

TRACING GROTOWSKI'S PATH

Year of Grotowski in New York

February 6 – July 13, 2009

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Cover image by Andrzej Paluchiewicz

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Year of Grotowski in New York

PRESENTED BY THE POLISH CULTURAL INSTITUTE in NEW YORK
AND THE PERFORMANCE STUDIES DEPARTMENT,
TISCH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Curator: **Richard Schechner**, NYU University Professor, TDR Editor
Associate Curator: **Dominika Bennacer**, NYU
Project Coordinator: **Agata Grenda**, Polish Cultural Institute

February 6 – July 13, 2009

Tracing Grotowski's Path: Year of Grotowski in New York celebrates the work and legacy of world-renowned Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski.

Considered one of the most important and influential theatre practitioners of the 20th century, **Grotowski** revolutionized contemporary theatre in a number of ways. Beginning in 1959 with his early experiments and productions in the Polish town of Opole and subsequently with the Polish Laboratory Theatre in Wrocław, Grotowski changed the way Western theatre practitioners and performance theorists conceive of the audience/actor relationship, theatre staging, and the craft of acting. This phase of his theatrical work, also called "poor theatre," was the basis for one of the most influential theatre books of the 20th century: *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968). After abandoning the "theatre of productions," Grotowski continued to push the boundaries of conventional theatre, first in his paratheatrical work, and later in his performance research, which took him to India, Mexico, Haiti, and elsewhere, in search of the traditional performance practices of various cultures (*Theatre of Sources*, 1976-82). This work led Grotowski to his identification of particular abiding elements of ritual traditions (*Objective Drama*, 1983-86). In the final phase of his work Grotowski explored the far reaches of the performance continuum, which he traced from "Art as presentation" toward what has been called "Art as Vehicle."

UNESCO has designated 2009 as "The Year of Grotowski" – 50 years after the founding of the Polish Laboratory Theatre and 10 after the death of the world-renowned Polish theatre director, master teacher, and, for many, a spiritual leader. In New York, we are particularly honored to have **Prof. Richard Schechner**, a true luminary and expert on Grotowski, agree to serve as curator of this multi-faceted celebration. *Tracing Grotowski's Path: Year of Grotowski in New York* is the first in-depth and extensive presentation in the U.S. of the innovations and influence of Jerzy Grotowski in all the phases of his long artistic career. This broad spectrum of work is being presented through a variety of lectures, panels, films, and workshops organized by the **Polish Cultural Institute in New York** and the **Performance Studies Department at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts**. It brings together some of the most important performance practitioners working in theatre today. These include early Grotowski collaborators, former Polish Laboratory Theatre actors, as well as theatre and performance scholars and historians from all around the world. By attending to aspects of Grotowski's work usually overlooked or misrepresented, it will contribute to popular and scholarly discourses on one of the greatest artists and innovators of the 20th century.



Monika Fabijańska
Director, Polish Cultural Institute in New York

Curator's Introduction

The Polish Cultural Institute invited me to curate the YoG events in New York – and before accepting I asked myself “Who is Grotowski to me?” He was one of my teachers and I was one of his editors and propagators. I first became aware of Grotowski in 1963 when I translated from the French and published in 1964 in the *Tulane Drama Review* (TDR) Grotowski’s program notes for the Laboratory Theatre’s production of Christopher Marlowe’s *Dr Faustus*. Why would a Polish director working in the small industrial city of Opole write his program notes in French? Clearly he wanted to reach beyond Poland, through the Iron Curtain, to Western Europe. TDR introduced Grotowski to English readers. Even after the publication of *Towards a Poor Theatre* in 1968, TDR remained one of Grotowski’s main links to the English-speaking world.

Reading Grotowski wasn’t enough for me. I wanted to meet him – which I did in Montreal in 1967. The man I sat with at Expo ‘67 was the “early Grotowski,” a serious very pale creature in a dark suit wearing dark glasses and chain smoking while declaring in a high-pitched voice the principles of a new kind of theatre. A theatre of such intensity and austerity that its apostles called it “holy” and insisted that it be “poor.” A theatre stripped of all that was not absolutely necessary, intended not only or mostly to entertain but to enlighten.

Meeting Grotowski wasn’t enough either. I needed to work with him. I got that chance in October 1967 when Grotowski and Ryszard Cieslak, one of several great actors that Grotowski trained, offered a three-week workshop at New York University’s School of the Arts. The other members of the workshop were NYU graduate student actors. I was the oldest participant and, beyond doubt, the worst actor. But, oh, what I learned! About artistic discipline, performer training, and Grotowski’s famed “via negativa” – where one stripped away all externals physical, psychological, and even metaphysical. Leaving... what? I won’t say, can’t say – “essential” is much too weak a word.



After that indescribably intense workshop, I met Grotowski only briefly on a number of occasions, sometimes publicly sometimes just the two of us. We met at NYU where the master came to lecture, in California at UC-Irvine where he was running the “Objective Drama” project, and in Europe first in Poland and later in Italy at the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards. The last time we saw each other was in 1996 in Copenhagen at one of Eugenio Barba’s ISTA conferences (International School of Theatre Anthropology). Grotowski was already frail and ill, but that did not tamp his intensity or dim his intellect. Grotowski’s eyesight was bad, his vision supreme.

Now it is ten years after his passing and a half-century after the founding of the Polish Laboratory Theatre. Grotowski’s work is recognized as one of the 20th century’s great artistic accomplishments. Paradoxically, after 1969, Grotowski’s theatre took place outside the theatre. This work – “Paratheatre,” “Theatre of Sources,” “Objective Drama,” and “Art as vehicle” – are best described as “cultural experiments and explorations.” But both in the theatre and beyond, Grotowski is recognized as a great teacher and director alongside Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Artaud, and Brecht.

The YoG focuses on successive stages of Grotowski’s work bringing to the fore under-represented aspects and re-evaluating well-known aspects. Grotowski’s theatre often played to audiences of less than 100 persons, and sometimes as few as 30, because he insisted on a direct, personal, and intense relationship between the performers and the spectators. He made attending his performances difficult – a kind of initiation rite, including showings and participations that were by invitation only. The few large-scale Grotowski Paratheatrical and Theatre of Sources events were relatively short-lived.

The intent of the YoG is to gather those who participated in Grotowski’s work, those who have studied it, and those who will be introduced to it in order to reflect on what Grotowski accomplished and to show today’s theatre artists and scholars who Grotowski was and why he is important today – not only for theatre, but for the broader arts world and society.

Participants from all phases of Grotowski’s multilayered career will take part, including Ludwik Flaszen and Rena Mirecka from the original Polish Laboratory Theatre, as well as Thomas Richards of the Workcenter in Pontedera, Italy, to whom Grotowski transmitted “the *inner* aspect of the work.”

The YoG brings together a large cohort of the world's most important performance theorists and practitioners from Europe, the Americas, Asia, and the Caribbean.

It is more than twelve years since I saw him last, and forty-one years since I first met him. How do I remember him? As a mystery man in dark glasses, a hippie with wispy beard and backpack, a laughing skinny Buddha demanding raw beef for dinner, a weak human being old before his years. These are physical attributes. There is more, the essence of his being. Grotowski was a seer in the old, traditional sense. What remains is his intensity, focus, and wisdom.



Richard Schechner, Curator
New York, December 2008

Richard Schechner is University Professor and Professor of Performance Studies at the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. He is editor of *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies*, general editor of the *Worlds of Performance* (Routledge) and co-editor with Carol Martin of *Enactments* (Seagull). His books include *Environmental Theater*, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, *The End of Humanism*, *Performance Theory*, *The Future of Ritual*, and *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. His books have been translated into many languages including Polish, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Farsi, Hungarian, and Serbo-Croatian. He founded The Performance Group and East Coast Artists with whom he directed many productions that have been seen around the world. He has directed plays in India, South Africa, and China. In addition to receiving numerous fellowships and awards, Schechner is an honorary professor at the Institute of Fine Arts, Havana, and at the Shanghai Theatre Academy where in 2005 the "Schechner Center for Performance Studies" was inaugurated. Schechner first met Grotowski in 1967 and kept in contact throughout the years until Grotowski's death in 1999. Schechner is co-editor (with Lisa Wolford Wylam) of *The Grotowski Sourcebook* (2001).

Dominika Bennacer, a native of Wrocław, Poland, Associate Curator of *Tracing Grotowski's Path*, is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of Performance Studies, NYU. Her scholarly specialties include performance studies and Eastern European experimental theatre. In her dissertation Bennacer reconsiders contemporary theories of witnessing by examining the quotidian and ritual practices of Muslims in the United States in the context of post-9/11 detentions and deportations. She has articles forthcoming in *Performance Research* and *TDR*.

Andrew Bielski, YoG curatorial assistant, is an M.A. candidate in the Department of Performance Studies, NYU.

A Grotowski Chronology

August 11, 1933 Jerzy Marian Grotowski is born in Rzeszów, southeastern Poland.

September 1951 Grotowski applies to the Acting Department of the State Theatre School in Kraków with the following results: Physical Appearance: C; Diction: F; Voice: B; Expressiveness: C; Written test: A.

June 1955 Grotowski graduates with an actor's certificate and receives a scholarship to study directing at the State Institute of Theatre Arts (GITIS) in Moscow. He travels there to study under Yuri Zavadsky and becomes known as a "fanatic of Stanislavsky."

Theatre of Productions 1959-69 The first period of Grotowski's work during which he engages in the creation of theatre performances. During this period he is an early pioneer in the field of environmental theatre, creates and realizes the idea of "poor theatre," elaborates and refines a unique investigation into the nature of acting departing from the principles of Stanislavsky's method of physical actions, distills the theatre to an encounter between the actor and the spectator, and leads his actors toward "the total act," an absolute disarmament during which the actor "reveals [...] and sacrifices the innermost part of himself" (Grotowski 1968: 35). Grotowski is well known for his productions of this period, such as *Acropolis* (1964), *The Constant Prince* (1965), and his last performance, *Apocalypsis cum Figuris* (1969-1973).

Spring 1959 Theatre theorist and dramaturg Ludwik Flaszen invites Grotowski to join him in reviving a small theatre in out-of-the-way **Opole**, Poland. With Flaszen as the literary director and Grotowski as the artistic director, the two work with a core group of 8 actors to form the **Theatre of Thirteen Rows**.

January 1965 What is now known as the **Laboratory Theatre** relocates to **Wrocław**, Poland.

Fall 1967 Grotowski makes his first visit to the U.S. when he and Ryszard Cieślak lead a workshop with actors studying at New York University's School of the Arts. Subsequently, Grotowski made frequent trips to America to lecture and eventually to lead his "Objective Drama" program at UC-Irvine between 1983 and 1986.

1968 *Towards a Poor Theatre* is published. This seminal work, edited by Eugenio Barba, continues to have deep and far reaching repercussions on 20th-21st century theatre.

Fall 1969 The Polish Laboratory Theatre performs in New York with *The Constant Prince*, *Acropolis*, and *Apocalypsis cum Figuris*. The reactions of public, press, and theatre specialists are electric.

Paratheatre 1969-78 In this phase, also known as the "theatre of participation" or "active culture," Grotowski shifts his focus away from theatre art and questions of technique towards eliminating the distinction between actors and spectators in events that involved spontaneous contact between experienced leaders and outside participants. Often, Laboratory Theatre Actors lead these paratheatrical events.

Summer of 1975 The University of Research of The Theatre of Nations is held in Wrocław under the sponsorship of the Laboratory Theatre. Over 4,500 people participate in classes, seminars, workshops, performances, public meetings, films, demonstrations, and paratheatre events.

Theatre of Sources 1976-82 Working with an international team of practitioners from India, Mexico, Haiti, and elsewhere, Grotowski seeks to identify "source techniques, archaic or nascent, that bring us [those actively involved] back to the sources of life, to direct, so we say, primeval perception, to organic primary experience of life. Existence-presence" (Grotowski 1978: 9-11).

August 31, 1984 After 25 years of work, the Laboratory Theatre is formally dissolved.

Objective Drama 1983-86 Conducted at the University of California-Irvine, this phase explored specific elements of ancient rituals coming from a variety of cultures, performative elements that could have a precise and thus objective impact on participants. A renewed emphasis on performance craft begins.

1986 Grotowski is invited by the Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale to shift the base of his work to **Pontedera** in Tuscany, Italy, where Grotowski is offered an opportunity to conduct long-term research on performance. The Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski is founded.

Art as vehicle 1986-present the final phase of Grotowski's work, also known as "ritual arts." During this phase of research, conducted in Pontedera, Grotowski develops performance structures consisting of "actions related to very ancient songs which traditionally served ritual purposes and so can have a direct impact on – so to say – the head, the heart, and the body of the doers, songs which can allow the passage from a vital energy to a more subtle one" (Thibaudat 1995: 29). In this phase, Grotowski collaborates with Thomas Richards, a young American actor who had studied at the Yale University.

1991 Grotowski is awarded a MacArthur "Genius" Award.

1996 Grotowski changes the name of the Workcenter to: "Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards." During the final phase of his research, "Art as vehicle", Grotowski concentrates with Richards on the process of "transmission" in the ancient, traditional sense of the word. During this phase, Mario Biagini, a member to the Workcenter team since its beginnings and key contributor to the work of "Art as vehicle", also works closely with Grotowski.

1997 Grotowski is appointed to the first chair of theatre anthropology at the Collège de France.

January 14, 1999 Grotowski dies in Pontedera, Italy after a prolonged illness.

The Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards Pontedera, Italy

Since Grotowski's passing in 1999, Richards and his Associate Director, Mario Biagini, have been carrying forward the artistic development of the company. Jerzy Grotowski entrusted Richards and Biagini as the sole legatees of his Estate, including his entire body of written work. Today at the Workcenter, Richards and Biagini actively continue this performing arts research as a living tradition, pursuing and developing its essential investigations.

The Grotowski Institute, Wrocław, Poland

In 1990 The Centre for Study of Jerzy Grotowski's Work and of the Cultural and Theatrical Research started its activities under the direction of Zbigniew Osiniński in the building of the Laboratory Theatre, which was formally dissolved in 1984. This institution, which changed its name in 2006 to The Grotowski Institute, is devoted to documentation and research of the artistic activities of Grotowski and the Laboratory Theatre, as well as organizing international meetings, conferences, and theatre workshops.



Ryszard Chleśiak in *The Constant Prince*, 1985; photo by Andrzej Paluchiewicz




THE YEAR OF GROTOWSKI IN NEW YORK

PROGRAM

*Unless noted otherwise, all events are free and open to the public.

*For updates, and biographical information on participants, please check www.PolishCulture-NYC.org

A black and white photograph of Jerzy Grotowski. He is standing in a rustic, outdoor setting, possibly a courtyard or a stage set. He is wearing a dark, long-sleeved coat or jacket. His arms are outstretched to the sides, and he appears to be in a state of physical exertion or a dramatic pose. The background shows a stone wall and some debris, suggesting a rough or industrial environment. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

Jerzy Grotowski, quite simply, was the Michelangelo of 20th-century theatre... Always inspiring, revelatory, and provocative

- André Gregory

Exhibition: Grotowski in Poland – The Photographs of Andrzej Paluchiewicz

Friday, February 6 – March 20, 2009

- Windows at the Kimmel Center, New York University
Located on the exterior of the Kimmel Building
La Guardia Place and West 3rd Street, New York, NY 10012
- NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Riese Common Room, Ground Floor
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

Andrzej Paluchiewicz worked with Jerzy Grotowski from 1966 to 1976. He was not only an actor in the Polish Laboratory Theatre; he was also the ensemble's resident photographer. He is the author of some of the most iconic images of Grotowski's productions. Combining images of Grotowski's work with more rarely seen photographs, this exhibition traces the trajectory of Grotowski's work in Poland from the "Theatre of Productions" phase to the "Theatre of Sources."

The Year of Grotowski in New York Opening: The Theatre of Thirteen Rows (1959) and The Grotowski Institute in Wrocław (2009)

Friday, February 6, 2009, 7:30 – 11:00 PM

NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Cantor Film Center, New York University
36 East 8 Street, New York City, New York 10003

This event brings together former literary director and co-founder of the Theatre of Thirteen Rows (later the Polish Laboratory Theatre), **Ludwik Flaszen** and the current directing team of the Grotowski Institute in Wrocław, Poland: **Jarosław Fret** and **Grzegorz Ziółkowski**. What brought the Polish Laboratory Theatre into existence? What was the Polish theatre scene like in those days of the Cold War and the Iron Curtain? What is the current work of the Grotowski Institute? How is the Institute preserving, researching, and using Grotowski's archives and his Polish heritage? The panel discussion, moderated by **Richard Schechner**, will be preceded by a screening of a film on Jerzy Grotowski.



Ludwik Flaszen: Grotowski's Devil's Advocate

Sunday – Monday, February 8 – 9, 2009

Sunday 5:00 PM; Monday 7:00 – 10:00 PM

NYU Performance Studies Studio, 6th Floor
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

Limited seating available. Please RSVP to
yearofgrotowski@nyu.edu



photo by Andrzej Paluchiewicz

At this intimate lecture-meeting, former literary director and co-founder of the Polish Laboratory Theatre, **Ludwik Flaszen** speaks about various practical, theoretical and historical aspects of Grotowski's work from the perspective of his closest collaborator. In this cycle of lectures, he addresses the mysticisms and fundamental errors that have arisen in interpreting the early period of Grotowski's work. Through his direct personal testimony, Flaszen traces the trajectory of Grotowski's development over time.

Actors of the Polish Laboratory Theatre: Mieczysław Janowski and Andrzej Paluchiewicz

Thursday, February 12, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Riese Common Room, Ground Floor
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

Mieczysław Janowski worked in Grotowski's Polish Laboratory Theatre for 8 years playing in all their core productions. In 1999, he was honored by the President of Poland for his entire artistic work with the Golden Order of Merit. **Andrzej Paluchiewicz** worked with Grotowski for over a decade as

an actor in the Polish Laboratory Theatre and as a participant in the paratheatrical work conducted by Grotowski. The two actors will discuss daily life inside the Polish Laboratory Theatre – from the rehearsals, role preparation, and performances, to what it was like to work with the Grotowski of that period. Moderated by **Dominika Bennacer**. Q&A will follow

This event is made possible through the generous support of the Drama Department at NYU.

Grotowski and Maud Robart: Encountering Afro-Haitian Tradition **Thursday, February 19, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 PM**

NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Screening Room 006
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

Maud Robart is an artist and master teacher whose lifelong investigations draw on her direct experience with the traditional practices of her native Haiti. She is the co-founder of the artistic group Saint-Soleil. Grotowski's first encounter with Robart took place in 1977 in Haiti. Subsequently, she became a co-creator of the "Theatre of Sources" project in Haiti and Poland from 1978 to 1980, which was conducted under the direction of Grotowski. Robart's position is significant and unique in that she is the only collaborator who was involved in all of the post-theatrical phases of his research from "Theatre of Sources" to The Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski. The discussion will be devoted to Grotowski's initial encounter with the living Afro-Haitian tradition and his consequent long-term collaboration with Maud Robart. Moderated by **Dominika Bennacer**.

This event was made possible by the generous support from the New York University Department of English Joe A. Callaway Lectures.

Grotowski in the Americas **Thursday, March 12, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 PM**

NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Screening Room 006
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

This panel featuring **Nicolás Núñez** and **Helena Guardia** from Mexico, **Ryszard Nieoczym** and **Dawn Obokata** from Canada, and **Stacy Klein** from the U.S. will explore how the methodology of Grotowski and the Polish Laboratory Theatre was adapted (and is still being adapted) by theatre artists in the Americas, in order to further their creative searches. The invited artists worked with Grotowski and other members of the Laboratory Theatre during "Theatre of Productions," "Paratheatre," and "Theatre of Sources" phases. The panelists will discuss Grotowski in light of their own unique social, cultural, material, and artistic contexts. Moderated by **Kermit Dunkelberg**, whose 2008 Ph.D. dissertation focused on Grotowski and North American theatre.

This event was made possible by the generous support from the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (FONCA) in Mexico.

Work Demonstration by Taller de Investigación Teatral UNAM - National University of Mexico

Friday, March 13, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

NYU Performance Studies Studio, 6th Floor
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

Limited seating available. Please RVSP to yearofgrotowski@nyu.edu

Helena Guardia and **Nicolás Núñez**, founding members of the **Taller de Investigación Teatral UNAM** collaborated with Grotowski on "Theatre of Sources" projects. They participated in the paratheatrical project "Tree of People" in Wrocław in 1979, and were the main organizers of Grotowski's "Theatre of Sources" project in Mexico in 1980. Joined by their daughter **Miranda Núñez** they will give a theoretical introduction to the principles of their work as well as step-by-step practical presentation of the concept and practice of one of the Taller *dynamics*, "Olmeca I." *Dynamics* are pre-Hispanic postures developed by the Taller and designed to elevate one's energy. The work demonstration calls for active participation involving people in the psychophysical training process of the Taller's work.

This event was made possible by the generous support from the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (FONCA) in Mexico.

Anthropocosmic Theatre Techniques: A Workshop by Taller de Investigación Teatral - UNAM National University of Mexico

March 14 – 15, 2009, 10:00 AM – 1:30 PM

NYU Performance Studies Studio, 6th Floor
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

Limited seating available. Please RSVP to yearofgrotowski@nyu.edu

This workshop conducted by **Helena Guardia**, **Miranda Núñez**, **Nicolás Núñez**, and **Deborah Middleton**, Head of Drama at University of Huddersfield, UK, will give a practical introduction to the actor training developed by the Taller. Participants will be exposed to some of the group's 23 *dynamics*, pre-Hispanic postures such as Tonatiuh, Quetzalcoatl, Hurakan, Teozintli, In Yollo!l. Most of the *dynamics* are named after pre-Hispanic deities, and are the direct outcome of the Taller members' search for roots.

This event was made possible by the generous support from the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (FONCA) in Mexico.

Grotowski's Influence on American Actor Training

Saturday, March 28, 2009, 4:00 – 5:30 PM

NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Room 108
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

This roundtable brings together expert teachers who have been influenced by Grotowski to discuss the growth and some of the varieties of Grotowski training in the United States as it has developed over the last thirty years. Panelists include **Stephen Wagh** from Naropa University in Boulder, CO, author of *An Acrobat of the Heart, a physical approach to acting inspired by the work of Jerzy Grotowski* (Vintage Books 2000) and **Kevin Kuhlke** and **Wendy Vanden Heuvel** from the Experimental Theatre Wing of New York University. **Richard Schechner** will chair.

The panel is made possible through the support of the Center for Teaching Excellence at NYU, Tisch School of the Arts Dean's Office, Experimental Theatre Wing and the Drama Department, NYU.



Ang Gey Pin, photo by M. Zakrzewski

Women in the Grotowski Diaspora: Training, Transmission, Creativity

Thursday, April 16, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Martin E. Segal Theatre at the CUNY Graduate Center
365 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10016

This evening of conversation and work demonstration features three former Grotowski collaborators: **Rena Mirecka** (Poland/Italy), **Stefania Gardecka** (Poland), and **Ang Gey Pin** (Singapore/Italy). Although the particularly strenuous physical training emblematic of Grotowski's approach is not gender specific, it has historically been associated with a masculine conception of the performer because of the central position occupied by Grotowski's male collaborators in most of his theatrical work and paratheatrical experiments. However, as evidenced by archival sources, personal testimonies, and transmission processes, but – interestingly – rarely by printed materials, several generations of women from different cultures and traditions actively participated in all phases of Grotowski's research, and continue to play a pivotal role in today's intercultural Grotowski diaspora. What in Grotowski's approach has inspired women to dedicate their life to such research? Moderated by **Virginie Magnat**, Assistant Professor of Performance at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan, Canada.

Grotowski in Communist Poland

Friday, April 17, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, Room 630-T
899 Tenth Avenue New York, NY, 10019

Panelists: Professor **Kazimierz Braun**, director, former Grotowski colleague and author of *Ten Days in Poland Under Communism*; **Seth Baumrin**, director, theatre historian, Assistant Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNY, author of *Ketmanship in Opole: Jerzy Grotowski and the Price of Artistic Freedom*; **Agnieszka Wójtowicz**, theatre historian; Assistant Professor at the University of Opole, author of *From Orpheus to the Hamlet Study: Theatre of the 13 Rows in Opole (1959-64)* discuss Grotowski's political activities in Communist Poland. They explore the complex and often contradictory political realities of cultural production in Poland at that time. The period in question spans the establishment of the Laboratory Theatre in 1959 through to the years of Solidarity in the 1970-80s and beyond to the fall of Communism in Poland in 1989. Just what was Grotowski's (a Communist Party member for more than two decades) and the Laboratory Theatre's relationship to the Party, to the emergent anti-communist activism of the 1970s-80s, and to the censors who passed on all phases of cultural production, including the theatre? How did the "political realities" affect Grotowski's artistic work? Moderated by **Daniel Gerould**, Professor of Theatre and Comparative Literature, CUNY Graduate Center.

This event is made possible by the generous support of the Jon Jay College of Criminal Justice Department of Communication and Theatre Arts and the Research Foundation of the City University of New York.

The Way - A Workshop with Rena Mirecka

April 18 – 22, 2009

Judson Memorial Church
55 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012

This workshop is not open to the public.

Rena Mirecka was one of the key figures in Jerzy Grotowski's "theatre of productions" and paratheatrical experiments from 1959 to 1982. She was instrumental in the conception and development of the "plastic exercises" and created all of the leading female roles including those in *Acropolis and Apocalypsis cum Fuguris*. Since 1982, she has pursued her own personal research in physical and spiritual theatrical expression. Since 1993, she has directed her own Theater Center in Sardinia, Italy. Her current work is called "The Way".

This workshop is made possible through the generous support of the Center for Teaching Excellence at NYU, Tisch School of the Arts Dean's Office, the Department of Drama, NYU, and the Judson Church.



Rena Mirecka, Wrocław, 1975, photo by Andrzej Paluchiewicz

1967: Grotowski in New York, The First Encounter

Wednesday, April 29, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

La MaMa E.T.C., The Club
74A East 4th Street, New York, NY 10003

A discussion with participants in Grotowski's first American workshop which took place at NYU in the autumn of 1967. **Ellen Stewart**, founder and director of La MaMa E.T.C., who was instrumental in bringing Grotowski to America, will also be on the panel. Two participants in the NYU workshop – Thomas Crawley and Jerry Mayer (both deceased) – kept a careful journal of this workshop. The observations concerning Grotowski, his principal actor at the time, Ryszard Cieślak, and the work process are "naive" and thus a very interesting document of American actors' first encounter with Grotowski and his training methods. **Richard Schechner** will read from the Crawley-Mayer journal.

Grotowski and Kantor

Monday, May 4, 2009, 7:00 – 10:00 PM

NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Room TBA
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

A conversation, moderated by CUNY Graduate Center Professor **Daniel Gerould**, between two internationally known scholars: **Zbigniew Osiński**, Professor of Polish Studies at Warsaw University and the founder and first director of The Centre for Studies of Jerzy Grotowski's Work and for the Cultural and Theatrical Research (from 1990 to 2004); and **Michał Kobialka**, Professor of Theatre Arts and Dance at the University of Minnesota, whose most recent book on Kantor, *Further on, Nothing: Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre*, will be published in 2009. They will assess the distinctive achievements of these two revolutionary theatre artists from Poland and will endeavor to dispel some of the myths surrounding their work in order to reveal clearly the legacy of each for the future of theatre.

Paratheatre, Theatre of Sources, and Objective Drama

Friday, July 10, 2009

NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Room TBA
721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

7:00 – 8:30 PM

Paratheatre and Theatre of Sources

Moderated by Lisa Wolford Wylam
With paratheatre participants and key work leaders from Grotowski's intercultural research from 1976-82
Speakers: Margaret Croyden
Magda Złotowska, Jairo Cuesta, and Téo Spychalski

8:30 – 10:00 PM

Objective Drama

Moderated by Lisa Wolford Wylam
With key work leaders and long-term participants from Grotowski's research at UC-Irvine, 1982-86, and the period of "Objective Drama," 1987-92
Speakers: James Slowiak, Jairo Cuesta, Magda Złotowska, Massoud Saidpour, and Pablo Jimenez

These two linked panels focus on the "Paratheatre", "Theatre of Sources", and "Objective Drama" stages of Grotowski's performance-based research. These phases have been sparsely documented, in part because the work was less accessible to the public than that of the theatre of productions. "Theatre of Sources" focused on identifying those elements of embodied behaviors present in the traditional practices of diverse cultures and on exploring their impact when performed by practitioners from outside that cultural milieu. "Objective Drama," centered at the University of California-Irvine, extended this investigation on the psychophysiological impact of elements derived from ritual traditions, alongside a renewed emphasis on performance craft. These interrelated panels gather important contributors to Grotowski's research from the mid 70s through the 80s, including those who traveled with Grotowski on his expeditions to conduct field research, and those who served key leadership roles in his US-based research.

Margaret Croyden is an American journalist and theatre critic, (New York Theatre Wire). Her 1993 book, *In the Shadow of the Flame*, offers an account of her personal experience of the "Special Project," one of Grotowski's paratheatrical events.

Jairo Cuesta is a Colombian actor and director. He collaborated with Grotowski in the "Theatre of Sources" and the "Objective Drama" Program from 1976 to 1986, working in Poland, France, Italy, Mexico, Haiti, and the U.S. He participated in preliminary workshops for *The Mahabarata* in Paris, under the direction of Peter Brook. Cuesta has been a guest artist at The University of Paris; the UC-Irvine; The Colorado College; Eckerd College; Case Western Reserve University; Ashland University; and The University of Akron where he directed Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*. Cuesta has conducted numerous workshops in Performance Ecology and actor training techniques around the world. He has performed with Teatro Libre in Bogota, Colombia, and co-directed (with James Slowiak) Moliere's *The Misanthrope*.

Pablo Jimenez, a Hatha yoga specialist, began his theatrical experience in Mexico. He worked with Grotowski for approximately ten years during "Theatre of Sources" and "Objective Drama" phases. He was one of three people chosen to accompany Grotowski to found the Workcenter in Pontedera in 1986.



Left to right: Stanislaw Ścierański, Jerzy Grotowski, Ryszard Cieślak; Holstebro, Denmark, 1970, photo by Andrzej Paluchiewicz

Massoud Saidpour received his degree in Theatre Arts from the UC-Irvine, where during his 8 years of studying with Jerzy Grotowski he also worked with Grotowski's associates - artists from various cultures including Bali, Korea, Haiti, Columbia, Turkey, Poland, and the U.S. In 1991 he joined the New World Performance Laboratory in Akron, Ohio, as actor and director. Saidpour is currently performing arts, music, and film director at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

James Slowiak is currently Professor of Theatre at the University of Akron and Co-Artistic Director of the New World Performance Laboratory. From 1983 to 1989, Slowiak served as assistant to Jerzy Grotowski in all facets of the Focused Research Program in "Objective Drama" at the UC-Irvine and at the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski in Pontedera, Italy.

Téo Spsychalski is a former member of the Polish Laboratory Theatre, where he participated in the "Theatre of Sources" phase of Grotowski's work and was the main workshop coordinator. In 1982, Spsychalski joined Le Groupe de la Veillée Theatre Company in Quebec, where along with Elizabeth Albahaca he founded "Le Studio de formation de l'acteur" intended to develop the actor's craft.

Magda Zlotowska worked with Grotowski and the Laboratory Theatre from the time she was 15, taking part in "Paratheatre", "Theatre of Sources", and "Objective Drama" Research. She frequently translated for Grotowski during conferences and speaking engagements, and worked closely with him in translating and refining numerous published essays.

Lisa Wolford Wylam is Associate Professor of Theatre at York University, Canada. She is co-editor, with Richard Schechner, of *The Grotowski Sourcebook* (Routledge, 1997), and with Antonio Attisani and Mario Biagini of the forthcoming *Doorways: Performing as a Vehicle at the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards* (Seagull Press).

This event is made possible through the generous support from the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Rutgers University-Newark.

Grotowski and his Legacy A three-day event at Lincoln Center



Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre and Theatre of Sources Period: Film Documentation

Saturday, July 11, 2009, time TBA

Film Society of Lincoln Center, Walter Reade Theater
70 Lincoln Center, W. 65th Street, New York, NY 10023

For updated admission information please check www.PolishCulture-NYC.org

The Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards: Film Documentation

Sunday, July 12, 2009, time TBA

Film Society of Lincoln Center, Walter Reade Theater
70 Lincoln Center, West 65th Street, New York, NY 10023

For updated admission information please check
www.PolishCulture-NYC.org

Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to capture on film the full experience of Grotowski's work, some sense of his accomplishments can be represented in the film medium. During two days of screenings, audiences will have a chance to see films of some of Grotowski's most famous productions from his theatre period, and a rarely shown film documentation from the final phase of his life's research, known as "Art as vehicle." Also on view will be a documentary concerning Grotowski's "Theatre of Sources" period and films and fragments of the recent performing arts research of the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards. Each film will be introduced by an expert, including **Paul Allain, Mario Biagini, Thomas Richards, and Lisa Wolford Wylam**, who will put what is seen in its historical and artistic context.



Thomas Richards, photo by Frits Meyst



Mario Biagini, photo by Frits Meyst

Thomas Richards and Mario Biagini: Grotowski's Legacy and the Workcenter

Monday, July 13, 2009, 6:30 – 9:30 PM

Lincoln Center Festival

Rose Building, Kaplan Penthouse, 10th Floor

70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023

For the last 13 years of his life, Grotowski worked very closely with **Thomas Richards** whom he called his “essential collaborator,” eventually changing the name of the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski to include that of Richards. During those years of intense practical work, Grotowski transmitted to Richards the fruit of his lifetime research, what he called “the *inner* aspect of the work.” Grotowski entrusted Richards and **Mario Biagini**, a key member of the Workcenter since its beginnings and presently its Associate Director, as the sole legatees of his Estate, including his entire body of written work, specifying this designation as a confirmation of his “family of work.” Since Grotowski’s passing in 1999, Richards and Biagini have been continuing to develop the Workcenter’s performing arts research in new directions.

The discussion will center on the performing arts research of the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards, the directions of its past and present creative impulses, and on the potentiality of Grotowski’s performing arts heritage to thrive today as a living legacy. Moderated by **Richard Schechner**.

Grotowski and his Legacy: This three-day program at the Lincoln Center is presented in partnership with the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards and the Jerzy Grotowski Estate. The film program is curated by the Jerzy Grotowski Estate.

These events are made possible through the generous support from the Italian Cultural Institute in New York.



Mario Biagini and Thomas Richards in a conference in Turin, 2006

The Polish Cultural Institute, established in New York in 2000, is a diplomatic mission to the United States, is dedicated to nurturing and promoting cultural ties between the United States and Poland, both through American exposure to Poland's cultural achievements, and through exposure of Polish artists and scholars to American trends, institutions, and professional counterparts.

The Institute takes an active collaborative role in the organization, promotion, and actual production of a broad range of cultural events in theatre, music, film, literature, and the fine arts. Its events range in scope from the 160-seat Joe's Pub to the 2,700-seat Avery Fisher Hall. It has collaborated with such cultural institutions as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Art at St. Ann's, La MaMa E.T.C., Lincoln Center, Museum of Modern Art, PEN World Voices Festival, Poetry Society of America, Yale University, and many more.

Polish Cultural Institute

350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4621
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The Performance Studies Department at the Tisch School of the Arts, NYU takes as its object of inquiry and instruction the whole range of performance from the aesthetic to the social, from popular entertainments to ritual, from law and medicine to business, from gender to the performances of everyday life. Students and faculty in the Performance Studies Department's M.A. and Ph.D. programs explore the myriad ways that performances in many cultures and widely differing circumstances create meaning and identities while shaping social life and inhabiting the arts. In addition to its many courses, the Performance Studies Department is home to the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics and two journals: TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies and Women and Performance.

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