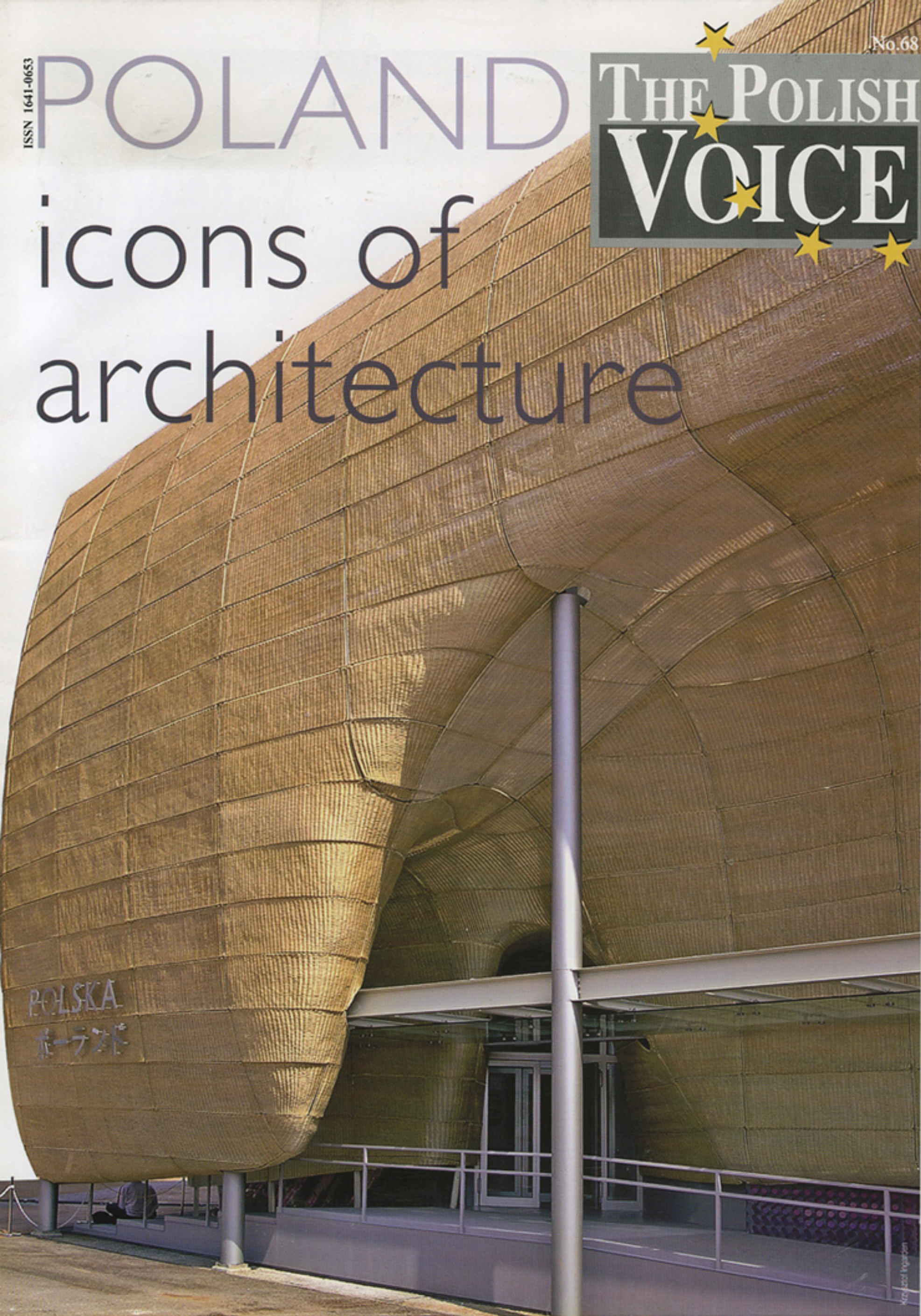


POLAND

THE POLISH
VOICE

icons of
architecture





JUST AS THE QUALITY AND NUMBER OF ROADS ACCURATELY TESTIFY TO A COUNTRY'S WEALTH, THE ARCHITECTURE OF BUILDINGS SAYS A LOT ABOUT THE SOCIETY THAT BUILT THEM. EXPERTS, EVEN THOSE FACED WITH THE UNKNOWN, ARE ABLE TO SAY WHAT KIND OF COUNTRY THEY ARE IN: ONE THAT IS OPEN AND FRIENDLY TO VISITORS, FREE AND DEVOID OF PREJUDICE, OR SOMEWHERE VERY DIFFERENT. IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW HOW THE AUDIENCE OF THE POLAND. ICONS OF ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION SEES US.

SEEING A DIFFERENT POLAND

The people behind the monthly *Architektura-murator* developed and organized the exhibition, acting in conjunction with the Promotion Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Poland, it was on display at the Center for Contemporary Art at Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, and now—in a bid to promote Poland—it is traveling to Polish institutions and diplomatic missions abroad, as well as to museums in Paris, Berlin and Frankfurt.

I think visitors to this exhibit will see a Poland different from the one they expected. They may actually be seeing it for the first time, not having thought much about our country and not having expected anything at all. They are certainly in for a surprise. Poland. Icons of Architecture says a lot about Poland, and in a very concrete fashion. Each of the 20 architectural projects is presented on two banners, printed on both sides. One side presents the project while the other side features a distinctive white-and-red graphic design. The banners create a flexible exhibition that is easy to set up, and that can be shown in many different exhibition spaces.

The display features 40 huge boards presenting 20 buildings constructed after 1989, each telling a story about the site on which they stand. These buildings have become symbols of the space that surrounds them, and have won recognition at major competitions.

Readers of this issue of *The Polish Voice* will find pictures of the 20 icons here, with information about the designers, investors and contractors. Rafał Wiśniewski, deputy minister of foreign affairs, says the exhibition does not present simple and pleasing buildings. It presents creations of a society that is aware of its history, that is constantly redefining its identity and is open to innovation, while at the same time wants to retain its traditions. One such tradition, dating back to the beginning of Poland's statehood, is being open to foreigners to design buildings in Poland. Another tradition is the ability to combine different cultural, ethnic and religious influences. The exhibition, Wiśniewski says, will encourage not only students of architecture around the world to take an interest in Poland, but will



poland icons of architecture

also reach out to many prospective investors and business people. To journalists and politicians, it will present evocative images of a country they have often only imagined. It will unquestionably encourage tourism to Poland, as the exhibition shows a Poland that is certainly European, but also aware of its heritage and location. This is a Poland of ultra-modern office and apartment buildings, but also of the poignant monument in Belżec [honoring Jews killed by the Nazis in 1942-1943] and many Catholic and Orthodox churches.

The exhibition includes the Warsaw University Library (designed by Marek Budzyński and Zbigniew Badowski), a unique and striking cult building with a roof of almost a hectare, overgrown with greenery. Another project featured is the headquarters of Agora (designed by JEMS Architekci), the publisher of *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily. This building is considered to be the only successful attempt at translating the principles of democracy into the language of architecture. It will be interesting to see what people think of a surprising beauty on the outskirts of Warsaw: the headquarters of Rodan Systems (designed by Magdalena Staniszkis). It is the essence of minimalist elegance and discipline, inspired by the precision of the world of computer data. Then there are the granaries in Bydgoszcz—the headquarters of BRE Bank (designed by Andrzej Bulanda and Włodzimierz Mucha), built quite recently but already a symbol of this city whose tradition stretches back more than 600 years. The exhibition also includes works by foreign masters, for instance the Manggha Center of Japanese Art and Technology in Cracow, designed by Arata Isozaki in collaboration with the Polish architects Krzysztof Ingarden and Jacek Ewy. The site was chosen by Isozaki himself, which probably explains why it has the best address in Poland: "opposite Wawel Castle (for centuries the seat of Polish kings), on the other bank of the Vistula."

The religious facilities that form part of the exhibition also dazzle: the Resurrectionists' Seminary (designed by Dariusz Kozłowski, Wacław Stefański and Maria Misiągiewicz); the Assembly Room at the Jasna Góra Monastery in Częstochowa (designed by Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński and Andrzej Miklaszewski); and the Orthodox church in Biały Bór by Jerzy Nowosielski—a world-renowned artist fascinated with Ruthenian icons. His church for resettled Ukrainians reminds one of a painter's vision directly transferred onto the coastal landscape.

Finally, the exhibition presents facilities that combine old architecture with the very modern, the best example of which being the Stary Browar Shopping, Art and



Business Center in Poznań (designed by Piotr Z. Barelkowski and Przemysław Borkowicz). The winner of many awards worldwide, it does not look like a modern shopping center but is more reminiscent of the passages and exclusive 19th-century stores found in Paris or Milan.

Zofia Szelińska

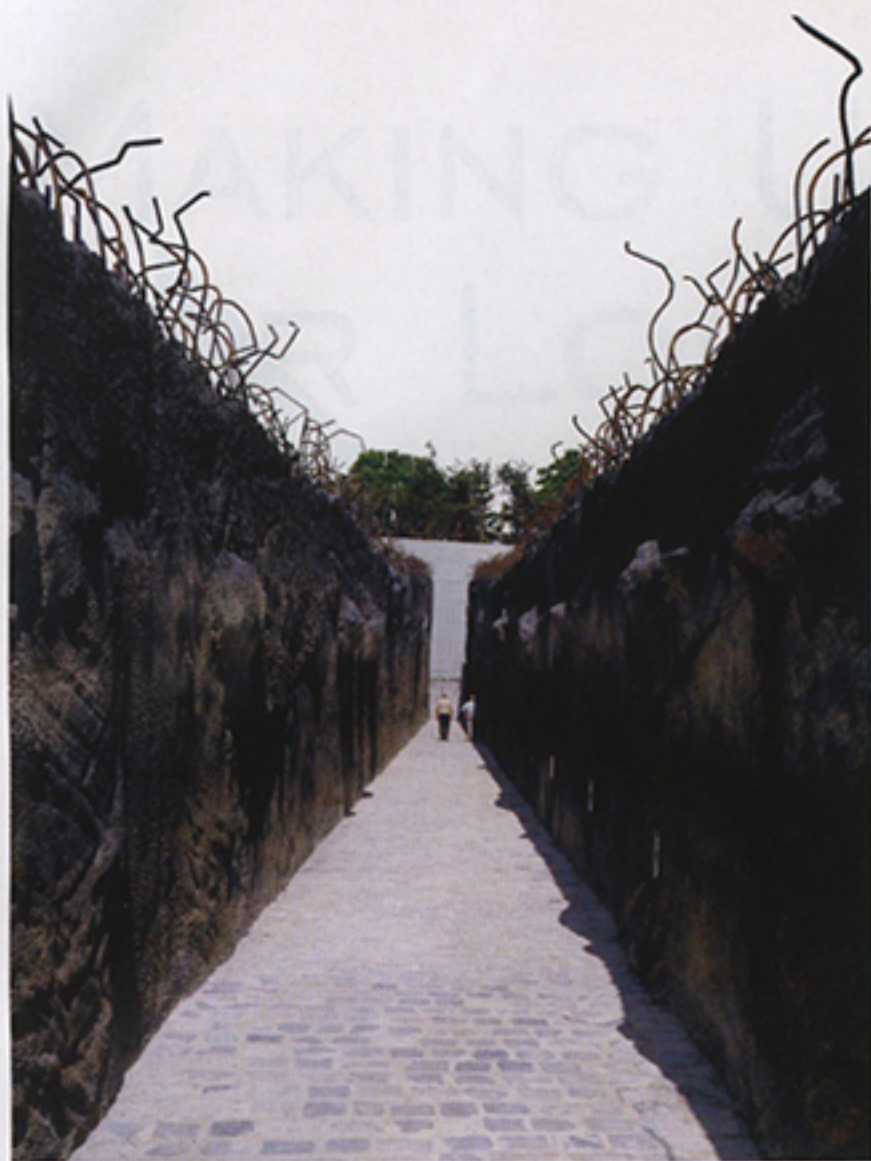
Opening the Exhibition:
(from left) Jan Edward Craanen, Ambassador of the Netherlands, Rafał Wiśniewski, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Gaetan Siew, chairman of the UIA



EWA PORĘBSKA,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF
ARCHITEKTURA-MURATOR
MAGAZINE, ONE OF THE
JUDGES AND THE CURATOR
OF THE EXHIBITION POLAND.
ICONS OF ARCHITECTURE:

It must be made clear that the 20 projects presented in the exhibition are just a fraction of thousands of projects being built—a small sample of what is currently going on in Poland's architectural world. That is why the judges wanted the selection to show the broadest possible spectrum of architectural trends and styles, demonstrating the extensive interests and creative range of the designers.

When making their selections, the judges decided that icons of architecture should refer to buildings offering a special architectural message, distinctive against the backdrop of the times, events and viewers' understanding. These were to be groundbreaking facilities, innovative within contemporary Polish architecture, telling a "story" about the places in which they stand. The judges did their best to select buildings that have become icons of their areas, and that have won the recognition of the architectural community in major competitions.

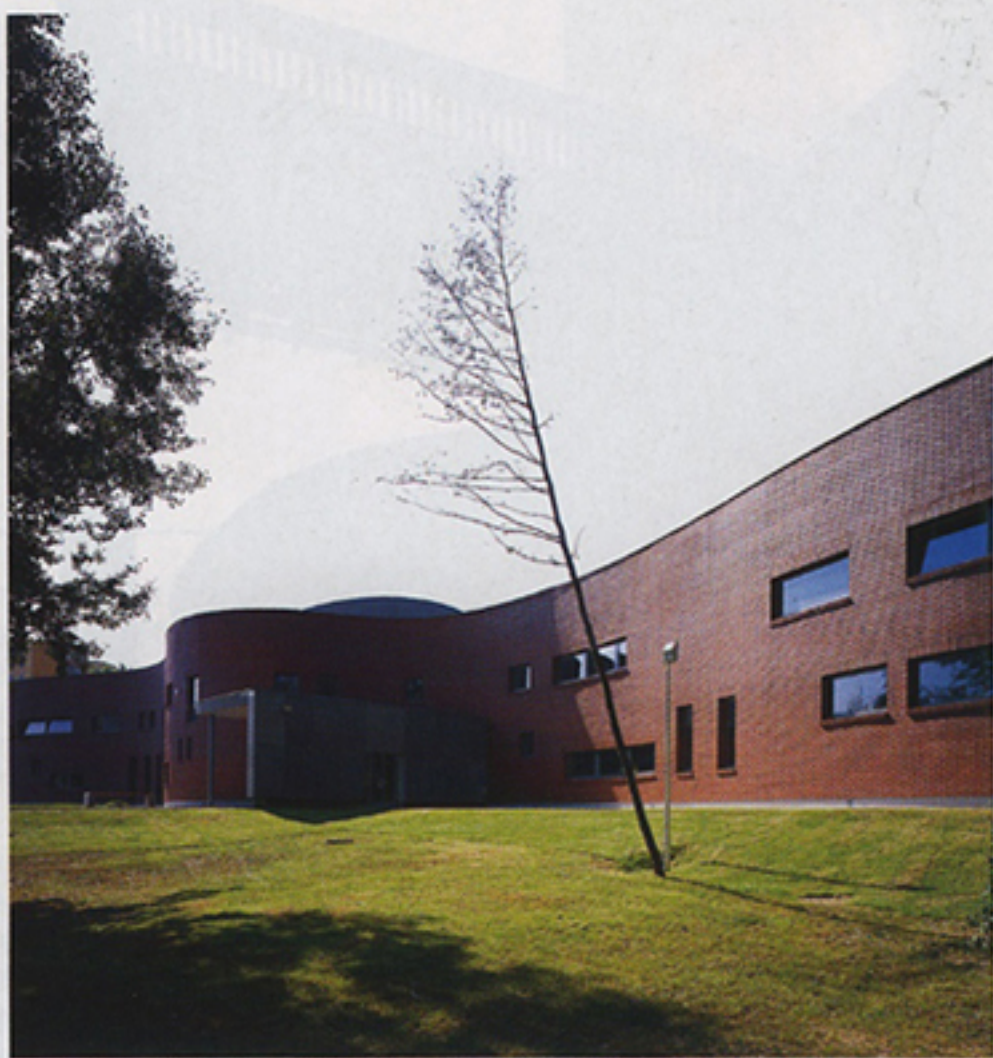


Monumental Cemetery on the Site of the Former Nazi Death Camp for Jews in Belżec

Architects: monument: A. Solyga, Z. Pidek, M. Roszczyk; museum building: DDJM Biuro Architektoniczne sp. z o.o.: M. Dunikowski, P. Czerwiński, P. Uherek

Client: Council for Protection of Memory of Struggle and Martyrdom, American Jewish Committee

General contractor: Hydrobudowa-6 SA



Zbigniew Herbert Junior High and High Schools, District Cultural Center and Charles de Gaulle Sports Complex

Architects: Konior Studio; Tomasz M. Konior

Client: City of Warsaw

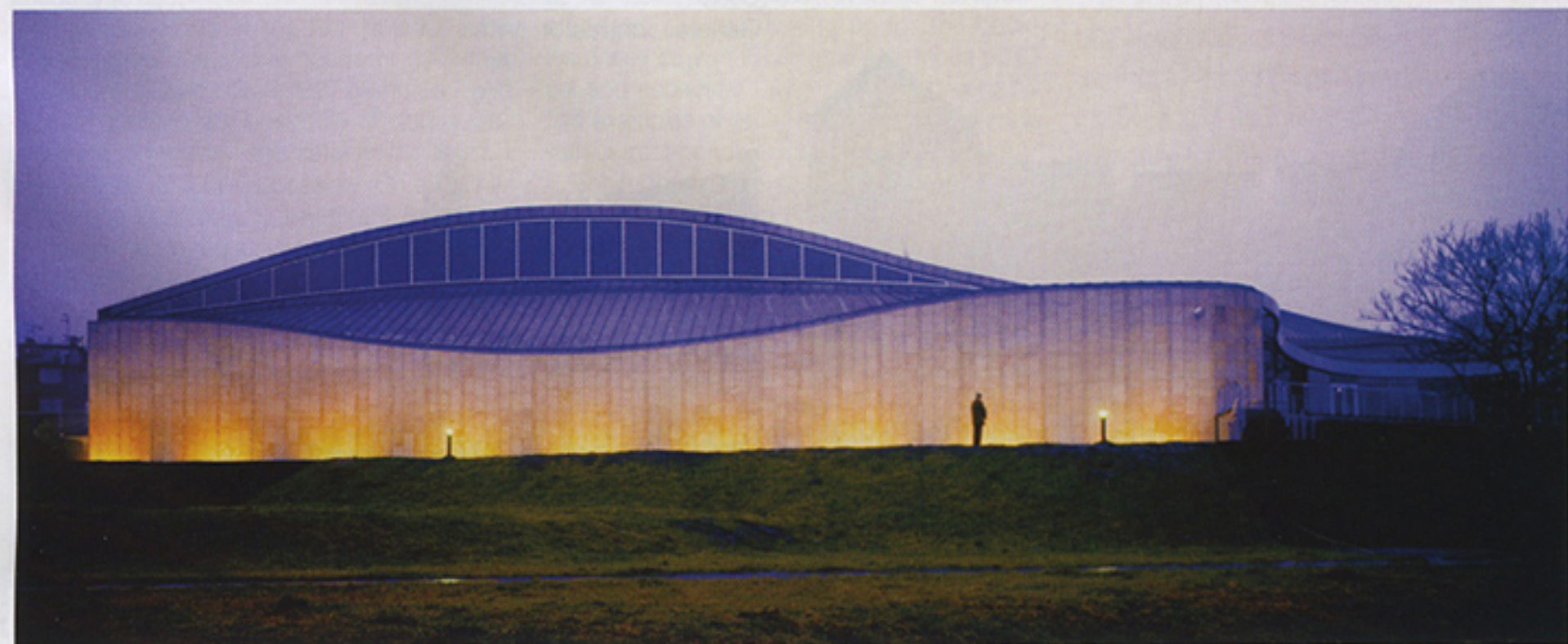
General contractor: Strabag sp. z o.o.

Manggha Japanese Art and Technology Center

Architects: Arata Isozaki & Associates (Tokyo); Arata Isozaki

Client: Kyoto-Cracow Andrzej Wajda and Krystyna Zachwatowicz Foundation

General contractor: Takanaka Europe GmbH



SURROUNDINGS SUGGEST SOLUTIONS

KRZYSZTOF INGARDEN
TALKS WITH EDYTA
GAJEWSKA.

OUR STARTING POINT IS THE EXHIBITION POLAND. ICONS OF ARCHITECTURE, THAT WAS PRESENTED AT THE CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART AT THE UJAZDOWSKI PALACE IN WARSAW AND IS NOW SETTING OFF ON A WORLD TOUR. HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE THE EXHIBITION?

This is an important exhibition, much needed by Polish architecture, which has not been promoted abroad for the last 50 years. For a long time very few projects in Poland were able to attract the foreign media's attention. There were also very few investors interested in developing experimental architecture. This does not mean that there was no good architecture in Poland; it's just that nobody in the world showed any interest. Since the early 1990s Polish architects have had greater opportunities to become known internationally, but this won't happen without proper promotion. Polish architecture needs to make up quickly for a promotion gap of several generations. In countries where the continuity of architectural tradition was preserved for years, for example in postwar Japan or Spain, each generation of architects had its own stars who were promoted abroad, ensuring that their market was closely observed around the world. In these countries, every project was almost automatically reviewed by the specialist international press. Interesting buildings are being created in Poland, but have yet to make an impact in other countries, although the situation is beginning to change. In 2004, the Manggha Center in Cracow, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary, organized the exhibition 3 2 1 New Architecture in Poland and Japan, which toured Poland and is now traveling around the world to excellent reviews. Rome, Milan, Padua, Germany and Austria are on the planned itinerary. Polish architecture is also on display at the exhibition Emerging Identities, organized in Berlin by Deutsches Architektur Centrum. There, Polish designs are being presented

along with architecture from the other new EU member countries. This exhibition is just beginning a series of international presentations. This is why I think the traveling exhibition Poland. Icons of Architecture is an excellent and extremely important project, carried out at exactly the right time. The international climate surrounding Polish architecture is beginning to improve and architects need to take full advantage of this.

THE EXHIBITION POLAND. ICONS OF ARCHITECTURE OPENS WITH THE MANGGHA CENTER OF JAPANESE ART AND TECHNOLOGY. HOW DID YOUR COLLABORATION ON THIS PROJECT WITH ARATA ISOZAKI COME ABOUT?

In 1987 in New York, I read in Tygodnik Powszechny that Andrzej Wajda was donating his Kyoto Prize for the construction of a center of Japanese art and technology in Cracow. I proposed to Wajda that we collaborate with Arata Isozaki, with whom I had worked before. When Isozaki came to Cracow and looked at Wawel Castle, at the plot lying at the foot of Wawel Hill on the Vistula, he was enraptured by the location and suggested that the building be shaped to look like a wave—a wave on the Vistula and a wave from the Japanese wood engravings by Hokusai, which are currently on display in the center from the Feliks Jasieński's collection of Japanese art.

YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF JAPAN RESULTED IN A MAGNIFICENT DESIGN FOR THE POLISH EMBASSY IN TOKYO, AND ALSO THE VERY ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR THE POLISH PAVILION AT THE WORLD EXHIBITION EXPO 2005. BOTH DESIGNS WON COMPETITIONS. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THESE PROJECTS?

I am glad that our design for the Polish Pavilion was so well received in Japan, as well as in other countries where it was publicized, and that it has now qualified as a Polish "icon." The building was an unconventional experiment in which we tried to find new materials and ways of constructing an architectural metaphor for contemporary Poland—a metaphor referring in a modern way to the music of Chopin and the landscapes of Mazovia, while at the same time combining high-



Krzysztof Ingarden is a graduate of the Architecture Department of the Cracow University of Technology (WAPK). Between 1983-85 he was on a PhD traineeship at the Tsukuba University in Japan and worked as an architect in Tokyo (Arata Isozaki & Assoc.) and New York (J. S. Polshek & Partners). From 1983 to 2000 he was a junior lecturer and assistant professor at WAPK. He is president of the Ingarden & Ewy architectural studio in Cracow. A member of the SARP Architects' Association, the Małopolska Chamber of Architects, the Kyoto-Kraków Foundation of Andrzej Wajda and Krystyna Zachwatowicz, a professor and deputy dean at the Department of Architecture and Fine Arts of the Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Cracow College. He is also honorary consul of Japan in Cracow.

tech approaches with traditional crafts. In the studio where we are talking now, you can see our computer-generated wicker "craftworks," the first samples used to test ideas for the pavilion's facade.

With the design for the Polish Embassy in Tokyo, on the other hand, I wanted to illustrate the Polish character with the help of materials used in the construction of

the Royal Castle on Wawel Hill: brick, sandstone, limestone. I didn't aim for a structure visually reflecting the historical forms of Polish architecture, which wouldn't have been understood in Tokyo, but for a transfer of tactile, sensory impressions that Japanese visitors to the embassy would be able to experience before visiting Poland.

Our latest project is also related to art and the Far East. The Europe—Far East Gallery is an annex to the Maggha Center that will allow this institution to expand its scope of activities.

TO SOMEONE SO SENSITIVE TO THE BEAUTY OF ARCHITECTURE, HOW IMPORTANT IS THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE AND WORK?

Cracow, to which almost all my life has been linked, is an extremely inspiring place on one hand, with its own character, *genius loci* and fantastic architecture, but on the other hand it is a difficult place for an architect due to the weight of its history and its uniform historical tissue.

WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS CHALLENGE? WHAT PROJECTS ARE YOU CURRENTLY DESIGNING IN YOUR CITY?

I always think about the surroundings first; they suggest solutions. From Japan, I brought the need to preserve the purity of a concept—the architectural message. I do my best to choose my materials carefully, as they suggest certain associations, and I compose a metaphorical message from them. I have designed two—as of yet still unfinished—churches in Cracow. In the one on Obrońców Krzyża Street (a very important, symbolic place for Cracovians), we applied an “elongated perspective” effect to preserve the traditional three-nave arrangement. The second one involves transferring the altar we designed on the Blonia Commons for Pope John Paul II's visit in 1999. When designing the building of the Papal Academy of Theology's library in Cracow, I took the greatest care to make sure that the form worked with the laws of physics, in order to facilitate, for instance, the convection of air inside, but also that the project coexisted harmoniously with the Vistula bank's open landscape and that the interior had a clear-cut and user-friendly arrangement.

The Wyspiański 2000 Pavilion on Grodzka Street has an interesting and long, eight-year history. Construction began this year, and it should be completed by the end of the year. This will be an exhibition pavilion and municipal information center featuring beautiful stained-glass windows designed by Stanisław Wyspiański. The facade will be made of specially designed bricks hanging vertically on steel cables that will rotate on their axes, allowing us to regulate the amount of light in the interior.

THE PAVILION'S LOCATION IS EXCELLENT—NEAR THE FRANCISCAN CHURCH, WHERE ONE CAN ADMIRE BOTH WYSPIAŃSKI'S MAGNIFICENT STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS AND ANOTHER GOTHIC CHURCH, OF THE DOMINICAN ORDER. HOW DID THIS INFLUENCE YOUR DESIGN?

The location influenced the decision we made to have the new building in dialogue with the Gothic style. We made references to old materials, but these were processed by modern technology. I think this will be an interesting building. I would call it experimental in formal terms and in terms of the materials we will use. The mobile brickwork structure of the facade creates a kind of “curtain” that in some cases uncovers the interior and in others—covers it up. I think architecture should give people hope that its modern language will allow for the creation of a poetic modern metaphor establishing a dialogue with a given place and its history.

IS THE MAIOPOLSKA GARDEN OF THE ARTS ON RAJSKA STREET SIMILARLY INSCRIBED IN THE TIGHT URBAN LANDSCAPE?

This project will be built in an excellent location, near busy Karmelicka Street, opposite the Provincial Library's new building. The whole street is to be redeveloped, with a green area added that will be great for strolling. The housing development in this part of Cracow is a bit “messy,” full of annexes, so our design matches this character, for instance in the way that the roof slopes. But this building is also meant to bring order to its surroundings by forming a clear-cut, concave

street corner. It closes the whole quarter with a huge letter L. I think the value of this design lies in the fact that the whole building looks as if it was always meant to stand there. In terms of materials, this is a modern building, with ceramic and glass facade. The investor is the Juliusz Słowacki Theater, and the building will house a mediatheque as well as conference, cinema and theater rooms.

WE ARE SAYING A LOT ABOUT WONDERFUL AND UNIQUE PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BUT WHAT ABOUT COMMERCIAL PROJECTS?

Jacek Ewy and I care most about such facilities, especially when they are related to art and culture. Of course no design studio can exist without commercial architecture. We design apartments, factories and warehouses, hotels and office buildings. Our first commercial project and the first of Cracow's international investments was the Ibis Hotel on Mogiłskie Traffic Circle; it allowed us to establish our own studio.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO WISH FOR CRACOW?

Of course good luck in getting good new architecture. Such architecture is being created, of course, but next to it there are many new buildings in Cracow that are poorly designed with a lack of regard for the backdrop of historical buildings. I would like investors to understand what is lost as a result of such projects, and I appeal to architects who take on projects in a historical context to notice its beauty and to avoid disturbing its harmony with their designs. Of course this is not easy, but Cracow is worth it.

Polish Pavilion at Expo 2005 World Exhibition - Krzysztof Ingarden and Aleksander Janicki

