



**"AWKWARD OBJECTS OF GENOCIDE"**

**CCP2**

**VERNACULAR ART ON THE HOLOCAUST  
IN AND BEYOND ETHNOGRAPHIC  
MUSEUMS**

**TRACES MID-TERM MEETING**

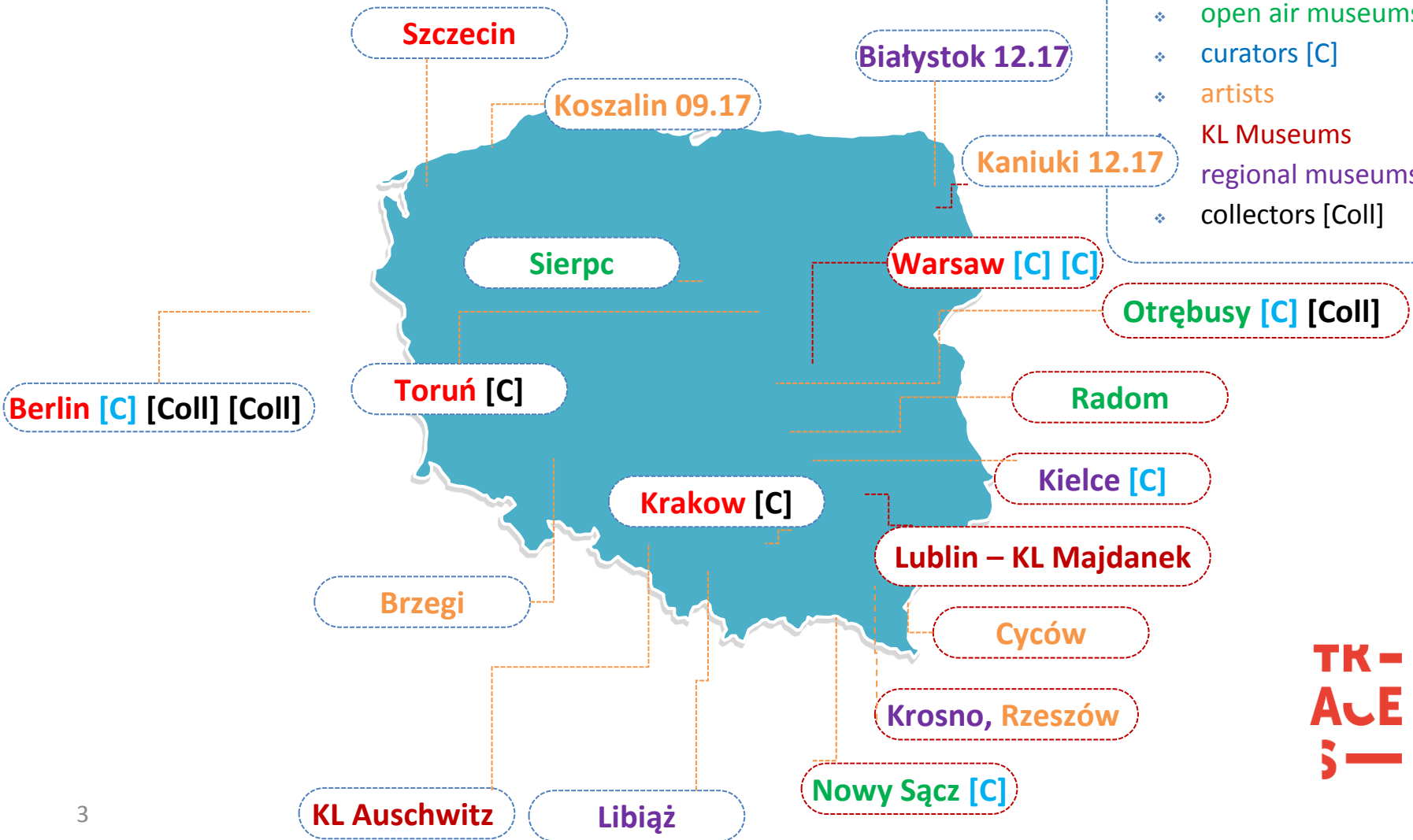
**BERLIN SEPTEMBER 25-29, 2017**

# **CCP2 MAIN ACTIVITIES MAY 2016 – SEPT 2017**

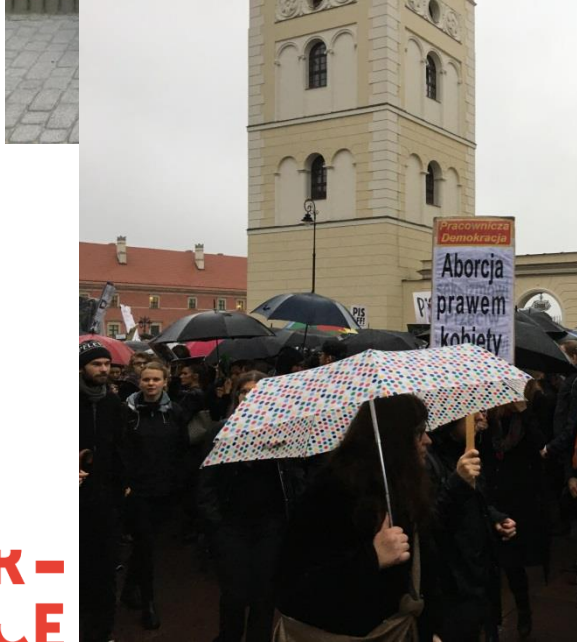
# Research

## Research

- ❖ ethnographic museums
- ❖ open air museums
- ❖ curators [C]
- ❖ artists
- ❖ KL Museums
- ❖ regional museums
- ❖ collectors [Coll]



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# Interviews

- research on the main German collections of Polish folk art: Hans-Joachim und Christina Orth, Hans-Joachim Schauß, Ludwig Zimmerer
- Interviews with collectors: Marian Pokropek, Louis Galinski, Walter Graetz
- meetings with curators of major exhibitions of Polish Folk Art → Jane Redlin (Berlin), Marian Pokropek (Otrębusy), Janina Skotnicka (Kielce), Jadwiga Migdał (Warszawa), Katarzyna Zimmerer (Krakow), Grażyna Olszewska (Toruń)
- meetings with selected artists who work with Holocaust themes: Jarosław Furgała (Brzegi), Bolesław Parasion (Cyców), Roman Śledź (Cyców-Malinówka), Jan Kowalczyk (Koszalin), Włodzimierz Naumiuk (Kaniuki)
- Meetings with folk art researchers: Ewa Klekot, Aleksander Jackowski, Antoni Kroh



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## „Pre-production”



- Intro workshop – October 2016  
„Polin Museum” GEOP grant
- Team building (junior researchers, curatorial collective, editors, graphic designers) → Ethnographic Museum in Krakow intervention – June 2017
- Book editing
- Establishing collaboration with art galleries
- Legal and copyright agreements
- Research in archives



- Shaping the background for the intervention



**Intro workshop – October  
2016 „Polin Museum” GEOP  
grant  
3-5.Oct 2017**



# Cross-pollinating projects



Traces WP1 (Europe) and Thinking through the Museum (Canada) members visit Krakow to workshop “My Museum, a Museum about Me” student intervention  
March 17th, 2017 workshop



# Ethnographic Museum in Krakow intervention – June 27th, 2017



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## Designing the Intervention

- Team meetings → script for the exhibition, first designs
- Designing „satelite” presentations + meetings
- Launch of curatorial dreams project for LCC (former Auschwitz collection)
- Conferences presentations: Fordham Univ., CLE Europe /Warsaw (keynote); IFPH Ravenna; FestivALT /Krakow; upcoming: Copenhagen (MSA), Krakow-Auschwitz (EAHS)



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# PRELIMINARY RESEARCH RESULTS

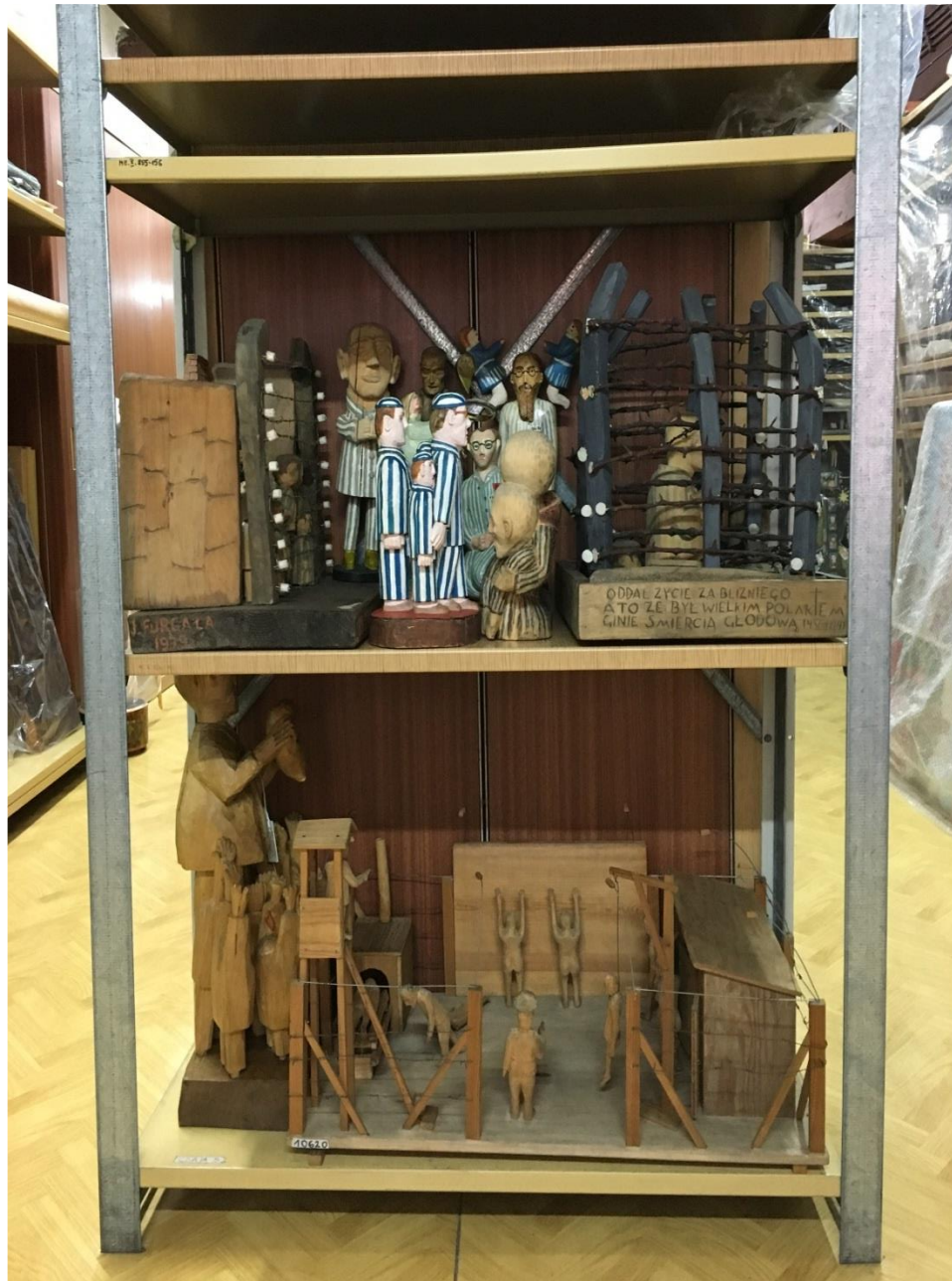
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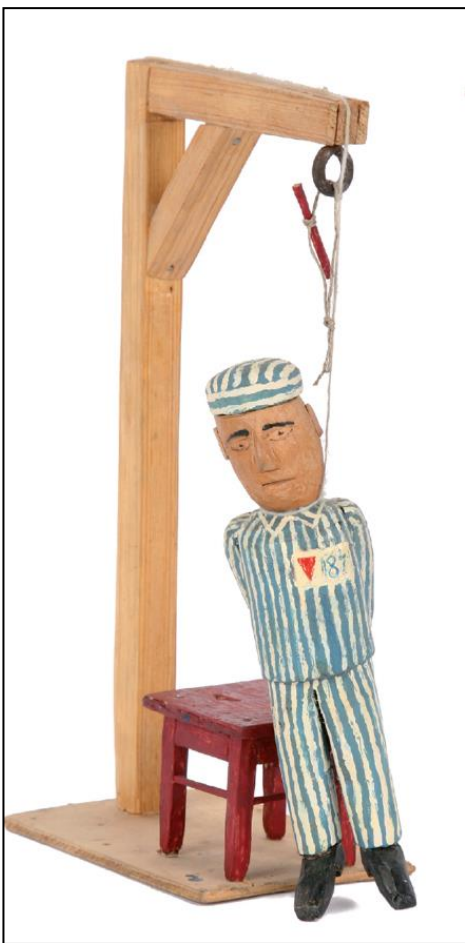


Ethnographic  
Museum in  
Toruń





Jan Malik  
date unknown,  
Polin Museum



Franciszek Skocz, ~1978  
Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum, Kraków



Władysław Chajec, 1967  
Rzeszów Ethnographic  
Museum





Zygmunt Skrętowicz, "The Gassing" from „Auschwitz” cycle, 1963, State Ethnographic Museum, Warsaw



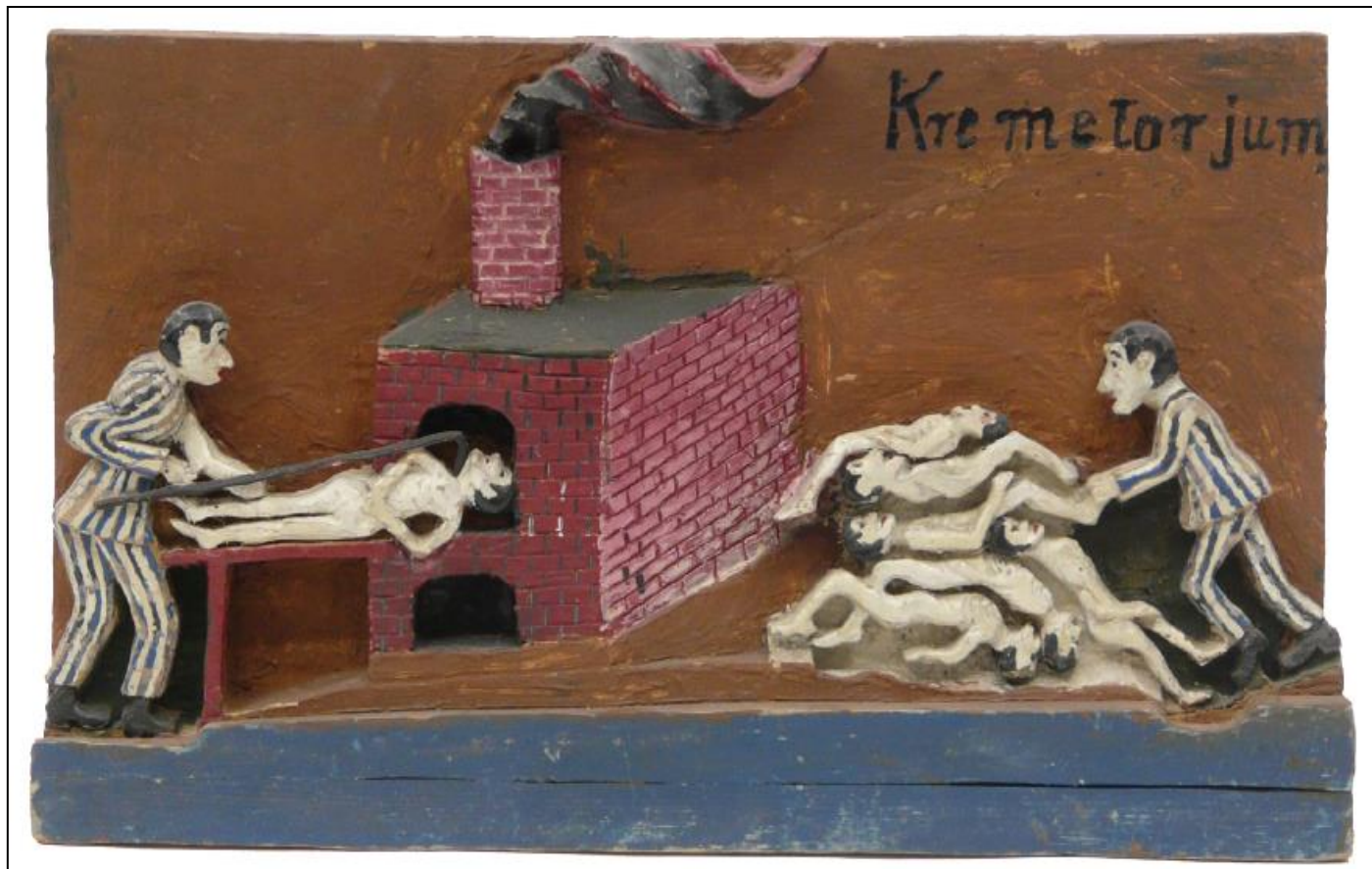
“Corpse carrier (“truposznicza”) or auto from Treblinka”

Franciszek Wacek, 1967

State Ethnographic Museum, Warsaw

Mieczysław Stobierski , ca. 1950-51, A Car with prisoners, Auschwitz  
–Birkenau Memorial and Museum





Władysław Chajec, 1965  
Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum,  
Kraków



Ethnographic Museum in Torun

- „constellations of the objects makes up of a bewildering variety of realtions”\*
- „the relation is itself like an artefact”\*
- the constellations of the objects are telling the story of memory interdependence: the story of „heritage communities”

\*Nicholas Thomas, *The return of curiosity. What museums are good for in the 21st century*, London 2016



# SHAPING MEMORY

## Mediatization



Executions of Kiev Jews by  
German army mobile  
killing units  
(Einsatzgruppen) near  
Ivanograd, Ukraine, 1942

“New Transport, Auschwitz I”  
From “Oświęcim” (Auschwitz) cycle  
Zygmunt Skrętowicz, ~1963  
(State Ethnographic Museum, Warsaw)

Published Warsaw, 1959  
*1939-1945: We have not  
forgotten / Nous n'avons pas  
oublié / Wir haben es nicht  
vergessen*



Kazimierz Rozin, *Obóz koncentracyjny w Sobiborze* [Concentration Camp in Sobibor], 1974, National Museum of Kielce.

Left: front of painting  
 Right: reverse of artwork, with a clipping from an unidentified newspaper. The title reads: *Sobibor's Executioner's Lies*



## Christianisation



Jan Wojtarowicz,  
„Deutsche Fabriken,”  
1970, Folk Art Museum,  
Otrębusy.



Adam Zegadło, *Wspólna dola* [Shared Lot],  
1969, State Ethnographic Museum,  
Warsaw

## Collectors' influence

In a 2015 interview the artist explained, “I made this sculpture for Zimmerer. **He planted the topic in my mind.** He said: You **should create** a police officer at front, a German police officer. Jesus in the middle. And an SS man at the back. They lead Jesus away. The police officer should have Jesus tied to a rope, lead him on a rope. This means Jesus should be tied to a rope. So.”



Edmund Zieliński, Got mit uns [ca. 1970],  
Museum der Europäischen Kulturen in Berlin

**Ideologies: assumed  
iconography/topoi**



Władysław Chajec, *Walka z faszyzmem* [The Fight against Fascism], 1975, State Ethnographic Museum, Warsaw.

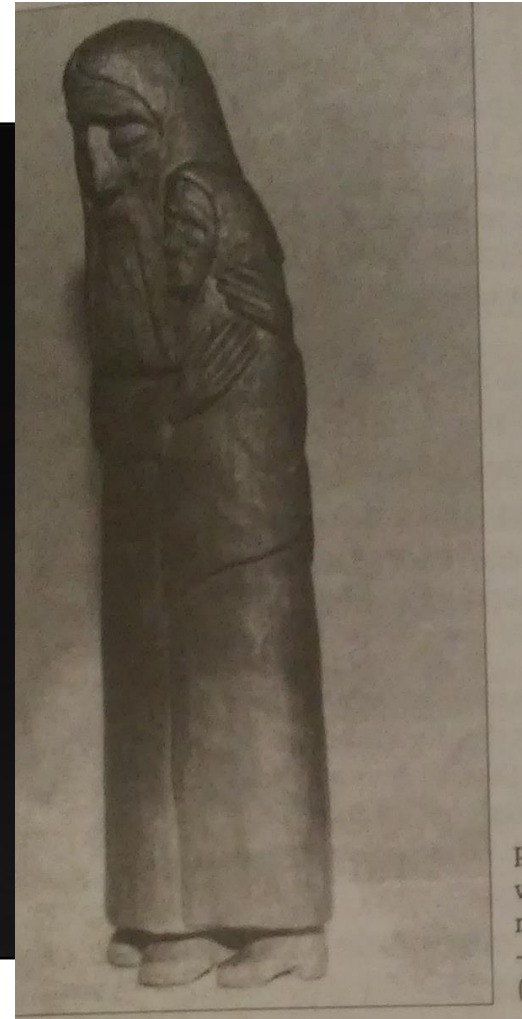


Contentious heritage as debatable one → place of unspeakable →  
affects' work in contentious heritage

# INTERPRETING AFFECTS

# Whose Affects?

Die erste Figur der Kollektion: Der Flickschuster Czerwiński bringt mit seiner „Letzten Umarmung zum Abschied“ - ein Jude mit seinem Kind vor der Einlieferung in die Gaskammer - die Solidarität des Armen mit den Opfern zum Ausdruck.

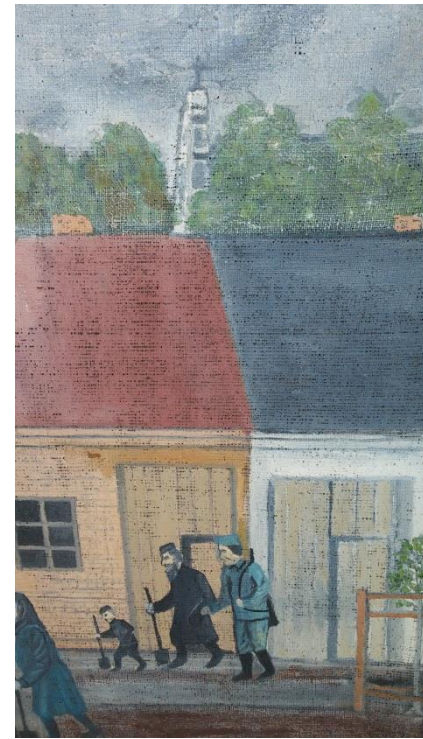


## Which Affects?



Adam Czarnecki b. 1915 -1997, Jews to work! [Żydy do roboty]  
National Museum, Kielce





Silvan Tomkins/Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick/Brian Massumi:  
Distress-Anguish, Interest-Excitement, Enjoyment-Joy, Surprise-  
Startle, Anger-Rage, Fear-Terror, Shame-Humiliation, Disgust,  
Dissmell

# „Traces”

Documentary by Andrzej Brzozowski (1963;1990)



- 04:20 They lived in that house over there. And there. Over there -- on that street over there I think that's where Gąska lived. Right there, where that woman is walking. And there, behind that gate, that was -- that was Giecel's house. I used to smoke cigarettes there. And there lived my --- um --- the carpenter, his name was Gruba Warga [Thick Lip], he had a thick lip and was called something like that - I can't even remember now. Anyways, Giecel owned a bakery, he was doing well, round-bellied and all that, but the rest of the people were poor, they lived in poverty. They were poor.
- 05:24 I once painted this **bleak, gloomy picture** about this **wrongness** that was done to them here. They came in the morning, nobody could have foreseen it. The dawn was breaking, it was still dark. And they took everyone. Nobody could have escaped. **It's been stuck in my head ever since.** And I wanted to -- I came to Pierzchnica and I just **felt unease**. That's when I painted that picture. It reminds me of them.
- 05:56 I painted the first picture in 1947. I had no paints back then. But I wanted to paint it the natural way, so I came up with the idea of using natural colors. I made them **myself out of ashes**, I made a red one and a grey one and a navy blue one. And that's how the picture was made.










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<b>MUZEUM ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE w KIELCACH</b> DZIAŁ ETNOGRAFII	<b>PRZEDMIOT</b>  <b>OBRAZ: WYGNANIE ŻYDÓW Z PIERZCHNICZY</b>	Powiat buski  Gmina Miejscowość Pierzchnica Województwo kieleckie Grupa etniczna (samookreślenie)
Nr inwentarza E.673	Nazwa gwarowa	Pochodzenie rodzime Pierzchnica
Przedmiot tworzy zespół z Nr Nr	Cechy charakterystyczne Na tle małej osady, równych i dokładnie namal. domków kilka scen ilustrujących wyniszczenie Żydów. Ujęcie tematu naturalistyczne. Wyczuć perspektywę. Postaci ludzkie mal. nieporadnie	Data i miejsce wykonania przedmiotu 1959, Pierzchnica
Materiał i barwy  Olej na płótnie Kolory: beż, żółty, brązowy, szary, czarny, niebieski, zielony.	Miejsce na fotografię lub rysunek	Imię, nazwisko, wiek i adres wykonawcy Adam Czarnecki, ur. 1918 Pierzchnica
Technika i narzędzia wykonywania  Olej na płótnie	027811	
Wymiary  127 x 76		
Stan zachowania, zalecenia konserw. Konserwacja Farba sucha	Karta Katalogu muzealiów etnograficznych.	Skala rys., Fotografował: J. Buczowski 1984r Rysował:



# **REPRESENTING DIFFICULT HERITAGE**

## Photographing Awkward Art



- Documentation of the folk sculptures related to the Shoah
- photograph them not only in a way typical for cataloging.



- setting up a macro lens closer to the victims and the perpetrators' figures



- emotions visible on faces that → reading feelings, sensitivities, and empathy (or lack of thereof) of those who create them.
- 
- Given the usually small size of figures or reliefs, a simple two, three, fourfold enlargement of their fragments reveals important details that are invisible or less noticeable to the average recipient of this sort of art.







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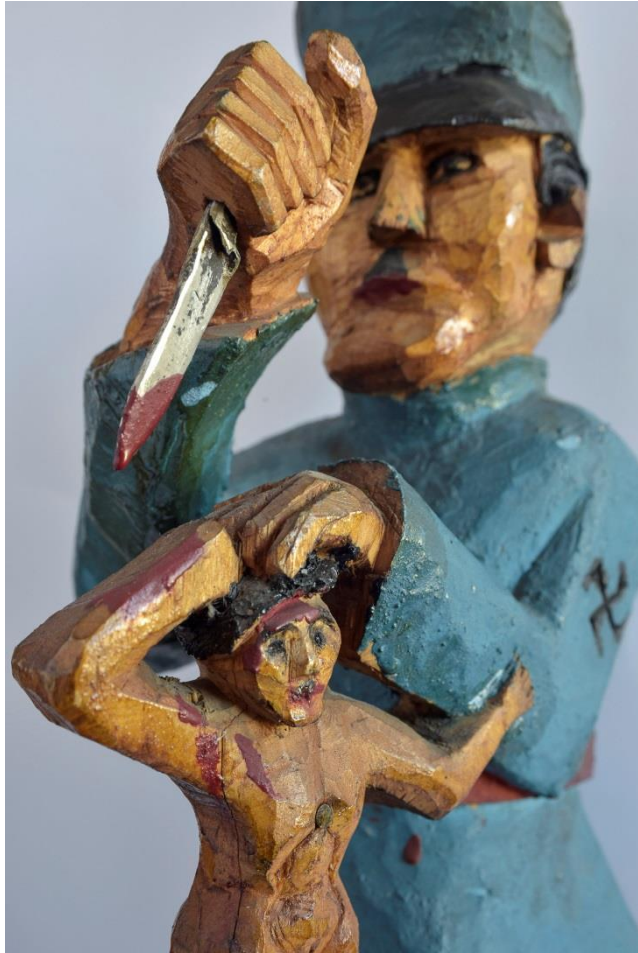


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**COLLABORATION:  
TOWARDS A “HERITAGE COMMUNITY”**



Working together in an international, multi-ethnic team allows us to pursue and bring to bear different concerns, bodies of knowledge, and social networks to illuminate -- as well as to re-animate -- the rich “heritage community” that is implicated by (and is needed to “fully” understand) these objects.

# "The social life of things" follow the objects...

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MUSEUM		PRZEDMIOT	POCHODZENIE
JASTRZĘBKOPOLENSKIE 00-000, Warszawa, ul. Krakowska 2 tel. 821 00 01, fax 821 00 00		Rzeźba w drewnie "Kspłna dola"	Kraj Polaka Grupa etnoma Województwo i powiat świętokrzyskie Gmina i wieś Krzyżka Producentem rodzimym J.w. Data i miejsce wykonania przedmiotu 2009, Warszawa, warsztat wytwórcy wyk. Adam Zagadło, 1969 r.
Nr inwentarza	Nr katalogu	Stwierdzenie	
SD06A			
Producent teoretyczny i Nr Nr		Charakterystyka	
Data i warunki przekazania przedmiotu dar Alinji Fiszman, USA Prot. KZ. 1/01, 9.04.2007 r.			
Materiał i technika wykonania drewno, farby olejne, pokosa, gwóźdź, wyk. przy pomocy noża i dłuta			
Wysokość i waga wys. 39 cm podstawa 33 x 12 x 2 cm			
Stan zachowania, restauracja i konserwacja b.dobry			



- Help tell wartime and postwar histories
- Complicate Polish and Jewish identities
- Reveal ongoing transnational connections

# **REFLEXIVE REEVALUATION**



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## Vernacular art on the Holocaust:

- retraced in museums' collections **FULL ACCESSIBILITY**
- in private ownership **LIMITED ACCESSIBILITY**
- artists' holdings **ALMOST NO ACCESS**
- re-categorized (**fringe/margin-→ center**)
- interpreted as ~~important~~ / → **telling/diagnostic** Holocaust art objects

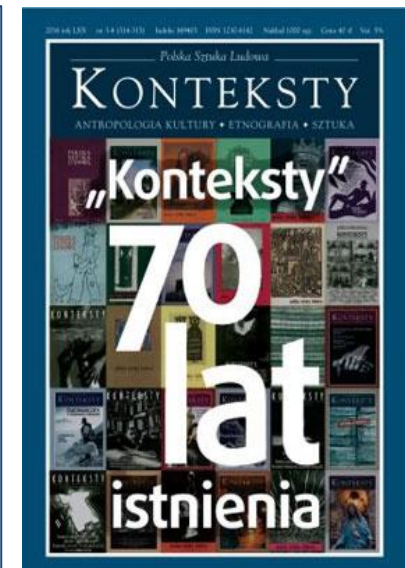
# METHODOLOGY



## FOLK ART // SZTUKA LUDOWA

„There is also an important detail concerning the adjective *ludowy*: in Polish the noun *lud* corresponds both to „the folk” (understood as peasantry), and to „the people”. The term Peoples Republic of Poland (*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*) contains exactly the same adjective form as is used in „folk art” (*sztuka ludowa*), and the name of the peasant party *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*.”

Quoted from the Ewa Klekot *The Seventh Life of Polish Folk Art and Craft* i „Etnoloska tribina” 33, vol. 40, 2010, pp. 71-85.



## Challenging traditional approaches:

- folk → vernacular CHALLENGES OF THE SCOPE OF THE MATERIAL → BORDERS NEEDED TO BE RE-INTRODUCED/PROBLEM: HOW TO OPEN CATEGORIES ON THE EXHIBITION?
- naïve, imagined, creative → informed, constructed, mediated

## Methods:

- Ethnography and anthropology
- + Holocaust studies, memory studies, affect studies, post-humanities
- art-based research, practice-based research
- Advanced curatorial practices (curatorial dreams; student's Curatorial Collective works, „hacking” of museums)

# OBJECTIVES



- reinforce the research on bystanders +
  - challenge practices of ethnographic museums +
  - investigate memory cultures +
  - read affects +
  - work collaboratively: practice self-reflexivity regarding own affects and perspectives; recognize the need/benefit of diverse research team (Polish, Jewish, German sensibilities)
- 
- How the European /global culture of memory of the Holocaust can be changed or challenged if we include into it the vernacular (uninstitutionalized, local) responses to the genocidal event?
- 
- Reflexive europeization observed through lenses of mnemonic processes: **local memories as European memories? Marginal memories as European memory?** Local memories vs European vs Global?

# CCP FUTURE MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- Legal and copyright agreements → multiple partners, challenging management
- Work with students: concepts for presenting Libiąż collection; open-source Pdf publication, in collaboration with the LCC – Autumn 2017-Autumn 2018 („curatorial dreams”) [education] CHALLENGES IN COOPERATION WITH A NON ACADEMIC AND NON-CURATORIAL PARTNER
- Curating final exhibition – Oct 2018
- Curating „satellite” events with participating galleries +Preparing public participatory programs around the research findings
- Curating travelling exhibition CHALLENGING LOGISTICS → LOOKING FOR A PARTNER
- 4. Editing final publication Problems in finding a publisher (open-source requirements)
- 5. Building up an on-line database alongside the exhibition (costs, need to apply for an external funding) Scale down!
- 6. Disseminating research results