

JOANNA ZABAWA-KRZYPKOWSKA, KINGA PALUS*

OPEN-AIR DRAWING AND PAINTING WORKSHOPS
CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE SUBJECT OF FREEHAND
DRAWING AT THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AT
THE SILESIAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

PLENERY RYSUNKOWO-MALARSKIE
PROWADZONE W RAMACH PRZEDMIOTU RYSUNEK
ODRĘCZNY NA WYDZIALE ARCHITEKTURY
POLITECHNIKI ŚLĄSKIEJ W GLIWICACH

Abstract

Over a decade of conducting the open-air drawing and painting workshops by the university staff from the Faculty of Architecture at the Silesian University of Technology repeatedly makes us aware that every day passing by the gothic churches, a city hall, medieval ramparts we get accustomed to them and do not always perceive their beauty, monumental character or historic details. Sometimes the beauty of the city is noticed by someone else – a tourist who admires the panorama visible from the distance or the towers of churches overlooking the city. Similarly the works of students performed over the years enable us to rediscover the unrepeatably charm of such places as Gliwice, Tarnowskie Góry, Chełmno or Zakopane. Those works catalogued in albums and presented at various exhibitions convince of peculiarity of the places presented using diverse artistic techniques and means.

Keywords: freehand drawing, open-air drawing-painting, perception and creation

Streszczenie

Kilkunastoletnie prowadzenie plenerów rysunkowo-malarskich przez kadre naukowo-dydaktyczną Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Śląskiej niejednokrotnie uświadamia nam, że przechodząc na co dzień obok gotyckich kościołów, ratusza, mijając średniowieczne mury obronne, przyzwyczajeni do ich widoku, nie zawsze dostrzegamy ich piękno, monumentalny charakter czy zabytkowe detale. Czasem piękno miasta zauważa ktoś inny – turysta zachwycający się widoczną z oddali panoramą czy górującymi ponad miastem wieżami budynków sakralnych. Podobnie prace studentów wykonywane na przestrzeni lat pozwalają na nowo odkryć niepowtarzalny urok miejsc takich jak Gliwice, Zabrze, Tarnowskie Góry, Chełmno czy Zakopane. Prace te katalogowane w albumach, prezentowane na licznych wystawach, przekonują o niezwykłości miejsc przedstawionych przy pomocy użycia różnorodnych technik i środków artystycznych.

Słowa kluczowe: rysunek odręczny, plener rysunkowo-malarski, postrzeganie a kreacja

* Ph.D. Arch. Joanna Zabawa-Krzypkowska, Ph.D. Arch. Kinga Palus, Department of Fine Arts and Design, Faculty of Architecture, Silesian University of Technology.

1. Topic of the classes: ‘Freehand drawing’ – description of the teaching process

Drawing plays a special part in the teaching process at the Faculty of Architecture. The drawing and painting classes constituted a complex open-air course carried out at the end of the 2nd semester. Those were open-air workshops conducted both on the spot and away organized home and abroad. Full-time students of the 1st year participated in the workshops. At the beginning these were the three-week open-air workshops organized in the cities with rich past, abounding in historical monuments, climatic backstreets, which were the source of inspiration for the artists, such as: Kraków, Wrocław, Bielsko-Biała, Cieszyn, Sandomierz. Since 1994 the open-air workshops have been organized in Silesia. The mentioned open-air workshops contributed to the popularization of the Silesian cities and the Silesian University of Technology.

The open-air workshops bore fruit in the form of albums: ‘Zabrze in drawings’, ‘Mysłowice in drawings’, ‘Katowice in drawings’, ‘Courthouses of the Gliwice region’, ‘Churches of the Gliwice diocese in drawings’, ‘Zakopane in drawings’, ‘Chełmno in drawings’. Within the Gliwice open-air workshop the drawing documentation presenting the Silesian University of Technology was created in the form of a portfolio entitled ‘The University of Technology in drawings’.

Within the consecutive years the students immortalized the architectural monuments of Gliwice, Zabrze, Myslowice, Katowice, Rybnik, Tarnowskie Góry, Pławniowice. The following open-air workshops were devoted to the buildings of the Silesian University of Technology, the Auto-Robot Zone and also to the sacred and postindustrial architecture. Exhibitions were the culmination of the creative work, during which the students presented their works. It constituted an element of the confrontation method (comparisons, ability to refute charges) in the field of creative activity of novice artists against the authors of works originated in their own university or the other national or foreign institutions. The ability to present a drawing or a painting work and to display it during a student exhibition enriches the whole teaching cycle. Possibility of presenting the student creative work in public is an excellent school of independence for students.

1.1. Organization of training

The open-air workshops were conducted in 15-person groups and supervised by the teaching staff from the Faculty of Architecture of the Silesian University of Technology. Each time an open air workshop would begin with a short discussion on the topic of a work of art. The pass mark given at the end of the training course was based on the review of a portfolio with a set of the outdoor works of art made in the format of 100 × 70 cm and the sketches, which preceded the works, and which were made in formats A4 or A3.

2. The aim of the classes

The aim of the training was to develop artistic skills and the perception of relationships among the spatial elements.

The aim of training was to:

- consider the mutual relation between the perception and creation of composition skills;
- trigger creativity, train spatial imagination, artistic sensitivity and the sense of: proportion in composing the drawing plane in accordance with the principles of perspective, chiaroscuro, texture and colour, spatial context;
- develop the skills of creative thinking through drawing, become sensitive to the value and colour as elements which shape and enrich the spatial architectural form;
- shape personality of a future architect through the possibility of free, creative and original expression;
- make a series of works of art concerning the study of form and spatial arrangements from life in a certain cultural environment and improvement of the student's artistic technique;
- acquaint students with shaping the relationship between the architecture and nature in the scale of a building and the urban space;
- learn the methods of work from the stage of the analysis of the context and define the idea of the rough drawing through making the work of art up to the stage of presenting it on an exhibition.

The scope of a student's work embraced the topics which took into account the diversity of the scale, forms and materials creating specific spatial arrangements (architectural details and forms, urban interiors, elements of plants, a study of trees and landscape, etc.) starting with uncomplicated solutions and gradually passing on to the more complex ones.

3. Selected examples of the open-air drawing and painting workshops conducted within the framework of students' training

3.1. Chełmno

The city of Chełmno has been the source of artistic inspiration since the dawn of time. The First All-Poland Open-Air Workshops for the Students of Architecture were initiated in July 2004 under the auspices of the authorities of Chełmno; the Department of Education, Culture and Promotion of the City of Chełmno. It was intended as the invitation for young artists to 'creatively explore the Polish Carcassonne' with a sketchpad [1].

The crowning achievement of the open-air workshops was an exhibition of the most interesting drawings and paintings. Until now Chełmno has hosted the training for the students from the Cracow, Radom and Lwów Universities of Technology, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, School of Economics in Bydgoszcz and the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin. In 2014 the Open-air Workshops were already organized for the tenth time. On behalf of the Faculty of Architecture in the Silesian University of Technology the academic tutelage was provided by Jacek Żurkowski, PhD, DSc, Arts, Beata Kucharczyk-Brus, PhD, DSc, Arch., Associate Professor in the Silesian University of Technology, and Kinga Palus, PhD, Arch.

3.2. Zakopane

Students of the 1st Year of the Faculty of Architecture at the Silesian University of Technology underwent a drawing training in Zakopane within the period of 1.07–14.07.2003. It was the first open-air workshop which took place in Zakopane thanks to the help of the painter Jacek Żurkowski, Ph.D. and the support of the Tatra Museum named after Dr Tytus Chalubiński in Zakopane. Wonderful mutual atmosphere during the first and the following open-air workshops, which were carried on until 2009, resulted in a high level of drawings contained on pages of the published albums embracing the catalogued works of students, and entitled: ‘Zakopane in drawings. Works of the students of the Faculty of Architecture at the Silesian University of Technology’, supervised by Kinga Palus, PhD, Arch., next ‘Impressions from Zakopane 2005’ supervised by Beata Komar PhD, Arch. and Kinga Palus, PhD, Arch. and ‘Open-air-Zakopane 2008’ supervised by Kinga Palus, PhD, Arch.

Each of the visited, drawn or painted places had its own unique charm reflected in the urban arrangement, architecture of buildings or in a detail. In this abundance of stimuli, everyone could find what was interesting in his individual, artistic quest, taking suitable composition, perspective and chiaroscuro into account. Diversity of sensations and the way of experiencing them, many times made students realize how differently they perceive surroundings. Not everyone possessed synthetic look thanks to which the idea for a painting originated in the admiration. The works that were created were inspired by a detail such as an architectural element or an elusive situation. A lot of participants treated those outdoor workshops as a possibility to search for originality through the willingness to work out their own individual style on the basis of established principles. It should be emphasized that many a time the works were distinguished by high technical and artistic level based on the insight of observation and finding the aim of the drawing.

3.3. Zabrze

The first after the open-air workshop catalogue which was created, was the publication entitled ‘Zabrze in drawings’. The initiator of the album release was the then Director of the Group of the Plastic Arts Prof Stanisław Słodowy. ‘Zabrze in drawings’, edited by: Stanisław Słodowy, Wojciech Słodowy, Adam Styrylski, Joanna Zabawa-Krzypkowska), Zabrze 1996.

That album was the result of a 14-day open-air workshop in Zabrze. The city proved to be an interesting cognitive and drawing area for young graphic artists. They were drawing the residential architecture from the turn of the centuries and the interwar period, sacred architecture and also the 19th century industrial architecture. In the past Zabrze was a cluster of villages. In the middle of the 19th century the country landscape changed into the industrial one. Mines, ironworks and factories of various branches of industry were built, such as: brickyards, glass-works, steelworks, a rolling mill, a coking plant and factories of the food industry, like a grain mill or a brewery. Simultaneously with the construction of the industrial plants the settlements of the working class houses were built, which later became the monuments of architecture often under the protection of the conservation officer.

3.4. Postindustrial Zabrze

The postindustrial plants of the city of Zabrze were the subject of the drawing training which took place in July 2004. Joanna Zabawa-Krzyzkowska PhD, Arch., Beata Komar PhD, Arch. and Grażyna Lasek PhD, Arch. took factual tutelage of the students. The purpose of work was to immortalize objects which were slowly falling to oblivion, becoming the history and deteriorating in full view of the city dwellers. The students were drawing pit-shafts, steam engines, production halls, pitheads, etc. While drawing they discovered uniqueness and beauty of postindustrial architecture. Such facilities were immortalized in those drawings: the mines ‘Ludwik’, ‘Luiza’, ‘Guido’ and ‘Mikulczyce’, the Zabrze steelworks, water towers, the Maciej pit-shafts in Maciejowo, the heat and power station as well as working class housing estates. In order to enable the students of the Faculty of Architecture to have access to particular monuments of architecture, the cooperation with the institutions owning and using these objects was established. The students had the opportunity to learn about the monuments of architecture, which were not accessible to the public, such as postindustrial buildings.

3.5. Churches of the Gliwice Diocese

In 2001 a 14-day open-air workshops took place, the topic of which was the churches of the Gliwice Diocese. The culmination thereof was the exhibition of the students’ works in Post-Cistercian Abbey and Church in Rudy and the publication of picture albums with the students’ works entitled ‘Churches of Gliwice Diocese in drawings’ (edited by: Stanisław Słodowy, Beata Komar, Beata Kucharczyk-Brus, Joanna Zabawa-Krzyzkowska, the Formation and Educational Centre of Gliwice Diocese in Rudy, Gliwice-Rudy 2002). The students drew, among other things, one of the most precious monuments of architecture in the Gliwice Diocese, namely the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Rudy as well as buildings of the Post-Cistercian Abbey and Church in Rudy. The workshops took place under the tutelage of Joanna Zabawa-Krzyzkowska PhD, Arch., Beata Komar PhD, Arch., Beata Kucharczyk-Brus PhD, Arch.

4. Selected examples of students’ open-air workshop works – summary

The whole process of creation, making choices, analysing, the choice of perspective, a frame, exhibiting some of the elements, omitting others was a unique exercise for every graphic artists. The process of creating was combined with the process of learning, which was an additional chief asset of those encounters with architecture. Learning the architecture that we can see gives us the opportunity to feel the scale, context and atmosphere, which are the inherent parts of a given object or place. As Maria Misiągiewicz writes: “Grasping a real image in a drawing is the effect of a spontaneous play of senses and conscious searching as well as insightful tracking down. The degree of faithfulness of the record in relation to the original form suits the category of the “reproductive” drawing: impression, cataloguing, reconstruction, analysis’. ‘Reproduction’ is not a mirror image of the real world, but a creative presentation, interpretative ‘reproduction’ [3].

However, in spite of the development of computer techniques freehand drawing still remains a convenient design tool, means of visual communication, recording of the surroundings or our own idea, multi-planes means of expression in the search of a new form making it possible to develop our sensitivity.

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