

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Narracje – Installations and Interventions in Public Space  
Długie Ogrody / Long Gardens, Gdańsk

14 -17 November 2013

## Unearthing Delights / Odkrywanie zachwyca

Markets, Memories and Meetings / Targowiska, spotkania, wspomnienia

Rob Garrett, Curator



*Długie Ogrody (1599) with the Main Town and Motława to the left; Granary Island in the centre; the long gardens in the centre-right; and St Barbara's Church and a 16<sup>th</sup> century palace in the lower right (from the 1599 "Stockholm view" plan of Gdańsk held in the Royal War Archive, Stockholm).*



*Present-day view of the former location of the same long gardens area as above; looking towards the Main Town, with St Barbara's visible through the trees (centre); the former church hospital building (left); remnants of a 16<sup>th</sup> century palace arched brick wall (left) and the traces of the palace's Baroque gardens in the form of a low geometric mound (to the right in the far distance behind the foreground trees. Photo by Rob Garrett, January 2013.*

"Unearthing Delights" responds to various aspects of the current status and past history of the Długie Ogrody / Long Gardens district selected for the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of "Narracje." Specifically the two words of the theme refer to the transformative re-engagement and wonder ("delights" as adverb)

that can result from uncovering past histories and spotlighting the potential of areas languishing from neglect. The curatorial theme will be further elaborated through the site-specific projects that are being commissioned, the selected video projections and the projects resulting from the Open Call to artists. The projects will express and reflect the historic and contemporary dynamics of Długie Ogrody.

The “Garden” and the “Market” were central to Długie Ogrody over many centuries and these have influenced my thinking. “Unearthing” acknowledges through its reference to tilling the earth, a particular generative and progressive aspect of the district’s past as a series of gardens that supplied the city from the 14<sup>th</sup> century at least; and through Gdańsk’s role in the grain trade, to the wheat bowls of Poland and the Ukraine that supplied Western Europe. “Unearthing” refers to the processes of discovery as dynamic; as activities generating knowledge, ideas and relationships.

Through the Narracje programme we hope to “unearth” or conjure up images suggestive for the exchanges, encounters, scents, sounds and other sensations of open markets in memory of the historic open market(s) that occupied Długie Ogrody for hundreds of years until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of these open spaces was adjacent to St Barbara’s Church which still stands on Długie Ogrody and it was a public place where the street was widened specifically so that people could gather. Equally, the Granary Island, with its 300 grain stores and numerous trading boats and people, constituted an important part of the territory’s history as a place of exchange. Broadly speaking, both trading and discursive marketplaces are important loci for encountering difference and for the mixing of people and ideas from different parts of the country and the globe. “Unearthing Delights” aims to (re-)ground visitors and Gdańsk residents alike in the delights of new and unusual encounters typical of a bustling open market.

The market is a key aspect of the curatorial theme. Markets are hubs of social, cultural and historic interaction as well as places of trade and exchange. I am interested in the ways that forms of public art (in this case temporary light-activated installations, performance, video, light projects, sounds and scents) can create moments of surprise, delight and challenge in public places where people from different parts of a city mix and mingle. The Narracje location in Długie Ogrody is both one of these places where people might expect to encounter the surprise of otherness; but it is also a neighbourhood where people who live here might expect that culture reflects their own values and stories in a more comforting, even homely way. This is the intriguing double dynamic in much public art that is deployed for place-making purposes (whether temporary or permanent); making on the one hand for surprising and challenging places; and other making more homely and attractive places for those who live there.

How we engage with and think about the territory and our situation in it, whether as visitor, worker or resident, is not an entirely private matter. Among the various propositions of “Unearthing Delights” we hold that the best public art specifically seeks to create a dialogue between private experience and public action; between art appreciation and the “becoming public” of cultural citizenship. In Narracje 2013 these forces will be energised through the projects and the publication of information about the current situation of the district, people’s past activities in the territory and various aspirations for a transformative future.

*By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Długie Ogrody was only partially occupied and developed; and to this day it has remained as a district without name, without intensive development, without a unified character. For the past 200 years it has constituted an urban-spatial and psycho-geographic field of possibilities. It does not impose a single style, or any particular aesthetic upon visitors. It is attractive for our Narracje project specifically because it is “un-made.” It is the perfect meeting place for things strangely familiar and uncommonly strange.*

*The projects commissioned for the 2013 programme will address the tension between otherness and homeliness, and between publicness and privacy; and each work, in its own way, will chart a path that softens the anonymity of the public realm with intimate gestures about small places and individual people, local sites and personal relationships, while also pointing to larger issues around trade and exchange and the condition of being on display.*

“Unearthing Delights” seeks to help people to re-discover the district and perhaps re-value its status as a fragmented and un-made public domain. The programme aims to shed some light on aspects of the district’s past, particularly the series of long gardens, the open market and its history as a place slightly to the side of “main society” and yet as a place of trade, exchange and dialogue; coupled with its present situation as a neglected area of Gdańsk. “Unearthing Delights” will focus on the district of the Long Gardens as it is rather than seek to redeem or recuperate it. Nevertheless, some sort of transformation is anticipated. What we can especially hope for is the transformation of peoples’ imaginations; given that artists are specialists at uncovering and spotlighting neglected areas of life in ways that reveal their generative potential and thus humanise our predicament.

## The Długie Ogrody / Long Gardens territory of the 2013 programme



The Festival trail will commence at Instytut Kultury Miejskiej / City Culture Institute and then move to Gdańska Galeria Miejska / Gdańsk City Gallery (GGM2) before taking in Granary Island and Stągwie Mleczne.

It will then take in the area of the Marina, Ołowianka Island, Kanał na Stępcę, Pułkownika Jana Dziewanowskiego and parts of Długa Grobla before returning along Długie Ogrody via the park on Świętej Barbary.

## Długie Ogrody: A personal response

One of the principal reasons I am attracted to Długie Ogrody for the 2013 edition of Narracje is because of its neglected, or unloved, but precisely lovable character.

Let us imagine you have inherited some beautiful fabric from your great grandmother. Now let us imagine that this fabric was made into a beautiful dress by your mother when she was a young woman; and now, partly because you value recycling and reusing things, and because you like used clothes, you are wearing this dress now. Let us imagine the fabric is very beautiful; but now it is also very worn and in places almost threadbare and fragile. Therefore you only wear it occasionally. You wear it because it brings you close to your great grandmother and to your mother in her youth. Let us also imagine that there are not even any photos or letters from your great grandmother, only this fabric and the stories and memories of your family; and perhaps also, the genetic traces of your great grandmother that you possess, in the way you gesture with your hands, the way you stand, the quality of your voice.

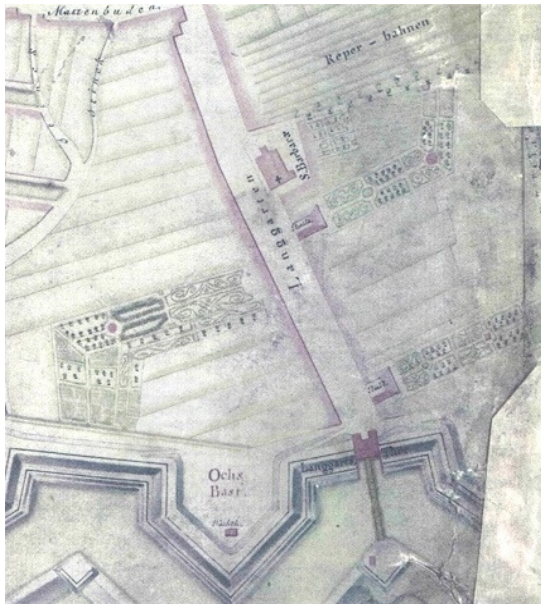
This is how I feel about the district which doesn’t even really have an official name. It is a district which is a mixture of old and new and it is full of holes, ruins and wasteland. Neglected and marginal;



perhaps it is unloved by many; but it is also home to many people, some of whom are elderly and poor and others who are raising young families.



Burnt-out granaries (ca. 15<sup>th</sup> century), more recently part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century butchery, on Na Stępcie (left); and the residential neighbourhood of Pułkownika Jana Dziewanowskiego (right). Photos by Rob Garrett, January 2013.



Długie Ogrody in 1792, the Schmidt plan (detail, left) showing St Barbara's church and small palaces with their long gardens either side of Długie Ogrody ("Langgarten"); and a detail of a 1908 Gdańsk city plan showing the Długie Ogrody district (original in the Gdańsk University of Technology).