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## Garden Festivals in Bolestraszyce

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### Abstract

In the previous year, the 7<sup>th</sup> Garden Festival in Bolestraszyce was already held. It is an annual event that brings together Polish garden enthusiasts and creators, teachers and young landscape architecture adepts, and even primary school representatives. Festivals have been organized since 2011 by the Arboretum and the Department of Physiography in Bolestraszyce, near Przemyśl. It has been initiated thanks to the funding from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The festival is surrounded by the substantive care of the Landscape Architecture Association, the Association of Polish Landscape Architects, the Polish Nurserymen Association and the Polish Dendrological Society.

Show gardens are an unusual variety of gardens – they serve to present the latest trends in the art of space arrangement and present, popularize new plant varieties. In recent years, they have also gained a wider educational function, often referring to environmental problems or various socio-cultural issues.

**Keywords:** *show gardens, educational gardens, theme gardens, education in landscape architecture*

### The beginnings of the festival

*Festival gardens, built to be watched and admired are not just decoration (...). Transmission of the content seems to be more important here than formal or decorative values. The show garden becomes a content not a decoration.*

[Myszka-Stapór 2011: 275]

*The Garden Festival in Bolestraszyce near Przemyśl is a testing ground that allows you to see how new forms of contemporary art are applied to garden art.*

[Rylke & Piórecki 2014: 2]

*Here the question arises as to what the show gardens really are. Are they gardens in the literal sense or are they still an exhibition space?*

[Krug 2011: 281]

The creation of a garden festival in Bolestraszyce can be associated with the growing interest in this type of events in Europe and around the world. The most famous festivals include the London Chelsea Flower Show, the French Festival International des Jardins in Chaumont-sur-Loire and the German BUGA (Bundesgartenschau). Every year, they attract more and more visitors, professionals and amateurs looking for inspiration or just ordinary people who want to spend time in a beautiful and interesting environment.

The Arboretum is located in Bolestraszyce, 9 km from Przemyśl (Podkarpackie province). It was established in 1975, when the authorities of the Przemyśl powiat gave the Department of Physiography and the Arboretum of the Society of Friends of Sciences in Przemyśl the former property of Piotr Michałowski, a Polish painter of the Romantic era [page 1].

The first Garden Festival in Bolestraszyce was organized in December 2010. The creators of the festival's formula to make it a *cyclical event on which garden artists from our part of Europe will be presenting* were professors of Landscape Architecture: Jan Rylke (SGGW), Aleksander Böhm (Cracow University of Technology) and Jan Stanisław Wojciechowski (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University). The Arboretum in Bolestraszyce near Przemyśl has been the host of this event.

The official opening of the First Festival took place on June 26, 2011. Visitors could admire 10 show gardens [Myszka-Stąpór 2011: 266]. The sign of the festival was a gardener who greets guests at the main gate by [Rylke 2011: 282-283].

Tab. 1. Gardens of the first edition of the Festival [based on Myszka-Stąpór 2011: 265-275, Rylke 2011: 282-312]

Name	Authors
Garden sphere	Zielony Zakątek Landscape Architecture Studio J. Korczak-Wodnicka z zespołem: A. Chadaj; A. Galińska; J. Karaś.
Garden of held moments	M. Skibińska, A. Wiktorko
Willows and water	S. Dziubak; Arboretum Bolestraszyce
Impressions with a country garden in the background	I. Pełczyńska – IPROJEKT
Garden of light	A. Długozima, J. T. Królikowski, D. Krug, B. Rothimel, A. Różańska, M. Skrobot, T. Turczynowicz, K. Wlazło
Garden of meanings and garden of the sea	M. Dębowska, K. Grygoriew, I. Myszka-Stąpór, J. Rylke, A. Wilczyńska
Garden of people and animals	I. Dymitryszyn, A. Jójczyk, M. Dymitryszyn, M. Gałek

Garden of elements ... from air, hunger, fire and war...	B. J. Gawryszewska, J. Rylke, J. Skalski
Minimalist water garden	M. Furtak, W. Kosiński, P. Kowalski, M. Zieliński
Garden of emotions	M. Fryz, K. Findysz, S. Curyło, E. Babiarz, K. Płachta, A. Mucha, M. Mucha, A. Rusztowicz, A. Mech, J. Warchoń, P. Paździor.

The official opening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Garden Festival took place on June 30, 2012. The opening was accompanied by a concert by the Przemysł String Quartet. At the Festival, 16 gardens were presented (6 improved projects from the previous edition and 10 new compositions) and spatial installations 'Space Painting' prepared by students of Interior Design of the Academy of Fine Arts Władysław Strzemiński in Łódź.

Tab. 2. New compositions of the second edition of the festival [based on Catalog 2012, Catalog 2013: 15]

Name	Authors
Reincarnation	N. Piórecki, Arboretum and the Department of Physiography in Boleszycy
Hydrosphere	Zielony Zakątek Landscape Architecture Studio J. Korczak-Wodnicka with a team: J. Wilkowska, R. Ejsmont, G. Chmielewski
Geometry and color in the garden	Students and teachers of K. K. Baczyński Complex of Schools of Economics in Przemysł
Garden I	M. Sak, Interior Design of the Academy of Fine Arts Władysław Strzemiński in Łódź
Podkarpacie - the land of abundance	J. Skalski, Department of Landscape Art, Warsaw Agricultural University; S. Dziubak, Tarnobrzeg Culture House
Willows and water	S. Dziubak, Arboretum Boleszycy, Tarnobrzeg Culture House
A heavenly corner	Students of Landscape Architecture from the State Higher Vocational School in Wałbrzych
Musical post-catastrophic garden	Parque-no Collective: K. Herman, J. Słomkowski, M. Łepkowski
Garden of transformation	W. Mityk, W. Selwa, M. Teler, A. Tomczyk, M. Fryz, A. Koprowska, J. Rzepka, N. Cisek, D. Makarska, K. Bęben, E. Barzyk, J. Zgnilec. Projekt supervisor: A. Gajdek, N. Kochańska. Sponsors: University of Rzeszów. Faculty of Biology and Agriculture, POLAN – D. Pilecka, Fruit and Orchard Nursery garden – G.& S Tomaka, Agricultural farm – E. & J. Płachta, GREEN DECO - M. Wijas, Florist „Flores” Sokółów Małopolski.
Garden of Calvary	B. J. Gawryszewska, I. Mysza-Stąpór. Department of Landscape Art, Warsaw Agricultural University

### Other festivals

The opening of the III Garden Festival took place on June 29, 2013. At that time 21 gardens were presented referring to the idea of Pop art. During the Festival in the Garden of Cavalry an artistic action took place: *Weeding art that is the art of weeding*, aimed at drawing attention to the need for continuous work on the garden, constant creation of its look and decision to remove specific plants. *Garden art combines all the currents of art. In addition to the title Pop art, knitting art, paving*

*art we still have weeding art. Supported by quotations from the Gospel, the art of weeding brought to the Garden of Calvary, besides the liturgical theme, an eschatological thread – the Last Judgment – In this case for parts of plants* [Catalog 2013: 1-3]. The festival was accompanied by a scientific conference on the meaning of show gardens.

Among the newly-created gardens can be distinguished: Country Garden, Autumn and Winter Garden, the title Pop Art Garden or joke, Water Dream, Custom Garden, Cottage with Garden, Eye to Sky, Garden of Sculptures, Let's talk about art, Lithosphere [Catalog 2013].

In 2014, during the 4<sup>th</sup> Festival, the visitors' eyes were already enjoyed by 27 show gardens. Many new arrangements, among others Garden Out of the Earth, Garden of Happiness, Block, Greed, Praise of slowness, Garden Protest – PRICE 100%, Garden? Strange? were developed. The festival was accompanied by a conference titled: Project – rhythms of nature [Rylke and Piórecki 2014].

During the 5<sup>th</sup> Festival among new gardens and installations there were such works as: Guardian – centurion determinant of the place, Romanticism (fig. 1), Little nature, Floral sundial, Protest Garden II – Tire vulcanization 150 m, or Firewood [Rylke & Piórecki 2015].



Fig. 1. Garden of Romanticism, referring to literature from the Romantic period, especially the works of A. Mickiewicz. Photo by N. Piórecki, 2015. Courtesy of Arboretum and Institute of Physiography in Bolestraszyce

Ryc. 1. Ogród Romantyzm, odwołujący się do literatury z okresu romantyzmu, szczególnie twórczości A. Mickiewicza. Fot. N. Piórecki, 2015. Dzięki uprzejmości Arboretum i Zakładu Fizjografii w Bolestraszytach

The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> Garden Festival took place on June 25, 2016. At that time 30 gardens were presented, as in previous years, some new ones, and some

improved and updated ones. Among them were: Orange Garden, Green School, Pantheon of Forgotten Polish Flowers, Białogłowy, Trials of Survival in Art / Wyspa Lesbos, Temple, Protest Garden III – 'CRIMES', TEMPLE..., Garden of Fractals, Round table.

On July 1, 2017, the 7<sup>th</sup> Garden Festival in Bolestraszyce was held. Within its framework, the arrangements prepared in previous years were presented, as well as new ones, including: Arboretum fables, 2030+ Municipal Garden of the Future, Tree of Life, Maidens, Garden 'Contrast', Creation of the Temple, Roses.

The eighth edition was canceled due to the construction investments carried out at the Arboretum.

### **Show gardens prepared by the students of Landscape Architecture, University of Rzeszów**

The idea of organizing Garden Festivals received a positive reception not only among landscape architects – both academic staff and practitioners, but also among the local community. The festivals are regularly attended by young people from nearby schools, such as students from the School Complex in Wyszatyce or from the Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński School of Economics in Przemyśl.

In 2011, during the first Festival, students of Landscape Architecture at the University of Rzeszów presented the 'Garden of Emotions'. The authors, through the composition of the garden and the forms and colors used, drew attention to the impact of human surroundings on emotions. The garden created in over 70% of waste, referred to organic art. It was a topic of discussion on the contemporary environment of life, which contaminated by consumerism, becomes more and more polluted and unfriendly to humans [Rylke 2011: 309-312].

In 2012, as part of the second Garden Festival, the students and the staff of Landscape Architecture, University of Rzeszów prepared the composition 'Garden of Transformation'. The demonstration garden was to pay attention to ecological problems, especially to the extinction of species and the role of insects in the natural environment, and to encourage the use of recycled materials. *The garden was created mainly for the smallest organisms – insects, whose number decreases every year due to pollution of the environment and genetically modified food. We create asylum and a cozy home for them. We encourage everyone to create space for insects in their surroundings. Visitors can take a close look at the insects, see the metal-plastic image of insects, and most importantly 'turn into' an insect thanks to the characteristic seats and tunnels we introduce, which are houses for insects on an enlarged scale.*

This garden was supposed to be a pretext for reflection on the meaning of life and time, on transience, over a moment that can be remembered and be engraved in the heart. *We hope that visitors to the garden will undergo a transformation and appreciate insects, extremely important for both the environment and our private gardens...* [Arboretum 2012: 9-10].

For the III edition of the Festival, the garden from 2012 was completed and transformed, and titled the 'Garden of Transformation'. The composition was based on the division into three zones: entrance, insects and transformations. In the garden there are both useful and ornamental plants, and of course, houses for insects: *On our scale, it is a small garden. In the scale of insects that are to be inhabitants here, it is a city...* [Arboretum 2013: 24-26].

As part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Garden Festival, students of Landscape Architecture working at Perspektywa Student Science Club (supervised by Agata Tekiela, PhD) under the substantive care of the employees of the Landscape Architecture Department; they created the Garden of Happiness (fig. 2). The composition was simple but also very eloquent – it resembled a four-leaved clover. Each of the 4 beds was filled with white clover, the borders were planted with *Lobularia maritima*. In contrast, the margins are planted with purple foliage. *Garden of happiness is a magical place. Anyone who is looking for happiness can find it. We invite visitors to the garden (...) to look for and take with them the happiness in the form of a four-leaf clover. The garden was intended to direct the attention of visitors to the quality of space that surrounds us and its impact on our well-being* [Rylke & Piórecki 2014: 20]. In 2015, the concept of 'Garden of Happiness' was supplemented and developed [Rylke & Piórecki 2015:23].



Fig. 2 Garden of Happiness. Photo by Marcin Wnęk. Bolestraszyce, 2015  
Ryc. 2 Ogród Szczęścia. Fot. Marcin Wnęk. Bolestraszyce, 2015

For the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Festival, students of Landscape Architecture at the University of Rzeszów (including members of Perspektywa Student Science Club) and members of the Podkarpackie Association of Polish Landscape Architects (SPAK) prepared a demonstration project entitled: 'Garden of Fractals' (fig. 3).

This seemingly pure game of forms, however, has a deep symbolic dimension. As the authors themselves say: *It is a garden consisting of repetitive objects – fractals. It refers not only to all beings at the molecular level. It symbolizes the perfect order of things, an infinity composed of the same and yet different elements. It is a set of solids "developed" around the place-center, which we can consider as the center of the world. Such a hierarchy of elements is present in every cell of all living organisms. Thus, this highly geometric, architectural garden becomes the praise of life in its every form and at every level of organization.*





Fig. 3 Garden of Fractals. Left above: Vision... (by A. Wójcik-Popek), right above: Creating..., left down: Weaving..., right down: Ready! Photo by A. Wójcik-Popek, Bolestraszyce, 2016

Ryc. 3 Ogród Fraktali. Od góry od lewej: Wizja... (A. Wójcik-Popek) Tworzenie..., lewy dolny: Plecenie..., prawy dolny: Gotowi! Fot. A. Wójcik-Popek, Bolestraszyce, 2016

The Garden of Fractals was created, or actually woven in one day. It is a microcosmos that everyone can interpret in their own way... And the key to understanding everything becomes ... mathematics.

In 2017, Landscape Architecture students together with representatives of the SPAK branch of the Podkarpackie region prepared a show garden entitled 'Tree of Life'. It is also a garden with a deep symbolic meaning, referring to various beliefs, myths and, above all, to the paradise Garden of Eden. In the center of the garden an apple tree is planted, surrounded by a gravel path with roots patterned with stones. The composition is supplemented by an oat field. With this project, the authors wanted to provoke discussion on *the role of trees in contemporary culture, where they seem to be an increasingly undesirable element of the landscape ... and to reflect on the role of roots in our lives.*

In 2018, students from SKN Landscapes under the supervision of Agnieszka Wójcik-Popek M.Sc. Eng. prepared an uncompleted project entitled 'The Garden of the Night', aimed at directing attention to the problem of light pollution.



Fig. 4 Show Garden 'Tree of Life': Left and right above: First design and improved version (students – group work), left down: Trying out (photo by A. Wójcik-Popek, Rzeszów 2017), right down: Finished garden. Photo by M. Wnęk. Bolestraszyce 2017

Ryc. 4 Ogród pokazowy "Drzewo Życia": Od góry od lewej: Pierwszy projekt i udoskonalona wersja (studenci – praca wspólna), lewy dolny: Próba (fot. A. Wójcik-Popek, Rzeszów 2017), prawy dolny: Gotowy ogród. Fot. M. Wnęk, Bolestraszyce 2017

## Conclusions

Show gardens are a special type of gardens. They are a temporary, short-lived form of exposure and expression. Sometimes they become an artistic manifesto or a record of the way of searching for beauty. Very often they refer to local traditions or current ecological or social problems [Komorowska 2009, Wójcik 2017, Wójcik-Popek 2018]. The educational aspect in show gardens is extremely important. However, it acquires a new dimension when students are involved in the process of creating a garden facility from the very beginning.

For young landscape architects, participation in the work on the concept of the garden, its symbolic and content layer becomes a particularly important complement to the skills acquired during the studies. Working together in a workshop style is the first serious project implementation for many. The practical dimension complements academic theoretical projects carried out during studies. It makes us 'start to measure forces for intentions'. It gives the opportunity to learn about the 'properties' of many materials and the requirements of particular plant species. And working together during the preparation of the garden you have planned before becomes not only a test of a character, but also great fun!

*Translation / tłumaczenie: Anna Nowak*

[DOI: 10.15584/topiarius.2018.6.7](https://doi.org/10.15584/topiarius.2018.6.7)