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*The drawn landscape – a permanent record
of the historic cultural landscape on the impermanent carrier
– the Sketchbooks by Janusz Bogdanowski*

How durable can a pencil sketch often made in a hurry be? As it was only a note on the sheet of paper from a sketchbook which was kept in a rucksack, hidden under the raincoat during the rain and finally, it was put on the shelf between other papers where beams of light destroyed the poor material in the process of irreversible changes. How important can a drawing documentation of a non-existing mechanism of the mill, a cottage plan or the view of a wooden shepherd shelter be? Can such a drawing be compared with a good photography, analytic thesis or precise inventory? A sketch often has some content as well: a description of the road in the fields, which leads to the wayside shrine; a story told by an old man met near the wayside shrine. Isn't it the most real record of the society history, which emanates with cultural landscape? The landscape irreversibly lost, which disappeared in silence with indulgent acceptance of passing of time. Nowadays, sketchbooks are becoming the shocking evidence of hecatomb which swept away from our planet and blotted out the memory of something which generations had built for hundreds of years creating in this way a new cultural identity. Let us take several sketches by Janusz Bogdanowski. As the life's work of one man – it is a giant job but as regards destruction – hardly a readable after-image of something that has already gone by.

The need of recording phenomena of the surrounding world is very strong for many architects. It results from the ability to observe, which is often exercised in the process of drawing because this is the drawing that teaches not only manual fluency but first of all empathy towards the encountered world, which in turn releases the impulse to record this world. Therefore, there appears the

need to record everything that is seen in form of photography, sketch or painting. And like an architect develops his passion, similarly the passion influences the development of his technique and design experiences.

Janusz Bogdanowski, Professor of architecture, had a drawing passion which accompanied him for the whole life. The need to create the first sketchbook appeared during the studies at the Department of Architecture of Cracow University of Technology in 1952. Soon it turned out that the sheets had to be placed in the next sketchbook and it was continued until the year 2001 when the last – 68th sketchbook was made. Every year, for almost fifty years, at least one sketchbook was created in which, apart from pencil sketches and sketches made with a thin marker in the next years, notes were taken as well. All sketchbooks were made by the author and they consist of sheets in A5 format, which are connected by means of a metal clip. Almost three thousand sheets were collected during these years. It would be difficult to assess the total number of sketches because on many sheets there are more sketches than only one. Thanks to unusual sensitivity and a good theoretical preparation in the scope of architecture and construction the author easily 'snatched' objects which were worth recording. Thus, we can observe cottages with the equipment of everyday use, complicated machinery, sketches of villages and farms, panoramas, parks and palaces, churches and fortresses, paintings discovered in wayside shrines – the index comprises over 600 places from different regions of Poland (in the later period, they were first of all the records of foreign expeditions). The sketchbooks constitute a rich source of the material for varied analyses [2–11], [14].

The review of sketches, which were created within such a long period, allows following the changes in the author's interests starting from fascinations with regional architecture and the process of inventory, analyses of garden constructions and ending in military architecture. The

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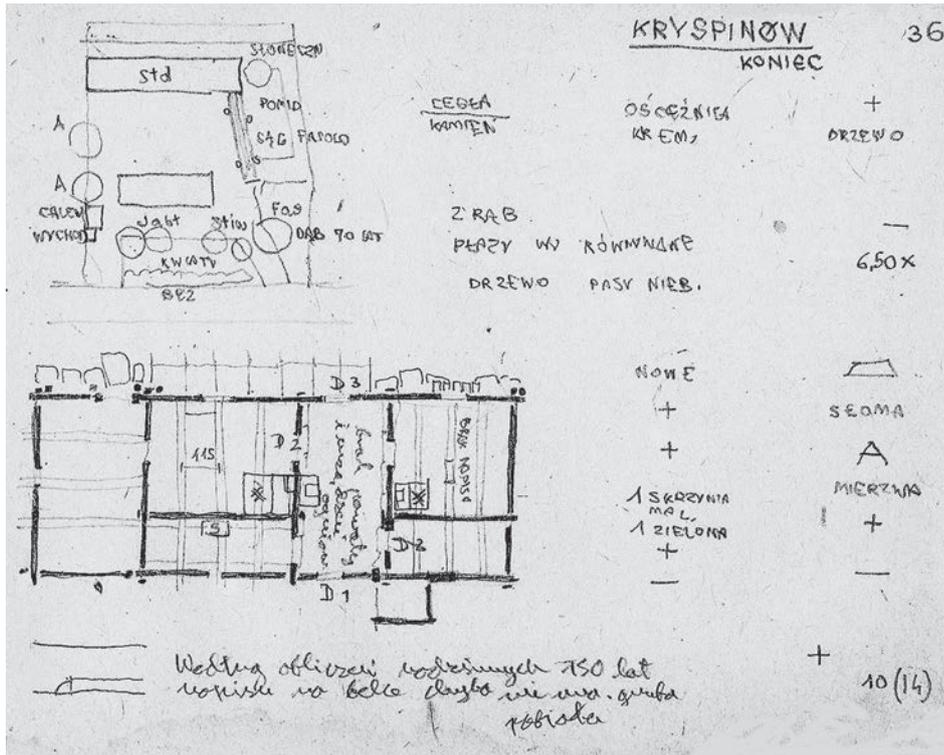


Fig. 1. Kryspinów-Koniec. Inventory drawing, hut No. 36. J. Bogdanowski, 1955

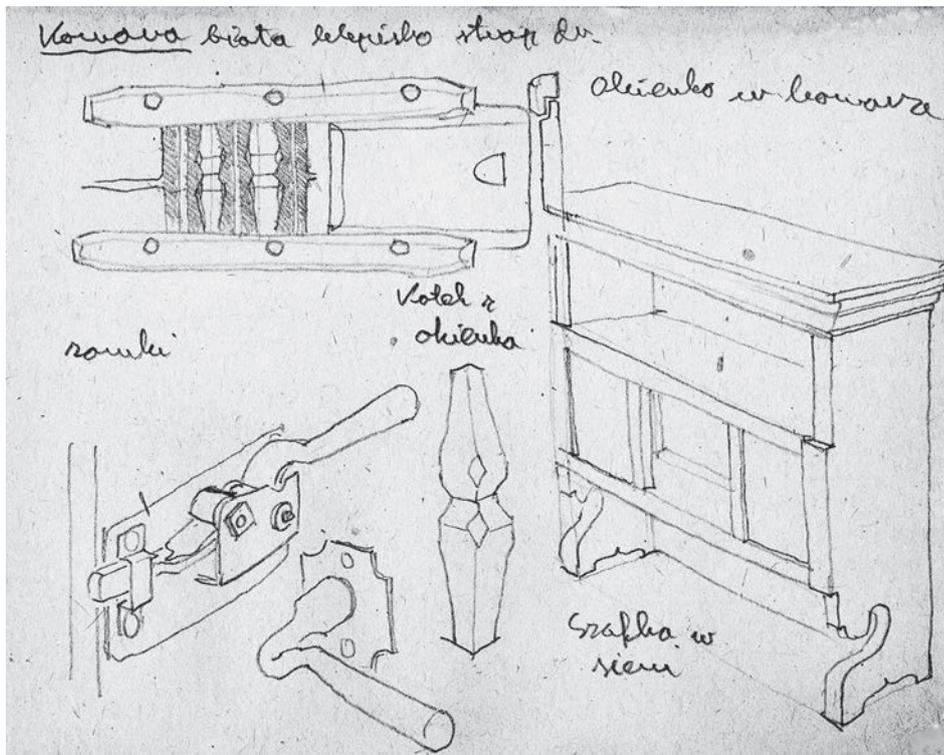


Fig. 2. Domestic equipment of the Kryspinów hut: widow wooden grating, cupboard, door handle. J. Bogdanowski, 1955

review also makes it possible to observe the scientist's work and the appearance of concepts which later determined new directions and research methods (for example, JARK WAK method). In the sketchbooks, it is also possible to follow the development of the author's drawing skills: from the first awkward attempts through technical inventories, landscape studies which were drawn with one line, axonometric drawings of architectural complexes –

because a 'normal' view was not inspiring enough – and finally several-second sketches of the gothic cathedrals. Janusz Bogdanowski put his drawing skills into practice by illustrating, among others, his own publications. The drawing documentation, contained in the sketchbooks made in the 1950s, is the most precious in assessing the changes of cultural landscape. It was also the period of the greatest activity of the author because from 1952 till

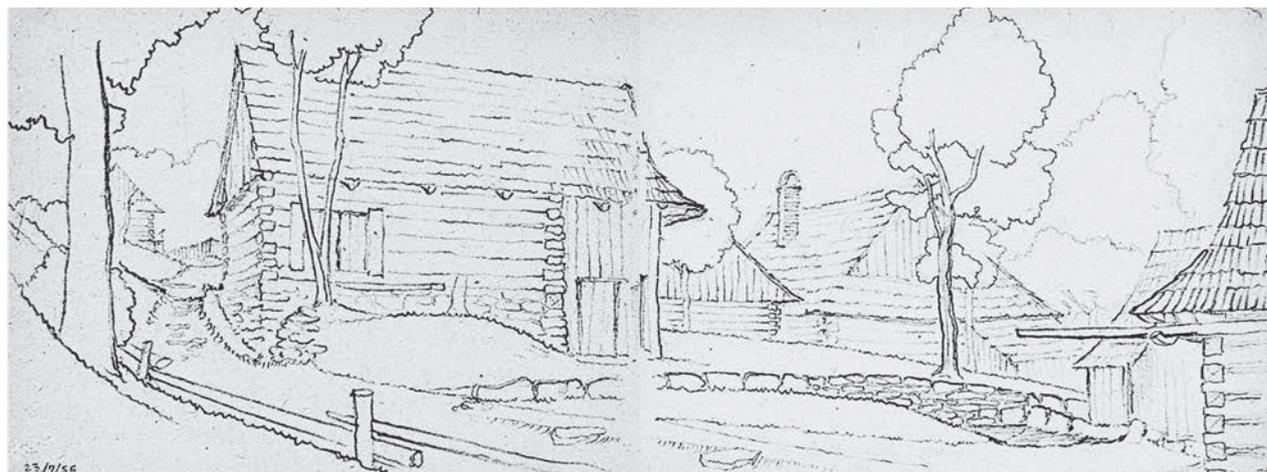


Fig. 3. Oleksowa Rola, view of the hamlet. J. Bogdanowski, 1956

the end of 1959, 27 sketchbooks were created and many of them contain more than 200 pages. It is worth noticing that the world recorded in the sketchbooks was not the world which was described in guidebooks or catalogues of monuments in a simple way. These were rather places off the beaten track and lost somewhere in the fields and whose discovering required great perseverance. Let us analyse several sketches. They can be an inspiration for considering the changes of the Polish cultural landscape of the last 50 years.

In the sketchbooks there are inventories of several villages. In order to accelerate work, the author invented the following system: in the thin cardboard of the sketchbook sheet's size he cut out several openings and then described each of them. When the cardboard was put on the sheet, it was possible to write appropriate data in the openings and in this way to fill in the table (Fig. 1). Thanks to this method, all the building elements of the described structure were recorded quickly and the author had time to draw some other interesting pieces: a wooden door leading to the little barn, inherited-from-grandmother baby cradle or a staple designed in a clever way.

Thanks to the drawings and descriptions it is easy to observe 'yesterday and today' of these villages. In 1955 an inventory of Kryspinów, situated near Cracow, was made. In the past, it was a destination point of bicycle trips along the road at the feet of Srebrna Góra – with a white figure of the Congregation of Monk Hermits of Camaldoli Church – in the direction of pine wood coppice on sand slopes/scarps. The number of thatched cottages with colourful walls allowed Janusz Bogdanowski to try to define the forms typical of villages situated near Cracow [3]. However, already at that time the author saw an architectural structure in its landscape context, which can be proved beautiful, painted with watercolours panoramas of villages, which open the sketchbook; then the analysis of the urban system, description of plant types, list of plants grown in gardens adjoining to the houses. As we can see in the sketches, Kryspinów-like farmsteads were full of clever carpenter's elements as well as the equipment – in more or less decorative forms – painted with

different colours (Fig. 2), while wooden ceiling beams of houses were decorated with inscriptions and dates which proved their 19th century origin.

A very interesting is also a written down history of the chapel, which is hidden in the forest growing on the hill and brings to mind pagan rituals, thus a proof of sacredness of the place: *At Easter, pretzels were put in front of the chapel and children came to collect them (...)* *The chapel is already on the cadastre, therefore it certainly is over 120 years old, perhaps from the 18th century situated on the place of the old castle (...); thus, is the village really the old borough?*¹ A choleric cemetery was also situated at the feet of the hill separated with a quadrilateral stone wall and the Immaculate Mother of Jesus figure on the stone column.

The sketchbook, which is devoted to the small hamlet Juszczyna, i.e. Oleksowa Rola (suski district), looks slightly different – this is a place where the author of sketchbooks spent the summer of 1956. Thanks to the plan of the village with marked directions of the drawn views, it is possible so stand exactly in the same places and compare 'yesterday and tomorrow' of the hamlet. It also one of the best sketchbooks – the joy of the author resulting from the discovery of his own style can be seen in his mastership of the line (Fig. 3).

The places described in the sketchbook, which are so familiar, appear to be fabulous. Here is the excerpt of the description from a trip to Zdów (Silesian voivodship, Zawiercie district), which led along the Biała River bank in 1959: *the road still at the feet of the mountain, one more brook and then the exit to a small meadow from where you can see a beautiful view of Kroczyckie Rocks – first from among the trees and then from the small meadow. Farther, the Biała River forks near the willows and flows to Jędruszek mill – a settlement consisting of two houses, the mill, basement and several barns, which are all situated near the beech-trees and rocks. From the northern side – only empty and huge meadows (...)* Suddenly, the path

¹ All quotations contain the original spelling.

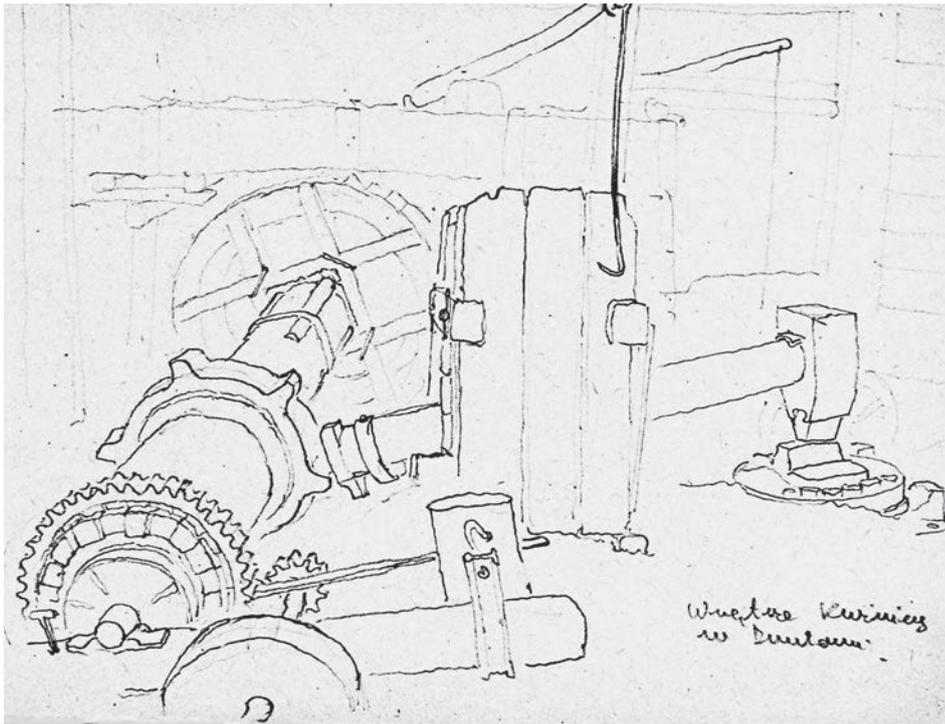


Fig. 4. Drutarnia, interior of the smithy. J. Bogdanowski, 1956

changes into a sand road along the river and then a thin forest – to the right, while to the left – a green valley, the river flows in its full width and the weir towards Piła. The settlement Piła, which is situated on the island in the fork of the river Biała, is one of the most unusual places immortalised in the sketchbooks. It only consisted of three houses and the mill plus several barns and gardens adjoining to the houses.

Another unusual place was situated in the region of Mstowa (Silesian voivodship, Częstochowa district). Janusz Bogdanowski arrived at this place in 1958 during the journey to the Mstowa cloister. In the nearby, on top of Kamionka hill surrounded by fields, the author found a complex of a few dozen barns. The ordinary farm houses, which are presented in the drawing, stand next to each other along slightly curved streets and form a picturesque complex which – blended in with the silhouette of the hill – creates the view complement of the surroundings with a dominating figure of the cloister and the baroque cupolas of the church towers. ‘Barns Mountain’ is an extraordinary landmark in the landscape of Mstowa surroundings.

The acquaintance with devices of the old technology presented in the sketchbook is also fascinating. In the past, those devices determined the economic existence of the village community and constituted a germ of the local industry. A lot of such buildings were drawn in the sketchbook from 1955, for instance, the ones in Juszczyzna (suski district) where the following buildings were situated along the river: a small farm mill, a picturesque big sawmill, a grinder, a shingle house, a bit bigger mill, a smokehouse. According to the tradition, the above mentioned shingle house was built by a self-taught cartwright who calculated everything on his own and built it without any special purpose but he was afraid of making any mis-

take; if he did, people would laugh at him. On the next pages of the sketchbook we can find an excellent mill from Lachowice (suski district). The inventory of this building is opened by a view of a wooden structure with a huge roof, and then a mechanism and numerous woodcarving details were described precisely, for example, the ending of the flour chute in form of a goat head which probably moved during the work.

Drutarnia – another village in konecki district (świętokrzyskie voivodship). In the sketchbook from 1956, we can find views of the blacksmith’s shop interior with a precisely drawn mechanism of the forging hammer. This is probably the only existing record of this ‘industrial’ interior appearance: gloomy and blackened with smoke, which is full of huge items of equipment. What a noise must have been there when massive turbines started the work of the huge forging hammer (Fig. 4).

The novel written down next to the drawing presenting the interior of Fugiel oil mill in Dąbrowa Szlachecka (Cracow district) shows how important for the village residents was building of a new structure of technology: A special ‘huge oak’ was brought to the building site (everybody remembers that). This cut oak gave poles to the piston of the oil mill, which were sunk into the ground at the same height as they stood out above the ground. It was a great sensation – all the time the people (especially children) were coming and staring. (...) Here, the oil was pressed, often nights and days. People stood in a queue like at the mill.

The analysis of the sketchbooks is really moving because the following question inevitably appears: how many of those places, buildings and equipment survived? The answer is also shocking and obvious: nearly none of them did! The hand-made wooden elements of houses



Fig. 5. Kryspinów, column with the figure of Our Lady on the former choleric cemetery. Photo by M. Bogdanowska, 2010

were most probably burnt just before the move to a new brick house where new furniture in form of wall units made of veneered flax board and PVC elements were waiting for new residents. Huge hinges, door handles, door locks, which were forged in the local blacksmith's shop, were replaced by mass produced trash. Unfortunately, the memory of the people who lived and the sense of cultural identity disappeared along with the houses and their equipment.

When we look at the forms of the drawn objects, it becomes clear that they were made on the basis of patterns which were handed down from one generation to another. Therefore, we can see carpenter's daps in the donkey's back, simplicity and functionality, balanced ornaments and strong colours, whose prototypes we can already find in... the Gothic style.

This also makes us think about the process in which generations of home craftsmen participated working in carpenter's and blacksmith's shops; about potters, wicker workers, stove fitters, woodcarvers, women embroiderers, workers of fullers and oil mills.

Thus, within a short period of fifty years only, man – an inventive creator of his own surroundings – became a passive recipient of the mass production. He does not need either the knowledge of the place where clay is the best to make the threshing floor or the knowledge of how to dry wood to make a robust table. He does not observe the older carpenter in order to learn how to cut lintels; he does not learn how to mix lime in order to paint the house. Our knowledge in the range of creation of our own place of living is limited to the shop location and a product price, which in fact does not differ from the one that is sold thousands kilometres away from our place and the boundaries of creativity are determined by the choice of patterns from colourful magazines. Thus, what kind of

cultural landscape does Poland of modern times create? Or in a simpler way: what cultural landscape do we create? What does this creation say about us and our attitude to the surrounding world? Because: *Observing the way in which we transform our natural environment, it is easy to conclude that we use our senses in completely different ways* [15].

Nowadays, there are no longer cottages in Kryspinów, however, the chapels survived. Perhaps, nobody remembers the story about the hill where there is an old reconstructed chapel decorated with colourful reproductions in plastic frames. Today, Kryspinów represents the so called unidentified area [4], suburbs of the city in which representative detached houses and catalogue houses are built. A present, the figure on the column, which took care of peace of the dead people during the period of plague, constitutes the artefact of the gardens adjoining to the houses (Fig. 5).

The example of Oleksowa Rola perfectly illustrates the changes of the Polish village. Wooden cottages disappeared gradually and were replaced by brick houses which were built at the same locations. Instead of trees which give the shade and shelter for birds, instead of gardens full of flowers, these new houses are surrounded by smoothly mowed lawns decorated with sad conifers. Nevertheless, the residents remember the village from the past very well and they recognise the interiors of their houses even with the equipment, which were preserved in the drawings. They look at them with some kind of nostalgia and seem to miss something which determined the identity of this small hamlet: they miss a small mill behind the creek, a wicker hedge, a wooden stool or an old apple tree in the garden.

The everyday life of the Polish village disappeared – the repository of the national identity which was created

through centuries and considered to be the essence of our culture by many people. The objects stored in the museum storerooms lost their context and in this way their reliability. Hundreds of mills were replaced by concrete berths of regulated rivers and the useless devices of the old technology fell into ruin.

The drawings and descriptions contained in the sketchbooks take us for short but sensually intensive walks to the old Polish landscape which is not only seen but takes us to the so called sound landscape [17]; apart from eye impressions, every walk delivers other additional sensual stimuli: we can feel the temperature, smells and we can hear sounds [1].

This wandering in hot summer becomes unusually familiar; hiking along the road shaded with the mountain massif and accompanied by the brook humming and the warmth of sand, a cool breath of the wind from green meadows and a distant noise of the river. And what about Mstowa barns? There must have been great commotion during the harvest time when haystacks and running people appeared on the maidan. Their calls and laughter must have been heard far away along with ringing of the bells coming from the cloister direction.

Fifty years ago man recognized his own place on earth not only due to landscapes but also due to sounds and smells. It had to be different from other places because it was shaped individually and the basis of its shape was the original landscape and things offered by nature: a river giving a drive to the water-wheel, the rise with farmlands and natural resources of the forest. Today, the landscape values undergo gradual unification and sensor experiences become simplified in the world dominated by the highway hum, the smell of fumes and 'twittering' of cell phones. It is obvious that cultural globalization caused the change of man-creator into man-recipient also called a consumer. Potentially, each of us has become a precious market target for the 'tourist product' – the name used for the landscape in some programs [16]. The landscape val-

ue becomes the trade value and the reason for its existence becomes dangerously dependent on economy. But when we browse through the sketchbooks, we can see that new fashionable definitions, for example 4H, are not in fact so contemporary at all². Fifty years ago, it was quite obvious that a cottage in the landscape was not only the carpenter's structure but people's will to settle in a specific place as well as the record of somebody's life, thinking and practised values.

This is another proof of the fact that the author of sketchbooks created things which are ahead of his time. In the 1960s a chimneyless hut was nothing else but a symbol of Polish backwardness, brick bastions built by occupants – a symbol of the decline of Polish statehood, while the defence against demolition of them in order to obtain bricks for the reconstruction the capital city – simply an attack on the Polish *raison d'état*. Fifty years ago, almost nobody sentimentalised about old objects, products of folk craftsmanship or devices of country technology. On the contrary – all this was just the echo of the times about which the supporters of modernity would like to forget once and forever.

These are only some of the considerations which appear while reviewing sketches drawn many years ago. The sketches were created out of pure love, passion of cognition and recording. And what is really interesting: here, not only sketches on yellowed pages but also their author became the element of the Polish cultural landscape history in some strange process. The landscape of the past, but recorded – perhaps on the poor carrier, however, still vital.

² *The essence of the countryside tourism is based on 4H rule: habitat, heritage, history and handcraft.* J. Śródulska-Wielgus, Z. Błachut, K. Wielgus, *Eksploracja przestrzeni historycznej Górców dla potrzeb turystyki kulturowej*, [in:] *Polskie krajobrazy dawne i współczesne*, Prace Komisji Krajobrazu Kulturowego, No. 12, Komisja Krajobrazu Kulturowego PTG, Sosnowiec 2009, p. 243.

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Krajobraz narysowany czyli trwały zapis historycznego krajobrazu kulturowego na nietrwałym nośniku – szkicowniki Janusza Bogdanowskiego

Kultura z architekturą bodaj najpełniej łączą się w krajobrazie kulturowym, który to stanowi widoczną emanację życia społeczeństwa, jego przekonań, sposobu funkcjonowania i wyznawanych wartości. Stąd też jego granice zaczynają się tam, gdzie następuje przekształcanie krajobrazu naturalnego, a kończą się na drobnostkach, takich jak formy małej architektury, detali, czy elementy domowego wyposażenia. Gdy zmienia się styl życia społeczeństwa zmienia się i wygląd krajobrazu kulturowego. Tworzone przez ponad pięćdziesiąt lat szkicowniki architekta – Janusza

Bogdanowskiego są znakomitym źródłem danych na temat tych przemian. Dzięki szczegółowym opisom, przekraczającym granice suchej inwentaryzacji, pozwalają odtworzyć nieodwracalnie utracone dziedzictwo polskiego krajobrazu kulturowego, więcej, pozwalają na porównywanie przemian, jakim był on poddawany. Świetny warsztat rysunkowy i wiedza autora, które pozwoliły na stworzenie tak wyjątkowego rejestru, sprawiły, że i same szkicowniki stały się już dobrem kulturowym.

Key words: historic landscape, sketchbook

Słowa kluczowe: krajobraz historyczny, szkicownik