Animal exhibitions. Deer parks as museums of nature

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According to Maria Popczyk,[1] a single type of architecture, or a single type of spatial arrangement, that could ensure proper presentation of a collection does not exist. In cabinets of curiosities, collections mattered most and they built the value of an exhibition, while the way of their presentation was less important.[2] Their richness aimed to show the diversity of the world. The cabinets used to be common until the end of the eighteenth century, when they disappeared due to the emergence of museums. Early natural collections (Fig. 1) operated in a manner similar to collections of the *wunderkammer* type, which stored exhibits of various categories (paintings, books, marble objects, plaster casts, natural curiosities). In both cases, the abundance of collected species, their multiplicity and uniqueness were of the greatest importance. The concept was that such a cabinet or museum of nature should make the universe visible through living or non-living exhibits that could represent the basic categories of beings and things.[3]

The emerging research institutions were neighboured by first botanic gardens and menageries. This was intended to enhance the impression that displayed objects also served scientific purposes. These places were most popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that is, when the exploratory attitude was being formed; therefore, they presented scientific instruments, inventions and masterpieces of technology used in describing the natural environment. The exhibits required relevant spatial surroundings to ensure that these relationships and correlations in biological processes could be clearly recognised.

The essential feature of this space was the arrangement of presented objects. This arrangement frequently had a symbolic meaning. It was most commonly ruled by the number four. The collected objects were arranged according to four seasons of the year, four temperaments, four continents, four periods of life and others, for instance the four corners of the world. Such a collection (and also a display of living exhibits) was meant to contain curiosities as well as strange, unique and sophisticated objects. This division suggested an attempt at a holistic approach.

1 M. Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie ekspozycji muzealnych* (Kraków, 2008), p. 39.

2 Cf. ibid., p. 49.

3 K. Pomian, *Zbieracze i osobliwości. Paryż – Wenecja XVI–XVIII wiek*, trans. A. Pieńkos (Gdańsk, 2012), p. 73.

Fig. 1

Visitors to an imaginary cabinet of nature, frontispiece, V. Levinus, *Wondertooneel der natuur*, 1715, vol. 1

Cabinets and museums of nature

The development of modern science was accompanied by a change in the way of presenting exhibits. The aesthetics and the necessity of creating a proper space for objects to be admired were increasingly important.[4] Early collections of natural curiosities concentrated on presenting an entirety, that is, in effect, on creating a vision of the world. For this reason these old collections functioned as a microcosm where a visitor could experience a contact with each of the spheres. A cabinet was 'a place where the universe as a whole becomes visible through objects able to represent the basic categories of beings and things'.[5] This world was ruled by the principles of sympathy and antipathy – all spheres were connected to form complex systems of interactions.[6] In cabinets, both harmony and mystery of the universe could be experienced. However, the faith in the science led to the abandonment of such idea-oriented conceptions and a turn towards analogies, rational systems and taxonomies.

A museum of natural history, a successor to cabinets, showed the natural living and non-living things and demonstrated their properties. In this manner, it presented results of studies and experiments. It was frequently located in a special room, which was always associated with

4 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 49.

5 Pomian, *Zbieracze osobliwości*, p. 73.

6 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 59.

a scientific institution; hence the collections gained a research value and quality. They differed from other practices, such as animal raising, agriculture or gardening, which, as intended for daily use or entertainment, were perceived as less serious.

Maria Popczyk defines this new awareness as 'the epistemology of presentation in the system of exhibits'.[7] The specific matter here is knowledge. Popczyk refers to two philosophical concepts, namely those proposed by Martin Heidegger and Richard Rorty. In each of them, the beginnings of modern science were associated with the concept of presentation. For Heidegger, this resulted in the objectification of nature – but also, on the other hand, in the increase of its value. What has an image, has a meaning; it can be recognised.[8] According to Rorty, early modern science regarded thinking as presenting and therefore assumed the sense of sight to be the most important tool for human experience of the world.[9] In addition, he emphasised that artefacts of nature became privileged presentations which could change into subjects of research and, in their physical form, objects to be watched. Popczyk proves that the aesthetic concepts of an exhibition are not exclusively associated with an individual object, but rather with a system of many objects and their mutual relationships, which together create an exhibition. She correctly perceives an exhibition as an effect of linking the sensory cognition of an object itself with the knowledge and awareness of the species, class and the environment. The rationale of an exhibition is the aesthetic component that had been seen, at the very beginning of its creation, in the epistemology.[10]

Nature was clearly connected with art already in curiosity cabinets. For this reason, it was affected by all the aestheticising processes in a broad artistic context. Cabinet collections owned by Renaissance collectors were intended to be seen; they were removed from the treasury rooms and made available in squares, residences or gardens. This turn towards a practice which by then can, it seems, be called a museum practice resulted in a greater appreciation of an exhibition itself, as both an object and the fact it was seen were important. In addition to artworks, natural exhibits, for instance stones, as well as specimens of flora and fauna were objects of interest.

Interactions between nature and art were also clearly seen in the inspirations evinced by individual collectors. Modern artists were fascinated

7 Ibid.

8 M. Heidegger, *Czas światoobrazu*, trans. K. Wolicki (original title: *Die Zeit des Weltbildes*), in: M. Heidegger, *Drogi lasu* (Warszawa, 1997, original title: *Holzwege*), p. 76.

9 R. Rorty, *Filozofia a zwierciadło natury*, trans. M Szczubiałka (Warszawa, 1994), pp. 15–16.

10 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 51.

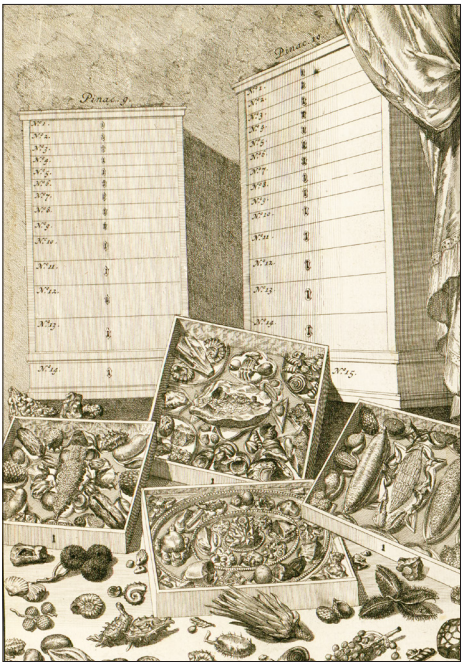

Fig. 2

A collection of shells and shellfish, V. Levinus, *Wondertooneel der natuur*, 1715, vol. 2

by collections owned by botanists.[11] Scientific illustrations were increasingly more precise, as they analytically presented specific stages of plant development and documented their transformations.[12] Thus, the history of culture and all evidence of antiquity corresponded with nature, and this synergy found expression in early modern art. The cabinet collections were most popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, affecting the development of the scientific approach. The fact that exploratory practice became more empirical resulted in a gradual abandonment of the culture of curiosity and of collections of the world's wonders in favour of its deeper understanding. In addition to surprising and rare objects, museums of nature collected typical, everyday things to create an explicit pattern of mutual relationships and to find the rules governing the world.

A clear distinction was observed even among the cabinets. Maria Popczyk notes that in the volume 5 of Diderot's *Encyclopaedia* the word 'cabinet' had two separate definitions. A cabinet of natural history (*Cabinet d'histoire naturelle*) should contain products of nature arranged in a methodical order, while pieces of art and products of artistic craftsmanship or curiosities should be stored and displayed in a cabinet as such, without any additional description.[13] This division shows diverse practices related to two types of places. While a cabinet of curiosities was associated with the principle of world meant as cosmic integrity or unity, in a cabinet of nature the same issue was interpreted as the hierarchy of beings, the order and classification (Fig. 2).

In a natural museum, a contact with objects was used to illustrate theories. Nature was described as a history of species development. Further classification systems by Carl Linnaeus, Jean Lamarck and Georges Cuvier provided the basis for new arrangements and presented a constantly changing vision of the species order.[14] Thus, this kind of museum was treated as the place for a meeting of science and a visitor based on a dialogue dictated by changing approach to the knowledge about the world. The essential rule was the mathematical and universal system proposed by the Cartesian theory. New museums were created according to an abstract order rather than

11 Z. Ważbiński, *Ut Ars Natura, Ut Natura Ars. Studium z problematyki medycejskiego kolekcjonerstwa drugiej połowy XVI wieku* (Toruń, 2000), pp. 223–33.

12 A. Piekiełko-Zemanek, 'Rola ilustracji w historii botaniki', *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki*, vol. 31, 1986, no. 2, p. 512.

13 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 69.

14 Ibid., p. 72.

sensory perception. Cabinets of curiosities served both for research and for entertainment. They were intended to surprise or fascinate. The purposes of the new museums were different:

> In addition to art museums, academies or galleries, natural museums emerging across Europe in the nineteenth century constitute an important part of the urban life; they create a public sphere for meetings of broad-minded, sophisticated people and correspond to illuminated and clean streets of the civilised society.[15]

Thus, these museums belonged to institutions of high culture. The progressive publicising of collections, which can be observed from the beginning of the modern era onward, affected the position of science. A museum presenting the natural world became an important place where results of research, journeys and scientific expeditions, as well as new theories, were presented to a wide audience. They frequently had laboratories where the proposed theses could be verified on the spot. While collections in cabinets of curiosities were intended to guarantee prestige and to demonstrate the collector's sophistication and wealth, natural museums had an educational mission.

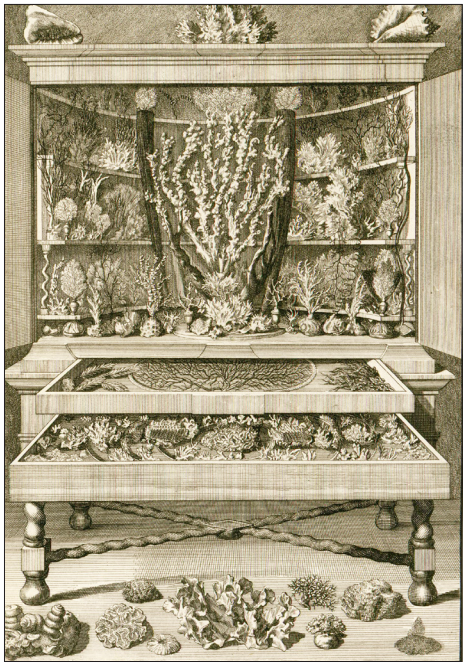

Fig. 3

A showcase with corals, V. Levinus, *Wondertooneel der natuur*, 1715, vol. 2

However, a clear aesthetic component is seen in both cases. Regardless of the specificity of the given institution, a collection was looked at and touched. In a natural museum, it was also subjected to experiments or in-depth observation and sometimes also drawn in order to analyse the details. Nevertheless, it was always a real example of theories. Animals both living and dead, plants, fossils and minerals were the evidence of a curiosity of a researcher,[16] who also perceived them as collectibles, as beautiful and fascinating as the entire nature (Fig. 3).

Nature and a human being

Gradual transition of cabinets of curiosities to natural museums resulted from the change of the attitude to nature which can be seen in the modern times. As Maria Popczyk reports, Sir Richard Owen, the founder of the Natural History Museum in London, referred to the picture of the biblical Adam during the public debate presenting the main mission of this institution.[17] The museum was intended to present nature ruled by

15 Ibid., p. 71.

16 Ibid., pp. 73–74.

17 Ibid., p. 75.

the human race. Due to scientific achievements, people could observe all creatures – as it had been described in the Book of Genesis. People gave names to particular species, developed their classification and analysed the evolutionary changes under the aegis of the rational theory of the world; a world created by the highest mind of God. This distinct trend of thought concerning human domination over the world appeared in the works of many modern philosophers. Phil Macnaghten and John Urry argue that it was the science that unified nature and separated it from human beings, excluding mankind from the natural systems.[18] Previously, a human being could have contact with its entirety, which resulted in the concept of a collection enclosed in a cabinet of curiosities.[19]

Natural history as expressed in early museums is a way of talking about nature, as well as a method of its taming and searching for analogies which make it possible to discover the rules that govern it. Its created picture matters more than nature itself. A classification is an example of an artificial, arbitrary categorisation of organisms, which is evidenced by the multitude of approved concepts and the debatability of their assumptions. The Linnaean system, commonly used nowadays, was widely contradicted and many researchers, including some in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, proposed their own solutions.[20] In a natural museum, the visitor's gaze was directed beyond, not stopping on exhibits but somehow penetrating them in order to see the emerging scientific theories, achievements of researchers and travellers, as well as the vision of the world they had constructed.[21]

In the early modern era, an increasingly popular subject of interest was landscape, particularly one processed and dominated by the human race; in particular, the idyllic, rural scenery. Mountains and forests were avoided as they were perceived as wild, dangerous areas. Macnaghten and Urry claim there is no single nature: its perception depends on the cultural context familiar to the audience.

Not only landscape is seen in a variety of ways. Other items of the living nature are given new meanings due to contexts created around them. In the early modern period, tensions in a complicated relationship between a human being and an animal were particularly clear. According to the theories accepted at that time, human beings subjugated the natural world and differed from animals because they possessed reason and the ability to communicate using a language, and a different soul than ani-

18 P. Macnaghten, J. Urry, *Alternatywne przyrody. Nowe myślenie o przyrodzie i społeczeństwie*, trans. B. Baran (Warszawa, 2018, original title: *Contested Natures*), pp. 18–27.

19 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 93.

20 J. Pawłowski, 'Szkic rozwoju zoologii na ziemiach polskich', *Kosmos. Problemy nauk biologicznych*, vol. 55, 2006, no. 1, p. 11.

21 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 79.

Fig. 4

E.-E. Mouchy, *A physiological demonstration with vivisection of a dog*, 1832

mals, that is, an immortal one. Other species were found useful, however: they were to help people and serve as food. They were also deprived of all rights. According to Descartes, animals did not have the capability for thought, and because they could not think, he claimed, they did not feel pain.[22] This theory justified experiments conducted on living organisms at that time (Fig. 4). As emphasised by Włodzimierz Tyburski, the faith in human domination over nature influenced the so-called Cartesian paradigm, on the basis of which the natural world was assessed throughout the next centuries.[23] It was only in the Age of Enlightenment that the attitude to nature changed, and with it, the definition of the relationship between a human being and an animal. Such thinkers as Immanuel Kant or John Locke called for a rejection of cruelty towards other species, while David Hume claimed that animals possessed emotions and even the beginnings of thought.[24] He discussed this idea in the text *Of the Love and Hatred of Animals*. Hume's conceptions were opposed to the main thought of the modern world. In his perception, there were certain similarities between the world of humans and the world of animals.[25]

22 R. Descartes, *Rozprawa o metodzie*, trans. W. Wojciechowska (Warszawa, 1988), p. 67.

23 W. Tyburski, 'Człowiek i świat zwierząt w horyzoncie myślowym doby nowożytnej (wybrane stanowiska),' *Przegląd Filozoficzny. Nowa Seria*, vol. 24, 2015, no. 2 (94), p. 15.

24 D. Hume, *Traktat o naturze ludzkiej*, vol. 2, trans. C. Znamierowski (Warszawa, 1963), p. 74.

25 More on the relationship between man and animal in A. Jakóbczyk-Gola, *Ogrody zwierząt. Staropolskie zwierzyńce i menażerie* (Warszawa, 2021), pp. 7–26.

Early modern philosophical theories referring to relationships between a human and an animal frequently presented a vision of the objectification of other species. In natural museums, animals, which were collectibles there, became exhibits. This transformation was described by Jerzy Świecimski. When visitors are looking at a particular exhibit, an intentional change of its features and its context occurs.[26] It is an ontological alteration; this was also emphasised by Krzysztof Pomian. A thing and an exhibit are two separate and not identical entities shaped by the act of being looked at. Presented objects are mostly deprived of their obvious functions and the primary meaning. Thus, an exhibition is not a simple collection of many objects, but a clear action resulting in a new cultural item being created during various cognitive procedures (this aspect is particularly important in the context of natural history exhibitions) and aesthetic procedures associated with the experiencing of beauty and to valuation, as well as entirely practical activities related to the creation of appropriate exhibition spaces.[27] In Świecimski's perception, it is not only an aesthetic issue but also an ethical one, particularly in the case of objects of nature. When displayed in an exhibition, natural objects lose their life functions and become prepared, static items. Pertinent human activity relies on making them look as realistic as possible.[28]

Living objects are a different issue: here, the aim is not to stop the time and look at static preparations, but to create a dynamic exhibition where displayed objects change all the time – although those changes must occur according to specific rules. These rules smother the naturalness of living organisms and push them into the frame of culture. A visitor's task is to visually recognise both the external specificity of an exhibit and its individual biological properties, i.e. behaviours associated with eating, reproducing and building a shelter, as well as the organisation and structure of herds. To provide the potential for watching all these aspects, a special space was required to hold such a demanding exhibition.

Musealisation of landscape

In his article on landscape museums, Andrzej Kiciński discusses examples of open-air sculpture exhibitions.[29] He correctly recognises their origins as dating back to the ancient times, when open-air glyptotheques were

26 J. Świecimski, 'Niektóre zagadnienia ontologiczno-estetyczne i etyczne związane z prezentacją, konserwacją i rekonstrukcją przedmiotów kulturowych w ekspozycji muzealnej', *Muzealnictwo*, vol. 28/29, 1984, pp. 77–93.

27 Cf. Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 32.

28 Świecimski, 'Niektóre zagadnienia ontologiczno-estetyczne', p. 61.

29 A. Kiciński, 'Muzea w pejzażu: Kröller-Müller w Otterlo, Luisiana i Arken pod Kopenhagą, André Malraux w Le Havre i Orońsko', *Muzealnictwo*, 2000, no. 49, pp. 256–73.

very popular. He also calls them 'art parks'. The most representative institution of this kind was created by Emperor Hadrian in Tivoli.[30] As Kiciński remarks, these areas were of both interior and exterior character, since closed galleries of painting and sculpture were commonly accompanied by gardens where sculptures were displayed, frequently in park pavilions. The growth of these institutions was also observed in the early modern era, when collections of ancient items gained in popularity. They were readily exhibited in natural surroundings.[31] Nowadays, landscape museums are still located far away from cities, as they were established in countryside residences. Therefore, they are frequently called museums of silence.[32]

The vision of landscape museums presented by Kiciński refers only to art museums using land and nature as exhibition spaces. Yet the description of the relationship between cabinets of curiosities and natural museums as given above provides also opportunities for other interpretations of landscape. Firstly, the issue of diorama is worth mentioning. Maria Popczyk demonstrates that in modern natural museums, a diorama was an adaptation of environmental concepts resulting from biological sciences.[33] Thus, exhibits were more widely accompanied by the context of their natural environment and entered into a broad discussion related to ecology or interpretation of nature. This kind of museum became an educational and documentary institution that explained complex relationships between a human and nature, described processes, presented warning messages and participated in social and ecological discussions on the further fate of the planet Earth.

In Popczyk's opinion, a diorama is an evident point of contact between science and art, as she finds it necessary for it to use a wide range of artistic measures. This aesthetic aspect links both types of object presentation. In addition, in this kind of exhibition the relationship between a natural museum and science, which had been the basis for an institution of this type, is not absolutely clear. The use of dioramas opens a direction towards environmentalism in natural museums.[34] This trend

30 Ibid., p. 256.

31 M. Szafrańska, 'Ogród jako kolekcja. XVI-wieczna geneza idei', *Kronika Zamkowa. Roczniki*, vols 57–58, 2009, no. 1–2, p. 66.

32 Kiciński, 'Muzea w pejzażu', p. 273.

33 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 81.

34 The movement emerged in the nineteenth century and is an example of a sociological theory. It assumes that geographical location and social environment directly influence human personality. It is also called the environmental determinism. The author of the term 'new environmentalism' is the ecologist Edward O. Wilson, who described the revolution in the way of perceiving nature conservation; E.O. Wilson, *Różnorodność życia*, trans. J. Weiner (Warszawa 1999, original title: *The Diversity of Life*, 1992). According to new environmentalism, nature should be used without destroying it.

connects three points of view which used to be considered as autonomous and essentially separate: aesthetics, landscape and science.

As seen the considerations of Macnaughten and Urry, this trend should probably be called new environmentalism, in contrast to the nineteenth-century theory known as environmentalism, which was related to the environmental determinism.[35] The assumptions of this current trend can be related to museums as well. It emphasises revaluation of the scientistic demonstration of nature in former exhibitions. The space of a museum should be receptive to issues associated with the surroundings, to landscape and, in particular, to its aesthetic components; frequently, even to artistic activities aimed at its processing. All that is possible because rigid correlations between the science and the art of collecting in natural museums are being relaxed. Polish theorists of exhibits, Wojciech Gluziński and Jerzy Świecimski, strongly emphasise the values of natural exhibits, such as their emotional quality or of the fact that they demonstrate philosophical concepts.[36] The act of looking at these objects leads to the emergence of personal narratives about the nature that surrounds every visitor. In this perception, objects (animals, plants, stones, shells or fossils), previously displayed in neutral conditions, begin to tell stories; this is also due to the fact that they have been introduced into a wider context created by a diorama, which is a form of stage decoration intended to surround the artefacts. Its task is to reproduce the natural environment of these creatures by creating a credible scene from their lives using artistic measures.[37]

Thus, dioramas eliminate the neutrality of isolated exhibits and release the atmosphere of the creatures' primary habitats. Moreover, they are educational as this specially designed scene by definition cannot be abstract and must reflect a natural picture.[38] Maria Popczyk even mentions a condensation of this image, as if the limited space of a diorama contained the essence of the vision of a particular environment.

The previously used metaphor of stage decoration makes it possible to compare dioramas to small performances and visitors to an audience watching single scenes where the same story is continuously told by immortal actors, i.e. the museum exhibits. Visitors are thus located outside the environment at which they look. In conclusion, a diorama can be included among the measures which represent the domination of the human race over nature. Similarly to the idea of a natural museum itself, those measures emphasise this relationship.

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35 Macnaghten, Urry, *Alternatywne przyrody*, pp. 67–73.

36 W. Gluziński, *U podstaw muzeologii* (Warszawa, 1980), p. 277; Świecimski, 'Niektóre zagadnienia ontologiczno-estetyczne', p. 88.

37 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 84.

38 Ibid., p. 85.

Deer parks as museums

Maria Popczyk notes that the effect of modernisation of natural exhibition space is the rejection of the essential function of visual reception as controlling and at the same time aesthetic.[39] Although the eyes recognise individual views and are responsive to changes, they do not represent the only sense that perceives an image of the surrounding landscape. It seems, however, that the idea of polysensory natural museums that use the real landscape as a diorama appeared far earlier.

In Europe, a model of such museums was a vast Roman garden, called a *therotrophium* in Greek, where game animals and exotic species were bred. These areas were mostly intended to provide entertainment. Mythological performances featuring appropriately trained animals were occasionally staged there. In Rome, entertainment was to a great extent associated with violence. Animals bred in gardens were frequently intended for various kinds of fights – with other animals or with men.[40] According to Pliny the Elder, the first person to create a hunting park was Fulvius Lippinus, while his followers were, among others, Lucius Licinius Lucullus and Quintus Hortensius Hortalus, all known for their love of luxury (*Nat. Hist.*, 8.211).[41] However, according to Zuzanna Benincasa, it seems that the major motivation of the Roman *nobiles* was not only the pleasure of possessing animals and having the opportunity to admire them, but also the potential for large profit from breeding specific species.[42]

Fig. 5

Depiction of a medieval hunting park in England, *The Master of Game*, fifteenth century.

Similar garden areas were common in the whole Europe and popular since the Middle Ages (Fig. 5). They were hunting areas, known as deer parks (*Tiergärten* in German). However, the term 'deer park' had a wider meaning, since it described any space inhabited by specific animal species; this included menageries. The definition of the term 'deer park' (*zwierzyniec* in Polish) is presented, for example, in *Historya Naturalna Krolestwa Polskiego* [Natural History of the Kingdom of Poland] by

39 Ibid., p. 109.

40 V.N. Kisling Jr, 'Ancient Collections and Menageries', in: *Zoo and Aquarium History. Ancient Animal Collections to Zoological Gardens*, ed. V.N. Kisling Jr. (Boca Raton–London–New York–Washington DC, 2000), p. 19.

41 G. Plinius, *Historia naturalna*, vol. 2: *Antropologia i Zoologia. Księgi VII–XI*, ed. P. Maj-Palicka (Toruń, 2019), p. 148. Cf. Z. Benincasa, '"Si vivariis inclusae ferae"… Status prawny dzikich zwierząt żyjących w 'vivaria' i parkach myśliwskich w prawie rzymskim', *Zeszyty Prawnicze*, vol. 13, 2013, no. 4, p. 9.

42 Benincasa, '"Si vivariis inclusae ferae"…', p. 11.

Stanisław Ładowski (1738–1798), a translator, naturalist, educator and a lecturer in the Piarist schools, published in Cracow in 1783:

> DEER PARK – is a place where animals captured during a hunt are released and bred to be used at any time. However, where predatory animals cannot be bred unless in a separate area. In vast deer parks, noblemen build fountains and place hunting-related statues, for splendour. But, as the walls are expensive and fences are impermanent, the best thing to do is to plant trees one next to the other so densely as to make them grow together over time and surround the park forever. Previously, there used to be huge and beautiful deer parks in Poland, kept by noblemen for their entertainment, but now they are destroyed because of wars and perturbations in the country.[43]

The co-author of this book was Anna Paulina Jabłonowska née Sapieha (1728–1800), who in her Siemiatycze estate had a well-known cabinet of curiosities, which was, in essence, one of the first and most magnificent natural museums in the Polish territories. It contained an extraordinary collection of minerals, unique specimens of flora and fauna, as well as geological items, which was one of the richest in Europe.[44] In fact, Ładowski's encyclopaedia of nature was dedicated to Anna Jabłonowska. The cited passage indicates that the perception of old Polish deer parks was affected by the Roman tradition. These areas were huge hunting parks, usually surrounded by some kind of fencing, where living animals, captured the owner's convenience, were kept to provide meat and skin.

The history of deer parks in Poland starts at the beginning of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. Vast forests in Lithuania, joined to the Commonwealth as a result of subsequent unions, changed Polish hunting practices. King Ladislaus Jagiello was a great enthusiast of this kind of entertainment and the first deer parks were created during his reign.[45] The largest royal park was located in Niepołomice. It was a fenced section of a forest where game animals were kept.[46] The shrinking of wild areas suitable for hunting, in connection with the noblemen's love of hunting, led to creation of huge deer parks near royal residences and manors of rich magnates, where mostly big game animals were bred: European bison, aurochs, elks and sometimes wild horses.[47] These parks were surrounded by a palisade or a water ditch to prevent animals from escaping, to avoid their excessive dispersion and to protect herds from predators.

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43 S. Ładowski, *Historya Naturalna Krolestwa Polskiego, Czyli Zbior krotki … Zwierząt, Roślin y Minerałow…* (Kraków, 1783), pp. 204–05.

44 J. Bąk, *Anna Paulina z Sapiehów Jabłonowska – kolekcjonerka, przyjaciółka nauk, inicjatorka przemian*, w: *Słynne kobiety w Rzeczypospolitej XVIII wieku*, eds A. Roćko, M. Górska (Warszawa, 2017), p. 158.

45 M. Mazaraki, *Łowiectwo w Polsce* (Kraków, 1993), p. 26.

46 M. Wilska, 'Atrakcyjność kultury dworskiej w czasach Jagiellonów', *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, vol. 38, 1994, p. 7.

47 A. Kryński, *Z kart łowiectwa polskiego* (Warszawa, 1991), p. 109.

The best examples of early and relatively small landscape parks created in the fifteenth century were Ujazdów near Warsaw and Zwierzyniec below Saint Bronisława Hill in Cracow. The Ujazdów deer park, which became the property of King Sigismond III and was supervised by the Vasa dynasty, was described by Adam Jastrzębski as follows:

> In front of the palace,
> A deer park is surrounded by a fence:
> There are deer there,
> Rabbits, hares, fawns.
> Fish in the ponds do swim,
> And birds happily sing.
> Lush meadows, grasses grow,
> Look who is riding down the straight road!
> You will see there what you have
> Not in Rome, Turkey or in Crimea:
> Woods, forests and bushes,
> Mountains, lakes, thickets,
> Gorgeous perspectives
> Strange to the eye.
> Even if the painters gathered
> And travelled through many a land,
> A place more beautiful
> Or more pleasing to the eye
> They would barely find.[48]

This court musician and composer of King Ladislaus IV visited Ujazdów in 1643. The cited text, *Gościniec abo krótkie opisanie Warszawy* [A Road, or Short Description of Warsaw], contained a presentation of the main buildings located in the capital city. The author was delighted not only by the Ujazdów palace itself, but also by its surrounding garden, a collection of animals and plants, and the landscape.[49]

The idea of creation of such gardens was most completely presented by the voivode of Poznań Jan Ostroróg (1565–1622), an owner or administrator of many estates and a precursor of ecological thinking in Poland. His specialisation was game breeding; he had several larger gardens and so-called 'small deer parks' (in Polish: *zwierzyńczyk*). They were mostly located in his Komarno estate in Red Ruthenia, or in Wojnów (today: Wojnowice).[50] The largest of them was situated at Komarno. The most important of Ostroróg's books on animal breeding was published in print in 1876 by Władysław Chomętowski, based on a manuscript titled *Materyały do dziejów rolnictwa w Polsce w XVI i XVII wieku poprzedzone wiadomością o życiu i pismach Jana Ostroroga, wojewody*

48 A. Jarzębski, *Gościniec abo krótkie opisanie Warszawy* (Warszawa, 1909), pp. 80–81.

49 T. Bernatowicz, 'Ogrody do zabaw myśliwskich. Królewskie zwierzyńce czasów saskich wokół Warszawy', w: *Królewskie ogrody w Polsce*, ed. M. Szafrańska, exhibition catalogue, Royal Castle in Warsaw (Warszawa, 2001), p. 267.

50 K. Łukaszewicz, *Ogrody zoologiczne. Wczoraj – dziś – jutro* (Warszawa, 1975), p. 106.

poznańskiego [Materials for the history of agriculture in Poland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries preceded by the information about the life and writing of Jan Ostroróg, the voivode of Poznań].[51] It is a set of several different works: *Kalendarz gospodarski na horyzont komarzeński* [A farm calendar for the horizon of Komarno], *Chowanie źrzebców* [Colt breeding] which is probably a part of a longer dissertation on horses, and the most important work: *Źwierzyniec* [Deer park] – a short treatise on establishing and managing deer parks.

The text contains much practical advice based on Ostroróg's long experience. At the very beginning, it emphasises that a deer park is a practically indispensable component of each noble residence:

> By each estate where one lives, as they say – a residence, I consider a deer park as almost as necessary as kitchen ponds, reservoirs or other things belonging to food provision. Once created, and if then well managed, it is a great assistance with food provision, a great relief to the cattle barn, a great relief to the purse for buying cattle for the kitchen, if one's own barns do not suffice, and not without one's own benefit.[52]

Ostroróg strongly emphasised the usefulness of deer parks. In the first place, they were intended to provide food and to reduce daily expenses of a manor. He found economy and practicality to be the most important aspects; in the garden art in Poland, they often preceded aesthetics.

King Jan III Sobieski was a great enthusiast and collector of animals. Between 1662 and 1696, he was the owner of the Żółkiew estate, which included a deer park (Fig. 6). At the back of the castle, a regular garden was created, arranged on two terraces. Below the garden flowed the Świnia River and farther down, there was a big pond crossed by a bridge which led to the deer park. Two buildings known as Łazienka (Bath) were located in the middle of the pond. The deer park is shown, captioned *Thiergarten*, in a topographic map of Galicia and Lodomeria made by Friedrich von Mieg between 1779 and 1783. It clearly presents the shape of the castle and both Łazienka buildings. This arrangement survived, despite numerous transformations, well into the eighteenth century.

In addition to smaller deer parks directly related to royal or magnate residences, vast hunting parks, encompassing thousands of square hectares, were created in forests belonging to manorial estates. The most famous deer parks of this type were in the areas near Zamość, Niepołomice, Zator, Rudniki or Rębelice Królewskie (formerly: Rembielice, close to

51 W. Chomętowski, *Materyały do dziejów rolnictwa w Polsce w XVI i XVII wieku, poprzedzone* wiadomością *o życiu i pismach Jana Ostroroga, wojewody poznańskiego* (Warszawa, 1876), pp. 1–94.

52 Ibid., p. 86.

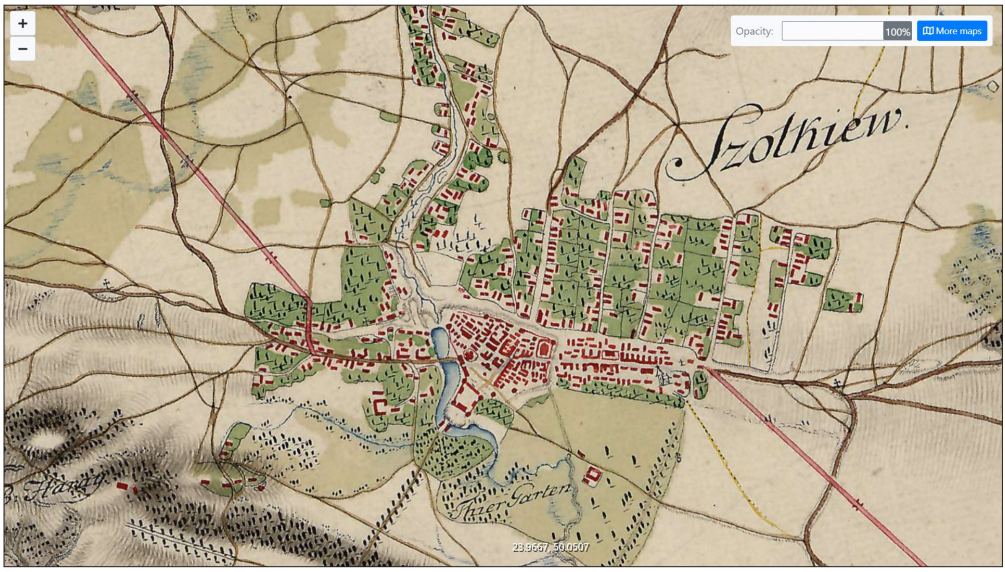

Fig. 6

Żółkiew on a topographic map of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, F. von Mieg, 1779–1783

Krzepice near Częstochowa)[53] and in the Górka family castle in Kórnik. A smaller deer park was located in Szydłowiec.

From the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, an incredible development of Polish hunting parks can be observed. In Marek Siewniak's opinion, noble families competed with one another as to who would have the most impressive hunting park.[54] Architectural modifications of suburban residences were accompanied by deer parks emerging across the land. New areas were created and the existing ones were expanded: Rembielice, Natolin, Rzeszów, Wiśnicz, Laszki Murowane, Zator, Żółkiew, Wolbórz, Wojutycze, Radziejowice, Jaworów, Ożomla, Smolarz, Biała Podlaska or Nieśwież. The number of parks was doubled during the next century.[55] At the end of the early modern era, the number of hunting parks and pheasant runs constantly increased, frequently in or near Warsaw (Mokotów, Marymont, Natolin, Otwock), as well as in Bodzentyn, Chroszcz, Białystok, Biała Podlaska or Wolbórz.[56] During the period when the electors of Saxony occupied the Polish throne, more attention was focused on their architectural design. Such specialists as architects, carpenters, painters and designers were frequently engaged in preparation of a specific exhibition.[57]

53 M. Siewniak, 'Zwierzyniec – ponadczasowe zjawisko społeczno-krajobrazowe. Od Tiglatpilesaria (1115–1076 p.n.e.) do Edwarda Gierka (Arłamow 1989)', *Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura*, vol. 109, 2012, no. 30 (8A), p. 22.

54 Ibid.

55 Łukaszewicz, *Ogrody zoologiczne*, p. 107.

56 Cf. ibid., p. 128.

57 Siewniak, 'Zwierzyniec – ponadczasowe zjawisko', p. 23.

In Poland, the solutions used in the royal menagerie of Versailles (built by order of Louis XIV between 1662 and 1664) were adopted relatively late when compared to the European trends (Fig. 7). New types of deer parks were represented by the eighteenth-century parks based on two remarkable radial architectural designs: the shape of the fan (*éventail*) and the shape of the star (*étoile*).[58] Fan-shaped arrangements were used in deer parks created during the Saxon period in and near Warsaw. Augustus II attempted to modify the deer park in Ujazdów, originally created by Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, but the enterprise was not completed.[59] Another place of this type was the Natolin Pheasantry, also created by order of this king.[60] The star-shaped design was represented by deer parks owned by the Radziwiłł family: in Alba near Nieśwież, created by Michał Kazimierz 'Rybeńko' Radziwiłł between 1755 and 1758,[61] and in Czarnawczyce.[62] In addition, a similar plan was developed for the deer park in Wolbórz designed by Francesco Placidi for the bishop of Kuyavia, Adam Ostrowski.[63]

At the end of the eighteenth century, a distinct turn in animal presentations was observed across the entire Europe. The first zoological gardens emerged, resulting from increasingly important exploratory and educational needs which only could be satisfied at such places. Old deer parks ceased to be fashionable or needed. The first zoological garden in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was created in 1833 in Podhorce by a Polish zoologist and biologist Stanisław Konstanty Pietruski (1811–1874), who conducted research on fauna there. Unfortunately, the zoo was destroyed by fire in 1848.[64]

However, were old Polish deer parks only intended for hunting? Were they only useful and practical places, as Jan Ostroróg wrote? In the early modern era, animals were treated as exhibits which were worth collecting and added to the collector's splendour. Many exotic species were kept in menageries, which mostly belonged to rulers. Private places of this type were created throughout Europe by the richest families, and even wealthy merchants owned them for business purposes, as they provided

58 Ibid.

59 T. Bernatowicz, "'Entre éventail et étoile". Zwierzyńce w osiemnastowiecznej Polsce i ich europejskie związki', *Barok. Historia – Literatura – Sztuka*, vol. 4, 1997, no. 1 (7), p. 105.

60 Bernatowicz, *Ogrody do zabaw myśliwskich*, pp. 272–73

61 Bernatowicz, "'Entre éventail et étoile"', p. 106.

62 Ibid., p. 107.

63 M. Wichowa, 'Wolbórz ośrodkiem humanizmu renesansowego w XV i XVI wieku', in: *Wybrane karty z dziejów Wolborza. Materiały z konferencji naukowej z okazji 950-lecia miasta (10 X 2015)*, ed. ead. (Łódź, 2016), p. 67.

64 G. Brzęk, 'Historia zoologii w Polsce do 1860 roku', *Prace Komisji Historii Nauki Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności*, vol. 3, 2001, pp. 154–56.

paid entertainment. Rare, foreign animal species toured the Old Continent with travelling menageries and circuses. Some of them, e.g. the female rhinoceros Clara or the female elephant Hansken, visited Poland. This perspective on collectorship could also be seen in deer parks, since herds were treated as exhibits, i.e. aesthetical objects to admire.

Fig. 7

W. Swidden, *La Ménagerie de Versailles*, 1683–1684

King Jan III's liking for animals has already been mentioned. Sobieski created a deer park on the eastern outskirts of his Wilanów residence. Like all other parks of this type, it was intended for hunting. In addition, the residence had an aviary, which provided predatory species for the king, who used them while hunting. On 22 April 1694, the king's chronicler Kazimierz Sarnecki recorded: 'The king and the queen ate dinner and after the meal, the king took a ride to the deer park to watch his fallow deer which lived there in large numbers'.[65]

Thus, Sobieski appreciated both hunting activities and opportunities for watching animals – their habits and beauty. He found them not only the sources of entertainment, but also aesthetical objects worth collecting, and he was interested in their behaviour and psyche.[66]

Deer parks can thus be treated as specific landscape museums. As Martyna Łukasiewicz remarks, the relationship between the space and the displayed object, i.e. a living exhibit that moves around and has its biological needs, is an important issue also in the discourse of contemporary museology.[67] The third important component in this system is the audience. Tensions between these three shape the museum perspective and explain the particular nature of communication in an exhibition. Thus, in this context, it is worth looking at old Polish deer parks as other types of natural museums. While early exhibitions presented in separate rooms mainly emphasised a close contact between an object and a visitor, in the case of deer parks the spatial relationship was important. Longer distances provided different opportunities for the exhibition design – an exhibition involved both a near perspective to let visitors watch animals from a short distance (as Sobieski did) and a far perspective. Herds were considered a landscape

65 K. Sarnecki, *Pamiętniki z czasów Jana Sobieskiego*, vol. 1, ed. S. Sierpowski (Wrocław, 2010), p. 152.

66 Łukaszewicz, *Ogrody zoologiczne*, p. 111.

67 M. Łukasiewicz, *Reinterpretacja przestrzeni wystawienniczej*, www.researchgate.net/publication/290929433_Reinterpretacja_przestrzeni_wystawienniczej (accessed 23 Sept. 2022), p. 1.

component, a living part of a landscape perceived as a painting; an element which made this landscape more beautiful and more dynamic.

Transforming the environment

In the case of deer parks, where living collections were presented, the most important issue was to create a proper contextualisation of the space. At the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, a modernistic vision known as the 'white cube', presented by Brian O'Doherty, emphasised the emanating power of an object; in this conception, the surroundings of the object were downplayed, allowing it to shine with its own light.[68] This separation from old interpretations of the museum context drew attention to the importance of the environment of an exhibition itself and gave an impulse to analyse it as an independent element with its own meaning and, furthermore, one that reinforced the meaning of presented objects. However, it seems that creators of deer parks clearly understood the value of the landscape surrounding their exhibits and they did not want to reduce its influence on them. They made it more beautiful and corrected the nature to provide good conditions for the presentation of their collections. It was not a specific place that mattered, but creation of the appropriate environment, similar to a setting for a precious stone, which is intended to attract even more attention to it.

Quoting Victoria Newhouse, Maria Popczyk considers this trend to be an environmental art in museum design, one that relies on transforming natural surroundings so that they become a piece of art (the term 'environment' refers here to both natural and artefactual surroundings).[69] According to Newhouse, the location of an exhibit, which contains a visual context created by the structure and colour of the walls, sources of light and the use of chiaroscuro, directly affects the reading of an exhibition.[70]

Building such musealised space was the aim of creators of deer parks in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. The most important issue was to set out good viewpoints from which visitors could admire animals. Various kinds of artificial hillocks were erected to create vast perspectives and to ensure that visitors could watch the movements and the dynamics of living exhibits. Deer parks as museums surprised visitors and let them enjoy new experiences with each visit. Dioramas described by Maria Popczyk gave no more than an illusion of a contact with nature, as they were motionless images presenting scenes which may have

68 M. Jadzińska, "*Duże dzieło sztuki*". *Sztuka instalacji – autentyzm, zachowanie, konserwacja* (Kraków, 2012), p. 138.

69 V. Newhouse, *Towards a New Museum* (New York, 1998), pp. 220–261, quoted after: Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 109

70 V. Newhouse, *Art and the Power of Placement* (New York, 2005), p. 8.

occurred in natural conditions. Hunting parks in the Commonwealth created many such scenes at any moment and specially built elevations guaranteed that several images could be seen simultaneously.

In 1688, the deer park in Żółkiew was visited by a French clergyman (his precise identity is unknown), who noted that he had seen a castle garden with pavilions made of glass and a three-storey tower from which a view of the whole area could be admired. In addition, he described a huge park with dense groves and vast lawns where roe deer and red deer were strolling.[71] The tower was probably located on the Haraj Hill, inside the boundaries of the Żółkiew deer park. A special viewing loggia was constructed in 1526 in Szydłowiec, this time within the castle walls, from which animals strolling in the scrub of the hunting park could be admired.

Another method of creating many 'living dioramas' for visitors was a system of paths by which they could easily move within a deer park. The architectural design of the royal menagerie of Versailles, well known across Europe, was based on a central pavilion with a radial system of alleys. In the eighteenth century, this arrangement was used to develop a plan of a perfect prison. The concept of a panopticon was presented by Jeremy Bentham in a series of letters published in London in 1787.[72] In Poland, symmetrical (axial and central in particular) arrangements referring to a panopticon were introduced in deer parks relatively late. This design was readily used across Europe, but in the culture of Old Poland the idea was never fully adopted. The closest to a central design was the architecture of Alba, established near Nieśwież on the Usza River.

The Alba deer park had its best period under the ownership of Kazimierz 'Rybeńko' Radziwiłł. Between 1755 and 1758, he modified the whole residence and implemented the idea of the panopticon.[73] The estate had three deer parks and a pheasant run at that time. Behind the palace, which had been remodelled in the rococo style, there was a French garden and a deer park separated by a canal. The main alley, which constituted the line of perspective, accentuated the domination of axial symmetry in the design of the park. A gazebo designed by Jan Hill functioned as the central pavilion of the deer park and was surrounded by small rooms intended for guests. The gazebo was a two-storey wooden pavilion with a shingled roof. Inside, winding stairs led to the upper floor with eight holes (known as 'perspectives') in the roof, where telescopes were probably used. Animals could be watched from above like in Szydłowiec and Żółkiew. The holes were usually covered with linen curtains to pro-

71 F. de S., *Relation d'un voyage de Pologne fait dans les années 1688 et 1689* (Paris, 1858), quoted after: M. Osiński, *Zamek w Żółkwi* (Lwów, 1933), pp. 71–72.

72 M. Foucault, *Nadzorować i karać. Narodziny więzienia*, trans. T. Komendant (Warszawa, 1993, original title: *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, 1975), pp. 235–73.

73 Bernatowicz, "'Entre éventail et étoile"', p. 106.

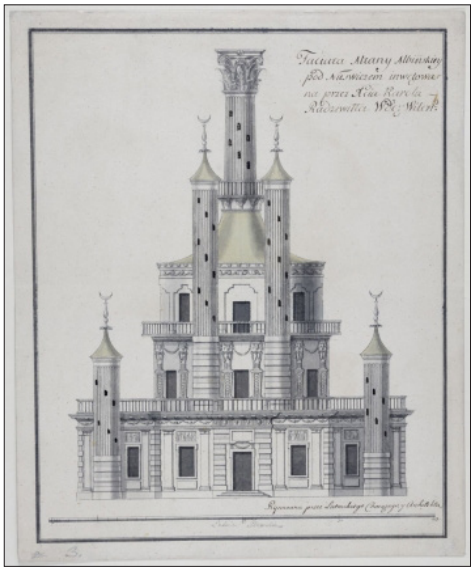

Fig. 8

Design for the pavilion on the island in Alba, by Leon Lutnicki, after: T. Bernatowicz, *Alba. Od renesansowej willi do kompozycji krajobrazowej* (Warszawa, 2009)

tect visitors from excess sunlight.[74] From each 'perspective' there opened a vista down a path cut in a birch wood. Eight larger panoramic lanes radiated from the gazebo. At the end of each lane, there was a sign with a picture of an animal: a bear, a deer, a fallow deer, an European bison, a camel, a lynx and an elk.[75]

According to Maria Popczyk, aestheticisation of landscape occurs when scenic routes appear in it.[76] This direction of changes was very distinct in Alba. A further transformation of this place occurred between 1780 and 1786 by order of another member of the Radziwiłł family, Karol Stanisław 'Panie Kochanku'. He created one of the largest deer parks in the country where approximately three hundred square hectares of land were inhabited by over a hundred various animal species.[77] The previous radial paths were changed into water canals which led to a circle pool with an island in the centre. The island offered vistas over the entire deer park, while water in the canals acted as a mirror, multiplying the panoramas. Watercourses reflected light rays and created various optical illusions. This use of water was popular in Baroque mirror gardens and was seen across Europe.[78]

The central island in Alba was an excellent viewing point typical of all panoptical landscape parks. A grand gazebo was built there based on a design by the architect Leon Szkutnicki. However, the author of the concept for this building was Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł,[79] which is evidenced by the text in the right upper corner of the design drawing, which is stored in the Print Room of the Warsaw University Library (Fig. 8). The gazebo was erected on the occasion of King Stanislaus Augustus's visit there in September 1784. An anonymous witness of this visit noted that the canals

74 T. Bernatowicz, *Alba. Od renesansowej willi do kompozycji krajobrazowej. Z badań źródłowych nad architekturą ogrodów na Kresach* (Warszawa, 2009), p. 25

75 Ibid.

76 Popczyk, *Estetyczne przestrzenie*, p. 120.

77 Łukaszewicz, *Ogrody zoologiczne*, p. 129.

78 A. Wojciechowska, *Koncepcja ogrodu lustrzanych obrazów w Dolnośląskim Centrum Dziedzictwa Przyrodniczego i Kulturowego w Wojsławicach*, a Master's thesis written under the supervision of T. Nowak Ph.D. (habil.), Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences, The Faculty of Environmental Engineering and Geodesy, major: Landscape Design (Wrocław, 2010), p. 13.

79 Bernatowicz, "'Entre éventail et étoile"', p. 107.

> […] were arranged as star rays that led to a central point, that is, a round plaza with a gorgeous gazebo modelled on the church of St. Sophia in Istanbul and decorated with mosques conceived and designed by the prince, [our] host, himself, surrounded by eight side buildings which did not obstruct the prospect down the same number of canals.[80]

Based on this description, it can be concluded that the gazebo was erected on an artificial island created by the course of waterways. The use of light and mirror effects created an incredible spectacle. In Alba, hares, fallow deer, boars, roe deer, elks and partridges could be observed. Sometimes bears were brought in and hunted when the king visited Nieśwież.[81]

The idea of an island as a diorama is also one of the exhibition concepts used in deer parks perceived as natural museums. The surrounding water, like in Wolbórz or Alba, had an important function related to presentation of living collections in these parks. Thanks to its reflecting properties, the exhibition was surrounded by *sui generis* mirror, which multiplied the strolling herds, creating an impression of a nearly indefinite set of animals. Due to the optical illusion, more and more animals or landscape components could be seen, although they were only reflections. In addition, exhibits could be observed from a boat; this changed the angles of vision, as well as created new perspectives and viewing points. Moreover, the eyes of visitors could be equipped with telescopes to see animals in more detail. The variety of types of observation, i.e. at a short or long distance or in mirror-like reflection, led to the perception of an exhibit as an object of visual desire. Animals were not only watched, but also studied. The variability of eye accommodation gave opportunities to enjoy diverse visual experiences and ensured many kinds of cognitive pleasure.

Water as a component of the exhibition space was used not only in deer parks with islands, but also in the so-called mirror gardens. During the Baroque period, mirrors were elements of both interior and exterior spaces. Gardens with glass panes and water used as reflective surfaces originated in France. The pan-European fashion for mirrors was initiated by the launch of the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles in 1684. Water used as an mirror gives an excellent illusion of the multiplication of reality. This element has a unique reflective property, because the light is partially reflected or scattered on its surface and partially comes from its depth, so even a tiny wave creates another image of the same object.[82]

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80 *Bytność Stanisława Augusta w Nieświeżu*, publ. by E. Raczyński (Poznań, 1843) (*Obraz Polaków i Polski w XVIII wieku*, vol. 16), p. 60, quoted after: Bernatowicz, *Alba. Od renesansowej willi*, p. 36.

81 Bernatowicz, *Alba. Od renesansowej willi*, p. 37.

82 M.G.J. Minnaert, *Światło i barwa w przyrodzie*, trans. W. Zonn (Warszawa, 1961, original title: *Licht en kleur in het landschap*, 1937), p. 36.

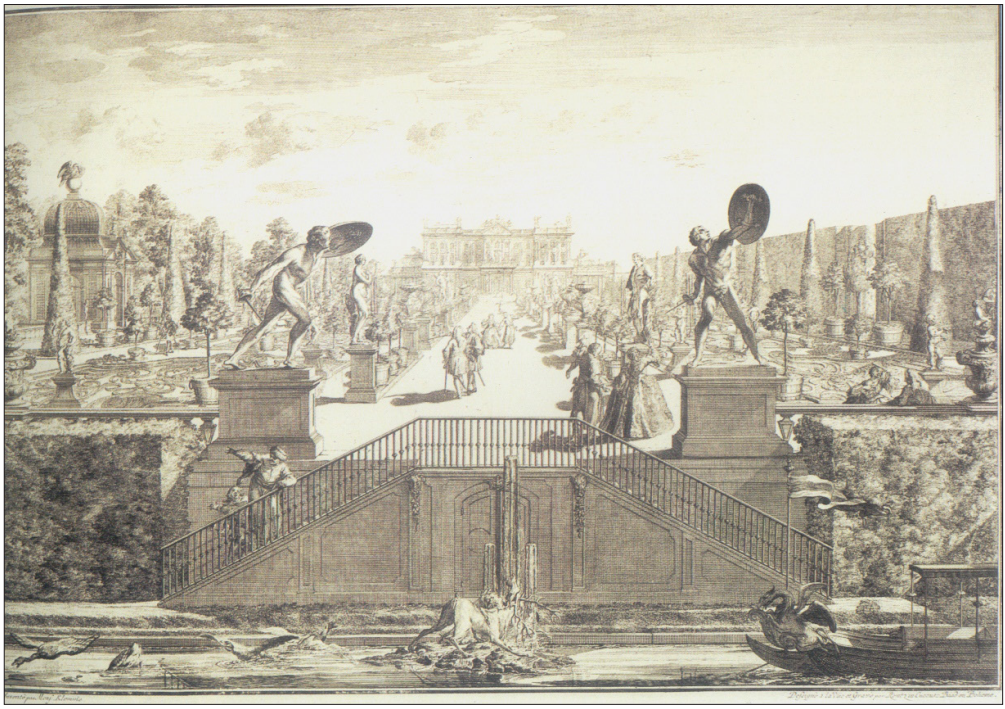

Fig. 9

P. Ricaud de Tirregaille, *A garden salon in the Branicki Palace in Białystok*, 1755–1756

The best example of this design was the park surrounding the Branicki Palace in Białystok. Between 1725 and 1771, when the palace was owned by Jan Klemens Branicki, it gained its final shape under the supervision of Jan Zygmunt Deybel followed by Jakub Fontana. The main works were carried out in the 1750s.[83] Their result was a garden divided into two parts: the upper part (called a salon) connected with the palace and the lower part where an animal park was designed containing a separate deer park and fallow deer park[84] (Fig. 9). The function of mirrors was performed by the Biała River and its backwater, as well as many ponds, canals, fountains and high cascades. The fallow deer park was created later than the deer park and it was situated along the crosswise axis of the garden complex. Thus, while the deer park was located along the main panoramic axis and constituted an extension of the palace perspective, fallow deer could be watched in a more private, more distant and less official area. Deer were observed in motion and the dynamics of their bodies could be admired, which was possible due to views from various points. In the case of fallow deer, the main aim was observation of their habits through two 'perspectives' (i.e. holes in the fence) with a small watering pond for fallow deer placed opposite. Individual animals were reflected in the water. When the animals gathered at the pond

83 T. Grabowski, 'Założenie pałacowo-ogrodowe Pałacu Branickich w Białymstoku', *Fides et Ratio*, vol. 11, 2012, no. 3, p. 160.

84 Ibid., pp. 157, 160.

to quench their thirst, a visitor could observe them without being noticed. The 'perspectives' were also placed in a separate building at the end of the park, near its wall.

To return to Maria Popczyk's considerations analysed above: she combined a diorama, i.e. a form of a natural museum, with the concept of stage design and theatralisation of an exhibition. For Mieke Bal, a museum is also a kind of performance – a vision of one person who is watched by the audience. However, Bal also emphasises the active role of visitors: not only do they enjoy the performance, but they also participate in it. Their senses condition the perceived reality. It is at the intersection point of the links between displayed objects, stage design, props and lighting that the contexts of an exhibition are created.[85] Bal calls it 'a dialogic model of participation'.[86] It seems an exceptionally accurate description of exhibitions in deer parks of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. Visitors played alternate roles: they were either the passive audience of a show, or actors who allowed their senses to deceive them. They readily entered the game with the surrounding reality.

In the case of deer parks, the concept of a museum as theatre was manifested at three different levels. Sometimes it was literally: theatres were built in these gardens to add to the available attractions. In Białystok, for instance, a theatre (*Operhauz*) was built, with a storehouse where costumes and all decorations were kept.[87] The *Operhauz* was a tall, two-storey building with loges, a separate space for the orchestra, and dressing rooms. Its decorations included two coats of arms: the Gryf of the Branicki family and the Ciołek of Izabela née Poniatowska, the king's sister and wife of Jan Klemens Branicki. The garden was a natural stage design intended to create an appropriate atmosphere for bucolic and mythological plays.

However, the crucial component of a deer park's function of a museum-and-theatre was the stage where animals were the main actors. A good example of such a project was a wooden hunting manor (*Lusthaus*) built at the beginning of the seventeenth century in Zamość according to the design by its owner, Jan Zamoyski. One of its sides was bordered by wetland closed by a forest which later was transformed into a small deer park (*Zwierzyńczyk*), which was precisely a theatre of nature, or a living museum.[88] Mostly attracted by food, animals walked up to the fence and could

85 M. Bal, *Wystawa jako film*, in: *Display. Strategie wystawiania*, eds M. Hussakowska, E. Tatar (Kraków, 2012), p. 108.

86 Łukasiewicz, *Reinterpretacja przestrzeni*, p. 10.

87 Inwentarz pałacu i ogrodu Branickich 1771/1772, in: *Pałac Branickich w Białymstoku*, vol. 1: *Inwentarze z XVII i XVIII stulecia*, part 1, eds K. Łopatecki, W. Walczak (Białystok, 2018), pp. 297–302.

88 M. Kseniak, K. Pałgan, P. Szkołut, 'Zwierzyniec. Od hetmańskiego parku łowieckiego do Parku Narodowego i obywatelskiego miasta ogrodu', *Barometr Regionalny*, vol. 12, 2014, no. 4, p. 53.

be observed from the windows or the porch of the manor. The landscape behind was a natural stage decoration for the approaching animals.[89]

However, the vision of nature was sometimes artificially enriched. For instance, behind the pond in the fallow deer park in Białystok there was a fresco, in documents described as *The End of the World*, which created an illusion of the garden's endlessness. The author of the fresco was an outstanding painter Wilhelm Neunhertz, active in Poland in the eighteenth century.[90] It was the longest perspective in the Białystok garden. Unfortunately, it did not escape destruction and by the time of Branicki's death in 1771, it no longer adorned in the fallow deer park.

According to Bal, the presence and movements of a visitor within the exhibition space create the basis for the process of narration, that is, a plot.[91] Thus, a visitor is a co-teller of a story which is developed in the process of perceiving the relationships between the objects and the space. Bal perceives a museum not only in the perspective of a theatre, but also in terms of a text, and she often uses linguistic terminology in descriptions of exhibitions.[92] Thus, an attempt to combine these two concepts can be made, and it seems that 'narrative' is the category which connects them.

Visitors to deer parks in Old Poland perceived them as true animal gardens, full of incredible creatures and curiosities they had never seen before, but first of all, as full of wild game animals. The variety, freedom and beauty of those animals were associated with paradise gardens free of dangers or predators. Architectural and economic considerations that ruled hunting parks tamed nature and made it subordinate to human beings, depriving it of fierceness and its rights. This is how the tale of animals enclosed in landscape museums was created.

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89 In addition, there was a theatre on the water in the deer park and gondola rides on the canals were offered.

90 Grabowski, 'Założenie pałacowo-ogrodowe Pałacu Branickich', p. 157.

91 Bal, *Wystawa jako film*, p. 110.

92 M. Bal, 'Dyskurs muzeum', in: *Muzeum Sztuki. Antologia*, ed. M. Popczyk (Kraków, 2005), p. 354.

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