

The *smellscapes* of Lublin.

An Olfactory Urban History of Interwar Poland.

By nosing around the history of the Polish city of Lublin I explore the various olfactory atmospheres characterising the city during the first half of the 20th century. The smell of bakeries, sewage and horse dung on the streets, the air of little shops emitting a typical mixture of nafta, herring and leather, and the odour of backyards exhaling the presence of communal toilets, litter heaps and butcher's waste – they all narrate the story of the emergence and decay of multicultural societies, the ups and downs of food supply, the struggle for modernisation. They tell us about ecologic pollution, of changing notions of hygiene as well as about social struggles.

Smellscapes substantially contribute to a city's atmosphere, they reflect sociocultural, political, economic and ecological conditions and are constituted by various aspects: people, places, objects, in particular consumed products. Certain parts of cities were and are identified by the characteristic scents associated with the activities carried out there, including markets, industrial zones, train stations etc. Smells play a crucial role in urban space perception and define one's environment and orientation within it. Odours have an unmatched impact on our perception of our surroundings. We often, mostly unconsciously, evaluate persons, situations, our environment, through our nose. The sense of smell is very sensitive as to the transmission of cultural values and social classifications. By asking who smelled and what smelled I also observe power relations and socio-political sensitivities.

I aim at writing an olfactory urban history of Lublin, scrutinising the changing odours, airs and atmospheres in relation to the history of the region in the 20th century. Currently, I concentrate on selected case-studies (neighbourhood, street, courtyard or the shop) in the first half of the 20th century, looking closer at everyday-life-history. Which were the dominant *smellmarks* shaping Lublin? Which were the significant odours indicating or marking transition? Which were the strategies of odour control and odour management? And what were the politics behind odour policies? Furthermore, how did olfactory constructions and social categories overlap?

By the example of Lublin I aim at providing a (olfactory) history of East-Central Europe in the first half of the 20th century, by observing the flow of *smellscapes* I narrate the transitions and continuities of the region.