

**The Artistic Ensemble and the Identity of the Theatre Institution.
Paradigm of Ensemble at the Polski Theatre in the years 2006-2016**

Can a theatre ensemble be more than just a group of performers appearing in productions? Can the collective work of artists shape what an institution truly becomes? These are the central questions behind this project, which focuses on the Polski Theatre in Wrocław during the years 2006–2016—one of the most influential public theatres in Poland at the time.

The aim of the project is to explore how an acting ensemble—as a community of people, values, and shared practices—co-creates the identity of a theatre institution. Typically, theatres are viewed through the lens of their leaders: artistic directors, stage directors, or individual creators. This project proposes a different perspective, showing that it is precisely the ensemble—through continuity, daily collaboration, and internal relationships—that can be the binding and defining force of a theatre over time.

The motivation behind this research arises from a need to shift the way we think about cultural institutions. In an era of organizational change and ongoing debates about public funding for culture, it is crucial to ask what truly sustains a theatre. Beyond its artistic program or the prestige of its leadership, the structure and cohesion of the ensemble play a critical role. The Polski Theatre in Wrocław offered a compelling case: for many years, its ensemble co-shaped the institution's identity through constant presence, collective responsibility, and a unique work ethics.

The project will involve archival and institutional research, analysis of the repertoire and performances, as well as in-depth interviews with ensemble members. A photographic exhibition documenting the theatre's life will also be curated as a means of sharing preliminary results with a broader audience. The research will culminate in a doctoral dissertation and a series of scholarly publications.

The expected outcome of the project is a new model for understanding public theatre—not just as a hierarchical institution, but as a community. The project also has a practical dimension: it may inspire more democratic and sustainable approaches to managing cultural institutions. It highlights the value of investing in the continuity of an ensemble, as it can serve as the foundation of a theatre's strength.