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**The custom in the art of Gdańsk in 16th and 17th century. Terminological and methodological problems concerning the research on genre scenes and actualisation in art.**

Works of art that were created in Gdańsk between 1600 and 1700 in which the daily life is the main theme or actualisation occurs, are the subject of my thesis. The aim of my dissertation is their analysis, placing in historical context and the answer to the following questions: what was the reason for creating such works, what was their function and their main audience? Terminology is of high importance here, as it determines the key in choosing the objects that should be used and methodology.

Traditionally in art history the representations of daily life are described with the term *genre*. The first one who used it was Denis Diderot in *Essai sur la peinture* from 1766. The term however, was more often used in 19th century and in 20th century it was commonly accepted. Still it is one of the most controversial terms in art historian's vocabulary and the discussion on its meaning is far from end. Some of the researchers saw in *genre* works moralising function, but there were others who claimed that such scenes are primarily of esthetical or comical meaning. One of the interpretations that aroused most objections was of Svetlana Alpers who wrote that *genre* scenes were the way of describing the world of Dutch in art. In the defining process and later in the discourse were involved such prominent art historians as Erwin Panofsky, Konrad Regner, Hessel Mediema, Eddy de Jongh and Jan Białostocki. The latter wrote that all ways of seeing *genre* have its reasons. The subject of this discussion was the 17th century Dutch art. It is hard to point out the publications comparing in detail Dutch art works described as *genre* with those created in Eastern Europe which is why the answer whether they had the same functions and meaning is crucial.

Moreover the border between the allegory and *genre* is sometimes, especially in 17th century very hard to define. The actualisation or elements of daily life representations, or like Karel van Mander wrote *naer het leven* scenes (from life) are visible also in sacral art. In Gdańsk allegorical or sacral works of art were very often actualised and they corresponded with current political or social situation. One of the earliest examples is the

panel with *Ten Commandments* (ca. 1480) from St. Mary's Church in Gdańsk in which each of the commandments is shown in two scenes, one presenting the sinful, and the other virtuous behaviour. The other example of sacral subject actualised to be better understood by the viewers is Anton Möller's *Joah repairs the temple*, 1602 (National Museum in Gdańsk) and there are many more less known realisations. That narrowing the subject of the research only to the traditionally understood *genre* scenes would be incomplete can be also shown on the example of Aegidius Dickmann *View of Gdańsk* from 1625, the title page of the city views cycle (PAN library Gdańsk). The inscription, Medusa's head, horn of plenty and four small pictures with daily life representations reveal the real meaning of the print. Thus, the term *genre* seems to be inadequate to the research on daily life scenes and custom representations in the art of Gdańsk.

The need of finding a new key word was reflected in some publications. To begin with *painting of habits* used by Roger de Pile in 18th century or *custom painting* as wrote hundred years later Theodor Visscher. Recently Jacek Tylicki in his publication about Gdańsk drawings used term naturalistic and moralistic art. Using the term *custom* as a key word will enable to include not only works traditionally described as *genre*, but also allegory and storia representations in which showing the story in contemporary realities plays crucial role. Art of 16th and 17th century Gdańsk was closely linked to the social and political situation that is why actualisation was very often used. It seems highly important to use in research on it sources such us reglamentation laws, sermons, diaries that will help to establish what was the function of custom representations and actualisation in art.