

THE MANY FACES OF EMIGRATION

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SYLWIA PIWOWAR

The Emigration Museum in Gdynia, open since 2015, is an essential stop on the cultural map of the Tri-City area. The distinctive building of the former Maritime Station is not just a gem of modernist architecture – it has become a powerful symbol of the sociocultural transformations that the city of Gdynia and Poland itself have undergone in recent decades.



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Photo 1
View from the Museum's viewing terrace, overlooking the entrance to the port in Gdynia. On the right is the French Quay, where Polish transatlantic liners, including the famous MS Batory, once docked

The history of the Maritime Station dates back to the early twentieth century, when the newly established Gdynia – even today still known as the “young city” – was rapidly evolving into a significant port within the Baltic infrastructure. The terminal building, designed as a blend of modernism and functionalism in the early 1930s, quickly established itself as a vital transport hub, handling both passenger and commercial traffic. This place was the beginning and end of many journeys, a witness to the extraordinary stories of emigrants who ventured into the world seeking better lives, employment, and/or greater liberty.

These narratives are recounted by the Emigration Museum in Gdynia, which is located within the specially renovated interiors of the former Maritime Station. It explores the diverse facets of Poles' myriad migration experiences and their contributions to the development of cultures and modern societies in scattered corners of the globe.

More than just permanent exhibitions

The permanent exhibition at the Emigration Museum is a captivating journey tracing the fates of individuals who left their native lands to establish new lives abroad. The museum takes visitors on a deep dive into the multifaceted stories of migrants, from their departure to their arrival in a new homeland. A noteworthy narrative thread of the exhibition addresses the whole process by which migrants adapted to their new surroundings, including their preparations, their often dramatic journey, and the complex procedures they faced. While the exhibition is narrative-driven, its extensive collection of photographs, personal belongings, documents, and letters adds a deeply emotional dimension.

Every year, the Emigration Museum hosts concerts, workshops, research gatherings, meetings with authors, and other cultural activities – all designed to explore the migration phenomenon in different ways and to encourage visitors to contemplate its historical and contemporary impact.

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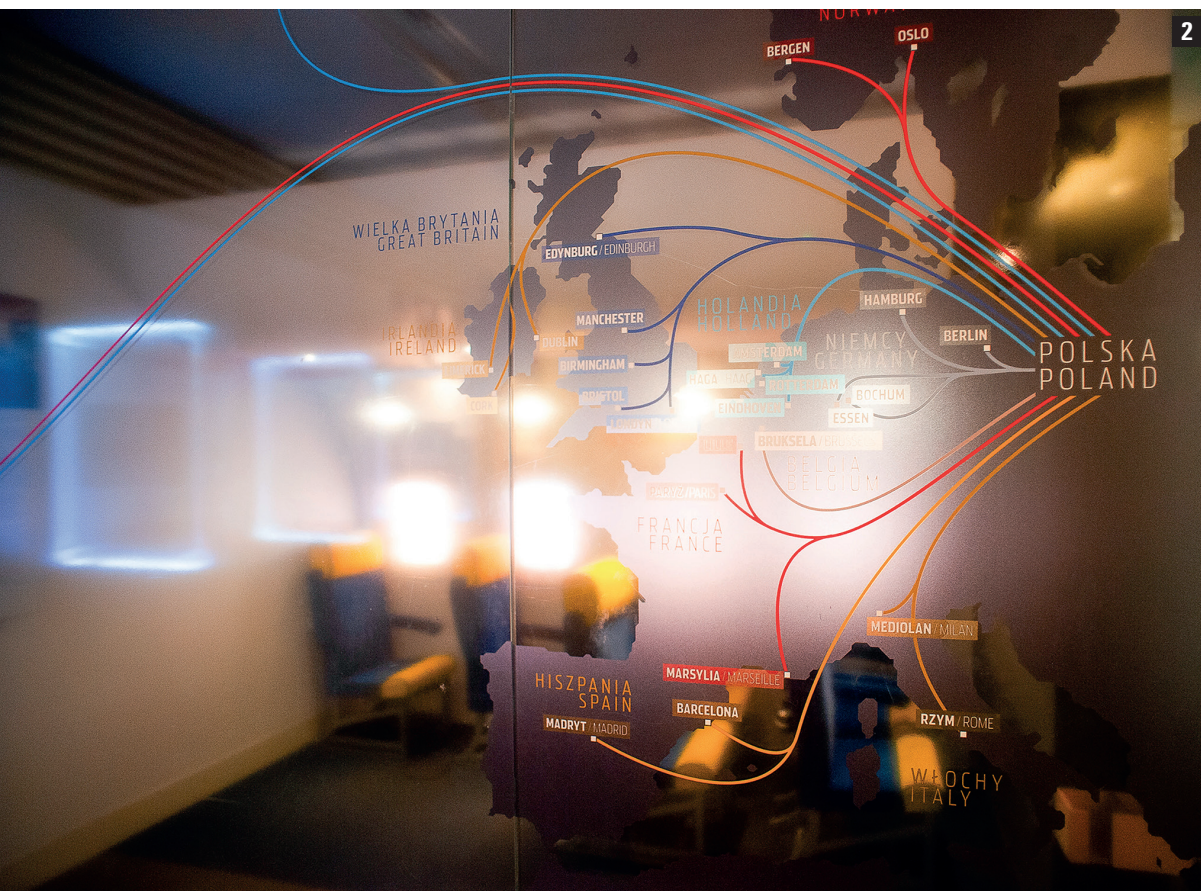
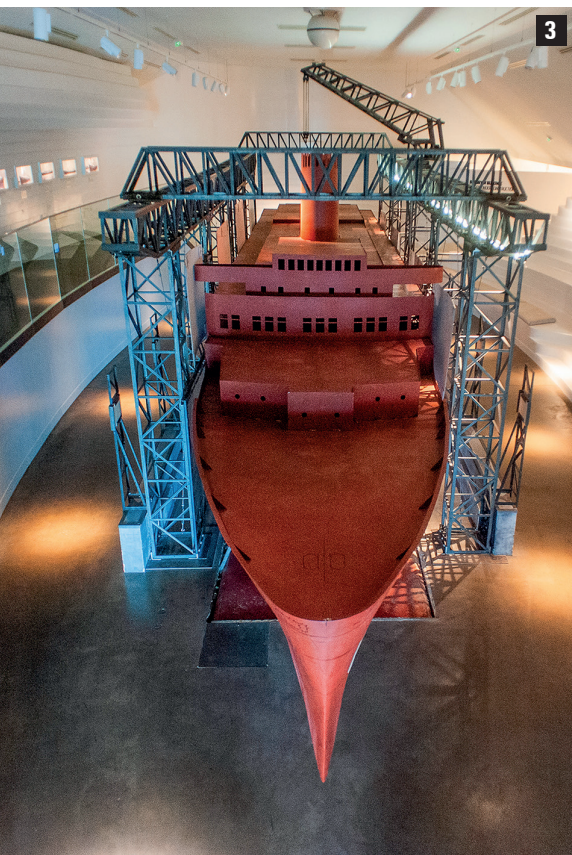


Photo 2
Directions of Polish emigration post-EU accession

Photo 3
A model displaying the famous transatlantic liner MS Batory – once the proud flagship of Gdynia-America Line – under construction at the shipyard

Photo 4
View from the Museum terrace on the Harbor Master's Office in Gdynia

Photo 5
Interior of the former Maritime Station's Transit Warehouse



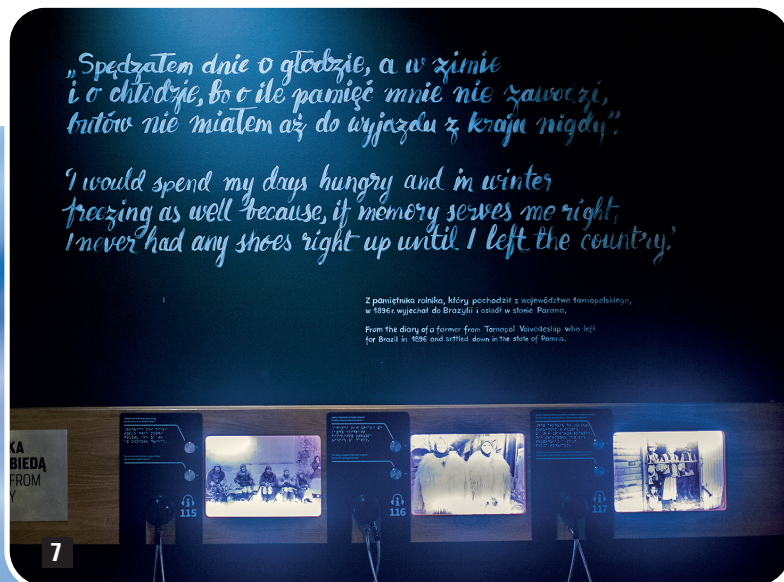


Photo 6
Permanent exhibition
– the deck of a transatlantic
ocean liner

Photo 7
Permanent exhibition
– the recollections
of emigrants

Photo 8
Permanent exhibition
– the communist era
in Poland, as symbolized
by Radio Free Europe
and a Fiat 126 car

Photo 9
Permanent exhibition
– a pocket watch

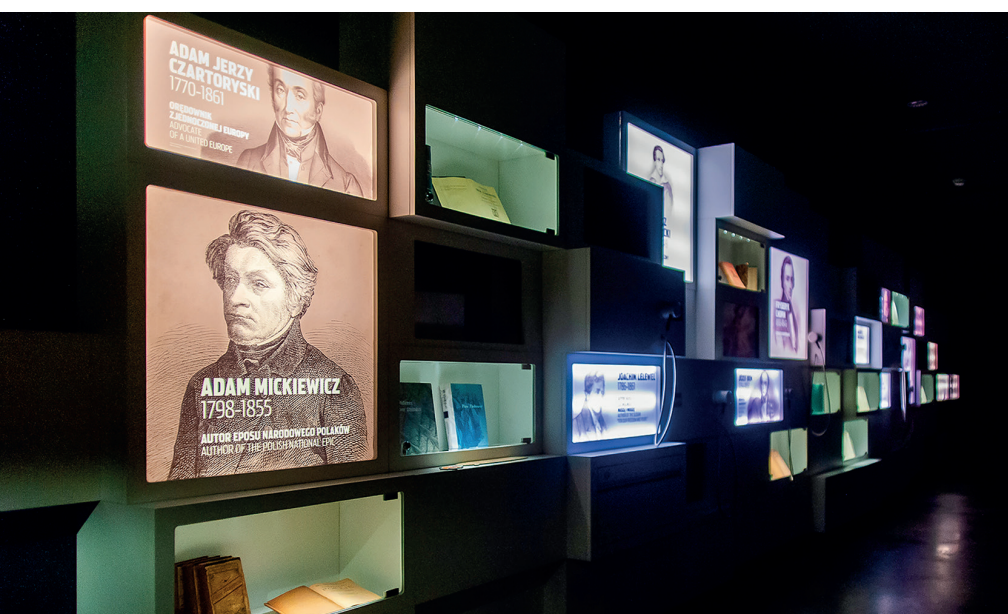
Photo 10
Permanent exhibition
– notable Polish migrants,
illustrated in
the “Ten Centuries of
Wandering” gallery



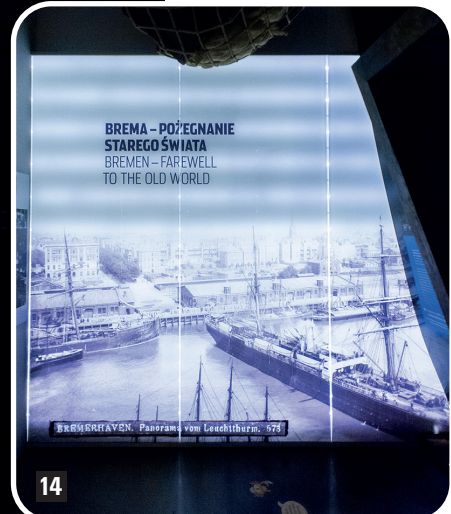
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Photo 11 & 12
Permanent exhibition – “Poles Worldwide” gallery

Photo 13
Permanent exhibition – the gallery of the “Great Emigration”

Photo 14
Permanent exhibition – “Bremen – Farewell to the Old World”

Photo 15
Permanent exhibition – rural cottage of the Sikora family

Photo 16
Permanent exhibition – “The Industrial Revolution”