



...how multimedia has been created

2010-09-15

Visitors to the museum should be prepared for a true spectacle affecting all their senses. The exhibition begins as soon as we step into the glass lift, which plunges down past walls covered with old prints illustrating medieval calligraphy. Just a short while later we find ourselves in the cloakroom, where we can hear the hubbub of various languages. Having left our coats and hats, we now enter a narrow corridor. The hubbub grows louder, the sounds of a haggling crowd slowly become intelligible: "Buy the baaasket!", "Oak woood cases!", "Rings at a good price!", "Soft gold, highest purity", "Buying that, sir?", "Silk of the highest quality, m'am, perfect for a dress! Venetian..."... We can hear Czech, German, and even English from the time of Shakespeare. We pass along another narrow corridor amidst delicate baizes flowing down from the ceiling. It is here that the first surprise awaits us.

From out of a foggy darkness comes a scene straight from the movies – in the foreground we see a woman carrying a fruit basket, on the right and left there are market stalls with merchants energetically hawking their goods. A cutpurse eyes the moneybag of a rich gentleman, and behind them a preacher calls for penance, quoting St. John's 'In pricipio erat Verbum...'. The strains of medieval music played by buskers and a local minstrel fill our ears, stalls overflowing with merchandise line the street with colourful baizes, bulky pieces of amber, hefty cases, painted furniture... After this one-minute scene, we are approached by a town guard, who gestures for us to come in. We follow him into the museum proper, where our attention is drawn to the intact archaeological remains by a spectacle of lights and laser beams that highlight the dates of the preserved layers. Through the glass floor we can admire a detailed relief map of trade routes in 15th century Europe. We tower over the Tatra mountains as a gale blows in from concealed speakers. One step ahead lies a miniature Krakow – a distant bugle call reaches our ears; to the right, an orthodox chorus wafts in from Kiev, and behind that, a tiny Prague... Everything appears to us as though we are peering into a magical crystal globe. Looking north to the sea, we can even hear the swoosh of the surf and cry of the gulls...

Above all this, the first of the great trade routes is laid out, and beyond that, a beautiful epoch-defining landscape. Amidst the willows, fields and forests covering the delicate hills, a merchant cart full of merchandise trundles slowly along. On the horizon, we behold our destination – medieval Krakow with walls and the surrounding Vistula River.

The columns supporting the entire space are equipped with 4 built-in touch screens, allowing us to follow the beginnings of trade and its development throughout the ages. Showpieces hang from the walls in transparent, semi-circular cabinets that tell us the history of the thousands of items that were found below the Market Square...

And all that is just the beginning of the exhibition, a foretaste of the full, amazing journey through time which we can all set out on this September in Krakow.