

# Nowa Huta

## GUIDE



Get the taste of the city which you won't want to leave!

## Nowa Huta

Nowa Huta, which celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2019, is a very interestingly designed city. The oldest housing estates (Wanda, Willowe, Krakowiaków) were still built according to pre-war designs. The later ones are the work of the best Polish architects. Talent, money and solid work were not spared to provide architectural high level. The district center and the most interesting buildings have been entered into the register of monuments of Krakow. Today Nowa Huta is waiting for its forthcoming challenges. Festival, the creation of ecological land, marking bicycle paths, construction of the Museum of the Polish People's Republic or work on the tourist route along the Nowa Huta shelters - this is just the beginning of making this district available to tourists. Its cultural and natural richness, once remaining in the shadow of the plant, is arousing more and more interest in the country and in the world.



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## The Turbulent History from Stalinism to “Solidarity”

### Nowa Huta

*once a separate city, now a district of Krakow - was founded in the 1950s, the most interesting and complete implementation of the intentions of architects of the socialist realism era. The unique urban layout of Nowa Huta has been entered into the register of historic monuments in Krakow. **Efforts are underway to inscribe Nowa Huta onto the UNESCO World Heritage List.***

Wide streets, impressive and well-equipped houses were to become the place where the ruling party wanted to shape a new socialist society. However, not everything went according to their plans. On April 27, 1960, riots related to the construction of a church took place. The city - already connected to Krakow as one body - showed its new face: it became a threat to the system. When it celebrated its 30th anniversary, the turbulent 1980s were approaching. It turned out that not only the May 1 marches, but also opposition demonstrations could march along the wide avenues. **Huge, well-integrated human gatherings became the support for “Solidarity” which transformed Nowa Huta into one of its largest bastions in Poland.**



Excavations for the first block of Nowa Huta commenced on June 23, 1949. A little later, on April 26, 1950, the first worker began to build a plant, later called the W. Lenin Steelworks. **In the record-breaking 1977, the steelworks employed 38,000 people and produced 6.7 million tons of steel per year (today about 1 million).** The basis for the building plan for the center of Nowa Huta included three axes: connecting the new city with the historic center of Krakow (the City Axis), the plant (the Work Axis) and Ratuszowy Square (the Leisure Axis). Tadeusz Ptaszycy - the main architect of Nowa Huta - designed the Central Square (presently Ronald Reagan Central Square) with five arteries coming out, surrounded by a half-octagonal city, on their basis.

According to the ideology of socialist realism, art was to be “socialist in content and national in form.” Renaissance Kraków, Zamość and Kazimierz nad Wisłą survived the war conflagration. Renaissance was therefore recognized as our “national form” and it was decided that Nowa Huta would be built in this style. From the formal side, Polish socialist realist architecture did not refer to Russian at all, where Classicism reigned supreme, but had its own original nature.



1990s, but it is still one of the best preserved examples of the design from the 1950s, with marble stairwells and specially designed furniture.

The steelworks is a giant - hundreds of buildings, entwined pipes and tracks running in different directions. The plant area is about 1000 hectares. **In some halls, several of Krakow's Markets could be placed next to each other.** Vats, as tall as small houses, filled with liquid metal, are reminiscent of volcanoes bubbling with lava.

After 1989, the plant underwent many changes. The patron was the first change (1990) - Włodzimierz I. Lenin no longer suited the new times, so it was renamed with Tadeusz Sendzimir - an outstanding American inventor in the field of metallurgy, of Polish origin. The restructuring of the steelworks began. Individual departments began to close. Some were too toxic, others unprofitable or outdated. The Zgniatacz Rolling Mill was liquidated - the main bastion of “Solidarity” in the steelworks. A memorial monument dedicated to all those who contributed a part of their lives to the creation of the first free trade union in the plant was moved in September 2005 to Central Square. Over time, the steelworks belonging to the State Treasury was incorporated into the Polskie Huty Stali holding company, and then sold to a private investor, Lakshmi Mittal. The new owner carried out a number of investments, demolishing the old halls and putting modern facilities in their place.

On November 23, 2019, the blast furnace was temporarily shut down.

## 1 ArcelorMittal Poland S.A. – Branch in Krakow Former W. I. Lenin, then the T. Sendzimir Steelworks

The Sendzimir Steelworks had been part of the Polskie Huty Stali S.A. consortium since 2003. It was purchased by the LNM concern belonging to the Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal (in 2005–2007 the steelworks were called Mittal Steel Poland S.A.).

**Main gate to the smelter at 1 Ujastek St., erected in 1952–1955, is one of the best examples of socialist realism in Polish art.**

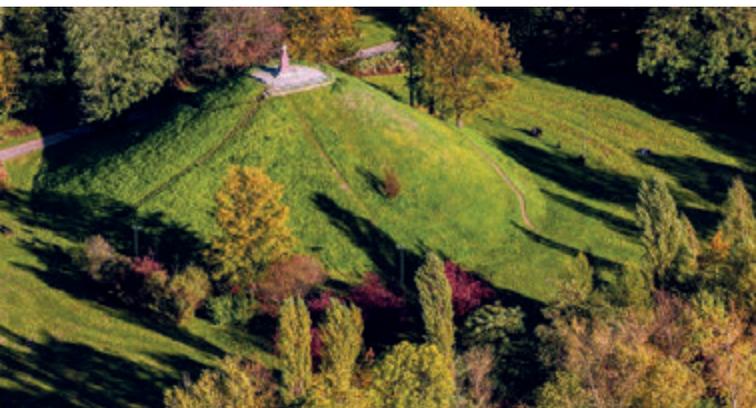
Its authors were Janusz Ballenstedt as well as Janusz and Marta Ingarden. The gate to the complex, flanked by two ofacine buildings, bears all the hallmarks of Renaissance style, which it was modeled after at that time. The Administrative Center of the steelworks is popularly called the “Doge’s Palace” or “Vatican City”. Its magnificent interiors were partly changed by the renovations which took place in the

## 2

## Wanda Mound

Nowa Huta is, in some sense, the oldest part of Krakow. Although it began to be built as late as in 1949, archaeological research revealed that **continuous settlement there lasted at least since 5000 BC**, while the area of the current Old Town was settled as late as in the 8th century AD.

The imposing mound standing just beyond the fence of the plant (near the intersection of Ujastek Mogilski and T. Ptaszyckiego streets) is a reminder of the ancient times. **It is considered the tomb of Wanda - the daughter of the legendary founder of the city, Krak.** As the legend has it, she jumped into the Vistula, so as not to give Poland over to a German with her hand, becoming a symbol of dedication to the homeland. At present, the Wanda Mound is decorated with a small monument erected in the 19th century according to the design of outstanding Polish painter Jan Matejko, who lived in the nearby Krzesławice manor.



the 18th and 19th centuries associated with the outstanding inhabitants of this manor are exhibited in five spacious rooms. The first of those was Hugo Kołłątaj - a famous political activist of the Enlightenment period, co-founder of the first European constitution, called the May 3 Constitution, to commemorate the day of its signing. He leased Krzesławice in 1778 from the Krakow Academy of which he was the rector. In 1876, the manor house was purchased by the greatest Polish painter of the 19th century, Jan Matejko. To buy the property, he allocated the money obtained for the sale of the canvas: „Batory near Pskov”. Since then, Krzesławice became his favorite place of rest. In every free moment he hid away from the metropolitan bustle of Krakow. You can see the famous „Gallery of Portraits of Polish Kings and Princes” there, illustrations for Niemcewicz's *Historical Songs* - considered to be the first example of romanticism in Polish art, as well as Matejko's easel, his boxes for drawings, paintings and reproductions. The property is surrounded by a magnificent English park that connects to the recreational areas of the Nowa Huta Lagoon. The wooden one-nave church of St. John the Baptist and Our Lady of the Scapular is located near Matejko's manor. This shrine was built in 1633-1648. It was originally located in Jawornik near Myślenice, but when a new church was built there in the 1980s, it ceased to be needed and was in danger of being demolished. It was moved to Nowa Huta in 1983-1985, adding an impressive tower that was not originally part of the church.



## 3

Jan Matejko's manor house  
Church of John the Baptist

Jan Matejko's Manor House in Krzesławice (Wańkowicza 25) is presently the property of the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Krakow. The low, single-storey building with an out-building that was once the workshop of Master Jan is open to the public. Furniture, paintings and everyday objects from

## 4

## Wandy and Willowe housing estates

*The building of Nowa Huta was based on the concept of a „neighboring unit” created in the United States in the 1920s, when architects were working on a plan to expand New York City.*

The “unit” was to be a housing estate of 4-5 thousand inhabitants, equipped with the infrastructure needed for living and constituting a separate town. The values of Nowa Huta construction were described as follows: Individual estates are located around the main axis, which form independent entities, to some extent. Each housing estate has everything needed to provide full social services to the residents. They include: shops, service outlets, club rooms, a school, a kindergarten, a nursery, a cinema. Each estate has its own collective garage for passenger cars. Residents can meet all their daily needs within their own housing estate. **Buildings from the first period stretch their arch from the monastery in Mogiła to Kocmyrzowska street**, creating charming settlements full of trees and flowers. The first of the houses listed here is located at Stanisława Mierzwę (14 Wandy Housing Estate; a commemorative plaque was hung on it). It was at the construction of these settlements that the famous **labor leader Piotr Ożański** - a master bricklayer who could arrange 60,000 bricks in 8 hours broke his own record. He became the prototype of **Mateusz Birkut** - the character of **Andrzej Wajda's film “Man of Marble”**.

## 5

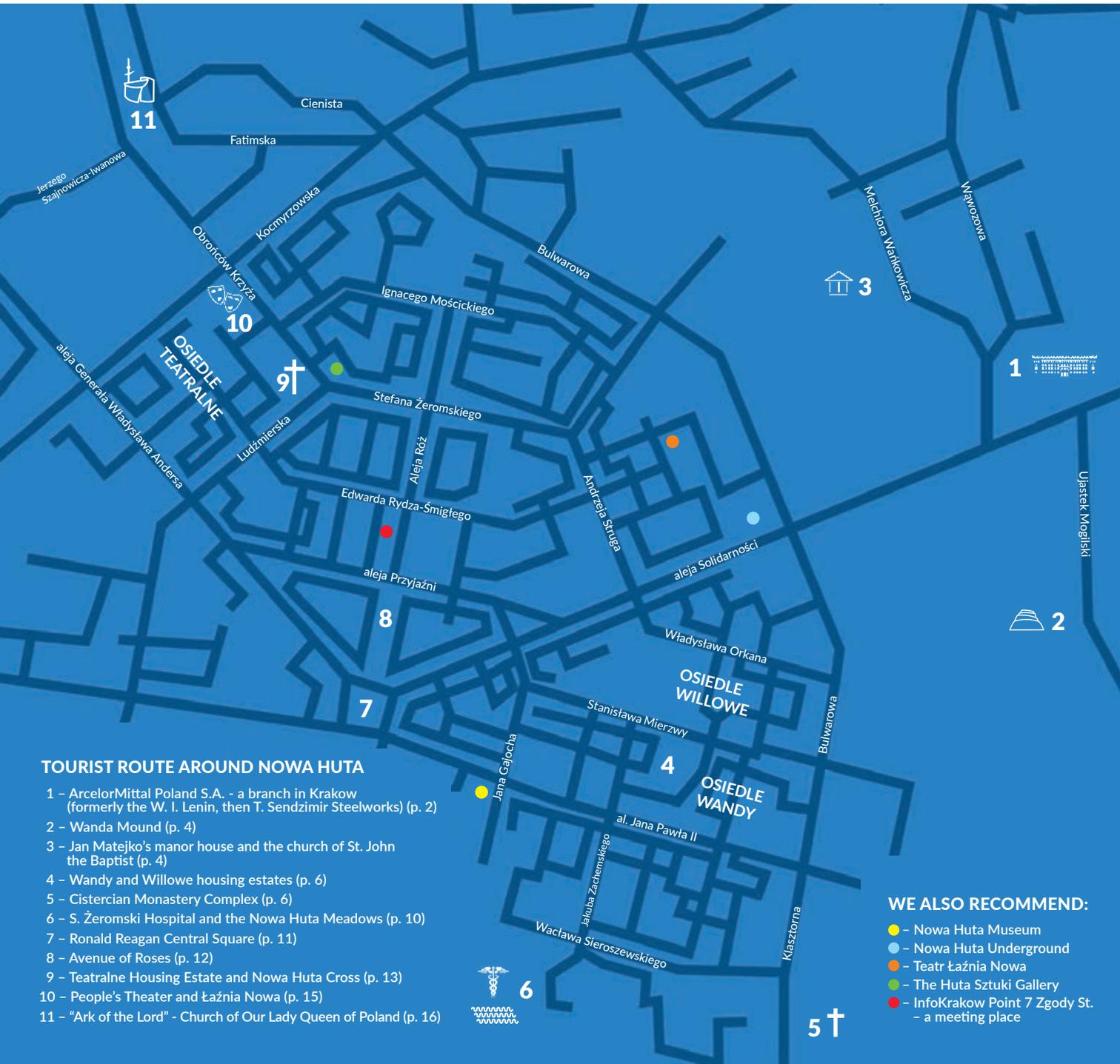
## Cistercian Monastery Complex

The church of the Virgin Mary and Saint Wacław in Mogiła (11 Klasztorna street) and the Cistercian monastery adjacent to it are among **the most valuable sacred buildings in the Malopolska Region**. The **crucifix which is famous for its grace** is housed here. This sculpture was the only surviving element of the furnishings after the fire in 1447. The crucifix was moved to the present chapel in 1588, it was previously located at the junction of the transept and the nave. The founder of both the convent and the wooden church of St. Bartholomew on the other side of the street, was the bishop of Krakow, bl. Iwo Odrowąż. He brought the Cistercians to



Mogiła from Silesia. They settled here in 1222. They began their activities by erecting a cross on the Wanda Mound which was a place of pagan rites until that time. During the Renaissance, Mogiła became famous especially for painting. Brother Stanisław Samostrzelnik, working for the court of King Zygmunt Stary, brought this art to unprecedented heights. His polychromes can be admired in the church and in the monastery library. In the years 1716–1786, the **General Study of the Cistercian Province** operated in the Mogiła monastery, philosophy, theology, canon law and church history were taught. **It was the first university in the area of today's Nowa Huta**. As the Mogiła church, as a religious object, was closed to the faithful, in the time of the BI. Iwo Odrowąża the church of St. Bartholomew was built for them nearby. In its present form, it dates from 1466 and is the work of carpentry master Maciej Mączka. The church has three naves, which are not found in wooden buildings of this type in Poland. The decor dates from the Rococo period and presents people distinguished for the Mogiła convent. A wooden bell tower dating back to 1752 with a domed roof and a passage gate stands next to the church.





**TOURIST ROUTE AROUND NOWA HUTA**

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**WE ALSO RECOMMEND:**

- – Nowa Huta Museum
- – Nowa Huta Underground
- – Teatr Łaźnia Nowa
- – The Huta Sztuki Gallery
- – InfoKrakow Point 7 Zgody St. – a meeting place



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## S. Żeromski Hospital and Nowa Huta Meadows

The Stefan Żeromski Specialist Hospital (66 Na Skarpie Housing Estate), built in 1954-1958 as the City Hospital is located in close proximity to the Ronald Reagan Central Square. The architects, Stefan Porębowicz and Henryk Skrzyński, created **an original assumption in the style of socialist realism with numerous references to Baroque and Renaissance styles**. The bronze bust of the patron of the hospital, the work of M. Konieczny stands in front of the hospital entrance. The hospital is located on a slope, behind which the **Nowa Huta Meadows - a huge area of greenery (about 70 ha)** lie. In the old days, the capricious Vistula, not yet included in the embankments, often changed the riverbed. In the 18th century it flowed along the escarpment on which Nowa Huta was built. The vast meadows are the remnants of its oxbow lake. In the 1950s, a park with a reservoir was to be established here. When the idea was abandoned, **the area became a paradise for 370 plant species and 69 bird species, including many listed in the Red Book of Endangered Species**. This area was recognized ecological by the decision of the Krakow City Council. In the future, the Vistula Old River Park is planned there.



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## Ronald Reagan Central Square

The Ronald Reagan Central Square and its surroundings are a kind of exhibition of the history of Polish architecture of the last half-century. This is because **buildings dating back to all periods of post-war construction** can be found there, implemented by outstanding Polish architects, including: Bolesław Skrzybalski, Janusz and Marta Ingarden, Adam Fołtyń, Tadeusz Uniejewski, Tadeusz Rembiesa, Stanisław Juchnowicz, and Romuald Loegler. Nowa Huta was built in Stalinist times - it was a city of strategic importance for the arms industry; so it could be the first to be bombed.

*Individual quarters resemble fortresses with an entire system of passages and safeguards. For someone who does not know Nowa Huta, it is a complicated maze (even entrances to estates are hidden behind walls and are invisible from the side).*

In 1952-1960, more than **250 anti-aircraft shelters** were built under the Nowa Huta estates. They were built under blocks of flats, health centers, schools, kindergartens, and cultural institutions. **The most effective shelters that have survived to this day are located under the administrative buildings of the plant and the Żeromski hospital**. The first location of the Underground Nowa Huta route created by the Nowa Huta Museum is the shelter under the Complex of Mechanical Schools No. 3 at 37 Szkolne Housing Estate where you can view the exhibition entitled "Emergency".

The defensive nature of the city took its toll on the militia units which dispersed anti-government demonstrations in the 1980s, during martial law. Other buildings are called “pointers” from the 1960s, located within the Handlowe Housing Estate (arch. Janusz Ingarden). They were called “Swedish” because they were modelled on objects erected at that time near Stockholm.

The **Nowa Huta Cultural Center** dates back to the 1970s, when - according to the official propaganda - “Poland was growing in strength and people were to prosper”. Due to the economic crisis of the time, the construction of this multi-functional facility took 10 years. Despite the difficult start, this institution is currently one of the most dynamic centers on the cultural map of Krakow. It conducts comprehensive educational and entertainment activities, offering recipients of all ages dozens of ways to develop individual talents and artistic sensitivity. Its offer is not only addressed to the residents of Nowa Huta. It organizes, among others, numerous exhibitions of contemporary art with Zdzisław Beksiński Gallery at the forefront.

In the early 1970s, the West began to depart from the style called modernism which took the form of large blocks of flats in Poland. A slow retreat towards historical styles began. And then it turned out that socialist realist architecture, so condemned by many, became pioneering in relation to the west. The **new style - postmodernism - resulted in the Centrum E housing estate built in Nowa Huta** in the 1988 to 1995 (arch. Romuald Loegler).

The Nowa Huta Museum has been located as a branch of the Krakow Museum in the building of the former Światowid cinema at the Centrum E 1 housing estate since March 2019. It combines the experience and achievements of the History of the Nowa Huta department of the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow and the Museum of the Polish People’s Republic. It invites guests to view temporary exhibitions devoted to the history of the district and various aspects of life in the Polish People’s Republic, as well as to the semi-permanent exhibition “Atomic terror. Shelters in Nowa Huta”, prepared in a former shelter, renovated especially for this occasion and retrofitted.



one hand, it was optically closed by the Krzesławice Hills, on the other - the Beskids. On April 20, 1970, the foundation stone was laid for the monument at the Avenue of Roses and a competition was announced, which was won by Marian Konieczny. On April 28, 1973, a 74-piece statue of W.I. Lenin - “the leader of the revolution” - was located at the destination. On April 18, 1979, the **Avenue of Roses was shaken by a powerful explosion**. A bomb was placed under the monument, but the load only broke Lenin’s heel. The monument was finally removed on December 10, 1989. It ended up in Wróblowice and was there in an unused fort until 1992, when the Swedish millionaire Big Bengt Erlandsson bought it for the price of 100,000 crowns and exported it from Poland. Today you can admire it in the town of peculiarities in Sweden.

[www.muzeumkrakowa.pl](http://www.muzeumkrakowa.pl)

The first InfoKraków dedicated mainly to residents was opened in 2018 in the building at the 7 Zgody Housing Estate located at the Avenue of Roses. The Cafe Nova Bookstore is also located there to implement a very rich cultural program.

## 8 Aleja Róż (Avenue of Roses)

Originally, it was supposed to be a pedestrian area connecting the communication hub - Central Square, with the main forum of Nowa Huta - the Town Hall Square. The latter was not implemented and the Avenue of Roses became a way to nowhere, typical of socialist urban planning. On the

## 9 Teatralne Housing Estate and the Nowa Huta Cross

The area of today’s Teatralne Housing Estate, colloquially referred to it as “Taiwan” by the first residents, because its construction began far from the existing buildings and new blocks looked like an island on the ocean of grains still rippling there. In the first half of the 1950s the “Świt” cinema and the Ludowy Theater were founded. After 1956, authorities agreed for a church to be constructed, but then withdrew their decision and ordered that a school be erected in the place of the temple. This resulted in an outbreak of riots known as



the fight for the Nowa Huta Cross on April 27, 1960. The confrontation of social protest and the authorities' decisions turned to bloodshed. Several hundred demonstrators and police officers pacifying them were wounded. In 2001, the church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was erected next to the historical cross (2 Ludźmierska). This was the work of Krakow architects, Krzysztof Ingarden and Przemysław Gawor.

The **C. K. Norwid Culture Center (5 Górali Housing Estate)** witnessed the fight for the Nowa Huta Cross. The history of this institution, founded by the Trade Unions of Steelworkers, dates back to the early 1950s. Invariably, the Sphinx Cinema Studio - the last traditional cinema in Nowa Huta - has been operating at the Center for over 60 years. It is frequently visited by tourists who, in addition to the current repertoire, can also watch a movie about the history of Nowa Huta (available in three language versions). In 2018, the Huta Sztuki Gallery inaugurated its activity at the Norwid Center. It presents the works of artists from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s associated with Nowa Huta and a unique collection of matter painting works by the Nowa Huta Group.



For years it has been said that Nowa Huta is famous for two things: good steel and good theater, despite the fact that the main theater building planned at the Central Square was never built, only a chamber stage was erected, i.e. today's People's Theatre (34 Teatralne). Designed by Edmund Dąbrowski and Marta and Janusz Ingarden, it inaugurated its activity on December 3, 1955 with the *Krakovians and Highlanders* play by Wojciech Bogusławski. The repertoire was not accidental - the drama takes place at the nearby monastery in Mogiła. **In remembrance of this premiere, the housing estates opposite the theater was called the Cracovians and Highlanders.** Many outstanding directors have been at the theater, including: Krystyna Skuszanka, Jerzy Krasowski, Józef Szajna, and such actors as: Franciszek Pieczka and Witold Pyrkosz. Due to the nature of the district, considered difficult for the theater, artists who had no chance to break through with their avant-garde ideas elsewhere came to Nowa Huta. With time, however, the predatory avant-garde was replaced by a more subdued, educational repertoire. The beginning of Jerzy Fedorowicz's management in 1989 coincided with political changes in Poland and opened a new period in the history of the People's Theatre, and the staging of the *Man of Marble* became a symbolic settlement with the history of this place.



Today, however, Krakow and Poland more often refer to the second Nowa Huta theater, Łażnia Nowa, housed in the buildings of a former school workshop at the Szkolne housing estate, **it is considered one of the most interesting places on the theatrical map of Krakow**, it is also the heart of one of the most interesting Polish theater festivals - "Divine Comedy". Łażnia Nowa combines artistic and social activities - performances are held in post-industrial halls, often carried out with the participation of local residents, festivals, concerts, exhibitions, film and multimedia shows, meetings and workshops.

[www.ludowy.pl](http://www.ludowy.pl)  
[www.laznianowa.pl](http://www.laznianowa.pl)

## “Ark of the Lord” - Church of Our Lady Queen of Poland

The church was established mainly thanks to the efforts of Karol Wojtyła - the metropolitan archbishop of Krakow and Father Józef Gorzelany appointed the parish priest by him in Bieńczyce in 1965. The temple was consecrated on May 15, 1977. Krakow's architect, Wojciech Pietrzyk, proposed a building in the shape of Noah's Ark settled on Mount Ararat. For people who wanted to survive the hard times of communism, this metaphor was very clear. The latest constructed

part of the assumption was a 70-meter cross-shaped mast with a crown, because the authorities did not want the Christian symbol to rise above the surrounding blocks. The construction of the “Ark” became a symbol of the unity of the entire Christian world. Pope Paul VI sent a stone from the Vatican from the tomb of St. Peter - it became the foundation stone of the new church. Dutch Christians donated 7 bells, and Cardinal König from Vienna - a chrome plate for making the cross-mast. The main altar was made of Carrara marble - the same that was once used by Michelangelo in Rome.



*A small crystal of rutile attached to the tabernacle was brought from the moon by the crew of the Apollo-11 spacecraft.*

The rest of the equipment is equally interesting. The expressive Christ on the side of the nave is the work of the Krakow sculptor Bronisław Chromy. In the underground chapel of Reconciliation you can see the many piets of the Zakopane sculptor Antoni Rząsa. Before the “Ark of the Lord”, numerous clashes took place between the local population and the militia. They usually took place after masses for the liberation of the homeland from totalitarian oppression. A small monument dedicated to the victims of martial law is reminiscent of the times. It is located in the place where a Security Service agent shot a young steelworker, Bogdan Włosik.

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