

THE SUMMARY OF PhD THESIS

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Ph.D. thesis topic: **Hope for the blackface practice to end in Polish theater based on the example of work on the play *Black Skin, White Masks* directed by Wiktor Baginski at the Jan Kochanowski Theater in Opole..**

Thesis supervisor: Marcin Brzozowski, post PhD

The subject of the thesis is an analysis of the creative process that took place during the creation of the roles of: Sophie Schroeder, Marysieńka Sobieska and the Border Control Officer in the play *Black Skin White Masks*, directed by Wiktor Baginski and performed at the Jan Kochanowski Theater in Opole. An important theme of the thesis is addressing the practice of blackface in the theater and the fight against racism through the art of acting. The PhD thesis is a reflection of the impact that the work on the play had on me. The issue we worked on changed me and my approach to the profession, moreover, it strengthened and broadened my perspective on the subject of speaking out on socially important issues, and it also influenced the construction of characters.

The aim is to give an idea of the scale of racist behavior taking place in the theater or taking place with its consent, and to have faith in the changes that speaking out on socially important issues such as racism through the arts can bring.

The dissertation consists of three main chapters divided into smaller subchapters.

In the first part, I describe the way I worked on the play, its formula and assumptions. The period of learning from historical sources, documentaries, painting and the history of the musics was particularly important in the process of creating the role. This stage represented for me an

expansion of knowledge about racism and its roots, as well as its social and psychological consequences. Evenly during the creation of the play, I worked on the body, which took on symbolic meaning in the final scene. The collective role is the central role in this play. This teamwork and strong sense of theatrical community was the fuel of our acting and was the strength of the play. The performance had the hallmarks of an experiment, whose boundaries I carefully explored. The rehearsal period was a time of improvisation, as well as working on dramaturgically structured scenes and developing physical expression under the guidance of the choreographer. It was a time of restraining the actor's ego and giving voice to characters who struggle with racial objectification. In the second part, the work explores the topic of blackface issues. It explains its historical and psychological background and its consequences in the form of nanoracism. I give examples of the use of theatrical makeup that is a symbol of dehumanization and exclusion.

In the following part, I give the floor to: director - Wiktor Baginski and actress- Sibonisive Ndlovu-Sucharska and their stories about the creation of our show, as well as functioning in the Polish theater. Their stories are a testimony to the difficulty of talking about racism, as well as to the role that theater can play in the process of changing perceptions of the Different.

The dissertation depicts my journey through my work on the play *Black Skin White Masks* and its irreversible impact on my creative process in the acting profession.