New Technology Division

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The New Technology Division at the NNW Festival in Gdynia

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From October 2 to 5, Grunwald Square in Gdynia became a meeting space for history, new media, and creative technologies — it was there that the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) presented a full range of its projects as part of the activities of The New Technology Division . Visitors had the opportunity not only to learn about these projects but also to take an active part by playing *“Cyphers Game”*, *“Warsaw Rising”*, and *“Aviators”* — three titles that combine historical knowledge with engaging interactive forms. For years, the IPN has been a partner of the International NNW Film Festival — an event that brings together filmmakers, artists, history enthusiasts, and educators. This year’s edition once again confirmed that history, memory, and culture can go hand in hand with modern technology, creating a shared language of understanding with audiences of all ages. This festival context perfectly reflects what we have observed for years: how the world of computer games intersects with the world of film and audiovisual storytelling. VR — virtual reality — technologies are one of the bridges between these two worlds. Thanks to them, the boundaries between film, education, and gaming are blurring, giving rise to new forms of storytelling about the past. The industries enrich each other: film draws on immersion and interactivity, while games adopt cinematic narrative and dramaturgy. That is why the short film *“Testimony of Help”*, depicting the fate of the Ulma family, fit so well into the atmosphere of the festival. The screening moved audiences of all ages, prompting reflection and discussion. The film is currently available on platforms such as Steam and YouTube — with more information about the production on the website of The New Technology Division.

A Shared Space with the Office of National Education

During the festival, the BNT shared its space with the Office of National Education (BEN), creating a kind of “educational hub” in the heart of Gdynia. BEN invited visitors to listen to recorded testimonies of *Witnesses of History* as part of the *“Told Stories”* project, while also presenting the exhibition *“The Defense of the Cross at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne, 1984.”* This combination of interaction and documentation — a meeting point for educational narratives, biographies, local memory, and testimony — attracted significant interest among festival participants, including young people and educators. The Regional Office of National Education of IPN in Gdańsk also presented its educational offer. Festival guests could additionally explore and purchase historical and popular science publications prepared by the IPN Publishing House.

Historical and Cultural Diplomacy – Strategy and Practice

Alongside the presentations of games and film screenings, the festival featured fascinating discussions, some of which explored the intersections of technology, narrative, and educational mission. Among the panelists discussing how historical memory can serve to build bridges between nations and promote values such as freedom and mutual respect were Prof. Piotr Gliński, Alicia Irene Falkowski, Prof. Piotr Niwiński, Dr. Maciej Ruczaj, István Ijgyártó, and Marek Magierowski. Prof. Piotr Niwiński, representing the Regional Office of Historical Research in Gdańsk, spoke about the IPN’s role in initiatives that connect history, culture, and international relations. His message was clear: *“We strive to reach people in many ways, using every opportunity to talk about Poland and its history.”* As debate moderator and former British Ambassador to Poland Robin Barnett summed up, *“The NNW Festival is an important tool of modern historical policy, a form of soft power in cultural diplomacy — a force that brings people together while respecting diverse perspectives.”*

Debate: “History on Screen. Film as a Tool of Education and Memory”

Another discussion panel was moderated by Dr. Marcin Zarzecki, Deputy Director of IPN’s *Stops of History* Office. Referring to data from the Polish Film Institute (PISF), he emphasized that a significant percentage of feature films financed in Poland are historical or documentary productions — which makes film an important instrument of cultural and historical diplomacy. Dr. Zarzecki described cultural diplomacy as a field in which film and the arts serve as instruments of dialogue between societies, often in a subtler way than traditional foreign policy. The preceding panel on cultural diplomacy strategies became a natural starting point for this discussion — moving from theory to practice. Participants in the debate included Magdalena Hajduk, Agata Miklaszewska, Pino Valente, Tomasz Łysiak, and Krzysztof Nowak. Magdalena Hajduk, Director The New Technology Division , discussed the importance of research in the design process. She emphasized that every project needs *“sensitive people”* — those who write the script, after which specialists adapt it for new technologies (including VR). She also noted that after a film screening or VR experience, young audiences need dialogue — conversation, reflection, and a deeper understanding of history. This, she stressed, is the key stage that connects the medium with

education, and ideas with emotions.



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