

Gwozdziec synagogue ceiling reconstruction is complete

Posted on **August 14, 2012** by **admin**



Photo courtesy of Handhouse Studio

After 10 years of research and workshops, the reconstruction of the wonderfully painted ceiling of the destroyed Gwozdziec synagogue is complete.

Read about the project and see pictures of the process [here, on the project's blog](#).

The 85 percent scale model of the tall peaked roof and richly decorated inner cupola of the wooden synagogue that once stood in Gwozdziec (now in Ukraine) were reconstructed is a project of the Handhouse Studio and the

forthcoming Museum of the History of Polish Jews. The reconstructed ceiling and cupola will be a key installation at the new Museum, which is due to open in the autumn of 2013. [Last summer](#), in the first stage of the project, students, master timber-framers and volunteers gathered in Sanok, southeastern Poland, to build the structure, using hand tools that would have been used centuries ago.

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Gwozdziec synagogue roof now being constructed on site

Posted on **January 20, 2013** by [jhe](#)



Panel of painted interior of the cupola. Photo courtesy of Handshouse Studio

The reconstructed roof of the destroyed wooden synagogue of Gwozdziec (now Ukraine) is, after months and months of work on individual parts, now being erected on site at the new [Museum of the History of Polish Jews](#) in Warsaw.

The Timber Framers Guild has [posted a series of pictures](#) showing the work in progress.

The reconstruction of an 85 percent scale model of the tall peaked roof and richly decorated inner cupola is a project of the [Handshouse Studio](#) and the museum, which is due to open next autumn. The reconstructed roof and cupola will be

a major installation there.



Gwozdziec synagogue. Photo from Handshouse Studio

In the first stages of the project, in the summer of 2011, students, master timber-framers and volunteers gathered in Sanok, southeastern Poland, to build the structure, using hand tools that would have been used centuries ago.

This past summer, at [workshops held in synagogues around Poland](#), teams of students and volunteers [carried out the colorful, elaborate paintings](#) that cover the interior of the cupola.

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Replica of Gwozdziec synagogue ceiling unveiled in museum

Posted on **March 12, 2013** by **jhe**



Photo: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

The glorious painted replica of the vaulted ceiling of the destroyed synagogue in Gwozdziec has been unveiled in the building of the forthcoming Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

The ceiling, [constructed over the past year and a half](#) using traditional timber-framing and other historic methods, will be

the centerpiece installation of the museum. The reconstruction, and the student workshops that created the intricately painted ceiling, were coordinated by the [Handhouse studio](#). (See [our previous posts](#) on this project.)

The museum building will open April 19 during ceremonies marking the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and its educational and cultural programming will also begin. The museum itself will formally open next year, after the exhibition is installed (a process that could take eight or nine months).

Some regard the brilliantly colorful ceiling as the “Jewish Sistine Chapel.”

[Vanessa Gera of AP reports:](#)

The ceiling is a rich panoply in milky blues and brownish reds of zodiac signs and animal symbols, along with inscriptions in Hebrew. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the program director of the museum’s core exhibition, said some of the animals express Messianic yearnings prevalent in Polish Jewish communities after a period of wars and destruction in the 17th century.

“It’s a heavenly canopy,” Kirshenblatt-Gimblett said. “It’s celestial. It’s literally the heavens and the world to come.”

Among the participants in the ceiling inauguration was Maria Piechotka, the doyenne of post-war researchers on Poland’s synagogues, who is now in her 90s. Hundreds of wooden synagogues in Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania were torched by the Nazis. The book Maria and her late husband, Kazimierz, wrote on Poland’s wooden synagogues in the 1950s was a milestone in preserving knowledge and memory of these destroyed buildings.



Rick and Laura Brown, founders/directors of the Handhouse Studio, and Maria Piechotka. Photo: Barbara

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett



Maria Piechotka, with a model of the Gwozdziec synagogue, with the book she and her husband wrote open to the Gwozdziec page. Photo: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

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2 THOUGHTS ON “REPLICA OF GWOZDZIEC SYNAGOGUE CEILING UNVEILED IN MUSEUM”



Antony Griew

on [March 14, 2013 at 09:11](#) said:

Is the Museum of the History of Polish Jews actually in Gwozdziec? If not, then where? It's a magnificent ceiling. One day I'll visit.



Hazel Bennison

on [April 4, 2013 at 05:50](#) said:

No the museum is in Warsaw, opens April this year.