

REPORT OLGA TOKARCZUK

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My novel, which will be published in September 2007 by the Polish publisher Wydawnictwo Literackie, has a storyline with the working title 'Anatomic', which inevitably incorporates elaborate details about the history of anatomy, a science that finds its foundation in the Netherlands of the Seventeenth Century. Because of my residency in Amsterdam, I was able to check all kinds of details. The organizers of the Writer-in-Residence program brought me in contact with someone from De Waag, who could give me a detailed account about this particular place and show it to me with the utmost care. Also thanks to the program, I came into contact with the managing director of the Vrolijk Museum, who gave me a meticulously conducted tour of his teratological collection, which provided me with all the information I was looking for. I also went to the city of Leiden to see the reconstructed anatomical theatre with my own eyes.

Every time I needed information about historical details (about the Dutch East India fleet, clothing or city-topography, for instance), I took great pleasure in visiting the Historical Museum, which is located nearby the Spuistraat. I spent a great amount of time in antiquarian bookshops studying maps (some of these will presumably be used in my book.)

Besides doing research for my book, I also found inspiration for new projects during my stay in Amsterdam. The prostitution-issue and the Dutch solution to this problem have aroused my interest. I came to be friends with social workers who counsel prostitutes, I've met several prostitutes and towards the end of my stay I participated in the ceremony of unveiling the monument for prostitution next to the Old Church. I have brought some material of interest about this subject to Poland.

What's more, I have met a lot of people, I finally had the time and opportunity to speak with my Dutch translator and to handle many important affairs with my publisher and literary agent. Looking back, this has been a very creative, intensive and good time for me, for which I am very thankful.