

# Chełmek Factory

Fabryka Chełmek

LOCATION

**Chełmek, Poland**

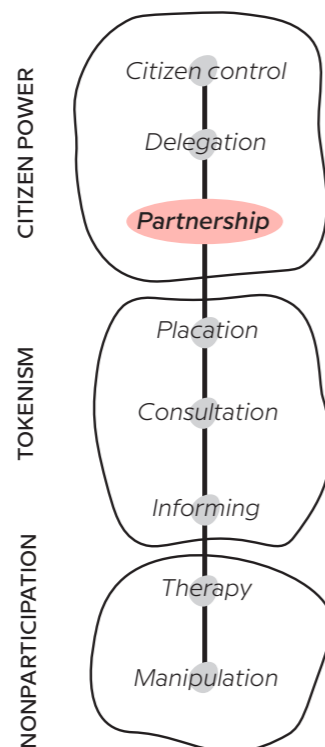
TIME PERIOD

**From 2020 to 2021**



## THE PROJECT

Chełmek Factory is a project that was implemented in a town where a former shoe factory existed. The factory was opened in the 1930s by Tomas Bata, a Czech industrialist. Unfortunately, it was closed in 2003. The main challenge of the project was to rediscover the forgotten history of Tomas Bata. The activities were designed to restore the identity of the inhabitants and show them the value of the history of their town.



who used to work in the factory and were happy to help organize the events and to share the history of the place.

## RESULT

From August to mid-September 2020, there were twelve artistic events in the commune that managed to create a positive trend of discovering the town's old history and taking pride in its heritage. As a result, **the targeted impact was reached. The group of residents interested in discovering the heritage of Bata is growing.** The topic also has its fans outside Chełmek and more objects are sent to the cultural centre that collects artifacts related to the factory. One of the most important lessons is the realization that **time and patience are crucial to work with memory.**

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SPACE

Located in the south of Poland, between Katowice, Kraków and Bielsko-Biała, Chełmek is characterized by an **aged demographic structure and a shrinking population.** The remoteness that can be felt by the local population has its roots in the closure of the Bata shoe factory in 2003 that had a great influence on the people's life. There are **limited public spaces** in Chełmek which might be attractive to people of all ages, such as playgrounds, tennis courts, a football pitch, and a local park. To change this, Chełmek is undergoing revitalization in the centre of the town.

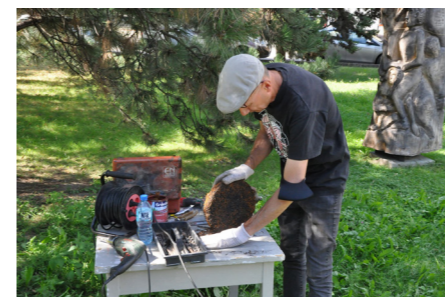
## INITIATION AND ACTORS

The Chełmek Factory project was made possible thanks to history and architecture enthusiasts and

activists supported by the local cultural centre. They also received funding from the Ministry of Culture, which allowed them to carry out various activities. The support of artists and scientists was also important.

## ROLE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY & METHODS USED

These actors decided to set up a **series of artistic events, workshops, and concerts inspired by Bata's heritage.** The events took place in the premises of the former factory, the Przemysza riverbank, "Kolonія" (the workers' colony), and the railway station. The project was an opportunity to remember history and to collect information and archives related to the factory. It also demonstrated the values of architecture and nature in the city. The local community was involved in the project through the people



Chełmek Factory project. Artistic residence ©Waldemar Rudyk



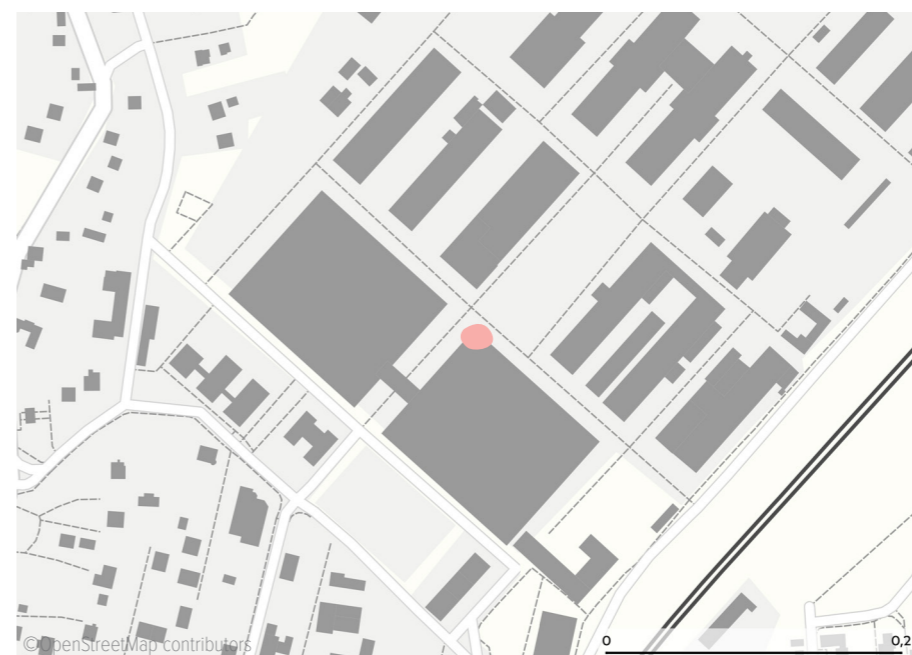
Chełmek Factory project. A walk in former factory ©Mirosław Saternus



Chełmek Factory project. A concert in historic area ©Paweł Waligóra



Chełmek Factory project. A walk in "Kolonія" ©Paweł Waligóra



Chełmek, Lesser Poland, Poland

more about this project

