

Impact Statement

Karolina Drzodowska, Grade 12.

Guardian Angel, 2017.

Mixed media, 27 x 27 Inches.

Pedagogical High School, Opole, Poland

Unsung Hero: Marek Kotanski

The person I have chosen, Marek Kotański, was the one who devoted all his life to help people. Marek Kotański, first of all, could notice the social problems, very often removed out of sight, neglected or avoided by the rest of society. These problems were connected with drug addiction, alcohol addiction, homelessness, HIV/AIDS infected people, ex-prisoners.

By the power of his character my hero did everything to help these people and although received great support from some people he also met with huge resistance from the part of the society who did not want to help these in need. Marek Kotański was extremely creative and innovative all his life – he worked out modern methods of drug-addiction therapy which were perceived by some people as controversial but turned out to be effective in many cases. Also, his organizational skills have become legendary – he was restless in finding places for the people who needed them, renovated or built new ones. He also organized national social movements to support his ideas. What is very important, Kotański started his activity in the 70s and 80s of the 20th centuries, during communist passiveness, overwhelming feeling of helplessness and rejection that any social problems existed. His ideas survived beyond his death in 2002 in the form of social movements, institutions and organizations run by his followers. At the moment the memory of Kotański is vanishing. His name is familiar to my parents and grandpar-ents, but not to my peers. I'd like to save memory of him not only in Poland, where his impact on social development was tremendous, but also abroad. He is a role model of a person helping others against all odds. Gathering information about such a person has been very important and enriching for me and I wish others experienced similar feelings. I love and appreciate the power of character of my hero, his sensitivity and engagement in the problems of people who were not interesting for anybody else. I admire his faith, passion and energy devoted to helping people. I also like the fact that he is a very complex personality, with some faults which in my opinion make him human.

Creating my piece of art, I read about my hero and realized how important for him were the people who were around and supported him. Consequently, my picture is made up of cut out photographs of people who played some role in my hero's work and life: the participants of social movements he organized, the addicted, the sick who were present in all his life throughout many years. All photographs are black and white, and I added some green colour to mark characteristic facial features and specially my hero's eyes. The green colour was chosen as the colour of hope and additionally, some red colour in his eyes symbolizes the passion of my hero. As for the methods I used collage and acrylic paint, all put together in the square piece of paper. The work gives the impression of my hero great activity, passion, diverse interest and endless energy. Last but not least, in my picture Kotański looks at people as he was doing all his rich and inspirational life.