

FROM THE EDITORS

A RAY OF HOPE

Space... The Final Frontier – that's how every episode of "Star Trek" begins. Back in the 1960s, when the show was developed, it may indeed have seemed that soon the only challenge left for humankind would be space exploration. And yet today it turns out we are preoccupied with far more mundane matters, especially security-related issues: ever-increasing entropy is on the horizon, in the form of conflicts, crises, and an impending climate catastrophe.

The Polish Academy of Sciences, too, in its own modest scale, is at a turning point in its history. On the one hand, a radical reduction in funding, an attempt to marginalize or even replace it as an institution, and restrictions on academic freedom are all making themselves felt. On the other, a self-reform agenda being proposed by the Academy itself, the ongoing digitization and expanding outreach of its publications (including *Academia* magazine, of course) and a new operating strategy do offer a certain ray of hope for the future.

In this issue of *Academia*, however, instead of focusing on ourselves, we delve into some deeper reflection on the numerous facets of the important theme of safety and security – especially the loss thereof. Devastation of the environment and biodiversity, geopolitical upheavals in Poland's backyard, more physical threats posed by earthquakes, food poisoning, ticks and snakes, as well as new uses of nuclear energy, symbiotic relationships with fungi, depopulation and migration, disappearing cultures, and public perceptions of security – these are just some of the topics into which, we might say, we "boldly go."

PROF. DARIUSZ JEMIELNIAK

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



Michał Zaborowski, "Pygmalion," oil painting, 2018

A Polish painter, born in Gdańsk in 1960. Graduate of the Faculty of Painting at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, where he earned his diploma from the studio of Prof. Ludwik Maciąg in 1985. He is the author of the monumental polychrome "Heavenly Jerusalem" in the church of the Pallottine Fathers in Warsaw, and a giant stained-glass window in the church of the Pallottine Fathers in Ożarów. His works – which have been exhibited in European and American galleries – focus on mood and ambiance, isolating people and things out of time.



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