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COVER PHOTO AND PAGE 2: JAKUB OSTAŁOWSKI

FROM THE EDITORS

ORIGINALITY AND INFLUENCE



NATALIA SIKORSKA

“Tanagra”, Mieczysław Welter (born 1928)

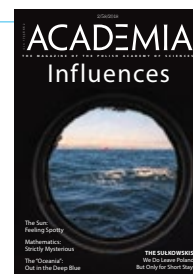
He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań, where he studied sculpture. He has created many monuments, including the Monument to Martyrdom in Soboror, to Nicolaus Copernicus in Frombork and in Mexico, to Jan Kochanowski in Czarnolas, and also portrait sculptures. The latter, made of terracotta, bronze, plaster, or artificial stone, invoke antique traditions.

There is only one Picasso – people used to say long ago, observing deformed cubist figures on canvasses by imitators of the Spanish painter. But at the same time, Poles also eagerly bought *pikasy* – ceramics and fabrics decorated with geometric patterns, very different from the traditional patterns that had long since ceased to captivate them. The pleasant objects helped them make their surroundings a bit more colorful and more interesting.

In art, in painting, in music, originality is easy to appreciate. That does not change the fact that works whose creators can be easily demonstrated to have been under the influence of a well-known master can still be recognized as intriguing, interesting, and innovative in their own way (as discussed by Dr. Marcin Zgliński).

What about in science? Theoreticians are continually lying in wait for a cue from experimenters, who painstakingly repeat their studies until they manage to report some unusual result. The reverse situation, when theoreticians stick to their guns irrespective of the fact that experimental confirmation is impossible or hard to obtain without massive (and expensive) apparatus, is rare. But sometimes it, too, yields surprising results. A clear example is Prof. Andrzej Trautman, who stubbornly insisted on the existence of gravitational waves on the basis of theory alone. And many years later it turned out that he was right – numerous teams, working together, ultimately demonstrated their existence experimentally. The French concept – of awarding grants for research that initially do not look very promising, but ultimately win a Nobel Prize, as Prof. Włodzimierz Zawadzki writes – certainly looks intriguing.

“There is clearly a link between solar activity and average temperatures on Earth, although we are only just beginning to understand it,” writes Dr. Tomasz Mrozek, reminding us that the behavior of our star in the past most likely sometimes caused the Thames River and Gulf of Finland to freeze up, and on the other hand sometimes made it possible for grape vines to grow in Poland. Learning about how one phenomenon influences another is very often the fundamental sense of research work. It yields that most important commodity: knowledge. And without it, the human species could not exist.



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