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Closer, Yet Still So Far Why as a society do we permanently exclude disabled people from the mainstream? Which domains of life does this apply to? – Prof. Antonina Ostrowska investigates. **10**



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To Comprehend, Just Smile Dr. Agnieszka Piskorska explores how positive emotions facilitate the broadening and building of various types of human resources. **42**



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Fortunate Coincidences

"Epilepsy needs to be treated with at least two different pharmaceuticals, and I try to find combinations that yield the best clinical results," Stanisław Jerzy Czuczwar tells us **56**

COVER PHOTO: JAKUB OSTAŁOWSKI
 STR. 2: CASTLE ROCK
 ENTERTAINMENT,
 JAKUB OSTAŁOWSKI (2)

FROM THE EDITORS

NOT FLEEING

When we think “emotions,” not surprisingly negative ones spring to mind. Psychologists explain that on a fundamental level there are many of them (fear, aversion, anger, sadness, disgust...) but basically just one positive emotion: joy. The intensity of a negative emotion, a neurobiologist tells us, enables animals to react appropriately to danger. If it still feels just anxiety, an animal remains watchful and cautious, but if that turns to full-blown fear, it will fight or flee.

How about people? When someone’s hostile behavior makes us fearful, we do often go silent. We analyze intentions, trying to grasp what lies beneath their aggressive words. Perhaps they did not actually want to say what they said? Ultimately we may attempt dialog, seeking to comprehend their stance, what motivates it. And if their anger turns out to be underpinned by fear (as is quite often the case), we try to counter emotional arguments by using rational ones.

And arguments of this kind are most often supplied by science. In this issue of Academia magazine, researchers point out the great threat diabetes poses, while encouraging sensible testing and a proper diet to help prevent it. A pharmacologist explains that new drugs now enable us to rein in epilepsy, a very menacing affliction. A sociologist tells us how new educational initiatives, such as positive examples portrayed on popular TV shows, can help alter deep-seated negative stereotypes about the disabled.

Simply put, this issue surveys a broad set of scientists’ views on issues that provoke very strong emotions. Eschewing the “fight or flight” response, we strive to engage such issues head-on.



“Mętne sprawy” (Murky matters, 1981) by Tomasz Ciecierski (born 1945). (A painter, drawer, collage artist, and photographer, a graduate and lecturer at the Fine Arts Academy in Warsaw, and winner of the Jan Cybis Prize (1999). His works make certain references to the history of European painting (including Renaissance and Futuristic painting). His canvasses are held by Poland’s National Museum (Łódź, Kraków, Poznań, Warszawa, Wrocław) and also the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam).



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