

Editorial

For the past 17 years, an introduction by its originator, founder and editor-in-chief, Prof. Waldemar Okoń, has been published in this section of the "Quart" magazine. Prof. Okoń, who turns 70 this year, is currently retiring, but he is not ending his collaboration with the Institute of Art History. The circle of his colleagues and friends decided to commemorate this occasion by dedicating a special issue of our quarterly to him. What emerged was an extensive collection of articles, or rather a commemorative book, which indicates the uniqueness of the milieu of people and topics generated with the Professor's contribution. This exceptional value consists, among other things, of an ability to empathise in depth with the issues raised and a responsibility for the beauty of the language used to express thoughts.

The small excerpt from *Dniownik* (Diangry) included in this issue of our quarterly tells us a lot about its Author. The title in itself announces an angry diary written from the point of view of an insightful person with the wits and experiences of an "Old Man from the Mountains", as the Professor sometimes referred to himself. Above all, however, it is his extraordinary sensitivity that entitles him to a harsh assessment of a world that turns out to bear a disturbing resemblance to the bleak era of the early 1930s.

Waldemar Baraniewski's sketch, also placed at the beginning of the volume, analyses the photographic documentation of a meeting of a group of people on the terrace of the flat of the director of the Pompidou Centre. With the help of this set of photographs, it tells the story of the link between the cognitive attitudes of the art historian Elżbieta Grabska and her emotional life. The essence of the understanding between the authors of our anthology, based on their intimate affinity, was thus revealed. Agnieszka Rosales Rodríguez interpreted Jacek Malczewski's painting *Sztuka w zaścianku* (Art in a backwater) in a manner worthy of the best models of Polish literature of the 19th and 20th centuries, and demonstrated the ideological richness of the works of the now forgotten master painter. Jan Wiktor Sienkiewicz, an expert on the history of Polish emigration, also attempts to save the memory of Polish artists who were sent to Cairo and Baghdad in 1943. Dorota Kudelska discusses an exhibition of works by Tadeusz Makowski, organised in Vienna in the winter of 1936, which showed a distance from the growing nationalism of the time. The case is close to the attitude of the Scholar honoured in the volume.

In the second part of the collection, Ryszard Kasperowicz characterises Novalis's concepts, drawing attention to the idea that poetic language does not reflect things, but is a sphere for releasing the forces of the universe within the individual. These considerations make particular sense in the context of changes in the creative activity of Prof. Okoń, who devoted himself with increasing determination to literary work. Lechosław Lameński decided to write, for the last time, about Stanisław Szukalski, here in the context of this artist's intentions to establish an art school based on assumptions that would compete with traditional art academies. Besides the knowledge of the views of Stach of Warta, this text proclaims the praise of independence in art, even when this independence reaches exaggeration. Sylwia Świśtocka-Karwot discussed the paradoxes of the work of Zdzisław Jurkiewicz, a vivid master of the neo-avant-garde, who combined emotionality with intellectualism in his work in a unique way. Associations beyond the subject of this statement impose themselves almost inevitably. The issue of style, important both to Prof. Okoń and to the two last centuries, was addressed by the undersigned.

The third group of texts was on 19th and 20th century art, which focused the Professor's attention for a significant part of his life. Justyna Bajda, whose articles on the borderline between visual arts and literature have strongly marked the tradition of our quarterly, described the ways in which graphic artists and painters illustrated Charles Baudelaire's most famous volume of poems. She discussed in detail the work of the Belgian artist Armand Rassenfosse. Aneta Grodecka also addressed the relationship between graphic art and literature, reflecting on a portfolio of lithographs by Piotr Potworowski referring to the prose of Edgar Allan Poe. Gustave Doré was able to illustrate any work of word art, but with the flair of a politically engaged reporter he also showed a critical image of London. In our volume, Andrzej Pieńkos devotes an insightful text to the 180 scenes from this city sketched by Doré. Whereas Anita Wincencjusz-Patyna wrote with enormous expertise about Elżbieta Gaudasińska's illustrations for children's poetry. The ambiguity and dangerous eroticism of Henryk Siemiradzki's painting *Phryne* were aptly noted in the satirical press by Jakub Zarzycki. He raised the importance of such newspapers in art history research, extending the reflections once made by Professor Okoń in his work on the positions taken by art criticism in relation to historical painting.

Michał Haake, whose texts have appeared in our quarterly on numerous occasions, reflected on the role of the "Sign" icon of the Mother of God in two works by Jan Matejko. Maria Poprzęcka, referring to the motif of the "Mother of Ukraine", described by the Professor in 1992, undertook the task of demonstrating the persistence of false myths, represented by the representatives of the "Ukrainian school of Polish Romanticism". This theme has resurfaced in the face of an aggressive war imposed on Ukraine by Russia in February 2022 and serves as a document of the inevitable filiation of the humanities with politics. The importance of the mother for the artist, but in a completely different perspective, is also highlighted by Krzysztof Stefański in his article on Adelaide Wiwulska and her diary. As Professor Okoń has repeatedly reminded us, it was Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, who was the mother of the Muses, which makes her the source of art. At the very end, I cannot but thank the thematic editors of this exceptional issue, namely Lechosław Lameński, Anita Wincencjusz-Patyna and Jakub Zarzycki, and encourage you to read it, as Prof. Okoń used to do.

Every attentive reader will recognise the links connecting the contents of the articles contained in the volume with the work and person of the honoured Professor. Further reflection, however, leads to the conclusion that a repetition of similar relationships will never again be possible. *Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.*