

LODZ CREATES INNOVATION

NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE CITY OF LODZ

NO. 2 (23)/2019

MAREK EDELMAN WITH KIND REGARDS

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A CITY OF VARIOUS
ALPHABETS

●
HALF-MASKS UNDERGO
A FACELIFT

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MODOPOLIS
TAILOR-MADE FORUM

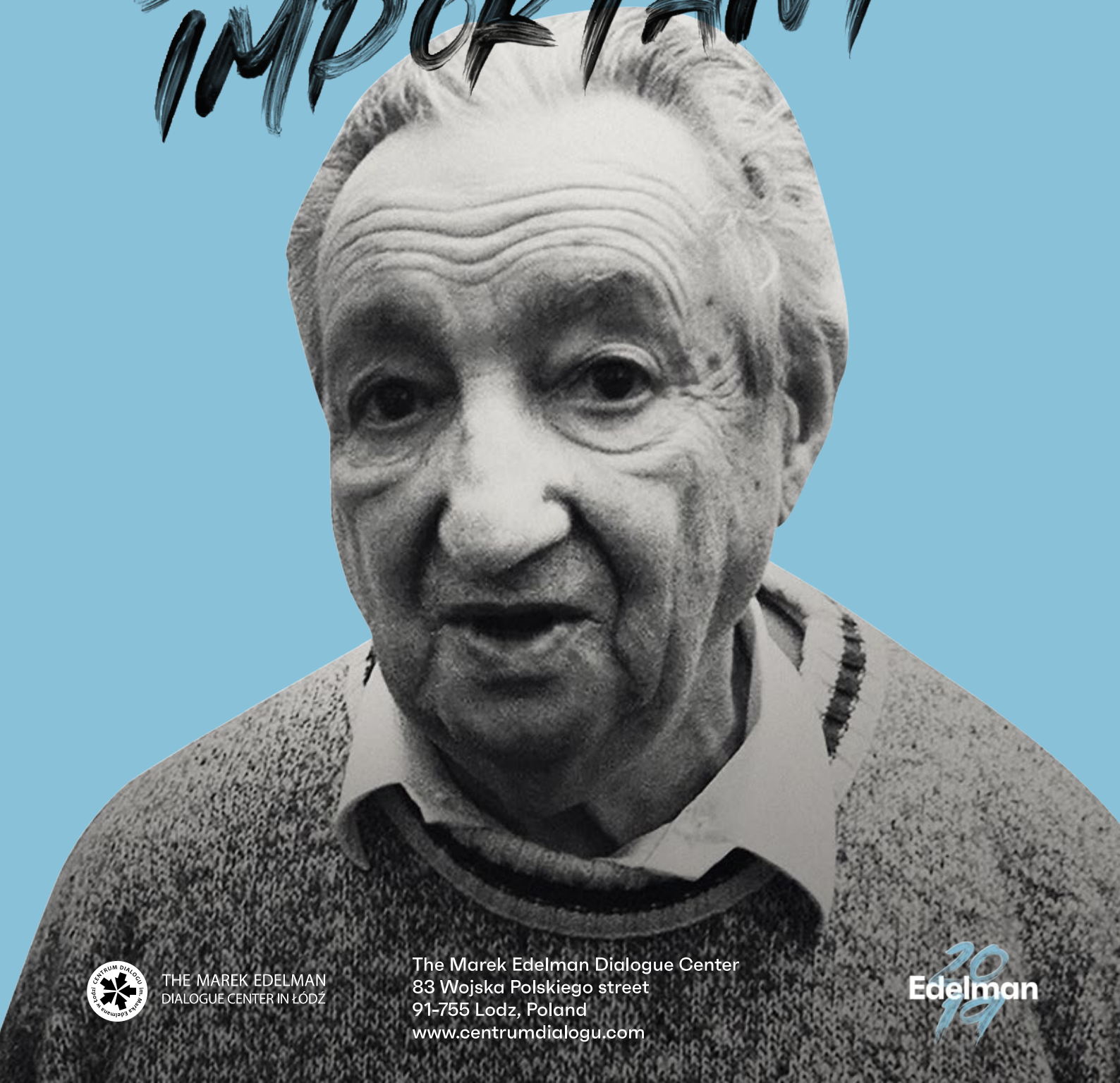
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AT THE LEECH FARM





The Year of Marek Edelman

LIFE IS MOST
IMPORTANT



THE MAREK EDELMAN
DIALOGUE CENTER IN ŁÓDŹ

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Edelman



ANNA KRAWCZYK
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In 2000, he was awarded the title of Honorary Citizen of Lodz. Even though his name is mainly associated as that of the hero of the interview "To outwit God" by Hanna Krall, Marek Edelman was not only the leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, but also, of which few people are aware, a cardiologist working at the Regional Specialist Hospital in Lodz. This year, we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of his birth. An opportunity therefore presents itself to get to know this amazing figure, as 2019 was declared the year of Marek Edelman. The celebrations were inaugurated at the beginning of January, at the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Lodz. The motto of the event was "Life is the most important thing". A series of cultural and educational events is planned as part of the celebrations. Marek Edelman's achievements, of great importance not only for the residents of Lodz, but the whole of Poland, are outlined in the interview that opens this edition, with Joanna Podolska, director of the Dialogue Centre - the organiser of the jubilee.

The Lodz Women's Trail is an extraordinary institution that has taken it upon itself to preserve the memory of women who made their mark in the history of Lodz. Thanks to the foundation many streets and

squares have gained the names of famous women from Lodz. The Lodz Women's Trail not only organises cultural events, but also commemorates difficult moments for the city, such as the hunger march, which took place in 1981, and shows the situation of contemporary women in this context.

Today, Lodz is best known for its fashion industry. No wonder that the first edition of the Modopolis Polish fashion forum was held here. This event will act as precursor on a nationwide scale, aimed at networking and the integration and promotion of the Polish fashion industry according to Maria Sobczyk. If you want to see an unorthodox approach to fashion, it's worth reading up on the philosophy of the Limanka Fashion House. Its creators mock the superficial elitism of the fashion industry, rebel against conformity and commercialisation. We talk to Tomasz Armada about his aversion to bling and the search for one's own artistic identity.

We invite you to visit Lodz on 15-16 May. The Expo Lodz hall will serve as the venue for the 19th edition of the Central European BioForum, which is a platform for exchanging industry experiences, an opportunity for companies to make biotechnology presentations, as well as an opportunity to find business partners. ●

Photo: Pawel Lawreszuk



**Rzeczpospolita
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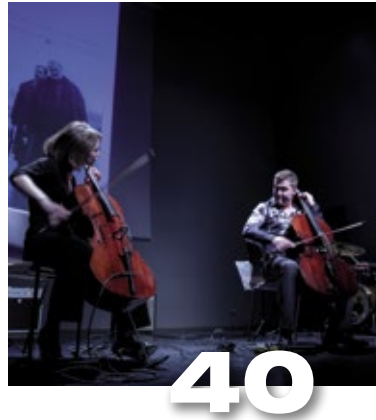
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Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Lodz
 Photo: Paweł Ławreszuk

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A city of various alphabets

In her journalist career, JOANNA PODOLSKA used to stress the propagation of the multicultural heritage of Lodz. She continues to fulfil her mission as the Director of the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Lodz. – Since people are evil and cruel, only education from the very start and showing that hatred is negative, and that love is good, can help humanity survive – says Podolska in an interview with Katarzyna Jóźwik.

The Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre has been working since 2010. Who initiated the establishment of this institution?

The Dialogue Centre was established by the City Council in 2010. It started working a year after its establishment. It was an initiative of the former President of Lodz, Jerzy Kropiwnicki. The Centre was another undertaking – after the Radegast Station and Survivors' Park – aimed at showing that Lodz turns to its memory and remembers its multicultural heritage and the contribution of Lodz's Jews to the city's development.

The Centre's Patron is Marek Edelman, who was not born in Lodz. What was the reason for Edelman to gain the most support in the selection process?

Marek Edelman was not born in Lodz indeed: he came here in the first months after the city was liberated. People say that he was here already in March 1945 – that is even before World War II ended. He lived in our city practically throughout all his life. Thanks to his future wife, Alina Margolis, he graduated from medical school in Lodz and then worked at several municipal hospitals. After the events of March 1968 his wife and kids left the





Exhibition in the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre

country. He stayed in Lodz nonetheless. In the middle of the 70s, Edelman actively engaged in political activity: he worked together with the Workers' Defence Committee, he was one of the establishers of the structures of "Solidarity" and he took part in the Round Table meetings. He was also detained. His apartment situated at Zelwerowicza Street was an important spot on the democratic opposition's map. People used to say that it is the unofficial embassy representing Poland's interests. Edelman's apartment was visited by important personalities from all over the world. After 1990 Marek Edelman was still engaged politically: he established i.a.: the Democratic Union, the Freedom Union, and finally the Democratic Party. At the same time, apart from engaging in political activity, he was working as a senior registrar of the cardiology unit in the Pirogow Hospital. In 2000, he received the title of Honorary Citizen of Lodz. The people of Lodz realized and appreciated his contribution to the city's development. In 2010, he was selected the Patron of the Dialogue Centre established by the city.

Were any other Patrons taken under consideration, celebrities from Lodz perhaps?

Unofficially, there were rumours about Jan Karski as a candidate, but eventually every member of the council voted for doctor Marek Edelman as the Centre's Patron.

How does the multicultural nature of Lodz popularised by the Dialogue Centre manifest itself?

The multicultural nature results from the city's history. 19th century Lodz was a city of multiple cultures and religions. The agglomeration was made up of not only Poles but also Germans, Jews, Russians and less numerous representatives of other nationalities. The signs of these cultures are visible in the architecture, the diversity of literature about Lodz (written in Polish, Yiddish or German), and also in the biographies of Lodz's citizens. The Lodz Symphony Orchestra was established by musicians representing various cultures and traditions. The city has been described in numerous alphabets. Several languages were spoken in a single neighbourhood. The most important writers, painters, musicians and architects have multicultural roots. We talk and learn about this in the Dialogue Centre. We try to show that the multicultural nature was and continues to be an advantage of Lodz.

○ **The multicultural nature results from the city's history. 19th century Lodz was a city of multiple cultures and religions**

How does the Dialogue Centre fulfil its aims?

We apply various methods. Starting from the organisation of exhibitions (i.a. the "Lodzer Miszmasz, or a story about Jewish Lodz" exposition which is very popular), open meetings and lectures ("The World of

Islam” or “Explaining the World” series of lectures). We invite interesting guests, such as Daniel Libeskind, an architect born in Lodz, or Rabbi Abraham Skórka from Buenos Aires, whose grandparents lived in the Bałuty district of Lodz, and – more interestingly – who is one of the pope’s friends. Apart from that, we also introduced several unconventional activities, such as our regular “Human Library”, in which people representing various cultures and ethnic groups or nationalities play the role of “books”. We organise concerts in cooperation with artists originating from different cultures. We also host the Helenow picnic or the Bigiel at Żytnia Street and we publish books.



The Centre also organises the legendary Lodz of Four Cultures Festival. Can you tell us what kinds of attractions are planned for this year?

The Lodz of Four Cultures Festival will continue the tradition present in Lodz since 2002. We hosted it in 2011–2012 and now, after a break, we have taken up its organisation again since 2017. The programme is created by a group of superintendents. This year’s motto of the September edition is “Coexistence”. It is too soon to give more details as we are still working on them. I can only say that – similarly to last year – music will be a very important element of this interdisciplinary performance.

Are any of the projects implemented by the Dialogue Centre more important than others?

All of them are important – both lessons about Lodz for pre-schoolers, workshops on the architecture of Lodz’s

The Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Lodz is already a fairly recognisable institution both in Poland and in Europe. We are dealing with multicultural issues but also with education for tolerance and counteracting the symptoms of racism and xenophobia

temples and walks around multicultural Lodz, with crowds of tireless fans following us. I must admit that the latter still amazes us. However, one of our flagship projects was the Quartet of Four Cultures – a project that we are particularly proud of. The project was prepared by musicians from Poland, Germany, Russia and Israel. They played works by composers representing four nations which co-created Lodz. First, we played with them in the underground cathedral in Stoki. Later, the musicians visited Berlin, St. Petersburg and Tel Aviv with the same repertoire. It was a perfect way to promote our city in the world. In the following year, we created the Orchestra of Four Cultures together with students from four countries.

You cannot escape from the “diversity” slogan in the Centre...

Yes, this is the biggest advantage of our activities. We reach children, young people and adults. Our projects are addressed not only to the residents of Lodz, but also to guests from abroad.

What is the future of the Centre and what challenges will have to be met?

The Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Lodz is already a fairly recognisable institution both in Poland and in Europe. We are dealing with multicultural issues but also with education for tolerance and counteracting the symptoms of racism and xenophobia. The situation in both Poland and the rest of the world shows that it is a very important and modern subject. In 2019, announced as Marek Edelman’s Year, we would like to recall our Patron’s words. According to Marek Edelman, education and showing the youth that hatred is always bad and love is a duty give a chance for development and are an “injection” against the world’s evil. It is something worth sticking to in this modern, relativistic world.

Thank you for the conversation. ●

BY AGATA DOMAŃSKA

Work or personal life? Better combine them!

Work-life balance is a term that was once extremely trendy. Today the term work-life integration is becoming increasingly popular, suggesting combining these two areas.

According to Kantar Millward Brown (study for Work Service), Poles work 45 hours per week on average, which is five hours more than anticipated by the 8-hour working day. Furthermore, the Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development calculated that Poles statistically work 1890 hours per year. So, we spend a large part of our lives working. And if we meticulously separate work from personal life, we can find that the latter is sorely lacking. Increasingly so, since work encroaches on our personal life all the time: does anyone turn their work phone off after leaving the office? Do we ignore work emails during our free time? Exactly...

HR specialists increasingly often emphasise that rigid separation of work and personal life is impossible and is not conducive to us or our work. This is due to several reasons. Each of us plays several social roles during the day. In the morning, we are parents driving our children to kindergarten. Next, we are colleagues, then in the afternoon we're negotiators at meetings with counterparties, and in the evening we're once again someone's partner and/or parent. Perhaps we see our parent self as sensitive and caring, our partner self as full of passion and romantic, and our negotiator self as hard and effective. Seems all right, but... In 2016, Professors Brandon W. Smit from the Ball State University, Patrick W. Maloney and Carl P. Maertz from the Saint Louis University in the US conducted studies demonstrating that people who change their behaviour depending on their role (professional or private) are less productive at work. And that we achieve better results when our behaviour is consistent across both roles. But that's not all. According to the studies of Maferima Touré-Tillery, a professor of marketing at the Kellogg School in the US, the perception of continuity in our professional and private identities and the consistency of features demonstrated by us ("I believe myself to be caring both when caring for children and when working with clients") elicits more ethical behaviour in work duties. No wonder, we want to see ourselves as good, righteous,

honest and trustworthy. Thus we put more effort to become such people at work if we do not separate this identity with a mental barrier from "our true selves" at the private level.

A wise employer understands that work and life can (and should) intertwine and complement each other. An employee who can combine her private and professional identities is more effective and more ethical. Functioning according to the principle of work-life integration isn't difficult. We can have a business meeting, talk with a strategic client, collect materials for



a project, but we can also call our mother and ask about her health, arrange a lunch with someone we like and who works nearby, or take our child or dog together with us to a team building meeting – all in a single day. One increasingly popular method of combining the private and work spheres is the custom of a day of remote work, or "bring your own equipment" days and working on one's private laptop (where our private email and social media accounts are available). This doesn't just help us work more efficiently, but also makes us feel as if we had a better job and "more life." ●

Photo: Adobe Stock

BY MARZENA ZBIERSKA

SMETHOD for better support of innovative companies



Paweł Nowakowski PhD



smethod



How to effectively support innovation in SMEs? Which will be better for a company – a subsidy or a loan? What innovations are needed in particular regions? The University of Lodz and the ASM – Market Research and Analysis Centre are working on a tool that will help answer these and other questions on the minds of fund managers. The project is financed by the European Union.

Both entities are partners in the international SMETHOD project, the goal of which is to identify the most effective forms of support for innovative activities undertaken by SMEs. The project started in December 2017 and is implemented by a consortium of universities, companies and institutions from five countries: Poland, Cyprus, Finland, Spain and the United Kingdom. The ASM – Market Research and Analysis Centre acts as the project coordinator and also contributes substantive work. The University of Lodz is responsible for some of the analyses. Anna Staszewska-Bystrova, PhD and Wojciech Grabowski, PhD from the Chair of Econometric Models and Forecasts of the University of Lodz are leaders of one of the five work packages, which ended after just under a year of research. One of its main objectives was to conduct an analysis of how various forms of support impact innovation in companies. The SMETHOD project is financed from the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme.

FIRSTLY – GOOD SEGMENTATION

“The project aims to create an improved segmentation method for small and medium enterprises, so that the

resulting segments serve as a basis for more effective and adequate support from institutions that finance innovations,” explains Paweł Nowakowski, PhD, project coordinator for the ASM – Market Research and Analysis Centre. “What I mean by that are all agencies and institutions that offer support in the form of, for example, tax breaks, subsidies, credits, loans, consulting services or financing for co-operation with research institutions.”

A database for further assessments containing about 730 companies, was created during the first stage of the project. The University of Lodz performed econometric analyses and evaluated the effectiveness of methods and support measures for innovations that have been used so far.

“Combining this knowledge with literature, interviews and databases will help us match specific types of support to individual company segments,” explains Paweł Nowakowski. “A one-size-fits-all approach for all small enterprises is not enough, so in the next project stage our task is to develop effective support measures for specific segments, which entails answering the question as to what will be better for

a company from a particular segment: a subsidy, a grant or a loan?

SECONDLY – SOCIAL AND REGIONAL CRITERIA

As Paweł Nowakowski underlines, the SMMethod encompasses a broad range of criteria used for segmenting companies.

“We take social factors, i.e. mentality, cultural differences and attitudes relevant to the company's environment into account. For example, apparatus for assisting euthanasia may be well received in the Netherlands, but will not be well perceived in Poland. The objective is also to support innovation of importance for the region's or the country's economic development.”

Other company segmentation criteria focus on its life cycle and the innovation cycle. The researchers are trying to ascertain the stage of the company's life cycle at which support for innovation is the most effective and how to properly support innovation at every stage.

“We've noticed that small companies have problems with organisational innovations, which means adapting the company's organisational structure in such a way as to introduce an innovation successfully to the market,” Paweł Nowakowski explains. “Often these difficulties result in innovative solutions being sold to large companies and, as a result, support for innovation in the SME sector translates into the market success of a large enterprise. Therefore, before launching support programmes, we need to check at which stage of an innovation's implementation it is most advantageous to support companies from a public policy perspective.”

THIRDLY – CONCLUSIONS AND BENEFITS FOR COMPANIES

The analyses have already allowed scientists to formulate initial conclusions, which will be subject to further investigation, but already give an idea of how effective the instruments used so far in support of innovation have been. It turned out that government credits and loans granted for the development of radical innovations are more effective than bank credits and loans.

“The University of Lodz has concluded that this is due to the higher interest rates on bank loans, which results in companies being unable to focus on developing innovation, instead being forced to achieve a level of income that allows them to pay back the loan,” says Paweł Nowakowski. “The key issue is that

government loans on preferential terms are available mainly to large companies engaged in export activities, which already have experience in implementing innovation. Hence the conclusion of the University of Lodz researchers that SMEs should also be allowed to take advantage of loans offered by government institutions.”

What else was observed? Within the scope of the innovations implemented on a given market, tax breaks and subsidies (subventions) work best, while in the case of domestic innovations – grants. In addition, internationalisation, human capital and cooperation with research institutions are all important for companies wishing to gain a competitive advantage through innovation. The above-mentioned factors are the key to achieving success.

“Stimulating innovative attitudes and awareness are also important. Companies that have introduced innovations are more likely to introduce more, while their ability to implement them depends on contact with their surroundings – research institutions, business partners. The more a company is open to them, the better,” the project's coordinator adds.



The research will also result in an IT tool aiding decision-making. The system will assign companies to segments and select appropriate support instruments. This is meant to serve agencies and institutions providing innovation assistance to SMEs. The SMMethod project is forecast to last until June 2020. ●

BY PRZEMYSŁAW GRZYB

Half-masks undergo a facelift

Protective half-masks are used by employees working in many different professions and industries. Their primary purpose is to protect the respiratory tract from external factors. Meanwhile, their users may be completely unaware they are exposing themselves to danger and health risks. Sounds absurd? And yet...

Researchers from Lodz discovered and described the dangers related to the repeated use of half-masks. Fortunately, they immediately found a solution to this problem. So, what is the risk and the means to deal with it proposed by researchers from the Central Institute for Labour Protection in cooperation with scientists from the Lodz University of Technology and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań?

SOME PROTECTION, SOME RISK

Protective half-masks are the simplest and, at the same time, a highly effective means of protecting against dust, many harmful substances and microorganisms suspended in the air. That's why they're so commonly used, for example in mining, the chemical industry, but also in the medical or food industries. However, it turns out that while half-masks perform their basic task well, i.e. assure air filtration, the material they are usually made of and their use conditions can cause bacteria and fungi dangerous to human health to rapidly grow inside the masks. "Our earlier research results have shown that the filtration materials used in half-masks not only give potentially pathogenic microorganisms the chance to survive, but also to increase their numbers at a very rapid pace," explains Professor Katarzyna Majchrzycka from the Central Institute for Labour Protection.

4 HOURS AND INTO THE BIN

Research confirmed these suspicions. It turned out that the design of half-masks allows potentially pathogenic bacteria and fungi to grow. What's more,



Katarzyna Majchrzycka, professor CIOP-PIB

the effect is enhanced by the conditions under the face piece. Exhaled water vapour and the presence of sweat make the temperature and humidity conditions under the half-mask ideal for the growth of microorganisms. In addition, microorganisms that can settle on the filter come not only from the outside, but also from the inside – from the skin or the respiratory system. It's a veritable "biological bomb" that becomes increasingly more dangerous with each subsequent working hour. "We're not saying this happens immediately after the

half-mask is put on. Regardless, after four hours of work such a half-mask must simply be thrown away (and after eight most definitely)," explains Professor Majchrzycka. In reality, however, things are completely different – half-masks are most often worn many times and the use of a new one is not dependent on the number of microorganisms in it. Firstly, there is no quick way to check this. Secondly, awareness of the threat is still very low.

WE'RE NOT HAPPY WITH SUPERFICIAL SOLUTIONS

It might seem there's a simple solution to the described problem – simply stop using reusable masks and throw away disposable half-masks after every use. In reality, however, this is not economically feasible. The issue of environmental protection and the need to limit waste are both equally important. The risks should not be underestimated either. The microorganisms that multiply in half-masks can carry various types of risks

– toxic, allergenic or infectious. Numbers confirm that this is a real problem. “In work environments with exposure to biological agents, absenteeism due to sickness can be as high as 14%,” comments Professor Majchrzycka. Meanwhile, for the general employee population this indicator is around 5-6%. It's difficult not to consider that one of the factors increasing the risk of illness and absenteeism are the protective half-masks, or more precisely, the microorganisms that multiply inside.

99.99% EFFICIENCY

The Central Institute for Labour Protection - National Research Institute decided to look for a solution to this problem. An invitation was extended to scientists from the Lodz University of Technology, more specifically those from the Institute of Fermentation Technology and Microbiology, as well as scientists from the Faculty of Chemistry at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The researchers' goal was to develop a filtering material that would stop or greatly slow down the growth of potentially pathogenic microorganisms. The work resulted in the development of bio-active non-woven filtration materials, which can be successfully employed in reusable devices and equipment used to protect the respiratory system. “The innovative nature of this material is that it periodically releases a biocide, which is harmless to humans, but allows the number of microorganisms to be significantly reduced,” explains Dr Justyna Szulc, Eng., from the Lodz University of Technology. The results are spectacular – the reduction in number of microorganisms can even reach 99.99% in some cases.

SMART HALF-MASK

The bio-active filter materials created by the researchers from Lodz were used to build innovative half-masks. What proves that this is a smart solution? “The half-masks adjust the amount of the released biocide to the use conditions. Along with the increase of humidity, which is one of the key factors accelerating the multiplication of microorganisms, more of the agent for fighting these microorganisms will be released,” explains Dr Szulc. In practice, this means the half-mask remains safe even after many hours of work and can be used repeatedly worry-free. In addition to their unique properties the designed half-mask models provide the highest, third protective class. The half-masks also demonstrate low breathing resistance, so they are comfortable and in no way hamper everyday work. This also means that the system can be successfully used, for example, in the increasingly popular anti-smog half-masks.

WAITING FOR BUSINESS

The half-masks and filtering materials prepared by the researchers from Lodz were developed under the “Improvement of safety and working conditions” programme financed as scientific research and development work by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. They are continuously being improved, but ready for interest from manufacturers of protective equipment, who could use them in their products. “Our half-masks are ready, their effectiveness is confirmed. Soon, they will surely go into mass production and become available to employees and all those who need them,” summarises Professor Majchrzycka. ●

Clogging test for filtering facepiece respirator with time-dependent antimicrobial activity



Nanoaerosol penetration test for filtering facepiece respirator with time-dependent antimicrobial activity



BY FILIP KONOPNY

At the leech farm

The only Polish medicinal leeches biofarm and one of the largest such farms in Europe is owned by Bio-Gen, which has been establishing its presence in Lodz. Although this is not the company's only business, from the very beginning it has been attempting to extract what's best for the health of people, plants and animals from nature.

Although Bio-Gen's main office is located in Namysłów and the industrial production takes place near Bełchatów, a part of production and laboratories (and the leech biofarm will be opened there soon) have recently been located in Lodz. Here is where Bio-Gen intends to develop its business, which is being aided by both suitable conditions for investors and the favour of the city's authorities, as well as the opportunity to work with young and talented microbiology specialists from Lodz universities.

MORE BACTERIA, LESS CHEMICALS

The main area of Bio-Gen's business is the production of microbiological preparations for the purposes of agriculture – plant and animal production – and environmental protection; this includes, among others, waste disposal and bad odour elimination. These preparations have industrial applications at sugar refineries and sewage treatment plants.

“The cultivation of microbiological preparations begins with culturing bacteria on a dish. We culture each bacterium separately in sterile conditions to provide our clients with a product of a guaranteed quality,” explains Artur Kleina, President of the Management Board of Bio-Gen. Preparations come in the form of a powder applied onto the soil, but not always. Bio-Gen also manufactures seed treatments for plants, containing beneficent bacteria.

“By treating seeds with bacteria, we stimulate the plant's growth in its initial phases,” adds Artur Kleina. “Bacteria have a unique potential to generate certain compounds that are precursors to growth hormones, thanks to which the plants – for example winter wheat – intensely grows its roots into the ground in the initial phase, which translates into the plant's greater resistance



Artur Kleina, President of the Management Board of Bio-Gen

during a drought and to a better collection of nutrients from the soil. This, in turn, influences the amount and quality of yield.

According to Artur Kleina, bacteria are also potentially beneficial with respect to preventing the growth of unwanted microflora, for example pathogens of various plant and animal diseases. “We use this in probiotics,” explains Kleina. “Probiotics populate the plant or animal body and take over places where pathogens could develop, in effect decreasing the susceptibility to diseases.”

Bio-Gen specializes in the manufacture of probiotics for farm animals, dogs and cats.

“The preventive property of probiotics reduces the use of antibiotics. It's no secret that antibiotics are typically used to treat animals, not people,” adds Artur

Kleina. “We have been searching for new biotechnological solutions for agriculture. We want to contribute to the elimination of chemical substances in plant cultivation and animal breeding, in particular those with a negative impact on the environment, and to replace them with biological alternatives.”

LEECHES IN THE HOSPITAL

This year, during the Central Agriculture Fair, Bio-Gen received a special award in the category:

Innovativeness from Czesław Siekierski, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. However, the company did not



rest on its laurels but continued to work on new projects.

“As part of our daily operations, we perform laboratory screenings of microorganisms that are useful in agriculture,” says Artur Kleina. “We isolate bacteria that can degrade a given chemical substance from the environment and then we culture them, assessing their potential as a microbiological preparation.”

Bio-Gen runs the only medicinal leech biofarm in Poland, and one of the largest in Europe. The farm has been breeding three different species.

“We are unique in that we breed the *hirudo medicinalis* medicinal leech, which is an endangered species,” explains Bio-Gen's president. “Our leeches are bred in sterile laboratory conditions; there is no risk of any complications during hirudotherapy.”

Bio-Gen delivers leeches to almost every country in the world: to the US, Canada, China, India, and to the RSA. The company sells around one million medicinal leeches per year.

“Unfortunately, there are medicinal leeches from unknown sources in Poland and complications after treatment are not uncommon. It's not always clear how to help in such situations.”

Patients who choose hirudotherapy should check the origin of their leeches to ensure their own safety. Bio-Gen also delivers leeches to hospitals that treat patients with, e.g., hand injuries.

“After suturing a body part, leeches are placed on the site of the injury, assisting in the reconstruction of capillaries and providing an opportunity for a total recovery,” explains Artur Kleina.

LEECHES IN SPACE

Bio-Gen has been breeding leeches for 15 years, and it has recently been working with veterinarians who use hirudotherapy mainly in dogs, cats and horses (as a supplement to drug therapy). In addition to hirudin, leeches excrete a range of substances that assist in treating typical injuries that occur in, e.g., horses: bruises, oedemas or haematomas.

Hirudotherapy is increasingly often seen as a return to the roots of medicine and a beneficial alternative to traditional drugs. Bio-Gen is the first company offering veterinarians the opportunity to participate in courses on hirudotherapy for animals. Bio-Gen experts have also been working on using the leeches during... space flight. In a state of weightlessness, humans can have issues with circulation, and in such cases the leeches' effect on the body could prove more beneficial than drugs. Bio-Gen's leeches have already participated in a simulated mission to Mars, and the test results were presented during an international conference at NASA.

For many years, Bio-Gen has been attempting to protect the environment and develop eco-friendly agriculture, and it has also been supporting the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity. So far, thanks to the generosity of the company's owners, the Orchestra's account was credited with about PLN 2.5 million. According to Artur Kleina, their support for the GOCC is an opportunity to have good fun during auctions and fulfil the need to share with others, especially if one experienced a stay in a hospital where equipment marked with the GOCC heart is saving lives and the health of patients. ●

BY FILIP KONOPNY

HARMAN, or how to programme the future of the automotive industry

The branch of HARMAN Connected Services in Lodz has recently moved its headquarters. In the glass office building at the junction of Ogrodowa and Zachodnia streets, over 400 engineers from the automotive industry are working on innovations used by the industry's giants. The company has also established co-operation with universities, allowing students and graduates to develop their skills.



From the left: Marek Walczak, Bartosz Gielzak

During the official opening of the new headquarters, Sanjay Dhawan, the President of HARMAN Connected Services and CTO of HARMAN International, said: "HARMAN is seeing extremely dynamic growth in Poland. Over two years, the number of employees has increased threefold. We hope that this new working environment and the partnerships that we are establishing with Polish universities will support further innovative solutions for the automotive industry."

ROAD TO A COMPANY

The history of the HARMAN Connected Services branch in Lodz began in 2007 with the company Teleca, which operated in a small office at Dowborczyków street and after a year moved to Kasprzaka street. In 2012, the company was transformed into Symphony Teleca. The first projects implemented here were related to software for smartphones and optics in mobile phones. In 2015, the company became part of the international

HARMAN group, the owner of many well-known brands such as: JBL, Infinity, AKG and Harman Kardon, and in February 2017 the company became part of Samsung Electronics. The innovative technological solutions created here are improving and modernising the automotive industry. HARMAN Connected Services' operations aren't limited to Poland. The company employs about 30,000 people in the Americas, Europe and Asia. The work of engineers has led to patents on over 7,000 innovative solutions, with the company awarded numerous prizes for audio systems projects. According to the company's estimates, more than 50 million vehicles currently use its innovative solutions.

A CAR THAT LISTENS

One of the projects being implemented at the Lodz branch of HARMAN Connected Services is for Daimler AG, the German manufacturer that owns brands such as: Mercedes-Benz, Smart and Maybach. Over 150 people are currently working on the new MBUX (Mercedes-Benz User Experience) multimedia and entertainment system. "In giving us new orders Daimler presents us with challenges that can be undertaken through a continuous increase in the number of employees. The system that we are creating is more than intuitive voice and touch operations, but also the ability to intelligently integrate all the systems within the car. The complexity and innovative nature of this project is a huge technological challenge for engineers," says Bartosz Gielzak, Associate Director. The system uses



Conference room – the best place for a team meeting and a brainstorming session



The work on the MBUX multimedia and entertainment system (Mercedes-Benz User Experience)

artificial intelligence and learns the driver's habits to best match their expectations. The engineers working on the project face a complex task – not only to meet the client's expectations, but also to provide the client with knowledge and their experience. “It should be noted that MBUX is to be used in various car models in the future. In 2016, we started with the S-Class Mercedes, while in 2018 we delivered a solution that is being called the most ground-breaking one in A-segment cars. We're currently also working on similar solutions for all passenger cars that Daimler intends to present in the future. This means HARMAN's solution will reach a wider audience, while giving us the opportunity to continuously work on improvements,” says Bartosz Gielzak.

AN ELECTRIC CAR CONTROLLED BY A SMARTPHONE

A project for the Volkswagen brand, which has been ongoing for half a year, involves 40 specialists. It's related to new electric cars and is not only aimed at creating a range of fully electric vehicles, but also introducing unique manufacturing methods and paving the way for advanced technologies. “All companies in the automotive industry are currently following the trend of creating and improving fully electric cars. The ones on the market now are often based on old solutions, while the goal of the Volkswagen project is to create a new modular platform designed from scratch for purely electric vehicles, the MEB (Modular Electric Toolkit),” says Program Manager, Marek Walczak. Future all-electric Volkswagen models from the I.D. family, which is based on this very MEB platform, will be available in various classes and their range will be 500 km and more. The branch of HARMAN Connected Services in Lodz is participating in this programme. The project team is designing and creating software that connects the car to the car company's server network via the Internet, so that every vehicle user can run

certain functions, also when they're outside the car, using their smartphone. “What we're working on with the team will allow remote control over car charging, turning air conditioning and heating on or off, and many other options,” Marek Walczak explains.

OPEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE

The new projects mean that HARMAN is constantly recruiting employees and expanding teams. “We're looking for experienced specialists, but also students, because young people are the ones that have the greatest potential and are open to everything that's new. HARMAN offers the Acceleration Pool training programme and summer internships to students and graduates. The Acceleration Pool is a three-month programme during which participants can develop their programming skills under the guidance of experienced employees, which allows them to join projects being implemented by the company once they complete the training,” says Bartosz Gielzak. The opening of the new office was also an opportunity to sign a co-operation agreement with two academic centres: the Faculty of Physics and Applied Informatics of the University of Lodz and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Electronics, Computer and Control Engineering at the Lodz University of Technology. The underlying idea for this initiative is the desire to support and develop the company's prized IT talents. “HARMAN is constantly developing innovative technological solutions, so we are proud that we can extend our activities in a place with such a thriving engineering market as Poland,” Sanjay Dhawan emphasised during the opening of the new branch in Lodz. Under the agreement with partner universities, HARMAN will conduct joint research, support education and academic research in the field of programming for embedded systems. The company wants to select both interns and permanent employees from among the students and graduates of these universities. ●

BY MALWINA WADAS

We know you well

Internet advertisements are often more annoying than interesting and this state of affairs is due to the fact that most of the time they are not in line with users' needs, and the authors often “blindly shoot” off their message. Does it always have to be this way? The Bluerank marketing agency from Lodz and its Hitspot Media brand say this can change and that the future of advertising is fully personalised – adapted not to a group, but to a single person.

Personalised campaigns are already under way and brands that have decided to work with Bluerank are achieving spectacular results. How does it work and why is it so effective?

HOW ABOUT A COOKIE?

The content of Internet advertisements has always been better matched to the recipient than in the case of traditional media. Every Internet user has experienced a situation, in which following a visit to a sales page they see ads with its products on other websites. This is a simplified mechanic, however, because these ads are displayed regardless of whether one buys a particular product or just reads up on it and ultimately skips the transaction. Bluerank approaches it differently. “We observe the customer's activities at various stages of their interest in the product and adjust the advertising message depending on the stage of the customer's journey,” explains Jacek Tkaczuk, head of the R&D department at Bluerank. Data on this is obtained from files called “cookies”. Users consent to their processing upon opening a website.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY

The customer journey, i.e. a customer's activity starting with their first contact with the brand and ending with a purchase (and then returning as a loyal customer), has many stages and each of them requires a customised message. It always starts with realising that a particular



product exists. At this stage personalisation is difficult, because the consumer most often learns about a product's existence from other sources, but the moment they visit a sales or information website for the product, personalised activities can start. First, it's displaying ads with links to blogs or articles that may additionally stimulate their interest or persuade them



Jacek Tkaczuk, head of the R&D department at Bluerank

of the high quality of a product or service. When the user revisits the product page and starts to become thoroughly acquainted with the offer, specifies their expectations more precisely, for example by configuring the product, they can be presented advertising with a specific product, encouraged to get to know it better. If they ultimately decide to buy, the advertising messages can be used to convince them that they made the right choice or provide additional offers and options.

WOW GROWTH!

A car brand used the services of Bluerank and Hitspot Media to create personalised advertising campaigns. The campaign's objective was to increase the number of potential customers who move to the next stages on the decision path. It all started with setting up one's dream car on the website. Based on data from the configuration engine, the user was presented with car ads for the exact same car they had previously chosen. The same colour, same engine and trim. However, the advertising didn't encourage them to buy, "just" to sign up for a test drive. When the user decided to take advantage of this, they were presented with various information about the car while waiting for the test drive – its capabilities or other key selling points. After the test drive, the ads linked to tests, expert opinions or informative articles. All this to reinforce the customer's belief that the choice they're about to make is the right one. The last stage was, of course, purchasing the car. What were the campaign's results? "Three hundred thousand people saw our ads, we displayed 130,000

unique creations prepared for individual users. We observed a four-fold increase in effectiveness in moving to the next sales stages than in the case of remarketing without personalisation," Tkaczuk explains.

BIRTHDAY DISCOUNT

Bluerank and Hitspot Media achieved similarly spectacular results with other campaigns. For example, for hair salons, in which case the ads were directed to customers with loyalty cards. The customers first saw advertisements for a birthday discount – they were eligible for services at a discount for the entire month in which they had their birthday. Subsequently, ads related to services and products that may be cheaper due to the number of collected loyalty points were shown – each card holder could benefit from a promotion tailored to them. The campaign's objective was to increase the number of on-line reservations in salons. Compared to standard activities, an increase of over 430% was achieved. However, it has to be emphasised that such a result of this and other campaigns run by Bluerank and Hitspot Media would be difficult to achieve without the coordination of on-line and off-line activities with information obtained from various sources. "We directed advertising messages to their recipients via seven different communication channels and collected data from the customer's systems, as well as issued physical loyalty cards. The integration of all the data was crucial for such multi-channel communication," Tkaczuk underlines.

THEY'RE INNOVATIVE, THEY'RE FROM LODZ

The campaigns run by Bluerank – for the car brand, hair salons, tour agencies and other customers – are widely regarded as very innovative and setting trends for the future of Internet marketing not only in Poland, but also globally. This is best demonstrated by the numerous industry awards these campaigns received, of which the European Search Awards, the Golden Arrow and the Mixx Awards are some of the most important. One could say that from the average user's perspective, since there is no escape from advertisements, it would be good if they were as well adapted as possible to the recipient, because they then bring value and can actually facilitate decision-making when buying or choosing an offer. That's why, the next time you see a surprisingly pertinent advertisement on the Internet, one made specifically for you, consider that it may have been created by an innovative company from Lodz. ●



BY FILIP KONOPNY

Modern business navigation

Infosys Poland Lodz Delivery Center

The Infosys branch in Lodz, in the Green Horizon glass office building at the “Solidarności” roundabout, is the company's largest branch outside of India. Over 2000 highly qualified specialists from 64 countries work here, providing services to 30 clients in 24 languages. There's power in these numbers!

Infosys Poland is focused on implementing transformation, continuous improvement and business process automation. Projects in the area of master data management, i.e. reference data management, as well as Big Data, are one of the cornerstones of the company's operations. Its clients represent many sectors of the global economy, including: FMCG, the mining industry, manufacturing, automotive, insurance, financial and technology companies. What all these brands have in common is their universal global recognition.

FROM ACCOUNTING TO PARTNERSHIP

In 2003 there were approximately 300 employees at the company's headquarters at al. Piłsudskiego and the company provided services for only one client. A lot has changed since then. Infosys is growing and changing, providing its services even for a few of the FORTUNE 500 companies.

“A dozen or so years ago, accounting services formed the backbone of our offer. Outsourcing them didn't generate any added value for the client. Today,

the client not only expects Infosys to act as a provider of accounting services, but also (and perhaps most importantly) that we will change the entire process,” says Michał Krauze, Lodz Delivery Excellence Head, who's been with Infosys for 13 years. The Infosys centre in Lodz currently provides BPM services (ed. business process management) for clients from around the world. The centre specialises in: tax services, Master Data Management, financial and accounting services, as well as business transformations, logistics processes and risk management. Accounting services, however, still constitute around 50% of its total business. The remaining, yet still growing, parts are: consulting, advanced analytics, automation, continuous improvement processes and everything that supports clients wishing to change or improve their organisations.

“Not only has our company changed, the industry itself has too. When I started working at the Infosys Lodz branch 14 years ago, the relationship with our client could be defined as a client-supplier one. Now, the client increasingly expects us to be a partner and treats us accordingly. Starting from a supplier responsible for a process, we have become a partner whose primary objective is to change the entire process and make it faster, less expensive and more efficient. We have become a strategist, adviser and consultant,” explains Wojciech Ciesielski, Senior Practice Lead Data & Analytics.

STREAMLINE, OPTIMISE, IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

When a company's business processes are implemented by an external entity, the service provider not only sees how they are performed but is also given the opportunity to propose improvements and optimisations. Raising a customer's efficiency by 50% over two or three years of co-operation is currently a standard for Infosys.

“The recipients of our services go even further. We have cases where clients achieved a 30-fold increase in their process efficiency,” says Wojciech Ciesielski.

A transformation from Business Process Outsourcing to Business Process Management means that Infosys has a broader understanding of the client and thus changes the management direction for its comprehensive business process.

“Improvements are one thing. We're simultaneously working on managing data available within the company, so as to obtain information through analysis, which the client may not even realise is there, because they have never applied such methods in-house. In addition to that, we also take advantage of the huge potential that machine learning, AI and Advanced Analytics have to offer,” Wojciech Ciesielski highlights.

FUTURE-PROOF

Infosys clients require the highest level of service not only because they are visionaries in their respective industries. The company provides services to top brands that dictate how the market develops and in doing so define reality.

“In order to meet their requirements, we must not only keep up with the trends. We must set them out.

At the moment the services industry is undergoing great changes due to automated systems, algorithms, everything that happens without human intervention – many processes are already automatic and their number will further increase over time. The company needs to be ready for this,” Wojciech Ciesielski further clarifies.

The services market is undergoing a dynamic evolution – more and more processes based on templates and rules are carried out not by people, but by programmes and robots that work faster and more efficiently. As technology develops,



Michał Krauze, Lodz Delivery Excellence Head

the scope of their tasks expands and employees must be ready for new circumstances and challenges. Therefore, the Infosys motto “Navigate your next” is more relevant than ever, encouraging one to take advantage of the development options offered by the company when planning one's career, among others. There is a system of upskilling and reskilling in Infosys, which responds to clients' expectations, but also to what employees need to meet the said expectations.

“Each department supporting our employees' development has prepared a rich training package applicable not only to domains, but also reskilling in automation. From this package, employees can choose the paths in which they want to develop, also to secure their professional future. Everyone, regardless of their position, is expanding their competences to find their place in the new reality and not to be afraid of it,” says Aneta Kluzińska, Finance Center of Excellence & Infosys Campus Senior Manager.

Infosys Managers say that many employees' professional development (themselves included) can be used as an example of how big and complex development opportunities are given by this company.

FOCUS ON EMPLOYEES

In order to serve clients in their native languages, the company employs talented specialists from all over the world, while English is the official language for internal communication. Therefore, the baseline requirement for employment with Infosys, regardless of the position, is knowledge of a foreign language and English at a level that allows easy communication. Skills in accounting, sales or purchasing are not a prerequisite for signing a contract. The successfully implemented Campus programme offers training that prepares employees



Aneta Kluzińska, Finance Center of Excellence & Infosys Campus Senior Manager
Wojciech Ciesielski, Senior Practice Lead Data & Analytics

who know foreign languages, but have not graduated with a degree in finance or purchasing, to work in the company. This gives them a chance and knowledge, which allows them to develop, fulfil their ambitions, but also to offer the client specialist support. To get a job with Infosys, it's also worth looking into programming languages, for example VBA or Python, or systems such as SAP or Oracle. In terms of what's expected from employees, Infosys managers quickly list: knowledge of new technologies, thinking outside the box or

combining analytical skills with creativity.

“Interest in these areas stems from the fact that our company is open to both suggestions and solutions proposed by employees. Such an approach allows us to develop as a company, as a team and individually,” explains Aneta Kluzińska. “Cultural diversity, regular discussions of career development paths, result-oriented management and appreciation of one's commitment to building a better partnership with the client; all these create perfect conditions for employee development,” she adds.

This is evidenced by, among others, Infosys Polska's membership in the prestigious ABSL association, its ACCA Approved Employer title received from ACCA and the CIMA Development Quality Partner Certificate, which is the only one given to a Lodz-based company. Infosys co-operates with universities, including the University of Lodz and the Lodz University of Technology, as well as the Lodz City Hall. Implementing joint projects strengthens networking, develops entrepreneurship, as in the case of the “Youth in Lodz” project and provides strong support for social activities, as in the case of the implementation of the “Access Lodz” mobile application aimed at supporting disabled people. ●

By KATARZYNA JÓZWIK

CEBioForum, or how to build Polish scientists' confidence



At the beginning of March news came that a patient in London was cured of HIV. It's the second case of this kind in less than a decade. Ongoing research in the field of biotechnology brings with it new treatment methods and pharmaceuticals, which are going to enter the market, demonstrating ever higher effectiveness in combating diseases incurable until now. Polish scientists are also showing great potential in this field. However, if they want to achieve actual success, they must start treating their inventions as a business idea and not simply as another scientific publication. Increasing awareness of this is the goal of CEBioForum – one of the most important events in the technology industry in the country and the whole world.

The event is the brainchild of Professor Tadeusz Pietrucha, a member of the National Development Council and co-founder of Mabion S.A. The 19th edition of the Central European BioForum is to be held on 15-16 May at Expo Lodz. Meanwhile, in November, Polish and American scientists and entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to exchange experiences in the field of biotechnology during the second American edition of the CEBioForum in Boston.



Prof. Tadeusz Pietrucha

AN INDUSTRY WITH POTENTIAL...

What exactly is biotechnology? To put it as simply as possible, it's a technology that uses biological processes to produce materials used in medicine and industry. Biotechnology solutions make it possible to invent innovative treatment methods or modern medications, but are also used in food processing, for example in the production of wines or cheeses. It's a domain with enormous potential that needs to be tapped. However, the biotechnology industry's development in Poland leaves a lot to be desired. "In Poland this sector is still in its infancy," admits Professor Tadeusz Pietrucha, the creator of CEBioForum, "It's a difficult industry, which requires great, specialised knowledge and experience. It's difficult to create a great sector based on specialists, if you don't have enough of the latter." The Polish biotechnology industry needs a lot of support. This applies not only to financial issues, but also the possibility of drawing on the experience of specialists from other countries. This is one of the reasons why the idea of creating an international forum for exchanging scientific and business experience in the biotechnology industry was born in the year 2000. Subsequent editions of CEBioForum prove that such events are needed by both Polish and global specialists.

... AGAINST SCIENTIFIC MENTALITY

Analysing the reports of the Patent Office of the Republic of Poland pertaining to patent applications in

biotechnology, it's hard to believe Professor Pietrucha. In 2017 alone the Office granted 78 patents and protection rights for utility models in the field of biotechnology to national entities. This might not be the leading industry in terms of processed patents, but the number of patent applications in this branch of science is increasing year on year. Specialists underline, however, that the entire problem lies in the lack of faith that Polish researchers have in their own biotechnological achievements. "Polish scientists, if they submit

patents, do it in the Polish patent office and for the Polish market, because it's cheaper," explains Robert Aleksandrowicz, former chairman of the supervisory board of Mabion S.A. "Meanwhile, for the patent to carry actual value, it must be global. This, though, entails costs of up to several thousand euros, incurred over a few years. This scares and discourages many scientists," admits Aleksandrowicz. Another important issue is the mentality of Polish academics, who often decide not to submit a patent application, limiting themselves to publicising their discoveries through scientific publications. This allows researchers to acquire subsequent scientific degrees, but doesn't make it possible to use really important biotechnological inventions.

AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM GAME

The CEBioForum provides both practical and financial support for Polish scientists. Held for nineteen years, it's a platform for exchanging industry experiences, an opportunity for companies to make biotechnology presentations, as well as an opportunity to find business partners. "The costs of patenting an invention are only the start of the expenses. The sooner you can find partners who will contribute funds to the development of the idea and take over some of the risk, the better," admits Robert Aleksandrowicz and underlines: "Investors are able to assess the project

from a business perspective, not a scientific one.” That’s why establishing co-operation between scientists and business partners is the key. It’s about time for Polish researchers to realise that innovative biotechnology solutions should be commercialised and not only take the form of studies relegated to paper. All the more so, since CEBioForum is opening up the market of foreign investors to them. The 11th and 12th edition was held outside the country (in Brno and Budapest). In addition to the above, as of last year the event’s organisers have expanded this scientific and business initiative outside the European Union.

POLISH-AMERICAN BIOTECHNOLOGY BRIDGE

As of 2018, CEBioForum has been held twice a year. The spring edition is organised in Lodz, while in autumn, the event was held in the US. Collaboration with Americans in this area is aimed at creating the Polish-American Biotech Bridge pioneered by Professor Tadeusz Pietrucha. Presenting innovative Polish projects and start-ups in the field of biotechnology on the American market is a great

opportunity to attract foreign investors. “It’s a win-win. In Poland the costs of conducting a biotechnology project in the initial, most risky stage are much lower than in the US,” admits Professor Tadeusz Pietrucha. “If the project succeeds, the increase in the market value of a company present on the US market is much greater compared to its initial valuation. Thus, an investment in a start-up located in Poland is potentially much more profitable than in the case of investments in American projects,” he adds. No price can be assigned to the fact that the Polish-American Biotech Bridge idea is an opportunity for the Polish biotechnology industry to gain access to American know-how in this field. It’s clear that drawing upon the experience of the leaders in a given industry is the best way to proceed. Undoubtedly, the US is a pioneer in innovative biotechnology solutions. Co-operation is necessary for this industry’s development in Poland. “Such international industry meetings are extremely important,” emphasises Professor Pietrucha, “Exchanging information and international co-operation are crucial in the biotechnology business. We can’t move forward without it.” ●

Photo: 80learn

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BY MALWINA WADAS

How an intern becomes an employee

The beginning of April saw the start of recruitment for the next, ninth edition of the “Praktykuj w Łodzi – staże wakacyjne 2019” (Internships in Lodz – summer internships 2019) project, organised under the “Youth in Lodz” programme. This year's edition of the initiative aimed at linking businesses with students and graduates of Lodz universities includes 68 employers from Lodz, who are waiting for a record number of 370 interns.

In the previous summer holiday period, paid internships for students and graduates of Lodz universities were organised by 65 companies from Lodz. The project partners were companies from a wide variety of industries, including: IT, BPO/SSC, manufacturing, logistics, construction, finance, accounting and marketing and 200 young, talented and willing interns joined their teams. A few months after the official end of the 2018 internships, we talked with representatives of three companies that participated in the project and with their trainees.

INTERNSHIPS IN LODZ – HOW, WHERE, WHY
The largest Lodz internship programme, organised by the City of Lodz for students and graduates of Lodz

universities (up to 12 months after graduation) allows them to gain valuable professional experience and practical skills, making it easier for them to gain attractive employment. All internships in the “Internship in Lodz” programme are paid, based on a signed contract and the companies pay a salary for each month of the internship. After the recruitment of candidates, which is held in April on the www.praktyki.lodz.pl website and followed by an initial application selection process, employers conduct individual interviews with chosen candidates and decide on the selection of interns, just as they would when recruiting employees. Internships last from June to September. Interns are treated as full members of their teams and departments. An internship is a great way to start



KRYSTYNA STAŻOWICZ

**HOLIDAY INTERNSHIPS
APPLY BEFORE 26.04**

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a career while studying and to get to know the daily challenges of working within a company structure. The programme's aim is also to promote summer holiday internships among employers as an excellent way to acquire new employees. Those participating in the recruitment process often surprise potential employers at the very beginning, because they already have their first professional experience, know foreign languages, are socially active and sometimes have outstanding scientific achievements.

EMERSON – EVERY TRAINEE IS A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE

The Emerson Group is a global leader, combining technology and engineering to provide innovative solutions for customers in industrial, commercial and consumer markets around the world. Founded in 1890 in St. Louis, Missouri in the US, the Emerson Group provides solutions in five business segments: Process Management, Industrial Automation, Network Power, Climate Technologies and Commercial & Residential Solutions. “We're still growing and looking for new employees. The plant in Lodz is regularly increasing employment. At present, we already have over 550 employees. Our structures in Lodz include:

a Machining Department, Assembly Department, but also our own design office, advanced laboratories and many departments supporting production: Production Process Development Department, Finance Department, Procurement Department, Planning Department, Logistics Department or HR Department. Seeking to grow, we invest in current employees and are constantly looking for new people,” says Krzysztof Hauk, Director of Operations at the Manufacturing Plant. This will be the company's third year in the “Internship in Lodz” programme. Last summer, it accepted 31 trainees from a pool of several hundred. “When accepting people

for an internship, we carry out thorough recruitment. We treat interns as future employees – we take them seriously, try to make every effort to assure their internship programme will be satisfying for them and bring real benefits. In turn, our primary expectation from interns is that they be open to new challenges. If someone wants to learn and absorb knowledge, and they will be open to solutions proposed by the company, I guarantee that we will train them, giving opportunities to develop under the supervision of more experienced colleagues. We also place great value on the commitment and willingness to work as part of a team. If the trainee shows such potential, then we as a company can give them the knowledge and tools



Emerson, from the left: Matusz Podlaski, Krzysztof Hauk

necessary to work effectively,” Krzysztof Hauk describes the recruitment in detail. Some of the interns who came to the company through the “Internship in Lodz” project stayed after the holiday period and still support work in various departments. Matusz Podlaski joined the project with the goal of seeing how a large international production company works. He was not disappointed. “In retrospect, I can say that it's definitely worth taking advantage of the internship programme at Emerson. It's a great opportunity to gain experience, network and pave your way to work in a company that interests you. Thanks to the internship, not only did

I have the time I needed to get to know the potential employer, but they also could decide whether it's worth investing in me by watching me at work. That's why it's definitely worth making the effort and showing your best side," says Mateusz Podlaski.

HTD – A SPECTACULAR DÉBUT OF THE INTERNSHIP PROJECT

The HTD Software house has an office in the glass Brukowa Business Center and specialises in the implementation of digital health projects. The Polish-American company cooperates with doctors, hospitals, entrepreneurs and investors from the private health care sector. It has been operating since 2016.



HTDDevelopers: Maciej Żywno, Adrianna Jędrzejczak

It employs 52 people whose work on mobile applications, web applications and server solutions is mainly organised in a project-based manner. In 2018, the company first joined employers offering internships under the "Internship in Lodz" project, but – as HTD's co-founder assures – this new experience will certainly evolve into regular good practice. "After recruitment, during which I personally talked with 70 people, about 25 were invited to the office for an interview and we offered internships to 9 of them. From the very beginning the interns were involved in

a commercial project and became full members of our project teams," says Maciej Żywno, co-founder of HTD. He describes members of the team as combining the worlds of design, programming, marketing and strategy. "Our expectations of interns are mostly in line with the requirements that we put before candidates for junior positions. We assume that while working with us a person will learn practical professional skills. What we require from candidates is a committed, passionate, responsible and conscientious approach. During the first meeting candidates must confirm that they have the skills needed to create algorithms and data structures, as well as knowledge of database design basics, however there is no obligation to know

any specific programming language, library or framework. We work in a dynamic environment and talk a lot with customers from abroad, which is why it's also necessary to formulate thoughts efficiently, present reasoning in a clear manner and speak English," adds Maciej Żywno when asked about the expectations from potential interns. The spectacular success of the "Internship in Lodz" programme at HTD is demonstrated in the fact that jobs were offered to (and accepted by) all the interns that were recruited in July.

Adrianna Jędrzejczak, a graduate of the Faculty

of Technical Physics, Information Technology and Applied Mathematics, studying computer science and specialising in Software Engineering and Data Analysis was among them. "I asked whether I would participate in a commercial project as part of the internship already during the interview, as this was one of the criteria I followed when selecting the company. In the first days of the internship I was involved in a project for a customer under the care of a company employee, run like any other in the company. The fact that I performed tasks similar to those of employees sitting

next to me in the office made me feel that I was part of the company, not just a guest,” says Adrianna Jędrzejczak, now a member of the HTD team.

ROSSMANN – COME FOR AN INTERNSHIP, JOIN THE TEAM

Rossmann is the leader of the drugstore market in Poland. It has over 1320 stores, where 770 thousand Poles shop every day. The first Rossmann was opened in 1993 in Lodz. This is where the company has its head office and main distribution centre. The company offers customers 21 thousand Polish and foreign products (800 brands in total). To make shopping even simpler, an online store has also been available since February 2015:

www.rossmann.pl.

Customers can download the Rossmann PL app to their smartphones, which allows them to join the Rossmann Club, whose members receive discounts. The app also has them actively participating in the “Pomagamy jak umiemy” (We help as we can) campaign, in which they transfer the collected points to their favourite charities. “We’re part of the local community and support initiatives in Lodz. We have been involved in the “Internship in Lodz” programme since 2012. During the last summer holiday period 16 people completed internships in various departments of the

company. The interns worked as a team, so they could draw on the experience of senior colleagues. In addition, they submitted ideas they would like to implement at Rossmann. We offered further co-operation to the vast majority of trainees and we organised their work so that they could combine it with their studies,” says Monika Franciszowska, Senior Specialist in the Recruitment and Training Department at Rossmann. Maciej Rzeszutek was one of those offered a job after completing the summer internship in 2018. “I joined the internship programme

to check the knowledge and skills I acquired during my studies. From the beginning of the internship, of course following proper onboarding and training, I was entrusted with challenging tasks that are very similar to those performed by other colleagues. I prepare letters and legal opinions. I immediately felt like a full member of the team,” says Maciej Rzeszutek, now an employee of the Rossmann Legal Department. The fact that an internship may lead to long-term co-operation is also proved by Dominika Bikiewicz, who was employed in the OHS Department after the summer holiday project in 2017. She works in the company to this day. “I was afraid that I wouldn’t be able to handle working with people who had such



Rossmann: from the left: Maciej Rzeszutek, Monika Franciszowska, Dominika Bikiewicz

extensive knowledge and professional experience,” she recalls her first day of the internship. And adds: “It soon turned out that my fears were unfounded. I’ve learned a lot from more senior colleagues. Every day brings new challenges and interesting experiences. I gained confidence with time. I observed that I was developing professionally. During the internship she gained new practical skills that complement the theory from her studies. I recommend the “Internship in Lodz” programme to all students – it’s a good start to one’s professional career. ●

BY MALWINA WADAS

Modopolis – tailor-made forum

The first edition of the Polish Fashion Forum – Modopolis was held at the Art Factory in Art_Inkubator, at Tymienieckiego 3. In an interview with the event's program director, **MARIA SOBCZYK**, we summarise the event that will act as a precursor on a nationwide scale, aimed at networking and the integration and promotion of the Polish fashion industry.



Where did the idea for this type of initiative, one completely dedicated to the fashion industry, come from?

The idea for Modopolis came about as a result of several coincidences and many considerations. This event is an extension of the Art_Inkubator idea. The residents usually include designers associated with the fashion industry – we've had, and still have, the opportunity to see the difficulties they face in their work. The Polish fashion industry is seeing very dynamic growth, but it still has no support mechanisms. Through activities that are close to our heart we wanted to lend support to a sector in which there is so much to do, but one that, at the same time, has so many entrepreneurs in its ranks. The idea coincided with the activities of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, which conducts support programs for the creative sector and added support for the fashion industry to its priorities.

I understand the choice of the space was also important? It's not only about the Art Factory or Art_Inkubator, but the city as such.

Lodz is famous for its fashion traditions, so it's difficult to imagine a better place for organising an event for entrepreneurs operating in fashion! Studies related to clothing design, fabrics are very popular at the Academy of Fine Arts. There is an abundance of people already working in the fashion business or who want to become its part. They need support at each of these stages and, unfortunately, the existing forms are currently no longer sufficient. So we decided to look for new solutions with the interested parties themselves.

The event's programme was plentiful, but also diverse. What was the underlying idea?

On the one hand, the programme is an educational offer, but on the other, it's an invitation to talk. The main event at the forum was a workshop which allowed us to

talk with entrepreneurs about their strengths, their needs, how we can respond to them as a business environment institution, what support mechanisms the Ministry can implement do they believe to be effective.

What issues were covered in discussions held during open panels, which have proved to be hugely popular?

We organised three panel discussions during Modopolis. During the first one, which was devoted to Polish fashion, we wondered together whether the term is actually used, what it is associated with, can we easily use it to enter foreign markets. Each of the invited panel participants presented a slightly different business model. We invited Tomasz Armada to the discussion, a young and eccentric artist who breaks stereotypes, draws attention to “Polishness” and is not ashamed of it. On the contrary – he builds his artistic ventures on its basis. It's difficult to say whether he is an entrepreneur, fashion designer or performer. Next to him sat Aga Prus, whose brand is based on family traditions. Her company offers hand-made shoes, distinguished by the immaculate attention to detail in the materials, workmanship and design. The panel was also attended by Maciek Wodniak, a representative of the Melancholia duet, the jewellery brand Michał Kubieniec, owner of the Gescheft showroom, heavily embedded in the Silesian tradition, who offers customers what's local. This was the inauguration panel that outlined the situation, discussed the essence of fashion, but also how it connects with business. The next two panels were devoted to the needs and strengths of Polish brands and Polish fashion. All the panels were hosted by Marcin Różyk, a curator, critic and fashion journalist.

Modopolis also included workshops conducted by practitioners and specialists who support the industry on a daily basis. Please tell us about them.

The aim of the workshops was to gain new competences and knowledge about areas that we see as important for representatives / employees in the fashion industry. We tried to take care of the needs of those who want to start a fashion

Lodz is famous for its fashion traditions, so it's difficult to imagine a better place for organising an event for entrepreneurs operating in fashion!

brand, but also those who have been on the market for years. For those thinking of starting a business, we organised a workshop called “Cienie i blaski bycia przedsiębiorcą” (Advantages and disadvantages of being an entrepreneur). It was hosted by Wojtek Kurzyk. We wanted to show people that there are several advantages, but many disadvantages. Another meeting was hosted by Agnieszka Witońska-Pakulska, attorney, from a law office in Cracow, specialising in the protection of fashion brands. She talked about the great importance of paying attention to securing one's business and, at the same time, showed many people that it's not as complicated and expensive as it seems. Monika Kozłowska from Social Tigers talked about how to work with social networks. In compiling the list of Modopolis participants, we browsed hundreds, not to say thousands, of websites of Polish brands. This experience drove us to invite Pani od polskiego, a company involved in editing texts, whose representatives advised “Jak mówić o marce, by ją kochali” (How to talk about a brand so that others love it).

A showroom was also part of the event, but – even though it was possible to buy clothes and accessories there – it was not like at a trade fair. Who visited it?

We asked representatives from 40 brands to prepare their products, but we didn't want it to be a trade event. We simply wanted to present products related to the Modopolis event. Of course, buying was an option, it was an open event, but most visitors were interested in the fashion market and the industry, people with a professional relationship with it. There are many trade fairs and commercial fairs, but they are not a place for reflections, meetings or discussions. Entrepreneurs network during such trade fairs,



because they have stands next to each other and they can see each other during subsequent industry meetings, but they don't have the space or time to talk about how they deal with difficult situations, where they look for good solutions and support. This – a space for conversations and meetings – is what sets Modopolis apart from other trade fairs.

Another important part of the event was the meeting of the fashion industry cluster. What is the cluster and what is its nature?

The cluster is one of the answers to the fashion industry's needs – it's a model for mutual support that we show as one of the possibilities for functioning on the fashion market. As it was held at the end of the year, the Modopolis project also served as a summary of activities that were aimed at supporting the emerging

support and connect companies that are competitors. A cluster amounts to difficult, collective work. It seemed appropriate to us to support novice entrepreneurs in particular. Such joint activities, even among potential competitors, may be beneficial for them. They may be competitors on the market, where they meet their customers, but when buying fabrics or looking for subcontractors, they have a stronger position in negotiations when they form larger groups. In the end, the Polish Fashion Cluster was brought to life, several companies have become very involved in its creation. The conclusion of an agreement with the Bursa Textile Show was a great success. Members of the cluster were invited to participate in the show just before the Forum, took part free of charge and during Modopolis they talked about how valuable this experience was. Thanks to the Forum many companies joined the cluster. This

was possible thanks to conversations and the fact that their representatives found themselves in one place. They had time to listen about the cluster's activities and talk to its members.

What is the future of Modopolis?

We're already planning the next edition! We're very hopeful that we'll also receive financial support from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage for the next edition, just like in 2018. We were surprised not only by the great interest in the event, but also by how open the participants were. They said Modopolis was very much needed – it was a very significant voice. All the participants declared their

willingness to appear during subsequent editions, where they would like to share their experience and skills. That's what we want every day – participation. Thanks to it, the support we provide can function well and give appropriate effects, and we'll be able to organise other attractive events for people directly interested in the fashion industry. We want Modopolis to be an event that really responds to their needs – here and now.

Thank you for your time. ●



On the one hand, the programme is an educational offer, but it's an invitation to talk on the other hand

cluster. Through our earlier activities we met Marcin Jabłoński. He came to us with fashion industry entrepreneurs who wanted to set up the cluster and together we wondered what we could do to support them as a cultural institution, but also a business environment institution. Earlier, thanks to the Ministry's support, we had the opportunity to organise meetings during which we talked about what the cluster is and what purpose it serves. From those we learned that there is a distrust of the initiatives that are supposed to



Artistic Non-Chain Republic

From the left: Sasa Lubińska, Dominika Ciemięga, Tomasz Armada, Kacper Szalecki

They mock the superficial elitism of the fashion industry, uncover its absurdities and expose phoniness. They "wake up" customers who have succumbed to the chain-store, repetitive style. They rebel against established standards. They don't settle for stereotypes. The creators of Dom Mody Limanka (Limanka Fashion House) give a flick in the nose to the Polish fashion industry through the actions of their artistic group. Marzena Zberska talks with TOMASZ ARMADA about the aversion to bling and the search for his own artistic identity.

You're one of the creators of the Limanka Fashion House initiative, which you refer to as an artistic and fashion collective. A collective brings about associations with the Polish People's Republic, with its propaganda and praise of collective work. Is there an analogy here?

The term was created to answer what the Limanka Fashion House is exactly. It's an artistic group founded in 2017. That's what we called our apartment, where we set up our gallery, organised exhibitions and concerts... We do actually work in a group though, so collectively.

Who makes up the Limanka Fashion House?

The core group is composed of Sasa Lubińska, a painter by education, Kacper Szalecki who studies new media and digital culture, and mainly acts as the photographer in our projects, even though he is a multidisciplinary artist, and Dominika Ciemięga, who is an architect by education, but runs a YouTube channel, records videos, guides, writes lifestyle blogs. I'm a fashion designer by profession, but that's not all I do. Other people join in

when we implement projects. The group's composition is therefore dependent on the needs, ideas, possibilities and sometimes is the result of coincidence.

For example?

Jakub Dylewski and I shot the video "Drogi ciuchy" (Dear clothes) for our friend Bella Ćwir. We also got Bożena Wydrowska, a choreographer, to work with us on this project.

How did you meet? What reunited such rebellious souls in one team?

We met through the Internet. Sasa and Kacper were living in Gdynia and ran Pracownia Mokra (Wet Art House), which was similar to Limanka, but on a smaller scale. After some time, they decided to move to Lodz. Then we resolved to live together. Our group's name comes from Limanowskiego, the name of the street at which I lived for a year in Lodz. This is a unique location, even though it doesn't have the best reputation among residents. Now we live in a different place, but the initiative's name stuck.

Is it easy for a group of individualists to work on a common project?

Working in a group is very difficult and involves sacrifices, mainly on an artistic level. Disputes, discussions and ideological clashes are common. Each of us is an individualist, a strong personality, so working together is difficult. We're quite eccentric, and our apartment is a total melting pot. Ultimately, however, we always reach an agreement and work out a common vision for the project.

Don't you think this is a sign of modern times? Now, you have to be an individual to stand out from the crowd and achieve professional success.

Not necessarily. We survive by forming a collective and working as a group. Otherwise, it's hard to be noticed and difficult to break into the mainstream. In establishing the Limanka Fashion House we assumed that we would create our own space and niche. Cultural institutions have recently started to open up to us, notice us. We already have a large audience in Lodz.

I don't duplicate Western trends but look for inspiration locally or in the Sarmatian folk dress styles. I try to tell a story through my projects, reference problems and show them in a strong, exaggerated manner

You recently completed a project for the Museum of Art in Lodz. Is this your first big undertaking intended for a wider audience and commissioned by a cultural institution?

We were asked by the curator team to interpret the Museum of Art's collection. The project is entitled "Prototypes: Limanka Fashion House. New collection" (Prototypy: Dom Mody Limanka. Nowa kolekcja) (the exhibition is open until 21 April this year). Chain stores have become our medium and parodying them our form of expression. All our work is subject to this aesthetic choice. We presented pictures, posters and sculptures in a chain store interpretation. For example, changing rooms were inspired by Witkacy's "Multiple self-portrait in mirrors". All this had to feature clothes, but low-quality clothes, mass-produced. Therefore, very low-quality clothing inspired by works from the museum's collection was created, for example sweatshirts based on artistic installations or sets of clothes referencing performances.



A world in which all people are similar, with all their dresses from chain stores, is boring. Is this project a way to praise originality and a manifesto against succumbing to trends?

In a way, yes, but this was not the key. We wanted to prepare an exhibition where exhibits can be touched, as it's difficult to complete art, if restrictions are present. On the other hand, we wanted to relieve those responsible for the security of museum exhibits, so that they wouldn't have to watch everything and everyone. We wanted to take away this responsibility, show off art with which one can be close, try it on, take a picture in an outfit from the exhibition and share it on Instagram. It turned out that the visitors were very enthusiastic about our idea. We managed to build an atmosphere of freedom in a museum space.

Are the clothes that the Limanka Fashion House showed at the Museum of Art in Lodz in some way connected to your own original designs?

The project for the museum doesn't have much to do with fashion. It's just a critical statement, showing the mechanisms behind the fashion industry, a lack of creativity in design. Another problem of the fashion industry is false social involvement. Clothing brands often call on different values in the name of profits. This isn't authentic.

How would you define your style as a designer?

I don't duplicate Western trends but look for inspiration locally or in the Sarmatian folk dress styles. I try to tell a story through my projects, reference problems and show them in a strong, exaggerated manner. Very often people attribute a second-hand aesthetic to my work, because I design clothes from recycled materials and what I find in second-hand shops. For example, I made a trench coat out of prayer rugs I found in a second-hand

shop. I try to go beyond what I learned during my studies, I break the rules of tailoring. I focus more on the visual aspect of clothing than on its purely usable function, but for me the clothes are primarily the medium I use to express myself. Designers in Poland usually copy others, especially western designers, instead of creating their own original designs.

Since the Limanka Fashion House is not actually a fashion house and in essence you have not designed any collection, how did it appear in “Vogue Polska” magazine’s summary of Polish fashion in 2018?

I have no idea. I’m a designer by profession and our initiative has a Fashion House in its name, and that was probably enough. Nobody checked, if Limanka really had anything to do with designing clothes.

And what tasks does the creator of the Limanka Fashion House have? After all, that is your function...

In some interview I said that I’m the Creative Director of the Limanka Fashion House and this information is now being repeated in the media. We picked up on the idea, keep playing with the fashion house thing, come up with different functions, for example Kacper is the CEO. In a world of ubiquitous media, it’s easy to assign oneself any function, which is basically unverifiable. Anyone can be a creative director. This is what the fashion world in Poland is based on. Very often, people in fashion give themselves different functions, positions and the media rolls with this. What do these people actually do? Who are they? Who knows.

The artistic activity of the Fashion House is one thing, earning a living another. Is designing now the source of your livelihood?

My own projects are unique works. I make them myself, from start to finish. They aren’t available on the fashion market, I don’t sell them in stores, I only make them on special order.

You’re an opponent of commercialism in fashion. Can you build a brand on avant-garde, unique projects and treat it as a source of regular income?

I’m not opposed to commercialism in fashion. I’m at the stage of looking for my own identity as an artist and designer, I experiment and, at the same time, I’m trying to gain recognition and develop my own brand.

What if a tempting proposal came about for you to design a collection for a well-known fashion brand...?

Then I might face a dilemma. I have already had the opportunity to design for UEG, a brand recognisable all over the world, and it was a very interesting experience. I hope that I can reconcile artistic activity with making a living from design. For sure, I’m at the very beginning of the road and still need to gain experience in both areas.

Is a tempting commercial proposition not at odds with the idea behind the Limanka Fashion House?

The only idea behind the Limanka Fashion House is to do cool things together. ●

Prototypes: Limanka Fashion House. New collection



BY MALWINA WADAS

Nothing happens without a reason

NIC ŁÓDŹ, also known as Piotr Kwietniewski and Emilia Biernacka, use knitting machines to knit sweaters like no one else on the market. They treat their work more like art than a business. Lodz inspires them, this is where they work and live. This is where they dispatch their extraordinary clothing world-wide.

We're meeting soon after you were chosen for the "Wystawiajmy się!" (Show yourself) programme run by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute to represent Poland at the most important trade fairs, design and fashion festivals in the world in 2019 together with other brands. Congratulations!

Thank you! It's a great distinction for us that we can be part of such a group.

How did NIC ŁÓDŹ come about?

E: The truth is that we simply met, our skills were aligned and joined to form NIC.

P: My parents-in-law have a sweater factory. They sent me to Germany for a three-month course organised by the manufacturer of the knitting machine which they had in their factory, but by mistake it was not the basic course, but the more advanced one, so I didn't understand a thing! When I came back to Poland,

nobody knew how to use the machines I had to deal with, I had no one to turn to for help, so I experimented and... I quickly fell in love with it. A few years later, I met a Norwegian lady, Linn, who was studying at the cinematography department of the Lodz Film School. After months of trials we managed to transfer her photographs onto knitwear, prepared an exhibition, even printed labels indicating the photo's author. Back then, I wasn't thinking about clothes at all, only about pictures. Today, however, I see this co-operation as one of the things that led me to NIC ŁÓDŹ, as the technology was also created thanks to Linn's work. I met Emilia exactly five years ago and we developed this advanced jacquard technique.

E: I'm a visual artist by education and passion. Family tradition also influenced my selection of studies.

To be honest, I never even thought that I would be creating clothes, even though I have been dealing with fabrics since I went to an art-oriented middle-school. I studied fabric design at university, but we didn't have access to technology. Then I met Piotr and it turned out that the machines are out there, he knows factories... Our first joint project were caps with the inscription NIC, which were mainly worn by our friends. Later, Piotr told me about the project with Linn and we came up with the idea of making a sweater. That's how it began.

What was the idea behind NIC ŁÓDŹ?

E: The caps were definitely not a business idea, more like a sneak peek. Sweaters with deities, which today could be considered our first collection, were still made for fun, we made only 8



of them. In the meantime, we created a fanpage for NIC – our model was naked, wearing only a hat with the words NIC. We presented the “Bozia” (Deity) sweaters on the site, someone saw them and invited us to a talk on a morning television show. We went to this interview, but we didn't really know what we were doing there. We were asked, if we were selling these sweaters, but we had only sold one – to our friend! Driven by this meeting, we decided to go to Slow Fashion. We had a few sweaters, hats and an IKEA clothes rack for thirty zlotys. This was a total flop – a few cardboard boxes, this rack... We didn't sell anything. We then decided that we weren't born for sales.

P: The fair was in December, then Christmas came and at the beginning of the year head hunters offered me the position of a knitting machines programmer, so we went to Ireland to make traditional Irish sweaters. We were there for a year and this trip gave us a lot of inspiration. Their braids, knitwear, tradition, their national heritage – all that fascinated us.

Where else do you get inspiration for patterns, weaves and materials?

P: Inspiration isn't a problem, we go to the factory and often don't have enough time to put all the ideas we have in motion. Lodz is definitely an inspiration.

E: During our stay in Ireland our imagination was overcome with romantic visions of making sweaters from Polish sheep's wool, which we have been searching for, for a long time, from Polish linen... We wanted to use local fabrics like the Irish. It turned out, however, no one was buying Polish sheep's wool, because people are afraid of its “coarseness”.

P: We still have this wool, but we don't use it to make clothes – it's an idea that we haven't been able to put into practice.

E: The range of possibilities in terms of weaves and wool is limited. People all over the world are mainly aware of the traditional Irish, Norwegian, Icelandic and Peruvian patterns. Poland doesn't have such traditions, so we came up with a completely different way to interweave Polish culture into the sweaters – by transferring photographs of Polish landscapes into the fibre structure. We're always on the lookout for inspiration. After the “Bozia” collection I created collages based on illustrations from a pre-war book, “Nowe lecznictwo przyrodnicze” (New Natural Health Care), and then we developed a dotted – pixel system. It was at this point that our work began to sell and we started to treat NIC as a business.



You often emphasise the importance of materials. You describe your sweaters by giving information on their base material.

P: Earlier, we made clothes from leftovers from factories, also from acrylic, and we felt awkward selling this... Our dream was always to use natural materials. Then we got merino wool, now we have organic cotton. This is important to us not only because of the quality of the clothes. We also pay attention to the ethical dimension of the manufacturing.

E: Most designers don't make fabrics, they only buy ready-made bales. For us, it's normal that we make them ourselves. If you were to look at it from the outside, it is quite unusual...

The knitting technique you use is also unusual.

E: Yes, the technique goes a bit against nature – in a way, we're fooling the machine. We use technologies created for mass production even though we make individual pieces. This isn't something you do in a traditional manufacturing process –everything usually happens quickly, with two, three colours, some simple pattern. From the industrial production perspective, what we're doing is unprofitable. In the time it takes us to make one sweater, seven others could be made, which is why we often have some process problems. The task is often so labour-intensive that once we have refined something, only one piece of clothing remains.

P: It's a bit like industrial painting. To describe what we do, I often tell people that it's like having a Ferrari and driving it off-road. I've been working this way for 16 years. ●

BY PRZEMYSŁAW GRZYB

One's own designer apartment

Owning an apartment has been the dream of generations of Poles for decades. Once you got the desired keys, you had to somehow decorate the interior. This “somehow” was very clearly visible for years, in the cumbersome furniture, dull colours and sad wood panelling. Today, “somehow” is not enough, as we pay more and more attention to how we live.

Joanna Pytlewska-Bil, who has been running the Pink Pug Design office in Lodz for 10 years, wants to show that beautiful and original interiors can go hand in hand with functionality and ergonomics, and that utility is the underpinning of a good design.

“GO BACK TO THE CAPITAL!”

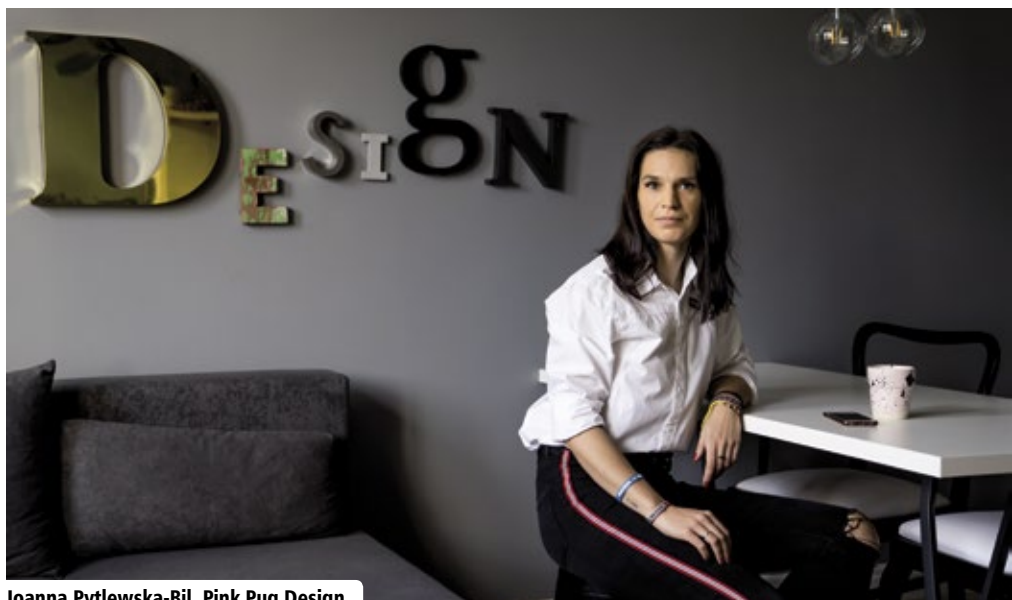
Pink Pug Design and Lodz were brought together by accident. Joanna Pytlewska-Bil was born in Skierniewice, brought up in Warsaw and came to Lodz for the first time just before the exam at the Faculty of Industrial and Interior Design at the Academy of Fine Arts. The first impression the city made on the aspiring designer was not the best, to put it mildly. “The beginnings were difficult for me. I was living in a dorm in Bałuty and witnessed many different situations, after which I kept telling myself: “Go back to the capital!” Pytlewska-Bil recalls.

However, over time she began to discover the city's less apparent and often not so obvious beauty. “The architecture in Lodz stole my heart, I simply love the tenement houses in Lodz. I decided that I would stay here on the condition that I would live in such a house. I fulfilled my dream and today my studio is located in a down town tenement house as well,” she explains.

FOR A FREELANCER AND AUDIOPHILE

Since its inception, that is from 2009, Pink Pug Design has focused primarily on the interior designing of private houses and flats. The services also include designing and arranging green spaces or terraces. Pink Pug Design's work is characterised by the fact that their

design is always adapted to the individual expectations of each client. “Our clients' needs vary greatly. A lot depends on their lifestyle. Some work from home, some have beloved animals, while still others are audiophiles,” Pytlewska-Bil lists. The interiors are first and foremost



Joanna Pytlewska-Bil, Pink Pug Design

functional, but the designer believes it's also extremely important that there be something very individual and personal about them. “I love when clients have a family heirloom that they want to have in their new space,” Pytlewska-Bil explains.

NO MORE COPY-PASTE

Work in Pink Pug Design rests on two pillars. The first is taking an individual approach to each design. “We don't copy and paste. The interior is to meet the user's needs, make them comfortable. This requires meetings 'over coffee,’” she says. It's during such meetings that the designer talks to the client, gets to know their needs and expectations, and also presents her ideas, visualisations,

selected raw materials and fabrics. Being “on-site” is also crucial. “When we’re carrying out a project in Szczecin, Poznan, Warsaw or another city, we get in the car and go there to get to know the owners and the space we’re to arrange. Contact in person is very important,” Pytlewska-Bil explains.

AN INTERIOR NOT FROM INSTAGRAM

Ever-present functionality is the second pillar. Interiors designed and arranged by Pink Pug Design are for made people, to match their needs, lifestyle and expectations. “We don’t design to get a nice picture, likes or hearts on Instagram,” Pytlewska-Bil says. “For us the client is of utmost importance and the biggest reward is when after a few months of using an interior that we designed, they tell us they’re happy and recommend us to others.”

GET YOUR STORE DESIGN HERE!

Arranging and designing commercial spaces is another important aspect of Pink Pug Design’s activities. Such spaces include: shops, stores and showrooms. One of the largest undertakings of this kind was to design a store for a Polish men’s clothing producer from scratch. “We designed the furniture in line with the range of products, chose the right lighting, so that the clothes and accessories would look their best. We complemented the design with decorative elements emphasising the masculine nature of the space. However, at every step we put the comfort of our customers and the convenience of service first,” enumerates the designer. Today, four open stores use this style and more are planned. Nevertheless, as Pytlewska-Bil underlines, arranging a space in a shopping centre is fundamentally different from work on a private space. “The number of details that require consideration is difficult to enumerate,” she concludes.

SHINING A LIGHT ON ACCESSORIES

In her everyday work, Joanna Pytlewska-Bil doesn’t forget the great importance of accessories and decorative elements. She designs and makes some of them herself. One of the key designs in her portfolio is the Convallaria Lamp. In Latin, the name stands for “lily of the valley” and the felt shade brings this very flower to mind. It is popular with both Polish and foreign customers, and has gained the appreciation of the design industry. The lamp has received an award at the Machina Design Awards

and was also presented at numerous trade fairs and events, including: the Lodz Design Festival, Gdynia Design Days, Arena Design in Poznań, 100 Percent Design in London and IMM in Cologne. Pink Pug Design’s portfolio also includes other accessories. “We made coasters for cups and plates inspired by data storage media, which have been withdrawn from widespread use. Floppy disks were the most recognisable. Unfortunately, when mass-produced Chinese products started flooding the Polish market, we stopped selling our own,” Pytlewska-Bil explains.

NOT THE TIME FOR A SUMMARY

The designer believes that 10 years of Pink Pug Design’s market presence is not yet a time for any summaries. The design office still has much work to do and a lot to achieve. Firstly, the market for home decoration services



Interior design of an apartment

is evolving. On the one hand, more and more people want to take advantage of them and live in well-designed, functional and beautiful spaces. On the other hand, there are companies and decorators who, through their lack of proper preparation or approach, spoil the market and discourage people from using such services. Education is therefore the key. Joanna Pytlewska-Bil also wants to expand the Pink Pug Design business with renovations and the sale of old homes. “We’ve established co-operation with a real estate market specialist. Together, we want to complete projects to revitalise old homes that show potential. We’ll breathe new life into them and create unique spaces that have soul and style,” she sums up. ●

Marek Edelman – with kind regards

By KATARZYNA JÓZWIK



Although mostly associated with the extended interview he gave Hanna Krall, entitled “To Make It Before God”, Marek Edelman is not only the leader of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, but also a distinguished cardiologist, who had been working at the M. Pirogow Regional Specialist Hospital in Lodz. In 2000, he received the Honorary Citizenship of Lodz thanks to his contribution to the development of the city.

Marek Edelman Year inauguration event. On stage from the left: Joanna Podolska, Marcin Gołaszewski – President of the City Council, Krzysztof Piątkowski – Vice-President of Lodz

The year 2019 has been declared Marek Edelman’s Year. The opening took place on 4 January of this year at the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Lodz. Marek Edelman’s Year will be celebrated by a series of educational and cultural events.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF A LEGEND

It is difficult to determine Marek Edelman’s date and place of birth. It is assumed that he was born on 1 January 1919 in Homel. – He died 10 years ago, and this year he would have celebrated his 100th birthday. This is a great occasion to recall his biography and message – explains Joanna Podolska, Director of the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Lodz. The biography of this insurgent and cardiologist proves that he was a remarkable person. During the war, as a member of the Jewish Combat Organization, he actively fought against the invader. After the death of the Organization’s commander, Mordechaj Anielewicz, he became the leader of the Jewish insurgents. In the interview given to Hanna Krall he admitted that they were on the losing end and their fight was merely a choice of the way to die, for – as he claimed – “humanity set up that dying with

a gun in your hand is more beautiful than dying without it”. His realistic approach to the conditions in the ghetto, to death and the race against God with the aim to save human lives accompanied him throughout his entire medical career after the war.

NOT HIS CITY, BUT HIS LODZ

Although Marek Edelman was not born in Lodz, he vastly contributed to the city’s development. As a Medical Academy student he not only started his adventure with medicine, but also fully devoted himself to work at the hospitals of Lodz. His innovative and yet well thought through treatment methods made him leave a mark in the history of Lodz as an outstanding cardiologist, whose assumption was that everyone, regardless of their social status, is equal in the eyes of medicine. This assumption assured him the limitless trust of his patients. But Marek Edelman is not only a well-known doctor from Lodz. – He was also an activist of the Lodz anti-communist opposition. His apartment at Zelwerowicza street was something of an embassy. It was visited by remarkable and important people, including presidents and prime ministers, filmmakers and actors, political activists and journalists

– enumerates Joanna Podolska. – Lodz was not Edelman’s hometown, but became and still is the city of Marek Edelman – she stresses. Marek Edelman never decided to leave the country despite numerous repressions in times of the People’s Republic of Poland.

COMPASSIONATE REBEL

Marek Edelman can easily be called an eternal rebel – due to his heroic fight against the occupier but more importantly due to his unique persistence in the struggle to save his patients’ lives. He admitted that as a doctor he tenaciously guarded the light of human life. Not only was he compassionate in relation to his patients, but also very much attuned to the suffering of every human being. He was actively engaged in helping the victims of military conflicts, i.a. in Kosovo, Bosnia or Sarajevo. His attitude and actions made other people realize that everyone of us is responsible for this world’s fate. He was not afraid to touch on difficult and painful subjects. He always stood up for the weaker. – His life is an amazing lesson of social engagement – admits the Dialogue Centre’s Director.

SAVE THE MEMORY

All of the ideas that Marek Edelman was guided by are the theme of the anniversary year’s events. The motto of the inauguration of the Marek Edelman’s Year was “Life is the most important thing”. The event encompassed memories shared by Edelman’s friends, such as: Henryk Wujec, Marek Czekański, doctor Aga Żuchowska, journalists Witold Bereś and Krzysztof Burnetko and Joanna Szczęsna. A special memory was recorded by Aleksander Edelman, Marek Edelman’s son and Janina Ochojska, head of Polish Humanitarian Action. Further events also correspond to the ideals Edelman upheld, namely respect for freedom, love and memory. The celebrations’ programme also includes a performance dedicated to the Patron of the Year, named “Edelman’s Worlds”, the world premiere of the book co-written by Edelman “And There Was Love in the Ghetto”, a series of memories and meetings with people from his closest environment. All of the planned events have one common aim: preserving the memory of this unique



Edelman’s Year celebration - general schedule

“Life is the most important thing”

- 4 January– Inauguration of Marek Edelman’s Year in Lodz and the 100th anniversary of the birthday of the Centre’s Patron
- 23 February – “Edelman. Doctor”, meeting with doctors and nurses, Marek Edelman’s co-workers, i.a. from the Pirogow Hospital
- 18 March – “Edelman. The Politician”, meeting with politicians and journalists

“Freedom is the most important thing”

- 16 April– premiere of the “Edelman” comic book
- 17 April– opening of the “Marek Edelman. Human” exhibition, premiere of the performance entitled “Marek Edelman’s Worlds” (directed by Karina Góra)
- 19 April– commemoration of the 76th anniversary of the Outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

“Love is the most important thing”

- 10 May– world premiere of the movie “Marek Edelman... And There Was Love in the Ghetto” (directed by Jolanta Dylewska)
- meeting with Paula Sawicka, co-author of the book “And There Was Love in the Ghetto”

“Memory is the most important”

- 2 October– 10th anniversary of Marek Edelman’s death
- Discussion “Why do we miss Marek Edelman today?”

personality. – Remembrance was exactly what meant so much to him. He used to say that he stayed in Poland to be with his friends, to make the memory of them survive. He was the guardian of remembrance – admits Joanna Podolska. – And we want to make the young generation guardians of remembrance – she adds.

FROM KINDERGARTEN TO THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

The educational offer prepared by the Dialogue Centre, conducted on multiple levels – from kindergarten to University of the Third Age - is also an important element of the celebrations. The workshops are dedicated to both organised groups and

individuals. – We have planned numerous meetings, lectures, screenings. In cooperation with Żak Student Radio, we will prepare weekly broadcasts on the Patron – claims the director of the Dialogue Centre. For more detailed information on the celebrations of the Marek Edelman’s Year, please visit the dedicated website: www.centrumdialogu.com ●

BY MARTA ZDANOWSKA

On the track of Lodz women with a past

Intelligence agent, conspirator, the first female professor at a technical university in Poland, pioneer of sexology... the stories of Lodz women can be told in various ways, but the Lodz Women's Trail shows how to do it in an interesting manner.

The Lodz Women's Trail was registered as a foundation in December 2017, although it previously operated as an informal group. The foundation's operation can be seen as promoting the "Lodz. There is strength in women" brand. Its members deal with herstory, i.e. history told from the perspective of women, its "missing half" omitted in textbooks and films.

THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

The Lodz Women's Trail is made up of five women: Ewa Kamińska-Bużalek, political science graduate and women's rights activist working with non-governmental organisations; Inga Kuźma, ethnologist and social activist; Izabela Desperak, sociologist and feminist; Iza Olejnik, graduate of Yiddish studies, librarian; Marta Zdanowska, literary scholar, cultural animator. Their collaborators include: Barbara Manduk-Cheyne, women's rights activist; Edyta Pietrzak, academic researcher; Joanna Sikorzanka, retired journalist of Radio Lodz. The activists organise urban walks, workshops for children, multimedia projects, urban games; they publish books, operate within the Polish herstory network, and document their social media operations. The foundation's ideas have grabbed the hearts of Lodz residents, as evidenced by the distinction "Point for Lodz" awarded for "exploring the forgotten history of the city."



A trail of Irena Tuwim

HERSTORY ON THE STREETS

The idea to name squares and streets after female historical figures was born quite quickly at the Lodz Women's Trail. It was a reaction to the clear disparity between "male" and "female" names given to public places. Michalina Wisłocka (Tybury 4 street), Irena Tuwim (corner of Lipowa and Struga streets) and Alina Margolis Edelman (intersection of Kilińskiego and Jaracza streets) Squares were established at the initiative of the LWT with the support of the city council. "We haven't finished. As part of the revitalisation process, completely new public spaces will be created in

Śródmieście: passages, squares, plazas. They will need names. This is a unique opportunity

to give prestigious spots in the city centre to female figures without the need to change existing street names," says Ewa

Kamińska-Bużalek from the Lodz Women's Trail.

Urban space is particularly important for the foundation. This was the origin of urban educational operations, including mapped urban walks, such as a trail dedicated to female writers and Yiddish poets in Bałuty, a walk dedicated to Lodz suffragettes and female scientists, a route of female textile workers, and a fascinating trail of Irena

Tuwim. The preparation of trails dedicated to female writers and actors is currently under way.

LODZ TRULY IS A WOMAN

The LWT activists decided to tell herstory... at bus stops. The "City of Women" project, as the initiative is named,

was implemented together with the Promotion, Social Communication and Tourism Bureau. Posters with photos of exceptional women from Lodz found their way onto 25 bus shelters. They depict: Irena Tuwim, poet and translator, sister of Julian Tuwim; Alina Szapocznikow, avant garde sculptor experimenting with the human body; Katarzyna Kobro, sculptor whose works are on display at the Museum of Art in Lodz; Grażyna Bacewicz, violinist and composer; Miriam Ulinower, poet writing in Yiddish. There was no shortage of social activists and scientists, including: Alina Margolis-Edelman, Zofia Hertz, Halina Kłąb-Szwarc, Maryla Biedermann, and textile workers and female scouts from Lodz. The posters contained descriptions in two languages (Polish and English), short enough to be readable when waiting for a tram. A QR code redirected you to the project website where you could read additional information. “I’ll shamelessly admit that the posters were beautiful. Thanks to this project, we managed to join the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Polish women’s right to vote. However, we didn’t organise a boring lecture about the need to tell herstory, but we entered the urban space with our protagonists,” says Ewa Kamińska-Bużalek. The operations conducted with the urban community were also successful – the campaign entitled “Irena: writer from our backyard” was organised at the tenement house where the Tuwim siblings lived for several years. The accompanying event “Transatlantyk Festival 2017” was intended to explore the figure of the translator and poet who lived most of her life in the shadow of her famous brother. Performative reading of fragments of “Łódzkie pory roku” (Seasons in Lodz), decorating the backyard with the beloved flowers of Irena Tuwim, and a temporary commemorative plaque for the writer made the residents feel that their tenement house is exceptional.

HUNGER MARCH – WE WON’T FORGET

The famous hunger march of 1981 was reported by media around the world: Lodz women, exhausted by three-shift work and standing in lines, protested against the difficult living conditions. This event was forgotten after 1989, even though it was the largest street

demonstration in the Polish People’s Republic. Activists from the Lodz Women’s Trail managed to find the participants of that march and – using reports and memories of protesting women – the script for a new march was conceived along the historic route.

The march made its way through Piotrkowska street, this time with the participation of numerous Lodz residents. The guides told stories about Lodz 37 years ago, in particular about difficult working conditions of textile workers. “One of the marchers was Janina Kończak, leader of the hunger march, opposition activist, mother of three children,” says Ewa Kamińska-Bużalek. “She made speeches on behalf of women from Lodz and demanded changes. She was interned several months later and then forced to emigrate. Today she lives in France.

She came to Poland at our invitation. She’s a strong, charismatic woman. She was so moved at the press conference that she cried,” adds the LWT activist. The march was preceded by Anka Leśniak’s artistic performance. Passer-bys received empty plates with chants shouted by women during many worldwide demonstrations. These chants and demands of the Lodz hunger march were also announced over a megaphone.

HOW TO TEACH HERSTORY TO CHILDREN?

The stories of female Lodz superheroes serve as fuel to the imagination, including children’s imagination. Children could learn about writer Irena Tuwim and Alina Margolis-Edelman, founder of the Empowering Children Foundation, during literary and art workshops, and educational workshops organised by the LWT. The kids wonder what has changed in our perception of female writers, and they learn that, in some parts of the world, education is a privilege, not a right. Teenage rebels are a bit harder to work with. The urban game “On the track of rebellious Bronka” was created for them. Young people walked around Lodz and solved tasks related to the stories of women from Lodz, which included carrying grenades underneath one’s clothes (referring to the operations of conspirators) and discussing inventions created by women from Lodz. It worked! Because Lodz is a truly exceptional woman. ●



The “City of Women” project

**19th FESTIVAL OF SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND ART IN LODZ**

8-15 APRIL

WWW.FESTIWAL.LODZ.PL

**1st LODZ SCIENTIFIC FORUM
ON THE WORLD VOICE DAY**

15-16 APRIL

PALACE OF THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC
IN LODZ, UL. GDAŃSKA 32
WWW.AMUZ.LODZ.PL

OFF-PÓŁNOCNA FESTIVAL

23-28 APRIL

MUSICAL THEATRE IN LODZ, UL. PÓŁNOCNA 47/51
WWW.OFFPOLNOCNA.COM

MUSICAL PIAF! THE SHOW

26 APRIL, 8:00 pm

WYTWÓRNA CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29
WWW.WYTWORNIA.PL

MELA KOTELUK CONCERT

28 APRIL, 7:00 pm

WYTWÓRNA CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29
WWW.WYTWORNIA.PL

MUSICA MODERNA session

6-9 MAY

CHAMBER MUSIC HALL OF THE ACADEMY
OF MUSIC IN LODZ
AL. 1 MAJA 4
WWW.AMUZ.LODZ.PL

LENNY KRAVITZ CONCERT

8 MAY, 8:00 PM

ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7
WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

XXV LODZ BALLET MEETINGS

11 MAY-23 JUNE

TEATR WIELKI, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1
WWW.OPERALODZ.COM

CEBIOFORUM 2019

15-16 MAY

LODZ EXPO HALL, AL. POLITECHNIKI 4
WWW.CEBIOFORUM.EU

LODZ DESIGN FESTIWAL

17-26 MAY

ART-INKUBATOR IN THE LODZ ART CENTER
UL. TYMIENIECKIEGO 3
WWW.LODZDESIGN.COM

NIGHT OF MUSEUMS IN LODZ

18-19 MAY

WWW.HISTORIA.ORG.PL

**22nd FAIR OF PHOTOGRAPHIC, FILM, AUDIO
AND VIDEO EQUIPMENT FILM VIDEO FOTO**

23-25 MAY

LODZ INTERNATIONAL FAIR, UL. KS. SKORUPKI 21
WWW.TARGI.LODZ.PL

ROSSMANN RUN ALONG PIOTRKOWSKA STREET

25 MAY, 7:00 pm

LODZ EXPO HALL, AL. POLITECHNIKI 4 (START)
WWW.BIEGPIOTRKOWSKA.PL

**INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
"FROM BLUES TO SONG"**

24-25 MAY

CHAMBER MUSIC HALL OF THE ACADEMY
OF MUSIC IN LODZ, AL. 1 MAJA 4
WWW.AMUZ.LODZ.PL

ANDRÉ RIEU CONCERT

31 MAY, 8:00 pm

ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7
WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

SEE BLOGGERS LODZ

7-9 JUNE

EC1 LODZ - CITY OF CULTURE, UL. TARGOWA 1/3
WWW.SEEBLOGGERS.PL

SMART CITY EXPO POLAND

11-12 JUNE

LODZ EXPO HALL, AL. POLITECHNIKI 4
WWW.SMARTCITYEXPO.PL

FOTOFESTIWAL 2019

13-30 JUNE

FOTOFESTIWAL.COM