

## SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

Jarosław Krawczyk "THE HEAD UPON WHICH ALL THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME"

This article is an attempted analysis of the famous description of Leonardo's "Mona Lisa" by Walter Pater (1839–1894), the most known representative of the English "aesthetic movement". In his "purple passage" (1869), to use the British expression, the image of the Florentine burgher's wife changes into a symbol of mysteriously smiling womanhood, which continues to rule our imagination. The majority of heretofore interpretations deduces the "purple passage" from nineteenth-century French literature and connects it with the Romantic *femme fatale* who emerges from the texts of Gauthier and Flaubert. Krawczyk does not question the aptness of this procedure but tries to widen the horizon of the interpretation and to discover new points of reference, disclosing the whole gamut of intellectual inspirations of English aesthetic thought. In the first place, he draws attention to a fact, previously ignored by literature on the subject, that Pater's text is strongly enrooted in the description of the Gioconda proposed by Giorgio Vasari. The author demonstrates the manner in which Vasari's dry notes were transformed by the poetic imagination of Pater into a vision of secretly smiling womanhood, making it possible to characterize the key narrative mechanisms of "aesthetic critique". By following the trail of various "cryptoquotations", which Pater skillfully concealed in the rhythm of the "purple passage", Krawczyk maintains that the final shape of the description of the Gioconda was decided by two rather astonishing narrative tricks. The first was an attempt at applying in contemporary art critique figures borrowed from ancient rhetorics, primarily that of interpretation, which consists of collecting synonymous expressions. The second trick was to try to base a description of a work of art on the narrative pattern of a mythological legend, in this concrete case the archaic model of the "Homeric Hymn to Demeter" (sixth-seventh century B.C.) whose fragmentary translation was presented by Pater in his essay entitled "Demeter and Persephone" (1875). According to this interpretation, the "purple passage" should be regarded as a totally conscious and extremely effective attempt at creating an artistic myth.

Zbigniew Benedyktowicz ON THE "EPITAPH AND SEVEN SPACES" – AN INTERVIEW WITH JACEK SEMPOLIŃSKI

One of Poland's greatest contemporary painters discusses his part in the unusual exhibition organized by Janusz Bogucki and Nina Smolarz and entitled "Epitaph and Seven Spaces" (held in the "Zachęta" showroom and the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw in 1991). Sempoliński stresses the fact that the display testified to a new anthropological approach to the artwork and creativity as such. The interview concentrates on problems of creativity, the tasks of the artist, the concept of the work of art and the relation between art and the sacrum.

Zbigniew Benedyktowicz EMMAUS – TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE FREEDOM? AN INTERVIEW WITH JANUSZ BOGUCKI AND NINA SMOLARZ

Janusz Bogucki and Nina Smolarz are the authors of several celebrated exhibitions which were frequently held in special interiors, for example, in churches, and which even if they took place in museums, were characterized by an attempt at transcending museum space and the notion of a work of art (exhibit) as "a thing to be displayed". Their purpose was always to present certain supreme values of an anthropological nature (in the wide meaning of the word, which includes religious merits). The authors speak about the premises of their successive exhibition, held in the Benedictine Emmaus monastery in Prague (The symbolic meaning of this name refers to the meeting on the road to Emmaus, described in the Scriptures). It is devised as an encounter of East and Central European artists in the newly emergent reality, and was to be accompanied by inter-disciplinary meetings (for financial reasons, the whole undertaking will probably not take place). Referring to their earlier exhibitions, the authors point to the constant motif of the labyrinth (*nota bene*, this was the title of one of their exhibits in 1989), since their intention is more to initiate and awaken a new perception and experience than merely to show a certain reality. As a result of the sometimes encountered charges of manipulating with works of art, the interview also deals with the problem of the artist's freedom. The authors claim that within their projects, connected with the premises of the exhibitions, the artists are always granted unhampered expression.

Aleksander Jackowski VARIATIONS ON AN IMAGE AND THEATRICAL SPACE BY ANDRZEJ MAJEWSKI

The text discusses an exhibition which was held in the Wielki Theatre in Warsaw in 1992, and which featured the works of A. Majewski, a stage designer connected with this theatre for the past thirty years. The exhibition is an example of the obliteration of boundaries between particular realms and means of expression (stage design, plastic work, theatre without actors, installations), encountered increasingly frequently. In a presentation of the exhibition, shown against a wider background of Majewski's accomplishments, the author distinctly accents its personal character, which is the outcome of the artist's personality and imagination.

Roch Sulima ON DYING SYRENA (MERMAIDS). A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SEMIOTICS OF DEATH

Syrena (mermaid) (the mythical figure of a mermaid is displayed in the coats of arms of Warsaw) is the name of the first automobile designed and produced in Poland. The original models were handmade in 1957, and the production was inaugurated in 1958. One could say that the significance of the vehicle was more symbolic than technological and incomparable to any other car. In the 1960s and 1970s a Syrena was the sign of social mobility (i.e. from the village to the town). It became one of the few landings for private property and provided a sphere for "rapacious" metaphors and myths (numerous local jokes were based on a play on words). The fate of this make abandoned on the streets of various towns were finally pulled apart in a search for spare parts.

In 1991 an American of Polish descent bought such an abandoned Syrena. He decorated it with colourful graffiti and an inscription on the side read "Time Capsule 1991–2016"; the signatures added included that of the mayor of Gdańsk. Finally, the car found its way to the Gilmore Car Museum. The idea of a time capsule was imitated in other Polish towns. The symbolic dimension of the automobile is testified by its "deaths". Several cases of "ritual" destruction in fact are noted. The article is supplemented by texts by Michał Luboradzki "Syrena: Dates, Events, Comments", which presents technical data and commentaries and press cuttings concerning the "new born" car. "Sidewalk-Parking Lot Compositions", a report from the exhibition, is a brief list of descriptions of Syrenas abandoned in different districts of Warsaw.

Jacek Olgdzki INSULATORS (ON TURNING THE BRILLIANT INTO ASHES)

Anatol Karoń executes original sculptures from matches. The material of these compositions is poor since the artist is interested only in the potential, the possibility of making something out of nothing or nothing – hence his choice of matches. Karoń regards his sculptures as closely allied with statues despite their fragility and temporality. He maintains that they express the idea of statuesqueness. Their titles refer to other works (philosophical, literary or paintings). In Olgdzki's opinion, an artist's independence is expressed in his ability to convince about the fascination of his milieu, generation and time with the application of unconventional means.

Tadeusz Chrzanowski A BOOKLET FROM THE EASTERN TERRITORIES

This is a presentation of "The Bell of St. Peter" (Baranowicz) a bibliophilic rarity written by Father Karol Żurawski at the time when he held the post of vicar in the parish of Baranowicz. The reason for the interest in the booklet are primarily the woodcuts made by its author, which are illustrations of the legend. Naïveté and a certain degree of stereotyping combined with an independent imagination which translated the plot into an equally romantic vision.

Michał Głowacki SEVENTEEN VISITS WITH SKIRZYŃSKI

Wacław Skirzyński (1912–1991) was one of the most renowned artists of the so-called Sierpc centre of folk sculpture and one of the most important contemporary sculptors in Poland. He came from a poor family and was self-taught. Skirzyński worked in wood and produced predominantly images of the Holy Virgin, Christ and the saints ("persons") as well as figures of kings, rejecting all deviations from iconographic norms. "Seventeen Visits" is an extremely honest description of the contact between the artist and his collector, a sui generis friendship established between a collector fascinated with Skirzyński's works, and the withdrawn artist who learned much about the latter's psyche as well as the complicated motives of the former. The text is completed with reminiscences by Wacław Dowłasiewicz.

Konstanty Leliwa Słotwiński "THE CATECHISM OF LICIAN SUBJECTS: Concerning Their Rights and Obligations towards the Government, Manor and Themselves" (1932)

The published fragments of the "Catechism" comprise a document which was its author. K. Słotwiński resigned from pursuing a career in the Austrian administration because he wanted to sport a bushy mustache forbidden to Austrian civil servants. He was a well-read man, a patriot and a devoted social worker. The outcome of the latter passion was the "Catechism" in which he tried to make, as simply as possible, the peasant aware of the fact that they remained under the special care of the authorities. Particular chapters contain quotations from the Bible and the intention was to indicate the natural quality of such phenomena as taxes, military service and other duties towards the manor and the state. Writing a work which was supposed to prevent evil in the ruling class, Słotwiński unconsciously produced a terrifying book, in places grotesque, and an involuntary but even more eloquent satire on the prevalent social relations. Antoni Kroh is the editor of the text and the author of an appendix.