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From Academia

Journeying Across Borders

The Latin term *limes* (source of English “limit”), originally denoting a pathway delimiting plots of land, vineyards, or fields, in later times came to be used to describe the fortifications at the far-flung ends of the Roman Empire, meant to protect it from barbarian invasions. This nicely encapsulates the conceptual links between “borders” and “limits”: a border is, after all, a symbol of division, an expression of separate identities, a marked difference between “us” and “them,” and crossing such limits represents may be associated with certain symbolic rituals, often also strong emotions.

For instance, there is often heated discussion in Poland about the use of *in vitro* research, or more broadly about defining the lines medicine should or should not cross. On p. 8, Prof. Jacek Zaremba gives us a fascinating update on prenatal testing in Poland. Another topic that sparks political and social controversy is migration: the contemporary waves of young Poles going abroad, their motives and associated myths, are analyzed by Dr. Michał Garapich (p. 4). The historian Dr. Dariusz Libionka tells us about the attempts to delimit fact from fiction in Polish-Jewish relations (p. 12). In this issue's featured interview, Prof. Marcin Kula talks about the difficulties that Poles emigrating to the Americas once faced, as well as about overcoming geographical, social, and psychological barriers (p. 36). The fluidity of the borders between the worlds of people and animals is described by Dr. Maria Pawłowska (p. 20).

In this issue of *Academia* magazine (which you are now holding in your hand or perhaps reading on your tablet or smartphone), we encourage you to transcend everyday limits, to take a journey across borders, exploring complex issues of history and contemporary times. We will follow in the footsteps of 18th-century travelers to Rome (p. 16), succumb to the charm of Romani song and follow along behind a Gypsy wagon train (p. 26), and focus our eyes on test-tubes full of green algae, to discern how they produce energy (p. 30). So sit back and enjoy the journey!

ACADEMIA staff



Magdalena Abakanowicz, “Texture Study,” 1964

Magdalena Abakanowicz, a sculptor and fiber artist, studied at the fine-arts academies in Gdańsk and Warsaw. She has taught at the Poznań University of Fine Arts, as well as in New York, Los Angeles, Sydney, and Tokyo. Her best-known works are three-dimensional fiber works that have come to be known as “Abakans,” variously made of plant fiber, ropes, silk, and horsehair.

Marcin Koniak/Dęsa Unicorn