FROM THE EDITORS

Spacing Out

It was just a little over 100 years ago that our world became "formally" embedded in spacetime, by the theory of relativity. However, time and space have for centuries remained intricately interwoven into all natural and social phenomena. The collection of texts presented in this issue of *Academia* magazine confirms that space is a core concept referenced in various ways across all scientific disciplines, from astronomy and physics to biology, from law to literary scholarship. Space today represents quintessence of interdisciplinarity.

When Fukuyama declared the end of history 30 years ago, the end of geography was also thought to be nigh, given the rapid advance of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). It was thought we would all eventually be moving to virtual space, that our location on a traditional map would lose all meaning. Today we know how wrong both conclusions were. Technology has altered spatial structures, but it has not replaced them. Successive crises (climate, economic, pandemic, geopolitical) have made us realize that individual ecosystems, as well as cities and regions, exhibit differing degrees of resilience to threats. It has long been clear that space (and with it the resilience of individuals) is shaped by the dynamics of linkages and flows. These determine, for instance, the range of expansion of plants and animals, and have determined the importance of places and regions since the rise of civilization. This is evident both in pre-Columbian cultures and in the modern-day pattern of socioeconomic interactions of the EU.

Space on the Earth is becoming a scarce commodity that we need to show concern for. Sustainability itself is a spatially grounded concept. The crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has made us reflect on the challenges of a circular economy – which, among other things, calls for environmentally friendly efforts to alter the organization of space. At the same time, our social disparities are increasingly also territorial inequalities, leading us to talk about such notions as spatial justice and territorial exclusion (e.g. as a result of limited transport accessibility). Consequently, modern territorial management, working to counteract spatial chaos, and appropriate legal measures are particularly important. Poland currently lacks a strategic document describing spatial organization at the national level, and the *Act on Spatial Planning and Development* has not fulfilled its intended role, for example, in terms of protecting against the uncontrolled dispersion of development. We all share a common concern both to take care of the space around us (not only our own, human space, but also that belonging to other organisms) and to strive to ensure its adequate legal protection.

Prof. **Tomasz Komornicki**
chair of the PAS Committee for Spatial Economy and Regional Planning

Nina Paszkowska, *Motyle* ("Butterflies"), 2018

Born in Lithuania in the town of Ignalina, the artist's first teacher was her grandfather, Alexander Paszkowski, who loved painting. She studied pedagogy and psychology at the University of Vilnius. Prof. Jan Reszka played a special role in the development of her talent.

NINA PASZKOWSKA