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THE
AKADEMIEIA

POST

EDITOR'S NOTE

Just by looking at the cover you might get a clue that this is a special issue - a small AP goodbye to our graduating class (and our graduating journalists). Here, I want to say a heartfelt THANK YOU to Jula, Zosia, and Pola who filled the big shoes of senior editors and did so with positive energy and confidence. We will miss your words and presence. At the same time we are thrilled for your future endeavours. Our graduates make me think of the sentiment expressed by Georgia O'Keefe:

“Happiness is temporary,
but interest is continuous.”

May you hold onto your curiosity beyond the school walls this summer break, and return not only with happy memories, but with joy that is constant and weaves all of them together into wholistic and fulfilled humans.



Read and belong,

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Sonia Blank

MEET THE TEAM!

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POLITICAL EMIGRANTS

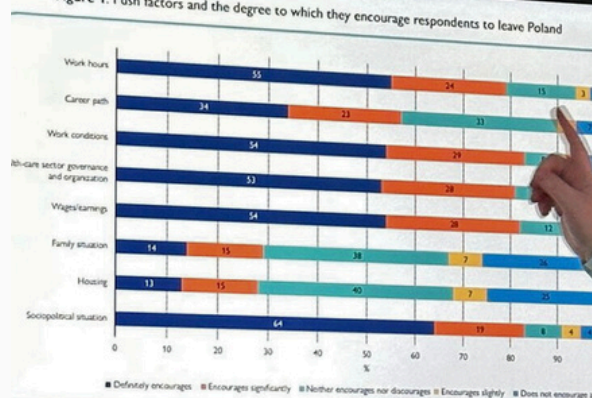
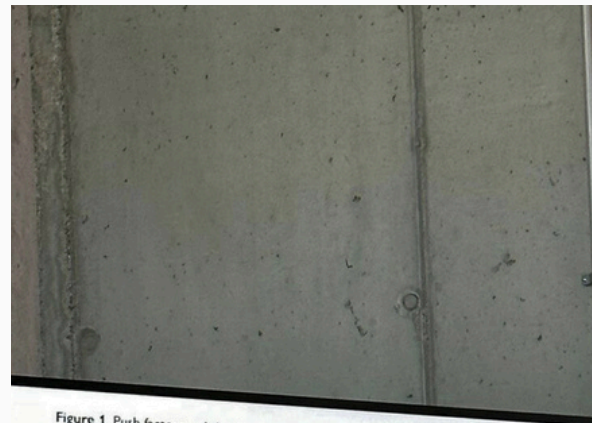
AN AKADEMEIA SEMINAR

Pola Jancewicz

On the 11th of April, Akademeia hosted a seminar on migration with a focus on emigration from the UK to Poland. Students got the chance to learn from Dr Steve Davies, a sociologist from the Graduate School of Social Research in Warsaw, who recently published a paper on how domestic politics influences migration patterns. Dr Davies spoke about the conclusions of his research and shared his observations on how Brexit affects British emigrants.

An Akademeia student who attended the seminar commented:

“It was interesting to learn how politics, a seemingly trivial factor compared to economic or personal issues, can influence people to emigrate. I appreciated Mr. Davies' insights on how research in the social sciences is conducted and his observations on British emigrants' changing feeling of national identity post Brexit”.



...ose our doctors?
...k, Pszczółkowska, Matuszczyk & Bojarczuk 2023)



PASSION & PERSISTENCE IN PHILANTHROPY

*AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CEO AND FOUNDER OF THE HUMAN
PRACTICE FOUNDATION*

Helena Bruździak

*“HOW HAS YOUR BACKGROUND IN
LAW INFLUENCED YOUR
APPROACH TO ADDRESSING
SOCIAL ISSUES THROUGH THE
FOUNDATION?”*

“I think my background in law has been really, really helpful, because from a law perspective, you understand how to set up a foundation, but as well the importance of making the right agreements, you understand which kind of risks there are and how to handle these risks. I think it's a very important fundamental for kind of making things happen and knowing how to act and what to do. It's actually been very practical because we are working in many countries having many people employed, and yeah, so I think it's been very important.”

*“WHAT ARE SOME KEY
CHALLENGES YOU FACED IN
ESTABLISHING AND GROWING, AND
HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME
THEM?”*

“To start with, I think there was a lot of challenges that other people believed that I could do this. It's far away, so how can you go and see it, and how can you make sure that things are happening, as you're saying.

So for that first fundamental that people were afraid it wouldn't work, I think how we overcame that, or I overcame that, was really being able to work, get things done, follow up very closely both with the people who gave money, with our projects on the ground, be very transparent with everything we do, and that way you really build up a strong sense of belief and commitment and trust.



I think in this world, philanthropy and in giving, trust is really essential and people are really afraid of what's happening with the money. So, we have kept very transparent and when we work with our own teams on the ground, we don't use a lot of middlemen, so we're very hands on.

I think another challenge has been to inspire people to give. But I see when you're very passionate with yourself and you keep that energy and believe in yourself every time you talk and speak to people about it, I think that's extremely important.”

“DID YOU HAVE ANY MOMENTS IN CREATING THE FOUNDATION THAT WERE MOST REWARDING, MOST IMPORTANT AND SPECIAL TO YOU?”

“That's a good question. I think I have many, many moments which have been very rewarding. I think when you are out opening a school and you meet the children, but as well the parents, and you deeply feel that gratitude and you really feel that you're helping some people and giving a helping hand to people who didn't have an opportunity and who didn't know. We, as a foundation, we always work really remotely, really where there's no other organization. So being able to bring that helping hand, they didn't expect that feeling. It's just really amazing. But at the same time, we are now 90 people employed in the organization. We're quite a big organization and for me to be part of a team who everyday works hard to help other people and make things happen, that's amazing. But then I think as well when we really got, the third one is a big moment was when we got a huge Danish foundation, one of the most established foundations who decided to support us. You suddenly get one of the best and most recognized foundations to follow you and support you.

“DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE YOU COULD GIVE TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WANT TO MAKE AN IMPACT AND MAYBE CREATE THEIR OWN PROJECTS?”

“I think everything starts with the passion and the heart. So be brave, try to find your passions when you have found your passion don't give up.

A wiser woman once told me that to create something you need three things; to have a deep passion, and to really understand what love really is for the ability to help people, she said to be intelligent so for us the education was very important here for us to make a change, as we started with law school.



And third one was, I was very tested in realising that everyone who wants to create something is being tested and that the willpower. Can you really when it's raining outside, and you are sitting alone, and you just got to know if you still believe that you can do this. For me at the start of this foundation, when I saw these children and learned about trafficking it was so important it was never a question of giving up and quitting. I think that attitude that even if the doors closed, I'll find a way that's extremely important and don't believe what other people are saying. I think the very last thing, I think this is important advice, we wanted to create something we want to see the whole way we want to be sure what will happen then then then. But the ability of letting go of that I don't know how to create this I don't exactly how to do it, but I'll find out. I didn't even know I wanted to build schools when I started this, so I think that's important to, let go of the control.”

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF FUNDRAISING

AKADEMEIA X HUMAN PRACTICE FOUNDATION

Helena Bruździak

Our team's journey kicked off one busy Friday evening as we scrambled to find a room. After some awkwardness asking the teachers to clear out, we settled into room 4. There, we brainstormed fundraiser ideas and mapped out plans for the main event. Fast forward to the week before our big fundraiser on April 19, and nerves had us all on edge.

The fundraiser was for supporting the Human Practice Foundation, which focuses on building and renovating schools in areas where they are critically needed in Nepal and Kenya. They firmly believe that schools are the foundation for shaping lives, which is why we are committed to helping them. Their idea stems from education's transformational capacity, which makes schools the major vehicle for creating change and difference in communities. Education is a transforming force, particularly in underdeveloped nations; it is a way for a better life for many. In their most recent investigation in 2023, they saw a 34% rise in literacy in Kenya due to their support in training teachers and renovating infrastructure.

For us specifically, the goal was to raise an ambitious amount of 100 thousand zł for a school in the Withare elementary school for 5 classrooms to be built with the money we raised.

The fundraiser was split into two parts; in the canteen and in the auditorium.

In the canteen we had various food stalls set up offering a diverse range of food for attendees to enjoy. The highlight for many was the eagerly anticipated raffle draw, featuring prizes generously donated by students. These prizes included unique pieces of student-created artwork, theatre tickets, and various vouchers, all adding to the evening's excitement.

During the second part, guests were asked to make their way to the auditorium for speeches from the guests: The CEO and founder of the Human Practice Foundation, Pernille Kruse-Madsen, the Deputy Head of Mission of the Kenyan Embassy, Amb. Valerie W. Rugene, and lastly, a recurring donor to the foundation Mr. Oliver Morali.

The Kenyan Ambassador from Berlin, officially Amb. Valerie W. Rugene, was the first speaker. She shed light on the educational landscape in Kenya, emphasising the importance of support from foundations and international collaboration. In her very moving speech, she talked about how the educational system works in Kenya. One of the key points in the speech was the need for alignment of the education system and implementation of a competency-based curriculum.

She believes that the intervention needed is not out of this world; it is the need for a basic classroom, basic desk, basic needs to be fulfilled. One of the issues is that schools aren't facilitated for learning and infrastructure.



Secondly, the security in the region is an issue with child trafficking, kidnapping or assault and the ‘bandits’, as she called them, who are in the region. She shared an anecdote explaining why she almost didn’t make it to the event.

Despite the challenges, there was also a message of hope in the speech. Ambassador Valerie W. Rugene highlighted the progress being made in areas such as stopping female genital mutilation and child marriage, and education being one of the key central sectors in Kenya's development in the future. With a goal of allocating 28% of the budget towards education.

The second speech was given by Pernille Kruse-Maddsen, the CEO of the foundation. She shared her inspiring journey that led to the creation of the organization. As a lawyer in Denmark, Kruse-Maddsen felt unfulfilled and decided to seek more purpose in her life. This led her to leave her good job and life behind, traveling with a one-way ticket to Australia.

Her search for meaning eventually brought her to a remote area in Nepal, where she taught children. During her time there, she noticed some of her female students suddenly disappearing. When she investigated, she discovered the harsh reality of child trafficking in the region. This experience ignited her passion for creating better educational opportunities to help prevent such tragedies.

Determined to make a difference, Kruse-Maddsen founded HPF. The foundation started its work in Nepal and has since expanded its efforts to Kenya, focusing on empowering and educating vulnerable communities. For example, the foundation raised 26 million dollars since 2014 and helped 45 thousand children, by building schools.

Lastly; Mr. Oliver Morali, explained how the experience of being a donor of the foundation has been over ten years. He described how transparent HPF has been with the advancements they made and how detailed and precise the reports of the work that is being done.

Y13 MENTOR GROUPS

A GOODBYE

Julek Franco Janecki

With Y13 graduation just behind us, let's take a closer look at the mentor groups these incredible students were a part of for the last 2 years! While writing this, I have had the pleasure of speaking with all the Y13 mentors and even some students! It's heartwarming to see how close they've bonded over the 2 years they spent together.

Here is what they had to say:

"IF YOU WERE TO DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT MENTOR'S GROUP IN THREE WORDS, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?"

"Balanced, inspiring, and supportive."

- Dominika Fiolna

"Clever, funny, empathetic."

- Jan Ladziński

"Amazing, wonderful, caring."

- James Poole

"HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR MENTEES?"

"I absolutely adore my mentees. They are my favourite people, and I am afraid how it will be without them. I am already searching for 'empty nest syndrome' support groups."

- Magdalena Strzelczak



"It was an unforgettable joint journey over the last two years, and I am very much proud with every one of them."

- Natalia Marchyk

"They have different interests, different plans for the future and approaches towards learning and towards life... this is kind of like a combination that is explosive and sometimes it was a little bit hard to navigate all of them. But I feel like whatever we did we always had a good time..."

- Paweł Chróstowski

"HOW HAVE YOU AND YOUR MENTEES GROWN DURING THE MENTORING PROCESS?"

"We have grown through the sharing of experiences and the diversity of our group. I myself also learned to share more with them to motivate them, to encourage them and promote the bonding and to help them through the two years of studies."

- Elena Jaime Jimenez

“I have certainly learnt to appreciate individual talents and interests much more, rather than focusing mostly on academic achievements.”

- Jan Ladziński

“... seeing this group emerge through, a lot of people have been through, you know, different hardships, different challenges and it's fostered a really resilient atmosphere.”

- Simon Bradley

This is what a mentee of Mr. Bradley had to add:

“I think it enhances you as a person because you have a bit of this interdisciplinary approach in the mentor group. So for example, we have different subjects, we have different university choices and applications, and it's sometimes interesting to listen to what other people are doing and it helps you because it doesn't leave you with just your A levels... makes you more interdisciplinary.”

“WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORY OF YOUR MENTORING GROUP?”

“The outing we had recently... to TEP Factory in Blue City. All Year 13s were running through escape rooms. I think those last mentoring hours [too], so one hit the earth today, we were sitting just in Room 5 eating ice cream and just chatting. And similarly, a year ago, the last mentoring hour of Year 12, we were sitting over there under a tree and just talking.”

- Adam Markiewicz

“Some days that we played different games <laugh>, but also especially days we were simply chatting and catching up after the holidays and not having seen each other for a while.”

- Elena Jaime Jimenez

“I have so many I can't choose. Recent highlight was the Y13 escape room challenge. I felt like we are on set of Oceans 11. Seriously, we could rob banks with all the skills we share between us.”

- Magdalena Strzelczak

“We went to the playground next to the school building and played on the zipline. Later on, it turned out that it was Michalina's birthday, which was an extra bonus. I also really liked the mentoring hour spent watching movie trailers and the cinema outing to see Dune with dubbing.”

- Maria Głowacka

Another mentee of Mr. Bradley replied:

“It would have been the ice cream trip!” (Mr. Bradley took them out for ice cream once the interview was over)

What did all of the mentors agree on?

“I will miss them.”

We will miss them too. This Y13 year group is filled with some of the most amazing people we have had the pleasure to meet. The Akademeia Post team wishes all of them good luck in all of their future successes.

ALWAYS REMEMBER US

THIS WAY

Y13 MEMORY DIARY

Zofia Jastrun , Julianna Podoba

Hanging out at 'the table'
Mrs. Fiona's "Good Afternoon Sixth Form!"
The weather finally being good enough to play volleyball outside
Forgetting your ID
Dr. Mikoszewski listing where to buy all the complex equipment for the hiking trip
Being thanked by Mr. Pulham for your 'wonderful' reading
Speaking English with the sound of heels in the background
Smiling when seeing your friends for the first time after the May break
Watching the teachers band play yet another banger
Getting told by Mrs. Szala that punctuality is the hallmark of kings
Complaining about the wifi not working
Learning a new 'Higgins Law'
Sharing a carrot cake from the school cafe
The sight of the first snow through the window of class 26 and the awe that follows
"Do not open the question paper until I instruct you to do so"
The well-known melody of the bell
Writing for the newspaper, editing the newspaper

This is what makes us feel at home



Though all 78 Y13 students feel at home at Akademeia High School, we decided to ask them where they see themselves in ten years after their graduation day.

Here's what some of them said:



Pola:
As a senior advisor to a minister

Chwazik:
Probably investigating a plane crash, but that's kind of grim actually...

Michał:
VP in a bank

Zosia:
Getting my 4th degree because I don't know what to do with my life / Reapplying to Cambridge for the 10th time

Franek S:
A chess boxing champion

Dasha:
Living happily somewhere where it's warm

Olivia:
Being a psychotherapist in a mental health clinic

Alejandro:
The moon

Alexi:
In St Tropez

Maciek:
In Belgrad

Ewa:
In Sandra's art commune

Sandra:
Probably with her on an island making art



Jula:
Far from the United States

As hard as it is to let go, we are excited to check-in in 10 years, perhaps at the Akademeia alumni Christmas dinner, and update the list.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS OUR SOCIAL REALITY

Miley Maynard

77% of teenagers have been diagnosed with mental illness in 2023. Since 2013, mental illness has increased by 47% among millennials, 65% among adolescent girls and 47% among adolescent boys. Teenagers are far more mature than ever, and they act more mature today than they did 10 years ago.

Influencer culture has an impact on teenage mental health because of the content that is being served to them having a rich lifestyle, expensive clothing, the newest technology. Teens tend to think that they also need this life to fit in. Cancel culture also plays a part in teenage mental health since it has the potential to make someone feel alienated and lonely, which can result in anxiety or depression and in the most serious cases, suicide. Teenagers have the need to make the perfect online image due to the fear of being judged by the people around you, the fear of your friends or family judging you.

Another factor that plays a role in the effect of social media on teens is screen time. The average teenager spends 7 hours and 22 minutes looking at screens every day. That accounts for 43% of their waking hours. Children and teens spend all day on their devices whether it is their phone, computer, or iPad.

We use our devices all day and into the late night often without boundaries. Social media is the first thing we see in the morning and the last thing we see when we go to sleep, since we are always involved with whatever is happening online, keeping up with pop culture, current trends and being in constant communication with other people.

The things that teenagers can easily access on the internet is concerning, because it can affect their mental health. We have access to the opinions others express that include radical views, for example on women's rights, racism, or homophobia. The spread of extremist views can be attributed to social media, targeting teenagers because of how easy it is to access.

However, thanks to social media and devices, we have access to mental health services if you are in the situation where you cannot otherwise. Social media can be a good place to give young people the ability to learn about their mental health and give them tools to cope with difficult situations. It also connects people all around the world and allows us to stay in contact with friends and family, talk to and meet those with similar interests, teach us skills or expand our knowledge on different topics.

RHINESTONES

Nela Swigulska

ORIGIN

Rhinestones got their name from the fact that they were originally gathered from the river Rhine. Today, they are commonly made of crystal glass and are used as imitations of diamonds.

The earliest examples of rhinestones as imitation diamonds were crafted by the ancient Egyptians, who used glass and polished rock crystals to mimic the appearance of precious gems like rubies, sapphires, and diamonds.

The availability of rhinestones greatly increased in the 18th century when Alsatian Strass developed the first imitation diamonds with the lower side coated in metal powder. From this, many European languages use the word 'strass' to refer to rhinestones. They were usually used to show social status and wealth. In the late 20th century, a new kind started to be commonly sold and used. Inspired by Strass, it was decorative lead glass coated with a thin metal layer.

MODERN USES

In popular western culture rhinestones were associated with music artists like Elvis Presley and Liberace. In 1975 Glen Campbell's top hit was the song "Rhinestone Cowboy" which served the basis for the movie 'Rhinestone' in 1984. Thanks to modern technology, there are new advanced manufacturing techniques like precise laser cutting and intricate moulding processes. This makes it possible to make rhinestones in countless different shapes sizes and colours.

CREATIVITY AND SELF-EXPRESSION

Rhinestones have become a symbol of creativity and expression. From ancient imitations to modern embellishments, they have journeyed through time, cultures, and trends. Their history exemplifies the human fascination with beauty and the desire to adorn oneself with shimmering gems, regardless of their material composition.



(Liberace)

The punk and glam rock movements of the 1970s and 1980s challenged traditional notions of adornment, often incorporating rhinestones into unconventional, edgy designs. This era demonstrated the versatility of rhinestones, as they could be used to enhance not only elegance but also rebellion and nonconformity.

Rhinestones have been around for centuries, developing from crystal glass to metal powder coats, and they continue to be commonly used today.

NORTHERN COMFORT

MOVIE REVIEW

Nela Świgulska

‘Northern Comfort’ is a comedy movie directed by Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurðsson, which premiered in Poland on April 4th, 2024. It is distributed by Netflix but is currently available to watch in several different movie theatres around Warsaw.

The film is about a group of people attending a course called ‘Fearless Flying’ to face and deal with their extreme fear of flying. The primary focus is on a woman called Sarah, who is trying to go on a vacation with her new boyfriend and his daughter. However, they are not aware that her fear is still present in her life, so she is taking the course in secret. The final part of the course involves going on a flight together with the group to an unknown, random destination. As the story continues, everything starts going wrong, such as one course leader being unable to come, a partial engine failure, and a storm creating intense turbulence during the flight. After landing, they are stranded in Iceland and sent by the airline to a luxurious spa hotel. Each character has a complex background story, and they are all connected by their common phobia which they struggle with.

The director stated that his idea was “to make a film kind of an existential comedy about big themes, like fear and death and life.” I think that these themes can be difficult to create movies and stories about, especially when it comes to comedies and including humorous aspects within such serious topics. So, I would say that the director successfully employed them in this movie.



Personally, I don't think that the ending of the movie was successful. It presents the main character, Sarah, finally landing safely from Iceland to meet her family on vacation. It shows her as she sees them and smiles. In my opinion, this was not successful because there was no resolution of the issues previously faced between them. Sarah was stranded and injured from a car crash, and instead of asking what happened or calling for help, her boyfriend just started an argument with her about something unimportant. They hadn't talked since then because he was not answering his phone, so the problems were not explained or resolved in any way. It ended very suddenly since there were no words exchanged between them. Overall, I would say that compared to the rest of the film, the ending seemed to be not as thought out or well executed.

In conclusion, I would recommend watching this movie for a good laugh, however, it was definitely not a masterpiece.

FACING YOUR FEARS IN THE KITCHEN AND BEYOND

A REVIEW OF THE BEAR SERIES

Klara Bakić-Pawlak

The Hulu hit series, “The Bear”, portrays the trials and tribulations of Carmey, a former Michellin star chef, who struggles to create a new restaurant – aptly named *The Bear* – that is true to his values and drive for excellence. The first scene of the first episode opens with Carmey (Carmen) on a bridge over a river standing in front of a white cage. He walks towards it and is breathing heavily as he opens it. Frightened, Carmey retreats from the cage, as a bear starts walking slowly towards him. In an instant, the bear attacks, awakening Carmey from his dream. With this scene, we are tossed like a cracked egg into the heated intensity of *The Bear* and its cast of kitchen-loving characters, as well as the attacks, the challenges, and the fears that must be overcome to survive the life of a “hot” restaurant striving for excellence. The life of the characters in the kitchen runs parallel to the difficulties they face in their lives and make for an excellent and moving study of their complex personas – and great entertainment too.

The series takes us along the path of *The Bear*’s transformation from a local Chicago sandwich shop to a proper restaurant where the colourful collection of chefs are a tight-knit team. However, this transition is not without its challenges. The kitchen crew faces many difficulties that must be overcome, including, for example, on opening night when after meticulous preparation, Carmey, who assembled all of the dishes, and on whom the entire kitchen appeared to depend, accidentally gets stuck in the walk-in refrigerator.

As a result, all the work and incredible pressure of opening night with a full house, fell to his sous chef Sydney, who has been shown to have a rocky past in coping with the tension of being a chef in the top restaurants. These types of scenes are commonplace throughout the series, illustrating the ferociousness of the unexpected, and the need to adapt and come up with solutions regardless of the circumstances.



Even though the series takes place mostly in the kitchen, it is a provoking and dynamic metaphor that stands for the pressures of life itself as well as the strength and community it takes to resist it and move on. *The Bear* is loud, chaotic, fast, and it almost feels like a documentary. If you want to watch something relaxing, this show might not be it. Still, it is inspiring in content, acting, and aesthetics. If you’re willing to join the characters in the kitchen and beyond, while they tackle many different issues such as death, addiction and balancing the life of being a chef, *The Bear* by Christopher Storer is certainly worth watching.

BYZANTINE NOSTALGIA

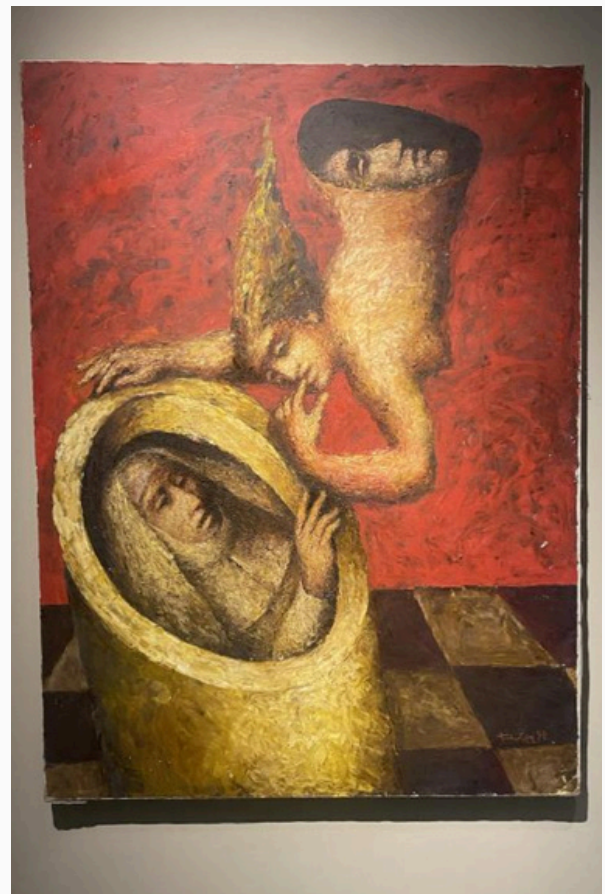
EXHIBITION

Natasza Grzyl

Byzantine Nostalgia (Bizantyjska Nostalgia) is both the name of an art exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle and how Tadeusz Kantor poetically described the intention of Jerzy Nowosielski's work, who was the starting point for this striking showcase. Nowosielski was one of the key metaphysicians of the 20th century. His philosophical theories can be encountered in his paintings, which captivate with their peculiar fusion of the sacred and the profane, mysticism and reason, as well as Eastern and Western cultural traditions. The underlying task of the *Byzantine Nostalgia* project is to discover the similarities between Polish and Ukrainian art through their depictions of an intangible, timeless reality.

Artists selected for the exhibition, from various generations and styles, focus on the metaphysical sense and belief in the priority of the extrasensory world rather than the material one. Contemporary art has moved away from this, becoming instead a medium for meanings that "fit" and are notable at given moments. Thus, with this exhibition, the artists and curators hope to take us back to the avant-garde,

encouraging us to "look behind the scenes" and discover the transcendent key theme of the artworks which, rather than reflecting a specific meaning, simply exist.



One artwork which I think perfectly captures this essence of metaphysical timelessness is Oleksandr Roitburd's 'Mirror'. This painting depicts two contrasting heroines - a nun and a sinner - looking at one another, presenting the paradoxical coexistence of the body and the soul.

In various religions, mythologies, and magical practices, the mirror continues to be seen as an object that is a passage to other worlds and lives. The string of reflections of ourselves which we see in a mirror is endless, illustrating the infinite number of diverse existential dimensions. As human beings, we are composed of plentiful physical, mental and spiritual instances, therefore allowing us to at least partially be a part of the vast existence.

Another painting in the exhibition that caught my attention from its seeming simplicity and bright colors was 'Levelling the Fence' by Jarostaw Modzelewski, who has been called a "painter of everyday life".



This artwork depicts the mundane through universal elementary colors, which make it appear as though we are observing the scene from the point of view of infinitude. The author himself comments that:

"When I look at my paintings, I notice that for the most part they are the result of a very specific observation of some situation that took place in a real time and place."

As a result, Modzelewski reveals the existential nature of seemingly insignificant moments in our everyday lives. He shows that even situations when it appears as though nothing is happening are important and artistic moments!

Although the Byzantine Nostalgia exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle, Centre for Contemporary Art, was only open until the 2nd of June, it truly immersed the audience in the mystical atmosphere of artworks like the ones depicted here. I highly recommend for you to visit this Centre and its other exhibitions as their assortment of various artworks is not only thought-provoking, but also unique in its presentation of things which are both relatable and unimaginable!

UNSURE ABOUT THE FUTURE? YOU MIGHT WANT TO...IKIGAI!

BOOK REVIEW: THE JAPANESE SECRET TO A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE

Harry Frelek

I*kigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life* is a short book that discusses the concept of Ikigai while displaying several collections of data that conclude in advice to a healthier and better life. While the concept itself has more to do with the psychological state, the authors—Hector Gracia and Francesc Miralles—go in-depth about recommendations for our physical bodies, considering movement and diet.

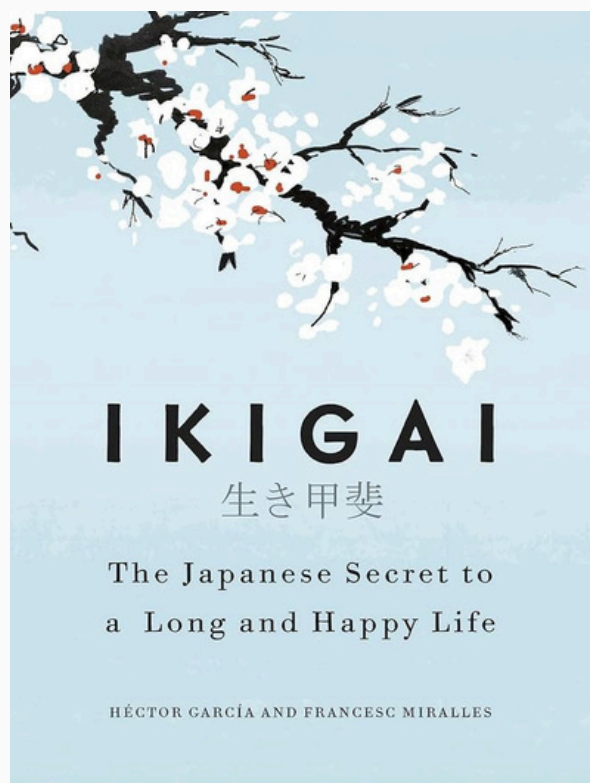
BACKGROUND: SLOWING DOWN

Both authors are people who had lived their lives to the fullest, whether purposefully or not forever searching for their Ikigai. Hector Gracia is a writer from Calpe whose books are reflective of his experiences and the lessons he learned living in Japan, among other countries, while being a software engineer, amateur photographer, and aspiring philosopher. Francesc Miralles is an author from Barcelona who also lived a dynamic life, studied at several universities, later worked as a teacher, waiter, translator, and editor, and travelled around the world.

WHAT IS IKIGAI?

Ikigai (生き甲斐, lit. 'a reason for being') refers to an activity or area of interest that combines one's passion, mission, vocation, and profession.

However, in academia, it is most often referred to as what we want to study in university. The book both explains this in depth and advises how to search for it. For example, through logotherapy, an approach developed by Victor Frankl which aids the patient in looking into the future, helping them endure hardships and find the meaning in life otherwise called Ikigai. The book goes in depth about the concept of the therapy, giving several case studies to show its effectiveness. Another approach described is Morita therapy, also helping to find one's purpose though it focuses on improving our everyday lives rather than considering our futures.



HOLISTIC APPROACH

While finding our purpose and direction in life can be crucial to better our lives, the book also explores other ways in which we can improve ourselves physically and strengthen our psyche. The latter is especially explored in chapter nine, which goes in depth about one of our dear school values: resilience. This, together with the tips it gives to lower one's stress, makes up a collection of perfect advice to all the students who are preparing for their exams. For instance, it offers practicing Buddhism or Stoicism to eliminate our negative emotions and practice well-being. Similarly, the book suggests meditation to help us realise our feelings and let go of them. There are also recommendations of short and easy exercises that can be done in the morning to significantly improve our wellbeing, such as yoga and tai chi. The book not only explores how they can help us, but also shows how to do them, including step-by-step diagrams next to the written instructions. For example, it guides us through a hatha yoga exercise called "Sun Salutation" consisting of 12 different movements that activate our muscles from head to toes.

The exercises are then followed by tips to a healthy diet taken from Okinawa, a place with the highest life expectancy in the world. It discusses excluding fats, red meat and sugar from our diets, which on its own is likely to show quick results. Instead, it recommends foods rich in antioxidants, which neutralize the free radicals that cause aging, such as tofu, miso, or tuna. Similarly, it highlights the importance of green tea that also contains them, bringing many benefits to our lives such as lower cholesterol or blood sugar, among others.

TRY IT OUT!

Overall, whether to find your Ikigai and live a fuller life, avoid stress, or simply become healthier through exercise and diet, *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life* is the perfect book for you. While reading about the concept itself is already interesting, it is the many practical applications you can employ into your life after each chapter that make it such a great read.



THE CONTRASTED EVOLUTION OF DOMINIC FIKE

Helena Despringre

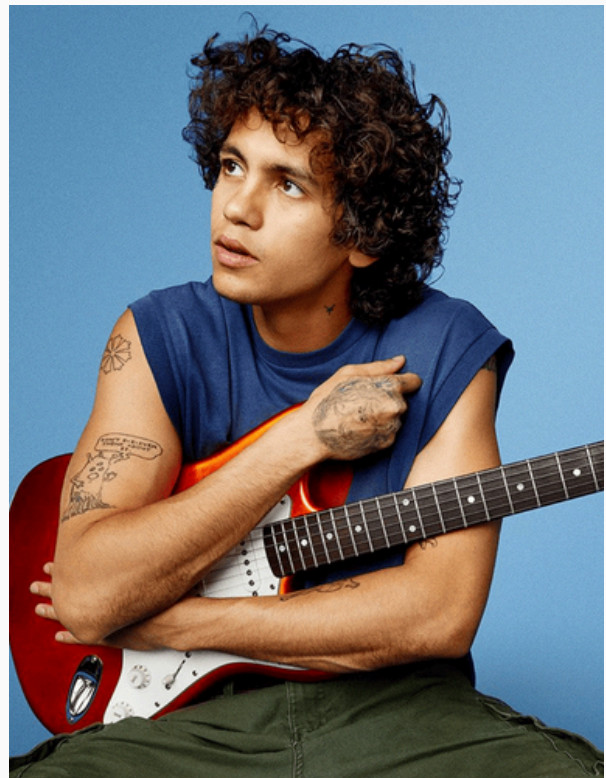
Over the years, Dominic Fike's musical evolution has been both notable and underground at the same time. This is because, to many, the artist is just known as 'that guy from Euphoria'. However, there is much more to his all-encompassing talent and personality than just his role on the show, and people have yet to discover it.

Growing up in the Floridian retirement town of Naples, Fike learned to play guitar aged 10 through watching YouTube videos, with his main inspiration being Red Hot Chili Peppers' John Frusciante. Surrounded by his family's and friends' substance abuse and frequent police brutality, he often found an escape in playing and making music.

In 2018, Fike got arrested for failing a drug test, one of the terms of his house arrest. However, that didn't stop him from continuing to pursue his music career. During the year that Fike spent in jail, his best friend and manager Reed Benn released Fike's first EP titled 'Don't Forget About Me, Demos' on Soundcloud. The catchy beats and genre less melodies such as his hit song "3 Nights" or "Westcoast Collective" caught major music label attention. Shortly after Fike was released from jail in early 2018, there was a bidding war between them, decisive of who was going to sell him their offer. Fike eventually signed to Columbia Records with \$4 million to his name and re-released the EP later that year with two additional songs: "Falling Asleep" and "Batshit".

The first expense Fike made was paying for his mom's lawyer, who had been sent to jail on drug-related charges. Soon after, he moved into a lavish Hollywood Hills mansion, where he spent his days partying, doing drugs and making music. Around that time, Fike also auditioned for a role in Sam Levinson's American hit-show "Euphoria", which he only ended up getting for Season Two, because he was high on mushrooms while casting for Season One of the show.

In July 2020, after spending a few months in rehab earlier that year, Dominic Fike released his first studio album called "What Could Possibly Go Wrong?". The LP features genre-fluid tracks such as the raw sounding rock album beginner "Come Here", the alternative pop and rap combination "Politics & Violence", and the heavily drum-based "What's For Dinner?".



A short year later, Fike collaborated with Beatles' ex-bandmate Paul McCartney on the reimagined version of 'The Kiss Of Venus', a track released by McCartney himself in his 20th studio album "McCartney III" (2020).

On July 7th, 2023, Dominic Fike released his second studio album. 'Sunburn' represents many things: not only feelings of heartbreak, regret, addiction and jealousy, but also an homage to his homeland; southern Florida that can be heard in 'Dancing in the Courthouse', '4x4' and 'Dark'. The track 'Sick' is also inspired by 'Last Nite' by The Strokes, with different lyrics and vocals added to it.

The album also includes an interpolation of songs of Fike's influences, such as Weezer's "Undone – The Sweater Song" in 'Think Fast', in which Weezer's Rivers Cuomo also contributes backing vocals on the song's bridge. The main goal throughout the creation of this album was, in producer Jim-E Stack's words, to 'let the world know who Dom is'. That is, to showcase Fike and his story in the most candid and honest light possible.

Following the long-awaited release of his sophomore album, Fike toured the US and Europe during his "Don't Stare At The Sun" Tour. He stopped by many popular venues, such as the Los Angeles "Greek Theatre", or Chicago's Huntington Bank Pavilion, which were also his biggest sold-out venues up to date. Fike also produced songs for some of the world's highest grossing films such as 'Hey Blondie' in "Barbie" (2023) and 'Mona Lisa' in "Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse" (2023). Two of his own songs also appear in the rom com "Anyone But You" (2023): 'Sick' and 'Photo ID', a 2021 song collaboration with artist Remi Wolf.



His monumental success in 2023 didn't stop there; in early 2024, Fike attended the Sundance Film Festival alongside his co-stars Talia Ryder and David Schwimmer celebrating 'Little Death' (2024) and the NEXT Innovator Award it received.

Subsequently, Fike's most recent project is his third release '14 minutes', released on May 3, 2024. Following a surprise visual project event in West Hollywood, where Fike projected a video of him running in the mountains onto a white truck, the artist released the album with approval of his recording label. This 14-minute and 17 seconds long album is scattered across 8 short-length tracks of various genres. Fike introduces the album with 'megaman', "hi grace" and "1.23.23", which include soft tones and downbeat melodies. The longest track, 'THICKRICK', is accompanied by soft and sentimental "bowie box". In the latter's continuation "misses", the chorus line is repeated 'Oh I loved you, misses (Florida!)', which is explained as a tribute to his homeland, his memories and relationships tied with it. Lastly, the most evocative track, 'coast2coast', is dominated by energetic electric guitar riffs and heavy drumbeats that give the album a proper ending. To conclude, with his incredible talent to blend genres and his willingness to work with a wide variety of musicians, Dominic Fike has shown the world that he is a versatile and experienced musician capable of anything he sets his mind to.

VOLLEYBALL AT AKADEMEIA

Aleksandra Trawkowska

As this year ends, let us rewind back to what has become much more visible this year: the volleyball team. This year, they had more opportunities which allowed them to expand their abilities and develop not only individually, but also as a team.



Our Akademeia Post Reporter had a chance to ask the wonderful coaches a few questions:

*AKADEMEIA POST REPORTER (APR) :
WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO INVEST MUCH
MORE INTO THE TEAM THIS YEAR?
WHAT WERE YOUR AIMS FOR THE
TEAM?*

Mr Ron Franzel (RF): Generally speaking, I wanted to invest more time into Volleyball as we had a lot of potential that was not awoken yet, both in the boys' and girls' team.

I saw that with some decent effort and knowledge, they could achieve great things this year. Furthermore, I really wanted to build team spirit for the school and a volleyball program where we educated on volleyball and how the game is played. It is also important to play against other teams, as practicing within the team only gets you so far.

Mr Pawet Chrostowski (PC): I was inspired by the potential our team had already shown last year and by the character, engagement, and attitude of the players.

Also, I am constantly inspired by Coach Franzel, who is very passionate and has broad knowledge and experience, so I have someone to debate with and to learn from. The main aims we managed to achieve this year were:

- continue with a volleyball elective for everyone, but also to separately start a selective volleyball team, where we have more professional training sessions;
- separate the boys' and girls' teams;
- run a proper preparation camp;
- present ourselves the best we can in the main competition in our district and advance to the main event: Warsaw Highschool Olympiad.

The aim that is still in progress, which is my absolute dream, is to build a spirit around sports in the Akademeia community. I love the American movies, in which young athletes are supported, recognised and appreciated by the community, and sport events are the moments that unite the whole school. We are getting there, step by step :)

APR: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THANKS TO SO MANY MORE OPPORTUNITIES, THE STUDENTS IMPROVED THEIR SKILLS?

RF: Yes, I do believe all of them have made a huge jump in both their abilities and how to approach the game from a mental standpoint, as well as the tactical part of the game. Especially on our Belchatow trip, when comparing them from Friday to Sunday, the students improved their skills. What an achievement!

PC: Definitely! Both teams made great progress, but I feel the boys' team should be especially mentioned here. They spent many hours training, including outside the school, and created the whole volleyball culture. The boys' team started to play with one setter, which I feel took them to the next level. The girls also made progress, but unfortunately a big part of our core squad was engaged in the school musical, so they could not attend many trainings and trips to Betchatów. Thank you Dr. Anders. No, speaking seriously - we don't mind - the musical was great - next year we will go on the trip in a date that does not compete with musical :)

APR: WHAT DO YOU THINK WERE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TEAM THIS YEAR?

RF: I really enjoyed our trip to Belchatow that Coach Chrostowski organized, so shoutout to Coach at this point. The dedication and amount of volleyball we played at the time was quite amazing. Further, the wins against TBS (both home and away) who we had not won against before, were a sign of the dedication and improvement our team has shown this year. Additionally, the WOM competition in April was another highlight. Being able to play against other Polish schools, and seeing how hard they played, was a humbling experience both for me and my players.

PC:

Winning gold medals in Wilanów competition with girls and boys (after absolute thriller).

Meeting my old high school playing in Warsaw Olympiad.

Pizza and movie in the Betchatow trip and burgers with the girls' team.



APR: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF BEING COACHES?

RF: Let us start with the challenges. Overall, coaching is a time-consuming profession; preparing for the games, producing line-ups and rotations, organizing games, and then playing the games all come at a cost of time. Luckily Coach Chrostowski was and is always someone I love talking to about volleyball and how we can improve the squad. Furthermore, some athletes are more 'coachable' than others, so finding a way to get through to them is something I am constantly working on and trying to improve.

As for the rewards, they far outweigh the challenges. Seeing the team come together, celebrate every point, asking how they can improve, and what they can do to be better athletes is something I appreciate. Obviously, winning games is a big reward, but the losses can also be rewarding.

It gives us coaches a chance to take our athletes' game to the next level. Another reward for me is to receive appreciation from our athletes, their parents, and the school.

PC: To be fully honest, this year's challenge for me was to find enough time for coaching properly. There is always something you would like to improve, another game you would like to play, tactics you would like to discuss. Being a good coach is time-consuming, and these are not only trainings. It was sometimes hard to combine it with my other roles in the school. Fortunately, I have Coach Franzel to split the responsibilities. I am very thankful for our cooperation, and we have one of those rare occasions here, where 2 mathematicians, by dividing the responsibilities, multiply the joy :). Our synergy is legendary, and I have a lot of fun working with Coach Franzel.

In terms of rewards, I love being a part of a team of wonderful people focused on one goal. We laugh, sweat and chill together and there is a special bond between us. There is also no greater pleasure when your team scores points after the moves you trained. This feeling is doubled when you see "I know better" or "I will do it my way" players adjusting to the team needs (hi Mark).

APR: WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE NEXT YEAR?

RF: As we are graduating half of the girls' and boys' team, I really hope that we advertised the volleyball program for more students to be interested in volleyball and I hope from the bottom of my heart that we will find more interested students in the next year. To make a team competitive, Coach Chrostowski and I really need about 10-12 athletes per team, so that each member must fight for a spot in the starting line-up.

It gives the entire team a different motivation to play their hardest during practice. We would also like to build a mini league with other international schools to have some league ranking. It will give more meaning and motivation to the experience. We are also planning to repeat the Belchatow trip, but more toward the beginning of the school year. It gives us an opportunity to talk in depth about tactics and approaches to the game. In addition to that, we would also like to organize a proper try-out on a Saturday, where we take a close look at everyone, to pick the best squad for our school. Playing in the WOM competition is a must from here on out as well.

PC: Next year will be very difficult. We have experience from this season and many good ideas, but we are graduating not only great players, but also leaders of the Team. Gabrys, Basia, Aniela, Zosia, Marsi, Pola, Mati, Adas, Michat, and Ales gave us a lot of quality, but also created a great atmosphere, and motivated others to progress. I would like next year's team to follow them, use what they have learned this year, and continue progress, but also warmly invite and help new members to jump into the team. I am counting especially on our captain Marta, but also on the other members to take responsibility and leadership.

AP JAMS

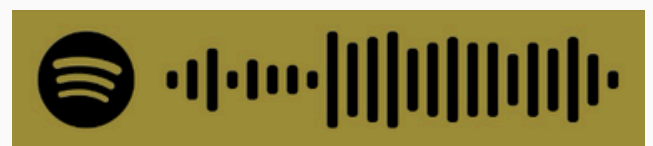
Julek Franco Janecki

SUMMER is just around the corner, but here we are in the middle of examinations. Whether you are writing your A-levels, iGCSEs, or internal examinations, remember to take a breather.

So, as we yearn for summer in midst of all the studying, here is a playlist to scratch that itch for vacation:



1. Money Trees by Kendrick Lamar and Jay Rock
2. Misses by Dominic Fike
3. Dark Vacay by Cigarettes After Sex
4. Girls Just Wanna Have Some by Chromatics
5. Life on Mars? A cover of David Bowie's song by Seu Jorge
6. Starman – 2012 Remaster by David Bowie
7. Strawberry Fields Forever by The Beatles
8. Somebody's Watching Me by Rockwel



For the graduating class of 2024
By Sonia Blank

Let me leave you with some philosophy. You expected this one, sure. Yet perhaps you did not expect to hear: do not make the right decisions! Oh yes, no mistake there. Life is linear, life is one. There's no time to think of what ifs. As you go forward, making your turns: make your decisions right! The decisions you make – let them be right. Make them right with humility, courage, and love. March on without regret or comparison. Move from attention to awe. Wherever you are, it is who you are that carries the flourishing, potent scent of a human fully alive!



AKADEMEIA
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