

LODZ CREATES INNOVATION

NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE CITY OF LODZ

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THE BEST OF THE BEST

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CHOSEN COMPANIES

●
START-UP SUPPORT

●
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DESTINED TO SUCCEED

●
YOUNG FASHION





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ANNA KRAWCZYK
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

One tool for supporting entrepreneurship throughout various regions is to create an ecosystem for start-ups. Lodz has a 10-year history in this respect. This year saw the final gala of the jubilee edition of the 'Youth in Lodz – I've Got a Start-Up Idea' competition held on the 18th of October. In addition to the organiser, the Lodz City Hall, universities in Lodz (including two strategic partners of the competition: the Lodz University of Technology and the University of Lodz), the Lodz Special Economic Zone, Bionanopark and numerous entrepreneurs from the region are involved in this initiative. Starting with this year's edition, mentors provide support to competitors and projects can be presented to the representatives of venture capital funds.

Young companies also receive support from the 'Startup Spark' accelerator in the Lodz Special Economic Zone. It has already finalised innovative projects from a wide range of industries i.e. from the construction of industrial robots, through the development of anti-drone systems, to the personalisation of dietary supplements and energy saving in industrial facilities. Agnieszka Sygitowicz, the president of LSSE S.A., and Magda Kubicka, manager of the start-up accelerator, talk about the available forms of support. Meanwhile, support programs for small, medium and large companies – and not only for start-ups – are explored by Eliza Kruczkowska, director of the Innovation Development Department at the Polish Development Fund (PDF). One individual we interviewed believes that Polish entrepreneurs lack skills in building business strategies and team development, in addition to marketing and international expansion. For that

reason, it is why the PDF has prepared a number of programs and support mechanisms. They apply to companies at various stages of development which already operate and wish to introduce innovations and/or plan to enter foreign markets.

However, you cannot forget about the local market. At Księży Młyn – the largest historical residential and manufacturing complex in Lodz – many local initiatives have been implemented that not only perfectly complement each other, but also attract tourists to the area. A thorough revitalisation of this unique area will help restore it to its former glory and make it something the city can boast about. Activities aimed at developing cultural heritage and education of the arts will be strengthened by the Academic Design Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz, which is currently being established there. Not only will its purposes be to promote design as culture, but also to organise meetings with artists, put on workshops or exhibitions and to help develop the skills of people interested in this field.

It's a wonderful idea to begin a visit to Księży Młyn by visiting the Księży Młyn Tourist Centre. Have a sumptuous cup of coffee and cake at the boutique café and pastry shop Maison a.s., whose fame already extends well beyond Lodz. Motorcycle enthusiasts are welcome to visit the 'Nowhere To Nowhere' motorcycle club which consist of a café and a shop. Here they can find products from niche companies that were, until recently, only known by Polish motorcyclists from the internet. For a delicious dinner, one should consider the Fatamorgana restaurant, which serves inventive cuisine. Lodz and Księży Młyn truly hope to see you soon. ●

Photo: Paweł Lawreszko



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COVER PICTURE

Winning collection at the 'Lodz Young Fashion Award, 2018'
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Chosen companies

We talk with ELIZA KRUCZKOWSKA (director of the Innovation Development Department) regarding the support entrepreneurs at various stages of development receive from the Polish Development Fund (PDF).



What skills do young entrepreneurs lack?

While they do possess very good analytical and technical skills, they unfortunately still lack competence in building business strategies, team development, marketing and international expansion.

That's where the PDF comes in to help. Which industry can expect the largest support from the PDF?

We have a wide range of recipients who operate in various sectors ranging from innovators through start-ups to companies ready for international expansion. To make it easier for them to take advantage of what the PDF group offers, we have created the 'startup.pfr.pl' portal, which is a single point of contact on the internet for innovators, start-ups as well as young, innovative companies seeking our capital and support. Nearly 100 programs are currently listed on the website, available to companies from the IT/ICT sector, companies developing gaming projects as well as start-ups from industries such as e-commerce, mobile, fintech, edtech, IoT, AI and many more.

And what help can those taking their first steps in business count on?

First and foremost, general development of the business skills necessary to achieve success on the market. In this respect we have identified five key areas in which the competency gap is the largest. These include: team building, marketing, business development, investor relations and product management. Based on this insight, we have created two initiatives addressed at different groups of recipients i.e. the PDF Pioneer School and the PDF Mentor Network.

Educational programs for future entrepreneurs and start-ups:

PDF Pioneer School - an innovative educational program for young and talented people who have the chance of becoming entrepreneurs working with new technologies - from programmers and architects to scientists who have had their first success.

PDF Mentor Network - a mentoring program aimed at start-ups in the initial and mid-stage of development, teams that seek support in working on key business skills. It facilitates contact with experts in various fields, support during specific challenges and allows individuals to benefit from the knowledge and experience of people who have been successful in business. These include: Jędrzej Szcześniak – co-founder of 'Daftcode', Kacper Winiarczyk - CEE general manager of 'ofo', Joanna Drabent - CEO and co-founder of 'Prowly', Marcin Szelaż - partner at 'Innovation Nest', Michał Pękała - VP Growth with 'Docplanner.com', Katarzyna Kazior - president of 'Frisco.pl' and Michał Borkowski - CEO and co-founder of 'Brainly'.

Another one of our core activities are initiatives addressed at inventors or people with interesting business ideas for using innovative solutions in need of support for their implementation or further development. To this end, we have launched the 'Good Idea' program, for people involved in innovative activities in their leisure time or for those who cannot count on the support of their own organisations in developing and commercialising inventions and projects.

One of the most basic problems an entrepreneur faces when starting a business is funding or rather lack thereof. Does PDF support young entrepreneurs in this respect?

We have established PFR Ventures, a fund management entity providing repayable funding through VC funds and groups of business angels to innovative SMEs throughout the various stages of development. The PDF's starter 'FIZ' program, under which we currently cooperate with six funds, supports companies at the earliest stage of their journey even before their first commercial sale.

The company has been launched and the second stage, keeping it on the market, begins. What does the PDF offer for existing small, medium and large companies?

Small, medium and large companies are the most widely represented in terms of programs created within the PDF Group. It's important for us to support companies at every stage of their development and help those that have already gone beyond the idea or prototyping stage. We offer a wide range of initiatives for such businesses, from acceleration programs, through consulting and training, to financing and accounts receivable insurance.

What funding can these companies expect?

Under a technology innovation loan run by BGK, companies can receive up to PLN 6,000,000 in funding. A technological bonus can be used, for example, for the purchase and use of new technologies or for the implementation of their own. This results in new or improved products, processes or services being introduced to the market. Also, companies can apply for a company development loan for the creation of a new work post.

We also help companies conducting research and development. Support in this respect consists of both funding (up to PLN 20,000,000 for investment expenses as well as the costs of experimental development works and consultancy services) as well as financing activities related to industrial property protection (Polish Agency for Enterprise Development program: Financing of Industrial Property Protection, Research for the market).

What determines whether a new venture will succeed – research and development work or marketing activities?

A skilful combination of these two is the key to success. Even the best product will not sell without proper promotional and marketing activities. Modern communication channels provide great opportunities

in this respect, limited only by the creativity and ingenuity of marketers.

What conditions have to be met for co-operation between start-ups and existing companies to be considered fruitful?

As has been shown by the 'Scale Up' acceleration programs launched under the 'Start In Poland' program, co-operation between young enterprises and those already on the market is not only possible but also beneficial for both parties. The operators and the start-ups themselves have been able to reinvent the image of Polish corporations and together demonstrate the importance of co-operation between two entities, which are seemingly from two completely separate worlds. Meanwhile, large companies have been able to take advantage of the latest and most innovative products developed on our market. Additional activities in this area include the 'ARP Innovation Pitch' competition, under which young companies get the chance to present their solutions to corporations and state treasury companies. There's also the Technology Transfer Platform, which is a mechanism that connects entities interested in new technologies with start-ups that can provide them with.

Can the PDF make it easier for young companies to take their first steps on difficult foreign markets?

Companies that wish to start export activities receive support primarily from PAIH Foreign Trade Offices. This is a network of representative offices tasked with supporting exports and investments of Polish enterprises on foreign markets as well as attracting investors to Poland. Currently, entrepreneurs can already take advantage of Foreign Trade Offices in 70 locations which include San Francisco, Singapore, Mexico and Shanghai. In addition, thanks to us, they can present their advertising materials free of charge at key fairs and business conferences organised all over the world and - under the Polish Silicon Bridges initiative - acquire comprehensive support from external experts in developing and implementing a strategy for entering a foreign market. We also provide accounts receivable insurance for companies that wish to secure their operations in high-risk countries as well as funding under the PFR KOFFI FIZ and PFR NCBR CVC programs.

Thank you for your time. ●

BY MALWINA WADAS

Global revelation – green revolution



Paweł Jarosiewicz in a research/chromatography laboratory. In the background, a Dionex IC15000 ion chromatograph which enables precise analysis of ions dissolved in water

In May 2018, it received the gold medal at the most important contemporary inventor expo – Concours Lépine in Paris. In June, it won silver at the International Invention and Innovation Show INTARG. The attention of the worlds of science and business has therefore been focusing on the invention created at the University of Lodz: BioKer. And, it will be even more famous.

BioKer is a light aggregate coated with a biopolymer and in the form of granules. The definition doesn't sound too friendly to the ears of the average person, but they will feel the effect of their invention – literally – on their own skin. It will be used to remove phosphate impurities from water, stimulate the growth of microbes and help cultivate plants without the use of soil. Scientists are still perfecting it and applying for subsequent patents, while investors apply for manufacturing rights. It sounds like a story about a Hollywood celebrity, however, BioKer offers much more than smiles and autographs. It brings great hope for the protection of the aquatic environment, sustainable water and environmental management. It will soon be available on the market and we'll be just one step away from a green revolution made in Lodz.

DIFFICULT TASK FORCE

The main author of the invention is Prof. Maciej Zalewski, PhD, head of the Department of Applied Ecology at the University of Lodz and director of the European Regional Centre for Ecohydrology at the Polish Academy of Sciences. The scientist is the creator of 'ecohydrology', an interdisciplinary science that integrates the issues of ecology and hydrology – the main field of which is the sustainability of aquatic resources. He has been working for many years with the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme, where he

represents Poland and holds the position of international expert on ecohydrology and water management. Although the invention is a result of many years of research conducted by teams of the European Regional Centre for Ecohydrology at the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Department of Applied Ecology at the University of Lodz, it was ultimately created during the preparation of Paweł Jarosiewicz's doctoral thesis under the supervision of Prof. Maciej Zalewski, PhD. The scientific challenge posed by the doctoral student concerned creating nature friendly solutions that are capable of improving the quality of the water environment. The main objective of the study was to adapt ecohydrological solutions to reduce pesticide contaminations whose common occurrence is destructive to biodiversity and the balance of aquatic ecosystems. The invention is currently being optimised as part of the Innovation Incubator project, one of whose beneficiaries is the Technology Transfer Centre of the University of Lodz. Its introduction on the market is planned soon.

FEATHERWEIGHT VS ROCK STRENGTH

One of the processes used in water treatment is the absorption of impurities by special permeable barriers. They are typically made using limestone which – thanks to its large concentrations of calcium ions – facilitates

the removal of, among other things, phosphate impurities, i.e. the main reason Cyanobacteria appears in summer. Unfortunately, such barriers are often rather substantial, making them difficult to replace, which is necessary to maintain a permanent and effective operation. Therefore, the main objective of the scientists became the creation of a light material that would have all the advantages of rocks previously used to build natural treatment plants. BioKer was thus made – a ceramic aggregate coated with a biopolymer ten times lighter than limestone! After appropriate modification of its structure, the function of BioKer can be adapted to a given need, e.g. capturing phosphate ions from the water environment, stimulating the growth of microbes on the surface, or helping plants combat impurities. There are many possibilities and



BioKer, a light aggregate which can take many forms depending on its purpose

each one can be generally summarised as improving the efficiency of the water treatment system.

ECOLOGICAL PERPETUUM MOBILE

A barrier made of BioKer granules can be placed so as to facilitate the flow of fish or other aquatic organisms. “Such a barrier filters water flowing along a river or body practically using its entire volume. It’s a compilation of processes that naturally occur in the environment and, through appropriate combination, provide a synergistic effect and thus have great water treatment potential,” says Paweł Jarosiewicz. Water treatment isn’t BioKer’s only application; the invention can also be used in soil free cultivation. “Phosphorus, a type of water impurity, is a perfect fertiliser for plants. Used in BioKer granules, it can be reclaimed from the environment and used as a source of fertiliser for plant cultivation. Furthermore, we can regenerate our system by using simple thermal processes and reintroduce the granules to the entire water treatment process,”

emphasises Paweł Jarosiewicz. The reusability of BioKer constitutes its unique property. It is therefore perfect for circular bioeconomy.

SAVING RIVERS

Nature-friendly solutions that improve the quality of the water environment are one of the priorities of the European Commission and the United Nations. It is very important, primarily because we can achieve low cost sustainable and permanent effects by copying natural processes. Ecohydrology supports combating river impurities; it assumes mutual dependence of hydrological and biological processes according to the dual regulation principle, which provides the opportunity to use hydrological phenomena to regulate biological processes in drainage basins and vice versa.



The irregular structure of the BioKer surface expands the sorption area – an extremely important parameter for capturing pollutants from an aqueous environment

The work of scientists never ends, but rather enters subsequent phases of perfecting the invention. When asked about the future of BioKer, Paweł Jarosiewicz says: “There is still much to be done. We are negotiating terms for transferring the licence to implement this solution with a company that’s interested in mass scale production. Additionally, we are currently conducting the Innovation Incubator project, where we substantially improved the invention as well as found completely new applications for it, such as hydroponic and soil based cultivation of plants. Moreover, our plans still include two new patent applications for the management of water resources, and the prototype of one of them is being tested at the Environmental Field Station of the University of Lodz in Tresta,” he adds. Such inventions as BioKer (innovative, effective, nature-friendly, with many applications), which – we hope – will soon be common and affordable, are undoubtedly supporting the biodiversity and balance of ecosystems. ●

Start-up support

They build industrial robots, develop anti-drone systems, personalise dietary supplements and find ways to save energy in factories – these innovative projects are being developed thanks to the support of the Startup Spark accelerator in the Lodz Special Economic Zone (Lodz SEZ). AGNIESZKA SYGITOWICZ, president of ŁSSE S.A., and MAGDA KUBICKA, manager of the start-up accelerator, discuss different ways of helping young technology companies with Malwina Wadas.



From the left: Agnieszka Sygitowicz, Magda Kubicka

Earlier, the Lodz Special Economic Zone primarily attracted investments. Where did the start-up idea come from?

Agnieszka Sygitowicz: Research & development departments operating at large companies focus on executing strategically set goals. Start-ups operate differently in that they aren't bound by the framework of working within organisational structures, they bring a breath of fresh air to corporations and a new perspective on certain needs of a company that haven't been noticed by said company yet. It is a global trend. We follow it and anticipate future ones, dictating the direction of our changes. Thanks to this, we provide increasingly more comprehensive services for businesses by opening them to external innovation and, in Lodz, we are present among the pioneers of start-up acceleration.

Magda Kubicka: Based on reports compiled by experts, we determined that the 20 most common reasons for start-up failures include: the fact that they don't solve real problems with their business, they choose the wrong technology, their HR is poor and they make products with low market potential. Based on this, we created a model of partnership for a young technology company with an experienced corporation, with the financial and mentor support of the Lodz Special Economic Zone.

○ We define the needs of a large company and find a start-up that can meet them. We develop and adapt the product and service together using the experience, resources and infrastructure of the 'mature' business.

The effect of this partnership is scalable meaning that it finds its place on the market and is used by other entities.

Matchmaking large and small companies can result in many problems...

AS: It's true. Start-ups and corporations communicate using vastly different languages. There are different modes and speeds of decision making, resulting in different speeds of operation and efficiency. We, as the Zone, using our own business potential and access to over 250 investors – mainly manufacturers – additionally support start-ups in reaching more potential clients. Things that prove to be successful for a Startup Spark Partner can be key for the operation of other companies located in the Lodz Special Economic Zone.

MK: This is why our role is to be an intermediary for communication and connect both worlds. This is handled by operational mentors who, in addition to the

support and advice they give to start-ups concerning their field, work inside a young company and act as 'project managers' for each start-up and cooperating corporation.

How else does the accelerator support start-ups?

AS: We support start-ups comprehensively. From accounting, legal and marketing support to assistance in choosing a business direction. They also receive great support from the corporation with whom they work as external R&D departments. Often, they literally become a part of the organisation during the acceleration period.

A model means theoretical assumptions, so how do solutions prepared at Startup Spark fare in the real world?

MK: There are more examples than there are start-ups. I can mention *Bilberry*, a company that executed its first test implementation with the *Pietrucha Group*, a manufacturing investor in the Lodz SEZ operating in 34 countries on 5 continents. Thanks to the support of the company and access to its manufacturing infrastructure, a modern industrial LED lighting system and its control system were both developed. The effect? Energy consumption was three times lower and the lighting in a room was three times stronger. The company calculated that, with the installation of about 40 lamps, the system will save over PLN 62,000 per year when illuminating a single factory floor meaning that the investment will pay for itself in a mere 12 months.

AS: The Social WiFi start-up developed its products together with Ericsson. Thanks to Startup Spark, the solution that facilitates the interaction of a mass-event organiser with its participants through a smartphone found its use at football stadiums. The tool obtains additional information about the course of an event, provides the organisers with real-time feedback and, in the version dedicated to stadiums (already available at the Legia Warszawa football stadium), also lets people guess match results.

How do you see the future of the accelerator? Will it be based on the current model or will it evolve?

AS: We have been attempting to acquire funds for Startup Spark 2.0, which will also connect young innovative companies with corporations. We added a pre-acceleration process to the model i.e. creating innovation by connecting people with business

potential with people possessing technology potential. For the future of the accelerator, the 5G pilot infrastructure project will also be key. It was recently announced by the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology. The integrated multichannel 5G communication will cover Lodz by 2020 and other Polish cities by 2025. The planned data transfer speed has a great value for the industry 4.0, the internet of things and provides a significant competitive advantage for our investors and start-ups. The project's technological partners are Ericsson, a Lodz SEZ investor and, in addition, the Lodz University of Technology.

MK: The number of corporations interested in implementing innovations as part of Spark 2.0 has increased. There will also be more than twice as many accelerated start-ups and there will be industries previously absent from the accelerator. We will attempt to create innovation together in the aviation, construction and cosmetics industries, respectively. Furthermore, we are building an ecosystem for start-ups in the Lodz Special Economic Zone, the purpose of which is connecting these start-ups with experienced businesses. And there is no shortage of such businesses in our Zone. We're creating a place where young companies can develop their competences and find clients. This is why we encourage everyone to contact the Startup Spark team as we gladly accept all valuable ideas.

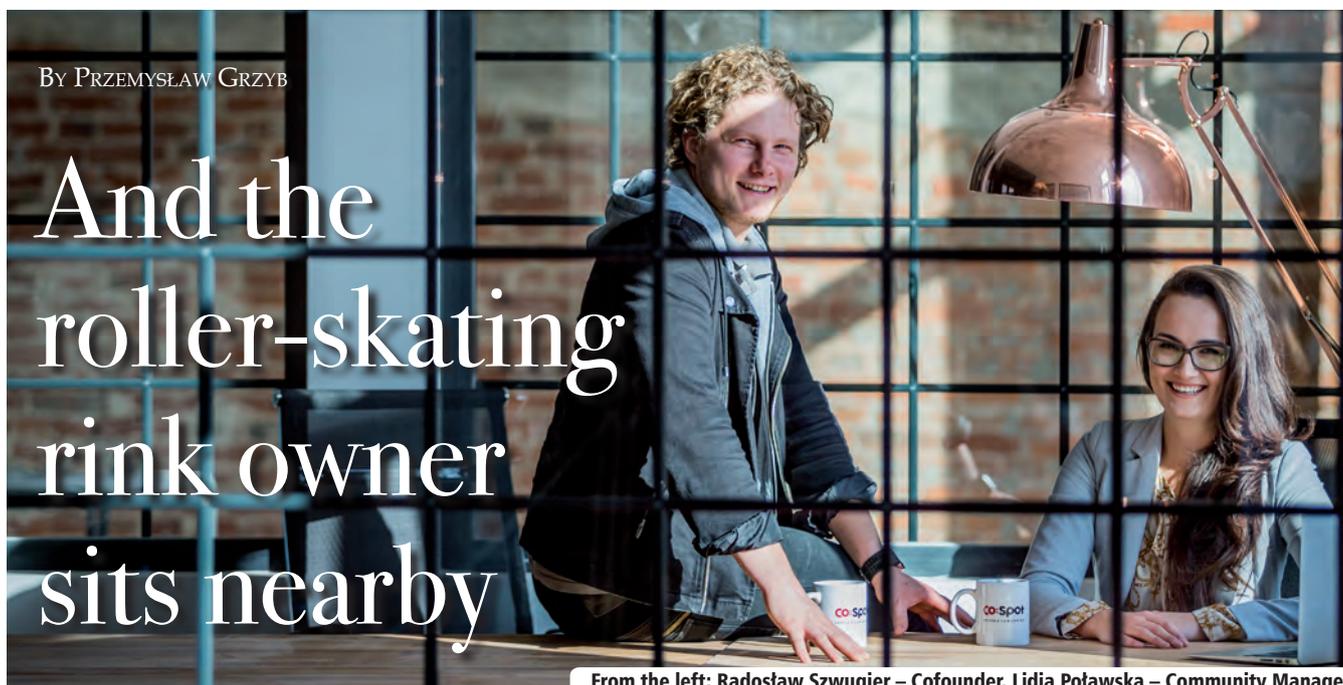
As the Lodz SEZ, you worked with the city as part of the tenth anniversary edition of the "Youth in Lodz – I've Got a Start-up Idea" competition. Please tell us about your engagement in this initiative.

AS: The Lodz Special Economic Zone participated in the competition for the seventh time. In this year's edition, we sponsored two cash awards for the chosen young entrepreneurs and elected two members of our accelerator, Kamil Kociszewski and Adam Błaszkiwicz, to become mentors in the competition. Among nearly 30 best start-ups participating in the competition, the Lodz SEZ gave the award to XOXO WiFi, offering mobile internet operating in 130 countries worldwide, and Exal Bone, and innovative medical dressing. Both companies are represented by young but very committed and entrepreneurial people, which are exactly who we want to work with.

Thank you for the interview. ●

BY PRZEMYSŁAW GRZYB

And the roller-skating rink owner sits nearby



From the left: Radosław Szwugier – Cofounder, Lidia Poławska – Community Manager

The first coworking spaces popped up in Lodz many years ago. However, RADOSŁAW SZWUGIER, co-author and co-founder of CoSpot, decided that not everyone offering work spaces understands what coworking really is. This is because, as his argument goes, it's not just about the place but primarily about the way of working, the community and the possibilities offered by such a business.

Interestingly, the idea of coworking in a form similar to the modern one was probably created in the 90s, in the hacker community of Western Europe. It therefore cannot claim to have praiseworthy beginnings. Hackers assembled in a large room, permeated by techno-anarchy, where everyone had their task but, in cases of encountering difficulties, discussed their issue and tried to find a solution together with their 'associates'. Setting the ethical and legal aspects of a hacker's 'work' aside, the idea of people sharing a common goal operating in a single space produced fantastic results and each participant gave something from themselves but also received a lot in exchange.

LONELINESS IN BERLIN

Radosław Szwugier learned about true coworking abroad and became so fascinated with it that he decided to relocate it to Lodz. He says that during one of his business trips he had to spend several days in Berlin and decided that instead of working in an empty hotel room, he could perform his duties at a desk in a coworking zone offered by the city. "Not only did I have a place to work and internet access, but I quickly met five or six people, was invited to dinner, and I simply didn't feel

lonely," he recalls. The trip lasted only a few days but some of the acquaintances made there have remained until now. Back then, Szwugier also understood that coworking isn't just about the space itself but also (or maybe primarily) about the opportunity to meet new people, exchange experiences and ideas – it's the possibility of taking a break from work and talking to people working at the next desk over. In the creator's mind, CoSpot (in Lodz) was intended to provide space, comfortable conditions and unlimited time for undisturbed work. It was also, however, to simultaneously constitute a place full of life or interesting business plans bursting with ideas and positive energy.

ROLLER-SKATING RINK IN NEED

As is commonly viewed, coworking is meant for freelancers i.e. people operating one person businesses, artists and people in the creative industry. Szwugier doesn't deny that CoSpot is fully open to such people, but it definitely isn't limited to them. This is because the idea behind CoSpot is to connect large and small businesses. Graphic designers, copywriters or programmers can find their place there, as well as

start-ups, accountants or employees of a large company's creative department. "For us, coworking also means networking i.e. creating opportunities for cooperation between various people and companies," he explains. He also mentions an example of a partnership that was born at CoSpot. "A roller-skating rink, which is one of the lessees, urgently needed legal advice. It transpired that a lawyer was sitting at one of the desks and solved the problem in literally a few minutes," he says. He admits that he also happened to take advantage of the support of one of the lessees who took a short break from his duties and helped him out with a task.

MILLENNIALS DICTATE THE TERMS

Coworking spaces are also an answer to the changing needs of employees. In the creator's mind, CoSpot was intended to meet the needs of the Y generation i.e. people born in the 80s and 90s. "The social aspect is very important. Nowadays, market trends are generated by the so-called millennial generation, which has completely different needs to that of the previous generation and values very different things," argues Szwugier. It had already been noticed by the biggest companies but also by the most innovative companies at the time, such as Facebook and Google. In the offices of the multi billion corporations, there are no strictly designated desks, clear divisions of space or isolation of people. To the contrary, spaces are shared and used as needed, and there is no shortage of space for relaxation or even entertainment. This is because work has to give joy and provide satisfaction, not be an unpleasant obligation. Therefore, at CoSpot, you can drink coffee as well as lemonade and can peacefully focus on your work for several hours or take advantage of the chill zone.

SHALL WE PLAY GOLF?

In his vision of coworking at CoSpot, Radosław Szwugier also sees a place for inspiration and drive for enterprises, which is why he also organises events often completely unrelated to operating a business – for example, a golf tournament. Participants include space lessees but also representatives of the broader business community of Lodz. Such meetings are intended to help entrepreneurs from various industries come together, establish business relationships and start forming partnerships. "Therefore, young people full of great ideas have the opportunity to become acquainted with 'big business' and even acquire investors. Big business, conversely, seeks innovation, creativity and freshness in approaching solutions to corporate problems," Szwugier

explains and adds that CoSpot also organises conferences and meetings with experts from various fields. Their knowledge isn't always strictly business related but can definitely be used in business or when operating an enterprise. "At CoSpot, we demonstrate that many issues have already been solved, and people should take advantage of these solutions," says Szwugier.

INTO POLAND WE GO!

Ultimately four CoSpots are planned in Lodz, which – according to Szwugier – will increase the number of opportunities even further and improve the flexibility of services on offer. For example, a person normally working at the space in Śródmieście can travel to a CoSpot in Widzew and meet a client or partner there as he or she travels by train to the Łódź Widzew station. Such mobility can also be used by small entrepreneurs who employ a few people in that they can lease a space close to each individual's home or divide them into



groups. "They will be more satisfied and work more efficiently because their employer meets their needs and shows them that he or she doesn't require strict discipline concerning the time and place of work," believes the founder of CoSpot. He adds that if people in Lodz warm to the idea, similar spaces and opportunities may spring up in other cities in Poland.

DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES, COMMON GOAL

The CoSpot space is being used, or will be used by several dozen entities in the very near future. What industries can be found at CoSpot? "Real estate, training companies, the widely understood IT industry, data security, graphic design, accounting and financial companies, and even a rolling rink that transformed its previous office into a playroom for children," lists Szwugier. And he adds: "The common denominator for everyone is that they have high aspirations and want to grow." ●

BY RAFAŁ WILGUSIAK

How to determine the coordinates of a place for business?

There are many areas where GPS is used. However, the main branch of the economy, which wouldn't exist without satellite navigation, is broadly defined logistics.

The possibility of precisely determining geographical coordinates makes the use of GPS practically limitless. In transport – aside from navigation, location and communication – particularly important things include: remote work time inspection, driver identification systems, smart vehicle security and fuel usage inspection. One expert in these areas is VE Systems, a company from Lodz founded by Sebastian Reszpondek.

“I am a native citizen of Lodz. I studied here and gained knowledge and experience that allowed me to open my own business and make it systematically grow,” says the boss of the company which specialises in the most flexible GPS vehicle monitoring system on the market.

FLEET UNDER SUPERVISION

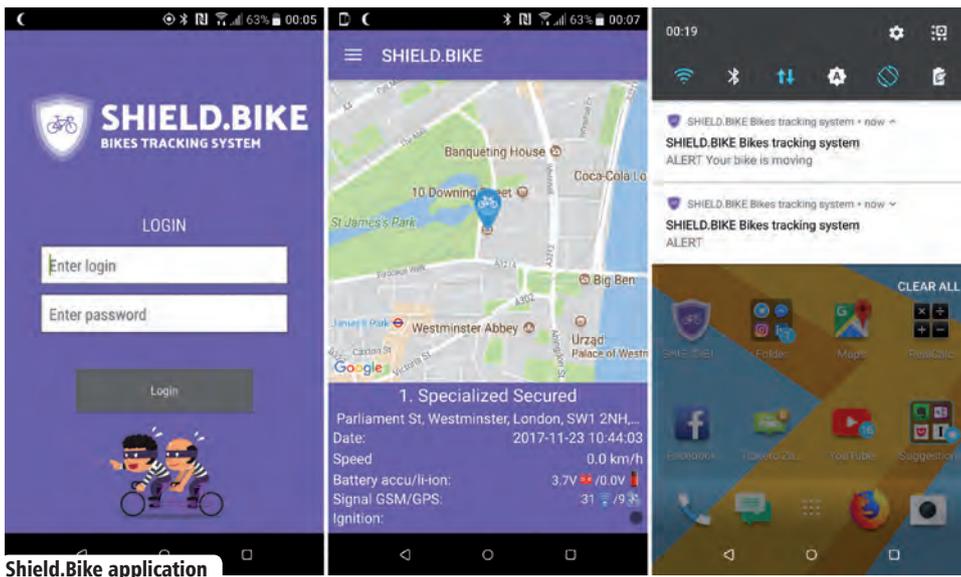
This system is based on satellite navigation, remote communication between devices and using the internet to exchange business data. VE Systems has been successfully operating on the market since 2010. “As early as in 2011, we established a partnership with NavTeq, which is how we guarantee our clients access to



the best maps of the entire world,” explains Reszpondek. “During the eight years of our operation, we have acquired over 1,000 clients throughout the European Union. We handle several thousand vehicles. We operate throughout the entire European market, particularly in Poland and the United Kingdom,” he adds. The most important achievement of the company from Lodz is its ‘Trakero’ service, a system facilitating corporate fleet management. It registers the actual work time of drivers, stops and route lengths. It enables users to control the timeliness of deliveries. Furthermore, it provides the possibility of controlling fuel economy via fuel measurements. Working with high class specialists means that ‘Trakero’ is being continuously expanded and developed. “In early 2012, we opened our own research and development department. The effect of our team’s work was ‘Skorpion’, a telemetry device and the basis of ‘Trakero’. The devices are manufactured in Lodz; where textile machinery once stood, now stand modern electronic device assembly machines,” says the president of VE Systems.

NON-TRIVIAL SOLUTIONS FOR TRANSPORT

Since 15 June 2019, each new vehicle performing transport services in the European Union must be equipped with a so-called intelligent tachograph with GPS. It enables vehicle inspection without stopping it, limiting the number of legal violations and increasing the detection rate of transgressions currently being committed by many transport companies. “Many entrepreneurs don’t intend to wait until the following year, so they seek innovative solutions now,” explains Sebastian Reszpondek. The benefits of using remote tachograph reading mean there will be no need to read the data manually and perform so-called empty runs i.e.



Shield.Bike application

returning to base just to read the memory of the tachograph and driver cards using external readers. To this end, VE Systems created the online tachograph management system eTachograf.pl. Collecting data from the tachograph remotely is a very comfortable solution that significantly improves logistics processes in a company. “The user receives another tool to read the data from the driver card or the memory of a digital tachograph. The readout does not require any action on the part of the driver, the vehicle can be in any part of Europe with wireless network coverage. Importantly, data is downloaded at any time or place whether driving or at stops, even 48 hours after turning the ignition off,” explains the president of VE Systems. There is also a possibility of collecting files on servers and allowing them to be downloaded multiple times by authorised people.

EFFICIENT PROTECTION AGAINST THEFT

An important benefit of VE Systems solutions is the fact that they offer real-time monitoring of vehicles and allow the identification of the driver using a so-called fob or a special card. Before starting the vehicle, the driver must press their fob against the reader to authorize ignition. “This solution is commonly used in immobilisers and intercoms. A small reader mounted on the dashboard decodes the ID fob, which contains a unique and unchangeable code,” says Reszpondek.

All attempts to jam GSM and GPS signals are immediately identified and transmitted to the alarm centre. Moreover, thanks to the so-called 3D accelerometer, every movement of the vehicle is immediately identified. “This protects against thieves putting motorcycles on a carrier trailer, for example. In an emergency situation or during an attempted theft, an

alarm will go off. Furthermore, the information is immediately sent to the 24/7 monitoring centre and directly to the owner by email or SMS,” emphasises the boss of VE Systems. “Individual solutions which act as a deterrent to theft are also intended for bikes, which is why we created a new brand: ‘Shield.Bike’. We have definitely found a niche where there is a big demand

for smart devices. Our products are unique and simultaneously have a wide variety of applications not just in mechanical vehicles, but also in bikes – both in traditional and electric ones, which are becoming more and more popular in Europe. It was apparent in June this year at the largest international IT expo – CEBiT in Hannover – where our products were met with great interest by clients from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Norway and Sweden,” says Reszpondek. The company also offers the identification of drivers by assigning them an individual fob code. Such a solution allows operators to check who is using the vehicle at a given time and generate reports for individual drivers, not just cars. This function will be useful in situations where several drivers use a single car or where one driver uses several cars.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

According to the founder of VE Systems, new technologies improve the efficiency of companies from the transport sector and beyond. Therefore, the demand for products of the company from Lodz will continue to grow. The future means analysing data provided at nearly all stages of use thus enabling us to limit costs and control safety. “Our company is currently in a period of very dynamic growth thanks to our individual approach to each client and the high quality of our services. We have found our place at BioNanoPark, a modern research and implementation centre constituting a part of Technopark Lodz. In the future we want to focus on developing ‘Trakero’, expanding the areas of monitoring with tracking packages (for example), as well as entering new industries, including vending (machine payments),” emphasises Sebastian Reszpondek. ●

What is the company's policy when it comes to caring for employees? What actions do you take to make your employees satisfied?

First of all, we offer a competitive benefit package to our employees, comprising medical insurance, support of sport activities, language courses, professional trainings and many other advantages. Secondly, we have invested in the best in class office space, where high quality furniture and equipment is mixed with collaboration areas, fully equipped kitchens and fun zones, the so-called Whirlpool Winning Workplace.

Last but not least, we have created an Engagement Committee, working on employee engagement and ensuring that people's satisfaction is on the leadership agenda.

With respect to sports activities, we have created a running team and we sponsored participation in 3 running events, including the Rossmann Piotrkowska Run and the Lodz Business Run.



Collaboration areas encourage employees to work together, discuss ideas, brainstorm

What about CSR rules? Are they important for the company? Please provide some examples.

Being socially responsible is one of the pillars of the Whirlpool global strategy. And in the EMEA region we focus our corporate giving primarily in three areas: food access and food saving, housing and youth employment. Whirlpool is very active also with respect to CSR initiatives and support for the local communities. In 2017, we launched our first CSR activity, where employees collected goods for one of the orphanages in Lodz.

In 2018, our employees participated in mountain cleaning activities and in Boss Chair event in collaboration with Akademia Przyszlosci (Academy of the Future). Additional CSR initiatives are planned for the remaining months of this year. As all our business locations in EMEA – we are also planning to take part in

the Community Day – devoting our time and resources to support the local community. The actions are planned for September.

How do you predict further development of the company in Lodz?

The history of Lodz is full of both good and bad economic periods. Therefore, we are happy that the recent years have brought its dynamic development. Lodz is currently attractive not just for companies developing production activities. It is an increasingly serious business centre for the business services centres. The presence of global brands here is the best proof. And the companies still develop that presence – thanks to the friendly, balanced policy of the city and regional authorities, as well as a strong academic background, offering companies access to young, talented, willing to develop staff. Lodz has aspirations to be among the most prosperous Polish cities, such as Krakow or Wroclaw. And we believe it's possible within 5–10 years.



Talking over issues and priorities with the team comes easier in a casual atmosphere

From our company's perspective – Lodz will remain a central location for Whirlpool's strategy in Poland, with one of its main production facilities and the EMEA Shared Service Centre.

Thank you for the interview. ●

Functions of SSC Lodz:

- Record to Report: General Accounting, Intercompany, Asset Accounting, Banking, Journal Entry, Statutory Reporting and Compliance.
- Bill to Cash: Bank and Cash Collections, Customer Master Data Management and AR Analysis.
- Procure to Pay: Vendor Master Maintenance, Invoice Scanning and Archival, Invoice Processing, Employee Expense Processing, Disbursement and Query Management.

The best of the best

The prestigious competition saw thirty-five innovative business ideas vying for the top spot. Intelligent beehives took first place, but all of them deserve recognition from the business world and the attention of investors.

Final Gala of the competition "Youth in Lodz – I've Got a Start-Up Idea"

The winners received their awards at a gala that took place in the Expo Hall on 18 October. "Youth in Lodz – I've Got a Start-Up Idea" is the tenth, jubilee edition of a competition aimed at highlighting innovative projects with great business potential. The idea is to connect young entrepreneurs with investors. The competition is a space for networking between young and mature businesses, and an opportunity to acquire start-up capital or develop projects already in their early stages. Projects from various industries, including medical, biotechnology, IT, artistic and creative took part in the competition. The ten previous editions of the event have led to nearly 1,230 business ideas, almost 320 professional business plans and over 200 companies operating as a result of their participation in the competition.

START-UPS TO THE STARTING BLOCKS

The key rationale behind this year's edition of the competition was to allow the most promising teams to present their projects to entrepreneurs with experience and recognition in the industry, experts in the area of high-risk investments and specialists in the field of technology transfer. And even though the program was

concluded with prizes for the best start-ups, many participants attached the most importance to the possibility of regular work with mentors, access to their knowledge and experience, know-how, the opportunity to refine their business model and to develop their idea. The specialists invited to the event included practitioners, encompassing representatives of the business, start-up and academic worlds. The Lodz University of Technology and the University of Lodz were the competition's strategic partners. In addition to cash awards, the pool of which amounted to PLN 80,000 this year, the participants competed for numerous other prizes, as well as services aimed at providing business support such as training, consulting, brand-building, accounting services, English language courses, a place in a business incubator, office space and much more. The finalists included: ARCHIZO, Pergam.in, XOXO WiFi, Nyklo, moviGO, Exal Bone, Wavy, DriveCloud, HYDRA, ThermoEye, TOMEK, Equezra, MAKE YOURSELF, Memory Support and Rozwój pojazdu do filmów 360 (Development of a vehicle for 360-degree films). This year's edition of the competition was won by the idea for Smart Beehives.

SMART BEEHIVES

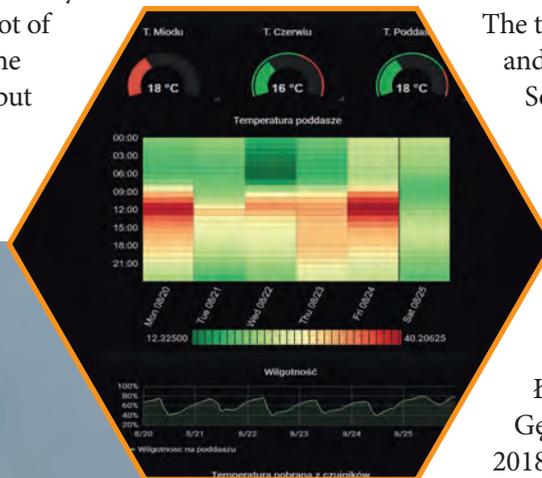
Bee populations are declining, falling to a disturbing level – this is the problem tackled by the project from Sebastian Górecki, a 22-year-old student at the Lodz University of Technology, who is the author of the smart beehive project. He was the winner of this year's grand prize and received prestigious awards, including PLN 40,000 funded by the President of the City of Lodz. The winning project is an innovative solution that makes it possible to visualise information about temperatures at individual levels of a beehive, its weight, the level of air pollution, humidity in the hive's top, as well as alerts and the locations of possible anomalies like diseases, swarming or underfeeding of bees. In addition, the application uses machine learning to analyse the collected data based on existing scientific research and presents conclusions, which allow for a rapid response. Sebastian Górecki assures that the technology will benefit both large and small apiaries, with bee behaviour monitoring increasing hives' efficiency and their development dynamic. "The award is a huge distinction for me, one so big and important that I still can't believe I've won. I'm very happy about it and I know that a lot of work awaits me, not only before the project develops into a company, but

also – what's crucial for me – before each of us will be able to benefit from it. This common benefit is of the greatest importance in my project's case – bees pollinate 80% of European crops and we need to take care of them. It's humanity's responsibility for nature, which I feel strongly about. There is a saying wrongly attributed to Albert Einstein that the moment the last bee dies, humankind will have four years left. I believe in this, it drives me and inspires me to work," says Sebastian Górecki. In addition to cash prizes amounting to a total of PLN 50,000 the young scientist received a package of business courses (in fields like communication with future clients), consultancy in the field of intellectual property protection, commercialisation and technology transfer, office space in the Entrepreneurship Incubator of the Medical University of Lodz, work space and the development of a document defining the brand's communication direction. As Sebastian Górecki notes, these prizes will provide very valuable support on the road to commercialising the innovation.

THERMOEYE

The title of "Winner of the Internet Poll" and the award went to Smart Soft Solutions, creators of the ThermoEye system which detects the early stages of disease in pigs. The founding team of this technology start-up consists of four scientists: Przemysław Sękalski, PhD. Eng. and former students Paweł Kielanowski, Łukasz Adamek and Hubert Gęsiarz. "In its report dated 8 March 2018, the Supreme Audit Office estimates that over 500 tonnes of antibiotics are administered every year to livestock in Poland. This accounts for over 2/3 of the antibiotics market. Even though the amount of antibiotics we eat in meat decreases following an appropriate withdrawal time, a significant part of these substances is excreted by animals and ends up in the ecosystem, causing antibiotic resistance in bacteria. This leads to life-saving medicines becoming ineffective, as the bacteria and microorganisms that cause diseases build up resistance. To combat this, more and more new drugs are being developed and doses increased, which then return to the ecosystem mainly through livestock," Paweł Kielanowski, CTO, discusses

SMART BEEHIVES



Sebastian Górecki



THERMOEYE



From the left: Przemysław Sękalski – CVO, Paweł Kielanowski – CTO, Hubert Gęsiarz – COO

the inspiration for the development of the ThermoEye system. The Smart Soft Solutions team decided to go after the cause by proposing a solution that allows for constant control of animal welfare. ThermoEye is a smart, distributed electronic monitoring system for pigs which allows real-time automatic detection of temperature anomalies in individual animals in the herd. It detects the first symptoms of elevated temperature – indicating disease, weakness or stress – after which the animal is labelled, while the veterinarian and farm staff receive an alert immediately. Thanks to this rapid response not only can the development of disease in a single animal be avoided, but its spread within the herd can be stopped as well. The device can be mounted in the pig house's existing infrastructure, such as passages or feeders, which means that every animal that approaches the device is tested several times a day. This solution allows the farmer to monitor the herd's condition constantly, regardless of its size. Co-operation with veterinarians allows remote monitoring of a larger number of animals and directing immediate help in the event of a disease outbreak. For the consumer, the key benefit from using ThermoEye is a reduction in the amount of antibiotics used in farming. We began monitoring with pigs, but intend to encompass the conditions of other species as well – our slogan is 'healthy animals, healthy food'. We're doing it for you and your children," Przemysław Sękalski explains. The very same statement was also made as the Smart Soft Solution team gave their thanks for the prizes awarded during the gala.

UCHFIT

Another project that was awarded was UchFit, an innovation created in response to the needs of customers in the fitness industry. As the name suggests, it's a holder that can be conveniently used during workouts and classes in fitness clubs. It keeps all the personal belongings of people exercising right where they are. The safety of your smartphone is no longer a worry, and you can comfortably use a towel or have a drink. The use of magnetic force and rolling many features into one product means the creators of UchFit have given exercisers real freedom when working out in fitness clubs. Meanwhile, with the smartphone holder you not only have the device always at hand, but you can also record your workouts and share them on

social media. Work on the project has been ongoing for almost two years. For most of this time the project's creator, Konrad Olejniczak, was working by himself, more as a hobby, splitting time between work, family and a range of passions, one of which became UchFit. In May, Urszula Małoszewska-Cyrulińska and Tadeusz Cyruliński joined the team, both of whom have been

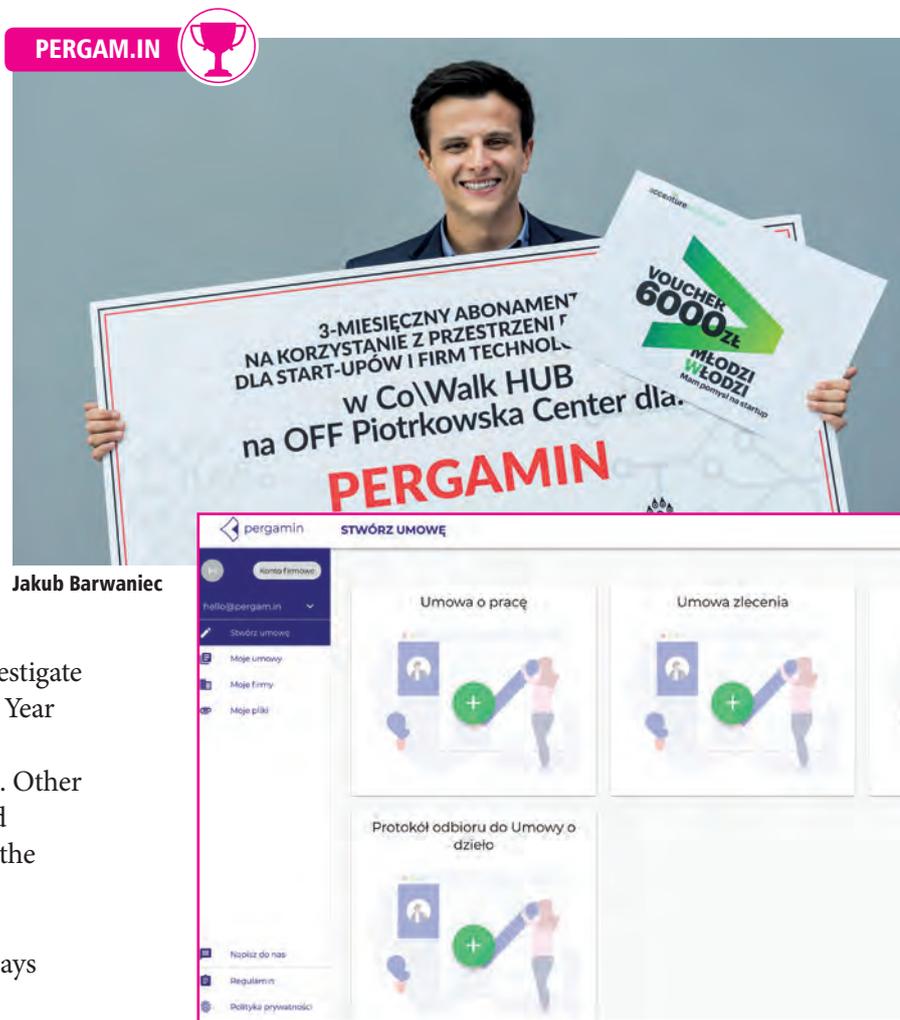


UCHFIT



From the left: Tadeusz Cyruliński, Urszula Małoszewska-Cyrulińska, Konrad Olejniczak

in the business world for several years. At the beginning of October, this passion project turned into a limited liability company managed by Olejniczak. Currently, UchFit has an industrial design registered in the European Union and a registered trademark in Poland. "We have planned UchFit's launch for March. As of September, pre-release orders can be submitted via our website, but there is still a lot of work ahead of us – the project needs last-minute refinements before going into production, plus the entire marketing plan, as well as organisation and logistics plans need to be implemented. Although the project is aimed at the fitness industry, we're receiving feedback from other sectors on various sources of its potential, for example in construction or agriculture. We will certainly investigate these options. UchFit received the Product of the Year award in the "Innovation" category at the 5th International Fitness & Wellness Fair FIWE 2018. Other important fairs are coming in February, April and October 2019. Our business is taking us towards the three largest European fitness markets, namely Germany, Great Britain and France," Urszula Małoszewska-Cyrulińska, the company's CMO, says about UchFit's development plans.



Jakub Barwaniec

PERGAM.IN

The winning projects also include Pergam.in, a representative of the dynamically developing legaltech industry. Legaltech includes all technological solutions that facilitate work with regulations or the provision of legal services. The solution prepared by the Pergam.in team has been recognised with a special award from Accenture. What, exactly, is the goal and will it keep lawyers awake at night? Pergam.in is an innovative system that makes it possible to organise and accelerate the contracting process in a company. It was created by Jakub Barwaniec, Adam Pokora, Antoni Wędzikowski, Michał Śliwka and Piotr Łuczak – people with many years of experience in law and technology. It is at the juncture of these two worlds that the company operates. "We have a rather unique mix of skills on board, which allows us to create a tool that facilitates work with complicated legal documents through the use of technology. Contrary to appearances, our goal is not to replace lawyers. Pergam.in is intended to support people who work with business contracts on a daily basis, who very often are not lawyers," adds Jakub Barwaniec

(CEO). The software developed by the start-up assures the rapid drafting of documents based on editable templates, on-line negotiations, a legally effective electronic signature, automated management, contract monitoring, creation of annexes and archiving. All work with the tool takes place at the browser level, which means you always have access to your contracts. Once a contract is generated in the tool (based on a template previously added to the system), it can be electronically signed with the business partner. "The electronic signature gives you enormous freedom in doing business. Imagine a situation in which an advertising agency starts collaborating with a freelancer, but wants to sign a confidentiality agreement beforehand. Today, this process is based on an exchange of paper contracts and can take up to several days. In Pergam.in, such a contract can be created in a few minutes and signed just as quickly, but over the Internet. The contractual provisions are just as binding for the parties as a paper version," says Antoni Wędzikowski (CMO). Organising all of these processes using one tool saves time and

reduces the costs of business operations. “One of our clients, a technology company, uses Pergam.in to prepare HR contracts for its employees. The person responsible for this process used to devote three days per month to this. Now, thanks to automation, contracts with appendices are generated and signed electronically in just a few hours,” Wędzikowski adds. The system was made for SMEs, but a special version for the enterprise sector was also created. It allows for complex organisational structures, different levels of access to contracts or two-step verification of the signer by means of SMS passwords. “Pergam.in offers corporate clients functions that allow it to become an element of the data and document flow network. Soon, we will enable integration of external qualified signatures and exchange of data with such systems as SAP or CRM tools. We hope Pergam.in will become the gold standard in generating and concluding contracts,” Barwaniec adds.

EXAL BONE

Another award went to the creators of Exal Bone, an innovative orthopaedic dressing that combines the advantages of existing solutions with the potential to speed up the treatment of limb injuries and inflammation. “The idea first came to light in February 2017, as an application in the ‘Innovative Therapy and Rehabilitation Methods’ competition. Then, an improved version took first place in the ‘Forge of Talents’ competition under the Smart-up Lab program. The team has been changing and reforming over the last 20 months, through the Med Tech 2018 program and, of course, ‘Youth in Lodz – I’ve Got a Start-Up Idea.’ In the end, the team consisted of Łukasz Piotrowski, dr Karolina Czarnecka, Kamil Chrzan, me and our mentor and business advisor, Kamil Kociszewski,” says Mateusz Siwak, a doctor and scientist from Exal Bone, discussing the stages of the start-up's development. “So far, we've had the opportunity to present our solution during the Investment Forum in Tarnów, the Economic Forum in Krynica and the EIT MedTech BootCamp in Munich, Erlangen and Barcelona.” The award-winning invention is a light, openwork, aesthetic, waterproof and discreet supporting dressing. It's made of a specially designed composite material characterised by its high strength

EXAL BONE



From the left: Kamil Kociszewski, Łukasz Piotrowski, Mateusz Siwak, Kamil Chrzan

and resistance to deformation. An openwork structure allows free ventilation of the skin's surface, which means it doesn't cause itching. The technology implemented in our solution allows the shape of the dressing to be adapted to medical needs without unnecessary haste and fear of premature setting. It's protected by a patent application. This technology also allows for secondary remodelling of the dressing, so as to provide patients with incredible comfort, and it makes incorrect dressing, pinching or deformation a thing of the past. The proposed solution is undoubtedly a revolutionary technological achievement, creating new therapeutic options in orthopaedics and rehabilitation. A method of combining the dressing with physical therapy has also been developed, shortening the treatment time of injuries and reducing inflammations by up to 30%. “We're very happy that there are companies in Lodz that actively work to develop entrepreneurship here, develop the city itself and make Lodz the best place to establish a start-up, not only through their involvement in the ‘Youth in Lodz - I've Got a Start-Up Idea,’” Mateusz Siwak explains. Awards received in the competition will allow further development of Exal Bone prototypes and facilitate subsequent steps related to patent protection. The start-up plans to commercialise the invention and enter the market in 2020.

moviGO

Among the winners are also the creators of the innovative moviGO cosmetic product. In Esperanto the phrase means “movement,” and the idea is for a washing gel dedicated to active people struggling with problems including dry and irritated skin.

A formula with five active ingredients is its distinguishing feature. The use of aloe juice, urea, glycerine, panthenol and vitamin E leaves the skin deeply moisturised and regenerated. The product also contains a chlorine scavenger, which neutralizes chlorine odour and is vital for people who frequent the swimming pool. It is complemented by a specially selected, allergen-free fragrance composition. The idea for moviGO came from Adam Jerzykowski, known for extreme swimming challenges and his Swim For a Dream project. “I remember a night, three years ago, when I couldn't fall asleep even though I was exhausted after intense workouts. My skin and hair were dry as a bone. My entire body was itchy and the unpleasant chlorine odour wouldn't go away. It was at that moment that the idea of creating a cosmetic product for active people came to me,” Jerzykowski says. “I invited exceptional people to work on the project, from various industries: production engineering, corporate banking, computer graphics, law, crossfit and sports marketing. We work on production with two companies. One is responsible for the packaging, the other for mixing the base and confectioning.” The

brand's mission is to accompany people on their path to discover their own potential and to unite them around an active lifestyle. “One product has already launched, but our vision for moviGO goes much further. We intend to introduce an entire cosmetics line for active people, conceptually referring to the four elements. Awards such as the one in the 'Youth in Lodz – I've Got a Start-Up Idea' give us energy and faith in business success,” says Agnieszka Kucharska about moviGo's plans. The idea's business potential is clear in that the product has already been launched on the market, and interest has been shown not only by individual customers, but also by the first distributors who intend to introduce cosmetics to foreign markets.

BUSINESS LESSON

The jubilee edition of the “Youth in Lodz – I've Got a Start-Up Idea” competition concluded not only with the gala attended by the President of the City of Lodz. On the same day, an inspiring TEDxPiotrkowskaStreet Another Perspective conference was also held, kept in the popular convention of short, charismatic presentations discussing ideas worth promoting. Polish and foreign speakers – enthusiasts and professionals associated with business, science and art – spoke about the power of momentum, life goals that can be deduced from Google Maps, important skills in crisis situations, building fashion brands in a market full of taboo topics or training the subconscious to achieve professional success. In addition to listening to inspiring speeches, participants had the opportunity to participate in workshops and improve skills useful beyond in the business world through practice. A VC Speed dating session was also held, with several start-ups presenting their innovative solutions to investment funds, including: Data Ventures, Infini, Poland Ventures, Satus Venture, Speedup Venture, Younick Mint, Simpact, Start Money, Luma Ventures, bValue and OPG VC. Young innovators, often making their business debut, had the opportunity to practice presenting their ideas among competitors and investors. After the official part of the gala, a trade fair zone was made available where the winners of previous editions shared their knowledge and experiences. The exhibitors included: Quantum Games SuperHot, Inplanner, Drive Cloud, Makemyballs, Archizo, Cocoart's, VitOFF, Procter&Gamble, Whirlpool and Accenture. This gave many opportunities for exchanging information, resources and invaluable networking. ●



Adam Jerzykowski, Agnieszka Kucharska

BY MARZENA ZBIERSKA

Players under control

Exciting, captivating, immersing you in virtual reality and suddenly...you are kicked out of the game. Impossible? And yet it does it. SuperHot is a game which forces the player to reflect upon their addiction to the virtual world.



Tomasz Kaczmarczyk, Vice-President of the Management Board

The first version of SuperHot was created in 2013 during the '7 Day FPS Challenge' competition. The demo version was made by a 7-person team from Lodz (in fact, local yards and alleys inspired the architecture of the game's levels). The great interest in the demo version inspired its creators to make a full version. However, only four people from the original team decided to continue with the project. Why SuperHot?

"The name was born spontaneously," replies Szymon Krukowski, PR Manager of SuperHot Sp. z o.o. "We all have our theories on this matter and all of them are true. My theory is that the name came about as a result of ironic brainstorming about typical names of games available on the market. It's characteristic of our work. In SuperHot, nothing is typical."

I HAVE AN IDEA FOR A BUSINESS, "I'M GONNA PLAY A GAME"

The money to develop the game came from the online community via 'Kickstarter'. In 2015, the makers of SuperHot established a company under the same name. Today, the company's bosses are Piotr Iwanicki, Tomasz Kaczmarczyk and Jakub Ziemiński. The company employs about 40 people in Lodz and works remotely with experts living in Amsterdam and Newcastle.

"Our mission is to create new and innovative products for the games market," explains Szymon Krukowski. "I say 'products' on purpose because our projects aren't always games. We take advantage of and explore the medium of games, but we want to go beyond stereotypes."

Szymon Krukowski emphasises that the company was born out of distaste for worn-out ideas and solutions, habits that were present in game making and accompanying the users.

“We don’t want to make predictable, or boring run-of-the-mill games,” he adds.

When asked whether, for example, simulators for the army would be a good area for experimentation and growth, he immediately answers: “Yes, it would be fascinating. Although a simulator is a somewhat

The story of SuperHot alludes to parts of pop culture, old technological solutions and contains many motifs concerning game abuse and media addiction. There’s a reason that the game’s interface resembles old computer graphics and time flows only when the player’s character is moving. All of this is meant to break the continuity with typical shooters. However, in SuperHot, players are surprised by something else too: the system controls their presence in the virtual world and, if the player stays there too long, it tells them to leave the game. What is this about?

“We lecture people a bit,” admits Szymon Krukowski. “It’s not about criticising gaming but about moderation. We want gamers to reflect upon spending too much time in the same manner or focusing too much on something, for example on the virtual world.”

The makers of SuperHot don’t criticise gaming but they point out the risks related to it.

“We want players to look at themselves somewhat from the outside and notice how much they’re playing and know that there are also other interesting things which they can do in life,” adds Szymon Krukowski.



Piotr Iwanicki, President of the Management Board

different project than a computer game, we would also like to dabble in this area in the future.”

SURPRISING GAME OVER

The creators of SuperHot have their model customer, created by analysing the expectations and needs of people from their own community.

“We assumed that we were making SuperHot for people from our generation i.e. those we know and spend time with,” explains Szymon Krukowski. “However, it turned out that gamers don’t just include the generation of current thirty-year-olds but also younger fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds. It is therefore a very diverse group, which is a great advantage as it makes the game less of a niche product,” he states.

WEARING HEADSETS AND HEADPHONES

The game is also available in a VR version (presenting the levels in such a way so as to make the impression of physical presence. It’s possible thanks to special headsets and headphones). A motif of reflection upon the over-reliance on virtual reality is also present.

“In the VR version, our statement is that we can lose and immerse ourselves in virtual reality too much. VR makes an even greater impression on players because simple actions can be shocking and immersive,” states Szymon Krukowski and notes that the company began working on VR prototypes as virtual reality is one of the most important directions of development.

Tomasz Kaczmarczyk, vice president of SuperHot, holds similar views.

“Technological advances give creators new possibilities,” he says. “Thanks to the support of big partners such as Sony and Oculus, smaller teams of programmers have been making increasingly bolder moves related to entering the new market and working with prototype hardware.”

Nevertheless, limitations remain. For game creators, the market of VR games is still very small. Other than SuperHot, there aren’t many independent titles that have been financially successful in virtual reality. Despite all of this, the situation is getting better and the number of gamers with access to VR is increasing.

“Forecasts show that by 2020, the market will exceed the threshold of 10 million recipients with high-quality headsets,” states Tomasz Kaczmarczyk.

REPETITIVENESS WILL NOT SELL

In addition to developing VR products, SuperHot (as a company) focuses on two goals: releasing its flagship product on all possible platforms and developing the SuperHot’s expansion which will further engross users. According to Tomasz Kaczmarczyk, a precise analysis of market needs is impossible, but leading trends can be forecast to some extent.

“Players primarily expect freshness and innovation from independent game creators. It’s not easy to delve into repetitiveness on this market,” notes the vice president. “We should definitely engage the players who are familiar with our previous projects by releasing expansions and follow-ups. However, brand new games have the largest potential and this is also our future direction.”

How will SuperHot surprise the games market next?

“We are working on several projects simultaneously. Some of them are directly linked with SuperHot or expanding its universe and some might be completely new,” says Tomasz Kaczmarczyk. “Some projects will be targeted at our current players and others will aim to expand this community. At the same time, we’re closely observing the area of the latest AR and VR technologies. It has a business meaning... and it’s simply cool.”

UNIQUE TEAM MEMBER

Important areas of the company’s business include charity, sponsorship and working with the Lodz

University of Technology. This helps support the development of young programmers, some of which are already working at SuperHot.

“The company is one big family. A good atmosphere is the foundation of efficient work and the proof lies in the fact that an employee’s dog stays in our office every day,” tells us Szymon Krukowski. “Thanks to this, we can feel at home, gladly come to work and focus on the company’s development.”

The creators of SuperHot unanimously admit that the worldwide success of the game did not go to their heads and that they don’t intend to leave Lodz. Here, they feel at their best. ●

Photo: Pawel Lawreszuk



The company has started work on prototypes in VR



Common area

Creative conflict in a company

AGATA DOMAŃSKA



Sometimes conflict and antagonism are better for a company than agreement and nodding, which is why we should occasionally argue to generate creative solutions rather than smile in order to maintain a pleasant atmosphere.

There are many sayings that emphasise the importance of cooperation: “United we stand, divided we fall”; “In unity, there is strength”; “As concord makes small things grow, discord brings the greatest to ruin.” And that’s correct. We can build things with agreement. But where are the sayings about the good sides of disagreement? Where is the appreciation of the creative role of conflict? Nowhere!

Scenario: the company is in trouble, loses customers – something has to be done. A meeting is called to find a solution to the critical situation. There are twelve people in the room, all of them experts. Everyone knows the case but only one person has new information (everyone knows and agrees that customers have to be offered something extra, but only one person has heard that their competitors resolved the issue in a similar manner). Theoretically, the meeting was called in order for such information to come to light. Theoretically. Often, it doesn’t happen. Why? Because sometimes agreement and consensus seem more important than making a good decision. If a company values a harmonious atmosphere and cooperation, if unity and concord are crucial – the risk that this one and only piece of information that changes the course of events won’t come up rises exponentially. In psychology, such a situation is called shared information bias. It means that a group of people tends to be more engaged in discussing things that everyone knows rather than obtaining information that is new to this group. Shared information bias is one of the most effective survival strategies in corporate teams. It’s hardly surprising: colleagues will believe we’re competent (and also harmless) if we confirm something that they already

know. This impression can be achieved by recalling something that was said several days ago or by repeating something said a moment ago using our own words. In groups that value agreement and a good atmosphere, tuning in to other people becomes more important than fresh ideas; mutually improving each other’s well-being is more important. The risk of such behaviours increases when consensus and the fact of decision-making at all are more important than its precision and effectiveness. The situation is similar when such new information is possessed by a person of a lower professional position (they don’t want to jump the gun). Interestingly, everyone is satisfied at the end of such conservative sessions – including the person whose voice wasn’t heard. It’s wonderful to work in a team where everyone likes each other, chat during downtime and do favours for one another. It even makes the daily commute pleasant! However, such excessive agreement has its price. It has primarily reduced creativity which, after all, consists of searching for solutions and application that no one else has found – neither the competitor nor the other team members. Excessive agreement may also result in making bad – or at least not the best – decisions. It is no wonder that the newest knowledge regarding a given issue is not taken into consideration. These are important reasons why the management should consider the cost of corporate agreement. Employees must be aware that disagreement doesn’t mean a lack of respect or that a short swim ‘against the current’ is acceptable. A solution? During corporate meetings, leaders should speak last. And team members should write what they think the group should hear. They should then give the sheets to the moderator. ●

BY RAFAŁ WILGUSIAK

Księży Młyn – a place destined to succeed

Księży Młyn is the largest historical residential and manufacturing complex in Lodz. The local authorities have decided to thoroughly revitalise this unique area, restoring its former glory and making it a true showcase of the city.

When asked “what do you associate with Lodz?”, most Poles (even those who have never crossed the city's limits) will answer: factories and red brick buildings. It's true. The city boasts a complex of facilities with huge social and economic potential. Księży Młyn, as it is called, will soon get a new lease on life thanks to the joint efforts of both city authorities and private investors.



Arkadiusz Bogusławski, project manager
for the revitalisation of Księży Młyn

A LIVING MONUMENT

The unique red brick housing estate was built on the site of a former fifteenth-century mill settlement belonging to the local parson – hence its name (Priest's Mill in English). The buildings' present appearance is due to Karol Wilhelm Scheibler, an entrepreneur from Rhineland, who came to the Kingdom of Poland in 1848

and decided to settle in Lodz, where he established what can only be described as a cotton empire. In Księży Młyn, the German industrialist with a Belgian passport built the largest group of textile factories in Poland. He didn't stop there, though. In the following years, he ordered the construction of the first planned residential estate in Lodz. The complex included factory buildings, workers' houses (so-called *famuły*), a shop (called a *konsum*), owners' residences, director's villas, as well as a fire station, gas substation, school and hospitals. Green gardens and parks brought life to the area dotted with red brick buildings. The whole complex, almost intact, has survived to this day. Even the textile industry crisis that occurred in recent years has not damaged the building complex.

EXPERTS IN RAISING FUNDS

Currently, this compact residential and industrial district – located to the west of Przędzalniana Street, enclosed between Tymienieckiego and Fabryczna Streets and Źródlińska Park – is an extraordinary city within a city. At the same time, it's one of the most interesting preserved industrial facilities in the world. Its uniqueness was noticed by President Bronisław Komorowski who, in 2015, named the nineteenth-century complex a “monument of history” and entered the entire estate in the register of monuments. The



DR. ANNA ŁASZKIEWICZ, DIRECTOR OF AKADEMICKIE CENTRUM DESIGNU (ACADEMIC CENTRE OF DESIGN)

The main goal of establishing the centre is to develop cultural heritage and conduct artistic education. We wish to promote this design as an aspect of culture and develop the skills of those interested in this field by organising meetings with

innovators, holding workshops and staging exhibitions which will serve as a medium for interesting thoughts, attitudes and trends. The location of ACD's office, Księży Młyn, will also benefit by becoming a tourist attraction and culture-forming point, serving as a catalyst for both creative attitudes and activities. The former school building, located at Księży Młyn 13/15, was purposely chosen as the ACD's location – it's in an especially precious area of the city, completely unique on a national scale.

The building must be refurbished in order to serve its function. At the beginning of August, we signed a contract for construction works under the “Academic

Centre of Design for the Development of Cultural Heritage and Art Education” project (pursuant to Subsidy Contract No. POIS.08.01.00-00-1033/16-00 dated 07.04.2017 as part of Measure 8.1 Priority axis VIII Protection of Cultural Heritage and Development of Cultural Resources of the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014-2020). The contract value is PLN 17,896,500 (gross). The work, which is projected to last until the end of 2019, will include the installation of internal systems, floors, ceilings, new partition walls, window sills, joinery, door and window joinery, as well as renovation of stairs and the fresco, amongst others. Ultimately, the facility is to be furnished, equipped with computer equipment, 3D printers and workshop equipment for a total amount of PLN 4,690,200 (gross). The ACD building will be handed over in the second half of 2020.

We hope that the project will have not only local, but also regional and national dimensions – the ACD is an initiative combining all academic centres with their broadly understood creative potential in the field of design. For the city, it constitutes another step towards building an image of a serious centre in the field of design, the cultural industry and art education. ●

revitalisation of the declining Księży Młyn was at the top of the Lodz authorities' priority list.

“Experience from work in Western European companies, as well as an open attitude to technical progress and innovations made Scheibler the leading manufacturer in Lodz, with his approach to business serving as a model for many entrepreneurs of the time. The city authorities were equally innovative in this matter. We enrolled private partners and housing communities, joined forces, and together we received EU funding for the comprehensive restoration of Księży Młyn. Never has there been an undertaking of this kind. It's a unique situation on at the national scale that one of the communities received as much as PLN 3,000,000 from the EU for the revitalisation of its property. It must be emphasised, however, that we didn't just sit on our hands and wait for EU funds to come. The city undertook the investment in the middle of this year with its own resources,” Arkadiusz Bogusławski, project manager for the revitalisation of Księży Młyn at the Lodz City Council, underlines.

REVITALISATION IN NUMBERS

The revitalisation of 4 workers' houses (famuły) and the school has already been completed. Tenants were moved to a previously prepared building for the time of the renovation. The next 3 residential buildings will soon be renovated, with a tender for 2 more to be announced soon. In the project's first stage, 14 properties will be renovated, including 11 belonging to the city, with the remaining ones belonging to housing communities and private persons.

“Previously, the workers' houses had small apartments. During the renovation, they will be rebuilt in such a way as to increase the surface area, make them more comfortable for the residents while, at the same time, retaining their historical values. It's worth noting that the company implementing the investment has already been renovating 'famuły', so it has experience in revitalising monuments of unique cultural and material value,” says Arkadiusz Bogusławski.

According to the plan, the renovation of a total of six residential buildings, the old shop (konsum) at

Księży Młyn Street and the building of the residential community located at Fabryczna 21 are to start this year. Next year, 9 buildings will be renovated. In addition to the odd-numbered side of Księży Młyn Street, these will be the houses forming the facade of Przędzalniana Street. The last 4 housing community buildings are to be restored in 2020. The comprehensive revitalisation of Księży Młyn will last until 2021. The project value is around PLN 100,000,000, while the EU co-financing obtained by the city amounts to PLN 45,000,000.



The Tourist Information Centre

HISTORICAL SPACE, MODERN SOLUTIONS

What's important is that the workers' houses, after reconstruction, will contain more than three-hundred apartments. A total of twenty-five buildings, including industrial buildings and the entire estate, nearly five hectares, will be restored to their former glory. Historical pavements and green areas will be included in the revitalisation project.

“Smaller investments will also be carried out, among them the redevelopment of the former railway siding area into a pedestrian and cycling route with a partial reconstruction of the former track. New street lights will be installed, copying those that illuminated the estate several decades ago. Near Fabryczna Street, the city plans to arrange a green parking lot with fifty parking spaces. We have already renovated three water pumps,” the revitalisation project manager points out.

At Księży Młyn, investments are also being carried out by private investors who will have 25 apartments at their disposal. The total commercial space will amount to approximately fifteen percent of the entire area of

Księży Młyn, or about three thousand square metres. A Tourist Centre and a number of gastronomical establishments, such as restaurants and pastry shops, are already operating in the renovated buildings, as well as a Motorcycle Club. In addition, the Strzemiński Academy of Art in Lodz will establish its Academic Centre of Design (Akademickie Centrum Designu) at the historic housing estate.

It's worth mentioning that Księży Młyn already attracts not only tourists (ultimately, after the completion of the investment, approx. one hundred thousand are expected annually), but also artists, photographers and culture lovers.

PRICELESS DIVERSITY

One of the key effects of the investment will be the creation of an open and comfortable housing estate for residents coming from various social backgrounds. A true revitalisation is the goal, one where social inequalities are reduced, unity developed and residents' activities are supported through joint participation in various types of projects. One of the premises renovated this year will act as the seat of the Księży Młyn Club. A Social Integration Club is also active here, providing residents with legal and other means of help.

“We also support local initiatives, such as neighbourhood picnics. We want Księży Młyn to be a model revitalisation, one that builds a community in which everyone has the same conditions for a good start in life,” says Arkadiusz Bogusławski.

NOTICED, APPRECIATED

The city authorities' initiative has received praise from the European Commission, which, last year in Tallinn, gave Lodz the URBACT distinction for model cooperation in revitalisation and an award for “good urban practice”. URBACT is the European Territorial Cooperation Program for Sustainable Urban Development, which brings together experts in urban issues. Thanks to the award, Księży Młyn has become a model example of urban revitalisation for the whole of Europe.

“This is the first such competition organised by URBACT in which the best urban projects implemented throughout Europe receive awards. Co-operation and solving various social problems are the less visible, social side of revitalisation and was certainly a decisive factor in us receiving this distinction,” says Arkadiusz Bogusławski. ●

BY RAFAŁ WILGUSIAK

Sweet, exquisite, homely



Sebastian and Agnieszka Andrzejewski

Modern confectionery made with passion, where everything tastes just as good as it looks – this is *Maison a.s.* in a nutshell. It's a confectionery store with a French atmosphere, situated in the very heart of post-industrial Lodz. Sweets served by the owners will satisfy even the most refined tastes, and they have one more property: they help maintain social relationships.

In 'Chocolate' with Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp, a mother and her daughter move into a small French town. In an old confectionery store, they open a shop with handmade chocolate delicacies, which slowly changes the provincial mentality of the locals by enchanting them with the taste and smell of chocolate. As it transpires, the taste of delicious chocolate and the form of its preparation can affect human relationships.

LET'S BUILD OUR HOUSE

Lodz has its own version of this story. Agnieszka and Sebastian Andrzejewski decided to put their skills and experience gained in France to use and set up a boutique confectionery store in Księży Młyn. They named it *Maison a.s.*, which means 'house' in French (a.s. is a shortened form of the founders' names). Agnieszka and Sebastian are graduates of the Culinary Arts High School in Lodz. Thanks to their exceptional grades, they received a scholarship and went to France to learn the secrets of the local cuisine. They spent eight years there learning, working, and achieving subsequent levels of initiation in the culinary industry. After eight years spent abroad, the graduates of CFA Louis Prioux Bar-le-Duc decided to return to their home city and set up their own store. "Finally, we noticed the positive

changes taking place in Lodz were creating beneficial conditions for operating a business. We decided to start in Księży Młyn because such places in France – due to their unique charm – are very popular. We believe that it's also going to be the same here in the future. We wanted to continue the kitchen revolution which started with the opening of the Fatamorgana restaurant, but this time in a much sweeter fashion," says Sebastian.

CHOCOLATE WITH MUSHROOMS

Agnieszka is a confectioner; Sebastian is a chef. Their signature product is puff pastries. There is also no shortage of delicacies characteristic of modern confectionery. At *Maison a.s.*, we can taste pastries and desserts using original French recipes and selected ingredients, served in a unique fashion.

For example: Paris-Brest, Saint-Honore, Religieuse are desserts filled with praline cream, and puff pastries (puffs with whipped cream) are filled with cream and caramel. These desserts, largely unknown in Poland, are loved by the French, who are enamoured with the sophisticated specialities of their long culinary tradition.

"At our confectionery store, you can taste eclairs, macarons, finger chocos or mille-feuille, everything made from high quality ingredients such as Valrhona, the best chocolate in the world. Only a few confectionery stores in Poland use it in their products. We use it to prepare original exquisite desserts, for example with mushrooms," explains Sebastian. One interesting piece of trivia is that the boutique doesn't have a fixed menu. It changes about once per month. "We want to constantly surprise our customers with something new, demonstrating how many choices there are in the art of baking sweets. At our place, we want Poles to feel like they are at the best French confectionery store, with a true family atmosphere," adds Sebastian. ●

BY RAFAŁ WILGUSIAK

Without power steering, without electronics, priceless

We all know that Księży Młyn attracts unique personalities. It's also home to a man who certainly knows where and how to change the stereotypical perception of motorcyclists: Robert Górecki, owner of the Nowhere to Nowhere Motorcycle Club. It's an obligatory point on the map of Lodz for everyone, not just for the local fans of single-track vehicles.

In Western Europe, motorcycle clubs have left a permanent mark on the urban landscape. They have become landmarks, like Ace Cafe in London. In Poland, Robert Górecki, architect by education, is one of the forerunners of this trend. He lived in Berlin for over a decade, then he worked on global projects as an architect for 13 years in the capital of the United Kingdom, when he finally decided it was enough.

"In London, I lived in the trendy district of Shoreditch. But, after a while, I began to feel like I was missing something. At the same time, I made friends with a neighbour who had three motorcycles in his backyard. I had one back then. Once, he persuaded me to take a trip to Belgium where his friend, trying to follow a new trend taking over Europe and the world, was opening a store with accessories for motorcyclists. There, I met wonderful, sincere people. They were passionate about custom motorcycles, café racers, choppers and bobbers. Each vehicle was unique and had its own character. Just like their owners who didn't just stand out with their appearances but were individualists through and through. I was fascinated by the atmosphere, the sincerity of these people, their need to return to the roots and find the spirit of motor vehicles. I began visiting more of such places, including the most famous ones: The Bike Shed and Bolt Motorcycles in London, Bandisca in Romania and The Real Intellectuals in Athens. And so it began," says Robert Górecki.

RACE FOR THE COFFEE

English motorcycle trend has its origins in the 1960s, when young bored boys raced each other on motorcycles from café to café, where they drank another tea with milk or sometimes coffee. And the name café racer was born. The need for rivalry resulted in the fact that rockers (the name refers to the music popular with young people at the time) began altering their stock vehicles to gain advantage over other participants of the coffee race. Handlebars were lowered, individual parts were altered or completely removed. Thus the motorcycles gained their new appearance. Boys on scooters soon followed the rockers, and a peculiar motorcycle culture was born. "The starting point or finish line don't matter. The essence of riding a motorcycle is the act of riding itself. I call it 'the road only,'" explains the founder of Nowhere to Nowhere. "The literal inspiration came from one of my favourite books by Robert Pirsig entitled 'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance'. For me, a motorcycle is a symbol of freedom, of direct connection between people, nature and their environment. I avoid motorways; I don't follow signs pointing to exits. Only the road matters. It is a kind of meditation, a break from reality, a way of meeting oneself. Therefore, my logo alludes to Uroboros, a snake eating its own tail, which is a symbol of renewal, the end transforming into a new beginning," explains Robert Górecki.

TIME TO CHANGE THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF MOTORCYCLISTS

Stereotypical motorcyclists and their stunts on the road are not very popular among average road users. Places like the motorcycle club in Lodz and people who gather in this space, creating its unique atmosphere, have the opportunity to change the image of a motorcyclist that has appeared in the minds of Poles lately. Górecki transplanted to Poland the trend consisting in the rejection of the popular mass manufacture of motorcycles in lieu of a return to traditions, which is also linked to the culture of riding down the road and the satisfaction resulting not from the speed, but from the fact of riding itself. "I decided to return to my home city of Lodz. I chose Księży Młyn because of the unique, creative nature of this place," says the architect. Three months ago, he opened a store /café there. It quickly turned out that products of niche companies are increasingly often sought out even in Poland. Customers visiting Nowhere to Nowhere don't have to look for products online or order them from abroad anymore because all the cult outfits and accessories are now at their fingertips. The club returns to the timeless classic, integrating into the atmosphere of Księży Młyn. Motorcycle aficionados will find non mass produced niche articles here, like handmade products, unique engraved buckles and gloves. "I was struck by the idea of a return to what motorcycles once were, without electronics or power steering. This is inseparably linked with timeless accessories and clothes," says Robert Górecki. It's one of the few places where customers can try out and buy Bell, Biltwell or Roeg helmets, or durable and rare Selvedge motorcycle jeans. However, the main idea of Robert Górecki is to create a space that will connect aficionados of motorcycles (especially those of timeless form, like café racers, bobbers, and flat tracks) and enable them to share their experiences and passion. Interestingly, it is a place with which people

who do not belong to any motorcycle club identify particularly well. Here they can find their own haven without any rules or vests. They can also meet people who view motorcycles just like they do; new companions for their motorcycle journeys. "I want to build a creative and exceptional place; therefore, I organize screenings of motorcycle-related films, meetings, presentations of interesting projects and road trip documentaries. But that's not all; our offer also includes a motorcycle handling, repair and customisation course. With this, I want to break stereotypes and introduce a creative breath of fresh air into the Polish motorcycle community," emphasizes Robert Górecki. It's worth highlighting that Górecki promotes Polish companies that have been building custom motorcycles for foreign clients, so that they can demonstrate their offer in Poland and find potential buyers.

ELEGANT MOTORCYCLISTS

Local two-wheeled vehicle fan clubs also meet at Nowhere to Nowhere. This inspired Robert Górecki to organize the first edition of The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride in Lodz. The famous charity ride of distinguished gentlemen and ladies taking place on the same day in several hundred cities around the world attracted over 100 people, including many women. This is one of the pieces of evidence confirming that Robert Górecki doesn't intend to stay in his niche. To the contrary, he shares his broad experience gained while living abroad. "The organization of the ride was possible thanks to the assistance of female motorcyclists from the Łódki na Kołach [Boats on Wheels] club, which makes me very happy," emphasizes Górecki. The success of the event means that we can forecast with a high degree of probability that a "new secular tradition" was born in the city thanks to this citizen of Lodz from London. ●



Photo: Paweł Lawreszko

BY PRZEMEK GRZYB

Workshops, cats and trinkets

Księży Młyn is not only an open air museum, but also a place full of life, creativity and positive energy, full of original ideas and solutions.

“Not all tourists are interested in postcards or fridge magnets. Some people prefer objects with soul whilst others collect mementos,” explains Monika Gajek, founder of the Księży Młyn Tourist Information Centre.

BUSINESS BY ACCIDENT

Monika Gajek, who has been working as a tour guide in Lodz, admits that the Księży Młyn Tourist Information Centre was founded by accident. She wanted to conduct workshops and educational activities for children and adults interested in the history and heritage of Lodz. She twice applied for premises as part of the ‘Premises for the creative’ programme but didn’t win the competition. “I learned that there was a renovated space intended for tourists visiting Księży Młyn. Its name was supposed to be ‘Tourist House,’” she reminisces. It was supposed to be a typical gift shop and tourist information centre. However, Monika Gajek noticed the potential to implement her previous plans and decided to rent the site.

TORUŃ GINGERBREAD, LODZ...SOCKS

In addition to the business being established at the Tourist Information Centre, which was the final name of the premises, Monika Gajek began organising workshops for children. She wanted them to draw upon the history of Lodz and textiles in particular. “When you go to visit Toruń, children make gingerbread. There wasn’t anything similar in Lodz,” she explains. This resulted in the idea that children could make cuddly toys from...socks. “We talk about how they’re knitted, we discuss the manufacturing process and we highlight the differences between various fabrics,” she explains. And in this manner, combining fun with education,



the history of Lodz is told – in particular of Księży Młyn – which is closely linked with the textile industry of Lodz.

COMMEMORATIVE TRINKETS

The Tourist Information Centre is also an exceptional place for anyone looking for unique souvenirs. It offers traditional magnets, postcards and tags, but the trinkets on display are what draw the attention of customers. “My partner collects such odds and ends, which is why we had the idea to sell them. Ultimately, a souvenir doesn’t have to have a large sign saying ‘Lodz’. It just needs to be associated with this place,” she says. Nonetheless, the fascination with trinkets, which is how the company founder refers to these articles, doesn’t end with selling them. She plans to organise a Księży Młyn trinket fair. She has even managed to convince enough residents of Lodz to sign this initiative as part of next year’s Citizen’s Budget.

ON THE CATS’ TRAIL

There is no shortage of ideas for the further development of the Tourist Information Centre. The next project Monika Gajek plans is the ‘Cats’ Trail’. “This is the customary name of one of the streets in Księży Młyn. According to the tale, many years ago, cats from workers’ houses hunted mice near estate stores (so-called ‘konsums’). Older residents talk about the extraordinary commotion to this day,” says the founder of the Tourist Information Centre. According to the vision of the tour guide, statues of cats would be erected on the ‘Cats’ Trail’ in the fashion of the fairy-tale ones from Lodz, or gnomes from Wrocław. A cats’ fair would additionally be organised along the street. “Księży Młyn is must-visit place in Lodz for every visiting tourist and sculptures of cats on the ‘Cats’ Trail’ would constitute another attraction,” argues Monika Gajek. ●



From the left: Grzegorz Batóg, Anna Prószyńska, Bartłomiej Pagacz

BY MALWINA WADAS

Not an illusion at all

Greenery all around, a small red brick building, an iron latticework door, a wooden ceiling, the original floor and over a hundred years old...this is not an illusion! It's Fatamorgana.

The chefs, Bartłomiej Pagacz and Grzegorz Batóg, know how to bring delight to even the most discriminating gourmets while the friendly atmosphere makes every guest feel welcome. "We opened a restaurant in Lodz because we grew up here, we love this city – it's flourishing. We also succumbed to the magical atmosphere of Księży Młyn when we decided that our restaurant would be here, we were the only ones here and the area wasn't fashionable. We decided to take a chance and gamble on developing in an area with growth potential," says Anna Prószyńska, Fatamorgana's manager.

SOMETHING ATTRACTS US HERE

The restaurant has been operating for over a year and a half and even though its owners are young, this is not their first dabble in the gastronomic world. Bartłomiej Pagacz began his culinary adventure at the age of 16 and quickly decided to develop his own vision of cuisine. He worked and studied in France for a number of years. Grzegorz Batóg gained experience in the culinary world at home with his favourite Polish cuisine. How did they start working together? "I grew up with Grzegorz in one neighbourhood, we were neighbours and friends. Ania is my fiancée and we've known each other for ten years.

I've dreamt of owning my own restaurant since my school days" says Bartłomiej Pagacz. "I was quick to share the dream of our own style of cuisine with Bartek. It's this close relationship, great understanding and the simple joy of being together that have allowed us to create Fatamorgana and share our passion with our guests," Grzegorz Batóg adds.

LITTLE SPACE, SHORT MENU

The restaurant is small. However, seating 45 people at most gives it a cosy atmosphere one would be more likely to associate with a dinner party with close friends than with a commercial establishment. Anyone looking for an extensive menu in Fatamorgana is also in for a surprise. The menu here is short and changes approximately once every two months. It features three starters, three main courses and two desserts – only that but yet a lot. A tasting menu which features all of the dishes on the menu, albeit in a slightly smaller version, is also available. The restaurant also offers wine pairing, perfectly complementing the culinary adventure with the chefs' very own cuisine. "We try to rely on seasonal products, focusing on freshness and quality. We make all of the dishes we serve, not only soups or main courses, but also ice cream, lemonade, bread, pickles etc. Jars with our preserves are also often used as decorations in the room. We get inspiration not only from our culinary knowledge, but also from books and from our mothers' and grandmothers' recipes. We often mix tradition and modernity in an effort to show our own interpretation of a dish, which is the philosophy of the cuisine in Fatamorgana," Bartłomiej Pagacz explains.

TIME TO EXPAND THE SHELF FOR PRIZES

Fatamorgana often participates in various culinary festivals where it has been successful a number of times. During the autumn edition of Restaurant Week 2017, it won 3rd place in Lodz in the general category and 1st for best main course, atmosphere and service. In August this year, during the first edition of Fine Dining Week in Lodz, it took a respectable 3rd place. Being listed among the best restaurants in Lodz in the Gault & Millau guide is also a great distinction. The owners are also happy for the successes of a gastronomy student from Lodz working in Fatamorgana, Norbert Szefer, who has already been on the podium in culinary competitions all over Poland on numerous occasions. "Prizes are important and they mean a lot to us but we don't intend to rest on our laurels. We focus on development to keep surprising our guests," says Anna Prószyńska. ●

BY ANNA KRAWCZYK

In Geyer's garden



In 1828, the Saxon entrepreneur Ludwik Geyer arrived in Lodz and started his industrial empire in the southern part of the city's main street. Almost two centuries later, in 2015, the company Monnari Trade had a different plan for this place – it wanted to create a modern, residential office and service complex under the name *Ogrody Geyera* (Geyer Gardens).

The first half of the 19th century was a period of prosperity for the city and the beginning of the modern industrial era in Poland. Entrepreneurs were attracted to Lodz from all over Europe, tempted by the developing textile industry and favourable business conditions.

THE EMPIRE BURSTS AT THE SEAMS

Just a few years after arriving in the city, Ludwik Geyer bought the first steam engine in what was then the Kingdom of Poland and very quickly became the biggest entrepreneur in Lodz. His first building was *Biała Fabryka* (White Factory), which has housed the Central Museum of Textiles since the 1960s. However, it quickly transpired that it would not be able to house the rapidly growing Geyer Empire. The entrepreneur expanded his holdings in areas to the west of Piotrkowska Street, between Czerwona, Wólczańska and Sieradzka streets. The new complex in the southern part of Lodz's main street covered nearly 48 hectares. In the 1890s and at the beginning of the 20th century, three large weaving mills (which used electricity) with preparation branches, boiler rooms and engine rooms were built. A theatre for the workers was established in the dining hall built in

1914 (a building on Piotrkowska Street that has already been renovated by Monnari) in which some shows of *Teatr Popularny* (Popular Theatre) are staged. In 1927, a sports club was established at Geyer's factory with its own field and tennis courts.

World War II was a particularly difficult period for this area. The German occupants deprived the family of its right to run a business and a member of the Geyer family, Robert, paid for this with his own life – he was shot by the Gestapo. After the war, the factory was nationalised and operated under the name *ZPB im. F. Dzierżyński Eskimo* ("Eskimo" F. Dzierżyński Cotton Mill). Nineteen historic buildings remain in the area purchased by Monnari.

GLASS SKYWALK

In a modern economy, post-industrial facilities in their original function are useless. After production finished in 2002, the area of Ludwik Geyer's old factory fell into disrepair. In May 2015, Monnari Trade purchased a majority stake in the real estate. With over 10 hectares at its disposal, it began its successive revitalisation.

"We sought new ideas for the future use of post-industrial areas and this is how the 'Geyer

Gardens, which will allow the area to regain its former glory, came about. We believe that comprehensive implementation of the project could serve as a development impulse for this area of Lodz,” says Mirosław Misztal, the president of Monnari Trade's management board.

The company created a comprehensive land development project. It features 19 historic buildings which will be used for services, offices and commercial outlets due to their location on Piotrkowska Street. Until now, four buildings made of characteristic red brick have been renovated. A few more are at an advanced stage (of revitalisation work), which is being carried out under the supervision of the heritage conservator's office. Two more should be ready by the end of the year. One of the buildings has been earmarked for lofts in order to preserve the character of 19th century factories and houses. In the glazed industrial connector between the former canteen and another building, the investor wishes to open a restaurant with a view onto a beautiful park and



Glazed industrial connector in which the investor wishes to open a restaurant with a view onto a beautiful park and the Central Museum of Textiles

FASHIONABLE, GREEN AND WITH A HINT OF DECADENCE

The buildings that could be saved will maintain a link to local traditions. Due to the property's size, a large residential and functional space could be located here. The plans also include areas for both residents and the general public: squares, playgrounds, cafés and restaurants. The spatial development plan is well intertwined with its surroundings, with significant green areas also on roofs and balconies. The investor is sure to create a space where residents, tenants and visitors can feel truly special. Large green areas will be woven into the historic facility, like in the gardens of Babylon.

The new spatial development plan currently being prepared is the key element in subsequent investments. Even though Monnari is the creator of the land development plan, it will not be the investor for its entirety.

The company treats the purchase of the real estate as an investment. Its management board will decide to what extent it will sell the property or rent revitalised areas depending on the offers it receives.

“We don't intend to give up on our main business, which is clothing design and trade. As a Lodz-based company, we feel a connection to the city and appreciate its unique history. Our wish is simply to underline our contribution to the city's development. We encourage companies that wish to invest in Lodz to develop these historical areas with us. We can restore them to their previous splendour together,” the company's President, Mirosław Misztal, urges. ●



A photo from Ludwik Geyer's factory

the Central Museum of Textiles. Monnari is working with the latter to develop an educational path which would pass interesting nineteenth-century relics, including a mangle it purchased from Ludwik Geyer's factory. The path will be open to all visitors.

Monnari wants to breathe new life into the forgotten factory and remind the inhabitants of Lodz, but also tourists, of its glory years. The historical surroundings will underline the traditions of this area and its industrial roots.

BY PRZEMYSŁAW GRZYB

Spanish rhythm from Lodz

JAROSŁAW WIECZOREK, a third generation shoemaker, was enamoured with flamenco so he decided to give this tradition a touch of his own. Today, the shoes he manufactures in a small workshop in Lodz are used to dance flamenco in nearly all corners of the world.

Flamenco, a dance originating in hot southern Spain, is truly mesmerising. Moves of female dancers are subtle and delicate, yet firm and confident. Their faces are focused, and each movement is a feast for the eyes as well as the ears. An inherent part of flamenco is the unique shoes that make a distinctive, one of a kind sound. They are a true challenge for every

shoemaker. They are the passion of Jarosław Wieczorek, a master shoemaker from Lodz.



a dance ensemble and that they could go and to watch the next show. “The girls were beautiful, they danced fantastically, and they made a distinctive rhythm with their shoes. Analysing shoes is my speciality, so I immediately began thinking why did their shoes make that amazing sound,” says Jarosław. He didn’t know much about flamenco.

Actually, he knew nothing but immediately thought that he could make such shoes.

I WILL BE A SHOEMAKER, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED!

Jarosław Wieczorek never imagined himself in any other profession. He was raised in a family with shoemaking traditions (both his father and grandfather were master craftsmen, making bespoke shoes and repairing them), so this profession was his destiny. Nonetheless, he himself says that he didn’t feel any pressure, more of a deep interest in this craft. “I never thought about other professions, I always knew I’d be working with shoes. Even my wife is my ‘professional colleague,’” laughs Jarosław. Thus, his choice of school – the Leather Industry Technical High School in Radom – was obvious; although, as it turned out, this level of knowledge and education was insufficient. Jarosław Wieczorek decided he wanted to know and do more, which is why he decided to take the master craftsman course at a well-known company from Erfurt in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

FLAMENCO...WITH THE GDR

During his time in the GDR, Jarosław Wieczorek saw a live flamenco show for the first time. During one of his free evenings, a co-worker told him that his sister was in

SUBVERSIVE ACTION

After returning to Poland, he couldn’t stop thinking about making and selling flamenco shoes. By using his contacts in Germany, Jarosław Wieczorek requested some used shoes so that he could take them apart and learn the secret of their structure. It was the early 1980s, just after the proclamation of martial law. The authorities, back then, believed it was suspicious for someone to import shoes with metal parts to Poland, so each package was therefore carefully inspected and its receipt was connected each time with a visit to a Citizens’ Militia station. Jarosław Wieczorek had to explain that he needed the shoes as a blueprint to make his own. Ultimately the officers were convinced that importing used dancing shoes did not constitute an anti-state activity, and so, despite some setbacks, Jarosław Wieczorek was finally able to begin working.

POLAND WASN’T READY

Jarosław Wieczorek began manufacturing flamenco shoes under the Carmen brand in 1988. However, it quickly turned out that the demand for such shoes in the country was practically nil as it was still the period of the People’s Republic of Poland (PRL). If you saw

flamenco back then, it was mainly on TV or at a cinema. “It wasn’t a popular dance in Poland,” says Jarosław. He sold several pairs of shoes in Wrocław, Gdańsk and the Tri-city; nonetheless, he admits that the majority of finished shoes ended up at a warehouse as there was no demand. He then decided to temporarily suspend manufacturing and focus on the development of a traditional shoe factory. “My children had to eat, and I couldn’t feed them using money from the sales of flamenco shoes,” summarises Jarosław.

QUALITY OR PRICE?

From the business point of view, opening his own manufacturing facility was a great success. From a small artisan workshop, Jarosław’s company transformed into a dynamic factory that, in the peak period of its business, produced between three and four hundred pairs of shoes per day and employed twenty to thirty employees. Moreover, it collaborated with numerous subcontractors from all over Poland. This period of prosperity lasted a decade but the capacity decreased as more and more shoes from Asia flooded the market.



Chinese shoes were much cheaper than those manufactured by Jarosław Wiczorek, but their quality was much lower as well. “Our shoes maintained their high-quality standard. I deemed what arrived from China ‘foot packages’, not shoes,” bitterly comments Jarosław.

“MAKE THEM, IMMEDIATELY!”

The company handled the crisis for some time by, among other things, accepting orders for shoes for the uniformed services, but here the price also quickly became the main criterion for ordering. Jarosław’s relatively small factory could not compete with manufacturers that could make shoes for less money. Finally, Jarosław Wiczorek closed the factory in 2005. However, throughout the years, he didn’t forget about his old idea. He found boxes of flamenco shoes hidden

in the warehouse and the idea was resurrected. This time, the circumstances were more favourable.

“I checked online – it turned out that there were two flamenco schools in Lodz and three or four in Warsaw. People were dancing flamenco in practically all the major cities,” Jarosław recalls and adds: “I went with my shoes to one of the instructors from Lodz, and when she saw them she said: “You are a gift from heaven! Make them, immediately”.

THREE HUNDRED NAILS IN THE SOLE

Carmen is currently a one-man business, but sells the best world-class products. Each pair of flamenco shoes is handmade. Up to two pairs can be made per day. The production process is a closely guarded craftsman’s secret. “I discovered many details myself. It’s tedious work. I wouldn’t want to pass this knowledge on to others on a silver platter,” laughs Jarosław. He emphasises that the most important part of flamenco shoes is the distinctive sound they make. It’s partially generated by three hundred nails driven into their soles, but its internal structure is just as important – and



Jarosław doesn’t want to part with these secrets. The upper is made of leather with a very distinctive design. The sole is also made of leather, which is further supported by an anti-slip tread.

THE WHOLE WORLD DANCES IN SHOES FROM LODZ

In the world of flamenco, Carmen is a renowned and respected brand. It is used for dancing in Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, Finland, Japan, Canada, the USA, Hungary and even in Spain – the birthplace of flamenco. Each pair of shoes is tailor made. “Dancers are satisfied with our shoes and talk about them in superlatives. It’s the best advertisement for Carmen,” proudly states Jarosław Wiczorek. He adds that, for him, it is the best motivation to continue working. ●

BY MALWINA WADAS

Young fashion

It's the second time young, capable and bold designers from around the globe have arrived in the capital of Polish textile design to participate in Lodz Young Fashion. Taking place from the 16th to the 20th of October, the largest Polish event for young fashion designers provided its participants with emotions and inspiration and opened the door to a great career for the winners.

The University of Technology Fashion Show Gala

Lodz has been an important European centre of textile design for almost two hundred years. Artistic and teaching activities have flourished as a result of these traditions. Educating fashion designers became the speciality of the Academy of Fine Arts while Lodz became the cradle of the best Polish designers. The first staging of the event in 2017 was a spectacular success and this year it did not disappoint: Lodz Young Fashion gives a new significant meaning to the statement: "Lodz is the capital of fashion."

CELEBRATION OF FASHION IN THE CENTRE OF POLAND

Lodz Young Fashion is an event co-organised by the city and the Władysław Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz, which promotes young promising fashion designers from all over the world. Many scientific and cultural institutions took part in organising the event. "We want Lodz Young Fashion to become something more than a festival. We want to engage the fashion business in our project, invite clothing manufacturers to our galas, show them our potential, how great our designers are," states Her Magnificence, Rector of the Władysław Strzemiński AFA in Lodz, Prof. Jolanta Rudzka Habisiak. As part of the diverse events programme, various facets of fashion were presented at the Academy of Fine Arts and in many other places in Lodz.

2018 LODZ YOUNG FASHION AWARD

For many participants, the most important part of the event was the international competition 'The 2018 Lodz Young Fashion Award'. This fashion related undertaking

is primarily aimed at young designers around the world, in particular at students and graduates of art universities and fashion design schools, but not exclusively: everyone who has a passion for creativity can embrace the challenge. The theme of this year's edition is 'freedom'. Members of the competition jury included distinguished personalities from the world of fashion. Presenting one's collection in front of them is an important step on the path to creating one's own recognisable brand. The winner of the competition, Laima Jurca from Latvia, received the Manequine statuette and EUR 30,000. The winning collection, entitled PIECGADES ĢENERĀL MĒĢINĀJUMS, thematically draws upon the Soviet period – when stores were empty, choice was limited and everything was grey. This forced great creativity and resourcefulness, and encouraged people to create bold projects in the peace of their own homes. The author of the collection studied the art of fashion at the Art Academy of Latvia and fashion design at the *Latvijas Mākslas Akadēmija*. She plans to use the prize money to create her own brand. "We treat competitions that take place as part of the event as a career springboard for young designers, which was exemplified by the first edition of Lodz Young Fashion. This event can potentially constitute the beginning of a fashion designer's exceptional career. For these young people, simply becoming a finalist is a great distinction and showcases them to the world of fashion," says Jolanta Rudzka Habisiak. This was the case for last year's winner Chen Zhi. The young designer used her winnings to create a new collection that is making waves on the prestigious platform *Not Just a Label*. Her brand, *I-am-chen*, received the prestigious 'Ones to Watch

Award, given by the British portal *Fashion Scout*, and her professional achievements have been closely watched by the world of fashion.

GOLDEN THREAD

Lodz Young Fashion also hosts 'The Golden Thread', another prestigious competition. The rivalry involved a fresh look at global trends and boldness in presenting one's own style. Another important competition criterion was the collection's practicality in meeting the 'ready to wear' condition. The competition was aimed at both professional and new designers – artists related to fashion schools, art universities and freelancers born after 1988. The theme of this year's edition was



MAGDALENA JANUS-HIBNER, COORDINATOR OF LODZ YOUNG FASHION

Lodz Young Fashion is an initiative that supports creative young people who are just starting their careers meaning they are in need of financial, expert and media support. In addition to this, our objective is to shape and develop the cultural identity of the Lodz academic community as

well as the City of Lodz using the promotion and performance of tasks related to both the industry itself, and fashion.

The strength of Lodz Young Fashion is its participants – young designers who boldly take on the fashion challenges of the competition. This year, we have slightly altered the structure of the Golden Thread and the Lodz Young Fashion Award competitions. In fact, we have diversified them. The condition for the 'Golden Thread' competition was the preparation and execution of a collection so as to make the clothes a finished proposition for wearing and, subsequently, for quick production. We invite people from the world of fashion to participate in the Lodz Young Fashion Awards. The only restriction is age. Thanks to the

demonstrate their skills in front of a large audience of professionals and authorities. It is also a great place to establish contacts, share experiences with participants and learn about what a designer does. The award gave us the opportunity to work with many wonderful people from the industry and paved new professional paths, also thanks to the fact that it sponsored the next collection," says last year's winner Karolina Mikołajczyk about the competition. The designer has been successfully creating fashion under her own brand, Karolina Miko. Her collections were shown at 'TRANOŃ WEEK' during Paris Fashion Week. She is also a designer for the well known Polish underwear brand *Undress Code*.

generous prize, this year amounting to €30,000, the participants can spread their wings and achieve their design dreams by creating a new collection or taking 'business action' and creating their own brand. This year's designs submitted to the Lodz Young Fashion Award were distinguished by their boldness, creation, high artistic form, and constituted the perfect reply to this edition's topic: *freedom*.

One of the events at Lodz Young Fashion was also the fashion show *BRA-vissime!*, where the models were patients from the M. Kopernik Voivodeship General Oncology and Traumatology Centre in Lodz. Each year, we invite exceptional partners to co organize the BRA Day. This time, thanks to the kindness of Ewa Pilawska, General Manager of the Powszechny Theatre in Lodz, our protagonists, overseen by professionals working at the theatre, prepared a show made up of cult fragments of comedy films.

This year's five-day edition of Lodz Young Fashion was filled with exhibitions, workshops, interesting suggestions for experiencing culture, fashion and art. Lodz Young Fashion is an event aimed at presenting creative young people and their freedom of thought. It is an event promoting the freedom of expression and narrative. Thanks to this initiative, creation and avant-garde find a common denominator. ●

'emotions'. The jury members included personalities from the world of fashion, including Mariusz Przybylski, Lidia Kalita, Mariusz Brzozowski, Marcin Paprocki and Agata Wojtkiewicz. The main prize was PLN 30,000 as

well as a 'wild card' enabling the winner to participate in the Lodz Young Fashion Award. 'The Golden Thread' is a great professional opportunity. There are many designers on the market and the competition lets them

BRA DAY

Like last year, the programme of the second edition of Lodz Young Fashion included the fifth edition of the event organised together by the AFA in Lodz, M. Kopernik Voivodeship General Oncology and Traumatology Centre in Lodz and the Pełną Piersią foundation. The *BRA-vissime!* gala was an important event in the celebration of the Breast Reconstruction Awareness Day (BRA Day). It is a fashion event with the participation of leading Polish designers. However, the main heroes of the evening were the Amazons

Department of Fashion Design at the Faculty of Textile Art and Fashion Design, AFA in Lodz. The exhibited pieces confirm the achievements of young artists and also demonstrate the level of the Academy. Young designers competed for the main prize from the Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz and for prizes sponsored by partners of the Academy. One of the undertakings organised as part of Lodz Young Fashion was the Academy of Young Designers, a series of workshops following in various ways the fashion context of the event. The workshops were conducted by



BRA Day



Laima Jurca from Latvia received 'the Lodz Young Fashion Award'



'The Golden Thread Award' was given to Adrian Krupa

– exceptional post-mastectomy women – who beat or have been fighting the disease. Their energy, strength and compelling charm are the best proof that cancer and mastectomy do not equate to losing their femininity. The gala is an artistic event combining the worlds of medicine and art in three different approaches. The fashion show was concluded with a passionate theatrical performance prepared especially for this occasion by the Powszechny Theatre. Photographs portraying the participants of the event were also on display. Furthermore, there were auctions, the proceeds from which will support the idea of the development of breast reconstruction and an improvement in the life of women fighting breast cancer.

INSPIRATION, EDUCATION AND BUSINESS: A CELEBRATION OF FASHION

Another important part of the event was the exhibition of the best collections of degree candidates from the

specialists: lecturers and practitioners. A very diverse range of themes was planned: from fashion photography, through fashion illustration courses, to issues related to the promotion of a brand. As part of the event, guests could also view exhibitions presenting young Polish fashion, jewellery and design. The biggest and newest part of the event was the University of Technology Fashion Show Gala, presenting the works of the best design graduates of the Faculty of Material Technologies and Textile Design at the Lodz University of Technology. The event was concluded by the showcasing of the fashion collection of the famous designer Jarosław Ewert, graduate of design at the Lodz University of Technology. The second edition of Lodz Young Fashion involved unforgettable visual and audiovisual experiences, meeting interesting personalities from the world of domestic and international fashion, inspiring shows, exhibitions and workshops...it is a world class celebration of fashion! ●



BY BOŻENA WIELGO

By Artists for Artists

The 19th century halls of Widzewska Manufaktura, the former manufacture, situated in the al. Piłsudskiego, is now home to a centre of culture named after the historic production plant. It has become the favourite place of artists – painters, filmmakers and musicians.

Many years have passed before the manufacture opened its gate to artists. In post-war Poland the space was taken by the globally known Widzewskie Zakłady Przemysłu Bawełnianego “Wi-Ma” (“WiMa” Widzew Cotton Industry Plant). It was the longest operating large spinning mill company in Lodz, closed in 2009. The last President of its Management Board, Stanisław Zaręba, was determined to make the factory building complex burst with life even after all the machines have stopped. And so, two years later, in 2011, the premises of the former spinning mill company were inhabited by Bajkonur. Zaręba’s idea turned into reality: Widzewska Manufaktura became a cultural and social centre where artists can spread their wings and cooperate.

MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS UNDER ONE ROOF

Bajkonur offers several rehearsal rooms, a recording studio, a stage, work café and meeting space. It is an independent incubator for music projects, built from scratch with the aim of serving artists – both professionals and beginners who want to develop. Bajkonur integrates creative potential. There are numerous artistic groups or musical groups in Lodz and its vicinity that pursue their activities separately, often in random places and hostile environment. The concept of the centre is based on the assumption that many different activities can be joined under one roof thus creating artistic space for diverse artists.

On 300 m² of loft-like space artists can pursue their activities in three professional rehearsal rooms: acoustically adapted, equipped with sound systems, ventilated rooms of various surface areas, providing sound recording possibility. They are used by bands and actively practicing instrumentalists who need properly prepared rehearsal space. Bajkonur also hosts a chamber stage where rehearsals, concerts, performances, film screenings, workshops and other cultural events are held.

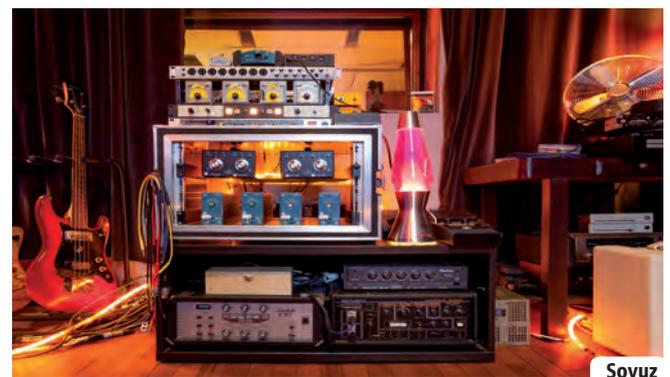
ANALOGUE AND DIGITAL

In 2012, Bajkonur was enlarged by Soyuz, a professional recording studio, including a 20 m² control room and two additional rooms of 20 m² and 30 m² managed by Kamil Łazikowski. “The setup of the studio is oriented towards an uncompromising combination of analogue and digital technique. We have best quality analogue-to-digital converters by MYTEK (24 channels) and more than a dozen fully symmetrical microphone preamps giving a uniquely warm and rich sound,” says Kamil Łazikowski. “We chose equipment that gives the possibility to register signal in best available quality and, if necessary, process digital signals without quality loss adding some analogue character and depth. A broad spectrum of analogue devices: tube amplifiers, tape amplifiers or devices equipped with germanium transistors ensures a wide range of sound colours,” he claims. Soyuz supports interesting music projects.

EVERYBODY IS INVITED

Bajkonur undertakes various initiatives. The post-manufacture space provides numerous possibilities.

It served as the set of various music clips (shot for such artists as Iza Lach/Snoop Dogg, Sjon, Revlovers, Iwona Kmiećik) and hosted numerous workshops, trainings, fashion shows and castings. ●



6th AŻ FESTIWAL

17 NOVEMBER–1 DECEMBER
ACADEMY OF MUSIC IN LODZ
WWW.AMUZ.LODZ.PL

28th MEDIA FESTIVAL IN LODZ "MAN IN DANGER"

20–24 NOVEMBER
FILM MUSEUM, PL. ZWYCIĘSTWA 1
WWW.FESTIWALMEDIOW.ART.PL

BOKKA – CONCERT

22 NOVEMBER, AT 7:00 PM
WYTWORNIA CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29
WWW.WYTWORNIA.PL

23rd FORUM OF EUROPEAN CINEMA "CINERGIA"

23 NOVEMBER–1 DECEMBER
WWW.CINERGIAFESTIVAL.PL

NIGEL KENNEDY "MAGICIAN OF LUBLIN & GERSWHIN"

24 NOVEMBER, AT 7:00 PM
LODZ PHILHARMONIC
WWW.FILHARMONIA.LODZ.PL

PAWEŁ DOMAGAŁA – 1984 TOUR

30 NOVEMBER, AT 8:00 PM
WYTWORNIA CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29
WWW.WYTWORNIA.PL

GUEST PERFORMANCE "GAELFORCE DANCE"

30 NOVEMBER, AT 7:00 PM
GRAND THEATRE, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1
WWW.OPERALODZ.COM

AL DI MEOLA – CONCERT

3 DECEMBER, AT 7:00 PM
WYTWORNIA CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29
WWW.WYTWORNIA.PL

THE ALEXANDROV ENSEMBLE CHOIR

9 DECEMBER, AT 5:00 PM
ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7
WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

MOSCOW CITY BALLET "SWAN LAKE"

9 DECEMBER, AT 5:30 PM, 7:00 PM
GRAND THEATRE, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1
WWW.OPERALODZ.COM

MOSCOW CITY BALLET "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY"

10 DECEMBER, AT 6:00 PM
GRAND THEATRE, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1
WWW.OPERALODZ.COM

GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA

14 DECEMBER, AT 7:00 PM
GRAND THEATRE, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1
WWW.OPERALODZ.COM

CONCERT OF LEONARD COHEN'S SONGS

16 DECEMBER, AT 7:00 PM
WYTWORNIA CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29
WWW.WYTWORNIA.PL

STAND-UP SHOW 2019 – THE BEST OF

31 JANUARY 2019, AT 7:30 PM
ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7
WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

MAN OF MANUFACTURE – PREMIÈRE

2 FEBRUARY, AT 7:00 PM
GRAND THEATRE, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1
WWW.OPERALODZ.COM

MUSIC OF METALLICA WITH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2 FEBRUARY, AT 7:30 PM
WYTWORNIA CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29
WWW.WYTWORNIA.PL

JOSÉ FELICIANO

3 FEBRUARY 2019, AT 7:00 PM
ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7
WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

"CHAMPIONS OF ILLUSION," INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ILLUSIONISTS

10 FEBRUARY 2019, AT 2:00 PM
DOM THEATRE, PIOTRKOWSKA 243
WWW.TEATRDOM.PL

SLASH FEAT. MYLES KENNEDY & THE CONSPIRATORS

12 FEBRUARY, AT 8:00 PM
ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7
WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

SUKHISHVILI – GEORGIAN NATIONAL BALLET

18 FEBRUARY, AT 7:00 PM
GRAND THEATRE, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1
WWW.OPERALODZ.COM

FLORENCE & THE MACHINE:

15 MARCH 2019, AT 6:00 PM
ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7
WWW.ATLASARENA.PL