Press release, 30 August 2021

**What unites people within a polarized world?**

**Celebrations of the Year of Stanisław Lem reach the Korean city of Gwangju, where polish installation “Do You Feel Connected?” will be presented as part of the Gwangju Design Biennale. Its concept, prepared by the infuture.institute in collaboration with Marta Flisykowska, refers to Lem’s *Summa Technologiae*.
The organizer of the project is the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (IAM).**

“In today’s world there are universal values that are common to all of us. The installation “Do You Feel Connected?” emphasizes their importance in modern communication, “ says Barbara Schabowska, director of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute.

Nineteen values, including freedom, respect, virtue, wisdom, and empathy were selected based on quantitative research carried out by the infuture.institute. Based on these, a visualisation of data in the form of an installation consisting of a dozen or so tubes was created in real time. This is a kind of reactive form — a light palisade that allows one to observe live the presence of the indicated values within the network. Each time content containing a hashtag assigned to a value is posted on Twitter (e.g., #love), a particular tube glows with white light. In this way everyone can — in real time, in real world, visually — observe the ongoing discussion about what is it that connects us.

“Our society does not want and does not like talking about values — because, naturally, this kind of conversation evokes strong emotions, deepens polarization, and in the context of technological progress it also seems anachronistic and unnecessary. Perhaps for this reason, we also do not want to talk about a single common vision, the direction we should be heading — because we do not believe that such a thing does actually exist. And yet despite this reluctance to talk about values and seek commonalities, somewhere deep inside, there exists a common moral system. There are certain values that we believe in, and that we can all agree on, regardless of our beliefs. This is not just my observation. This was confirmed by quantitative research we carried out while preparing the installation for the Gwangju Design Biennale — when asked if they believed that there were universal, common values for all people, over 80% of respondents answered yes.” — Natalia Hatalska, CEO of the infuture.institute explains.

 “The idea for a project that would use social media, robotics, and art has followed me for a long time. I am glad that thanks to the infuture.institute this idea was realized. The installation is a combination of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills that left us with a lot of room for experimentation, “ says Marta Flisykowska.

The installation refers to Stanisław Lem’s *Summa Technologiae*, in which the world-famous science-fiction writer wonders how the subject of cybernetic sociology could be envisaged.

The project is one of the elements of IAM’s pillar programme, “Lem and thinking about the future”, the aim of which is to promote the work of Stanisław Lem and Polish futurological thought among foreign audiences. During the Gwangju Design Biennale, the installation will be on display from 1 September to 31 October 2021.

Organizer: Adam Mickiewicz Institute

Curator: infuture.institute (Natalia Hatalska, Olga Jankowska, Zuzanna Bonecka, Marek Gawdzik, Aleksandra Kulińska, Aleksandra Trapp)

Artist: Marta Flisykowska,

Coordination: Olga Jankowska

Technological support: SKALP Robotics Association (Mateusz Dyrda, Patrycja Matejek, Mateusz Witka-Jeżewski, Rafał Rzeczkowski)

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**The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is a national cultural institution whose goal is to build a lasting interest in Polish culture around the world.** The Institute cooperates with foreign partners and initiates international cultural exchange in dialogue with recipients, in line with the goals and aims of Polish foreign policy. The Institute has completed and realizes cultural projects in 70 countries on 6 continents, incl. in Great Britain, France, Russia, Israel, Germany, Turkey, USA, Canada, Australia, Morocco, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, as well as in China, Japan, and Korea. To date, the Institute presented 38 strategic programmes, which were seen by 60 million viewers. The IAM is promoted by the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport.

**infuture.institute** is a forecasting institute that defines and describes key trends and indicates their potential consequences. The institute monitors and analyses all factors that may trigger fundamental change in individual categories within a specific time frame (short, medium, and long term). The institute was established by Natalia Hatalska and is made up of futurists and forecasters, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, cultural experts, and other researchers (Olga Jankowska, Zuzanna Bonecka, Marek Gawdzik, Aleksandra Kulińska, Aleksandra Trapp).

**Marta Flisykowska is an artist, researcher, and lecturer** in the field of experimental design and work at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. She is interested in the human element within the field of technology, intuition, and imaginations are important to her. She puts her fascination with space and futurology to use in projects, exhibitions, and publications. The SKALP Robotics Association is responsible for the technological part of the installation.