

FROM INDIVIDUAL STORIES TO UNIVERSAL TRUTHS

Aristotle once noticed referring to poets, that they act just like painters – they portray their characters. Over the following centuries the discussion related to the hierarchy of arts has appeared in the theory of art repeatedly. Painting has been compared to poetry and questions concerning the relationship of music to painting have been raised. Areas of expression relevant to literature have been searched and those for which visual arts are the most appropriate. The issue of possibilities of different arts returns in the works of Jacek Świągulski belonging to the cycle 'The Surrounding', presented at the exhibition 'Under the Floating Epidermis of the Earth'. The clear closeness between painting and poetry is evident in the works.

The similarity is based not only on the vital role that the content acquires in the artist's works, but also on the use of means of expression associated with poetry; mainly metaphors. The ambiguity of content leads the paintings to poetry. Recipients, depending on their personal experiences and individual sensitivity, can fill them with different connotations. Titles of paintings, which are to guide them to the path of interpretation the artist adopted, might help in the process. However, they are formulated so as to open the viewer to other possibilities of perception.

The artist's works fit undoubtedly into figurative art. A human figure shown in a simplified, outlined manner, but not subjected to excessive deformation, plays a dominant role. Such visualization of figures promotes the transfer of metaphorical content. Man, in Jacek Świągulski's paintings is the element, that conveys most communicative and symbolic meanings at the same time. The juxtaposition within one painting of a few silhouettes, which have a relationship to each other and the outside world opens new interpretations of images.

Świągulski abandons mimetism in his works. He does not imitate reality, but focuses on visualizing spiritual aspects of our lives – emotions arising from mutual relations, sensitive responses to events and finally reflection on them. Spirituality, which the artist leads us to, is mature and conscious, rather a contemplation than an explosion of passionate, uncontrollable emotions. This does not mean that the artist avoids interpreting strong and exciting events. Using his painting tools he cools them slightly, making us not feel like intruders watching someone's life with impunity.

The setting of the forms, the world in which they are embedded, is close to abstraction, where you can find a highly simplified landscape. On one hand the trick draws our attention to characters as a carrier of meaning, on the other hand reminds, that we are facing painting. Resolving painting issues is crucial for Jacek Świągulski and it takes place outside characters. In this way, a content zone and a form zone are created in the artist's works. None of them can exist without the other one and they both function as a living organism.

The subtlety of relationships between figures and in the choice of colours indicates the high sensitivity of the artist. It causes some intimidation in reading the originally encoded meanings. Hardly anyone has so much uncontrolled curiosity to trace particular situations in the life of the artist, as a result of which these works were created. On one hand Świągulski lets strangers into his life, as poets do. On the other hand, however, he retreats allowing the recipient to adjust the image to their own lives. Thus, out of his personal experience he creates a universal manifesto.

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