

DIFFUSION / LAYERING / EVANESCENCE

Three paintings, arranged in a triptych entitled *Crucified I, II, III*, constitute the axis of the exhibition. One could freely quote Tadeusz Różewicz here: "(...) the dying man was leaving, shouting long, searching for evasions". The first associations lead to Christ, whose figure emerges from the light only to disappear in the next image melting into the dark background. I call these works *Daily/Emerging Christ* and *Nocturnal/Disappearing Christ*. I would rather not include the third surprising painting in the triptych, but present the other two as a diptych. The contrasting – *Crucified* sharply enters the observer's awareness with his strange, unnatural pose like a character taken from a carnival procession. He reminds us of his presence. Surrounded by stars which bend clumsily, he arouses amusement rather than pity; more human than divine he is trying to throw off gestures, schemes, expectations that crucify him. The non-obviousness of forms and the layering of techniques used in the paintings is striking, which makes it easier to break away from associations imposed on us by tradition and let our mind wander further. The *Crucified* from Jacek Świągulski's paintings turn into ploughed landscapes, stitched together with sharp rays of the rising or setting sun, full of hills, craters, roads, ploughed fields, harmony and peace.

The figure "trying to find evasions" is also found in a series of drawings entitled *She Crucified*. And she (as well he) tries to break free from the poses she takes. She takes a step and retreats, takes a step forward and a step back and so on in the eternal dance, repeating gestures, movements, poses.

The *Nameless* and the *Heads* are the next series at the exhibition and they evoke associations with portrait painting. Portraits, or rather folk and carnival masks, which were traditionally supposed to magnify human features and vices, here strip off (whom?) artificial gestures and grimaces one layer after another. What's under the next brushstrokes, under the greys, greens, reds and beyond? Can we reach the first, elementary layer and check whether it exists at all? The layering of the works violates their static nature, puts the recipient into a trance, forces them to imagine what hides behind the next coating and at the same time to repeat the question after Mr. Cogito: "Who wrote our faces? The *Nameless* was painted with accidental splashes, expressive and ephemeral brushstrokes, like Chinese characters. The impression of impermanence of these portraits/masks is intensified by the association with the titles – The *Nameless*, i.e. unrecognizable, stripped off identity, without qualities. Colorful portraits emanate a deceptive calmness of icons. However, giving them a closer look one becomes alarmed at the lack of individualized physiognomy and facial expressions of these heads/portraits that would reflect their life story – moral, social, physical, mental and spiritual. One wonders what would happen if observers started to remove the translucent and provocative layers of paint. They might discover that it is a story of impermanence, transience and complexity of the world as well as ourselves. About how many different people are in us, Tadeusz Różewicz writes in one of his poems: " a face the

same and completely different at the same time". And hence the need to come to terms with the changes we experience and the fact that there are no convenient, once and for all approved answers and definitions of reality.

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