

RETURNS AND GOODBYES

Jacek Świągulski is one of the most active Polish artists, a consummate painter and sketcher, a valued teacher, the author of exhibitions and art articles who is industrious and persistent in his art endeavors. The last years have been particularly intense for him given the number of created art works and exhibitions which were held in museums, art galleries and culture centers across Poland. This is the result of his relentless search for content and formal experiments within the two painting series: "The Surroundings" and "Internal landscape" which are crucial for his art development. The first one is dedicated to his research on figurative art and its generic character perceived in aesthetic and humanistic aspects. The second one presents the effect of the artist's fascination with landscape – its sensitivity, rhythm, smell, sonority and silence, vitality and cyclical nature, lasting since 2013.

The raw landscape constantly surprises and inspires him even though he has been depicting the familiar places, such as Bieszczady Mountains, The Kraków-Częstochowa Upland and his hometown Borów, for many years. It was the simplicity of the plowed field with a high horizon that awakened in Jacek the sensitivity to nature's beauty – carefully observed, formally analyzed and transformed in his imagination into synthetic frames containing a narrow color range. At first glance, the paintings seem to be abstract. However, their point of reference always revolves around some specific panorama that has been brushed of all the details to evoke the essence of nature, its strength and beauty. The depth of Świągulski's paintings is built using contrast – both in terms of structure and color. The artist is not afraid of using pure black or white boldly combined with bright, almost fluorescent colors or with more subtle undertones marked with distinct contour. The austerity in paintings is emphasized by broad brush strokes or palette knives, as in the "Jura" series from 2013 which consisted of four boards forming one painting sequence. The choice of oil paint is also substantial. It facilitates the creation of precise and refined artworks using the impasto and glaze technique. Moreover, oil paint forces artists to take breaks giving him the space to think and then return to work with new energy and fresh thoughts. Jacek Świągulski in his paintings always searches for valid and universal content and landscapes can be a great pretext for that. For that reason, he is tenacious and excited to return to the same places, indulging in their variability. Nature, like life, floats and undergoes constant evolution. For instance, the vast and untamed Bieszczady Mountains inspired him to create one of the most aesthetically pleasing works in 2015. However, he also became inspired by more exotic places such as Chang La Pass – one of the highest mountain passes in the Ladakh Range in India. The effects of that journey are the expressive paintings from 2017.

On the opposite pole of Jacek's art endeavors are subtle, ephemeral pieces called "The Jurassic Monochromes" created in the wash technique (ink, acrylic and watercolor paint) on cardboard, smaller in size. Those semi transparent paintings remind of the "Young Poland" (Polish: "Młoda Polska") landscapes reflecting the dramatic quality of nature, the condition of a soul, internal life of a human and his passions represented as the elements. Jacek Świągulski follows this art period and the modernistic approach but he writes another chapter to the story. He is allured by Informalism and Polish Colorists group, especially the paintings of Piotr Potworowski, Artur Nacht-Samborski or Teresa Pągowska. However, his works are more formally disciplined. It may be connected with his studies at Władysław Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź. The simplicity of representation, synthetic approach, narrow color range, the placement of one dominant in composition such as line or spot that differentiates the apparent homogeneity of the background – these measures are not only the practice of hands but also the brain exercise and search for new formal and content quality.

The artist does not avoid decorativeness that may be subliminal but surely valid in reception of his works. Jacek's landscapes prove that new artistic beings are within our reach. Those "returns" signify his maturity and awareness of the goals and possibilities that landscapes (both Polish and foreign) can offer.

This exhibition is also a symbolic event. Jacek Świągulski returns to the Imaginarium Gallery after seven years with new or rather different artworks. In 2016 he presented figurative paintings that opened the audience to new artistic possibilities and themes. This exhibition is organized during the meaningful period. This year the cultural institution - Łódzki Dom Kultury is celebrating its 70th anniversary. Świągulski has been working there for 17 years. Moreover, this is the last exhibition before the planned temporal relocation of the institution. Will he come back with new ideas and works? It would be a double return that is wished for both the artist and the institution.

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