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in Katowice

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The substance of thought. Contemplation in painting on the subject of constant transformation.

Thesis summary

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un-placed and un-timed
between speech and silence
take a look, un-seeing,
to find, in un-formed forms
the un-familiar shapes,
and in transparency, the colour
of an as yet un-experienced memory¹

1 K. Lata, *Timeless* - text for an exhibition: Timeless, Ateneum, Katowice, 2019

The abstract is a natural opposite of the figurative, as far as ideas are concerned. However, implementation shows that the line between the figurative and the abstract is not as clear as one might initially think. Given that creation is the act of giving form, can a human being really create, without producing the polar opposite of the abstract?

One could ask whether the abstract can really exist anywhere beyond theory, but that question would perforce become the final dot, curtailing all other contemplation. Yet there are other angles one can look at the problem of the abstract from. One can consider the ability to cut off any association or resemblance, in order to create a space wholly divergent from the ubiquitous mundane. One can consider the purpose of such action, or its difficulties. When exploring the purpose problem, one would probably arrive at either the transcendent or the immanent experience, or possibly a mixture of the two. Such is, in fact, my own case, since my current creative attitude is a direct result of several previous year's worth of introspection.

I have first broached the subject of the abstract (which I identified with spirituality) and the figurative (identified with matter) in my Master's thesis, *Re_sublimacija*.

My thoughts were always somewhere around the subject of spirituality, of the broadly understood placement of the soul within the body. And I have always expressed these thoughts in painting, which I consider to have a great potential as a matter of expression for such themes, having an unlimited possibility of (non-)depiction. The spirit within a work of art is and always has been a supremely important matter, in my opinion. The language used to talk about spirituality by all those who came before me - and therefore the language I use myself, being as it is based on those who came before me - is not particularly accessible for the modern audience, and for that reason my first attempts at crystallising my thought were really an attempt at redefining the term "spirituality."

I have thought long and hard about what spirituality is and how it could be described. Fortunately, I have finally understood that it was a matter so individualised and so private that any possible tangible definition would be nothing but a cluster of words pointing at nothing but my own vanity. This brought me smoothly over to introspection, to thinking about what my own spirituality truly was for me. My first observations concerned the ease with which spirituality merged into sensitivity, and thus I began to correlate the idea of an artist's spirituality and their creative sensitivity, using my own example. Creative sensitivity became my starting point, but I did not want to define it anymore.

I think that enclosing any phenomenon as emotional, as private and as deeply entrenched in an undefined part of the human being, would go against the very nature of such an intangible (non-) matter. I want to reiterate that, for me, the most natural form of expressing thought is painting. Thus I have reached a point where I can decide to - rather than try to lexically define spirituality - create a painting environment that would allow me to familiarise myself with my own spirituality/sensitivity. The next step was to realise that coming to terms with oneself is easier said and done, because it must perforce entail understanding oneself first.

The only constant able to truly reflect the human reality, both external and internal, is a pulsing state, movement and transformation. Change. Development comes with uncountable changes, and therefore understanding oneself seems an endless process; which is not to say senseless. It turns out the process itself is its own goal. This remark applies to the creative process as well: some of my paintings are results of formal and technological experiments, using the natural properties of paint to achieve a structure resembling living, transforming tissue.

This PhD cycle comprises eleven large-format oil paintings, each of them being an attempt at capturing the moment right before discovering, naming and coming to terms with the primal energy that determines all the change in a human being and in the world. Combined, the paintings create a pulsing, abstract space, alternately approaching and receding from the final answer, and thus reproducing the state of wandering thought.