

Nevertheless his works always preserve the same relationship with reality: they are close to it, but they never turn into its straightforward reflexion. Beside the elements which give the impression of being painted from nature, there are others which present purely fantastic features. Here is an example: the hand of a man. Its normal appearance seems evident: a hand has five fingers. The fingers have fingernails. But with Beksinski this hand will by no means be realistic. It will always be slightly larger than the natural proportions would demand. The veins will seem a little too swollen for the hand's age and the effort it is making. The wrist and the forearm, however, are painted in an almost conventional manner. The artist will not mark the muscular structure, for what interests him to a greater extent is the gesture and the expression of the hand ..

The reason for this is that Beksinski never paints from nature. Each object assumes its own proper form, invented by its creator, even though this object remains strongly based on its realistic and probable appearance. From this spring the specific features of this painting, which correspond to the interior universe of the artist: a strong impression of a faithful representation of nature followed immediately by the sensation of unreality. The sky of Beksinski, although it resembles the natural sky, is never a real sky. Even the clouds, so often represented by the artist, are only clouds which he has invented, though at first sight they seem photographically precise. The sky can be yellowish in one painting, ochre in another, or elsewhere, emerald, red, etc. But it is always identical: seemingly real, but oh, how fantastic ... Beksinski's tree is always the same as well. A leafless tree with thin bushy branches, at times bent by the wind which is always a violent wind and sweeps away every living and dead thing present in the painting. The surface of the land is most often scorched earth or a swamp with still pools of water, or else some undefined "base". It can be strewn with either bones, sheets of paper, or twisted entrails. When painting a house Beksinski never depicts a window or a doorway, a door with a doorknob, or a roof with a chimney. Instead of the window there will be a dark opening veiled with a spider web, and coming from within there will be tongues of fire. Instead of the door one will find a black orifice, leading nowhere. The bones and veins depicted in these paintings seem to come from anatomy textbooks. But even a cursory glance will reveal that they have strictly nothing to do with reality.

The striking resemblance between the exterior world and these visions entirely unconnected with it proves beyond doubt the dreamlike origin of this art. Indeed it is in dreams that we see a deformed world which nevertheless seems to us quite natural. In dreams our hands, which have five fingers each, stretch out hundreds of them without surprising us. In dreams we stride about a hill in flames without getting burnt. Just as in dreams we walk across an empty field and although there is no mud, our legs refuse to carry us.

Beksinski certainly accepts the interpretation of his art through dreams, though his visions usually make their appearance in waking life. To arouse a vision which is later rendered on a panel of fibreboard, a moment of "second sight" suffices: for example a piece of paper falls to the ground, a tuft of hair trembles in the wind while a man alights from a tram. The commonest association, the simplest explanation for this painting is, with good reason, the influence of dreams. Beksinski explicitly confirms it: "I paint a lot, and it is possible that in the daytime I trigger those functions of the brain which favour dreams in the night. It was during childhood and youth that I had the most interesting dreams. I have painted, at most, two or three paintings directly inspired by dreams. Night-time dreams and daydreams share the same mechanism of free association. In psychoanalysis it makes no difference whether the patient relates an authentic dream or a fantasy invented from beginning to end - his psyche is encoded just as much in one as in the other."

Dreams are the key to the riddle of his paintings, even though the visions at their source originate in daydreams.

Dreams ... It is impossible not to think of surrealism. Especially since the artistic technique also brings it to mind. The comparison between the paintings of Beksinski and the work of Salvador Dali or