

Giorgio de Chirico seems evident. However Bekinski declares that to a large degree this is but an illusion: " ... If I have anything in common with surrealism, it is only the method of free association. I feel a closer link with 19th century painting than with surrealism. Of course it is possible to discern certain influences of surrealism in my painting, but I am indifferent to how it is labelled by the critics. "

But even if they were related, there would still be a fundamental difference between Bekinski's painting and surrealism. This difference lies deeper than appearances reveal, but also it is more fundamental. Not only the surrealists formed an ideological program for their art. This program obliged them to employ specific pictorial procedures. Hence the surrealists implemented, both in theory and practice, a model of art which was opposed to previous models such as "realism" and conventional rationalism. In order to fight their adversaries more effectively they had to consistently employ the rather simplified rules of surrealism. Consequently, in their works a fish had to stand erect and as far from any water as possible, while a set of drawers had to come out from the neck of a giraffe. What the surrealists were aiming at was to fight realism with its nearest and most obvious opposite. It is clear that Bekinski does nothing of the sort. First of all he is not fighting anyone or anything. His fishes lie on the sand, thrown out of the sea, and his people do not walk on their heads. When in the paintings of Bekinski we note different creatures, the origin of their presence has nothing to do with the realisation of a program aimed against rationalism. They are more likely to originate in the world of obsessions and the subconscious of the author.

"I clearly see rather the EXPRESSION of what will be painted than its precise material form. I have to discover this form in the painting even if it means transforming it several times. Hence I sometimes paint something unforeseen, because suddenly, in the chaos of the composition, in that "battlefield", I see something different which, like Rorschach ink-blot, becomes fascinating enough for me to put aside the original vision and keep it for another painting. What is more, I often tackle one subject several times, for I feel that it is not yet what I wanted to do. At times the original version is simply incomplete, since I sometimes hesitate over certain details. So I paint two or three more or less similar versions which nevertheless differ in certain respects. Sometimes many years separate these paintings, for in the meantime I paint other things. As a result I often paint, painted and will continue to paint the sea, planets and phenomena in the sky, blind eyes gazing into a void, light, doors, a road everything, discounting any symbolism that might be attributed to me with hindsight, that stays rooted in my mind and wants to reveal itself. "

Bekinski is the recorder of subconscious visions and the stage director of paintings. He is the recorder when he reveals the vision buried within him. He is the stage director when he paints it on the fibreboard. The first gives form to the impulse of the subconscious. The second directs the action of the will. The visionary imposes the subject. The stage director turns it into a work of art.

The neatness, the particular nature and the unique atmosphere of these paintings immediately draws attention. There are "agreeable", "nice" paintings despite the juxtaposition of colours and forms which could be felt as shocking. There are also "repulsive" ones whose atmosphere is heavy and uncongenial to contemplation. But the obsessional nature of certain images and the repetition of the most shocking motifs is no accident: it is a means of making the spectator familiar with them. The tireless reproduction of these images is a way of «tiredness» softening their macabre appearance. In endlessly coming back to them, Bekinski hopes to accustom the spectator and to make him accept them without fear. Those who have lived with these pictures know that the artist is right: the exterior aspect of the anecdote and the horror very quickly disappear. What remains is a permanent sensation of beauty. One ceases to identify or notice the objects in the paintings, just as the horrors of war and the physical suffering of the Crucifixion depicted in old paintings no longer arouse feelings of identification or surprise. As one sees the paintings of Bekinski again and again, as one lives in