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Beksinski refuses to capitulate: "What is painted is never as literal to me as it is to the spectators who approach a painting with a dictionary in their hand: a tree - the symbol of life; green - the symbol of rebirth; black - the symbol of death ... A bird, a cow, a coin, a pitcher, grass, some excrement; for him they are all symbols. The mentality of the average European is crammed with all sorts of "trash" to the point that he can notice very little for himself / .. / He runs about with his dictionary which he ceaselessly consults in order to discover meanings. And since there is always <something that does not fit, he blames it on the author."

Beksinski does not like symbolism. Just as he dislikes narration. He honestly admits: "I detest the expression: "this means ... " What's painted should be nothing other than what one sees. "Nothing" should bring nothing to the mind."

In this way the search *tot.cettein* mysterious hidden relations, supposedly existing between the objects and the human figures in these paintings, is completely/utile. This painting does not offer any ideological message. It has nothing to do with the social or political convictions of the artist. In the same way it tells no story. The rectangles of fibreboard filled with colours should be no more than windows onto another reality, the inner reality of the painter - a reality /

1966. Photo.: J. Lewczynski

offered him by the blessing of dreams, visions, and imagination. A blessing which God or Nature offers to every man. The fact that people stop before these paintings and patiently examine them until they find a meaning probably tells us more about the spectators than about the painter. That great dustbin we call "the association of ideas" - into which the 19th century placed a goodly contribution gives everyone a chance to show off. If one made an experiment and placed in front of Beksinski's painting any number of spectators, one would not find two identical opinions on the presumed "message" of the artist. The reason is that there is no message. And if during contact with the paintings of Beksinski each spectator finds a different message, it is because he seeks an answer to the questions which cross his own mind and which are totally alien to Beksinski. No "discovery" can be considered as "right", since in the intentions of Beksinski there is none. The projection of the personal fears and convictions of the public while placed before a mirror would be the only result of this game.

It is true that the error is easily committed if one does not take care. This is the error of mistaking the exterior aspect of these paintings for the profound ambition of their creator. He strives to paint the Mystery. He is concerned with the mystery of the human