

drew a clear line, setting him apart from avant-garde pursuits. At this time, Beksinski introduced all of his typical fantasy and visual paintings together. And it was the works he produced during this "Period of Fantasy" that initiated the period of his greatest fame that still continues today. These exhibitions elicited a certain astonishment due to the change in tenure of Beksinski's paintings created during the year previous. Though that change was the natural result of the object of his search throughout his entire career. First of all, he made the critics angry because they were confused as to just how to accept this phenomenon. It appeared to them that Beksinski had abandoned the avant-garde and that he had become so impatient with his friends and the art world in general that he had completely turned his back on them. In those days, all the Polish art exhibit venues were filled with abstract art. Even so, after his exhibitions, he was inundated with telephone calls from all of those galleries requesting his works. Thus his name became widely known, and his paintings began to bring higher and higher prices. It was during this time that Beksinski's scenery paintings began to appear, a genre that up to this time were considered to be in the realm of an academic patent held by the artists who painted them. But Beksinski himself often insisted that he had definitely not abandoned abstractism. He explained that whether he took scenery or small object as his subjects, his artistic ideology continued to be that of an abstractionist. He went on to note that while form, light and shadow, or compositional balance were, to him, important elements, any lurking literary aspects that anyone might find there were there by mere coincidence.

"I always believe that anything beyond the actual contents of my paintings is a certain by-product. To me, 'seeing' is a hundred times more important than 'understanding.' For I find the word 'understanding' to be synonymous with 'monotonising' or 'minimalising.' And it is from this viewpoint that I myself approach films and music."

The Historical Museum in Sanok purchased works by Beksinski for the first time in 1964. And two years later, they held a one-man exhibition of his works, Beksinski was so moved by their favor that he rewarded them with a several donations or a number of his works free of charge, giving birth to a close mutual understanding between the artist and the museum. Thus year by year, the exhibit gallery of the museum was increasingly enriched by new works from Beksinski. Subsequently, the museum began to pay him a simple gratuity for additional works, which he accepted due to his understanding of the financial

situation faced by the gallery and his strong desire to have his works exhibited there. He told the museum to receive his works at whatever price they could afford. And by 1978, the gallery's collection of his paintings, drawings and sculptures reached a total of nearly forty works. It was only during the long period during which a French art dealer held exclusive rights to the sale of his works that the direct sale of his works to the museum was temporarily brought to a halt.

Today the Historical Museum in Sanok houses the largest collection of Beksinski's works in the world, coming to a total of around 100, some of which were placed there on deposit from the artist himself, due to his desire to make the museum's collection of his works more complete, and to ensure that it is not limited to any single specific period of his life, but to allow visitors to experience the entire range of his entire creative life. Beksinski himself was so eager to make certain that the museum was in possession of the works that he himself considered of importance, even to the extent that this museum can be referred to as his exclusive gallery. Considered from the viewpoint of Beksinski's reluctance to become personally involved in the planning of any sort of exhibition of his works, the conditions he set up for this museum proved particularly efficacious. That is, it facilitated the planning of exhibitions because all a producer need do is borrow works owned by the museum in Sanok. Another point that should be stressed here is that almost all of the works owned by the historical museum are not in storage, but are part of their permanent standing exhibition. This is an extremely rare case in the context of dealing with contemporary artists in Poland. Beksinski's works are hung on the walls of the Sanok exhibition gallery from spring to autumn, welcoming everyone to come and view them. During the remainder of the year, it is possible for them to be lent out for exhibitions held by other galleries.

Move to Warsaw

In 1977, the town authorities announced the demolition of Beksinski's home, so he moved away from Sanok. The reason for the demolition was to make room for a new street. In his memoirs, Beksinski says, "The vehicle of the local authorities moved slowly toward the buildings that were slated for demolition. Alongside the vehicle was a no-good who walked along with a can of red paint with which he marked the houses that were to be totally demolished." This made it necessary for Beksinski to find another place to live. And he chose the Polish