



BIOGRAPHY

by Piotr Dmochowski

True to the image of his work, Beksinski is a secluded man. He does not appear in public, and does not exhibit his paintings. When museums or collectors exhibit them he does not show up. He works on his paintings twelve hours a day against a background of classical music. They are always painted on hardboard, signed on the back, and they bear no titles.

He was born on February 24th 1929 in Sanok, a small town near the south-east border of Poland. His father was a surveyor, his grandfather a building contractor, and his great-grandfather Mathieu, an insurgent of 1863, was the founder of a wagon

factory. Under the German Occupation Beksinski continued his studies' at a secondary level, first in a school of commerce, then in a clandestine highschool. In 1947, after the libération, he entered the Faculty of Architecture in the Mines and Steelworks Academy in Cracow under pressure from his father. In 1951 he married Miss Sophie Stankiewicz, and in 1952 he obtained his degree in architecture. Due to the obligation of work which was at that time imposed on young graduâtes, he started working in a State building enterprise where he supervised the building lots.

Although he had been drawing since his early childhood, he applied himself to it seriously in 1953. He also concentrated on painting,

photography and sculpture, and thus prepared his way out of a profession which he disliked.

In 1958 his only child, Thomas, was born.

In the same year his first exhibition of plastic works, and especially abstract relief, was held in Poznan. At that time he was still a member of the Union of Polish Artist-Photographers and he took part in numerous exhibitions of photography in Poland and abroad.

In 1960 he abandoned photography and in his plastic works broke away from the avant-garde. This break was felt by some as an act of treason, since his early creation had aroused much hope among the partisans of abstract art. But it was also this step towards fantasy expressionism, noted during the exhibition of 1972 organized by Mr. and Mrs. Bogucki in the "Contemporary" gallery in Warsaw, that was to make him known to a wider public. The polemic aroused by his painting

reached its climax in 1975 when after a poll organised by art critics he was declared "the best painter in the thirty years of the People's Republic of Poland" thanks to the votes of certain participants who gave him almost all their points, while others refused to give him even one...

In 1977 he left Sanok and moved to Warsaw only to isolate himself from the world even more radically because of the inconvenience arising from the celebrity he now had in his home town. When he moved into the Polish capital he hoped to mingle in the anonymous crowds of a big metropolis. Despite the curiosity he arouses, he refuses to take part in any manifestations and accepts neither awards nor medals. He has practically ceased to exhibit, receives only one or two journalists a year, when he grants them an interview which does not touch upon current events.

A charismatic personality and a man with a profound spirit, Beksinski has never left Poland, doesn't speak any foreign language and has never been a member of any ideological group; he hates and despises politics.

by Piotr Dmochowski