

## Commentary for the printed publication

Looking back at the twenty four years that have passed since the time I decided to promote the art of Beksiński, I realize that the best move I made was the first one: immediately after concluding a contract with Beksiński, I hired a photographer and ordered him to go around Poland to find the addresses of people who had purchased the artist's works and make big slides of them, called ectachromes. Such slides are necessary to reproduce paintings in paper. I also ordered to photograph the earlier works of Beksiński, his photos from the 1950s as well as bas-reliefs and some of his drawings that were housed in the museum in Wrocław. From the very beginning I knew that in order to make the art of Beksiński popular, the most important thing was to exhibit his works, and then immediately after that – issue an album of his works. None of the artists living in the Polish People's Republic had such an album at that time, and the only available items were poorly issued albums of a Soviet publishing house „Aurora”.

The photographer went to Sanok, Wrocław, Rzeszów, Warsaw etc, i.e. everywhere where Beksiński's works were housed, taking photographs and making the above-mentioned ectachromes.

It was a major step on the occasion of which I congratulate myself until today, as all or almost all the publications in paper that I was then able to prepare myself or in co-operation with other people and institutions, were based on those ectachromes and photographs.

Being so well-armed, I could make an attempt to find a publisher of the album I wanted to issue.

No French publishing house wanted to undertake this task, as all of them were convinced that the art of Beksiński did not enjoy enough popularity in France and was too scary for French readers.

After knocking at dozens of doors in France, Germany and the United States, I finally came across a Polish publishing house – „Arkady” („Arcades”), which a few months before had been the first in Poland to issue a small album of a living artist Duda-Gracz, and now agreed to issue my equally modest album of Beksiński.

As our interests coincided, I proposed to lend them a few of my ectachromes. However, I laid down one condition, namely that I would be allowed to alter the

text written for them by a Cracovian journalist, Tadeusz Nyczek, as I considered it tangled), chaotic and unclear.

This way started my never-ending negotiations with „Arkady”.

As the discussion was going to be long, I decided to issue the album myself. It was after my second exhibition in „Galerie Valmay”, during which in 1986 I managed to sell a number of Beksiński’s paintings and pay the debts I had incurred for the first exhibition.

That is why through the agency of Mirabella Dors from „Figurations critiques”, with whom I was friends, I found in South Korea a printer, Kim, having API company, who proposed me a relatively low estimate. As I mentioned before, after paying the debts that I had incurred for the first exhibition in „Galerie Valmay”, I regained a financial balance, so now, being solvable, I turned to my bank for a high loan to issue the album. The bank, still being affected by the catastrophe which occurred in 1985, granted me a loan.

That fact that Kim spoke French was also helpful, so everything went smoothly. I went to Poland to choose with Beksiński the works for reproduction and ordered a young artist, Bimer, and his colleague to prepare a model layout within a few days. The texts had been ready for a long time, both in the French and English version, as I had done the French translation myself a few months before, and I had also had the text translated into English in advance. This way, having most of the elements, I issued the album after a few months. I took the album and went to boast about it in „Arkady”, which had not even started the works on either their album or the album of Beksiński. They looked through my album carefully and said nothing, apart from asking a question „why did you put this frame here?” (about the reproduction of one of the drawings).

Having bought many new paintings of Beksiński in the meantime, I supplemented my collection of ectachromes with the help of a new Parisian photographer, Mr Bury, who proved to be more competent than his predecessor.

From the collection of ectachromes, which was then rich and complete, I could lend any number of works both to Hartel for the catalogue of his exhibition in Freising and Lindner, for the catalogue of the exhibition in Badfrankenhausen. I could also help a Japanese publishing house „Treville” in the issue of two editions of their album about Beksiński and in the collective issue of „Biomannerism” album. Also my ectachromes were used by different centres which released in Poland a catalogue (terrible) for the exhibition of Beksiński’s works that were circulating in

many towns in years 1995-96. The same happened in case of the Community Centre in Metz, „Cercle d'art de Saint Léonard de Noblat” etc.

In 1990, just after I had opened my gallery on rue Quincampoix in Paris and incurred enormous debts for its building, it seemed again that I would have to sell my flat. However, a miracle repeated and financially I was able to stand on my feet again after my adventure with the Japanese, who bought 59 Beksinski's paintings from me. That is why I immediately turned to Kim to release the second edition of my album (this time more luxurious than the previous one, with a stiff, linen cover and laminated jacket as well as Beksinski's changes to the reproduction and translators' alterations to the texts). At the same time I asked Kim to issue the second album, which in these notes is entitled „volume II of my album of Beksinski”.

While the model layout for the first volume in 1988 was, as I have already mentioned, was made by artists, Bimer and his colleague, here everything, starting from the cover design and finishing with the model layout was prepared by me and my wife. Only translation of texts into English I entrusted with a competent translator so as to avoid a delay, which occurred during the issue of the first edition of „volume I of my album of Beksinski”.

After three exhibitions in the rented gallery of „Valmay”, then two exhibitions in my gallery on rue Quincampoix and following the issue of the first volume of my album in 1988, Beksinski became well-known in Paris. That is why a French publishing house „Ramsay” proposed me a release of their own album about the artist. In this case I was taken in, just like in this anecdote about a nail soup. The publishing house stipulated in the contract that I repurchase from them a thousand of copies of their album at half the retail price. This simply meant that for the production of album I would pay everything on my own, as the 90 thousand francs which I had to pay were equivalent to the whole cost of the publishing house. Thus, not only did I give them my ectachromes, but I also paid for everything. And it was called „their” album.

To make matters worse, the quality of the album was terrible. Having bought a thousand of copies, I was not able to sell a single one. Until today they are uselessly stocked in the cellar. But „Ramsay” did not earn anything on it, as probably it did not sell anything either. Everything was given up for miling. From „their” album I have placed only the texts, as the square shape and non-typical dimensions make it impossible to scan the reproduction. The reader does not lose

anything, as only the catalogue for the Beksiński's exhibition circulating around Poland in years 1995-96 was worse. The only difference is that in the latter case I gave my ectachromes, but did not have to pay for poor work.

But the catalogue of Panorama Museum is perfect, and the catalogue of Hans Hartel – correct. That is why, contrary to „Ramsay”, in this documentation I reproduce their whole content.

Apart from paying for two volumes of this album and covering all the costs of „Ramsay” publishing house, I also published at my own expense the catalogues for the first – in 1985 and the second – in 1986 exhibition in „Galerie Valmay”. At the third exhibition – in 1988, the role of a catalogue was played by the first volume of my album, which had been released in the meantime. Apart from that, in 1987, I issued a catalogue of the drawings' exhibition in the Polish Institute in Paris as well as a catalogue for the collective exhibition „Visions des ténèbres”, which was circulating around Poland in years 2004-2005.

When issuing the first edition of the first volume of my album in 1988, I ordered Kim to print a number of postcards with the reproductions of Beksiński's paintings. He did it wrong, so I do not reproduce these cards. Together with the second edition of the first volume and the first edition of the second volume of the album in 1990, I had these 10 postcards printed anew and this time Kim did it right. So I present here those 10 postcards.

All the other catalogues and albums were made and paid by third parties, though most frequently they were printed from my ectachromes. For since the time when my two volumes of the album began to circulate around the world, a number of publishers realised that they were selling well. In particular, this was the case of the Japanese publishing house „Treveille”.

I also wish to add that the moment Beksiński became better known in France, a few French publishing houses turned to me (or I proposed it to them) with a request to place a reproduction of one of his paintings on the covers of their books (chiefly science-fiction). These covers have been included in this documentation.

I also reproduce an article from the French issue of „Penthouse” with Beksiński's paintings and drawings. This is a completely minor item among all the publications, in which I directly or indirectly took part. However, I am doing it because it was the first publication that I managed to obtain at the times when I did not have any money to pay for such publications, and all the others refused to issue

them at their own expense. When sending the proposals to all French magazines, I also sent them to Playboy and Penthouse, as both of these erotic magazines had their art columns. „Penthouse” was the only magazine to reply, so it was a great victory for me, which at that terrible time seemed to be a light in an unending tunnel of problems. However, also this victory, which I eagerly communicated to Beksiński (who, as usual, did not say a word of praise or reprimand), bringing him 50 copies of the magazine, cost me a lot as the editor of the art column in „Penthouse”, a Nicolas Hugnet, took my 160 ectachromes to choose from, and then lost them all. The only consolation was that it happened after printing the article. I congratulated myself on having three copies of each ectachrome made by my photographer. Without these precautions I would have had empty hands.

In this chapter of the documentation, devoted to paper publications, I also wish to signal my book „Struggle for Beksiński” (French title „Notes sur la situation générale. Historique d’un échec”). I do not reproduce it as it has been listed in my internet gallery for a long time and is available to anyone who would like to become acquainted with it.