

The artist who painted his dreams

Zdzisław Beksiński belongs to the most outstanding and eccentric Polish artists of the 20th century. The entire output of his work is remarkable. He dealt with photography, sculpture, computer graphics, architecture, but above all he was an eminent painter. His dystopian surrealism cannot be confused with the art of other painters. Some critics' conviction that his paintings represent surrealism in the style of Salvador Dalí is not entirely justified. He developed his own, unique style based on the psychological subconsciousness and formal freedom. His art evokes a lot of emotions and controversies and, as a result of this, has both supporters and opponents. For some, it is an expression of genius and for others, it is a manifestation of kitsch and ugliness. Regardless, however, on what side we would stand, we must admit that it has a certain phenomenon. The creator endeavored to achieve an effect that brings to mind photographing dreams.

Looking at his works, we get the impression that they are an exact mirror image of his subconsciousness, photos of inner visions and dreams. He paid special attention to subjective impressions - not to the obvious images and phenomena that we can name. He painted the deepest hidden - which has nothing to do with reality. Each of us has a different psyche and reacts differently to what we see. From his point of view and in relation to his work, there was no a wrong path because everything is possible in dreams.

Beksiński did not give any titles to his works so as not to suggest the message flowing from them since, according to the artist, they do not possess it at all. He once said that he never asked himself the question about the meaning of either his paintings or the paintings of other artists. The sense was completely irrelevant to him. It was not important what was shown, but what was hidden. This is essential what appears in our souls. The painter did not want us to see logic in his paintings so that we could understand them rationally. Art is supposed to influence people, to arouse emotions in them, to move to evoke an aesthetic shock.

The artist manifestly stressed the superior value of form and technique. For him dreams were a seemingly real reality that contained a huge amount of fantastic details. They were always naturalistic as for light, shadow and perspective. The painter had to defend his right to use his imagination for many years. Guarding his independence, he refused to permit

the deeper analysis of his own subconsciousness because there existed a danger of discovering the secret of his art.

Wiesław Banach, the director of the Historical Museum in Sanok and the specialist in the artist's output, points out that the painter is a phenomenon on a European scale. The artist threw out the visions of what was happening in his subconsciousness. However, he could not explain his dreams. He emphasized that subconsciousness was a garbage dump of culture, a kind of a theatrical props room in which people wandered. The threat of death, decay, destruction, loneliness was constantly present. Beksiński sensed what was inexpressible: fear of emptiness which reason revealed. However, reason cannot answer the majority of questions that are tormenting a human being.

The basis of Beksiński's creativity was the concept of fantastic realism, a pictorial record of images in the likeness of photographing dreams. Despite the fact that he was accused of compositional and formal inconsistency and kitsch, his painting still inspires artists from various corners of the world, delighting with its extraordinary expressiveness. His hypnotizing art penetrates into our subconsciousness leaving a permanent mark there.

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