

Clearances - towards light, towards darkness.

Transformation of space and other methods of modeling perceptual processes in painting

This work is a commentary to the cycle of paintings
entitled "Clearances".

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Abstract

The phenomenon of clearances is the subject of my deliberations. I perceive and analyze it in this work in very different contexts. Beginning with the meaning of this concept functioning in everyday language, up to the abstracting of clearances as structured elements of reality and referring them to art in its broadest sense. I also consider clearances as an element of nature and in this aspect I pay attention to some kind of mechanism resulting from the functioning of nature. Finally, I attempt to find the so-called truth about clearances, which leads me in the direction of more general considerations about truth in painting.

Then I review my own work, showing that clearances have always been for me an object of fascination and a subject of painterly inquiry, as well as a trigger for deeper reflection on painting in general. I treat my paintings as an experience exceeding the framework of the visual layer, referring to my inner space: the mental and metaphysical sphere, which as a kind of carrier of spiritual content - becoming an intimate record - allows me to express a whole range of inner states and emotions.

Referring to my own way of taming emotions by transposing them into paintings, I show the process of deconstruction which takes place not by replacement or removal, but by layering subsequent events reflected in the layers of painting matter, where the use of layered form underlines the complexity of the problem and deepens and strengthens its resonance.

Referring to various ways of transforming space, I emphasize the importance of the line, which, although in itself is flat and divides space rather than builds it, its multiplication and layering become for me the basic means of creating multidimensional depths.

Walter Benjamin's concept of image-writing leads me to the relationship between the transformation of a line into a letter (sign) and a writing into an image (hieroglyph). At the same time I am interested in the methods of plane transformation which, by subjecting a text to conscious disintegration, directly influence its complete transformation into a specific plastic form.

Following this thought, I recall the painting of Simon Hantai, who creates textiles painted with written text (layered to the point of illegibility), where the key element is the metaphysical play of presence and absence. I read this process as an attempt to return to the roots - to reunite with the original matter. I also assume that a conscious transformation of the painting space may have an influence on the quality of perceptual processes and affect the kind of emotions generated.

Analyzing my works in which the layering of texture plays a key role, I notice not only an ever more evident inner need to disappear in the matter of the painting but also an ever growing fascination with darkness. In this context I bring to mind the examples of other artists, both in painting and in photography, literature or film, for whom escape into darkness is a metaphor of inner anxiety, fear or fatal desire.

I show a kind of mechanism when the inner darkness triggers a strong imperative to create, which is the ultimate defense against sinking into depression or self-destruction.

I also draw attention to the characteristic, especially for the American prose of the sixties, drawing on the therapeutic practice of Sigmund Freud and his studies on daydreaming, and to the fact that his concept of culture as a "source of suffering" was the basis for the creation of innovative artistic conventions of the time.

Following this path - I go back to the basics of Freud's psychoanalysis, who, assuming that the roots of human motivation lie mainly in the subconscious, linked it directly with the concept of defense mechanisms, thanks to which we are able to reduce tensions related to potentially threatening feelings, such as discomfort, pressure, fear or anxiety, in order to cope with stress.

Deepening the knowledge about the subconscious and defense mechanisms in the psychoanalytical approach, and taking into account the fact that already in the early abstract expressionism the image was treated as a record of a complex inner space, which was to be defended from civilization threats by creative expression, I come to the thesis that creation is a kind of defense mechanism.