

MATTER AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SILENCE

On the painting, drawing (and musical) activity of Marek Batorski

Leszek Możdżer, a brilliant pianist, said in a radio interview, that the world (the universe) was for him a state of musical vibration. The pianist added that this kind of vibrating matter is what constitutes living space which is saturated with musicality, that is vibrating sounds from which sometimes brilliant musical compositions come into being. The only thing which we need to do is to hear them in our imagination, give them some order, write down and, finally perform on an instrument...

When in 1985 I was writing a comment to the catalogue of my first individual exhibition, which was after I graduated Academy, and which was held in *Piwnica pod Baranami*/The Cellar under the Rams I pointed that I composed my paintings in the same way people would compose music. At the time I didn't indulge myself in composing sounds, but it seemed to me that, while I was weaving together the triangular structures of my abstract or allusive paintings I learnt how to compose music. Colour patches were for me the sounds and gave as much satisfaction as composing or listening to music...

I had a similar, but reverse feeling while listening to Marek Batorski playing the saxophone who together with his band was losing himself extatically in jazz phrases and impressive solos. I thought then that because Marek Batorski is affected by music so much and draws it from his instrument in such a uniquely impressive way, he must be a good and expressive painter too. And I was right! Marek Batorski's paintings and drawings are precisely clean cut and powerful due to their contrasts, lines edges of composition that construct the painting's silence which is paradoxically contradicted by visual perception because it takes away dynamically and – let us say – ”sonically” colour patches and colour planes that are at times set together in a drastic manner. In his paintings Marek Batorski does not want to tell us any anecdote, he does not want to tell us a story or describe the world in its illusion, but it seems that he wants to reach to the very bottom and the profoundest depth of the extatic affection which, depending on how intensive it is remains the basis of expressing any human feelings. Music means sounds and feelings. Painting is music ”heard” with our eyes, physically soundless, but also sensed visually in a very sensitive way and in the registers of dynamics, rhythm, linear complications, in intensification and diminishing, *piano* and *forte*.

I see Marek Batorski's paintings and drawings with musical vigilance and in the context of music where he feels at home too. There are visual arts which are much too raw, too essential, much too brutal but this is actually their power and the colour saturated at the most is the ”sound” heard

by the eyes and put on the canvas with a strong hand of the artist armed with the piece of painting equipment. The contrasting planes of yellow, red and white are the counterpoint to the colour basis which, in Marek Batorski's paintings, is black. This makes his work monumentally expressive, but is also the reason for drawing attention which means the direct digging deep into the abyss of the archetype. Everything that is synthetic, simple, vigorous and raw, everything that is taken out in the iconographic phenomenon with the textural crusts of the painting matter and seems to be explicit and convincing at the same time. You respond to the paintings of Batorski immediately with some extreme sense and feeling that those bygone times of the history of human civilisation return these days in the similar yet new new form because actually nature and existential problems, human awareness of existence and the mystery of the meaning of life are the same now as they were thousands of years ago.

In Piotr Orawski's article "The beauty of music. On painting and other arts perceived visually" we read: *Painting has got the power of being voiceless. You can't hear painting. Pictures have to be seen. And here comes the opposition which has fascinated me for a very long time: what does it mean to see and to hear? And what is the relation between these two phenomena? Almost everyone will answer that the relationship is parallel or compatible, but to my mind it is not that obvious. I have always wondered about the phenomenon of the ear for music. Why is it that only a few out of a hundred people haven't got this skill? And why is it that only a few out of hundred – though they see – can't really perceive anything? The art of sound is like the art of sight – both should be sharpened, but if they are blunted we can't actually do anything about it.*

I have used this quotation as the final point of my short essay on the visual and musical activity of Marek Batorski. The artist who has within himself such a unique visual and musical sensitivity has to draw it inside out all the time and emanate with it. The paintings and the sound complement each other. The completion is full when we add poetry to painting and music. In this classical triad – both the artist and his addressee – reach the state which is sometimes called the inner paradise and harmony, but what fits better here is the Greek word, *katharsis*, the purifying feeling that is so strong that after the emanation and absorption a complex work of art has taken place, it is made possible for us to become transformed, maybe different, and maybe better and wiser...

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