

TEMPTATIONS

Krzysztof Nowicki and Cyryl Polaczek

Krzysztof Nowicki and Cyryl Polaczek are two young talented artists, winners of last year's and this year's Hestia Artistic Journey competition. They explore the classic, no longer trendy discipline - painting on canvass with oil or acrylic paint. Their artistic quest often takes them outside the realm of two-dimensional paintings – Nowicki is led there by science and intellect, and Polaczek by his intuition and emotions. They respond with a resolute and original language to questions about the world around us.

They argue that the time has come to maximise work, painting and experiences.

Krzysztof Nowicki, this year's winner of the contest and a graduate of the Faculty of Painting at Gdańsk Academy of Fine Arts is endlessly tempted by Renaissance and Baroque masters: Pontormo, Dossi and Titian. Their works are an inspiration, a raw material the artist transforms with software, processes to tame everything he finds enchanting with the language he relates to. Transforming the continuous being of the surrounding space into a computer binary system, the creator safely adapts the reality around him. What Nowicki demands from his audience erudition; he is toying with the idea of how far he can leave behind the original to reproduce his source of inspiration in the subconscious memory of the audience. This is how Geometrical Defigurations appear in front of us, in which our lost eye, ready to subordinate the incomprehensible, finds in portraits of Saint Lucas and Danae, figures of Spidermen, unmanned aircrafts or grey diamond mountains which actually form the Portrait of a Man. Where distant galaxies are goddesses Venus.

Nowicki's works are also brought to a halt "halfway" through. Geometrical impressions of existing compositions are presented as raw digital prints. "Exaggerated Still Life" collated from numerous Dutch still lifes and floral compositions, bursts with a plethora of incomprehensible symbols which conveyed additional meanings in original copies.

Cluttered in his works, they besiege the little head of Pontormo's - the painter's alter ego overwhelmed by the flood of aesthetic communication.

Nowicki has his own unique ways to unclutter excess. He adds unreal quality to museum objects, disassembles and digitally re-assembles them anew to build his own work on foundations of the old one. This collage is a joke, a total painting, ultimately modern like the author himself, but making homage to his great predecessors. Cyryl Polaczek, the winner of last year's Hestia Artistic Journey competition, a postgraduate student of painting at Kraków Academy of Fine Arts is an unorthodox, perverse and flamboyant poet-cum-painter.

His canvass are bursting with uninhibited crude colours, while drawing on the tradition of the expressive figurative painting, his artworks ooze self-confidence in painterly skills.

The author minds such gracefulness and attempts to "spoil" it by building brand-new meanings and adding a whole new dimension to his works.

Another piece featuring banal or non-banal flowers of a self-portrait seen from a distance, set on the bank of a clay pit pond, depicts the same dimness of the "horizon of unknown forest" and sensual meatness. Guised as ordinary, "the other side of the mirror" reflects an introspective diary of a sensitive artist, written lyrically but with strong words. Polaczek maintains a never-ending discourse with his masters: Wróblewski, Modzelewski, Sobczyk, Richter, Neo Rauch or Sasnal. Engaged in eternal dialogue, he fails to imitate them. He perceives them as a source of inspiration and a lesson to be learnt. He is a talented student, what is best showcased by the technique he used to paint the red drapery separating the real world from the imaginary one on his picture.

His painterly skills are vibrating with cold and warm greys on the portrait of a man in a greatcoat with face replaced with a palette, in leaden clouds of the bay and blackness of flowers.

Watchful eyes are gazing at bathers on Utoya Island. Like in stories of the Grimm brothers, archetypal fear is testing the limits of our own anxiety.

Polaczek's quest takes him even further to create reliefs or painted sculptures.

He takes us to the world of unpredictable temptations. Nowicki and Polaczek are tempting us with an unknown beginning of a great adventure. Let's muster courage to embark on our own artistic journey with both of them in tow.

Bogna Gniazdowska

Exhibition curator