

Waldemar "Major" Fydrych's paintings: between revolution and dwarfs

(without domination of the orange color)



Immensely tricky and demanding is this artistic field of painting, the queen of all arts. One needs a lot of talent, courage, and knowledge to engage in it. To go on, one must fulfill many requirements and be a slave to a great passion. Yet, continuing in it is very hard for many diverse reasons, as modernity dictates to us what is to praise and what to reject. More than often, this modernity loves to discard artists themselves and not care for anything else.

There is one man such that it will be hard to dismiss him, and even harder to bind him with the canon. His painting will trouble, just as he posed a problem for many in the past. Many were those who wanted to reject him. Others accepted him. Still, others were frightened of his orange color and dwarfs.

Waldemar "Major" Fydrych possesses uncompromising courage, allowing him to engage in what he considers right at a given point in his life. His work is inherently free of any fear and any preemptive obligation that binds most other artists. Anyone who knows Major better understands that there is no room for constraints for him. He is a free man, and for many indeed, an epitome of freedom, equally attentive to others' freedom. Many will want to see his paintings in search of his dwarfs and references to the past years. They will be curious about how he goes about it. We know his watercolors—simple, small painting expression forms, a technique friendly to the eye, and small size. Yet an easel painting adds pressure, increases the expectations of viewers. Many will be amazed by Major's spontaneity and audacity, executing his plans on the canvas, and by his enviable candor. Whatever he does or paints is filled with sincerity and is explainable. His paintings are like maps that we follow, everyone making their trip and finding their comfort or discomfort. This journey will feel different for an art professional than that for Major's fans. Politicians and opponents will approach his craft with apprehension, afraid of a jest that might hurt, used to hit somewhere right on the dot.

Some of his paintings are like extremely condensed maps. Still, just as on the charts, each symbol has its justification, the reason for being, so in Major's works, everything carries a meaning and sometimes a message. Paintings dense with forms, lines, or colorful spots at first glance seem to make their content disappear. Yet, after a moment of concentration, we find it again, each of us on

our own. The artist would have made it even more complicated, should we ask him for an explanation.

In his paintings, Major stays faithful to himself, disregarding salons of the glitterati. He determines his truths, but the art comes closer to beauty only through the truth. Today beauty is often ignored. Modern art forgets about beauty. More often, it prefers to contemplate ugliness. It hovers over it and indeed glorifies it. In Major's paintings, ugliness, even if present, takes an attacker's role and is not a subject of glorification.

Other Major's paintings, on the contrary, are more austere in their expression, in their poster-like idea, one form whose meaning is underscored by the color of the background. A single dwarf figure against the red background. Nothing more is needed.

Some color compositions would thrill our Kapist colleagues. In others, their asceticism makes one want to see them changed, giving an urge to reject them. Yet this is perhaps why the Neue Wilde would wish to have him in their ranks. Art historians will see there a reference to fauvistic and abstract tendencies of the 1970s. Still, such is the role of art historians. We will not do it. Major would not like us to do it. Major cannot be typecast.

I suppose Major's thoughts are free of all constraints, directed only by his intuition. His paintings are, therefore, intuitive. Should we want to consider his compositional objectives, they too are subject to the artist's intuition.

Major has been engaged in painting with a great passion and discipline for already several years. For the most part, it is the artist's contemplation of his extraordinary past. I see his painting as a form of a seal on the events from the times past.

His current engagement in the painting reminds us of the forgotten value of imagination itself, evokes this selfless act of creation, this useless endeavor, an internal dialogue. A work of art is entirely useless, magnificent futility. Kapuściński wrote of it: "We gave the world this marvelous, unique, and irreplaceable uselessness. What we offered to the world was not something to make life easier, but to make it more beautiful, of course, should such a differentiation make any sense. [...] And in this way, while living in a bare, monotonous desert, you live like in an eternal garden that never loses its freshness or color. And still, you can imagine this garden as having a pleasant scent, hear birds singing and insects buzzing. And so you feel rewarded, you are nearing the Heavens, you are a poet." (Ryszard Kapuściński, *Shah of Shahs*).

A citizen of the world, a member of many circles. A cosmopolite? Perhaps, but for sure, an artist whose artistic creation and activities require a few volumes of description. This exposition finalizes the period of his last several years dedicated to painting.

Dr hab. Zdzisława Ludwiniak, professor, Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw, Poland