

When faced with certain cultural texts, some individuals feel an overwhelming need to rewrite or repaint them. This applies to works which are able to move the deepest layers of sensitivity in particularly receptive readers or viewers, as a result of which they begin to identify themselves with what they see. In an act of reception, the identity of the subject susceptible to impulses sent by a work of art – in a metaphorical sense – melts and disappears somewhere on the body surface. The delight that accompanies this experience is always individual, but never personal. It comes from the asymbolia of speech and the resulting otherness that is difficult to integrate into a whole. I can respond to this creativity of an artwork only with my own inventiveness. Marcin Stosik often spoke of the pleasure he experienced in contact with the works of Schad, Balthus, Hockney and many others. He said that ‘by constantly expanding consciousness, art reminds us of the existence of what is unconscious. Reasons for our choices, including the artistic ones, are occasionally rooted in the area not covered by the conscious.’ In this case, the pleasure was evoked by deformation, a sense of anxiety and, finally, by what the artist called ‘a dissonance within reality.’ The artists mentioned by Stosik subjectified the world presented, thus making it alternative to reality. Stosik’s works sustain and boldly develop the process of creating conditions for the emergence of this other land. The delight that viewers experience when watching these painting projects first induces a feeling of strangeness. It uproots our subjective (personal) perception and clashes our bodily ‘I’ with the physicality of

imaginary subjects. As a result, we unexpectedly find a substitute for our own presence in the paintings. We begin to identify ourselves with the world depicted and look for the confirmation of our own emotions. Roland Barthes described this experience, which occurs where the two surfaces (body and image) meet, as the experience of the erotic body – a carrier of untamed signs or the one that moves signs (semantic and disappearing body).

This mechanism of reception that accompanies the psychological study of characters depicted in Stosik's paintings is manifested particularly strongly in two of his works – *Czytająca list* [A Woman Reading a Letter], inspired by the famous work of Vermeer, and *Gra w karty* [A Card Game] inspired by the work of de La Tour. The latter is an example of the procedure that the artist often repeated in his works, i.e. he reproduced his self-portrait. By incorporating himself in a story that has already been depicted before, he becomes delightfully detached from this world, thus entering a world of fiction. Excess and repetition reveal the difference, make a breach and expose the gap between illusion and reality. An eerie glow of light comes through the surface of some of the images. Fiction, which allows us to temporarily give up our life, becomes part of reality. Therefore, art enables us to free ourselves from ourselves.

Private spaces

The paintings of Marcin Stosik are like film shots. The evident vigorous brush strokes in the series *A Woman Reading a Letter* indicate a sudden freeze-frame. The sight of the woman sitting on the couch expresses surprise, impatience, or even anger. Her silhouette is extremely tense. The scene is frozen just before the woman touches the cup with her mouth. The painting brings to mind the works of Edward Hopper and the characteristic suspension of being in 'the light of its being' – as Martin Heidegger put it in his *Origin of the Work of Art*. Here, the traditional mimesis does not stand the test due to the expressiveness of the presentation. Slight deformations, displacements, vibrating colours and embellishments are also the features of the cycle *Dziewczyna z Chryzantemą* [*A Girl with a Chrysanthemum*]. They reveal the artist's creative approach to the process of imitation – not only does the author simplify the image, but he also adds his own components. As a result, the painter builds intimacy and a private space within each painting. He invites a viewer, but prohibits the entry into the interior, putting a partition of reality despite numerous appeals to universal emotions. Consequently, the viewer will always remain unsatisfied and curious of the true meanings of the scenes presented. Therefore, the private spaces of Marcin Stosik are not a finite story. Each of us can continue to spin the story according to his or her liking.

Piotr Grzywacz – the curator

Maciej Kurak/Marek Przybył – arrangement

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Mała Scena Gallery, University of Arts in Poznań,

Al. Marcinkowskiego 28, Poznań, Poland

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