

Wojciech Leder | ARTIFICIAL PRESENCE

(paintings by Wojciech Leder)

14.02–25.03.2018

Opening: 13.02 (wtorek), godz. 18.00

Galeria Duża Scena UAP, ul. Wodna 24

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coordination: Public Relations Office of the UAP

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Wojciech Leder's paintings show a paradox that appears when we compare what we see with what we know about the space around us. Space – in a phenomenological approach – appears to us in two ways. We can see it as a certain orderly presence of experienced objects, towards which our consciousness turns with a particular intention – in one or another direction. This space has variable, specific vectors (top, bottom, depth, proximity or distance, interior and exterior, light and heavy areas, etc.), because it is experienced by an empirical, carnal subject (right-handed or left-handed), who perceives oneself intentionally and hierarchically as a body. This was also pointed out by Stanisław Fijałkowski when commenting on Kandinsky's writings and his division of a rectangular painting. We know, however, that space can be considered independently of the objects and bodies that are in it. These objects and bodies are susceptible to manipulation – they last or are subject to change as ready-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*, *zuhanden*). Then the space appears to us as abstract, continuous, divisible and infinite. We are unable to turn toward it with a specific intention because it is *achromatic*, *isotropic*, i.e. there are no explicit, specific directions. Just like in the case of Euclid or Kant, it is an *a priori* form of clarity that allows the emergence of sensual representation.

This paradox, i.e. intentional seeing of objects in space, as well as the difficulty or even inability to intentionally turn toward the same space becomes even more absorbing when subject to *medialisation*. Leder's paintings contain the well-known post-Renaissance concept of the *image-window*, in which intentionality takes the form of a convergent perspective (in contrast to the Byzantine icon). Leder further strengthens this by using the effect of the post-Baroque illumination of concrete objects and, at the same time, invalidates this space, ordered according to clearly marked directions, by using a dark, undifferentiated background. This background suggests the flatness of the image and absorbs the space. Although his paintings show or suggest the real existence of objects and space, their artificial presence (as Lambert Wiesing points out) prevents us from experiencing the presence of the physical. The paintings open up to what is non-physical and, at first, appears to us as artificially present. The *image-window*, in which intentionality was originally manifested as a turn of consciousness towards a specific object, now turns itself into an *image-object* (as in Husserl's phenomenology). This intentional turning, however, is very difficult. This means that contact with the painting is not only intentional because its nature is only physical (real), as claimed by modernist critics, such as Strzemiński and Greenberg, who indicated the timelessness and flatness of a painting as a physical object. If we want to understand what a painting is, we cannot only look at *image-windows* that point to things, but we have to think about the source of Husserl's *image-object*. The latter does not – according to Wiesing – have a physical existence. Although paintings show or suggest the presence of a real world, they do not constitute a part of it, but appear to us as visible validity that

raises the question of the basis of this validity. Jean Luc Marion, therefore, adds the optically indescribable super-visibility – appearance to the ontic visibility of the painting.

Leder wants to suggest this effect of the painting – its iconic dimension that indicates donation rather than its idolatrous dimension (that what exists as real). Therefore, in his latest paintings, which are unfortunately not exhibited here, he paints objects he has partially burnt or made of polymer clay and painted. He sometimes covers these objects with a transparent curtain and then photographs them to make them radically unreal. The aim of Leder's artistic work, in which he often uses an airbrush, is to create a painting, which is understood not as a physical object or a mere phenomenon, but as a so-called saturated phenomenon (le phénomène saturé), which reveals some surplus of intuition in what exists. Kazimierz Piotrowski