

Marian Siwek

THE RIDER NEVER LEAVES

...that is, look closely and spot the differences between the images...

Dear viewer, spot the differences and similarities between the art of father – Marian Siwek the and the artistic output of his daughter – Iwona Siwek-Front. Or maybe for a focused viewer such comparisons are not important at all?

How should we call this family meeting, dear art lover? After all, it is a discussion: father and daughter sharing common passion in which different points of view clash. An unfinished conversation, which began with a Sunday dinner and drags on in the studio until late in the evening.

“The art prolonged his life,” said the late Professor Jerzy Vetulani commenting on Marian Siwek’s paintings. Though the artist passed away, his voice can still be heard. Maybe due to the fact that his artwork, this visual commentary on life, has remained a voice with which one can discuss even today.

Father and daughter continue their conversation. In art nothing is impossible.

Iwona Siwek-Front knows that the artist looks beyond the facade of reality, the artist’s sensations are real, natural and it has to be like this, not the other way! Fashion, trends, glamour of this world – they all pass away, but this which is real and natural always touches the viewer. Siwek-Front sometimes raises her voice, saying that at times artists should put their nose where others do not dare. For an artist is allowed to shout out the truth, which can after be adopted by the masses. The artist is displeased with the world of plastic, as she calls it, and she perceives the hunger for the wise. Modern world is flooded with stupidity and her paintings are in a constant dialogue with it.

Siwek2Siwek, Siwek talks to Siwek, Siwek comments on Siwek, Siwek places Siwek against a new background, in a new context; she tries, attempts, asks: “See this”, “Or maybe like that?” She poses all those questions which perhaps she had never asked her father.

Father, as the father, remains silent, his paintings are what is left, what more could he add? Especially that he is gone, yet still being here. He remains present, though always in a different reality, by the end of his life exposing a different look at art, a changed perspective. Today he is probably even more visible. The subject matter of his art is gaining in importance. His legacy are street impressions, portraits of unnoticed people. The white rider, worry-worn guys in a beer pub of the ‘80s, a hammered peasant in a stable, the White Lady from the market square. There is, of course, the king of the street – blind and paralyzed Stefan “Kororo”, a legendary Roma violinist and his band. There is the Boss, always stylish and knowing how to make use of a compound speech, there is the Begging Madonna with the Child from Mikołajska street, with whom the artist daughter continues to polemicize.

There is a self-proclaimed horse waste cleaner, the shitty Don Quixote, who traverses Krakow of the early ‘90s on a bicycle. Though he might have preferred a little horse – Rocinante, or even better, Pegasus, instead. The guy lovingly nicknamed “Shithead”, who had the idea for a business and a shovel, a one-man business that had its wings cut off. An entire gallery of marginally important figures.

A man is depicted with all his dirt, with the luggage of life. It is a man who passed under the barbed wire. Today, we need heroes like the figures from the father’s drawings, we need them to understand why freedom was once most important for artists and why for some it has remained such.

Siwek2Siwek with one voice proclaim the beauty and importance of freedom. They speak to those who prefer not to know, they speak to make the meaning of freedom today clear, to remind us what was the barbed wire “made in Auschwitz”. They speak to maintain

proportions. Then people do not get fooled so easily. For Iwona Siwek-Front, language is important in terms of interpersonal communication, as many problems result from misunderstandings. This is what we should at least try to understand.

Marian Siwek first of all sees a man, a man with all his weaknesses. The landscape is just a trace, sometimes a galloping horse or a guy with a bottle sitting against the background of the mounding of Nowa Huta district. The landscape is merely brushed; the man is the most important. This is what Siwek2Siwek say, each expressing it in their own way.

– I have never done such an interference before; I have moved around the topic with tiptoes; it is the first time I have made collages...

The daughter discloses yet another level of her father's artistic sensitivity. Behind the man, the animals follow. They copulate, settle their needs, suffer, feel and experience. Piercing eyes, violent, wild, animal instincts. Background heroes, suffering in the human world since the dawn of time.

The motif of Pegasus that lost its wings is common in Marian Siwek's artwork.

– I pasted it to a meadow, onto my drawing. I associated such a meadow with freedom, nature, love. When we go out to the meadow, we are free. There is smell, there are worms – fantastic creatures. I think that the rider does not leave at all.

Art is lively, unpredictable, manuscripts do not burn and drawings do not sink. People do not leave for good. On Iwona Siwek-Front's collages the begging woman cut out from Marian Siwek's work appears with her brother. Many of the artist's drawings sank in the flood that hit her studio, yet it became just another inspiration for her to seek for new techniques and ways of expression.

Iwona Siwek-Front started to cut out pieces of the works than had been flooded or damaged to create new images. The art is also the continuity. She is interested in where this modern brain overloaded with information and wellness flows to. The conversation on the brain conducted with Professor Jerzy Vetulani has been suddenly broken off too...

Where is a man today? What has remained is a series of questions. What is this all for – the workshop, the brush stroke prolonging her father's life?

The father does not respond. The rider stares at the meadow.

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