

Ilona Tunklová

Large Format Valtice 2001

This year it has been the sixth run of the painting symposium Large Format Valtice. Again, it was held in the Valtice castle in the Břeclav region and organized by the Association of Visual Artists and Theoreticians of South-Eastern Moravia.

Mr. Jan Pospíšil, a painter and the headmaster of the Secondary School of Applied Art in the town of Uherské Hradiště was the main organizer. In 1991 it was him who came with the idea to organize such a venue - a workshop of artists where they would be given an opportunity to check up on possibilities and also obstacles linked with large scale paintings. The specific concept of the symposium issued from the basic idea to give the artists a chance of free creative work without any limits as it never happens with commissions.

The horse riding hall in the Valtice castle seemed to be an ideal place due to its space and light and last but not least thanks to the willing approach of the custodians. The artists must also have been inspired by the beautiful historical surroundings of the castle and the whole Lednice-Valtice area which is enlisted on the UNESCO Heritage Trust list. Especially foreign artists highly appreciated it.

During all runs of the symposium there have been 18 foreign participants from various countries working together with 37 Czech artists. The paintings done there have been stored in the depository of the castle. There might be a chance to open the collection to public permanently, but first the castle needs to be reconstructed.

This year's symposium was held after a four-year gap caused by the lack of finance. As for the place of origin of the artists, it represented Visegrád Four, but more important was the genre variety.

While the preceding symposia placed emphasis on a classical painting, this year we could see installations by Adama Molenda (Poland) or 3D elements in the paintings done by a young artist Petra Fekarová. She created three pieces of art where coloured 3D textile objects protrude from a tow-cloth basis.

Her husband, a sculptor Miloš Fekar, called his paintings "Night Pictures". He used a combination of light and shadow installing strip lights on a perforated canvas. Thus he created impressive lit objects in blue, red and white colour.

The work of a Slovak artist Josef "Danglár" Gertli provoked a controversial reaction. He made a blow-up of one comic's scene, which he does for Slovak magazines. He called it "Batman and a Blind Man Called Minsky are Operating on Mickey Mouse".

David Čárský's monochrome diptych show light green and grey tones enriched with plasticity and a rough surface structure.

Hungary was represented by another married couple. Ida Lencses was inspired by architectonic elements of the Lichteinstein buildings, while her husband Péter Balasz Kovács introduced himself with a free hand abstract painting where we can see a tension between two elements entering into a mutual dramatic relationship.

Mikoláš Axmann experimented with a large print-monotype where positive and negative elements created an impressive whole with the length of more than four meters.

The last participant to be mentioned is Jan Pospíšil who is also an organizer of the event. His two expressive paintings "The Unstable Stability" and "A Ship of Fools" try to cover tragic and comic opposites between which the human life

is taking place. Irony and sarcasm are often present in his spontaneous and dynamic works. From the above mentioned follows that the symposium has introduced a broad spectre of art approaches which can give us an idea about the condition and changes of the contemporary Czech fine art. The differences in quality among the pieces of art appear to be a necessary risk linked with the choice of painters.

This year a new five-year cycle should come to existence. It is expected to bring more possibilities to compare the development and trends in the contemporary art. The base of the symposium itself presents an unquestionable value. Jiří Kornatovský, one of the participants said: "Valtice symposium is typical for its tolerance to each artist and his/her individuality and thus it gives a broad space for various approaches and dialogues and discussions about a large format."

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