

Drawn to The Canvas: Grzegorz Stec's Controlled Violent Brushstrokes

Daniele Perna (April 30, 2008)



Poem from Grzegorz Stec's website.human progress is a growing intensity to notice about half a dozen primary secrets which in the dimness of history pulsate in the shape of eternally beating hearts. Ortega y Gasset

On the evening of April 25th I set off to attend the opening reception for an exhibition of paintings by the native Polish painter, Grzegorz Stec at the Consulate General of The Republic of Poland in New York City. A colleague and friend, Mr. Marek Osinski, who was the exhibit coordinator, graciously extended the invitation, so I did not bother to look at the artists work before going to the exhibition.

Initially, I thought it would be an interesting event because of the location - the historical and beautiful, De Lamar Mansion on Madison Avenue - a residence built in 1906 by architect Charles Pierrepont Henry. It is a stunning example of New York Beaux-Arts residential architecture. If anything, viewing an art exhibition in an interior of this period would be an emotional charge and a good experience in itself.

My wife and business partner, Lynn Zilka, and I approached the entrance in awe of the architectural glamour and humbly walked through the front door. After going through security we ascended one flight up a dramatically wide turning staircase with a red carpet. We arrived but needed to make a transition from the staccato of Manhattan and our workday to the world of the De Lamar Mansion buzzing with Polish socialites, dignitaries, Olympic medalists, futbol stars, a world renowned supermodel, film and television stars, video crews, journalists, photos flashing and art enthusiasts. So before looking at the work we decided to indulge in a refreshment, a traditional Polish Bison brand grass vodka apple martini. After settling in for a moment and washing down this delicious elixir it was time to look at the works.

Koncert, (1989 25 x 90 cm)

I was immediately drawn to the painting titled *Koncert*, (1989 25 x 90 cm) a panoramic view of emotion. As I stood viewing the piece it was as if all the individuals in the room vanished, and I found myself struck by a singular focus - a Zen energy state - no longer could I hear or sense any movement in the space. Rather the image evoked music and I felt and heard the ambient Avant-Garde music composer and performer, Steven Roaches album 'On This Planet' playing in my mind. It was fantastic to experience a phenomenon of this nature triggered by Grzegorz Stec paintings. The composition first caused a strong emotional reaction following the intellectual analysis. The painting is a large scaled fogscape in black and washes of gray moving towards white light. In the foreground and background there are characters playing the violin, one dark and one light. A vast expanse separates them. The painting in one glance captures the stark separation, the negative and positive, dark and light of our reality.

Figura II (2004)

Figura I (2001)

Moving through all of the black and white paintings with excitement and wonder (a tad overwhelmed), I walked over to view the color canvases. A powerful use of saturated color with controlled violent brushstrokes. The energy Stec projects in to his abstracted detail, gestures indicating movement, a piece of clothing blurred through use of color and distinctive texture. Immediately the viewer associates these gestures with the human figure, dance, battling knights, festivals and beautiful period costumes.

Tree of Gender / Ciagta Jesien (1995 100 x 140cm)

Some of the works drafted in an epic scale, massive landscapes, crowds of thousands, dramatic tension, and mythological, allegoric fantasies. At first glance one is not sure what they are looking at, but dive deeply into the world and clarity of the scene unfolds. The painting *Tree Of Gender / Ciagta Jesien*, 1995. A dance of naive beings around the archetypal "[tree of life](#) [2]" revealing the truth of what is currently taking place on our planet. The trees branches and sky merge into one grotesque atmosphere blocking the heavens to the earth exposing the pollution and murder of mother earth.

Drezwo 1 (2002 100 x 140 cm)

In all of this discussion of darkness the opposed painting *Drezwo 1* (Above) providing the viewer with a sense of hope and restoration of mother earth. A sky and branches expressing the beauty and connection to the heavens.



Smierc Klauna (1991 58 x 91 cm)

From The Author

My strongest desire is that my paintings should arouse not only at a glance from a distance, but that they should reveal new values on closer examination - tiny details, puzzles. A picture should be sensual in its macro and micro - structure. It should bear a problem (you call it a theme) not just any problem, but one that is not indifferent in a purely personal sense. Better still, the theme should be allowed to qualify the form, and the form to influence the theme. Let them mutually complement one another. In order to achieve this, I'm convinced that inner being is a necessity- not contrived nor assigned. Despite my desires, it is almost impossible to complete a painting which would relay a horizon of experiences and at the same time provoke maximum aesthetic and intellectual satisfaction; a painting that would arouse and remind one of a secret.

Perhaps all together this is unworkable? I think not. I have encountered such workmanship. When successful the contrary attitudes between the literary character of the composition and its plasticity is pointless. In my opinion, the purpose of these languages is not to describe various objects, but rather the varied aspects of those same objects. If this is the case, they should be allowed to infiltrate one another.- From Grzegorz Stec's letter to Józef Czapski, Cracow, April 5, 1988

Stec, born in Cracow, Poland, in 1955 graduated from the Faculty of Graphic Arts in the Academy of the Arts in Cracow in 1981.

Kuilsy 1 (1998 73 x 100 cm)

Below photos from the event and more information

Photo Plate Clockwise: Consul General of the Republic of Poland in New York Mr. Krzysztof Kasprzyk, Grzegorz Stec- artist-painter and poet, Agata Ostrowska- polish Foreign Correspondent (Twoj Styl), International Executive Vice President Peter Makula, International supermodel Anja Rubik, standing next to the painting Chtopiec i Sztandary, Interior of the De Lamar Mansion exhibition space: Consul General Mr. Krzysztof Kasprzyk addressing the exhibition audience, Designer Danielé Perna, Marek Osinski- Exhibition Coordinator, Grzegorz Stec's North America Sales Representative & Manager

If you are interested in opening yourself up to powerful emotions and flooding your mind with endless analysis Kurier Plus Gallery will be exhibiting Grzegorz Stec art works From May 2nd to the 7th.

Opening Reception Friday, May 2, 2008

6:30 - 9:30 pm

Kurier Plus Gallery

718-389-3018

145 Java Street

Brooklyn, NY 11222

Marek Osinski- Exhibition Coordinator, Grzegorz Stec's North America Sales Representative & Manager: mosinski1@nyc.rr.com [3]

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- [2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tree_of_Life_%28Judeo-Christian%29
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