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Artistic Discipline: Fine Arts

The Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, the Faculty of Sculpture

A REVIEW

of the doctoral dissertation and artistic achievements of Mr Patryk Rogiński drawn up in connection with a doctoral degree conferment procedure in the field of arts, in the artistic discipline of fine art and art conservation, initiated by the Artistic Discipline Council of the Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław.

The topic of the doctoral dissertation: "Anti-aestheticism of the human figure in contemporary sculpture"

Basic information about the doctoral student

Mr Patryk Rogiński was born in 1993 in Wrocław. From 2006 to 2012 he attended the Group of Art Schools in Wrocław, in the years 2012 - 2015 he was a student of the Bachelor's programme at the Faculty of Glass and Ceramics at the Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, during which he was granted an Erasmus scholarship and studied at the University of Wolverhampton in the UK. From 2015 to 2017, at the same Faculty in Wrocław, he pursued his MA degree under the supervision of Professor Grażyna Płocica and Professor Gabriel Palowski. He graduated with distinction in 2017. In 2019, Mr Patryk Rogiński started his studies in the Interdepartmental Doctoral Study Programme with English as the language of instruction at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław under the supervision of Professor dr hab. Adam Abel at the Faculty of Ceramics and Glass in the Studio of Intermedia Activities in Ceramics.

Evaluation of artistic and academic achievements

Mr Patryk Rogiński has participated in several group exhibitions and festivals in Poland and abroad, including in Spain and Estonia, and has very modest achievements in terms of individual exhibitions, i.e. only two in 2017, both of them concerning the

presentation of his MA diploma work. Several of the doctoral student's works were included in paper or electronic form in publications accompanying the events.

2021 Lacuna Festivals - Distance - Group exhibition, Lanzarote, Spain
2021 Give me Emotions - Mural creation project, Bytom, Poland
2021 Zine Without a Crown - Work published in a magazine, Wrocław, Poland
Zine Without a Crown | issue VIII | p. 26 | publication date: 30.11.2020
publisher: Zine Without a Crown | publication date: 11.2020
2020 Satellite Imagery - Group Exhibition, Tartu, Estonia
2019 Zeniths - Group Exhibition, Wrocław, Poland
Work in catalogue: Zeniths/Zenithy | ISBN - 978-83-66321-08-3
p. VII | publisher: ASP Wrocław | publication date: 21.06.2019
2019 XXL Ceramics - Workshops and presentations, Wrocław, Poland
2018 Underwater Wrocław - Group exhibition, Wrocław, Poland
2017 Respira - MA diploma with distinction, Wrocław, Poland
2017 I Am Human - MA diploma with distinction, Wrocław, Poland
2016 Intersection - Arrangement of a conference hall at the Scandic Hotel, Wrocław, Poland
TV interview as part of the ESK
2012/15 Work for Contrast Wrocław, Wrocław, Poland

The work made in 2016 as part of the Scandic Hotel competition - an arrangement of the conference hall in the form of a four-metre installation with a lamp function is worth mentioning; the PhD student was awarded the first prize for it.

Mr Patryk Rogiński is currently the manager of the Grupa Glasso Wrocław glass studio. He was also involved in photography, e.g. for the Contrast magazine, and he completed an internship as a ceramist in the workshop of dying crafts in the Folk Culture Museum in Węgorzewo.

I learned from the academic supervisor's opinion that the doctoral candidate participated actively in the entire didactic process of creating students' semester works in the studio, as well as independently supervised an Erasmus programme student, offering her both technological and conceptual support. The doctoral student has not provided such information at all.

Evaluation of the doctoral dissertation, the written part

The doctoral dissertation of Mr Patryk Rogiński entitled "**Anti-aestheticism of the human figure in contemporary sculpture**" is entirely devoted to anti-aestheticism and a re-definition presented by the doctoral student through the prism of his own experiences in the context of contemporary sculpture. The work is divided into six parts, of which only parts II and III comprise substantive content, parts I and IV are the

introduction and conclusion, and parts V and VI are the bibliography and the table of contents, respectively. The second chapter provides definitions, a general background to anti-aesthetic tendencies and an academic background to the concept of anti-aestheticism. The third chapter is the doctoral student's reflection on his own experiences and their influence on the dissertation.

In chapter II entitled "DEFINITION" Mr Patryk Rogiński introduces a number of terms, definitions and meanings of anti-aestheticism in the context of post-modern transformations taking place in sculpture. He points to the sources of anti-aestheticism primarily from the perspective of human biology, social life, literature and technology. It is also to some extent an announcement of his intention to search for his own definition and even expand it with his own experiences. The doctoral student points out that many art theoreticians and historians have attempted to define the roles of postmodernism and anti-aestheticism in literature and in visual arts, giving the example of Veerle Thielemans who speaks of the concept of 'affect', i.e. the influence of material reality on the perception of art and how the object itself becomes a link between an artist and a viewer. He also states, following S. Brown, that the source of an object ceases to be important - it is the emotional reaction that becomes the primary motif. The doctoral student also points out the important role of figurativeness in his work and in the works of contemporary artists, and emphasises its current renaissance, regardless of whether the body appears in the context of classical beauty or ugliness. This always remains a subjective matter of the themes the artist takes up. It is natural that the figure, the character, the body is a response to changing times. This, in turn, generates a demand for the human figure in art, and in the case of the doctoral student, this translates into sculpture in ceramics. Mr Patryk Rogiński writes that we live in strange times, we are inundated with a mass of unwanted information, pictures that are scary, artificial, unnatural, ugly and even grotesque and turpist, which he places in opposition to anti-aestheticism. He also points out the significant role played by the games industry, digital graphics and film in the methods of processing the human figure in 3D software. According to the doctoral student, anti-aestheticism is closely linked to deformation, negative perception and the viewer's reactions to physical impairments. He claims that for an artist even the most difficult and heart-breaking topics should not constitute a limit, hence many of us are inspired by diseases and their impact on human life. He gives the example of a disease called harlequin foetus, which could be an aesthetic object in itself, were it not for the awareness that it is a sensitive feeling child. Writing about mental disorders and their influence on perception, the doctoral student also mentions his own situation with depressive disorders which can distort his perception.

In the second part of chapter II, Mr Patryk Rogiński presents the academic foundation of anti-aestheticism in the context of art movements. Juxtaposing the concepts of anti-aestheticism with revulsion art, he states that revulsion art uses the body and secretions in a vulgar or even offensive way, thus becoming a commentary for socio-political events. Anti-aestheticism, on the other hand, does not need to shock, it is an enhancement of the emotional reaction between the viewer and the object. The doctoral student provides the example of Ron Mueck's sculpture "Baby", where in order to achieve a unique means of expression only two measures were applied: a giant scale and intensified colour saturation. The doctoral student also mentions posthumanist philosophy, which treats the human figure in a way similar to anti-aestheticism. These are transhumanism and posthumanist thought. In this section, Mr Patryk Rogiński also draws attention to the importance of the material in developing the discomfort of perception. He rightly claims that contemporary materials, i.e. resins and silicones, have allowed for unlimited experimentation in the imitation of the human body. He also gives several examples of artists (Patricia Piccinini from Australia, Sara Renzetti and Antonello Serra from Italy, Felix Dac from Romania, Jason Hopkins from the UK) who use these materials to create sometimes very large naturalistic figures. He mentions Jason Briggs, an artist working in ceramic material, which is much closer to us, and artists using materials such as polymer clays (Jonathan Payne), wax (John Isaac) and even textiles (Rosa Verloop). Elaborating on the material used to create the work of art, the doctoral student pays particular attention to the importance of the object's surface, colour, texture and the influence of the environment on the perception of the anti-aesthetic work. In my opinion this seems to be normal and important in all types or trends of sculpture, as nothing exists without a context. The chapter ends with the conclusion that the material from which the sculpture is made has a great impact on the aesthetics of the object. Examples of measures applied to enhance the impact on the viewer are also provided. These include enlarging or diminishing body parts in relation to one another, adding or subtracting body parts, and even depicting a chimera - a creature combining an animal and a human.

Chapter III of the written part, entitled 'PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION', is a description of the author's own experiences during his PhD studies in a difficult time of a global pandemic. Regardless of the difficulties, it was a useful time for the doctoral student, during which he developed his individual style of figuration in ceramics. He also presents his own path to anti-aestheticism in his works, also classifying it as a separate mode of expression in art, although he states that it is difficult for him to explain the reasons for taking this path. He highlights the very strong influence of his own mental disorders of a depressive origin on his work, which puts me as a reviewer of the doctoral dissertation in an awkward position. Let me quote: ... "The first - and most important - context that appears in this part of the dissertation is the previously mentioned mental

health and its disorders. First of all, depressive disorders. Nowadays, especially with the ongoing pandemic in the world, and above all the isolation that goes with it - the impact of mental health on every area of life has been widely disclosed".... The doctoral student states that the mental state often has a direct bearing on a person's physical state, or that disability is a consequence of depression. In the doctoral dissertation, physical deformation is a very important part for the doctoral student, but as he writes, it is largely due to the reification of mental disorders. This reification also becomes a direct inspiration for the author to make his sculptures. The doctoral student's works are based on human anatomy on the one hand, and on the other, he transforms it quite freely, significantly modifying and deforming the external appearance. This is particularly evident in the way he builds the systems of muscle, fat and skin tissues. He enhances all this with colour treatments on the surface, drawing on his own experience with the art of make-up.

Evaluation of the dissertation, the artistic part

In the third and fourth parts of Chapter III, the doctoral student offers a detailed presentation of the works from the series "**Delusions**", which constitute the artistic part of the doctoral dissertation, as well as the technological solutions he applied in the dissertation. Therefore, I point out at the very beginning that the written work and the artistic work naturally interpenetrate, complement each other and constitute a unity. The artistic work of Mr Patryk Rogiński consists of three groups of sculptures: "Parasites", "Impossibility", "Falls" and a series of seven photographs.

The works from the first group, "**Parasites**", are three sculptures of a similar organic character. This composition includes objects entitled: "Nest" 98 x 76 x 51cm, "Parasite" 60 x 45 x 44cm and "Imago" 32 x 29 x 19cm, made of chamotte mass, fired at 1100° C and covered with glazing paints. The sculptures are strongly deformed, exceeding the general framework of the human figure, rather resembling crawling insect larvae, parasites, which for the doctoral student are the embodiment of oppressive, depressive thinking. Through excessive deformation of the form, repetition of bubbles or growths, the concrete basis of the sculpture as well as one definite arrangement is lost. The objects in this composition seem to be in the process of development, forming, initiated by the author.

The second group of sculptures is entitled "**Impossibility**". The composition consists of three objects entitled: "Tearing", 74 x 30 x 24 cm, "Force of Will", 91 x 58 x 24 cm, and "Dysthymia", 52 x 22 x 19 cm, made of chamotte mass, fired successively at 1100° C and two more at 950° C, covered with glazing paints. These sculptures are humanoid forms which for the doctoral student are a response to the problems with performing activities due to the deficiency of the body. The figures, because in this case this is how I can describe the composition, are depicted with a considerable

deformity, without limbs, with a specific medical condition. They seem to make specific gestures, movements, they want to convey something to us, only I cannot interpret it. They scream with their helplessness.

The third composition of sculptures is entitled "**Falls**". It consists of only two objects entitled "Larva", 53 x 39 x 29 cm and "Trial", 70 x 50 x 30 cm. Also made of chamotte mass, fired at 1100° C, "Larva" is coloured with iron oxide in the mass and with a transparent base for glazing paints, and "Trial" is covered with glazing paints. In my opinion this group is closer to the composition entitled "Impossibility", if only for the similarities of human anatomy. These outstretched hands become for me a cry of inequality, tragedy, a symbol of disability and powerlessness, but at the same time they express a willingness to act and change one's space. In my opinion, these three groups of objects can, and should, naturally interrelate, becoming delusions of human existence.

Mr Patryk Rogiński added seven photographs to the sculptures that are the effect of his experiments with anti-aestheticism on a plane. The doctoral student creates the visible deformations with the help of digital and analogue procedures, applying chemical compounds directly onto the photograph. The doctoral student writes that these photographs were intended to complement the sculptures and build relationships between them and their surroundings. For me personally, they become the foreground, taking considerable power away from the objects. I would even state that in these photographs there is more of the anti-aestheticism explored by the doctoral student than in the sculptures. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the photographs combine morbid, deformed spaces with the anatomy of a beautiful human body (photographs no. 60, 61, 62, 65 from the series of photographs entitled "Decay").

In the last section, the doctoral student describes the advisability of the choice of ceramic material for the works included in the dissertation, even providing the exact percentage composition of dry clay to fired clay plus colouring oxides. He points out that clay gave him more control over the creation of the work and the appearance of additional effects due to its grain size. This is how he writes about the material: ... "I wanted to interpret the theme of the body in ceramic sculpture, simultaneously addressing issues that are important to me. Regardless of the complexities connected with the subject matter, it was the process itself that encouraged me to work with ductile material. Touch analogous to human contact introduces a tangible relationship. The tactile perception between the hand and the material can create an almost emotional bond. The feeling of temperature or ductility are important factors influencing the work with a given medium"... The doctoral student draws our attention to the well-known impression, which accompanies us all during the process of creating a work of art - the direct contact with the ceramic material. What is surprising,

however, is the fact that he uses low-melting glazing paints (150 - 200°C), which he applies to the surfaces of already fired ceramic objects. For me personally, this is an unprofessional and kitschy approach to sculpture in ceramics, which I understand quite classically, but it seems that the doctoral student does it on purpose and very thoughtfully. It gives him complete control over the surface of the object and the colour, which does not change during firing. I can only confirm after the doctoral student that also in this case he fits into anti-aestheticism without taking into consideration the so-called nobility of the ceramic material.

Summary

In his doctoral dissertation entitled "**Anti-aestheticism of the human figure in contemporary sculpture**" devoted entirely to anti-aestheticism, Mr Patryk Rogiński focuses on new research solutions and issues and formulates his own means of artistic expression in a unique way. He seems to have found an answer to the problem of anti-aestheticism in art, showing his works at the opposite pole to the concept of classical beauty. He writes: "...What I call anti-aestheticism is my own concept to define a specific way of representing the body and its deformation...". For me, however, the cycle of his works seems to be closed. I do not see a beginning in it, but I do see an end. Objects so strongly deformed show the final stage of human existence. The question I pose here is what more can be done, how to deform, what to take away or what to add so that this cycle could be continued. This is why I believe that more of the discussed anti-aesthetic content is to be found in the photographs, which open the door to his further explorations. And the use of glazing paints to decorate the surface of such a noble material as ceramics gives me additional discomfort, but I think this is what the doctoral student had in mind. The problem, well identified, described and presented, probably also results from the doctoral student's own experience of illness, which he refers to several times, and which is additionally strengthened by the ongoing pandemic. Despite my doubts, the written and artistic parts interpenetrate and are coherent.

Conclusion

Having thoroughly read and analysed the documentation of artistic achievements and other documentation necessary to write a review of the doctoral dissertation of Mr Patryk Rogiński, I am confident that the presented doctoral dissertation meets the requirements of the Act on Academic Degrees and Academic Title in Art (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 261). **In view of the above, I propose to the Artistic Discipline Council of the Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław to adopt a resolution to confer a doctoral degree to Mr Patryk Rogiński.**

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