

Suggestions and Sublimations by Mateusz Choróbski

A silent, almost secret, majestic stride based on the adoption of organic and non-organic elements belonging to the world around him, as well as on the exploration of the material and immaterial limits defining their outline, nurtures the creative path of Mateusz Choróbski (Radomsko, 1987). This has been so since the time when – upon completing his studies at University of Fine Arts in Poznań and then at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw – he made his first appearance on the exhibition scene. His aptitude of observing the world and listening to every aspect, every fragment and every detail of reality, together with his capacity to translate this inclination into visual compositions out of any pre-arranged patterns has been clear since the beginning. His art evades any traditional labels, as is evident from his commitment to creating works that make themselves explicit through a well-structured variety of linguistic systems, including plastic, video, performative and installation art. These works draw from a varied iconographic and iconological repertoire that is often inspired by daily reality and the subjects that span its development (such as common objects, ordinary materials, natural organisms). In doing so, they manage to touch every aspect of human perception, characterizing themselves with a marked multi-sensory quality.

By looking at such propositions, clear in their compositional framework and dense in their substance, the spectator is immediately stimulated by their visual, intellectual and emotional profile, becoming an active part of the works – almost an accomplice, given the virtual mechanism that is triggered. This phenomenon is highlighted by the modesty of the materials, which provides a leitmotiv in many of Choróbski's works. Likewise, it acts as a warning reminding the viewer that existence is temporary and that everything in life will pass or transform in due course. The installation becomes the witness of an inescapable phenomenon that the artist interprets by originating a sequence of *apparitions*. These vary in their dynamics and techniques, documenting (both visually and plastically) a series of evanescent and ever-changing experiences. A sort of chronology of memories is thus created, manifesting itself according to the logic of the processes' dynamics; reinterpreting their codes and modernizing their syntax.

Starting from the observation of physical and chemical natural phenomena, Choróbski attains the *objets trouvés* that, like mineral and vegetal elements, he composes and decomposes in plastic conglomerates. At times, these are functional (as in the case of his luminous works), and their presence considerably changes the perception of the space hosting them, both figuratively and materially. The genetic and structural modifications of the materials used in these works occur in line with self-determination logics akin to those found in *process art*. Once he has completed his intervention (disassembling and reassembling an object, as well as decomposing and recomposing its founding substance), the artist observes its development. He lets time and matter play their part, hence amplifying the effects of what he has already created himself. This technique speeds up the transition from chronicling (i.e. the artist's intervention) to fantasy (i.e. the action made by the physical and chemical laws completing the previous process).

In the same fashion, the artist's work continuously lands on parallel worlds, yet is always characterized by a strong personal influence originating from his contemplation on existence. His work deals with universal topics related to the spheres of senses and perception. Equally, it is deeply autobiographical, as it stems from cognitive processes connected to his own experience, alongside the many aspects that nurture that experience day after day. It is with surprising ease that Choróbski synthesizes this complex reality, creating articulate simplicity. He also summarizes the results of his reflective study using visual elements that are at the same time dense on a semantic plane and graced with a refined modesty on an expressive plane. The main sub-

ject under examination is never interpreted by the artist in a “literal” way, but, on the contrary, by following an unpredictable, fluid and open path, even when those reflections spring from subjects whose outlines are well-defined under their chronological and cultural profile.

His solo exhibition in Lublin is proof of this. It is the result of a mix of suggestions – partly emotional and partly intellectual. The former develop from the exhibition space and its urban positioning in the heart of Lublin’s old town; the latter stem from the poem *The House-wreckers* by Charles Reznikoff (“*The house-wreckers have left the door and a staircase, / now leading to the empty room of night*”). Simultaneously surveying the first and reading the second became – as Choróbski puts it – “the two starting points” of the project *The Empty Room of Night*. This project is “based on them, albeit not literally”, instead relying on “intuition and feelings”, meaning that “somehow space and poetry affected my way of thinking about the exhibition”.

Space is the chief protagonist of the installation *The Empty Room of Night (roofing)* (2019). The grille that half covered the window facing the street has been removed, and the main hall of the gallery is flooded in light. The effects of this light are multiplied by its refraction on the steel sheets (which, incidentally, cover the rooftops of many Polish buildings) that the artist used to cover a radiator. A sort of luminescent tunnel is thus created, perfectly connecting the outdoor with the indoor space through modifying the perception of the structure considerably and turning the hall into a volume of light. This effect is further emphasized inside the hall by the presence of four sculptures that all have the same main structure – made from parts of an old radiator, the type that was once common in public spaces – but differentiated from one another by the vitreous shell that wraps around their shapes. Two of them, *The Empty Room of Night (cupping therapy cup, radiator)* (2019), are covered by a transparent and slightly milky vitreous concoction created by shredding the tiny cups used in so-called cupping therapy (a common treatment for disorders of the blood and lymphatic systems). The other two, *The Empty Room of Night (thermos filler, radiator)* (2019), are wrapped in a golden-glared mixture resulting from the pulverization of glass thermos fillers.

The four works alter considerably and variously the way in which the environment is perceived. This is effected on a physical level (by remodelling and readjusting the architectural volumes), a sensory level (by radiating an artificial light that melts into the natural light seeping from the window), an emotional level (the glass of the therapy cups ideally leads to the concept of treatment or healing, while the glass of the thermos fillers brings back the idea of warmth and comfort), and a cultural level (the radiator, medical aids and food carriers are symbols of household traditions, as well as of habits and customs recurring in the daily life of various social classes). A similar solution is echoed by *The Empty Room of Night (thermos, gutter)* (2019) located in the basement. This work is a sort of multi-coloured totem shaped by the shells of thermoses and pieces of gutter. Once more, the action of Choróbski translates the ordinary into the extraordinary, exalting all that concretely makes it real – parts, matter, shape, function – into the untouchability of a reflection, into the incorporeality of a thought, thus staying coherent with its own poetry.

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