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***Portrait - a map of information about a person, ones life and the environment***

Abstract

In the introduction to my dissertation, I describe my Lemko-Polish roots and my family's experiences, which motivated me to try to preserve the memory of my relatives and friends in my artwork.

The main questions posed in the research and artistic work are: "will I succeed in expressing experience - the invisible but perceptible - through the language of painting? Is such a portrait even possible?" and: "how do I create an image so that it refers us back to this concrete prototype? What artistic means should be used to enrich the show the truth about the person?"

I began my search by outlining the origin of the portrait. I went from Neolithic skulls clad in clay, through Egyptian sarcophagi, to an analogy with Baroque epitaphs. I also marked the connection between portraiture and the human experience of death and attempts to resist it by preserving the presence of the dead in images.

In the following chapters, I considered painting that imitates visible reality. I started from Plato, who argued that it was impossible to render the essence of an object in painting. The metaphor of Plato's Cave and the thoughts on painting contained in the *Sophist* and the *State* demonstrate that imitative painting (*eidolopoiike techne*), according to Plato, is incapable of telling the essence of the preimage. Next, I moved on to the theology of the icon, which was intended to reveal the truth of the prototype. I considered the dogmatic foundations of the icon, such as the Co-eternity of the visible Christ and the invisible God. The icon had to abandon the realistic imagery that limited it and develop its own artistic language that allowed it to convey the essence.

I tried to analyze the usefulness of artistic means that I discovered in icon and guild painting, such as: text in the painting, klejmo, painting format, symbols, ways of presenting faces, including *silhouette* portraits. I have tried to show that the use of these means creates a portrait in the shape of a metaphorical map, which contains information about the portrayed person.

I also described what function such a portrait would perform today, in times of "inflation" of images that takes place in the space of social media and the universal availability of photos.

I concluded that the function of a portrait can be found in the permanent preservation of the memory and image of the portrayed person. In the case of photographs, this phenomenon does not

occur due to the low physical and information life span of this medium.

I came to the conclusion that creating a real portrait requires abandoning realistic imaging of the world and focusing on the painting as an ordered map - a collage in which artistic means (face, text, klejmo, symbols) complement each other. I believe that such a portrait is possible to create and will preserve the memory and the truth about person and ones identity.

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