

ποσσοκού or the postulates of painting

1.

Painting could constitute a perfect model of conflict, of the essence of conflictivity itself. Instead of a dispute taking place on a common platform – when we share certain basic assumptions, rules and, shortly speaking, share the same world that we live in – painting initiates a confrontation between two realities, whose mutual relationship is difficult to define. The relationship between three-dimensional space, where our life seems to happen (including the life of the painter, canvas, paints and all the gestures of the act of creation) and two-dimensional space as the perfect horizon to see the effects of the act of painting, slightly resembles the conflict of yesteryear between spirit and flesh – in the sense that this ultimate "view" would have to be something spiritual. Quite the contrary. In a sense, comparing these two spaces is problematic, but at the same time we are convinced that there is some kind of relationship between them. However, the nature of this relationship is so peculiar that it is difficult to find its basis (we could say "plane", but in this case it is just one of the sides). The conflict between spirit and matter sometimes provoked the reduction or elimination of one of the sides (for the sake of radical materialism or equally radical idealism). On the other hand, the case of painting and confrontation of 2- and 3-dimensional space is more interesting, because such hasty gestures are more difficult. This conflict does not end too fast, it lingers. It is understood differently than the traditional concept of fighting – landing blows and clashing powers – but in a more specific sense, without blows and clashes that actually join the two extremes (*ergo*: the conflict becomes neutralised). The conflict would always take place between universes, and painting can be treated as a matrix.

2.

There is nothing more problematic than the transformation that allegedly takes place thanks to painting – it is easy to speak of a "change of status", "passage between universes", "shaping the form of matter" or even "bestowing meaning". It is necessary to give up the mistaken model focused on crafting (shaping), viewed even as (al)chemical (decomposition, transformation, synthesis, transmutation). Also the religious model (transubstantiation) keeps "substrates" and "products" too close together. The painter himself – clearly aware of this problem – used diverse terms: *abstraction, sublimation, psycho/somo/socio-analysis*, each time elaborating a separate *route*, to not only describe the essence of metamorphosis in painting (*what and how is going on*), but also to lead people through that "route" (*I don't know, take a look for yourselves*). Either way, we should rather think of numbers and objects (physical, mental, etc.) – is there any kind of transformation of the former into the latter (let us forget for a moment about the question of numbers as objects)? Numbers can be treated as results of generalization (of all the multiplicity that exists in the world, and many different methods of counting), objects – as forms of incarnations (of not just numbers, obviously, but also figures or functions): the mutual independence of both worlds and the parallel character of events within them are more important. Painting could be defined as being present and making discoveries in 2- and 3-dimensional space. Sometimes, it would resemble the counting of nuts, in other – less frequent – occasions, it would consist in creating theorems and working on numbers as such.

3.

At times, everything seems tangible, and the painter basically gets his hands dirty working with material media of many kinds; and in a sense, there isn't a lot of difference between the matter of impressions, emotions, somatic experiences and the physicality of pigments, putty knives and colours. Nonetheless, from the very beginning, many things take place in the two-dimensional universe. – And I mean something more than just the area of the work of art itself. More specifically, both the painter and his work serve as links between the two universes or inhabit both of them at the same time. Perhaps, we should even say that they are not able to inhabit only one of them. Therefore, the work of a painter always goes hand in hand with a kind of confusion (*where am I?*), and each work bears the stigma of chaos (chaos not as a lack of order, but rather a cruel intermingling of worlds, their mutual invasion, both highly effective and hard to locate). We don't always know what processes are taking place in each of those spaces. Although this collation might feel trivial, the art of painting still preserves traces of the Paleolithic – because the awareness of mutually overlapping universes was born in the caves, and painting served as a tool to intensify this phenomenon. And there is nothing religious about it. *Höhere Wesen* have more in common with the surface of a canvas than with the afterworld.

4.

Therefore, the art of painting has some inherently atheistic traits. It can shock us, it can move us, it can even "represent" something – but more importantly it does not lead us anywhere, and does not consist in

influencing people, initiating the flow of power from the work to its viewers, or a transmission of "views" dedicated for senses and minds (powers are invoked by the theatre, while images belong to the cinema). On the contrary: painting would rather leave us in our 3-dimensional universe, while at the same time falling onto the 2-dimensional one, similar to a lesson in physics, when we start to think about the world with formulas and equations, and then realize that actually it is the formulas that we perceive as our world.

5.

The choice of egg tempera, for the sake of colours and against the aura of illusion: matt and intensified colours, not necessarily ascetic, a reduction of the transcendence surrounding the work of art (another dimension) to a single, atheist plane. The planes are always numerous. Painting is an art of making layers, accumulating and delaminating (just like the theatre is an art of the backstage and staging: entering and exiting; while the cinema – an art of editing: of depths and consequences). This multiplicity of layers generates, obviously, numerous *effects* (perspectives, compositions, harmonies), but at the point of departure, the only thing that exists is the problem of relations between the layers (apply, reveal, cover, uncover). Up to a point, this problem is a coping strategy for the issue of interdimensional transitions, it's the pictorial way of presenting this topic. Tempera is one of the answers (sometimes – all the contrary – we will have to break through the layers, detach from the pictorial support, burn it and punch holes through it – this is the case of late drawings by Artaud).

6.

The painter's confusion in view of parallel universes, this curious access to both of them, means that painters operate solely within the element of means. Everything is a means for a goal, or everything needs to be transformed into one. The painter focuses solely and exclusively on constantly finding and unleashing means – instead of just using them. Even the apparent goals, senses, meanings, intentions, experiences and sources – all of them require careful elaboration to change into means. Therefore – apart from the obvious means-tools that usually come to mind when we think about painters – there is a sophisticated procedure involving huge machines (equipped with user manuals) that are put into motion and kept operational for years, including meta-automata used to process everything into means. *Quotation marks, What? With what? Table, course, brain research*, and finally *painting* itself (e.g. as a means to formulate sculptural issues – see: project "Year of Sculpture"). The design and construction of machines are the basic tasks of painters. The painters of the past used to marvel us and surprise us with their second role of engineers. Perhaps, in the end, painting has more of engineering in itself than we ever expected.

7.

In the famous fragment from *Science of Logic*, Hegel praises a simple agricultural tool as a means: something that mediates the relation between humans and nature, something more than just an expression of desires and goals – it is the incarnation of reason itself. Obviously, it does suffer wear and tear during its existence, but it does not disappear after our desires are fulfilled. It is only worthwhile to create means. But it's worth it – Marx would add – if they are beyond the control of their creators and can be used by other owners. For sure, the pictorial production of means does not take place *for us*. It results from the requirements of the situation in which the painter finds himself, facing the mysterious relationship between two universes. Therefore, should we use means created in this way – for our aesthetic satisfaction, or investing into art? And what if – due to the specificity of these requirements – we should rather *not use* those means? In such case, the proper time for them to last would be the *weekend*. At the same time, we should prevent the appropriation of artistic means. Society would have to become one big court, providing the perfect environment for the reproduction of means, placing orders and organising more and more of such weekends. This would – of course – previously require a change in the form of auto-reproduction of this society.