

Marcin Maciejowski

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Painter, illustrator, author of press illustrations and cartoons. Born on June 14, 1974 in Babice near Kraków, lives in Kraków.

After graduating from Secondary Technical School of Construction in Krzeszowice, he studied at the architecture department of the Kraków University of Technology from 1994 -1997 . After his third year, he dropped his architecture studies and continued his higher education at graphics design department at the **Academy of Fine Arts** in Kraków. He obtained his diploma in 2001 at professor Piotr Kunce's studio of poster design. Maciejowski uses oil paints and a 4B pencil.

Since 2000 he has worked for the weekly magazine Przekrój, where he publishes cartoon entitled "I live here and I feel good in here". Between 1996 - 2001 together with **Wilhelm Sasnal, Rafał Bujnowski**, Marek Firk and Józef Tomczyk "Kurosawa" Maciejowski belonged to an artistic formation Grupa Ładnie or Ład-nie. He founded and edited an artzine "Słynne Pismo we Wtorek" / "Famous Magazine on Tuesday". He is the author of the work **How to live in here now?** displayed at billboards in many cities in Poland by Galeria Zewnętrzna AMS / Outdoor Gallery AMS.

Currently, Maciejowski is affiliated with Galeria Zderzak / Zderzak Gallery in Kraków and Galerie Mayer Kainer in Vienna. In 2001 he was awarded a scholarship by Bayer AG concern in Leverkusen. He was awarded Paszport "Polityki", an award presented by the weekly magazine Polityka, for the year 2002 in the field of visual arts "for perceptiveness, sense of humour and innovative use of advertising media stylistics to describe contemporary Polish customs".

Maciejowski is one of the most interesting artists of his generation. He has created an original and at the same time, clearly readable, style of painting allowing him to communicate in a simple and direct manner with viewers of different backgrounds. Inscriptions are an integral part of his paintings, which help the artist to explain what is painted. Maciejowski paints in a realistic fashion, depicting simplified scenes and schematically presented characters. His works are narrative and figurative. They formally hint on concise language of ads, posters, cartoons and press illustrations. Maciejowski is a realist not only in a sense of painting style which reflects reality, but also in his particular interest in issues of ordinary contemporaneity.

Maciejowski paints from photographs cut out from daily newspapers and colour weekly magazines. He often uses the photographs he takes himself. The illustrations that interest him or make him laugh, the artist first collects in special notebooks, and then depicts them on canvas. He treats newspapers like sketch books. Sometimes, Maciejowski literally copies illustrations, but usually he adds various alterations: he removes unnecessary details, uses fragments of photographs, or changes their format. As for the inscriptions, he usually makes them up, or he uses a fragment of a text attached to the original photos, or quotes original captions. His paintings distinguish themselves with light sketches and a clear contour filled with flat areas of colour. The artist uses characteristic, loose track of paintbrush and tends towards cartoon shortcuts.

The artist draws themes for his paintings and drawings from newspaper and television iconosphere while focusing mainly on what can be found in media. His art reflects a "second-hand" reality; it shows what has already been selected and undergone medialization process, it gives a specific testimony of a condition of the social consciousness because people see the world as it has been created by mass media. Thus, on Maciejowski's paintings the images of celebrities appear (e.g. Claudia Schiffer with a sign "Naturlich Blond", Andrzej Gołota "Gołota Polak ze złota" / "Gołota Golden Pole", popular painter Joanna Sarapata "Subtle acts of Joanna Sarapata are created under a moment of inspiration"), criminal events (fights of football fans, car thieves caught red-handed), sensational news ("Tajemnicze kręgi w zbożu" / "Mysterious Crop Circles") "Kazimierz Domański miał już ponad 200 objawień" / "Kazimierz Domański has already had more than 200 revelations"), but also social and economic problems ("Młodzi nie chcą się uczyć ani pracować" / "The young do not want to study nor work"), family violence, unemployment, subculture of "dresiarze" / "jocks").

Copying the newspaper illustrations on canvas, Maciejowski takes away their status of an accidental, one-time documentary record, and extracts what is most significant, that is meaning. The fragmentary shot painted by oil paints on canvas acquires an attribute of a permanent depiction, without a temporary autonomous representation. What becomes most important are not specific events but information behind them. It spreads messages about not only what is of interest to an average Polish person, but show the mechanism of reality representation in media as well.

Following a collective/group exhibition Dobrze / In Ordnung (2002) organized in Vienna by a curator Goschka Gawlik as a part of the Polish Year in Austria, a prestigious Mayer Kainer Gallery became interested in Maciejowski's work. The fruitful cooperation between them in a next few years gave rise to a development of Maciejowski's international career.

Maciejowski displayed works painted in a characteristic photographic style. An interesting series **Młodzi** / **"the Young** (2003) showed 25 portraits of world-famous and Polish artists (including Cezanne, Picasso, Pollock, Beuys, **Kantor, Nowosielski, Dwurnik, Libera**) in their youth. Maciejowski referred to black and white, passport size photographs, which gave an effect of unification of the images of famous individualities since they do not differ much on his paintings. It is noticeable that the artist concentrated on the person's hairstyle and collars, omitting the psychological quality of the portrait.

I had an idea I could search for portraits of famous artists from the times they were young and these portraits will not be the ones commonly recognised, but that their faces will look like faces of average people. I also thought I could mix portraits of world famous artists with those less known. Because everybody deserves the same treatment, all of them were engaged in art and should not be classified according to arbitrary category of success.

Similarly to **Marynarze na kotwicy** / **"Mariners at Anchor** (2003), the title painting of the exhibition **Zachowujmy się normalnie** / **"Let's Behave Normally** (2003) follows the convention of a group portrait. In a series of paintings depicting amateur weapon constructors, the artist juxtaposes their faces, painted in a similar style of an ID-size photography, with guns exposed as attributes completing their images. Military themes appear in other paintings of this exhibition. The most intriguing work is entitled **Baza** / **"Base** and depicts a detailed image of an underground, military shelter which brings to mind a computer-game scene.

Maciejowski often admits that in his works he does not criticise reality, but rather describes and promotes it:

As for my approach in visual arts to an established reality, it is not critical in a negative sense (I do not mock reality, as it may seem at first); it is meant more to advertise and promote reality itself, that is life stories and misfortunes of people (friends, characters of press articles, movies etc.).

In June 2004, Galerie Meyer Kainer exhibited Maciejowski's art at an "Art Statements" exhibition during a prestigious art show Art Basel. In this same year, the artist's first individual exhibition was organised in the United States, in the Californian Marc Foxx Gallery, as a result of which four of his paintings were purchased by Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Maciejowski's exhibition overseas was made possible due to the efforts of Galerie Meyer Kainer which represents the artist abroad (at the same time a reproduction of his paintings appeared on the cover of a prestigious Kunstmagazine.) At Marc Foxx Gallery, the artist exhibited works that were a continuation of his interests in the question of infiltration and a dialog with the art world. In particular, he was intrigued by the figure of Picasso, whose images and works he reproduced. The exhibition was opened with a series of paintings on Picasso's life including Picasso's self-portrait (**Boulevard Raspail, 1913**), portraits of his wives (**Dora Maar, Françoise Gilot**), portraits from different life stages (**Picasso 1915/16, Picasso 1928, Picasso 1952**) and reproduction of the artist's famous works (**Picasso's 'Boy with a Pipe'**). The composition of the last painting consists of three elements: reproduction of the title work, black-and-white image of Picasso and an inscription informing that a **Boy with a Pipe** was purchased by an anonymous person for one hundred four million dollars. This convention is followed by the painting **Martwa natura z Cezannem** / **"Still nature with Cezanne** on which the artist inscribed a "memo" informing about the price for which the painting was purchased. One of Maciejowski's works bought by Los Angeles County Museum of Art is a painting entitled **Edyta** / **"Edith** painted on the basis of a source downloaded from internet, which is emphasized by a tool belt visible at the forefront.

The same discursive motif of other artists and their works appeared at Marcin Maciejowski's exhibition "Pictures at the Exhibition" at the Meyer Kainer Gallery in Vienna (2005). The artist exhibited paintings including **Exhibition View** depicting works by Haimo Zobering which were hosted earlier by the same gallery in Vienna, Atelier Dusseldorf, with a view on Gerhard Richter's studio, as well as portraits of acclaimed artists Kazimierz Malewicz, Aleksandr Rodczenko and Marc Rothko. Some of his earlier works were dedicated to Polish avant-garde artists including **Alina Szapocznikow** and **Katarzyna Kobro**.

The paintings of this time clearly indicate that Maciejowski's works do not carry as obvious a message as his earlier ones and open a wide area of interpretation. The painter started leaving the role of a chronicler of contemporary Poland and moving closer to the position of a publicist and reporter. It can be noted that Maciejowski is more interested in universal themes such as art, the figure of an artist, fame or popularity. History is often depicted through motifs of a history of a revolutionary, avant-garde art and the history of resistance movement, which at times the artists combines at his exhibitions. At the exhibition in Vienna, Maciejowski displayed **Pożegnanie (Bór Komorowski)** / **"Farewell (Bór Komorowski)**. Yet, Maciejowski still remains a painter of a warm, kind-hearted irony, a master of portrait and a familiar style of scenic painting, which in his works acquired the up-to-date value. His paintings are sometimes "read" as a newspaper.

Paintings depicting celebrities known from TV or cinema screens constitute an autonomous motif in Maciejowski's art. Images of Claudia Cardinale or Brigitte Bardot are remakes by paint produced on the basis of film scenes. Maciejowski also created a series of paintings depicting famous actresses caught in various poses, in monochromatic palette of greys, at a neutral background and deprived of facial expressions. Scenes, painted as film shots, make whole sequences corresponding to mafia films such as **The Godfather** or **Scarface**. By usage of the "mosaics" form, Maciejowski depicts love stories and ruthless fights between gangsters. In these series, the technique of depriving the models of facial expressions reappears, as if the artist wanted to take their identity or individuality away or even dehumanise them.

The summer of 2006, Maciejowski spent as an artist-in-residence at Österreichische Galerie Belvedere in Vienna. The fruit of this stay was an exhibition "I used to live in Vienna" at the Meyer Kainer Gallery and the artist's participation in a collective exhibition at Atelier Augarten influenced by Egon Schiele works. The title painting is a specific commentary on a then-prevailing conflict on the restitution of works by Gustaw Klimt, towards which the Austrian government made endeavours. In a form of a diagram, the painting depicts the Belvedere building located in a park and portraits of three women in tondos, characters of a conflict on Klimt's oeuvre: Adele Bloch-Bauer, an artist's model depicted on one of his most famous paintings, Maria Altman, the then-owner of the painting, and Elisabeth Gehrler, the Minister of Culture of Austria.

While in Vienna, Maciejowski painted many works devoted to Gustaw Klimt and Egon Schiele. **Nacht Schiele**, a painting depicting both a master and his student, is one of them. The painter created a photomontage based on two old separate photographs and the images of artists "sown" together on canvas painted in en grisaille technique. Another example of the artist's reinterpretation of Klimt is a series of oil paintings with portraits of Maria Beer, which were painted on the basis of subtle portrait sketches by Klimt.

In 2007 a beautifully edited album was published of around 100 reproductions of Maciejowski's paintings exhibited at various exhibitions of the artist including **I Used to Live in Vienna** (Galerie Meyer Kainer, 2006), **Struktury Dobra** / **"Structures of Good (Galeria Raster, Warsaw, 2006), Stan wewnętrzny" / "Internal state** (Centrum Kultury Zamek/ Centre of Culture 'Zamek', Poznan , 2006), **Discovery** (Galeria Leo Koenig, New York, 2005).

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

- 2000 - "Sport i pielęgnacja" / "Sport and Care", Zderzak Gallery, Kraków
- 2001 - "Polska", Zderzak Gallery, Kraków
- 2001 - "18. Stadtmaler", Gallery am Werk, Leverkusen
- 2002 - "Tu żyję i tu jest mi dobrze" / "I Live Here and I'm Comfortable Here, Zachęta Gallery, Warszawa
- 2002 - "Traurig, schon", Gallery Meyer Kainer, Wiedeń
- 2003 - "Zachowujmy się normalnie" / "We're Behaving Normally", PGS, Sopot
- 2004 - "Dziupła/Schlupfloch/Stash", Arsenał Gallery, Białystok
- 2004 - Marc Foxx Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
- 2005 - "Pictures at an Exhibition", Galerie Meyer Kainer, Wiedeń
- 2005 - "Discovery", Gallery Leo Konig, Nowy Jork, USA
- 2006 - "Struktury Dobra" / "Good Structure", Raster Gallery, Warszawa
- 2006 - "I used to live in Vienna", Galerie Meyer Kainer, Wiedeń
- 2007 - "I Wanna Talk To You", Galerie Meyer Keiner, Wiedeń
- 2007 - "Będzie wielka burza" / "There will be a Huge Storm", Gallery Pies, Poznan

- 2008 - "Bildpolitiken", Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg.

Selected Group Exhibitions:

- 2000 - "Scena 2000", **CSW Zamek Ujazdowski**, Warsaw
- 2001 - "Rybie oko" / "Fish Eyes", BGSW, Ustka
- 2001 - "Relaks", Arsenał Gallery, Białystok
- 2001 - "Popelita", Bunkier Sztuki, Kraków
- 2002 - "Dobrze in Ordnung" / "Its Good in Ordnung", Kunstbuero, Wiedeń
- 2002 - "Rzeczywiście, młodzi są realistami" / "Indeed, the Youth are Realistic", CSW Zamek Ujazdowski, Warsaw
- 2003 - "Dessinez avec Desiree", Gallery Meyer Kainer, Wiedeń
- 2004 - "Habitat", Arndt & Partner, Berlin
- 2004 - "Far West, Near East. New Art From Poland", Forum Kunst & Architektur, Essen, Germany
- 2004 - "Under The Red & White Flag, New Art from Poland", Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Litwa
- 2004 - "Under The Red & White Flag, New Art from Poland", Estonian Art Museum, Tallin, Estonia
- 2005 - "Superstars, Von Warhol bis Madonna", Kunsthalle Wien, Wiedeń
- 2005 - "Prague Biennale 2", Kerlin Hall, Praga, Czech
- 2005 - "Stadtmaler / Artists in Residence 1988-2001", Bayer AG, Leverkusen, Germany
- 2005 - "Nach Rykotnik", Die Sammlung EVN, Museum Moderner Kunst, Wiedeń
- 2005 - "Podróże 'Made in Poland' ", Galeria Zderzak, Kraków
- 2005 - "Vom Bild zum Bild. Metamorphose", Museum der Moderne, Rupertinum, Salzburg, Austria
- 2005 - "Wystawa o niczym" / "Exhibit of Nohting", BWA Gallery, Zielona Góra
- 2005 - "In this (our) country", VIA, Turku, Finlandia
- 2006 - "Malarstwo polskie XXI wieku" / "21st Century Polish Painting", Zachęta Gallery, Warszawa
- 2006 - "Nowe tendencje w malarstwie polskim" / "New Trends in Polish Paintings", BWA, Bydgoszcz
- 2006 - "W Polsce, czyli gdzie?" / "In Poland, where?", Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej, Zamek Ujazdowski, Warsaw
- 2006 - "Nach Schiele", Atelier Augarten, Wiedeń, Austria
- 2006 - "Stan wewnętrzny" / "Inner State, Centrum Kultury Zamek, Poznań
- 2006 - "Zuruck zur Figur, Malerei der Gegenwart", Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Monachium, Germany.

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