

## **Jerzy Nowosielski**

*Portraits, Forum Gallery, Cracow (Poland) 1989*

At last there is someone and something to write about! So long have I been the witness and forced participant of a situation when actually you had to invent reasons for writing. All this flood of pseudo-creativity, creativity 'for show', in the market situation of trading in 'art'. It started probably around the 1930's in Paris, when the centre of art was moved from Montmartre to Montparnasse and poor painters – those who could not even afford a pair of shoes – started to get rich.

Who was the last poor painter? The last madman? The last truly crucified artist? Certainly there were a lot of them. Those who were not wanted and accepted by the society that was getting rich. They were thrown out from the restaurants, from the social life. The same society, though, when the last one of the 'madmen' died, or 'kicked the bucket', ceased to scare people with his scandalous presence, could make great money on his artistic heritage. It was at that time that horrible things started to happen in the culture of Western Europe, things which are proper to define as commercialisation of art. Artists smelled money. Fortunes emerged on dead bodies of great martyrs, such as Van Gogh, Gauguin and many others. The last one of 'mad martyrs', at least on the Parisian ground, was probably Amadeo Modigliani, as I don't want to mention Utrillo, the really last martyr poet, captured, artificially bred and fed by the greedy prosperity group.

And here, in poor Poland, again we have a painter, a relatively young artist who amazes us today. What is his place? Amazingly, wonderfully, he is not original. He is not an individuality. He cannot present what is mostly acknowledged at all crowded exhibitions and glamorous events of our world. Who is he? Perhaps, Modigliani, who rose from the dead and returned to finish his work in a different climate and conditions? Let us put aside intuitions and suspicions. In the development of European art there was something which could be defined as the succession of experience. Technical, but also spiritual experience. El Greco was a direct disciple of the Venetians. But when he got old, he reached for a different succession. We know what succession it was.

This is what we have been waiting for. In the second part of the 20th century, no one reached for succession in commercialised, market conditions of the art. This was not allowed. This was not sold. This was not traded in. Unfortunately, spiritual development of art is a continuum. It is a unity of spiritual experience. And when I see that a young artist takes up directly the 'experience' of another artist, who died prematurely 69 years ago, who in a way incorporates himself in the artist's professional life, deepening, finishing and implementing what the other one did not manage to do, I suspect that I am facing a great mystery of development of art, the one that fearful people will not dare to speak of, but which to my joy has been revealed unexpectedly. Let us be brave enough to see and accept it.

*Cracow, 28 January 1989 Jerzy Nowosielski*