

Real

The exhibition entitled 'Real' features the works of students from the VI Studio of Graphic Art – Digital Graphic Art of the University of the Arts in Poznań, headed by Maciej Kurak and Radosław Włodarski. The theme 'Real' was the main subject of classes run in the studio in the academic year 2018/2019.

'Real' refers to the 'here and now' attitude which involves an impartial assessment of reality/facts based on experience and understanding.

Since the emergence of realism, art has been undergoing many changes in the convention of presentation. For example, cubists and expressionists used distortions and 'incorrect' perspectives that more fully conveyed emotions and also presented the properties of a given object and its movement with the use of a static medium, such as graphics, painting and photography. Due to the need to reveal seemingly invisible things that determine our perception, contemporary realistic works can take the forms that do not go hand in hand with the standards of perception. Stereotypical behaviours resulting from widespread cultural principles often refer to topics that are not officially presented. They are seemingly harmless. These are forms of chauvinism, racism and hierarchisation stressing the values

associated with the right of ownership. Negative phenomena, such as speculation, exploitation and extreme self-centeredness are sometimes interpreted positively as effective coping methods in the capitalist system. They are associated with cunningness, taking advantage of opportunities or taking care of self-development.

Our unreflective acceptance of the existing realities is strengthened by popular myths that contain elements of commonly accepted fiction. These half-truths are more convincing because they can be quickly disseminated and easily received.

The persuasive power of half-truths stems from pop-cultural mechanisms involved in the shaping of attractive, communicative messages – they are media products that reach a large number of recipients. Scientific messages are often incomprehensible because their form is more difficult to read.

The display of common elements of culture, the meaning of which is not fully analysed, through artistic activities, reveals hidden stereotypes of behaviour. This shows how the values that are often adopted unreflectively by society shape culture. Behavioural patterns become universally applicable although they are sometimes inappropriate and hardly valuable.

An attitude focused on creativity and self-fulfilment or treating work as a passion, the most important aspect of which is pleasure resulting from the implementation process itself rather than achieving financial benefits is the preferred behaviour in all economic sectors.

This reveals the full acceptance of the precariat's way of functioning, where freedom in work organisation is implemented at the cost of social security. By preferring this model, we often exploit ourselves. Due to the urge to meet the imposed requirements and become a successful person, the boundary between work and leisure disappears. Taking up duties in several places and accepting employment without social benefits are common practices that

result from the desire to succeed. The system of values developed in this way works because it is stimulated by myths accepted in culture. It is often believed that hard work is the key to success but the American dream 'from rags to riches' is often just an illusion in the current structure because the conditions of deep social polarisation discredit those at the bottom of the social ladder. Continuous dissatisfaction, critical assessment related to the amount of time devoted to achieving success and comparing less developed countries with the western core countries are behaviours that maintain the 'world systems'. It seems that the values adopted are not bad and only the way they are understood and implemented can cause distortions. Georges Seurat's painting entitled 'A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte' presenting a congregation, where each person is an independent, self-focused individual, illustrates the present situation. However, let us hope that this vision will slowly change because individualism is realised in self-fulfilment through others and not in contrast to others. Cultural patterns shaped by material values associated primarily with ownership lead to competition understood as a structure of goals in which people want to achieve benefits at the expense of others. In fact, it turns out that only when we start appreciating cooperation, cooperativeness and public good, we will begin to perceive individualism as self-fulfilment through others and realistically influence changes in our environment.

Maciej Kurak