

1.

Jolanta Johnsson

2.

diplomas, degrees

**22.06.2012** Ph.D. in Fine Arts obtained at Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków.  
Thesis' title: *The Human Figure and its Place in Space as an Expression of Dwelling in Solitude and in the Community.*

**28.05.1990** Obtaining Master of Arts at the Faculty of Graphic Arts Academy of Fine Arts – Warsaw.

**03.27.1982** Obtaining Master degree in Finnish philology at the Faculty of Philology.  
Adam Mickiewicz University – Poznań.

3.

Employment

**1990–2002** freelancer artist – painting, drawing and graphics.  
Presenting the work at individual and collective exhibitions.

**2002–2009** occupation in the Polish-Swedish trade company – design, translation, coordination

**2011–2012** teaching the printmaking at the Institute of Art Education at the Maria Grzegorzewska College of Education in Warsaw

**10.01.2013–** lecturer at the European Academy of Fine Art in Warsaw – artistic graphic, graphic design.

4.

As an achievement based on Art. 16th paragraph. 2nd of March 14 2003 about academic degrees, academic titles and degrees and title in art (Dz. U. No. 65, item. 595, as amended.) I present: a series of paintings and graphic entitled: *Landscape in the Abstract and the Portrait.*

### **Landscape in the Abstract and in the Portrait**

Jolanta Johnsson

Gallery U

House of Culture Stokłosy

Inauguration of the Year of Culture in Ursynów

September 2014

## AUTOREFERAT

*Mathematics is the door and the key to knowledge.*

Roger Bacon

These words by medieval English philosopher and mathematician were often heard at my family home. My first conscious memories of my father were connected with the statements about mathematics. I grew up in a family where science and mathematics reigned. Abstract reasoning in mathematics, admiration of the ideal models in geometry – these were topics often discussed. My parents took some math courses at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan and also there obtained Master Degree in physics.

At Polish elementary and high schools science is a subject of significant importance. The students often struggle with various topics and tasks in science because understanding them requires big effort and perseverance. It was no different in mine and my siblings' case. Our parents took part in our science education actively, explaining and helping in solving the problems. Our father enlightened us a lot of things through simple experiments, believing as an experimental physicist that "in order to understand is to see."

These adventures with science which our parents generously offered us had other side – they did not appreciate the humanities. My father said that mathematics is the only "humanistic branch of knowledge" which did not prevent him of reading huge amounts of books of a big variety of topics.

Neither in the close nor in the extended family there were not people involved in art and my inclinations for drawing and painting, which started in the early childhood were "out of nowhere".

In the years 1984–1989 I studied art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. It was the third school in which I had received the student index.

First, after graduating from the high school, I spend one year studding at Warsaw Polytechnic. Then I graduated Faculty of Philology at A. Mickiewicz University in Poznań, receiving a Master's degree in Finnish philology.

Throughout the period of studding on these three faculties grew in me the dream of being the artist combined with a dream to grow it professionally. It came true when in 1989 I received the degree of Master of Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. It started to be my "job". The word "job" – I take this word in quotation marks– because in the case of art it has different meaning in comparison with other areas of human activities. Despite the specificity of art, art education takes place in a normal process, completed with a diploma – a document confirming the professional competence of Master of Arts.

## **WORKING AS AN ARTIST**

After graduation I have tried to achieve my own way of expression and this process continues to this day. During these years two subjects have emerged and dominated my work: landscape and human.

I created a significant number of paintings in oil, as well as drawings and graphic works, which were presented at 21 individual exhibitions and also in many group exhibitions – in Poland and abroad.

The oil painting dominates my work. This technique is my favourite one and it occupies me almost every day. I am dealing with graphics periodically – is it not easy to have access to professional graphic studio. After graduation, I did not have the ability to create graphics in classical techniques. These limitations have inspired me to develop my own techniques and to search for alternative materials for matrix. I am interested in graphics as the approach of creating specific methods of writing thoughts. I'm not interested in graphical reproductions of the work. The graphic image on the simple matrix is for me is often the starting point to develop it as a painting.

While studying at the Faculty of Graphic I was learning about many varieties of graphics. The contact with this kind of art had given me the opportunity to see its extraordinary nobility. I still have moments of excitement while watching the first test of graphic prints. For me they have unique beauty and depth.

## **COMPUTER GRAPHICS**

I graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1990. I mention this date as the date of the beginning of the contractual spread of digital technology in Poland image. The availability of computers and computer graphics programs increased rapidly after that when:

*In 4th of June, 1989 the communism ended in Poland.  
(28/10/1989 Official Television, Joanna Szczepkowska)*

The political changes, the opening of borders, the release of trade triggered the Poles' entrepreneurship and initiative. My colleagues eagerly entered into the – not yet known to us – the field of computer graphics. Poland was at that time "no man's land", an attractive place for people with initiative who wanted to work, create the new products, hitherto absent on the Polish market. Many artists have been successfully involved in this process.

I became interested in computer graphics few years after graduation, in the mid 90s. Since then, it is my second profession. I have created the layouts for the publications or digital presentation. I am also dealing with filming, video editing and creating the websites.

I admire the ingenuity of the creators of the digital color space and computer graphics applications. I think of them as colleagues, artists from another field. The computer is for me not only a tool, but also a mediator in contact with the authors of graphic applications.

The computer graphics I treat as a separate field, not mixing with my artistic work. In my graphic work do not appear the digital print elements. The computer graphics is a parallel path with my art.

However, while working on the computer graphics I strive to achieve logical and clear: text, image composition, harmony of colors – the same way I treat my graphic art or painting.

The computer graphics has opened new possibilities for me. I will mention a few.

### 1. The camera operator, editor

In 2010–2011, I worked as a camerawomen and editor for Finnish television journalist, traveling through the countries of the former Eastern bloc – the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, East Germany, as well as the Ukraine. I was able to be present among the participants of the important social changes in the countries that I visited. The common denominator of the observed situation was and is the human desire for freedom. Staying with a camera in hand where the important events took place, gave me a sense of participation in a witness' story that happened in front of my eyes."

### 2. Websites

I had created significant number of websites, including these for the artists. While working on their websites I arrange the photos in the interactive galleries, and I am looking for a way of optimal presentation of the values in their art.

By that means I contribute to the dissemination of their art. Here are the samples of the artists' websites ([www.wieslawbienkunski.pl](http://www.wieslawbienkunski.pl))

I created the first website of the European Academy of Arts – were I am employed presently, after it became part of the Vistula University. ([www.eas.edu.pl/dawne](http://www.eas.edu.pl/dawne))

### 3. Layout and composition of the books on the Polish history for foreign publishers.

I made the lay – out of the books written by my husband, Peter Johnsson (historian, journalist, a longtime correspondent for the Nordic media in Eastern Europe). The books: *The History of Poland* (Polen and Historien), *Stalins and Katyn massacre* became an event on the book market in Sweden and Scandinavia. A book about the Katyń has been recognized in Sweden as a Book of 2011. In 2014 it has been translated into Finnish and published in Finland, and soon it will translated in German. In all editions I participated as the author of the cover and layout.

### 4. Interactive Files

I had developed digitally and prepared an interactive pdf files about thousand drawings by Jacek Malczewski. The recorded files on the CD were attached to the catalogue of the exhibition at the National Museum in Warsaw. The exhibition was organized on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the death of the artist. For the first time the The National Museum's collection of drawings was presented to the public, unfortunately only part of it, due to the limited possibilities for display. The CD created by me presented all the drawings that were purchased in 1937 from the artist's son, Rafał Malczewski, by the Józef Piłsudski National Cultural Fund.

## PEDAGOGICAL WORK

### 1.

Presently I am working at the European Academy of Arts, running the studios in graphic design and printmaking. I also teach the artistic drawing classes at the faculty of architecture.

In my pedagogical work I focus on cautious observation of the students. I am guided by the following remarks:

The diagnosis of students' art works based on the finished pieces.

The encouragement to increase the effort to develop the parts which are the strongest.

The discussion in the class about the work done before.

Analyzing the previous pieces of work, when the student has some distance towards them.

The observation of the students' self- critique and listening to the opinions of their previous work,

which is very often more mature, then just after creation. The students notice lot things which can be improved frequently. It is a symptom of their artistic maturation and this way they are shaping the consciousness of "being in the progress." For me it is very important to provide students with the truth that the creative process is a never- ending search.

4. The incentive to continue working over the works, which have previously been considered to be finished and after some time can be re-analyzed. Experience of returning to the previously completed work gives a sense of the relativity of the definition of "work completed".

Discussion on the rules of the creative process, with an emphasis on the value of perseverance in diagnosis of their predispositions.

Pointing at the joy and satisfaction that derives from the creation.

An indication of the aim which can be finding your own unique forms of expression.

Transferring the analysis of the components of the creative process in drawing and painting to other areas of artistic expression.

Indication that way of life of the artist is an attractive one, although not easy, but rewording with a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment of developing own personality and artistic aspirations.

During the course of computer graphic design I put emphasis on the primacy of the artistic idea and while introducing the students with graphics programs, I am encouraging them to get acquainted with a wide range of possibilities in different programs, so as not to limit themselves to only a few basics. I wish that they can treat the computer like a kind of "pencil" or "brush" in order to create their own ideas and visions. This way their work will fit in the modern market requirements of visual communication and advertising.

## 2.

The Vistula University, which is part of the European Academy of Arts is the most international university in Poland with five thousand students from 30 countries.

I teach in Polish and English, but if it is necessary I use my fluent Russian and Ukrainian. My students, among others, come from: Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and Kazakhstan.

The presence of students from different countries gives me the opportunity to become familiar with their specific way of artistic thinking.

I try to transfer to my pupils the values I had received as a student of such artistic personalities like professors: prof Jerzy Tchorzewski, prof Halina Chrostowska, prof Raphael Strent, prof Mieczyslaw Wasilewski, prof Wojciech Sadley and prof Leszek Hołdanowicz.

The teaching at the University of Vistula gives me the feeling that I participate in the new role played by our country towards the countries of origin of our students. Poland is a member of the European Union, our university's educational offer is very attractive, learning takes place in good conditions and we use the latest versions of computer programs.

## 3.

I am co-creating the additional events related with my educational work.

Here are some examples:

May 2013 – in the gallery of the Vistula University headquarters – organization of exhibition of European Academy of Fine Arts students' works

June 2014 – organization of the Night of Museums at the headquarters of the Vistula University

September 2014 – participation in the jury of National Photographic Competition – *Water*, for high school students (<http://www.woda.foto-vistula.pl>)

**HABILITATION'S WORK**  
**THE EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS AND GRAPHICS**  
**"LANDSCAPE IN ABSTRACTION, LANDSCAPE IN THE PORTRAIT"**

The series of works was created as a continuation of my whole artistic work. From its beginning a landscape and man were in focus of my interest. I do not treat these two subjects separately. My work consist more landscapes than figurative images, although I can say that man is the center of my attention. The landscape is created when I am looking for the adequate forms to my thoughts and feelings. I am seeking for ambiguous forms. I want to express my joy and anxiety – maybe they are similar to feelings of the viewers of my paintings. I want even exceed the intended content, often to the direction unknown to me. The landscape is an additional area of signs and forms, to which I reach for, when the figure is not sufficient. But I always have desire of speaking about human – the title "Landscape in the Portrait" – is very adequate. For me the image of human's face is like a landscape.

## **LANDSCAPE**

My landscape paintings are these ones where there is no human's figure. The desire to create them wakes up in me when I leave the interior walls and enter the unlimited (from the perspective of a man stationed on Earth) space of the landscape.

The sense of sight captures the distances – closer – farther. I can see a variety of elements in the landscape.

The trees protrude their branches into the sky, drawing an irregular, jagged horizon line, the fields are waving in the sunlight, and water in its constant motion vibrates the flashes of reflected light spots. I yield to the action of the lines and planes, the optical contrasts between light and shadow. I absorb the richness of experience. I'm feeling more complete person when I see the landscape.

I have the memories about my little – now grown up – children. I was a witness of their growing up. During their childhood, especially the early one, the development of the little human is clearly dependent on the provided incentive. The children deprived of them are evolving slowly, and maybe even do not develop the sensitivity in certain areas of life.

I had a pleasure and satisfaction in watching the childhood of my daughters. I wanted to share with them my fascinations and preferences.

In the upbringing of children the parents are guided by so-called parental instinct supplemented by knowledge of human development. They can draw the information from the field of psychology, medicine, pedagogy and from available publication. However the process of transmitting the principles to the children, which is also an element of education, the most important for me was passing to them my personal fascination. In these moments the upbringing was the most pleasurable.

I initiated the activities which I was convinced that there are good and the effort which these projects required were not as burdensome as daily work.

I took my daughters in to the landscape, different landscapes; for long and short walks, on trips far and near, on sports trips. In all seasons. It was good for their development and for their health. My children, and I with them, we were coming back to everyday routine with new energy and enthusiasm.

As an adult I do not develop as a small child, but like a child I need yet sensations and variability. I'm always fascinated by long journeys. When I go abroad to a country where I have not been yet,

with intense attention I am watching the new places unknown to me. New experiences are the nice boosts; they stimulate the imagination to a hitherto unknown direction.

But I also like the familiar, ordinary landscapes. My walks in them, detachment from everyday life makes their ordinariness a sense of capacious metaphor. This section of the world becomes the whole world to me, where I happen to live and accept what it offers to me. I see the greatness and sublimity of its small – at first glance – phenomena.

The formation of terrain, the color of the sky, the changing of the seasons, this whole landscape's reality gives me a feeling of safe coexistence with its mystery. The friendliness of a surrounding does not preclude the intense sensations arising under the influence of not only what I can see, but also from my own past experience, from the level of consciousness, mood of the moment.

In such moments I talk to the landscape.

## **WONDERING**

This is an impulse reaction to something new. The new view stimulates. To ask questions, to try to understand. Certainly I would understand more if I knew more about the nature. The fragments of knowledge from biology school lessons remain in me – about the basics ecosystem's functioning of the forest, meadow, grove or field. I know little, but my knowledge is scarce. The wind is whistling in the trees, and I do not know the name of their species, I do not recognize the names of the flowers in the meadow. I hear the bird singing, but also I do not know its name.

My uncle is an ornithologist. While walking in his company I am learning the birds' names listening to their songs. I get the answers for the questions: why the birds are singing, where they place the nest, why they fly away for the winter and to which country. These walks with my uncle, even in a small suburban woods turn into a journey of discovering small astonishments.

I didn't study the natural sciences; I'll never have the knowledge of biologists. But they still do not know everything. My lack of biological knowledge doesn't disturb me with soaking with my whole body the landscape speeded in front of me eyes. I am absorbing the sensations coming from nature. The inalienable part of them is the incomprehensible mystery of life, of the busy small ants, busy bees, birds in the sky, and the plants on earth. The constant bustle of these creatures' activity fulfills the fascinating scene, where I stand in front as an astonished viewer and observer.

The fact that I have access to the richness of nature gives me joy. I feel a bond with this reality, I find a pleasure in these moments of my inner harmony, when the beats of my heart are the same, as nature's.

## **FREEDOM**

I can wander in the landscape freely in the way chosen by me. I'm free and I can go where I want. This is a very important attribute of freedom. The punishment of an imprisonment is for a man not without a reason.

But I know that area of my freedom has its limitations, primarily is limited by the freedom of others. Other free people co-create the shape of the landscape on which I wander.

This restriction I do not experience unpleasant. I look at the landscape and its mood impresses me. It appears in me as an unrestrained will of mastering it, to change it into a painting. Then I feel internally free. The liberated power gives me the energy for seeking the artistic means in order to describe the phenomena of these what I see. I feel the energy but also the fear.

## FEAR

The fear accompanies my artistic work. The urge of expressing this what reality offers me is crashing down on the fear of the unknown. Each new canvas is a journey into the unknown. My signs of directions are the sensations that I want to sum and merge, but at the same time preserve the truth and authenticity of my experiences. I am accompanied by the fear of false, not the real characters. I want the picture to be real trace of my desires and emotions. Fear is not pleasant. You could decide on its liquidation. My mind tells me that I have absolute power in my artistic world. If I decided to remove the fears, simultaneously I would erase the adventure of exploration and doubts. The work in front of the easel would become senseless and boring. I have to accept the fear – this difficult companion.

## INFINITY

While spending my time in the landscape I think of infinity. Instinctively, my gaze is directed towards the horizon. It is so close to the mathematical model of a straight line, is a reflection of the elusive idea of perfection, unattainable for us men, chained in the Plato's cave.

The Plato's cave became well equipped since the philosopher came to this idea. Knowledge what we have now is huge compared to the knowledge of the people of the ancient era. The world is so much changed. The development of industry and technology has enabled the mass production of often unnecessary goods and gadgets. The machines make our lives easier, mediate in communication, and provide entertainment. We are residing in artificially thickened reality, busy with work and entertainment. This kind of matter doesn't favor the reflections about spirituality.

But a man, when he is in the landscape, still looks with a particular pleasure at the horizon – the symbol of infinity. While looking at the horizon he senses the eternity, his inevitable death preceded by fear.

In my landscapes the horizon appears. Sometimes separates the heaven from earth. Other times it is a free line deforming the reality, which interacts with biological liquid components, with the effects of my imagination. I play with the horizon. I tame it in a game of composition. The rich and generous nature does not spare me of the material.

Then the feeling of transition, which is mine and each of us destination, is less severe.

*Infinity and eternity are the biggest and the only certainty.*

Søren Kierkegaard

I feel even some kind of peace. I get confidence that I can pass by. That on the other side of the horizon, at the end of the understanding I will find the light.

## LIGHT

In the biblical book of Genesis creation of the world begins with the creation of the light. The light is the universal good of the whole of creation. Light is associated with warmth, vision, clarity.

I would like to paint with light. This desire is rather audacious. I use the paints. The images are formed from the paint. I'm building a color with the paints. The color builds the form. While composing the image of forms I try to compile it so that it turns into radiating light's elements. Each of the spots shines in its own way, and the sum of their radii gives strength to light the entire image, voicing the colors.



## TIME

Over the whole world, including me and my landscape, rules the time.

The landscape changes under the influence of light and seasons that define the passage of time. My vision changes with age or with the passage of time.

The transience is shaping me like an invisible sculptor, I am constantly changing. Not only my attitude toward art's changes. The art gives me hope that I can start all over again. With joy I return to the landscapes, not visited long time ago, the same, but different. And again, I want to re-capture the relationship between their fragments, translated into the abstract language of color and form.

I want to find a balance in the incomprehensible tangle of the natural world, in the contrasts of light and shadow, to find in this vortex of natural forms the quiet perseverance in time and create from them the calm of my painting composition. I am not able to stop the time. No one can do this. I am detaining and holding the moments in the image. I do not know why I'm doing this. Painting is the approach of the incomprehensible things, audacious attempt to get closer to *Eternal Thoughts of Masterpieces* (Norwid).

*The idea is to reach the wall with your painting – nothing more. To the wall of the world .... to bring your painting as far as possible – this is a point.*

Piotr Potworowski

## PORTRAIT

The face reflects the most individual human characteristics. That's why I create portraits.

I'm not creating the similar images of the individuals. I am seeking the face of a man who is not like anyone but himself. I create portraits and figurative paintings of people with whom I have a lot in common. I am searching in each of them the archetype of a community which lives in me, hurts me and enjoys, what is in continuous flux, which is part of my life. Am I looking for mirror reflections of myself?

The self-portrait doesn't attract me. I see better if I can look straight ahead, into the faces of others, and not in the mirror. I want to capture their presence.

My graphic portraits are created from two matrices. While combining the matrices I do not try to fit them together. The gap is formed between them – a kind of a crack. The crack is a flaw. The human's head should be full and tight. I am violating its visual unity. This is closer to reality, closer to the truth about the human condition.

The inalienable part of the human self is the freedom to choose between good and evil. The man reached boundaries, unfamiliar to him until recently.

The twentieth century – the age of terrible totalitarianism witnessed incomprehensible human atrocities. So far, despite the passage of 70 years after the events of the Second World War, the countless reports, memories and publications, we cannot find the answer to the question: how and why this EVIL happened?

The history also tells about people being the victims of this evil, who reaching the very bottom, were able to guard in themselves the goodness and to show it to another human being.

The process of choosing the values – this is the meaning of life. The hardships of life sculpts the human body, marks the human faces.

I paint and create in a graphic technique the images of a human captured in its slow, but inevitable, biological degradation, where the changes constantly take place. He survived a lot, but a lot is ahead of him. A young man drifts to adulthood. The adulthood seems to him a freedom, sometimes fulfills his youthful hopes. The youth is a full of inscrutable content potential.

Portrait of a young human is a mystery to me. I cannot define it. In the metal graphic's matrix, in disordered directions I stroke a network of snouts, I blur the surface of figure, still flat. The depth of figure will grow in time. While working on portraits of young people I am directed by intuition acting without certainty of the desired result. In this way, I would like to empathize with their unknown fate. I create silhouettes and I call them *Growing up*.

## **ABSTRACTION**

The abstraction is a trespassing to the world of unreal. It is the artist's expression of freedom. The artist creates the rules of the composition and determines its lack of existence.

*The scarier is the world, the more abstract art is.*

Paul Klee

Paul Klee lived at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. He has participated in and witnessed the birth of an abstract art and its growing presence in the world of arts. The modern man needs the realistic and abstract art in his terrible and also good world.

In one of these worlds, a man has expanded the area of individual freedom in the sphere unknown to our ancestors. He rejected the traditions and selected the lifestyle, solely to own desires and needs. However, with astonishment, he discovers that achieved freedom drove him into the trap of absolute relativism, in which he lost any foothold.

Living in it he is forced constantly to re-invent himself, to prove his independence and authenticity. Abstract art is a good medium for expressing such dilemmas. It is an autonomic recording of the free artist who chooses the path of searching his own expression and describing his relationship with the World.

The light in the landscape, the richness of its manifestations, rhythms and directions of perpetual forms of the motion penetrate human and are reflected in his face.

The signals from the landscape are accompanying us from the beginning to the end. They soothe the anguish of a lack of response to the eternal questions, fill the places where something could arise, which does not exist yet. They enforce also the experience which already occurred.

Rajmund Ziemiński at some point of his artistic career began to name his images "the landscapes". For several dozen years he was giving this title to his paintings, marking them with numbers and date.

These images were formed far from universally visible reality, they were filled with dark, jagged forms, remaining of the giant cobwebs hung in monumental spaces.

In July 2005, I wandered in the halls of Warsaw Zachęta Gallery, watching the images presented at the exhibition entitled *Landscape 1953-2005*. This hackneyed word – landscape – in the work of Ziemiński became the name for almost universal space, filled with specific forms, which had been found by the painter. This space was not pretty, it was ostentatiously unattractive.

*My paintings are not talking about the charms of the world, but warn against the worst, against insanity, dehumanization.*

Rajmund Ziemiński

This statement shows what a great role to his painting the artist allocated. Very bold statement at a time when several "isms" already died in the artistic world, and ideologies which aspires to the prescriptions for a better arrangement of the world turned out to be false and useless.

In today's globalized world, the painting is created next to the works done in the techniques of a different kind – faster, more spectacular. The digital, hurried image dominates, often without deeper content. This haste and superficiality also appear in the studios of contemporary artists.

Rajmund Ziemski's painting is for me an example of the great creation that could arise only through consistent work and fervent faith in the sense of painting. His landscapes describe the world that is created by his senses, enchanted in the universal signs. He gave the landscape the role of a representative, speaking about the anxieties of the author, common to him and to us – the recipients of his works.

*For me the art is a matter of existence, in the easier description – it is human.*

Rajmund Ziemski

My desire is that I would be warmed by the heat of Ziemski's landscapes, that they will accompany me in approaching to my landscapes. We live in a landscape. We are gifted by it.

*Jolanta Gofembrowska - Johnson*