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The Space of Thought and Salvaging the Past

Selecting from the harvest of the past five years, *Ádám Gáll's* show entitled *Memento* is not suggestive of the current anniversary of the 1956 uprising. According to the concept of memory conveyed by these abstract paintings, the present and the future need the past to be carried along – mostly so that the cessation of our being and our products will not be a taboo, that we dare ponder the meaning and finality of existence. Our hedonistic age is unwilling to face the ineluctability of destruction and annihilation. This metaphysical approach to the questions of decay became the subject matter of the pictures *Ádám Gáll* painted in recent years. Through his lyrical means, his refined pictorialness, his evasion of concreteness and his atmosphere of mystery, he reveals to us the calligraphy of turning to dust.

Instead of the classical use of paint, brush and canvas, he synthesises several media; rooted in Informel and spot painting, his works can be interpreted as painting reliefs, picture statues or plane sculptures. Paste made of sandstone dust, pulp, sand, perlite, and dust paint is applied in thick layers to fibre- or ply-wood boards to form a relief-like surface, where it retains its materiality and does not enter the service of imitation. In the “beauty of pulsating material”, architectural structures, ruinous plaster-work, naturally eroded decaying walls can be recognised; the material used is thus in perfect harmony with the depicted subject matter. Appearance and imitation disappear as a result of the reduction of painterly means and the rejection of figuration; the composition is made up of but the rich effects of facture and the simplest of geometric forms.

Due to the drastic relations of height and depth, the refined, though darkly toned, colouristic transitions, colour effects verging on the monochrome, we necessarily “see into” the surfaces objects, persons or events. A face, a brick wall or the imprint of a hand unfold only at the level of conjecture, allowing for free association. There is one thing that strictly limits this “playground of thought”, namely: the titles embodying weighty, philosophical conclusions in their very simplicity. For instance, *Blind Spot* and *Landscape Plaster III* are concepts that refer to man's inner, spiritual reality, and their depiction includes less concrete instances than do *Modifications* and *Effect*, which are dominated by more constructive features, the powerful structural elements of rectangle and circle ever returning into itself. In other pictures, we have details with obviously organic origins: the relief-like surface of *Relictum* and *Precipice* recall fossils and mosses established in old walls. In a third group of *Gáll's* works, the central theme is walls and plaster made by man but beginning to perish (*Wall Memento I* and *Fault Line*). In one of the most staggering pieces of the exhibition, a concrete object seems to transpire

faintly; the worm-eaten coffin of *Ding an sich Doubled* warns there is but one thing eternal: cessation.

These works revolve around the concepts of becoming and annihilation, making and destruction whether we consider the concrete ravaging and building with which the pictures were made or the layers of their broader meaning. They have no actual time, space or narrative. They treat issues, the final meaning of things, difficult to grasp through the senses. They are pictorial formulations of essential thought.

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