

Art Review: West Loop Trilogy — Part 1 (EC Gallery) by Jeffery McNary



West Loop Trilogy - Part 1

Contemporary Figuratively Themed Works

EC Gallery

Chicago

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It's as if couriers have arrived, delivering storms of color and skillfully engineered works to the EC Gallery. With the current exhibition, "Contemporary Figurative Themed Works", curator Ewa Czeremuszkina, has re-collected and filled full her right-size gallery with the art of both Tadeusz Bilecki and Agata Czeremuszkina-Chrut. There's a bright lawlessness in these handful of paintings, stimulating the senses, and suddenly enabling the visitor to exhale, and to glide from the everyday.

"The paintings, currently exhibited, belong to the 'Pisz litery' ('Write letters') series. The leading subjects are letters, which I sometimes see in advertisement photography or on billboards", says Czeremuszkina-Chrut. "My work is very intuitive. I quickly draw specific lines which are my first concept, and which later on I change hundreds of times."

"Fall Back", acrylic and oil on canvas, brings the viewer broad brush strokes blending color, grays and blues forced into purple. There are deep scratches topside through the layered paint. There's washed pink near its heart with dark, questioning droplets directing toward the deep, the regal purple, the wondering, before shouting loudly, 'where are you going?', spreading its fever.

"The, 'Fall', series touches upon the topic of two people coexisting and the resulting psychological supremacy of one of them over the other", the artist shares. "From these, risky combinations and contrasts of colours arise, which only seemingly do not go together." These works do not wait around for the viewer to catch up. They're off and fluid and one need leap in front of them.

Her, "Fell Down", mixed media, brings more purple, and scraping on a broad swath of brown. There are written letters between two figures in this work. "I am often inspired by press, photography and lettering. However, I am not interested in the messages they carry. I dissect them, strip them of their meaning while giving them a new one," explains. "The elements of lettering included in my works have no communicative value whatsoever, but only a visual one. In a way, they are a manifestation of the modern world. Images just fall into my head and evolve into new ideas."

The ineluctable works of Tadeusz Bilecki are both bold, powerful and have visited upon the gallery in the past. There's an intriguing texture and immense dimension to his works. They embrace back and kick high. "There are influences, on every moment. They sometimes change the whole artistic searching process. Sometimes even in a drastic way. The influences come from art history or every day life," he says. His stirring pieces are washed and dreamlike.

"The choice of colours is the result of an evolution, a research process which is always changing, sometimes in an unexpected way. More and more often, there are violent combinations of colours, sometimes accidental," he continued. "Before, there were more thoughtful, calm, esthetic combinations of colours. Before, I was in search of harmony and balance. Nowadays, the colours I am using are more nervous, stressful, more chaotic."

Czeremuszkina-Chrut meets that with a game changing, "The limitation of colours? I want my paintings to become sterile, monochrome and very economical. I am also planning to go back to mural painting of large format – contact with a wall arouses very different emotions in a spectator as well as in the artist...texture and scale of a wall are a huge challenge."

Bilecki's phenomenal, "The Apparition of the Geisha -suite", acrylic on paper strayed early on from ready made shades in grid and forethought. The works are pastel like. They are comfortable in the conviction and flavor.

He does not fight for change or evolution in these works. "It is not useful", he shares. "The need to create, artistic searching is much stronger of me. I am doing it during my whole life, and it is a long time since I stop from thinking about the use of creating, if the creation act is helping me or the other way round."

Czeremuszkina-Chrut convictions sway differently. "Fighting is involved in each of my paintings because most of them are created through multiple changes of decisions regarding the way of painting (which leads to over painting as a consequence). When matter resists, rivalry and competition are born. The painting resists and demands; it does not allow me to 'break' it and shape it."

Giving thought to future works she sees,"... evolution, and I carry out this process on purpose. I am interested in endless synthesis of human form, in making its personality traits disappear completely," she says. "I aspire to create a new and individual human form – my own human form. Apart from anonymity, also biology characterized by hidden sexuality, is important to me. I would like to make my work deeper in a psychological sense: a human being as an anonymous entity and at the same time as embodiment of the crowd."

"I like it very much to observe the evolution of my work, but only when observing the work already done (as if this was already historic)", says Bilecki. "I never think about it when creating or when preparing my future art works. I have no idea! I leave it, the theoretic art, to redactors and great philosophers, as for instance you," he shares in jest, "You always have a global look. I don't."