

## Diagonal - opening speech

Now, of all the exhibitions I recently had a GiG, this one seems the most straightforward. Only two artists. All work is on paper. No sculpture, no video, no complex installations. No performances. Yet you wouldn't believe how much trouble I had writing about it! Never did I get so many emails responses to one text! Seriously, I wrote a paragraph or so explaining the title and within a day I had almost 20 emails sitting in my inbox.

What was the problem? I used the term 'inhuman.' It's funny how often the inhuman is understood in a negative way (or maybe this is in Germany, I do not know). Dangerous people are inhuman. Murders, rapists. Whereas for me, the Gods are inhuman. I think of the divine, the heavenly, the planetary.

I don't want to say that the paintings we see here are divine, although I like them very much. Rather, I like to think about how they are made, without the process involving human creation. Obviously, the work is made by Berthold and Andrea, but not in such a way it falls under the conventional narrative of the genius artist and his masterpiece. In their work other impulses are at stake. I like to call them rational and animal. For me, the rational is not human because its mathematical logic is independent of its utterance by man. Often, the rational has utopian aims, enlightenment being the process of mankind overcoming its ignorance. The animalistic on the other hand, is a force which we share with all forms of life. This is not the instinct to survive, but need to attract. We want to connect with others and we often do so by producing means of attraction.

If we look at the paintings, we see both aspects at work. While it might seem that how Berthold made his frieze is very rational - it is meticulous and carefully planned - a large part of its appeal is its fragile, mottled surface. Andrea's work might seem very free and spontaneous, yet there is also a rigour to it. The format and time frame are always the same. There is a set of rules she makes for herself. The work when seen together enhances these two aspects, the one lending its rationality to the other, the attractiveness flowing across from one to the other.

I also like the fact, that to make these impulses visible both Andrea and Berthold use the most conventional of means, the same used as any hobby artist - just some paper, watercolour and crayon. In fact, I would say, that this precisely is what makes them so liberating. Paradoxically, it is because that they are so straightforward, I do not know how they are made.

*Magdalena Wisniowska 2020*