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TRANSCENDENCE IN ART AND CONTEMPORARY MARGINS OF TRANSCENDENCE IN GRZEGORZ SZTABIŃSKI'S "AESTHETIC THINKING"

Abstract: The text describes Grzegorz Sztabiński's treatment of the topic of transcendence in his philosophical reflection on modern art and the interpretation of works, as well as in his own artistic work. In the first, largest part of the article, relevant fragments of the professor's most important publications are summarized and analyzed. They concern the place of transcendence among the tendencies to intellectualize art, in geometric abstraction and in art cultivating spirituality among "over-aesthetized" reality. Then, an artistic cycle with transcendence in its title is analyzed and interpreted. Finally, the professor's ideas are applied to a contemporary exhibition on metaphysics. In this way, the sources and manner of Grzegorz Sztabiński's "aesthetic thinking" are shown alongside the possibility of its contemporary application.

Keywords: transcendency, metaphysics, avant-garde, post-modernity, contemporary art, aestheticization, margins

The "aesthetic thinking" of professor Grzegorz Sztabiński often centered on transcendence. As an artist and philosopher, when he took up this metaphysical issue, he did so in the form of philosophical reflection on (mainly contemporary) art and its theoretical underpinnings, the interpretation of specific works of avant-garde and contemporary art, as well as his own creative projects.

As late as in 1991, Sztabiński continued to define transcendentals as "the universal properties of being" and "perceptions of the absolute".¹ One may therefore suppose that he accepted the qualitative pre-categorization of the principles of being, such as cause, being, thing, unity, difference, or separateness. Any question about these principles, he would have agreed, is at once a question of sense and value that asks whether whatever is "good or bad".² In consequence, understood as universals used for the purposes of categorization, truth, beauty and goodness are often listed among fundamental values, and Sztabiński explicitly addressed various understandings of beauty in his writings. The principles of being and ideas are the subject of metaphysical knowledge, mediated by the properties encountered in the real, physical world. And it is precisely these physical properties of works of art, as vehicles of metaphysical knowledge, that Sztabiński often examined in his reflections.

In the book entitled *Problemy intelektualizacji sztuki w tendencjach awangardowych* [*Problems of Intellectualization of Art in Avant-garde Tendencies*], in a chapter devoted to the potential of art to capture transcendence, he argued that, historically speaking, transcendentals were usually expressed through a range of "visual equivalents", such as allegories and symbols, borrowed from appropriate iconographic systems.³ In the 20th century, in contrast, artists began to attempt to limit the role of the senses, to capture the very essence of being through the cognitive capacity of the intellect. This could mean, for instance, looking at forms from a remote divine perspective that would allow them to be synthesized over and above their contingent actuality, as was the case for Paul Klee. Alternatively, like in Piet Mondrian, emotion-inducing visible matter could be transformed into transcendentals such as eternal force and primordial unity, substances independent of any perceivable properties, which could be grasped once all their contingent elements were discarded through a process not unlike anamnesis, i.e., by recovering the memory of an ideal structure. Thus, the natural would be reduced to the abstract and the universal, or, in other words, to a relationship of "constant equilibrium",⁴ to unity and harmony, which could be perceived in nature and its representations when they

¹ Grzegorz Sztabiński, *Problemy intelektualizacji sztuki w tendencjach awangardowych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 1991, p. 36.

² W. Stróżewski, *Transcendentalia i wartości*, [in:] idem, *Istnienie i wartość*, Kraków 1981, p. 12. Cf. Andrzej Maryniarczyk SDB, *Transcendentalia a poznanie metafizyczne*, „Roczniki Filozoficzne XXXIX-XL”, vol. 1, 1991-1992, pp. 305-322.

³ G. Sztabiński, op. cit., p. 35.

⁴ P. Mondrian, *Neoplastycyzm w malarstwie*, [in:] *Artyści o sztuce. Od van Gogha do Picassa*, eds Elżbieta Grabska, Hanna Morawska, PWN Warszawa 1963, p. 405, quoted after: G. Sztabiński, op. cit., p. 41.

were organized along intellectual principles. This meant a reduction to geometric forms, which, in the spirit of Platonic (and Mondrian's, Sztabiński argued) philosophy, were seen as pure and rational (due to "intensification of consciousness"), thus guiding one toward the idea of Good.⁵ Mondrian would also often weigh in to elucidate his own works and help "the self-revelation of truth, which he associated with beauty".⁶ Yet another artist, Kazimir Malevich, in his search for the essence of being, rejected the practicality of depicting natural reality and renounced institutionalized religiosity, which, he argued, exploited art and suppressed our genuinely "felt" need for the Absolute. The suprematism of Malevich strove to depict the realm of such feeling directly, without lending itself to any practical use. The feeling was viewed as a gateway to being as such, to the pan-energetic universe, to the unchanging oneness that transcended all contradictions. It was to be expressed by the forms produced by the intuitive reason that unveils truth and the experience of his art was often described as not unlike a mystical "dark night" that came before divine illumination.⁷

Sztabiński further developed these ideas in his 2004 book, *Dlaczego geometria?* [*Why Geometry?*]. Drawing on the work of Wilhelm Worringer, he argued that the metaphysical dread of the primitive human spurred a need for permanence and stability, which in turn gave rise to the use of stable and absolute "symbols of necessity", such as, for instance, the straight line and geometric figures.⁸ Over time, the origin of the geometric order was variously identified with either God or the eternal "laws of nature"; whatever they might be, however, the fundamental principles always included geometric patterns. The patterns were implicit as the underlying structure of ancient mimetic art. In the Middle Ages, the propagation of light, which, according to Robert Grosseteste, was the "corporeal" force that endowed matter with form, was reduced to geometric relationships; its original source was God, who acted on the world through the medium of light. Later on, the pursuit and use of this permanent ordering structure at the core of our empirical experience of the world would also have an important impact on art, e.g., in the use of perspective in the Renaissance, the way classicists drew on their ancient models, or in how Paul Cezanne and Pablo Picasso employed reason in their interpretation of world phenomena. However, the partly Pythagorean and partly Platonic idea that the human soul can only move beyond the limitations of the senses and

⁵ G. Sztabiński, op.cit., pp. 46, 44.

⁶ Ibid., p. 47.

⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

⁸ Grzegorz Sztabiński, *Dlaczego geometria? Problemy współczesnej sztuki geometrycznej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2004, p. 11.

grasp true being if it is first purified through the study of mathematics and geometry (since "*Geometry is knowledge of the eternally existent*"⁹) was most widely assimilated in the 20th century. Apart from his elaborate, context-rich discussion of Mondrian and Malevich, Sztabiński also quoted Vasyl Kandinsky, who held that the inner immaterial emotions of the artist and the viewer were set in motion by sensory perceptions, giving rise to a work of art, which acted, for instance, through the form of a triangle, which had its very own "sound" and "spiritual aroma"¹⁰. According to Malevich, the properties of a square or a cross were meant to be analogous to the general properties and principles of being. Specifically, as has often been the case in the history of art, the equilateral triangle was seen as divine, perfectly balanced, and prior to all other geometric figures. Similarly divine in nature were the properties of unity, wholeness, infinity, simplicity, and self-identity characteristic of the circle.

However, Sztabiński argued that in our time, the use of geometric shapes and structures had already lost much of its "power of transcendence, of calling our attention to another reality, a reality that is generalized, absolute, or divine".¹¹ Still, he identified an attempt to capture the "spirit of the cosmic space of being" in the early works of Jan Pamuła and appreciated the encounter with the objective mechanisms of digital machines that the artist used later on in his art.¹² The paintings of Mieczysław Wiśniewski, which depicted the permanence of geometric forms, questioned the capacity of our senses to grasp the truth by the simultaneous use of concavities to produce surprising light refraction effects.¹³

In 2009, pondering the relationship between aesthetics and transcendence once again, Sztabiński wrote that in order to express the spiritual in art, one needs to transcend the senses and turn toward "the universal principle of being".¹⁴ In an article entitled *Poza estetyzacją. Problem duchowości w sztuce współczesnej* [*Beyond Aestheticization. The Question of Spirituality in Contemporary Art*], published in "Sacrum et Decorum", the philosopher reasserted that the ancient conjunction of beauty and good was once thought to be achieved through the observation of reality, which guided one toward the metaphysical ideas. In the Middle Ages, Christians discovered purpose, order and harmony

⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 37.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 75.

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, chapter: *Między uniwersalnymi prawami a jednostkowością ludzkiej egzystencji. Twórczość Jana Pamuły*, pp. 194-199, quote on p. 196.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, chapter: *Światło i geometria. O twórczości Mieczysława Wiśniewskiego*, pp. 200-206.

¹⁴ Grzegorz Sztabiński, *Poza estetyzacją. Problem duchowości w sztuce współczesnej / Beyond aestheticization. The question of spirituality in modern art*, „Sacrum et Decorum. Materiały i Studia z Historii Sztuki Sakralnej”, vol. 2: 2009, p. 111.

in the world and recognized them as the work of God, the intelligent cause of all things beautiful, or supreme beauty as such. Spiritual beauty, which was of the highest value, could be known thanks to moral virtues, and the initial spiritualization of matter was replaced by an idea of beauty that descended into the material world. According to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, matter continued to bear the traces of divine perfection, which could be unveiled once that which concealed the hidden beauty was removed (even though God as such could not be known). Saint Augustine believed that God, understood as beauty itself, existing beyond all sensory perception, could only be seen by the pure soul, whereas physical beauty, accessible to the senses, could only be good if it unveiled before us the mysteries of the faith. For instance, the uniform harmony of the "Pythagorean" distribution of elements in space and time could bring us closer to the spiritual realm. However, beauty could also be bad if it concealed the spiritual. A law of order and harmony defined the connection between spiritual and material beauty (where the former was always more valued) in terms of a limited analogy, similarity, influence, reflection or equivalence. An image could be used for contemplation, bringing one closer to God (as in the icon), or edification, allowing the mind to access invisible spiritual beauty.

In the same article, Sztabiński argued that art ceased to serve the purpose of revealing beauty as an idea proper to God in the 20th century. Instead, it began to be used to elicit an intense experience or, at most, to evoke the sublime, as redefined by Jean-François Lyotard.¹⁵ Perhaps this is why we should focus our study of contemporary art on its allusions to the tragic, the sublime, to expressive ugliness. We should examine its attempts "to transcend aesthetics"¹⁶ and, instead of analyzing the relationship between the sensual and the spiritual, investigate the way in which contemporary art can only do so much as assist us in exploring the spiritual realm. Sztabiński quoted Kandinsky's call to make brighter the "feeble light of transcendence"¹⁷, which he thought had begun to dim early in the 20th century (when it had ceased to be a daily concern), and his vision of art and its mission to explore unknown territories in the realm of the immaterial. Science, which had eliminated the old barriers to knowledge only to erect new ones, could not help us. It was the new formal language of art, capable of expressing finer feelings, that would automatically discover that which is "unknown" and yet unnamed, in other words: the very

¹⁵ The sublime would only be seen as „inaccessible” and „unrepresentable” in rule-free post-modern art, but Sztabiński does not address that issue in this particular article. Cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *Odpowiedź na pytanie: co to jest postmodernizm?*, transl. Michał Paweł Markowski [in:] *Postmodernizm. Antologia przekładów*, ed. Ryszard Nycz, Kraków 1996, pp. 47-61.

¹⁶ G. Sztabiński, *Poza estetyzacją...*, p. 118.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

soul of art, understood as inner beauty, quite distinct from that accessible from the outside.

A new belief in the cognitive and communicative role of abstract art, Sztabiński posited, fueled its widespread use in architecture and the applied arts. However, this did not spiritualize our environment; it aestheticized it instead, as visions of a better tomorrow were soon converted into a consumer product (which, in turn, caused resistance). Today, a ubiquitous sense of seemingly transcendent harmony only serves to maintain the mental equilibrium of the modern human who has reduced spirituality to a mere kaleidoscope of sensations so numerous that this *homo aestheticus* is ultimately rendered incapable of experiencing any. In this situation, the goal of art, as proposed by Wolfgang Iser,¹⁸ is to point to and reclaim that which is not communicated, or that which is incommunicable, not subject to aestheticization, i.e., our aesthetic "blind spot". Perhaps this can create a chance for a revival of spirituality.

Sztabiński also set out to apply his "aesthetic thinking" to works of Polish artists. One such artist was Maciej Szańkowski, who criticized the excessive formalization of sacred art and looked to nature for elements overlooked in the universal trend of aestheticization, on which he then modeled his sculptures to "reveal the possible meaning of that which nature has created".¹⁹ Neither Szańkowski's tentative groping for traces, nor his characteristic shape of the "knot", borrowed from folk culture which always remains close to nature, could in any way be appropriated by consumerism. Surprising in a statue, the knot symbolically alluded to poverty, urgently packed bags, sudden displacement and migration. It emphasized the necessity of wandering and sacrifice in the name of a stable religious and national identity that persists over and above constant flux. The element also made one think of loss as the price of staying faithful to the truth, which is the condition of freedom, in the face of the rational and practical demands of pragmatism.

Another artist, Zbigniew Warpechowski, flatly rejected what he saw as the excessively orderly and methodical ideas of avant-garde abstractionists, who instrumentalized spirituality, as well as those of contemporary curators beholden to its "aestheticization". Approaching metaphysics through the invention of "new forms of artistic expression seems an attempt to replace the risky and uncertain path of exploration with a rationally verifiable method.

¹⁸ According to Wolfgang Iser, art must expose the rampant and obtrusive aestheticization we are witnessing today and recover the experiences it has sidelined. Cf. Wolfgang Iser, *Estetyka i anestetyka*, transl. Małgorzata Łukasiewicz [in:] *Postmodernizm. Antologia przekładów*, ed. Ryszard Nycz, Kraków 1996, pp. 543-544.

¹⁹ G. Sztabiński, *Poza estetyzacją...*, p. 126.

However, <the spirit acts but does not speak our language and does not vouch for itself>"²⁰ - this is how Sztabiński summarized Warpechowski's views. We must renounce all certainty, rationality, sobriety, because "in contemporary art, spirituality often abandons the mainstream".²¹ All-encompassing systems of yore are no longer useful, and the modern scarcity of authority figures means that we need to engage in an "active experience" and continual subjectivation of the ways in which we experience art. In this way, in Warepechowski's 1995 performance, a round shaped can of fish and the oil that dripped from it could curiously morph, respectively, into the Holy Host and unction oil.

Finally, in 2014, in an article published in English in "Art Inquiry",²² Sztabiński argued that contemporary art limited itself to impassive observation of worship. Palpable is the lack of a sense of the whole, based on a metaphysical system with an inventory of concepts that could articulate our longings for transcendence, which now only manifest themselves in fragmentary, contingent and impoverished forms. Modern endeavors to express transcendence have abandoned the "mysticizing" attempts to purify the creative process (still present in Mark Rothko and Ad Reinhardt). Instead, artists today focus on creating spaces of intense experience, not only of the sensual kind, which are meant to provoke a "shiver of transcendence", known as *skinscapes*.²³ To this end, they use the medium of everyday, often overlooked objects, which are probed for the margins of transcendence, often through sometimes controversial juxtapositions with motifs of religious iconography or elements of religious art, such as in the works of Robert Gober or Kiki Smith. The way that such objects and images work in an alien context may strike us as blasphemous, but often the goal is to touch the margins of transcendence. Another way to suggest the metaphysical in contemporary art is to use forms (also in the absence of any specific object) to emphasize that nothing exists beyond the "simulacral" image; the image itself produces transcendence as it is not transformed into an everyday object. This creates the space for a personal epiphany or a surprising "abnormal" experience of the poetic. A case in point could be a series of works produced by Jan Berdyszak, entitled *Reszty reszt* [*The Rest of the Rest*], in which the artist does not focus on the whole, which previously intrigued him, but on the non-whole, since, as he puts it, "subtractions, gaps and uncertainties of equivalents must be included in the creative process".²⁴ Finally, the third way

²⁰ Ibid., p. 127.

²¹ Ibid, p. 129.

²² Cf. G. Sztabiński, *Margins of transcendence in contemporary art*, "Art Inquiry" vol. XVI: 2014 („Margins and Marginalization”), pp. 57-85.

²³ Ibid., pp. 60-61.

²⁴ J. Berdyszak, *Ze szkiełowników*, [in:] Jan Berdyszak. *Reszty reszt*, Galeria Sektor I exhibition catalog, Katowice 2009, p. 34 (*szkiełownik 158: 1999-2004*), [quoted after:] G. Sztabiński, *Margins...*, p. 81.

in which metaphysics makes an appearance in contemporary art, according to Sztabiński, is the sacralization of art as a path to transcendence, sharply separated from religion.

Grzegorz Sztabiński also treated transcendence as a challenge in his own art, which became a visual expression of his original "aesthetic thinking". In a series entitled *Pismo natury* [*Nature's Scripture*], created from 1993 onward, the artist collected and arranged dry tree branches (found through the mindful observation of nature, such as that of Cezanne or Mondrian) into artistic installations.²⁵ On a separate sheet of white or black paper, he displayed little twigs that sprouted out in different directions and naturally created various shapes and structures. In this way, Sztabiński copied the letters of nature's alphabet, or pages from nature's book, and arranged them as found objects. Their meanings, however, remained elusive, dispersed and decontextualized, even though the pages were once put together in accordance with a metaphysical template, which the artist now tried to reproduce with his intellect, the way people would try to understand a book. The syntagmatic relationship was now determined by the empty space between the vestiges of script. This "non-place", this no man's land, invited viewers to fill the empty spaces with themselves, with their own idea of syntax, as if there existed an actual pattern that asked to be brought into existence, so that the book could be read and would return to beauty, now emerging from within, as Kandinsky said. Perhaps this is why the book was laid down in front of an altar, which was made up of "natural" raw canvases filled with sharply delineated, stereometric, triangular forms in shades of white, gray and brown. Pointing to what was "above", these triangular signposts brought to mind the stability of pyramids or the eternal balance between the sides of an equilateral triangle, which Sztabiński wrote about. Existence as such, orderly and categorical, was also evoked by a horizontal strip that cut across the canvases and a vertical block that stood alone in the gallery space. The block was wrapped with a rope, tied up, bound like a ritual offering on an altar, a pure essence or just a trace of sacrifice... As a philosopher, Sztabiński agreed with Plato that "the senses are shackles that constrain our knowledge"²⁶ and echoed Welsch, lamenting that today the senses are overused and stretched beyond the limits of possibility. Perhaps, as postulated by Welsch when he wrote about the "aesthetic" mission of contemporary art, it was precisely this situation of entrapment and overuse that Sztabiński meant to show? A simple raw symbol displayed in a "non-place" with no more than a residual identity,

²⁵ Cf. G. Sztabiński, *Pismo natury - Transcendencja* [in:] *Sztuka wobec metafizyki. Postawy i strategie lat 2000-2020*, entry: *Grzegorz Sztabiński*, tab: *Baza twórców*, <https://sztukaimetafizyka.up.krakow.pl/grzegorz-sztabinski/> [accessed: 12.04.2022].

²⁶ G. Sztabiński, *Dlaczego geometria?...*, p. 19.

precisely on account of its impoverished and vestigial form, took on the semblance of an ignored "blind spot" which we need to acknowledge before we can begin to see. It is only then that we can discern the margins of transcendence", the signs of the altar and the symbols of sacrifice, as well as a book in which nature explains itself, pointing beyond its own limitations, beyond matter, and beyond the senses. The shackles that bind us can thus change into knots that tie the worldly and the metaphysical together. No wonder then that the subtitle of *Pismo Natury* was *Transcendencja* [*Transcendence*].

Grzegorz Sztabiński applied his reflections, which could be described as "aesthetic thinking", to his own art and the art of his contemporaries. It would be interesting to see how they apply to artists who now openly confess metaphysical sensibility.

The exhibition entitled *Sztuka wobec metafizyki. Postawy i strategie lat 2000-2020* [*Art and Metaphysics. Attitudes and Strategies 2000-2020*], organized at Podbrzezie Gallery in 2022, showcased works created by some of Sztabiński's friends. Jan Pamuła moved away from depictions of arranged systems to show a colorful symbolic gateway enclosed by a circular arc, which could be crossed in accordance with the "objective rules" of a computer. A painting by Tadeusz Gustaw Wiktor offered itself to the senses as a spatial plane ("not found anywhere in nature"), thanks to its subtle saturation of blue, existing essentially as the metaphysical One, beyond all contradictions, in a way characteristic of geometric abstraction.²⁷

Among the younger artists on show, Beata Stankiewicz presented *Pokój nr 27* [*Room 27*], a realistic large-format painting of an empty interior with divan beds, bathed in gentle uniform light, which did not suggest any metaphysical meanings. An icon on the wall of the room was illegible. However, the artist confessed she was "looking for beauty in a simple realist form"²⁸ in her meta-realism. Her attempt to unveil beauty through light and color depended on the image of an ordinary, functional attic bedroom, one of many such rooms only briefly used by countless people. Turning out to be beautiful, this "non-place" also revealed a "margin of transcendence", a tiny fragment in the real world that opened up the view of the metaphysical whole.

In his video installation *Stany skupienia* [*Double Take*] (2017), displayed from two projectors on opposite sides of the room, Dominik Lejman showed images of a crawling, pulsating, octopus-like substance and a shape that floated in the air amid these "undulating" pieces of matter. Organic and indeterminate,

²⁷ Cf. G. Sztabiński, [in:] *Tadeusz Gustaw Wiktor. Wpisany w Oś Świata*, exhibition catalog, Galeria Pryzmat, ZPAP Kraków 2017, p. 16.

²⁸ Beata Stankiewicz, *Autokomentarz* [in:] <https://sztukaimetafizyka.up.krakow.pl/stankiewicz-beata/>

the substance resisted being endowed with any sense or meaning; the images were no more than iconoclastic simulacra, mere representations of various states of matter, devoid of any practical use. Perhaps, however, the space between the projectors was the site of difference that belongs to the realm of the transcendentals and eludes the senses, which the artist so much constructed as unveiled.

Interestingly, the same exhibition featured *Symból* [*Signache*²⁹] (2014) by Grzegorz Klaman, a cross made up of pills, our contemporary quick fix for pain and suffering, which eliminates their sacrificial power, and *Msza* [*Mass*] (2011) by Artur Żmijewski, depicting a desacralized mass performed by theater actors. Both artists showed how a religious system in the service of metaphysics can be stripped down to bare signs and residues when it is devoid of spirituality or observed with indifferent detachment. And yet, perhaps even so, the margins of transcendence are still there, even in these deformed and mutilated forms?

Perhaps art is seen as sacred by Lech Majewski, who joined the exhibition with his videoart piece *Jaguar* [*Jaguar*], from a series of "divinities" entitled *Krew Poety* [*Blood of a Poet*, 2006). A father and son travel up a hill, initially in a luxury car; their trip is only seemingly like the sacrifice of Abraham, because the father does in the end strike the son with a knife. Contemporary landscapes and objects shown in the piece are infused with the "margins of transcendence" by our imagination, since the son dies a sacrificial death, accompanied by a thunderbolt, not unlike Christ. He dies because his sensibility and creativity condemn him as the Other, similar to many other characters in the video art of Majewski, who has never, in his art or in his public statements, ceased to preach the cult of the high arts and the need to defend them against the advance of mass culture.

The article has discussed the sources and strategies of Grzegorz Sztabiński's "aesthetic thinking", and sought to explain how they are still relevant today. Sztabiński's academic reflections sensitively and perceptively elucidated differences in how the transcendentals have been treated in old, avant-garde, and contemporary art. His art illustrated their present status. Finally, his original ideas allowed him to address the most recent art to explain and interpret it in the key of "aesthetic thinking".

The author truly regrets that it was only after Grzegorz Sztabiński's passing that he really delved into the professor's ideas on transcendence in art and understood how metaphysical values were manifested in his own creative work.

Translation: Urszula Jachimczak

²⁹ Replacing o with ó in the word in Polish means that the ending of the resulting term means pain or ache.

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TRANSCENDENCJA W SZTUCE I WSPÓŁCZESNE MARGINESY TRANSCENDENCJI. W MYŚLENIU ESTETYCZNYM GRZEGORZA SZTABIŃSKIEGO (streszczenie)

Tekst opisuje podejmowanie tematu transcendencji przez Grzegorza Sztabińskiego w filozoficznej refleksji o sztuce nowoczesnej i interpretacji dzieł, a także we własnej artystycznej twórczości. W pierwszej, największej części artykułu streszczane i analizowane są odpowiednie fragmenty najważniejszych publikacji profesora. Dotyczą one miejsca transcendencji wśród tendencji do intelektualizacji sztuki, w abstrakcji geometrycznej i w sztuce pielęgnującej duchowość wśród „przeestetyzowanej” rzeczywistości. Następnie analizowany i interpretowany jest artystyczny cykl z transcendencją w tytule. Wreszcie koncepcje profesora zastosowane zostają do współczesnej wystawy dotyczącej metafizyki. W ten sposób ukazane są źródła i sposób „myślenia estetycznego” Grzegorza Sztabińskiego, a także możliwość współczesnego zastosowania tego myślenia.

Słowa kluczowe: transcendencja, metafizyka, awangarda, ponowoczesność, sztuka współczesna, estetyzacja, marginesy

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