



ARTIST STATEMENT

Paweł Dutkiewicz: *Afterimage*

"Afterimage" – an image that continues to appear in one's vision upon closing the eyes after looking at the sun. It can also describe all traces left in the memory upon having contact with great works of art.

Shortly before my studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, I saw works by Vincent Van Gogh, as well as some great Orthodox icons and sacred art of Tibetan Buddhism, during my travels across Russia. I knew Van Gogh from reproductions and from his "Letters to Brother", but upon seeing his original works, in their original colours, as opposed to colours changed in a reproduction, I was stunned by their striking impression. This experience was so overwhelming that I had to sit down on a bench in the museum and could not move, let alone visit the rest of the exhibition in the Moscow museum.

Many painters have experienced similar events during their lifetimes. Mark Rothko spent hours contemplating a Henri Matisse painting in the museum in New York, and returned there many times. Works of art by the young Pablo Picasso from his blue period seem to refer to the colour climate visible in works by Velazquez and El Greco.

During my studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, I was lucky enough to be a student of Professor Jerzy Nowosielski, an outstanding Polish painter and lecturer. In subsequent years, we frequently met in the Krakow Academy, in his home studio, and also in my studio, which was located nearby.

I once told him about the experience I had in the Moscow museum. He admitted that he had a similar, almost identical one when he was young and first saw the original sacred art of Orthodox icons. The professor admitted that these experiences "can shape a man for his lifetime."

During our private conversations, as we sat in front of one of my abstract painting compositions, he told me that "he appreciates my creation so much, because it is a completely new type of abstraction, with a metaphysical background."

Now, although I can no longer enjoy conversation with my late painting mentor, his works are still here. I often visit the Orthodox Church to see his sacred paintings, frescos, and stained glass works. What I find there, he himself described as a "painting's silence".

There is a kind of sanctity and purity, captured by the art of painting – impersonal and timeless. All one can do is simply contemplate it in wonder. Hence the title of my latest exhibition – "Afterimage".