

ALGIRDAS ŠEŠKUS - *Balandis*

30 April - 30 August 2021

The light entered through the window of the studio. He was seated quietly wanting to achieve a maximum grade of concentration. He has been doing this exercise with his art most of his life, but recently he tried to achieve a higher level working on his paintings.

He sat and slowly started to mix the oil paint with the turpentine. The strong smell heavily opened his nostrils and he thought his brain expanded. He moved the paint brush sensually in a thick amalgam of oils and pigments.

Colours flourished like crystals and minerals.

The sun rays landed in his head and made his white hair shine like a cloud. A glowing light went down along his neck and followed the shoulder nicely reaching his hand which approached the canvas illuminating its oily surface.

He felt every movement of his body and projected himself into what he thought could be a perfect mental dance. After a few hours he noticed a lack of energy which was today even more evident. He was not concerned about this sudden fatigue, on the contrary, he never regretted to be soaked up by his work.

He stopped, looked around the room and contemplated some of his recent works. Hanging around the walls and piled on the floor were the images of family, friends, memories from the past and other meaningless images which apparently built a constellation of his personal interests but which were in fact random images without a specific narrative or content. Some paintings were upside down others facing left or right or what was supposed to be their logical position, but this was certainly not important for him, though disturbing for the others when visiting.

That luminous day of April he looked thinner than usual, also weaker, but his blue eyes were bright and mysteriously calm. A serenity which also possessed the paintings radiating light under the shadows of the afternoon.

He smiled with satisfaction.

This ceremony had been occupying his days during the last weeks and months. An endless routine just broken by the interruptions of his wife who brought some coffee or announced with her jingling voice the visit of his sons, grandsons and friends.

That day he knew something was different, despite his fatigue he felt light like a feather, he looked at his hands and noticed his skin translucent like the stomach of a tadpole. He was happy and did not bother to go downstairs to have lunch. He continued mixing other colours still fresh from the day before.

The painting glowed intensely and he shrunk while the palette collapsed.

In the late afternoon and after not having any sign of her husband since the early morning, the wife went upstairs to ask if he wanted to eat something.

She knocked the door, nobody answered.

Very slowly she put her head around the door and asked him if he wanted something for lunch. Surprisingly she found nobody there. The paint brushes were on the floor. One painting was on the easel apparently freshly finished. She looked at it, and said out loud jokingly: "well it seems that finally you've melted with your paintings" and closed the door with a nervous laugh.