

Jestem już na to za stara - I am too old for this. I still remember when everything changed. It was the little things that I noticed at first. At the beginning there was only one or two vegetable stands close to the tram stop across the street. They were soon joined by others selling second hand clothes from the west. Advent calendars followed with real chocolate inside (!) - then a baker - then a stand with underwear and nylon stockings and slippers with elastic bands. Dynasty was on TVP after the news each Sunday at a quarter past eight and a chewing gum cost 1.000 zloty. The next week it was 1.500 zloty. 100.000 zloty was a Christmas gift from my grandmother and I was told to spend this quickly. When I visit Poland, which is not at all often, these are the memories I carry with me and their images of the past always shape how I see the place where my parents live now.

Most of the artists in the exhibition "Roztopy" curated by Przemek Sowinski and hosted by the Tiger Room were born much later, in the late 90s, and they are not burdened with these particular recollections. When Przemek writes of the "thaw" this is what he means. I admit that initially I misunderstood. I assumed the period of transition that the exhibition refers to was the historical transition from one political system to the next. I guess I really am too old for this - I am too late. In 1990, as a ten year old child I only witnessed the beginnings of a transition. But it is this transition time, which is now perhaps coming to an end, melting away as it were, like old winter's snow. And in the green-tinted light we can see the dirt that has been left behind. Spring is here at last - a sun is rising in Dominika Olszowy's work! It is also there in the small drawing by Paweł Marcinek, outside his block of flats, on an advertising banner. Yet in the painting by Karolina Szwed, spring is a girl's short skirt, a drop of liquid like a tear, tricking down her bare thigh. In the work by Klaudia Figura another girl stomps on her schoolwork with clumpy shoes. So vomit spews from the second sun by Olszowy setting in the corner of the gallery space - and from the wooden sick house by Paweł Marcinek hanging in the other corner. Two arms embrace it from behind, whether to comfort it in its distress or to stop it from choking, we cannot tell. In a small drawing by Maryna Sakowska, a gothic, multi-story dwelling is being disinfected by men in biohazard suits, after a grandmother was found lying dead behind the stained sofa. Whereas, the dwelling in Zuza Piekoszewska's piece is one made for insects to crawl in.

There are other memories present here as well, but these refer to a past I do not share because it was an impossible future for me, the turn of the century when everything was supposed to get better, cooler somehow. Czaro Malinkiewicz's heavily textured reliefs of silicon and paste and dirt, refer to splatter film gore and manga comics and more references to manga are also present in Sakowska's work. Whereas we in the early 90s would try to find old copies of Lucky Luke. Przemysław Piniak celebrates this time to come in his video, dancing wildly in front of his grey block of flats while dressed in his most shiny and colourful sports clothes. Julia Woronowicz, who often reinterprets local histories and myths, has also seen the future in her painting, and it looks like Piaseczno! Presiding over this detritus of change is a small kneeling figure, shiny and black holding a duck in its arms. Like Benjamin's angel, it looks towards us as it is blown to the future.

