

## Low-Intensity Extasy

In one of his reflections, G.K. Chesterton states that art is fundamentally about trimming rather than expanding. People often think of imagination as something boundless, yet this is a misconception, because imagination is an image (or a collection of distinct images that can be interconnected), and every image has its frame. It is the frame that excludes everything that interferes with clear articulation. To elucidate this idea, the English author draws an intriguing analogy from ancient Greek philosophy, observing that, despite being immeasurable, Greek thought was better suited to the small city of Athens than to the vast Persian Empire. This analogy underscores the often-overlooked fact that very large ideas can only be presented in very small spaces.

This principle of "trimming" of space is distinctly evident in the exhibited works of Miran Blažek. And not the infinite, cosmic (read: prosaic) space, but rather limited (gallery) space. Blažek uses photography printed on canvas, in the form of horizontally positioned "cubes" (canvas mounted on stretcher bars with an accentuated voluminousness, all together supported by wooden legs) and a photograph printed on canvas in a frame with glass. His palette, dominated by achromatic tones—black, white, and grey—features only one chromatic element: yellow, ranging from intense primary yellow to pale yellow. Observed as a whole, the exhibition exudes a sense of calm, even comfort. While yellow, as a colour, possesses an expansive quality and inherent dynamism that challenges its boundaries, in this context, it seems to confront the constrained space of defined dimensions, creating an ambience that can be described as an ecstasy of low intensity. How should we interpret Blažek's intent to "capture space," specifically gallery space? The colloquial term for gallery space, the *white cube*, provides some insight. The white cube (often not literally a cube) is an aseptic, confined space where the whiteness of walls, polished neutral-toned floors, and subtle lighting create a setting in which the artwork is "cleansed" of external influences, "consecrated" at the exhibition and thus legitimized as a work of art, ready for the external world. All jokes aside, one might mistakenly infer from this description that Blažek's approach is overly Dantean or even predictable. However, the matter is far from straightforward; in fact, it is quite the opposite of what one might expect. The artist positions himself as a surprising "missing link" between nature as a space of potentiality and culture, which perceives this dynamic not as a tool for manipulation but as a gift. This is precisely why his

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continuation of the legacy of the Land Art generation of artists (Robert Smithson, Walter De Maria, Robert Long, and others who in the 1970s preferred to avoid gallery spaces, working in nature on a grand scale) is not unusual. However, Blažek understands that the desire to "become nature" is inherently unnatural. Therefore, his "measure," in relation to historical Land Art, finds a different way to achieve the encounter between space and man without exaggerated apotheoses or false "harmonization." By incarnating the decontextualization of space into the scale (an approach that traces back to earlier works, as seen in his *Ratio* series, circles drawn in charcoal on gallery walls), his "cubes-paintings" (in their proportions, rhythm, relationships, and arrangement in space) continue and expand on the great works of Land Art. This is analogous to how, long ago, the human-scale proportions of the classical Greek column translated the colossal dimensions of Persian architecture into something accessible to human experience. After all, space can only truly "become aware of itself" through man and his literal measure.

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