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## Three-quarters of blackness: Abstract

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The summary of a doctoral thesis is all the more difficult because it has to be a kind of description at the same time. As my dissertation was written in the period of *closure*, and this phenomenon affected this work and me directly, I have become both an artist and a viewer at the white cube of an apartment. This process made it possible to experience the topic in a previously unintended way, broadened by isolation, loneliness and loss.

While exploring blackness, I let it come to the foreground, noting its presence, expansionist traits and perversity. What is blackness? Like a noun that derives from an adjective that is synthetically graded, of which I have built the titles of the chapters of experience and which, if graded, moves away from the blackness itself by negation and an attempt to whitewash the subject.

Blackness rarely appears in art in its essence, and if so, its strength is able to change the perception of a three-dimensional element into two-dimensionality. In the dissertation, I make an attempt to recreate this three-dimensionality, composing the painting when confronted with the text and signature of the work done. Owing to that fact, this production cannot be displayed electronically, because any fragmentation would deprive the whole of its creative meaning.

In the doctoral thesis, I also point to the absurdity of the website sources responsible for promoting culture and the arts, in which blackness is paradoxically present with a white text, eliminating access of a viewer and possibilities of any confrontation with reality. A shortage has arisen, which has been filled with an experimental field of blackness, forcing me to confront myself at the level unknown to me so far.

The printed dissertation about blackness and its expressions has become again a new form of its imagery and change in the painting itself. In the final process, I close it inside a hand-painted black cover which gets my hands dirty and leaves marks on itself while it is watched. The title of my work translated into Braille in the black square field constitutes the basis for the creation of a cube with golden walls and a smell of blackness inside, by which a viewer may experience their own imagery. This is a practical art resulting from experiences during the creation of written work.

Blackness is everywhere; it was before us, like black dyes before the appearance of the first painter, like an information code in our blood from a black foremother whose figure will reveal itself in art and will become an object of worship.

This was the figure of Black Madonna of an unknown artist that aroused in me the desire to learn about the very essence of blackness, which commands dimensions, shades behind the eyes, nails and gums. Writing my own icons without special features, I decided to keep the proportions of format A4, most often used today to write texts.

What is an icon? I still do not know... Its outline may fragment the surroundings or become a keyhole which opens up another door to other worlds to meet them.

Kazimierz Malewicz in his icons changed the figures in icons into geometric figures which were still imprisoned in the imagery form. Although he created iconic

works whose creative process was vitally important and which affected successive generations of artists, I value them most for not holding me back. Could he sense that blackness is inseparable from whiteness?

Blackness possesses reproducible visibility, but also its own limitations resulting from an attempt to present it in a wide spectrum. This is like an endeavour to hang a black painting on a wall that is much smaller than it is.

The painting of blackness is a carrier of self, but also, because of the latest, digital technology, we can observe it in new forms and contexts. Even Walter Benjamin in the publication *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility* notices that “a reproduced work of art is increasingly becoming a reproduction of the work that was created for that purpose”. This is how the process was perceived in the 1970s.

What is then the image of blackness today, recorded with a camera, revealing new aspects of blackness, elements not caught by a human visual system? What is a printed reproduction not fully overlapping with a painting prepared for printing, painted again in a classic technique?

Perhaps another of the endless layers which blackness puts on itself to exercise its patience with another experimenter?

Adam Zausznica in *The Science of Colour* touched upon the problem of the ‘impossibility’ of capturing the colour of painting itself through a change of the environment in which it was created. That is a removal of the painting from the studio to new exhibition conditions.

What is also interesting for me is the perception of a painting on account of the knowledge possessed by a viewer. Does our perception of the *Black Paintings* by Francisco Goya change, if we learn that he did not paint them?

I am concerned with blackness and its imagery, because it is closest to my creative language; it comprises many external stimuli I cannot cope with. The painting replaces an autoanalysis of subconscious, which reveals itself only in this way, acquiring the capability for confrontation.

I observe it, taste it, immerse my head and open my eyes; I become a white background for it. Hoping that on the other side there is its white pole which will manage to absorb my darkness... And maybe blackness hides a different picture for each of us, and to understand it, it is enough to close one’s eyes?

In the thesis, I explore blackness through the experiences of other artists, such as Kazimierz Malewicz, Mark Rothko, Robert Lax, Ad Reinhardt, Jan Bredszak, Damien Hirst, Tōkō Shinoda, Frank Stella, Wassily Kandinsky, Louise Nevelson or Robert Rauschenberg—to Anisha Kapoor, who has made a breakthrough and used blackness so black in his work that it disappeared from sight.

In many cases, artists use blackness episodically or in a short period of their creative output. Some of them put the word ‘black’ in the title of the work, not investigating blackness itself and *vice versa*. Others create black paintings without a title, as if to suggest powerlessness in the face of the phenomenon.

When confronting blackness, I record thermal effects in paintings, justified by quantum physics, but because of this not less surprising. I observe space discoveries and depict the theory of black holes that are not completely black according to Stephen W. Hawking, and paint them again... red!

What is blackness that hides in itself all other colours? After turning off the lights, a black painting stops being visible, but does not stop being a black painting in the same room. It is only our limitations resulting from the structure of the eye that record these changes. When the light goes out, we may find ourselves in infinite space or in the tight cage of fear of it. The lack of reference points allows a different experience of space.

In other works concerning blackness, I wanted to point out that it is significant and full of knowledge about ourselves. It occurred before us, before the first painter discovered its properties; it will be present after us in the form of cosmic, black background in order to sharpen the remaining plans of all events. We have emerged from carbon, we will turn into soot or will get stuck in a diamond crystal, waiting for another supernova explosion.

Blackness is ubiquitous. It was the first pigment of cave painters, emphasised the beauty of Egyptian rulers, changed Chinese and Japanese writing into a picture, and today, it endures patiently the warmth of hot laser printouts.

The experience of blackness takes many forms in my works and variety must lead to simplification. When applying an acceptable level of disharmony and observing this phenomenon in such a way, it is starting to be perfect...

Blackness reveals its white side like a sheet of paper. And maybe the black background of space is another canvas to be painted over, a galactic background with a white reverse of events? Since the Italian physicist and researcher Carlo Rovelli states that the white hole exists in exactly the same space as the black one, but... in the future.

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