

Mosaic
About the painting of László L. Révész
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László L. Révész is .at home in various kinds of artistic creation - just think of his drawings, graphic and intermedial works, scenarios, performances. All of them constituting mosaic stones from which the lifework can be pieced together. But, taking a closer look at a constituent - one will find that such a stone is also composed of various smaller mosaic stones, each of which comes from a set of even smaller ones, and so on, and so forth. As if we were roaming a Web-work or various levels of a homepage on the Internet. The

levels are superimposed according to a rigorous logic, exposing newer and newer connections. During these wanderings, we can look forward and backward, and at several junctions in a variety of other directions. This complexity is one of the decisive features of László L. Révész's work, and within that, his painting. Tessellation can be taken almost literally, if one recalls the pictures of decomposition painted in the early '90s and shown in Palme House in the winter of 1993/94 with the title Acknowledgement. He painted over the figures pictures decomposed into tiny squares like the pixels of the screen which could only be made out when you squinted your eyes.

The two layers represented two worlds: one external and one internal. It is important that there, the inner world was superimposed upon the layer of the external world. The further articulation of the sight led to the pierced pictures shown in the Dovin Gallery in spring 1997- with the title Enumeration. It happened earlier, too, that he cut a hole in a graphic work, mainly in the shape of a square. The grid that emerged also reminds one of the pixels, of over-painting. Indeed, the openwork surface became a new "layer" on the

drawing. He further elaborated this procedure with the paintings, cutting holes into the plywood carrying the paint. The pictures are arranged over a grid. A square may be a hole, a self-contained little picture or detail of a larger picture. Thus, the work itself is assembled like a castle from the building blocks or a puzzle picture from the pieces. The tiny pictures widely vary: there are portraits, interiors, multifigural scenes, still-life objects. Lots of small tesseras which add up to a "picture": the reflexion of an inner world. They are no story-boards as we have no linear story. Experiences, impulses, thoughts appear in their fragmentary, incomplete states, as acknowledged imperfection. The most recent of his exhibitions could be viewed with the title Interlude at the Dovin Gallery until January of this year. What struck one as most conspicuous when stepping into the exhibiting space was the predominant red colour in every picture: the colour evoking ancient classical wall paintings and the fashionable interiors of today emanates cosiness, warmth, at times sultriness. One picture contains several smaller ones framed by parallel streaks. These frames are reminiscent of the doorframes of old downtown

apartments, another sign of reviving the home, the interior. When a closer look is taken at the works, one discovers layers again: it becomes obvious that the pictures were painted by the artist twice. The lower layer appears through the frames and the texture also sometimes shows through. Just as you arrive to an earlier layer, having scraped off a coat of paint from the wall, or, figuratively, as new experiments dim over the earlier ones. The colours of the deeper layer are always brighter and lighter, the suggested picture is filled with light: the cloudless memories of youth are buried under by

the more sombre and careladen images. (In the pictures belonging to the Acknowledgement series the broken down pictures are also lighter.) The pictures inside the frames are almost always interiors, and the ones that are not also show off as photos preserved in an album. They remind the viewer of the interiors of early 20th century Hungarian painting that could condense long and elaborate stories in a single static moment. The objects Révész paints also tell stories, just as earlier the nail, whip, wreath of thorns referred

to the passion of Christ. In today's world the image, the appearance is very important. Immense intellectual energies are consumed to create images of persons of firms with the help of tastefully designed or selected objects, often symbols. But all that remains on the surface - true, it is not meant to penetrate deeper. The emphasis on outside appearance has naturally had its imprint on contemporary art as well. Révész too often conveys a picture without any personal comment.

Nonetheless, his pictures reveal an internal world. His loose painting style is perhaps closer to the frescos of early christianity, the "clumsinesses" originating from the variety, the manuality, turn the works highly personal like a handwritten letter. One

encounters a sincerity and intimacy here that is unusual in the art of the '90s. The layers, the tessellation suggest selfconcealment, which only makes the confession more authentic. This self-exposure is a bit embarrassing but the confidence is after all gratifying. This strange duality can be detected in the iconography as well: the products of Japanese pop culture appear painted in Révész's traditional style. Coupled of course with irony: next

to the small animal called pikachu, the young man wears a fashionable T-shirt on his chest and a traditional Japanese kimono below it. Very few artists can find the common denominator of the new trends and tradition. These compromises, however, can only be momentary. Hence, the path Révész is negotiating is unique and possibly hard to follow. But it's good to know that it is not impossible.

Translated by Judit Pokoly