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Borys Makary's negative constellations

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Apart from a banal translation of the light into the dark and the dark into the light, negative inversion has numerous consequences which influence both the formal characteristics of images, and their semantic layers. Borys Makary's negative nudes prove this. Although the fragments of bodies captured in them come from the real world, their interpretation goes beyond the realistic experience, transporting the viewer into an abstract space of shapes, signs and symbols. In other words, when looking on individual photographs, one forgets their provenance and stops comparing them to the familiar views of the surrounding world. Herein lies the paradox of the negative, which, as the closest and most direct witness to the world, seems to simultaneously recede away from the reality.

Already the negative space of photographic images and films seems unreal. As far as one has become accustomed to the representations of dark objects on the lighter backgrounds of various everyday life scenes in the cultural tradition of the West, in the case of negative landscapes, everything seems to take place in a dark, cosmic abyss. It is no accident that in Borys Makary's photographs darkness frames unnaturally bright fragments of bodies; the dispositions of the object and the background find in them an affinity with monochromatic images of the Moon in which the strange bright matter of the surface of the heavenly body levitates in a black expanse. Similarly to outer space documents, in the black and white photographs of the Cracovian photographer there is no gravitation – body fragments seem to have no basis, sometimes drifting upside down. In such takes, the *white-cube*, associated with the documentary realism of photography, gives way to the theatrical *black-box*, a rational analysis gives in to irrationality, and realness is noticeably dominated by abstraction.

Negative inversion entails a truly anti-Pygmalion effect. If mythological Pygmalion brought to life the body of the woman he sculptured, in the case of numerous negative photographs there is a reverse reaction; the real body of a woman seems to be transformed into a sculptural, stone or maybe even ice structure. The impression of the ice in question partly results from the specific, inversed light of the negative takes. The body fragments in Borys Makary's photographs resemble a transparent structure, giving off its own internal light, illuminating the darkness of a tenebrous abyss. Particular framing, resulting in the fragmentation of bodies, and, therefore, close to the surrealist practice of amputations of specific body parts, cut by a photographic frame, amplifies the impression of peculiar "sculpturalness", sometimes associated with ancient statues, damaged over the centuries.

Borys Makary is not satisfied with just photographing the body and the negative inversion of the frames such obtained. On the transformed, sometimes multiplied forms appear geometric drawings, lines and symbols, defining their additional, internal structure. As a result, the artistic and sculptural fragments of bodies obtain a mathematical skeleton; the irregularity of the body is enriched with an internal foundation of geometry. In many cases, the shapes drawn by the Cracovian photographer resemble zodiac constellations. Indeed, there are also white points on the black bodies (birthmarks, moles or photograph defects) which bring them closer to the representation of the starry night-time sky, a peculiar basis of astrological thinking. The similarity to astrological shapes allows identification of the *modus operandi* of Borys Makary who – as it once used to be – seeks to impose order on chaos, to structure the area, which defies rational cognition, in an effort to understand something incomprehensible and illogical.