

IDEAS & IDEOLOGIES is an exhibition prepared directly for the Záhorie Gallery of Ján Mudroch in Senica. Marcin Berdyszak conceived it for about a year. As the artist is exhibiting in the Záhorie region for the first time, the title of his visual presentation and exhibited works are a brief cross-section of his thoughts about society, as well as a presentation of the media and genres with which he has been working for a long time. Everything with the use of numerous symbols and signs, where he metaphorically or openly expresses his attitude towards the past, present and fears about the emerging future. All in the Central European context. He does not deny being the proud and committed Pole who expresses himself directly. Symbolism is linked to the authoritarian mindset of political and religious elites, to the lack of freedom and suppressed civil rights of various kinds (here he works primarily with the symbolism of the colours of the flag of his native Poland, where his criticism is primarily aimed), but several works reflect his concerns about developments in the EU through clear signs – a certain impotence of this administrative colossus, conflicting opinions in the EU, but also the growing influence of Asia. In figural compositions, it is an illogical race of different parties and groups competing under different colours or flags. At the chapel, we become aware of the increasingly present element of fascism in Central Europe, the dominance of the “physical”, uniformity and brute force over reason or positive emotions. In Berdyszak’s work, current themes of ecology and electrosmog are also present. The cycle of photo-paintings in the hall on the left comments on the accumulation of stereotypes in Poland, on the disregard of the rights of minorities, but also on the attitude of the political elites towards the liberally-minded. The so-called the Pop art elements of “Jessie” in *Star Bath* are primarily directed against the war conflict between the West and the East.

And finally: Marcin Berdyszak did not forget to pay homage either. *Infinity – 5607249 – Dialogue with Roman Opałka* (1931–2011) is a free conversation with the lifelong work of an important conceptual painter of Polish origin who lived most of his life in France. The object and sound video-presentation has its exhibition premiere in the Záhorie Gallery, while the remaining exhibited works were also realised in the last two years. Several have so far only been presented at the recent exhibition in Wrocław, Poland, some not at all. However, the dialogue with Opałka also has a timeless message: in 1965, Opałka began to develop the concept of the so-called number paintings (white numbers on a black background, from 1968 on grey...). It became a lifelong cycle, and in 2011, before the death of the artist, it stopped at number 5,607,249. With this work, Berdyszak followed up on Opałka: 5,607,250 is the continuation and imaginary end of this cycle in infinity. The work of the artist is limited by time, and one day it will be completed in the cycle of work in progress. However, the followers take up this baton and develop it further “ad infinitum”. By doing so, they give the work a universal meaning...

*Roman Popelár*