

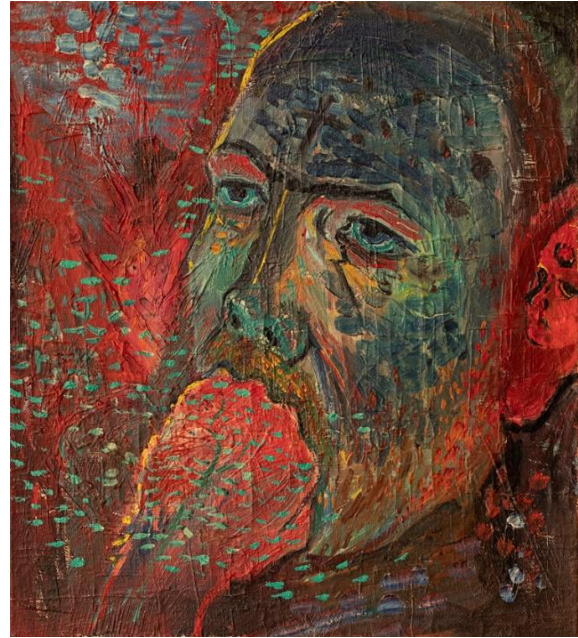
The Black Glow of The Divine Light: Antonin Artaud and Miroslav Yahoda

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Miroslav Yahoda's merits in painting and graphics are already indisputable, however his literary (poetry, prose) and theatrical (scenography, drama) oeuvre is less known and yet to be fully discovered. As a result, it is still challenging to grasp the special phenomenon of Yahoda who manifests an unshakable integrity and consistent sequence of methods common to all facets of his creative work.



A. Artaud. Self-portrait. Pencil, paper. 1948



M. Yahoda Self-portrait. Oil on canvas. 1992

In every genre, Yahoda often deliberately violates norms and canons, pushing boundaries to extremes and even shocking levels, creating an apparent chaos... The original imagery, the destruction of the image and language, the accentuated intonation, the polysemantic allegory, and the combination of traditional and own symbolism – everything is layered enriching the material in the act of co-creation. The created substance allows Yahoda to disclose and reveal deep ontological essences, to draw closer to the primary black energy demanding high emotional intensity and total dedication.

That is why during his period of formation in the 1990s, the creative process held more significance for the artist than the resulting works. The expressive canvases and graphics of that period, dominated by black, were considered secondary and were not even meticulously preserved. In that period Yahoda's creative credo was, *"To draw, you need feelings, those especially terrible feelings. I am not interested in the painting as a product, I am interested in the experience when I paint"* [1].



A. Artaud. Untitled. Ink, paper. Date unknown



M. Yahoda. Untitled. Ink, paper. End of 1980s

This fundamental aspect of Yahoda's creative approach largely echoes the system of Antonin Artaud which was initially purely theatrical, and later interdisciplinary, or more precisely, meta-disciplinary. Like Yahoda, Artaud, both as an art theorist and as a practitioner of many genres worked furiously on the material. His main goal was to break free from the rigid framework of established practices and reveal the primary, primordial forces of nature and the universe. Artaud's famous "theater of cruelty," often misunderstood, is not at all about violence or dirt but about the mercilessness and fury of creativity, "*giving spirituality and life to beings, an underground river that feeds the flat outer surface with its power*" [2].

Both Artaud and Yahoda saw the artist-creator's role as revealing internal energy. Their works, as clots of such energy, show the world *a black glow of essence that is painful to look at* [4]. The similarity in their artistic goals and methods, as well as the universal human resonance of their creations, facilitates the correlation of these two seemingly different masters.

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The congeniality of Artaud and Yahoda has not gone unnoticed. T. Zhmurko noted a compositional similarity: just as in Artaud's "body without organs" there are no specific body parts or zones of sexuality, in Yahoda's world there is no specific time localization, especially in his graphics from the initial "black period" [5]. H. Kaluger described Artaud the closest contender for the dialogical construction of Yahoda's character emphasizing their similarity both in their complete unsuitability for life and in Bacon's pathos of "*delivering a thing as it is, so that everyone is horrified*" * [6].

The noted parallels pertain only to paintings and graphic works, which constitute the majority of Yahoda's work and only a small fraction of Artaud's. However, this similarity is just an external manifestation of an essential relationship in their entire spectrum of creativity. Their much deeper commonality lies in a persistent and uncompromising attempt to release the black energy of the fundamental principles, leading to transgression and a unique artistic experience.



A. Artaud. Theater of cruelty. Pencil, paper. 1946



M. Yahoda. The Holodomor. Oil on canvas. 2000s

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Exploring the connection between Artaud and Yahoda offers not only a better way to study and comprehend the unique phenomenon of Yahoda in the context of world culture but also a means to perceive, through a new “optics,” the black flashes of divine light in his diverse art.

* M. Yahoda himself highlighted his dissimilarity with the art of F. Bacon, whom he viewed as painting unemotionally, like a mechanical man [1].

References

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