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**Tomasz Gryglewicz / Was Czapski a good Colourist? Józef Czapski's painting in view of aesthetic doctrines of the K. P. group**

In studies on Józef Czapski's artistic work predominate discussions and analyses of his writings and of his social and political activity. As long as visual arts are concerned his critical oeuvre is much appreciated, a book on Pankiewicz and other remarks on art gathered in the volumes *Oko* [An Eye] and *Patrząc* [Looking]. Also his sketches are praised. Whereas his painting is not much described, as a negative though unjust opinion was shared with some of his fellow-artists Kapists who used to claim that Czapski lacked talent. In the following paper I have focused on formal, stylistic and aesthetic aspects of Czapski's painting. Therefore, I act somehow against the main stream of studies on his artistic legacy.

The Kapists came up with a very coherent painting doctrine, they stuck to it and made it a syllabus of artistic education in Poland after the WW2. One of the main theses of Polish Colourism was a belief that the value of an art piece is decided by its form and not contents, described disdainfully by the Kapists as "literature". So did Czapski, in his writings he was rigid and uncompromising in tracing down weak points in form and colour in the then contemporary works of art, remaining unmoved in view of their pathetic symbols, he was for independence of art from the reality.

When analysing Czapski's paintings it is difficult not to notice that they differ significantly from ideal for the tendency works, especially those by Jan Cybis or Hanna Rudzka-Cybisowa (the other Kapists also stood aside this norm, everyone in his own way). Only his early works meet the assumptions of the Kapist movement. In the later period, mainly after the WW2, during his emigration in Paris, he stopped being truthful to the rule of the picture's autonomy, which was followed by the Kapists, and he moved rather towards subjects and art based upon observation of the surroundings, art which included some elements of magnified expression. Georges Rouault, Chaïm Soutine, Max Beckmann, as well as figurative works by Nicolas de Staël are listed, among others, as the sources of his inspiration. Some researchers trace analogies even between his works and Neo-Expressionist "wild" new figuration in Germany in Czapski's late period.

However, in my opinion, Czapski was never entirely an Expressionist, remaining truthful to the traditions of École de Paris, in the first place being under a strong influence of Post-Impressionism of Pierre Bonnard, other Kapists alike. Czapski was therefore an artist focused on purely painterly values; he remained a colourist painter, by following his own individual version of Colourism, he treated it in a non-orthodox way.