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'Truthful lies'- Dariusz Romanowski Interview

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Interview by Javier Melian. Cover portrait by Emma Zarifi.

I am trying to recall when was the last time I experienced something new, either visually or an unknown scent or feeling... like the first time you go on a plane or ride a roller coaster. The sensation of living in the moment, and the excitement that lasts only an instant until the brain adjusts to the new and absorbs it to the inventory of the known. Visiting Dariusz Romanowski studio felt just like that; a revitalising sensorial experience of unlearning the reality we treat as truth and replace it with beautiful lies. I appreciated Romanowski's work in pictures, and I anticipated I would like it in the flesh, but the real encounter took me aback.

His landscape pieces drag you into the mysteries of nature, as they do change colour and volume when the different lights and tonalities settle in as you move around them. Animated objects that become captivating beings, emanating with their own pulse and intensity. Same goes for the Corpses series, as the otherwise gruesome idea of piled bodies transforms into

a vibrant scene of dynamic transformation. There was never so much beauty in the decay and rugged flesh of his old ladies' portraits.

The essence of life; the feelings that cannot be put into words but that every man understands. It's all there in the brush strokes of Romanowski's art.

Romanowski's practice successfully attempts to make idea and technique inseparable; a complete interlocking of image and paint where the image becomes the paint and vice versa, enhancing the visual excitement.

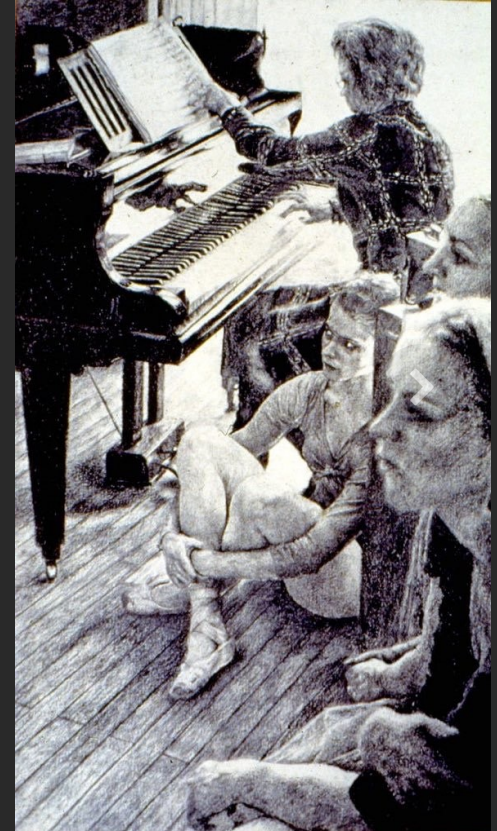
"That is why, i believe, painting is a continuous struggle. It is mysterious because the very substance of the paint, when used in this way can make a direct assault upon the viewer and bring the image back in a far more poignant way" he points out. As Van Gogh said, to make paintings to be inaccurate and anomalous in such a way that they become lies that are more truthful than the literal truth.

Romanowski recreates a particular sensation with renewed vigour in the desire to live through it again with a different kind of intensity. He works in series, with specific images which move him and act as a grounding, and allowing the artist to push reality to the point of breaking the mould and creating something new.

Romanowski's talent emerged since childhood and was always nothing less than extraordinary. His extreme gift made him stand out at school when he showed truly uncommon natural drawing skills, not for a child but for artists of any age. So much that the teachers at school suspected he was cheating, and in that in fact the drawings were produced by someone else. They decided to put him under a test and locked him in a room with only paper and charcoal. Half an hour later they came back to find, to their astonishment, a very advanced reproduction of Michelangelo's Last Judgement executed entirely from memory.

He has always possessed a very strong visual memory. Some of his drawings come from the times he used to watch his sister's rehearsals as a ballet teacher. Later in his room, he would reproduce these scenes, from memory, with unbelievable quality and sharp realism.

Romanowski underplays the notoriety of this prodigious skill since an early age, and he quickly outgrew this technique to experiment and evolve towards his own way of "abstracting" the human form whilst staying always grounded in reality. There was no value for him in demonstrating that he could draw, but the mere fact of proving the point and moving on.



'Dancers' - a collection of charcoal drawings done at the age of 14

Romanowski is a perfectionist, and very critical of his own work. He is also not interested on fame or notoriety, and jokes about settling for anonymity and letting someone else take his place in the tedious world of marketing and promoting his work. The ideal situation for him would be for his pictures to be well known but him as a person/ artists to remain totally unknown, if that makes sense. There are anecdotes of him attending his own exhibitions and pretending not to be the artist with the purpose of engaging on discussions with strangers about the flaws of his own work to the point of being expelled once by security.

This perfectionism and lack of complete satisfaction also led him once to borrow one of his pieces from a collector, to do 'minor restoration work', and ending by totally overhauling the piece to the point of no recognition. The collector was absolutely shocked at first but ultimately settled to love the new creation. Romanowski also struggles a bit with the concept of ownership of his art, and for him, his works always belong to him, despite the changes on legal form and market practices that tell him clearly otherwise.

Romanowski sells primarily to private collectors all over the world, also taking on commissions if the idea appeals to him, and doing solos and group shows in the most exciting locations from Venice to New York.



You were extremely gifted for drawing and painting since early childhood. Do you think society, now and then, is equipped to identify child prodigies and maximise their potential?

I don't know. I don't think being able to draw is as valued as perhaps in the past. Picasso would not have been able to so manipulate form without being able to draw. There seems to be quite a number of "artists" in very prominent positions, some teaching, with very little ability. I don't think that is unique to our age, the same has happened throughout art history. I do find it a curious shame though that lack of ability seems to be so celebrated at times. The basic skills don't seem to matter too much these days resulting in works which are banal to say the least, I do find this odd, one does not call oneself a chef by merely being able to make toast!

Have you had a mentor or someone who encouraged you and pushed you to follow the artistic path?

He wasn't a mentor, but my art teacher at school gave me a lot of freedom and encouragement. He never really spoke about art and allowed me to do as I wished in the class which was always me looking at art books which were lying around. I was interested in art way before this but that freedom which he allowed left a deep impression.

If you were to create or join an artistic movement, which one would it be?

Joining a movement does not interest me. I know some people find it beneficial but I think I would feel restricted and the boredom would quickly set in. I like the freedom I have. For the same reasons creating a movement would for me seem pointless as I could not imagine collaborating in anyway with others, I would find it stifling sticking to some manifesto or dogma and would very quickly want to go my own way or most likely be thrown out.

You are very critical of your own work, sometimes coming back to change a piece even a long time after first execution. Is the completion stage ever reached? when do you know this has happened?

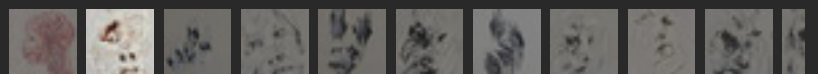
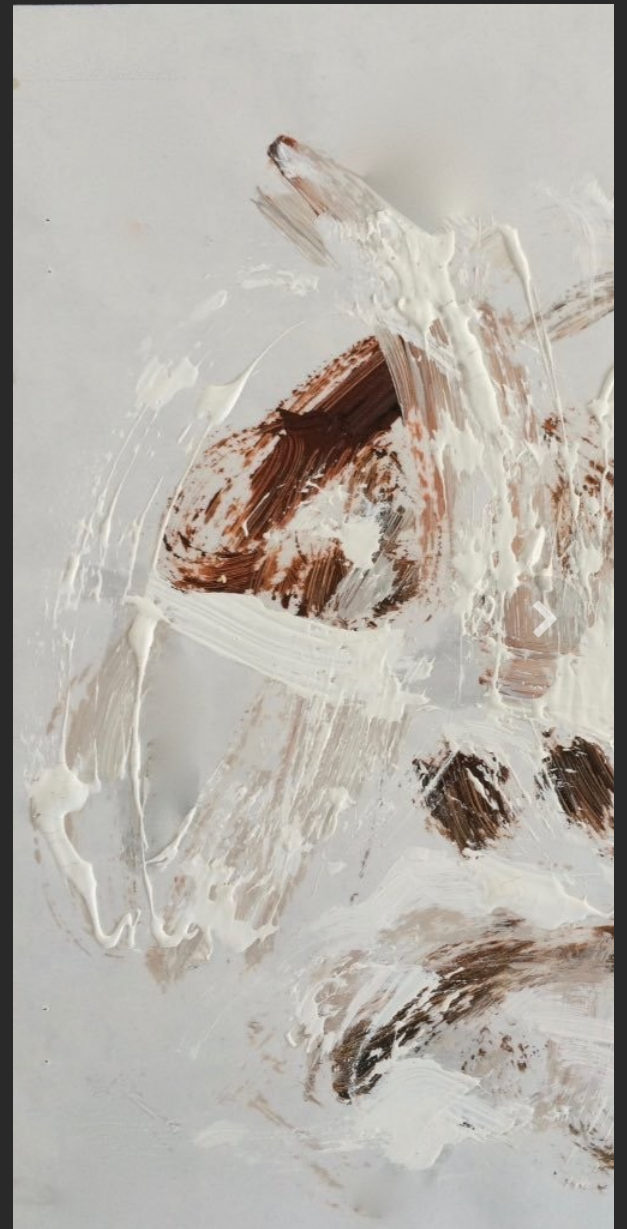
I think that is a very difficult question. I have certainly returned to pieces long after and felt I could add or change something to improve it, which sometimes works and sometimes does not.

I don't know if a piece is ever truly finished one could in theory carry on tinkering until it either changes totally or is ruined.

There do come points in a work when I think one looks at it with a degree of satisfaction but this is fleeting and the loathing quickly returns.

Equally I think ones idea of what to produce is never the same as the final result so one carries on either tinkering or more often than not leaving the work as at that time nothing more can be done, moving on to the next. I suppose the fantasy or ideal would be to produce the one piece which would obliterate all the others but of course after this what would be the point of going on.

'O' (2011) - Pencil, acrylic, gold leaf on paper mounted on cardboard



You strive to make idea and technique inseparable. Is this a very conscious process or does it occur by chance? is it trial and error or you follow a method?

I don't follow a method as that would to me seem too much of a gimmick. Above all I paint for myself and try to excite myself with the application of paint which forms the image. Equally oil

paint is a very luxurious thing and the way it moves and lays on a surface is I think part of the pleasure of looking at a picture.

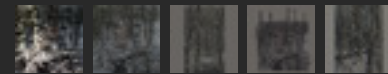
At times chance does leave a mark which I decide to keep or I try to obtain a controlled accident with the application of paint but it cannot detract from what it is conveying but must be a part. If it detracts then I remove it. I think Rembrandt made idea and technique inseparable as did Bacon , to name but two, and I find their work very interesting and very suggestive. For me , if I want to keep returning to an artists work then that work has succeeded.

You said that the human body is the ultimate source of inspiration and the most difficult subject to portrait. In your view, which other artists in history have got it right?

I think Rembrandt certainly, Bacon was a great painter of flesh, Picasso manipulated the human form in very interesting and unique ways. Michelangelo in his drawings and sculpture, Rodin is very interesting and poignant. Velazquez too. There are more but for me not as many as one would imagine.

I think one must always try to push forward based upon what has gone before, what would be the point of making a sculpture like the Greeks now, or painting a portrait in the style of Leonardo or the cubists. It one looks at art history it always moves forward, each age is like a link in a chain. The human form has always been the most difficult to portray but with at times spectacular results, from the Egyptians, Greeks, Renaissance , Picasso , etc....it does still in my view remain the most difficult and enticing.

"Wall of Ivy" (2012) Leaves, grass, oil on board. 17.5 x
40 inch



Boredom drives you to change frequently of style or to keep various parallel styles that would appear to the viewer to be disconnected. Is there a nexus between your landscapes, heads, corpses and women series?

If the works were viewed chronologically I suppose one could see connections, I certainly can. One set suggests to me something else which bleeds into the next. I think one does need to try and progress or push forward, whatever the appropriate term may be, otherwise one is left essentially painting the same picture over and over.

It's not just boredom which drives me to change, if I do something and it suggests something else to me then I will pursue it. I have many times painted groups of works in different styles at the same time simply because I was exploring different ideas and certainly not for some effect. There also comes a point where for me I have taken things as far as they could go at that time so I move on.

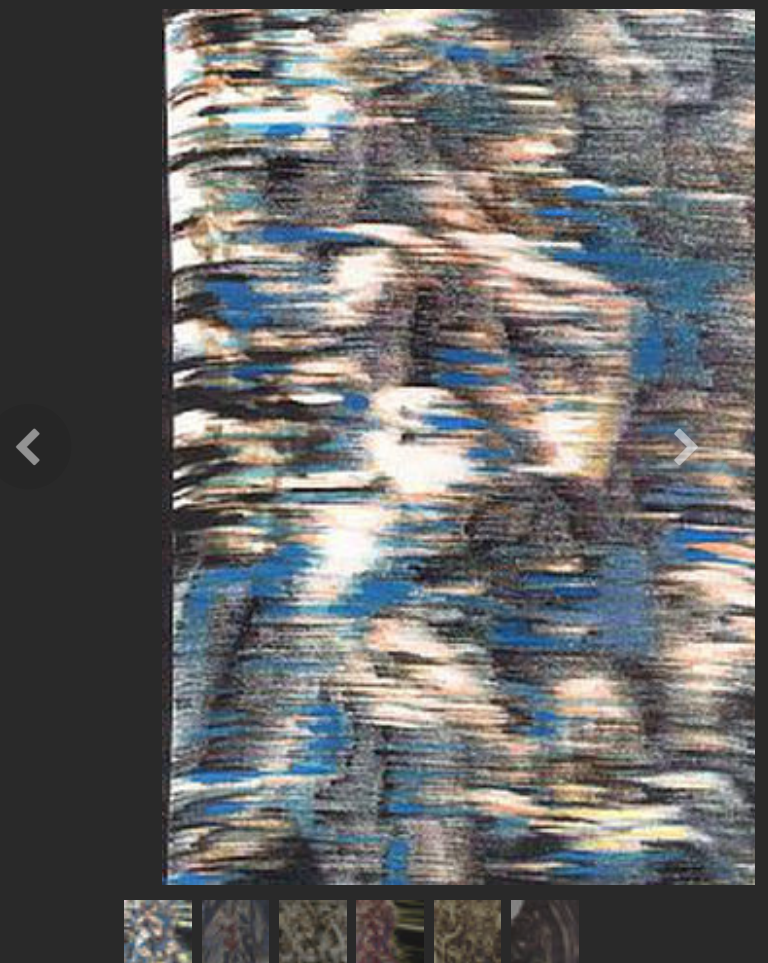
I have been asked whether I am 'searching ' for a style, this is mistaken thinking, it's all my style, I don't see the problem.

You have exhibited around the world in places like New York, Rome, Venice, and of course London. Which city is the most exhibiting place for the arts? where would you like your next exhibition to be?

I don't know which is currently considered the most exciting for the arts, I think these things are quite fake a lot of the time, something the media or whom ever creates. I remember one time I looked at a catalogue of some exhibition where apparently it was meant to show the best of what a particular city had to offer and it was amazing how bad it all was, no imagination or talent at all.

I am fond of New York which has an open attitude to art and I'm very taken with Paris, probably as so many artists I admire have come from there. Equally I think Russia would be quite interesting to exhibit in.

I would also love to exhibit in Tokyo as I find a lot of Japanese art exciting and the way it is exhibited.



In your 'wood in the snow' series there is a compelling sense of depth and immersion that is really enhanced when you see the pieces in real life. They seem to also change with the time of the day, and when you move around them. Have you thought of evolving the idea further or extrapolate it to other environments?

I am developing it further, they have to constantly move forward otherwise what would be the point. I'm not sure extrapolating the technique to other environments interests me as it would smack too much of gimmick. At present I am planning a very large snow scene which will be different to what I have already done. I am very interested in how light affects these pieces,

giving them colour which is not there and equally when viewed from different angles. Depth affects them as does size. Equally I enjoy the plays on perspective within these pieces, fooling the eye as it were. There is still I think for me a need to deepen the game as it were with these pieces.

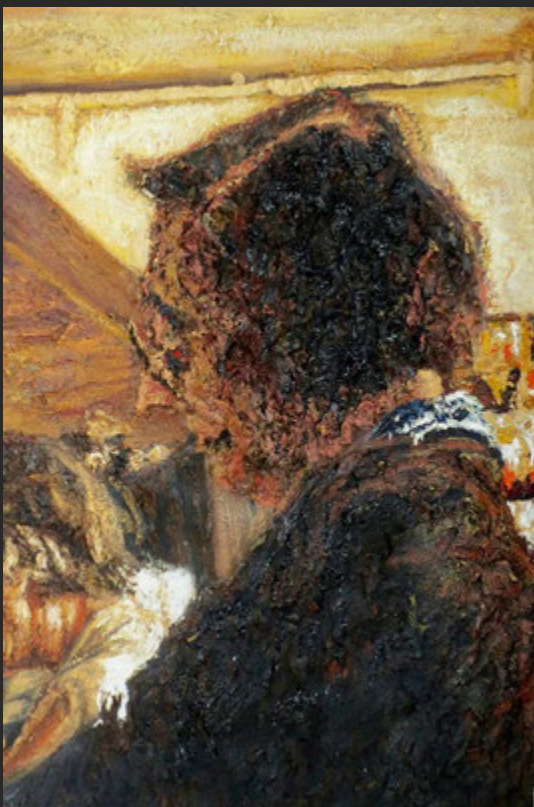
You seem to have a palette based on blues, reds, browns, and of course black and white. What is your relationship with colour? what role does it play in your work?

I use colour where and when necessary, what would be the point of sloshing lots of different colours for the sake of it.

At times I use certain colours simply because I have ran out of others, the black and white heads are an example , an accident if you like which worked out.

Certain pieces demand certain colours, I wish at times I could use others for them but it doesn't work out.

Colour is very interesting, lots of 'artists' haven't a clue about it and yet they pile it on thinking it will enhance their work which of course it does not.





To find out more about Dariusz Romanowski's work please visit www.dariuszromanowski.com

Twitter: [@romanowski_d](https://twitter.com/romanowski_d) Facebook: [Dariusz-Romanowski](https://www.facebook.com/Dariusz-Romanowski)

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Riccardo Angelo (Sunday, 16 October 2016 12:20)

#1

This is a great profile and interview. Dariusz is an extremely intelligent artist that pushes away any perceived boundaries or scripts about style or methods. He's simply an artist tour de force and inspirational at that.

Great writing Mr Javier Melian - the opening words are brilliant; tactile and visual at the same time - sensory !

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#2

An incredible chance for me and it was heavenly information to view this site. Extremely hard to reveal these helpful page or site. I have numerous tools and accomplishing legitimate article of these worked admirably and vitality keeps on being seeing about this web blog.

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#3

At present I am arranging a huge snow scene which will be diverse to what I have officially done. I am exceptionally inspired by how light influences these pieces, giving them shading which is not there and similarly when seen from various edges. Profundity influences them as sizes. Similarly I appreciate the plays on viewpoint inside these pieces, tricking the eye in a manner of speaking. There is still I think for me a need to extend the diversion so to speak with these pieces

Do My Essay For Me (Wednesday, 15 February 2017 07:38)

#4

What a fabulous article about Interview by Javier Melian. I have ever observed. I didn't locate this sort of data till now. Much thanks to you such a great amount for sharing this data. This blog is especially positive I visit this blog first time and motivate by this well done work. Unbelievable post keeps up posting such awesome images.

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