

## **Q&A with artist Ewa Konior**

### **Can you describe your work for the Arc exhibition launching April 29?**

The first group of works, made in mixed technique (acrylic, pastel, pencil) on paper or wallpaper, is a continuation of the series 'Returns' which was inspired by the nostalgia for past times. The happy moments of my family united in collaborative work and play: hiking, farming or picking berries etc, have become essential elements of my consciousness. Seeming banal and prosaic, sometimes funny, these moments added meaning and quality to my life. The larger works oil painted on boards present a new series of portraits of people close to me who affected me in a significant way. They are situated in every day situations during a meal or a rest. In portraying them, I'm trying to cross the external layer much more, paying attention not only to the physical similarities, but foremost to the depicting of the psychological and spiritual side of the portrayed person. The aim is to show the essence of the individual as a whole.

### **Why did you name your exhibition Presence?**

Above all, I wished to give it a title that would unite the message of all the paintings presented at the exhibition so anyone viewing it could have their own interpretations and approach to what's shown.

Another reason was to concentrate on the contemplation of the special moments in our lives, when we lived intensely and it became something more than the past or the image of the family album. I believe each of us has such memories still present in our consciousness that became a part of ourselves. My attention was focused on the interaction with the environment and its hidden world, and on actions that affect its whole. For me, the presence in time is a humble coming to terms with one's own current position and vocation, and also the joy of being 'here and now'.

### **How does it feel to have an exhibition at Arc?**

I am happy to be able to share my work and experience with all the participants of Arc and the exhibition's visitors. Having volunteered there in the past, I really felt a part of the place and received wonderful support there.

### **Do you have any other upcoming exhibitions?**

Yes, in the same time with the solo exhibition at the Arc I have a group exhibition at 'Storiell' in the Gwynedd Museum & Art Gallery, Bangor, Wales (April 8-May 20).

### **Who are you and what do you do?**

I am married and have two sons. I work as a freelance artist. I paint, create ordered projects, take part in art exhibitions, also teach drawing and painting.

### **What's your background?**

I was born in Poland. After graduating from the Silesian University in Katowice, Poland with a Master's Degree in Fine Arts, I worked as a cartoon animator and a graphic designer, I have been living in Great Britain for 12 years, currently in Bangor, Wales, where I paint in my own studio.

### **What's your strongest memory of your childhood?**

My fondest memories of childhood are linked with my grandmother's house, where I used to spend a lot of time in the backyard with other children, also working with my family on the field, then delicious dinners ... We had a simple, happy, quiet, life, close to nature.

### **Why art? What inspired you to get started?**

I have always been a bit withdrawn, more like an observer. Since childhood art has always been this natural, unfettered way of expressing my world on paper. Later, during elementary school after-school art classes in painting deepened my interest in this field and encouraged me to go further in this direction. I love creating pictures, helping others and sharing my art knowledge.

### **Which art form do you identify most with? What's your favorite piece of artwork?**

I think I identify with figurative painting mostly, but treated in expressive and abstract way, depending on the image motto.

My favourite piece of art is 'The joy of life' by Henri Matisse and artists whom I like the most are Rembrandt, Edvard Munch and Luc Tuymans.

### **How has your practice changed over time?**

Initially I created my works in very bold colors in a spontaneous way, emphasizing the movement in the image through distinct brush strokes. Later however, I started to plan and contemplate more the way of presenting the problem by trying to match the means to the idea. I draw attention to the layers in the picture, their interpenetration, and on the particular choice of colours. Nowadays, I more often calm and limit certain parts of the image to a single accent. I follow the rule 'less is more', but I still try to keep the image fresh and not "tired", containing a certain dose of understatement or being unfinished.

### **What research do you do when planning a new piece or series of work?**

First of all, I sketch or take pictures of the subject. I spend lots of time considering how to present the problem. I don't browse the Internet reviewing the works of others, although I like to go to the exhibitions, browse albums of various artists or read an interesting book.

### **What role does the artist have in society?**

Varied, depending on the artist, his works or personality type. In my opinion, artists should point out important issues that are present in today's world and show this invisible reality, something which is most often unnoticed, like spiritual values.

### **What memorable responses have you had to your work?**

The most memorable reception of my work brought me the picture entitled: 'Garden', which was selected for the first prize at Waterside Open 2014 (Waterside Arts Centre), Sale. I met then with a very favorable reception of my painting, not only from the audience, but also from the judges.

### **If time and money were no object, what would your dream project be?**

I would think about designing a place where everyone who is not aware of their own abilities or wants to and is unable to decide on a career path could spend time on trying different activities and see if it suits them or not.

### **What's the best piece of advice you've been given?**

My dad has given me the best advice: " finish your work and never give up".