



Maciej Herman *Sightfulness*

Large format photography, in particular one taken with an 8×10-inch camera, requires a different rhythm of looking and a different kind of presence. In this system, *Sightfulness* is not an act of recording, but of a meeting. Photography negative, in direct contact with the light sensitive paper, ceases to be just a medium – it becomes a witness of presence. It leaves a trace without interpretation, without an excess of form. The picture is exactly of a scale of the moment – it is tangent with reality. It does not diminish or enlarge it, it allows it to remain "as it is": subtle, quiet, seemingly accessible.

The title *sightfulness* can be understood in a phenomenological sense – as an experience in which a thing appears in its own truth, which cannot be translated into ideas. Husserl wrote about a "pure sightfulness" as a state in which what is visible is not yet interpreted, but simply given. Analogue photography, especially this contact one, is in this sense akin to the phenomenological act: it does not seek illusion or effect, but what is direct, inimitable. It is not created on a screen, but in a darkroom – in a place where light from the past penetrates the paper. The touch of the negative and the touch of light become one gesture.

The fragments of rocks and geological structures presented at the exhibition are portraits as much as the photographed faces. They have their surface – and the entire impenetrable worlds hidden beneath. In photography, the rock does not become an object of cognition, but a challenge to the gaze – an invitation to contemplation, to be attentive to what is resistant and not easy to grasp.

Portraits of people met in open spaces – in parks, on the edge of city paths – follow a similar logic. The photograph does not present them in a representative sense. Rather, it allows their presence to be recorded without the violence of interpretation. Photography becomes a form of material contact – it creates an image of perceptible density and weight.

These photographs cannot be "exhausted" by a glance. Their structure evokes the experience of a veil – present and hiding at the same time. It carries a sense of depth that cannot be penetrated. A picture does not have to reveal a mystery – it is enough that it stays with it.



Curator: Bownik

