

Abstract

Camouflage as a strategy of masking and displacing reality

Camouflage is a concept that means masking, obscuring something out of recognition. It is a spectrum of ways which lead to the opponent's confusion. Its purpose is to deceive, falsify the image, hide the things which are under the surface. It is carried out through concealment, simulation, demonstration activities, disinformation. Camouflage is used by humans, animals and plants; by predators and victims.

My doctoral thesis entitled „Camouflage as a strategy of masking and displacing reality” consists of a series of graphics and a series of large-format photographs. The graphics were made in the technique of color woodcut combined with collagraphy, the photos were made in the technique of black and white analogue photography on 4 x5” films. The series of graphics focuses on the subject of camouflage, blending into the background, background noise, disintegration of the information. The original inspiration for the work was the camouflage pattern used in the military, the methods of camouflage, the types of camouflage and their origin, the history of the formation of masking methods and research on the most effective means of hiding from the enemy in various armies of the world. The subject of my doctoral dissertation evolved from my earlier artistic works in which I brought up the subject of war. Among the motifs I used, there was also a camouflage pattern. I explored the motif of the masking pattern away from its original meaning which is masking in the military. Camouflage patterns were created on the basis of the analysis of forms and phenomena occurring in nature, such as organic shape, color or structure of matter, as well as the use of light and shadow. All these elements assume a form close to abstract art in camouflage. These forms intrigue and stimulate the imagination. The camouflage motif in my works began to move more and more towards abstraction, departing from the war connotations and became an autonomous entity. I also became interested in the meaning of camouflage in everyday life and in culture. Issues related to the concept of masking reality, displacing knowledge about the actual state of affairs and constructing alternative realities, such as simulacrum, fluid reality or post-truth, caught my attention. I realized that the oc-



currence of phenomena with the characteristics of camouflage doubts our understanding of the surrounding world. The analysis of forms occurring in nature and graphic experiments played an important role in the creative process, intuitive actions were of significant importance. The graphic matrices were created in the technique of woodcut and collage, the used strokes are dynamic and organic, they bring to mind of patterns from the world of nature. The graphics were made of many layers of vibrating planes. The structure of the print is fractured and vibrating, shapes are fragmented and disintegrated. Successive layers of graphics enhanced the visual noise effect, causing the eyes to wander over the divisional graphics surface. Large formats of works enhance the impact of the image and allow one to immerse into the picture. Compositions of graphic are without the center and focal points for sight; they are causing confusion, contradicting the normal process of visual perception that always tries to give an image some sort of organization. The works feature an apparently uniform range of colors, which is internally diversified. Contrasted small patches of color cause the apparent pulsation of the image surface. The composition of the works is complemented by streaks of color, emphasizing the pulsation of the surface on a macro scale.

Research on the role of lighting in the reception and perception of forms, conducted in experiments on military masking, inspired me to create a series of photographs. Photographs accompanying the graphic works were made with the use of a large format camera on analog black and white plates in the size of 4x5". The photographs deal with the subject of transparency and masking with light. Transparency seems to be the most effective way to hide an object from view, but under certain lighting conditions it is uncovered. Similarly, the excess of light, its proper distribution or the lack of it allows you to hide objects from view. In the theoretical part of my doctoral work, I described the basic meaning of camouflage, such as various types of camouflage found in nature and used in the military. I also presented examples of the occurrence of camouflage in culture and mentioned phenomena that are in some way related to camouflage, such as simulacrum, anamorphosis or post-truth.

The aim of my doctoral work was continuation and development of the previously undertaken issues related to war, thought on the mechanisms of manipulation. I undertake a study of the world around me through my graphics. My creative process favors the consideration of the issues I undertake and their thorough reflection, the matter suggests



solutions to the problem and reveals new paths. Creating photography made me aware of the susceptibility to distortions and imposing my own view of the world, even in such an apparently objective medium. Camouflage questions the reality of the world around us and introduces new dimensions. It is an integral part of nature and culture.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Hanna Rozpova". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with long, sweeping lines.