

Artist Zdzislaw Beksinski Stabbed to Death

[Jack Rackem](#)

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WARSAW, Poland - Zdzislaw Beksinski, a leading Polish surrealist painter known for his images of death, was found stabbed to death at his Warsaw home on Tuesday, police said.

Relatives found Beksinski's body overnight, and "everything indicates it was murder," police spokeswoman Zuzanna Talar said. He suffered multiple stab wounds, and police said there were no signs of forced entry or robbery.

Beksinski, 75, was considered one of Poland's leading contemporary artists. He emerged on the Polish art scene in the 1950s and was best known for his abstract renditions of skeletons, monster-like creatures and other apocalyptic images evoking death and decay.

"We all see death before our eyes," Beksinski said at the opening of an exhibition of his work at Warsaw's Zacheta Gallery in 2002, the news agency PAP reported. "I am not an exception."

"Personally, I am more afraid of dying than death itself. This is not a fear of emptiness but of suffering - and this is what I am most afraid of."

Beksinski also enjoyed a large following outside Poland - mainly in France, Japan and the United States - among fans of surrealist art and collectors, said James Cowan, the president of Morpheus Fine Art, which published a book on Beksinski and has sold some of his works.

Cowan said Beksinski's paintings sold for between \$30,000 and \$50,000 to collectors - among them a number of "Oscar-winning people in Hollywood." He said he could not identify the buyers.

"He's just a brilliant modern master," Cowan said in an interview from his office in Las Vegas. "Poles consider him the finest contemporary artist. But the art goes beyond the borders of Poland. It is ... very classical in style."

Beksinski studied architecture in Krakow before throwing himself into painting, photography and drawings. His works hang in the National Museum in Wroclaw, the National Museum in Warsaw and in a dedicated museum in Sanok, his hometown in southern Poland.

In the 1990s, he expanded his repertoire to include computer-generated images in his trademark surrealist style.

"Zdzislaw Beksinski won our imagination and the hearts of everyone - the public and the critics," Zacheta Gallery director Agnieszka Morawska told PAP.

Though Beksinski depicted foreboding, dark images, he always resisted

attempts to analyze their meaning.

"It misses the point to ask me what my paintings mean," he once said. "Simply, I do not know myself. Moreover, I am not at all interested in knowing."

Beksinski's wife died several years ago, and a son, Tomasz, committed suicide after battling clinical depression, Cowan said.

This is a real damn shame, especially this happening so soon after Hunter S. Thomson's death. Especially an original like Beksinski.

[Here's a zip of some of his stuff for those who are unfamiliar.](#)

[Lepidopteran](#)

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I've loved several of his paintings for years, but I didn't know who the artist was until this morning. Part of me really appreciates his wholehearted rejection of symbolism and meaning-as-such.

~L

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There's another link to some of his work [here](#) (with popups unfortunately) in case you're at work and they don't like you downloading things...

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