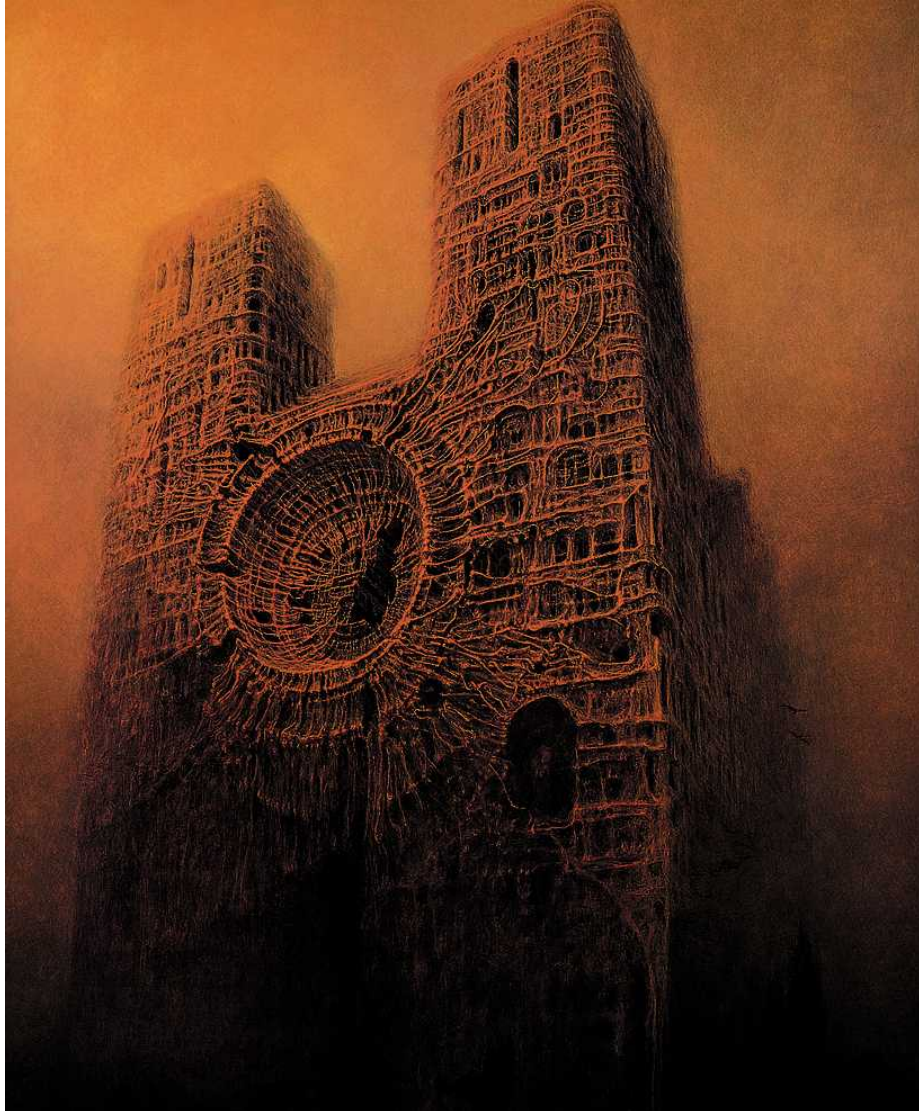


Visual Analysis



[Untitled](#) by [Zdzisław Beksiński](#) is a painting that features a cathedral made of an unspecified material. It feels organic, as if it is a kind of slime mold, tree branches, or bones. This mysterious texture is characteristic of Beksiński's work.

The cathedral is the only subject of the image. Behind it, there is minimal background with a textured gradient (top to bottom - light to dark). The painting features a mostly monochromatic palette with shades of orange and brown. The smooth texture of the sky contrasts with the grain of the strands that make up the cathedral. Closer to the ground, darkness envelops structure, as if there is a thick fog that the sunlight cannot pierce through.

The image focuses on the front face of the cathedral, at a slight angle. The framing looks up, emphasizing the cathedral's height and imposing presence. The lines at the edges of the structure are slightly curved.

There is no movement; it is an eerily static image. It is slightly imbalanced, which adds to the organic quality of the material. It is full of holes between the strands, but one cannot see what is inside. There are some bigger holes, as if it had frayed with time.

The two most prominent forms are the circle at the centre and the line of the edge of the right-side wall. The centripetal, curved lines of the tendrils contrast with the vertical, more orderly lines of the rest of the structure. This circular indentation in the material plays with the contrast between the divine beauty of a stained-glass window and its tendrils spreading from its centre.

Much like a dream, this image suggests a feeling more than a narrative. It is surreal, gloomy and somewhat disturbing.

This piece emphasizes the interplay between divine and profane (see [Durkheim](#)). The sensations of organic decay - rot, putrefaction, collapse, corruption, atrophy, withering - are put in contrast with the expectations of an orderly, stable, structured, solid, protective, welcoming, cosy, and pure religious experience. Most of the image's structural aspects contribute towards this contrast, achieving an uncanny effect (see [Freud](#)).

Beksiński (1929–2005) was Polish, which informs the historical and aesthetic aspects of this piece. It can be read as a commentary on Christianity, as well as a comment on World War 2 - a shedding of faith in humanity and lack of hope for the future. Art from this part of the world (Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Russia) also shares some aesthetic sensibilities which results in a particular kind of dark surreal art. For more detail on this, see Appendix A.

Beksiński did not name any his works. He was stabbed to death at his apartment on 2005, by the teenage son of his caretaker.

This feels like a nightmare. Even the sky has a texture that suggests a dreamlike space - sparse, fuzzy, toxic. It doesn't try tell a story or to be clever. It is just a feeling of decay and hopelessness. There is no comfort here, but there is also nowhere else to go. I resonate with the feeling of being trapped in an open space.

Compared to similar pieces, I find this one more abstract and subtle. I find it honest. This work fits precisely into an uncanny space that I find tolerable - perhaps because of its architectural character, or because of the straightforward nature of its contrasts. I much prefer this to his works showing withering humans, or other, more 'gory' disturbing imagery. In any case, I love that this weird stuff can not only exist, but thrive.

AI was not used in this work.

Appendix A

This piece reminds me of (all following links lead to images):

- [The Void](#) (game)
- [Stalker](#) (film)
- [ouch_tatu](#) (tattoo artist)
- [HR Giger](#) (author)
- [Blame](#) (comic)
- [Scorn](#) (game)
- [Berserk](#) (comic)
- [Retirantes](#) (painting)
- [St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Blues](#) (song)