3. Did You Forget to Shave?

Přemysl Arátor interprets the painting ***Did You Forget to Shave?*** (1950) as follows:

“Mirrors like the one depicted in this painting used to be found in barbershops and in their window displays. Above them were inscriptions such as the title of this painting, or ‘Clean-shaven, in good spirits ’and ‘Our smile, your success. ’This painting aspires to be a mirror in which, alongside its protagonist, fragments of the world around him also appear.

The strange and strikingly ugly man who is shaving here in order to achieve catharsis – that is, a purification, whether physical or spiritual – is, of course, not a self-portrait. Rather, it is a depiction of the Sinner, whose weaknesses constantly and inevitably re-emerge, so that he must keep shaving them away – one might say through a kind of informal confession.

Here, the verism of the closely observed face, fingers, and soap suds on the shaving brush and in the bathtub merges with motifs from conventional illustrated magazines and naively erotic publications. The picturesque details of the women surrounding the man – engaged in a mystical, or at least moral, act of shaving – are based on types drawn partly from personal experience and partly from magazine imagery. The way the foam or the cigarette ash in the holder is depicted follows the detailed painting of Dutch still lifes. This was the kind of painting that satisfied Pavel Brázda at the time.”