8. Still Life – Self-Portrait

Pavel Brázda wrote regarding Věra Nováková's painting: ***Still Life – Self-Portrait (1949–50)***

“The theme of this still life offers several possible interpretations, from the psychoanalytic to the existential. According to the artist, it is primarily a painting of her mental state at the time – inner confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty stemming from the collapse of values she had trusted until then. She sees herself there in a shard of a shattered mirror, surrounded by all sorts of junk found in cellars, in the attic of her childhood home, and outdoors. All those strange and disturbing objects and their relationships are an expansion of the artist’s portrait. They are symbolically expressed components of her soul – all possible and even contradictory ones. Unlike the 'inner model' prevailing in Surrealism, the artist here begins with a direct depiction of a pre-assembled external model, viewed unusually closely and in great detail. In this work, Věra Nováková moves from a Surrealist starting point to a deeply felt Existentialism.”