

Press Release to the Exhibition

Archipelago of Attention

June 26– August 11, 2024

Curators: Karel Srp, Jan Kudrna



Exhibiting artists: **Kateřina Frgalov, Martin Gebert, Lilla Gombos, Oskar Hořnek, Lucie Hořkuv, Martin Jech, Ěereza Mtlov, Zhafera Runa, Oksana Sadovenko, Kamil Šlapk, Andrea Naďa Ěomikov, Natlie Źeleva**

Trafo Gallery cordially invites you to an exhibition of twelve artists from among the youngest generation of students and recent graduates of art schools from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, working in the media of painting, sculpture and intermedial installation. The opening will take place on Tuesday 25 June from 7pm at Trafo Gallery, a guided tour on Wednesday 17 July from 6pm. You can find more information at trafogallery.cz.

What does solitude mean today? Is it the last layer in which one can still be with oneself? It is possible to connect various approaches, each of which speaks its own language, of authors who do not even know each other and who come from many places, in one exhibition, without applying any method of current generational understanding, it is possible to find attitudes that are as close as possible to each other do they distance and define each other? Can gaps be discovered in the growing socialization, preserving a distinctive expression, dominated by ambiguous individual experiences that escape the shared, overwhelming everyday life? Art remained one of the few areas that resisted all kinds of external and internal pressures, a place of last salvation before falling into nothingness, an area that lifted the view from the mundane, a surviving island in which a condition that can be characterized as preoccupation is still preserved. One of its sources is solitude, a crack, surrounded by insignificance, fullness in emptiness, irrelevance, not intersected by coordinates. The island and the rift are mutually intertwined assumptions, as if one could not exist without the other. The features of preoccupation include differentiation, the effort to be outside, not to become part of a generational, group, stylistic program, a link in the wheel of the world of art and its operation.

Although the boundaries between individual approaches are not impenetrable or clearly defined, we perceive clearly the tendencies and directions that are determinative. We can observe the subject matter that is evident in the work of **Kateřina Frgalov** and **Martin Jech**. Both artists preset the initial reality with a specific fragmentation that is focused on a particular segment of the subject spectrum. Frgalov separates objects of everyday use, which she installs in inert spaces. She thus accentuates the essence of the depicted and raises the seemingly banal object from the category of simple function to the category of transcendence. In contrast, Jech works with the epic aspect of the initial reality. He is interested in sequences where he captures the storyline. He challenges the general reality, in which the human is the classic fundamental driver of the plot, with paraphrases directed at the animal kingdom, specifically to dogs. In the realm of, say, the descriptive, a due of artists follows, for whom humankind is the fundamental carrier of both formal and substantive essence. **Andrea Naďa Ěomikov** and **Martin Gebert**. Both use the figure of the human as a platform for capturing a broader artistic message. For **Ěomikov**, the figure is a complex set of both physical and mental absolutes. The human is an integral stage that sprawls across and exists in the space of the painting with complete certainty and naturalness. It is its essential determinative element, which, though functioning autonomously, still holds the image as a whole within a fixed format. Gebert subjects the figure to a certain fragmentation. He elaborates on the basic human sign and symbol. The face. Gebert perceives this specific, autonomous interface as a space that naturally provides an incommutable

code that, combined with an economical and clear painting, can define the essence of the message.

Oskar Hořánek is another who operates on the factual level of the message. In his open series of paintings he processes the reality of humankind's non-present industrial landscape, represented by segregated factory objects that bear witness to the past, but which can very easily become testimony to a terrifying future. A kind of principle of non-presence of the human is crucial to **Ľereza Mátlová's** work too. She works with colour in an unprecedented way. Colour is determinative. And somewhere around and or in the centre of Mátlová's work there is to be found one or more figures. They emerge non-violently from the colour spectrum of layered planes and reinforce the composition in such a way that the initial intention is connected to the resulting reality. **Lilly Gombos** works with what at first sight is the opposite but mentally similar principle, not with colour, but with gesture. Her paintings are organic reliefs that stand out from the customary pictorial space, where they define their own territory with the aid of tentacles that reach deep into the surroundings in order to define quite clearly the sovereign territory of the initial experienced rectangular environment. The delineation of one's own environment within the conventional understanding of painting is essential in the work of **Lucie Hořková**. She works with canvas that has been buried underground for several weeks. The canvas is not a continuous and unchanging platform. She stitches its fragments together so that the ground itself becomes part of the painting. **Hořková** paints using stitches, watercolour, charcoal, and clay that has been imprinted on the canvas. Gesture and testimony are a crucial denominator for this artist.

Gesture and authentic testimony form an essential aggregate for **Oksana Sadovenko**. She starts with a basic black background, onto which she paints distinctive conceptual images. She draws on the emblematic, personal and cultural history of her own roots, and on top of this she complements the paintings with texts that underline the meaning and essence of the painting itself. The image is for her a synthesis of authentic collective history and contemporary language. The interplay between communicative painting and the conceptual is fundamentally evident in **Zhatera Runa's** work. It is not hugely important whether it is a departure from the space of the basic level of the image, a collage or a painting. What matters is the energy, feeling, impression and actual imprint, the trace. Quick, clear and automatically authentic. Without filter, regulation and (self) censorship. A certain, let's say, deregulation is an essential phenomenon in the work of **Natálie Želeva**. She paints phantasmagorical exposed situations that are set in specific locations. The paintings are essentially compulsive records of her own imagination. It is not the drawn letter of the message that is important. What is essential is the authentic energy, a certain diaristic record of a specific situation that is not present in a network but on medium-size canvases.

Kamil Šlapák is the complete opposite of Želeva. His paintings are patient and enmeshed. He works in a highly thoughtful and analytical way and is able to interpret reality as an intermediate space between the apparent and the intuited. He blurs both imaginary and factual spaces of the external and internal. The uncertainty as to whether you are close to the action or a mere spectator passing by is an essential feature of **Šlapák's** work.

Thanks to all partners who are supporting Trafo Gallery: Magistrát hlavního města Prahy, Canadian Medical, Skupina ČEZ, Hospodářské noviny, Seznam.cz, Dopravní podnik hlavního města Prahy, Art District 7, Mondi Perigraphica, Radio Color, Radio 1, Wine4You a MOST Nápoje / Beverages s.r.o.

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