



TRAFO  
GALLERY

## Ester Knapová: Winter Apples

January 12 – February 25, 2024

Curator: Petr Vaňous

Trafo Gallery opens the New Year season with an exhibition of an exceptional young Czech colorist, Ester Knapová, who creates her authentic painting world out of an inner necessity to present time in its elusiveness and impermanence. The exhibition will present images awakening the author's lost memories and key moments of the past. The opening will take place on Thursday 11 January from 19:00 at Trafo Gallery. The guided tour will take place on February 7 from 6 p.m. The curator of the exhibition is Petr Vaňous. You can find more information at [trafogallery.cz](http://trafogallery.cz).

Ester Knapová's paintings spread a kind of dreamy mood at first sight. They draw us into various remote times and present us with familiar situations that remind of us something. The artist opens up the half-forgotten world of her own past, though it is not strictly speaking only her world. It is, rather, a found form of sharing and awakens the viewer from passivity. She makes us remember objects and moments that were somehow important for the present, even if it didn't appear so "back then". A network of involuntary observations, banal objects, corners, hiding places, a web of abandoned places in which Morandian silence speaks: this is where Ester Knapová returns to recall long-obscured connections, connections that shed a different light upon the lived time and that magically transform the seemingly insignificant into what suddenly appears as crucial and essential from today's perspective. This is the discovery of something lost, but something which at least exists in memory and recollection, and which is therefore accessible in certain ways.

The image as conceived by Ester Knapová is in a way an "ideal framework" in which it is impossible to touch the ephemeral, to shape it, to reveal it and to eternalise it at the same time. Into this ideal framework one can draw a whole range of earliest childhood experiences: the immediate enchantment with nature, the joy of games and free movement, a pure contemplation of the state of things, the joy of lightness and fantasy. The shadows of experience are colourful and do not cause pain, but intensify determination and curiosity. They are playful, mysterious, they provoke the imagination, they are themselves a trigger for further images and associations. And yet between the lines there is a scepticism and sadness arising from the awareness that every experience is both profit and loss, and that, although it opens up new horizons of knowledge, it overwhelms and complicates human immediacy in its openness and ethical purity.

Knapová makes extensive use of the fullness of painting after modernity, which, by subtly escaping the dictates of objective illusion, allows both a framework description of the situation as well as its materialisation through the use of coloured massing and its modelling. It is this "physical moment", in which the painting experience of many generations is summed up, that can conjure up the uniqueness of specific moments and turn them into timeless messages on a relatively small surface with a modest complement of actors. This is why it is a good idea to view Knapová's paintings both

from afar and close up, in their unifying colours planes, their shape modelling, but also in the haptic moulding of the surface of the painterly layers, in the textuality of fully involuntary impressions, overlaps, scars and traces. Polarities in general are essential when viewing the artist's work. By thinking about painting on the basis of opposites (e.g. distance vs. proximity, reverse vs. obverse, instantiation vs. disappearance, freedom vs. anxiety, joy vs. scepticism, etc.) Knapová prepares the conditions for vivid relational fields. Colour is analogous to their "liveliness" and "inner movement", colour as a specific composition of radiant and suppressed places, the interplay of ideal transformations, which we subliminally know about from nature, from its cyclical flow, within which we fill our time.

The exhibition *Winter Apples* awakens a kind of overarching atmosphere by means of its title, while at the same time allowing us a glimpse into the thematic diversity of the paintings, by means of which the artist examines her relationship to time and the passage thereof.

In addition to specific childhood memories, there are objects and places associated with the movement of a searching memory and with direct sensory touch, in the intersection of which, and in the blending of internal model and external phenomena and appearance, the poetics of image and painting thrive.

**We thank our partners for supporting Trafo Gallery: Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, City Hall of Prague, Canadian Medical, ČEZ Group, Seznam.cz, Prague Public Transit Company, Art District 7, Radio Color, Radio 1 and Wine4You.**

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