

FREEDOM

ART

KNOWLEDGE

Kahan
Art
Space

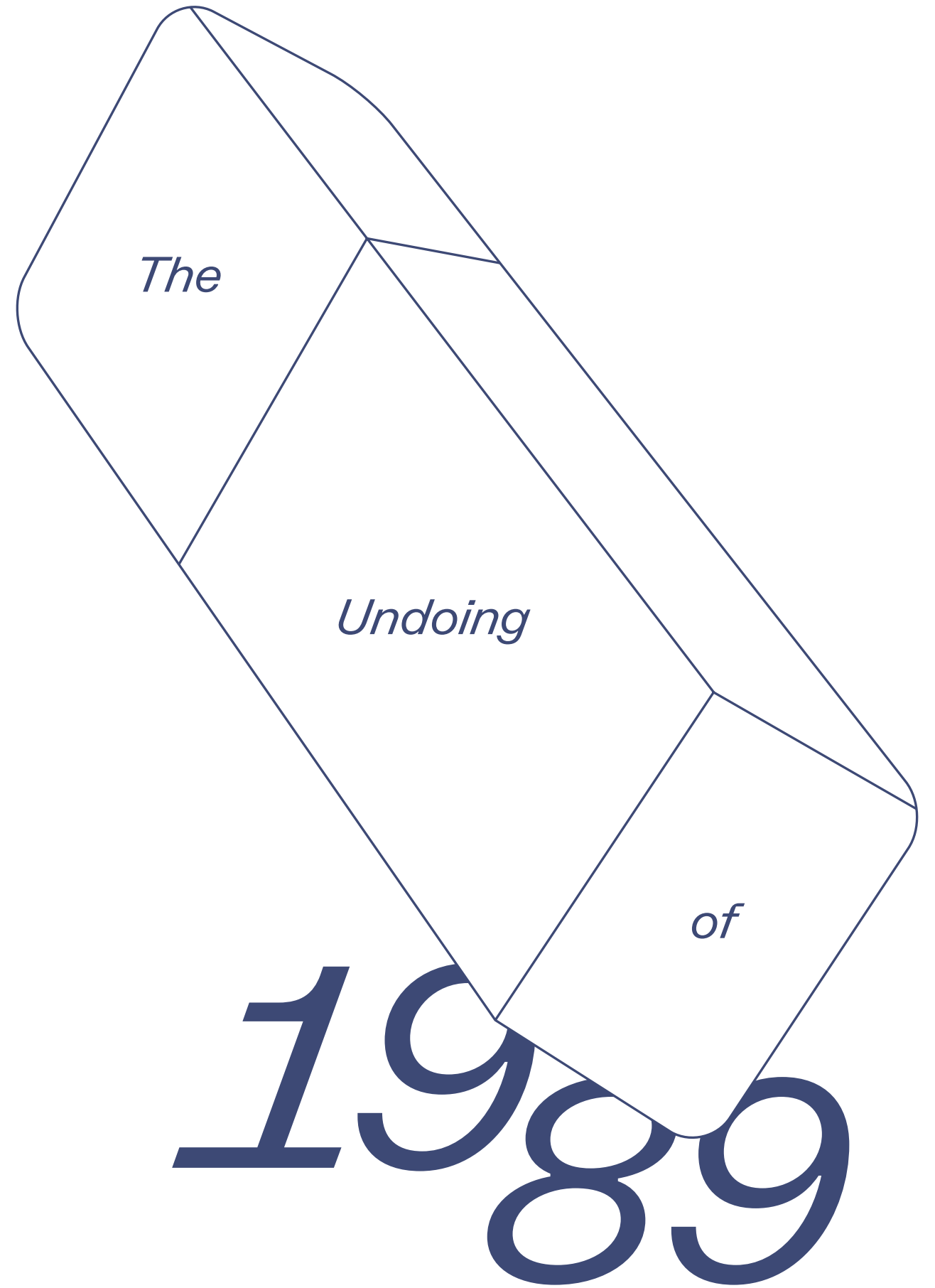
*Kahan
Art
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The Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation is a public benefit foundation established in memory of the life of Dr. Éva Kahán by her family in 2015 using the family's private assets.

Fundamental democratic values, such as minority rights, access to education and the right to artistic freedom, played an important role in Dr. Éva Kahán's life, and the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation cherishes her memory by promoting the values represented by her.

The foundation's activities include:

- ✿ Supporting the university studies of socially disadvantaged students in Hungary by providing academic scholarships and tuition fee grants
- ✿ Supporting artists and their creative work at Kahan Art Space Vienna and Budapest
- ✿ In Budapest, the foundation supports young Central Eastern European artists just beginning their career, while in Vienna the focus is on art concerning current social, economic and political topics
- ✿ In addition, the foundation regularly hosts artists in Tuscany as part of its Artists in Residence Programme
- ✿ Participants of any Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation programmes are required to respect human rights, especially minority rights, and the freedom of art.



Ever since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, escalating a conflict into what would become an all-out war with Ukraine in 2022, artists and cultural observers in Eastern Europe have seemed hellbent on vindicating many of their longstanding observations that the USSR, the old Soviet juggernaut, was back.

Comparisons soon began mounting. The 2014 Sochi Olympics were seen as tantamount to the Moscow Olympics of 1980, the Pussy Riot trials of 2012 to the Stalin-era show trials of 1937, the Euromaidan protests in 2014 to the Hungarian uprising of 1956. Everywhere, it seemed, there were clues.

In the years following 1989 the processes of perestroika and glasnost saw many Eastern bloc countries transition to Western liberal democracy, a process neatly aligned with the interests of Western museums and institutions; yet, agents of cultural change within former Soviet republics faced a double-bind: how to combine national narratives with the fraught legacy of socialist modernism and realism, together with trends and concepts emanating from globalization and what Francis Fukuyama called *the end of history*^{*}, the idea that liberal democracy, the apex of humanity's sociocultural evolution, signalled an epistemic universality. Today, however, more than thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it seems that the European project has never been more fragile.

Yet, for those familiar with life in former Soviet republics, the entrance into the 'civilized' Western world was accompanied by brutal and often very extreme measures. In Russia itself, privatization was introduced by imposing a forceful shift to a market economy that permitted the spread of violent, hardly democratic and often criminal business practices. In Poland and what would become other European Union and NATO-aligned states (East Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), Western non-governmental and cultural institutions invested heavily in soft power. Liberal social values and civil society proliferated alongside access to investment and trade. In former Soviet republics on the periphery of Europe, such as Georgia, Belarus and Ukraine, the post-

independence landscape of the 1990s became a means by which these countries could press for concessions from the West as part of playing a dangerous geopolitical Russian roulette. Natural gas, energy and economic dependence were used as the carrot and the stick by which Russia could continue to impose its political will on countries left outside the purview of the European Union, which slowly eroded their ability to achieve even a modest degree of non alignment. During the turbulent Columbian drug wars in the 1990s, a popular saying emerged: *Plata o plomo* (silver or lead), essentially meaning ‘take the bribe or take the bullet’, cooperate or be destroyed. This saying would not be amiss when applied to any of the post-Soviet republics outside the European Union today.

With the historical fault lines of the former Soviet Union continuing to exert a matrix of coloniality and power, particularly in countries like Georgia and Ukraine, the need to unpack the role of culture within civil society has never been more urgent.

For those now aligned to the West, the renewed Cold War that came after the invasion of Ukraine has done little to address the historical difference between post-Soviet social tensions with Western liberal democracy. The ever haunting spectre of rising tensions with Russia raises an important question: how far East can the West go?

In Václav Havel’s final play, *Odcházení* (Leaving), which is about a ruler forced to step down after years of serving his country, the reasons for the ruler’s demise remain unclear. Was he deposed by a coup? Did he lose via a swing in parliament? A Velvet Revolution? If it were to mimic Havel’s own experience: as a heroic dissident who challenged the Soviet Union before going on to become the Czech Republic’s first President, leading it into NATO, later succumbing to the constraints of a weak presidency that he himself devised, the contradictions and burdens of his life as a social revolutionary, with the gnawing, Kafkaesque flaws that undermined and sowed division within his burrowing brand of nationalism and materialism, a ‘realist’ who experienced the ‘idealism’ of art and literature,

the different orthodoxies he experienced in his life offer some insight into opportunities for engagement with respect to the cultural and political landscape unfolding across Central and Eastern Europe today.

Founded in 2015, the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation, with spaces in Vienna and Budapest, fulfils a necessary, albeit difficult function in this framework. Under the directorship of Marie-Ève Lafontaine, the foundation is incorporating an adjusted view of Central and Eastern European art that includes many of the polemics noted above, amplifying what the Ukrainian filmmaker and artist Oleksiy Radynski calls ‘art as a tool of repair’. The strategies of the foundation dovetail into an alliance between the cultural field and civil society. As an examination of historical narratives that challenge approaches to transition, the foundation’s mission seeks to realign the history and identity unique to Eastern bloc countries, working with artists who express how these unfold in contemporary art.

An exhibition at the foundation’s Vienna location of the Polish-Romani artist Małgorzata Mirga-Tas in spring of 2022 exemplifies this pivotal role perfectly. Known for melancholic depictions of Romani communities, Mirga-Tas’ incredible works give voice to the voiceless. Her work documents via drawings, paintings and textiles the lives of Romani communities the artist herself lives in. They feature prominently human silhouettes imbued with explosions of colour, sequins, feathers and fabrics. The textiles are often from clothes worn by people dear to the artist, including family members and friends, and are stitched together to form scenes that liberate the colonial gaze away from the conceptual ghetto of ‘gypsies’ as bands of criminals and welfare recipients, instead positioning these figures in an expressive realism not dissimilar from painters like Kerry James Marshall, who in a similar way reclaims the agency and visuality of Afro-American culture. Her exhibition and inclusion within the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation’s burgeoning roster signals the importance of art as a tool for repositioning marginal voices, creating a platform in which art can act as a responsible agent of civic mindedness and change.

Founded by Zoltán Aczél, the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation has developed a core set of values around art and social activism with a mission to spur creative engagement across Central and Eastern Europe. In the past, it has worked with artists such as Andreas Greiner, Daniel Rycharski, Judit Kis and Biljana Đurđević, developing a program that, rather than shying away from engaging with the messy social and political subjects that tend to be overlooked by more commercially minded galleries in the region, engages with these subjects head on. Its spaces, including the flagship locations in Vienna and Budapest, as well as an artist residency in San Sano, Tuscany, will soon be supplemented with a large industrial warehouse in Budapest, set to open later this year.

Part of the foundation's mission is to reflect on the trajectory of the post Soviet transition to liberal democracy, a task made all the more prescient today given resurgent forms of totalitarianism now threatening not just the European continent, but the entire world. As Western Europe is coming to terms with its own legacy of colonialism, Eastern Europe is currently in the midst of its largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. And, since history often repeats itself, we should never ignore the ripple effects of geopolitical conflicts on cultural dimensions, either.

The sovereignty and survival of Ukraine's cultural sector is thus not only a matter of the country's national security, but of regional and global security as a whole, placing the conflict at the forefront of a cultural and political battle royale, with Western liberal values brushing up against an insurrectionary global world order marked by renewed tenets of autocratic illiberalism. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as such, seeks to topple and replace more than a Western-aligned government. It attempts to undo the fundamental principles upon which transnational networks of solidarity have developed across Central and Eastern Europe, a radical assault on the geographical-ideological framework upon which the West is based.

How do we then redefine Central and Eastern Europe today? How do artists engage in the struggle of individual versus collective

identity? And what do the relics of the post-Soviet experience tell us about renewed assaults on Western democracy? How we answer these questions will have profound implications on the remainder of the 21st century. Artists, for their part, will be tasked with reckoning an adequate art history that encompasses these questions, and so will institutions and curators, for the propensity of culture to respond to the threat of continental annihilation has never been greater nor more urgent.

DORIAN BATYCKA
Journalist

- ✿ The end of history meant that liberal democracy was to be the final form of government for all nations, and that there could be no progression from liberal democracy to an alternative form. Francis Fukuyama, *The end of history?*, Routledge, 2015.



Organizing principle

Dia Zékány
19 Feb – 19 Apr (BUD)

For almost a decade I have been dealing with the 21st century problem of accumulation, hoarding and the resulting messiness from an artistic perspective. For years, the focus was on the intimate spaces and interiors of our family home, and then it expanded to include the places of friends, acquaintances and strangers. I am interested in the creative exploration of the relationship between the environment and man, with an eye to observing and exploring the psychological and sociological phenomena behind them, which I present in a kind of realistic style of representation, taking a documentary approach.

The starting points of my 'field work' are small bourgeois interiors: my grandparents' apartment and the family house and its surroundings in Debrecen, where I grew up. This type of 'collections' is often found in Hungarian households, mostly as a result of hoarding all kinds of things or their accumulation, which has a different explanation from generation to generation and social class to social class. The cluttered piles of objects piled on top of each other fill the spaces as if following the 'horror vacui' concept.

This multifaceted, complex issue, which can be approached, presented and processed from many different angles, is also fascinating to me because it stems from a defining personal experience: there are four brothers and sisters in our family, and our house has always been overcrowded and rather messy. I struggled in various ways to tidy it up for nine years and then I gave up. It was not easy for me to live under such circumstances, but now, as an observer, I perceive the compositions of objects and clothes as a kind of 'installation' giving me romantic inspiration and a desire to capture and paint them again and again.

In recent years, the focus of my interest has gone beyond interiors and included outdoor spaces, too. I have also expanded my themes to include back gardens, courtyards, workshops, storage rooms, garages and various service spaces. These buildings are extensions of the house and tell the story of the people who live there as much as of the rest of the dwelling.

Often ugly, they are made up of a jumble of scattered, accumulated paraphernalia, often the 'blind spots' of the courtyard which the eye is meant to avoid because they are those parts of the porch that 'don't fit in', so to speak.

The jumble of objects forms a random, collage-like mixture, which thus usually become 'makeshift installations'.





Spiritchaser

Kata H. Jancsó
21 Mar – 19 May (BUD)



Masks began to appear in my works more and more frequently starting from 2015, reaching a peak just before the COVID pandemic, when I was awarded a grant from the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation to spend a month in fabulous Tuscany in February 2020. The works I created there were almost all mask-related. Two weeks after I returned home, the first outbreak occurred in Italy, which was then followed by the rest of Europe. It was not the first time that my drawings had foreshadowed future events, due probably to the fact that the artistic creative process is driven by the artist's subconscious. I often wonder with my artist friends how art in general can often be a kind of prophetic manifestation.

It was uncanny that almost a year before the first outbreak I made a small sculpture of a doctor wearing a mask (covering nose and mouth).

And we were wearing masks also when installing the exhibition, just like everyone else hustling in the corridors of the office building. We also exhibited drawings, paintings, prints, graphics, photographs, electrographs and digital prints, trying to implement a kind of storytelling on the walls with the images and, at the same time, balance it with empty spaces intended to give the works and the viewer some room to breathe. The online guided tour was a new experience for me, as it was not possible to have an actual opening at the time due to regulations.

Another experience, and a strange one, was talking to a dark screen with absolutely no feedback as to whether the audience were listening to me or seeing what I was talking about. It was as if I was talking to myself, except for the occasional chat popups proving that someone was actually listening and looking at my works.

To sum up, it was an exhibition full of strange experiences and new experiences of an unusual time for me. I sincerely hope that those who saw the exhibition left with some interesting impressions, insights or just some good feelings on an aesthetic level to help them leave behind, if only for a moment, the difficult time we were having. help them emerge, if only for a moment, from this difficult period.







The Cages

Daniel Rycharski
8 Apr — 14 May (VIE)

Daniel Rycharski, born in 1986 in the small village of Kurowko in Poland, focuses his work on rural areas, their history and traditions. As a result, his work occupies an autonomous place in the latest trends of Polish art.

Rycharski works at the intersection of different social and political contexts, critically exploring the tensions between urban and rural Poland, LGBTQ rights and a politically active Catholic church in an era marked by the rise of conservatism, nationalism and right-wing populism in Poland. Rycharski often draws directly on religious symbols and transfers them to his personal world. In doing so he highlights the close relationship between political and religious power in the country, their intolerance and latent anti-Semitism.

Rycharski repeatedly harnesses the potential of artistic participation for his social debates. Rycharski's artistic strategies thus include placing installations in public urban and rural spaces, into which he incorporates the community, its language, craft and history.





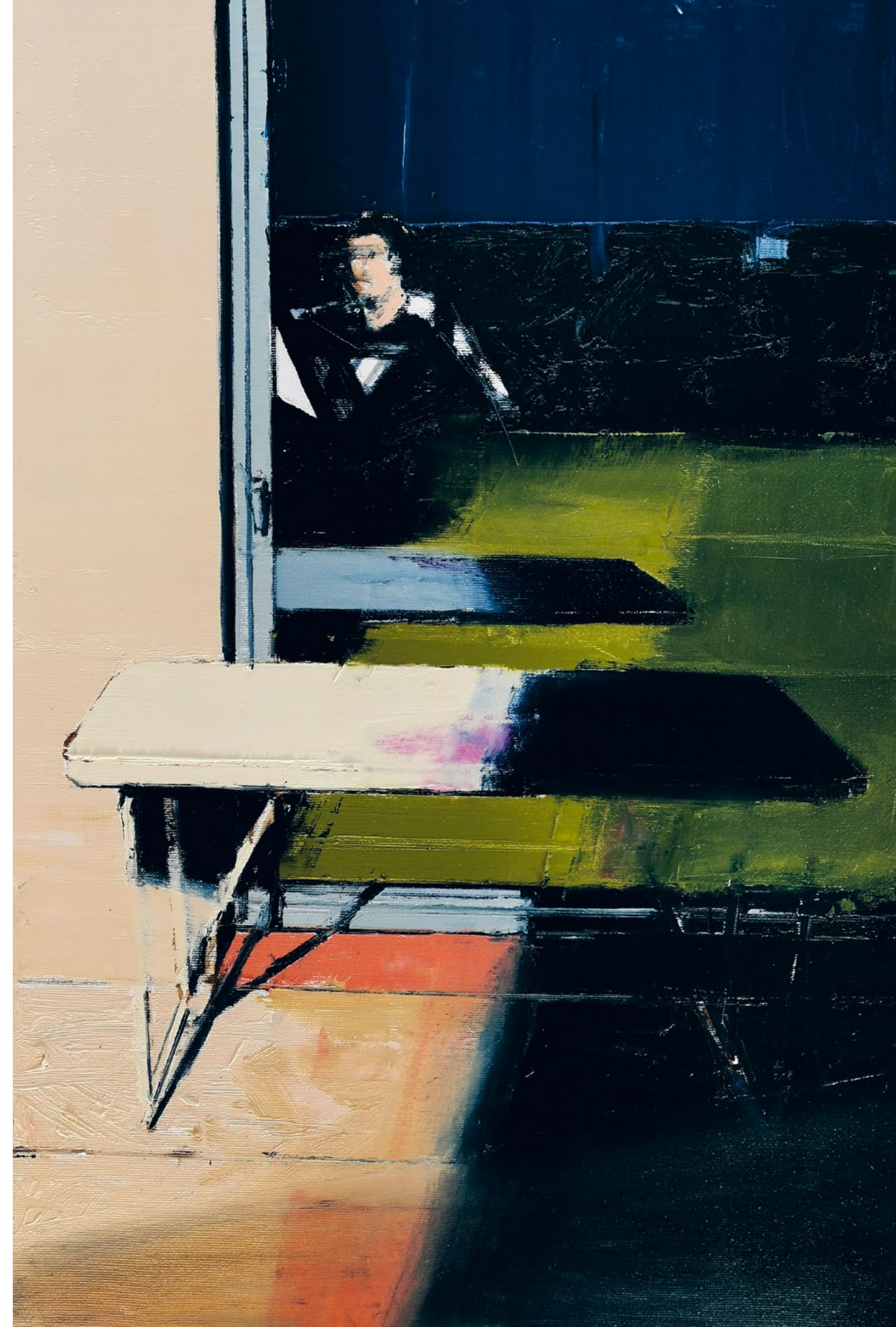
San Sano Polis

Juraj Florek
20 May – 12 Jun (BUD)

Florek is a 100% urban plein-air painter, his idealism motivates him to reinterpret plein-air painting and adapt it to the current post-industrial landscape. He does not shy away from difficult environments, or from selecting locations such as dysfunctional 'stalker environments' with industrial architecture, or the seemingly unobtrusive corners of the present-day city. He is a painter seeking their unadorned truth. At the same time his painting represents the honest 'celebration of everyday life', which explores his social environment and his joy of life in the city.

Juraj Florek spent February 2021 in the atmospheric wine region called Chianti in Tuscany under the Kahan Art Residency programme. During this intensive month he produced 18 canvases, which are all displayed in this exhibition.

San Sano Polis is an easy title, as fresh as the paintings created directly on the location. The title is a play on words, making the picturesque village of San Sano sound like a big city. *San Sano Polis* also refers to a passionate urban pleinairist who found himself in a rural setting for a month.







Jungle Memory

Andreas Greiner
29 May — 15 Aug (VIE)
23 Aug — 11 Sep (BUD)

Greiner's work revolves around the sculptural qualities of biological processes while playing with the boundaries of form. Since 2018, he has worked with forests in particular as both an artistic theme and a medium, challenging the traditional nature/culture dichotomy and leading him to cooperate with experts such as biologists, art historians, programmers, architects and musicians over the course of his career.

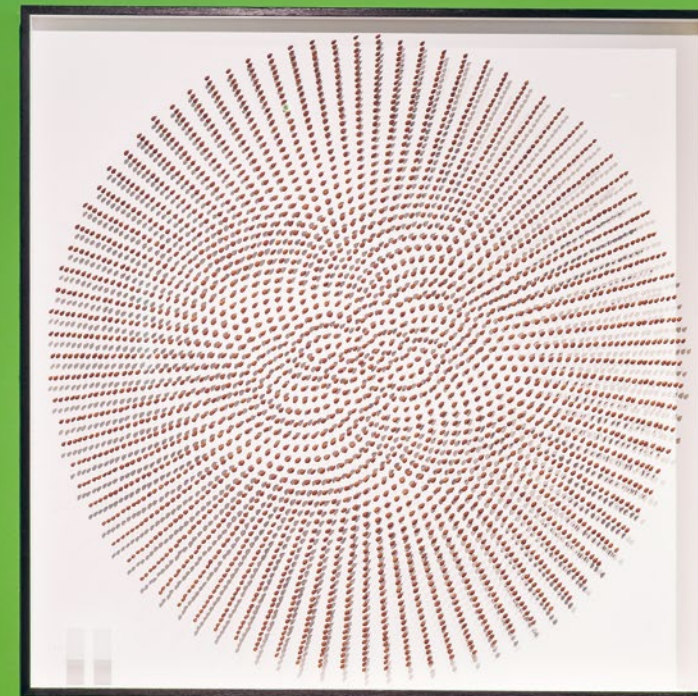
By incorporating living beings as subjects in his work and questioning our conception of 'sculpture', Greiner blurs the lines of art and science while probing the nature of the relationship between man and the natural world. His exhibition in Kahan Art Space Vienna is an investigation of the possibilities of cooperation between ecology and technology when engaging in themes of climate change and the extinction of species, while also seeking to explore novel frameworks of understanding in what he refers to as 'archeology of the future'.

In *Jungle Memory*, Greiner presents a new series of works made with the aid of artificial intelligence. As the result of the artist's most recent projects concerning the large-scale forest dieback in Goslar, Harz National Park, Hambach Forst and the Bislowieza Forest, Greiner has an archive of several thousand photographs that he took himself and fed them into a deep-learning program in order to derive algorithmic projections — the 'idea' of a forest — from a computer.

The result is a flipping of the traditional landscape genre for the contemporary age, a sort of 'digital hallucination', which examines Romantic-era ideas of sublimity as well as the autonomy of mankind in creative production. The exhibition as a whole is presented as an

interwoven story of highly inter-dependent threads — a multitude of economic, historical, technological facets that come together to 'read' as an inquiry into the post-modern condition: what can art do in the face of stark reminders of global warming and mass extinction?

Lastly, as part of the artist's desire for critical self-analysis and disclosure of his own ecological footprint, a hanging beech (*fagus sylvatica pendula*) was planted in Vienna's Augarten in cooperation with the Vienna Biennale for Change 2021 and the Federal Gardens of Vienna. The tree — which Greiner refers to as a 'living sculpture' — is given a human name in order to question the conception of human/non-human relationships while also alluding to the man-made separation between cultural artefacts and natural entities.









Why do we love trees?

Because they are friendly! They provide shade, protection, shelter, nourishment through their roots.

Because they can talk to each other and to their environment. Imagine, protect and signal. If a giraffe starts eating their leaves, they emit a cloud of gas that disturbs the giraffe and sends a signal to other trees that there is danger! So, the giraffe will stand so that the wind carry away this cloud of gas.

Because they are socially sensitive. Trees of the same species, for example, beeches, are able to make friends and what is more, and you might not believe this, they can even feed each other through their roots. Trees balance each other's strengths and weaknesses.



Because they believe in the principle of 'no hurry'! That is, they take as long as 80 years to grow up, waiting for their turn where they fell when they were just a nut or an acorn.

Because they are polite. They certainly have an unwritten code of manners. The trunk of an obedient adult deciduous tree should be straight with the grains running evenly. The roots should spread out nicely and reach deep down under the tree. And this is by far not the end of the list.

Because the principle of 'it is easier together' is true: trees are social creatures helping each other.

Because they have excellent water balance. How does water get from the soil to the leaves? Water travels hundreds of meters from the roots to the leaves. How it does that, we don't know ... Perhaps, it is carried up by tiny CO₂ bubbles.

Because they are not ashamed of their age.

Because they're tough like beech.

Because they're experts.

Because they are orderly.

Because they navigate the realm of darkness.

Because they are CO₂ vacuum cleaners.

Because they are the best, cheapest and most environmentally friendly air conditioners.

Because forests are the best water pumps.

Because they are the most important social housing providers.

Because they are the flagships of biodiversity.

Because they hibernate.

Because they have the most accurate sense of time in the living world.

Because they are resilient.

Because they create uniform forest air.

Because they are so beautifully green.

Because they are tireless bio-robots.

And because without them, there would be no life on earth, no planet, and perhaps none of us.



Through my eyes

Dávid Merényi
24 Jun – 10 Jul (BUD)



Streets, village houses and cars. Though ordinary objects, they all speak of a positive human quality: the ability to create a home, which we can all identify with.

How do we see the countryside? The atmosphere of a village and a rural home? How do we relate to the specific values of the countryside?

Cottage buildings, the most common type of rural houses in Hungary under communism, the so-called *Kádár-kockák* (Kádár cottages) and the farmhouses from earlier periods all have their own characteristic aesthetics. They reflect the social and cultural differences of our environment, the diversity and traditions of our villages, and provide an insight into the lives and character of the people who lived there.

During his travels, Dávid Merényi discovered the intimate image of the villages and the countryside, and he depicts it using his own particular treatment of form and gestures in his paintings.

His colours and fresh depictions are associated with the southern sunshine and the long, perhaps endless summer. This realistic representation conveys a particular vibrancy in the form of a bush or a sunny curb in the artist's own idealistic world.

It is worth observing his brushwork, the forms he constructs on canvas and their relationship to each other. Let us immerse ourselves in his pictorial world, observe the subtle combined movement of the harmonious colours and discover their uniqueness. If we can do this, we might also see all that Dávid can see through more than just his eyes.





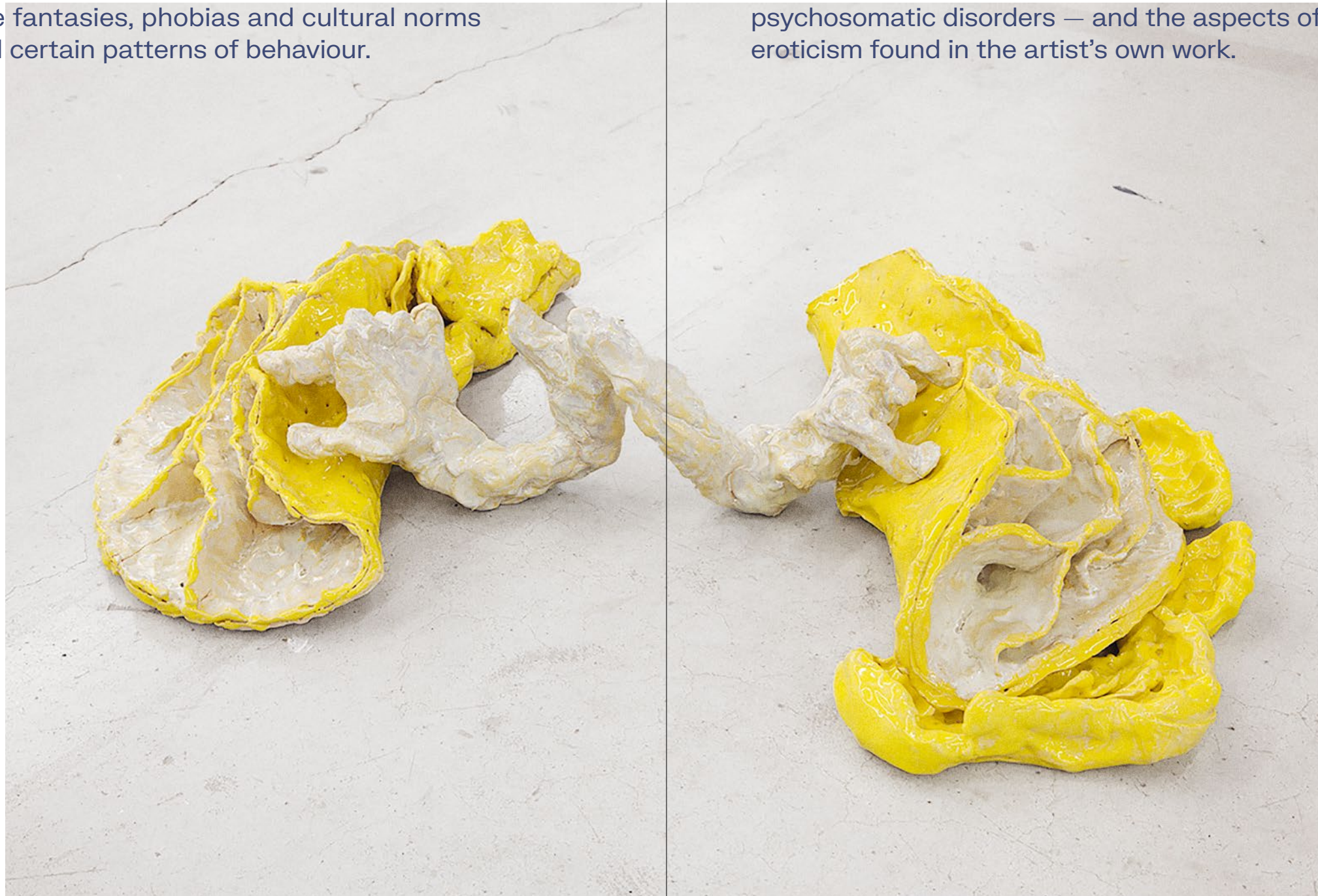


B006

Andrea Éva Győri †
7 – 12 Sep (VIE)

The artworks of Andrea Éva Győri are visual mindmaps of deeply personal experiences in psychology, family dynamics, and self-analysis based on intimate and careful observations of social relationships. Győri examines the physical and psychological needs out of which arise the fantasies, phobias and cultural norms which permit or forbid certain patterns of behaviour.

Drawing on themes of feminine sexuality, the artist's show at Parallel — her first solo exhibition in Austria — focused on the intersection of the physical location of the Semmelweis-Frauenklinik, a former women's clinic focusing on gynaecology, obstetrics and psychosomatic disorders — and the aspects of psychoanalysis and eroticism found in the artist's own work.







Good Life

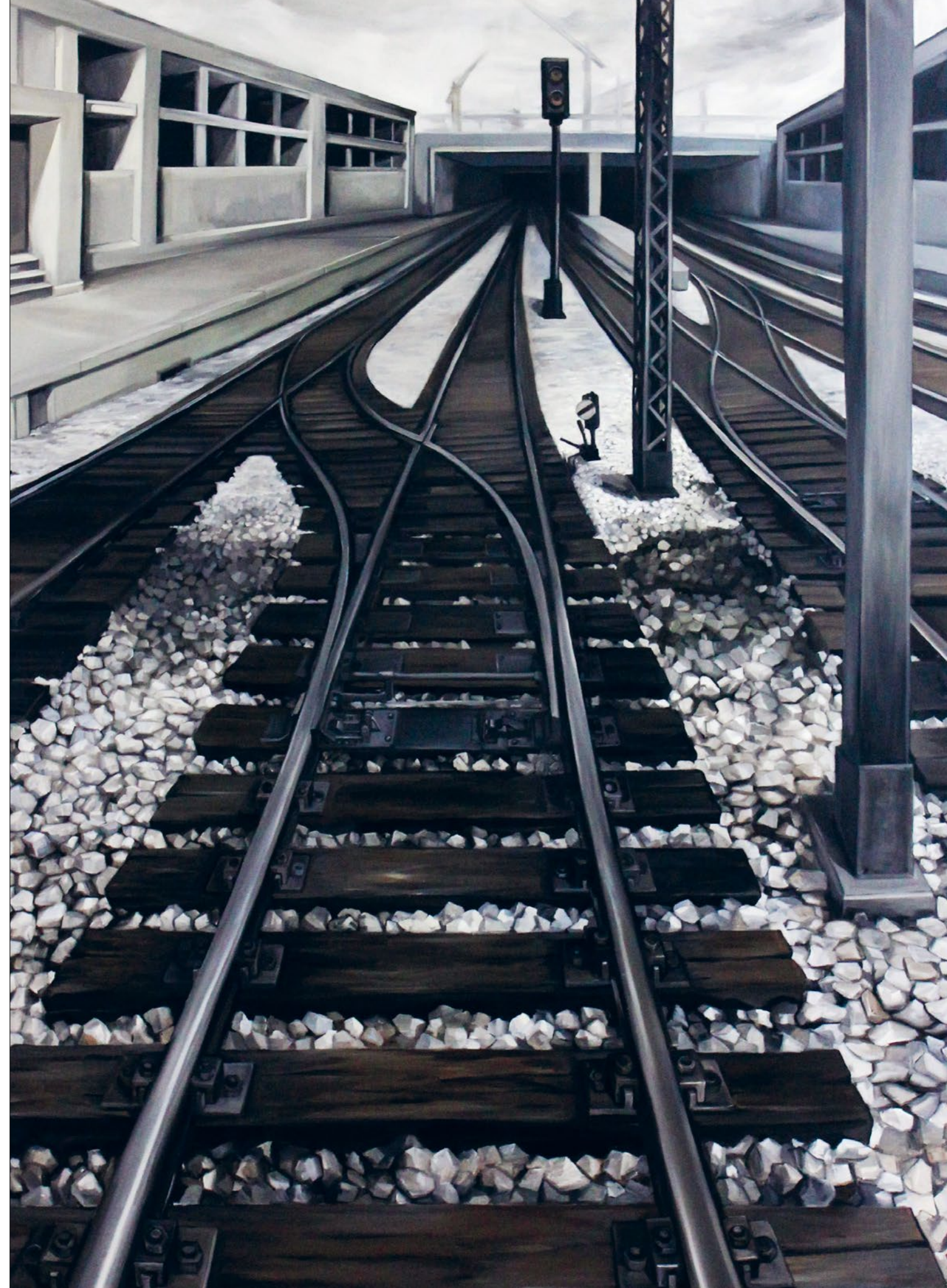
Biljana Đurđević
8 Sep – 28 Nov (VIE)
2 – 23 Dec (BUD)

The works of Biljana Đurđević examine the state of human existence under the conditions of violent systems. Reduced to the essential, her paintings, animations and sound works highlight the present state of exploitative working practices worldwide and those who might only dream of a ‘good life’.

In the midst of current social and economic changes, the artist’s exhibition in the Kahan Art Space spotlights the rise of the gig economy and the globalisation of markets, touches on themes of pollution, de-population, and the endemic exploitation of people in her native Balkan region.

Alternating between garishly lightened, clinical interiors, vague figures and sinister industrial scenes, the paintings and animations of Đurđević seek to portray the shaky underpinnings of a society in which the promise of success means nothing more than survival of the fittest. Đurđević works spotlight the risks inherent in the breakdown of measures that guard over the social well-being of a population.

Her images, reminiscent of the bleak scenes familiar from Orwell’s novel *1984*, are translated into a series of realistic yet dreamlike scenes that play on contemporary tensions, and in particular, the modern anxieties simmering in the wake of a technological revolution following the deregulation of neo-liberal economics pursued by politics and international corporations.







Monuments of Everyday Life

Daniel Labrosse / Patrick Murakami
23 Sep — 23 Oct (BUD)



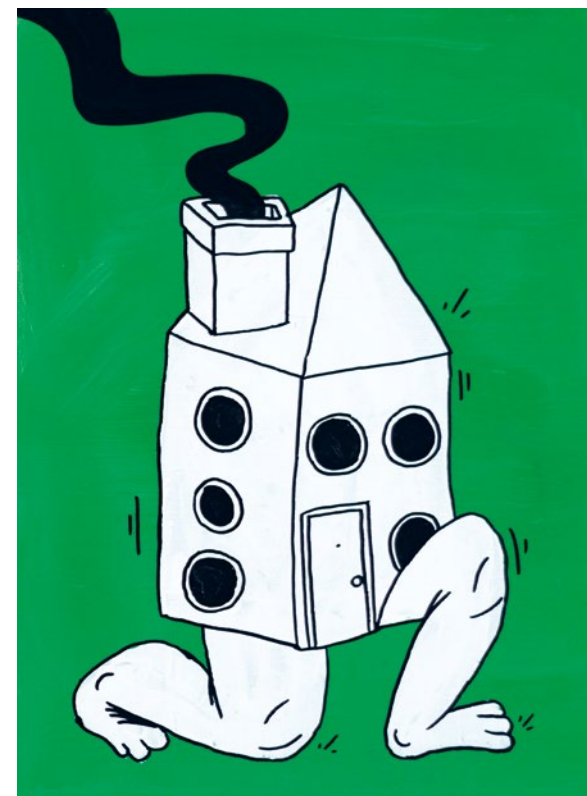
What happens when a young French-Hungarian and a young Japanese-Hungarian artist come together to create joint work for an exhibition? Daniel Labrosse (1997) and Patrick Murakami (1998) demonstrated in the exhibition space of Kahan Art Space Budapest that two artists can work together, create together and literally complement each other's paintings.

Both artists are very young but have already exhibited in many parts of the world with success. Labrosse's style has been influenced mostly by 70s and 80s comics, retro cartoons, and artists such as Keith Haring, Hieronymus Bosch, Charlotte Salomon, and Grayson Perry. Murakami's style, on the other hand, is characterized by a pop art tendency that goes outside the rules. He was greatly influenced by prominent figures in American pop art such as Jean Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol, and Keith Haring. His paintings are often inspired by social and political events or by his emotional state of the moment. The two artists represent different trends in Pop Art painting, so it was interesting to see if they could find some harmony in the dissonance that results from the meeting of their different styles.

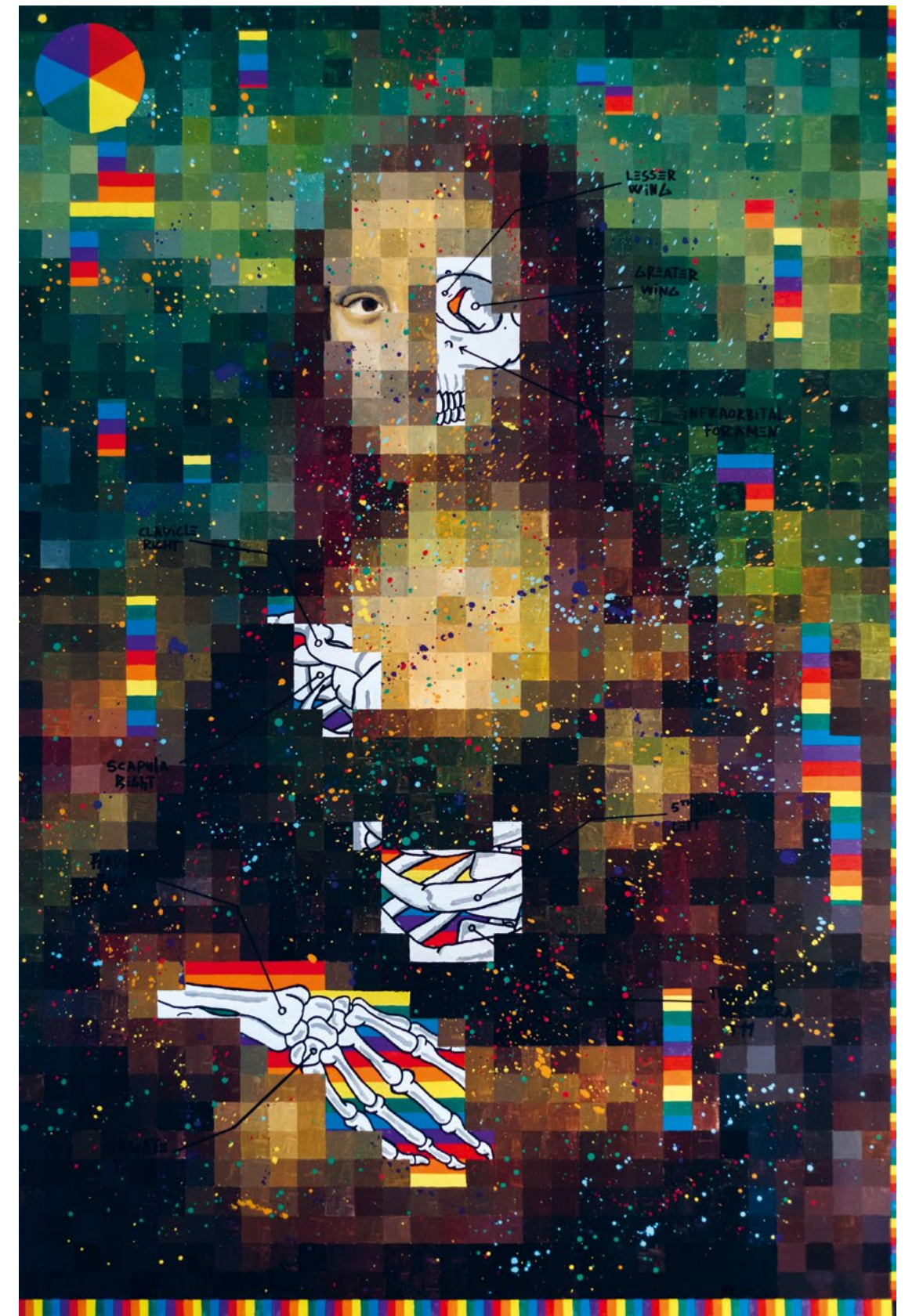
Another key word for Labrosse, besides collaboration, is empathy: 'I have a constant fascination with dissecting people's eccentricities. Through art, we can learn how others see the world, how they experience everyday life, and I find that this makes us more empathetic. With this exhibition, I also try to inspire visitors, artists and viewers alike, to try their luck and collaborate with others, especially those whose style is different from their own.'

Murakami: 'Our joint exhibition, as our work usually does, highlights things of everyday life, depicting aspects of everyday life, whether it is a modern-day replica of a painting from 1500 transposed into digital pixels or current issues related to the environment and human rights.'

Labrosse: 'I look at paintings as if they were diary entries. I illustrate the routines of everyday people, taken out of space and time, with wall-white figures that resemble ancient Greek statues. While Patrick deals with larger social issues, I focus on how the average person lives them, how they are processed. Inspiration can come from anywhere at any time, be it a song, a film, a dialogue or even an interesting guy on the bus. Freedom is important to me, but I also like to give myself challenges and rules, because then I am forced to be more creative because of the strict framework, and it helps me to get out of my comfort zone.'









Slum

László Csernátory Lukács

28 Oct – 26 Nov (BUD)

László Csernátory Lukács' ars poetica: 'There is a famous techno club in Berlin, which was converted from a WWII nuclear bunker. It was designed to withstand conventional and nuclear bombing. The club is a well known meeting place of Berlin's transgender subculture. Should a nuclear war break out or ecological suicide occur, the only survivors will be a handful of drugged-up trans people who, unsuspectingly, party the night away. They will repopulate the Earth, they will be the alpha generation.'

Not only does Csernátory bombard us with his wild take on classic pop culture heroes (Batman, Captain America ...) through his *Eat Your Heroes* series, but he also sketches the possibility of a new social model. His expression is playful, crazy aesthetic and full of pleasant perversions. His paintings study the flow of materials. Animality is often present in his work, a state that can be either exhilarating or devastating. It is both the end and the starting point of social development. It is both a phenomenon in which a sense of civilizational shame can be dissolved and a source of tension, because it is both an opportunity and a means of the compulsion to produce stereotypes. Csernátory confronts the dark recesses of the body and the mind, but also manages to depict them in all their aesthetic beauty. His insight draws out another layer of the unconscious. Suffering is something that most people reject, but often there is no choice but acceptance, for it is in a state of acceptance that the greatest works of art are born.

The idea of an apocalypse, of the destruction of the world, raises interesting questions: would a society imagined by the artist abolish prudery and exclusionary attitudes, or would the survivors' descendants live in the same prudish and exclusionary society

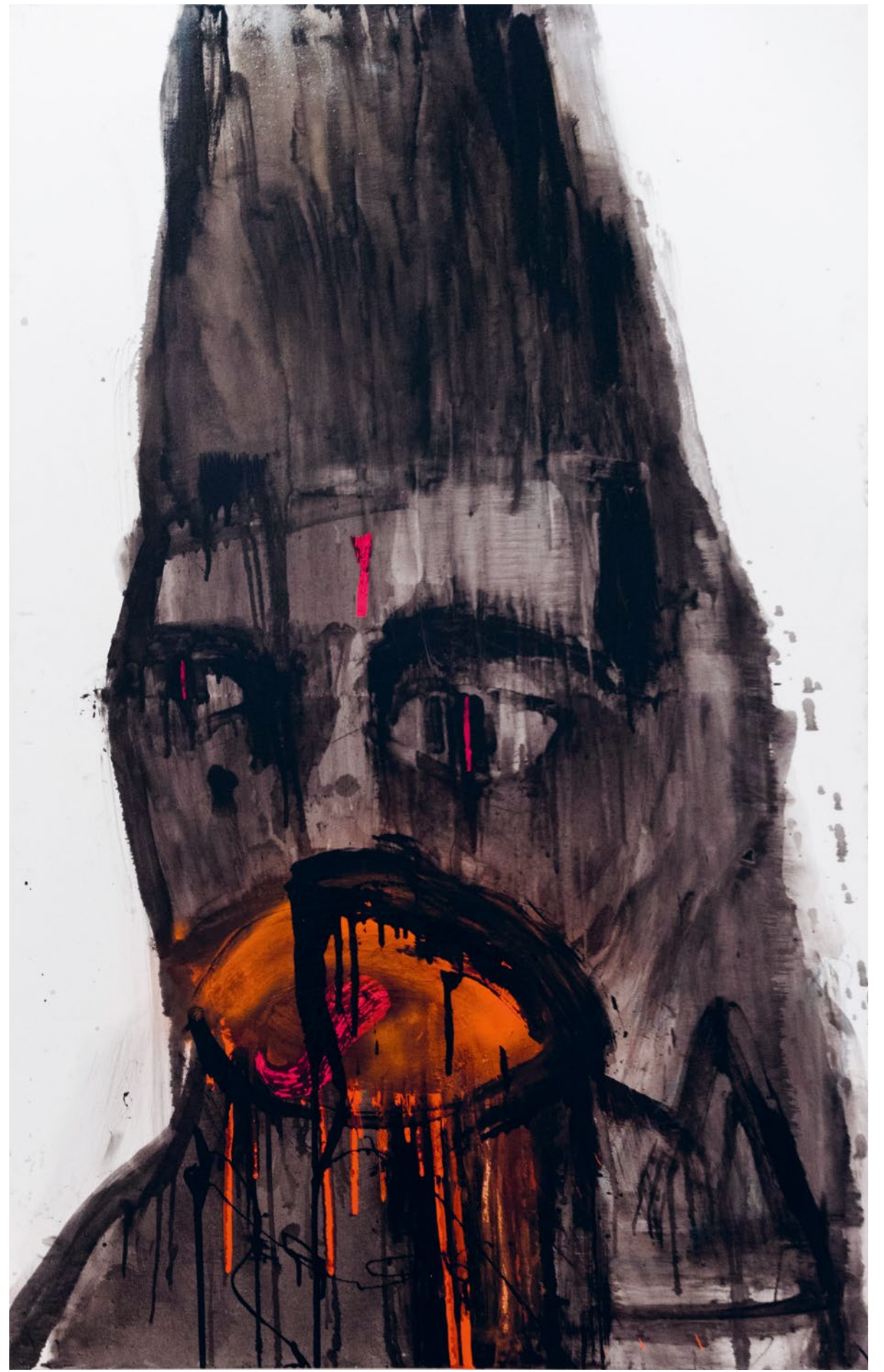


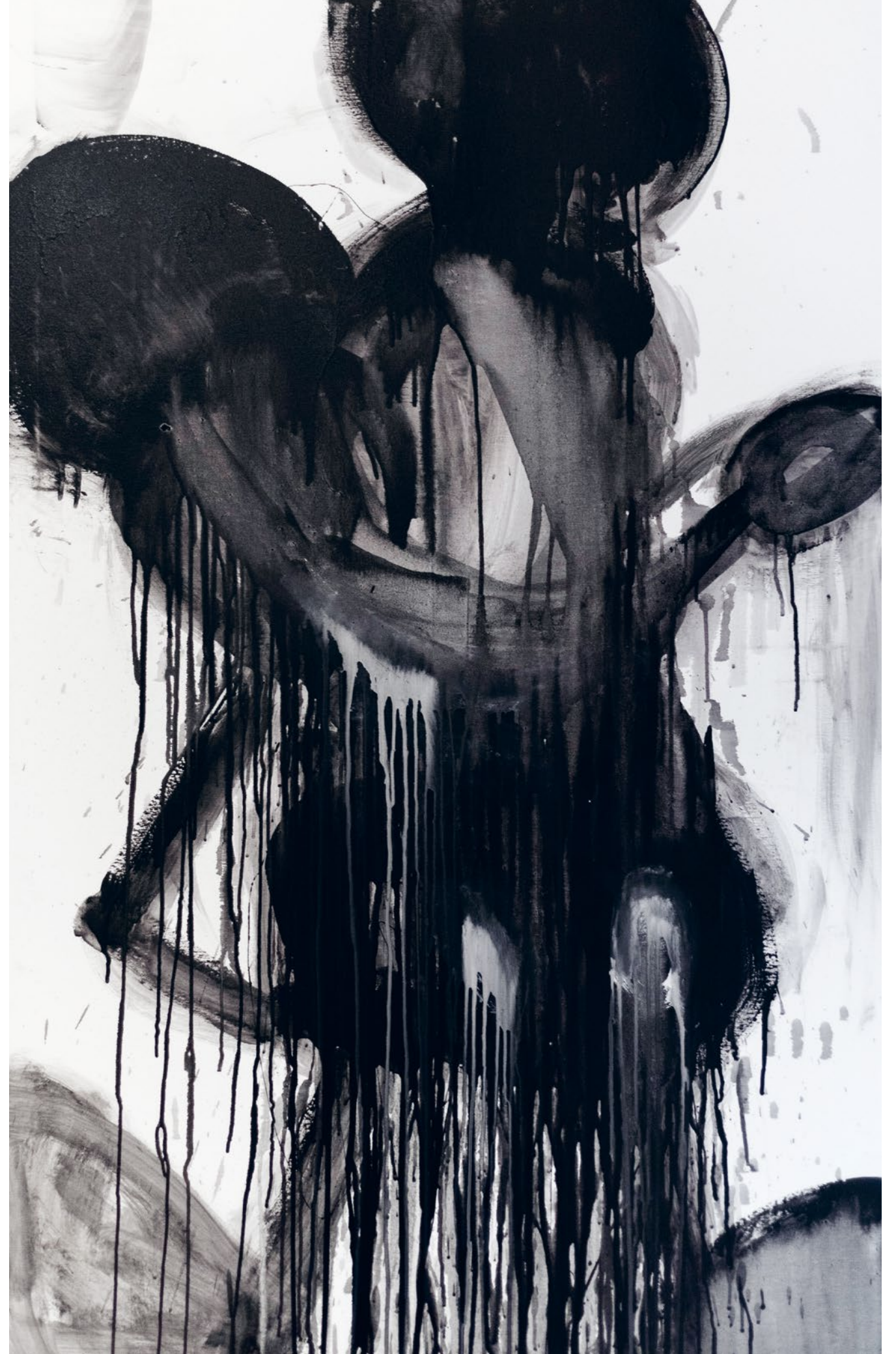
after an apocalypse, but with a different definition of 'normality', thus setting in motion the same cycles and group dynamics that we are living in now? Do the basic characteristics of the person change, or is it just the context and presentation that changes?

As a historical example, some say that based on the depictions of humans on the walls of Egyptian temples, which were modelled on the human body, there was complete acceptance of all genders, so that the priests of the Eye of Horus led the thousands of men and women living there in peace. However, if the apocalypse were to bring with it a permanent and general mutation of the basic characteristics of the human race, it would be an exciting and difficult situation for us to imagine the social consequences ...

Csernátóy's latest series, *Son of a Bitch*, gives the viewer an opportunity for free interpretation. From a certain perspective it can be a reference to birth, but also to the creation of an artwork, since both of these actions can be interpreted as creation. The artist's paintings go beyond what is generally accepted and break down sensitive taboos, not leaving any room for indifference. For him, art is the truth of existence; it is not a means to create an illusion that settles on us, causing suffering and thus feeding a lie, and to show us all this through coloured lens, but its purpose is rather to restore a sense of justice, preserving earthly beauty and solitude.

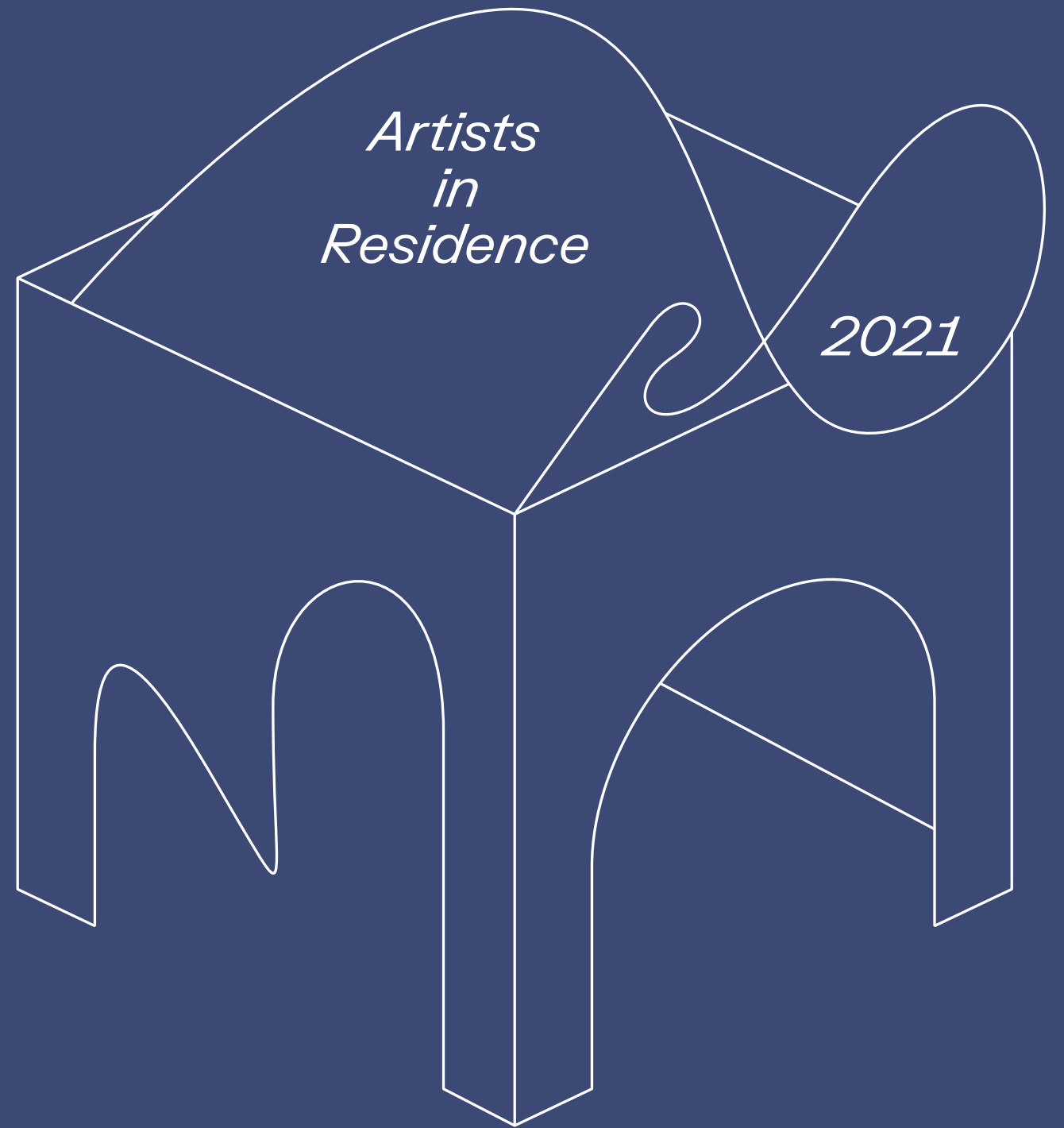
A few months ago the artist started painting the same picture monumentally, palm-sized, on paper and on canvas repetitively. This way, if anyone feels like it, they can create their own version based on the sketch of the figure so far. This can be an artistic and community experience, and at the same time you can dismantle the original figure as a starting point and build a new one.





*Artists
in
Residence*

2021



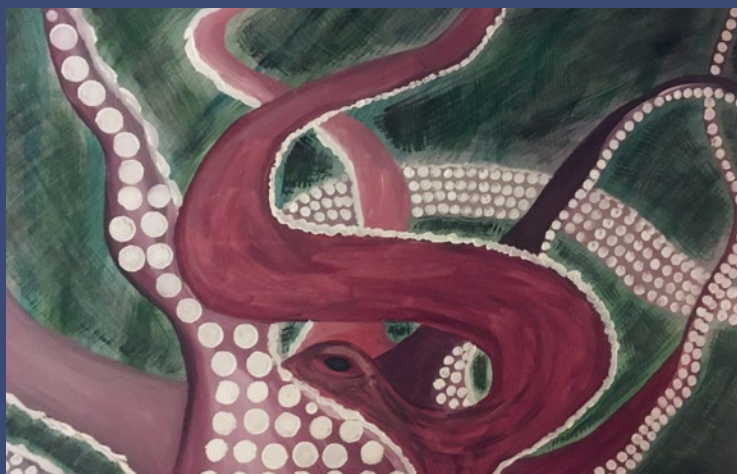
Mirella von Chrupek

Mirella is a photographer, designer, collector and curator. She also works in such domains as scenography and sculpture. Mirella aims to create alternative worlds of happiness. In her recent photomontages she uses archival materials to create imaginary lands from our memories and fantasies.

The Things I Saw is based on archival materials, vintage photos, postcards, and magazines. The triptych aims to portray a vision of a kingdom without time. The artist took the role of an architect and designed a place located in a parallel reality, where contours are outlined by our memories and dreams. By reconfiguring the collected iconographic material Mirella could conjure intriguing and non-obvious images, somehow familiar yet distant. The main hero looming in the background is a town that, at first glance, seems to resemble any town in Tuscany but, in fact, is a cluster of various Italian towns. The atmosphere is slightly nostalgic filled with a pinch of fear and anxiety (a drowning Leaning Tower, the eruption of Etna, a whirling La Lupa — a symbol of Siena).

The works were created during the Eva Kahan Art Residency (March — April 2021) combining archival materials as well as photos taken on the premises of the residency and during local trips.





Annika Döring

Being a painter, Annika Döring brought big canvases, most of them measuring about 100×80cm, and painted in watercolours and acrylic colours on a huge variety of topics. She made this certain landscape of Tuscany as a crucial part of her work here. For this reason, it was important to her to spend a lot of time outside. During the pandemic, the artists in residence had a limited choice of (otherwise numerous) activities and, therefore, Annika spent a lot of time in the huge garden. This offered, not only due to its size, a lot. It turned out that this confinement to a single place in fact enlarged Annika Döring's body of work, because it offered her the opportunity to focus both on the landscape itself and on details within it.

From the residency's terrace one has a wide view over the vast Italian landscape. The Mediterranean climate lifted Annika's mood. Still, it was winter, and this condition made the atmosphere very special. It was also chosen for the topic of her favourite painting made in San Sano titled *Tuscany in Winter*, painted in watercolours on canvas. It shows a foggy morning sky in the coldest month of the year, which partly covers the hills of Tuscany. The sky is light blue, matched with decent grey and white. A few hills are visible in the middleground of the painting, the ones that she could see in the fog that morning. There is a house with a leafless tree here. The house adds a sense of stability to the painting, as it reflects a feeling of security. Annika knew she was where she wanted to be, and that being a painter is her calling. The tree next to the house is probably an olive tree. Matching the foggy and light grey sky, the black tree strengthens a sense of melancholy.

It was sad to wave goodbye to San Sano, but Annika knew that she would continue as an artist and that this plant would be in leaf again in the future. It worked out well, and the Residence Programme supported her a lot. Therefore, she thanks the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation for the opportunity.

Juraj Florek

His recent works consist exclusively of paintings. The idea of his work is simple — to paint contemporary urban environment open-air painting techniques, which in the context of contemporary art may include action performance art elements. The subject matter is our environment, things and places we can see every day which, when transferred through the medium of oil painting, appear with a new, fresh angle of view.

His painting does not criticize our urban environment but offers a poetic approach to it. His works represent honest 'celebration of everyday life', which explores the artist's social environment and his joy of life in the city. The city, essentially, is research material for him. Although the main aim is to pass on to the viewer painting action that will take them out of their comfort zone, he usually chooses sophisticated topics and deals with either some overlooked, yet interesting part of the city, some banality, or thematises contemporary visual trash of our cities, which are paradoxically very picturesque, thus paintings made this way become also a living document of this time.

Considering contemporary painting genres, plein-air painting is on the periphery. The reasons include its difficulty and the assumptions of the artist, who likes to test their limits while painting outdoors and is not afraid to go 'against the tide' — the current mainstream trends in painting. Cityscape plein-air painting seems to be a landscape painting genre that is not outmoded and offers a wide range of exploring painting themes and technical approaches.

Juraj's work has two major parts. First, he must find a suitable motif in the urban environment, and second, he must paint it on the spot. He usually paints at pre-selected locations. Juraj describes his approach as a 'free play with urban space', and never knows which exact spots will attract him in a new urban environment.





Hannah Mevis

Water has an ever-changing form — vapour / liquid / ice — and its amount has been the same[☼] for millions of years.

Equipped with a Japanese saw, an electric drill and a yardstick, Hannah Mevis built a six-legged construction of 4 meters height. She usually has an intimate connection with her artworks, however, in San Sano it happened for the first time, that she had identified one of her sculptures as female. Maybe, it was caused by tenderness towards an object she had high expectations of. Or, it was the subconscious equilibrating the phalloid appearance. When she was put up, she started dancing in the wind. Hooks, ropes, tent pegs, strings, olive trees and the soil helped to pin her to the ground. Still, during her first night out on the field, Hannah was horrified she would fly away and land in one of the fine wine yards. She stayed and Hannah spent several hours and days improving the anchoring and the funnel net. Then, the weather forecast anticipated misty nights and foggy mornings and she finished off a net construction with freezing fingers, at night. On the morning of the 17th day, she collected the first cloud droplet from the cloud-catcher-lady. It remained overcast for two days before the sky cleared and the warmth returned. It had been just enough to collect around 400ml of liquid. Hannah asked her friends and colleagues if they were interested in a sip of Italian clouds which she shipped to their homes. Overall, 40 people in 11 countries on 3 continents took part in the distribution of Tuscany's clouds. Most of the recipients were still under COVID-restrictions when the blue cushioned mailers arrived. Each contained a 5ml glass container with clouds-juice inside. Hannah asked a favour in return: 'Please, let the clouds return into the system by drinking the liquid. Depending on your location and your digestive system, it will take unforeseeable time for the clouds to reappear in the sky.'

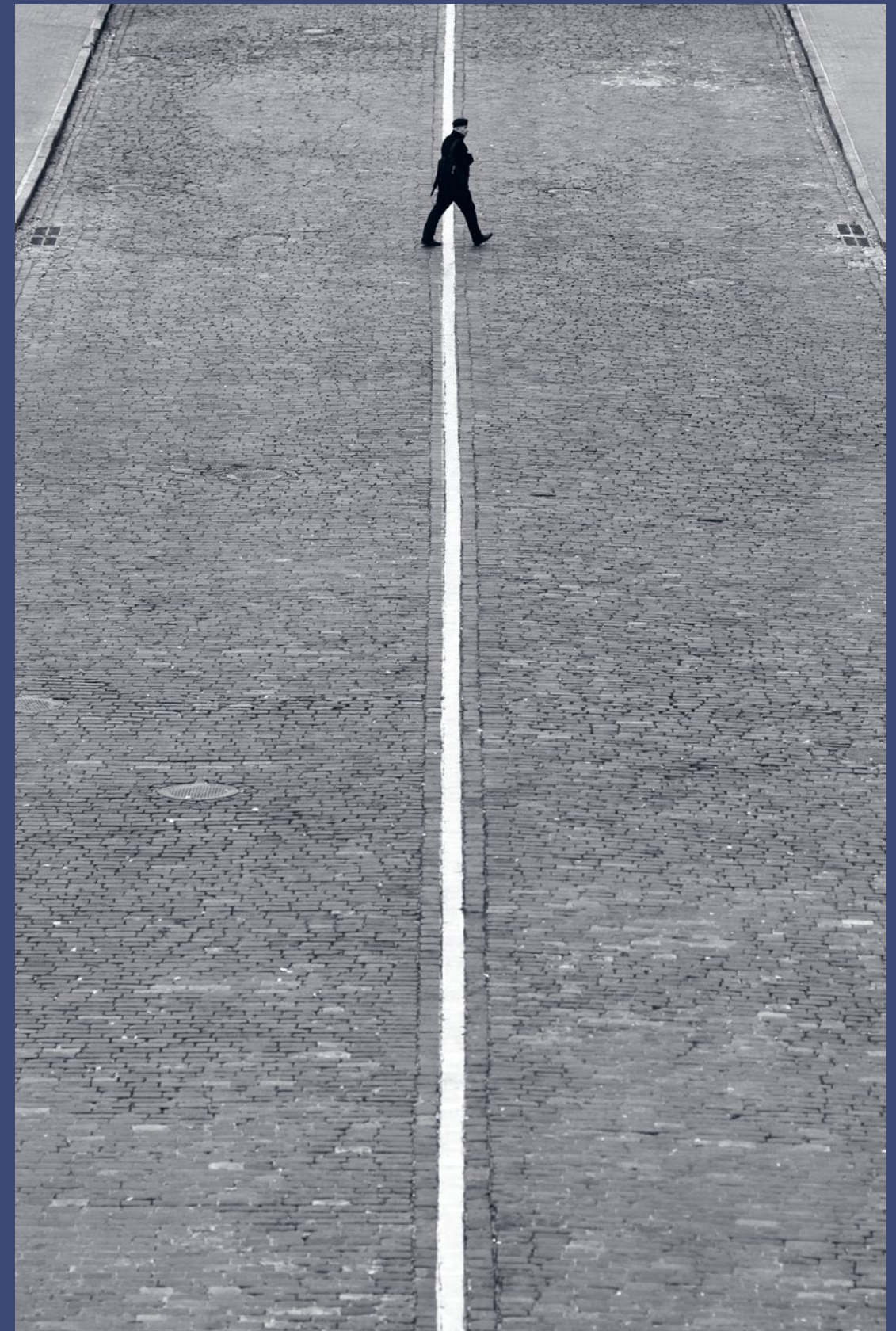
☼ Except the water that has been irreversible polluted.

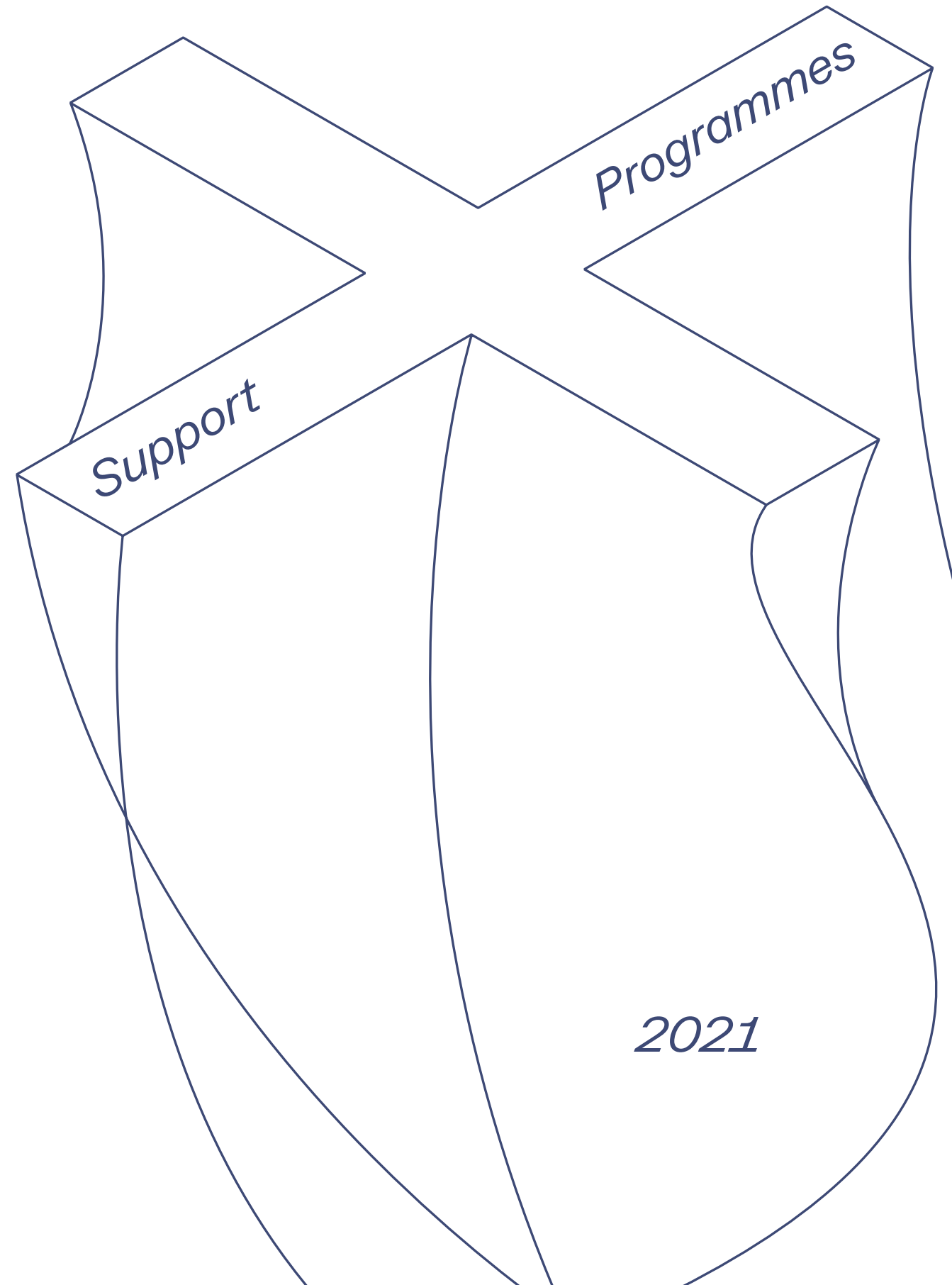
Marcin Ryczek

Marcin Ryczek's works are a series of minimalist and symbolic photographs. They focus on minimum form and maximum content. The theme is multidimensional; it refers to freedom, spirituality and human-nature relations. Found in the surrounding world, and not transformed graphically, the clear images refer to straight lines and pure forms. In the process of creating Marcin Ryczek's works, descreying and waiting are the two most important stages. Descreying is an intense observation of reality, searching for something special and interesting in seemingly ordinary places.

Waiting, on the other hand, is looking for a moment when one can capture the unique atmosphere of a chosen place, a moment when something that would reflect the author's sensitivity happens. The photographs are metaphorical, ambiguous and universal in nature, which stimulates the imagination and encourages the viewer to reflect and interpret them.

The theme of harmony is one of the important themes in my work. Harmony, the balance of life is to be understood in very broad terms. One of the most important aspects of this subject is the relationship between man and nature, which often appears in my photographs and installations.





Dr. Éva Kahán worked as a lawyer and was committed to the fundamental values of democracy, such as the rights of freedom and minorities, access to education and freedom of artistic creation. The Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation, which supports these values, is dedicated to her memory and all its programmes are based on respect for human rights, especially the rights of minorities and artistic freedom.

The Foundation operates in two main areas: scholarships and support for the arts. It provides scholarships, tuition fees and other forms of assistance, such as language courses, computers and tutoring, to help socially disadvantaged young Hungarians – primarily from the Roma and Jewish minorities – to start and complete their legal studies, without which they would not be able to obtain a degree or would have to go through extreme difficulties. The programme is now in its fifth year and graduates include a trainee at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

A difficult path

Bence Trunkos won the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation legal scholarship in 2021 and was interviewed by Dr. Tibor Fényi, board member of the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation

BT My parents had serious problems, my grandmother raised me on her extremely low pension and our situation was always made known to me in the village or at school. Even if I was an excellent student, if I applied for a course or a faculty, there was no place left for me or the teachers talked me out of it. I was a good student, and my English was very good, so when the school announced that a German course was starting, I applied immediately. But soon the teachers came and told me that I didn't need it, that I wouldn't be able to follow the difficult curriculum and that the textbooks were so expensive that we couldn't afford them ...

My grandmother supported me in everything, but she was a very simple person, she didn't understand these things, it wasn't her world, she couldn't learn either, so we accepted that I wouldn't get into this either. I don't know why but I really wanted to learn German and it really hurt me when I realised that even in public school you can only learn if, you know, you have money, at least for the textbooks.

But it was very nice that my classmates never bothered me, even though I could never go on a class trip, and we didn't have the money to pay the fees. I began to understand that in our region, if you are disadvantaged, you do not get help to change that. I felt that for those who had no money, life was just a kind of constant sad resignation.

TF You finally got into the best law school in the country ...

BT With a slight twist. I became interested in law and justice starting from the age of about fifteen, so all through high school I thought I would go to law school. But even though I studied very well, even though I went to competitions, my teachers tried to talk me out of it. They said that it would be too difficult for me, that I was getting in over my head, that a lawyer could only be someone with good connections and lots of money.

Finally, even the Reformed pastor of Makkoshotyka came to see us (I think for the first and last time) and he also tried to persuade me not to apply for law. He said his son went there too, so he knew that it would be too difficult for me. He also added that it costs a lot of money and it had cost them a lot of sleepless nights to figure out how to pay back the student loan, so it would not work for me, and if I wanted to study at all costs, I should study something easier.

TF They succeeded ...

BT Then, yes, they did. I got discouraged, I didn't even care about my A-levels anymore, so my GCSE marks were good but not excellent. I applied to the University of Debrecen as a Hungarian History major and I was admitted. I studied there for two semesters and my results were very good, but I never felt for a moment that it was a challenge for me.

My big dream was still to go to the Budapest Law School, so I decided to quit my studies and submit my application there. Since paying the extremely high tuition fees was out of the question, I retook my school-leaving exams in order to get the maximum score for admission, which meant that I was exempt from tuition fees. I was able to start my studies at the Faculty of Law in Budapest after a one-year gap.

TF How right were those who tried to talk you out of it before? How did you manage to make a living?

BT Not easily. My grandmother's pension was 80,000 forints, and we both lived on that, while I still received 12,000 forints from the state in child protection. It's impossible to live on that here, I had to work, but student work doesn't pay very well. I remember the first time I went to buy textbooks, I was absolutely amazed at the prices even though I had already accepted that I would have to learn from second-hand books since I had never had a new textbook before.

Even so, I would have had to pay 40–50,000 forints every semester, which was a huge slap in the face for me. I thought about the most important textbooks and bought them, but other than that I could only study sitting in the library, which left me little time to work, and then I had no money.

TF How did you get involved with the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation?

BT I knew that I would finish university and not give it up. I was searching the Internet to see if there were scholarship opportunities. First, there weren't any, but then I found the website of Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation. It said that poor minority law students could receive continuous support throughout their university studies and even have their tuition fees paid. It was made for me!

I submitted my paperwork, they called me back two days later, I had my interview the following week and in a few days I was notified that I had been awarded the scholarship. It was almost unbelievable.

TF What did you spend your first scholarship on?

BT The first thing I did was to buy some fruit, which I could never afford before.

Then it was very important to go and get new glasses. I had been visiting an eye doctor for about five years then and

my eyesight had changed a lot. My eyes were constantly watery, so it was a great joy to see well with the new glasses.

TF How difficult is university?

BT It's not easy, but I'm doing pretty well. I finished the semester with several A's, but during the COVID pandemic we only had online lectures and seminars for a long time and libraries were closed too, so, maybe, that is why I didn't get an A in some subjects.

TF Is there any subject that interests you more than others?

BT Basically, criminal law. I do a lot of reading and researching. I am very interested in the purpose, the use and the meaning of punishment. I am curious whether we have a good penal system, how penal policy is evolving, what it can achieve.

TF And which side do you want to be on: a lawyer, a prosecutor, or a judge?

BT I have always had a difficult career path in my life, but I find that when I am given a choice, I make it for myself. So now my goal is to become a judge.

TF What is the most important thing that the Dr. Eva Kahan Foundation scholarship offers you?

BT Security. I can plan as I don't have to live from hand to mouth. It was also wonderful to travel with the others for the first time in my life: we went to Berlin with the university. I received a very good laptop from the Foundation, and there is another thing: I told them that I wasn't allowed to learn German at school. The Foundation paid for an excellent German course last year,

so I got that too. Apart from studying and the scholarship, I still work. Luckily, I don't have to fold shirts and pin them together anymore. I did photocopying for a company for two years, but now I have been 'promoted' and I work as a call centre operator. So, I can still put some money aside, but I need it, as the summer internship at the courthouse doesn't pay a penny and I still have to make a living.

But it feels good to be able to do more and more. For example tomorrow I'm going home to Makkoshotyka because it was my grandmother's birthday. We talked a lot about her never being to a restaurant before, and I haven't been to a restaurant many times, either, so I am planning to take her out there. I really hope she will come and not shy away from such a great opportunity.

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- ¹⁵ Dia Zékány
Clean, dirty IV
Oil on canvas, 2018
- ¹⁶ Dia Zékány
Pondering
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Indifference
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- ²⁰ Kata Jancsó
Please, do not stay
Mixed media (coal, ink, acrylic, pencil), 2020
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Can we just be friends?
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- ²² Kata Jancsó
Baba yaga
Acrylic on canvas, 2018
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Mask of emotional imperialism
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Cages
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Series of 11 drawings
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