

Metka Kavčič

Breakaway

KiBela, space for art / MMC KIBLA
14 June–12 July 2019

Metka Kavčič is well known for her unique industrial sculpting style that instills a softness of forms and visually reincarnates rough, raw materials like bronze or metal into seemingly fragile sculptures, soft as fabric, or transparent as lace. At the KiBela Gallery in Maribor, the artist is presented with a project in which the visitors are taken from their urban homes into the nearby forest, into nature, and into the world, by means of a visual-sonic narrative. The exhibition is a commentary on the challenging forms of modern living environments that are routinely saturated with aggressive, unnatural sounds, and a breakaway from them requires an escape into rural areas, which are to provide the individual, if that's at all possible in today's world, with tranquility and relaxation.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree: Metka Kavčič's creativity had been passed onto her and instilled in her by her father Maks. Already as a child, she would accompany him to his studio and later kept in touch with his circle of friends and acquaintances, many of whom were acclaimed artists or experts from various fields. Although formally trained as a painter, he loved music and theater as well, and was a great educator, who was always there for his students.

In this sense, still, Metka Kavčič's entering the world of art is not to be taken for granted, in spite of her family's history. It was only after her father had passed away unexpectedly that she began to miss that genuine artistic creative spirit, which she had so vividly experienced in her childhood, and later on it also became the main reason for her to decide to further her study at Ljubljana's Academy

of Fine Arts and Design (after graduating in Art Education in Maribor); unlike her father, she was formally trained a sculptor. Later on, she switched to restoration, and completed specialized studies in Conservation and Restoration at the Academy. Today, Metka Kavčič is active in several genres/media, from drawing and painting to animation and idiosyncratic sculpting techniques. She sees art as a challenge: 'confronting' issues of form, using materials that are complex in themselves, and, on the other hand, placing that same, crude material into the space so as to render it soft and delicate.

Breakaway is a kind of a *mise-en-scène*, in which, apart from the adorning sculptures, the creation includes digital media, video animation, and sound. The range and selection of sound combined with the visual scenery, the series of photographs from the artist's cycle of gardens and the tree(top)s cut out of metal, place the visitor into an elaborate artificial environment, into a kind of an omni-virtual experience of nature.

The basis of the organized structure of this sculpting novelty is the sound, which "supports" the animation. The in situ installation is orchestrated by a sound narrative, recorded as the artist's everyday pilgrimage from her apartment to the studio, and then to the final stop, an idealized forest. Metka Kavčič's world is a colorful and vigorous one; we hear the strict sound of the strut against the asphalt accompanied by traffic noises, then moving to a sandy surface and finally to the forest floor, with the aggressive pitch of the city replaced by the soothing sounds of bumblebees, chickens, roosters, dogs, birds, deer, and water.

The artist recorded the physical breakaway from an urban into a rural environment to call attention to the apathy and immunity of people to the (over)load of sounds in cities, to the sound bombardment, as this all-pervasive sound aggression could be called. The need to retreat to nature – and thereby to the much desired serenity – is becoming a social necessity, though at the same time the artist does not hide the fact that the artificial, man-made sounds, are impossible to avoid.

Metka Kavčič's art is definitely dual in nature. On one hand, she flirts with traditional sculpting ideas, inspired by introspective meditation, and on the other, she obviously uses entirely industrial techniques in search of challenges and a genuine contact not only with nature as such, but especially with the nature of man, the mythology of the modern world, which – as Nietzsche, the unfortunate one, had declared – returns eternally. Metka Kavčič knowingly steps into the field of 'positivist nihilism', as the re-use of rough materials requires a unified Kafkaesque metamorphosis of the standardized sculpting form, which, in her case, must first lose its original purpose, in order to be able to take the contemplative, historically conditioned substance to synthesize the retroactivity of a contemporary mythology, which is driven only by fear, anxiety, and refusal of responsibility.

Freedom is not self-evident: Hegel's mental torture can only bring us a step closer to comprehending freedom, but for as long as the mind searches for a moral imperative, which it has to produce in order to stay within the humanist discourse – so long beauty, eternity and religion mean nothing to the mind. They remain hollowed points of a beginning, which is not really a beginning.

This difference does not really exist, it is in fact a kind of Lacan's lamella: a breakaway from reality, artfully produced and mediated in the form of general opinion, which serves as a distraction from examining that, which is supposed to be truly important. The lamella throws the individual into neutral: the engine is running, the wheels are not turning.

Metka Kavčič's Breakaway thus becomes a disconnection: an escape from the hubbub of civil society, a retreat to solitude and – especially! – an explicit esoteric experience of silence, or at least quietude, which has virtually disappeared.

Nina Jeza, Artists&Poor's

"The exhibition is dedicated to Polonca." Metka Kavčič

Photo: Branimir Ritonja
Sound editing: Andrej Hrvatini
Support: Studio Legen
Translation: Helena Fošnjari

Metka Kavčič: Odmik / Breakaway
Exhibition opening on Friday, 14 June 2019, at 7 p. m.
The exhibition will be showing until 12 July 2019.

KiBela, space for art / MMC KIBLA, Maribor, Slovenia
Open on weekdays between 9 a. m. and 10 p. m., Saturdays between 4 p. m. and 10 p. m.
(closed on Sundays and national holidays)