

Beno Artnak

Sen slike / Painting's Dream

6 October–28 October 2017

artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor
ACE KIBLA, Maribor, Slovenia



"The process of creating a painting goes on until the painting is finished, which is when the artist leaves his/her final trace on the work. Before that, however, it has gone through a process of progress and change. With each layer of color, and with each break the artist takes, the painting is given an unrepeatable moment of existence, sometimes brief (a mere moment), and sometimes long (like eternity). But with the next layer of color that moment is gone. The painting changes and now lives in a different moment. Sure, it continues to exist. In every stroke. All the way to the end. A painting has a soul, and the soul dreams."

Painting's Dream is about intuitive images, it wishes to simulate the hemispheric beta-condition of sleep, i.e., what we imagine, what we desire, and what is un-real. Un-realistic, in the sense that it is created beyond the conscious, if we believe Freud, or molded into the collective unconscious, according to Jung. What links the two theories together is the simple fact that the images from Artnak's cycle *Sen slike* (Painting's Dream) are not based on reality. There is no look to disclose them, because they only exist for the single reason of being hidden in the artist's individuality.

The artist accentuates the idea that the painting has existed, as it were, "since forever": that from the moment of placing the canvas on the easel, it is just a "work in progress". From the original idea onwards, the depiction is in fact but a sum of inspirational moments, progressing through individual, inextricably linked stages. The artist is the one to determine when the painting is "finished", thereby announcing its march towards conquering the observer's view. Each painting carries a proper connotative content, which is important for its own progress, as much as for the artist's. The observer may not be able to see this, but can perhaps sense it on a different level.

Beno Artnak became acquainted with the world of art already in his childhood years, reading through the illustrated children's magazine *Vseved* (Polymath), which published biographies of great artists and introduced their works. In his teenage years, he found inspiration in the collection *Muzeji sveta* (World Museums) and in comic books. After graduating, he turns to the American Black Wave, characterized by drawing, contrasts, and minimalism of strokes.

The period of the Black Wave was vividly present in former Yugoslavia, especially in the film genre. By connecting amateur and professional production and emphasizing the key thematic highlights, the Black Wave was, above all, a criticism of the existing social reality: by revealing its pressing, yet publicly hidden issues, such as unemployment, homelessness, poverty, crime, prostitution, social marginalization, etc., it reached directly into the creative socially-realistic culture of that era.

Central to the development of Beno Artnak's painting talent was the fact that in Maribor, as well as in the rest of the country, there was an intolerance present already at the end of the 1980s, which demanded (and in fact, still demands to this day) that an artist be academically trained, in order for the artistic value of his works to be recognized. Formal education in the arts – or, thank god, naïve art. It is a simple manipulative logic: the formalization of education in the arts is supposed to provide the academy graduates not only with an artistic ability, but (perhaps mainly) with the possibility to exhibit in galleries, which is a decisive advantage in comparison to the "mere" creatives and self-taught artists. The trade of art had to be learned inside the state school system, otherwise an artist would easily remain an overlooked amateur, regardless of his/her potential qualities.

Beno Artnak draws his inspiration as a painter mostly from the energy of the young cultural turmoil of the 1980s and 1990s, while his artistic driving force remains in the desire for a comeback and re-emancipation of *figure* in the contemporary visual arts realm. With a seeming carelessness of the painting stroke, and a deceiving lightness of composition, he achieves a persuasive synergy in his depictions, which enables his portraits to breathe in the face of the observer, and, more importantly, down his neck.

– Nina Jeza

Beno Artnak, *Sen slike* / Painting's Dream

Friday, 6 October 2017, at 6 p. m. – exhibition opening

Saturday, 7 October 2017, at 10 a. m. – breakfast with the artist

The exhibition will be showing until 28 October 2017.

artKIT Gallery, Glavni trg 14, Maribor

Tue–Fri 10 a. m.–1 p. m. and 5 p. m.–7 p. m., Sat 10 a. m.–1 p. m.

KIBLA

ACE KIBLA is co-funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, the Municipality of Maribor. Project RISK CHANGE (2016–2020) is co-funded by the Creative Europe Program of the European Union.