

Milan Ketiš

The Wave of the Artwork

16 May–7 June 2017

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

"The exhibited paintings, drawings, and objects show Waves, or are Waves in their own right. Waves (undulations) are all that exists, and this is what I am trying to present through my work. My works may simply oscillate outwards or inwards from the center, they can be dispersed, colorful, black-and-white; they can be objects, creatures, people, emotions, music, and certainly a lot of other things."

The artist presents works from the series he created over the last five years, different in terms of contents, but all sharing the same substance: waves (undulation) as the cornerstone and molecular binder of all things existing. The starting point behind the artistic consideration and the creative process derived from it is the sensibility of the artist's mind and body to the space he currently occupies. He uses raw materials, in which he indulges quite intuitively, to be able to employ a variety of media and material means to manifest installation works even to the level where the border between ready-made and conceptual art undulates to the point of interpolating with the gallery space, as well as the visitor. The wave is everything, and all of this 'everything' – waves.

Milan Ketiš is a post-graduate student at the Academy of Fine arts and Design in Ljubljana. The showcased works include drawings, paintings, and objects. The drawings are exhibited for the first time, as they represent the artist's most intimate and relaxed way of expressing himself. In his own words, they are a form of self-therapy, which is also why there is no need for an 'added value' in the form of content-related concepts. The drawing, then, is a spontaneous moment of creation, which happens freely, randomly, each time in a renewed constellation. The drawings are charged with a diverse, yet distinct contents: from portraits to various stories and explorations of sensuality, through entertainment or simply having fun with the pencil strokes, the result of which is – often – a surprising reflection of unconstraint. For Ketiš, it is the technical importance of the drawing that remains as that final inter-polar undulation, by means of which he retains a primal contact with the artistic form, where any kind of explanation regarding the contents becomes unnecessary.

It is no novelty that paintings are the most vividly expressive form within the arsenal of art works, however, in order to become alive, they still require an observant eye and a sensitive substance. Ketiš' paintings are individual works that do not conceal having been created in his development period, i. e. his study years, when the most important thing for a young artist is to explore techniques and materials. How – if at all – can a material sculpture speak up? A link to the philosophies of the East and the pertaining entropic spirituality can be observed especially in the works *Krogotok (Circuit)*, *Energija telesa (Energy of the Body)*, and *Prizemljitev (Ground)*, from the same period when the artist began practicing meditation and yoga. These represent his personal experience: a process of interpretation and visualization of the energies of the human body. During meditation he felt, as he puts it, inspired by the images, and has tried to visualize the waving of their energies through his own body. This means that he is deliberately not indulging the illusion of inviolability, but rather insists and remains in the primary, inspirational image, looking for possibilities to materialize, or visualize the circuits of bodily energy.

The last out of this series on a temporal scale, *Prizemljitev (Ground)*, depicts precisely this unpleasant moment of 'hitting hard bottom', that is, the moment of ultimately confronting the unbearable lightness of this unworldly being. The artist explores, of course, man's intimate coming-down-to-earth experience, the one that produces, beyond its own and recognizable essence, something else, which could be called – to avoid Freud, who has not much in common with such an interpretation – *inter-ego*. Perhaps the point can be demonstrated by the following:

a tree growing out of another tree symbolically implies (at least) the illustrative possibility of its essence to upgrade itself and from within itself; in the same way, man is committed to self-creation and personal development, which may not be of much help to him, but nonetheless push him forward irrevocably. Thus, the painting becomes a meditative medium, a trigger of secondary and subjective meanings, like for example the work *Vdih / Izdih (Breathe In / Breathe Out)*: it has to be observed to the point where it starts to return the look and observe the observer, like a reversible stalker.

Valovita pokrajina (Waving Landscape) is painted on a wooden panel and uses Ketiš' recycled study years drawings as a background. Natural materials prevail, such as cannabis sticks, used to ingeniously demonstrate the pulsating of materiality. The cannabis sticks collage creates several center points in the painting, from which the landscape spreads in waves. The work is the first from the series *Um roke – dela etnost* (the title is a wordplay based on Slovenian words for 'art' and 'craftsmanship') and addresses the question of whether the artist's hand can be reduced to consciousness-per-se, and – if this is possible – what is the 'character' of the hand in this case, upon its contact with nature.

Objekti (Objects) come from the same series: they are crinkled drawings made from durable paper; works in crumpled-paper technique demonstrating the waviness of a material that is organic and earthy. The crumpled-paper drawings are made from natural materials: brown paper, flour glue, graphite, cannabis string, paste, acrylic, and toilet paper. From the technical point of view, the artist considers it very important that the viewer be addressed by the texture of the material, and hence by the structure of the art work. The roughness and firmness of the work make it possible to observe the relief surface, and to be aware of its solidity.

For Milan Ketiš, auto-suggestive creation means creation from the depths of his soul. Premeditated meaning, therefore, makes no sense, and this intentionally unconscious lack of content is, above all, a source of joy to the artist. His experimentation relates to reasoning and feeling, as well as to transformations of energies into visual matters, which he uses in his attempt to establish equivalence between the material, energetic, and spiritual state.

About the artist:

Milan Ketiš (1992) lives and works in Maribor and Ljubljana. He graduated in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana, with his thesis titled *Risba telesa (Drawing the body)*. He is currently continuing his studies at the same academy, and is shortly to defend his MA thesis titled *Prostor duhovnosti, človek, narava in kultura (A space of spirituality, man, nature, and culture)*. In 2015 he attended an exchange program at the University of Arts Helsinki, Academy of Fine Arts, Department of Painting. His works have been shown in several solo and group exhibitions both home and abroad.

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Tuesday, 16 May 2017, at 6 p. m. – exhibition opening

Wednesday, 17 May 2017, at 10 p. m. – breakfast with the artist and guided tour

Curated by Nina Jeza.

The exhibition will be showing until 7 June 2017.

artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor, Slovenia

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

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