

Boštjan Plesničar

Too Modern Beauty KIT

13 June–15 July 2017

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

Boštjan Plesničar is one of the members of the 'too modern' movement, which rejects in its own way the elitism of academic rules, and consciously profanizes art in every possible respect. Content is given priority over stylistic and technical principles of an artwork. Motifs are often figural, and there is plenty of realistic stylization, which enables the artists to deliver the narrative in a fine art manner. A too modern work of art always contains a certain level of bizarreness, irony, sarcasm, and humor.

The concept of too modern art emerged at the break of the millennium, when people were generally obsessing over the idea of the end of the world. A group of artists, who at that time were still (final year) students at the painting department of Ljubljana's Academy of Fine Arts, responded to this in a unique manner, by intentionally proclaiming 'the end of painting'. The idea behind it is that traditional painting has no future, because it stopped evolving. We've seen it all, say the too-modernists, in terms of both technique, as well as content and structure, and in turn also the composition, which is why in order for painting to survive, it urgently requires new, contemporary, millennial, dispersive themes. Modern is not modern enough, to banalize in terms of the 'holy simplicity of the world'. Four artists, Ervin Potočnik, Vladimir Leben, Oliver Marčeta, and Boštjan Plesničar, the latter also the conceptual leader and program manager of the new too modern movement, have declared a new artistic tendency: to create something "too modern".

Thus, the *too modern movement* is conceived and established at the turn of the century: a fresh and positive response to the dust-covered rigidity of the Academy, which was markedly influenced by public institutions, i.e. museums and galleries. The foundation of the movement was based on the artists' personal experience, which is proven by the fact that all of these too modern authors have a formal degree in painting, most of them from the Ljubljana Academy of Fine Arts and Design, while Grega Mastnak and Josip Rochus Pongrac graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Croatia; later they were joined by Filip Gregorowitz (Poland), Boštjan Franc Avguštin (Slovenia), and finally by Goran Medjugorac (Slovenia).

In 2001 they founded the *Museum of Too Modern Art*. In Spodnji Hotič near Litija, an old barn was transformed into a gallery space, and the number of new members and supporters kept growing as they organized exhibitions and other events. The group fell apart a decade later, but the spirit of freelance and lightheartedness of too modern art is still vividly present in all of their works.

The *too modern* movement typically sees the artist immersed in his own creativity, without the onerous rules imposed by the established academic painting techniques or contents. The painting can have any kind of form, it can be placed anywhere – or, it can be placed exactly and exclusively in the place chosen by the artist. In a typically too modern sense, these are mainly provocative, scandalous, or sarcastic contrasts of forms and shapes, on all 'user' levels; there are no limits, even regarding the set-up of an art work. The themes are unusual, sometimes even senseless, but also – intentionally – simple, entertaining, profane, approachable, positive, and relaxing. The same goes for colors: earthy tones prevail, with plenty of yellow, red, blue, and brown. The titles are witty, as are the depictions themselves. The *Too Modern Movement* was recognized by Slovenian art critics as an 'ideological' comparison to Dadaism, which is true, though perhaps we could add to it the influence of thematic surrealism; yet nonetheless it needs to be emphasized that in its very essence, style is no longer a determining factor for the *too modern*.

The title of the exhibition, *Premoderno KITenje*, translated here as *Too Modern Beauty KIT*, was created spontaneously. The name of the exhibition venue, artKIT, retains the acronym KIT, which originally stood for "Communication and Information Point", known locally as KIT. When the space was occupied by an arts & handicrafts shop, we added the word 'art', arriving to the compound 'artKIT'. The same thing happened with the title of the exhibition: since this is a presentation of too modern art, the artist selected some of his early *too modern works* (dating back to 1998), while the showcased paintings were created in the period all the way up to 2014. Boštjan Plesničar played with the words and constructed an anagram, as he often does with the titles of his paintings, and the resulting translation solution, beauty KIT, refers to decoration, ornamentation, or adornment – as does the original Slovenian verb '*kititi*'.

The venue of artKIT, thus, becomes a beauty kit, adorned with too modern paintings. In the playfulness of the setting we recognize the vivacity of too modern art.

Nothing is sacred, all is profane. Or too modern.

— Nina Jeza

Boštjan Plesničar, born 1968, began his painting career in 1988 at the Savo Sovre art studio. He started his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana in 1990, graduating under the mentorship of Professor Emerik Bernard. In 2000 he defended his post-graduate thesis *Skrivnostna trivialnost* (Mysterious Triviality) at the same academy, his mentor was Professor Lojze Logar. Following his MFA, he acquired the status of a self-employed person in the field of culture. He has participated in solo and group exhibitions both home and abroad. He lives and works in Ljubljana and in Goričko.

Tuesday, 13 June 2017, 6 p. m. – exhibition opening

Wednesday, 14 June 2017, 10 a. m. – breakfast with the artist

The exhibition will be showing until 15 July 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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