

Viktor Šest

THE PASSION

14 April–13 May 2017

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

The Passion by Viktor Šest is a deliberate attempt to flirt with the Christian tradition in the form of an artistic gospel, manifesting the feeling of being an outcast within the global, and at the same time representing "suffering" as a satirical act of some kind of self-apprehension.

Viktor Šest spent his youth in Kamnik. After graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana, he was employed as an illustrator with the Založba Obzorja publishing house in Maribor. In his works, we can definitely observe the influence of his professor from the period of his study years at the academy, Kiar Meško, especially in terms of motifs and style, though it has to be noted that the stroke and painting expression of Viktor Šest is much more raw, aggressive, and distinctly experiential. Indeed, it could be no other way: through the years, Šest's artistic expression has been dramatically reduced to "mere" essence. The technique he uses, which could be called "straight to the point", allows the artist to capture the moment, but also to let go of it right the next minute, like an unnecessary burden. What we are left with is an unveiled canvas, which appears unfinished, yet at the same time it is sophisticated and experiential, powerful and uncatchable.

Viktor's figural imagery is portrayed expressively. The images are based on drawings, and added emotions by means of a warm color palette. The motifs in Viktor Šest's paintings are either random or chosen intentionally. He paints acquaintances, friends, historic figures or literary characters, musicians, dancers, sailors, generals – the list goes on and on... But the point remains, that Viktor Šest has achieved a true and very versatile mastery of painting, characterized by a distinctly unique and recognizable artistic stroke.

The exhibition showcases some of the works with the above mentioned motifs. Though separate and individual, they are combined together to form the title concept, *The Passion*. While not concealing empathy for the "traditional" ascent of Christ to Golgotha, the exhibition introduces a somewhat shifted notion of the same idea. It refers, namely, to the passion of Viktor Šest himself, who may not be taking onto him the sins of humanity, but symbolizes with great persuasion the artist's torment of giving birth to a subjective visualization of an image. The artist showcases an opus of paintings, created *ad hoc* in the time celebrating the salvation and redemption of Jesus Christ. The Christian iconography symbolizes 'generalized humanity', which requires the sacrificing of the individual. It is only through the Passion that Christianity is established as such; and the same fate, though much more frequently, is shared by the artist, the only difference being that it is much harder for him to experience his own salvation and redemption. Šest deconstructed the Holy Trinity into their individual essences: screaming from the paintings there are God the Father (crucifixion), Jesus Christ (suffering), and the Holy Spirit (resurrection), while Šest's response to them is portrayed in the form of a modernist ecumenical image of an old man, sitting down, wearing a diaper, and leaning onto his crutches.

The specialty of Viktor Šest is the painted moment caught in his stroke. His figures are in motion, looking at us, running from us, or standing simply as a hint or outline of a silhouette, which nonetheless always carries meaning. The figures are light and alive, the true work of a virtuoso; the motifs reveal a great confidence of the painter's stroke, which can be recognized in every single painting. The works are perfected in terms of drawing, with colors adding to the sensuality of the portrayed figure. Rather than following modern-day painting trends, the artist stays true to his own technique. The genres observed in the works recur regularly, but never to the level of reproductions. The artist skillfully and constantly alters the details: even the recurring motifs painted in a similar fashion are different each time, thus creating a great variety in terms of content.

The art of Viktor Šest is the art of his character. It is only through such a personal view that we can have a final insight into his artworks, and only after that a possible understanding, if anything like it exists at all. Caught only in a moment, and only for a moment.

—Nina Jeza

Viktor Šest (1956) was born in Ljubljana, and spent his youth in Kamnik. He graduated in 1981 from the Department of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana, under the mentorship of Professor Kiar Meško, painter, sculptor, and graphic artist. His artistic focus revolves around paintings and illustrations; he is a member of the Union of Slovenian Fine Arts Associations (ZDSLJ) and the Maribor Fine Artists' Society (DLUM). He has received several awards for his work: purchase prize of the Maribor Art Gallery, purchase prize of Graphothek Berlin, the Glazer Charter Award for the illustrations of a book by Zorko Simčič (*Trije muzikantje ali Povratek lepe Vide / Three Musicians or The Return of the Fair Vida*). He has illustrated and designed the visual image for numerous books, and worked on puppet shows as a puppet and set designer. His works have been shown in over 150 solo and group exhibitions.

Exhibition opening: Friday, 14 April 2017 at 6 p. m.

Breakfast with the artist: Saturday, 15 April 2017 at 10 a. m.

The exhibition will be showing until 13 May 2017.

artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor / KID KIBLA

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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