

Igor Banfi

WANDERERS

10 March–3 April 2021

MMC KIBLA/KiBela

Igor Banfi transfers his experience of the domestic Pannonian landscape to large canvases, which are not merely reflections of the Prekmurje plain but also spaces of contemplation, where a lost soul can take refuge.

Wandering and looking for the indeterminate are the abstracted figural forms that inhabit and revive the archaic, lyrical landscapes of Igor Banfi. Vertical, in some places shapeless, and in some almost incarnated images, travel, disappear (in the water) and present themselves to a viewer who is, in a distinctly intimate, spiritual sense, confronted with his own existence, questioning loneliness, solitude, alienation, all shades of longing and possible salvation.

Banfi in the color palette remains true to the earth tones, which are rarely replaced by shades of the bright red sunset. He also incorporates the earth into his works as a tactile element. He applies the soil, together with oil paint, on a canvas as an image's textured building block that sublimely grounds the content in reality. There is also a presence of an airy, soothing blue. From it, fog is born on cold surfaces, which surrounds a lonely tree or a barely recognizable body. Always lonely, even if in twos, but mostly alone, small and searching; immersed in the ambient atmosphere of color coating. Despite the melancholy of blurred figures and dull colors, there is intangible positivity in white and yellow tones, glowing from the horizons. The calmness of the uninhabited layered landscape, together with the harmony of the elements in it, opens the door to a metaphysical world, which allows wandering and finding hope on the border between the sky and Earth.

The constant presence of natural elements – air, earth, and water – permits the outpour of intimate confession and leaves room for individual walks through the lyrical landscape. Natural elements also stand out in the titles of works, where, in particular, water and earth often locate the motif in a specific place (hill, river, sea, or lake). The air in combination with water and fire, that is, the Sun, predicts weather changes or the arrival/departure of light, which determines not only the weather condition in the painting itself but also the internal events in the depicted wanderers.

The scenography of Banfi's artistic-visual narratives and confessions, which the artist puts on display on selected canvases in KiBela, otherwise expresses the specific *genius loci* of Banfi's homeland, where, in the heavy, monotonous horizon, in this colored seam, the Earth and sky, stretching above it meet and merge with one another.

- Deja Bečaj and Živa Kleindienst

BIOGRAPHY

Igor Banfi was born in 1973 in Murska Sobota. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, majoring in painting, where he graduated under prof. Andrej Jemac in 1997. He completed his postgraduate studies in 2000 under the mentorship of prof. Lojze Logar. Since 2000 he has held the status of an independent creator in the field of culture. He is a member of the Association of Fine Artists of Prekmurje and Prlekija and the Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies. He lives and works in Ljubljana and Murska Sobota.

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MMC KIBLA/KiBela, Ulica kneza Koclja 9, Maribor
Opening hours: Monday–Friday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.