

Iva Tratnik and Erik Mavrič

DEMENTED RIDER

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MMC KIBLA / KiBela

The occasional duo of painter, performer, visual artist Iva Tratnik, and draftsman Erik Mavrič, combines the personal specificity and artistically universal creative approaches of both artists, who confront individual characteristics and common givens on large paper formats. Through lines and fields, figures and textures, characters and sketches, their drawings are assembled into a uniform and unique collage of images that pass from one painting to another, swim and jump, change shapes and colors, merge from bright day to dark night. Exhibition of two processes, techniques, methods, ways, approaches, colors, strokes, lines, and dots.

The basic structure of drawing, line and color, where the process is also dictated by the orientation and size of the base, unites the works, even if their motifs can be based on different thoughts, from magical and dream realism to symbolism and surrealism, fantastic and mystical expressionism, even the New Image Painting (*Nuova immagine* in Italy) and of spiritualism, which, when faced with external situations, reacts to them with internal reflexes and conditioned states, with which, pouring them on paper, it summarizes the reflections of a kind of fatalism of one's own knowledge and the activism of reactions to them. The strokes in their works are mild, amorphous, natural, soothing, but this works from a distance. When we approach the paintings, we are drawn and tightened by many dark details. They can also hit us. Like in the garden of the witch Kirke. They attract and enchant. Domesticity in a (more) non-domestic way.

The titles of the works are, so to speak, colorful, even witty, and ironically morbid. *Demented Rider* like the exhibition title, *Delicious Dead*, *Rousseau's Prosthetic*, *Hikikomori Heaven*, *Composite Angel*, *Waiting Room*, *Incubi*, *Little Black*, *AI*, *Mother Kintsugi*. Iva Tratnik and Erik Mavrič say on the naming of their work *Mama Kintsugi*: »The drawing *Mama Kintsugi* fell on the floor during work and was damaged in several places. We patched it up by using the 'kintsugi technique', a Japanese technique in which a broken object, such as a vase, is glued together with gold. We both used gold acrylic. We think it's a good symbol, on the one hand, for mending us personally, and on the other hand, as a symbol for mending the world.«

Iva's painterly, constructional poetics and Erik's meticulous, filigree drawings are combined into monumental surfaces of black-and-white and colored landscapes. The charcoal rubs into the color and together they conjure up fascinating landscapes, imaginary environments and at the same time a space in which not only the artistic approaches and techniques of the artist flourish, but also their inner world and inspiration, as well as their imagination and energy. It seems as if they both exist not only in their own but also in a shared space-time, in an emotional and conceptual environment made up of fluidity of line and delicacy of detail. A dreamland is emerging before us, which is warm, gentle and primordial, it seems home to us, it invites us to enter its coordinates and bring it to life.

Erik draws with charcoal, one of the original art materials that has survived from cave painting. Iva's colors and soft strokes bring it to life and its »elementality« is accepted, embraced or just

whizzed through, absorbed or hidden in a new environment that steps from fiction into reality and through our acceptance into the metaphysics of the subjective perceptions and ideas of everyone who finds themselves on exhibition area.

The eruption of both gestures, painting and drawing, passes from work to work and connects them into one, into a single body, which becomes a common abode, refuge and shelter at the same time. A temple of art, in which artistic knowledge, intimate enlightenment and a sense of disembodiedness reside. The body migrates from us to the picture, from where we can observe the morphology of animated images and walk through the inviting field of our own perceptions. Whether we are in real or imaginary worlds is a common thing.

The exhibition *Demented Rider* is the first joint solo exhibition of Iva Tratnik and Erik Mavrič, which primarily reflects their excellence. They invite you into their own world, which is both imaginary and real. The fruit of strokes, images and landscapes in curves, human figures, animal portraits, through the synapses, nerve endings and intersections in the pictures materialize in our brain as a kind of ecosystem, the abode and landscape of fantastic, imaginary and dream worlds, in which they place their creatures, which seem to they are in elementary, ephemeral and extrapolated states of being, feeling and perceiving, when we interpolate from the external observer to the inner depths of consciousness and breadth of imagination. It is associatively positioned as contemplative and structural in the composition of the exhibited drawings, in which strokes intertwine and colors not only complement, but upgrade the composite as it becomes one, common.

Iva Tratnik, whose portfolio includes many media, painting, sculpture, drawing, collage, photography, video, textiles, installation and covers various artistic practices, performance, contemporary dance, theater, and Erik Mavrič, whose monumental and filigree-made drawing is specific to us, share quite a few artistic affinities. Both Iva and Erik are attracted to larger, or rather large, monumental formats (the largest drawing is 7m long), on which they unfold maps of their universes, through which we can travel like blind passengers and surrender to their currents, or perceive in the displayed reflections on our existences, which appear in the paintings mainly as an allegory of animal images in the whole range of life, down to bones and skeletons, veins and nerves.

Like yin and yang, like day and night, some of their drawings are light and some are on black paper. And as our vision perceives during the day, pastel colors with some more lively and also calmer, smaller addition glow from the bright paper. As perceived by our vision at night, white drawings dance on black papers. The particular becomes the universal when we enter this spatial installation of monumental drawings and are embraced by their world. Iva and Erik combine their artistic handwriting and multi-layeredly connect them into one, they kidnap us in a soft-terrorist way and drop us into their artistic universe, where every element of the drawing is equally important, because without it the natural balance of their eco-iconography would be destroyed.

The internal dynamics of the works spreads to the entire gallery space and transforms into the existential dynamics of the exhibition. It is depicted or shown so much that it is artistically self-contained and also autonomous, in the sense of staged drawn landscapes, that it is occasionally established as a scenographic intervention in a space that lives its life in the struggle for survival. It is clear that *we are* and *we are not*, as two impulses of creative and general existence – eros and thanatos in the continuous struggle of coexistence within the artistic reality of Iva and Erik. And on the one hand, their art can be seen as futuristic, and on the other, archaic. They play with near and far, with past and future, with reality and associativity, with form and with the interaction between media, not only with materials, but also with each other. Which is undoubtedly the main thing.

Years ago, Iva collaborated with Marko Jakše, the cycle of paintings *Battle Dance on the Bombarded Moon* was exhibited in KIBLA in 2011. She had a solo exhibition *Maske* in 2018, after which she participated with the patchwork painting *Veščica* in the international group exhibition *Tense Present* (2019–2020) at KIBLA PORTAL. Erik Mavrič appears in KIBLA for the first time. Thus, the present co-creation of Iva and Erik seems both the beginning and a completely natural expansion of the horizons of their kind of ritual of life in and with art.

- Peter Tomaž Dobrila

BIOGRAPHY

Website



In 2012, **Iva Tratnik** (1980) received her master's degree at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana, majoring in painting. She explores various artistic practices, including textile collages, oil and acrylic canvases, sculpture, drawing, installations, and other site-specific interventions. In 2015, as one of the selected artists, she represented Slovenia at the Milan Expo, she presented herself at the Center for Contemporary Art in Celje (2017), the KiBela MMC KIBLA Gallery in Maribor (2018), Škuc in Ljubljana (2019), Rajhenburg Castle in Brestanica (2021) and participated in some important group and overview painting exhibitions, such as *Lepo slikarstvo je za nami / Beautiful Painting is Behind Us*, UGM Maribor (2012); *Čas brez nedolžnosti / Time without Innocence*, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana (2019); *Napeta sedanost / Tense Present*, KIBLA PORTAL, Maribor (2019). In parallel, she deals with performance, where she experiments with voice, movement, mask. Works autonomously or in temporary collectives.

Erik Mavrič (1979) studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana, where he graduated in 2004 and obtained a master's degree four years later. During his studies, he received the student Prešeren award in 2012, a special recognition of the expert jury at the 16th Slovenian sculpture exhibition. He presented his work at several solo exhibitions, among others at the Krško Gallery (2014), the DoubleRoom arti visive Gallery in Trieste (2018) and the Alkatraz Gallery in Ljubljana (2018), as well as at numerous group presentations at home and abroad. He currently lives in the area around Krško.