

JANJA KOSI

Lepidopterarium

16 September–15 October 2022

artKIT

To paraphrase the philosopher Arto Haapala, a sense of orientation influences our perception of (un)familiar places and, consequently, our perception of the world. Haapala says that we are not only influenced by the place where we currently live and are, but that the »map« of our identity is made up of the network and relations of all the places to which we used to be (un)attached. In her new works, Janja Kosi focuses on the multilayered experience of a particular place, and with her solo exhibition *Lepidopterarium*, she transforms the urban environment into a spatial image. The artist records her orientation in the actual city as clusters of micro-images, which begin a new life in her works.

Since the sense of orientation in the urban environment depends on various factors, it is often imprecise. The more disoriented we become, the more we turn to modern technologies and stroll on the screen of our smartphones rather than the streets. It is the new technologies of surveillance, tracking and perception that are helping to push the digital map beyond our actual physical territory. In this way, the complex map of our identity is upgraded by the relationship to digital images that actually create a space of navigation, while at the same time producing cities and social processes. »Images of space and [the] space of images,« explains Russian geographer Dmitry Zamyatin in his understanding of meta-geography. In the text *Meta-geography and the Navigation of Space*, artist and geographer Nikolay Smirnov highlights the close link between spatial imagination and the human mind and its activity. In the meta-geographical interpretation of the world, the phenomenological becomes the ontological through imagination. He says: »Meta-geography focuses on phenomenological and ontological aspects of the 'space of images'. This approach asserts that it is fundamentally impossible to cognize the world outside of human perception and imagination, which means that all geographical knowledge takes the form of images.«

For Janja Kosi, images are key to the subjective experience of the urban environment. She records her own spatial and physical experience of moving through the city with a photographic camera and then transforms the recorded urban fragments into spatial drawings. While walking through urban spaces, she seeks new perspectives, observes changes and creates photographic images of architecture, which she takes out of context in order to weave them into the web of her inner urban image. In this way, she perceives them as an aesthetic object that can become part of a new structure. The collection of architectural fragments, which the artist exhibits in new compositions, is reminiscent of the process of collecting butterflies and displaying them in so-called butterfly houses. Hence the title of the exhibition *Lepidopterarium*, as the artist collects her fragile impressions of the city and, like the butterflies, takes them from their home environment. The comparison between butterflies and architecture is also evident in the work *Lepidopterist*, in which the artist frames folded digital architectural collages, pinned with a pin, alluding, of course, to the preservation of butterflies in natural history collections.

The form of the exhibited works does not explain an artistic process that lies behind, and due to the complexity of this process, we do not detect the outlines of Cankarjev Dom or any other building from our subjective path. In this process, the snapshots are only material for the creation of a digital

collage, which the artist prints onto a transparency and folds, thus re-creating a three-dimensional object. In this process, the artist explores and blurs the boundaries between objects and images, which becomes evident when she illuminates the transparent object with a graphoscope and outlines the projection. The whole process is completed by placing the drawing in a multilayered grid, which resembles architectural models or models of urban planning, thus offering an image of an imaginary city. The visitors are thus confronted with the final act. The final phase presents us with an image of the newly created city, in which each part can even be understood as a specific neighborhood of the city with its own colors and its own atmosphere.

Last but not least, the images of the city created by Janja Kosi are the opposite of the »omniscient digital images« that prevent us from getting lost. Her images are not objective, homogeneous or mathematical. The space that the artist constructs cannot be calculated, predicted or navigated. It does not simulate reality or give a sense of stability; it is closer to open structure and incompleteness than to the basic potentials of form, imagination and unpredictability. As images participate in the shaping of worlds, new forms of thinking emerge, which are based on visual communication and require the development of the optical mind.

- Irena Borić

BIOGRAPHY

Website



Janja Kosi (1994, Maribor) studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana, where she graduated in 2016 and received her MA in 2020. She spent part of her studies as an exchange student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig. She is currently living and working at the MGLC Švicarija in Ljubljana as part of a two-year residency for young artists. She works in the fields of visual arts, painting and illustration. She has participated in solo exhibitions *Serving Suggestion* (R Space, Ljubljana 2021), *Significantly Local* (ETC Magazin, Podhod Ajdovščina, Ljubljana 2022), *Serving Suggestion* (Dobra Vaga, Ljubljana 2021), *darling the roof is leaking* (DLUL Gallery, Ljubljana 2019) and many group exhibitions, including the *Art Stays* festival (Fo.Vi Gallery, Kidričevo 2021), *EKO8 Triennial* (UGM-MTT, Maribor 2021), the exhibition *Provisional. For the Foreseeable Future*. (Fotopub, Ljubljana 2020), *Prelaunch EKO8* (UGM-MTT, Maribor 2020), *4WD; Polycentricity of Painting Issues in the Works of Four Women Artists* (Moderna Gallery, Zagreb 2020), *Another Time and Place* (Improper Walls, Vienna 2019). In 2020, she received the ALUO Award for her MA thesis entitled *Everyday Life of Heterotopic Space / X°Y'Z" N - A°B'C" E*. Her practice is characterized by spatial installations and the intertwining of different media, where her painting note can still be felt. She is primarily interested in the subjective perception of space and its connection to the notion of place.

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artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor

Opening hours: Tuesday–Friday: 3 p.m.–7 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m.–1 p.m.