

Ejti Štih

RED AND GOLD

14 June–20 July 2024

MMC KIBLA/KiBela

Ejti Štih's painterly expression is direct, sharp, precise and sincere. As a painterly essayist witness, she depicts both the beauties and the horrors of life, all the good and the bad that the human being possesses. She is a heartfelt life-traveler who loves life and feels and perceives it with great empathy.

Her paintings penetrate us like arrows. The painterly reality of the visual narrative consists of strong color fields, heavy themes and human destinies. The human figures and bodies border on caricature in the gestural and expressive quality of the figures and are strongly emphasized in character. She depicts a specific painterly aesthetic of the world she observes and is surrounded by.

As a painterly mirror chronicler, she captures the stories of the people and places she lives in and to which her eyes and heart are directed, which she then refocuses and redirects back to the world in a distinctive and characteristic way through the medium of her life's work of painting. Many who do not have a voice are given a voice through her paintings.

First there is a story, a moment, an event, a specific subject matter that gains her focus and full attention. Her motif is the human being. In the whirlwind of creativity, she works intuitively. She starts with the background. She starts with the initial lines of the figures, using long-haired brushes, almost reminiscent of calligraphy, to lay out the linear silhouettes of the images in quick strokes.

She paints with acrylic paints that, while drying quickly, give her the possibility and freedom to paint faster, with the flow of thought, hand and intuition. The generosity of the colored background embodies the painting, fills it, makes the volume infinite and at the same time gives the figures a stage for life.

The positioning of the space in the painting as well as the light and shadow give a theatrical atmosphere, opening or closing our eyes with imaginary backdrops and having a beam of light, like a spotlight or a beam of light, directing our gaze on the action.

Each color touches us and captivates us with its symbolic meaning. The color red overwhelms and surrounds us, inhabiting us and at the same time penetrating human history in a timelessly existent way. From the color of battle and war, from political to regal powers, from intimate to amorous genres, from birth and slaughter, from magic and fire, from warm nest and protection, from majestic royalty to life-giving red water. Red simply enters us red.

Red speaks of a powerful life color that can touch us in countless fields within our lives. With its power and majestic touch, it captivates, seduces, protects, nurtures and grounds us, but it can also frighten, haunt and destroy us. It speaks of major emotional and life shifts, where, when we

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encounter and come into contact with shifts, this kind of powerful experience slides tectonically into our deepest depths. It can wound, move, heal, heal, birth, move, love. Fill in the blanks yourself.

Almost no other color can rustle with such a wide-ranging historical-life fan as red. The materialization of red in the painter's paintings in the current exhibition *Red and Gold* functions as a key building block, creating, sustaining and ever-energizing the earth-life stage for the paintings, constructing a backdrop that glows, breathes and beats red.

Red is not just a color, it personifies the spatial dimensions in which figurative forms emerge, testifying to their destinies. The red atmosphere brings with it an empathetic mentality. The red volume becomes its own character, one of the main figures, as a spatial being that senses and feels, framing sensually the situations of life and at the same time pouring out beyond the frames the piercing and harsh earthiness as the brutality of life, where humanity masterfully shows its shadow sides of dehumanization and apathetic inhumanity.

Dark faces with evil looks dwell in the shadows and speak of an extension of the evil, darkness and negativity that dwarf and barbarically rule. The painted scenes weigh heavy on the heart. Flight, shame, rebellion, power, helplessness, hopelessness, sadness, evil.

Passing through the surfaces of the paintings and focusing on the color scale, suddenly the purple, with which, among other things, the painter shades her works, hisses.

The golden color, on the other hand, breathes divinity, transcendent eternity. It stands on its own, a silent but present color, waiting to lead us to freedom, through the golden gates of heaven, the window or the sky that we will all pass through sooner or later when we leave our earthliness.

It is the color effect that captivates us, and the charm of the color effect can only be seen and perceived with the heart. Just as it is possible to be human with a good and compassionate heart.

As a civilization, our humanity should protect and safeguard us. But there are many kinds of human nature that reside in human beings. The question is which kind we nourish. Having a high capacity for compassion assumes that a civilization is sufficiently highly developed, and consequently, that it understands the differences and diversities of other people and different people, and can proceed from understanding, respect and acceptance, and operate from the common denominator that we are all first and foremost human beings, and we are all equally important.

There are, among other things, three overarching attitudes that give us much direction and guidance in our life journeys. The first relationship is the relationship that one has with oneself. The second relationship is the relationship one has with others. And the third relationship is the relationship one has with one's environment. Being on Earth is complex and immensely intertwined with both light and darkness, but let's ask ourselves the following: where and how do we stand as individuals, what relationship do we have with ourselves, others and the environment, and where do we stand as a society?

Our human problems are universal and can be found on every continent, in different variations and degrees. Deep down, we all know what is right and what is wrong.

– Nina Šardi

BIOGRAPHY

Ejti Štih was born on 25 November 1957 in Kranj, Slovenia. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, and after graduation she studied with the academic painter Krsto Hegedušić in Zagreb, Croatia.

Since 1982 she has been living and working in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. Her artistic career so far has included painting, sculpture, ceramics, installations and printmaking. She has illustrated books, magazines and newspapers, and designed posters. She has taught drawing and painting at the Atelier of Visual Arts in Puerta Abierta in Santa Cruz.

As a costume and set designer she has worked on more than fifty theatre productions in Slovenia, Bolivia and Spain. She has also designed masks and carnival costumes.

She designed the church furnishings for the Misiones de Chiquitos International Festival of Renaissance and Baroque Music in Bolivia.