

Kamila Śladowska

HEALING BODIES, HEALING ECOSYSTEMS

31 May–29 June 2024
artKIT

The value and richness of the life force, of the creation of life ecosystems, of different kinds of life, of the birth and giving of life, is something of the utmost importance that exists on our Earth, of course apart from love.

The artist's exhibition expresses her view on the current state of the world and the anxiety she perceives and feels about it. In her search for ways to heal ecosystems and bodies that are subjected to the exploitative tide of human greed and indifference in a way and style of living that is environmentally and animal friendly, and through her art, she seeks to give a voice to nature and at the same time direct the human gaze to multiple foci.

She works, creates and integrates several media at the same time, such as oil paintings, textiles, video and film, sound sensory and interactive objects, clay pots, hydro-feminist maps, spatial installations of water elements, wall flowers and body images. The created color scale merges into a compositional narrative that rounds off the whole of the oil paintings. The artist creates her own painting grounds, which give a specific individuality and contribute to the organic nature of the painting installation.

In her art, she emphasizes the human intervention in nature and tells stories of fusion with nature, inspired by moments in her life and the environment in which she lives, through surreal images that seek to transcend human detachment from nature.

Poland is a strong farming country. As a result, the land in the area is heavily exploited and forced to produce agricultural products. Where once there were forests, today there are wastelands of cleared land.

The images of women, seated or lying on the ground, bear witness to human greed and indifference, leaving behind a sad trail of emptiness and speaking of the devastation of the land. The women depicted are witnesses to a given situation in which their presence speaks to the fact that we are here and that there is still a desire and hope for the earth to be resurrected, grounded and healed. Different ways of living and alternative agriculture are possible and necessary.

The painting entitled *Friendship* tells the story of Chernobyl and nuclear danger, with the hands growing out of the lower part, resembling the horrible shape of a mushroom caused by a nuclear explosion. The intertwining of the two hands, with the fingers vertically intertwined, suggests interconnectedness, help, community and friendship. Humanity must not be forgotten, even when times are hard.

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artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor
Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In the painting *Grapes Top the List of Pesticide Residues*, the grape's little breasts speak of grapes that are often sprayed and thus harmful to both the environment and humans. The breasts are depicted in the symbolism of grapes, as they suggest the theme of grapes being sprayed, which in turn merges into another connecting theme, where substances and toxins harmful to humans have also been found already in the human body and consequently in breast milk. The image conveys a strong message and a clear connection between how closely we are intertwined with the whole ecosystem and how much more consciously we should guard our planet.

Lamium purpureum depicts the womb, which is connected to the whole earth and body through water-root vessels. The image of the womb and the petals of the scarlet-red dead nettle (*Laminum purpureum*) growing from the ovarian stems tells a story of natural harmony and testifies to the healing and beneficial effects that nature has on us and our well-being. By reviving the knowledge and good old recipes, the advice of grandmothers and herbalists, and by bringing nature and its healing herbs back into our lives, we are reconnecting with nature, which has offered us solutions to various ailments, both in the past and today.

The painting *Herbal Brew* encourages us to prepare herbal blends and to pick seasonal herbs and make tea blends. At the same time, while blending the herbs, the station invites us into a sound experience that gives the herbs themselves their meaning and voice.

The painting *Vistula* is about the Vistula River, the longest river in Poland, which also flows through the city of Warsaw. Legend has it that the river is home to the Warsaw Mermaid, who protects the city of Warsaw with her sword and shield and is its patron saint. The womb, which is both a symbol of women and their protector, floats above the city itself.

The morphology of flowers and plants reminds us more closely of the connection between human beings and nature. We derive from nature as it derives from us, and the similarities in the composition of body parts or structures are often more common than foreign to us. From anthers to flesh flowers, from snake's mouths and tears of flowers to veins and green grasses, on Mother Earth we are all and everything magically, invisibly, intricately interwoven and co-created. The life force of creation is one and only, and it is the feminine energy that creates and gives birth to life through her body. Likewise, the force of creation creates a myriad of different lives, whether plant, animal, or human. But the structural make-up and functions of bodies are related and similar to us.

In the painting entitled *Growing Food*, the artist merges the human body even more closely with the vegetative world and a part of the human hand becomes a zucchini. This fusion gives a human form to a small part of a vegetable. Where the resulting image is surreal, it encourages renewed contemplation and speaks of a visual dialogue between the transcendental and the earthly.

The unfolding and unveiling of her own visual language speaks of a gentle narrative, which in turn points in a clear and direct way to the problematics of the time and encourages the search for alternative ways of thinking or acting, while inviting to a visually compassionate coexistence and perception with nature.

Her visual language dwells on the bridge between the earthly and the transcendental. It brings together the invisible connections of both worlds and depicts them in a unique and personally mythological visual surrealism of contemporary time.

Many people are reflectors of systems and culture, but at the same time there is a rising tide of

thinkers whose outdated views and value systems of cultures are no longer reflected back into society, but reflect a different image.

The human eye is exposed daily to visual media glimpses of thousands of problems scattered around the world. For apparently, in the world of media, there is only fear and destruction. It is quite overwhelming for both the psyche and the human heart. But human beings are not just what is shown on the screens. Yes, we can be beasts, just as we can be angels. But if social systems are set up to bring out the worst potential of humanity, it is up to the people to see, to realize the system for what it is, healthy or rotten, and to refocus and redirect themselves for the good of human potential rather than succumb to the lure. Learned patterns of behavior are by-products of culture and environment, for no creature is born with prejudice, or intolerance, or greed.

The intelligent use of emotional intelligence, value systems, science, compassion and technology can be potential tools to reach new paths and further directions. All of these potentials, of course, stem from social awareness and concern for the environment and people. In the absence of this, the tools are meaningless. If we perceive a system that does not primarily serve the environment and people, but rather the maintenance of its own system, such a system is meaningless.

If there is a desire to change the world, a different value system is necessary. If there is a mindset that the world cannot change, this kind of thinking comes from those individuals who will not change it. Let our culture be compassionate and good and in symbiosis with nature, animals and fellow human beings.

– Nina Šardi

BIOGRAPHY

Website



Kamila Śladowska is a Helsinki based visual artist born in 1996 in Warsaw, who works with various media, focussing on painting. Being raised in anthropocene, she tries to learn about painting from more-than-humans. The artist researches around topics of diversity and cultural anthropology in the context of post-humanism. Her creation is associated with ecosexuality or eco-feminism. Inspired by hydrofeminist, Śladowska investigates the relationship of human and more-than-human. In the past years she has been working on interconnected immersive painting ecosystems. She makes effort to work with recycled materials or using slow techniques in order to reduce the harmful impact of painting. Her work has been shown in multiple countries in Europe (including for example Biennial of Palermo, STØND LEEG festival in Antwerp, Asbestos Art Space in Helsinki, Sinfonia Varsovia in Warsaw or In Feminis Veritas in Berlin).