

“The Extended Painting – Between Figurative and Abstract”, 7. 12. 2016 - 31. 1. 2017

Prague House in Brussels, Avenue Palmerston 16, 1000 Brussels

There is a narrow line between figurative and abstract painting yet it provides painters with a large scale of expression. The reflections of the world in contemporary painting are determined by the cross-over of the artists' vivid perception and imagination with information data leading to a selection of characteristic features expressing the way of depicting the world. These features must be perceived as the result of fragmentarization of our visual reality. To use a mathematical simile - they resemble fractals, i.e. images of which parts are equal in meaning to the whole and which can be found in patterns or shapes everywhere around us. For artists, they might mean specific signals acquired at the moment of inspiration as the methodical impetus for their work.

Alice Nikitinová works with selected motifs or emblems. It often takes a second look to reveal in them a thing or object associated with specific human actions. A wounded finger stands for some kind of movement or work activities; a winter coat becomes a hiding place concealing our soul as well as corporeity. The detail of the chosen symbol is accentuated in its semantic entirety by the formally austere colour composition of the painting. In the works of **Pavel Příkaský**, fragments appear in various forms: as a detail of a personal memory, reminiscence, a used object or a sign associated with a certain working environment, for example, a detail of a cracked wall. Photography, often used as the subject pattern accentuates the transience of a representation as the subject vanishes from the painting surface with its contours being washed down just like all events disappearing in time. **Martin Lukáč** conceived his painting compositions, which show traces of the figural world, as a metaphor of our brain functions, trying to understand the visual information transmitted to us as an event from the outside. Influenced by the omnipresent imagery of visual culture, he projects his emotions, feelings and stimuli into his works through expressive painting gestures. This often results in mere linear recording of his distinctive drawing or plain surfaces of impasto painting.

Patricia Fexová's painting style is characterized by the impressive contrast of filled and washed-out colour spots painted with energetic brush strokes. The artist takes interest in the process of introducing resemblance into depiction, the moment when a cluster of spots turns into a certain face or the moment when a face has not stopped being a cluster of spots yet. Her friends and acquaintances from Prague's art community often serve as models for her minimalist portraits. The artist also examines the boundary between illusion and abstraction in the two paintings in red and blue tones. She used explicit photographs to create these, indicating their composition with her painting only to immediately suppress it again. **Jan Poupě's** works inspired by the natural appearance of the landscape or by industrial structures express the constructive order of elements affected with a specific error or technical process. They create a unique visual language that integrates systematicness and operativeness of new technologies and evaluate an experience of “error” geometry in relation to reality. **Josef Achrer**, originally also inspired by the landscape, used to make his paintings by pushing paint through the canvas from the reverse to the front creating works resembling ink paintings. He

would also examine the origins of geometric abstraction using geometric grids. However, recently he has been inspired by information technology and the structural segmentation of his paintings' surface is being replaced by physical deformation of its shape. He uses RGB colours to magnify the optical effect of the shape modification. To linearly express his painting compositions, **Evžen Šimera** uses an original technique called "new dripping" where he allows drops of paint to flow spontaneously on the canvas. He creates two different forms of linear hatches depending either on the position of the canvas or on gravity introducing barriers in the course of the flowing paint in the form of wooden planks or layered painting boards. He conceives the picture as a procedural framework of painting as well as an installation element, multiplied by the possibilities of perceptive communication with the spectator.

The common feature of the work of all these artists, most of whom have won the annual Critics' Prize for Young Painters in Prague's Gallery of Critics, is conceptual work with the relation of regularity and randomness in the process of approaching reality, enhanced with new knowledge from informatics. This creates tension between determination and creativity in the perception of the artwork in favour of the birth of new semantic values.

Vlasta Čiháková Noshiro, curator of the exhibition and at the Gallery of Critics in Prague