

Endless Tree

Helena Tóthová

Vernissage: 15th July 2021 o 17:00

The exhibition lasts until 30th September 2021

Curator: Ivana Moncolová

Helen Tóthová (also Helen Tóth, 1992) is a graduate of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. She works in the medium of drawing, photography, painting and installation. A strong theme of her works is nature in its fragment, cut-out. The tree is its proxy symbol. Helen Tóth comes from a generation of artists who grew up in a strongly "virtualized world". And the encounter and coexistence with this world and the finding of its counterbalance is related to her work.

In history, with the onset of industrialization, the technicization of the world (at the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century), we encountered philosophical currents as parallels in the visual arts, where authors and artists took refuge in nature and its personification in human life. Sometimes it was a search for a spiritual path, at other times it was an inclination towards atropomorphism, the result of one's own idea of seeing the world. At other times nature could be a spiritual space; in German Romanticism nature was a mirror of man, man/artist was a pilgrim in it. It was the technical acceleration of the world that fascinated some artistic figures, and conversely it paralysed some artistic figures so much that they resorted to founding their own chambers in nature. Nature became the studio. Often this understanding of art, with its overlaps into mysticism, spirituality, hermitage, had a romantic tinge in its understanding of the beautiful. It was an idealistic and psychological understanding of the aesthetics of nature. The concept of the author's "I" or "immediate experience of self", intuition, was strong in the concept of art making. At the end of the 1960s, the ecological concept of understanding and protecting nature was added, which is still very relevant today, and also in visual art.

Helen Tóth is an artist whose transition from childhood to adulthood took place in the zero years of the 21st century, in the era of new media, the mass use of social networks, and the decline of personal social contact. She is an author who experienced both a pre- and a after-era in her childhood. Social media, which has brought a flood of information, is a good tool, but the rate at which it fills our time and our living in a hurried world takes a toll on our mental as well as physical health. The media war between television, advertising, and the internet is escalating in a multitude of people and their desire to return to nature in different ways, like the principle of finding our own equilibrium. As we have seen from history with rapid technological progress there is always a society of people who take refuge in a world without technization. Helen Tóth is an artist who uses technical achievements to realize her

artistic intention (digital and analog photography, digital maps and GPS coordinates), she treats the use of social networks as a compulsory ride of necessity for every artist, although she would prefer to be without them. She sees them as a powerful polarizer of society, the basis for the unification of art, the adoption of artistic models that deviate from personal, authorial authenticity. In her work, Helen Tóth thinks of the tree and the forest as fundamental elements of nature. For her, walking in the forest as a space whose experience is one of balance is fundamental. Fragmentarily, she selects fallen tree branches from it, which serve as an initiation model/ stimulus for her painting in the studio. In painting, she combines intuition and paint work as well as memory or experience of the forest. Sometimes the stimulus for painting is a black and white drawing of a forest or tree made on the basis of a combination of memory and a photograph. Tree branches collected in the artist's studio become the basis for her installation in the gallery space. She expands painting and drawing into the gallery space. Using the medium of installation, she creates an environment out of paintings and natural history. She returns the used parts of nature, branches back to their environment after use (but first she paints them with non-natural paint), then photographs them in their original forest environment. She gives the viewer directions on where to find them using GPS coordinates. The author defines herself as a long-time "collector" (not a hunter) of objects of natural origin, in the exhibition she pays tribute to the first Slovak botanist, Isabela Textorisová, who spent most of her time researching the flora around Martin City, especially in Velká Fatra and Gaderská Valley, and recorded and described new and rare plants from this area.

The artist Helen Tóth works in a system of discovery and collection, i.e. like a botanist, she does not have scientific ambitions, but she concentrates in several forests in different parts of Slovakia. Sometimes she instructs friends/audience to selectively bring her samples of the forest they choose. She then creates micro-environments from them and preserves them as a kind of three-dimensional herbarium.

Helen Tóth (1992) was born in Dunajská Streda. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava (prof. Ivan Csudai, akad. mal., 2012 - 2016), (prof. Daniel Fischer akad. mal., 2016-2017), (Mgr. art. Rastislav Podhorský; Mgr. art. Martin Špirec, ArtD., 2017-2018). She works in Bratislava and Dunajská Streda.