



MITJA FICKO

Please, feel instead of me, while I'm away

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UGM Studio, Trg Leona Štuklja 2, Maribor

Paintings are very patient and bear a lot. So, when I sense imperfections in my older paintings, I can easily continue to work on them.

Even though the exhibition presents a production of paintings from 2015 and 2016, half of these paintings were commenced earlier. The largest painting *Closed Garden*, for example, was drafted in 2009; *Little Midnight School* and *White Room* originate from 2012, but were resumed in 2015 and completed in 2016. *Blue Hour II* and *Night Sowing* were commenced in 2014 and with minimal additions completed this year.

Because of the time differences in their commencement, these paintings have less in common compared to the paintings from my last exhibition entitled *Back to the Cave* at Eqrna Gallery in 2015. However, despite their similarity to children of different generations, they act more inwardly, towards the intimate.

I do not really have a solid method of work or a painting concept. I rather place my faith in flexibility. Therefore I am more interested in the commencement, the work process. In other words: I want the painting to happen, as if it would have one breath-in and breath-out.

As I said, some paintings are a continuation of complete or incomplete paintings. They have been commenced very slowly, with temporary breaks and observation intervals. These paintings show a greater degree of calculation and cogency, sometimes also a more perfected scene as a consequence. However, the listed qualities are not constituent for my painting. Also in this time frame of commencement, my interest for the painting to HAPPEN and not to be made, never fades.

I do not tell stories, I only lead the attention.

I generally choose abandoned, isolated spaces that revive the scene by a minimal presence of something or somebody. That is why the paintings can act as experiential metaphors, often in a dramatic and at first eerie atmosphere. Through careful observation, they reveal themselves in different clothing.

The scenes are not sequences of a story with a beginning and an end. They are independent scenes in the form of illogical sense or koan.

I prefer to move out of the painting, rather than to inhabit it; I conceal myself, shade, give meaning to coincidences, move in the interspace—between the occurring and the disappearing, between day and night.

Many experts place my paintings into magical realism. I however, claim: "This is black dialectics." Black or night dialectics, because everything is wrapped in some concealed and yet revealing incomprehensible beauty.

I define blackness as emptiness, shapelessness, as potentiality consisting of basic cornerstones, of which things and phenomena are commenced and materialise. In the same way as in commencement, I am interested in dematerialisation, in which the process of materialisation is turned around into disintegration, dwindling, or fading. It is a materialisation of departing, vanishing, or a materialisation of dematerialisation.

Parallel worlds coexist in the paintings; one world supports the other, they disclose each other through the third world, through the fourth they...

In the process of painting I pursue the feeling. It is easier to explain a feeling, if it is based on something exterior, something material. The concurrence of events characterises the exterior world. This is a general quality of nature, while we select, focus, isolate. If I would convey the concurrence of events to my paintings, they could have a hallucinogenic effect.

It is also about a multitude of equally intertwined worlds and a concurrence of dynamic events.

But not all paintings are set up to achieve this effect. An equivalent intertwining of worlds is only one of many possible ways of perception, cognition, and sentience.

Interruptions on a formal and contentual level are a constituent part of my painting.

Interruptions are formal or contentual cuts, or losses. Cuts are generally perceived as interferences by the mind, as they do not seem logical. Interruptions act as points of transfer from the usual to the unusual; from one, so-called single world, to a multitude of worlds. With cuts, I break up the hierarchical dictatorship of one world into a multitude of worlds.

Please, feel instead of me, while I'm away.

The exhibition title denotes sentience, perception, and nothing else. We do not need anything else anyway. Why? Because, contrary to the separated reign in our heads, sentience brings us back, earthens us to our bodies. Sentience is the connecting element (the exterior interior) that leads towards presence. The experience of sentience is cogent, because it is happening to us and not because we think about it.

One of the main functions provided by the analytical mind is to break up the intertwined multitudes of sentience and the selection of the felt-perception. But this is a three-in-one operation, as its third part is the construction of a world made of broken up, selected elements. Yet the world that is constructed (synthesised) by analytical thinking cannot satiate us, since the constructed one has eliminated itself from the multitude of life phenomena and possibilities.

Because I replace dictatorship—the unambiguous isolation of the mind—with multisensuality, we do not need a painting title, nor all the years of its creation, nor arising thoughts, and there is no need for searching stories, as primarily there are none. All of this only matters to the mind. And when the mind is involved, the mere feeling that raises and fades again slips through our fingers. Consequently, we do not know what we feel at all. But we do not give up. We persistently continue, even though we do not feel anything.

Therefore: ***Please, feel instead of me, while I'm away.*** Even when walking, watching TV, talking to your friends, when you are happy or lonely and you do not know, what to do. Feel instead of me, while I'm away.

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