

Eliška Konečná

A Dry Place to Fall | 08/06 - 06/09/2023

What is fascinating about Eliška Konečná's work is that it reflects both tendencies and concerns of the young generation of Czech artists (she graduated from the Painting Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague in 2020) while detaching itself from any chronological linearity to gradually approach a certain timelessness, a form of universalism mirroring the history of art.

This interpretation finds its roots in Eliška Konečná's relation to symbolism and the almost classical construction of her narration around allegorical figures. The artist seems to slowly develop her personal mythology filled with characters depicted for their individual qualities, struggling with morality issues, while she uses a very intuitive language, leaving a great place for pure aesthetic considerations. In this sense Eliška Konečná's practice definitely illustrates a certain return to sensuality. The choice of artisanal techniques such as woodcarving or embroidery, the organic materials, the round lines and intertwined human bodies strike the viewer by their sensorial implication. If Eliška Konečná's stories are first read through the prism of their corporeality, one may find them reminiscent of Baroque sculptures. Proserpina's abduction couldn't be better brought to life than through the impression of Pluto's fingers into her flesh in the masterpiece of Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

With her solo exhibition *A Dry Place to Fall*, the artist extended the dimensions of her traditional media (wooden and textile bas-reliefs) through a more figurative drawing, the introduction of sculpted objects and the abundant use of color which seem to serve here as a subtext for every scene. The painting overlapping the main motive almost seems to depict its own narrative, deriving from the subject itself. It reminds of a pre existing context, it is the palimpsest to which new stories are applied (sawn).

The superposition of narratives, the coexistence of various influences, including classical and modernist references mixed into a diversity of media certainly bring Eliška Konečná's exhibition to a great level of depth of interpretation. The artist even often combines contradictory or oppositional elements in her compositions (even the title of the exhibition involves the construction of an oxymoron) in the aim to ultimately transcend reality's complexity and human ambiguous nature.

Indeed, Eliška Konečná's scenes are often not joyful nor sad, we are not really experiencing empathy towards its characters, we observe them instead as we could meditate in front of a cartography of dreams, without judgment. In Eliška Konečná's artworks, emotion is treated as a background of sensoriality, or as its direct consequence. If her subjects often illustrate a notion of impossibility, it is deprived of frustration, if they illustrate the notion of desire, it is pointless. Here resignation and acceptance take the place of guilt and pain, as eventually the bodies, limited by their own humanity, are transcended by their ability of neutrality.

Caroline Krzyszton

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Eliška Konečná (b. 1992, Czech Republic) lives and works in Prague.

Eliška Konečná graduated from the Painting Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague in 2020 (Studio led by Robert Šalanda and Lukáš Machalický 2018 - 2020).

Konečná's work stems from an effort to display the untouchable abstract reality, which she interprets into material dimension. This effort relates to her long-term interest in communication and its boundaries. The organic materials and traditional techniques such as woodcarving and embroidery are at the core of Konečná's artistic research. In her recent works and installations, she is particularly interested in the human sense of touch and the dynamic relationship between the physical and the spiritual.

She encourages the viewer to settle into the world of her hand-crafted artifacts balancing on the fleeting border of wakefulness and sleep, tactile and immaterial. The floaty shapes of her wooden and soft bas-reliefs often underline the transgression of the body and its visual narratives related to the corporeality perceived through the prism of desires and drives.

Eliška Konečná has recently exhibited at Public Gallery in London, Below Grand Gallery in New York, Rondo Sztuki in Katowice, Karlín Studios and Berlínskej Model in Prague.

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