

a populist series of markers of monumental and metropolitan k. u. k. splendour, but the worlds of that which we ignore in ordinary passing. There are images of the Viennese urban space, captured in the moments and multitude of everyday faces. In the streets, squares, in front of bars or inside bars, galleries, workshops, in apathy or in being lost, in human solitude or in hustle and bustle. In this process, the author limits the conventional black-and-white photography, but essentially spreads it wide open with a square format and red veil. As we ask ourselves the question why, the square format unconsciously forces us to explore the events and narratives within the given format. It is clear that the genesis of the square has many historical references, but in the selected discourse we undoubtedly think at least of the canonical artwork of the geometric abstraction. We can no longer overlook the pioneering and iconic Suprematist artwork of Kazimir Malevich, his "black" and "red" square. Nor the works of Piet Mondrian, for example the marvellously harmonized squares in his famous *Broadway Boogie Woogie* from 1942-43. Here is where I see the artist's introspectiveness, which in a way determines the visual code, thereby evoking our different, certainly more composed, contemplative attention.

Matej Fišer covers all his Viennese urban squares with a red veil in a highly imaginative way. I interpret this lucid approach as the artist's covert-symbolic projection through the lens of artistic generic space, the kind that the photographic darkroom offers in solitude and isolation. There, under the red light, in the process of photography creation, magic happens, a miracle, which eventually comes to exist as an image in the light. Matej Fišer's view as an art photographer is original, unobtrusive and eloquent in multiple meanings, actually masterful, because he genuinely conveys the essence of what is happening as he captures the right moment, as an intuitive perception in the context of Cartier-Bresson's "decisive moment".

– Dr. Janez Balažič

Website



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Matej Fišer
RED SQUARE
23 August–23 September 2023

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.

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RED SQUARE

(SOUND AND VOICE OF IMAGE ON/OFF THE RED SQUARE
WIEN op. 1/24)

Through the red square into the view which reaches further

Matej Fišer, born in 1974 in Murska Sobota, is an art photographer and author of culinary books who lives in Vienna. The photographic series titled *Red Square (Sound and Voice of image on/of the red square, Wien op. 1/24, 2023)* is twenty-four selected recordings from his first series of art photography works, which explore the visual rhythm of urban and human living in the city of Vienna through the genre of street photography. With the abbreviation op., which has been used in the world of classical music from the 18th century onwards, appeals to the musical language of the word opus, which in latin means work and refers to the artwork and the number of the work, which it joins with the number of film negatives, which contain 24 recordings.

With the abbreviation op. 1/24 connects the world of music and the visual, therefore the sound and voice of the picture on the Red Square, or the sound and voice of the picture of the Red Square. From this duality, sound and voice and the Red Square, or the sound and voice on the Red Square, Fišer first connects the voice as message and sound (also visual), then the square as format, frame and square as the meeting place.

For the first series of twenty-four artistic photographic works by Matej Fišer it is important to note their visual rhythm, constructive element of the created scenery and the goings-on of the compositive urbanism and societal complexity. And so with his visual and cinematic photography and its communication the author constructs spaces with the effects of transparency as well as an interest for lighting, colourful energy and dynamic movement, which passes through and spreads into the perception of human feelings. With street photography he captures the genre motive typical for depictions from everyday life; specific, unique moments in a given environment and society, which with its uniqueness and unrepeatability creates magic. The passage into the intoxication of the street photography from *Red Square* strengthens and place us into the red square with its red colour, as well as its impulsive transparency. The visual dynamic of the photographs introduces us into a new context of reading and method of viewing through the truth of the frame of the revealed eye.

The reflectivity of Kazimir Malevič's red square and its supremacy represent and abstract artistic movement, which derives from the basic geometric shapes. The Red Square represents the

encompassing materiality of the given and enables the ability to go further into the exploration of unknown life and witty feelings. With the deepening into the unknown, Malevič believed in the greatness of transformation which can happen to an individual. So too is the geometric element of the square constructed in its esotericism from four elements; these being water, air, fire and earth. During the function of all four elements at the same there opens the field of the fifth element, ether, which allows the view to build its own and peculiar world, and to move further. Despite the limitation of the view and visual input field narrated and allowed by the lens, the scenery of the viewable and the line of the square, the internal human field remains all-encompassing, circular, uplifting and unlimited. On the perimeters of the square, which works like a screen, we descend into the »photographic« ether, within which we can immerse our view, which reaches further.

In the most sincere images and the slight invisibility, Fišer's photograph captures the worldly human, plucks him from the time and space within which he resides, and submerges him in the peculiar world within the frame of the square and the reddened, intensified feeling. From numerous life moments, captured through a 35mm lens and the lively motive there happens an attentive break in the signature of red, which is, like a colour filter or colour touch, connected into the happenings of the visual rhythm. The sucked up energy of the red colour fills the view and contributes the colourful building block of the enjoyed moment, filled with the aura of red visibility and its personal impulsive, energetic subjectivities.

Fišer's photography stands like an independent field which represents the independent marks of a given moment. The series itself doesn't have a fixed narrative, yet the photographer is led by a visual rhythm which winds through the series of recordings and offers a free space for one's own imagination and interpretation. A deeper and immersive look into the substance of the street moment can get lost in the images and portraits of human outlooks and their stories, scenarios and movements; the light and shining dynamics of the scenery; the possibility of one's view traveling around the occurred shards of glass and visual reflection which borders, reflects and builds new dimensions.

Because of its use of contemporary »new« technology we are presented with fields of virtuality where the feeling of time and space is lost. New technologies do not see the location and space. They are not there where we are, yet they demand the total immersion into the virtual world and the abandonment of true reality.

Before we gaze upon the future, stop looking into the past and lose ourselves in the virtual world which we do not know how to operate, it should still be noted that living in the now should stand in first place. The three-dimensional timeline exists only in the three-dimensional world, which is comprised of the past, present and future. Upon stepping into the fourth or fifth-dimensional space, time and space are lost, and thus so are we.

The opposite pole to this loss there is photography as a visual medium, which offers us a pillar and simultaneously an anchor, capturing and immortalizing us in the importance of time and space, which is crucial for the optimal function of humans and human society in the environment, be this in the urban bustle, the countryside, or space. Thus urbanism and urban bustle, nature and bird chirps, like the gazes of our close ones, the hug from a friend, smell and sound of the moment are not virtual worlds. Thus it is of existential importance that we stay in contact with the reality which created us, which builds and creates us, which is alive and breathing within space and time, where we reside, and only carefully engage with the worlds of virtuality, always with great clarity, presence and knowledge of where the real and virtual worlds exist.

Fišer's twenty-four chosen art photographs beautifully passes to us the urban environment of city forces. The photos offer an understanding of the variability of time and its spacial flow, they offer the parsing of reality, which is wrapped into itself and the square, which frames and protects it. In the locality of the urban space, the homeliness of the location in which we reside or observe, our vision begins to concern itself with the circumstances of the present, of street photography and the magic of reality. Through a photographic accessory we are nestled here and now in the urban real point, observant of the real scene and the magic uniqueness of the moment, which will never be again. Thus we are offered the awareness of transience and the importance of presence.

At the presence which fills the view, and at the intensive observation which fills up inside the person, which is immaterial and indeterminate, yet in constant motion, there lies the ability to observe life. Today's society is shockingly and shakingly quickly losing its ability to observe reality. Even though it seems as if the world is drowning in the multitude and complexity of images, pictures and photographs, the photograph is nonetheless that which still offers and preserves within itself the spirit of reality and warns of reality, anchoring us to it.

The red colour and square can offer us an anchorage and pillar which allow observation to push away from the beach and travel further into spiritual dimensions and personal transformation. The importance of the anchor is thus understood as a necessity, as the entrance point is also our exit point and the possibility of return back to there were we can subsequently nestle our experiences in the internal contemplation of the contemporary. The visual messaging and exceptionality of Fišer's photographic works communicate with us and remind us to be here and now, in the space where we are. They lead us into the expanding opus of experiencing the uniqueness of the moment and the understanding of life.

– Nina Šardi

Lucidus rubidus quadratus

The series of 24 selected art photographs by Matej Fišer, themed on the urban, Viennese milieu in the broadest sense of photographic reception, can be classified under the so-called "street photography", i.e. street photographs of everyday city life. The prehistory of "street photography" is long and multifaceted. From the pioneering beginnings of Charles Nègre (1820-1880), Eugène Atget (1857-1927), through André Kertész (Andor Kohn 1894-1985) and Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004), if I mention the "French" line from around the period before WW2. Kertész, who recorded street scenes from 1928 onwards with a handy Leica and remains paradigmatic in this sense, is particularly relevant in this context, as he strongly influenced Cartier-Bresson as well as Brassai (Gyula Halász 1899-1984). The genesis of street photography also readily includes the works of Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) and a portion of the opus of other American photographers, for example Dorothea Lange (1895-1965), Walker Evans (1903-1975), as well as Robert Frank (1924 -2019) and his 1958 anthology *Les Américains*, if we mention one of the more recent. Of course, later and until the present day, an almost impenetrable multitude of photographs has been created and is still being created, clearly in line with the genre disposition of "street photography", within which the artistically imaginative and unique series of Matej Fišer definitely stands out in terms of formal and artistic expressive power.

Matej Fišer captured numerous images of the city of Vienna with exceptional photographic subtlety. Not that which manifests itself in a plethora of impressions and which is devalued by