

Mitja Ficko

THE STAR STICK

24 November–16 December 2023

MMC KIBLA/KiBela

The Mechanism of an Elusive Language

The entry point to Mitja Ficko's exhibition entitled *The Star Stick* begins with the visual display of its visual tissue under the magnifying glass of the exhibition microscope KiBela. The painterly creative process is a living and elusive thing, it is often difficult to say when it begins or ends, when it is restored and when it is eternally fluid. But the opposite is also possible, namely when the end result of the creative process, project, work or vision is clear and the artist senses or knows when the painting is finished and complete. We can see the artist's work in different ways and attach different values to its content. At present, however, he consciously chooses to make his work elusive and difficult to define, with undertones of transience and fluidity.

The Star Stick is an open title that attempts to capture the associative in a metaphor. The stick can also be seen as a wish, depending on expectations and preferences. It can transport us into a world in which images become building blocks. When you turn over the golden stick, you also turn over the building blocks. And what you get are never the same pictures that represent nothing and appear unfinished. Imagine twelve blocks. Each block has six sides. Each face represents a part of the image. Only when all the blocks are correctly arranged with the sides of the same picture can you see the whole picture, which consists of twelve fragments. The puzzle contains six different images.

Mitja Ficko's paintings are mosaics of different surfaces, blocks and puzzle pieces thrown together, which do not form a complete image. Since they are unfinished, they illustrate the idea of composition and flow, as the blocks change position and reveal or conceal their sides depending on the artist's mood.

The ambience of the gallery offers a kind of pause and invites the viewer to slow down and observe the current selection of building blocks, i.e. Mitja Ficko's paintings.

The painterly lines presented in the exhibition *The Star Stick* branch out into various forms and encompass the artist's creativity over the last three years. They are divided into lines that seem familiar to the viewer and that he can recognize due to the artist's style and painting method, into old paintings in which he intervenes with new impulses, into lines with which the artist has condensed the paintings into collages, in space and time, into lines of new paintings, also collages that move towards the realm of abstraction, independent of the narrative of the story and that represent a visual and structured inner plot that is built up without any previous strategy.

The artist used to be inspired by his travels abroad, but today he finds his inspiration in everyday life, both in a formal and thematic sense. Our gaze is captivated by the thick layers of paint that

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flow in streams over the surface of the canvas and under which we can see miniature horses. The images of miniature horses, foxes, puppies, magnets and stickers appear and disappear again in Ficko's paintings. They resemble children's toys and embody the motifs of a happy family, childlike playfulness and joy. The figures have no prehistory, they are simply figures standing alone in the environment of events, in the here and now; they are as we see them, as they were drawn. Guided by his inner sense, the artist searches for new ways to open up new spaces in his painterly language, which precedes the subject.

The fact that the radical is at the center of research can be seen in a painting that is diagonally divided into two poles, one of which is depicted in red and the other in black. When we look at the painting, something interesting emerges in the background of our perception and how it affects us. Although we are looking at a dark, gloomy painting, it does not weigh us down or weigh on our senses. Instead, it draws us into the feeling of timelessness, the simplicity of life, knowledge and clarity. The painting materializes this feeling of being flooded with energy flowing through the body of the canvas and the bodies of the hearts, a kind of network of energy points of a greater whole, and speaks to us in a new language of flowing associations and experiences.

In the search for a new expression and a new way of structuring the work, a new language began to emerge, the mechanism of which the artist is still uncovering and exploring. The materiality of the language itself is elusive, because the main characteristic of a mechanism is that it is constantly turning and being formed, generating, shaping and passing through, merging, combining and creating.

The exhibited works show a retreat on the level of content, which is partly accompanied by a structural shift in space and time. The space expands and shrinks with collage cuts and layers that also create a temporal cut into which events are inserted that overlap and condense into further events and temporalities that are condensed into a scene. The figure in the form of a magician, who represents nature, is in the background of the painting. The spatial field increasingly branches out into a multi-space, in which the structuring process branches out the old story that is still visible in the background. In the foreground, however, new images of hearts and the glistening sky are superimposed. The retreat from time and space thus transports us to another inner dimension in which the hearts represent eternity and the source of light, which is self-fulfilling, just like nature, which is the creator with its own source. The artist uses simple, but also overused motifs, inserts them and transforms them into new structures with a new charge and a new meaning.

The viewer thus finds himself in the orbit of the artist's total freedom, in the mechanism of his elusive language, which is on a path of self-discovery, forming infinite images and non-images, ideas and structures that offer new trajectories, lines and the perspective of an all-encompassing explorer. Where the path leads, we do not know at the moment. But we do know that here and now, in the small things of our everyday lives, we can find the key to unlocking the mysteries of the present moment that lead to the star sticks that paint the world around us.

– Nina Šardi

BIOGRAPHY

Website



Mitja Ficko was born in Murska Sobota in 1973 and grew up in Ljutomer, Slovenia. He is an assistant professor of painting at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana (2023). He studied with J. Bernik, G. Gnamuš and specialized with Metka Krašovec. From 2004 to 2023 he worked as a freelance artist.