

Blažka Križan

A MYRIAD OF SEQUENCES

9 August–7 September 2024

artKIT

»An In-between Space of Shadow and Light«

Blažka Križan's art moves between the worlds of paper cutting and op art. With her scalpel cut, the artist opens, lifts and guides the emerging surface relief of the paper. The repetition of the cut creates optical illusions which, through association, generate organic and biomorphic forms as well as undulating, linear and circular compositional structures in motion. The monochrome works are joined by works in blue and, more recently, in red, the backs of which are dipped in acrylic paint. The colors reflected from the surface thus influence the color scale of the relief itself.

Depending on the motif and choice of cut, the artist uses different types of paper, but mainly watercolor paper with a thickness of 200 g/m² to 300 g/m². The application of acrylic precedes the cutting of the paper. Various types of scalpel knives are used to cut the paper, differing in size and shape of the tip. Before the work slides into the creative core of cutting, the first steps in the whole creative process are ideas, sketches and especially op-art motifs and geometric shapes. Sometimes, when the need arises at a certain point in the creative process, a tiny cut-out sketch is made as a relief cut, which the artist uses to study the next steps, the direction and inclination of the following cut or the effect of the light and shadow created.

The artist's committed paper-cutting technique and the elegant plasticity of the cut capture a considered and intuitive artistic quality. In some of her works, the undulating organicity reigns in its subtlety, adding a note of a moving image reminiscent of waves and currents of water or traces of the wind as it sweeps through the lush field of grass. As you delve deeper into the works, a different perspective opens up, taking us further into the soft and undulating. Tiny raised surfaces, reminiscent of small windows or membranes, allow us a glimpse into the space below, in between and on the other side. The theme of the works emerges through the elementality of the shadow, the light, the line, the inclination of the paper, the slant of the line, the width and depth of the cut, the breathing forms or structures that expand and contract in their materiality and essence.

Through optical illusion and the manipulation of the cut, the shape, the direction, the length of the shadow and the light, the impression of a moving image is created, which in places produces a sensory effect of optical sensuality that enables us to perceive the image as if it were in motion. The artworks are constructed as three-dimensional reliefs in which shadow and light meet in an esthetic interplay. At certain points, the line is replaced by the cut, with the line remaining on the surface where the cut is not raised and the relief is not exaggerated. The optical illusion of the moving image is most clearly recognizable in these works.

The precision of the relief and its structure fold in on themselves and outwards, in a circular,

linear or undulating manner. The balance created in the paper reliefs radiates a visual calm that soothes the viewer's gaze. The horizontality and verticality of the surface are immersed in the dimensions of the spatial relief through the repetitive gesture of the cut and the resulting depth.

There are a number of directions from which the viewer can view the works. They grow from a subtle implosion, but also from an explosion of relief volume, they branch out and undulate in their planes of linear cuts. In these different paper planes, the surfaces are sometimes sunken and submerged, sometimes raised and undulating or radially branching – organically or geometrically. The organic character and complexity of the patterns is reinforced by the sequences of elements and their number.

Rhythm and repetition create movement. The repetitive and changing movement of the elements creates a rhythm that connects with the surface of the relief. The composition of Blažka Križan's works has a rhythm and dynamics that follow each other in precise longer or shorter intervals, gradually and gently. The fluctuation of movement in the undulating and circular structures also assumes a greater or lesser density, darker or lighter areas and the constantly changing inclination of light and shadow. Influenced by compositional clarity, the shading and cut lines profess to be signs of hidden realities that serve as anchor points for beauty and drive the breathing visuality.

The relief and structure of the works embody the thematic core in in-between spaces, whose elements are shadow and light created by the slant, depth and width of the cut. Shadow and light exist side by side, independent yet interdependent. The content created in this way animates the interstices and suggests an in-between reality that only becomes visible after it has been created. A line next to a line, a cut next to the cut evoke in us a principle of proximity that can be visually integrated into a visual landscape of relief-like esthetic beauty and totality.

— Nina Šardi

BIOGRAPHY

Blažka Križan (1990, Ptuj) completed her studies in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana under Prof. Marjan Gumilar (2012). In 2017, she completed the second phase of her studies under Prof. Zmago Lenardič and Prof. Dr. Jure Mikuž. During her studies, she focused on creating in the paper cutting technique. She has received several awards, including the Student Prešeren Prize for her master's thesis, the Fine Artists Association award in 2020, the Youth Prize at Ex-tempore Piran in 2022 and a recognition at the 12th International Festival of Fine Arts in Kranj in 2023. She lives and works in Ptuj.

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