

Ján Kekeli

—Vague script

Artist: Ján Kekeli
Curator: Mária Janušová

Opening: October 18, 2018 @ 6PM
Open until December 2, 2018
Venue: Salon

The exhibition titled *Vague Script* presents the latest artworks by young Slovak artist Ján Kekeli. Kekeli's main focus is on the medium of photography, while his domain lies on the intersection of documentary and artistic photography. Even though he is known mostly for his landscape compositions, which are featured especially in his cycle of monumental diptychs *Landscape Images* (2012), his current Nitra Gallery exhibition presents another one of his various positions.

The artist follows up to his previous exhibition project *Small Scene* (Phoenix, Bratislava, April – May 2018). Both exhibition titles are related on purpose as the artist's new direction is closely tied with theatre. He no longer just documents any given reality, he becomes a director and play creator. Even though he still holds on to reality, he is now able to manipulate and twist it either directly (by staging the photographed scene) or in the post-production process which allows him to adjust or finalise the "reflection of reality". The composition of his work is final only once it has been installed in the actual gallery space. Kekeli uses layered copies of the same photographs to dramatise and raster the captured scene. In addition, the artist positions the individual pieces in non-standard ways, whether horizontally on the floor or just leaning against the wall, which enriches the spacial quality of the otherwise flat (2D) medium.

The presented photographs can be generally categorised as still life as they record random, but also arranged groups of certain objects. Kekeli tries to capture the visual quality of everyday things under different circumstances and staged compositions. He notices otherwise usually overlooked moments of everyday life and highlights their specific aesthetics and poetic sides. The scenes are usually set indoors or in an unspecified environment which



emphasises their dramatic feel. The individual photographic images are characterised by their typical, vague narrative as if they contained an act of a play that cannot be read and yet we are somehow draught to it.

Kekeli's presented artworks focus mostly on the visual aspect of the captured moment. The artist showcases his technical skills and sense for precision by reducing the number of elements in each image and using a simple, but well thought-out composition of the individual photographs. He had decided to use analogue technology and large-scale negatives in order to capture every possible detail in the images and give his work a sensitive as well as melancholic appeal. The photographs also contain hidden symbolism tied to the artist's personal experience. While creating the photographs he tried to empathise with the depicted objects. His focus on capturing a single element implies the artist's loneliness and embodies his feelings of abandonment and seclusion from the rest of he world.

Ján Kekeli (*1984, Kežmarok) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava where he had studied (2006-2012) at the Studio of Photography led by Filip Vančo. Later, he began his doctoral studies (at a studio led by Ľubo Stacho) which are currently on hold. He has held several solo exhibitions in Slovakia and abroad: Phoenix, Bratislava, 2018; Art Gallery in Trinec, 2017; Nevan Contempo, Prague, 2016; Photoport, Bratislava, 2014; Slovak Institute, Warsaw, 2013. He has also participated at many important group exhibitions both at home and abroad: Slovak Institute, Berlin, 2016; Virka Gallery, Helsinki, 2016; Palazzo Vittoriano, Rome, 2015; Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, 2014. His work has received several prizes, including the NOVUM Foundation Award (2016). He won the Photo of the Year competition in 2012 and he was also one of the finalists of the ESSL ArtAward (2013) or StartpointPrize (2012). His work is a part of both private collections and the Slovak National Gallery collection. He lives and works in Bratislava.

Mária Janušová