

Marián Žilík: “Everything is different”

Artistic participation: **Anabela Sládek a Jana Mináriková**

Curator: **Eva Kapsová**

Opening: **Wednesday, 12 December 2018, 6pm**

Duration: 13 December 2018 – 17 February 2019

Venue: **Salon**

Marián Žilík „Everything Is Different“ is the title of an exhibition that will be held on the occasion of the artist’s 70th birthday as he passed away a year shy of it. The exhibition explores the artist’s work, focusing mostly on his painting, while also presenting a selection of photographs and public space art in the form of a creative participation – a film by Jana Mináriková.

Marián Žilík (1948 – 2017) was an academic painter whose work is often admired by residents and visitors of Nitra when they take the pedestrian zone on their walk to the Nitra Castle. This part of the town is home to some of the artist’s sculptural pieces that date back to the 1990s and whose architectural design represents the town’s modern ambience (sewage covers, the Sword, the Fountain, Father’s Well, 1996). In 2000, he created the Millennium Memorial (Stool) at the Castle Square, inscribed with verses from Proglas. He participated at restoring the historic Well “Na Vršku” [On a Hill] where he created the Lattice of Europe (2006) as well. He also took part at the artistic design of the M. R. Štefánik Square in Topolčany. Many of his public space pieces received prestigious awards (Dušan Jurkovic Prize, 1996; CE.ZA.AR, 2009 and others).

Before switching his focus to public space, he mostly worked on paintings and also photography. At first, his photography was dominated by poetic natural and urban themes before it switched to being a form of criticism. In recent years, Žilík’s eco-criticism was mostly aimed at the close surroundings of Nitra.

The artist’s relationship with the town and its region was reflected in his themes that went back all the way to the Great Moravian Empire, but they also covered folk and agricultural aspects of the Nitra region. Furthermore, his work incorporated intimate, cultural and modern life style topics. The scenic aspect of his work, which is so typical for theatre, was apparent in his painting and sculpture poetics. Žilík’s



works often contain relevant, but artistically encoded social and political issues that go beyond the geographical limits of the region (references to 1968). The artist’s figural painting style evolved from expressive and realistic (1970s) and moved towards neoexpressionism. He left behind his focus on detail and turned to greater stylisation, broader perspective, impersonal pop-art

style and geometry of abstract shapes (1980s). His figural motive compositions reflected his interest in staging and collage. His series Seals (2007) was a promise of a new attitude towards painting, represented by his shift from oil-painting to acrylic and continuation of neo-conceptual tendencies. It was, in fact, painting that was supposed to serve a predominant part of the exhibition that would have featured the artist’s latest works in the field of painting and photography. However, these have remained only in the form of sketches and stored in the “depository” of the computer, but also as fragmented thoughts recorded in his journal. The artist did not have a chance to follow the exhibition through, but he did manage to give it (unknowingly) a fitting name, “Everything Is Different”. The current exhibition, held on the occasion of his 70th birthday, aims to explore the artist’s work while focusing mostly on his painting (1970s-2000s). It also features a selection of his photographs and his public space artworks in the form of a creative participation – a film by Jana Mináriková. The exhibition also references his unfinished work (as the “absent body of an artefact”) in the form a unique composition of the displayed collection.

The academic painter **Marián ŽILÍK** was born in Mojmírovce on June 13th, 1948. He studied photography at the School of Applied Arts in Bratislava (1963-1967). He continued his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava at the Department of Painting at a studio led by Ján Želibský (1970-1976). After his graduation, he received the Martin Benka Award for the best diploma thesis. He lived and worked in Nitra. He worked in the Nitra Gallery and between 1991 – 2014, he taught at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. He was one of the founding and active members of the Association of Artists of the Nitra Region N°89 (1989 – 2017). He received prestigious awards for his public space art. In 2018, he was awarded the City of Nitra Award In Memoriam for his life-long contribution to Slovak fine art and the development of Nitra’s art scene. He died on October 18, 2017.