



Suffer nothing to remain outside

Michal Martychowiec

We are very pleased to have conceptual artist Michal Martychowiec for our first exhibition at NADAN. It is usual for a visitor of a gallery or a museum to come with an expectation to 'see something'. And thus, a visit to the exhibition ***Suffer nothing to remain outside*** might offer a surprise, for the space of the gallery remains thoroughly filled with thick fog making it impossible to see anything but oneself. The immersive installation ***Where Do We Come From? Where Are We Now? Where Are We Going?***, however, is anything but just a gimmick on an empirical experience. Its title has been taken from Gauguin's acclaimed work, one which was made during the time of a personal existential crisis of the artist. However, Martychowiec, rather than personal, is concerned with the crisis encompassing societies, one which is historical in its nature and historic in its significance. And thus, one of the questions in the original title has been replaced with, perhaps, the most valid one: Where are we now?

Essentially, the installation immerses its visitor in a historical experience in every possible meaning of the term, and becomes a meeting point for many moments of history as it might be suggested by the neon ***All is history*** placed in the front window of the space.

And so, the visitor finds him/herself isolated in this fog of history, i.e. the fog of the present and is left alone to answer these three crucial questions. Moving deeper into the gallery space one reaches stairs leading downstairs. Underneath the 'fog of the world' two films from a trilogy by Martychowiec are being projected. The images of the ground of a Japanese temple and sort of 'ruins' spreading across the globe are combined with historical quotations (music, text) throughout the two films.

The shrine to summon the souls opens this trilogy cycle of films investigating and constructing an ongoing reinterpretation of history using symbolic locations, frameworks of historiography, historical, political, and sociological ideologies, and various cultural

relics. Blossoming cherry trees in the gardens surrounding Yasukuni Shrine (The Shrine to Summon the Souls) in Tokyo offer a spectacle of fugitive beauty and an intense experience of time as if passing moments were visible with every tiny white petal falling on stones paving the paths between the trees. It is a special moment for a meeting of many narratives of the past and the present seemingly out of time, where the living walk alike the absent spirits. The temple is consecrated to the heroes of the country, among them controversial ones from the period of the Second World War. The memory is being aestheticized, but under the surface of a charming landscape, the violence, contempt, rage and hate due to a failure of the struggle for freedom is echoed by a human voice.

The more universal ideas in the first film are developed further in ***The fire and the rose are one***. The film is constructed, similarly to *The shrine to summon the souls*, with two parallel narratives. One is the text of T. S. Elliot's *Four Quartets* which suggests on many levels means of reading of the visual part which presents three historically symbolic sites: former site of Pruitt-Igoe social housing project in St. Louis, Ordos City in Inner Mongolia and ruins of the Greek village of Levissi located now at the Turkish coast. The three locations present historically symbolic ruins and each facilitates a new perspective in consideration to our present circumstances.

The arrangement of works in the space is symbolic. If the upper floor is meant to represent a metaphor of the present world, the lower floor signifies certain foundation or ground on which this world has been constructed. Like in a Romantic painting, the ruins are covered with fog, the spectator can only imagine what histories have led them to where we are now.

Michal Martychowiec

Michal Martychowiec (born in 1987) creates conceptual series of photographs, films, drawings, neons, objects, mixed media installations and environments.

Selected exhibitions

2021

Tears of Iblis. All that is solid melts into air. | Rodríguez Gallery | Poznan (solo)
Marcel Duchamp smoking cigar in the museum | Rodríguez Gallery | Poznan (solo)
Where Do We Come From? Where Are We Now? Where Are We Going? | MMS2 | Berlin (solo)
BLAST | Urbs Picta – Palazzo Poste | Verona

2020

Nachricht vom letzten Menschen: The Mythology of Michal Martychowiec | Bublitz. Thesaurós. Uhlandstraße. | Berlin (solo)
Josephine, entering the maze | Bublitz. Thesaurós. Uhlandstraße. | Berlin (solo)
Body. Gaze. Power. A Cultural History of the Bath | Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden
Escrituras Ácratas | Centro Párraga | Murcia

2019

Empty room | Spazio Cordis | Verona (solo)
Winter kept us warm | Migrant Bird Space | Berlin (solo)
A Time for Farewells | Shrine Empire Gallery | New Delhi
UNselect | Kleine Humboldt Galerie | Berlin
Greetings | Videinsight Foundation | Turin

Works in collections

Signum Foundation | Venice/Poznan
Videinsight Foundation | Turin
OCAT | Nanjing
Private collection of Denise René | Paris
British Artists' Film & Video Study Collection | London
C/O | Milan
Cruz-Diez Foundation | Houston
Collection GM | Lodz