

Interview: Julija Dodič

You study Photography at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana and are also interested in painting. But in the current exhibition, you showcase standalone objects that are part of a more recent production. How did this shift to a more contemporary medium occur with you?

The Academy and the field I am majoring in allow for and support our work in all techniques and mediums. Last year, however, I wanted to move further away from the classical art practice – for me, these are painting and photography – and explore something new. I was interested in seeing how far I could go with my work in a new medium while including the older, more classical approaches. I tried to understand the nuances of various mediums, the differences between them and, above all, the diverse impacts they have on a spectator.

The method of reduction is characteristic of the formal design of the pieces in this exhibition. Why is that? Did you draw inspiration from any specific artists?

I am inspired by numerous 20th-century artists, namely those who address the topics of existence and existential crisis. I am fond of Francis Bacon, for example, because he brings reality into painting in a thoroughly cruel, hopeless manner. Once I began to work with objects, I also began reflecting on my own praxis, wanting to distance myself from some of the more conventional ways of creating art. At some point, there were more and more artworks and visual imagery coming from me, there was a certain unrest and an overload of chaos. The reduction was, therefore, a reaction to the situation. I decided to return to my beginnings, similar to how many artists had returned to children's drawings. I, too, wanted to return to a more basic form of creativity.

What kind of an effect or feeling do you want to provoke in a viewer?

I want the viewer to notice the consistent, pure form of the exhibited object, observe it closely, and become aware that they are very much a part of a specific space. I wanted to bring to the front the materiality of these objects and the fact that they can be fascinating in themselves. It was my wish that the viewer would perceive them as almost sacred, that there is a kind of ceremoniality revolving around them, similar to what we usually experience around an altar.

You are currently studying painting as an exchange student at the Academy in Florence. How would you compare the studies there with those at the Academy in Ljubljana?

Apart from the fact that in Florence, I am focusing on a very different medium, I personally see quite a few significant differences between studying at these two academies. In Ljubljana, the students are much more directed towards developing certain content themselves and to give a more substantial emphasis on setting up the piece in a space. That is something I miss in Florence. There, the teaching method is much more focused on teaching the techniques, the relationships between materials, how to mix colours before applying them to a canvas, etc. It seems to me that in Florence, a more classical approach is prevalent, while in Ljubljana, the approach is more open and modern. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with how they

work in Florence, but I do feel that there, I am missing something in my artistic development. I chose Florence primarily to connect with and get an insight into the history of painting as well as to learn the old techniques that might prove helpful in my future work. I've learned, for example, how to assemble a canvas, which I plan to include in my future installations. Another flaw in studying in Florence is that corrections are only made at the end of the process, which prevents one from making changes on the go and thus developing one's work and praxis.

The interview was conducted by Svit Skobir Lampič.