

# ALJA HORVAT

## The Beginning

27 January–25 February 2023

artKIT

Alja Horvat is a young illustrator based in Slovenia, where she also grew up. She is from Maribor, finishing her degree at the University of Natural Sciences and Engineering, majoring in graphic design, in Ljubljana. Art has always been a passion of hers, she started painting in 2016 and she decided to take it more seriously in 2018. She mainly works with her graphic tablet, but she also loves traditional painting with oils. She is inspired by everything that surrounds her, mostly by nature and museums. Being a big fan of the 60s and 70s we can feel the nostalgia in her designs and respect for those times.

At the exhibition with the meaningful title *The Beginning*, on which she shows only her latest works, we find ourselves in a landscape where we walk among colorful patterns that intertwine, connect and complement each other. The artist, who is otherwise best known for her illustrations and depictions of women, animals, and flowers as well as printed patterns on goods, especially from the 70s and 80s of the 20th century and music from the 60s onwards, this time focuses mainly on the depiction of flowers and floral patterns open to interpretation.

It subtly and at the same time playfully invites us to immerse ourselves in the dreamy world of flowers, which is as timeless as nature itself in the eternal renewal and intertwining of cycles, but always blooming, on the other hand, it can also transport us back in time, especially in the 1970s or 1960s, which she is a fan of. Therefore, we can also feel this kind of nostalgia and respect in her paintings and forms, which she builds on with a distinctly personal style and characteristic drawing, which radiates a peculiar energy of the present time and a modern approach.

After all, Alja used digital tools, a tablet, and programs and then printing when creating the pictures for the exhibition, which does not relativize the entire mise-en-scene setting but adds to it the patina of past references and a new, unique approach, which she illustrates: »When you draw with gouache, it is most similar to digital illustration; when you paint something with water-based crayons, everything flows, and with gouache if you put a lot of it, I get very close to the technique I use to draw. Some of my works are otherwise made only with a graphic tablet.«

Even if it seems that her patterns are dominated by a carefree nature that takes us outside the framework of today's world problems, it is not a mimetic rendering, but a carefully composed, computer pencil-drawn and colorful, full, decorative, but also calmer, landscape, meditative pastiches.

Her works are a reflection of the inner energy that leads her from the perception of the environment to the depiction of her own world. Of course, we can also recognize artistic historical references in them, which include some painters of the 20th century, but Alja weaves them into a gilded, individual expression, about which she says: »When I was still looking for my own style, I wanted to find a color palette, with which people will watch me, but in the end, you realize that it's irrelevant. More important than that are the shapes and the way you draw something.«

She is inspired by everything that surrounds her, especially colorful nature and visiting museums, and simply - life, which is telling her stories and she also listens to: »When I draw, I try to create a story, and this way I add things through the elements.« But we let ourselves be inspired by her images and become a part of this nature, which can also give us the kind of flowers that bloom in these pictures and the landscapes that can be conjured up by the imagination, which is created with the stroke of a computer pencil and appears in front of us luxuriously flourishing in all its glory.

- Peter Tomaž Dobrila

# BIOGRAPHY

Website



**Alja Horvat** is a 26-year-old illustrator and graphic designer from Maribor. She is the winner of the Elle Style Awards 2019 in the »Young Talent« category and the winner of Forbes' »30 under 30« list in the Arts & Culture category. She studied at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering in Ljubljana, and turned design from a hobby into a professional career in 2018.

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artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor  
Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.