

drMáriás

WHERE IS MY CAPITAL?

artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor

13 March–9 May 2020

On Thursday, 12 March, 2020, the Slovenian government declared an epidemic. Measures and restrictions, limitations and guidelines, announcements, and decrees. The next day, Friday, 13 March, 2020, we announced the exhibition of the Novi Sad artist in Budapest, drMáriás. We collected his first solo exhibition in Slovenia in Zalaegerszeg, Hungary. Countries and borders were closing, inscriptions remained. We didn't know when the curtain would fall, we didn't risk meeting during setting up and opening, so we got together close to the border. In one hour, we were ready and aware that in the case of emergency, we had to be able to drive back home if one of the countries announced the closure of borders and - even worse - mandatory quarantine of 14 days.

And it started, as we expected. DrMáriás could not come to Maribor, so in artKIT, we were alone among his works, brought from Hungary. We set up an exhibition, arranged the paintings, and prepared the opening. Disinfectants were placed on the table: for hands and throat. There was a limit of up to 10 people at public events by recommended means. Masks and gloves were not mandatory at the time. Without excessive advertising, only with invitations, we managed to convince ten people (five women and five men) and three dogs to come to the opening. We believe that we were within the allowed maximum number of people in the room, and we have not violated any restrictions. The mitigating circumstance was that we were not gathered all at once, in full numbers.

On the next day, Saturday, March 14, we had to close the exhibition *Where is my Capital?*, created by a painter and visual artist, novelist, film actor, and musician, leader of the group *Tudósok* drMáriás. Like all public spaces. On Monday, March 16, we were banned from entering and working on the site. We remained in (self) isolation. The situation prolonged until Thursday, April 30, on the eve of Labor Day, when the opening of galleries and museums was announced overnight. On Monday, 4 May, the doors to artKIT could reopen, and the exhibition was put on display until Saturday, 9 May. Long live Victory Day!

In its iconography, the exhibition from the epidemic to Victory Day touches precisely those we have watched, listened to, read about in the public media, followed on social networks, worked with them, or merely dealt with them. If Virus was the most significant icon at the time, a kind of space messenger, we were all actors of the group performance, and the most exposed to the media were the leaders deciding between life and death, between movement and standstill, between socializing and isolation. Unfortunately, with too little action and insufficient action in nursing homes. But among the people, leaders who pave of destinies at election rallies, who convince us that this is the best way, are still popular.

C(o)ronological faces are the starting iconography of the works of drMáriás. Ours, here, now and past. They are intertwined in characteristic backgrounds, compositions, studios, motifs of famous artists, quotations from their works, ironic-caricatured and sarcastic-bombastic reflections of forms, clichés, and art-historical canons. As we walk through the gallery, many faces and environments pass by us, as summoned from somewhere. Connected from below and above, mythological and comic. We do not know whether they are real, present, past, or just symbols, depictions of our urges. They are recognized, exposed, and woven into the recycled basis of someone's idea, gesture, an image that we see in the depictions that should be hanging in state palaces.

Depictions of the 'famous' in drMáriás's paintings flow through the seamstress's ears into the mirrors of reality, the real and the created, merge somewhere in the collective memory of the known and set, juxtapositioned, composed and embraced real existence and historical consciousness of reality and comics. The mixture of painting themes and flashes announces the immediacy and simplicity of the process. In engaged criticism, it turns into a work of art written in memory and a multifaceted assessment of what is seen. Playing with artistic elements is like stringing notes on the lines of a composition, which also has a distinct compositional meaning in drMáriás. That is why the symphony he composed for his first solo exhibition in Maribor, during the pandemic - and for some war with an invisible enemy - is entitled »Where is my Capital,« and a picture of Karl Marx on the invitation is very appropriate.

At a time when the whole world, all people are faced with thinking about the present and wondering about the future, when countries turn systems back to normal, when jet engines burn, when what we call economics is primarily in the domain of fire brigades. When we have the impression that in our lives, only health care and culture function. When top art or educational activity, merge into a kind of literacy in the culture of living and viruses, of functioning in society. During this time, the healthcare system informed us in detail regularly, and culture gave us artistic content, and we had to follow online. Healthcare and the arts were the ones who took the most care to calm the general panic, which was started by those from the paintings of drMarias.

The images placed in the painting motifs become landscapes in which the resemblance is a symbol at the same time. The reference is the correspondence, the autochthonous dialogue of the painter in the media reality. Books, music, visual and performing arts, film and, of course, the traditional mass media, television, and radio, are instances of drMáriás'. In Maribor, we broke through these platforms, networks with a new reality, whatever it was, is, and will be. In the weeks since the beginning of the epidemic, the exhibition opening, the state of emergency, the shutdown of the vast majority of the economy, self-isolation, confinement in homes and municipalities, most often heard mantra was »How to proceed.« To answer this question, you should come and see the exhibition of drMáriás. Where is my Capital?

- Peter Tomaž Dobrila

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Monday–Friday, 4 p. m.–8 p. m..