

PETR PÍSAŘÍK SPACE MAKER

Exhibition guide

I.

Through a black tunnel, we enter a place on the sea bed where a cast of relics of an earlier civilization is dimly lit with distorted blue-tinted rays of light. Shipwreck anchors, blocks of stone, which used to support majestic buildings, remains of coral reef whose sparkle leaves us wondering whether it is nature, or something left by us that nature has swallowed.

“The ties between the present and the future are more tenuous than those between the past and the present. Once upon a time, hardly anyone will remember, and I have only heard the stories, we were somewhat suffocated by our past. But today, as the past gradually wanes from the horizon of our experience, we let ourselves be tied with shackles we created out of something that is not here and probably never will be. Never will be – because we weave the past from the present.”

II.

Petr Písařík says: it's geometry. Old pendulum clock, which reminds us of a home altar; *Martian Revivalist*, something between Kubrick's hedgehog and the Big Bang; *Homage to Alan Turing*, the mathematician and pioneer of cybernetics. And we must not forget the *Endless Tuning of the Birds*, Beuys-style rack for hard felt. All in black and white. On the wall, two *Superpositions*, shards of modernity in various colours and textures. It's geometry.

“When I paint, I think white and I paint white. Still, I cannot just work on and spread the paint on the canvas. Paint is like features on the face: it reflects emotional shifts, what you are seeing and what you are thinking. The white I intended, the green I intended, the sequins I intended – it's all there but not where and how I envisaged. And not in the same quantity.”

III.

In a dark blue world, a 19th century gentlemen's club, Písařík orchestrates quite a different atmosphere. Geometry remains as a frame, but what is new is the fairy tale, “Kunstkammer”, where the attention is automatically drawn to the *The Treasure of the Silver Lake*, a replica of a massive stalagmite from a stalactite cave – possibly even more beautiful than the original. A gravely solemn Indian mask looms imposingly between two armchairs from the artist's studio. The set-up invites to a moment of rest and contemplation – so that we have time to notice that all that pomp Písařík loves to use hides a certain sadness that there are cruel people among us who take their ancestors' totems and turn them into souvenirs.

“If collectors want fetish, they are not aware that the subject of their admiration is a pearl-infused solution, put in this or that vessel, experimentally placed next to classical European art or bronzes from Benin. It is evident, but you cannot ask of someone to see things as they are: fragile and temporary.”

IV.

We climb ten steps and emerge in a space of 2,500 cubic metres where Písařík masterfully spins a composition of seven objects: with dominant references to classic modern sculptures, *Beauty and the Beast* paying homage to the style of Brâncuși and Moore; Gutfreund-like *Iron Man*; and *Machine, machine*, a round 3D object inspired by Kupka. Nothing to add here, not even side panels to two empty frames. This method of reduction is possibly a reaction to the hedonism of the previous gallery hall.

“In comparison with space, all other things – the surface area, technical aspect, mass, image, semblance, expression, proportions, rhythm, consistency, colour, structure – are wholly secondary and in the realm of details.”

V.

Under the stairs where the *Three Musketeers* stand – an experiment with molten glass which Písařík finished five days before the exhibition opening, we are yet again held hostage to the author's obsession to weave his work into endless intimate complexes. Are they supposed to substitute for the fuzzy view of the world which, in its contrasts, infinite layering and deluge of information, we can never understand in its entirety?

VI.

The asymmetric composition of this gallery hall, where paintings and frames drip down the right wall, seems to prove the hypothesis formulated in the previous hall. The complex structure of plinths and curbs substitutes for the missing solid framing of the reality with allusions to supports, networks forming relationships between seemingly disparate elements.

The direct reference to the architecture of the building turns the hall into a space that becomes a part of the paintings and objects – and vice versa.

“The main question is: for the relationships between materials, proportions, the balance between knowing and not knowing, weight and relief, colour and construction, erotica and comfort, surface and depth were strong and clear... When you are building, you make space your own. You set the boundaries that work as the limits of resistance. A lake wants its shore to contain it.”

VII. a VIII.

The last and the last but one hall, respectively, could be a tribute to a higher order – the cosmic one. Geometry is evidently in the service of speed and the desire to communicate with worlds far from our planet. Before we leave the exhibition, we are invited to the 13th chamber, the Masaryk Study, which before had been only open to the visitor’s eye through tinted screens. This “split end” to the circuit illustrates a significant symbolism of Písařík’s work: the consummate eclectic, he revisits the beginnings, primary geometry and methods, constantly challenging without making claims to the only correct linear description of reality. Písařík’s rendition of permanence is only temporary; it can be radically transformed using a single piece of tinted glass of some other form of permanence.

“Everyone wants to understand art. But the artist is just a detail in chaos; no need to pay him more attention than so many other things which are manifestly seductive.”

Author: David Korecký, quoting Marek Pokorný’s text *Plausible Interview with Petr Písařík* in the exhibition catalogue.