

Press release

June 5th
July 31st, 2021Project Space
48, rue Chapon

Kiss of the leopard

József Csató

The Hungarian painter József Csató breaks from the traditions of narrative painting and the contemporary trends in figurative art through his appropriation of a very particular mode of representation. His paintings are characterized by the use of symbolism tending towards the universal, due to his use of a knowing mix of the vernacular and the exotic. Within this syncretism of inspirations, the spectator wanders through a landscape of figurative and abstract elements, discovering purely personal stories through these curious visual riddles.

The artist draws his inspiration from motifs borrowed from nature, which he combines with dreamlike figures and other fantastic creatures. These mythological forms are supplemented by geometrical shapes and purely fictitious symbols. The figures stand out from generally monotone backgrounds without perspective, and the faded tones and networks of cross-hatching or marbling that fill out the forms, lend this visual vocabulary a semi-abstract quality.

Why did you choose painting as a means of expression?

For its unpredictability: that's something in the nature of painting that I really love and count on. I start out with something, which I think is good, but almost inevitably my original idea turns out to have been rubbish. That's the moment when I find painting the most interesting. I start to feel comfortable with a piece of work when I've worked on it enough to have "gained experience points in the game."

I often feel like a teenager, putting forward raw ideas as a kind of provocation and then waiting for the canvas to react. Then, all of a sudden I see the way forward. I learn from this process every day, how to use it positively, letting go of my ego and going with the flow.

What kind of communication would you like to establish with the spectator?

It's amazing to see how people react to some of the paintings. It's astonishing to hear what kinds of thoughts and associations emerge and to see how people's relation to a painting can be so special. The silent communication of painting fascinates me a great deal.

Usually I don't have a narrative in mind or a particular story to tell with my paintings, but I love hearing the stories other people come up with. Everyone has a different one; it's quite incredible.

What is art capable of doing, in general, from your point of view?

As well as the obvious benefits of art, there is something I've always loved: the art I enjoy the most is able to point out something special, like a hidden aspect of the beauty of life or someone's unique point of view. The best new things have come into my life through someone showing me them: "Look! Isn't that great?"

This kind of thing has really expanded my horizons and if it happens at the right moment, I can end up liking something I never imagined I would.

I think art is the gentlest means of achieving this and it can change points of view

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on its own. For an instant, we are able to get a sense of the unlimited universe we are all part of.