

Pavla Malinová

Cuckoos

Cuckoos by Pavla Malinová is connected to time whose concept has different meanings for each of us. We perceive it through unstoppable impermanence or through a healing prism of hindsight resulting in desired forgiveness or oblivion. We sometime treat it as an inexhaustible source, whose limits we always realise way too late. But time is not only the symbol of existential experiencing; it also represents the strength that comes with a definition of one's own priorities. Ticking away unflaggingly, Pavla Malinová's *Cuckoos* place unwanted gifts in the nests of others at the right moment, just like the eponymous beings from the world of birds. They take form of personal crises, new hopes, spirituality, and intimate moments filtered by the personal mythology and symbolism of the artist.

Pavla Malinová is a distinct representative of the young generation of Czech female artists. Her original painting programme has no followers in our context. It is the result of the combination of several formal and ideological approaches that seep the combination of echoes from the past and present, figurative and abstract motifs as well as concrete and symbolical scenes in the background of dreamlike atmosphere. Although Malinová's paintings abound in intentional equivocations, camouflages, and modifications, it is her work with concrete prototypes, personal experiences, and her own emotions that is so characteristic of her art. In her earlier works, she portrayed bodies more straightforwardly, even though their forms sometimes deviated from reality in the sense of neo-surrealistic tendencies and formal stylisations. Her organisms were massive, mighty, and cumbersome. Even though they were unequivocally alive, it could seem that no blood circulated inside them because of their robust sculptural nature and that they were just avatars of the artist's mythology. The modernist character of figures, along with the earthy colours here and there and fine, even disturbing structures of oil paint applied and spread with a spatula, contrasted with the bright basic colours and various details referring to appropriated historical models.

A solo exhibition in the DSC Gallery in Prague, *Cuckoos* presents a selection of the latest painting series by Pavla Malinová. She naturally combines the experience from her previous works, while chiefly presenting new themes that sensitively shift her unique artistic programme. Inspired and driven by the art of the Swiss-Austrian symbolist Ernst Steiner (1935, Winterthur), her latest oil paintings clearly express a slight deviation from figural compositions. Mighty figures, torsos, and portraits that over-complicatedly filled up the painting formats, ignored beauty ideals, and inclined towards formless modelling of corporeality are now replaced by hybrid still lifes with only scarce indications of bodies. Here and there, Malinová exposes a piece of a limb or a hint of a skeleton, as if she refuses to relinquish human contact. Yet, her attention turns to a single person – herself, which makes the paintings more intimate than ever. She presents new shapes, in which she combines her personal interest in materials, spirituality, colourful harmony, painting structures, and symbolism of scenes.

She places the resulting hybrid forms, open to the interpretations of the audience (even though they are indicated by the work titles), into central compositions dominated by circles or circular details. Inspired by the dial forms of classical analogue clocks, sundials, and hourglasses as well as by the details of the cuckoo clock weighs, she presents the leitmotif of the exhibition – time. She does not express it linearly in her oil paintings, but rather she focuses on the visualisation and materialisation of monuments, icons, and talismans of their kind that symbolise intimate moments (e.g. *Time for Yourself*, 2022, *Time for the Good*, 2022,

Time of the Past, 2022, and others). Throughout the painting development within the series, the circular dials are transformed into amorphous objects, space bodies, and solid materials. The visual and ideological evolution is further underlined by the stylised morphology of birds that does not occur for the first time in the artist's production. In the past, especially in the self-therapeutic form, birds symbolised new mornings after a wakeful night. Nonetheless, they currently offer hope, freedom, independence, and new beginnings.

Cuckoos by Pavla Malinová is personal and specific, yet general and symbolical. The artworks on display can be accessible and easily legible, yet they require reading between the lines. They are emotional, spiritual, curative, sometimes melancholic and serious, but they do not lack irony, a detached view, and playfulness. They are both historicising and contemporary. *Cuckoos* provides perfect visualisation of what the artist currently lives for, what she experiences, what helps her, what fulfils her, and what bothers her, all at the same time.

Pavla Malinová (1985, Vsetín) lives and works in Prague. She graduated from the Painting Studio II of František Kowolowský at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Ostrava. In 2019, she was a finalist of the Jindřich Chalupecký Award and she won the Rudolf Schlattauer's Award in 2013. She had solo exhibitions in Galeria Szara, Katowice; No. 9 Cork Street (with Anna Huláčová), London; White & Weiss, Bratislava; Regional Gallery in Liberec (with Anna Huláčová); lítost gallery, Prague; NoD Gallery, Prague; and Galerie Dole, Ostrava, and she also participated in group projects in the Moravian Gallery in Brno; Futura, Prague; National Library of Technology, Prague; Plato, Ostrava; Kunstverein Eisenstadt; Galéria Jána Koniarka, Trnava, and others. Her art is amply represented in national and private collections.