

THE X. FILES

Exhibiting Artists ∨ Viktor Belányi, Mira Gáberová, Ludovít Slamka

Curator ∨ Ludmila Kasaj Poláčková

Duration ∨ May 14, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Venue ∨ Salon

Opening ∨ May 14, 2022, 6pm

Another one of Nitra Gallery's (im)permanent Salon exhibitions is dedicated to nude art and its numerous representations in the gallery's drawings fund. We have selected a fragment of nude drawings by Viktor Belányi and Ludovít Slamka. Besides presenting the artists themselves, the showcase also represents one of the primary functions of a collection institution, which is to protect and increase the value of a public collection or cultural heritage with the process of restoration. The presented collection of almost 30 items has been professionally restored (Brigita Hradská), which has got it back into an exhibition-worthy shape.

The NG drawings fund includes a rather large number of nude drawings, but our curated selection focuses on artists with the highest number of nudes in the collection. At the same time, the artists' life paths are in some way linked to the region of Nitra and they have also somehow got "lost" or "disappeared" over the course of history.

The collection of drawings by *Viktor Belányi* (October 5, 1877 Ludanice – May 7, 1955 Budapešť) and *Ludovít Slamka* (August 25, 1906 Nitra – May 22, 1969 Nitra) is an intimate reminder of these two artists who mostly painted and their drawings served them as initial sketches. They both come from the region of Nitra. And they have both been forgotten. Belányi has been naturally left out of the local history of art, as it usually happens when someone leaves their hometown and never comes back. Slamka "lost" the artist in him after he finished his studies and returned to his hometown where he started teaching in 1940 – between 1946 – 1969 he taught at the Secondary Technical School of Civil Engineering in Nitra.

"The X. Files" is a standard genre and theme-focused exhibition. Nudity/corporeality and their depictions have always been important themes in the world of art. The exhibition does not present just female nudes we are mostly visually "accustomed" to, but it also features depictions/studies of the male body (as women also get curious at times and the code of man's curious eye, so empowered by the history of art, is not so bullet-proof as we tend to believe). We had to take a rather mysterious, exploratory approach while coming up with the exhibition as we needed to determine how to attractively and delicately present and interpret the nudity of the human body, which is, on one hand, very natural, but on the other hand, also being very vulgarised these days or, the other way around, absolutely tabooed.

"The X. Files" bring into the gallery spotlight such drawings that have been preserved and partly forgotten in the depository drawers as drawings presentations are rather infrequent even though drawing belongs to one of the elemental visual artistic expressions. Our exhibition tries to partially declassify them.

The exposition reflects on two different approaches to drawing. The drawings by Belányi and Slamka are studies/templates for paintings – drawing is a "second-class" form here, serving only a support to their paintings.

A current look into the traditional perception of drawing is delivered by *Mira Gáberová* (March 7, 1979 Lučenec) who approaches drawing conceptually. Her work is tied to the Slovak environment (her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, the Studio of Painting and New Media), even though she has been working in the Prague environment lately and only time will tell if she also becomes one of the lost/found artists on the state border. Her work oscillates between video, performance, drawing and painting. She tends to incorporate various elements of corporeality, intimacy, irony, decorativeness or sentiment. She intervenes into the exposition with her in-situ project created specifically as a response to the exhibition and work of Belányi and Slamka.