

Levels of Touch

Exhibiting Artists ∨ Martin Bízik, Ľubomír Slovinský, Klára Štefanovičová

Curator ∨ Dominika Chrzanová

Duration ∨ September 9 – November 20, 2022

Venue ∨ Youth Gallery

Opening ∨ September 8, 2022, 6pm

We can really call this time we live in the Age of Touch. Most of the things around us are controlled by touch – phone screens that we do not seem to be able to part with, tablets, trackpads, etc. Our fingers are in almost constant contact with touch screens. To what degree are we aware of our (including) electronic touches, how do we use them and how do we evaluate them? What do we get in return and what is the meaning of this reward?

The period of the last two years has been tough on individuals, but also on mankind as a whole. Human contact was restricted to a minimum and any kind of touch was immediately identified as a threat. We have been given a great opportunity to improve and rehabilitate the world we live in. But have we succeeded?

The exhibition titled “Levels of Touch” presents works by a trio of graduates from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava and the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica.

Martin Bízik, Ľubomír Slovinský and Klára Štefanovičová present their work in a joint project where they process their theme using different creative techniques and both classic artistic and digital media.

The exhibition is partially interactive (Sound Substance/ Substance of Sound) and offers visitors an opportunity to intervene directly in the sound processes of the work which incorporates a narrative of an experimental

musical instrument which utilises the visitors’ touches of water-filled bath tubs. The exhibited work by Martin Bízik oscillates on the border of physical and digital worlds. Besides the acoustic and visual experience it offers, it also reflects upon the alarming state of rising sea and ocean levels.

On another end of the spectrum, the exhibition also presents an individual’s point of view and how they cope with the past and creation of new reality (12–16, 19–21). We use our memories to form the present, but we also need to learn from it. Klára Štefanovičová’s linocut prints are about freeing ourselves from the past and growing as individuals who (if they want to) are capable of improving the environment where they live. After all, there is no other option as it keeps changing and moving as the surface of water. An important tool (not just) for an artist are their hands, the creators of the final effect, and it is important to use them wisely (MANUS). In this case, it is our touch that enables man to bring non-living material “to life”, give it a soul and create a relationship with it.

Finally, the exhibition also showcases a seemingly unnoticeable movement, a gentle touch that contra-intuitively causes the most visible changes to our planet. Ľubomír Slovinský emphasises that every individual is able to utilise this kind of touch – fingers + screen – to influence global events, outside of their own region or continent. Online shopping and purchasing products from exotic parts of the world or innocent purchases of clothes and accessories just for fun are no longer so innocent from a global perspective. Such activity often tends to trigger extreme deforestation, mining raw materials, vast shipments of products from all over the world which has an extremely devastating effect on our climate, the oceans and environment in general.

The exhibition talks about the importance of touch which needs to be fully understood. Any kind of touch might be not just pleasant and aesthetic, but also stimulating to human senses and able to generate some disturbing processes. The exhibition presents various levels / planes of touch there are in the sense of coming into contact with various kinds of matter and materials and in the sense of different levels of interference into the thinking and actions of an individual. In all of the cases, man comes into contact with non-living materials and surfaces which are brought to life and activated by our touch.

Martin Bízik (*1996) graduated (2022) from the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica. His program overlaps digital media with site-specific installations and incorporates a large percentage of engaged art.

Lubomír Slovinský (*1993) worked on his bachelor degree (2013 – 2017) at the Department of Design at AFAD in Bratislava. From 2017 to 2018, he attended the K.O.V. Studio at Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague and then received his masters degree in Digital Media at the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica in 2020. His works focus on environmental, natural and urban themes, he often uses digital media and projections, light and video installations and animations.

Klára Štefanovičová (*1995) received her masters degree in Printmaking and Other Media at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava in 2020. During her studies, she went on study trips where she attended the Plymouth College of Art (Painting, Drawing & Printmaking – 2017) and the Tokyo University of the Arts (Printmaking – 2017/2018). Her program is mostly dedicated to comic books and free printmaking.