

Shrine

Exhibiting artist ↘ Tamara Kametani

Curator ↘ Dominika Kuchynková

Duration ↘ December 2, 2022 – January 29, 2023

Venue ↘ Youth Gallery

Opening ↘ December 1, 2022, 6 pm

Welwitschia mirabilis is considered a living fossil among plants. It is an extremely persistent, undemanding, resilient and evergreen plant which is endemic to the Namib desert where it grows solely in extreme conditions. What is more, it is able to survive this merciless environment of the desert ecosystem for hundreds of years, which is why it is called “two leaves that don’t die” in Afrikaans.

Even though it may not have the most appealing appearance (it is said it looks like a pile of garbage from distance), this fascinating ancient plant has been able to adapt and not succumb to the enormous climate changes it has experienced. One could call it a true curiosity and oddity of our planet that is able to survive almost everything...

We enter the Shrine at an unspecified point in time and space where museums and galleries do not exist. Images, objects, prints or sculptures are not “valuables” nor important and the institutions that used to protect them in the past are now gone. Financial and environmental crises, conflicts and wars have turned into an existential crisis. Building interiors tend to change with time as they follow trends in architecture and adjust themselves to the needs of the society. What does the term shrine represent in this reality? What is it for? Who and what does it worship?

The Shrine exhibition is a follow up to the first part of the artist’s trilogy titled *Ending in Three Parts* which

gives birth to an unlikely vision of freedom and escape from the omnipresent oversight in the form of an island which has so far existed only in digital space as a virtual landfill for corrupted data. A vision of inhabiting this Null Island, as it is called due to its coordinates 0,0, represents a possibility of a better, less restricted and just world. The “nullist” movement keeps growing the number of its followers who are inspired by the idea of self-reliance, determination and persistency.

Endeavour, relentlessness and a tiny bit of hope spread across the building, faith in the island of dreams is overlaid with symbolism of this prehistoric plant and an effort to keep securing the most basic necessities of life. The Shrine offers more questions than answers, but in the most unlikely symbiosis of circumstances, it is the ability to adapt and persist which become worthy of honouring and being thankful for.

Tamara Kametani (*1988, Nitra) studied at the Royal College of Art in London and film and photography at the Napier University in Edinburgh. She currently lives and works in Athens. Her work references current social themes and critically (and ironically) incorporates a certain dose of absurdity, especially when it comes to themes like border politics, power, various forms of oversight and increased control of both digital and real-life environments as well as excessive growth and spreading of new technologies. Her work is open and gives the viewer a certain level of freedom in the interpretations and possible solutions of the covered issues. She works with a wide range of media, including video, photography, installations, sculpture, but also web design and various digital formats and applications used for “mapping”. Since the pandemic, she has been focusing more on artificial intelligence, algorithms, conspiracy theories and alternative futures.