

E.H.M.S.

— Zsolt Bodoni —

Art+Text Budapest is delighted to present the latest works of Zsolt Bodoni in the framework of a solo exhibition, the second one hosted by the Gallery following *Forest* in 2016.

The most recent works of Zsolt Bodoni (1975-), who studied in Budapest (HU) and lives in Oradea (RO), speak the distinctive language of Bodoni's art: large-scale paintings rendered with gloomy, sombre colours and populated by dark, mysterious figures in bleak settings. Here, as well as in Bodoni's earlier works, the figures occupy a crucial role as they embody different concepts and ideas, posing numerous questions pertaining to the human condition. In the artist's words: "Figurative representation has always been a key point in my work. In recent years I've been interested in the idea of androgyny and the Jungian anima-animus theory. Androgyny among humans - physical, psychological, and cultural - is attested to from earliest history and across world cultures. I am interested in the idea of transformation and metamorphosis, in how bodies change into different bodies, and the relationship between aspects of sex, sexuality, and gender."

The anima-animus theory referred to above was created by legendary Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, according to whom there exist different psychological archetypes which constitute a transpersonal psychic structure common to all mankind. In Jungian theory the psyche is inherently androgynous, as it contains and embraces both feminine and masculine, regardless of gender. The anima and animus, both Jungian archetypes, are personifications of the subconscious that represent the opposite gender in a person. The advancement of one's anima or animus is a crucial part of the process of individuation, a lifelong psychological process of differentiation of the self, which is the main task of human development. The title of the exhibition refers to this very development, as the letters stand for the four anima levels of state development in Jungian philosophy: Eve, Helen, Mary, and Sofia. These states are embodied in Bodoni's canvasses in the form of multiple figures that emerge in his enigmatic, perplexing visual world.

Jung believed the anima-animus development to be one of the major sources of creative ability, and the way towards a personality's ultimate prosperity. However, if not cultivated and tended to, one's anima or animus could also cause terrible destruction. This duality is manifested in the exhibited paintings that are rich in contrasts and exude a sinister, yet exciting air.

Although Bodoni is primarily a painter, he has always worked with different media: photography, sculpture, as well as video art. In this exhibition, a series of black-and-white analogue photographs accompany the paintings. According to Bodoni, these works play with the idea of presenting the shadow aspect, the unconscious state of mind, where the anima and animus together formulate the self. Thus, the series represents a crucial part of the process of individuation as well as the exhibition itself, but the photos also served as studies for the other works on display. Indeed, the female figure captured in the photos has become an integral element of several new paintings.

Another pivotal aspect of Bodoni's art is his method of reworking old masters. First, he attempts to peer beneath the glaze of the "original", searching for the skeleton underneath; then, from his own reproduction he invents new elements or changes the proportions. Bodoni says of the paintings on view: "I made experiments to inject these ideas into age-old images of old masters, with special interest on the representation of the body."

Opening: 11 April 2019, 7 pm

On view: 11 April - 3 May 2019