**FOREWORD**

The phantasmagorical scenes of landscape, almost de Chirico-like, metaphysical, devoid of life and existence, unfold before us in Valentina Supanz Marinić's works. This is a fictitious and inhospitable world, suffocated by neon smoke and heavy, toxic air. A post-apocalyptic scenario, reminiscent of the scenes from Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road*. A world without the sun, dark and cruel, destroyed by some unnamed cataclysm that we are painfully aware of. The repertoire of motifs is very similar in all her works. Nature becomes unnatural, and people, in overalls and face masks, are merely symbolic figures of doom. The post-apocalyptic world slaps us in the face with neon colours that the artist uses to further emphasize this toxicity. The sky turns yellow, water purple and green, and vegetation dies off or becomes strange. The electrified horizons of silence fade at dusk (of humanity?), whereas people appear only from behind, in clothes that clearly show that they found themselves in a world in which they would not be able to survive without the protective equipment. Their clothes are red. This is an emotionally intense colour, the colour of fire, blood and danger. It further warns us that the world we are in is not on the right path. Humans are on the edge of doom, unconsciously scrolling from one meaningless news on their mobile phone to the other. The animals in the paintings do not bring us the expected peace (a herd of deer, seagulls, a dog). Quite the contrary, like the documentaries on the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone - where animals, despite the disaster, continue to live but in a genetically altered form – they scare us even more by becoming completely unpredictable to humans. Valentina gives us a very powerful vision of the future, which may happen by chance. She efficiently uses human psychology, presenting us with spaces that are not an imaginary, untouchable world of one’s nightmare. These spaces are familiar, such as the Sava embankment or Medika Autonomous Cultural Centre, where the artist’s studio is located, the appearances of which do not differ substantially from these scary scenes in the paintings. This further intensifies the observer’s discomfort. The observer becomes fully aware of the disturbing truth about the alarming state of the environment, which is something we hear about in the media. However, given the current situation with the Coronavirus epidemic, the observer is also concerned whether we are facing the collapse of civilizational norms due to some huge crisis and whether an average *homo vulgaris* will manage to cope with it or are we facing extinction. This makes Valentina’s work very topical and engaged, and it clearly states that art cannot, and should not, be detached from reality, immune to serious issues, and enclosed within the studio walls.

“He lay listening to the water drip in the woods. Bedrock, this. The cold and the silence. The ashes of the late world carried on the bleak and temporal winds to and fro in the void. Carried forth and scattered and carried forth again. Everything uncoupled from its shoring.“

Cormac McCarthy, The Road

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