Terraforming is the hypothetical process of modifying a celestial body to make it as similar to the Earth as possible. In the 14 photographs of Slavonia, taken by Domagoj Burilović and exhibited in his solo exhibition at the Karas Gallery, mystical landscapes and alien, deserted lands emerge before us. They show something else as well, certainly something visible, but also something invisible: something like a trace. (Wittgenstein). Life has dematerialized before our eyes, but it has left invisible traces that make us or at least should make us question the real existential problems, the problem of the survival of an entire region. Golden Slavonia, the belly of Croatia, a historically rich region to which the people from other parts of Croatia used to move, leaving the sea view behind in search of fertile soil. The region that meets all the preconditions to become the richest, and not one of the two poorest regions in Croatia. Domagoj hints at these traces in the seemingly invisible, interrogates, exclaims….Can anyone even hear the cry of the abandoned anymore? The objects in the photographs and their visual morphology become irrelevant compared to the feeling. The feeling of restlessness, depression and despair the photographs evoke in us. What is it that we see? Arable land, minefields, mass graves, abandoned machinery, illegal dumps – the whole tragic history of an area. What happens is the opposite of terraforming. The Earth or soil turns into a hostile, alien space of continuous emigration and flight of the population. The exodus, which only leaves behind helpless old people, who still remember and tell stories of some other, which seems like it happened ages ago. But it didn’t.

This series is in line with Domagoj’s interest in social and political issues, serious topics and transience and history – both of an individual (*Post Factum* exhibition) and of an entire region, in this case, his native Slavonia.

The fog in photographs, which by the way is not always easy to capture, obscures, mystifies – it is an obstacle, but it also emanates. In other words, it is not only the backdrop, but it also becomes a participant in the story. For a moment, the photographs remind me of Caspar David Friedrich and his abandoned abbey in the middle of the woods. The literary classic Frankenstein was written at that same time, all thanks to a volcanic eruption and the fact that this year in Europe became known as ‘the Year Without a Summer’. Has Slavonia lost its summer and its harvest forever?

I don’t want to leave things on such a dramatic note, we should try and keep a bit of optimism because there are still those who have not left. Those who fight, create. For them, I quote the verses of the great Slavonian poet, Dobriša Cesarić: “The fog, hiding everything in thick disguise, / Turns the streets into deserts before our eyes. / And yet, behind that curtain of grey / People are walking, / And the streets are awake. // And close to you someone might be passing / Following the same way. / But cloaked in fog / With the blink of an eye they fade away.“