

BASIC FACTS
Orange is red,
heart is on the left
Jelena
Micić

OPENING:

11 April 2024, 18.00 h

DURATION OF THE EXHIBITION:

12. 4. 2024 – 31. 5. 2024

CURATOR:

Martina Bábinová

Čepan Gallery, Nádvorie

Štefánikova 3, Trnava

"My work is my collection." – Jelena Micić

Jelena Micić's work is characterized by the systematic collection and organization of everyday plastic waste, the fascination with its visual aspect, the study of colours, colour systems, and their socio-economic aspects. The exhibition presents minimalist compositions of colourfields, referring to the tradition of abstract painting, which can be understood as visual statistics of one's own consumption and accumulation of selected materials, thus revealing patterns of consumption. Given that plastic disintegrates over time, Jelena also considers the permanence and methods of preserving artworks made from this material.

The central piece of the exhibition is a spatial ready-made installation entitled *"Bojna polja" [Color/Battle fields]*, (2016 – 2024), made from colourful plastic nets used to protect and transport fruit or vegetables. Individual packages of different colours and structures usually correspond to the colour of the product, although there are exceptions. Plastic serves not only as a carrier of colour but also as an example of how an individual's economic situation can influence their choice of nutrition. Organic products, which are

often considered higher in quality but also more expensive, are typically packaged in cotton bags. The placement of the artwork in the centre of the gallery space and its semi-transparency allow the visitor to see through it or to move beyond the piece. For each exhibition, the installation is adjusted and adapted to the specific space. Pieces of microplastic fall off the artwork during the manipulation and become part of the author's extensive collection once again, with the question of what to do with them remaining.

Another type of waste material that the author works with are industrially dyed garbage bags, which Jelena transforms using textile crochet techniques. In the artwork *"Heart is on the left (2021 – 2022)"* the original purpose of the polyethylene bags has been lost, and the plastic has become unrecognizable, gaining a new structure within the geometric composition and function of the artwork.

The latest development in her own colour theory is visible in the series entitled *"Ko sme ta*j može [You can if you dare]: Spar Choco Nuts, M&M's EU, M&M's US, (2023–2024)"*, in which Jelena extracts

food colouring from the sweets mentioned in the name of the artwork. The works, which resemble watercolour swatches, represent the process of experimentation, as the colour fields on the paper are arranged in the order in which the dyes were tested. The author herself becomes part of the experiment, gradually eating the sweets, observing her body's reactions, and possible symptoms of intolerance to the food additives, which in some cases have actually occurred. The title, "You can if you dare" is an ironic reference to the unpredictable and risky nature of the test.

The title of the exhibition is a play on words, referring to simple, common facts derived from artworks on display - oranges are always packaged in red netting, and the human heart is (usually) located on the left. At first glance, these may seem to be mundane, but at the same time, we can perceive them as symbols representing more complex truths. Similarly, we can see Jelena's work, with its obvious visual interest in colour and plastic material, as revealing additional layers and backgrounds to their contexts.

Jelena Micić (1986, Knjaževac) completed her master's degree at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, at the Department of Textual Sculpture (2020). She also holds an MA in Philosophy (2013) and is a graduate philologist of Scandinavian languages (2010) from University of Belgrade. She is a recipient of the Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos Award (2021), the Ö1 Talent Scholarship Bildende Kunst (2018), and the *kultur gemma!* Scholarship (2018). Jelena is a board member of the "Project Office for Diversity and Urban Dialogue" in Austria and a co-founder of the informal group UMETNIK*. The artist has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Austria, Serbia, and other countries. Her works can be found in the following art collections: Museum of the City of Vienna, Collection of the City of Vienna, Federal Collection (Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport, Republic of Austria), Paper Collection of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna) and The Homeland Museum in Knjaževac, Republic of Serbia. Jelena currently works as the artistic director of the WIENWOCHE festival for art and activism and she lives in Vienna.

Last fall, Jelena participated in a residency at Residency Unlimited in New York City, where we met for the first time.

MARTINA BÁBINOVÁ

EXHIBITED WORKS:

1. Bojna polja [Color/Battle fields], 2016/2024
2. Heart is on the left, 2021/2022
3. Ko sme ta*j može [You can if you dare]: Spar Choco Nuts, M&M's EU, M&M's US, 2023/2024