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TENDENCIES IN ABSTRACTION
Systems, Techno Organisms, Information

The concept of abstraction in contemporaneity is fundamentally different from the currents of ideas represented in the art of classical and post-war modernism. If the latter established a subjective relationship to the external through its symbolic, aesthetic and utopian reinterpretation as well as artistic reduction, then abstraction today has become an integral part of everyday life and its abstracted routines that we encounter at every turn, from turning on the computer to stopping at a cashpoint or a coffee machine. Abstraction no longer stands for a radical transformation of the world and the environment in which it is created but has paradoxically become a new form of realism that exists beneath the surface of things. Instead of formal innovation and aesthetic contemplation, the abstract form takes on new meaning through new content that responds in art to the invisible abstract structure of operating systems, technological devices, algorithms and cybernetic infrastructures, as well as to the geometry of the urban environment, hypothetical objects of science, dynamic economic and biological systems. Is not the QR code ("Quick Response Code") a manifestation of this abstraction? The natural, unconscious expressiveness of the body that defined the aesthetics of abstract form is being replaced by computer simulations and visualisations, artificial intelligence and technological gadgets that are establishing new relationships between body, subject and technology, between artificial and organic worlds.

The exhibition *Tendencies in Abstraction* deals with contemporary approaches in the field of abstract art using various art forms and media. It was launched on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Ljubljana Society of Fine Artists and accordingly the selection of exhibitors is linked to membership in the society. The artists in the exhibition respond to the challenges of the present from different perspectives, considering abstraction first and foremost as a terrain from which they can perceive and reveal anew the processes and mechanisms that determine reality. For most artists, abstraction is not the primary focus of interest, it is not a matter of addressing abstraction as such, but rather it is a consequence and a logical product of creative thinking, interests and the creative process. The artists address a wide range of subjects, but often the sociological, perceptual and practical implications of a technologically transformed world are a major inspiration, evident both in their choice of subject and in their use of technological tools.

In her art practice, Uršula Berlot deals with invisible, hidden processes and structures that take place both in the body and in the physical structure of matter and only become visible through technology. Often starting with the microscopic images of her own body, such as skin and hair, she is interested

in insights into the processes within matter that behave completely differently on a nanoscale. Using digitally processed microscopic images, the artist depicts materiality as a moving entity that is constantly changing through abstract metamorphoses of colours and shapes. The technological interventions in matter in her exhibited video *Hyperoptics* create a visual-acoustic atmosphere in which unpredictable, hypnotic and poetic images visualise the synthesis of the organic, the biological and the technological.

Boštjan Drinovec also stands out for his innovative integration of science and technology with art. His kinetic sculptural constructions and dysfunctional, playful machines emerge from the combinatorics of various objects and everyday materials. They combine different aesthetics and forms, from readymade elements (electricity poles, laboratory and kitchen utensils, furniture constructions, etc.) to designer minimalism and industrial functionality, transposing artistic ideas into potential futuristic concepts. *Models for Digital Photosynthesis* and *Tree Particles* also fall into this context; one of the performances created in this context is known as an urban intervention in Ljubljana that has become a public sculpture. *Models for Digital Photosynthesis* are a kind of hybrid of technological nature, highly developed mechanical trees that, among other things, open up a reflection on the increasingly fatal contradiction between the desire for progress and dependence on nature.

The works in the series of drawings *Undertrained, Overfitted* by Tobias Putrih are the result of an equal collaboration between the artist and a computer programme. The basis for the abstract compositions is Putrih's hand-drawn sketch, which the programme processes via various deep learning stages. This is then supplemented by the artist and resubmitted to the artificial intelligence again, and so on. In this artificial simulation of the human brain, we no longer know which point belongs to the hand and which to the plotter, nor does it matter. In the interplay between the computer-generated image and the artist's interventions, an image of infinity emerges that appears as an inexhaustible system of possibilities.

In *Space train* and *A cloud in the night sky*, works from one of her recent series, Suzana Brborović moves away from the architectural backdrops that characterise her painterly practice. Instead of the implicit political history and collective memory contained in architectural reminiscences, images of the open sky take the place of a kind of symbolic canvas onto which the human gaze is projected into infinity. However, with the difference that the gaze painted by the artist has become veiled, enmeshed and interwoven with visible and invisible circuits – disembodied in cyberspace that increasingly determines the imaginary horizon of humanity and the vision of the present and future.

Roman Makše's architectural constructions, on the other hand, intervene minimally and ascetically in the space they occupy, creating micro-locations that encourage the viewer to discover and become aware of their own spatial experience. Using lines, surfaces, screens and openings, Makše creates a highly abstracted perception of space that, while starting from real, recognisable and functional elements, shifts the focus to materiality and form. Makše's reconstruction of spatial perceptions creates dialogical tensions between the basic spatial concepts of closed, open, empty, limited and transient, and establishes a dynamic situation between space, viewer and object.

Duša Jesih also creates new relationships between materiality and signs that allow combinatorics and access to dynamic spatial relationships through the logic of construction. They are characterised by a rational, mathematically precise aesthetic that continues the historical line of geometric abstraction on a formal level and updates it with current contexts in terms of content. Jesih's refined, pictorially balanced abstract compositions are not only conceptual and aesthetic but spring entirely from factual ideas. Abstraction is in turn a form of reality that we recognise in the rationalisation of social space, the organisation and signalling of public space, the signs of the urban landscape and, last but not least, in the mathematical foundations of digital geometry.

Mojca Zlokarnik's work explores the phenomenon of colour, which offers an inexhaustible system of variations. Despite the precise geometric conception that suggests an analytical artistic approach, her relationship to colour is intuitive and is based neither on a predetermined grammatical system nor on a cultural or anthropological symbolism of colour. *Gazing Objects* that represent the artist in the exhibition not only refer to the affective and sensual potentials of colour but also address our processes of perception and cognition, digitally altered attention and usual ways of seeing. More than an expression of fascination with the beauty of the sound of colour, *Gazing Objects* are visual paraphrases of the hypnotic, sticky surfaces of today's screens through their explicit appearance.

Abstraction thus continues to create allegorical images of the world, even if it has fundamentally changed.
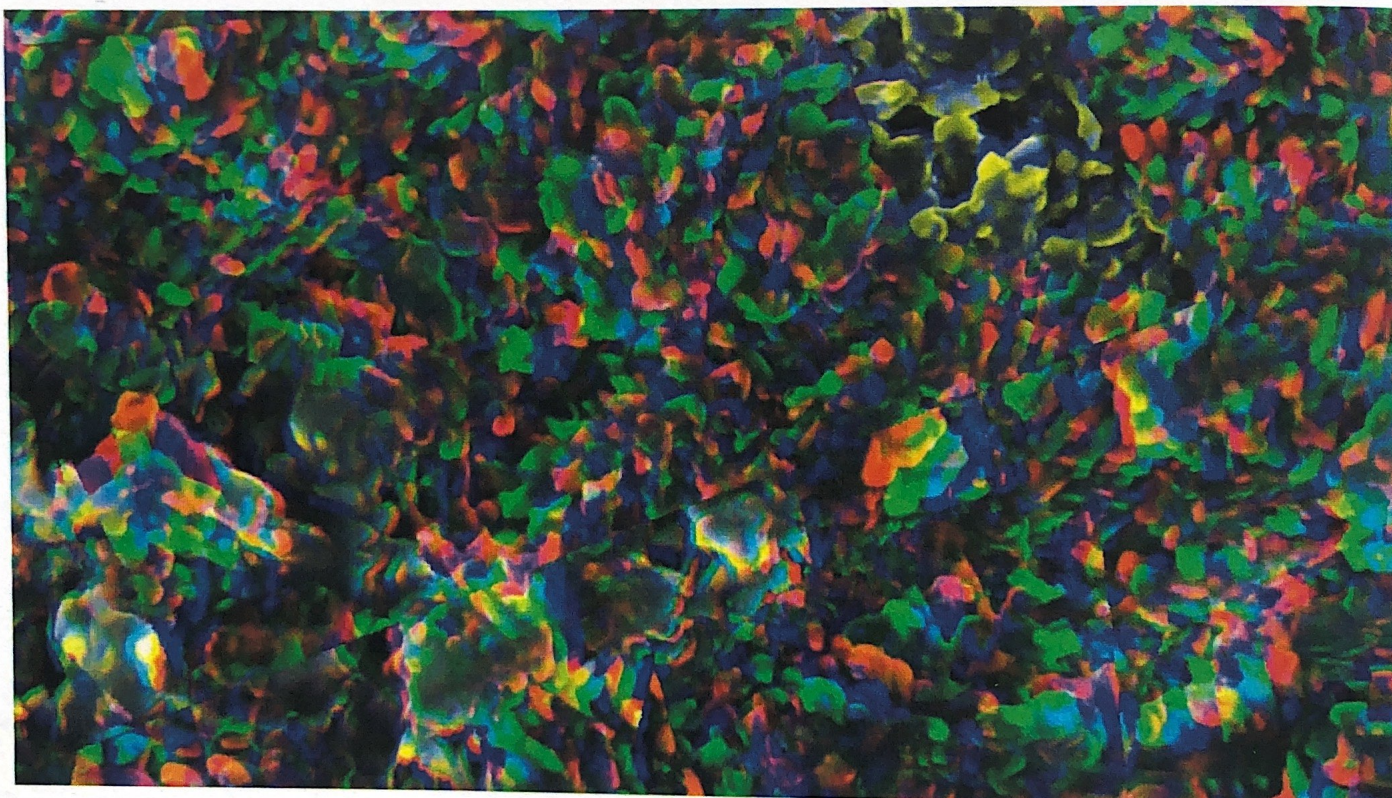
Uršula Berlot, *Hiperoptika / Hyperoptics*, 2021, video, 4.22', zvok / sound: Scanner - Robin Rimbaud,
zajem iz videa / video still
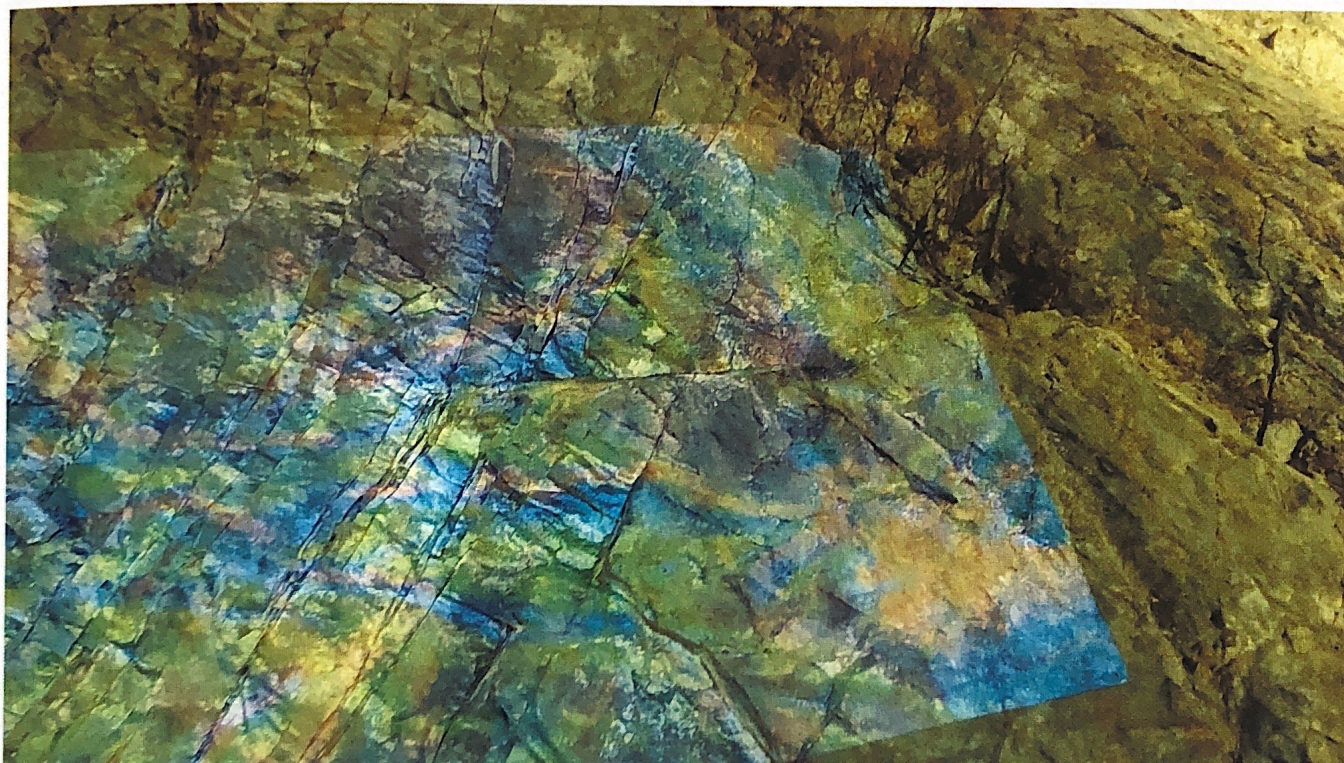
Uršula Berlot, *Hiperoptika / Hyperoptics*, 2021, video, 4.22', zvok / sound: Scanner - Robin Rimbaud
pogled na postavitev / installation view