



PRESS RELEASE

The exhibition "Inner Sanctum" presents the current work of Dominika Brečková (1992).

Author, Exhibition Title:	Dominika Brečková: Inner Sanctum
Venue:	Záhorie Gallery Jána Mudrocha in Senica, Sadová 619/3
Curator:	Michaela Šuranská
Exhibition Opening:	November 24, 2023 (Friday) at 5:00 PM
Musical guest at the vernissage:	Pavel Morochovič – piano
Exhibition Duration:	November 24, 2023 (Friday) – January 21, 2024 (Sunday)

Dominika Brečková's work in the current domestic visual arts scene is rather unique. Primarily, this uniqueness stems from her intense personal interest in Japanese culture, which she continuously and extensively incorporates into her paintings. However, in her hands, this interest becomes both a tool and a language for expressing opinions on cultural and gender stereotypes prevalent in our country, where patriarchal vestiges concerning women's presumed positions are still remarkably present.

Dominika has been developing her artistic program, grounded in figuration, narration, and a feminist perspective, since her studies at the university (Academy of Fine Arts in Banská Bystrica). Following her graduation, she expanded and intensified this program with great dedication.

The nature and content of her paintings derive from the authenticity of her unique perspective, interpretation of Japanese tradition and pop culture. She transfers them into both the domestic context and her personal life. Thus, a hybrid dialogue between two cultures emerges on the canvas. Appropriating elements from both cultures, their subsequent liberal use, involving paradoxes, absurdity, and irony (including self-irony), all converge into a bold painterly narrative presenting the author's view of these cultures. In the case of the Japanese culture, apart from personal interest, it reflects how it is adopted and subsequently modified, often superficially, within the domestic environment. Her paintings feature figures from both older (yōkai) and newer (anime) mythologies, references to pop culture, games, or pornography. They are characterized by expressive colors and brushwork, utilizing ornamentation and a distinctive aesthetic, yet not aestheticization. Ornament, embroidery, and symbols become part of the organic body of the painting. As they are used subversively, their expressive application evokes a sense of unease.

A diverse range of visual elements mixes Eastern and Central European environments, Slovak folklore, pagan, agrarian, and personal mythology. Characters from all these worlds converge in Dominika's paintings. While these paintings carry strong symbolic aspects, they are rooted in the real material with

which the author works, shaping her own mythology. This includes familial context (painting "At your age, I had a ball"), regional elements, as well as some personal activities such as taking care of domestic animals, traditional mask carving, practicing aikido and others.

Dominika employs means typical of feminist or feminine art, such as embroidery, sewing, and crocheting. Thus, her paintings are expanded with soft elements that intricately and organically connect with them. They resemble the "warm organs" of the paintings or peculiar implants. They introduce a "handcrafted" aspect but again, in a subversive manner. The hanging image is combined with sewn spatial elements, pushing its classical form further.

If one were to conclude a textual reflection on Dominika Brečková's exhibition with a single principle extracted from her broad and diverse painterly iconography, it would be the motif of women practicing aikido. Their representation signifies an element of female strength and emancipation, seeking spiritual balance, gender harmony, and the friendship of different cultures. In our environment, where folklore was systematically utilized during socialism and where today's political power is turning back to it ideologically, this motif could also signify a woman setting aside the agrarian past and engaging in self-development.

Michaela Šuranská

Dominika Brečková (*1992)

In 2017, she completed her master's studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Academy of Fine Arts in Banská Bystrica. She primarily focuses on painting, which she studied in the studios of Stanislav Balka and later Ján Triaška. In 2021, she was a finalist in the Painting of the Year competition by the VÚB Bank Foundation. She has showcased her work in solo exhibitions such as "Female territory" (Koniareň – space for contemporary art, Trebišov, 2022), "Tatami galaxy" (NERV platform, Humenné, 2021), "Fountainhead p(a)lace" (Gallery Jula Bindera, Banská Štiavnica, 2020), and group exhibitions like "Hradby samoty XII." (Jablonica Castle, 2023), "SADIS - Slovak art days in Split" (UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY IN SPLIT, 2022), "PAINTING 2021" (Nedbalka Gallery, Bratislava, 2021), among others.