



P R E S S R E L E A S E

Exhibition title:	Prefiguration – Trace Elements
Artist:	Milan Mikula
Venue:	Záhorská galéria Jána Mudrocha v Senici, Sadová 619/3, 905 01 Senica
Curator:	Mária Beňačková Rišková
Opening:	9 June (Friday) 2023 at 17.00
Running:	9 June (Friday) 2023 – 23 July (Sunday) 2023

“We live in the context whose meaning is difficult for us to trace without making an effort.”

The currently non-functional part of the granulate production and spinning facilities of the former factory for the production of artificial fibres, Slovenský hodváb in Senica, became the scene of a special action by artist Milan Mikula. The exhibition **Prefiguration – Trace Elements** in the Záhorie Gallery of Ján Mudroch is a transfer of the visual output from this action, of the layers stripped of fragments of a non-functional and devastated space, elevated to objects of art. The artist’s intention is to transfer the atmosphere of the original space to the gallery with an emphasis on the ephemeral nature of memory and on the perception of the undeniable fact by uncovering deposits of time. Milan Mikula records the fragments, remains, traces, layers and deposits of an industrial object using his own method of scanning and uncovering. He creates a record of the life (or period of functionality) of a specific object in the form of peeling off selected parts of walls, floors and interesting sections of the space using the method of “archaeological” uncovering of deposited “cultural layers”.

“The objects become independent living abstract, semi-abstract images (prefiguration) through transfer and the continuous process of erosion actually continues.”

Milan Mikula’s action involves elements of playfulness. On the one hand, it is an absurd polemic with the accumulation of products or experiences and a reflection on construction megalomania and pseudo-progress based on the production of an ever-increasing number of products “absolutely” necessary for survival and for a deep sense of life. On the other hand, it deals with the Sisyphean task to generate and preserve as many traces as possible we leave behind. However, their selection does not always represent situations and objects worthy of preservation and respect. On the contrary, it highlights commercial, activities and products.

“Erosion is a fundamental and guaranteed part and result of evolution.”

Milan Mikula, Mária Beňačková Rišková

An exhibition catalogue supported by the Arts Council from public funds will soon be published.

Milan Mikula is a universal personality, an artist known on several “art scenes” – visual art, graphic design and scenography. His work on view presents challenging philosophical themes dealing with the questions of existence and living in various situations of human society. He explores the values of the world and their transfers and finds them in communication, illusion and constant transformation. These motifs appear in all elements of Mikula’s work, in which a book is not only a book, but also a puzzle and the work of art has a provocative and inseparable effect on the environment where Mikula places it.

Abandoned spaces, factory chimneys or dysfunctional church buildings often become locations of his installations. He likes working with the existing scenery of the “real world”. Mikula often refines these themes and environments with comic-absurd elements, performance and action. He is not reluctant to creatively use clichés, motifs and themes that are part of the cultural background of people from our region, from their generation and thoughtful individuals in general.

Mária Beňáčková Rišková

Milan Mikula was born on 9 June 1963 in Skalica. In 1978 – 1982 he studied at the Secondary Technical School of Printing in Bratislava, in 1995 – 1997 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava with Professors Ľubomír Longauer and Juraj Bartusz.

In 1991 he started collaborating as a stage designer with dramaturge and director Anna Gamanová and theatre companies M – divadlo, Zádrapky Senica and Korbáč Myjava theatre.

Since 1992 he has participated as a co-author in the organisation and implementation of the ETUD project (experimental workshop).

In 1997, together with Jozef Jagušák, they founded the advertising agency and graphic studio RECO in Senica.

In 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2006, he designed the visual identity of the Divadelná Nitra festival.

In 1998 and 2006, he won awards at the “Most Beautiful Books of Slovakia 97” competition, and in 2001 was awarded the Slovak National Library Award at the 4th Biennial of Book Art in Martin.

In 2000 – 2013, he collaborated with director Dušan Vicen and with the theatres DISK Trnava, SKRAT Bratislava and the State Theatre Košice.

In 2003, he created the visual identity for the Trnava Poster Triennial international exhibition. In 2003 and 2009, he received honourable mention at the National Design Award competition, while in 2009 he also realised the visual style of the competition.

In 2005, he designed the visual identity for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Grafobal Skalica company, which won several awards at home and abroad.

He has had 30 solo exhibitions in the galleries and alternative spaces in Slovakia (GJK, Synagogue – Centre for Contemporary Art, Trnava; Kunsthalle Bratislava; Space Gallery, Bratislava; Umelka Arts Association Bratislava; Gallery 13m3, Bratislava; P. M. Bohúň Gallery, Liptovský Mikuláš, Záhorie Gallery Senica).

He has participated in more than 60 joint exhibitions of contemporary art and graphic design in Slovakia and abroad (Palac Sztuki, Krakow, Poland, Centro Cultural Alfredo Kraus, Madrid, Spain, Bienal Internacional del Cartel en México, Mexico, Wallensteinplatz, Vienna, Austria, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Regional Gallery of Fine Arts, Zlín, Czech Republic, Czechoslovak Pavilion, Venice, Italy, The Korea Foundation, Seoul, South Korea, Künstlerhaus, Vienna, Austria).

He creates objects, installations, environments, performance, scenography and graphic design.