

Arta Raituma / LV

In my daily practise I am using plywood, often juxtaposing this natural material with such synthetic mediums as acrylics and alkyd enamel paint. I have discovered my own specific burning technique that serves in creating hazy visuals. Plus, I see a poetic contradiction between fire and wood – a symbolical collision of death and life, an enchanted alchemy. For me expressiveness goes hand in hand with extremely delicate details. This brewage awakens inner landscapes with dream-like surroundings and evokes mystical characters derived from organic matter. I seek for inspiration in the works of symbolists and surrealists, especially painters Remedios Varo and Leonora Carrington, nevertheless, Cy Twombly and Anselm Kiefer are great authorities for me as well. The peculiar components added to my creative brainstorm are the folklore of ancient Baltics and poems by the ingenious mythicist Rumi.

My work *Manifesto. The Gate is Open* has been developed during the recent lockdown, contemplating about the borders of the inner and outer space, repetitive patterns, and subconsciousness as the main source of creativity. I have combined wood burning with extremely delicate acrylic painting and graphite drawing. Working for hours, I have explored the relationship of dozens of layers of half-transparent paint, thick paint, hazy burnt part which serves as a *sfumato* background and the parts of plywood that are left unpainted, breathing through and shining at different angles. I have chosen a small format (40 x 40 cm) on purpose to develop almost like an intimate relationship with the plywood panel, paying attention to every centimetre of the surface. This painting serves as a manifest, a 'gate' to the world of the artist's imagination, the inner world that is the shelter during these times when nothing outer is stable, when all the previous beliefs are being torn down. Therefore, I have gathered the characters that I have developed in my other paintings altogether in on place, putting them aside the continuous 'road of creation'. My aim is to constitute an alternate mythology, a surreal story that questions the dogmas and respects the classical composition at the same time. This work invites the viewers to find more and more details, to evoke their own imagination and to continue the storyline themselves.

CREATIVE BIOGRAPHY

I am an emerging artist from Latvia currently studying in master's program at Art Academy of Latvia, painting department (having obtained a bachelor's degree in the same department). I have greatly explored paint as a medium therefore my current practice combines painting with performance, photography, writing, installation and a self-developed burning technique.

I have had 4 solo shows in Latvia and several performances. I have participated more than in 30 group shows, for instance, *Academia* at the exhibition hall *Arsenāls* in 2019. I have received an award in a competition-exhibition in honour of the celebration of 100 years of Latvia and a scholarship of the famous Latvian painter Valdemars Tone.

In 2018 I took place in an exchange program to study at Accademia di Belle Arte di Venezia in Venice for 6 months and my work is included in the private collection of the academy. I have worked in three art galleries and have been the assistant of Latvian Pavilion in *Venice Biennale 2018*.

I have been living in Portugal from January till August 2020 having accomplished an internship at a contemporary art gallery *No-No* in Lisbon. Recently I have also been a resident for one month at the artist residency *PADA* in Barreiro, Portugal. There I have had a chance to make my latest solo exhibition *May Home Stay Within You* at *Galeria PADA*.

I have currently returned to Latvia to accomplish my last year in master's studies as well as to indulge into local art activities.