

YOUNG PAINTER PRIZE 2021

Madara Kvēpa / LV

<https://www.instagram.com/madadara/>

“Soil”

oil on canvas, 150x200cm, 2021

This work is a part of my Masters' Thesis called “Whole”, which consists of a series of works (please see the additional 4 images).

The inspiration for this work was born in the dark shadow cast on to us by the global pandemic. Since the moment it began, I noticed that our lives had changed based on a huge emphasis on physical health, consequentially leaving behind concerns about our mental health. In latvian language the noun “health” (“vesels” - in latvian) has two meanings: the first being “health” and the second one being “whole” or “wholeness”. This ethymological detail clearly indicates that historically my ancestors had seen health as a united, undivided concept, where physical and mental health exists in close interaction. I started to study old latvian healing traditions and discovered, that, according to this ancient knowledge, in order to be healthy (or whole), it was not enough to cure oneself through ingesting medicinal substances, but it was also very important to have the mental intention to get healthy. This intention was practiced through various rituals.

Since no one could help me with the increasing hopelessness of all the canceled plans and exhibitions of the pandemic, I decided to take my mental health matters into my own hands. I engaged in several ancient healing rituals, which later came to be the source of inspiration for a series of artworks. For example, I practiced intentional crawling through a large cavity of a tree trunk, that symbolizes a symbolic rebirth through a mother's womb. I also asked my friends to bury me neck-deep in forest soil, and 6 months later I was buried again, only in deep snow. This symbolical burial of all the old, decayed and unnecessary turned out to be a life-shattering experience for me, that I was eager to convey further on to the viewer, and thus the painting “Soil” was made. My aim was to represent the feeling of moist, dark, cool soil on one's skin, the network of life that it consists of (roots, worms, ants, plants), and the both majestic, frightening and protective power it radiates. In latvian language we call the earth our mother (“Zemes māte” - in latvian), because since ancient times it has been a source that has fed us, as well as protected us, when we came to lie down for our final rest.

Education

2009-2012 Janis Rozentals Highschool of Art

2012-2015 Riga Highschool of Art and Design, fashion department

2015-2019 Art Academy of Latvia, Painting Department, Bachelor's Degree

2018-2019 ERASMUS+ study semester in Accademia di Belli Arti di Brera, Milan, Italy

2019-2021 Art Academy of Latvia, Painting Department, Masters' Degree

Exhibitions & other

2021 Solo-exhibition "Whole", Raiskuma Krogs, Cēsis Art Festival, Cēsis, Latvia

2021 Group exhibition "MA Painting", gallery "Pilot", Riga, Latvia

2020 Group exhibition "Hard Drive of Lost Expressions", gallery "Pilot", Riga, Latvia

2020 Group exhibition "Tested. Result - positive", theatre hall "Jūras Vārti", Ventspils, Latvia

2020 Solo-exhibition "Gaze", Valmiera Theatre, Valmiera, Latvija

2020 Grand prix "SEB Bank's Scholarship in Painting"; finalists' exhibition at the concert hall "Cesis", Cesis, Latvia

2020 Group exhibition "Synthesis. Study of the truth through movement, progress and divergence", former textile factory "Boļševička", Riga, Latvia

2020 Pop-up short term solo-exhibition "111", gallery "LOOK", Riga, Latvia 2020 Solo-exhibition "Translation", gallery "LOOK", Riga, Latvia

2019 Group exhibition "Academia", exhibition hall "Arsenāls" (this exhibition hall is a part of the Latvian National Museum of Art), Riga, Latvia

2019 Graduation show of the Art Academy of Latvia, Former Faculty of Biology, Riga, Latvia

2019 Solo-exhibition "Colour memory", movie theatre "Auseklis", Talsi, Latvia 2018 Solo-exhibition in collaboration with jazz-musician Intars Busulis "Our home"

(As a part of project "Sound needs Art"), Mākslai Vajag Telpu Summer House, Riga, Latvia

2018 Solo-exhibition "Phenomenon" (As a part of the collaboration project between Art Academy of Latvia and Grand Poet Hotel named "Art Collection by Grand Poet"), Grand Poet Hotel, Riga, Latvia

2018 Group exhibition "Breakfast in Kuldīga", Kuldīga Artists' Residence, Kuldīga, Latvia

2018 Participation in the creative workshop "Gattopardo II Palermo-Riga-Vienna" participating the Art Academy of Latvia and the Fine Arts Academy of Palermo

2018 Group exhibition "Pagalms", Art Academy of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

2017 Group exhibition "Latvia's State Forests' Art Prize", Office of Latvia's State Forests, Riga, Latvia

2017 Solo-exhibition "INTUERI", Dad cafe, Riga, Latvia

2017 Group exhibition "Summer works", Kuldīga Artists' Residence

2016 Illustrator for the children's boardgame "Putnotājs"; SIA "Oliver Latvia", Riga, Latvia

2016 Group exhibition "Brederlo-Von Sengbusch Art Prize 2016", Art Academy of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

2016 Group exhibition "Summer works", Kuldīga Artists' Residence, Kuldīga, Latvia 2016 Group exhibition "Days of The Academy of Art", Art Academy of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

2014 1st place in the Olympic uniform design contest organized by the Latvian Olympic Committee, in collaboration with the design agency "Rhino", Riga, Latvia

Publications

2021 "What artists are doing now. Madara Kvēpa" Interview by curator Auguste

Petre in Arterritory.com

2019 Interview by curator Auguste Petre in "Pastaiga" magazine, september issue

2018 Artist talk with the art historian Ilze Putnina about exhibition "Our home", live TV24 broadcast, Latvia

2018 Interview about the solo-exhibition "Phenomenon" in L'Officiel Baltics magazine's august/september issue

2016 Painting "Where I haven't been" included in the annual calendar of the RIB bank