

# ŠIMON CHOVAN

## WINGS IN MOTION

Curator: Barbora Kurek Geržová

Venue: Youth Gallery

Opening: September 9, 2021, 6 pm

Duration: Sept 10, 2021 – Nov 7, 2021

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Šimon Chovan is a visual artist and designer who belongs to the youngest generation of artists at the contemporary art scene. His work critically reflects upon our growing addiction to new and sophisticated technologies that define these times. He is interested in the way society, nature and the world work and our place in it, but also in our interaction with entities outside of the human realm.

His creative program is based on current philosophical trends, such as object-oriented ontology (OOO) and speculative realism (materialism), which are in opposition to the way other movements understand the world, like the Enlightenment or modernism, which were based on anthropocentrism (from the Greek anthropos - man, centrum - centre) where man is given the central position and is considered to be of the highest value and the centre of everything.

Object-oriented ontology and speculative realism have radically changed the hierarchy of the subject-versus-object battle in a way that turns the scales in favour of the object's autonomy. From this perspective, the attention is on a world where man loses his superior, privileged position. He becomes just a part of it and is on the same equal level as all of its other parts, like nature, animals, plants, inanimate objects and materials. This kind of structure makes the world balanced, as it was before man and as it will be after him. It is an apocalyptic vision of the end of mankind and our civilisation, but not nature, the world, universe and Earth - they may survive in some modified way.

This way of thinking is reflected in the artist's fascination with the metamorphosis of

substances which were here before mankind, natural materials, but also the man-made ones (technical, waste materials). An important aspect of the artist's work is its emotional character based on a need to "cultivate our feelings and resuscitate the ones suppressed by modern technologies and sterile aesthetics, but also create new forms of feelings and inter-species solidarity through material sensibility."

The artist's current exhibition titled *Wings in Motion* will present three of the artist's works which are made of the same specific natural material - a characteristically yellow and brown coloured soil, resembling desert soil from an exotic country, but which is, however, hauled from the volcanic area of Banská Štiavnica where Šimon Chovan also comes from. In a more narrow view, it references the artist's biography, personal mythology and history, but mostly his individual way of coping with the ecological crisis. In a broader view, it reflects upon the alarming state of our planet which is a result of the devastating influence of human civilisation. In the presented works, it creates a tension between various materials, both organic and inorganic, natural and industrial ones. He argues we need to be more sensitive toward both animate and inanimate existences of any kind. He works with geological time and the geology of material media.

**Šimon Chovan** (1994) is a visual artist and designer. In 2019, he graduated from AFAD in Bratislava from the Studio Space (Marcel Benčík, Paľo Choma). Over the course of his studies, he would switch between various studios - Medialab, Jaroslav Kyša's workshop or Boris Ondreička's Studio. He has also spent a semester at Belgian KASKA, attending studios of Media Art and Network Culture. He has taken residencies at the New Synagogue in Žilina and FKSE in Budapest. In 2019, he was nominated for the EXIT Award. He is a contributor to an online magazine "3/4 About Digital Cultures".