

Vytautas Viržbickas IN LETHAL UNDERSTANDING

April 12 – May 18 2018

GALERIJA
VARTAI

On 12 April 2018 the opening of the solo exhibition In Lethal Understanding by the sculptor Vytautas Viržbickas will take place at Vartai gallery, where the artist will present his latest sculptures and installations.

Vytautas Viržbickas's imagination is an endangered species – like fairy tales, heroic deeds and people without mobile phones. Metaphorical, literary and independent thought, it would seem, could lead straight to abstraction but instead it gives birth to concrete and unwieldy visual chimeras. Routine pessimism becomes a sad fable, told in the voice of a citizen watching TV. Illustration, kitsch, never mind those epithets – it's aesthetics which refuses to be relevant while it is trying to not drown, quench its thirst and save itself in any other way, taking care to keep its oily hands off a guest's suit.

This warehouse of props you find yourself in is a place of a thousand and one deaths. Death after freezing on a bench (*A Bench for Homeless*), the death of Ophelia, who was told unambiguously and impolitely: you're a bitch (*Ophelia. To Go with the Flow*). The death of a ruler, leaving behind an old jester and a new seven-year-old king with all of that trite tension which strengthens their positions (*Lest it Blow Away. A Seven-Year-Old King*). Death after exhausting all possible existence and curling up in your own cupboard, leaving behind a couple of words and some plastic, and not thinking even once that a cleaned-out wardrobe leaves no need for a coffin (*Everything. Almost. Selfie - joke*).

Old stories, archetypes of doubtful origin, an attempt to scoop up air and space – everything that both a human being and a dog grasp on when stuck in lethal understanding (*Sandwich With Efforts on Both Sides*). What we most don't want to see is what is inevitable – just how awkward is the *Puff of Change*, blowing through good taste and reminding us of an existence beyond the limits of the world of us fine wonderful people. The place in which we never pray or party is where some people toast their heavy black flasks,

unable to break out of this nomadic prison, even though it's made of straw and sprayed with the outdated dream of capitalism (*A Couple of Sips*). You could say it's horrible – but look, clouds kiss above their heads, not ours.

Viržbickas's work is as elegant as an encounter with an axe or a sausage, as a desperate cry to get lost so you can work with a clear conscience. But pushing someone away in order to protect them is an especially noble and graceful act. The artist's grace is hidden in those actions which he chooses not to put into effect, respectful as he is of the limits of the theoretical world and unwilling to accept the services of pretension. They are of no use when you can only drink and weep, when you don't have anyone to dance with, when you have to build your own work bench and leave the studio suddenly, since it is not even a home, but someone else's real estate. Probably the only thing more transparent than glass is sadness and tranquillity. Their union is almost erotic – like an old tyre, unfurling into a curl which you can no longer brush off your lost lover's neck.

Monika Kalinauskaitė

Vytautas Viržbickas (b.1987) has BA and MA degrees in Sculpture from the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Among other venues, the works of this artist have been exhibited at the Panevėžys City Art Gallery (2010), the LTMKS project space Malonioji 6 (2012), Vilnius; Le Megasin contemporary art museum (2014), Grenoble, France; Si:said gallery (2015), Klaipėda, viennacontemporary 2016, Vienna; Artissima art fair (2017), Turin. The artist has also been involved in group shows: Chess city blocks, Nida Art Colony, Nida (2012), Viennacontemporary (2015), Vienna; Artissima art fair (2015), Turin; Žilvitis, Vartai gallery (2016), Vilnius; Body and Darkness, Vartai gallery (2017), Vilnius. The works of Vytautas Viržbickas have been acquired by the Servais Family collection (Belgium), MO Museum (Lithuania) and private collections in Lithuania, Austria and Egypt.

Maecenas of the gallery: Živilė and Jonas Garbaravičiai | *Patron:* Renata and Rolandas Valiūnai

Supporters of the exhibition: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, Lithuanian Council for Culture

Supporters of the gallery: Vilnius City Municipality, Art Fund, Vilma Dagilienė, Romas Kinka, Lietuvos Rytas, Ekskomisarų biuras