

Krista Mölder and Notes on Being Present

Through 11 February 2019, Galerie Iragui in Moscow is hosting 'Notes on Being Present', an exhibition by the Estonian artist Krista Mölder.

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Krista Mölder works mostly in video and photography, and her works address a unique poetic dimension in the space that surrounds us. Genuinely meditative and philosophical, they are sometimes reminiscent of something like a visual hokku where the means of expression are quite laconic yet surprisingly multifaceted. Krista Mölder studied in London (University of Westminster); she lives in Tallinn and teaches at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Mölder has shown in many countries, including Japan. Speaking of the latter experience, Krista says that it taught her to forget the obvious – which, according to her, is the best result that an artist can dream of. Her 'Notes on Being Present' show comprises series of photographs made in recent years. The works on view create a sort of ensemble that makes us acutely aware of our sense of space, both as a set of visual images and their dynamic interplay with the exhibition room. In her artistic practice Mölder frequently creates site-specific installations for a powerful emphasis on the spatial context of her allegorical art.



Exposition view. Photo: Krista Mölder

The 'Notes on Being Present' exhibition is a joint project by Galerie Iragui and the Estonian gallery Temnikova & Kasela (Tallinn) as part of the cultural programme marking the centenary of Estonian independence. We contacted Krista Mölder in Tallinn to ask her a few questions for our express interview.

How do photographic works exist on the gallery walls? How much does the medium in which they are exhibited influence the perception of your images?

The position and medium of pictures matter a great deal. In fact, I ascribe so much importance to placement that I can even sometimes forget about the rest of the field of meanings during the installation phase – or I fret that if I arrange it the wrong way, the message might get lost on its way to the viewer. Because of that, I consider the positioning of pictures important from the standpoint of the whole.

It's the same way with the final presentation of the work – some are behind

glass, some are only on paper, some are glossy, others are matte and set in a deeper frame. The formal rendering, the medium, affects how we perceive the work. In this exhibition, my photos are framed in different ways; hopefully that introduces some dynamics that also transmits to the viewer.



Krista Mölder. Untitled I, from the series YOU/BLUE. 2015

This is your first personal exhibition in Russia. Preparing the exhibition, did you also think about the local context, the local Russian viewer?

That's a great question. In my defence, I can say that unfortunately I don't know the Moscow art scene. So even if I had wanted to fit into some context, I wouldn't have been able to. But to be perfectly serious, once Galerie Iragui invited me to hold an exhibition, it became my duty to justify that decision by following through with precisely the exhibition I

had in mind.

On the other hand, I always proceed from the gallery space I'm given to work with. I ask the organisers to send me the floor plan and photos of the venue beforehand. Regarding this exhibition, I had a great opportunity to see the gallery first-hand three weeks earlier as I visited Moscow for the opening of an Estonian exhibition in the New Tretyakov. That visit contributed a lot to the selection of works.

I think the overall impression of the exhibition comes to the fore as a whole – the synergy between works, space, lighting and the viewer.



Krista Mölder. Untitled II. From the series YOU/BBLUE . 2015

I sent the gallery a few pictures as press photos ahead of time and was pleased that the gallery people were already so into the exhibition that they responded with a photo of scaffolding set up in the courtyard. A visual and

a situation that resonated with one of my works wonderfully.

Now, as to a special gift for the Russian viewer, I think the exhibition title that is transposed into the space could be considered one. Galerie Iragui often displays very text-based conceptual art, and thus explanatory text is common here. I personally try to make little use of it, and my language and message are visual instead. But here it seemed enticing and substantively justified to bring the title of the work as the guiding idea out on the wall.



Krista Mölder. From the series "Not leaving a room II. Repeated game".
2018

In a way, photography is a kind of immortalisation of reality. What kind of reality would you like to immortalise? What is your subject in the world of everyday life?

I would avoid the phrase ‘immortalise reality’ because immortality

conjugates up finality and taking away a possibility. But I would like to offer a possibility and that is really the focal point of my work — enabling the potential and bringing a possibility into the ordinary everyday life.



Krista Mölder. View with a screen. From the series "Being Present". 2012

These are mostly works that do not feature people. Objects, places, trees... Why is it that people do not really appear there?

As a person I tend to be modest yet also curious, and when I see a door ajar, I'm tempted to go and see what is behind it. If someone were to block the door outright, I probably wouldn't feel such a temptation to enter. I like to think that I create an analogous space with my works, with a place reserved for the viewer.



Exposition view. Photo: Krista Mölder

You called the exhibition *Notes on Being Present*. Is it like a visual diary or more like a conceptual combination of images which give us an opportunity to understand a little better what it means to be present?

Yes, it's more like a conceptual combination. I wanted to highlight or remind the viewer of the importance of their presence and of situations where a simple view or a slight change in the vantage point or light can offer an opportunity to approach the same thing or situation in a different vein.