

## Mysterious Landscape

---

*Beautiful city centers became captives of commercial business, slowly losing their public qualities in submission to monofunctionality. The decline towards logo or brand Cities, where the street level no longer hosts the spirit of freedom but instead succumbs to consumption followed swiftly after. A visual bombardment using advertising billboards, bright colored brands and company signs transformed this area into a space of repetition and sameness. In a way, it was only natural that this bleak landscape was covered with Graffiti and tags by sprayers. A calling for identity? The last vestige to individuality? <sup>1</sup>*

In the words of Adriaan Geuza, I introduce an environment in which - without ever planning to during the actual process of creation - the photographs from Zuzana Pustaiová have appeared.

The cycle came to existence in the cultural center named BANSKA ST A NICA Contemporary in the year 2012, during the Luminographic workshop (Mysterious land) of students from the Photography and New Media department of Academy of Fine Arts and Design under the guidance of the Photographer and hosting pedagogue Jan Pohribny.

The presentation in Nitra is a fusion of two contrasting environments which suit the name from the mentioned workshop. Mysterious was the "romantic" exterior of the landscape of Banská Stianica, mostly connected with the working method of Luminography, which taught to creatively uncover, and in the resulting photograph or series by using either short or long exposure time to illuminate and connect the fragments hiding in the "deep night full of mystery". The term mysterious landscape can also stand for a void left after the removed city part on Stefanikova trieda in Nitra, where the container from the project Bunka pre súčasnú kultúru (Cell for the contemporary culture) is set up, which, through several activities provides a partial substitute for the activity of the denizens of the missing house. By connecting the photographs with the environment both components obtain new interpretation qualities. They enrich each other and grow in value by unlocking new meanings.

Zuzana Pustaiová participated on the workshop a bit differently than her colleagues. She did not go out into the exterior, instead she transferred the fragments of the land into the interiors of a station building. She magnified the effects by double framing. First frame was achieved with furniture in a limited space inside the building while the second frame was done during the final composing of the photograph. Instead of being overwhelmed by the landscape, she managed to conquer it in front of her lens. Was she the one to display the landscape in showcases during her creative process, or did she find the landscape already in them?

The light conditions under which the photographs were created, dusk, night or dawn inspire in this case the art of their presentation, an ephemeral reproductions. The result is a projection of photographed still life on the bare walls of neighbouring houses. The lighting limited by the failing light of dawn is a non destructive legal tag, a legitimate branding, a calling for identity and individuality. Its a compensation for the loss of content and decline but also of new life given through elements from foreign interiors.

Zuzana Pustaiová managed to domesticate parts of exterior landscape with ease and through this showed the ability to capture the contradictory flow of time, where it is hard to ascertain, whether it is a remembrance of the past, the present state or a projection of the future.

*The street also provides an address. Not only as a sign with a number on the door of a house. An address also can be seen as a scene, where we show the world who we are, its a showcase of our identity and of our social status. <sup>2</sup>*

text: Juraj Gábor, Seoul / 2013

Translation: Michal Sýkora , Berlin / 2014

<sup>1</sup> Geuze A.: Ulice. In: Kratochvíl P. (ed.): Architektura a veřejný prostor. Praha: Zlatý řez 2012, s. 133

<sup>2</sup> Geuze A., tamtéž, s.132