



# VARHO

## JEDNA NEKONEČNINA

Notes on the exhibition

Martin VARHOLÍK: ONE INFINITH

February/March 2018, Pálffy Palace, Zámocká 47, Bratislava

“What is a course of history, or philosophy, or poetry, no matter how well selected, or the best society, or the most admirable routine of life, compared with the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen?”

Walden. Henry David Thoreau

The exhibition ONE INFINITH by Martin Varholík, a Slovak author from the younger middle generation, represents a comprehensive and original collection of works, showing the sustainability of his stubbornly developed programme. Someone who is an architect by education, a construction manager by profession and a photographer by professional experience might give, as a freelance visual artist, the impression of being an untrustworthy man. In this case, however, the artistic experience is authentic, based on credible creative fundamentals and thoroughly handled to details. Moreover, the author's background outside visual art gives him a certain advantage of keeping a clearer perspective.

With a certain degree of simplification, we could designate the visual works of Martin Varholík as “art hors-les-normes” – not in the sense of meaningful work on the margins of society or as a naive creative expression, but rather in terms of auto-therapy and, specifically, systematic eccentricity: the disruption of normative routes, intentional circumvention of the mainstream in artistic operation, as well as a breakup with the traditional conventions of visual art, perhaps perceived by the author as restricting. His works escape the traditional in terms of the programme, procedures and the media. In other words, Martin, whose life philosophy is based primarily on the undoubted value of individual freedom, treats his visual expression very freely, whatever the general situation is. He lives art through introspection. He creates intently, being aware of the most genuine essence of human efforts – with pure joy from his creative work.

In this relaxed position (both against the current and on the margin), a certain role is also played by his worldview, shaped on the anti-establishment platform. This does not mean, however, that Martin's works would reflect politics or social pressure (maybe just marginally, at a more personal level). Quite the contrary, the key content lines of his pictures are individuality or even spiritual intimacy. The author pursues a more detailed analysis of the “I and the world” relationships and, as a logical consequence, he descends deeper in an attempt to capture the “meaning”, to search for it and, possibly, to successfully reveal it.

It is interesting to see the changes in the visual repertoire within the continually developing works of Martin Varholík. His stable technique, based on the manipulation of pictures, its interpretation and fine-tuning with gestures, calligraphy or collages, is evidently maturing (though the author would assumingly take a reserved attitude towards such judgement). His personal poetry, represented in his pictures not only by the very first photographic impression, but also by the literary layer of the inscribed messages – the author's “whispers and outcries”, expanded into a linguistic expression. The more or less clearly articulated words were not enough for the author, and so he turned to line compositions and more hermetical signs, superior to particular speech in terms of semantics. In them, as if he had penetrated almost into the alchemical language, uncovering the invisible and attaining the unification of the frequency of his life with the universe/being. In his attempt to interfere with it, he seeks to catch its maximums.

If we assume that Martin Varholík struggles in his work with the matter of art content just for himself, that he systematically builds individual reticence and lives the artistic experience of creation singularly, then the possible conclusion is that he does not open a dialogue with the audience through his pictures. By doing so, he liberates his resultant work from the burden of interpretational limits. He presents to the audience his specific perspective and leaves it on its free will how it would handle it. The audience might see what is to be seen.

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