



PRESS RELEASE

SOLO SHOW JAN VALIK – SHIFTING PLACES **16 JANUARY – 26 FEBRUARY 2022**

Husk Gallery is delighted to present ‘Shifting Places’, the second exhibition by Jan Valik in its gallery space in Rivoli Brussels. The solo show by London-based Slovak artist features his recent paintings of abstracted landscapes and series of works on paper, all created within the past year.

Thoroughly influenced by the painterly landscape tradition in Western and Eastern art and natural landscapes, Jan Valik continues his exploration on the landscape genre and beyond. ‘Time to shift’ is part of his recent oil paintings that reflect on the interplay of the organic (natural) and the manmade (cultural) elements. The artist is inspired by his daytime or nocturnal walks and encounters throughout the metropole of London. Careful observation of both, the natural elements and the public space, Valik’s latest paintings freely translate the shifting cityscape into brushstroke gestures liberated from literal depictions of the topographical scenes. Other paintings clearly keep interacting between the concrete and the abstract. Valik composes each painting with its self-standing logic, by using painted frames or discontinued lines that seem to disappear. Although Valik’s rich colour palette remains, the use of various grey tones becomes more predominant. Colours are nuanced to evoke atmospheric changes, such as the continuous interaction of natural sunlight and clouds. By adding small eye-catching colour details Valik creates an imaginative landscape, that encompasses different viewpoints, a sense of temporality and invites the viewer to enter.

Paintings of Jan Valik are tangentially connected to the idea of landscape as a psychological space where relationship between human perception and the landscape consists of complex ties but also of fine nuances. His interest lies in the edge of perception where abstract and figurative inform each other, evoking a spatial and pictorial ambiguity, a tension of simultaneous presence and absence. Throughout the painting process, he balances and plays with gestural traces and atmospheres of various spaces, experienced and imagined, which merge with fragments of sensory memories.

The contradictory experience of spatial fluidity, an indoors-outdoors duality, stillness and shifting locations are ideas which he discovers through the painting process. His works invokes this and engages the spectator in this simultaneous action, one in which paint can be seen both for its intrinsic properties and for its ability to imply fictive spaces. The dialogue oscillates back and forth between evocation and abstract traces that are open for interpretation. For Valik, painting becomes a way of existence, both as an activity and an object.

During the general lockdown in the UK, the artist has also started an open series of drawings in the intimacy of his private apartment. From organic and figurative lines and shapes of the bed linen through subtle or dynamic movement of curtains this series titled ‘Fragile Veils’ suggests the polymorphous nature of the textiles and invites the viewer to interpret the folds and veils in their semi-abstract appearance and possibly into different realms. The ‘Fragile Veils’ series is mainly created with charcoal or ink in black and white and focuses on the ambivalent meaning of the shapeshifting contours of curtains, veils and clothes. Jan Valik’s works on paper complement his eponymous oil painting series.

Short CV

Jan Valik (b. 1987, Bratislava, Slovakia), currently based in London, received his Master of Fine Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague in 2012. He received the third place in the VUB Foundation Painting Prize '16 (Slovakia, 2016) and previously, in 2011, was a finalist of the EXIT Award (Czechia, 2011). Recently Valik has been shortlisted for Contemporary British Painting Prize 2021. He has participated in numerous Artist-in-Residence Programs notably at BankART (Yokohama, Japan, 2016), Mark Rothko Art Center (Daugavpils, Latvia, 2017), Banska Stanica Contemporary (Banska Stiavnica, Slovakia, 2018), Egon Schiele Art Centre (Cesky Krumlov, Czechia, 2018) and Shanjian Contemporary Art Space (Beijing, China, 2019). In 2020 he joined Turps Studio Programme where he is currently for the second year. His work has been shown in solo exhibitions in Belgium, Austria, Slovakia, Czechia and Japan, as well as in group exhibitions in the UK and across Europe (Belgium, Germany, Austria, Czechia, Slovakia, Latvia, France and Ireland) as well as in China and Japan.

Opening Sunday 16 January 2022 from 2 to 7 pm

Opening hours during exhibitions > Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 2 to 6 pm

Rivoli Late Opening 27 January 2022 from 6 to 9pm

Rivoli Open Sunday 6 February 2022 from 2 to 6 pm

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Time to Shift by Jan Valik, 2021, oil on canvas, 140x124cm