



Stasys Eidrigevičius, 2022, photo courtesy of the artist

The artist Stasys Eidrigevičius is a storyteller. Curious, always reactive and responsive, mischievous at times, sad at others, transforming reality into a visual metaphor. Behind every image drawn by his hand there lies a story — known and believed, and sometimes utterly unpredictable or unrecognisable, which only makes it all more interesting. Stasys's line, succumbing to the freedom of the pencil, is a reaction: to a mood, to an emotion, to people, to the environment, to the everyday, to the moment that makes one pause.

The exhibition *!Reactions* is the first ever showing of Stasys's work in Zachęta. This exhibition is not a retrospective, yet it traces a line between his oldest and newest works, spanning 50 years of his creative practice. The year 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of Eidrigevičius's graduation from the Vilnius Institute of Arts (now the Vilnius Academy of Arts) and his decision to pursue the path of a professional artist. Over the years, he has tried out different genres, flexibly navigating between artforms and often combining them. Graphic art, painting, poster art, photography, book illustration, collages, and performances — all these constitute Stasys's ever-different, original, distinctive, and at the same time instantly recognisable and memorable work.

!Reactions begins with Stasys's earliest pieces: miniatures created in 1974–1979, which testify to the artist's precision, sensitivity to the magical world of fairytales, and his

mysterious metaphor. Against the backdrop and context of the miniatures, the most recent installation will be presented as a bridge and a dialogue with Stasys's latest works, permeated with echoes of the present. His pastels created in 2022 bear witness to the artist's transition into a new creative phase — here, the human face, the central axis of Stasys's work, is fluid, blurring boundaries, caught in a process of deconstruction. Dots appear next to the line, creating new illusions and new possible worlds. When it comes to pastel technique, Stasys points out that it combines everything: colour and drawing, drawing and painting. 'Pastel requires a masterful ability to strike at once, to speak with precision, to establish a conversation instantly with the surface on which the drawing is being created,' Stasys says. A number of his pastels dating back to the late 1980s and early 1990s will also be showcased in the exhibition.

Stasys's mischievous art is easily recognisable in his collages, which create a playful dialogue with other works of art and classical themes. The photograph series *By the Window* (2001) now appears as a prophecy of the future: a beak-shaped mask blending, in a contemporary manner, the iconography of the plague doctor mask and of the long-nosed man, white gown and gloves — is that not reminiscent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the masked reality we have just experienced? Alongside reflections on the pandemic, there will also be plentiful reactions to the present we currently live in: the war, the ghosts of totalitarianism, the indestructible urge to subjugate the other, and, in general, the balancing of life and emotions in the face of war. This is a sort of culmination of the exhibition, not allowing us to forget that which continues to hurt and unsettle.

The exhibition takes place under the Honorary Patronage of His Excellency Eduardas Borisovas, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania in Poland.

Stasys Eidrigevičius

!Reactions

27 January – 11 April 2023

curators: dr Jūrate Čerškute, Ignacy Eidrigevičius
exhibition design: Ignacy Eidrigevičius
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