

peter
smik

Golden Age / Zlatý vek

keramika
ceramics



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Synagogue – Spišské Podhradie

The exhibition is sponsored by
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– Michal Kapusta

“Ceramics are an endless process of trial and error, and glass is like alchemy... Relationships, life, nature. I am trying to record those moments which hold a certain power within themselves. I don't focus long on a single theme or motif, life is constantly presenting me with new emotions, and I want to capture some aspect of them in perpetuity”.

Peter Smik

The creative approach of the Spiš-based ceramic artist Peter Smik employs various materials, including stoneware, porcelain and glass, which he artistically prepares with different techniques to produce ceramic and glassware sculptures. Despite the complexity of these works, the traditional role of ceramics remains present. The major share of his work is comprised of small- and large-format objects in fine or coarse stoneware and porcelain which he fires in an oven. In addition to his stoneware pieces, he also creates glass objects using the techniques of fusing and the production of stained glass.

In this exhibition, a selection of his small-scale works is presented for the first time; a focus is placed on recent pieces that reveal connotations with the era in which we currently live. The symbolic title of the central installation, **Golden Age**, reflects upon the rise and fall of the Classical Chryseon Génos – a silent memorial architecture to an age in which the Earth gave birth by itself and people lived in harmony with the rhythm of the constellations. The wooden object features a series of boxes placed haphazardly, each of which conceals a golden cavity – illuminations of a past of which only fleeting memories remain. Deep within the cavities stand clay figures – the shadows of the beings who once strode across a land of peace and eternity. Their outlines call to mind the nymphs and shepherds of Arcadia, born into a deep silence. “The gold of the interior does not evoke value but the light which lingers within it. Every box is a shrine to a long-gone past – fragmented, yet still present. The work is not a reconstruction of the myth but its breath. It invites us to pause, to listen, and to discover within these shadowy figures that which has outlived even the Iron Age”.

The installation is accompanied by the ceramic statues **Angels of the Apocalypse** (2019), metaphors of reciprocal give and take. As the artist himself notes, “The angels cling to the edges of a figurative bowl with their wings. The wings are striking, like vanity, the feathers are as sharp as claws; they symbolize the senses, emotion, faith and hope”.

The cycle titled **Frozen Blue** (2024) is a metaphor of the suspension of a moment within eternity, a memory of beauty, wrought in light and cold. “This frozen flower is a reflection of an era in which people are externally radiant but remain untouched within by the warmth of humankind. The transparent petals are layered, like unfulfilled promises, while the cold and abstract aluminium base reflects a world whose prosperity is unable to warm our hearts”.

The object titled **Stones** (2025) is meditates on a Biblical phrase: “For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19). “Stones do not speak, but if we were to stop and listen, perhaps we might hear something; Don't say who I am. See that I exist. The work reminds us that deep down we are nothing more than dust, yet it is precisely this which makes us all equal”.

The ceramic sculpture titled **You Can't Move Straw with a Cross** (2025) is a symbol of quiet refusal: the unwillingness to cross a border, even though all that is required is to lift a straw. “There is a silence that reminds us of how much lies beyond our power. Bodies are made of clay; souls are made of silence”.

The artist, whose work also features in the collection of the Gallery of Spiš Artists, is an active figure on the Esat Slovak art scene, not only in terms of the presentation of his art but also as an educator and organizer of exhibitions and art residencies. He and his wife Katarína are involved in the civic association Annogallery which holds various workshops and exhibitions; they are active in the ceramics community both within their own region and abroad, tirelessly promoting the “message of the Earth” with the aim of sharing free creativity “stamped with clay”. Working with clay is also a powerful form of art therapy; like other types of fine art, ceramics serves as a means of discovering ourselves and the wider world, forging new relationships between one another.

Mgr. Lucia Benická – exhibition curator

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Peter Smik was born in Poprad in 1968, and he lives and works in the nearby village of Hôrka. He works in free fine art and applied art, and he also organises ceramics workshops and participates in creative projects. He studied at the Industrial Secondary School in Poprad and the Arts and Crafts Secondary School in Prague. He has also participated in further studies in ceramics and glass working, and he has undergone numerous study internships in the Czech Republic and Germany: for example, courses on the application of the Tiffany technique on sheet glass and glass fusing in the Czech Republic in 2004, on paper porcelain in Grenzhäusen, Germany in 2008, on printing on ceramics at the Karlsruhe Academy in Germany in 2009, and a ceramics school in the Czech Republic in 2009. Smik's work has been exhibited both in Slovakia and abroad, and his art features in many public and private collections in Slovakia, Hungary, France, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and the Czech Republic.

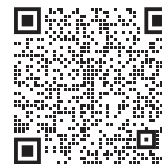
www.smik.com

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OVŠTAVE
ABOUT EXHIBITION

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