

The exhibition project by the Gallery of Spiš Artists presents the work of four of Slovakia's most prominent practitioners of geometric painting: **Štefan Balázs**, **Mária Balážová**, **Pavol Rusko**, **Adam Szentpétery**; who have also nurtured successive generations of young artists over the course of their extensive teaching careers. Their artistic techniques differ in terms of inspiration and formal approaches, but their work reveals a sense of consistency in terms of the evolution of geometrical art. The exhibition is presented as part of the Theme dramaturgical cycle of exhibitions. The project is supported with public funds from the Slovak Arts Council.

The exhibition Didactic Quadrilateral can be conceived as a metaphor for the contemporary understandings and practices of geometric art, a genre which is now an integral part of the current Slovak artistic context. The exhibition outlines the ongoing development of geometric abstraction as a dialectical process in which universal forms take on a specific shape, with the academic and pedagogical involvement of artists in this evolution contributing greatly towards a deeper understanding of the genre in the context of contemporary painting, both at a Slovak and international level.

The artists whose works feature in this exhibition each represent an individual approach to geometric expression, yet they are all united through their similar starting points and a shared fascination with geometric principles. The work of **Štefan Balázs** draws on his belief that geometry can be conceived as an organising principle for the world as a whole. His art reflects upon the counsel of Modernism and contemporary Abstractionism, with geometry serving as a structural framework for exploring the dimensions of time and space. Balázs reduces geometrical forms to their basic elements as a means of formulating rules which order form and space. In this approach, geometrical abstraction is not a mere play on shapes but is instead a means of uncovering the deepest structures of reality, an exploration of the concept of a universal visual language. **Mária Balážová** has revitalised the concept of geometric abstraction by positing it as a metaphorical and emotional space in which she can reflect upon personal and social issues relating to women, work and identity. In her conceptual understanding, geometric shapes take on the role of symbolic gestures which critique gender inequality and patriarchal structures. Her work builds upon the ideas of post-geometric painting, with phenomenological experience being combined with space and the body to generate a sense of tension between fixed structures and the dynamism of individual perception. The product of many years of work, her Snake Geometry cycle introduced the phenomenon of semantic geometry to the Slovak scene. The sense of rhythm and intuitive mercuriality that **Pavol Rusko** brings to the geometric system results in paintings that evoke movement and transience within a strictly determined geometric framework. His work oscillates between the principles of mathematical precision and a poetry of organic changes which reflect the dynamism of the contemporary world. The elements of repetition and symmetry are the key compositional tools in Rusko's work. The repeated use of geometric motifs generates a rhythmic effect, while symmetrical arrangements grant the compositions a sense of balance and evoke references to metaphysical principles. **Adam Szentpétery** uses linear precision and sophisticated colour harmonies as a means of synthesizing form and meaning, a style which can be seen as existing on a continuum connecting Modernist approaches, contemporary trends in geometric painting and op art. His works emerge through the creation of complex visual structures founded on rhythmic repetitions of horizontals, verticals and diagonals which create tension and visual frequency. Resembling optical illusions in 3D space, his large-scale circles reflect the intersection between traditional principles and modern technologies. Szentpétery combines mathematical logic and emotional resonance to form a visual poetry of timelessness.

Mgr. art. Katarína Balúnová, ArtD.,
exhibition curator

ARTIST PROFILES

Štefan Balázs (*1958) is primarily a painter, but he also works with objects as a means of expanding the scope of painting. From 1979 to 1985 he studied at the Academy of Fine Art and Design in Bratislava where he later undertook his doctoral studies under Prof. Rudolf Sikora from 2000 to 2003. He taught at the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and since 2008 he has been based at the Faculty of Fine Art at the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica where he is head of the Studio of Critical Image Analysis. He was nominated as a professor in 2023. His work has featured in many group and solo exhibitions in Slovakia and abroad, both in Europe and beyond. He is a member of the Discursive Geometry group based in Łódź (PL).

Mária Balážová (*1956) works in the fields of painting, drawing, graphics and object art. From 1978 to 1984 she studied at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, specializing in scenic costume. Since 1997 she has lectured at the Faculty of Education of Trnava University where she is head of the Studio of Planar Media and Textiles. In 2004 she qualified as an associate professor. Her work has gained international attention, and she has participated in exhibitions such as the 10th Norwegian International Print Triennale in Fredrikstad, 1992 (NO), Eine Kurze Geschichte zur Malerei in Leverkusen, 2001 (DE), Here and Now in Kunsthalle, Budapest, 2015 (HU), and the 5th International Drawing Triennial in Tallin, 2015 (EE). Since 1998 she has been a member of the Concretists Club.

Pavol Rusko (*1961) works in the fields of textiles, painting, graphics, illustration and large-scale works. From 1981 to 1987 he studied Textiles under prof. Elvira Antalová at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. From 1993 to 1999 he was head of the Department II of Applied Art at the Academy of Fine Art in Ružomberok, and since 1999 he has taught at the Faculty of Education at the Catholic University in Ružomberok. In 1997 he was appointed as an assistant professor. In 2000 he undertook a two-month study stay at the Cité International des Arts in Paris. His most important exhibitions include Korespondenz at the Kunsthalle Herrenhof, Neustadt-Musbach, 2019 (DE), the International Fiber Art Exhibition – Flag, Japan, 2000 and the International Print Triennial '94 at Palac Sztuki, Kraków, 1994 (PL).

Adam Szentpétery (*1956) has contributed significantly to the development of geometric abstract art in the Central European context. From 1976 to 1982 he studied large-scale painting at the Academy of Fine Art and Design in Bratislava. From 1999 to 2021 he was head of the Studio of the Contemporary Image at the Faculty of Arts of the Technical University of Košice where he was also head of the Department of Fine Art and Intermedia between 2006 and 2012. Among his most significant solo exhibitions are Networks at the Vasarely Museum, Budapest, 2023 (HU) and Codes of Geometry at Galerie Caesar, Olomouc, 2016 (CZ). In 1994 and 1996 he was awarded the Srebrny Cworokat Second Prize at the International Biennale of Painting in, Przemyśl (PL). In 2023 he received the Fine Arts Prize of the Hungarian Academy of Arts – MMA Képzőművészeti díj.

U. fond
na podporu
umenia

The project has been supported using
public funds provided by Slovak Arts Council.

téma
theme

Curator: Mgr. art. Katarína Balúnová, ArtD.

Production: Mgr. Lenka Kráľová – GUS

Graphic design: Mgr. art. Ivana Babejová, ArtD. – GUS

Translations: Bc. Gavin Cowper

Production: Gallery of Spiš Artist

– a cultural facility of the Košice Self-governing Region