

# RICHARD ROHÁČ TLAKY / PRESSURES

KSK KOŠICKÝ  
SAMOSPRÁVNÝ  
KRAJ

GALÉRIA UMELCOV SPIŠA

téma  
theme

The artist's latest thematic project reflects on psychological and social pressure to which the individual is subjected by the negativity of the contemporary world. Roháč's expressive paintings resonate with a spontaneous painterly technique and his distinctive gestural style. Part of the Theme cycle of exhibitions.

Created between 2024 and 2026, the cycle of paintings titled **Pressures** by Richard Roháč is marked by evocative figural motifs and a rawness of expression. The works, socio-critical and often sarcastic, address several contemporary social topics – humankind and our collective thought in the midst of an era of social media, corruption, hoaxes and political propaganda. The dominant element is the human head, and the ideas and constructs which are evoked in its facial gestures. The deformed and twisted faces reflect a society which pours out a torrent of negativity which we are all forced to deal with. In **Pressures**, the artist explores not only the psychic health of the individual but also of society as a whole.

The exhibition's paintings are mainly acrylic works on canvas, some of which feature spontaneous overpainting with acrylic felt tip pens; a feature common to all of the works is the contrast between black paint and white lines emerging from the darkness. The ground layer of black emphasizes the darkness of oppressive thoughts. Attentive viewers cannot fail to notice the damage inflicted on the canvases, leaving them in a state that falls short of what we might expect of them, just as we ourselves are unable to unflinchingly meet the expectations of others, imperfect as we are. Several of the gashes (wounds or scars) have been painstakingly stitched up by the artist's long-term partner Livia, a lecturer in the history of philosophy who plays an inseparable role in Richard's life.

We are born under pressure; we live out our entire lives under pressure; we work under pressure, stressing ourselves, constantly driving ourselves forward to meet impossible deadlines and expectations. Through the exhibition, Richard openly confronts the pressing issues which incurable illnesses impose upon us. One of the featured paintings is titled **Metastases**. His social media accounts recount his day-to-day struggles as an individual burdened with serious health issues. As we immerse ourselves in his world, we come to realize how crucial it is to pause for a moment and consider the fact that many of the pressures which afflict us are not actually as important as they might seem. We might also learn that we should never give up – no matter the situation in which we might find ourselves.

Mgr. art. Eva Čarnoká,  
exhibition curator

## About the artist

**Richard Roháč** (6. 6. 1983, Svidník), also known under the alias Rochárd Smrták Riháč, is an unconventional artist who works and lives surrounded by his cats and dogs in the east of Slovakia, somewhere near Košice. The term "unconventional" is apt here, because he tends to shy away from contemporary trends, applying a signature style which has always been one of a kind – raw, authentic, yet deeply honest.

After finishing his studies in promotional graphics at the School of Applied Arts on Jakobyho Street in Košice (1999 – 2003), he moved to the city's Technical University where in 2011 he completed his master's studies in free fine art at the Studio of the Contemporary Image led by Adam Szentpétery, an iconic figure in the field of geometric abstractionism. In Roháč's work, however, abstractionism appears in a more fragmented manner – particularly in the moments in which his spontaneous and gestural figures merge into a single abstracted mass, rich in structure. Humankind always forms the foundation of his art – imperfect figures struggling under the pressure of a deformed world and layers of overflowing emotions, the tumult and flood of thoughts in the human mind. Richard Roháč also completed his doctoral studies at the Department of Design of the Faculty of Arts at the Technical University of Košice in 2016, with artistic posters forming part of his thesis work.

His reminiscent allusions to his alma mater on Jakobyho Street are no coincidence, as it was there that his relationship with art was formed and likely also his affinity with the work of Július Jakoby; like Jakoby, Roháč's work also features scenes drawn from memory, an expressive style and a sensitivity to the inner world of the individual. In addition to the spontaneity and rapidity of their painterly approaches, Roháč and Jakoby are also united through the fact that both artists suffered poor health dating back to their childhood, an experience which greatly impacted their lives and deepened their perception of the world around them.

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