



Matej Gavula, Promenade, 2021, photo: archive of the author

MATEJ GAVULA: Promenade

In front of the Kunsthalle Bratislava, in the area of Treskoňová Street, Matej Gavula installed the Promenade, a temporary layout of the stone fragments removed from the Danube embankment in Bratislava. They come from the so-called Matušík's wall, which is inscribed in the collective memory of the people of Bratislava as an iconic element of the promenade by the Danube.

Opening: 25. 11. 2021 | 7 pm

Curator: Lýdia Pribišová

Duration: 26. 11. 2021 – 6. 2. 2022

Place: Treskoňová street, next to Kunsthalle Bratislava

The project focused on the problem of cultivating and conserving public space, with its relatedness to the local population's cultural memory. The artist's work traces the consequences of irresponsible interventions by developers, who had no regard to the identity and social context of the architecture and the place.

"...Promenade comes from my personal experience of the Danube waterfront, and my observation over many years of this unique building work of 1958, by the architects Ivan Matušik and Ivan Salay. It stretches from SNP Bridge to the Botanic Garden, almost two kilometres in length. When the River park complex was built, part of the travertine promenade was removed and, to comply with flood measures, replaced by a new structure in concrete. Resulting from this, hundreds of hand-cut components of Spiš travertine ended up in the city depot in the Čierny les area. My interest is in achieving a temporary, surprising 'return' of these segments to public space in the city centre, and rousing the associations activated by memories of optimism and pleasant feelings, personal memories of the promenade, which are very much present in Bratislava. The layout of the stones into the rings is associated with a figurative composition, a scheme that refers to the ancient circular defence, to the Roman martial arts or to the movement choirs of the modern dance-art constructor, the Bratislava man Rudolf von Laban. I think of my project as hybrid sculpture in public space." says about his artwork Matej Gavula.

Travertine with its characteristic porous structure is formed by sedimentation, slow settling, similar to memory, which is constantly overlapped and preserved by more and more layers. "Gavula's work is about the passage of time, oblivion, amnesia, but also about power; its key terms are historical context, public space, reflection, recycling, transformation. The project raises questions about the public space of Bratislava, sensitizes the public's relationship to the city's architecture, its heritage and history," explains the context of the work curator of the exhibition, Lýdia Pribišová.

MATEJ GAVULA (*1972, Bratislava) is a visual artist working in Bratislava. He graduated in the discipline of Stone Sculpture at the Secondary School of Applied Arts, and subsequently at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava in the Studio of Glass. He works in the media of sculpture and object, photography, video, action and performance. In the recent past he has presented his work at exhibitions including *Dom obradov*, Tabačka Gallery, Košice (curated by Samuel Velebný, 2021), *Homo Faber*, Julius Koller Society, Bratislava, (curated by Daniel Grúň, 2020); They are given: a park, a fountain, East Slovak Gallery, Košice (curated by Peter Tajkov, 2020); *Abrasive Society*, tranzit.sk, Bratislava (curated by Judit Angel, 2019); *Shake*, HotDock Project Space, Bratislava (2019); *Stratená forma/Blind Mould*, SODA gallery, Bratislava (2018); *Continuously Growing Horizontal Underground Stems: Geopoetics in Times of Anthropocene*, Plusmínusnula Gallery, Žilina (2017); *I Take Pleasure in Attention*, Central Slovakian Gallery in Banská Bystrica (curator Zuzana L. Majlingová, 2018); *Pretty Soon if this Keeps Up I'm Going to Have to Envelop the Entire Universe*, Gdańsk City Gallery (curated by Piotr Stasiowski and Jaro Varga, 2018); *Panphilia*, Zahorian & Van Espen, Bratislava (curated by Daniel Grúň, 2016); and *Shell Game*, MeetFactory, Praha, (curated by Lucia Gavulová and Jaro Varga, 2017).

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