

Marta Krześlak

Ruins of my Dreams

Ruins of my Dreams is an installation that was the diploma work of Marta Krześlak at the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź. An inflatable playground for children with elements from Disney's fables, considered useless, was thrown away by the previous owner and, therefore, became a huge piece of plastic waste. The artist brought it back to life by treating this piece of waste as ready-made and giving it new artistic significance. The faded castle with clear traces of use fills almost the entire exhibition hall of the Galeria Labirynt. On the one hand, it can overwhelm the viewer, but on the other, it makes the monumental installation to draw into the gallery space.

Krześlak is fascinated with unnecessary and abandoned objects, but most of all, she sees their fundamental importance in the potential possibility to transform them into imaginary worlds. The castle presented at the exhibition, accompanied by songs about dreams from the 90s sung by the artist herself, brings to mind the carefree fun of childhood. However, it is impossible to get rid of the impression that the world recalled by Krześlak reveals superficial sentimentality. Behind its facade there is indulgent kitsch. Often idealised memories meet with a real object from dusty, dirty plastic in monstrous colours. The artist plays with this dichotomy, ruining her dreams and perhaps also the perceptions of the viewers.

It is worth to present another aspect of Krześlak's artistic activities in the context of meaning of the abandoned object. The artist very often refers to the coexistence of economic processes with natural ones, she is inspired by the space within which the effects of human action affect nature. The latter is often irretrievably destroyed. The *Ruins of my dreams* is not the first installation that is the result of the artist's reflection on natural environment condition. Krześlak uses materials difficult to degrade, that are mass-produced in facto-

ries generating irreparable damage to the environment. In 2017, she created 'Collect together' installation (Polish name: 'Wszystko się ułoży') out of colourful polyurethane foam. The inspiration for this work was the Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of Australia, that is dying. In the arcades of the tenement at ul. Legionowa (Legionowa Street) in Łódź, the artist installed soft, colourful sea anemones of nice shapes. In this case, the artist also played with the scale of the object – the twenty-meter-big work was difficult to ignore, moreover, it was tempting for viewers, who willingly interacted with the object. Under the pretence of a colourful, attractive form, suffering and ubiquitous destruction of nature is revealed. It is the consequence of human activities and, consequently, of climate change. The *Ruins of my dreams* is therefore a reconstruction of the past, which can tell a lot about the current state of affairs, while being a warning to the future.

Marta Krześlak (born 1994) – she graduated from the Faculty of Graphics and Painting of the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź in 2018 and also studied at the Faculty of Media Art of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw as well as at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Lyon. Krześlak is a Grand Prix winner of the Young Wolves 15 Art Festival in Szczecin, laureate of Grey House Foundation award as well as of Best Diplomas Competition in Gdańsk. Works of Krześlak have been presented on various group exhibitions as well as individually in Poland and abroad. She is holder of the scholarship of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage as well as 2017 Marshal of Lodz scholarship. Her interests are concerned around dreams and flashbacks of memorised or imagined landscapes. Using found objects, Krześlak creates narration analysing the nature of human actions and often emphasising its absurdity. She lives in Grabina near Łódź. The artist has already worked with the Galeria Labirynt, taking part in the '(Non)presence' exhibition (2016). She also participated in 'VideoNews' (2017) – the review of video art works by students of Polish art academies.