

Dear Sele,

I googled "art exhibition write up". It suggested that I refrain from "artspeak" and include "the Big Idea".

I think your paintings are about legacy burden, which, translated into the proverbial artspeak, means dipping your paint brush into the oily dollops of your ancestors' baggage, or **intergenerational trauma**, to be precise. Books and the internet offer self-help advice and healing workshops that should rid us of such a burden. As if the lives of our parents, grandparents and those before them carry some *ancestral disease* that may plague our true selves and contaminate the path to complete and pure self-realisation.

I like to consider my generation, the GenXers, as important historical co-creators of everyday life. The everyday life of a child born in the 60s anywhere in Europe, or the US, starts with a latchkey. Or, simply a key under the doormat. Once the key has turned, everyday life continues with a silent and empty home, a slice of bread and chicken liver pate on a baroque saucer from times long gone by, an immense sense of *freedom*, and endless opportunities that a late afternoon of games in the street may offer.

The 60s and early 70s were overshadowed by the WW2 aftermath, the Cold War, and the war in Vietnam. The ideal of a just, equal society, "*freedom for all*", was by all means tightly integrated in the street games we played on those late afternoons.

Partisans and Jerries. No one wanted to be a Jerry. Everyone wanted to be a partisan; a guerrilla freedom fighter, impassioned by values and unwavering beliefs larger than life. Albina Mali Hočevan, the young woman with a scarred face and a glass eye in your painting, as well as the women in your family - young, pure and valiant, spiteful and resilient - suffered torture and disfigurement for what they believed in.

I believe that your childhood and the Civil War in Yugoslavia in the 90s marked the beginning of an unprecedented descent into something I **still** struggle to find the right words for, but it was certainly the beginning of the mockery of everything that Albina stood for, what the women in your family stood for, and what our childhood games were all about.

The individual agency of children is far more difficult to grasp, since a child is not thought to be rational, which, many will agree, is at the heart of historians' idea of a "social actor". Hence the rationale behind my "bad" parenting practices that have encouraged **civil disobedience as the generator of change**. That is my legacy which I pass on to you.

The disenfranchisement of Zoomers, the apathy of the Millennials, and the alienation brought on by social networks seem to be the underlay of your paintings. The yearning to be adorned with the wings of a time when passionate beliefs in ideals that are larger than life carried the people of your age and younger is what I read in your art. Your paintings are your vessel, your set of wings to carry you out of your own cultural and intergenerational entanglement. Use them wisely.

Love,

Mum

