



Sandra Strēle's exhibition at Jūras vārti

In June, Theatre House *Jūras vārti* will host an exhibition of large-format paintings by artist Sandra Strēle, *Brikšņi* (Thicket), which will be opened on 2 June at 16.00. 16.

Sandra Strēle is one of the most sought-after Latvian artists in the world today. She regularly participates in painting events abroad, receiving awards and recognition from both juries and audiences. In her exhibition in Ventspils, Sandra presents her understanding of painting, which is best described by the terms “story, storytelling, seriality” – where the story continues from one series of paintings to the next, where “something” happens behind or between the paintings, in the shadows. “A ticket popped up for me as a kind of metaphor – like something you are trying to break through,” says the artist. She uses replicas of various long-defunct plants, with the help of which she tries to dress up these tickets as a mythological rather than a real environment. Each person breaks out of his or her ticket and finds a home or shelter, but then goes further and deeper into his or her inner world. The ticket is a very powerful metaphor that intertwines time and the power of nature, the struggle against overgrowth.

Sandra Strēle graduated from the Art Academy of Latvia in 2016 with a Master's degree in Painting, and participated in the *Erasmus* student exchange programme at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. She has had several solo exhibitions, participated in group exhibitions and artist residencies in Italy, Norway, India, Belgium, Germany, France and elsewhere.

She has also received several scholarships and prizes for her creative expressions: Boris and Ināra Teterev Foundation Visual Arts Scholarship (2012), Brederlo von Sengbusch Art Award (2014), SEB Bank Scholarship in Painting (2016), prestigious scholarships from *The Elizabeth Greenshields* Foundation in Canada (2019, 2021), Young Painter Award (2019) and most recently *the Premi Internacional d'Art de Barcelona* Award at the Barcelona International Contemporary Art Fair in Spain (2022). Sandra is currently studying at the Art Academy of Latvia in the Professional Doctorate Programme.

Artist Rita Jansone says of Strēle's work: “Her painting is a combination of a stable nervous system, a steady working regime, carefully balanced form and content, where the large format is not a happy accident, but a stable, recognisable handwriting. Sandra could definitely be placed in the field of landscape painting, the most reliable, tradition-rich and popular genre of Latvian painting. However, Sandra tackles the landscape in her own way, incorporating not only playfully decorative elements, such as mushrooms that can grow both in the pool water and on the roofs of block houses, but also demonstrating a self-contained decorative painting that is pleasing to the eye.”

Strēle's works were first exhibited in Ventspils in 2012, when she was only a second-year student at the Art Academy of Latvia.

Everyone is invited to attend the opening of the *Brikšņi* exhibition at Theatre House *Jūras vārti* on Friday, 2 June at 16:00, when the *ribbon will also be cut* for the Ventspils Photography Club *Kaktuss'* exhibition *Human*. Both exhibitions will be open until the end of June.