

DNÁ DNÍ

MARCEL MALIŠ

CURATED BY: ADRIÁN KOBETIČ | 17.09. 2026 - 31.1. 2027

Dná dní is a solo exhibition by Marcel Mališ, a Slovak painter and interdisciplinary artist of the middle generation. It addresses the question of engaged art and the political image, which is once again coming to the forefront in the context of the radicalisation of society and the use of demagogic strategies in the public sphere. Through manipulated realities, Mališ points to the continuities of nationalist propaganda, the misuse of sacred imagery, and the persistence of visual strategies which, despite the democratic political order, find their precedents in the totalitarian systems of both the past and the present.

The exhibition follows Mališ's long-standing interest in the creation of icons, their political instrumentalisation, as well as their destruction. It can therefore be understood as the culmination of one strand of his artistic research, in which the image appears not merely as a representation of political power, but as one of the instruments through which such power is created and sustained.

In this sense, Mališ's work can also be read through the thinking of W. J. T. Mitchell, who shifts the question from what images mean to what images "want" and what they are capable of doing. The image is thus not a passive object intended to be decoded, but an active participant in social relations, capable of provoking desire, identification, conflict, and even the urge for its own destruction. It is precisely this ambivalent power of the image that Mališ works with.

The iconographies present in the exhibition are familiar not only from political history but also from the history of Christianity. Their meaning, however, extends beyond the theological framework and re-enters the political sphere. Mališ's characteristic illusionistic materiality and imitation of marble operate in a similar way – marble being a material that, since antiquity, has served as a sign of wealth, authority, and power. Here, paradoxically, the realist language of painting does not serve to affirm reality, but to expose the ways in which reality can be bent and manipulated.

The symbolic culmination is therefore an iconoclastic gesture: an attempt to destroy the image. Yet the burned image of a politician does not cease to exert its influence through its physical disintegration. On the contrary, its persistence reveals the limits of iconoclasm – destroying the material support does not necessarily mean destroying the image itself, nor the ideology it represents.

This question acquires a new urgency in the age of generative artificial intelligence and deepfake technologies. The boundary between realistic representation and the production of political illusion is becoming increasingly indistinct. Ultimately, Mališ turns the question back towards the viewer: is it possible to fight powerful images with images without, at the same time, adopting the very mechanisms of their power?

Mgr. art. Marcel Mališ, ArtD. (*1978) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava from 2001 to 2007, at the Department of Painting and Other Media in the Studio +- XXI led by Prof. Daniel Fischer, where he also completed his doctoral studies between 2009 and 2013. He is a recipient of the ESSL Art Award CEE (2013), a finalist of the Painting – VÚB Foundation Award (2009, 2010, 2011) and the Henkel Art Award (2009), and was nominated for the Strabag Art Award in 2010. His work has been presented in more than 15 solo exhibitions and 50 group exhibitions in Slovakia and abroad. His works are represented in the collections of the Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava City Gallery, the Ján Koniarek Gallery in Trnava, as well as in several private collections. He teaches at the Department of Art Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Trnava. He lives and works in Bratislava.