

Millenáris
(Budapest)

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The Ungraspable Stay - The Photo Exhibition of Frankl Aliona

Aliona Frankl lives and works in Budapest. She first showed her photos in 1987 to the audience. Her earliest photo series (Old Shops, Disappearing Budapest, Cafés, Cemeteries, Jewish Budapest, Trades, Archaic brick, photo programs) mostly showed segments of towns that the average people just pass by. Her pictures are documents. She shows details and moments of past rarely to be found.

The Red and White Gallery of the Millenaries presents Aliona Frankl's new photos on which details, locations and situations are emphasised. A few of her pictures are like diaries. According to the artist, they were made with using family albums she found. She used original negatives to come up with her powerful and personal tone of voice.

The exhibition was opened by the writer Balázs Györe on 3 October who read his own interpretations of the photos.

The opening speech of Balázs Györe:

"It was summer yesterday , now it's autumn"- I should begin with the words of Baudelaire. We were not here yesterday, today we are here and tomorrow or maybe the day after tomorrow we will remember that we were here today. It was summer yesterday, we were sitting in the Gozsdu Garden near a barber shop that was not open anymore. Aliona Frankl wanted to show me photos but the computer could not open the file. The table tilted and the coffee spilled.

While I am writing these lines, it is raining outside, I taste my morning coffee and looking at Aliona's photos. I laid the copies on the floor so that I can see them really well. I am walking about them carefully so that I don't step on them. I am holding the coffee mug carefully so that I don't spill my coffee on the pictures. The writer and poet Yeats laid his dreams in front of someone's foot. Géza Csáth was walking through female bodies. Radnóti walked in the footsteps of old loves.

The pictures cover the gap on the parquet. Pictures often take me closer to our memories. Once I sat on a bench, on a pier on the Lake Balaton. Once I went out rowing. Once I moved, I transparented and cuddled with another person. I showed the light colour as if it was dark (just like on photo negatives). Once I put down silly lines in the memory book of a ten-year-old little girl. I was serious about it.

I am still serious about it, but nowadays I do not set off in search of my memories as they do not bite me and do not flatter me either. Memories are tame and are tame on their own account. It is not us, people, who tame them but time. Sometimes they become ridiculous. Géza Ottlik said we cannot get disappointed in hits and cigarettes. We can add: the little memory poems. I used to have a little memory book. I got a photo from the girl in exchange for my poems. She is smiling in a flowery dress at me (45 years now) Then it was summer.

Aliona took a few pictures of me at the Gozsdu Garden. I tried to be natural but I could not get further than the first moments. Now it's autumn. The air was hot in the Gozsdu Garden. Now we have to turn on the heating in the room. My coffee is cold. The smile that began did not get any warmer.

The viewer now takes the place of the character. I used to be a viewer and now I am a character. We have to interpret the world, our lives. Pictures are born. Change of places again. Whatever happens to the character turn into a feeling in the viewer. The feeling is ungraspable, still, it gets hold easily, it sticks like glue. Emotion is stuck to time. To time that we sometimes love to get stuck in. We term it the way "time stops". It is nicer. I could even sing these lines. However, in vain we address time, it never stops. - It does not stop, it keeps on walking on, "its steps are throbbing diphtheria", or it is running like the Seine under the Bridge Mirabaud.

Copies of paper do not stay on the ground. Since they did not stuck to the floor, I pick them up without difficulty. The real photos are put on the wall, I think. In eye level so we can watch them carefully.

I was looking at them and now I am talking to the pictures of Aliona Frankl. As if the eye was taking photos, napping. It is making the photo album of our life so we can page it. The eye can get hold of the moment in pictures but misses words. I became what I was looking at, a little. So, let us not stick to words. Let us enter the picture, balancing, carefully. What is in it? I should say it with my eyes, but it is not possible. We have to invite flimsy words to help to say: interlocking. "Our stalks cut the world." We are bound together, as if on the photogram. I quote Ottlik: "... "...we are bound together and not like mountaineers or lovers not with our body part that has a name, address and that acts in the world but with our greater part that is watching all this. Lactic acid or wax, something came out of the muscle pains, from the wounds and snow, from the ignominy and wonder of our life.

In summer, the file could not be opened in the Gozsdu Garden. Aliona Frankl's photo exhibition is however now opening at the Millenaries with the restriction that there is someone, and there is always someone, who cannot be there, since her or she is gone.

(Extract from the speech on 3 October 2008 at the opening of the exhibition)