

1. Untitled, 2025
installation
steel, textile curtain
approx. 450 × 250 × 250 cm
2. Untitled, 2025
diptych
oil pastel, pencil and charcoal
on paper
50 × 70 cm
3. Untitled, 2025
set of 4 objects
unfired clay, yarn
variable dimensions,
approx. 30 × 20 × 18 cm
4. Untitled, 2025
set of 2 paintings
acrylic and oil on canvas
135 × 135 cm each
5. Untitled
diptych
steel, textile
30 × 220 cm, 30 × 300 cm
6. Untitled
set of 5 drawings
oil pastel on canvas,
set in mycelium frames
drawings 30 × 40 cm, frames
of variable dimensions

MEMORIES THAT BECOME MY OWN

Monika Pascoe Mikyšková

Monika Pascoe Mikyšková's long-term project is grounded in a fundamental paradox: memory is deeply personal, yet never entirely private. It emerges and takes shape within relationships among people, generations, places and materials. It is lived; it is transformed and transmitted through experience. It is carried not only by shared moments, but also by gestures themselves, by reflexive reactions over which we have no full control. As such, it is recorded, organised and institutionalised; it is experienced — and at times becomes a bearer of trauma.

A childhood memory — a hot summer, the landscape bathed in golden light; golden too are the flowers foraged in a meadow with her grandmother. The flower of calm, St John's wort, distinctive not only in its bloom, transforms in another memory into a red decoction with a sweetish taste. It is gathered, dried and drunk, and in the process regains its magical significance — once again becoming that "St John's blood" hung above household altars in honour of benevolent spirits (hence its Latin name, *Hypericum perforatum*).

Pascoe Mikyšková sensitively explores her own memory, its reach, transformations and absences, turning to those closest to her: her grandparents, their children, her parents and siblings. She traces the movement and transmission of memory, from intimate recollection to collective sharing; yet she is equally interested in what disappears from official narratives while continuing to survive in small rituals and repeated practices. Why, indeed, were St John's wort flowers needed?



Jan
Zentarek
Gallery



SELF-GOVERNING
TRNAVA
REGION

N O V O U M
P A R M E N O I V A E

The central theme of this generously offered intimate story is the tension between personal narrative and memory as collectively mediated and reshaped experience. It is carried by the second and third generations, who have no direct experience of past events yet recognise their echoes in dreams, gestures and family habits of communication. Excessive reactions, tendencies towards melancholy, persistent fears — all of these originate somewhere. While memory, however articulated or institutionalised, strives for the stability, clarity and continuity of “grand history”, personal memory remains fragmentary, mutable and often ambiguous. Pascoe Mikyšková shows that it is precisely within this contradiction that a distinctive and productive field emerges: the small histories of everyday life, family relationships and embodied experience are not merely a supplement to official history, but one of its preconditions.

Fiction plays an important role here, as it always does in human life. Fictional structures allow individual memory to remain open to interpretation and transformation rather than becoming a mere document. They enable what her grandmother experienced and had to come to terms with to be silently absorbed by the child and consciously reflected upon by the adult woman. Fiction creates a space in which personal narratives can touch upon collective experience without being entirely subsumed by a singular historical interpretation. It offers the possibility of self-acceptance, understanding and reconciliation.

No narrative, no fiction, and certainly no trauma, can exist without matter. Just as Pascoe Mikyšková has previously explored the memory of the plant world and ecological trauma, she now draws on the botanical richness of her native landscape and relates it to the human condition. She understands memory not as abstract, symbolic or subconscious, but as embodied. She locates it in repeated actions which, through repetition itself, demand materialisation. They require things that can be touched, squeezed, smelled, broken or doused with hot water.

And here Pascoe Mikyšková introduces perhaps her most compelling proposition: magic, understood not as an irrational belief system but as a primary model of relational thinking. It suggests that memory is transmitted through touch, repetition and presence rather than through records or descriptions. And that understanding itself is transmitted in much the same way — within families, through intimate relationships with those closest to us, perhaps the most formative relationships of all.

The exhibition, as the spatial manifestation of this long-term inquiry, creates a setting in which personal and collective narratives, micro- and macro-histories, individual recollection and institutionalised memory converge. Yet this is not merely Monika Pascoe Mikyšková's story. It reveals memory, above all, as a process — one that can be shared without requiring a shared origin. Navigating the delicate boundary between self and other, between the personal and the collective, becomes the condition through which memory may once again become active and meaningful within both micro- and macro-history.

is a Slovak visual artist who lives and works in Bratislava. Her practice operates at the intersection of painting, drawing, object-making, and spatial installation, and has long explored the relationships between humans and nature, memory and time, with a particular emphasis on plant structures, ethnobotany, and material processes. Her work is distinguished by a sensitive connection between personal experience and broader ecological and cultural contexts. It represents a significant contribution to contemporary Central European art with an environmental and posthumanist perspectives.

Pascoe Mikyšková studied at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava from 2003 to 2007, where she completed her master's degree in the Studio of Painting and Other Media under the supervision of Daniel Fischer. In 2004, she undertook a study residency at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in the United Kingdom, where she focused on studio practice in drawing and painting, again within an expanded understanding of media. From 2008 to 2014, she continued at her alma mater as a doctoral student, during which her work developed significantly toward spatial installations and material-based practice.

Pascoe Mikyšková has exhibited extensively in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and internationally. Among her most recent solo projects is the large-scale installation *Memories That Do Not Belong to Me*, presented at PLATO Ostrava in 2025–2026, in which she explored personal and collective memory through drawing, watercolour, objects, and spatial interventions. Other significant chapters of her practice include the cycle *Perceive White* (2022–2023) and the project *Plants*, presented at Bratislava City Gallery in 2019, where she first developed, on a larger scale, her interest in botanical structures and their cultural and symbolic meanings. Her work has also been featured in international exhibitions and presentations, including the Zielona Góra Biennale and the Vienna Contemporary art fair.

Monika Pascoe Mikyšková has received repeated recognition for her work. In 2007, she was awarded third prize in the VÚB Painting of the Year competition. In 2015, she received the Collection Invitation Prize within the Essl Art Award CEE competition, which resulted in the acquisition of her work. In 2019 and 2023, she was supported by a NOVUM Foundation grant, and in 2023 she became the laureate of the Oskár Čepan Award, one of Slovakia's most prestigious awards for emerging and mid-career visual artists. Her work represents a sustained and critically recognised contribution to contemporary visual art discourse. It was recently included in the volume *Crossing Borders: Central European Women in the Arts* (De Gruyter, 2026).