**PRESS  RELEASE**

**Exhibition title:** Insiders - Contemporary figurative painting and drawing **Authors:** François Bard, Richard Butler, Dayron Gonzalez, Julien Graizely, Jérôme Lagarrigue, Michal Mráz, Manon Pellan, AnaÏs Prouzet **Venue:** Koppel villa, Ján Koniarek Gallery in Trnava, Zelený kríček 3, Trnava **Concept:** Olivier Waltman **Opening:** 13 July 2023 (Thurs) at 18:00 **Duration:** 13. 7. 2023 (Thurs) – 03. 09. 2023 (Sun)

What news have contemporary figurative artists tell when it comes to portraiture? The representation of the human figure is probably one of the oldest genres since man has been drawing and, later on, painting. The Lascaux caves, in Périgord (South of France), are a perfect example of parietal art and attest to the irrepressible need to show, depict, document, and ultimately leave a trace for the times to come.

The history of mankind has since then, always given a most central place to the portrait in the arts that were produced. The period of creation and geographical provenance notwithstanding, these portraits had in common the aim of the best possible depiction of the subject. Despite technical evolutions such as the invention of the perspective at the beginning of the Quattrocento, artists did their best to reflect the reality of the physical features, be it of royals and nobles posing in their costumes or of peasants and farmers harvesting their fields.

It is only in the modern era that painters began investigating the deeper soul of the characters and came to the conclusion that emotions mattered more than the accuracy of a nose, a lip, or an eye. Hence, the distortion - the deconstruction of the subject even - became legit. Artists, not only wanted to merely represent, but they also wished to give their interpretations. They allowed themselves to take distance from reality and basked in the freedom of expressing their visions. Even if these visions would shock the public at times.

The eight artists presented in Insiders have practices deeply rooted in art history and have built pictorial vocabularies which celebrate their masters by blending their codes and heritage into a new creation. An echo of the world of today, of its torments, failures, and hopes, contemporary art is here to let us look through its specific kaleidoscopic prism. Like philosophy, art speaks to humans as a group and as individuals. It is political and intimate at the same time. It finds unexpected yet meaningful resonances between the evolution of society and the burden of the human condition.

The visitors are invited to look, get closer to the exhibited works and wander through a collection of family portraits in a way.

Portraits where the faces are sometimes visible and sometimes not.

Portraits with fierce realism or more blurred brushstrokes.

Portraits in their environments and political contexts or emerging out of the most neutral backgrounds.

Insiders.

The exhibition is prepared in collaboration with Galerie Olivier Waltman in Paris.

The exhibition is held under the auspices of H.E. Pascal Le Deunff, Ambassador of France in Slovakia.

Olivier Waltman