

## HOURS OF SILVER AND SUN

*Rita Olšauskienė*

28 November 2023 - 29 March 2024

The word *empathy* has its origins in the Ancient Greek *ἐμπάθεια* (*empathēia*, meaning "physical affection or passion"). Theodor Lipps (German psychologist best known for his theory of aesthetics) adapted the German aesthetic term *Einfühlung* ("feeling into") to psychology in 1903, and Edward B. Titchener (best known for creating his version of psychology that described the structure of the mind: structuralism) translated *Einfühlung* into English as "empathy" in 1909.

Empathy as a word embodies a quality which defines human nature. We wonder if this is true when it seems more like a rare gift which blesses a few, otherwise life should not appear as it seems a turmoil of sequences of disastrous events with temporary islands of peace and wealth. Recently I read an interview with Belgium philosopher Laurent de Sutter in which he said "life is a catastrophe. We are always confronted to any kind of catastrophe". Therefore I felt that in this occasion I would love to create a shelter where to show, in the small scale of the gallery space, life in all its melancholic beauty.

"Hours of Silver and Sun" is a title taken from a poem written by the artist and painter Rita Olšauskienė [Vilnius 1961 - Vilnius 2006]. Evocative words which also bring to mind the idea of love, and in this show love is central. I came across the work of Rita when I first met Marija Olšauskaitė years ago in Vilnius. We had a long conversation at Marija's family apartment where some paintings hung on the room caught my attention, one was by Marija's mother, Rita Olšauskienė. Since that moment I felt haunted by both Marija and Rita.

Rita Olšauskienė was a gifted artist, she study at the Vilnius Academy of Arts and specialized in Scenography, but her work stands out as a painter who had an extraordinary sensitivity to penetrate into the human soul through a free use of colour, along with the delicacy of her drawings and the selection of themes she choose to paint.

In this her first show in Spain: "Hours of Silver and Sun" I selected a group of works in which the apparent simplicity of the subjects hide multiple layers of meaning. The scenarios and characters of her paintings seem unreachable, even unreal in its beauty, like a dreamy scene from a film (Picnic at Hanging Rock, 1975 by Peter Weir comes often to mind), or as if we were reading a book imagining what can not be properly described with words.

Rita Olšauskienė painted quite often her own children and the resulting works can be seen now under a breeze of nostalgia. We feel the scenes not only through the projection of memories and feelings but also through the use of light which makes the surfaces breathable. Rita had Proustian qualities as a painter, her atmospheres are tangible, her scenes are universal, though personal and intimate. We can all relate easily to what she wants us to see... and most importantly we see.