

**Exhibition Title:** Velvet Dreams

**Artist:** Botond Keresztesi

**Curator:** Peter Bencze

**Venue:** Longtermhandstand, Budapest, Hungary

**Duration:** 1 May – 2 June 2024

**Photo:** Áron Weber

**Tags:** @keresztesibotond @longtermhandstand

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**Text:** Peter Bencze

Velvet Dreams, a solo exhibition by the painter extraordinaire, Botond Keresztesi, hosted at Longtermhandstand. This immersive journey invites us to traverse the boundaries of reality and imagination, exploring the interconnectedness of human and non-human existence through a captivating fusion of contemporary artistry and historical allusions. As you enter the gallery space, you are greeted by an array of smaller portraits, reminiscent of Keresztesi's recent showcase at Meetfactory in Prague. These intimate glimpses into the human psyche serve as a prelude to the grandeur awaiting you in the main room. Here, amid a redefined indoor landscape illuminated by analog citylights, Keresztesi unveils his latest masterpiece: a series of soft pastel works on canvas. These ethereal compositions offer profound insights into the cosmic tapestry, guiding viewers on a transcendent odyssey from the earthly realm to alien-inhabited spheres. At the heart of Keresztesi's narrative lies the seamless integration of contemporary motifs with echoes of art history. In "Follow the leader!", one of the exhibition's standout pieces, a whimsical figure emerges from a Zsolnay jug, metamorphosing into a cobra amphibian leading towards a luminous horizon — a metaphorical beacon of hope. Elsewhere, the iconic blue nude of Matisse undergoes a transformative evolution, transcending its traditional form to embody a futuristic cyborg, symbolizing the symbiosis of humanity and technology fostered through healthy living and spiritual practice. Like a guardian spirit, this cybernetic deity navigates the ether, symbolizing resilience and adaptation in the face of adversity. Yet, amidst the celestial splendor, Keresztesi also confronts the specter of desolation. In a haunting tableau, a lone mask stands as a solemn sentinel amidst a barren landscape, its hollow gaze a poignant reminder of the fragility of human existence and the enduring quest for refuge and meaning. Through Velvet Dreams, Botond Keresztesi invites you to embark on a voyage of introspection and wonder, where the boundaries between dreams and reality blur, and the possibilities of the imagination are boundless. Join us as we explore the ever-shifting landscapes of the human experience, guided by the visionary artistry of one of today's most innovative talents.

Peter Bencze