

Botond Keresztesi

NPC (No-one Paints Chrysopoeia)

13th September - 26th October 2024

In the first room of Botond Keresztesi's exhibition is a series of eight paintings hung very closely in pairs. Each pair is formed of a dominant image with a smaller panel placed directly beneath. The larger works all share a common motif, that of a metallic, mechanical form with pulley wheels and linkages cutting a diagonal across each canvas. The function of the mechanisms is unclear, are they possibly the gears from a bicycle? Japanese derailleurs enlarged and isolated? These already alien mechanical forms morph further, sprouting claws or a horse's head or sculpted human masks. Numerous decorative embellishments seem to have grown from the once functional object, the cast metal linkages have developed iridescent porcelain fluting, the functionality obscured by embellished filigree. The organic growths have the luminous feel of the Hungarian Zsolnay glazed ceramics, whose hallmark iridescent glazing was once synonymous with Art Nouveau.

The mutated objects are situated in a soft, indistinct landscape. Evidently not a depiction of a physical space or location as eyes stare back at the viewer from within rock formations and the landscape itself morphs into sculptures, vases and fluid abstract forms. These idealised outcrops of smooth rock are redolent of the layered, flattened game-space of 16-bit computer games, endlessly scrolling to the left. The paintings also have a direction. The smaller, landscape formatted works are titled after planets and their corresponding alchemical metal - the symbol for tin is also used to represent the planet Jupiter in astrology. cursory online research confirms that 'chrysopoeia' refers to the transmutation of base metals into gold, or at least the attempt to do so.

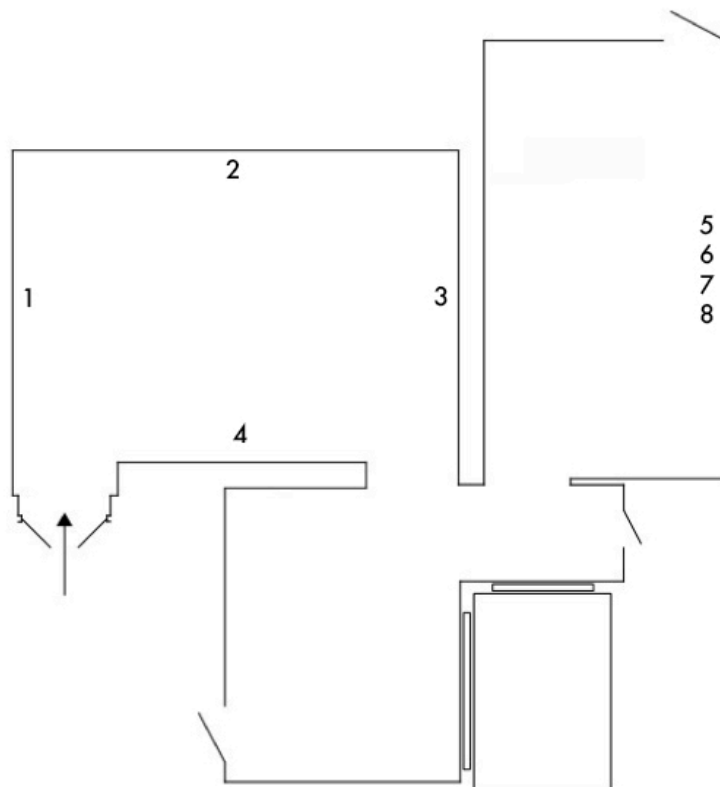
So then have these objects been purposefully altered? The organic glow of Hungarian ceramics bonded to precision Japanese engineering visually recalls the cyberpunk trope of grafted limbs and augmentation, biological flesh bound to servos and nerve endings tied to electronic circuitry. This sci-fi techno-optimism matches the turn of the millennium computer game graphics, but the morphing of functional into decorative suggests something more than an enhancement of utility. Is this process more likely a spontaneous evolution or mutation rather than a hack? Is there a watchmaker or has the object responded to its environment, external pressures, evolutionary pressures, forced to self-repair?

The system of gears found on a bicycle expands and enhances our range as humans. Through levers and pulleys energy is transformed to motion, multiplying our speed and so we can surpass our biological limits. This series of works uses the transformation of pigment into image to raise beguiling questions about our bodies, what might be possible with them and how we might adapt either through ingenuity or magic.

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Botond Keresztesi b. 1987 in Târgu Mures, Romania, lives and works in Budapest, Hungary.

Recent solo exhibitions include Longtermhandstand, Budapest, Hungary; The Hole, NYC; Kosice Kunsthalle, Kosice, Slovakia; Iftost, Prague, Czechia; WT Foundation, Kyiv, Ukraine.



1. Botond Keresztesi

Shimano GRX 11 Direct Mount Shadow, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas, framed
164.5 x 144.5 cm (65 x 57 inches)

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Tin-Jupiter, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas, framed
54.5 x 144.5 cm (21 ½ x 57 inches)

2.

Botond Keresztesi

Shimano Dura-Ace Rd-9000, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas, framed
164.5 x 144.5 cm (65 x 57 inches)

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Lead-Saturn, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas, framed
54.5 x 144.5 cm (21 ½ x 57 inches)

3.

Botond Keresztesi

Shimano Deore RD T610 SGS, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas, framed
164.5 x 144.5 cm (65 x 57 inches)

Botond Keresztesi

Copper-Venus, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas, framed
54.5 x 144.5 cm (21 ½ x 57 inches)

4.

Botond Keresztesi

Shimano Alivio, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas, framed
164.5 x 144.5 cm (65 x 57 inches)

Botond Keresztesi

Iron-Mars, 2024

2024
Oil and acrylic on canvas, framed
54.5 x 144.5 cm (21 ½ x 57 inches)

5 - 8.

Botond Keresztesi

Untitled, 2024

Oil pastel on canvas,
100 x 80 cm (39 ¼ x 31 ½ inches)