

Press Release

“The metaphysical meaning of any authentic symbolics is not built upon sensory images, but it contained within them defining them through itself. These sensory images are themselves rational, not simply as physical, but specifically as metaphysical images, bearing these latter ones in themselves and being enlightened by them.”
/Pavel Florensky/

In-Gate Gallery is pleased to present the inaugural exhibition in the new Brussels location, the solo show of Danja Akulin *Between the Lines*, on view from May 19 until July 16, 2022.

The exposition **Between the Lines** brings together large-format drawings by Danja Akulin (1977) created between 2012 and 2022. The artist lives and works in Berlin since 2000, he studied at the University of Arts of Berlin (UdK) at the Department of Fine Arts (2000 – 2005), where he has completed his Advanced MFA (2005 – 2006).

For his first show with the gallery Danja Akulin has chosen the title **“Between the Lines”** as a reflection of the meanings depicted through sensory images, the cognition of reality out of the physical and material space. The selection of the artworks on display presents large format drawings created in the artist’s signature technique – with graphite and pencil on paper mounted on canvas, or with charcoal on canvas.

Danja Akulin creates black-and-white landscapes in monochrome technique, deliberately choosing a laconic language of drawing as an instrument that makes it possible to convey the idea of the image in the most concentrated and pure form: *“A drawing may not contain bright colours, light and shade are sufficient. Optical oversaturation of the world can be avoided by focusing on a plot, generalising and reducing it to a precise statement.”*

My experiments went from sculpture to drawing till I understood that with the help of a pencil I can say much more than with a brush and paint. For me a line drawn with a pencil is times more sophisticated than a brush line or a border line appearing between different color frames. It can give much more information.”

Each black and white space represents a new page of reality constructed by the artist and gives the opportunity to touch the mystery of visible life forms, to dive through the superficial level of perception, reading “Between the lines”.

Symbols and signs intersect with iconic landscapes, scenes and fragments at the level of perceptions and meanings. Compositions by Danja Akulin are born from the artist’s imagination or memories, maybe it explains why sometimes they are perceived as surreal, creating the state of half-dream, half-reality, the feeling of a perfect image capture just for an instant. Akulin’s laconic spaces create the link with another level of perception and meanings, guiding the viewer through the sensory image. As soon as we try to hold on to the image itself, it becomes defragmented, almost abstract, balancing on the border of appearance and disappearance.

One of the essential senses and themes of Danja Akulin’s works is to approach the mystical basis and the roots of the nature as a sophisticated vital structure, comprehending and rethinking the codes and formulas of its existence. The subject of the artist’s reflections and research is the logic and mystery of the interaction of built-up elements of the nature, the predestination of its internal processes and the sequence of its life cycles. That’s why in his artistic research he often reproduces and reimagines the same composition and elements.

The repetition in the artist's vision has a philosophical aspect. Graphic images as a framework and a visual formula turn into a canon and are filled with new content and meaning in each replica, which is perceived as a unique mood, sound, and energy. Danja Akulin's works are both analytical and personal, a strict external structure, a conventional form filled with emotions, a special state, experienced and "lived" in different ways.

The images in the artist's interpretation represent an intensive multi-layered field constructed with lines, spots and crosshatching which initiates the meditative way of observation and adds one more dimension to the graphic space.

The graphic character of the works is determined by its monochrome aspect, while the space of the light and shade is revealed through the synthesis of two approaches, two artistic techniques - drawing and painting. The mystical images of nature are created in the subtle balance between a line and a brush-painted surface, between "recording" the trajectory of a gesture and working with a plane, with a painterly representation of space. Graphite and charcoal are changing their character, plasticity, and energy component, depending on the vision of the artist.

White color as a visible objectification of the light takes the lead in his black-and-white images. It is being disclosed in each work to a different extent, still it gives the main image an opportunity to exist revealing its idea and forming the structure. Light is perceived as the main actor, as the root cause and the main mystical source of the existence.

Accepting the invitation to take a walk in the monochrome spaces of Danja Akulin's works, a viewer experiences their hypnotic effect, teetering on the verge of half dream and half reality, in the space of half-shades, finding a way between vague or sharp outlines of depicted objects, and discovers sublime moments in the most simple and unsophisticated.

Danja Akulin (b. 1977 in Saint – Petersburg, Russia) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. He studied at the University of Arts of Berlin (UdK) at the Department of Fine Arts (2000 – 2005, Prof. Georg Baselitz), where he has completed his Advanced MFA (2005 – 2006, Prof. Daniel Richter).

Selected solo exhibitions include *Penumbra*, Erarta Museum, St. Petersburg (2019), *Charcoal on Canvas*, Mimi Ferzt Gallery, New York, USA (2013), *Penumbra*, Erarta Gallery, London, UK (2012), *Survival Craft*, Moscow Center of Art, Moscow, Russia (2007), *Signs*, Triumph Gallery, Moscow, Russia (2007), *Art of Paper New York* (2020), *Art on Paper* Brussels (2018), *Art Karlsruhe* (2013). The works of Danja Akulin were exhibited in Fano Kunstmuseum, Fano, Denmark, Perm Museum of Contemporary Art, Russia.