

# Dénes Farkas

Temnikova & Kasela Gallery



Dénes Farkas's latest exhibition, "About Dreams That Awaken You," could be read as a visual poem; it invited the viewer to search for possible narratives in the display, letting intuition be her guide. In this, it recalled the Budapest-born, Tallinn-based artist's previous show, in 2018, which derived from the poem "Dear Eros," written that year by the American poet Traci Brimhall. For Farkas, Brimhall's poem, with its fragile moments of love, sensuality, violence, and intimacy, offered the possibility of pursuing meaning through feeling, rather than through rational understanding.

This show centered on a set of wooden shelving, titled, like

all of the pieces in the show, *About Dreams That Awaken You* (all works 2019). The structure consists of three distinct parts, all of which seemed to hint at personal stories, like notes written offhandedly. On the left-hand shelf, a found object (a vintage high-voltage isolator) acts as a paperweight, holding down a folded newspaper clipping with a faded image of voluptuous rose blossoms. On the right side is an old typewriter with sheet of yellowish paper—displaying a typed poem in English, interrupted midsentence:

*And all I had to do was  
remember the smell of rain,  
to say something,  
to breathe again,  
but that was*

Lastly, a vintage amplifier and two antiquated speakers emit the faint and indistinguishable soundscapes of street noise, water splashing, and murmurs. All of these elements, with their obsolete technologies of the past—the typewriter, the amplifier, the ceramic isolator—carry a heavy load of nostalgia and melancholy, yet with little other discernible information. They become material vehicles of memory.

On the wall behind the shelving structure were three photographs depicting a still life with potted plants. Hung flush with one another, the trio of images sliced the still life into fragments, conjuring the sense of missing pieces and links, as if replicating the glitches of memories or dreams.

Albeit healthy and lush, the plants remained inert in their pots. On the opposite wall, however, a light box featured a dry and brittle-looking yet vigorous plant that nonetheless coiled energetically upward. Its rough stem defeated the concrete under which its roots were trapped, bringing a kind of sad hope into the room. Or could it have been reaching toward the blue light of a handwritten neon word, IMPOSSIBLE, shyly hiding in the farthest corner of the space? If the meaning of the written word is clearly negative, the soothing blue softened its conclusive nature. The blue also compensated for the lack of color in a black-and-white fragment of a cloudy sky gleaming on the back wall of the gallery in another light-box piece. The ephemerality of clouds—the impossibility of touching them or of defining their outline—was belied by the material fixity of the photographic image. Was there a face in those clouds, or was the image just the result of pareidolia?

Farkas offered no answers. Intuition, after all—that seemingly spontaneous force of instinct—is always already filtered through culture. As in a poem, the possible references and stories are wide, but not unlimited. So by the time one left the gallery, it seemed possible to fill in the puzzle, to finish the sentence: “All I had to do was / . . . to breathe again, / but that was” impossible.

— [\*Neringa Cerniauskaite\*](#)