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Traces of Abandoned Places. The cycle of paintings and ceramic installation.

Summary:

The dissertation *Traces of Abandoned Places* examines the phenomenon of abandoned spaces within aesthetic, historical, and artistic contexts. The concept of the “abandoned places” is understood as a visual and existential record of presence, representing the effects of time, nature, and human activity. Abandoned places are interpreted not merely as sites of decay, but as spaces of transformation in which nature gradually reclaims what was once shaped by human intervention.

The theoretical part focuses on the concept of ruins and their evolving significance in art history. Ruins are approached not only as remnants of architecture but as autonomous aesthetic signs carrying layers of memory, temporality, and cultural meaning. The study traces this motif from classicism, represented by artists such as Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain, through Romanticism, in which ruins acquire a profound spiritual and existential dimension (notably in the work of Caspar David Friedrich), to modern and contemporary perspectives addressing industrial, war-related, and urban ruins. Special attention is also given to the contemporary phenomenon of urban exploration (urbex), understood as a form of discovering and documenting abandoned sites within the framework of digital visual culture.

The practical part transforms these theoretical insights into an original artistic project focused on abandoned greenhouses. These spaces are perceived as interfaces between nature and human intervention, where processes of decay and regeneration become visible. The project consists of large-scale ink drawings and ceramic objects inspired by direct observation of such environments. The drawings capture light, atmosphere, and a sense of suspended time, while ceramic casts of branches materialize a “preserved trace” of natural forms. Together, they create a synthetic body of work combining documentary and metaphorical dimensions.

The dissertation concludes that abandoned places and ruins remain a vital motif in both art history and contemporary visual culture. They provide a framework for reflecting on the relationship between humans and nature, as well as on memory, transience, and continuity, while opening space for interpreting the ambivalence between permanence and transformation.