

**The Road That Never Was – visual adaptation  
of the *Epic of Gilgamesh***

**Summary of doctoral thesis by Maja Starakiewicz**

Project authored by Maja Starakiewicz attempts at translating Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (work canonical although forgotten) to visual, especially graphic, means. Project comprises series of illustrations created in technique combining traditional and digital drawing, numerous sketches and wooden objects. All works together depict crucial locations ( City of Uruk, Cedar Forest, tavern at the crossroads) and characters (Gilgamesh, main hero, as well as Enkidu, Shamhat, Siduri and others).

The relation between Gilgamesh and Enkidu is one of the most highlighted issues of the project. It is portrayed not as a connection between two characters but rather as a dissolution of a human being into two, interdependent, entities: a humane, yet cruel civilized part (personified by Gilgamesh himself) and wild and natural one (personified by Enkidu). In this sense, death of Enkidu can be interpreted as partial personality dieback.

In her work, Maja Starakiewicz proves, through visual means, that doing with ancient literary text is not only an experience that we may call historical. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is an example of story that turn out to be topical and exhilarating, even if it hides those features under a mask of archaic language and inaccessible form.



12 kwietnia 2021