

# Hay, Straw, Dump

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The exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump*, prepared by the curatorial-production collective of the Jindřich Chalupecký Society, is on the one hand a tribute to leading Czech artist Zorka Ságlová, who developed an extraordinarily progressive and experimental artistic oeuvre from the mid-sixties onward despite the harsh restrictions of the socialist regime, and on the other hand an attempt at a reinterpretation of Ságlová's legacy as an impetus for reflection on our relationship with the land and nature through the works of contemporary artists.

The premise for this site-specific group exhibition project is a look back at Ságlová's iconic installation *Hay — Straw* realised for the exhibition *Somewhere Something* (also featuring Jan SágI, Běla Kolářová, and Jiří Kolář), which was prepared for the Václav Špála Gallery in 1969 by theorist and curator Jiří Padrta. *Somewhere Something* lasted a mere two weeks, and its inclusion in the programme of Špála's gallery, which was led by renowned theorist Jindřich Chalupecký, occurred more or less by chance — Chalupecký had fallen ill and therefore asked Padrta for assistance. Nevertheless, as art historian Pavlína Morganová notes, the

version

Extended

project “was, from today’s perspective, among the most radical exhibition undertakings of the 1960s, both in form and content.”<sup>[1]</sup> In the curatorial statement, Padrta situates the work of the Ságls and Kolářs within the most progressive artistic tendencies of the time, which he defines by the blurring of the boundaries between art and life. Indeed, the exhibition aroused a lively interest among the general and professional publics, which were, however, largely critical of it — and it was Ságlová’s iconic installation *Hay — Straw* that evoked the most ardent response.

For the exhibition, Ságlová loaded the basement area of the gallery with bales of yellow straw and green alfalfa as well as piles of still drying hay. Ságlová and her friends would regularly turn the hay, and they encouraged the public to do the same and to rearrange the bales in the next room however they wished. Ságlová thus declared both work and play to be art. In addition to the installation’s interactivity, other integral parts of the audience experience included the smell of the natural materials and the presence of grasshoppers and other insects that temporarily inhabited the gallery. At the exhibition’s closing, the then new band The Plastic People of the Universe performed, and Jan Ságls took a series of photos of the band members on the bales of straw. By bringing elements of nature/the land and work/ordinary life into the gallery space, Ságlová was in a specific way joining the international tendencies in art that we now lump into categories such as land art, environment, action art, or social sculpture.

Although Ságlová herself did not explicitly declare it, her radically experimental work, which was also imbued with the ethos of the musical underground, had strong anti-regime connotations. The materials from the fields and meadows and the action of turning associated with them were a simple expression of the personal experience of the artist, who came from a family of farmers and thus had a close relationship with the land and agricultural activities. Her uncle, who for many decades resisted the seizure of the family farm by the state, was both an exception and an example of how difficult it was under the previous regime to escape collectivisation, meaning the seizure of land and entire farms by the state. It is this aspect of the environmental reading of *Hay — Straw* that interested us, for collectivisation had far-reaching consequences for the local landscape in terms of ecological devastation and social impacts. At the same time, today we face other very urgent challenges that lead (or should lead) us to rethink our stance towards nature as a passive resource for our livelihoods. In his text for the exhibition *Somewhere Something*, Padrta spoke of “real and civilising nature”. However, we can no longer agree with this

kind of dualistic approach: In the spirit of so-called ecofeminism,<sup>[2]</sup> we consider this dualism that regards nature as something “out there” and human civilisation as somehow superior to be a very problematic concept in need of reconsideration — much like the simplistic notions about who women and men are and what roles they should play. Thus, with the current exhibition we want to try to look at Ságlova’s project from a contemporary ecofeminist point of view. Our aim in doing so is not to reenact (recreate) her original installation but rather to elaborate on its content from a contemporary perspective.

The artists in the exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump* deal with inter-species solidarity, respectful and sustainable relationships, and coexistence — or with critiques of anthropocentrism and with post-humanism, a philosophical movement that strives to depose man from his imaginary pedestal at the centre of all events and thought. It encourages, among other things, a perspective on the fleetingness of human civilisation and the human species, whose existence will not be eternal, whereas our planet and nature in general will undoubtedly survive us. The exhibited works resonate more or less (or also only tangentially) with Zorka Ságlova’s legacy in various ways, for example, by touching on the personal experience of taking care of a farm (Kotlářová-Chovancová), by addressing the theme of collectivisation (Hulačová, Doujak), by using natural and recycled materials (Janda, Kindernay, Putramentaite), by thematising the relationship with the land and intergenerational dialogue (Brabcová, Hurych), by encouraging playful interaction (Polák), or by letting the materials used in the work’s creation speak for themselves (Tajovský, Vojtuš). At the same time, however, they strongly articulate explicitly ecological themes such as pollution and nature reclamation (Kindernay, Lelonek, Šubrtová) or the interconnectedness and interdependence of various ecosystems and life-forms (Manna, Tučková, Górowska & Jarosz) and draw attention to non-human entities (Hammari, Putramentaite, Polák).

The theorist Luboš Hlaváček described Ságlová’s installation critically as a “hay dump”.<sup>[3]</sup> We’ve decided to truly create the impression of a dump in one part of the gallery with an installation by Polish artist Diana Lelonek that, like *Hay — Straw*, has the character of an environment that fills the gallery, but its aim is to emphasise a less bucolic experience of the landscape than that which we associate with haystacks. Here, Lelonek combines scrap and rubbish with the fertile soil created by composting Prague’s organic waste, demonstrating both the unsightly nature of rubbish dumps and the positive possibilities of recycling. We are accentuating the theme of the dump in the exhibition especially because the different kinds

of waste resulting from the sum of human activities comprise one of the main actors transforming our environment, often beyond recognition. At the same time, the processing and disposal of waste in different parts of the world is a reminder of social, economic, and political inequalities on a global scale. This aspect is articulated in the exhibition perhaps most vividly by Diana Lelonek's projection, which follows storks which have relocated from wetlands to rubbish dumps, and also by Tamara Moyzes and Shlomi Yaffe's project *Lactism*, which draws attention to the connections between ecological crises and social discrimination. Their work emphatically reminds us that thinking ecologically is not about turning away from social problems and naively adoring or romanticising nature but rather about being more clearly aware of who bears what level of responsibility and where the need for redress and a change in approach is most urgent.

The exhibition is part of the program line of Jindřich Chalupecký Society called *The World of Jindřich Chalupecký*.

The exhibition is part of the international project *Islands of Kinship: A Collective Manual for Sustainable and Inclusive Art Institutions*, co-funded by the European Union, Czech Ministry of Culture and the City of Prague.

[1] P. Morganová, T. Nekvindová, D. Svatošová: *Výstava jako médium*, Akademie výtvarných umění, 2020, p. 463

[2] "Ecofeminism is a movement within feminism that points out the analogies between discrimination against women and nature in contemporary Western culture and seeks to lead the discourse on this topic (among professionals and the general public) and to contribute to the creation of a harmonious society that will perceive both genders, as well as other natural components, as equal parts of the global ecosystem. Feminist political ecology deals with the application of these views in the political sphere." Enviwiki [accessed 22 March 2023], <https://www.enviwiki.cz/wiki/Ekofeminismus>

[3] Luboš Hlaváček: *Dilema našeho výtvarnictví*, Tvorba, vol. 37, no. 5, p. 10, 1972

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## Zorka Ságlová & Jan SágI

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- Jan SágI, photodocumentation of the installation *Hay — Straw* by Zorka Ságlová, photo canvas, 110 × 110 cm, 1969
- Zorka Ságlová, *Action Drawing*, drawing, 74 × 104 cm, 1992
- Jan SágI, *Zorka Paints Rabbit*, photograph, 180 × 55 cm, 1992

Archive:

- Original of the curatorial text by Jiří Padrta accompanying the exhibition *Somewhere Something*
- Marie Naša Kráslová, *Oldřich Opt* — Jiří Kolář, Svobodné slovo, 1969
- Article by Vladimír Burda accompanying the exhibition *Somewhere Something*, *Výtvarná práce*, 8—9, s. 6, 1969

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## Anna Hulačová

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- *Engine with Irises*, concrete, metal, ceramics, 82 × 117 × 72 cm, 2023

Anna Hulačová has long dealt with themes relating to agricultural collapse in different historical periods and locations. In the Czech context, for example, she has explored the consequences of so-called agricultural collectivisation, meaning the process by which independent farmers were deprived of their land and incorporated into collective farms (kolkhozes, sovkhoses, agricultural cooperatives, and state farms), the main phases of which took place here in the 1950s. This process has no root in Marxist theory; it was driven primarily by the need to control the rural population, to deprive them of the possibility of owning land, and to supply cities with a cheap labour force as part of ongoing industrialisation efforts. Aside from leading to the ecological devastation of the countryside, collectivisation also had far-reaching psychological and social consequences. It was associated with an uprooting, a loss of our erstwhile contact with the land, the Earth.

Hulačová's new sculpture in the exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump* depicts a tractor engine with irises growing through it. In many cultures, this popular flower is associated with the welcoming of spring. In the case of Hulačová's sculpture, the iris is an imaginary celebration of nature growing through the materialised desire of man to control, "to command the wind, the rain." The question today is who will ultimately command whom? And how much longer will we be able to inhabit the environment we have been systematically destroying for so long? Some species of irises will most likely disappear as a result of our actions, while others may come into bloom here without us.

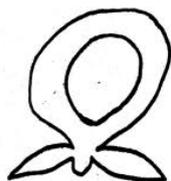


- *My Dear Little Worms*, text, performance, installation of soil-hummus, 2023
- *here all is distance there it was breath* installation, garbage, paper mache, soil, sugar, bioplastic, wood, bones, 200 × 70 × 70 cm, 120 × 50 × 30 cm, 2022 —  
Special thanks: Dominik Lang and Kateřina Vídenová

Ruta Putramentaite is a Lithuanian artist who has long been based in Prague. Her practice includes the creation of sculptural, sound, or video installations, often with a performative overlap. In terms of content, she balances on the line between a personal and collective statement regarding environmental crisis and ways of dealing with it. Putramentaite reflects on these themes from her own position as a human/woman/artist, but in her most recent projects she has also increasingly sought to manifest a non-human perspective. For the exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump* she wrote a short story entitled *My dear little worms*, which straddles the line between possible utopian and dystopian futures that await the artist and, in a figurative sense, our planet. It is a suggestion of a future where the existence of man is coming to an end and with it the system of exploitation and abuse of natural resources, other beings, and ultimately even people themselves. The inspiration for the work comes from the artist's cohabitation with her own earthworms, which she keeps in her home vermicomposter. Their joint contribution to the new project is an installation of earthworm-processed, nutrient-rich humus, which the artist offers to gallery visitors to take home, where they can use it in pots or flowerbeds to enrich the nutrient composition of the soil for their own plant "housemates".

The exhibition also presents two sculptures from the series *here all is distance, there it was breath*, in which the artist transforms the remnants of manmade creations such as bicycles or car parts that have not been recycled despite being decommissioned and have become yet another piece in the endless supply of rubbish with which humanity is flooding (not only) its living space. In the artist's interpretation they become fictitious artefacts from the future, evidence of a new kind of existence made from the remains of human production, which, although derived from nature, will no longer decompose back into nature.

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## Martin Hurych

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- *The Pit*, sound installation, wood, 225 × 200 × 50 cm, 2023  
Special thanks: the artist's granny

The works of Martin Hurych oscillate between the media of sound art and architecture, based primarily on reflections on the character of a specific place. The artist is known for a certain amount of exaggeration and warm-hearted humour, but at the same time he is very sensitive to social problems, especially the economic and cultural gaps between regions, which is an issue he critically draws attention to with his works.

*The pit* reveals the life of the artist's grandmother in the period between 2004 and 2022 in the form of an audio recording of her journal, in which she chronicled her daily activities on a farm in the village of Lubná u Poličky. Against the backdrop of a never-ending list of garden chores, outbuildings that need tending to, and events in the village, we perceive the burden of the routine activities and loneliness that are part of life in the countryside, and not only for older women. "The pit" is how Mrs. Hurychová refers to the place in the house where most of her activities take place, which the artist brings into the gallery in the form of a visual shortcut. The view of the courtyard through the "little gate" on the front porch is now replaced by a view of the busy Prague boulevard Národní třída, enhancing the contrast between these two worlds. The pit thus becomes a metaphor for the unavoidability of everyday life and for ways to, in the words of Mrs. Hurychová, "keep it from driving you nuts".

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## Tadeáš Polák

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- *The Rodent Revolt: An Autonomous Community of Rats Prepares To Strike a Deadly Blow To Human Civilization*, a short story, ink and acrylic paints drawings, graphic design: Hynek Trojánek, 2020/2023

"That's why we, rats and humans (...), have decided to carry out a joint liberation attack, after which the planet will be able to say 'aah' or 'oh yes'," reads the short story by Tadeáš Polák, which is loosely based on the work of science fiction author Kurt Vonnegut. Polák borrows Vonnegut's protagonist and alter ego, the underappreciated writer Kilgore Trout, and places him in a dystopian tale about a rebellion against humanity organised by a non-hierarchical community of rats. Trout gradually becomes part of a grand inter-species plan and embarks on a mission that could perhaps bring

humanity another chance, although he risks meeting the tragic fate of a messiah upon his return.

Tadeáš Polák's works are characterised by his absurd but amiable humour, underpinned by a sophisticated use of language, with which he frames his frequently activist content focusing primarily on environmental issues. Here, too, he invites us to reflect on the direction of human activity in relation to nature and ourselves and allows visitors to supplement *The Rodent Revolt* with their own illustrations — because, as Trout says, “Imagination is the best cook.”

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## Ines Doujak

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- *Land Grabs*, series of posters, 120 × 69 cm, 2018/2023
- *Ghost Populations*, collage, 100 × 130 cm, 2021

In her installations, sculptures, collages, and photographs, Austrian artist Ines Doujak often seeks the historical roots of today's toxic, unequal, and diseased world. At the Václav Špála Gallery, she exhibits a selection of posters from a large series entitled *Land Grabs*. The posters present a history of the justifications for land grabs from the sixteenth century to the present using original quotes. The languages change, but the claims are similar — referring to the efficiency of land use, which is, however, never tested in the long run. In the background of the posters there are many diverse species of apples, pointing to the loss of biodiversity that goes with industrial monocultural farming. For the occasion of the exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump*, the posters have been translated into Czech. They address the displacement of predominantly rural populations which has been taking place worldwide. As such it can also be related to the infamous process of socialist agricultural collectivisation that marked the Czech landscape or to similar, even earlier events in the region. The posters are accompanied by a collage from the series *Ghostpopulations*, which deals with the globalisation of pathogens and diseases stemming from European colonialism.

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## Jumana Manna

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- *Wild Relatives*, 2K video, 64 mins, 2018

Jumana Manna is a Palestinian artist and filmmaker based in Berlin. Her work explores the ways in which the forms and manifestations of power are articulated. Her main focus is on the theme of corporeality and the earth in relation to the vestiges of colonialism and the local histories of selected sites.

Her film *Wild Relatives* tells the story of seeds on their journey from the Arctic to Lebanon, revealing the way the lives of humans and plants intertwine across distant and vastly different ecosystems.

Seeds from all over the world are stored in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault on the island of Spitsbergen. Far beyond the Arctic Circle, the seeds rest in a cave deep below the permafrost, kept as a reserve in case of catastrophe. The film *Wild Relatives* focuses on events that attracted worldwide attention in 2012, when the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas was forced to relocate from Aleppo to Lebanon due to the revolution and subsequent civil war in Syria. In its new location in the Beqaa Valley, the centre's team begins the arduous process of planting the seeds acquired from the vault in the Lebanese soil — a task performed primarily by young migrant women. The film highlights the stark contrast between industrial and ecological approaches to seed preservation, biodiversity conservation, and climate change.



## Tamara Moyzes & Shlomi Yaffe

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- *LACTISM: Mycoremediation*, living fungal sculpture, drawing of mycelium on paper, surveillance system, 2023 — The work was created in collaboration with artist Jakub Rajnoch. Partners: Kampus Hybernská, Kavárna Hlína, Farma Hlína

The project *LACTISM: Mycoremediation* (from the Greek *mycos* = fungus, and the Latin *remedium* = restoring balance) focuses on the issue of environmental injustice that occurs in the context of social exclusion policies (not only) in our region of Central Europe. The work addresses the practice common in many places in Slovakia of displacing inconvenient Romani inhabitants and municipal waste beyond city limits. The authors draw on research carried out by an interdisciplinary team under the auspices of the Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in 2022, which documents the toxic effects of this practice on the local ecosystem, inter-ethnic social ties, and the lives of marginalised residents.

The living actors of the installation are mycelia (fungal filaments), which will slowly “feed on” the exhibited objects over the course of the exhibition. The texts on the wall describing environmental devastation and social anomie will gradually become illegible, and the red dots on the map of Slovakia marking the polluted villages populated by Roma will slowly disappear as well. In the context of twenty-first-century Europe these are absurdly painful facts that unfortunately remain

ignored by majority society (see the attached text for details) while evoking a sense of hopelessness in others. Therefore, in the exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump*, Tamara Moyzes and Shlomi Yaffe symbolically remedy this injustice through the uncontrollable growth of mycelia, a kind of biological network that combats inequality and ethnic segregation.

8

## Hanna-Maria Hammari

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- *Domestication of the Infinite*, installation, found glass objects, LED-lights, dimensions variable, 2022
- *Warm Worm Warm Wurm*, installation, ash wood, wood stain, acrylic color, wax, canvas, dimensions variable, 2022
- *Untitled (Egg)*, glazed ceramic, latex, dimensions variable, 2019

Hanna-Maria Hammari is a Finnish artist based in Frankfurt, Germany, whose artistic practice centres around the topic of the body and its boundaries, both in humans and non-human animals. Through questions of otherness, reproduction, and mortality, she investigates the workings of bodies, their limits, and the various shells that protect or otherwise define them in relation to the world.

The exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump* features several works by the artist, distributed among two of the three gallery floors. The installation *Domestication of the Infinite*, situated on the underground level of the gallery, evokes a landscape or cityscape consisting of stacked glass objects of various original purposes, collected by the artist mainly at flea markets. Radiating an eerie green light, not unlike the toxic glow of uranium, the work brings up the topic of the fluctuation of value within objects and human production in general. Visually enchanting, it lures the viewer closer while simultaneously emanating a vague aura of warning about a possible unspecified danger.

On the first floor of the gallery two more artworks by Hammari inhabit the landfill-like environment. A large, wooden sculpture reminiscent of an almost comically oversized earthworm crawls over the dump, while three other mysterious life forms seem to be waiting to hatch from latex-clad “eggs”. These sculptures embody the unpredictability of the unknown, reminding us that new life can also initially appear ugly or even frightening.

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## Diana Lelonek

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- *Storks, a Sacred Bird*, video, 10 mins, 2022
- *Dump*, site-specific installation, 2023

Polish artist Diana Lelonek devotes her artistic practice to the exploration of the relationships between humans and other species and the way living nature not only resists but also adapts to human-induced environmental change. She uses photography and found objects, creating works that are interdisciplinary and often appear at the interface between art and science. In her video *Storks, a Sacred Bird*, featured in the *Hay, Straw, Dump* exhibition, we see storks in an almost apocalyptic landscape — they fight with seagulls and search for food in the largest open landfill in Latvia, near Riga. In the Baltics the birds are considered a symbol of happiness, and their nests supposedly bring protection and good luck to the houses they choose to inhabit. Nowadays, however, the noble birds prefer to live in an environment that provides them with a constant, year-round supply of “nutrients” in the form of human waste and decomposing leftovers.

Another important contribution to the exhibition by Lelonek is the site-specific environment created on the first floor of the gallery. The immersive multisensory installation builds on a realisation the artist created for her solo show *Compost* at Galeria Arsenał in Białystok, Poland, in 2021, where she combined matter from the municipal composting plant with items she found in the warehouses of Galeria Arsenał, including remnants of previous exhibitions. In Prague the environment illustrates the notion of the “dump” from the exhibition title by piling composted soil supplemented with dried leaves, wood, and ruderal species of plants that are first to colonize polluted lands as well as found objects and materials from Czech and Polish junkyards. In the space that fifty years ago artist Zorka Ságlová filled with hay and tried to imagine a present and future in which people and nature keep coming together and taking care of each other, human waste slowly gains the upper hand over the natural element in quite an alarming way.

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## Věra Kotlárová-Chovancová

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- *For You*, acrylic on canvas, mixed technique, 240 × 320 cm, 2006 — The work is on loan from the collection of the Eva and Petr Zeman Foundation.

In Věra Kotlárová-Chovancová’s textile painting *For You*, we see the figure of a girl in front of a giant gingerbread heart. A kind of dark landscape surrounds them, filled with hybrid creatures depicted in desperate situations — we see a windup toy that is fully wound but will never be set in motion, a chicken with its leg gnawed to the bone, or a figure on a trampoline who is forced to jump endlessly.

Even seemingly innocent objects such as a pram or a cake apparently portend nothing good and, together with the fairground trinkets, instead evoke a sense of tension.

The girl in the centre of the painting, however, offers us a way to transform this dismal “dump of life”. Locked in the box beneath her foot she hides — in the words of the artist — life itself, and it is up to us to take the key.

This almost fairy-tale-like scene could be seen as a chapter in the never-ending story of human joys and anxieties running through the artist’s works. Her considerable narrative gift impresses itself in her large-scale paintings, with a greater or lesser degree of abstraction. In a captivating fashion, the artist reveals her inner motivations as well as her lived experience, whether it is the experience of faith or of a close connection to the land or her family roots.

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## Michal Kindernay

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• *Witnesses of Sound #1 — #14*, sound objects, dimensions variable, 2022

Michal Kindernay is an intermedia artist who works with the possibilities of interactively connecting sound, image, and natural atmospheric processes and who has long reflected on environmental issues in his work. His audiovisual installations combine the tools of art, technology, and science. In the exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump*, Kindernay’s works articulate another way of understanding the words dump and pollution. The artist turns our attention toward the earth’s seas and oceans, which, in addition to serving as mankind’s largest dumping ground, also have to contend with noise pollution. Not only do the yearly emissions of just a few cargo ships pollute the environment more than all the cars in the world combined — the deafening sounds of their propellers spread through the water for hundreds of kilometres. And that’s not to mention the noise caused by military sonar or mining companies probing the seabed. Unfortunately, there is virtually no place in the world’s oceans where human sounds are undetectable, and this enormous amount of noise pollution poses a huge problem for underwater life. However, there is as yet no regulation or agreement to protect marine animals in international waters. It is precisely this phenomenon of sonic contamination in our oceans and rivers that Kindernay captures with his sound objects. Using a hydrophone, the artist made recordings in, among other places, the Baltic and North Seas, the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the Persian Gulf, and the Danube. The objects from which these underwater sounds now issue originate in

the same places; they are rubbish or pieces of driftwood that washed ashore, and as the artist himself notes, “For a long time these objects bore witness to the sounds that now resonate in them.”

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## Dagmar Šubrtová

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- From the series *Secret Fire*, thermal images, 21 × 29,7 cm, 2007
- *New Wilderness*, photographs, 21 × 29,7 cm, 2006—2013

At first glance it may seem that the photographs exhibited by Dagmar Šubrtová depict a kind of foreign jungle — a wild landscape shrouded in darkness, hot, perhaps even smouldering in places, as indicated by the yellow and red spots on the thermal images. Nevertheless, the images represent a completely different kind of “exoticism”. The photos are a selection from an extensive series that was captured during the artist’s night-time expeditions to the heaps of the defunct mines Mayrau, Ronna, and Schoeller near the town of Kladno. As the location of one of the country’s major coal deposits, Kladno was affected by mining in every regard — ecological, economic, psychological, and social. Many locals can recall the stories of their great-grandfathers, who overworked themselves to early death, of all the personal and collective ups and downs of which the romanticised ruins of mine buildings now serve as a reminder. Another testament to the region’s past is the somewhat ignored heaps — that is, spoil tips, of which about 150 were created in the area around Kladno since the discovery of coal there in the eighteenth century. These “no-man’s-lands”, which would not exist if not for the devastating human activities, have over time, due to their limited accessibility, become host to a surprisingly rich diversity of plants, animal species, and geological findings. A distinctive “new nature” has emerged, which is perhaps taking back at least part of what was once taken from it.

13

## Marie Tučková

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- *Alder*, audio, 2:09 mins, 2023
- *Wet Scores for Listening*, audio, 4:20 min, 2022 — The work was recorded and improvised together with Mariana Hradilková.

Visual artist Marie Tučková is somewhat unorthodoxly represented in the exhibition by her musical work. Like Michal Kindernay, Tučková focuses on the element of water in her two compositions but does

so with her own melody and poetry. The multi-voiced lullaby *Alder* was created as a free improvisation after a several-hour meditative listening session by the Vltava River in Prague's Braník neighbourhood. The melody is thus directly inspired by movement of water. Similarly, the two-voiced improvisation *Wet Scores for Listening* by Tučková and Mariana Hradilková is a reflection on the flow of the river. However, the recording was made in a space where the flow of water is subject to the utilities of man — a hundred-metre-long underground sewer in a former wastewater treatment plant in Prague's Bubeneč district. In her work, Tučková deliberately utilises polyphony, meaning a musical form composed of two or more voices, none of which is the leading voice, thus giving the piece a non-hierarchical structure. For Tučková, polyphony is not only a formal technique but also a direct bearer of a message about the need to listen and “tune in” to each other — and not only between people but also between us and nature. Tučková refers to, among other things, the ideas of Guyanese writer Theodore Wilson Harris and his essay *The Music of Living Landscapes* (1999), which urges us to rethink the view of nature as a passive resource meant to provide for our human needs and instead encourages us to listen to the polyphonic “music” of nature. It is no coincidence then that the lyrics of both songs invite us to listen. The symbolism of flowing water and the passage of time — the transience of things and our lives in the endless spinning of nature's cycles — also plays a powerful role. However, we should not be overly lulled by an awareness of the integrity of nature and the fact that we are merely a part of it — after all, the water that is now disappearing from our landscape is also a reminder of the climatic and ecological changes that are currently radically transforming the face of our planet and human civilisation.

14



## Justyna Górowska & Ewelina Jarosz

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- *Cyber wedding to the brine shrimp*, video, 12:03 mins, 2021 — The work was created in cooperation with Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens, commissioned by the Polish Cultural Institute New York.
- *Baby shrimp*, 3D print, Biodegradable PLA, variable dimensions, 2022

“Save the brine shrimp! Free the sea monkeys! We fell in love with brine shrimp because they are a fascinating element of the depleting biodiversity of the Great Salt Lake, although due to their survival

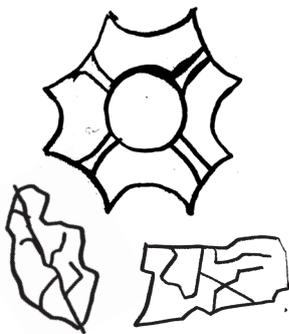
capabilities they will most likely outlive humans. Take a peek into the life of these beautiful creatures and you will fall in love with them and want to marry them too!”

Inspired by the ecosexual weddings of Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens, the cyber-nympho artist-brides, Ewelina Jarosz and Justyna Górowska married the brine shrimp on the 14th of September 2021. The interspecies ceremony took place at the Great Salt Lake on the Rozel Point peninsula near the *Spiral Jetty* (1970), a land artwork by Robert Smithson. This special art project is the artists’ response to the shrinking Great Salt Lake, which dropped to its lowest levels in recorded history during the past year. The catastrophic condition of Utah’s so-called natural wonder is attributed to an ongoing extreme drought and reduced snowpack, which are a part of global climate change processes. The brine shrimp (*Artemia franciscana*) is one of the oldest and most precious inhabitants of the Great Salt Lake. These tiny crustaceans, with precarious bodies and extra strong eggs, are a pillar of the local ecosystem and a crucial link in a food chain that feeds fish and millions of migratory birds. You may also know them as “sea monkeys”, a magical product that has been sold to children in America since 1957.

15

## David Vojtuš

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- *RECYFIX®HICAP®F1000*, linocut, drainage channel, 100 × 50 × 15 cm, 2023
- *Untitled* (intervention to the installation *Dump* by Diana Lelonek), linocut, 112 × 67 cm, 2023
- *Untitled* (intervention to the installation *Dump* by Diana Lelonek), linocut, 120 × 67 cm, 2023

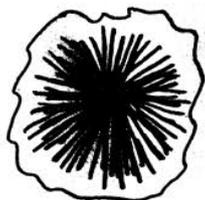
“When I was a kid, I used to ride my bike to the countryside to look at the animals and plants, and then I’d flip through encyclopaedias and draw pictures and dream of becoming a scientific illustrator one day,” says David Vojtuš in an interview in *Art Antiques* magazine. Much like scientific illustrations, his current work is characterised by great meticulousness and attention to detail. Vojtuš works with various types of plastics and industrial materials, from whose shapes relief drawings emerge. Although abstract, they evoke landscapes and natural or physical phenomena, thus contrasting with the purely artificial materials and seeking connections between the two worlds that transcend categories such as (un)ecological, residual, and (un)sustainable.

In the exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump, Vojtuš* presents new works — linocuts incorporated into an installation by Diana Lelonek as well as an object that takes its basic shape from a matrix used in waste systems. Together these works can serve as future remnants of today's world, reminding us of its glamour and toxicity.

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## Jakub Tajovský

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- *Still Figure*, shellac, UV pyrography on a beech board, 90 × 110 cm, 2020
- *Still Figure II*, shellac, UV pyrography on a beech board, 90 × 110 cm, 2020

“Drawings of wood, traces of parasites, preservative resins, dehydration, staining, and burning represent a set of possibilities of ‘painterly expressions’ used to create models of interspecies imagination instead of representations of original images,” says Jakub Tajovský with regard to his drawings on beech boards. In his work, the artist intentionally departs from conventional painting techniques, always approaching painting as a dialogue — whether with the natural processes in the very substance of the painting or with technologies. In the series *Still Figure*, Tajovský does so specifically through the perfecting of the old artisanal technique of shellac varnish, which he combines with digital tools, and the drawing is then burnt into the surface of the wood using UV pyrography. The result is a specific creative process involving three actors — nature, man, and technology — in which the artist reacts to the wood grain but leaves the actual realisation to the “artificial intelligence” of materials, tools, and technology. Tajovský thus shifts the medium of painting to the level of a conceptual experiment of authorship shared by diverse entities.

17

## Nikola Brabcová

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- *Jara*, video, 12 min, installation, natural materials, variable dimensions, 2021/2023

Artist Nikola Brabcová has a longstanding interest in the land and environmentally friendly ways of creating art. Her work runs parallel to everyday life — housework, cooking, parenting — and she therefore recycles and makes use of common household materials, even scraps and waste. However, in addition to natural materials

(including homemade bioplastic) that are naturally biodegradable and have a low environmental impact, Brabcová's installations also feature conspicuous technological elements (cables, etc.), reminding us that technologies (and media such as sound or video) are not intangible and have a strong impact on our environment.

In her video *Jara*, Brabcová depicts an ordinary walk through her mother-in-law's garden, where the grandmother explains to her grandson where food comes from, the role of insects and weeds, how composting works, and also the importance of the legacy of previous generations — here specifically in the form of trees planted by the boy's grandfather many years ago. The aim of the video is to reflect on types of agriculture and cultivation that are driven by a love of nature, not its exploitation, and in which personal experience and a lifetime of acquired knowledge foster a relationship with the land and a form of cultivation based on respect and reverence.

18



## Petra Janda

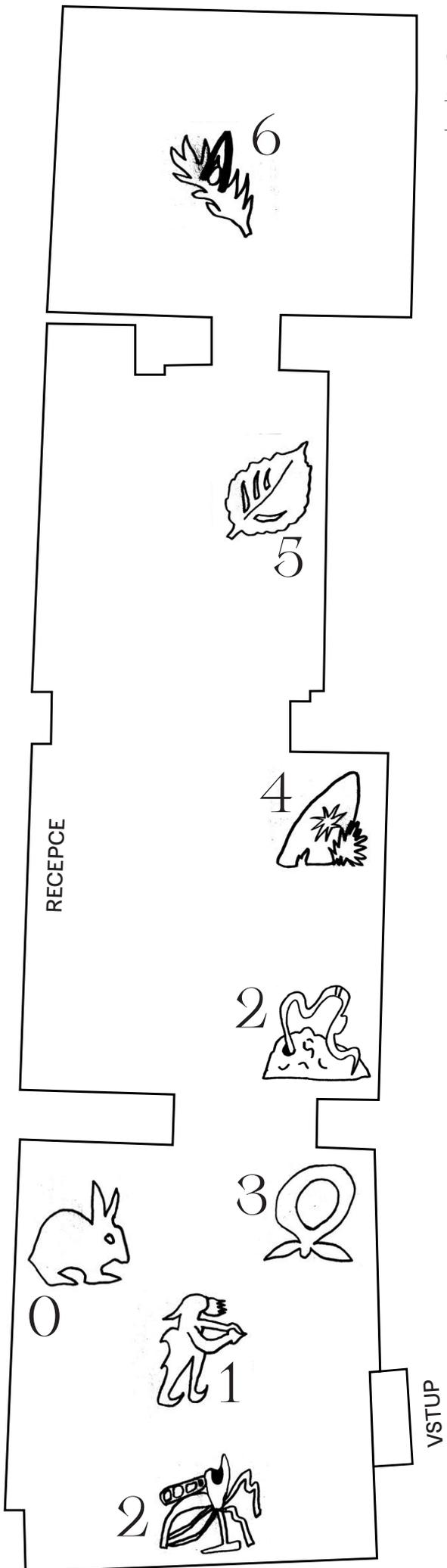
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- *Regina*, straw from ecological agriculture, recycled metal construction, variable dimensions, 2022 — The work was finalized during a collective performance with Darina Alster, Veronika Šrek Bromová, Natálie Košková, Tomáš Samek, Zuzana Štefková, Tereza Vydrová and Petra Janda.

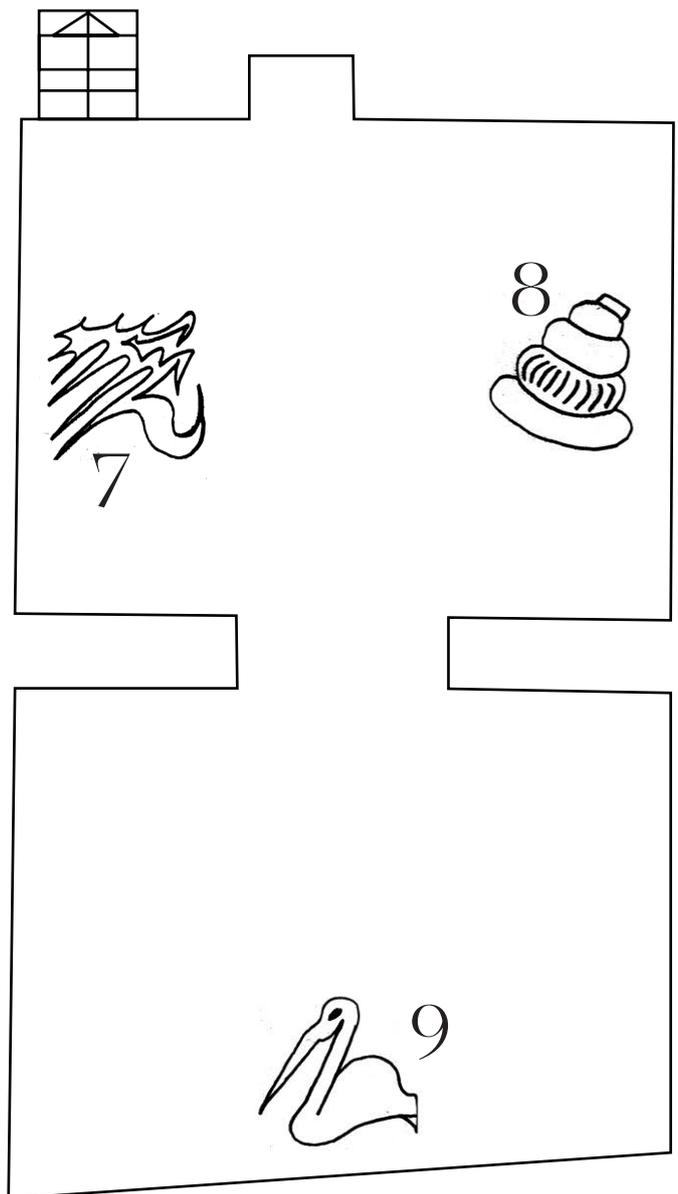
In her works, Petra Janda employs temporary materials such as different types of paper, clay, straw, or other natural substances. Thus, they become a sculpture for a certain amount of time but can easily return to the cycle of life, creation, development, and decay/decomposition. Sometimes one work flows freely into another, parts of it are used on another occasion, everything is in progress. Many of her pieces also feature living bodies, whether those of viewers or performers, who co-create the works, entering them and animating them.

In the exhibition *Hay, Straw, Dump*, Janda presents a work entitled *Regina*, which evokes a royal gown or crown from which long tendrils of plaited straw emanate. This process of plaiting was important for the creation of the work, for *Regina* was “inaugurated” by a predominantly female performative group. In the exhibition at the Václav Špála Gallery, this sculpture growing out of a “dump” represents the imaginary triumph of the feminine principle (which exists in all of us), of consideration and the hope that in today's half-destroyed world it is not too late to begin spinning a better future.

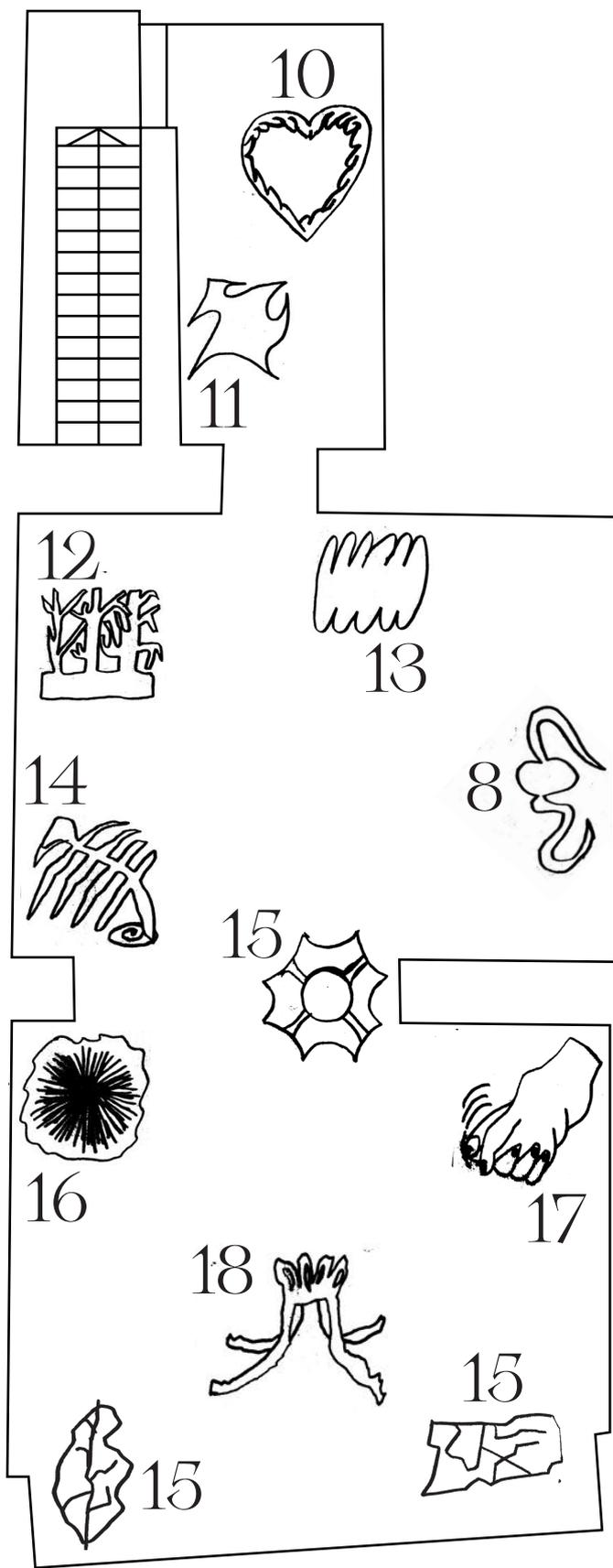
ground  
floor



underground



# 1<sup>st</sup> floor



- 0 Zorka Ságlová, Jan Sági
- 1 Anna Hulačová
- 2 Ruta Putramentaite
- 3 Martin Hurych
- 4 Tadeáš Polák
- 5 Ines Doujak
- 6 Jumana Manna
- 7 Tamara Moyzes & Shlomi Yaffe
- 8 Hanna-Maria Hammari
- 9 Diana Lelonek
- 10 Věra Kotlárová-  
-Chovancová
- 11 Michal Kindernay
- 12 Dagmar Šubrtová
- 13 Marie Tučková
- 14 Justyna Górowska & Ewelina Jarosz
- 15 David Vojtuš
- 16 Jakub Tajovský
- 17 Nikola Brabcová
- 18 Petra Janda

## Exhibiting artists:

Nikola Brabcová, Ines Doujak, Justyna Górowska & Ewelina Jarosz, Hanna-Maria Hammari, Anna Hulačová, Martin Hurych, Petra Janda, Michal Kindernay, Věra Kotlářová-Chovancová, Diana Lelonek, Jumana Manna, Tamara Moyzes & Shlomi Yaffe, Tadeáš Polák, Ruta Putramentaite, Jan SágI, Zorka Ságlová, Dagmar Šubrtová, Jakub Tajovský, Marie Tučková, David Vojtuš

## Curators:

The JCHS curatorial collective  
(Barbora Ciprová, Veronika Čechová,  
Tereza Jindrová, Karina Kottová)

## Exhibition environment:

Diana Lelonek

## Production:

Ondřej Houšťava, Zuzana Šrámková

## Public programs:

Nikola Ludlová in collaboration  
with the JCHS collective

## Production of public programs:

Sára Davidová

## Graphic design:

Tereza Haspeklová & Petr Kněžek

## Translation:

Lamija Čehajić, Viktor Heumann, Brian D. Vondrak



The exhibition is part of the program line of Jindřich Chalupecký Society called *The World of Jindřich Chalupecký*. The exhibition is part of the international project *Islands of Kinship: A Collective Manual for Sustainable and Inclusive Art Institutions*, co-funded by the European Union, Czech Ministry of Culture and the City of Prague.

