



Press release, March 11 2020

Biennale Matter of Art announces title, dates, curators and locations

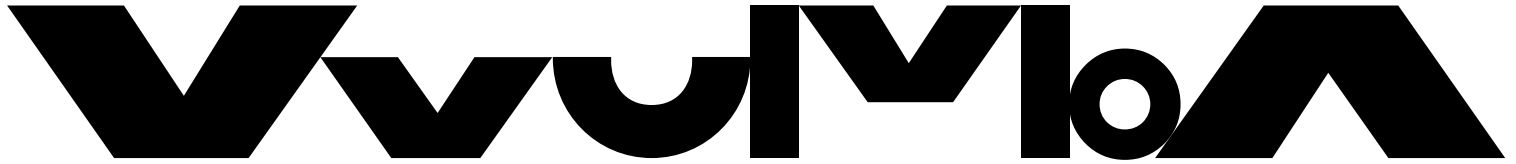
The first edition of a new exhibition of contemporary art will take place in Prague from 18 June to 20 September 2020 at the Prague City Gallery, Prague Market and the DBK shopping centre.

The institution Bienále Ve věci umění / Matter of Art (VVUMOA) is a project organized by the platform for contemporary art tranzit.cz. The first edition of the biennale comprises an international group exhibition entitled **'Come Closer'** held in three venues, namely the Prague City Gallery (GHMP) in the Municipal Library building, the Prague Market and the DBK shopping centre in Krč. VVUMOA 2020 is curated by the programme director of tranzit.cz Tereza Stejskalová and the curator and art theorist Vít Havránek. The project is developed in cooperation with the GHMP, and its ambition is to become an inclusive space that will allow for gatherings and discussions, attracting visitors from across today's polarised society.

*"The title of the exhibition – **Come Closer** – is an appeal for proximity, both physical and mental. It could be something an adult would say to a small child when they want to wipe their mouth, it could be an erotic invitation or friendly encouragement, yet at the same also a threat. Human closeness can take the form of mutual understanding but also of fundamental misunderstanding. Above all, closeness is a basic human need and also an expression of empathy, caring, and emotional labour, which we perform for ourselves as well as for others,"* explains Tereza Stejskalová.

The biennale builds upon two decades of organizational and publishing activities of tranzit.cz on the Czech contemporary art scene, where it has exercised a fundamental influence.

"Tranzit.cz has helped to broaden the local context with important themes and discourses. The initiative has published Czech translations of essential texts of post-colonial theory, we have explored connections between artists of different generations, and in addition we have explored connections and stimulated dialogues between artists from different generations. Tranzit.cz has been involved in the creation of intercontinental artistic and curatorial networks and we have also focused on the ways art enters the political arena. It is the ambition of the biennale to critically examine and revise these themes and strategies, and to step out of our own shadow and find a form through which a critical art institution can approach and address a wider audience," comments Vít Havránek, the curator and previous long-term director of tranzit.cz



An important impulse for the transformation of tranzit.cz was the appointment of the curator Tereza Stejskalová to the position of programme director in 2019. Stejskalová brought not only a different generational perspective on the art world and society in general, but also new topics and strategies based on feminist theories, such as care, emotions and sexuality.

“What we want to introduce to the viewer is an encounter with a life experience he or she may not be familiar with whatsoever, as well as a sense of ‘otherness’ in the wider sense of this word. Art has the potential to allow us to process these differences,” says Stejskalová with regard to the curatorial approach. *“We asked ourselves questions about how to organize a biennale that wants to be caring towards its viewers, staff, environment, and also the city. We put a lot of effort into the accessibility of the whole project – all the exhibition spaces are barrier-free. We believe that the biennale could be a truly open platform for everyone,”* adds Stejskalová.

The names of the participating artists will be published at the programme press conference on Thursday 16 April 2020.

Dates

Biennale Matter of Art 2020: Come Closer	18. 6. – 20. 9. 2020
Programme press conference	16. 4. 2020, 11AM
Main press conference	17. 6. 2020, 11AM
Press preview	17. 6. 2020, 12PM-4PM
Public opening	17. 6. 2020, 6PM

Venues

Prague City Gallery
Municipal Library, 2nd floor
Mariánské náměstí 98/1
110 00 Prague

The Prague Market
Bubenské nábřeží 306
170 00 Prague

DBK Shopping Center
Budějovická 1667
140 00 Praha



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Hashtags

#vvumoa #vvumoa2020 #biennale #matterofart #tranzitcz #feministinstitution



Attachment: tranzit.cz profile, curator biographies, venue descriptions

Tranzit.cz

tranzit.cz is a part of the tranzit.org network, founded in 2002 and working independently in Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Romania. During the course of its existence, tranzit.cz has been engaged in numerous international projects and exhibitions within the framework of tranzit.org, such as **Monument to Transformation 1989 – 2009**; **Manifesta 8**; **Report on the Construction of a Spaceship Module** and others. From 2007 to 2017 **tranzit** was a part of the project of the tranzitdisplay gallery in Prague, in 2017 it initiated the development of the Feminist network and in 2018 established the institution Biennale Matter of Art, which is a member of the East European Biennale Alliance (along with Off Biennale, Hungary; Visual Culture Research Center, Ukraine; Warszawa Biennale, Poland). The ERSTE Foundation is the main partner of tranzit.cz.

Curators

Tereza Stejskalová (*1981) is a critic and curator. Between **2012-2015** she worked as an art editor of the biweekly cultural magazine A2. She co-founded the online daily news site A2Iarm. Since 2015 she has been working as a curator at tranzit.cz, and in 2019 she was appointed as its Programme Director. She has contributed numerous texts to books, catalogues, art magazines and web sites. She has presented her curatorial / artistic projects at the National Gallery Prague; Framer Framed, Amsterdam; Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin; Warszawa Biennale and Gwangju Biennale. Together with Barbora Kleinhamplová she published a book of interviews entitled *Who is an Artist?* (2015). In 2014 she received the Věra Jirousová Award for established art critics. She is a lecturer on contemporary art at FAMU in Prague.

Vít Havránek (*1971) is a writer and curator currently employed as Vice Dean of Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. From 2002 to 2018 he worked as director of the contemporary art initiative tranzit.cz, having previously served as curator at the Prague City Gallery and National Gallery in Prague. He has curated and co-curated exhibitions at various institutions, most recently *Dead and Alive – 9th Triennial of Contemporary Art U3*, MG +MSUM, Ljubljana, Jakarta Biennale 2017, Muzeum Sztuki, **Lodz**; VOX, Montréal; New Museum HUB, New York; Steirischer Herbst, Graz, *Manifesta 8*, Centro Cultural de Montehermoso, Murcia; Espace Electra Paris, pas Prague and others. Together with artists, co-editors and JRP Ringier Havránek has edited and co-edited books and catalogues including *Pictorial Atlas of a Girl Who Cut a Library into Pieces* (with Eva Kořátková, 2016); *The Czech Files* (with H.U. Obrist, 2014); *Atlas of Transformation* (2010); *Autobiographies* (2006); *The Need to Document* (2005); *Lanterna Magika* (2002); **and action, word, movement, space** (1999). His texts have appeared in the books **Art and Theory of Post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe: A Critical Anthology**, **Invisible Adversaries**, **Green Room**, **Promesses du passé**, **VOIDS: A Retrospective**, and art magazines.



Venues

Prague City Gallery, Municipal Library

The Municipal Library of Prague, situated on Mariánské Square, was built between 1925 and 1928 according to the design of the architect František Roith, a student of the professor of the Vienna Academy and distinguished architect, Otto Wagner. The building was conceived as a cultural institution providing broad possibilities for its use, including exhibitions, lectures and concert halls. The building's architecture is based upon a rather rationally conceived ground plan and simple arrangement of material. The extensive exhibition spaces on the 2nd floor were acquired by the Prague City Gallery in 1992. They subsequently underwent a thorough reconstruction, and today serve the purpose of housing prestigious Prague exhibitions. The adaptations to the building include a new artistic conception of the main entrance to the Gallery from Valentinská Street, designed by the architect Vlado Milunič in 1996.

Prague Market

The protected heritage site of the Prague Market, a former meat processing facility, is located in the Holešovice district, with a distinguished industrial history. It was built between 1893–1895 according to the design of the architect Josef Srdínek, as the central slaughterhouse of the royal city of Prague. The design uses elements of Renaissance Revival and Art Nouveau. Since 1983 the area has been used as a marketplace, and today the area is undergoing yet another transformation in order to establish a multi-purpose space comprising shops, galleries, cultural venues, and a food court..

DBK Shopping Centre

The DBK building was opened to the public in 1981 as 'Dům bytové kultury' (House of Interior Design). The eight-storey building was designed by the architect Věra Machoninová and is exceptional not only for its form, but also for the used materials, such as the wind-proof steel Atmofix, aluminium and concrete. Several art installations were also part of the design, such as a round-shaped decoration made out of concrete. The building has undergone several phases of reconstruction and served various purposes - in the early 1990s it served as the first Czechoslovak branch of IKEA, and later it became known as the Prior department store. In 2006 the building underwent a renovation in order to modernize the shopping areas, improve its technical condition and make it accessible and barrier-free. In the same year, the building also returned to its original name of DBK.