

MARKÉTA MAGIDOVÁ: THAT'S NOT A FAIRY, THAT'S A MUM

Galerie Vltavská

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Curator: Karina Kottová

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Cascades near the Vltavská underground station

Cooperating institutions: Prague City Gallery and Prague Public Transit Company, part of the program "Art for the City"

The exhibition by Markéta Magidová "That's Not a Fairy, That's a Mum" is a site-specific installation in the public space near the Vltavská underground station, the location of the fountain with the figural sculpture "Faun and Vltava" by Miroslav and Olga Hudeček from 1984. The author tells a new story of the mythological figures, and plays with their alternative social roles. The project was picked up by the jury of the open competition for the Galerie Vltavská project, created in the cooperation of the Prague City Gallery and Prague Public Transit Company as part of the program "Art for the City" for temporary art interventions.

The exhibition by Markéta Magidová in Galerie Vltavská is a direct response to the sculpture made by Olga Hudečková and Miroslav Hudeček, who designed the fountain "Faun a Vltava" in the 1980s, as part of the architecture of the Vltavská underground station. They depicted both characters in their mythological lightness, celebrating the stream of life. However, the Faun is freer than Vltava, sitting on the top with his flute, while Vltava holds the river rocks and lets the water wash over her, the water that brings the fountain to life. In her current work, Markéta Magidová attempts at shaking the trees of mythological archetypes and recent social and gender stereotypes, and present both Faun and Vltava in new constellations. In her large-scale digital images, placed next to the original sculpture, she replaces, for example, Faun's flute with a baby milk bottle, and puts a baby into his arms so Vltava/mum can rest for a while and do whatever she might like – have fun, take a good night's sleep, work, visit a spa resort etc. Other images of the author present Vltava and Faun in various family constellations, with sick or crying children, in joys and worries that shatter their archetypal unchanging roles and open the uneasy questions about the composition of a family, the roles of its members, and possible alternatives to traditional, often restrictive standards; these questions have gradually become more and more important as social and political issues.

One of Magidová's images shows Vltava lying under a duvet made of waterlilies, looking like rootless existence, a bit like Ophelia just drowned. At this point, Vltava as the river and its personification as a woman mingle at its best. Women, or female principle in general, are often given qualities attributed to water: good memory, sensibility, flexibility, sensuality, or persisting strength. In the time when it's (once more) necessary to fight for women's rights, the alliance between water and female qualities is more than appropriate. Once the archetypes become real stories and natural elements are given the equal voice in the human community, we may approach them, empathize with them, and possibly look for ways towards a sustainable and considerable future.

“This is the fourth project that enhances the cascades at Vltavská within a year. This time, it’s a lyrical exhibition by Markéta Magidová, reflecting on the dominant feature in the area – the Faun and Vltava fountain – and adding another dimension to it. A few years ago, we managed to repair the fountain and restore its operations. I’m really happy it becomes part of life in the location – this time, as a impulse for art,” **said Hana Třeštková, councilor for culture and tourism.**

“I’m happy that Vltavská has become a new center of artistic efforts, and time and again we can see very interesting concepts here – concepts that transcend the location by the messages they carry, and speak to civil society in current language and content. It has become apparent that the public space, if given a chance, may be an intersection and a common ground for artists and audience alike,” **said Magdalena Juříková, Director of the Prague City Gallery.**

“At the time of its origin, the underground was full of art projects reflecting historical, social or political topics. I’m really happy that current projects, such as Galerie Vltavská, enhance this area by topics related to social margins and subcultures, climatic issues or gender stereotypes. In this time of social self-reflection and transformation, it’s important that these motives resonate in public institutions, including the public transport,” **added Anna Švarc, architect of the Prague Public Transit Company.**

Markéta Magidová is an artist and director focusing on installations, digital imagery and cartoons. In her work, she explores the ways of historical and fictitious representation, patterns and standards of collective behavior, thinking and emotions. She reflects social topics especially from the gender point of view. Her films were featured in important international festivals (Annecy, ShortFest Dresden, Bolton International Film Festival, Bucheon International Animation Festival, St. Louis International Film Festival, Roma Independent Film Festival etc.) as well as at AniFilm in Czechia; three times she became a finalist of PAF Other Visions. Magidová’s artworks were exhibited at the Youth Biennale in Moscow, in the National Gallery in the North Macedonia, in Plexus Project (New York), CEAAC Gallery (Strasbourg), Bunkier Sztuki (Krakow), National Palace of Culture (Sofia), Czech Center in Berlin, City Gallery in Nitra, several galleries in Prague (MeetFactory, Contemporary Art Center, French Institute in Prague), Brno (FAIT Gallery, TIC, House of Art), the sculptural festival in the Kukačka public space in Ostrava etc. Her book *Překlapy a přehmaty* (Misfits and blunders) was adopted for a radio play by the Vltava Broadcasting Station, and she is the co-editor of a extensive book “Literature and Conceptual Tendencies” with Ondřej Buddeus.

The successful Galerie Vltavská project will continue in the next year. Look forward to two more exhibitions recommended by the jury after the first call for artists. In March, the area will offer the site-specific installation *MECHanization* by Adam Novotník and Adam Hudec, displaying microscopic samples of bio-verdigris and the analyses of the wall surfaces at Vltavská. From June on, a series of performances will follow, conducted by David Helán and Pavel Tichoň.

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