

Divination from a Night Sky Partly Covered by Clouds. The Role of Photography in the Post-Media Age

24 May – 18 September 2022

Prague City Gallery

House of Photography

Revoluční 5, Prague 1

Tue–Wed, Fri–Sun 10 am – 6 pm, Thu 10 am – 8 pm

Larry Achiampong a David Blandy, Hynek Alt, Ruth Beale, Stano Filko, Ivars Gravlejs, Jana Ilková, Nikol Czuczorova, Richard Janeček, Andrej Kiripolský, Alena Kotzmannová, Zuzana Markéta Macková, Markéta Magidová, László Moholy-Nagy, Markéta Othová, Lucie Rosenfeldová, Erica Scourti, Matěj Smetana, Jonáš Strouhal, Petr Svárovský, Ezra Šimek, Jiří Thýn, Leevi Toija, Aleksandra Vajd, Max*ine Vajt

Exhibition Curator: Jitka Hlaváčková

Coauthors of the conception: Palo Fabuš, Lucía Gregorová Stach, Jitka Hlaváčková, Hana Janečková, Václav Janoščík, Jen Kratochvil, Andrea Průchová Hružová, Vojtěch Márc, Barbora Trnková, Pavel Vančát, Filip Vančo

Divination from a Night Sky Partly Covered by Clouds explores contemporary forms of visuality in art that is based on the medium of photography. It presents a spectrum of conceptual and artistic approaches by more than thirty artists and theorists from Czechia, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Greece and other countries. It reveals the forms that photography is taking in the age of artificial intelligence, and how artists are responding to current trends in their work.

The ground plan for the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue consists of studies by twelve co-authors who responded to a survey on the subject of post-media photography. Their contributions indicate how visual art is coming to terms with the ever greater intersecting of the physical and digital worlds, and their connections with global networks and processes. This process is significantly changing the ways in which images are created and their resulting forms, as well as the methods for their manipulation and storage. Technologies working with artificial intelligence can enhance, adjust and even create images of seeming reality, turn static images into moving ones, animate them and use 3D printing to manufacture reality itself. They can also use psychological and sociological analyses and

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algorithms to categorise information and tailor individual realities to each user. Such technologies are increasingly becoming a self-sufficient artistic medium.

This exhibition is not the outcome of collaboration. It is a partly random structure that to some extent has adopted the principles of post-media reality. On the basis of a heterogeneous sample of artistic and theoretical approaches, it addresses questions concerning photography's role in the accelerating fragmentation, multiplicity and manipulability of visual media, and how this process has influenced "art photography". It examines the relationship between a digital archive and the emotional memory of art, and the social role of art in a system whose limitlessness places it beyond any control.

The fragmentary nature of these investigations would seem to be the hallmark of contemporary perception. The spectrum of responses creates a plastic mosaic whose individual pieces represent different aspects of how we approach photography at a time when photography itself is dissolving into the myriad formats and infinite expanse of digital space. Exploring this universe through human senses and emotions is like divining from a night sky largely covered by clouds. And just as it was formerly the night sky that represented the ethereal dimension or the infiniteness of space and time, today such expectations are similarly attached to digital networks. It is therefore also increasingly natural to direct our questions to virtuality for what it can tell us not only about our present, but also about our future.

As the exhibition's curator, I decided to open it with an illustrated magazine from 1936. *Telehor*, published in four languages, was the work of the Brno-based curator and editor František Kalivoda and the avant-garde artist László Moholy-Nagy. It is an excellent example of modernism's tendency to deconstruct the medium and historical canon of art, as well as a statement about the need in the 1930s to consciously accept art's role as a tool for social transformation. Contemporary art possesses a similar potential, reflecting the digital sphere that connects the world across different continents with diverse national, political and social communities. On a thousand plateaus, it holds up a mirror to all the torments and delights of the human world.

Telehor is then followed by two contemporary multimedia artists from the younger generation, Matěj Smetana and Markéta Magidová, whose works present ephemeral technological and postdigital phenomena. This is also true of Jiří Thýn, whose art is placed in the context of this exhibition by the photography theorist Pavel Vančát. Markéta Othová and Aleksandra Vajd have taken different paths to a similar destination, and their joint installation of drawings and photograms is presented by the artist and curator Vojtěch Märč. The visual culture theorist Hana Janečková uses works by Lucie Rosenfeldová and the British artist duo David Blandy and Larry Achiampong to highlight various ways of



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representing corporeality in relation to technology. Through a similar prism, but from the logic of group authorship with a much broader scope, Jen Kratochvíl presents the work of seven artists from the Studio of New Aesthetics at FAMU in Prague, which he heads with the photographer Hynek Alt. Meanwhile the philosopher and theorist Václav Janošík uses works by Hynek Alt and Jonáš Strouhal to offer a detailed view of the backdrop of technical and political networks and infrastructure that also represent society's indispensable physical and relational infrastructure. In Alt's series of exposed pipes an object is transformed from 3D to 2D and back again, and we see the same transformation in a piece by the Latvian photographer Ivars Gravlejs, presented by Palo Fabuš. To illustrate the post-media theme, the curator and new media theorist Barbora Trnková has chosen two inspirational artists working with mobile phones: Oslo-based Peter Svárovský and the Greek artist Erica Scourti. Meanwhile Andrea Průchová Hružová, a contemporary visual studies theorist, has selected a video by the London-based artist Ruth Beale as an important reference point in the current process of deconstructing the photographic medium. The Slovak scene remains intimately connected with Czech art, and it is represented here by the curator Lucia Gregorová Stach and her selection from the oeuvre of the godfather of post-media approaches, Stano Filko, whose treatment of associativity, obsessive preparation and layering of visual material and systematic self-presentation point to key principles in the post-media era. The photographer and curator Filip Vančo then presents a series by a young artist named Jana Ilková, part of a stratum of contemporary art that is returning to classic photography's uniqueness and materiality via the aesthetics of Instagram.

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive catalogue with texts by all co-authors, and a series of debates has been planned that will be attended by the majority of those involved to discuss the themes covered by the individual parts of the exhibition.

Jitka Hlaváčková



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Exhibition Architecture: Tomáš Moravec

Graphic Design: Martin Odehnal

Media partners: Art&Antiques, ArtMap, Artalk, Flash Art, A2, Artiki, Revolver Revue, Artyčok.tv, protisedi.cz, Radio 1, Český rozhlas Radio Wave, Fotograf

Entrance fee: CZK 150 full (adults) / CZK 60 discounted (students) / CZK 20 seniors

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ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

24 May 2022 at 6 pm

Archive and Emotional Memory

A presentation of the exhibition with some of its creators followed by a debate on digital space as individual and collective memory

9 June at 6 pm

Studio of New Aesthetics

A meeting with some of the cocreators of the exhibition *Divination from a Night Sky Partly Covered by Clouds* – teachers and students from FAMU's Studio of New Aesthetics – a tour of the exhibition followed by a debate

14 July at 5 pm

Divination in the Post-Media Age

A tour of the exhibition with its curator, artists and cocreators, followed by a debate on current trends in post-media photography

30 August at 5 pm

The Fragmented Body of the Digital Image

A tour of the exhibition followed by a debate with the creators on post-media activism in the work of selected artists at the exhibition

13 September at 6 pm

Care Devices

A tour of the exhibition followed by a debate on user-friendly forms of post-media art

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Educational Activities

Saturday Art Workshops

Saturday 27 August 2022, 1 pm – 6 pm

Multiplicity in Photography

House of Photography

Saturday 3 September 2022, 1 pm – 6 pm

Ways of Manipulating Photographs

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Education Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Art Workshops for Adults and Senior Citizens
Thursday 7 July 2022, 3 pm – 6 pm

Photograms I

Education Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Friday 8 July 2022, 10 am – 1 pm

Photograms II

Education Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Friday 8 July 2022, 3 pm – 6 pm

Photograms III

Education Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thursday 25 August 2022, 3 pm – 6 pm

Cyanotype Photogram and Drawing I

Education Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Friday 26 August 2022, 10 am – 6 pm

Cyanotype Photogram and Drawing II

Education Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

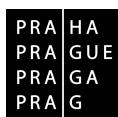
Friday 26 August 2022, 3 pm – 6 pm

Cyanotype Photogram and Drawing III

Education Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Interactive tours of the exhibition for all types of schools and other age and interest groups, with the opportunity for participants to subsequently respond by creating their own art. Events are adapted to each school's requirements concerning scheduling, subject matter and level of difficulty.

Reservations essential: edukace@ghmp.cz



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