

G PRESS RELEASE HMP

THINKING THROUGH FILM

November 8 2023 – February 18 2024

Prague City Gallery

The Stone Bell House

Staroměstské náměstí 13, Prague 1

Tue – Sun 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Concept creator and curator: Sandra Baborovská

Exhibiting artists: Zbyněk Baladrán, Radek Brousil, Jakub Jansa, Ján Mančuška, Lea Petříková, Sara Pinheiro, Tomáš Svoboda, Ondřej Vavrečka

“A person who watches what is happening around them is a director, a cinematographer, and an editor at the same time. They decide for themselves what to focus on, where to direct their gaze,” says Sandra Baborovská, the creator and curator of the exhibition.

Film is “a form that thinks,” as director Jean-Luc Godard once noted. Montages of images and sounds enable us to express certain ideas but also to reflect on the material, formal, and narrative elements that define the film medium. The exhibition and publication project *Thinking Through Film* focuses on the ways in which contemporary audiovisual art not only pushes the language of film forward, but also brings it back to its roots.

All three floors of the Stone Bell House explore film as narrative in the gallery space. For the most part, the exhibited films were shot with professional crews (cinematographers, editors, and sound designers) and professional actors/performers, including Ester Geislerová and Tereza Hořová (as Oracle), Cyril Dobrý (as Half-Dead Fish), Miroslav Krobot (as himself), Jan Vondráček (voice-over) and others.

The first floor is dedicated to Jakub Jansa’s *Garden of Problems* project, which for the first time brings together episodes from the *Club of Opportunities* series, dating from 2017 to the present. Viewers visit the gallery instead of “Netflixing.” The series thematizes social issues of our time and raises questions about authority and hierarchical relationships. Underprivileged entities turn into elites and vice versa, with new opportunities arising during this transformation. Each episode creates situations between reality and fiction, gradually revealing the story through video, objects, set design and acting performance.



Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits at seven venues: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bílek, Troja Château and František Bílek’s House in Chýnov.

G PRESS RELEASE HMP

The exhibition on the second floor hosts contemporary Czech artists, both those focusing on the film medium (Ondřej Vavrečka, Lea Petříková, Ján Mančuška) and those associated with moving-image art (Tomáš Svoboda, Zbyněk Baladrán) and sound design (Sara Pinheiro). We deliberately juxtapose visual artists from art schools, filmmakers from the FAMU film school, and creators combining both backgrounds. Paradoxically, the conjunction of these opposites produces an unusual and unexpected dynamic, as they are not often presented together. Filmmaker and FAMU teacher Ondřej Vavrečka is represented by a costume and collages, in which he comments on film, specifically editing. It is no coincidence that Ján Mančuška's *Reflection* (2008) was a result of a Vavrečka editing workshop. Sara Pinheiro, a sound maker also based at FAMU, created the sound design for *Like in a Movie* (2016) in a similar way. Lea Petříková graduated from both FAMU and the Academy of Arts Architecture & Design in Prague (UMPRUM), and her film *History of the Shrouded Screen* (2021), shot on "material," explores the "surface" of the film screen.

All of the exhibiting artists have the ambition to express themselves through the moving image, either narratively (Ján Mančuška, Jakub Jansa, Radek Brousil, Lea Petříková), or in an essayistic way (Zbyněk Baladrán: *Night of the World*, 2011; Tomáš Svoboda: *I Live Film*, 2015).

The book *Thinking Through Film*, edited by Sandra Baborovská and Jiří Anger, provides tools for understanding the continuities and discontinuities between classical film montage and its "second life" in contemporary hypermedia art and culture.

The collective monograph explores the ways in which film montage resonates in contemporary art and media space. The texts focus on the analysis of film editing in general, on the viewer's perception of moving image montages in galleries, and on how to transfer the notion of montage into the realm of human observation. The book features six texts (four new, two newly translated – essays by Sergei Eisenstein and Georges Didi-Huberman), which look at the old-new topic of film editing from the perspective of theory and practice. The intention was to include articles by both theorizing practitioners and practicing theorists. The former are conceptual-minded filmmaker-editors (Ondřej Vavrečka) who demonstrate, in their own artistic language, the extent to which the theoretical conception of editing is based on material practice. The latter are authors with a theoretical background (Sandra Baborovská, Noemi Purkrábková, and Jiří Anger), whose practical experience, either curatorial or artistic, is reflected in their thinking about editing and audiovisual culture.

The exhibition will be accompanied by screenings of selected works that border between film and visual art at the Ponrepo cinema. Each of the three evenings will focus on one of

G PRESS RELEASE HMP

the key questions related to the film medium: the projection of moving images, the relationship between the visual and the auditory experiences, and the existence of film in the face of time.

The first evening program will offer a confrontation between the works of Martin Ježek and Jan Kulka, two artists experimenting with analogue film screening. Both of them unscrupulously and quite deliberately shatter our ideas of what a cinematic experience should be. They demonstrate what technical processes and mechanisms make it possible for us to see smoothly unfolding images of a familiar world on the screen, but also how to use these processes subversively to (re)explore the very foundations of the film medium and the moving image. In doing so, they materialize a vision of cinema that aims not to represent and narrate at all costs, but to keep inventing new ways to assault the sensory and nervous systems of the audience.

In the second part of the series, we will focus on the relationship between silent and sound film. The cinematic experience is and always has been audio-visual. Even in the days of early cinema, sound was everywhere: live musical accompaniment, the voice of the commentator, the roar of the audience, the rattle of the projector. But what if we tried to isolate the visual and audio components? We will look at the topic through the works of Ondřej Vavrečka and Sara Pinheiro. While Pinheiro is mainly a sound designer, Vavrečka is a director and editor working mainly with photochemical film. The clash between sonic composition and silent film will show how we deal not only with the presence of just one of the film's defining components, but also with the absence of the other.

The third and final evening will reveal the film medium's ambiguous relationship to time and temporality. A film can be both a linearly unfolding plot and a constant repetition of the same frames, an imprint preserving a once-captured moment and a physical object inevitably subject to aging. Through the current films of Czech filmmakers and visual artists – Lea Petříková and Adela Babanová – we get to experience two notions of temporality: a temporality that exceeds the horizon of everyday experience and a temporality that locks us in the present moment.

G PRESS RELEASE HMP

Light Underground V

Radek Brousil: Can You Still Feel the Butterflies?

Prague City Gallery

The Stone Bell House

Old Town Square 13, Prague 1

Tue – Sun, 3 p.m. – 8 p.m.

The fifth edition of the Light Underground series, funded by the Art for the City program, will present Radek Brousil's "zero-waste" film *Can You Still Feel the Butterflies?* (2021), screened in the basement of the Stone Bell House and accompanied by sustainable set pieces that were literally tailor-made for the medieval premises using upcycled fabrics.

We talk about the end of the world, but we can't seem to feel it; we can't seem to grasp its true meaning or reach. The author achieves an authentic, intimate experience through excessive theatricality, avant-garde costumes and props, and stylized dialogues based on the lyrics of 90s indie-emo songs. They function as a reflection of the cultural collective consciousness, consisting of descriptions of personal feelings of love, anxiety, pain and self-destructive tendencies.

Radek Brousil, in collaboration with the exhibition's architect, Miroslav Pazdera, deconstructed the film into backdrops (a gate from the mid-19th century by the sculptor Václav Levý, a fabric installation in a functionalist church from the 1920s) and a neon sign that illuminates the medieval basement and gives the entire audiovisual project a contemporary aesthetic. Thus, different eras meet in one romantic story culminating in an original song performed by the filmmaker (vocals and lyrics by Radek Brousil; music by Igor Bruso and Radek Brousil).

The exhibition from the Light Underground series is the fifth event supported by the Art for the City program.



Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits at seven venues: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bilek, Troja Château and František Bilek's House in Chýnov.

G PRESS RELEASE HMP

Creator and curator: Sandra Baborovská

Architectural design:

Tomáš Svoboda (*Myslet filmem*, 2. patro)

Jakub Červenka (Jakub Jansa: *The Garden of Problems*, 1. patro)

Miroslav Pazdera (Radek Brousil: *Can You Still Feel the Butterflies?*, Light Underground V)

Graphic design: Anymade Studio

The exhibition program of the Prague City Gallery is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

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

Admission: 150 CZK full fare (adults) / 60 CZK reduced fare (students) / 20 CZK seniors

Press contact:

Michaela Vrchotová

+420 725 818 721

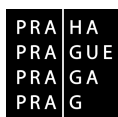
vrchotova@ghmp.cz

Further information:

www.ghmp.cz

www.facebook.com/ghmp.cz

www.instagram.com/ghmp.cz



Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits at seven venues: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bílek, Troja Château and František Bílek's House in Chýnov.