

Bucolica by Anna Hulačová at Kunstraum Dornbirn

THISISPAPER, June 8, 2026

Alexander Zaxarov



At Kunstraum Dornbirn in [Austria](#), [Anna Hulačová's](#) "Bucolica" transforms the historic industrial assembly hall into a stage where ancient myth and speculative futures converge under the sign of agrarian life.

This is not simply an exhibition of sculpture, but a total environment—part pastoral vision, part industrial ruin, and part sacred rite. Hulačová draws on the allegorical framework of bucolic poetry to reimagine the countryside as a site of ideological contest, where the past and future of labour, nature, and technology wrestle for shape.

The architectural intervention is a silent yet towering presence in this narrative. A cluster of metallic buildings—sheet metal silos, naves, and towers—anchor the space with the monumental gravity of agrarian functionalism. Their forms echo Le Corbusier's 1933 admiration for agricultural structures as modern temples, but here they are stripped of utopian sheen. Instead, they house scenes of strange communion: bodies locked in tasks both timeless and enigmatic, machines of ambiguous utility, and gestures frozen in concrete. This imagined farmstead is not productive, but contemplative, suspended between parable and post-human condition.

Hulačová's figures, rendered in rough grey concrete, resist humanisation. Their features are displaced by glazed ceramics or schematic ink drawings; limbs taper off into abstractions; organs dissolve into honeycomb. In a poetic inversion of ecological process, her sculpture "Calf Bearer" was partially colonised by bees during its outdoor gestation. The use of living organisms, and reference to "bugonia" myths of rebirth from animal carcasses, folds the sculpture into a continuum of decay and regeneration. These hybrids of human, animal, and insect invoke a deep time beyond the anthropocene—a world in which nature not only survives industrialism but metabolises it.

Against this backdrop, figures like "The Man with the Hoe" or "Jester with Toaster" become emblematic. The former evokes Socialist Realist tropes of glorified labour but undercuts them with subtle disfigurement; the latter infuses humour and fatalism into the mix. A jester bearing a toaster suggests both absurdity and prophecy, as if to say that even in dystopia, the domestic rituals of nourishment and chance persist. Hulačová is not nostalgic for either collectivist pasts or rural idylls—rather, she sees them as tools to excavate deeper tensions between community and individualism, subsistence and spectacle.

The logic of agriculture here is not about production, but about cosmology. Fields are not ploughed, but symbolised. Machines do not function, but gesture. Everything is imbued with the aura of necessity and futurity. Hulačová invites us to think of agricultural architecture not only as infrastructure, but as myth-making apparatus—as sites where stories about human survival, power, and sacrifice are staged. Her built environment resists utility, opting instead for ambiguity and ritual.

"Bucolica" is thus a quiet epic. It traverses the continuum from Virgil's shepherds to Corbusian idealism, from folk motifs to futuristic drones, from mythic fecundity to capitalist fatigue. It questions whether the land—and by extension, the built structures that claim to sustain it—can ever be ideologically neutral. In Hulačová's hands, architecture becomes sculpture, sculpture becomes ecology, and agriculture becomes a deeply coded language for human hopes and failures.

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review

ARTIST IN FOCUS: Meet Anna Hulačová.

A sculptor translating traditional crafts into contemporary art.

"Artist in Focus" is a new column that shines a light on individual artists by showcasing their portfolios and artworks, exploring their inspirations and personal journeys. As our team travels to various art fairs, festivals, art weeks, and biennales, we uncover emerging talents and share their stories, giving our readers an authentic glimpse into the artists who are shaping the contemporary art world today.

Posted on:
06/12/2024

Edited by:
Berenika Balcer

Anna Hulačová → (b. 1984) is a Czech artist, who merges ancient symbolisms with contemporary art. By using a wide range of traditional sculptural techniques, she corresponds with her roots as a graduate of the Prague Academy of Fine Arts with a degree in sculpture and intermedia work. While by combining brutalist features, such as concrete with organic forms, she points to the hybrid nature of modernity, where distant forms merge and mutate, forming a new reality. As such, Hulačová's work has a distinct apocalyptic feel, heightened by her use of different textures and materials.

In the artist's world, the themes freely inspired by the 1990s Western mysticism, UFOs, crop circle iconology, Czech mythology and brutalism intertwine, translating well into the form of contemporary art. She forms a distinct artistic language – rich and symbolic, proving that nature is messy yet beautifully relentless in its adaptability and creativity. Organisms grow to adapt, with the surroundings transforming into a kind of sci-fi landscape. The viennacontemporary fair audience had a chance to see Hulačová's latest work, *Begonia and Alien Bees*, in which she expands on the topic of beekeeping, invoking these very dystopian and utopian sentiments. All of her works – endlessly captivating to the viewer, even though the artist fully embraces the idea of an inevitable end. Yet she gracefully searches for new alterations and ideas to give us both hope and survival tools.

Anna Hulačová is represented by the [Pedro Cera Gallery →](#).



Anna Hulačová, Untitled, 2023, concrete, glazed ceramic, variable dimensions. Photo Václav Litvan, Courtesy of the artist and Pedro Cera.

Anna Hulačová: Pheromones and Gentlemen

Contemporânea, July, 2023

Enzo Di Marino

_Contemporânea

Anna Hulačová: *Pheromones and Gentlemen*



— by Enzo Di Marino

When it comes to sculpture, especially when the sculpture portrays the human being, today more than ever, the discourse inevitably focuses on the function of statuary, on the intrinsic meaning aimed at monumentalising the depicted subject, consigning it to the eternity of history.

Since this process is still under discussion, I think you will forgive me if I don't even hint at a possible answer to this issue. The discussion on this topic seems, somewhat like everything today, to polarise into two diametrically opposite attitudes: on one side, we see those who still consider the preservation of (and perhaps even the creation of new) monuments dedicated to the deeds and heroes of history fundamental; and on the other one, there are those who deem it necessary to dismantle some, if not all, of the monuments that mostly depict white men who, through a strange reinterpretation of the past in a contemporary context, are accused of various timeless and ageless crimes.

Now, *Pheromones and Gentlemen* is absolutely an exhibition—the second by

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Anna Hulačová at Galeria Pedro Cera in Lisbon—that at first glance appears to be a "statuary" exhibition, although we quickly realise that there is a *small* short-circuit between the classic subject-object opposition.

Upon entering the gallery, our attention is immediately drawn to this group of men sculpted in raw concrete. These gentlemen, evoked from a not-so-recent past, seem engaged in ordinary conversation, smoking and paying no attention to their surroundings. (Not even to the fact that one of them is leaning against a giant iron! But we'll come back to this later.) Perhaps the first characteristic that becomes evident is the powerful materiality of the works—all the details sculpted in raw concrete radiate with a blinding anonymous grey. It's impossible not to be struck by how the artist manipulates the material through a skilful play of volumes and textures, giving ordinary concrete a plasticity usually attributed to much nobler materials. Up to this point, everything seems normal, until we realise that the heads end with a flat surface, as if the face had been perfectly sliced. In place of the typical individual features of the face, we find graphite drawings, flows, almost cosmic motions of distant planets. These sculptures, reminiscent of Soviet brutalist buildings, completely subvert the idea of classical statuary; and instead of "celebrating" specificity, they seem to elevate anonymity. Monuments to none!

This complexity, which we could define as purely technical, however, underlies something hidden within—a set of references and symbols that reveal a new narrative. And it is precisely when I become aware of this that a series of contrasts emerge, both directly and indirectly, from the enormous installation in the first room of the gallery.

A gigantic iron, almost resembling a spacecraft, generates an evident contrast in the eyes of the viewer. Its sparkling, metallic forms speak of a world that is very different from the imperfect and porous one of concrete. This new element seems to be a tribute to technique, to everything that has been born and generated by the hand and ingenuity of human beings. Though a lifeless, decidedly unnatural entity, it presents a new ambiguity. The wire that should connect the appliance to electricity, through voluptuous lines and sudden curves, leads us to a third sculptural level. At the end of the line, a bee, perched in the centre of an orchid, feeds and inadvertently collects pollen to spread to other flowers, thus allowing the plant to continue its existence and reproduce. This new level, which we could call "natural," possesses, like the others, its own specific materiality that differs from the human and technical elements. A synthetic blue, almost plastic, definitely unnatural, contrasts with the reproduced subject.

An initial interpretation from a spiritual and symbolic perspective unmistakably comes to light: the bee, dating back to ancient Greece, has been regarded as a representation of both immortality and fertility, as well as the realm beyond life. Anna Hulačová places us once again in front of contrasting symbols and elements—life and death, artificial and natural, masculine and feminine. After all, regardless of how anachronistic it may be, the idea of conflict has always been paramount to generating political and social balances, or simply new ideas, if we think of it in terms of a discussion between opposing positions. The key to

Anna Hulačová: Pheromones and Gentlemen

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understanding the work of the Czech artist seems to revolve around the possibility of creating new, different narratives by attempting to commission and hybridise positions that are too easily considered polar opposites.

Today, more than ever, we tend to read contemporaneity through dichotomies—distinct entities that live on parallel planes, which sometimes intersect but we think will always remain divided. It is easy for me to think of the most classic division that I seem to hear in everyone's mouth: there is a clear definition of what is natural, radically opposed to the idea of what is artificial. The enormous installation that gives the exhibition its title seems to shout at us when we stubbornly get it wrong. The three elements (natural, human, and technological) merge into a single body, speaking to us of an interconnection that is now inevitable and that perhaps is ferrying us into a future where the boundaries between categories will become increasingly blurred and impossible to define. However, the artist does not limit herself to the classic dystopian ending so dear to contemporary science fiction (mostly cinematic) narrative. Instead, she seems to speak to us of possible futures. Particularly for this utopian and dystopian future, Anna Hulačová goes beyond certain models, as well as certain power relationships, which, like ruins, are destined to be abandoned to the lethal immortality of history.

Embracing these convictions, elements that initially seemed contrasting to me appear much more harmonious; and when looking at the other works in the exhibition, it's also possible to perceive the narrative and material fluidity that emerges from the sculptures. Under this new light, upon entering the second room of the gallery, the work *Stuck in a Bush* stands before me, akin to the finest of dramatic conclusions. Using its thorny branches, a thicket of brambles, of a "very natural" synthetic blue, traps some concrete elements, ruins of a past world, including an electric razor with an insect-like body, among others.

Once again, Anna Hulačová presents us with elements and materials that seem to come from different eras, shattering the convention that history is cyclical and progress linear. She offers possible visions of *Days of a Future Past!*



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Alien conspiracies and agro-degradation. Anna Hulačová in conversation.

blok magazine, December 22, 2021

Katarzyna Różniak

b l o k

22 December 2021

Alien conspiracies and agro-degradation. Anna Hulačová in conversation

Katarzyna Różniak



[Anna Hulačová, Alienbees, 2021 concrete; pencil on silk Courtesy of the artist and hunt kastner, Prague. Photo Tytus Szabelski.](#)

We are talking in relation to your current exhibition “Alienbees, save us please!”, which we are pleased to present at the Arsenal Gallery in Białystok until 10 January 2022. The publication of our conversation is also accompanied by photographs taken by Tytus Szabelski in your studio, in the countryside near Prague where you’re currently based. So first I’d like to ask you about how important it is for your work, that you grew up (and live again) in a rural area?

Actually, I don’t know how important it is for me that I grew up in a rural environment, but in any case there is something subconsciously rooted there. Otherwise, I don’t think I’d be inclined to move from the city to the country again. Rural areas are now sort of deserted islands of life in the midst of increasingly toxic monocultural, inhospitable farm fields or dying forests. When you live in this environment and observe the degradation of your surroundings, you cannot help but react.

What motivated you to address the historical topic of agricultural industrialization in Czechoslovakia?

When I lived in the city, I had more romantic ideas about the countryside. A kind of search for the mystique of abandoned places and customs. At the same time, I could still see my father, how passionate yet depressing it was for him to exist as a small farmer in the present day. In the countryside I also feel more intensely the contemporary problems of the region, and along with that I am also interested in the history of the problems of agriculture, which is closely linked to collectivisation and industrialisation. So I am motivated mainly by the stories of small farmers, such as my parents, who went through the past regime and collectivisation, and the related observation of the state of things around them. The topic of ecology and agriculture is becoming more and more important to me. And then I work with the search for historical connections and contemporary consequences. In doing so I connect thematic contrasts, like utopia and dystopia.

The titles of the exhibition and one of the works presented are also connected with your childhood spent in the countryside in the 90s. Can you tell us where the idea for the “Alienbees” came from?

Bees are my favourite subject because pollinators are an indicator of the cleanliness of the environment. And it’s fantastic how bees are able to adapt to changing conditions – there is a unique evolutionary mechanism that works in them, for example in terms of body transformation in reaction to the parasite varroa mite. I imagine the toxic landscape then, as a strange inhospitable universe in which surviving animals have to mutate or transform

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Anna Hulačová, *Cooperation 4 (Emergency Call)*, 2021, concrete; pencil, paint on metal sheet. Courtesy of the artist and hunt kastner, Prague. Photo Tytus Szabelski.

to survive. Like aliens in their own alienated universe – the landscape. The insect world is also alien to us in many ways, and I enjoy the idea of mutant bees reminiscent of the aliens from the covers of mystery sci fi magazines in the '90s, when it was believed in my neighborhood that they made crop circles. The '90s are also very interesting in this regard in terms of society's perception of the climate of eco-collapse and agro-history itself. It's as if those emerging crop circles and the idea of alien-conspiracy obscures the nature of the planet's already escalating problems. And instead we have turned into a kind of esoteric sci fi world of beings who have influence over us and will either destroy us or save us. For the exhibition at Arsenal, I had a subtitle in reserve, "When alien-conspiracy gave birth to a mutant of agro-degradation". But I used the shorter "Alienbees, save us, please!"

Why are you asking them to save us?

It sounds like a fanatical prayer to aliens who could save the planet for us, because we don't believe we are capable of doing anything about it. It's just that we've woken up from the hangover of the '90s to a much harsher reality, and in retrospect the circles in the monocultural grain fields seem rather ridiculous. And the current dystopian mood is really spot on. However, if I incorporate real earth bees into the prayer – perceived as aliens, then the prayer would not have to sound so insignificant and it already makes sense to me.

How long have you been working with the insect theme? Do they have a special meaning for you?

Insects are fascinating creatures. Many environmental paradoxes are observed especially through insects – for example, for a bee, the city is currently a cleaner environment than the countryside, which is surrounded by fields treated with pesticides. Beekeepers who have apiaries on the roofs of townhouses in urban areas observe that, unlike in rural areas, the chemical composition of honey from the city is better.

There is also an interesting history and symbolism of bees in different cultures. In the past, I worked with bees by placing figural sculptures on top of active hives. A part of the bee colony, without the queen, peacefully (and temporarily) expanded from the original hive into a cavity in the body of the statue, where it created a new comb and lived throughout the season. This process is symbolic and is inspired by Greek legends. Honeycombs built by bees inside the statue replace the entrails, important organs that can symbolize the soul, as the original systematic structure inside the body of the statue. The ancient Greeks believed that the bee was a symbol of the eternity of the soul, immortality and non-sexuality because, before domestication, bees often lived in the cavities of dead bodies. Likewise, other ancient cultures associated bees with the immortality of the spirit. The bees that emerged from the cavities of the dead bodies were seen as ghosts rising back from the kingdom of the dead.

Could you also say something more about the works in which your sculptures become utilitarian, taking the form of beehives?

Beehives could again be perceived as art objects – sculptures, the purpose of which is not only to beautify the landscape, but also because the hives are beautiful for their usefulness and ecological function. Following last year, and in the current state of the climate crisis, I have perceived an overall social desire to move from the interior to the exterior, and to breathe cleaner air. The creation of beehives does not have to be perceived solely

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as a revitalization of folklore or countryside aesthetics – I do believe that the creation of sculptures as beehives has untapped potential, especially with regard to contemporary artistic approaches. We should also see a big challenge in that. The potential is also witnessed in the current revitalization of land art; eco-poetic sculptural realizations in fields, meadows, or parks.

In your artistic bio it is rarely mentioned that before you decided to pursue a career in art you also studied conservation. Don't you think that these studies have significantly influenced your artistic practice?

Yes, I think it has certainly influenced me a lot not only in the craft, but also in how I perceive historical themes and symbols more as puzzles that help me add to the context of today. Why do some things and mistakes keep repeating themselves, where is the origin of the current state of civilization? Of course, history is also being rewritten, but symbolic references in art are still the greatest rope that allows us to trace the essence of human deeds and events. Suddenly you feel as if the past is a possible present and vice versa...

What historical artistic references are most important to you in the works? Could you say something more about your artistic inspirations?

I like the aesthetics of Soviet Brutalism, it is very symbolic for me not only because of the material of concrete. Likewise, the topic of the already mentioned "collectivization", which is only part of the more complex concept of industrialization. Historically, the link between brutalism and collectivisation works primarily through the seizure of the landscape. There are many industries that suffer from this, from beekeeping to land degradation. Equally, I like to work with the morphology of Futurism and Czech Civilism, which was a celebration of the emerging industrialism, with Otto Gutfreund, for example, creating man and machine as one. I enjoy transforming this celebration of optimistic, even utopian visions of the future into a contemporary dystopian reality.

I know you are interested in working with opposing values. You have just described how you turn the historical utopia of industrialization of agriculture into a contemporary dystopia of environmental degradation. But then, looking more closely at the role of water in this work, its reincarnative, life-giving potential, I again became convinced that the overall message was positive, even soothing. Is there also hope in your vision?

As you mention, I want both to be included in the work. Both material and thematic contrasts. And when I approach a sculpture that represents a dystopian mood, it can still carry a kind of exaggeration or humor, like life contained in detail. This humour embedded in the detail is precisely the surviving soul – the life in the concrete masses.

The same goes for the sculptures you call hybrids or mutants: do you see them as organisms degenerated by ecological catastrophe or as an opportunity for new, transformative life forms?

Again, both are intended. Animals have a tendency to transform and mutate because that is what ensures their survival. They either die out or take on a new form of existence, albeit in more aggressive forms.

I also have to ask you about the material of the artworks. Why do you choose to work in concrete?



6. Anna Hulačová, Flowers, 2019
Concrete
Courtesy of the artist and hunt kastner, Prague. Photo Tytus Szabelski.

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For me, concrete is a very eco-controversial and symbolic material. It carries a kind of brutality. Its origin is also very rough and at the same time it is the material we are most often surrounded by. It is everywhere and in all sectors, and such a commonplace material that is becoming a folk construction material for modern man. On the other hand, I like fragile, surreal elements, which I like to combine with these brutalist and futuristic aesthetics and forms. So brutal concrete can be a great base and in combination with other materials, shapes and thematically produces a refreshing contrast.



Anna Hulačová, *Moth Love*, 2018, concrete; pencil, paint on metal sheet. Courtesy of the artist and hunt kastner, Prague. Photo Tytus Szabelski.

Are your works created in closed thematic series? In Białystok you present sculptures created over the course of several years, which nevertheless creates a coherent installation, a landscape.

I often work in thematic series, but in recent years it has been the same theme and the individual sculptures interact with each other, both older and newer, to create an imaginary mutating landscape. Of course I choose individual sculptures for each “new installation landscape”.

What would you like to work on in the future?

I am still keen to continue developing the theme of agriculture further.

Artist	Anna Hulačová
Exhibition	<i>Alienbees, save us, please!</i>
Place / venue	Arsenał Gallery Białystok
Dates	19 November 2021–10 January 2022
Curated by	Katarzyna Różniak
Photos	Tytus Szabelski
Website	galeria-arsenal.pl/en
Index	Anna Hulačová Katarzyna Różniak

Expresso

Culturas

Exposições

Metamorfoses do feminino



Há qualquer coisa de robótico nas figuras, que exibem concavidades nos rostos

uma surreal negociação entre memória e mudança

TEXTO **CELSO MARTINS**

Um artista contemporâneo pode ver no passado um arquivo de características estéticas associadas a relações de poder e alvos potenciais de um desdobramento crítico. É o caso da checa Anna Hulačová, cuja escultura possui uma capacidade de impregnar iconograficamente os materiais que utiliza.

THE NEXT SHIFT

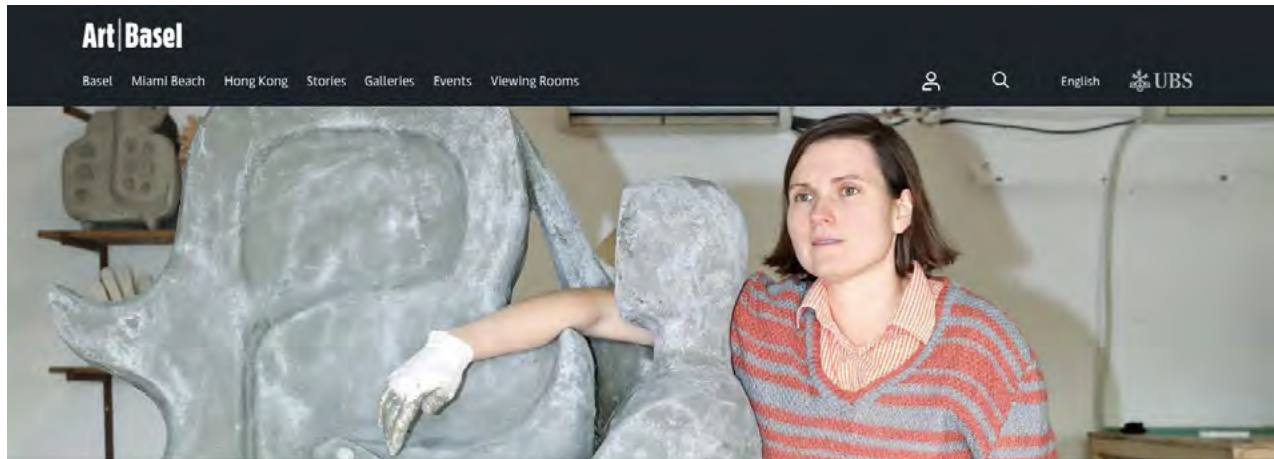
Anna Hulačová

Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisboa,
www.pedrocera.com, até 31

Espalhadas pelo espaço, vemos cinco figuras femininas. Uma está sentada à frente de uma máquina de costura, as restantes de pé segurando objetos como um ferro de engomar, uma batedeira ou uma liquidificadora. Todas assentam em bases bidimensionais

que figuram imagens condizentes. Numa parede, um friso de ondas estilizadas é base de figuras com os mesmos objetos; noutra, juntam-se estranhas naturezas-mortas vegetais. Este cenário seria facilmente rotulável como um ambiente doméstico impregnado pela condição feminina, e já muito glosado pela história da arte. Mas outros elementos baralham a linearidade das representações. O brutalismo das figuras é evocativo de um certo desenvolvimento do modernismo, com manifestações importante na arquitetura e na escultura do pós-guerra, com forte incidência nos países que viveram regimes comunistas. Isso é reforçado pelos materiais usados nelas (o concreto, o metal), que nos remetem para uma ideia de solidez e durabilidade. Por outro lado, há qualquer coisa de robótico nas figuras, que exibem concavidades nos rostos, ou nos seus braços simplificados, como se se quisesse enfatizar um prolongamento do corpo nos seus labores. Na verdade, estas figuras teatrais são agregadoras de símbolos que se desenham nas suas anatomias, o que permite ler cada uma delas como uma sede de evocações que podem vir de uma versão modernista do folclore ou de um filme *sci-fi*. Nelas encontramos afinal um mundo híbrido e contraditório que mistura tempos, materiais, criaturas, que se oculta na aparente rigidez do concreto para caminhar para a transfiguração, como se vários automatismos vindos do passado (a tradição, a industrialização) tivessem em si inscrita a possibilidade do colapso.

Anna Hulačová, the apprentice carpenter turned rising art star
Art Basel, April, 2019
Kimberly Bradley



Anna Hulačová, the apprentice carpenter turned rising art star

Kimberly Bradley

Kimberly Bradley speaks with the Czech artist whose practice combines science-fiction and local folklore

'Mutation is everywhere. We live in a sci-fi world now,' says the Czech artist Anna Hulačová. The sci-fi reference sounds odd coming from a thirtysomething artist who lives and works in a Czech village and whose father is a carpenter and farmer. Then again, there's nothing odd about it. Hulačová and her figurative sculptures explore the web of tensions between local and global, utopia and dystopia, organic and digital, evolution and mutation.

In the dead of winter, I meet Hulačová at **hunt kastner** gallery in central Prague. She's made the trip from the countryside to see me. Most of the larger pieces in her studio are already on their way to Art Basel Hong Kong via Berlin, so better to see a range of work – busts and masks in concrete, a meaty hand carved from wood, a delicate insect of salmon-hued silicone – in gallery storage (as well as, to my delight, on view in an expansive group exhibition called 'Entomos' at the Prague City Gallery, alongside pieces by Hungarian sculptor Zsófia Kerestes and Czech Surrealist František Janoušek). As we speak and view work that the artist has produced since graduating from Prague's Academy of Fine Arts in 2012, her personality unfolds: She's both humble and hungrily curious, softly spoken but also adamant about the issues dear to her. Born in 1984, Hulačová experienced the last years of communism prior to the Czech Republic's Velvet Revolution in 1989. Her work incorporates traditional or even folkloric techniques as it subtly critiques late capitalism and the technology driving it – from what one could call a post-communist perspective.



Anna Hulačová in her studio. Photo by Michaela Čejková for Art Basel.

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Anna Hulačová, the apprentice carpenter turned rising art star

Art Basel, April, 2019

Kimberly Bradley

'I like combinations and contrasts,' explains the artist. Although her sculptures are usually monochromatic in gray, white, or natural linden wood, they are laden with references that span eras, movements, materials, and topics both hot-button and eternal; they are like three-dimensional collages through space, time, and art history. They also explore figuration, which especially during her studies in the 2000s, ran counter to almost-expected sculptural abstraction. 'I'm interested in working with a representative of what existed in the past, what defined ideology and social ideals in sculpture,' the artist said in a 2016 Czech film profile, 'and to compare them to the present.'

Some older works refer to Greek antiquity, others to beastly creatures from Central European folklore. Newer sculptures take inspiration from Surrealism, Futurism, and the century-old public sculptures of the Czech artist Otto Gutfreund – his work, often depicting people celebrating progress, is still visible on Prague's facades. Many connect to current issues: In *Cosmonauts* (2018), two helmeted beekeepers in intricately decorated cement relief remind us of today's insect apocalypse, but with triumphant upstretched arms they also evoke Soviet-era space travelers. Smaller floor sculptures in concrete with flat surfaces bearing graphite drawings, such as *InSections*; *Wasp Madonna* (2018), combine the animal and vegetal.



Anna Hulačová, *Cosmonauts*, 2018. Courtesy of the artist and hunt kastner, Prague. Photo by Tim Bowdich.

Her complex installations go further to illustrate modern life's social tensions: On view last year at both the Baltic Triennial and the Fondation Louis Vuitton, *Underworld Upside Down* (2018) sees stylized figures bearing home appliances. Near them, a mysterious snakelike form loops toward a Dionysus figure with bubbles gurgling from its belly as it reclines atop an upturned swimming pool. It's a comment on our insatiable wants and the 'digestive tract' of capitalism. Another installation, showing the eerie (and surrealist) atomization of the nuclear family – the artist has a daughter, now almost 4 years old, with her partner, also a sculptor – with multiple figures in a sterile kitchen, was recently on view at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

This is heady stuff, but underlying the conceptual level is Hulačová's deep love of materiality. 'My father was a carpenter and restorer of furniture,' she explains. Before she began art school in 2006 – an interesting decision for a rural student with few artworld connections at the time – she trained as a carpenter as well. 'Wood was my first material.' But her current favored medium is concrete, which came later, and has stuck. She plays with its texture, surface, and shape, carving into it, drawing upon it, leaving it rough or sanding it smooth. 'I like its grayness, its dryness. It's a common material,' she says. 'I use concrete as a base and other materials on top – they always feel so wet and juicy in contrast. If you take the moisture away from concrete, you are left with sand and dust.'

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Anna Hulačová, the apprentice carpenter turned rising art star
Art Basel, April, 2019
Kimberly Bradley



The artist working on a new piece in her studio. Photo by Michaela Čejková for Art Basel.

More than once in our conversation, Hulačová mentions spirituality and mysticism. Recurring symbols such as hands or bees – including real honeycombs and hives incorporated into sculptures – transcend mere representation. Hands are about labor, and also philosophically connect to the eternal, while the ancient Greeks saw bees as a symbol of immortality and fertility, but also the underworld. Interestingly, in the artist's human figures, hands (and faces) are often absent or eerily modified.

Hulačová tells me that, at the moment, she is particularly concerned with the Czech history of agricultural collectivism, in which small farms were forced to consolidate during communist industrialization in the 1950s, and the 75% drop in insect species in Central Europe since (newer sculptures are the insects rendered in salmon-hued silicone). 'What Anna doesn't talk about much is that she's an activist,' the gallerist Kacha Kastner adds – hunt kastner began working with the artist after her 2013 show at the Prague gallery 35m2. Hulačová is working against the use of glyphosate in Czech farming; a germinating idea is to create a large Land Art-style work in local fields. 'It's very important how landscape changes,' says the artist. 'I like exploring how mutation continues. It starts in a small organism and it's coming to us, in our bodies.'



The artist and one of her works at her studio. Photo by Michaela Čejková for Art Basel.

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These themes and her hypnotic forms have certainly hit a nerve. Due to an increasingly busy exhibition schedule and burgeoning career, Hulačová recently made the difficult decision to give up her position as assistant sculpture professor at her alma mater. At Art Basel Hong Kong, she will show a selection of mutant concrete sculptures along with objects such as a wooden skateboard in ornate intarsia. The wood came from her father's archive; he fabricated the piece to Hulačová's design ('My dad wanted me to help him after my studies, but now it looks like he's helping me!' she jokes). Pieces like tables and pedestals are creeping into her production; they support the sculptures but are also artworks in their own right. The work digs deep into the artist's own histories but also brilliantly captures universal high and low cultures far beyond.

For me, one question still hangs in the air: Is Hulačová a pessimist or an optimist? She chuckles. 'It depends on the day,' she says, a grin slowly appearing across her face. 'Sometimes I feel very apocalyptic but...I think it's optimistic to be apocalyptic.' More contrast and contradiction, but there is indeed a poetry in predicting devastation as well as paradise. 'We need utopian visions to survive, but we need to be critical as well.'



A chicken interacting with one of Hulačová's sculptures in her garden. Photo by Michaela Čejková for Art Basel.

Éntomos at Prague City Gallery, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace
ArtReview, April 1, 2019
Max L. Feldman

ArtReview

***Éntomos* at Prague City Gallery, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace**

Max L. Feldman Reviews 01 April 2019 *ArtReview*



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The Czech artist Anna Hulačová and her Hungarian contemporary Zsófia Keresztes, both sculptors, share some grounding ideas; they express them, though, in quite different ways. One mutual reference point for their eerie sculptures is Surrealism, and the proto-Surrealist fantasies of Hieronymus Bosch, especially *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1490–1500), clearly influence Keresztes's lurid visions. And that Prague Surrealism, still underappreciated outside the Czech Republic, inspires both artists is made by the inclusion of František Janoušek (1890–1943), a significant figure in the movement, to anchor their work in classic Surrealist practice. *Éntomos*, named after έντομον, the Ancient Greek word for 'dissection', 'insect' or 'to offer as a (sacrificial) victim', places the sculptures of Hulačová and Keresztes alongside Janoušek's energetic illustrations for *Life of the Bee* (1901) by the Belgian Symbolist poet Maurice Maeterlinck. The magnificent seventeenth-century Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace is an appropriate location: Janoušek's drawings are part of the Prague City Gallery collection housed here, and the building's Baroque interiors contrast Hulačová and Keresztes's wild imagination.

Hulačová's work has changed in recent years. Earlier pieces like *Cult of Personality* (2016) use wood and honeycombs, but she's recently moved towards concrete sculptures and pencil drawings. Despite this shift, her sculptures still contain recognisably organic figures: human bodies, insects, plantlike things. Their sombre tone has a darkly humorous edge as her characters appear in the colours of pale flesh, ghostly apparitions or grey brutalist architecture. *Portrait with an Ant* (2017), for example, looks from some angles like a typical bust, with shoulders, a neck, ears and hair made from pale pink ceramic with white streaks. Yet the face, or lack of it, is a shock, replaced with an almost blank white digital print, a single ant crawling across what would once have been a forehead.

This work sets the tone for Hulačová's other works, in which human body parts are replaced with consumer goods. Series-piece *Ascension Mark I* (2017), first shown at Frieze London, is just one example of a tool – a rotary shaver – taking the place of a hollowed-out human head. The creature in *Praying Mantis and Rotary Shaver* (2017), a glass box containing these figures made of Super Sculpey polymer clay, glares menacingly out at the viewer, perched on top of the shaver like a conquered enemy.

Keresztes, meanwhile, is not inspired by humanity's relation to nature, but virtual reality. She makes nebulous, fluid creatures from ghoulishly pink, yellow and violet glass mosaic tiles, resembling natural oddities from a horticulturalist's dreams mixed with interior design features from the imperial baths in Budapest. *The Safety of Distance* (2018) is in portrait format, hanging on the wall, but stubby tentacles protrude from the picture plane as if reaching out from a portal to another dimension. *Altar (Sharing Our Final Belongings)* (2018) is a strange creature, like a monument honouring the third gender of 'androgynous creatures, with both male and female elements, descended from the moon' described in Aristophanes's speech from Plato's *Symposium*. Two congealed, lumbering slabs of bio-matter appear to hover just aboveground. They have horn- or earlike appendages at the top, and a lolling yellow tongue dangling just between their 'heads'. Though the two halves form one creature, they are constrained by orange ropes with dollops of liquid hanging from the bottom. There are points in the middle where the creature's clumpy 'arms' and 'legs' are coiled with rope and swollen like clotted flesh.

Hulačová and Keresztes's works stand and fall with the current fashionable interest in the Anthropocene. Though this makes their interventions timely, they are both joining and competing with many other artists in questioning whether it is even worth representing human bodies in any conventional sense. The stakes of this kind of work are, nevertheless, shared by all of us, since we all face unprecedented conditions. Not only are we all overwhelmed by 'cyberblitz', but the whole species is threatened by ecological crisis, which has already seriously damaged the insect and bee populations necessary to support natural life as we know it. *Portrait with an Ant* and *Altar...*, in particular, ask if the reimagination and reconfiguration of organic life is a threat or, perhaps, something to be embraced as a way to survive impending disaster.

Éntomos at Prague City Gallery, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, Prague, 21 November – 3 March

A Czech Artist Sends Her Message to Hong Kong

The New York Times, March 27, 2019

Ginanne Brownell Mitic

The New York Times

A Czech Artist Sends Her Message to Hong Kong

By Ginanne Brownell Mitic

March 27, 2019

PRAGUE — For the Czech sculptor Anna Hulacova, sometimes art is a family affair.

Her husband, Vaclav Litvan, whom she met when they were students at Prague's Academy of Fine Arts and who is also a sculptor, sometimes works with her on the technical side of her pieces, and he often helps install her works in museums and galleries for shows.

Her aunt, Zdenka Kucerova, who is a beekeeper back in Ms. Hulacova's home village of Kasejovice (about a 90-minute drive southwest of Prague), has also had a hand in helping the 34-year-old artist with her conceptual art over the years. They designed a way for Ms. Hulacova to put some of her works, with hollowed-out middles, on top of beehives so the bees over time created intricate honeycombs inside the cavities of her sculptures. Ms. Hulacova — a keen environmentalist — and her aunt also made sure that once the sculptures were removed, there was little disruption to the bees and hives.

Meanwhile, her father, Josef Hulac, a furniture restorer and farmer, and her brother, Jan Hulac, have done intarsia (a form of wood inlay similar to marquetry) work for a few of her installations. A wooden skateboard and table, where they used 15 different types of wood including cherry, oak, mahogany and ash, were part of the installation "Graceful Ride," which was exhibited last year at Kunstraum, a London gallery.

"They enjoyed doing it," Ms. Hulacova said, adding that she paid her father and brother for their work. "Especially my father, because he could finally return to his best techniques, which was a cherry on top for him."



Artist Anna Hulacova in an undated photograph. Peter Fabo, via Hunt Kastner

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Ginanne Brownell Mitic

At Art Basel Hong Kong, Ms. Hulacova's work "Pathetic Poetic," an installation that includes not only her own sculpted concrete pieces but also her father and brother's skateboard and table (and their intarsia wooden bookshelves), will be featured in the Discoveries sector of the fair. It's something of a coup for Ms. Hulacova, as well as for her gallery, Hunt Kastner (the first Czech gallery to show at Art Basel Hong Kong), because it is a chance for her work to be seen by collecting and curating circles across Asia. Though her work has been featured at other big-name art fairs including Frieze London in 2017, she hasn't had much of a presence outside Europe, though she will also take part in the Aichi Triennale in Japan starting in August.

However, Ms. Hulacova has increasingly become a name not only in her own country, winning Czech Artist of the Year 2017, but also across the Continent as well. She has been featured in a number of European solo exhibitions, including one in Paris at the Fondation Louis Vuitton from October 2018 to January 2019.

She has also participated in a several group exhibitions including, also in Paris, the Palais de Tokyo's "Another Banana Day for the Perfect Fish" and in last year's Baltic Triennial in Lithuania where her "Underworld Upside Down" received much critical praise. Another group show, "Entomos: Hulacova-Keresztes-Janousek," closed this month at the Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace in Prague.

Adeline Ooi, the Asia director for Art Basel, said the whole point of the Discoveries sector was to introduce up-and-coming artists to a new broader Asian market.



Ms. Hulacova's, "Underworld Upside Down," 2018. Andrej Vasilenko, via Hunt Kastner

"When we discussed the project, it jumped out," she said of Ms. Hulacova's "Pathetic Poetic" installation. "It stood apart from everybody else in its own way. It rang with a certain kind of honesty, and it was distinct, and you could not say no to this."

As a child, Ms. Hulacova loved to model in clay, and her father sometimes let her practice carving in his studio. As a teenager, she was sent to school to learn traditional woodworking. While she enjoyed the experience, she realized that her real love was more contemporary, so at 18 she moved to Prague to study art — something that her family supported but didn't really understand at first.

"They didn't know that art can be a serious job," the shy artist said with a chuckle. "It was quite funny when I found out that I would go on a residency to Strasbourg and my grandfather started to cry because he could not believe that someone would pay for me to be staying somewhere."

While at art school, she found she was interested in juxtaposing not only sculptural styles, like classical with conceptual, but also working with different materials, aspects that she experiments with in her current work. However, a number of her professors felt that her work was too provincial and naïve.

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A concrete sculpture included in Ms. Hulacova's installation at Art Basel Hong Kong. Michal Czanderle, via Hunt Kastner

"They didn't understand it," said Kacha Kastner, one of two North American expat co-founders of Hunt Kastner. "In the Czech Republic, there is a strong post-conceptual bent and at that time no one was making figurative sculpture, and so I think it took longer for people to jump on the bandwagon. But maybe that is a good thing."

What makes Ms. Hulacova's work stand out, say critics and curators who have worked with her, is that combination of seemingly incongruous themes, concepts and materials that on paper seem like a bizarre mishmash yet somehow, once combined, create a powerful and stimulating body of work. They include brutalist architecture and Central European folklore to Greco-Roman mythology, Surrealism, Futurism and science fiction — all represented through things like wood, concrete, honeycomb and digital prints.

"Through this ambiguous yet playful mix of inspirations, techniques and materials," Yoann Gourmel, one of the curators of "Another Banana Day for the Perfect Fish," wrote in an email, "she successfully merges in her own distinctive language the local with the global, the past with the present, the organic with the digital, without any distinction or sense of hierarchy."

The combination, much of which Ms. Hulacova said comes out of her anger over things she finds unjust, including issues around loss of animal and insect habitats, often also mixes the optimistic with the pessimistic, so while some find her works grotesque and disturbing, others find them playful and beguiling.

"People do not realize her works have a deep social commentary," Ms. Kastner said. "When she is angry, she sees a situation, like problems with the environment that people are not addressing, and she feels she has to do something."

Her art must be touching a nerve. "There is a wave of tensions in her work that make it absolutely mesmerizing," said Vincent Honore, who curated last year's Baltic Triennial. "She is an extraordinary artist."

ATP DIARY

Interview with Marina Dacci and Krištof Kintera | Hidden Beauty, Z2O, Rome

"My aspiration, as well as that of Kristof, was for this exhibition to become a sort of star constellation and therefore there is a sort of search for complementarity, a sort of open reading of space and vision, on the sense of beauty."

April 21, 2018

Vasco Forconi

Text and interview by **Vasco Forconi** -

From the meeting between Marina Dacci, Sara Zanin and Krištof Kintera, **Hidden Beauty** is born, a collective that reflects on the act of seeking beauty as an essential element both in artistic practice and above all in that of daily crossing of reality. The exhibition collects recent works by four artists originally from Prague who, despite the profound difference in their respective researches, are here linked by a common attitude towards the existing, plumbed not in search of a canonical beauty but in the constant attempt to reactivate the look and experience.

Anna Hulačová through alchemical drawings and sculptures with unrecognizable faces, he proposes an investigation into identity that becomes complex and stratified. Faces disappear and are replaced by digital prints or by superimposing sculptural fragments, making mystery, of vague metaphysical memory, the privileged place for the search for beauty.

Krištof Kintera, also active in the role of co-curator of the exhibition, proposes sculptural and installation interventions that reflect on the idea of artificial nature, made using the assembly of waste materials and projecting an idea of beauty which, in its radical mingling with the reality, it also opens up to the dirty and decadent bass. In addition to the interventions in the gallery, Kintera installs his works within numerous commercial activities in the neighborhood, offering the public an experience of non-contemplative and disseminated art.

Pavla Sceranková reflects on the perception and the relationship between the subject and the space that surrounds him. In his sculptures and installations, furnishings and everyday objects are dissected or blown up into a thousand fragments as if to record the tension impressed on them by the surrounding space, thus transforming them into as many measuring devices of the space itself. **Richard Wiesner's** research, set on a decidedly more intimate register, it works on the transformation of objects bearing a memory that is about to vanish. On the occasion of the exhibition he exhibits a series of sculptures in which furniture, tools and appliances belonging to an elderly citizen of Prague are incorporated into complex conformations of resin, which by canceling their functionality effectively preserve the intrinsic memory of the object.

"The exhibition is a small theater of different looks and artefacts, in part complementary, which however have a common denominator: the tension, the need to rediscover and invent some new form of Beauty every day, to feel" in the world "and live with it. even in unexpected ways.

We are not interested in giving a label to "what is Beauty" - rivers of words have been written on the subject - but how to use new eyes to discover that hidden beauty that we often do not see or do not consider as a fundamental part of our existence.

It is a beauty, sometimes with a capital "b" but most of the time small, traceable in negligible details and / or in humble situations in which our memory, imagination, dream, experimentation help us to restore them a universal meaning, albeit through subjective canons, a highly validating and non-stereotyped meaning on what makes us feel we can live an authentic experience. Also for this reason part of the exhibition, for the works of one of the artists present, is proposed as a "treasure hunt" in unexpected places to go and where to wear "new glasses" ». (text from press release)

Interview with Marina Dacci and Krištof Kintera | Hidden Beauty, Z20, Rome

ATP Diary, April 21, 2018

Vasco Forconi



— Hidden Beauty, 2018 - Installation view, room 3 - z2o Sara Zanin Gallery, Rome - Courtesy z2o Sara Zanin Gallery, Rome, ph. by Giorgio Benni

ATP: Let's start with the title of the exhibition *hidden Beauty* (*Beauty Hidden*): what does it mean today question the value of beauty?

Marina Dacci: This is the question I asked all four artists present in the exhibition, because it was interesting for me to have from them not so much a definition of beauty as to understand how they could find it and how important it was in their research. And they gave me different answers, but in the end this difference coagulated into a single aspect, in my opinion very interesting, which is to work on the idea of the cancellation of stereotypy, that is, of this way that we normally have to meet our ordinary and try to use other pairs of glasses to read things. Each in their own way, because everyone is focused on their own path, but it is also interesting to have different needs and different approaches to arrive at the same common point.

ATP: In the catalog that accompanies the exhibition, ask each of the artists "if beauty is necessary" and they all answer absolutely affirmatively. This partly surprised me....

MD: Absolutely yes, it is not a curious thing, because in my opinion the meaning of life is to accept the idea of mystery, and beauty is constituted by the idea of mystery. Accepting the mystery in my opinion means entering a dimension every time, in a sort of pool where you swim, put on goggles, open your arms and wait for something to come towards you ... and your attitude, because this is the problem fundamental is the attitude of looking at things. In the smallest, most banal, stupid things up to the most important things. Every day, I wrote it and I keep repeating it because I also live it personally as a human being, we are trapped by the fact that everything we meet we try to fit it into our cognitive maps, it is all functional to something that we need to control . Beauty comes unexpectedly you cannot control it, you just have to open up and live it and take a kind of breath. So the idea is precisely this, how it is possible today to put together our daily life and an attitude towards research, because we are made of everyday life. In a world where ideology dies, a whole host of other things die, the important thing is to live in the little everyday life and open up without barriers to what can enter, and let it in. This exhibition is not about beauty, it is about the process in which you put yourself, in a posture, for which it is possible that you perceive it. how is it possible today to put together our daily life and an attitude towards research, because we are made of everyday life. In a world where ideology dies, a whole host of other things die, the important thing is to live in the little everyday life and open up without barriers to what can enter, and let it in. This exhibition is not about beauty, it is about the process in which you put yourself, in a posture, for which it is possible that you perceive it. how is it possible today to put together our daily life and an attitude towards research, because we are made of everyday life. In a world where ideology dies, a whole host of other things die, the important thing is to live in the little everyday life and open up without barriers to what can enter, and let it in. This exhibition is not about beauty, it is about the process in which you put yourself, in a posture, for which it is possible that you perceive it.

ATP: How did you collaborate with this group of artists from Prague? And why the choice to exhibit them here in Rome?

MD: The choice was born from a meeting with Krištof Kintera, and Sara Zanin. Krištof offered us names and told us why he had chosen them. Obviously then also epidermal and sensitivity factors play a role, evocative. I was

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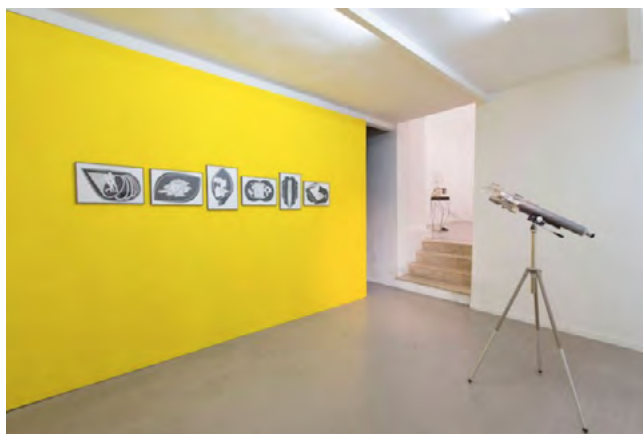
Interview with Marina Dacci and Krištof Kintera | Hidden Beauty, Z20, Rome

ATP Diary, April 21, 2018

Vasco Forconi

interested in having different visions. Krištof is now working on this very interesting theme of artificial nature but also on the problem of making art accessible and usable to everyone, but I was also interested in recovering a female vision with another process, like that of Pavla Sceranková. Pavla worked with astrophysicists, starting to reflect on the relationship with molecular dissolution. For many years he has worked on this category of space and time trying to redefine it and not mechanize it, and then to deconstruct and rebuild it through the personal perception system. On the other hand, we have a more intimate work, albeit with social reflections, that of Richard Wiesner and Anna Hulačová. Richard worked on a very specific trend: he entered the Prague apartment owned by an elderly electrician, who is currently hospitalized, and who among other things was one of those who facilitated communication with the British during the Second World War, creating radio communication systems. This gentleman says "I don't want my whole life, all my experience and my objects to be lost. I want them to continue living beyond me ". that of Richard Wiesner and Anna Hulačová. Richard worked on a very specific trend: he entered the Prague apartment owned by an elderly electrician, who is currently hospitalized, and who among other things was one of those who facilitated communication with the British during the Second World War, creating radio communication systems. This gentleman says "I don't want my whole life, all my experience and my objects to be lost. I want them to continue living beyond me ". that of Richard Wiesner and Anna Hulačová. Richard worked on a very specific trend: he entered the Prague apartment owned by an elderly electrician, who is currently hospitalized, and who among other things was one of those who facilitated communication with the British during the Second World War, creating radio communication systems. This gentleman says "I don't want my whole life, all my experience and my objects to be lost. I want them to continue living beyond me ". creating radio communication systems. This gentleman says "I don't want my whole life, all my experience and my objects to be lost. I want them to continue living beyond me ". creating radio communication systems. This gentleman says "I don't want my whole life, all my experience and my objects to be lost. I want them to continue living beyond me ".

So Richard, who was not a friend of this person, tried, in an absolutely lyrical way, to encapsulate these objects, to manage them as if they were artifacts to stop their dissolution over time, transforming the functionality of the object and reifying it through another type of language. . So there are this kind of crystals, satellites or parts of objects that are incorporated in resins or in any case in artificial materials with the aim of giving them new life. Hanna instead constitutes a *crossing point* between his experience in the Far East, between working on the folk of his nation, and experimenting with new materials and new media. The drawings we have chosen for this exhibition are all somewhat alchemical drawings, because they reflect on the microcosm, on the little things of everyday life, bringing them back to the macrocosm. I almost seem to see a book from the 1600s that talks about the organization of space and the cosmos.



— Hidden Beauty, 2018 - Installation view, room 1 z2o Sara Zanin Gallery, Rome - Courtesy z2o Sara Zanin Gallery, Rome, ph. by Giorgio Benni

ATP: Selecting works that address the issue of beauty (however hidden) is a daunting task. What principles did you refer to?

MD: Of these artists we tried to respect what was the core of their research, we did not select marginal works. My aspiration, as well as that of Krištof, was for this exhibition to become a sort of star constellation and therefore there is a sort of search for complementarity, a sort of open reading of space and vision, on the sense of beauty. So it is not a linear path, there is never anything that confirms a one-way reading, but they are different ways, feelings, experiences of doing research. Selecting the works wasn't that difficult in the end. Imagining what could be a dialogue between Wiesner's telescope with Hanna's drawings, rather than between Pavla's work of deconstructing small objects, cutting and cutting, with Krištof's work, which is always a scientific work, because it experiments with materials and deals with the discourse of matter as something that from inorganic can become organic and becomes our landscape, it seemed to us a very natural and very fluid way of putting ourselves in different positions and looking reality. What interests me in this operation is an attitude, a posture.

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ATP: Posture is also something anatomical, why are you talking about it precisely in relation to beauty?

MD: Because I believe that when you travel the world looking for confirmation of what you already think or the things by which you have been conditioned, you can find nothing but egoic confirmations, useless from a certain point of view. Then beauty is something lyrical, something inexplicable, mysterious but it is a reason for living because it makes you vibrate together with the universe, with the world in which you belong. So posture is the ability to keep oneself open, not in a didactic way but without overly conceptual grids. Posture is not something anatomical it is also something psychological. It is the ability to understand that you can perceive the world through a synaesthetic attitude,

ATP: Regarding the concept of 'ugly' ... or 'bass', as opposed to an equally generic and complex concept ...

MD: It is not a Catholic counterpoint dialectical role of "you can know good only through what evil is" but it is simply a question of vibration. Sometimes the ugly vibrates in a way that is interesting and useful in your life to be able to read the beautiful. There is a form of vibration even in the ugly that in the end makes you live your belonging to a real world that incorporates the ugly, as well as the beauty in the canonical sense. I believe that for Krištof the idea of dirt, the idea of something that descends into the lower levels allows you to understand that you need to open up and rise, not in a Catholic or religious or moral sense, this is not the point. . The point is that you vibrate together with things, and you vibrate together with things the world is made of every, and in my opinion the idea of incorporating the ugly with the beautiful is part of life and you can also find a lyrical aspect in the ugly. Not because there is the aesthetics of the ugly.



— Krištof Kintera, *Me, waiting in another room*, 2009 - shoes, concrete - cm 64 x 40 x 55 - Installation view at Moves Fitness, Rome - Courtesy Z2o Sara Zanin Gallery, Rome, ph. by Giorgio Benni

ATP: Kristof, how did you live this experience as an artist / curator?

Kristof Kintera: It's ambiguous, when I hear a director acting in his own film I ask myself "how does he do it?" looking through the camera and acting in your own film at the same time? So it seems ambiguous to me. Here, on the other hand, I was involved as an expert on the Prague art scene. It's something I know better than Marina, of course. I like this sort of confrontation, because I'm really struck by the willingness to bring something from our local context to Italy and Rome, and it's something I really appreciate. So when they asked me to do this exhibition it was a challenge for me, I feel like a kind of guide of the art scene and maybe this was the only and most important role I played in the project.

ATP: You have scattered eight works in the neighborhood surrounding the gallery. How were these places selected? And how did you choose to intervene within them?

KK: I relied on Marina and Sara Zanin on the selection of places, who know the neighborhood and the context of the spaces very well. Basically I like it when art talks to people who are not insiders, and this is the busiest time. When you take art for a walk and take it out of the gallery, something happens, something extraordinary. It was Marina's idea but she knew that in my recent projects I was already working on this, on the idea of art taking a stroll, in shop windows. For me it is not a new experiment, but it is here in Rome.

HIDDEN BEAUTY

Anna Hulacová, Kristof Kintera, Pavla Sceranková, Richard Wiesner
curated by Marina Dacci and Kristof Kintera

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b l o k

26 December 2018

'Éntomos: Hulačová – Keresztes – Janoušek' at Prague City Gallery



This exhibition presents two young sculptors who are rising Central European stars: the Czech artist Anna Hulačová and her Hungarian contemporary Zsófia Keresztes. Both develop the Surrealist tendencies that culminated in the 1930s, therefore the artists have invited František Janoušek (1890–1943), a prominent Czech Surrealist, as their “guest”. Janoušek’s 1935 illustration for Maeterlinck’s book *The Life of the Bee* is housed in the collections of the Prague City Gallery, and the name of the exhibition refers to the ancient Greek term “éntomos”, the plural of which, “éntoma”, was later used to mean “insects”. Both artists see in today’s environmental crisis, when bees and other insects are dying, the precursor of a manmade disaster. Zsófia Keresztes explores the theme of self-devouring and Anna Hulačová deals with the symbiosis of man and insects. *Éntomos* is their first joint exhibition.

The name of the exhibition etymologically refers to the original ancient Greek term “éntomos”. Its translation into Latin as “insectum” was first mentioned in the writings of Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*. Pliny freely follows from Aristotle, who studied the unity of the soul of a “dissected insect” which lives further even if cut asunder. *Éntomos* in the original ancient Greek literally means “cut into sections” and in plural even “sacrifices offered to the gods”.

Zsófia Keresztes and Anna Hulačová have created a new installation for the exhibition placed in the central room, reminiscent of the well-known triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch (1503–1504), whom Surrealists considered to be one of their predecessors.

The bodies, in Zsófia Keresztes's interpretation, cannibalize themselves. As she explains, "Their anatomy can be interpreted as the totems and mascots of a fictional 21st-century religion. These tools act as masks for rituals that help the users transfigure themselves into a different state of mind."

A certain religiosity is also contained in the oeuvre of Anna Hulačová. Two years ago she worked with linden wood and honeycombs; at present she makes sculptures of concrete and complements them with drawing in pencil. She refines and illustrates the raw material. Hulačová herself says about her sculptures, "There is an internal contradiction manifested by the material contrast between the contradictions of wet/dry, flat/curved, historical/futuristic, gentle/brutal." Hulačová's imaginary figures have faces that are usually covered by the masks that make up their characters. In the bodies of these organisms, whose forms are transformed into the form of a man, insect or plant, there are cavities where the organic substance lives: "It is the primary layer of life embodying nature, the basic essence within their bodies. Like a soul, an intangible element, which can be a kind of primitive DNA code," Anna Hulačová summarizes her current production.

These artists complement each other. Anna Hulačová's art is earthier, more temperate in terms of color, often monochromatic and strongly related to nature in terms of the material chosen (wood, honeycombs, sand). Hulačová develops the classical figural tradition. On the other hand, the starting point of the Hungarian artist Zsófia Keresztes is virtual reality. She opts for multicolored glass mosaics in pastel hues which cover her amorphous creatures, androgynous avatars whose pink bodies are made of lightweight extruded polystyrene, like a skin. The avatars make their appearance as warriors who have come to life in the real world. It is no accident that their name is derived from the Hindu term "avatāra", representing the earthly incarnation of a deity. While Hulačová's characters come from the real world, here the characters are transformed into different forms entirely.

Zsófia Keresztes explores the theme of virtual cannibalism. Anna Hulačová deals primarily with the natural symbiosis of man and insects, which has degenerated as a result of ecological changes into "self-devouring" of mankind. *Éntomos* is the first joint exhibition where these two artists are meeting in person.

Artist	Anna Hulačová, Zsófia Keresztes, František Janoušek
Exhibition	<i>Éntomos: Hulačová – Keresztes – Janoušek</i>
Place / venue	Prague City Gallery
Dates	21 November 2018 – 3 March 2019
Curated by	Sandra Baborovská

Performer I & Anna Hulačová hunt kastner / Prague

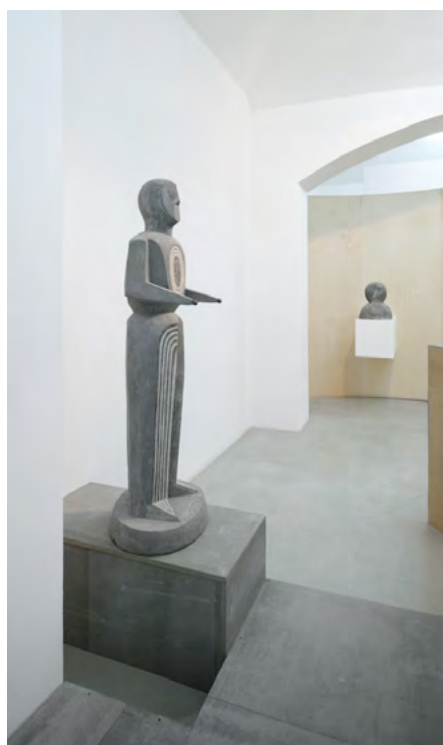
Flash Art, December 20, 2015

Tereza Záchová

Flash Art

20 December 2015, 10:41 CET

Performer I & Anna Hulačová hunt kastner / Prague



The joint project of Anna Hulačová and Jiří Přihoda is a contemporary artistic probe into the environment of folk culture, pagan customs and religion.

The project is not only dedicated to artistic cooperation, but also to cooperation in the narrowest sense. At the exhibition at the Hunt Kastner Gallery in Prague, Jiří Přihoda represents several roles at once - artist, curator, architect of the exhibition and the teacher himself, as Hulačová studied under his guidance at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. His work, which is often characterized by monumentality and architectural elaboration, here depends on the sculptural design of Anna Hulačová. This author dominates with her interest in ornament, craft and folklore, and also excels in an interesting selection of materials for her sculptural realizations. It has a ritual function of tattooing, which we can feel, for example, from the faces of Maori chiefs.

In the direction of the architecturally determined route, the spectator enters a kind of open-air museum, which is fitted into the gallery space. At times, he has the impression that he finds himself in a fairy tale about Otesánek, but he is also a participant in witch hunts. Elsewhere, it clashes with the natural cult of prehistoric peoples or just with a drawing on a contemporary aluminum sausage tray. The rawness and narration of the individual statues evoke a feeling of fear of discovering our ancient roots and at the same time an ancient experience with pagan rituals. Site-specific architecture, which is an unobtrusive sculpture by Jiří Přihoda, becomes, at first sight, a pedestal for the author's sculptures. The figures set in the exhibition architecture tell the story of the spirituality and symbolism of long-extinct folk traditions, to which we turn sporadically. What is the significance of religion or ritual today? Isn't it just an empty concept?

The exhibition project *Interpreter I &* is not just one interpretation on an infinite line of possible interpretations. As a spectator, as an artist, as a probable discourse that will evoke ever-growing and evolving views on cultural identity. One thing is clear, however - neither Hulačová nor Přihoda prevents us from doing so; on the contrary, they are shamans in modern times.

Artist I. & Anna Hulačová view of the installation, hunt kastner gallery, Prague, 2015 photo: Ondřej Polák.

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