

No Time to Work No Time Free of Work

28/3—15/4/2025

Laichter house

EXHIBITION COPY

The exhibition and research project *No Time to Work. No Time Free of Work.* draws inspiration from a 1969 text by Czech art theorist Jindřich Chalupecký entitled "Všechnu moc dělnickým radám" [All power to the workers' councils], in which he criticizes both "classical democracy" and "authoritatively devised and applied socialism after 1948." His call for a complete transformation of the sociopolitical system, true freedom, and the direct participation of "the people" in public affairs and the cultural sphere concludes with the following words: "All power to the councils of workers, peasants, youth, intellectuals. As if we might reopen the first pages of the revolutionary textbook and, after all the disappointments and despair, once again strive for freedom in this world." Chalupecký was banned from public speaking for twenty years for publishing the text.

Although the text is over fifty years old, it takes on new meanings in the context of the current sociopolitical situation, becoming relevant to the future of art and artistic creation. Building on Chalupecký's ideas, we consider what specific roles contemporary art can play in the broader context of its time, what its potential is to contribute to systemic change, and at the same time, what the vital conditions are for its very existence. The project focuses on the topic of artistic labor and is also based on the current state and limitations of international discussions and implementations of the so-called status of the artist. It draws inspiration from practices employed in the post-Yugoslav region and from initiatives that are dealing with this matter in the Czech Republic.

The project is experimental and processual by nature, and it is based on a close dialogue with the participating artists. It aims to highlight the socioeconomic mechanisms that lead to the precarization of artists and cultural workers in a broader context. In the first phase, the curatorial team selected specific artists and existing works related to the theme of labor in both a literal and symbolic sense. The curatorial team then initiated a dialogue with the exhibitors about realistic versus ideal conditions for creating and exhibiting the given works. In addition to the selection of ten artworks, installations, and projects, the exhibitors' written questionnaires and interviews also resulted in a collective audio installation and a document titled "A Set of (Utopian) Demands," which is included in the exhibition along with graphically rendered excerpts from texts by the participating artists about the creation of specific works in the exhibition, the general conditions of their work, and their visions for improving not only their own status but also the overall role of art and culture in society in both the Czech and international context. Another layer of the project consists of notes and drawings from a collective event commenting on the aforementioned "Set of (Utopian) Demands" during an autumn meeting in Prague. The project will be expanded upon by a live program, during which the topics will be further discussed and directed toward practical outcomes.

No Time to Work. No Time Free of Work.

Laichter House, Prague

28. 3.—15. 4. 2025

Artists: selma banich, Lenka Đorojević and Matej Stupica, Haveit collective, Lukáš Hoffmann, Barbora Kleinhamlová, Dorotej Neshovski, Danilo Prnjat, Pavla Sceranková, Jirka Skála, StonyTellers

Co-organizer: Faculty of things that can't be learned

Curatorial team: Barbora Ciprova, Veronika Čechová, Tereza Jindrová, Karina Kottová (Jindřich Chalupecký Society), Ivana Vaseva (Faculty of things that can't be learned)

Production: Ondřej Houšťava, Zuzana Šrámková

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1 Dorotej Neshovski

Everything outside of art is a waste of time
drawings on paper, 2022

Dorotej Neshovski is an interdisciplinary Macedonian artist who deals with issues of creative spontaneity, social inclusion, pedagogy and the relationship between the institution, the audience and the artist. In his research and pedagogical practice, he looks at ways to bring contemporary art closer to children and support creativity in society.

The series of drawings titled *Everything outside of art is a waste of time* was created during the time when Dorotej was working at the Lottery stand in the supermarket in Skopje. During the interactions with customers, the artist created spontaneous sketches on the used lottery tickets. Most of them depict faces and reflect the communication with “ordinary people”, frustration from unstable work and feeling of his own alienation from this world. He creates an algorithm of happiness–hope–communication in which he searches for the position of art in the world and comes to the paradoxical idea that art is a lottery that cannot be won, yet is the only meaningful thing for him.

2 Jirka Skála

Art Practice and Other Activities
series of photographs, 1TB external hard disk in a vitrine, 2017

Jirka Skála works in diverse media, though in a very minimalist way, often employing text and the gallery space. His artworks claim the full attention of the viewers while having a strong will to communicate. They enter various semiotic systems and have a formal yet subversive character. In some projects, Skála even provides political commentary. He employs literary approaches and contents, addressing personal relationships while also analyzing societal relations, the complexities of class and labor. He was strongly effected by the campaign Zero Wage* that shake the Czech art scene in 2012.

The exhibited project called *Art Practice and Other Activities* represents very personal and at the same time very systematic dive into the complexities of what does it mean to work as an artist. After several years of research into free time and artistic work Skála purchased a 1 TB external hard disk, formatted it, transferred all his data onto it and began to move his files into different folders according to a predetermined plan. Its basic structure consists of eight folders (inspired by thinking and terms by Paul Lafargue, Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung, Hannah Arendt, Guy Standing and others) that appear on the computer screen once the hard drive is connected: Paid Work, Laziness, Unpaid Work, Organized Education, Procrastination, Recreation, Sleep and Free Time. This process showed that most of his artistic activities exist on the very fluid boundaries between unsalaried work, private life and leisure-time activities. Nevertheless, the project helped Skála to get better clarity about the conditions and complexities of what does it mean to be an artist for him: “Now I have everything divided and quantified. Not only do I know which artistic activities are under Unsalariated Work, but I also had the opportunity to learn about and explore other human activities. I gained more control over my life and a critical distance from my work. I’m not afraid of any questions: What are you doing? What is your art practice? Now I know how to answer them. Thanks to a small device that I always carry with me and to which I have a very specific relation, it has eliminated my formal view of art practice. Above all, it allowed me to place some human activities at the same level as work for which I am grateful.”

3 StonyTellers

How to Dream from Nine to Five
installation and public programs, 2023
Commissioned in collaboration with Anežka Januschka Kořínková for 35m2 Gallery

The StonyTellers collective was founded in 2019 . As stones, women, feminists, artists, storytellers, students, curators, gardeners, future psychologists, bartenders, intercultural workers, ceramicists, economists, grant applicants, producers, curators, graphic designers, photographers, PR managers, foster parents, singles, partners and wives, they critically respond to the work of artists in an era of climate change and create space for collective and sustainable practice. In their virtual narratives, installations and performances, they explore themes that emerge from shared choices, hardships, anxieties and desires in response to the state of the contemporary world. They involve human and non-human beings in their work, creating a space for new relationships to emerge.

The original project *How to dream from nine to five* was realized at the 35m2 gallery in Prague (2023) as part of a series of exhibitions about happiness and how it can be shared and spread. Through their artistic practice, StonyTellers constantly question the conditions of (artistic) work, calculate hourly wages and address phenomena such as exhaustion and burnout syndrome. For the exhibition at Laichter House, the artists decided not to recreate the original, office-like installation, but to keep only the element of the magnetic board that summarizes the estimation of working hours and the related calculation of hourly wages.

Statement of the artists:

The financial undervaluation of cultural workers is a long-term systemic problem that leads to precarity, exhaustion and insecurity. While the exhibition you are in now reflects these themes, it also finds itself struggling with the limited budget available to it, ultimately continuing the practice of inadequate compensation for collaborators. In response to the potential conditions of the SJCH, we have therefore decided to present the existing work in a much reduced form as a gesture reflecting the reality in which art must constantly seek new strategies for survival.

4 Pavla Sceranková

Series of sculptures: *a trouble head, a renamed head, a forgotten head, a head that seems to glow at night, a head that swells with false promises*
paper, porcelain, metal, wood, yarn, threads, 2012–2020

<i>A troubled head</i>	paper map of Europe, metal stand 80 cm	2023
<i>A head that has been forgotten</i>	paper map 30 cm	2023
<i>Renamed head</i>	paper map of Dargovské hrdinů housing estate, metal stand 35 cm	2023
<i>A head that seems to glow at night</i>	wood, wool yarn 120cm	2023

<i>A head that swells with false promises</i>	found porcelain, spools of thread 25cm	2023
<i>A head that wants to take a step back</i>	women's stocking, wooden base	2023
<i>Offended head</i>	ceramics, magnets 20 cm	2023
<i>Significantly silent head</i>	thumbtacks, clipboard 40 cm	2023

Pavla Sceranková is recognized internationally as a brave, yet sensitive sculptor, author of many monumental works and installations. In her newest work though, she has turned to quite a different approach: her sculptures become so much more vulnerable, made from ephemeral materials, that might not stand the test of time. It is Pavla's reaction to the question of sustainability of her work, both in terms of environmental sustainability, sustainability of artistic practice itself and in regards to her personal situation, being a mother of two, a teacher at the art academy, and so many other parallel roles that a woman needs to take on in order to survive/strive? in the current society. The head has been at the center of Pavla's work for a long time – the troubled head, the forgotten head, the renamed head, the head full of false promises... addressing the (Western) human condition of being way too much in our heads, troubled by our thoughts, by the weight of our brains, that might not be so easy to handle at a times of late capitalism. On the other hand, the "head that dreams about glowing at night" touches upon another angle of Pavla's work – our interconnectedness with the universe, with universal principles, with our aching for something higher. Perhaps the head does not only represent the weight of the overthinking brain, but also a gateway to something else.

5 Danilo Prnjat

The Last Working Day
Documentary, 28 min, 2022–2024.

Danilo Prnjat was born in Montenegro (SFR Yugoslavia) and lives and works in Belgrade. His work is based on long-term processual, research and collaborative work, with other artists and different social groups. The research is focused on alternative economies, possible social-progressive models of work (in culture), politics of participatory practices, collective work and self-organization.

The semi-documentary film *The Last Working Day* shows the last few working days of Miloš Ristić, a worker at the GOŠA rail vehicle factory, before the factory was completely shut down.

The film evokes in an emotional way the problem of worker exploitation, the effects of deindustrialization and the condition produced by the colonial discourse and the position of the country of peripheral capitalism. By intertwining the fate of the worker with the fate of the factory, the film builds the story of the worker who was "sold together with the factory".

The film is a consequence of the collaboration and is co-authored by the artist Danilo Prnjat and the worker in a factory Miloš Ristić who started hanging out and working on this film back in 2019. The material was jointly processed during 2021 and 2022 with the help of VAC – Visual Anthropology Center in Belgrade and in cooperation with production student Nataša Radić and law student Đorđe Paunović.

6 Lukáš Hofmann

S. C. L.
video, 25 min.
2019

Was it compassion, repulsion or attraction you felt at the tannery, where animal skin is being deprived of the rest of the once-alive being and turned into a commodity? Dead skin doesn't itch anymore. I know it's not solely the motif of violence, ethical boundaries or exploitation that made you connect those unnerving environments for the new video piece, but you probably cannot avoid others looking through this prism. Is it your personal battle with the skin, with your own immunity system, which you know works partly against you, that lay the grounds for this confrontation? Do you bite your audiences, leaving traces of your teeth on their wrists, in order to make them participate in your fight?

To Lukáš, Karina (excerpt from the curatorial letter for the exhibition *Skin Come Leather*, Art in General New York, 2019/2020)

Skin as a membrane or border has been a reappearing theme throughout Lukáš Hofmann's practice and the present video and installation investigates its aesthetic, somatic and symbolical layers. Skin is seen as a semi-translucent membrane, both dividing the bodily self from the rest of the world, and providing access to it; a sphere of the most intimate contact, letting the environmental elements enter the body, holding the body together and yet being so vulnerable to outer powers. In his video, Hofmann follows the rudimentary process of turning skin into leather—a commodity—alongside skin examinations and experiments. The video piece obsessively exposes all these aspects by means of conscious mystification, disturbing aestheticization and close-up inspection, typical for Hofmann's artistic process.

7 Haveit Collective

Examinimi
video performance and installation, 2013

Baby Blues
video performance, 2017

Shaving Patriarchy
video performance, 2016

Haveit (established in 2011, Prishtina) is the collective of 4 young women artists – Alketa Sylaj, Hana Qena, Vesa Qena, Lola Sylaj – whose art vehemently rebels against power and, nationalism, LGBT discrimination and the oppression of women prevalent in Albanian society. They refuse to conform to this politics based on hate and injustice and illustrate the struggle with the day-to-day difficulties of nearly every Kosovar by performances, videos or interventions into the public space.

Examinimi is a street performance first staged during a protest against the sexist language and the approach of parliamentarians in March 2013. During a parliamentary session, one of the deputies proposed performing medical examinations of the women that claim to be survivors of rape. Apples, a table, four kitchen hammers, four kitchen boards and a drawing on a bedsheet symbolize the examination process.

The performance *Baby Blues* (first time realized in 2017) refers to a psychological syndrome experienced by most women after childbirth, where nearly 80% report feelings of sadness, emptiness, or postpartum depression. Inspired by a pivotal scene in the cult Hollywood film, "The Hours" (2002), the artists aim to convey a message about the position of women.

Same as the character, they ask the question about the life's meaning while nervously maneuvering the shopping carts. The shaking feeling is intensified by the sound of crushing the glass.

On November 28, 2016, coinciding with the Celebration of the National Albanian Flag Day, the collective applied shaving cream to their faces and shaved their symbolic "beards" in Pristina's main square. Performance *Shaving Patriarchy* was an act of liberating themselves from patriarchal norms staged conspicuously in front of the statue of Skanderbeg, an undisputed historical figure revered as the "father of the Albanian nation."

8 Lenka Đorojević & Matej Stupica

Free fall

video performance, 2016

Lenka Đorojević & Matej Stupica is an artist duo based in Ljubljana, collaborating since 2012. Their interdisciplinary projects span interactive audio-visual installations, set designs, video performances, texts, and sound works, allowing for a discursive approach to subject matter. They delve into critical interpretations of the ambivalence surrounding the position of the (art) subject within contexts such as mass media, digitally constructed realities, and the narratives of late capitalist production, representation, ideology, and symbolism.

Free fall plays with gravity and the perception of space to uncloak the absurd and dystopian nature of our everyday life in contemporary times. *Free fall* is not only a metaphor for a complete, dangerous level of freedom, but also a reminder of the state of mind in which time and space no longer exist. With the help of technology, we have liberated all determinants – from natural and physical conditions, through social structures and ideologies, all the way to our wretched and helpless bodies. Emancipation has led to the condensing of space on the level of a global village and the compressing of time into an endless moment. And precisely this moment beyond time and space is the moment of *Free fall*.

The crisis of identity and the search for meaning in the futile consumerism has created a dystopia of political and economic impotence, of ignored environmental problems and of the colonialization of the public from the side of the private. The *Free fall* video performance portrays two persons attempting to overcome the physical strain which their bodies are exposed to, carrying on with their everyday routines in mimicry of normality. They portray the total disjointedness and disfigurement of contemporary life as an act of defying gravity, as life under constant stress and tension in a world that we have turned upside down, or rather as life in a state of free fall which we pretend not to notice.

Concept and execution: Lenka Đorojević and Matej Stupica

Performers: Katarina Stegnar and Primož Bezjak

Camera and editing: Marko Cvejić

Lighting and technical support (video): Martin Lovšin Schintr

Video post-production: Jure Lavrin

Sound: Luka Cvetko

Production: P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Institute

Free fall was produced in cooperation with: Glej Theatre, Strip Core, Slovene Mladinsko Theatre, Mandragora film

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9 Barbora Kleinhamplová

Hand over Heels

Performance; installation and video documentation from Art in General, NYC, 2017

The practice of Barbora Kleinhamplová is rooted in the relationship between human existence and contemporary political and economic institutions, confronting this relationship through playful association and metaphor. Kleinhamplová often collaborates with people from different disciplines and professions, and uses existing forms of group interaction, such as therapy or coaching sessions, with both actors and non-actors. Presented as videos, installations, and performances, these semi-staged situations are a means by which to examine and test what constitutes a functioning society, and what the role of an individual is within its systems. She is also focusing on questions dealing with the position of man in contemporary consumerist society controlled by corporate rules.

Kleinhamplová's performance *Hand over Heels* took over the office of Art in General (former contemporary art center in New York City) to reflect on the experience of work within institutional structures. It stemmed from research the artist has conducted on our contemporary relationship to labor and its uncertainties, and asked: what norms must we conform to, however unstable, in order to get by? What kind of work do we want to do? How do we measure and define our capacities? Unfolding over the course of eight hours—the duration of a typical workday – performers recited excerpts from cover letters and psychosocial questionnaires relating to unpaid internships. Meanwhile, a giant pair of hands was inflated and deflated under the performer-workers' supervision, simultaneously affirming and questioning our dominant labor systems today.

10 selma banich and protagonists of Split's independent scene

Umjetnost treba jebati! (Art Needs to Be Fucked!)

video, 5'27, 2011

selma banich is a performing artist and activist, born in Yugoslavia, living in Zagreb, whose work is collaborative, processual and engaged; she is part of many collectives and initiatives aiming to improve the current challenges and pitfalls in arts and culture. Her practice is mainly expressed in actions and interventions in the public space, and engaged public practices in communities but she has also been working as choreographer and performer on film.

The video *Umjetnost treba jebati!* was made as part of the program of the festival XONTAKT in 2011. In this video, 1994 meets 2011, blending archival footage of performance *Chairs* with the sound recording of a gathering, *Fraktal Falus Teatar*, and the current independent scene; set in the same space but nearly two decades later, it reflects on the post-war transition of the '90s and the privatization of the 2000s, to draw attention to the never-completed *Dom mladih*—both a trace and a sign, a fuck-up and a bugger off.

The work incorporates footage from the performance *Stolice (Chairs)* by *Fraktal Falus Teatar* and archival recordings of *Dom Mladih*, Split, 1994. The audio remix is by Adam Semijalac.