

PRESS RELEASE

ústí nad labem
house of arts

What We Talk about When We Talk about Family

28. 5. — 1. 7. 2020

Exhibition opening **Wednesday, May 27 at 6 pm**

A guided tour through the exhibition
with Curator and Artists will take place at **4.30 pm**

Curator:
Maro Hajrapetjan

Artists:
Anna Daučíková, Sylva Francová,
Miroslav Hašek, Lenka Klodová,
Mothers and Fathers group,
Markéta Oplištilová, Dany Vigil

The exhibition project presents the topic of family as a dynamic changing medium of interpersonal relationships. Our attention is focused on how this topic is currently reflected on art scene. How authors view this concept themselves, whether through their personal experiences, opinions or more general questions of human coexistence. The exhibition wants to be opened platform for different ways of understanding this topic and communication between them. It doesn't represent an idealized setting for partnerships or intergenerational ties. It is a probe into these intimate relationships with ambition to uncover some important questions about family, its identity, meaning and various interfaces of this sociological and political term that is founding personal history.

Today, more than ever, we are aware of importance of family in our lives. At time of pandemic crisis, family unit becomes central point of our thoughts. We live in times when we think about the nature of our own family, its specifics and how we perceive it as individuals. Right now, when we spend almost all our time at home with those we care about the most, we are even more aware of their importance. Bonds built on the basis of family history, however widely conceived, are maintaining to be a mental space for us to cling on. Whether this space is fulfilled or not, we adhere to it despite various difficulties and twists that can be part of it.

The exhibition tells stories of family or partner experiences of individual authors and gives the visitor opportunity to think about the nature of their own relationships. We still consider family a bearer of values such as trust, sincerity, experience, truth and togetherness despite various structural changes of its definition. Regardless of its traditional or non-traditional arrangement, we believe that family should provide space for building and gaining basic social habits and strengthen our emotionality. From the social anthropology point of view, family is spoken of as a primary group, in the sense of first collective that person joins after birth. Therefore this group consists of people who experience long-term communication or interaction. And within these processes, one gradually develops relationships and social habits that can be influenced by the way we perceive meaning of the family.

There are artists represented in the exhibition who worked generally with relationship topics in the past and they keep coming back to it. They deal with the nature of relationships, their own family members, or they reflect on their own new situation. For some of them, the exhibition has become an impulse to create a new artwork, in which, for example, they re-evaluate

their previous work, create new intellectual connections with older works or share part of their personal story through artistic methods. The exhibition metaphorically presents many questions that we usually ask about the family topic. But to understand each other, we must try to answer the question: *what we talk about when we talk about family?*

Anna Daučíková in her video *In Thier Shoes* presents a non-verbal game without rules dealing with gender identity and social ties. The focus is on intuitive action — a dialogical reaction to the other. It is seemingly easy to distinguish types of footwear according to how cultural and user stereotypes determine it (male, female). However, the ongoing dialogue of movements brings complications and difficulties in determining gender and other possible stereotypical identity patterns. In the video we can't see the player, there is an open field for interpretation of other potential interpersonal relationships, necessarily evoking psychological and social backgrounds, and for breaking agreed certainty of binary gender as a given factor as well. (The personal pronoun „they“ is used in the Anglo-linguistic world to communicate with transgender, transsexual and queer people.)

Over the years, **Sylva Francová** developed her work, in which she explored the emotions and experiences reflected in the faces of her twin daughters while watching fairy tales. In the new project *Sisters*, she managed them to actively cooperate despite their age when they hate being an object of photography. Her daughters (now 15) are experiencing many new emotions. They often try to detach themselves from their parents and relationships are sometimes more complicated for them according to their age. Their faces often show disgust, fear, anger, sadness, but also euphoric joy, enthusiasm or curiosity. At the same time, photographic animations respond with exaggeration to the current specific situation where family members spend more time together surrounded by news that sound more and more dramatic or absurd.

In his work entitled *Unity Is Diversity*, **Miroslav Hašek** reflects on personal historical moment through which he points out more general issues of partnership, parenthood, fatherhood and motherhood. The light combinations of figures represent the possibilities of partnership and demonstrate flexibility of socially given conventions. The author doesn't question the traditional understanding of the family. He wants to dynamize and enrich it with other possible bonds regardless of gender.

Lenka Klodová's effort is to artistically reflect on the topic of divorce which commonly appears in film and literature, but is quite rare within the art scene. In the past, Lenka Klodová organized an obstacle course against divorce which dealt with this topic. She worked with a kind of absurdity — obviously everything couldn't be solved by running. As part of a new project *Make It Art* prepared for Ústí nad Labem House of Arts, she addressed several divorced artistic couples and invited them to actively participate by creating a drawing — a portrait of a former partner. This activity was partially meant to be perceived as spontaneous therapy. However, the seriousness and concerns of some respondents related to this topic turned out to be stronger and this fact also significantly affected the final form of the implemented project.

The project of the **Mothers and Fathers** group focuses on the genre of sculptural groups, specifically reflecting Ivan Záleský's work *The Family* (1987) located near the House of Arts in the atrium of Ústí nad Labem City Hall. So-called nuclear family (mother, father, child) is a frequent topic appearing in public space as a model of ideal and stable family life. The intervention within the selected sculptural group *The Family* consists in the addition of two other different figures representing lawyers who observe the family idyll from above. Contrasting to the round shapes of the family, lawyers are rigid and created from non-durable materials, especially textiles and gypsum. This temporary addition is a formulation of current and more realistic family structures. The Mothers and Fathers group presents this project as an inspirational model for another possible variants of intervention throughout the Czech Republic.

Site-specific installation made by **Markéta Oplíštilová** consists of complicated net made of fine material. If we think about it, maybe we could describe interpersonal or family relationships in a similar way. They are also characterized by a certain interconnection and structure which is still evolving. We can enter the space inside this monumental but also very fragile installation and rest for a while. We can take our time to think not only about the physical aspect of the structure, but also about how we feel inside this space, how we understand the relationship with ourselves and our surroundings and loved ones. Installation title *The Core* describes our inner processes. Construction is a structural cover for these processes.

As a child, **Dany Vigil** often heard the story of his parents' wedding day they didn't have any photograph of. At the time, he still didn't quite understand why his mother was moved every time she remembered that day. Many years later, he worked on this family event in the *Green Dress* project, as a photographer who often deals with the topic of memory, family and absence. This experience allowed him to understand how crucial this event was in his mother's life and how essential was evidence to her that this day really happened. The nano-documentary *Green Dress* is an attempt to examine the topic of his parents' wedding day with a touch of humor pointing to the fact that even though many things didn't work out according to the participants' ideas, his parents are still together, which is the main proof of their love and the essence of the uniqueness of that moment. Using color film, the author refers to a time when digital technologies weren't available yet, especially to the absent photographer, who left the author's mother without documentation of this important day.

Maro Hajrapetjan
curator

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM:

03. 06. (Wed) 5 pm

RAPPROCHEMENT with the public space

Guided tour and workshop about visual communication of public spaces.

06. 06. (Sat) 2 — 5 pm

Being in a role — what a roll can be?

Workshop for children (age 3–11).

Reservation — duul@ujep.cz / Entry 50 Kč.

09. 06. (Tue) 4 pm

Mothers and Fathers — Family Walk

Guided walk in traces of family sculptures in Ústí nad Labem.

Info and reservation — duul@ujep.cz

11. 06. (Thu) 5 pm

Distressed Landscape

Film screening and discussion with Jana Moravcová (CZ).

The event is organized by the Platform for Politics and Aesthetics.

13. 06. (Sat) 2 — 5 pm

ROE / Linda Retterová

Punk silkscreen workshop.

Reservation — duul@ujep.cz (age — 14+) Entry 350 Kč

15. 06. (Mon) 5 pm

Zdeněk Sloboda:

Pathways to parenting of gays,

lesbians and bisexual men and women

Lecture and discussion with artist Miroslav Hašek.

17. 06. (Wed) 5 pm

Jiří Suchánek: sound reflections

12th episode of the cycle dedicated to contemporary sound art, music and spaces between curated by Time-based media studio FAD JEP.U.

01. 07. (Wed) 4 pm

Slides — formal closing of the exhibition

What We Talk about When We Talk about Family.

Guided tour, performance, brunch and screening of the film *Nerodič* (Jana Počtová, CZ, 83 min, 2017).

CONTACT

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Open:

Tue—Thu 11 am—7 pm

Fri 1 pm—7 pm

Sat—Sun 1 pm—6 pm

free entry

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