

KP Invites is a series of solo exhibitions dedicated to emerging talents who already have a substantial body of work. For most of these artists, this is their first institutional exhibition. KP Invites supports the development of innovative, research-based projects that address important societal issues and the production of new works, with no restriction of media. Each exhibition is accompanied by a publication and a programme of related public events.

Christelle Havranek,
Chief Curator at Kunsthalle Praha

MARKÉTA MAGIDOVÁ
My Sweet Inedible Planet
09 02 2023–01 05 2023

CURATOR Andra Silapětěre
EXHIBITION TEXTS Christelle Havranek, Markéta Magidová, Andra Silapětěre
EXHIBITION PRODUCTION Nikola Schnitzerová, Eliška Žáková
TECHNICAL PRODUCTION Matej Al-Ali, Leoš Drábek
EXHIBITION DESIGN Daniela Baráčková, Jakub Filip Novák, Kristýna Plischková (NO Architects)
GRAPHIC DESIGN Lucie Zelmanová
LEARNING AND SPECIAL PROGRAMME Martina Freitagová,
Aneta Kučeríková, Barbora Škaloudová
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TRANSLATIONS INTO CZECH David Koranda
EDITING AND PROOFREADING Theo Carnegie-Tan (EN), Jana Jebavá, Eliška Žáková (CZ)
EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE EXECUTION Vetamber
INSTALLATION Patrik Adamec, Leoš Drábek, Augustin Soukup, Jakub Šimek
AV INSTALLATION AND SUPPORT Lunchmeat Studio
VR Adam Fišer, Mikoláš Fišer (veryrare.software)

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MARKÉTA MAGIDOVÁ

MY SWEET INEDIBLE PLANET

9/2 2023–1/5 2023



MY SWEET INEDIBLE PLANET OR HOW TO HAVE A SHARED VISION?

How many 'planets' exist in our extragalactic nebula (read: society)? And where do you, the visitor, stand: which is your planet, and is your planet edible?

In the exhibition by Markéta Magidová, you will meet unearthly creatures. They dance and chant in her video, *Releasing Spell*, where the artist envisions a possible future: a group of aliens comes to Earth and finds the ruins of monuments that represent the nuclear family. The video treads a thin line between dystopia and utopia. It looks at human civilisation's many pasts from a distant future: civilisation has ended, but through a ceremonial dance aliens celebrate a new kind of coexistence free from rigid social hierarchies.

Looking at the empty landscape in the film, I can't stop asking: 'Really, can the planet with all its living organisms come to an end?' The cold feeling of destruction isn't so unrealistic, considering the refugee crisis, the (post?) Covid-19 pandemic, the horrifying war in Ukraine, and long-standing threats from climate change such as flooding and extreme heat waves. The problems keep coming, and as Elvia Wilk ironises: 'In fact, you have your pick of dystopias *du jour* depending on what you're feeling most nervous about. Flooding? Declining birth rate? Refugee crisis?'¹ These issues have escalated to such a point that radical, polarised opinions surrounding them are highly common, bringing the added challenge of finding a way for global society to agree on how to overcome its numerous catastrophes. It is significant that people around the world can't agree on what it means to live on the same planet. It is as if we can't tolerate differences within the same environment, and instead create different 'social galaxies' and find our own 'planets' that conflict with one another. Quoting Maya Borg from her film *Future My Love*: 'Civilisations end, people move on.'

But can this narrative be changed? To overcome global uncertainties, what are the ways that we could share the same vision of the future and coexistence, so that it is acceptable for everyone and not just for some? However, dear visitor, don't worry, this exhibition is not about the end of the world. It rather wishes to offer another point of view on how we can live together as individuals, households, communities, and as one planet.

What characterises Magidová's practice, and this exhibition, is playfulness, humour, and dream-like aesthetics that dismantle social hierarchies and offer new perspectives on structures such as class, status, gender, and family. While the moving image and video could be considered as a core of Magidová's art making, she expands her search for new forms of visuality by creating digital paintings and objects. All these mediums come together in this exhibition that focuses on children's aesthetics, which it uses to broaden our understanding of otherness, imagination, and creativity. Magidová invites us to appreciate the multitude of diversities and see them as a collective force.

The exhibition takes its title from Magidová's conversation with her twin daughters – Zoe and Ester. Last summer while driving in the countryside, they played around with the idea of the landscape and the conversation led to the notion that it was possible to have a different perception of our world. Inspired by her daughters, Magidová takes us on a poetic road trip, and through the means of storytelling and the immersion of the senses creates encounters with those we often refuse to hear. She invites us to travel to the distant past and tells the story of a sex worker in Pompeii. She rethinks gender stereotypes through idiosyncratic interpretations of stories such as the Little Mermaid, and mythical creatures such as Faun or fairy Vltava. Magidová brings children's scribbles to life and makes them inhabit real space and time both here at Kunsthalle Praha and a fictional museum somewhere in another reality.

THE FEAR OF OTHERNESS

How much freedom are we prepared to give to those we love as ways to transform and restore the social fabric?

The fear of otherness and difference is cultivated in our society from childhood. To define identity and belonging, the similarities that build a 'we' and the differences that constitute 'others' are important to the way society functions. However, historically, it has also been the starting point for systemic hierarchisation and the oppression of minorities: social, religious, racial, and sexual. Last spring I attended a discussion in Riga about transgender rights and one of the thoughts that I took with me was that we tend to translate normality as happiness. We impose this perception on ourselves, on our children, and people around us. We want to be 'normal' and integrate within existing norms. We fear wrong reactions and, in that way, suppress our needs and wishes and devalue personal freedom and safety. It requires courage to ignore the loud and policing inner voice in our minds 'trained' by social norms. How can we give freedom to our close ones as well as ourselves and let everyone be what they want?

The American writer Melissa Febos in her book *Girlhood*² investigates the possibility of choosing to play a different 'game' beside the one guided by personal and collective awareness. Through her experiences as a teenager uncomfortable in her own body, dominatrix, and drug addict, she dissects the structures of our society and finds patriarchy and fear of the un-normal deeply rooted in our behaviours. Febos writes that both have trained many of us to comply with the rules dictated by those with more power than us, mistakenly considered as our own. 'You carve yourself', Febos writes, and resisting the restrictive external gaze she finds the possibility to live an intentional life. But is it enough? Shouldn't we work toward changes and resist the institutions that police the borders of what is considered normal? How is the transition possible?

IMAGINATION AS A TRANSITIVE ACT

Is it most effective to reform the current system, or to imagine – and then build – an alternative one?

Magidová's work is driven by feminist utopias, and through its immersive character shows why fiction matters in the times we live. Her works defamiliarise the world around us so that we may better see where we have ended up. But while joining the artist on this journey of reimagining and envisioning a better society, the question that stood out significantly for me was that of the education system. On one hand, because education and learning reforms have long been ways of imagining new societies; and secondly the school as an institution characterises the systematic arrangement of the world – a top-down hierarchy with a centralised power.

Magidová's children's experiences, as well as the development of the education programme *Wrong E* for this exhibition, allow us to observe that the existing education system in the Global North with its social structures erases otherness and in that way everything that is against the norm. Systems are achievement-oriented and rarely put imagination and creativity at the centre of the learning process. This manifests itself further in society as inequality and the reproduction of stereotypes of gender, sexuality, race, and class. On one of our calls Magidová with an ironic smile told me that her daughter said with fullfillment: 'Mum, I behaved well today in kindergarten.' Magidová was sorry that learning institutions set obedience as a primary goal and not the acquisition of new knowledge and experience. In a way this tells us that if we want a better, different future, we have to introduce utopian thinking and imagination in education to develop new visions and forms of existing. Quoting Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor: 'The future is always an action, a process of creation through an act of imagination.'³

Dear visitor, we must continue to imagine, and I hope your planet allows you to travel far!

Andra Silapētere, curator

1 Elvia Wilk, *Death by Landscape*, New York: Soft Skull Landscape, 2022, p. 106.

2 Melissa Febos, *Girlhood*, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021, p. 320.

3 Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor, *A Contradiction in Terms: Defining Imagination*, accessed October 23, 2022: <https://imaginezine.com/jennifer-wagner-lawlor/>.