

PLATO

Press Release
10 October 2023, Ostrava

Animals Open Own Newsroom in PLATO Gallery. New Exhibition Takes Them as Equal Fellow Inhabitants of City

If urban animals were able to tell us about their lives in Ostrava, what would we learn? And what if they did their own news reporting? The international exhibition *Escaped, Found a Hideout, Still on the Run*, with the subtitle *Animal News*, is the result of such a reflection (on view until 10 March 2024).

Almost exactly one year after the opening of the gallery in the refurbished city slaughterhouse, visitors strolling through the new exhibition can imagine what it would be like to coexist with animals in respect and without fear. Since the beginning of PLATO's most challenging exhibition project to date, the exhibition concept authors Eva Kořátková and Edith Jeřábková have been motivating visitors to leave behind the human viewpoint and perceive the exhibition through the perspective of an animal.

Immediately upon entering the Ostrava City Gallery of Contemporary Art, viewers realise that there is a difference. At the ticket office for the new exhibition, you will find the usual gallery merchandise such as T-shirts or bags but in addition, you will discover a display case with a set of crocheted animal outfits made by artist Livia Škutová. The exhibition guards and guides are a fox, a hare, an owl, a raven, a pigeon, a bee and a roe deer. The videos of these animal avatars were created by artist András Cséfalvay and they were given voices by people from the PLATO team. The exhibition set-up, designed by Eva Kořátková in collaboration with Ruta Putramentaite, consists of giant animal bodies, scratching posts, kennels, dens, perches, hiding places and objects resembling a drooping tail or an oversized paw; they can be touched, stroked and cuddled. The artworks are installed in a way that makes it possible for them to be viewed by dogs, cats or ferrets – these are allowed access (on a leash) to all the exhibition rooms with works by the twenty-nine participating artists.

The section of the former pork slaughterhouse transformed by the creative team into a newsroom bringing reports from public and hidden places in Ostrava, as well as more distant

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sites, has become the most dynamic area of the exhibition *Escaped, Found a Hideout, Still on the Run*. Twenty-three reports take the form of video, audio, drawings, photography and various combinations of these. Swedish artist Annika Eriksson has made a new film for the exhibition, presenting the view of seagulls, poultry and farm animals on life at the landfill and an abandoned farm in Ostrava. Painter Hana Puchová has made a cartoon reportage to convey the life of wild horses from the meadows in Kozmice near Ostrava. In a video reportage about pigeons in Ostrava, David Přílučák together with activist Fuki attempt to change people's negative attitude towards pigeons, which has spread since pigeon airmail was replaced by technology. Jiří Žák is interested in the life of canaries helping miners in Ostrava coal mines. Tuan Andrew Nguyen uses an artistic double projection to document animal life in Vietnam, sometimes in a very raw and critical way. Another example shows the intimate and almost magical picture of the coexistence of Polish biologist and professor of forest sciences Simona Kossak (1943–2007) and her partner, natural scientist, artist, photographer and writer Lech Wilczek (1930–2018) with forest animals in the Dziedzinka settlement in the Białowieża Forest. Jim Nollman contributed a radio piece to the exhibition, composed in 1973 for Thanksgiving, in which he recorded himself singing children's songs together with three hundred turkeys.

“We have conceived the exhibition as an environment consisting of different zones in which the animal is mixed with the human, the exhibition setup is mixed with applied objects, and the temporary, the changing is combined with the permanent. We envision the gallery as a big animal newsroom where exhibitions, reports and formats of shared learning and working take place side by side. The individual contributions and investigations intersect, bringing a plastic and ambiguous picture of animal actors and actresses,” say the authors of the concept, Eva Kořátková and Edith Jeřábková. Kořátková is involved in the project in three different ways: as the designer, curator and exhibiting artist.

Throughout the exhibition, the newsroom will be enlivened by meetings of the editorial team with the public. On 24 November, the first of three open all-day *Editorial Meetings* will bring a programme for children and school classes led by the exhibiting artists in the form of scratching and meowing classes or a workshop on the theme of the inner animal. In the

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evening public session, activist Fuki, for example, will open a pigeon hair salon inspired by these birds' "hairstyles."

Escaped, Found a Hideout, Still on the Run

(Animal News)

PLATO, Porážková 26, Ostrava, Czech Republic

12 October 2023 – 10 March 2024

Opening: 11 October 2023 at 6 pm

Based on a concept by Eva Kotátková & Edith Jeřábková

With the participation of: Yevgenia Belorusets, Cecilia Bengolea, Jan Bražina, András Cséfalvay, Annika Eriksson, Fuki, Kateřina Konvalinová & Jiří Žák, Eva Kotátková, Simona Kossak & Lech Wilczek, Zdeněk Košek, Denisa Langrová, Karolína Matušková & Lucie Zelmanová, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, Jim Nollman, Viktorie Pražáková, David Přílučík, Hana Puchová, Ruta Putramentaite, Tabita Rezaire, Jonáš Richter, Lívie Škutová, Adam Tománek & Martin Tománek, TV Páteř, Cecilia Vicuña, Aleksandra Waliszewska

Curators: Eva Kotátková, Jakub Adamec, Edith Jeřábková, Zuzana Šrámková

Curatorial statement: <https://plato-ostrava.cz/en/Octopus-Press/Zvireci-Zpravodajstvi>

Three editorial meetings open to the public: 24/11/2023, 27/1/2024, 1/3/2024

Pigeon's hair salon: during the opening, three times during editorial meetings, and then twice a month

Commented guided tours (in Czech): once a month throughout the duration of the exhibition

Opening hours: daily from 10 am to 6 pm, on Wednesdays to 8 pm, closed on Mondays

Admission (3 types following the visitors' sympathy for PLATO):

You are a fan – 1 CZK; You support it – 30 CZK; ♥ – 100 CZK

www.plato-ostrava.cz

PLATO is a dynamic and open institution founded by the city of Ostrava, Czech Rep. Since 2016, it has been presenting current forms of contemporary (visual) art without building its own collection. Since September 2022, it has been located in the former slaughterhouse building and also runs PLATO Bauhaus.

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