G A L E R I A

Arsenał



RADYKALNE RODZICIELSTWO

17.11.2023—21.01.2024

RADICAL PARENTHOOD

Artists:
Pamela Bożek, DIS/ORDER, Monika Drożyńska, Elżbieta Jabłońska
Lesia Khomenko, Bartłomiej Kiełbowicz, Cecylia Malik,
MATERNAL FANTASIES, Bára Šimková, Jaśmina Wójcik

Curated by Eliza Urwanowicz-Rojecka
Graphic identity: Tomek Pawluczuk

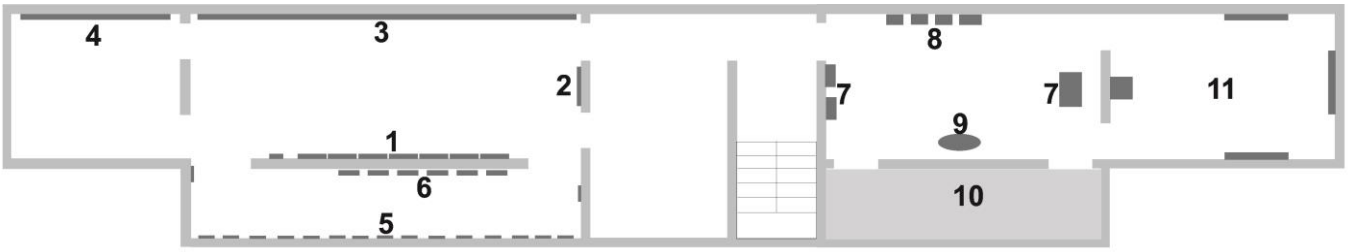
The exhibition explores the issue of parenthood interpreted as a process fitting economies of social care and generosity.

We live in breakthrough times, in a dynamically changing reality system solutions cannot keep up with, continually searching for narratives to "organise" or "hack" the future; in times of a war well-nigh on our doorstep, of climate, epidemic, geopolitical, humanitarian and migration crises. Given the relentless frequency of institutional inefficiency and oppressiveness, the current and future wellbeing of Children is increasingly dependent on their parents' involvement, openness and creativity. Daily and regular parenting practices, individual and community-based alike, offer an opportunity for creating new patterns, solutions and representations assisting the child in his/her/their development in emotional-and-intellectual, social, physical and ethical terms. An actively thinking, feeling, acting citizen of the world, the subjectively treated Child remains at the core of all practices. Yet parental self-care and focus on parental wellbeing is an equally essential practice-related component.

All works shown analyse the parenthood phenomenon from an individual and social perspective, occasionally mixing and blending the two orders, showcasing their intermingling and mutual dependence. After all, cultural imaginings or archetypes are processed or transcended through our own experiences, feelings, daily lives.

Parenthood will be approached in the context of emotions and thinking styles as well as daily practices focused on the here and now as well as on the future, near and distant alike.

Eliza Urwanowicz-Rojecka



7.

Pamela Bożek
***All That Glitters*, 2017**
sculpture, dimensions: varied
photograph 40.8 × 28.5 cm (photo by: Iwona Demko)

Pamela Bożek, Ignacy Bożek
***All That Glitters II*, 2019**
sculpture, dimensions: varied
photograph 40.8 × 28.5 cm (photo by: Alicja Kozak)

The photographs and accompanying sculptures are an account of a process of coping with the experience of disability in public space.

The golden impression is a rendering of the caretaker's perspective. A desperate aesthetisation strategy, the gilding of post-operative plaster casts, proved effective as protection against mass expressions of sympathy, astonishment and surprise, all of which making the briefest escape from pain and discomfort impossible.

The blue impression is a tale of inclusivity and community. Not only was the decision to take a photo after further surgery made together with the child – it was steeped in awareness of purpose and consequences. We worked on the sculpture together, intentionally transforming Ignacy's commemorative plaster cast into a work of art.

And just as artificial gilding – performance of wealth standing in sharp contrast to the expression "poor child" – was supplemented with a golden rescue blanket, blue Austrian orthopaedic dressings were complemented with the azure Frakta. The famous IKEA bag is a home-related object accompanying all of us without fail, an egalitarian product available to people across the globe: "Make room for life". The Frakta contains dreams, pleasure and toil. Carrying a heavy load within, its unvarying shape tells the story of homes or their shortage, of moving, of travel. Its azure hue prevails in all accounts of camps set up by persons fleeing war, of sleeping rough, of the vast sky.

For the *Radical Parenthood* exhibition, the photographs were veiled for the first time. The decision to secure them in a special way was taken by Ignacy the day before (its) opening.

Pamela Bożek – artist and activist with a focus on caretaking and community efforts, and education and collaboration for solidarity, affordability and equality. Wrote her Ph.D. thesis "From Poland to Poland" exploring post-artistic strategies in the spirit of caring for and building relationships with persons with migration and refuge experiences under the supervision of Professors Iwona Demko and Krzysztof Wodiczko. Mum to Ignacy. This is how Ignacy describes himself:

My name is **Ignacy Kosma Bożek**, but I prefer "Ignacy". My mum is Pamela Bożek, she gave birth to me in Cracow in 2014. I live in the village of Rogale and in Warsaw, where I go to school and football practice at my favourite club: Alternative Sports Club ZŁY (*BAD*).

9.

DIS/ORDER

***The translucent existence of a radical being on its way of becoming whole*, 2023**

object, paper with family interviews and photos

I want this piece to be a sincere, truthful, self-exposing narrative depicting real-life evidence of my lifestyle, my feelings and way of thinking, my general world outlook and political views.

As a practicing mother and radical feminist, I derive my point of departure from the role conflict that characterises motherhood and parenting in general. The conflict is nearly always present, regardless of whether blatant or not. While more obvious in motherhood, it affects fathers to a great extent too.

I see this disintegration as evidence of trauma. The trace of a split personality, the interrupted tissue of a reproducing human – it originates and reproduces trauma on all levels, generational and transgenerational to the deeply intimate. The parenting experience is common, ordinary, conventional – yet invariably revolutionary on a personal level. It can make you whole – or ruin you. Reproductive practices are the very special locus of our potential to emancipate - as members of the human race and individuals; as children and parents.

The transparent kimono is based on my son's invention – the "Kimono with a Thousand Pockets". Yakiv developed it several years ago as a present for our dear friend and co-founder of the DIS/ORDER fashion brand. The coat includes DIS/ORDER's signature feature: the big and practical pocket our family calls the "mum bag". It will hold literally anything – a bottle of prosecco to a small kid!

The coat is filled with assorted stuff I found several of my purses and pockets.

DIS/ORDER – *DIS/ORDER* is a Ukrainian collective from Kyiv. Lubov Malikova and Max Poberezhsky run the collaborative art group and experimental design studio, and own and manage an independent fashion brand. Other artists work with the collective periodically.

Luba and her two children fled Russian terrorist action in Ukraine – after a year of exile, they decided to come back home and stay.

DIS/ORDER develops multidisciplinary projects, situations, installations, graphics and wearables, using subjects of mutation and objects of religious cult, products of social transformation and technology. Contributed to the *DENEDE* initiative, *IZOLYATSIYA* platform and *SVITLOGRAD* project at Donbas, the latter shown at the VCRC (Kyiv) and Art Arsenal (Kyiv). Finalists of the 2015 UK/Raine international contest for young artists organised by Saatchi Gallery, London; finalists and winners of the *MUKHI* contest for young Ukrainian artists (2010 and 2011); recognised as part of a special selection for talented designers at the two most prominent international fair and show events for professionals: *Bijorhca* and *Tendence*.

Luba and Max expanded *DIS/ORDER* to include a branch activity – the *Queer Chapel*.

Over the last 7 years, *DIS/ORDER* has been operating as an independent mystery fashion brand, the political message concealed in its structure intended to overcome selected capitalist standards of the industry, and targeting interesting results in research to push the field forward. They have developed and manufactured innovative face masks as the first local supplier. Manufactured and delivered thousands of signature "Smiley Face" masks for ∄, popular today with Ukrainian ravers and internationally.

4.

Tymon Słapak (textual content/reader), Monika Drożyńska (embroidery), Jan Moszumański (animacja)
***OKruszynka*, 2021, animacja, 1'24"**

2.

Tymon Słapak (tekst), Monika Drożyńska (haft)
***OKruszynka*, 2021, haft, 100 × 110 cm**

The work is accompanied by an essay by Grzegorz Stępniak, *OKruszynka 2021, or growing up sideways*
The work and the essay were created as part of the Year of Lem in Kraków, 2021
The project was co-financed by the City of Kraków
Organizer: Exhibition Bureau / Polish Modern Art Foundation

Eleven years old at the time, Tymek wrote a story about Speck as his Polish language homework assignment. He asked me to check his spelling. I asked if he would let me embroider the full text as a family keepsake. Times were difficult, the pandemic upon us – Speck warmed our hearts. We came up with the idea of displaying the embroidered story on sign-posts around town. A scannable audio-video animation was created to facilitate access. I managed to convince my son to read Speck for the animation, in lieu of paying for all our work. His did as requested – and declared he was done with art (we had created a number of works together, sharing exhibition experiences in Warsaw's Zachęta Gallery, the Labirynt Gallery in Lublin, and Art Exhibitions Bureau Olsztyn). Today, Tymek plays sports.

Monika Drożyńska (1979) – doctor of art, visual artist, embroiderer, and activist. Precursor of embroidery techniques in contemporary art, and fabrics in public space. Collaborated with the POLIN Museum, Zachęta – National Art Gallery. Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Mumok in Vienna, Ludwig Múzeum in Budapest, and Bozar in Brussels. Her works form part of collections owned by Bunkier Sztuki (Bunker of Art) in Cracow, the National Museum in Cracow, MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art in Cracow, National Museum in Kyiv, and Lentos Art Museum in Linz.

Tymon Słapak (2010) – seventh-grade primary school student. **Athlete**. Monika Drożyńska's son.

3.

Elżbieta Jabłońska in collaboration with Antoni Majewski and Stanisław Kotwicki
drawing, collage, ink on wall, 2023

(based on drawings from the artist's family archives, 1997–2023)

I collect trifles, slivers of reality, drawings, letters, cards I had been gifted or sent by my sons over the years. I borrow, modify, update and publish. This time, I selected around 500 drawings from our enormous archive, drawings my sons and I have transferred onto a single large-size, coherent wall drawing. For a little while, for the duration of the exhibition, we make notes jotted in our notebooks, sketchbooks and private family correspondence available to the world.

Children are power!

Elżbieta Jabłońska – visual artist playing ironic games with social roles attributed to individuals and/or operational mechanisms of institutions of art, subjecting any social engagement in the field of art to profound reflection. Her *oeuvre* includes long-term activities based on co-operating with audiences and art institutions, projects activating varied communities, and curatorship realisations.

Her *oeuvre* is frequently classified as feminist or post-feminist. Her pivotal interests include installations, photographs, performances, and time-space activities. Considers artworks to be relational objects, their sense and meaning subject to change and/or modification. Is currently exploring artistic gestures of encouragement to take action, build fleeting communities, and develop space for mutual communication and concord – thus relinquishing the production of matter, and – occasionally – her own authorship.

Mother to Antoni and Stanisław.

6.
Lesia Khomenko
***After the End*, 2015**
a series of watercolors in box frames under milk glass, 43 × 53 × 6 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Voloshyn Gallery

This is a set of watercolours under satin glass which blurs and obscures the image. I showed my peaceful life in Kyiv at the time of war breaking out in East Ukraine and Crimea. I depicted my daughter, sleeping and playing; my husband in home routines, nothing special going on. While *After the end* suggests "after the end of the war", it also brings to mind the loss of our quiet, invisible paradise – and us leaving our previous life behind. To me, this work turned out to be a document of that time.

The gesture of blurring the image by placing watercolours under milk glass is a response to the impossibility of conveying subjective experience (that of daily life in times of war, for example). Compared to dramatic depictions of death and destruction, monotonous daily routines are an unpopular subject. Media seek to create visual and semantic clichés when discussing territories hit by military conflicts. And yet in such times, banal and boring mundaneness becomes a thing most cherished. Culture offers few instruments useful in creating images of uneventful everyday life. In literature and cinema, "quiet life" begins after the story ends, after the end, so to speak. All things quotidian are pushed beyond the frame of the narrative. In *After the End*, I use the frame and glass to ponder my personal "quiet quotidian", transforming the frame – a dispensable decorative element – into a meaning-formative mechanism.

Lesia Khomenko (b. 1980 in Kyiv) is a multidisciplinary artist who reconsiders the role of painting – she deconstructs narrative images and transforms paintings into objects, installations, performances, or videos. Her interest lies in revealing tools of visual manipulation in the context of history- and myth-making. Graduate of the National Academy of Fine Art and Architecture in Kyiv (2004). Member of the R.E.P. Group since 2004. Co-founder (2008) of the curatorial union HUDRADA, a self-educational community based on interdisciplinary co-operation. Initiator and programme director of the "Contemporary Art" curriculum at the Kyiv Academy of Media Arts. Her works were shown as part of multiple exhibitions: at the Lviv Municipal Art Centre, 2021 (solo); PinchukArtCentre, Kyiv, 2018 (solo); MNAC, Bucharest, 2016; The Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, 2015; Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary

Art, Warsaw, 2014; The Future Generation Art Prize@Venice2013; Kyiv Biennial 2012 (main project); National Art Museum of Ukraine, 2012; Mystetskyi Arsenal, Kyiv, 2011 (solo); Kalmar Konstmuseum, Sweden, 2011; Fridman Gallery, New York, 2022; MUMOK Vienna, 2009; *Zachęta* National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 2008; *De Appel*, Amsterdam, 2008; the Ukrainian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 2007 (collaboration with Mark Titchner); and Kunsthalle Vienna, 2006. Finalist of the Pinchuk Art Prize in 2009, 2011, and 2013; 2016 finalist of the Kazimir Malevich Award, Kyiv. Lives in New York with her daughter.

5.

Bartłomiej Kiełbowicz
***The Baby*, 2019, ink on paper, 29.5 × 21 cm**
***Pregnancy Register*, 2023, drawing on paper, watercolour, 29.5 × 21 cm**
***The Artist's Child*, 2023, drawing on paper, watercolour, 29.5 × 21 cm**
***Uber Kids*, 2023, mural, dimensions variable**
***On Fatherhood*, 2023, drawing on paper, watercolour, 29.5 × 42 cm**
***Awake*, 2023, mural, dimensions variable**
***Changing the Nappy (after Leonardo*), 2023, mural, dimensions variable**
***Falling Asleep*, 2023, drawing on paper, watercolour, 29.5 × 21 cm**
***A Parent's Eyes*, 2023, mural, dimensions variable**
***Hugo*, 2023, gouache on paper, 29.5 × 42 cm**
***Father and Son*, 2023, drawing on paper, watercolour, 42 × 29.5 cm**
***Working Parent*, 2023, watercolour on paper, 42 × 29.5 cm**
***Climate Change Crisis*, 2023, mural, dimensions variable**
***Changing Nappies, a Shift in Power*, 2023, mural, dimensions variable**
***Tomorrow*, 2023, watercolour on paper, 42 × 29.5 cm**
Statistics*, 2023, mural, dimensions variable*
***A Room with a View of War*, 2023, watercolour on paper, 42 × 29.5 cm**
***Children at the Border*, 2023, mural, dimensions variable**

We live in a country with no respect or care for women, a country we cannot feel safe in. That was our first thought once we found out Liwia was pregnant.

What about the pregnancy register, what about abortion, what about medical care, can we trust any physician observing the "conscience clause"?

Our son's birth coincided with the anniversary of war breaking out in Ukraine. Having joined a manifestation at the entrance to the Russian Embassy, I kept glancing at my watch: is it time? Has she gone into labour? Just a few days before, a new and improved ChatGPT version had been released, triggering debates on whether we ought to fear an A.I.-caused downfall of humanity.

On one of our first walks with our son, we ran into a march defending the reputation of John Paul II, a macabre procession with Zbigniew Ziobro at the helm. Hugo rolled over onto his belly for the first time around the March of June 4th, one we both joined with his mum Liwia, distributing banners. Hugo's first smile – *"Not a Single Woman More"* protest march. His first tooth – the visa scandal. His first step – on the eve of parliamentary elections. Hugo learned to wave "bye-bye" with radio accounts of Gaza Strip casualties in the background.

My works are commentaries on current events; they tend to trickle over into our family life. My drawings are swifter and somewhat abridged these days – I have less time to work. Sometimes, when my son falls asleep during a walk in the park, I use my iPhone to draw: the simpler, the better – and the more forceful the message.

Liwia and I are both active artists, sharing child care equally.

Drawings shown at the exhibition are a sequence of extraordinarily personal works with a focus on my relationship with my son and on watching him grow – yet they are not free of concern regarding the kind of world he will end up living in, affected by climate change, uncertain geo-political circumstances, and technological development. The earliest drawings on display go back to before Hugo was born, conveying expectation coupled with fear associated with the pregnancy register; they are also an attempt at imagining what my son would look like. Post-partum drawings are a commentary on how our life had changed: sleepless nights, an enormity of duties, efforts to combine professional assignments, political protest involvement, and caring for our baby. A parent myself, I am particularly moved by the situation of children tying in with assorted conflicts around the globe: war in Ukraine, clashes in Gaza, the humanitarian crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. Such are the stories my recent works tell.

Bartłomiej Kiełbowicz – visual artist. Graduate of the Faculty of Painting, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Author of paintings, drawings, videos, murals and installations. Observer of reality he comments on regularly in his draughtsman's journals and activist campaigns. His recent works explore themes of defending democracy in Poland (*Transparenty wolności – Banners of Freedom* campaign), crisis in the Roman Catholic Church (*Zamalowany papież – Pope Painted Over*), war in Ukraine (*Zrób to sam #Leroy – DIY #Leroy* and *Depcz Putina – Trample Putin* campaigns), the refugee crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border (*Dłonie pod domem Jarosława Kaczyńskiego – Hands in Front of Jarosław Kaczyński's Home*), and defending the *Zachęta Gallery* in Warsaw (*Zajęta – Occupied* campaign). Co-operates with choreographer Liwia Bargieł. Draws for the *"Polityka"* weekly.

Key solo exhibitions: *Pope Painted Over* (Marszałkowska 18 Gallery, Warsaw, 2023), *Sublimacja* (*Sublimation*, Biała Gallery, Lublin, 2020), *Od pewnego czasu mieszkam w czyimś śnie* (*I have Been Living in Someone Else's Dream for a While*, Contrast Gallery, Warsaw, 2018) and *Dziennik budowy* (*Construction Site Journal*, Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, 2014).

Key group shows: *Utrwalanie* (*Consolidation*, Centre of Polish Sculpture, Orońsko, 2023), *Sezon w piekle* (*A Season in Hell*, Bielska Gallery, Art Exhibitions Bureau, Bielsko-Biała, 2022), *Nigdy nie będziesz szła sama* (*You Shall Never Walk Alone*, *Labyrinth* Gallery, Lublin, 2021), *Rewizjonizm magiczny* (*A Revisionism Magical*, *Propaganda* Gallery, Warsaw, 2020), *We are people* (Labirynt Gallery, Lublin, 2020), *Borderline* (Wrocław Drawing Triennial, Wrocław Contemporary Museum, 2019), *Summer* (Roberto Polo Gallery, Brussels, 2015).

8.

Cecylia Malik

***Polish Mother at the Felling*, Sodowa, Krakow, 2017, lightbox, 28 × 20 cm, photo by P. Dziurdzia**

***Polish Mother at the Felling*, Kobierzyńska, Krakow, 2017, lightbox, 28 × 20 cm, photo by P. Dziurdzia**

***Polish Mother at the Felling*, Okulickiego, Krakow, 2017, lightbox, 28 × 20 cm, photo by P. Dziurdzia**

***Polish Mothers at the Felling*, Polish Aviators' Park, Krakow, lightbox, 47 × 33 cm, 2017, photo by T. Wiech**

Polish Mothers at the Felling is the moniker of an informal civic movement born of a response to mass tree felling in Poland in the wake of a more liberal logging law having been introduced, duly dubbed "lex Szyszko" in reference to the infamous minister of the environment at the

time. The campaign was launched by Cecylia Malik, who protested against tree felling by breastfeeding her six-month-old son Ignacy for a month on fresh logging sites around the city of Cracow. She uploaded photographs of individual performances to her Facebook page to illustrate the tree butchery scale. Her campaign was eventually joined by other mums, Anna Grajewska appointed co-organiser. The first group performance was held in Cracow on March 3rd, a photograph of the site going viral online and in Polish and European media; extending beyond its purpose as an illustration of "lex Szyszko", it gave rise to similar protests in other Polish cities. Mothers and their young children set out for logging sites throughout Poland with intent to document the scale of destruction, demanding immediate change to the amended law, and dismissal of environment minister Jan Szyszko. Polish Mothers on Logging Sites served their appeal – complete with a copy of the campaign photograph – to President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Beata Szydło. A delegation of the Mothers gifted a third copy of the photograph – with a report on destruction to Polish nature drafted by prominent Polish ecological organisations – to Pope Francis, alluding to his encyclic *Laudato si*. The trip to Rome crowned a month-long crowdfunding campaign. This pilgrimage of objection was organised with intent to request a papal intervention, since the minister of the environment and his anti-ecological policy had been backed by the Polish Catholic Church and Catholic media. The newly forged tradition of breastfeeding in protest was continued by climate activists in a sequence of *Feeding Hope* performances in Belgium, on initiative of artist Maria Lucia Cruz Correia.

Creative campaign concept: Cecylia Malik
Photographic documentation of Cecylia Malik's performances: Piotr Dziurdzia
Photographic documentation of the group performance in Cracow on March 3rd 2017: Tomasz Wiech
Photographic documentation of the campaign in Rome: Tomasz Wiech
Co-organiser and editor of the report on the condition of Polish nature presented to Pope Francis: Anna Grajewska
Campaign logo by: Wojtek Kwiecień-Janikowski

Mothers and children involved in the campaign to visit Pope Francis: Anna Grajewska and Róża Wiech-Grajewska, Agata Bargiel and Kosma Dzierżak, Agnieszka Miłogrodzka and Lew Czupryński, Daria Gosek-Popiołek and Róża Popiołek

Cecylia Malik – painter, visual artist and environmental activist. Combines art with activism, seeing to meaning and efficiency in equal measure in all campaigns. Joining forces with experts representing assorted fields, organises protests developed as happenings and artworks, translating the difficult specialist language of environmental protection into the language of art.

Founder and leader (as River Białka) of the *River Sisters* collective. Author of visual concepts for *River Sister* happenings, and a documentary telling the collective's story. Invented and co-organised the first campaign in defence of rivers – *Białka's Braids* – with the Bunkier Sztuki (Bunker of Art) Gallery in 2013. Rivers have become Malik's love and passion. Member of the *Save the Rivers* Coalition from the day it was formed.

Author of multiple art projects, key endeavours including *365 drzew* (*365 Trees*) and *6 rzek* (*6 rivers*). Co-author of the *Lycaenidae* Collective formed to defend Cracow's Zakrzówek Lagoon against commercial development, and the *Aquatic Critical Mass* regular event on the River Vistula. Co-founder of the *Squirrel* Centre for Contemporary Art. Initiated the *Polish Mothers at the Felling* campaign in protest against "lex Szyszko".

Winner of a number of awards, i.a. the *Person of Polish Ecology* (2017), and Katarzyna Kobro Award (2019).

Mum to Antoni, Urszula and Ignacy.

11.

MATERNAL FANSTASIES

***The First Supper*, 2023, photograph, 100 × 150 cm**

***Milky Way*, 2023, photograph, 100 × 150 cm**

***Grass Madonna and the Green Dominics*, 2023, photograph, 100 × 150 cm**

The photographs are accompanied by texts by members of MATERNAL FANTASIES

The three photographs presented are part of a larger body of work, which MATERNAL FANTASIES has executed since 2018 during self-organized artist residencies, so-called "Landpartie". 'Landpartie' is an old-fashioned German word for a trip to the countryside. The photographs were created in the spring of 2023 during "Landpartie #3" at Haus des Wandels, a cultural production site in Brandenburg, Germany. The collective has developed a set of self-imposed rules for the staging, co-authoring, and (co-)directing of video scenes as tableaux vivants and photographs taken at the same time. Their playful way of working, which includes the children of the collective, is based on a principle of rotation of team members in all the responsibilities associated with artistic production including care work – e.g. rotation in the roles as cook, director, performer, childcare worker, writer, cleaner, or as camera person. This spontaneous and pragmatic process takes into account the different capacities and abilities of individuals in different phases of life and motherhood(s) and gives a fantastic visibility to the multi-faceted and diverse experiences therein. The resulting co-authored and polyphonic artworks highlight rather than hide imperfections, flaws, diversity of personal struggles and motivations, contradictory opinions, and interpretations.

In this context, the two animal masks (octopus and raven) self-ironically challenge one-sided and stereotypical views of mothers as either "holy" or "monstrous", e.g. as expressed in the term "Rabenmutter" ('Rabenmutter' is a German swear word for a bad mother, one who neglects her children because of a professional occupation.)

In their large-scale photograph ***The First Supper*** (2023), the members of the MATERNAL FANTASIES collective re-enact the famous, already frequently restaged, religious mural *The Last Supper* (Leonardo da Vinci, 1494–1498) from their feminist, collective, and non-religious perspective. With the masks and the roles they assume in *The First Supper*, MATERNAL FANTASIES articulate their rejection of the idealized and exclusive mother role personified in the holy Madonna with child (and the concept of immaculate conception) within Christian, patriarchal mythology.

Milky Way (2023) references *The Origin of the Milky Way* by Tintoretto (ca. 1575-1580), which depicts the moment where the Greek queen-goddess Hera pushes away the nursing hero-baby Heracles from her breast. As Mikala Hyldig Dal, member of MATERNAL FANTASIES states: "In my re-enactment, I was interested in exploring how, at that moment of strain and rejection, the Milky Way comes into existence, created by the surplus milk still squirting from the goddess's breast: Weaning as the founding moment of our galaxy."

Grass Madonna and the Green Dominics (2023) links the re-enactment of a contemporary artwork by Maicyra Leão, member of MATERNAL FANTASIES with the art historical reference of Caravaggio's *Madonna of the Rosary* (1607). In doing so, the picture updates both the image of the individual artist persona towards the mother* artist while revising the iconic Madonna portrait. True power is assigned here to the connected collective organism.

MATERNAL FANSTASIES
***Love and Labor. Intimacy and Isolation. Care and Survival*, 2020**
a performance between mothers and children in a state of lockdown
video of online performance, HD, 22'50", sound

A transcription in Polish and English is available at the exhibition

Who cares for whom, and what are the consequences? The feminist art collective MATERNAL FANTASIES lets viewers peek into their homes, where artistic production exists alongside domestic tasks and childcare. Household items become toys. Kitchens become backdrops. Care work and parenting have historically been marked by gender-based inequalities, yet the current conditions of social distancing have acutely magnified these injustices. Against this backdrop, the performance seeks to understand "mothering" not as a physical and fixed category or identity, but instead as dedicated time, attention, nurturance, protection, and an interrupted state of mind.

MATERNAL FANTASIES – an interdisciplinary group of international artists and cultural producers based in Berlin. They shape the discourse on motherhood through collective artistic processes while enhancing the visibility of contemporary feminist positions addressing motherhood(s) in the arts. From writing autobiographical responses to classic feminist texts to devising performances using children's games, their art practice favours inclusive community-oriented experiments as alternatives to traditional structures of art production. Bridging theory and practice, their strategy transforms research on motherhood(s), care work and representation in the arts into frameworks for immersive modes of critique.

MATERNAL FANTASIES are **Aino El Solh, Hanne Klaas, Isabell Spengler, Lena Chen, Magdalena Kallenberger, Maicyra Leao, Mikala Hyldig Dal**.

MATERNAL FANTASIES are recipients of the Artist Advancement Award 2019/20 of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, and authors of the book *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s) – On Radical Care and Collective Art as Feminist Practices*, published by onomatopee, 2020.

10.

Barbora Šimková
***The Dwarf and the Artist*, 2022, audio, 18'**

A transcription in Polish, Ukrainian and English is available at the exhibition

Bára Šimková's fairy tale tells the story of an artist who is also a single mother. It follows up on Šimková's long-term interest in single parents attempting to survive in conditions of the highly underfunded art world – and, more generally, in a society systematically underestimating the importance of caregiving. Do single parents have the right to devote themselves professionally to art while demanding dignified living conditions? Or should they rather resign, give up artistic self-fulfilment ambitions, and come to terms with what society has to offer: to survive in endless uncertainty rather than live; change one's interests based on economic prognoses; or resign from whatever ambition they had other than paying rent, putting food on the table, keeping their homes tidy and their children spotless? The term "single mother" evokes contempt at worst, and compassion at best. What if not every single mother dreams of finding a new daddy for her child? Shouldn't every mother, whether in a relationship or not, have the right to freedom? The fairy tale explores art, upbringing, relationships, and failure. The artist deals with the role of the state and its institutions such as courts, preschools, and social welfare agencies, which tend to make any form of support dependent on additional work: running errands, waiting in lines, filling out forms. Even more importantly: are these

institutions trustworthy? Will our heroine be helped by some kind of supernatural revelation? Or will coming to terms with reality and her new-found determination be the greatest touch of magic she can count on?

English version:
narrated by Rebecca Riisness
sound design: Monika Rygálová
translation: Lívia Tomečková
recorded in Mr. Wombat studio

This work was created as part of the Biennale Matter of Art 2022

Polish version:
narrated by Patryk Ołdziejewski
translation from English: Aleksandra Sobczak
copy-editing: Ewa Borowska
recorded in EsDwa studio

Barbora Šimková (ur. 1989) – an artist based in Prague, currently a post-graduate Ph.D. student of Fine Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, attempting to improve the work and study conditions of academic community members who are also parents. In her research, she focuses on issues of labour, gender and economic inequalities, and the position of caregivers in artistic production.

Graduate of the Faculty of Fine Arts (Intermedia Studio) of the Brno University of Technology. Her thesis (2019) was intended to bring together art students with the goal to improve their economic situation, and position within the institution. In 2018, she presented her short film describing Prague's housing policy conditions at the Ji.hlava IDFF.

Participant of residency programmes in Norway, Russia, and Slovakia. Advocate for fewer working hours and higher wages.

Member of the leisure collective Lilky_60200.

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Jaśmina Wójcik
***Empathetic Education Manifesto III* cycle, 2017–2023**
drawings, ink on paper, dimensions variable

The *Empathetic Education Manifesto III* is a cycle of drawings combined into diagrams and panels I have been developing and expanding for the past five years. Therein I have gathered and shared personal experience associated with formal education, a system of oppression and formatting. A parent myself, I am making conscious efforts to search the system for gaps of freedom, one neither unambiguous nor obvious. This involves processes of unlearning and observing the education system, and of how it has made me think and act (as a mother, guardian, and educator). The *Manifesto* cycle is an account of my path of turning towards my children and listening to them as a parent – but also as a pre-school and school educator active in assorted care centres and institutions of culture; as initiator and founder of *Gazeta Dzieci* (*Children's Gazette*); as a film director making movies with children. In my drawings, I depict the process of abandoning adulthood as a category of power and omniscience in favour of adulthood interpreted as mindful companionship to children, and following them in their journeys (while preserving a framework of proper safety of and accountability for the entire process).

I authored my *Empathetic Education Manifesto* at the intersection of many years of working with the community of former *Ursus* Tractor Factory workers – and children's communities. I spotted a number of similarities in accompanying the two groups, and remaining in close relations with both. The *Manifesto* is also a record of my own observations, reflections, and experiences as a mother and educator making a conscious effort to work with children along empathetic mindfulness lines. Moreover, I am using the *Manifesto* as something akin to a mirror, seeking out my own traits as an adult, my habits and mental clichés – a legacy of the formal education system.

Jaśmina Wójcik
***Nakba 2023*, 2023**
drawings, ink on paper, dimensions variable

The work was created just before the installation of the exhibition as a personal voice of solidarity and sympathy for the families dying in the Palestinian Gaza Strip.

Jaśmina Wójcik – visual artist, educator, film director, author of listening-based participatory social-and-artistic campaigns. Specialises in working on inclusivity for unseen and unheard communities, providing them with a sense of agency.

Co-editor of the book *Sztuka ze społecznością* (Art with Communities, 2018), based on her most-well-known project: working with the community of former *Ursus* Tractor Factory workers. The venture yielded an award-winning full-length art documentary she directed herself: *Symfonia fabryki Ursus* (Symphony of the Ursus Factory, 2018).

Involved in empathetic education since 2012: designs *auteur* art practices for children as speakers. Hands agency and empowerment over to children, making them co-authors and inviting them to join the dialogue. Today, Wójcik chiefly explores grassroot educational practices and providing children with a space to speak out, the practice to be shortly showcased through her new film based on Janusz Korczak's *King Matt the First*. She works with children as co-editors of the *Children's Gazette* (with editorial offices i.a. in Warsaw, Białystok, Choroszcz, Szudziałowo, Krynki, Gdańsk and Lublin), and co-curates art exhibitions with them (e.g. *Galeria to kurnik artyści to kury a sztuka to jajka kur – The gallery is a chicken coop artists are hens and art is chicken eggs*, Arsenal Gallery in Białystok, 2023).

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municipal cultural institution

Białystok

Exhibition open from Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am – 6 pm. Last admission to exhibition is at 5.30 pm
Entrance fee 8 PLN, reduced 4 PLN. Free admission on Thursdays
The Arsenal Gallery accepts Big Family Card, Białystok Big Family Card, and Active Senior 60+ Card
A detailed price list with a list of discounts is available at: https://galeria-arsenal.pl/dla-zwiedzajacych