



ORIGIN OF THE STONE

Gandy  
Gallery

**Origin of the Stone**

Exhibition: 10.10.2023 – 08.12.2023



*Installation view*

Could the stone be the author of the exhibition? Okay, weird question, let's try asking it another way: Could the stone be a co-author of the work? What is the role of stone in contemporary art anyway? When did it cease to be a mere material to be worked and become an entity in itself with its own meaning, symbolism, or perhaps even an artistic partner for conversation or wandering? The exhibition *The Beginning of Stone* tells the story of stones through the work of contemporary artists.

It presents an interdisciplinary theme of ontological, existential and symbolic qualities that can enter our thoughts out of the blue, perhaps by simply stumbling on the path, or conversely through a careful search for flint or precious stones.

Jana Písaříková, 2023

(Curator and art theorist, works at the Blansko City Gallery and the Moravian Gallery in Brno)

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### KAREL ADAMUS

Hold šlěpějím (1973/2023)

4 x b-w photography, 10x15 cm each

*Karel Adamus (1943, Plzeň) is an artist who worked as a poet but later shifted to visual poetry, of which he is an essential representative in former Czechoslovakia.*

*His work is primarily based on visual poetry, divided into several groups. In addition to the structures of typefaces, typescripts and other visual elements, he records movement in his poems, whether in space or time. Some series of his works include Cigarette Poems (1969 – 1970) - with burning paper; Mobile Poems (1970 – 1971) – with movement in the structure and form of a poem; Poems of the Score (1973 – 1976) - musical scores created within the tradition of minimalism; Poems Object and Subject Poems (1971 – 2002) – drawing inspiration from Jiří Kolář.*

*In his Wind Poems (1983 – 2007), the artist allows a sheet of paper to float freely in the breeze, applying a brush or pen to it while controlled by the wind. In this, he acknowledges the deliberate inclusion of the environment in which the work was created and psychomotorism. He as well creates objects and assemblages with some Dadaist influences in their execution and visual metaphors.*

*Adamus has also written a series of short stories, influenced by eastern philosophy, published in several parts under the title Po dně a podněžníci.*

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**POLINA DAVYDENKO**

Public tinnitus (2020)

Video, 5:50

The main narrator is a piece of coal that sings a ballad about the city of Dobropolje and asks why some habits are so far beyond the boundaries. A fraction of coal compares the whole mechanism of a mining town to a beehive. Honey is taken from bees and replaced with sugar. Similarly, I perceive a mining town maintained only in exchange of coal for money and products. The ubiquitous coal mining that keeps the entire city alive can be heard and seen, but nobody pays attention to this. Like tinnitus, whistling in the ears disappears and appears depending on how much attention we pay

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*Polina Davydenko works mostly with the medium of photography overlapping with the media of video, audio and text. The key theme of her work is narrative and its various forms. She focuses on human-animal relationships and cultural stereotypes related to the issue. These become the starting point for playing out other contexts, which the author visually sensitively connects into one disturbing message.*

*Polina was born in Ukraine, but she lives in Czech Republic since her childhood. She completed study at the Ivars Gravlejs' Photography Studio at the FFA BUT in Brno. She has furthered her education at KASK in Gent, FAMU in Prague and at the FFA's Studio Environment. In 2022 she was nominated for Futures Photography.*

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**ALVA HAJN**

Untitled, 1980s

Concrete, 75 x 36 cm

*Born in 1938, in Pardubice right before the Second World War, Alva Hajn has just had a short period of time to make and show his art freely. During twenty years of normalization in Czechoslovakia he had very few opportunities to present his artworks in public, even though he has been intensively working on the paintings, objects and drawings. Based in the provincial town of Pardubice, Alva Hajn was considered as an unknown artist without some specific contacts or connections to other (more famous) Czech painters. However, between the fifties and the eighties he produced a considerable amount of the works, various in formats and rich in colours which stood out of the common image of "non-official art". He ended his oeuvre in the 1980s by a number of objects and by a reduction of colours to black and white or even by their substitution for natural materials. He has passed away in 1991, several days before his great exhibition in Prague, which should have brought him a general recognition.*

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### MILAN MIKULÁŠTÍK

Statky / Goods, 2018

17 x 10 x 5 cm, gold, flint

object in plastic and metal suitcase

Authentic hand axe made by human ancestor, found in Mauritania, Africa, acheulean period - 1 million years old. Prehistoric tool was covered by artist with gold using galvanoplastic method.

*Milan Mikuláščík is czech visual artist, exhibition curator, graphic designer, journalist, VJ, teacher of art and architecture. he was born in 1975 in Slavičín, now is living in Prague and Zlín. 1994-1996 studied at Faculty of Fine Arts of Technical University in Brno. 1996-2002 studied at Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. Graduated in 2002 at Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. He is exhibiting since 1995. From 1995 is member of artistic duo mina (together with artist Jan Nálevka). From 2003 founding member of art and activist collective guma guar. Between 2001 and 2008 worked as graphic designer in various agencies, newspapers and magazines. From 2006 till 2008 worked as graphic designer, journalist and editor of magazine reflex. From 2008 to 2009 worked as curator of gallery nod in prague. From 2009 till now is working as chief curator of gallery ntk at national library of technology in prague. From 2012 till now is working as tutor of architecture history at Academy of Art, Architecture and Design in Prague. From 2015 till 2018 worked as an assistant of new media (supermedia) studio at Academy of Art, Architecture and Design in Prague. From 2021 is working as an assistant of painting studio at Academy of Fine Arts in Prague.*



**MILAN MIKULÁŠČÍK**

Makapansgat Project

from 2016

from the series of digital collages, digital print on aluminium

FIRST PORTRAIT!

THE FIRST READY-MADE!

THE FIRST PIECE OF ART!

THE FIRST EMOTICON!

The MAKAPANSGAT PEBBLE, which is sometimes called “the pebble of many faces”, is jasperite cobble of 8 cm measure with natural chipping on one side that make it look like a stylisation of a human face. The pebble was found together with the bones of Australopithecus in a cave in Makapansgat valley, South Africa. Though it is definitely not a manufactured object (artefact) but naturfact, it has been suggested as the earliest example of symbolic thinking and of aesthetic sense of our ancestors. It is also considered to be the first representation of human face in history. Because the Australopithecus specimen moved the piece of stone to his cave, we can say, that he transferred the pebble into the institutional context of his primitive tribe. Then we can think about it as first ready-made and also the first known example of art at all. Three million years before Duchamp! Except this, it is also the oldest known example of today popular emoticon-smiley :)

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### MARIAN PALLA

Stone, that could occur

5 from the series of 15 drawings, A4 format

*Marian Palla (born 30 July 1953 in Košice) is a Czech prose writer, poet, artist, university teacher and publicist. He graduated from the Brno Conservatory in 1977. For over fifteen years he played in the orchestra of the Janáček Opera in Brno. In addition to his musical activities, he is a visual artist. He has had a number of solo exhibitions (since 1980) in the Czech Republic and abroad. His works are represented in the collections of the National Gallery in Prague, the East Bohemian Gallery in Pardubice, the Museum of Art in Olomouc and the Moravian Gallery in Brno. From 1994 to 2011 he taught at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Brno University of Technology (initially as an assistant, later as an associate professor). In 2000, he graduated from the Multimedia, Concept, Environment Studio at the Faculty of Fine Arts, BUT. He is a member of several art groups (e.g. Florian). He is also the author of a number of books. In 2003 he became the first ever Czech slam poetry champion. In 2016, he was the recipient of the Michal Ranný Award. He currently lives and works in Střelice near Brno.*



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**MILOŠ ŠEJN**

left: With stone on stone, since 1983, lead, cca 26x60x15 cm

right: With stone on stone, since 1983 lead, 32x28x7 cm

*Born 1947 in Jablonec nad Nisou, Czech Republic, graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy (Charles University) in Prague in 1975 (visual art - Doc. Zdenek Sykora, art history and aesthetics - prof. Petr Wittlich, Doc. Milos Juzl). In 1976 Doctor of Philosophy, 1991 appointed professor of painting. In the years 1990-2011 he directed the Department of New Media at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, a visiting professor at the Academies in Aix-en-Provence, Carrara, Ljubljana, Stuttgart, The Hague and Vienna.*

*Milos Sejn works in the fields of visual art, performance and study of visual perception, and conducts workshops, such as Bohemiae Rosa. Sejn's artistic vision formed when he was young and when he undertook many trips into the wilderness. It embodied an inner need to get closer to the secret of nature and observe the miracles that happen in it. From the beginning of the 1960s he took pictures, drew, collected and described his observations of nature during these wanderings. Sejn's present-day interest is in the relationship of nature and art as intrinsic needs of the mind, and focuses on immediate creative possibilities, based upon relations between historical humanized landscapes and intact nature. He consciously works in the areas of expressive language among text, visual stroke, body movement, voice, and expansion into space.*

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**PETR ŠTEMBERA**

Kameny, 1979

exhibiting copy, 6,5x20 cm, 15x20 cm

Two sizeable yet rather unremarkable stones were at the center of an artistic action that took place on the northern outskirts of Prague: the stones were wrapped in netting, hoisted onto the artist's shoulder, and carried along a path through a nondescript green landscape. The neutral and elemental character of the action, in which the mineral fragments of the Earth's crust were simply removed from their current position and transported on the artist's back to another outdoor location, is confirmed by the documentation: six photographs that somberly depict the stages of the action, supplemented by a city map on which the route is marked. "Transposition of Stones" focused on the phenomenological apprehension of the natural landscape through astute bodily experience. Eschewing any hidden human-centered social interpretation, as was typical for much of Petr Štembera's work, the action foregrounds direct physical encounters with the natural matter of the world. In this case the artist, who at the time used to describe his practice as ecological, was simply carrying rocks, feeling their weight on his back as he moved through the landscape. Privileging neither his body nor the stones, he merely acknowledged their coexistence; nevertheless, he was actively removing them from their original site. M.&R.F.

*Petr Štembera is among the key Czech performance artists of the 1970s. He was one of the leading figures of the Prague body art circle and from 1970 mediated contact with important performance art representatives both in the West and in Eastern Bloc countries. In the early 1970s, Štembera's interest in extreme physical and psychological experiences led to extreme body art pieces that he began to document in the manner customary in American body art: a black-and-white photography with a short description – a report on when and where it happened. Štembera's first performances took place in nature.*

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**JIŘÍ VALOCH**

Exercise, 1978

13 x typewritten text, signed, A4

*Jiří Valoch (\*1946, Brno, Czechoslovakia) is a poet and creator of visual and conceptual poetry, photographic poetry and photographic concept, minimalist happenings and interventions in the environment, artist's books, and text installations. Since 1966 he has also worked as an art critic and curator. In 1974 he published his first monography, Poesia Visiva (Beniamino Carruci publisher, Roma). He studied German and Czech literature and Aesthetics at the College of Philosophy of Masaryk University in Brno (1965 – 1970) From 1972 to 2001 he worked as a curator at the House of art in Brno, preparing exhibitions of Czech artists (V. Boštík, Milan Knižák, Vladimír Boudník, J. Kolář, B. Kolářová, A. Šimotová, L. Novák), after 1990 also international artists (R. P. Lahnse, G. Graser, R. Mielsam, R. Barry). Starting in the early 1970s he was involved in organising unofficial exhibitions across Czechoslovakia.*

*In 2015 he donated his collection and archive to the Moravian Gallery in Brno.*

*In 2023 he was awarded the Bernard Heidsieck prize at the Centre Pompidou for his body of work. Last two year he has been leaving in small village Ludíkov in the Moravian Carst.*



**JIŘÍ VALOCH**

From the stone series, 1970-1974  
b-w vintage photography, 13x18 cm



**JIŘÍ VALOCH**

Love, (from stones series), 1972-1974  
b-w vintage photography, 17 x 11,5 cm

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### JANA ŽELIBSKÁ

Top: Photo of the installation Breasts (Stones), 1988, 58x48 cm

Bottom: The Stone, 2014, Mixed media, 28 x 34 x 49 cm

“My actions from the 70s and 80s are mainly stories that took place between nature and woman. A woman, though represented by a stone rhombus cut by a sharp blade of grass. There was a lot of humour in them, but also a myth about the essence of nature and women. The ancient matter of a woman in childbirth, right? The body was playfully associated with as nature with the nature of the body.”

The artist began working within nature on objects and interventions that had the character of an imprint or sign. She played with materials, structures, and surfaces.

Gradually, she moved from signs to evocation of the symbols based on their similarity with other objects, phenomena, interventions in nature.

In the work Collected grass in place A grows in place B (1981)8910, Jana Želibská shapes the grass into the form of rhombus, while in the works Prsia (kamene) [Breasts (stones)] (1988) and Fata Morgána prsa [Fata Morgana breasts] (1990) she accumulates material in the form of breasts.

*Born in 1941 in Olomouc, Czechoslovakia. Lives and works in Bratislava, Slovakia.*

*Jana Želibská studied at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava and graduated in graphic design and book illustration in 1965.*

*Želibská, belongs to the progressive generation of action and conceptual authors of the late 1960s in Czechoslovakia, specifically re-evaluated the impulses of neo avant-garde tendencies, French New Realism and post-Moderna.*

*She was present at the birth of environment art in the 1960s, object and installation at the end of the 1980s and video-art in the 1990s.*

*She openly thematizes the female body through a feminist approach which in her work blended with the characteristic period themes of the alternative scene and unofficial art in Slovakia.*

*In 2012, a monographic exhibition was dedicated to her at the Slovak National Gallery, and in 2017 Jana Želibská participated in the 57th Venice Biennale, where she presented the installation *Swan Song Now* in the Czechoslovak Pavilion.*

**Gandy Gallery**

Sienkiewiczova 4

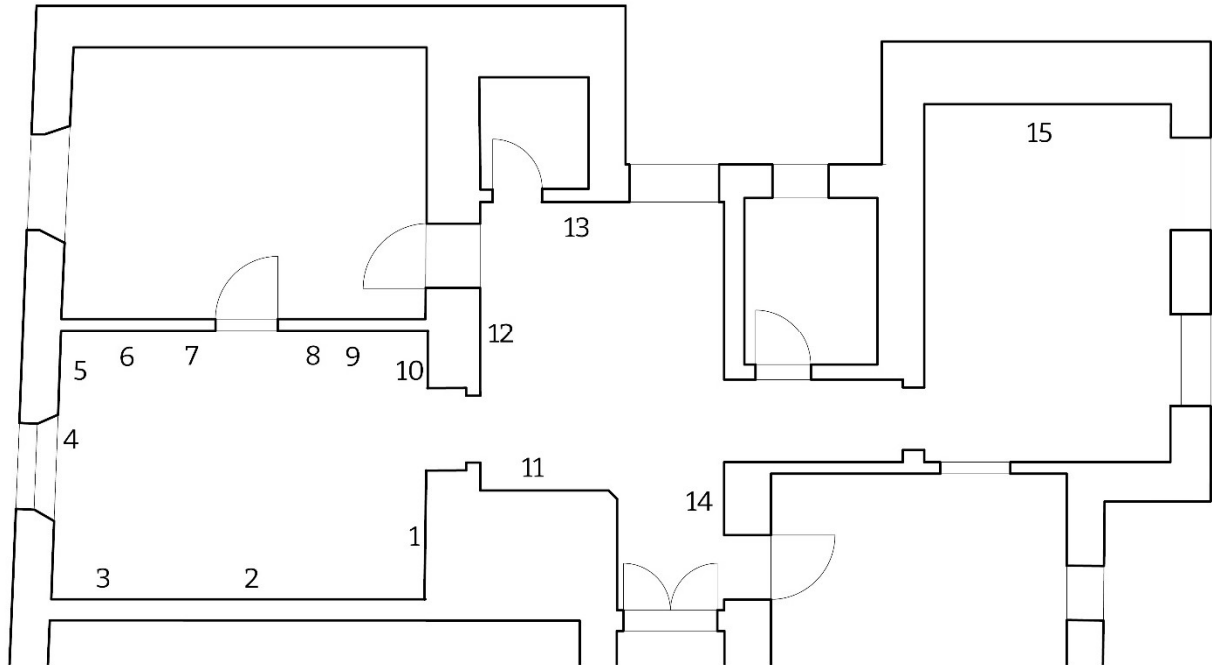
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1. Petr Štembera, Kameny, 1979, exhibiting copy, 6,5x20 cm, 15x20 cm
2. Jiří Valoch, exercise, 1978, 13 x typewritten text, signed, A4
3. Jiří Valoch, From the stone series, 1970-1974, b-w vintage photography, 13x18 cm
4. Alva Hajn, Untitled, 1980s, Concrete, 75 x 36 cm
5. Karel Adamus, Hold šlépějím, 1973/2023, 4 x b-w photography, 10x15 cm each
6. Miloš Šejn, With stone on stone, since 1983, lead, cca 26x60x15 cm
7. Miloš Šejn, With stone on stone, since 1983, lead, 32x28x7 cm
8. Love, (from stones series), 1972–1974, b-w vintage photography, 17 x 11,5 cm
9. Milan Mikuláščík, Statky/Goods, 2018, gold, silicit, 45x40x40 cm
10. Dušan Urbaník, Velká přestávka III, 2005, Ink on paper, size 59x84 cm
11. Marian Palla, Stone, that could occur, 5 from the series of 15 drawings, A4 format
12. Jana Želibská, The Stone, 2014, Mixed media, 28 x 34 x 49 cm
13. Jana Želibská, Photo of the installation Breasts (Stones), 1988, 58x48 cm
14. Milan Mikuláščík, Makapansgat project, since 2016, from the ongoing series of digital collages: First portrait, First Ready-Made, First artwork, First emotikon, Print on dibond, Various dimensions
15. Polina Davydenko, Public Tinnitus, 2020, video, 5:50 min