

(Un) Natural

Artists: **Anna Ročňová & Pavel Příkaský**

Curator: Veronika Čechová

Opening: Thursday, September 19, 6PM

Duration: 20/9 — 17/11/2019

Venue: Youth Gallery



Anna Ročňová is fond of nature and natural phenomena, studies our civilisation and its products. Her latest achievements feature a more radical selection of materials, leaving behind sculpture techniques while shifting her focus to nature. Her objects, collages and assemblages are often created in groups, often inspired by some kind of a prosaic activity, such as fishing, swimming or having a picnic. Even though they often share the same theme, or rather its spectrum, their form is a result of the artist's communication with the materials and technologies incorporated or even "suggested" by them. Despite little talk of experimental and empirical views of today's world, this is what Ročňová is trying to do. She uses the trial and error method while trying to find various ways of joining different materials and things. These workflows allow for randomness and intuitiveness while respecting the logic of different materials, objects and numerous semantic and contextual organic metamorphoses. **Pavel Příkaský's** paintings often expand beyond his canvas and stretch across the surrounding walls. They sometimes even include various non-traditional painting materials, like silicon and similar modelling pastes flowing and dripping into the adjacent space. Lately, his work has also been shifting its focus, in this case to spacial art, using various materials to complete his images that tend to expand into space and subjugate it just like natural parasites such as lichens or moulds do. These clusters sometimes cover and sometimes expand a portion of the image, resembling common decorative techniques and even though they seem rather artificial in the way Příkaský incorporates them, they still tend to simulate living tissue. In this way, both artists continually balance between experimental imaging of the natural using artistic and artificial means and vice versa.

The *(Un)Natural* exhibition directly confronts both artists' works which makes it impossible not to distinguish who is the artist behind the individual pieces. The exhibition is considered a single contextual unit in a complex environment which overlaps Pavel Příkaský's and Anna Ročňová's languages in a way that allows their artworks to keep their own integrity. Their installation partially responds to the gallery's space whose historical elements and architecture are close to the neighbouring castle which creates scummages of paintings and objects that evoke a feeling of a strange presence. The suppressed presence of an unknown being that might have occupied the space at some point or at least helped create it adds another dimension to the exhibition's title. Suddenly, *(Un)Natural* does not just represent the dichotomy of the natural/artificial, but also suggests the presence of something non-natural, or even super-natural. The notional noble house turns into the archetypal decaying castle that is run by something other than human spirit and where the natural and supernatural can mean the same thing.

Pavel Příkaský (1985) studied painting at Vladimír Kokolia's studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (2005 – 2012). In 2011, he took residency at the Middlesex University London. Even though he keeps using the painting medium, he has been blurring its borders for a long time now. Příkaský regularly showcases his work at various solo and group exhibitions in the Czech Republic and abroad. Some of his latest selected projects include: *Healing 2.0* at Prague's Meetfactory (2019), *Liquid Bodies* at AQB Gallery, Budapest (2018), *Oh it is...* at the DOX Centre for Contemporary Art in Prague (2018), *Healing* at the Tschechisches Zentrum Berlin (2018), *The Offense of*

Things at Armaturka Gallery in Ústí nad Labem (2016) and Dreams that Money Can Buy at Drdova Gallery in Prague (2016). Some of his solo exhibitions include Transgenic Myth, NoD, Prague (2019), Isotonic Song (in cooperation with Miroslava Večeřová), Fotograf Gallery, Prague (2019), Pneuma, OGL LÁZNĚ, Liberec (2019), Mantichora (in cooperation with Martin Herold) at TIC Gallery, Brno (2019) and Hybrid's Potential, Atrium Žižkov, Prague (2018).

Anna Ročňová (1989) studied at the Studio of Sculpture led by Edith Jeřábková and Dominik Lang (2010 – 2017). In 2013 she took residency at Universität für angewandte Kunst, TransArts in Vienna and in 2015 at Painting Studio II / Vladimír Skrepl School at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. Ročňová has participated at numerous group exhibitions, e.g. The Earth Turns And All Things Slip Away at Hunt Kastner Gallery in Prague, Poetic Materialism at SODA Gallery in Bratislava, Picnic at the A.M.180 Gallery in Prague, Transitdispatching at Transitdisplay Gallery in Prague or the Subversive Tactics at the Czech Centre in New Yorku and Against Nature at the National Gallery Prague. Ročňová often exhibits with Jan Boháč. Together they held a performance exhibition Situation 25 at the Pavilion in Prague, the Sun Is Shining on a Dusty Corner exhibition at the Windows Gallery in Vienna or the Herbarium project for Prague's Altán Klamovka and the recently concluded exhibition Sprained Ankle at Karlin Studios. Her solo exhibitions also include: Taking a Bath and Moisturising at Jeleni Gallery or Luxurious Moments at the Prague City Gallery, held at premises of the Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace. Her diploma thesis studied the possibilities of a non-traditional and extremely large exhibition space. Her Fan project connected her art with the space of an empty tropical greenhouse at the Botanical Garden of the Natural Sciences Faculty of Charles University. The second part of her exhibition "winterised" her objects at the Project Room at the Hunt Kastner Gallery in Prague.