



Daniela Dostálková, Linda Dostálková: **Curatorial text for the exhibition by Petr Bosák, Robert Jansa and Adam Macháček**

Translation: Nicholas Orsillo

Curatorial text for the exhibition by Petr Bosák, Robert Jansa and Adam Macháček We're not looking for a compass that points to a static North Pole but toward that which we most desire. Or to nowhere, if we don't know what that is at PLATO (20/2–27/4/2025).

The exhibition titled *We're not looking for a compass that points to a static North Pole but toward that which we most desire. Or to nowhere, if we don't know what that is* is an installation created specifically for the context of PLATO. The main reason we decided to approach the collective of graphic designers consisting of Petr Bosák, Robert Jansa, and Adam Macháček (20YY Designers) is not the experimental nature of their work, the typical starting point for including the discipline of graphic design in contemporary gallery practice, but the specific attentiveness they have intensively devoted to projects with a varying range of cultural representations for the past two decades.

The exhibition guides the audience through a complex allegory of a printing company that is in constant operation, producing more than eight million books annually. This company also prints the works published by the Utopia libri publishing coop, one of whose cofounders is a member of 20YY Designers. The collective's goal is to present the process involved in the creation of a new book; as publishers, co-editors, and graphic designers, they reveal the collective's tools and conceptual decisions. In the exhibition, the artists construct metaphors that tell stories about alternative human paths to the currently established order, believing that utopia can inspire the imagination and the creation of our present and future.

They also see utopia as being much more focused on practice because you do not necessarily know everything ahead of time or expect that you will successfully construct a theory explaining the world in all its complexity. You can create and change plans on the fly based on your experiences. The designers therefore feel no need to create more ready-made outputs; in contrast, through their work they try to constantly seek narrative forms that make expectable connections impossible. Thus, they critically and often pragmatically disrupt the otherwise seemingly smooth functioning of cultural infrastructures, laying bare the sharp contrasts of how they work and who they serve. They bend the materiality that they carefully explore and, in the process, engage in discussion with many related professions. Thus, they may foreshadow a series of associations that could be evoked not only by the physical legacy of their production. The print run of the book with the working title Utopia is marginal compared to the number of copies of commercial titles ordinarily produced: the automated

tasks performed by printing machines in the company's workshop become for the exhibition's creators performative moments, especially in relationship to human actors, which are part of them.

The artists' selection of historical printing blocks from the archives of the National Technical Museum in Prague is here the subject of iconographic exploration in an attempt to revise their symbolism and to thus separate bodily memory from the infrastructures that originally maintained this symbolism. Together with printing plates imprinted with interviews between the graphic designers and the book's authors, the other tools of the distinct genre of polygraphy are exhibited, however, without any ostentation, because they have never been emphasized until now.

The exhibition is proof that a certain type of interdisciplinary thinking makes sense. Here, a combination of media, cultural references, and modes of address is staged. The designers openly transform the functional aspects of related disciplines connected to cultural production and art as such. It is evident that they believe in their reflexive potential, including how works of art can adopt accompanying forms, become symptoms in the continuity of current events, and at the same time depict stances of resistance or utopian scenarios. The summary of the publication, which Utopia libri will publish during the exhibition's run, states the following: "For some time, we have felt the need to deal more deeply with contemporary utopian thinking. Our differing political trajectories have intersected at a point where we share anti-authoritarian or anarchistic views and certain concerns about the future of related ideas, activism, and movements. We draw from the anarchist tradition, and we see that most anarchist or anti-authoritarian struggles are reactionary, dealing with the negative aspects of our lives. Collective inspiration going beyond stories of a glorious past or ancient struggles is something out of the ordinary. It would seem that we've become stuck, immobilized under the burden of the current state of affairs; very rarely do we dare think about ourselves outside the boundaries of today's structures, and we seek refuge in sub-cultural bubbles or individualized adaptation strategies."

Daniela and Linda Dostálková

Note:

Utopia libri is a publishing cooperative that concentrates on crossing the borders between themes, genres, and languages, and on the intersecting of the ideas of horizontal and anti-authoritarian social movements, especially anarchism and anarcha-feminism, with critical perspectives on the climate crisis, the current sociopolitical situation, art, and the technologies of power.

Titles published by Utopia libri:

Tereza Langrová (ed.)
Na této zemi je pro co žít
Podněty k osvobození Palestiny

Maksym Eristavi
Ruský kolonialismus: průvodce

Jestli mám zemřít, ať je to příběh
Palestina v českých perspektivách
Ivan Kalmar

Bílí, ale ne tak docela
Iliberální vzpoura ve střední Evropě

Vinciane Despret
Autobiografie chobotnice a jiné anticipační příběhy

Guy Debord
Společnost spektaklu

Immanuel Wallerstein
Utopistika: historické rozhodování ve 21. století

Vojtěch Pecka
Továrna na lži: výroba klimatických dezinformací

Legacy Russell
Glitch feminismus: manifest

Lukáš Likavčan
Introducción a la planetología comparada

Miroslav Farkas
Pikola
Básně a kresby z tureckého vězení

Katarína Hládeková, Vojtěch Pecka (eds.)
Neúplný atlas regenerace

El Pasajero
Pienso, luego colapso

Angela Y. Davis
Jsou věznice překonané?

Tiq-tiq xanım, Alex Kramola
Utopia

