

Edith Jeřábková: **Sprouts**

Translation: Guy Tabachnick

Curatorial text for the exhibition Sprouts at PLATO.



Photo: Dominika Goralska, PLATO

Dear friends, this is an exhibition for you and by you. Over the last year you've left your art for us on the bulletin board of the Keyhole; now, in return, we're displaying it in the gallery. This exchange enriches both you and us. We wanted to reach out to artists in the family, among your friends and ours, at school, online, at work, out in the world, and at home, too.

At this exhibition we aren't evaluating people's successes, but what they wish to share through their art. So *Sprouts* is an exhibit of visitors of this Keyhole, some of whom you may already know and some of whom you do not. We have watched with interest as our bulletin board has quickly and repeatedly filled up with your artwork, and we have selected many works from that valuable archive for this exhibition. We've also thought about who's doing the selecting. In the first part, *Sprouts and Love*, I am choosing works in a particular theme as the creator of the exhibition and the curator of the gallery. But the second part, *Sprouts, the World, and Me*, which will begin on May 28, 2025, is being prepared for you by a curatorial

team of children from our Hi Kids Club with the support of educators Gabriela Pilařová and Jana Adamec Tkáčová and myself. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog that will be published at the beginning of the second part of the exhibition.

Sprouts opens the gallery to people outside of professional circles. As young offshoots of plants, sprouts seek an appropriate environment for their further development and are growing all around the exhibition hall, which they also wish to cover with the growth of art that has not been vetted over the course of centuries or consecrated by artistic schooling and practice. This location aims to give a voice to those who play the role of visitors to galleries, who usually remain anonymous. Although we as a gallery wish to communicate with them, this communication is rarely mutual or personal. As a gallery we create our own image of who you are, and you as members of the audience don't see one another either. Here we wish to gradually change this relationship.

Although this exhibition will not yet be able to cross all the walls we have between us, it aims to at least try to find images and their meanings, messages, and effects outside the world of established artists – without excluding them. This democratization of the practice of exhibition has the goal of posing the question of whether we see each other and whether an environment predominated by experts doesn't create blind spots that keep us from seeing other images of the world that might remain hidden to us, that we might lose out on, and that we do not speak about.

Thus, as the curator of the first part, *Sprouts and Love*, I attempt to interpret and develop the messages you are sharing in your images, and I must confess that it's not easy. I can't rely on the history of your work or the interpretations of other colleagues before me, I can't speak with you – I've come to find that this is one of the most mysterious exhibitions in my career. Your images are teeming with symbols and declarations that both vary and repeat themselves and show that even toddlers should have the opportunity to share their views of the world. Love, as we know, has many forms, and it's a feeling running through us even before birth – who knows how it is after death. The gallery walls full of hearts prove this, and it's interesting that images of the heart continue to tempt one generation after another and never fall away as symbols. All of history contains them. But these hearts also contain history, as well as the whole range of our emotions from the personal and social to the planetary and cosmic.

And because there is much to discover, again and again, in your drawings, collages, paintings, and small objects, I am asking for help from other gallery staff: the Hi Kids team. The members of this curatorial team are working together to choose and install works for the second exhibition, *Sprouts, the World, and Me*, which presents those works of yours dedicated to observing the world, relating to it, and finding one's place in it. We and the young curators (aged 6–11) are very much looking forward to your opinions, statements, surprises, and participation. You may write and draw these on the wall so that they can be read not just by us in the gallery, but by all whom we or you invite here. We will also be glad if you add to your displayed work the label that we have prepared for you. This will not just identify its artist, but will also be a message for us and others that we know about each other.

The exhibitions in the Keyhole also include games that you in the past have designed for yourselves and others and that you can also play here. We're preparing them for you with our team according to your sketches, and we assume that they will be modified further. In this way, we will work together to cultivate and maintain this important (not just) human activity.

