

Jakub Adamec, Marek Pokorný: **I Can Hear the Grass Grow**

Translated by Marta Darom

Curatorial statement for the exhibition

I Can Hear the Grass Grow
9/2–16/4/2023, PLATO

Since the beginning of its existence, PLATO has paid specific attention to artists active in Ostrava and the region. However, the inclusion of their work in PLATO's dramaturgy has been guided primarily by the institution's development goals, and therefore also by the quality or actuality and ability to adequately place local positions in a broader context. With the move of our activities to PLATO's new headquarters in the reconstructed historic slaughterhouse, some aspects of our exhibition dramaturgy are being reconsidered.

One of the decisions that resulted from the completion of the proper facilities for our institution is the creation of a long-term project that will provide more space and care for artists working in the specific local situation. The planned cycle of exhibitions entitled *On Current Issues of Local Resources* doesn't aim to identify or construct a specific concept of the Ostrava scene; on the contrary, it should point out the diversity of local artistic production, the possible ways of understanding it, and discuss the problematic question (to which even we do not have a definite answer) of how an institution such as PLATO can relate to this diversity in a relevant way. In the following years, we will organize exhibitions in which selected curators will present works by artists working in Ostrava and the region, or artists who lived in the region during their studies or are connected to it in an important way. In 2023, we will launch the cycle with the exhibition *I Can Hear the Grass Grow*, curated by PLATO's in-house curators Jakub Adamec and Marek Pokorný.

The risk of the existing approach was that the effort to reflect and accentuate certain aspects and qualities of the artistic production and practice of artists

active in PLATO's perimeter of operation, consisting of locating them within the context of global artistic strategies, may not have been understood correctly. The risk of the new project—which we are well aware of—can be seen in the focus on the local situation and the arbitrary exclusion of the phenomenon of the local from the broader context of and connections to the development of contemporary art. Of course, we will not abandon the first type of approach to “local resources” in the future, but we find it appropriate at this moment to clearly articulate our institutional responsibility in relation to the local context through the new cycle as well. We are aware that we are squaring the circle here, but the very awareness of the issue can contribute in the future to a more adequate treatment of the dialectic of the global nature of contemporary art and its local manifestations.

The mapping of the diversity of themes and artistic expressions of authors and collectives working in close or loose connection to the region is also related to questions on the possibilities of their use and the reasons why a young generation stays in the region or leaves it. Our reflections also revolve around the paradoxical questions of whether it's the more courageous ones who stay or, on the contrary, those who do not believe they have a chance of success in a wider artistic context. However, their starting conditions, their equipment with cultural and social capital, and their sparse cultural infrastructure may not be just a handicap but, in the longer run, may provide a chance for that necessary and so often mentioned slowing down, a quality of life that is not measured by performance. Also at play is the consideration of a productive combination of shortcuts leading to success with more demanding strategies, usually—but not necessarily—somehow related to the phenomenon of outsidership.

The exhibition and the selection of works displayed represent an attempt to create, on a small surface, a sketch composed of individual creative responses to the questions we have raised here. We wanted to capture, at least partially, the diversity of the broader “Ostrava” scene and underline the artists' strong affinity to music production and their connection to other art genres, which is perhaps a bit more intense here.

Jakub Adamec, Marek Pokorný

