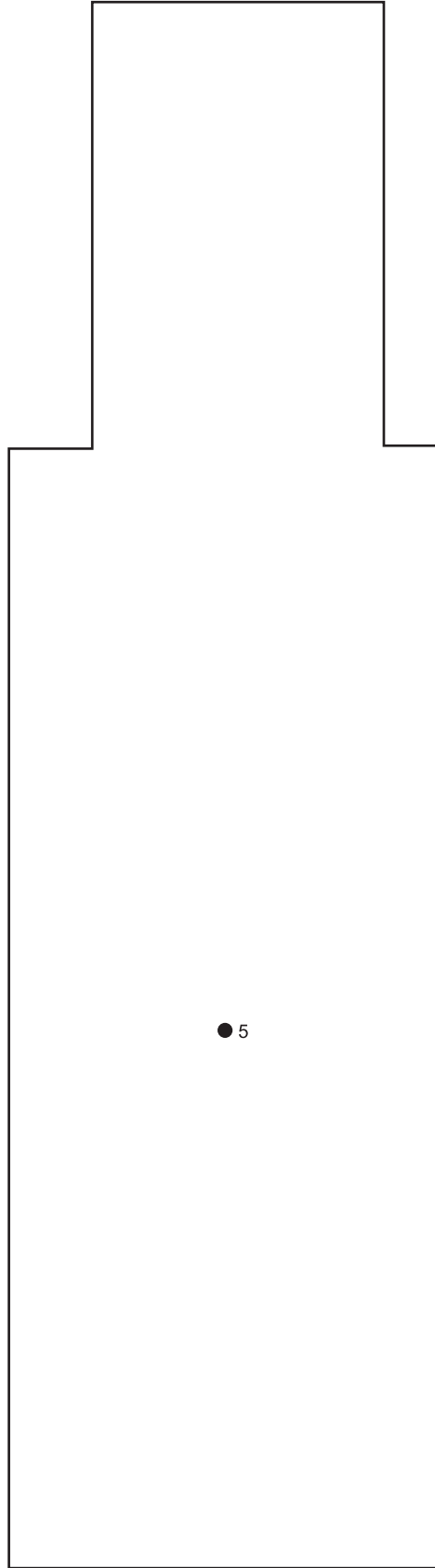


Fondazione Pastificio Cerere



Spazio Molini

Diana Lelonek: Buona Fortuna, curated by Jakub Gawkowski

This exhibition, just like a laboratory, consists of samples. Selected fragments of broad and often long-term art projects of Diana Lelonek are presented in sequences, offering a glimpse into the artist's model of work. Either to be mixed or considered separately, all the samples connect to reoccurring environmental questions about the transforming borders between natural and cultural realms, which occupy the artist. The presentation of artist's work in the upper space of the silos is complemented by the newest pieces dedicated to the underground Spazio Molini. A sincere wish, a greeting, or a forced courtesy—the title of the exhibition evokes a wide range of social situations, but also points to the belief in the mysterious fate, the *fortuna* which shapes the world we live in. In the practice of Lelonek, this belief in the omnipotent fate is replaced by the need to explore the world as it is, and how it transforms through human actions. Evolutionary theory, non-human intervention into the scientific canon, trash which turns into life, the melting Glacier, and the last breath of industrial coal-based culture... In Lelonek's work all those threads bind together to reveal the network of dependence between the species, and to picture a possible horizon of a common coexistence.

Descriptions of works:

1) From the series, *Yesterday I Met a Really Wild Man*, photographs, 2015.

The series with animal-like naturists depicted in post-industrial landscape draws on the ideas of posthumanism and questions human relations with other species. Let us follow Richard Dawkins and imagine a special kind of chain, involving parents and children. You stand and “in your left hand you hold the right hand of your mother. In turn she holds the hand of her mother, your grandmother. Your grandmother holds her mother's hand, and so on. How far do we have to go until we reach our common ancestor with the chimpanzees?” As Dawkins notes, the way is surprisingly short, and we arrive to the ancestor we share with chimpanzees in under 500 km. The distance from Rome to Genoa, or from Warsaw to the German border on the Oder. If it is close, how difficult can it be to imagine us next to other species, in a relationship based on cooperation and learning and not violence?

2) From the series *Zoe-Therapy*, Mixed media objects (photographs parasited by mold and bacterias), 2015.

The presented pieces are a selection from Zoe-therapy—a collection of microbe colonies, fungi and bacteria developed on the portraits of canonical Western philosophers such as Rene Descartes and Martin Heidegger. In these works, inspired by Rosi Braidotti's writings, and motivated by the need to expand our understanding of a community, the fungi take over the images to get revenge on the Anthropocentric and hierarchical vision of history. By dissolving the visual representations, the mould (inc. *Serratia*, *Aspergillus niger*, *Geotrichum candidum*) overthrows the dominant narrative built upon ages of suffering and violence towards marginalized, sub-altern and non-human others.

3) From the series, *Center for the Living Things*, found objects and photographs, 2016 – ongoing project.

The Centre was established by Diana Lelonek in 2016 to collect and conduct research on new forms of relations between human-made objects and non-human organisms. The collection draws on the long tradition of displaying specimens in museums of natural history and works as an archive of human leftovers that came into relation with other organisms or became absorbed by nature. The Centre is a vision of a new start for the planet after humans, where the post-human world will become a base for the development of other organisms. The presented selection is a fragment of the collection which develops with time in cooperation with the botanical garden in Poznań.

See: centerforlivingthings.com

4) *Melting Gallery*, multichannel sound installation, 2019.

The sounds collected by the artist on three melting Alpine glaciers: du Rhone, Aletsch and Morteratsch, composed by Denim Szram. The artistic research considers not only the melt, but also diverse coping strategies—such as covering du Rhone in UV-resistant blankets—and spiritual responses to the process.

5) *Barbórka*, mixed-media installation; sound, 2020.

Saint Barbara's Day, commonly known as Barbórka, is a traditional celebration of the miners' labor, accompanied by parades, religious services and concerts of miners' orchestras. Celebrated in Upper Silesia, the mining region where Lelonek was raised. In the installation, the figure of Saint Barbara usually carried by the marching miners is replaced by different species of ruderal plants, which are first to colonize disturbed lands of former mines and abandoned industrial areas. Bringing back life to dry, post-industrial grounds, those plants also carry symbolic, magical and medical use in folk tradition. The species have diverse purposes such as rituals of cleansing and abortion (*Artemisia Vulgaris*), a psychedelic drug (*Datura stramonium*), and to cure depression and hysteria (*Tanacetum vulgare*). The work connects cultural rituals to the deep history of coal formation, and to natural folk knowledge. It is looking for a new model of the post-industrial culture, in which the extractivist perspective is replaced by the intimate connection with earth, and not its exploitation. Object constructed by Tomasz Partyka. Sound installation consists of record from the march of the miners' orchestra from the Bytom-Borek mine on Saint Barbara's Day on December 4, 2019, composed by Bartosz Zaskórski. The mine was closed in January 2020, making the recorded sounds yet another archive: the last celebration of the mining tradition in the society which is forced to rethink how to transform the culture based on destructive industry.