

REFUGE
The first annual exhibition at the Sapieha Palace
12 April–31 December 2024

Curators:
Edgaras Gerasimovičius, Virginija Januškevičiūtė
Exhibition architecture:
Laura Kaminskaitė, Povilas Marozas
Graphic design:
Goda Budvytytė, Vytautas Volbekas
Coordination:
Povilas Gumbis, Paulius Andriuškevičius
Communication:
Denisas Kolomyckis, Aistė Račaitytė, Emilija Filipenkovaitė,
Giedrė Ivanova
Technical implementation:
Jokūbas Čižikas, Vsevolod Kovalevskij, Antanas Dombrovskij,
Almantas Lukoševičius, Ilona Virzinkevič, Matas Šatūnas
Translation:
Paulius Balčytis, Alexandra Bondarev, Julija Matulytė
Copy editing:
Dangė Vitkienė, Gemma Lloyd

Funded by:
The Lithuanian Council for Culture
Supported by:
ARC Bucharest residency, National Cultural Fund Romania
Media partners:
15min, LRT, JCDecaux, Echo Gone Wrong, Artnews.lt

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Laurence Alary, Algė Andriulytė, Audvidas Balčiūnas, Barbara Barnak,
Žygintas Būčys, Valentin Duduk, Daina Ferguson, Rimantas Garnys,
Arūnas Gelūnas, Rūta Janonienė, Grigorijus Grigas Karachanovas,
Matas Labašauskas, Radu Lesevski, Lina Michelkevičė, Micki Meng,
Laura Misiūnaitė, Gunia Nowik, Christopher Pieper / Leideno
universitetas, Satu Oksanen, Marija Olšauskaitė, Petras Olšauskas,
Evaldas Purlys, Romanas Raulynaitis, Mindaugas Reklaitis,
Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik / Sengirės fondas, Dalius Sabaliauskas,
Laima Sazanova, Antanas Stanislauskas, Francisco Salas / PM8,
Vadim Šamkov, Andrius Šoblinskas, Edvardas Šumila, Saulius Valius,
Birutė Rūta Vitkauskienė, Louis-Philippe Van Eeckhoutte /
dépendance, Žilvinas Žilinskas / Scenos darbai



Sound Works for
the Sapieha Palace



Digital booklet and
exhibition photo
documentation

REFUGEE

2024.
04.12–
12.31

SR
SAPIEHA PALACE
www.sapiegurumai.lt
L. Sapiegos st. 13, 10312
Vilnius

The inaugural exhibition of the Sapieha Palace seeks to showcase the newly-found venue – a new branch of the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius – and consider what it might mean for contemporary art to enter the historical building at this particular time. The exhibition serves as a subtle, transparent layer over the partially restored 17th century architecture of the palace, where the spaces have been drawn and redrawn countless times throughout history. It highlights the involvement of diverse forces and voices – both known and unknown – in the formation of what is now considered heritage, and speaks to the present moment defined by the urban, geopolitical, cultural, and emotional climate permeating Vilnius today.

The title of the exhibition, *Refuge*, points to the Latin inscription on a marble plaque above the front door of the building: it proclaims that ‘the grand palace, rising from the ruins, will shelter those worn-down by war and surround them in quiet and peace’. The inscription was installed by Kazimierz Jan Sapieha, commander-in-chief of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, who built the palace as his representative country residence. The themes of victorious glory and peace were especially significant in the decoration of the palace, along with the choreography of space and allegories of virtue unique to the High Baroque. The entire ensemble, comprising the residence, its park, and the adjacent Trinitarian monastery, was intended to serve as a testament to the past and future achievements of the Grand Hetman and his influential family.

However, due to a brief civil war that erupted specifically to counter the dominance of the Sapiehas, the palace served its original owner only very briefly. The themes of healing and warfare inscribed in the marble plaque continued nevertheless to resonate throughout its more than three hundred years of history. At different times, the edifice has served various owners and armies as an instrument of conquest, a trophy, a warfield, army barracks and a war hospital. Right after WWI it was repurposed by the Polish government as an eye clinic, and after WWII it was a school where Soviet military personnel were trained to operate anti-aircraft radars.

The exhibition breaks away from the common ways of tracing history through the nobility, owners and family histories, or even through the grand works of singular architects and artists, venturing instead into the domain of material histories, speculative (re)construction and repurposing of affects embedded in the architecture. The one who is weary of the warfare now is perhaps the contemporary visitor. Here, in this exhibition, the spells, meditations and visions shared by the artists aim to provide conversation and refuge for enduring situations that one would rather not be in. The works offer insights and models of endurance, engaging with the themes of war and refuge, illness and healing, miracle and disaster, beginning and end.

As restorers continue to uncover more traces from different periods, the walls of the palace reveal inconsistencies, interruptions, contradictions, and a wealth of diverse perspectives on the past. What may have seemed irrelevant, unwanted, or disposable at one time has been valued anew in others. The many nuances of history often remain unknown.

The exhibition will run until the end of the year, evolving with new works and new configurations throughout this period.

14 B.

PETER WÄCHTLER
Like a Palace, 2022

Video, sound, duration – 33'35". The majority of the film contains no sound
Courtesy of the artist and dépendance

At just over half an hour long, Peter Wächtler's film combines the genres of silent cinema and science fiction travelogue, and unfolds a drama centred around a community of time travellers. Specifically, it presents one person recounting the adventures and relationships of this community, supplemented by excerpts from their experiences. Yet, from the very beginning, it becomes clear that the juxtaposition of different genres has a disruptive effect on the film's narrative coherence. Firstly, it has no sound (except for the end credits), creating a disturbing distance from the unfolding drama and a confusion between the voices of the narrator and the characters (further increased by the fact that one of the actors is also the film's director). Additionally, the film lacks narrative coherence and character development: while we may understand that the palace depicted at the beginning of the film is an important place for the time-travelling community, the motives behind its members wandering across time remain unclear. Following traces and clues, the travellers set off on a transhistorical investigation that only they comprehend, taking them to the Stone Age, ancient Greece, Prussia during the industrial revolution, and a future suspiciously reminiscent of the present day. At times, the characters' actions seem to be guided by an enigmatic 'book with all the rules,' at other times – by the dynamics of their communal relations. Yet, we cannot be entirely sure even of that.

Peter Wächtler's (b. 1979) film *Like a Palace* can be seen as a comic parody of a linear scientific account of the past. However, it can also be interpreted as a science fiction-inspired piece that does not aim to convince viewers of an enchantingly detailed and cohesive fictional world but rather seeks to disturb us with the fragmented nature of our memory and comprehension of historical narrative. The lack of meaningful components, becoming increasingly evident throughout the film, opens up a vast space for the viewer's imagination. Ultimately, this structural incoherence unfolds stories about the fragility of friendships and communities, the promise of the future, and the weight of past mistakes. — EG

15

MILJOHN RUPERTO AND ULRİK HELTOFT
From the series *Voynich Botanical Studies*, 2013–2014

Specimen 02r Jaro
Specimen 30v Leto
Specimen 33r Leto
Specimen 93v Podzim
Specimen 65v Podzim
Gelatin silver prints, 50 x 40 cm
Courtesy the artists and Micki Meng

The Voynich manuscript is one of the most enigmatic illustrated books. Researchers date it to the mid-15th century. The manuscript was discovered and popularised by Wilfrid Voynich, who was born in 1865 into a noble family in Telsiai. A number of written historical sources mention him as one of the first anarchists active in Kaunas. Despite being exiled to Siberia for his anti-tsarist activities, he escaped and, after settling in London, gradually built up a substantial rare book business, gaining recognition as an expert in the field.

The manuscript of just over 240 pages, barely larger than the palm of a hand, is currently housed in the collection of the Beinecke Library at Yale University. Its indecipherable text, enigmatic balneological illustrations, and depictions of celestial bodies and unrecognisable plants puzzled not only Voynich himself but also the leading cryptographers of the 20th century and continue to puzzle scientists today. Experts agree that part of the book explains medicinal recipes, but its overall text and relationship with the illustrations remain a mystery. Various theories have been put forward in order to unravel it. Some explain that the book is a unique musical notation system, others that it is an ancient joke or 19th-century hoax, while some consider it a work of divine providence or the creation of inhabitants of another world.

Artists Miljohn Ruperto (b. 1971) and Ulrik Heltoft (b. 1973) used computer graphics to create detailed images of more than 100 plants featured in the codex. They then made a photographic negative and a photographic print from each image, five of which are on display in the exhibition. The artists expanded this collection of plants, which do not exist in nature, by creating images of the plants across the four seasons, thereby transforming a phenomenon unexplained by scientists into documentary fact. In terms of imagery, Ruperto and Heltoft's works bear resemblance to the renowned photographic studies of individual plants conducted by Voynich's contemporary, the German photographer Karl Blossfeldt. Ruperto and Heltoft's *Voynich Botanical Studies* rekindle the mystery of the plants and the manuscript's significance in the era of modern technology and artificial intelligence – the devices enabling us to address previously unsolvable questions are the same ones being employed to fabricate reality, to falsify knowledge, and generate sophisticated counterfeits. — EG

16

MILJOHN RUPERTO

Janus, 2013

Digital animation, sound, duration – 3'30"

The film *Janus* by Miljohn Ruperto (b. 1971), a Filipino-born artist living in Los Angeles, created in collaboration with animator Aimée de Jongh, refers to the ancient Roman god of the same name, the guardian of gates, who represents the intermediary state between opposites – beginning and end, war and peace, life and death. Janus, who is traditionally depicted as a two-faced man looking in opposite directions, is embodied by the popular optical illusion character duck-rabbit in Ruperto's work. The figure, conceived by American psychologist Joseph Jastrow in the late 19th-century and later popularised by philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, persists to this day as a playful optical device. It demonstrates that our gaze is not merely a passive recipient of visual information but actively shapes our perception of the environment by recognising and distinguishing separate elements and combining them into a meaningful whole. Personal life experience plays a decisive role here. Depending on the focal point, one can recognise either the rabbit or the duck in the duck-rabbit image, but never both with equal clarity. A person who has not seen the rabbit will only recognise the duck, and vice versa.

The film shows this paradoxical animal wounded and seemingly about to breathe its last breath. The sequence of animated frames is edited to be shown as a perpetual loop, suspending the sombre moment of the end of the fictional creature's life in eternity. Pervading the room, the uneasy and inevitable confrontation with the unreal and endless demise of the duck-rabbit, serves as a reminder of the complexity of our experience. Despite our reliance on rational evaluations and conventions in life, in certain cases and often unconsciously, we are inclined to make exceptions akin to magical thinking. — EG

17

RITA OLŠAUSKIENĖ

Marija's Dream, 2003

Oil on canvas, 90 x 120 cm

Untitled, 2000–2003

Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm

Untitled, 1993

Oil on canvas, 79 x 79 cm

Courtesy of Olšauskai family and PM8 / Francisco Salas

Amidst the works depicting fires, traces of the sun, confusion, visions of the future and the past, are several paintings by Rita Olšauskienė (1961–2006). They show people resting, watering flowers, braiding each other's hair. In the background, their own fires burn, deserts and caravans stretch into the distance, and fantastic flowers grow. The paintings, imbued with an atmosphere of warmth and empathy, seem to remind us that others once lived, and therefore dreamt, in this palace. — VJ

1

MARIANNA MARUYAMA

Arts of Subtraction, 2024

Carrara marble, 63 x 44 x 77 cm

Incense Clock, 2024

Ceramics, various organic materials.

Dimensions variable

At the main entrance to the Sapieha Palace, passers-by are greeted by a small memorial stone by Marianna Maruyama (b. 1980) with Latin inscriptions carved on both sides. One proclaiming *diebus noctibusque deploratis*, a dedication 'To all the days and nights that have been lost' and the second, *instantis aerae temporis*, a devotion 'To the breeze of this time'. The inscriptions, seen from different perspectives, become a threshold that can be crossed from two different sides.

The artist's second work is much more ephemeral, unfolding in various spaces of the palace like the scattered crumbs of a long-ripened idea. The artist invites us to look at this newly opened building as a scent clock: every moment, hour, day or week since the palace was opened, different scents have permeated its spaces, some repeating themselves, others lingering, and not long after, dissipating. Incense clocks have long been used in many parts of the world – a change in scent can signal both a symbolic transformation in the church liturgy and inform house guests that it's time for them to depart. For her incense clock, Maruyama uses scents that naturally enter and emanate from the building, over which she has no control, as well as her own carefully selected organic materials, which in one way or another refer to the time when the Sapieha Palace was built. Incense cannot often be burnt in the Sapieha Palace – the building is too fragile for that – so her incense clock is, so to speak, at a standstill. Reality is too fragile for time to move forward. However, in agreement with Domas Noreika, another artist participating in the exhibition, who invites us to look at the material connections between the building, its various inhabitants and visitors (his work is called *The Conservator's Imagination Desk*), Maruyama's incense clock will be lit to mark the death of the bacteria that live in the Sapieha Palace, which is typically announced by the odour they emit themselves.

One of the components of this incense clock is a series of small ceramic pieces that have been scattered throughout the space. Under some of them, someone seems to have taken up residence and formed miniature mounds. Both of Maruyama's works are part of a larger series entitled *The Arts of Subtraction*, and a prominent role in this series is played by termites, small creatures that are particularly famous for their love of gnawing on valuable heritage objects and for their elusive nature (some species are also excellent builders, but that's another story). There are no termites in Lithuania yet since they usually live closer to the equator, but a few months ago, scientists in the Netherlands discovered them for the first time not far from The Hague, where the artist lives, and there is no doubt that sooner or later we will meet them in Lithuania, as Northern climates heat up. The title of the series, *The Arts of Subtraction*, invites us to think of natural processes and culture – creation, exploitation of nature, and human impact on it – together, linked on a material level and evolving side by side. For the artist, this interconnectedness opens up new ways of thinking about loss and bereavement. — VJ

2

VYTAUTAS BALČYTIS

Library. Vilnius, 1987

Gelatin silver print, 11.6 x 18.3 cm

Vilnius, Šnipiškės, 2005

Gelatin silver print, 13.9 x 20.5 cm

Vilnius, 2005

Gelatin silver print, 13.9 x 20.5 cm

Gariūnai, 2005

Gelatin silver print, 13.8 x 20.5 cm

Justiniškės, Vilnius, 2001

Gelatin silver print, 12.2 x 18.2 cm

Kiduliai, 2005

Gelatin silver print, 13.7 x 20.5 cm

Vilnius, Šeškinė, 2005

Gelatin silver print, 13.8 x 20.5 cm

Facsimiles (digital prints)

LNMA collection

The photographs listed above will be replaced by a new set over the course of the show.

The exhibition features seven silver bromide prints by Vytautas Balčytis (b. 1955), a distinguished figure in Lithuanian photography. Created between 1987 and 2006, these monochrome photographs, despite not all being part of the same series, share a connection stemming from the artist's enduring interest in the visual eloquence of the ordinary, everyday environment. Almost all of the photographs feature a piercing flash of reflected sunlight that breaks up the otherwise continuous surface of the image and is seemingly the primary motive behind the creation of the photograph. Were it not for these serendipitous flickers of light, the rather mundane landscapes that are so typical of our country, the decaying relics of Soviet industry, the cookie-cutter agricultural structures, the street corners and vacant billboard panels would never have been immortalised in photographs.

To contemporary eyes, these images seem to document a shifting social landscape during a transitional period in Lithuania, but the emptiness they convey seems to extend beyond the boundaries of historical time. The characteristic tensions in Balčytis's photographs between emerging and disappearing imagery, between the accidental moment and the dullness of everyday life exaggerated to almost monumental proportions, present a certain contrast to the exuberance of the palace and the cheerful daylight flowing in through its windows. The photographs serve as a silent reminder of the turbulent past of the palace and the contradictory nature of the forces that have shaped its present form. Different approaches to heritage have led to some historical fragments being showcased at the expense of others. For example, part of the 19th-century legacy was sacrificed to reveal the relatively few authentic Baroque fragments, while some decorative elements survived, albeit in a fragmented form, thanks to being repurposed for construction during mid-19th-century, inter-war and Soviet-era reconstructions, providing important material for researchers in their endeavour to reconstruct the palace's former appearance today. Visitors are greeted by the facade of the Stalin-era Martynas Mažvydas National Library, which not only embodies the tension between disappearance and emergence and serves as yet another backdrop to a blinding flash of light, but also engages in a dialogue with the interior spaces of the Sapieha Palace in the rather indelible language of architecture of power. — EG

3

DOMAS NOREIKA

The Conservator's Imagination Desk, 2024

Various natural materials, oak wood, glass.

Dimensions variable

Table designed by Kotryna Gurskaitė, manufactured by Sigita Žemaitis and Alius Bareckas

This artwork is animated by the artist during live presentations every Wednesday.

Domas Noreika is an interdisciplinary artist and a conservation specialist at the Sapieha Palace. He is also one of the founders of the Aikas Žado laboratory, a long-term, collective project/artwork developed in the 18th century Žeimiai Manor. Noreika's practice combines traditional methods of architectural conservation, preservation and restoration with the latest knowledge in geology, biochemistry and microbiology, encompassing a lively presentation of conservation processes to the broader public.

In the exhibition, Noreika presents a selection of materials obtained through practical experimentation, showcased within a custom-designed vitrine-table by designer Kotryna Gurskaitė. These materials, utilised by the artist in the conservation and polychromic processes of the Žeimiai Manor House and other heritage buildings, can also be found in the human/animal body and plants. Each week, the artist engages with visitors, talking about the significance and application of these materials in the preservation and restoration of the Sapieha Palace. Additionally, Noreika reveals the networks and microbiological connections, invisible to the naked eye, which, from a non-human scale, prompt a reconsideration of the bound-

aries of our bodies and their proximity to the 'inanimate' natural world. Throughout the narrative, the conservation process begins to resemble a form of healing, reframing self-care in terms of the Other that may be perceived through bodily senses rather than intellectually. — EG

4

ANDRIUS ARUTIUNIAN

You Do Not Remember Yourself, 2022
Brass instrument (100 x 600 cm), hanging system, two contact transducers, four loudspeakers, media player

Do Not Fear, Then!, 2022
Sound, duration – 60'

You Do Not Remember Yourself is a six-metre-long musical instrument created by the artist. Its long brass body emits, amplifies and modifies the sounds it produces; when straightened or moved elsewhere, it immediately forgets its previous shape. As part of the artwork, the instrument is used to perform Andrius Arutiunian's (b. 1991) sound composition for four vocalists based on old Armenian incantations, titled *Do Not Fear, Then!*

The work incorporates spells and incantations written in the secret language of Rushtuni, once utilised by the felt makers from the city of Moxos. In Armenia, felt had always been considered the most durable, economical and insulating material, but also a symbol of 'barbarism, poverty and intolerance', as noted by James R. Russell, a scholar of the Rushtuni language. Consequently, those who produced it were considered part of the lowest ranks of society, sometimes regarded as akin to thieves and swindlers.

These craftspeople travelled extensively to sell their felt and developed a clandestine language to protect their trade secrets. Knowledge about it comes from a 19th-century document which, along with a short glossary, also contains spells and incantations that offer insight into the milieu of felt makers. These chants were employed to appeal to supernatural forces and ward off bad luck and misfortune. Most of the incantations end with the phrase used for the title of the work – *Do Not Fear, Then!*

The piece was originally performed by four vocalists who, together with the artist, speculated on how the incantations might have sounded in their original form. The sound installation includes a recording of their improvisation, which the artist transformed by giving the voices distinct textures and sounds akin to different instruments. Harmony slowly gives way to dissonance, then returns. The work is a hypnotic exploration of the human voice, tension, and spells that protect us against evil. — AA / VJ

5

DARIUS ŽIŪRA

Mould, 1998 / 2013
Found coins collected in fountains,
15 x 7.5 x 3.75 cm

Mould by Darius Žiūra (b. 1968) is made of coins that the artist collected from the bottom of a fountain in the grounds of the former palace of Count Tyszkewicz in Palanga. It is said that tossing a coin into the fountain helps one find happiness or ensures their return to Palanga – a resort favoured by holiday-makers – in the future. Thousands of tourists from all over the world cast their lots in this way every summer – the surface of the alloy sculpture is uneven, precisely because it is made of money from different countries, manufactured from different metals.

The artist's text, displayed in the "Restorators' Room", tells us how the idea for the work was conceived and what it took to realise it. His narrative is full of contradictions, dilemmas that an artist faces, and unexpected questions posed to us, the viewers and readers. The artist's self-deprecating humour goes hand-in-hand with unwavering persistence, especially when he tries to convince the metalworker that he does indeed want to fuse the coins, despite being warned that nothing will come of it. And indeed, something does come of it. This unique story of a small miracle, the unexpected glow of the alloy, which subtly encourages us to liken the work to alchemical experiments, and the issue of whether it is ethical to collect coins that others have sacrificed to the fountain, or if it should be considered theft, are what ties in the sculpture with the artist's entire oeuvre. Žiūra has always had a fascination with creating what might be considered impossible images.

In the Sapieha Palace exhibition, the shape of the small metal block seems to echo the shapes of bricks from various periods uncovered by restorers in a bid to display the history of the palace's walls – and, at the same time, the fact that one can no longer observe the 'true' appearance of the palace. Thus, one reality of the building gives way to the next, evoking thoughts about the power to change reality in general. According to the artist, the work would not exist were it not for people's desire to be happy. — VJ

6

GINTAUTAS TRIMAKAS

Lumen Negative Prints, 2022–2023
Unique prints, artist's technique,
17.5 x 18.3 cm and 27.5 x 27.5 cm

Gintautas Trimakas' (b. 1958) *Lumen Negative Prints* are documents of the Sun's descending path along the dome of the evening sky captured on light-sensitive paper. When creating these images, the photographer flips the sheet of photographic paper inside his camera obscura at a certain point, forcing the Sun to retrace its path, thus capturing it as if it were trapped inside the rectangle of the frame. Sunlight activates the metallic salts in the photographic emulsion and colours the paper in shades of purple, brown and pale pink. The colours are then fixed to stop them from absorbing more light. These photographs by Trimakas are often described as 'light traps' since both the artist's involvement and the technological means used in their creation are minimal. The artist merely creates the conditions in which the ever-present processes of the effects of light on matter can unfold.

On the one hand, Trimakas' display of the Sun's journey introduces a superhistorical dimension of time and change – regardless of our wishes or beliefs, the Sun will inexorably follow its own path, unconcerned with our problems, national borders or global networks of economic relations. On the other hand, Trimakas' *Lumen Negative Prints*, alongside Vytautas Balčytis' photographs, weave a poetic conversation with the light coming in through the palace windows and with its architecture. Peacefully inserting themselves into the pattern of its walls, which has been altered so many times, they suggest we focus our gaze on the building's materiality on a micro-scale and the infinite number of scars left, healed or erased by the palace's visitors, guests, former owners and restorers. — EG

7

MINDAUGAS LUKOŠAITIS

From the series *Vilnius in Graphite Dust*, 2022
Digital prints, 21 x 21 cm

In his most well-known series, Mindaugas Lukošaitis (b. 1980) draws, as if from memory, important historical events, which he did not personally live through and which have not been captured in photographs, making the invisible visible with almost documentary precision. However, in some sense, according to the artist, he still has to experience these events in order to depict them, and has to draw them in order to experience them. The series of drawings titled *Vilnius in Graphite Dust* was created in the first months of the large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The drawings were first presented in an exhibition of the same name at Vilnius City Hall, dedicated to the city's 700th anniversary. The series is distinctive in that, rather than depicting events from the past, it presents images relayed in a gloomy premonition of the future. The drawings depict fire glow in a darkened contemporary Vilnius that is under attack. Vilnius University is on fire, and so is the Karoliniškės District, while someone's empty bed appears as a faintly luminous glow in the twilight. The disaster is intangible and barely perceptible, its scale unspoken, as the same kind of darkness could be enveloping either a quiet night in the city or a curfew. Art historian Erika Grigoravičienė, speaking about the rendering of military uniforms in Lukošaitis' series Z, which seem to twist as if empty or perhaps gripped by a macabre dance of death, compared them to suppressed thoughts. In the same way, the series *Vilnius in Graphite Dust* could be described as suppressed anxiety that envelops the city, and is difficult to live with but permeates every glimmer of light in the sleeping settlement.

Crețulescu's sculptures hover between abstraction and recognition: they may be seen as geometric shapes while also resembling everyday wearable or otherwise tactile items like clothing, backpacks, or bedding. Their human scale and the choice of materials, commonly associated with objects of practical daily use, are a direct reference to an intimate, comfortable and secure relationship with the body. However, their lack of a clear function, combined with their striking symmetry and the manner in which they are displayed, stimulates the imagination: the sculptures evoke images of armour or weapons from ancient palaces, trophy-like animal furs and skins, or unsettling insects, reptiles, and other creatures found in museums of natural science. Crețulescu's works use contemporary tools to juxtapose safety with danger, highlighting humanity's enduring fear that our innovations, intended to enhance comfort and security, may one day slip out of our control and become weapons in a fight against us. — EG

13

IZA TARASEWICZ

Cluster of Contingencies IV, 2022
Steel, wheat, wire. Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Gunia Nowik gallery

Looped Processions IV, 2022
Oxidised steel, brass, wheat, wire in three segments. Dimensions variable

SUPERPOWER, 2024
Brass. 60 x 30 x 30 cm
Tomasz Michalski's collection

Yellow Coal, 2016/2022
Ochre, wood. Dimensions variable

Iza Tarasewicz's (b. 1981) work, set in two corner rooms of the Sapieha Palace, seem at first glance to create different moods. In the north gallery, an austere barricade-like cross, with four-fingered rakes resembling farm equipment, seemingly threatens to move, grab or demolish something, or at least block the way. In the south gallery, solemn braids of wheat and brass hang from the ceiling and resemble ornate chandeliers that subtly glow in the sunlight. Next to them lie eye-catching boxes with ochre and a brass composition that resembles hands gently caressing a head or a beautiful headdress. In both rooms, the sculptures seem frozen, but ready to move: in one case, to attack or to work, and in the other, to dance and spin. But a keen eye can also notice the stiffened, steel fingers with pronounced knuckles sticking out in the 'chandeliers'. These are machines, freed from human will, designed to live independently but still resembling the human form. How safe is the metal shelter of *SUPERPOWER*?

The artist created *Looped Processions* and *Cluster of Contingencies* in response to modernity and technological progress, the ecological situation, folk traditions, and the political and social turbulence in Poland and other countries. Finally, Russia's long-prepared large-scale invasion of Ukraine, which caused much pain and loss to Ukraine and affected the economies of many other countries, broke out while the work was still in progress. The farming implements and grain in the sculptures refer not only to the artist's background and large-scale industries, but also to Ukraine's grain export crisis. Her images of futuristic machinery are in line with the cyclical nature of agriculture and folk dance, and the prospect of the renewal of life after a catastrophe. 'We are currently going through a transitional period, a turning point. I am talking about climate, ecology, the food crisis, migration, soil quality, water and air pollution, etc. Turning points are always fearful, but in the past, in folk cultures, they were the driving force behind ceremonies and magical activities,' says the artist.

The title of the installation, *Yellow Coal*, refers to a piece of writing from 1939 by the Kiev-born Polish writer Zygmunt Krzyżanowski. Already living in Moscow at the time, the author wrote a story about how first the US and then Germany found a way to turn public anger and confrontation into a source of energy to replace black coal, oil and all the other fuels used previously. First public transport, then the army begins to run on it, and later yellow coal contributes to the cheap electrification of homes, offices and factories. The need to ensure that this fuel never runs out has become a major concern for politicians on both sides of the Atlantic. For the artist, yellow coal is a symbol of toxicity in a broad-

er sense, encompassing not only the moods of society but also the unchecked toxicity of capitalism, which invisibly or often, on the contrary, in extremely attractive forms, permeates the everyday. The volatile pigment powders, which inadvertently penetrate the environment (safely placed in boxes in this installation to protect the surroundings), become a metaphor for the chaos and systematic confusion that is taking root in both the private and the public spheres. — VJ

14^A

THE ARTWORKS WILL BE ON DISPLAY
FROM 9 SEPTEMBER.

ALEXANDER KLUGE
Minute Films, 2006–2021
13 digital films
Chinoiserie musicale by Jacques Offenbach,
1855, 2018
Video, sound, duration – 5'35"

Gut Thinking, 2017
Video, sound, duration – 5'47"

Baby, baby, ope your eye..., 2020
Video, sound, duration – 1'40"

Notre Dame / "Douleur me bat", 2019
Video, sound, duration – 1'37"

I have one foot in the grave, 2020
Video, sound, duration – 2'50"

The Pride of the West Ends at its Fortified Borders, 2018
Video, sound, duration – 2'43"

Five Hours of "Parsifal" in 90 seconds
Swedish Mozart
Neon Sky Rays
Vertov and Eisenstein
100 Years of the German Rhine
Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome
- *War and Theatre*
Godzilla in Fukushima
Video, audio, total duration – 8'45"

Alexander Kluge (b. 1932) is a writer, filmmaker and lawyer. His diverse practice encompasses cinema, literature, social and film theory, and political action in various cultural fields. Kluge is one of the founders of the New German Cinema movement whose work can be considered a continuation of the Frankfurt School of critical theory. His first feature film, *Yesterday Girl*, won the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1966. In 1987, Kluge founded the television production company dctp.tv (Development Company for Television Program), which produces original fiction plots for German commercial television.

Kluge's dctp.tv programmes were broadcast on SAT.1, RTL and VOX, Germany's three main commercial TV channels. The unusual collaboration stems from a former German law that obliged private TV channels to include independent productions in their programming. As a lawyer and sociologist, Kluge was fully aware that such a law offered an opportunity to propose alternative content to commercial television and counter its power to push superficial content onto the masses, manipulating viewers' attention for its own ends.

Kluge's select *Minute Films* presented in the exhibition are short, experimental, mostly archive footage-based commentaries on important or forgotten historical events, methods of constructing historical narratives, propaganda, current social processes, and Kluge's own relentless passion for music, especially the opera. These films were produced as inserts or vignettes to be shown in place of conventional advertisements, and, thanks to their playful form, inconsistent or downright poor audio and video quality, simple editing, and an unusual abundance of text, they became a sort of anomaly or perhaps even a distinct genre of TV production.

Removed from their original context, the *Minute Films* act as independent works in the exhibition, offering poetic commentary on today's sense of looming war, the migrant crisis, effects of the pandemic, fragmentation of society, manufactured truth, propaganda, and human beings trying to make sense of their own role in this global drama. — EG

Double Race, 2020
Mixed media, 27 × 20 × 37 cm (wooden wall:
102 × 28,5 × 23.5 cm)
Romanas Raulynaitis' collection

Trakehner, 2022
Calced and stabilised piece of a wooden
wall, 125 × 40 × 40 cm

Drift Ice, 2020–2023
Mixed media, 67 × 50 × 60 cm

The series of six sculptures by Petras Mazūras (b. 1949) can be described as variations on the theme of the horseman. The artist shares two temporally distant motives that inspired the creation of these works. The first is a statement from a professor back in his student days that one becomes a real sculptor by mastering the depiction of a horse. The second was the intense discussions and societal division regarding the Lukiškės Square monument in 2016. Looking at Mazūras' work on display in the exhibition, it becomes clear that for the artist, the horseman embodies an exploration of plasticity, a playground for experimenting with form, colour, material, and the dynamics between them, as well as a fundamental collective image of the Lithuanian people, continuously evolving and assuming new forms. Perhaps this is why some of the artist's sculptures of the horseman – abstracted and far removed from the heraldry of the knight, Vytiis, on Lithuania's coat of arms, but still clearly identifiable – are encased in a form of transparent synthetic resin resembling a human head. Like a jagged lens, it magnifies, distorts and fragments the horseman figures, each small enough to fit into the palm of a hand, depending on the viewer's position.

In his series, which is full of symbols, Mazūras creates a visual narrative of a warrior who has gone to war and fallen with his horse, and whose ghost returns home. In the sculpture *Drift Ice*, we can envision the veiled, bowed head of a mother or lover mourning their loss. Mazūras crafted these sculptures slowly, year after year. First, he would sculpt the figure of the horseman, and then he would come back to it to add a new element – whether it was leftover material from another sculpture, a household object, a new layer of colour or an inscription. In *History Is a Nightmare You Will Never Wake Up From*, we can read the inscription 'Pokarwis 1261', which is carved inside the sculpture as if on the other side of the glass and refers to the victorious Prussian battle against the Teutonic Order and the Crusaders. Another part of the work features the engraving 'Soldino', the name of the present-day location in Poland where the pilots Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas crashed their aircraft, Lithuania, on route from Kaunas to New York in 1933, in the nearby woods. Other entries, such as 'may lightning strike them' or 'concertina,' are more likely to express the hardships that befell the knight or his fate: upon a closer look, we can see the horse's hooves tangled in barbed wire crafted from a fern stem coated in silver paint, serving as a commentary on the migrant crisis and the construction of defensive installations on the Lithuanian border today. Over time, as the sculpture has evolved, some of the inscriptions have become obscured beneath new layers, bearing witness to events that have faded with the passage of time.

In Mazūras' series of sculptures, the image of the horseman undergoes a constant transformation of material and meaning, symbolically becoming some sort of battleground between the different versions of our society's shared history, its present goals, and its future expectations. — EG

12^A

THE ARTWORK WILL BE ON DISPLAY
UNTIL 6 NOVEMBER.

IC-98 AND KUSTAA SAKSI
A World in Waiting (78°14'08.4"N
15°29'28.7"E), 2018

Tapestry (jacquard fabric, seeds),
553 × 302 cm
Commissioned by the Victoria and Albert
Museum, London

A World in Waiting by IC-98 (Visa Suonpää and Patrik Söderlund) and Kustaa Saksi is a contemporary interpretation of the millefleur, a type of tapestry that became popular between the 16th and 17th centuries. Millefleurs (French *mille-fleurs*, 'a thousand blossoms') are artistic fabrics depicting a meadow-like

ornament comprising stylised yet recognisably realistic flowering plants, typically acting as a backdrop for various human and animal scenes. The millefleur was resurrected as a textile genre towards the end of the 19th century by members of the British Arts and Crafts Movement who believed that a return to the old crafts and artisanal work ethic, almost extinct at the time, could provide a counterpoint to industrialised mass production, which had alienated people from their work and impoverished the experience of daily life.

IC-98 and Kustaa Saksi are rethinking the idea of craftsmanship as a sustainable relationship with the world that has been lost to industrial progress, in a contemporary context where the negative impact of human activity on the planet has reached critical levels. In their version of millefleur, the artists have removed humans and animals from the scene, bringing the all-encompassing, vibrant nature into the foreground.

In its own way, the tapestry on display in the exhibition is a model of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault located on the island of Spitsbergen in Norway. Also known as the Doomsday Bank, the repository holds plant seeds from all over the world, which could replant the Earth's surface in the event of a catastrophe. The work imagines the Svalbard Seed Vault 2000 years later with the human species now extinct due to sea-level rise but its relics still taking part in natural processes. The work tells a hypothetical story about seeds that have escaped from the repository and have sown themselves, growing into green, flowering, fruiting plants. *A World in Waiting* was developed in collaboration with scientists from various fields. They helped select seeds from the repository's collection that would likely thrive in the area in the year 4017, which were then woven into the work. The artists argue that *A World in Waiting* is akin to a self-fulfilling prophecy: left unattended, it would germinate in nature and perhaps be the beginning of a new natural world freed from human domination. — EG

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS:

Merja Hartikainen, Kaija Hakala and Elina Kiviharju / Natural Resources Institute Finland;
Kimmo Ruosteenoja / Finnish Meteorological Institute;
Kristian Nyvoll / Tromsø Arctic-Alpine Botanic Garden

PLANTS DEPICTED ON AND ENCAPSULATED IN THE CARPET:

Agrostis capillaris (Common bent)
Angelica archangelica (Garden angelica)
Brassica rapa ssp. campestris (Wild turnip)
Chamaenerion angustifolium (Rosebay willowherb)
Deschampsia flexuosa (Wavy hair-grass)
Elymus mutabilis (Wildrye)
Festuca rubra (Red fescue)
Hordeum jubatum (Foxtail barley)
Phleum alpinum (Alpine cat's-tail)
Poa pratensis (Common meadow-grass)
Polemonium boreale (Boreal Jacobs-ladder)
Rheum rhabarbarum (Rhubarb)
Rhodiola rosea (Rose root)
Ribes rubrum (Redcurrant)
Rubus chamaemorus (Cloudberry)
Solanum tuberosum (Potato)
Taraxacum officinale (Common dandelion)
Trifolium pratense ssp. pratense (Red clover)
Trifolium repens var. repens (White clover)
Vaccinium vitis-idaea (Lingonberry)
Vicia cracca (Tufted vetch)
Vicia sepium (Bush vetch)

12^B

GIULIA CREȚULESCU
Mountain Peak, 2022
Textile sponge, steel, 140 × 100 cm

Full Body Coverage, 2024
Textile sponge, 100 × 70 cm

Optimal Surface Message, 2022
Textile sponge, 270 × 130 cm

Body Contouring, 2023
Textile sponge, 130 × 80 cm

The exhibition showcases four textile sculptures by Bucharest-based artist Giulia Crețulescu (b. 1994). As is typical of her broader body of work, these sculptures blend elements of contemporary functional design and heraldry, ranging from specific imagery to a harmonious fusion of materials, shapes, and colours. Positioned slightly above eye level,

In one of Lukošaitis' drawings, an unfamiliar object glints in the background of the Sapiėha Palace – possibly a missile aimed at the city or maybe a celestial body orbiting the Earth. Perhaps the drawing is unintentionally telling the story of a comet of extraordinary brightness that repeatedly appeared in the skies of 18th-century Europe? Some ascribed the unexpected appearance of the celestial body to impending calamities and God's punishment, while others, harshly criticising the former, argued that it was just a harmless natural phenomenon. In a way, this divergence of views reflects a renewed appreciation for change and fragility in the Baroque era: despite the controversy, both sides agreed that, if there is no permanence in heaven, then there is also none on Earth. — EG / VJ

9

VLADAS DRĚMA
Fire in Vilnius in 2222, 1928
Watercolours on paper, 27 × 22.8 cm
Facsimile (digital print)
LNMA collection

The historian and museologist Vladas Drėma (1910–1995) included the Sapiėha Palace in his famous work *Lost Vilnius*, first published in 1991. Drėma's research into Vilnius' old, lost architecture often relied on images created by artists of previous generations. He studied not only how the city changed but also, inevitably, how the same architectural creations were rendered differently by the hands of different masters. Depicted in a painting by Ferdynand Ruszczyc in 1908, the vista of the gate to the Sapiėha Palace appears timeless, not dissimilar to the way the palace looks today, the only exception being its roof, which was completely rebuilt at that time. In a 1927 etching by Jerzy Hoppen, the same gate serves as a setting for a dramatic scene featuring people in historical costumes. Upon seeing it, one is led to wonder whether it really took place in Lithuania since it seems to transport us to the mythical times of the romanticised Baroque, just as, a few centuries earlier, the architect of the gate sought to transport us, the observers, to the mythical romanticised antiquity. In Josef Perli's meticulously ornamented image of the palace and the Trinitarian Monastery, the palace's corner towers seem to have lost their unusual Asian-inspired shape, as if the artist had simply not noticed this oddity.

Before and during the Second World War, Vladas Drėma also produced paintings and prints. Much of his work was devoted to the subject of Vilnius. The exhibition presents an enigmatic futuristic vision he created in 1928 – the city engulfed in flame in the year 2222. In this room, the motif of the fire of Vilnius finds its way into the works of various masters. — VJ

9^A

THE ARTWORK WILL BE ON DISPLAY
FROM 15 SEPTEMBER.

GEDIMINAS ŽYGUS AND YEN CHUN LIN
Hold the Blue Wind With Open Palms, 2024
Six-channel audio installation, duration
47'11"

Gediminas Žygus's and Yen Chun Lin's audio installation is a live sound piece adapted for the grand hall of the Sapiėha Palace, originally performed on the eve of the opening of the palace on 13 April 2024. Created specifically for the palace, the sound composition interprets the feelings of displacement, perpetual change, and falling, embodying the condition of someone seeking security and permanence in an ever-changing world. To quote the artists:

'Falling into a tunnel – the wind brings us here. The wind that touches the ocean's surface, lands, leaves, and hair. Sometimes, one can hear it; sometimes, one can only feel its shy touch. It preserves memories by hiding rhythms in its noise. Layers, loops, and rhymes of the past, present, and future can be unpeeled and heard.

Here, a realm slowly wakes up from a long hibernation. Sounds emerge from dust, from plants drawn on the walls, from birds carved on the balcony, and from clouds printed on the windows. The wind that carries time and memories sings between our palms as we hold each other's hand.

In this shelter, without time, the wind, and dreams can escape from becoming fictions of the future and history. As we long for shelter from the wind, the wind also needs a refuge – to let it go from our embrace.' — EG

9^B

THE ARTWORK WILL BE ON DISPLAY
UNTIL 9 SEPTEMBER.

BOJANA CVEJIĆ AND LENNART LABERENZ
...in a non-wimpy way / steve paxton, 2019
Two screen video installation, sound,
duration – 18' and 4'43"

Bojana Cvejić and Lennart Laberenz's film revolves around Steve Paxton (1939–2024), an American dancer, choreographer, and one of the pioneers of the contact improvisation method. After decades of vibrant artistic life in bustling metropolises, Paxton relocated to an idyllic rural house, a kind of country residence, which, as he himself emphasised, did not prevent him from remaining a critical pessimist. It was within this country home that playwright, artist, and researcher Bojana Cvejić (b. 1975) and documentary filmmaker Lennart Laberenz (b. 1976) conducted and filmed an interview with Paxton. In the conversation, the choreographer speaks of the origins of the contact improvisation method, his aspirations to create 'an antidote to the aggressive tendencies that we have', and his reflection on how even the best ideas are always destroyed by children, or rather by the next generation. — JV

10

ALINA POPA
From the series *Square of Will in Square of Love*, 2018–2019
Drawings made with eyes closed in
notebooks lying across the artist's chest,
14 × 9 cm
Facsimiles (digital prints)

'Healthy people have no soul' is an Amazonian proverb that Alina Popa (1982–2019) was fond of, as noted by her friends. For the Wari people of the Amazon jungle, the soul embodies impermanence, the power to change and transform into something else, and is only awakened by illness or other similar experiences. Popa would half-seriously, half-jokingly refer to this proverb when confronted with the struggles of an incurable illness. Following her diagnosis, she spent two years observing her evolving relationship with her environment and herself, leading to a reevaluation of her artistic and ethical stance.

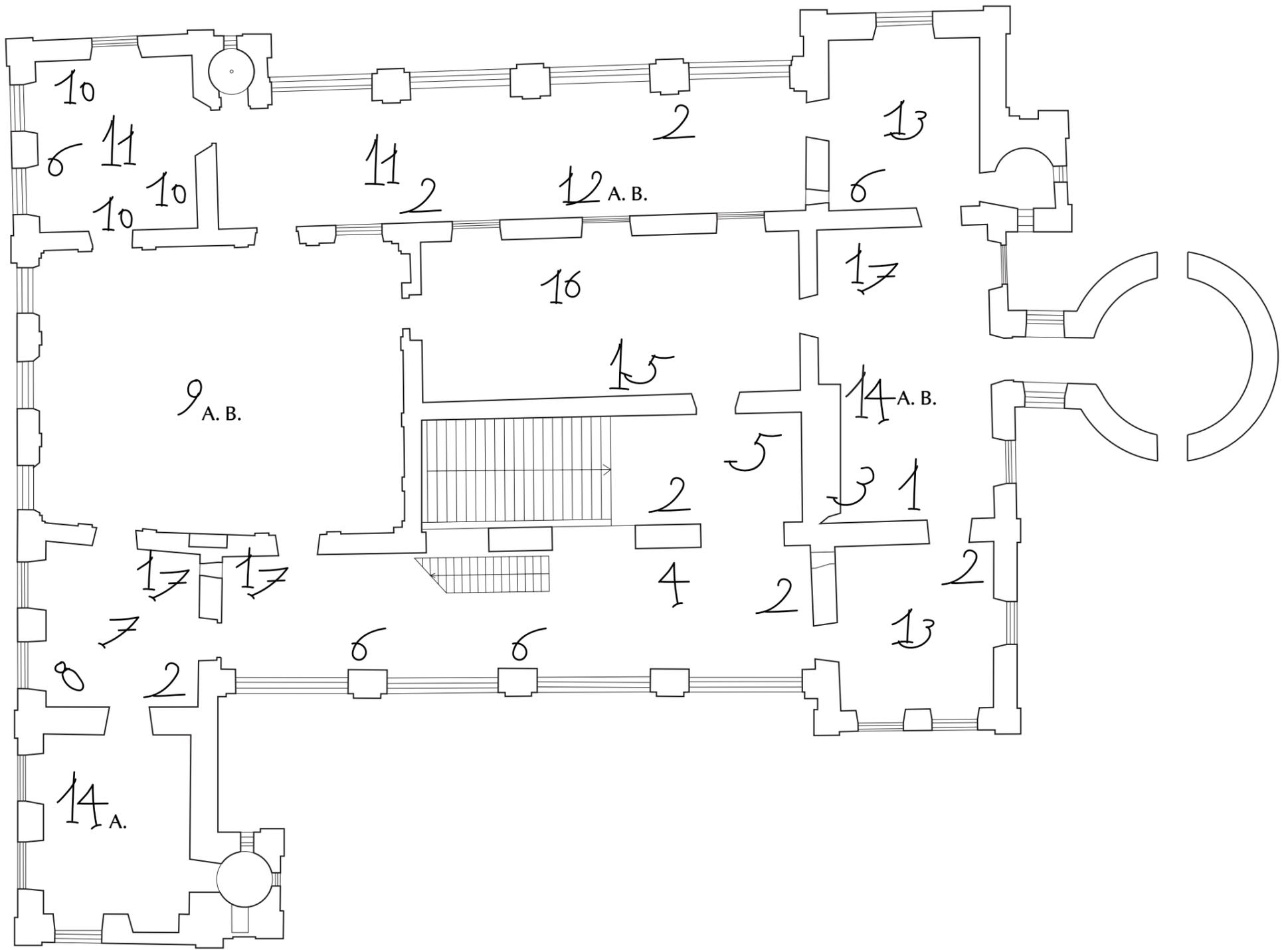
Popa's creative work had been intertwined with the concept of art as a form of life from the beginning of her career: she was a choreographer who created not so much dance per se but rather situations, tasks, and scenarios. Later, she explored numerous and different medical and spiritual perspectives and practices, establishing new friendships and communal bonds, and creating micro-worlds. Actively cultivating a highly personal, bearable relationship with difficult feelings, sensations, or states, she created a series of performances. These include both collaborative and personal ones, with the latter performed in private, aimed at healing and freeing oneself from depressing perspectives. Popa built a kind of jungle in her body, and its resident animals and plants took care of her. With closed eyes, she would draw in a notebook placed on her chest. Her hand would follow her breath, drawing an imaginary corporeal shape based on her awareness of the moment, thus calming her, alleviating her pains, and evoking images from her dreams.

Each drawing in the series is accompanied by a description of the subject, task, or insight uncovered during the drawing session, along with the date and duration of its creation. Only a small part of the whole series is featured in the exhibition. The title of the series is derived from an inscription found on one of the drawings. — VJ

11

PETRAS MAZŪRAS
History Is a Nightmare You Will Never Wake Up From, 2023
Mixed media, 58.5 × 49 × 29 cm (wooden
wall: 102.3 × 29 × 25.5 cm)

The Great Attractor, 2015
Mixed media, 18.5 × 32 × 22 cm (wooden
wall: 101.2 × 31.8 × 27.5 cm)
Pilėnas, 2019–2024
Mixed media, 43 × 33 × 24 cm (wooden wall:
89 × 27.5 × 24 cm)
Romanas Raulynaitis' collection



- 1 Marianna Maruyama
- 2 Vytautas Balčytis
- 3 Domas Noreika
- 4 Andrius Arutiunian
- 5 Darius Žiūra
- 6 Gintautas Trimakas
- 7 Mindaugas Lukošaitis
- 8 Vladas Drėma
- 9A Gediminas Žygus
- 9B Bojana Cvejić
- 10 Alina Popa
- 11 Petras Mazūras
- 12A IC-98 ir Kustaa Saksi
- 12B Giulia Crețulescu
- 13 Iza Tarasewicz
- 14A Alexander Kluge
- 14B Peter Wächtler
- 15 Miljohn Ruperto ir Ulrik Heltoft
- 16 Miljohn Ruperto
- 17 Rita Olšauskienė