

Eva Koťátková

Controlled Memory Loss

14/1 - 7/3/10

Opening: Jan 13th at 6 pm

Kamenická 22, Praha 7- Letná

Gallery opening hours: Tue - Fri: 1 - 6pm, Sat 2 - 6pm

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hunt kastner is pleased to present a new project by Eva Koťátková in the solo exhibition *Controlled Memory Loss*. In this new body of work, the artist continues her exploration of familiar surroundings. In a series of drawings, objects, installations, videos and photographs, the artist examines, probes, and often redefines the conventional idea and meaning of "to be at home". Through creating a series of staged situations, illustrated in drawings, video, photographs and models, the artist attempts to define the scope of deeply-rooted patterns and rules, which either influence or determine our behavior as we attempt to integrate ourselves in - or, distance ourselves from - conventional structures.

In a remote place, far off the beaten path and from scenic views, lies a neglected mound of discarded household items. Many of the items tossed on this pile have already lost their original shape; most of them have lost their original functions, or potential for recovery and reincorporation back into daily life. As the individual objects sink deeper and deeper into the lower layers, disappearing into the stratification of the mass, each object begins to take on the shape or identity of another, so that there are no longer any easily identifiable autonomous objects, simply shapes, fragments and silhouettes of the original, whose only role is now to remain caught in this anonymous new arrangement.

*As we look upon this chaotic conglomeration, we might find ourselves overcome with resigned regret, or, on the contrary, gripped by a determination to bring these things back into use, to return them to their former state, and awaken people's interest in using them again. This means repairing the arm of the chair, fixing the bottom of the drawer, adding on the missing chair legs, screwing new light bulbs into lamps. It would be necessary to glue, sew and piece together the fragments, and do whatever it takes to put these things back together again in some sort of semblance of their former life. But what if, in the midst of these "repairs", our memory, experience or practice fails us and the pieces refuse to fit back together again? What if, despite our detailed knowledge of all that is familiar to us, we find we are not able to identify the missing parts, name them, or correctly piece them back together again? Then, we would be left with no alternative other than to go back to the beginning - to explore the material of the items, their solidity, pliability or softness, to guess their function in relation to our body, to try and see which objects we can sit on, which ones we can move, which things can be used for cover or to keep us warm, which objects we can hide in... The video work *Exercise No. 2- Mound (Cvičení č. 2: Hromada)* documents how a group of four people made themselves at home in this mound of cast-offs over a 24-hour period.*

In addition to 4 videos documenting a series of performances (*Exercise No. 1 - Hanging; Exercise No. 2 - Mound; Exercise No. 3 - Sitting, Standing, Lying; Exercise No. 4, 5 - Home Reconstruction*), the exhibition also presents a series of photographs of staged situations (a human clothes-rack; a home that is carried on one's back; an instrument for reading multiple books all at one time; an instrument for looking into your neighbors homes), and related drawings. Finally, in the center of the exhibition space, is a series of miniature models, presented on a meandering mound of interlocked black cubes, each numbered from 1 - 14, like the different stations of a board game, which illustrate situations and incidents of home life, based on real experiences. The exhibition visitors are invited to participate by creating their own proposals, in drawing or in text, of how they might react, handle - or, extricate - themselves in any of the given situations.

Eva Koťátková (born 1982 in Prague) studied from 2002-7 at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts, Prague Academy of Applied Arts, San Francisco Art Institute and Akademie Bildende Kunst Wien. In 2007 - at the age of 25 - she became the youngest artist ever to be awarded the Jindřich Chaloupecký Award for young artists in the Czech Republic. Koťátková combines several techniques in her work, which begins with her drawings - her many drawings are initially created without a set intention, which only later is revealed in the final form and content, objects and video or photographed performances, which are characterized by their playful exploration of the artists immediate environment - and herself.

Exhibited videos

Exercise No. 1 (Hanging)

Exercise No. 2 (Mound)

Various household objects and furnishings are taken off to a remote place and thrown together in one big mound. Here, on this pile of things, a group of people attempt to make themselves at home. Their interventions range from chaotic redeployments to a systematic sorting and construction. Throughout this transmigration, there is a re-identification and re-organization of items, which are often assigned new roles and uses with little regard to what their original function may have been.

Exercise No. 3 (Seated, Standing, Lying Down)

A group of three people are confined in wooden cages in the basic lying down, standing and seated positions. The wooden constructions that encase them are connected; together they form something like a matching set of furniture.

Exercise No. 4, 5 (Home Reconstruction)

A group of three people attempt to make a cardboard model of their homes while blindfolded. One of the participants went even one step further, and created a model of the home he would like to live in.

In a second phase of the project, the participants worked more collectively, and without blindfolds. Each of them were asked to create models of the buildings that they live in, from memory, in a size proportionate to their own bodies, which they could then don and wear as a sort of walking home.

Exhibited Models

Visitors are invited to comment by proposing, in drawing or text, their own ideas, scenarios, possible courses of action, or escape routes, for each of the given situations.

1

Under a dining table is a cage, where one family member after the other is enclosed during meal times. This is a way to overcome the hierarchical stratification in the family and domination by any one member.

2

People build covers in the shape of their apartment buildings and homes that can be worn and carried on their bodies.

3

A staircase is used as a sort of temporary dormitory; at night, as well as during the day, at least one person is lying on each step, making it difficult, if not almost impossible, for the building's tenants to go up or down the stairs, and get in and out of their apartments.

4

There is a large rock with steeply angled sides and surfaces, making it difficult to climb and reach the top, but which has the best view overlooking one's hometown from the top. Even though it is dangerous, the rock attracts many climbers.

5

Storage space has been built into the floor and the apartment below that has been empty for years, making it possible to continue to build and add on more and more storage space into the depths of the floor over time.

6

Tables for drawing, writing, reading and sitting have been arranged in a hierarchical construction. On each level sit people engaged in various activities. Their placement on any given level, and the activities they are engaged in, indicates their standing in the hierarchy.

7

In the park, following an excavation, a room with all its furnishings is uncovered. The household items were found various conditions and places, most of them no longer fulfilling their original functions: i.e. it is not possible to sit on the chairs, the top shelf sticks out of a wardrobe, etc...

8

The residents of an apartment decide to make contact with their neighbor, whom they have never seen before, on the other side of the wall. They try to communicate in unconventional ways: they produce sounds, knock and look out through the window. Their aim is to catch the neighbor's attention, and in doing so to initiate communication with someone else in the building.

9

The façade of an apartment building has been temporarily removed and the everyday life of the tenants is exposed to passers-by. The tenants react to the situation by regulating their normal behavior, mainly by acting and engaging in the most expected ways and activities.

10

Three wooden objects to enclose three people in the most basic positions: lying down, seated and standing. Together, they form something like a set of furniture.

11

A person's movements are narrowly defined. Everyday, a person ventures as far out to the road as his apartment block reaches. On his walk, he is followed by the silhouette of the apartment buildings, which carefully watch that he not stray too far.

12

The book contains drawings by the inhabitants of one apartment building, who all live in apartments that share the same floor plan. In each of the drawings, the tenants - singles, couples and families - have drawn on the set floor plan the placement of their furnishings and objects, which make their home unique.

13

People can - very economically - make themselves at home in sturdy cardboard boxes. Using them like construction material, they can build a place to live - singles, couples, or even whole families can live in a minimum amount of space derived from the physical dimensions and needs of the inhabitants.

14

A person can be seen looking out from the window of his apartment into the building opposite; everyday, like clockwork, watching his neighbors at 6 in the morning, 12 in the afternoon and 6 in the evening. For someone who almost never leaves home, this neighbor plays the role of a clock and embodies the segmentation of time.