

Assets of Resilience

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It is often said that the world is a complicated place, full of threats lurking at every corner. They target the individual, communities, and even the planet itself, often remaining unnoticed until the moment they become irreversible. Yet the exhibition *Assets of Resilience* addresses these social perils, bound to the acceleration of late capitalism, only in part. Much more, it speaks about ways of facing and countering their consequences.

The three works by mid-career artists, acquired by the Ján Koniarek Gallery for its collection last year, demonstrate a high degree of reflection on the surrounding world and their own position within it. They stem from various forms of social critique, each leading to some principle of personal activation. This “asset” or contribution, however, does not manifest as a grand or ostentatious gesture, as we are so often accustomed to today. Rather, it exemplifies the cultivation of resilience through collective forms of searching, dialogue, and appeals that encourage attentiveness. In this sense, the works also touch upon one of the key tasks of contemporary art—care.

Oto Hudec’s video *All We Could Do Together* (2023) explores the relationship between people and trees as an act of mutual protection and solidarity. It captures stories of environmental activism, highlighting how individuals and communities can achieve tangible results, even when often confronted with failure. These stories document efforts to protect trees and natural sites from industrial interventions, pay tribute to the courage of those who sacrificed personal comfort for the preservation of nature, and serve as inspiration. The narrative deliberately blurs the boundary between human and tree, perceiving them as almost a single entity united in a common goal: reciprocal protection.

The artistic collective *Abandoned (Re)creation*, founded by visual artist Andrea Kalinová and architect Martin Zaiček, has been focusing for years on saving the Machnáč Sanatorium in Trenčianske Teplice (1932, architect Jaromír Krejcar). This building ranks among the most significant examples of interwar functionalist architecture and has been a national cultural monument since 1996, yet it continues to deteriorate due to insufficient protection. Since 2011, *Abandoned (Re)creation* has realized site-specific installations and interventions, including the video-performance *Room No. 106* (2014), in which they reconstructed one of the rooms to its original 1932 state, emphasizing the importance of care in preserving cultural heritage.

Jana Kapelová’s video *It Is Not We Who Live in This Space, but This Space That Lives in Us* (2013–2014) responds to the critical undertones of Slovak films from the 1980s. Her re-enactment within a model situation of a television play reveals the parallels between unresolved problems of the past and those of the present, while also serving as a form of institutional critique. The dialogical nature of the work points to unspoken tensions that require collective engagement with self-reflection. This entails both the need to ask questions and seek answers, as well as to question oneself and be willing to hear the response.

The exhibition intertwines environmental activism, architectural heritage, and institutional critique into a narrative of responsibility, cohesion, and agency, expressing the awareness that protecting nature and cultural heritage alike requires action, determination, and care.

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