

## re-(t)exHile

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Clothing is the oldest technology of humankind. It represents a tool for adaptation, a form of primal architecture – an environment that separates us from nature while also enabling us to survive within it. It is "wearable architecture" – a mobile envelope that humans design, adapt, and innovate according to needs and environmental conditions (Lukáš Likavčan). Thus, clothing becomes a means for building a sustainable relationship with nature and with oneself. The re-(t)exHile project is not just an exhibition, but an interdisciplinary international initiative focused on a critical reflection of the textile industry's circulation. It explores the global-scale impacts of the industry, particularly overproduction, waste generation, and the persistent forms of inequality and exploitation tied to international trade in used clothing. The project stimulates discussion on the possibilities for a sustainable future in fashion and its transformation. The exhibition addresses both environmental and social challenges linked to the textile industry – its ecological burden, resource overconsumption, problematic labor conditions, and the systemic imbalance between the Global North and South. Used garments from the Northern Hemisphere are exported in large quantities to countries like Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, or Nigeria, where they often end up in illegal landfills or are incinerated, causing serious environmental damage. The textile industry is one of the world's largest polluters, consuming vast amounts of water, energy, fossil fuels, and chemicals, while generating enormous waste. re-(t)exHile thus draws attention to the need for sustainable development, a circular economy, and climate responsibility. The initial phase of the project took place in 2024 during the Lagos Biennale. The artist collective, in collaboration with local communities, created a large-scale textile installation from approximately 500 pieces of second-hand clothing purchased at the Katangua market. The work was realized through collective sewing as a spatial manifesto on the consequences of global textile waste. Collaborations, friendships, local expertise, and shared experience played a key role in the process.

In Trnava, the installation was adapted to the local context. As part of their research, the artist team focused on mapping the textile recycling industry in western Slovakia. Unlike some Western European countries, where used textiles are often exported to the Global South, a significant portion of Slovakia's textile waste is recycled. For instance, we visited the company SK-TEX, s.r.o., where Mr. Futrikanič introduced us to the operations of the plant that processes textile waste – mostly unsold garments from retail – into recycled fibers for the automotive and furniture industries, as well as building insulation. They recycle approximately 3,500 tons of textiles annually. These site visits were documented in a video by Monika Kováčová, which serves as a counterpart to the video by Anto Lloveras from Lagos, capturing the creation process of the original installation.

Although we were unable to meet with representatives of the company Textil House, which sorts discarded clothing and distributes it through its network of second-hand stores, we managed to obtain discarded textiles via an open call. In collaboration with students of the School of Design – the Private Secondary Art School of Bohumil Bača in Bratislava – the artist collective created a new textile object. Like in Lagos, a symbolic thread runs through it, connecting individual pieces with the geographical regions addressed by the exhibition – the Global North, the South, and Slovakia. The project also involved Baterkáreň – Slovakia's first reuse center, known for organizing popular clothing swap events. During the exhibition, it participates in coordinating accompanying activities.

**Martinka Bobrikova** and **Oscar de Carmen** have been working as an artistic duo since 2005. Their collaborative practice spans institutional critique, participation, and socially engaged art. They have taken part in numerous residencies and exhibitions around the world (e.g. ISCP New York, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Saitama Triennale, Fotogalleriet Oslo, Lagos Biennale, and more). In 2012, they founded the nomadic residency program Nomad AiR, focused on hospitality and new forms of cohabitation, and in 2017 they initiated the Future Utopia Community Key in Uddebo, Sweden. Since 2018, they have organized the annual anti-symposium IECES and actively contribute to the development of independent cultural frameworks. In 2023, they co-founded The Union, an art platform in Oslo that supports new forms of care, participation, and civic engagement through art.

**María Alejandra Gatti** is an interdisciplinary creator, curator, writer and editor. She co-directs metaninfás, a critical curatorial and editing platform and is professor of the MA Art & Technology at Buenos Aires University, in Argentina. Her current work investigates collective processes and practices that focus on open, displaced and constantly moving dynamics. She uses editorial work as a tool for action to circulate artistic projects and practices. She is currently living in Oslo.