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Ester Geislerová's emotive video installation at Kunsthalle Praha explores the fragility of intimate relationships

On 28 June, Ester Geislerová's exhibition *What We Should Have Said But Didn't* will open at Kunsthalle Praha. In it, the artist draws on her long-standing interest in romantic and intimate relationships. Through ten short films featuring well-known actors such as Tomáš Jeřábek, Elizaveta Maximová, and Luděk Sobota, she explores the possibilities and limits of interpersonal communication. Playfully combining therapy, humour, skilful acting, and an element of surprise, the exhibition offers a powerful experience for anyone who seeks depth in their own relationships and holds an interest in contemporary art forms. Moreover, this exhibition sees Geislerová return to the space where she presented her thesis project in completion of her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague.



Ester Geislerová: What We Should Have Said But Didn't
28 June – 13 September 2024
Gallery 3 at Kunsthalle Praha
Curators: Christelle Havranek, Denisa Václavová

**Kunsthalle
Praha**

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Kunsthalle Praha, nadační fond
Klárov 132/5, 118 00 Praha 1
IČO: 04535871 DIČ: CZ04535871

“I’m interested in the moment when, and how, two people stop getting along. What happens to our social skills when communication becomes too painful? Why do the other person’s words sound like they’re coming from a different planet even though we’re using the same language?” asks Ester Geislerová, whose artistic practice spans both acting and fine art. In recent years, she has also been exploring the language of social media and has organised a series of public lectures titled *Sharing Therapy LIVE* in collaboration with psychotherapist Jan Vojtko. Describing how her multi-layered exhibition draws from several worlds, she explains: *“I took something from each one of them and created my own sort of hybrid. My favourite form of expression is video installation, which allows me to use acting as a medium. I’ve been immersed in the world of film since I was five years old, so it’s natural for me to draw on my experiences.”*

For her newest, most extensive video installation to date, Geislerová gave her friends a performative task: to read out a letter on camera. Most performers were not aware that these monologues, thematising romantic relationships, were written by their partners. Their other halves had been asked to write down their unarticulated feelings about something that they had been unable to get over for a long time. Some of the ten short films thus contain a cathartic moment, occurring when the performers find out who wrote the letter they had been reading out. *“What we should have told each other but didn’t... Or couldn’t, didn’t want to, weren’t ready to, were afraid to,”* considers therapist Jan Vojtko.

The actors also helped curate their costumes, masks, sets, and props. Most were able to choose a role they always dreamed of playing. The films were directed in close collaboration with the artist, and the creative process itself thus became an important part of the project. Performers include Tomáš (Tomina) Jeřábek, Mia Rosa Kadlecová, Martin Hronský Krupa, Elizaveta Maximová, Matyáš Řezníček, Luďek Sobota, Jan Vojtko, and Viktor Zavadil.

In these videos, viewers will also meet non-human characters. *“A knight, a mermaid, or horses, symbolizing emotions, desires, and the need for closeness. Viewers can witness powerful confessions and experience the breaking of silence through a ritual of words and intimate monologues that assuage inner pain by finally vocalising something that has not been talked about,”* explains exhibition curator Denisa Václavová.

For Geislerová, the exhibition also represents a symbolic return to a space that was already once brought to life by her art. In 2012, she exhibited her thesis project—which marked the completion of her studies in the *New Media II* studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague—in the dusty attic of the then-abandoned Zenger Electrical Substation. The building has since undergone an extensive transformation into its contemporary form as a space for art and culture. The present-day Kunsthalle Praha building was awarded the main prize of the 2022 Grand Prix of Architects — National Architecture Award. Geislerová will present her video installation in Gallery 3, on the top floor.

What We Should Have Said But Didn’t helps raise awareness about therapy and mental health. The exhibition emphasises that talking about our feelings is normal and healthy. The audio-visual installation offers a chance to connect with those parts of our personalities that often remain neglected, unexpressed, and silent. In the individual videos, the actors help us overcome these barriers through their words. *“I think going to therapy or seeking psychological support is still a bit stigmatised. Lots of people see it as something shameful or as something trendy, but I think this trend is one of the best ones we can join in on. To heal as a society, we need to start by healing ourselves,”* adds Ester Geislerová.

The exhibition *Ester Geislerová: What We Should Have Said But Didn't* will be on display from 28 June to 13 September 2024. Alongside it, we will host a programme of supporting events, including a dinner with Ester Geislerová as part of our series *Art 'n' Dine* and a session of *Sharing Therapy LIVE* at Kunsthalle Praha.

The exhibition is also accompanied by an online publication with texts by Tomáš Pospiszl, Jan Vojtko, and an interview featuring Ester Geislerová and Christelle Havranek.

Entry to Kunsthalle Praha is free for visitors under 26 years old with a membership.

Kunsthalle Praha thanks its partners (The Pudil Family Foundation, BMW, Dentons) and the exhibition partners (Foto Škoda, Studio Beep).

Media Contact Information

Zuzana Dusilová / +420 721 034 543 / zdusilova@kunsthallepraha.org

Media Representation

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<https://kunsthalle.brandcloud.pro/link/WqVMnJWi>



EDITOR'S NOTES

Ester Geislerová

Ester Geislerová is a Czech actress, visual artist, and curator of the *Sharing Therapy* project. She comes from a prominent artistic family and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, in the *New Media II* studio. Her primary art form of choice is video installation. Geislerová's past exhibitions have included *Liquid Maternal Love* (2018) at Galerie Kabinet T in Zlín, *Reenactment* (2019) at Galerie NOD, and *Personality Postponed* (2020) at The Artist Lab. *What We Should Have Said But Didn't* at Kunsthalle Praha is her largest exhibition to date.

[instagram.com/geislerova_ester/](https://www.instagram.com/geislerova_ester/)
[instagram.com/estergeislerart/](https://www.instagram.com/estergeislerart/)
[estergeislerova.com/work](https://www.estergeislerova.com/work)



Kunsthalle Praha

Kunsthalle Praha is a new space for art on Prague's vibrant cultural scene. Founded as a non-governmental, non-profit platform by The Pudil Family Foundation, it opened its doors to the public on 22 February 2022. Kunsthalle was created through the conversion of the Zenger Electrical Substation, built in the 1930s. In 2022, the renovated building won the main prize of the Grand Prix of Architects — National Architecture Award.

The building is now home to a modern gallery space for short-term exhibitions, cultural events, and innovative educational programmes. With a total floor space of 5,687 m², Kunsthalle Praha comprises three large gallery spaces, a design shop, and a café with a historic terrace overlooking Petřín Hill and the Prague Castle.

Kunsthalle Praha's mission is to connect the Czech and international art scenes, present innovative perspectives on the art and culture of the 20th and 21st centuries, and engage with a wide audience, offering insights into art through a dynamic programme. Kunsthalle also has its own art collection focused on modern, post-war, and contemporary art.

[instagram.com/kunsthallepraha](https://www.instagram.com/kunsthallepraha)
[kunsthallepraha.org](https://www.kunsthallepraha.org)

Open daily 11:00—19:00; Wednesdays 11:00—21:00. Closed on Tuesdays.
Free for members: www.kunsthallepraha.org/en/become-a-member.

