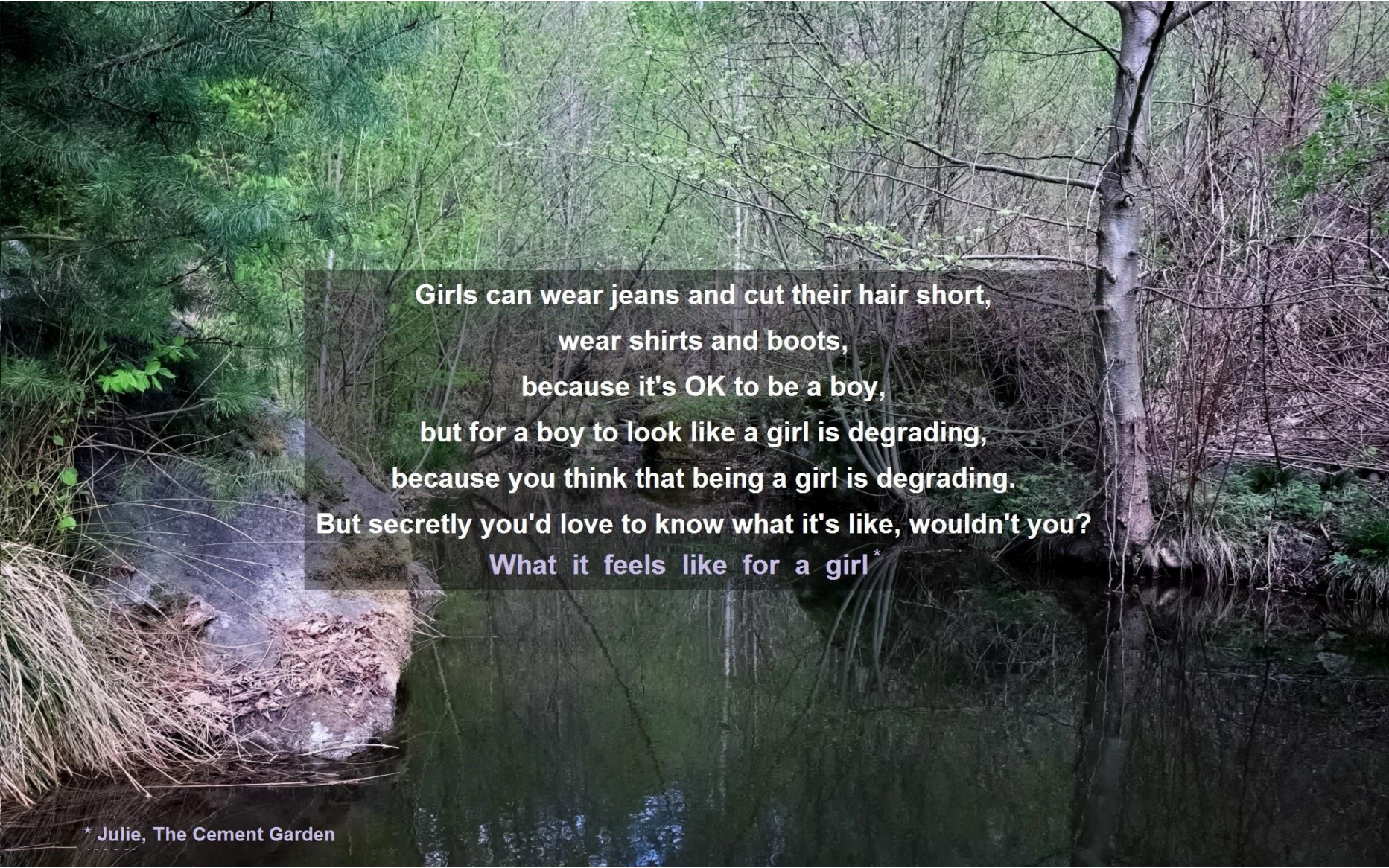






kryštof novotný  
what it feels like for a girl



A photograph of a forest stream with a semi-transparent text box overlaid. The stream flows through a dense forest, with trees and foliage reflected in the water. The text box is centered and contains a poem.

Girls can wear jeans and cut their hair short,  
wear shirts and boots,  
because it's OK to be a boy,  
but for a boy to look like a girl is degrading,  
because you think that being a girl is degrading.  
But secretly you'd love to know what it's like, wouldn't you?  
What it feels like for a girl \*

\* Julie, The Cement Garden



The exhibition *What It Feels Like a Girl* tries to capture a woman's life in twenty oil paintings. The models shown mostly come from the painter's family and friends, or these are women who inspired the artist. They try to capture their desires, thoughts, and feelings in individual important moments of their lives. The author has a close relationship with women and as he himself notes: „*Women played an important role in my life, when I was little, I had more friends and I understand my whole life so far more with women. I have always taken women as muses that inspire me not only in an artistic career but also in my personal life. I admire their way of thinking and looking at the world. During my life so far, I have met several exceptional women who have strongly influenced and supported me in my decisions. For these reasons, I decided to dedicate my new exhibition mainly to them. I would like to imprint my admiration and my love for them. I would like to do it by means of these twenty oil paintings. Last but not least, I would like to thank them for their long-term inspiration.*“

The paintings created during the years 2018 to 2020 have the same dimension, mainly due to the smooth continuity. The initial impulse for the creation of the exhibition was movie *The Cement Garden* (1993). In this film, the protagonist explains the fundamental difference in how society perceives the position of women and men. The exhibition is divided into day and night part. Both timelines, each with ten images, follow each other in action and describe

the key moments in a woman's life. The first night part captures the dark side of the human personality. It tries to show the moments that are pleasant now, may have a significant negative impact in the future. On the contrary, the daily part captures the joy of life, a positive way of thinking, motherhood and emphasizes with the role of women as the basis of life for the next generation. The exhibition also contains eight paintings inspired by the concept of the *American Horror Story: Coven* series, a personification of the trials of the Seven Wonders of the Magic School in New Orleans. The characters of the series, to control the individual wonders, had to pass several tests, which often took the form of their greatest fears and anxieties. The concept of overcoming oneself and pushing certain boundaries became another theme of this exhibition. Each image in the portfolio is supplemented by an analysis of the painting, the expression of the painter and the depicted models, serves as a guide for the viewer and presents various views on the hidden meaning of the given works.

*What it feels like for a girl* is a manifesto celebrating women. Krystof Novotny deals with the question of the position of women today and the concept of feminism as such. He points out on the growing tendency for a negative perception of feminism. Nowadays, he tries to bring a woman's life closer to the male audience and portray how it feels to be a woman.

## NIGHT PART

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- II. } Sadness
- III. } Pyrokinesis
- IV. } Divination
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## DAY PART

- XI. } Transmutation II
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- XVII. } Love
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- XIX. } Two Mothers
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Krystof Novotny in the creation process  
of *Vitalum Vitalis* 2019; Blansko

**NIGHT PART**



## I. } Descensum

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

*Descensum* is the power to project your soul into the afterlife, appearing in the aforementioned *American Horror Story: Coven* series. It is a test that takes the form of the greatest fear or traumatic event of the person being tested. It takes place in such a way that the witch lies on the ground, closes her eyes, and casts a spell, transferring to the afterlife. She will only survive if mind returns to her body in right time. Otherwise, her body will turn to dust and her soul will be trapped in the underworld of her own hell.

The depicted Eva Prokopova is connected with the artist's life. She is dressed in a black blouse, the dark color of which represents imminent death. Her hair is divided into seven strands, which refer to the seven sins. However, we can also see the biblical theme in the name itself. Paradise Eve presents the theme of sadness and pain here. Death becomes the central theme of the painting here. The author tries to capture a double view of death in the painting. On the one hand as a sad and unpleasant event, on the other hand as a new beginning and deliverance. Punishment for sins in a previous life and eternal reward for good deeds. The positive aspect is expressed by a cheerful floral pattern on the carpet, which at the top violates the law of perspective and refers to the afterlife, which does not necessarily follow the laws and rules we know. The negative aspect is contained in the scene itself, which captures the moment when the witch succumbs to her inner hell and gradually turns into dust. However, the transformation is still in the beginning and there is still hope for a final salvation. The main concept of painting symbolizes the burial of the past and forgiveness in friendship.

The author himself comments on the issue as follows: „We each have a friend in our lives whom we love from the bottom of our hearts, but it happens that for certain personal reasons you stop associating with the person in question. After some time, you realize that you still lack this person, and you still want him to be a part of your life. This picture describes this given stage and discusses it for forgiveness and burial of the dark past. Death is outlined here as an inner force that helps us cope with a painful past and represents liberation from our own negative thoughts.“ „Time passes constantly... it does not matter existence or non-existence, no one promises us that life will be easy, but still, we expect from him. But it is my life, and I am going to be with it. Until the end, whatever it is.“ adds Eva Prokopova. It is therefore an emotional confession of the author, who in this way tries to cope with the negative feelings he experienced and opens a new chapter in his life.





## II. } Sadness

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

*Sadness* is set in the Andromeda Theater in Sicily. The architect of the theater, Lorenzo Rein, became an important inspiration for this painting. As a young man, he grazed sheep on the hills and dreamed of becoming an architect. His big dream came true, and when he returned as a respected architect, he built a theater here. The woman depicted in the painting slowly climbs to the desired goal, but the path is not easy. During her journey, she experiences feelings of frustration, sadness, and fear of the future. Her hand resting on the statue points to the past and death. Yet her gaze is still fixed on the top of the hill. The setting sun represents the end of an epoch of life and a relentless passage of time that reminds us that we must not waste our lives. This painting represents not only sadness itself, but also the path to the desired goal, which may not always be easy and along which we are often accompanied by unpleasant feelings.

*„In sadness, I see nobility, strength and beauty, which can help us a lot in the certain life situations. For this reason, I incorporated a sunset into the painting, which predicts a new day, a new beginning. Through this dimming, the soul goes through a time of preparation for a new phase of life, it is a time of renewal, healing, and rest. There are problems in every person's life that may seem just as hopeless. Nevertheless, once the sun rises and dawn appears. So, the painting presents the coming night combined with a feeling of sadness, which we must proudly face, and will eventually become a part of us.“* notes the artist.

The depicted Radka Sevcikova comments on the painting itself and the question of feminism as follows: *„Today and every day, I confirm that being the woman I would like to be is not easy. I feel that many situations in my work and personal life force me to suppress or at least hide my womanhood to such an extent that the male environment does not perceive it negatively. I think women are strong, it is just how the world is willing to look at women's strength. At least it would be foolish of me not to stand on my side, on the side of feminism. I think we should start defining ourselves on the basis of who we are, not on the basis of gender. If we feel sad, I see no reason to avoid or hide this natural emotion. I perceive a balance between day and night, love and hate or success and failure, so the balance between sadness and joy is important to me.“*



III. } **Pyrokinesis** (*fire walk with me*)  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

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The central theme of *Pyrokinesis* is the ability to control fire, which is also a test of the Seven wonders in the *American Horror Story: Coven*. For ancient cultures, fire became one of the most important elements of their lives, bringing warmth and light, but at the same time it posed a danger that, if mistreated, could have fatal consequences. Perhaps because of its unpredictable nature, it has not ceased to fascinate people around the world. A significant idea was raised by Sigmund Freud, who saw human libido and notions of forbidden passion in the fire. And it is precisely this contradictory symbolism of fire that the painter tries to transfer to the painting. The woman in the painting is captured at the very moment of burning desire and passion, referring to Freud's reflections. While the element of fire is represented in the image by the Sun rising behind the forest, for which the viewer is not able to say whether it is only illuminated by morning light or is on fire. It captures the uncertainty that is so typical for fire.

The depicted Ksenia Kovalchuk from a young age perceived the surroundings around her in which she grew up very intensely. Every little thing, every detail affected her in different ways, and perhaps that is why she decided to study architecture, where she can apply her sense of detail very well. Ksenija herself comments on the current position of women and the theme of painting as follows: „I am not a supporter of feminism, but the role of women in such a masculine world is not entirely easy. Unfortunately, nowadays this term takes on a derogatory subtext. It is automatically associated with strong women who are not afraid of anything, can be as cruel as men in top positions, and prefer a career to a family. For me personally, feminism should be characterized by a woman's right to live in any way that is comfortable and free for her, without humiliation by men, but so do the women themselves. We must learn to find compromises even in such a complicated world as it is today. It is not a struggle between the sexes, but a struggle for an intelligent and mature society on Earth. The image expresses my innermost feelings. It shows passion and total submission to her and devotion. It depicts a woman who is not guided by reason, but by her feelings. All this speaks through the fire, which is close to me in terms of heat, light, and its danger. The forests flooded by the sun in the background of the painting capture my tendency to solitude and exclusion from ordinary society. The question is, to what degree is it appropriate to go after such a fire?“





#### IV. } Divination (*intelligence*)

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

The portrait depicts Marketa Giblova in the garden of the Café Alfa in Brno. The very essence of the image symbolizes the intelligence of a woman. The woman is a fortune teller who provides a session on the interpretation of tarot cards. Divination is the ability to acquire directly (through intuition) or indirectly (through a tool) knowledge of an object, person, place, or physical event by means other than the physical senses of the user. It is one of the Seven wonders appearing in the *American Horror Story: Coven*. Depending on the purpose, divination is distinguished in specific fields, such as vision or danger detection in all possible forms.

The dachshund in the model's arms resembles the solution of all situations and scenarios. Furthermore, the dog symbolizes vitality, joy of life, devotion, and perseverance. Next to the model shown, her favorite onion flowers are placed on the left table. The goblet lying on the table on the right in the form of a human skull imitates the cleverness and wisdom that the fortune teller draws from the tarot cards, but also recalls the transience of life and death. Other people in the painting are dressed in gray, black and white colors, it symbolizes a chessboard game, which is mainly characterized by the necessary intelligence and concentration. The depicted universe behind the balcony represents human limitations and a reminder to leave the mind rooted in the real world. Aspects of the depicted universe, checkerboard colors, oracle cards contain common mystical properties, which the painter interconnects with each other and expresses himself on the topic: „In my opinion, the tarot cards reader must have high intelligence to correctly guess the specific meaning of read cards. Intuition is the ability to know only things, but thanks to intelligence, a person interprets the true meaning. I see nobility, progress, innovation, endless inspiration in Renaissance art, and with this painting I wanted to pay homage to this important style.“

When asked what feminism means to the model depicted in the painting: „Originally, I had a column written about how my father washed the dishes at home, there was no division between 'female' and 'male' work. I have never encountered the claim that I cannot do something because of my gender. Like macho mammoths, who think that the absence of a penis means predestination for housework, they will die just as soon under a pile of their dirty socks, which no one will wash for them. And then I read about the abduction, rape, and subsequent stoning of a young Kurdish politician, Hevrin Khalef. Socks are suddenly not such a big deal... So, I wish that once any woman or girl in the world could behave as she saw fit, and she would not have to be afraid of the reactions of those around her.“



## V. } Fear/Power

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

The painting *Fear/Power*, inspired by the song *How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful* (Florence And the Machine), depicts the moment when a woman encounters something unknown to her, she is afraid, but she is still ready to fight. She is surrounded by two deer representing her protector. The deer and the pink color of the dress are the embodiment of feminine tenderness. Also the deer's intuition tells us when to run away or fight and requires us to trust ourselves. The forest in which the scene is set can hide various kinds of dangers and is shrouded in mystery and the unknown. In this case, we can interpret it as a threatening aspect of one's own subconscious stemming from a lack of consciousness and self-knowledge. At the same time, it is a place where we can come into contact with our own inner beauty and fill our hearts with hope. „I like the idea that everything in the world is interconnected. In my opinion, this is also the case with the feeling of fear and strength. People who have a balance between these feelings are not afraid to pursue their dream, face their fears and be vigilant. Believe in yourself and what you know is true and move on accordingly in your life. The painting therefore primarily represents the balance of these two feelings (fear and strength).“ says Krystof Novotny.

„I used to be often stressed and afraid of failing. The older I get, the more I realize there is no hurry. Material things do not escape, and above all they cannot make one happy permanently. I mean, there are a lot of things focused on money these days. It is much more important that we pay more attention to human relationships, such as love. Love has many forms, I do not mean the love of two people now, but rather the love of nature, animals, forests, and our surroundings. I keep remembering that I must not sin with words when you are a woman it is quite complicated (laughs). But there is a choice, either I will use the power of the word to spread evil or in the name of truth and love. I try to choose the second option, because then I feel happy and calm. I appreciate being a woman, I am no less, no more than a man. I am grateful that I live in a country and a time when and where equality between men and women is - we live in harmony. In my own interpretation of this painting, I see a great white glow, I feel vulnerable, I want to protect myself. I do not know if anyone will attack me. I do not know what to believe. I never know what is hidden here, as well as what is hidden in the depths of my mind. I fear my hidden power, I doubt it, and I also doubt myself. I have to find peace in myself, trust myself, stand up for myself and know my value. True strength comes from love, from your heart, compassion and feeling of abundance. It is based on our self-confidence, self-belief. If I am strong, I see things clearly, I know my value, I know my path, my goal and I stand for the truth.“ says the depicted Olga Martinkovicova.





VI. } **Electricity** (*cross that bridge is the consequence*)  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2018

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Since the image of *Electricity* was created first, we can say that this is where the concept of the entire exhibition was born. The woman is on her way home after a wasted night, which, however, does not bring her any pleasure. Walking under the Brooklyn Bridge, she sees lightning that scares her. The author captures the moment when one does not know where to go in one's life and tries to drive away these feelings as much as possible. The bridge under which a woman walks represents hope. Hope for a better life, a metaphorical transition from emptiness and frustration to life on the other hand, full of joy, self-knowledge, and self-acceptance. „If you get over this bridge, you can then find yourself in a better place on the other side with the prospect of a better tomorrow. The bridge symbolizes any transition in the life of a young girl, in which there is an inner struggle with her own divided thoughts and past. The depicted lightning above all shows a striking awakening and awareness of one's own mistakes.“ says Krystof Novotny. The symbolism of lightning is strongly rooted in Greek and Roman mythology. Lightning is often perceived as God's punishment, the main weapon of the supreme god Zeus. Today, the depiction of lightning is most often associated with the semiotic depiction of electricity, to which the enlightened New York, a city that never sleeps, refers in the painting. So also lightning represents above all the fear of the future and the search for a way to our dream goals, which ignites our insides. The moon is an expression of our inner intuition, of subliminal emotions, emphasizing the symbolism of the depicted lightnings.

The painter dedicated the painting to his best friend Yvette Prochazkova, with whom he underwent a drastic life change. Their common period of darkness consisted mainly in the search for a way and a meaning in life, both of whom were drowning in depression and ignorance of themselves. Perhaps it was thanks to this sad period that their relationship deepened and together they each found their own meaning in life. Yvette Prochazkova comments on the painting as follows: „I sincerely agree with this description and it comes to me as a torn from my own soul. As a woman working in a purely male field, I deeply identify with the whole concept of this exhibition. And despite the fact that today is more welcoming to women, it has always seemed only superficial to me. Fictional. In my opinion, today's society still sees woman only as an object, a vessel that is used but does not have its own filling. And there is a very thin line between what women can do for themselves and what men do for us. The only way for men to cope is to be a man. But honestly, why should we want that?“



VII. } **Happiness** (*city light painted girl*)  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2018

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The painting *Happiness (City light painted girl)*, inspired by the song *Self-control* (Laura Branigan) is temporally connected with the painting *Electricity*. They take place at the same time, but each in a different place. The women in both paintings are close, their interconnectedness is reflected in the full moon. The scene takes place near the Italian town of Riomaggiore in the Cinque Terre. The city is known mainly for its colorful house facades. It is the romantic atmosphere of this city that only underlines the overall theme of the painting. The woman on the boat is dressed in a white dress representing innocence and purity, the predominant blue color is supposed to evoke confidence, wisdom, and peace.

The author again attaches a deeper meaning to the depicted sea. Inspired by the short story *The Old Man and the Sea*, he tries to transfer the main idea of the work to the painting. The author sees the main idea of the work in not giving up and staying, despite the fact that in the end one does not get exactly what he initially wanted so much. „*What I consider to be the most important parallel in this painting is the relationship between the sea and life in general. The unpredictability of these two forces of nature, when dark clouds hide the moon and the sea brings waves that prevent a peaceful voyage forward, and the only solution is to return to shore or be more careful about sudden obstacles in life. To face the given problems and solve them in order to be happy again.*“ explains the painter. The author tries to capture the fleeting and changeable happiness, similar to the sea itself. However, the depicted Katerina Stankova, despite everything, is happy and cheerful.

„*I love when people in my presence can be themselves and can show their strongest and most hidden aspects of the soul and desire. I am aware of the current issue of women, in my opinion feminism is disappearing within feminism. Women separate from men, do not share their trust in them, and do not draw from them the potential for a full relationship. Women are rude, shut in, afraid of being weak. In my opinion, harmony and satisfaction of women and men will occur in the moment we begin to trust each other. On the other hand, I strongly feel a new wave of conscious and strong women who are able to bring to light the femininity of its femininity in its true essence. For me, painting represents mystery, deep emotions, hidden power, and desires. Hidden inner spiritual wealth, which is obscured by darkness and the reflection of inner desires and the character of the soul.*“ says Katerina Stankova.





VIII. } **The Night is Young**  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

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The painting shows two friends during an evening celebration in Brno. The girls sit in the alcove of their favorite bar, expecting what tonight will bring them. The night here symbolizes freedom and hope. The green light on the traffic light represents freedom and endless possibilities of entertainment. „I painted a picture celebrating the nightlife and the carefree fun. Nevertheless, I did not want to create a painting that would draw too much attention to bright colors, haze, and ubiquitous alcohol, because this condition is only in the person's mind, but the surroundings around it remain unchanged, so I tried to paint this painting realistic/sober as possible. Capture the so-called feeling of happiness and contentment, when you feel that you can do anything, and you have an infinite number of possibilities, places, and things to discover. This feeling, however, does not last forever and this painting is his reminder.” author explains the main purpose of the painting.

Painted girls comment on today's issues in the position of women in society, as follows: „Feminism for me represents mutual respect for both sexes. I am surrounded by people who share a similar opinion, and it is not a matter of course for them that women are touched by women or insulted them in any way if they do not want to. And if I get into such a situation, there is always someone to stand up for you. The problem occurs when you are out and none of your friends see it. In such situations, I am often overwhelmed by the fear of labeling me a girl with no sense of humor, a girl who exaggerates unnecessarily. Each of us has the border set a little differently, and one sometimes inappropriate remark, joke, or a fleeting touch can hurt. And it is in such situations that I realize how important it is to talk about such things, listen to each other, and then behave accordingly. I wholeheartedly wish to live in a world in which I will not be afraid to speak up when something is wrong.“ Katerina Kotapisova mentions and her friend Kristyna Pavlickova further develops her idea: „I would like to live in a world where gender does not affect the quality of human's life. In a world where I could go to the park at night, leave a drink in the bar without babysitting, stop the car and go anywhere in the world. Without fear that my gender will be the reason why someone will hurt me and why others will say I was to blame. I would like to live in a world where all voices are heard the same. In politics, in schools, in families. In a world where women do not have to prove to anyone, that they can keep up. In a world where everyone is authentic and free. This is how I understand the mission of feminism.“



## IX. } Work

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

The theme of the work is nothing new in the history of art. The author of the painting tries to look at the work from several different angles. The inspiration for Manet's painting of the *Bar in Folies-Bergère*, exhibited in the Paris Salon in 1882, is completely undeniable here. A barmaid preparing a drink for her customers is a representation of duty and responsibility. As her expression suggests, she enjoys work, despite the bitterness and hardship that work can bring. These are hidden in the detail of the drink itself, which the barmaid is preparing. This is a Negroni drink of Italian origin, which is known mainly for bitterness. The girls behind the large glass window of the bar are the same women from the previous painting *The Night is Young*, represent the contrast between carefree fun and duties.

*„I played with the idea of depicting work in a woman's life in an interesting way for a long time. I did not just want to create an image that would describe the work, but it would be a deeper idea. When I first spoke to Kristyna, she told me that she really loved her job. I really liked this fact that one can really adore one's work. Considering the fact that nightlife, drinks, and bars are associated with entertainment in society, it can also be a kind of exceptional work. I also liked that she is a bartender who is also successful in other creative branches of work, where we usually meet men rather than women.“* says Krystof Novotny.

Kristyna Vyslouzilova works as a bartender and is the main inspiration for this painting. She herself comments on the image and the question of feminism this way: *„In the painting I see four years of hard work, which has given me so much experience and bizarre stories that I can't even count. I see a bar that will be partly forever my home and I see my favorite cocktail called Negroni, which I not only like to mix, but also like to drink. My brief view of feminism has changed quite a bit lately. At the moment, I am a little worried about how extremist this movement is starting to look. But it is perhaps true that my view is probably biased, because I have been incredibly lucky in my personal and professional life and I have not encountered any inequality so far.“*





**X. } Transmutation I**  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2020

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*Transmutation* is the magical ability to move instantly from one place to another without physically occupying the space between them. It is one of the witch rehearsals from the *American Horror Story: Coven* series. The painting is divided into two parts, which is the main connection between the day and night parts of the exhibition. The twins Viki and Agnes Mrackovi represent dualism in many forms in the painting. The theme of the painting points to opposing forces that may in fact be complementary to each other, such as yin and yang. According to this philosophy, everything has its opposite aspects, the shadow cannot exist without light. The first part of *Transmutation* captures the artist's curator Viki Mrackova. Night is often associated with danger and evil due to the psychological combination of fear of the unknown and darkness preventing vision. Night is naturally associated with vulnerability and danger to human survival. In the background of the scene is painted an oak, which is associated with morality, strength, and knowledge.

The sisters Mrackovi comment on the topic of feminism as follows:  
„Today, feminism is perceived in a very pejorative spirit, which is a pity. We women have been, perhaps by our past, forced to lose face due to claims and conventions. What feminism represents today we perceive as a fear of not going back in time. Fortunately, in our Western culture, the position of women has improved or at least maintains the level that our predecessors won for us. However, the position of women still seems to us to be slightly stereotyped by past centuries. A woman in the position of a sexual object, or an object of domestic violence and the like, is undoubtedly the experience of each of us. We strongly condemn such behavior of men. However, if today's feminists have a single goal, we agree that this should be the end of such a view. For example, such quarrels over officially recognized female suffixes seem a little exaggerated to us, at least compared to the most important thing - to protect a woman as an independent personality and being. But at the same time, we perceive our position as women of society, perhaps in a bit of an archaic spirit - as a tender sex that can create a home and, above all, give love. However, do not be independent. We think that even in this case it is mainly a matter of finding a compromise, and we are really happy that Krystof is one of those men who is not indifferent to the opinion of women in this issue.“









**DAY PART**

**XI. } Transmutation II**  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2020

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The second part of the painting, which displays the magical ability of *Transmutation*, takes place on a summer morning, when the Sun shines most strongly. The effects of day and night are not only seen in the animal kingdom but also...? Plants have also evolved by adapting to best cope with the lack of sunlight during the night. Depicted Agnes Mrackova is surrounded by her favorite flowers, a poppy here paraphrasing peace and accepting negative feelings. The pine in the background symbolizes wisdom and longevity.

*„I tried to conceive the whole concept of the exhibition What it feels like for a girl in a minimalist style. Capture the women concerned as accurately as possible and depict as clearly and simply as possible the scene of each painting they present to the viewer. In this exhibition, I also often toyed with the color of each painting, as I often excluded one of the basic colors of the complementary color circle. Transmutation was an important painting for me, in which I wanted to non-violently depict the transition from the dark part of the exhibition to the happier part celebrating life. To introduce dualism, I knew from the first thought that I would use twins in painting, who have a deep tradition in mythology. The appearance of the siblings is obvious on the outside, but just like night and day, they are different. Everyone is exceptional, everyone has their positive and negative qualities, but the gift is to find a certain balance in them, but nothing in life is black and white.“* notes the painter.





**XII. } Allegory of art**  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2020

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The painting takes us to the first days of autumn. The composition of the painting takes place on the shores of a large lake and is partly inspired by the composition of the famous painting *Turkish Baths* (1862) by Jean A. D. Ingres. Each of the ten women in the painting paraphrases a different branch of art: music, singing, theater, photography, painting, fashion and dance. In the lower left part, there is a painted singer/actress Hana Barbara holding the keys, not far from her is a mask referring to her theatrical career. Next to her sits the Italian singer Rachele Marinelli playing the guitar. Lucie Simunkova and Katerina Frankova sit and sing opposite them, also Katerina plays on the ukulele. The photographer Kristyna Chocholacova is captured behind the music group. In the lower right part of the painting, the painter Veronika Smiskova is depicted during her work, behind her are sisters Prokopovi symbolizing fashion and design. Katerina Krahulcova, representing modeling, stands next to them in a dress of the fashion brand SESTRY. In the background is the dancer Sarah Salloum.

Krystof Novotny comments on the theme of painting as follows: „Day and night have the same length during the autumn equinox. The autumn period focuses on the instability of life and emphasizes how important it is to accept the presence, which is why I used the autumn period to move from the dark part of the exhibition to the happier one. Thanks to the changing nature of life, it brings us new secrets every day. The gray weather and the changing leaves embody the unknown. And once we accept these mysterious secrets, we have a greater capacity to live to the fullest. As temperatures drop to the level of the falling leaves, autumn illustrates the beauty of forgiveness, closure, and transferring through bad memories. So, we can use this concept of image for the benefit of our inner ego, pride, and self-belief. However, my main goal was to capture ten talented women who brought together art in any form.“





**XIII. } Telekinesis (studying)**  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2020

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The image represents *Telekinesis*, the ability to manipulate and induce the movement of physical objects without being touched by the person concerned. It is one of the Seven wonders that appear in the aforementioned *American Horror Story: Coven* series. The painting presents Kristyna Hanakova hovering over her bed, where the books lie, thanks to which the woman in question acquires new knowledge. The whole painting is toned in white, which affects the mind and body by helping to purify mentally. The white bed heralds great and pure love. White roses here represent peace and innocence. The tuned furniture in the color of gold symbolizes grandeur, magic and, above all, wealth, which imitates the creative mind and mental fulfillment. Above the model shown is a hanging sculptor created by Mexican artist David Troice. He was always fascinated by paper origami, which led him to study industrial design, and it was then that he created his first piece of origami from iron, which constantly leads him to endless experiments in working with light and space. The painter adds the mentioned theme of the painting as follows: „When I choose a model for the image of the study, I immediately came up with Kristyna, who constantly has to study on a demanding path to achieve doctoral studies. Her floating body in the painting depicts the feeling of knowledge that a person acquires through self-education and mental balance. The use of a sculpture by David Troice, in my opinion, gives the painting a more modern character, and points to the fact that art primarily unites artists.“

„Feminist movements are often radicalized today, and their views often lack common sense. That, in my opinion, is a pity. Women need to be heard and be equal partners to men. However, not to fight against them, as is the case with many feminist groups. For me, the role model will always be a woman who is healthy self-confident and stands by her opinions and values. That is why I chose to go the path of help and responsibility, to become a doctor. For me, it is not a profession but a mission that combines all the visions and values that I recognize. I hope that in the future I will also be an inspiration and a driving force for other women.“ confides Kristyna Hanakova.





XIV. } **MENstressuation**  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

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Menstruation is an integral part of a woman's life. Unfortunately, this topic has been tabooed for centuries, and despite the efforts of some women, it is still shrouded in shame and fear of condemnation. Probably the most unknown taboo about menstruation as unclean, we know from biblical times, when women were socially separated from their camp during this period. However, the period was not always perceived in this way. In contrast, in some cultures, menstruating women were considered sacred, and their blood was perceived as a source of female power, especially dangerous to the power of men.

*MENstressuation*, the title of the painting refers to the frustration of patriarchal society and men in general, depicts a menstruating woman lying in the middle of Black Lake near Doo Lough between the Irish mountains of Mweelrea and Sheeffry Hills. The red color of the wet substance refers not only to the menstrual blood itself, but also to the pain, anger and discomfort often associated with the period. The woman is set in the Irish minimalist nature, which creates two important elements - a woman and an untamed landscape that have a common basis - nature. However, it points to the positive side of menstruation, precisely because of its cleanliness. As mentioned at the beginning, it is an important part of a woman's life, and in a literal sense, we can also perceive it as a purification, or a new beginning.

Saveria Spezzano comments on the painting and patriarchal society as follows: „*For me, the name of the painting means a lot. When I was young and actually, sometimes even today, I wanted to be a man. I envied them, I wanted to live life like them, to be out late at night and not to be afraid that someone would hurt me. I wanted to sleep with whoever I wanted and not be called a whore, just because I liked it. I wanted to travel without fear of being raped, as my friend had done. I know I cannot be a man, but I promised myself I would not be afraid anymore. I will travel alone, I will be out late into the night and I will sleep with whomever I want, whenever I want. I will be a single woman! Feminism, in essence, wants us to learn to love. It is not a war between men and women! It is a war of stereotypes, they are all the same: being skinny, tender, and perfect. That is how we should be. All my life I have felt fat, awkward and imperfect. And the fact that I did not help the lesbian much. I did not want to be different. I did not want to be a woman. Today I am almost 25 years old. I am a proud lesbian and a happy woman. But it was not always easy. On the few lines I have, I cannot explain how I did what I went through. But I can tell you, my girlfriend, that it is necessary to do it. Accept yourself and we have to start now. I hug you all tightly.*“



XV. } **Concilium** (*socialization*)  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2020

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*Concilium* is the ability to control the mind of another through simple will, which allows the performer to control their actions, memories, feelings, and thoughts. It is one of the Seven wonders of the *American Horror Story: Coven* series. The stronger the human mind, the more effort is needed to control them, yet a person skilled in this ability can break any resilient mind. It is possible to try to resist this ability, but over time everyone will succumb. The scene of the painting shows a woman who relaxes on her balcony in the morning meanwhile a furious fight and protest takes place behind her on the street. The blue and gold blanket symbolizes the division of the exhibition into night and day and represents the balance between good and evil. Flying ashes represent a moral and social decline.

„The painting interprets a mentally balanced woman who, despite the ubiquitous chaos, is immersed in her own faith and love in a better world. The image further paraphrases the control of the mind, thus letting the model stop time behind her, thus preventing further violence. Socialization here means the personal expression of one person, whose opinion can influence the decisions of other people around her.” adds the description of the painting by the artist himself. Model Jessica Monteiro comments on the theme of painting as follows: „Feminism leads important conversations, breaks down the stereotype of strong men and weak women. Yes, I am a feminist! Do I hate men? Absolutely no! I love men. Especially those who are feminists and women who long for what is rightfully theirs. Just because I am asking for the same rights that men hold does not mean that I want to be treated like a man. I am proud, I am ambitious, and I know exactly what I want. If that makes me a bitch, OKAY!”





## XVI. } Sex

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2020

In this painting Marketa Brundova shown in an euphoric pose, represent sexual pleasure. The scene symbolizing sex takes place in a meadow, behind which rises in the distance a huge rock slightly imitating a male genital organ. The purple sky in the background represents innocence, modesty, and eternal love. Around the model's naked body there are blooming daisies symbolizing youth, justice, and pure thinking. In this given sexual theme, these flowers can also be interpreted as a symbol of finished chastity and virginity. The meanings of peonies and violets in painting include romance, honor, and compassion. „Sex in me evokes a pleasant feeling in the context of love and relaxation. Furthermore, I have this erotic experience connected with a certain animal instinct, which is connected with nature, so I painted the scene in a romantic landscape.“ describes the painter's intention.

Marketa further develops her statement on the concept of painting and her opinion on feminism as follows: „Nowadays, everyone shakes up when saying the word feminism, but I am afraid that this is caused only by low awareness of what it actually means. Simply put, many people perceive feminism as a trend seeking to establish women's rule over men, but this is not the case at all. It is necessary to consider the fact that the term feminism originated in a time of deep all-encompassing patriarchy. This means that at that time it was a struggle in the equalization / equalization of women's rights between men. I believe that all people are equal in their humanity, everyone is good for something else, but everyone is equal from the ground up. The image in which I am captured represents the theme of sexuality and money for me. Much of sex education has been distributed to us for some time by easily available porn on the Internet, and what we are talking about does not have that much to do with reality, so for me this image is a representation of relaxation, pleasures associated with sex and sexuality, which I have not been able to understand exactly for an exceptionally long time, despite the fact that I started my sex life relatively early. Somehow it started, unconsciously, automatically, ... It was not until many years later that I began to find out what I actually liked and how to actually talk about what I or the other one liked. I would therefore like to be as relaxed among my favorite flowers in the picture, every young person who is just getting to the age when this topic is relevant and sensitive to him, so that every such person knows that he has enough time to know himself for now, but when he will really want to start, he can and there is nothing wrong with that.“



## XVII. } **Love**

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2020

The painting exhibits a young couple, Lucie and Zora Fridrichovi, with their son Benedict, who are good friends of the painter. Painter comments on the painting as follows: „I wanted to depict the theme of love in a love and tender situation. I decided to introduce my friends Lucie and Zora to the painting, where their mutual devotion and love always confirm that even today a soul mate can be found.“ The background color symbolizes joy, and the intertwined leaves refer to the ever-growing love between the couple and their child.

„Love is unconditional. Love does not ask. Love does not condemn and knows no bounds. Love is Benedict. We see feminism as a struggle for sustainable equality for all. We do not think that it is just about equality between women, but about the equality of all, regardless of gender, orientation, or skin color. Nowadays, a woman still has difficult entry conditions in basically anything. Even among women themselves, a woman is still judged: Depending on how we look, how we think, how old we are, and which hours are just ticking or have stopped ticking. Isn't it too early, too late? Being a housewife or a female careerist or both? Feminism is something that is still needed, there will be a need, and the more of us there are, the more the world will be a better place for everyone.“ point out both models presented.





**XVIII. } The Miracle of Living**  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019

The painting manifests motherhood and the mother's love for her newborn child, and also represents the miracle of life and its constant renewal. The painting takes place at the beginning of spring, when, after a long winter, all living organisms are born and restored in full force. The depicted Jana Kamenarova and her daughter Emma are sitting on a park bench, and behind them, a view of the city of Brno is shown in the background. Pink flowers represent grace, tenderness and mediate youth, innocence, and joy.

The model interprets the painting as follows: *„It will sound like a cliché, it probably is, but Emma is everything to me. It is a little creature that opened the door to a whole new world for me. She showed me a hitherto unknown dimension of love. I never thought it was possible to love someone so much. So much so that a person is proud of the slightest act of that little innocent child. When I gave birth to my bundle of love, most people around me were surprised. Firstly, because a lot of people did not even know I was pregnant, secondly, because I became a mother at a relatively young age. Although sometimes not easy, I am glad I am living the time I live. I have a child, but that does not mean my own life is over. It may have changed, but my child is not my burden. I did not have to drop out of school because of my daughter, I did not have to give up my hobbies and dreams. I can travel with her without any problems, work. All I had to do was start planning my time more. It might seem to some that the child is just taking. I do not have it that way. My daughter gave me and gave me much more than she could take from me. This image will always impress me, because for me it will always represent the bond of the most beautiful and purest love. The connection between me and my daughter, which I started to love from the very first moment. And this painting is not only a bond between me and my daughter, but it also attracts an artist forever - an author who is a good friend of mine. And with him will be joined by this spectator, who will explore this gem. And I thank you Krystof, a thousand times for giving us the opportunity to pose and unite us all. And not only as models in this painting, but you also connected all the girls and women who became a part for you in this project.“*





## XIX. } **Two Mothers**

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2020

The painter describes the analysis of the painting as follows:

*„I have two fateful women in my life as a role model, and that is my mother Zuzana Bockova and her mother Ludmila Novotna. The painting takes place on the edge of the family garden in Letovice. The fence and tree trunks in the background symbolize the family roots, strength, and stability of a strong relationship. These women have spent their entire lives giving, understanding and self-sacrifice for the benefit of their children. I admire them immensely for this fact, and I think it is one of the most noble fates of a good mother. In my life, I owe a lot to these women, if I had not been blessed by my mother, I would probably never have done painting, because she was the one who led me to art from an early age and supported me indefinitely in my dream. It is thanks to these two mothers, without which I would not be the person I am in this world now. It is a declaration of love, pride, and gratitude for the family in the purest and kindest expression. I decided to paint both women at their different stages of life. I painted my grandmother on her wedding day. The beige coat indicates a desire for comfort and harmony. On the other hand, the mother is captured here at the present time, holding a bouquet of lilies of the valley in her hands. Lilies of the valley also bring happiness in love, in biblical legends these flowers symbolized tears or mourning over human death. I have always had a very deep relationship with my mother and grandmother, I try to be in my life, to use their best and strongest aspects in my own personality. I am immensely proud of my family. A family that has never had an easy life, nevertheless, never gave up and fought for the right things. The different age representation of women here represents a defeat of time, because my grandmother is no longer with us. However, this does not mean that death ends everything, quite the opposite. Love of neighbor is the key to eternal life, and thanks to the preservation of their memory, their values and love, anything, even time, can be overcome.“*

In conclusion, the overall idea of motherhood is supplemented by the artist's mother Zuzana Bockova: *„A woman is not born a mother but becomes a mother. Motherly love it is like a vitamin pill, an injection that allows an ordinary woman to do the impossible. It is not easy for me to find words that replace feelings, thoughts, joy, pain, and fear, connecting me with my children, and vice versa with my mother. It is motherly love, love that will not destroy anything.“*





## XX. } **Vitalum Vitalis**

oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2019


*Vitalum Vitalis* represents the power to balance between death and life. This gift is one of the Seven wonders of the *American Horror Story: Coven* series, and the painting directly refers to it through the Miss Robichaux Academy building in the background. In the painting we find many details pointing to the celebration and joy of life. For example, a woman standing in a white dress with a floral pattern represents an exciting new beginning. Butterflies remind us not to take life so seriously. The tiger, the model's favorite animal, is a depiction of power and at the same time its protector. Flowers also have their own distinctive symbolism, red roses are the embodiment of passion, love, and desires. The sunflower is then a symbol of long life and perseverance in difficult times.

*„All the mentioned symbols harmoniously complete the overall essence of the painting, and especially the main essence of the exhibition What it feels like a girl, which aims to find strength, new taste and vitality in each woman's own life. When you begin to believe in yourself, make love as you are, accept your mistakes and things without which it would not be you, and stop playing someone who you are not. For me, this means Vitalum Vitalis, so it symbolizes rather the mental state of an individual, when healthy self-love begins, at that moment everything around you change and you know that you are starting a new stage in your life. You start a new life with which you identify, you share it with your loved ones, and above all you influence other people around you. This is the true essence of a person's whole life for me. To make the world a better place and try to influence and find people with whom you will be satisfied in your life.“* describes Krystof Novotny.

Alissa Dokic was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during the war in Yugoslavia, her family moved to Rome. She is now a citizen of Bosnia and Italy, although she considers herself a citizen of the whole world. She comments on the painting as follows: *„I love this masterpiece. I love all animals. I was also a vegetarian for several years. I love women and I always try to get some inspiration from the people I meet, especially from women and girls. I never understood why jealousy, rivalry and envy were so widespread among women. If I see someone who has something that I would like to have myself, I will do everything in my power to improve on a particular matter. I try to be a good person because I think this world needs it, just as we all need it. I have always wanted real friends, and to make them, I have to be myself a good person.“*







**Design by Kryštof Novotný, Kateřina Kotápišová, Ksenija Kovalčuk**

**Logo by Barbora Magulová**

**Photos by Olga Martinkovičová**

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**To the memory of Ludmila Novotná**

**All paintings © Kryštof Novotný**



# CURRICULUM VITAE

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## EDUCATION

**2000-2009**  
Elementary art School, Blansko

**2009-2013**  
Secondary School of Art, Style and  
Fashion, Brno  
Modeling and design of clothing  
(graduation)

**2016-2019**  
Masaryk University, Brno, Department of  
Philosophy  
History of Art (graduation)

## EXHIBITIONS

**2012**  
Gallery in the Tower, Blansko  
Portraits exhibition from 2012

**2014**  
Café Trojka, Brno  
Paintings exhibition from 2013-2014

IN-JOY festival on BVV, Brno  
Paintings exhibition from 2013-2014

**2016**  
Pekařská Gallery, Brno  
Regression exhibition from 2015

**2021**  
The Holy Art Gallery, London  
What it feels like for a girl exhibition from  
2020