



#7.0 Eva Kořátková

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For the opening exhibition of the third year Convent presents a solo project of the Czech artist Eva Kořátková (°1982, Prague), who lives and works in Prague. Kořátková, who spent a part of her childhood under the communist regime in former Czechoslovakia, examines in her work how an individual relates to social systems and institutions such as a government, schools, hospitals, communities or family. In a wide array of media, including collage, sculpture, performance and film, or in combination, Kořátková represents the invisible: thus trying to expose power structures behind rules, conventions and rituals and materialising a feeling or situation that results from restrictions. In 2013 the artist was internationally acclaimed for her impressive installation *Asylum*, consisting of countless small objects and illustrations from medical textbooks spread over a platform, which was shown in the central exhibition *The Encyclopedic Palace* at the 55th edition of the Venice Biennale. Resulting from multiple visits to the psychiatric hospital Bohnice, just outside Prague, *Asylum* illustrated a variety of delusions, phobias and fears of patients, as well as their struggle to communicate.

The sculptures and collages included in the exhibition at Convent, located in the building of a former school, also expand on this and show the possibilities and impossibilities of mental and physical limits imposed by rules that are connected to institutional contexts, ideologies and codes. The three metal sculptures *Emil*, *Shoe* and *Mouse*, all from 2015, were designed based on book illustrations of old animal traps. They are a continuation of earlier sculptures in which Kořátková examined structures of entrapment that were reminiscent of outdated orthopaedic devices or old-fashioned tools for psychiatric patients. For her these works aren't about physical confinement or violence, rather they evoke the invisible, mental cages that every person carries with them and that are intensified by inner fears, often brought about by

unfulfilled expectations created by society. Throughout her work there is a remarkable tension, that goes back and forward between the imaginative dream world (of a child) and the constant threat of the established structures to destroy these dreams. Kořátková frequently has her installations activated by performances. Adversely, works like *Emil* and *Mouse* seem to suggest the absence of a body and are in a way reminiscent of an action that has just taken place.

For the collages in *Untitled* (2014), which are spread out as a leporello on a wooden table top, Kořátková made use of photographs from historical books and magazines on psychology, medicine and education, which she has collected obsessively over the years. In this never before exhibited work she, amongst other things, combines portraits and (fragments) of the human body with images of architectural constructions, animals and primitive masks, rendering the characters anonymous and creating a surreal world. Here too the cage is a recurrent shape. By appropriating, opposing and re-contextualizing existing imagery, not only new associations are formed but simultaneously the familiar appears odd.

The oversized steel scissors titled *Training in Ambidexterity* (2015) is part of a series of works with the same title, consisting mostly of collages and other enlarged measuring instruments used at school, such as a drafting compass and a protractor. Ambidexterity describes the phenomenon that someone is both left- and right-handed. However, most of the people who are considered ambidextrous are not born this way, but are predominantly left-handed people who were forced, usually at school, to use their right hand. For Kořátková ambidexterity is a thankful phenomenon to demonstrate the discrepancy between, on the one hand, innate skills and, on the other hand, what according to certain institutions is the norm and thus should be taught.