

NO LIGHT

As it is always the case in the works of the Czech artist, also in this project, started in 2009, the subject is closely tied to the dynamics and collective dilemmas brought about by the interference of an extraneous factor with the social fabric of the small town of Nošovice. It all starts in 2003 at the town hall of this rural community counting just 960 inhabitants, located seven kilometres east of the Czech town of Frýdek-Místek. The local representatives (mostly likely instructed by the region) have put on the agenda a vote for changing the zoning plan and, in a short space of time, three hundred hectares of fields have turned into an industrial area. In 2005, after offering an indemnity of 100,000 Czech crowns to all inhabitants, for each house, the renowned car manufacturer Hyundai secured these plots of land and commenced the settlement of a new establishment. This heavy interference leads to an irreparable disruption of the community's pre-existing relations and dynamics. Many people, unhappy with the new reality, abandon the town and those who stay on are unable to communicate with their former townsmen due to practical reasons and the position of the factory. The most problematic element is represented by a concrete boundary wall surrounding the entire complex which, due to its position, divides the town into two, seriously jeopardising the previous links and road networks and turning the former paths and streets into blind alleys. Following this operation by Hyundai, reaching an acquaintance takes eleven times as long as it did before and, besides the deeply torn social dynamics, even the local environment has undergone radical changes. The previous natural landscape has been replaced by an industrial area which is made even colder and drearier by the squad of giant lights that are able to light up the horizon for many kilometres even beyond the concrete wall.

MIRROR HILL

When Kateřina Šedá arrived at the train station of Budapest for the first time, she felt as though she were in the same place she had left behind four hours earlier in the Czech Republic. She had this same feeling in many peripheral areas of the Hungarian capital and the feeling grew even stronger in Tűkrégy: an area located about fifteen kilometres away from Budapest. Here, in 2007, a new neighbourhood of detached houses called Mirror Hill was annexed to the traditional village with old buildings, thus elevating it to the rank of a true town centre. A series of buildings which, due to their peculiar architectural features, have little to do with the pre-existing buildings. As no aesthetical limits or rules were imposed during the construction phase, each house was built in its own style: Italian shutters, Greek pillars, English windows, etc... A variety of elements that leads to the place being perceived as some sort of "foreigners' town" which is completely emptied during the day and turns Tűkrégy into a lifeless area; a mere dormitory town, whose residents are strangers

to one another. Furthermore, because of the lack of a real centre, people are not encouraged to go for walks and meet up, thus making the social life of this place a hardly attainable utopia. On the basis of these premises, the artist has decided to create a kind of “grid” to try and get the local inhabitants to interact with one another. A simple, yet complicated plan. Kateřina Šedá asked the inhabitants to draw what they saw beyond their front door. All the drawings made by each single participant and collated in a book have thus become a map which each person possessed and which they used to get to know their neighbourhood better. Subsequently, the artist started a sort of competition among neighbours in order to verify the level of knowledge of each individual in relation to the community they lived in. The prize for whoever managed to associate each single drawing with its respective household was a fourteen-day free trip to Florida.

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