

FRAGILE STATES

Ania Bąk, Dimitra Charamandas, Olga Grotova, Anna Hulačová, Eliška Konečná

with a text by Edoardo Durante

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Like an archipelago, a dispersed and intricate mosaic. Fragility, too, fragments and reassembles itself, unceasingly. Anchored to the ontological transience of each subjectivity, it moves beneath the surface of permanence. It accompanies us, disappears, then resurfaces, silently persisting through time. It is inevitable. It embraces the individual, feeding on their vulnerability. It becomes both a metaphor for fear and uncertainty, as well as one of boundless potential. It is the epicenter of a form of resistance, mindful of the past, engaged with the present, and focused on the future. Fragility is a condition that embraces, a shared experience in a divided world. *Fragile States* gathers stories, memories, and narratives that forge connections beyond borders. Heterogeneous artistic practices seek to explore intersections, those liminal spaces that exist between physical and conceptual fragility. These varied approaches revolve around a central theme, offering multiple interpretations of the current global state of collective uncertainty. Precarious and ephemeral, it reflects on transition and the decay of matter itself. Language and historical narratives are deconstructed and reinterpreted by the artists through a vision in which impermanence becomes a source of strength: just as desire is born from absence, so fragility generates resistance. Instability holds within it a tension, a latent resolution that, rather than being a sentence, becomes a point of departure for affirmation. Fragility is no longer weakness, but the foundation of emancipation.

A hybrid, metamorphic condition. With *Little Vest* (2025), matter, intrinsically anthropic, as the concrete with its brutalist connotations, engages in dialogue with the organic, translating an intimate and symbolic artistic language. The works of Anna Hulačová (1984, Czech Republic) embody natural features, resilient by definition and adaptable to various conditions. They exist in symbiosis with artificial elements, testifying to the transience of material states and the impermanence of human existence. Hulačová employs narrative strategies to highlight the cultural legacy shaped by the coercive policies of former Czechoslovakia, an attempt at re-reading aimed at a deeper understanding of past dynamics. Her interdisciplinary practice weaves together speculative narrative, ecology, history, and biology.

Textiles, wood, and metal. Reliefs and recesses. A sensuality of form and matter that invites touch. So *Long since I heard you sing* (2025) and *You squeezed it shut when you couldn't bear it song* (2025) – Eliška Konečná's work (1992, Czech Republic) – reveal an expressive universe that underscores bodily transgression through the lens of desire and instinct. Bas-reliefs embedded within two-dimensional supports and velvet dyed with unpredictable textures create a visual mythology laden with moral dilemmas that resist singular interpretations.

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They are infused with an emotional intensity emerging from intuitive, sensory experience, fostering a continuous dialogue between reality and metaphor.

The ground does not forget. Like an archive of knowledge, it records and remembers. Just as soil is the result of continuous layering, so in Olga Grotova's (1986, Russia) work marks accumulate like sediment, pigments clash and blend. With *Sprouting Stockings* (2022), her photograms celebrate absence; everyday objects are present as plants inhabit the earth, witnesses of transition. Her images do not emerge from a representative process, rather they become part of Grotova's artistic language through an imposition, a contact with a photosensitive surface. It is an impulse that links the body and its physicality, a reflection on space and on symbols that carry meaning. Hematite – literally "bloodstone" – an essential element in her pictorial vocabulary and traditionally used in the creation of Orthodox icons, establishes a bridge to the past, from which lost stories of communities and families from former Soviet states resurface. It becomes a strategy of resistance against patriarchal and, more broadly, oppressive dynamics.

Immersive installations, the result of a synesthetic process, inhabit interstitial spaces. The works of Dimitra Charamandas (1988, Switzerland) are like shorelines and calderas, liminal territories shaped by the constant tension between care and abuse. The series *Auricular Whorl* (2023–2024), as well as the diptych *Shoreline* (2025) are the result of a succession of interconnected layers and contradictions. They are precarious, cochlear forms, once protectors of soft, invertebrate bodies. The material undergoes metamorphosis. Like wounds in the earth, her works open as porous membranes that exemplify the relationship between body and environment.

Through a series of assemblages, the works of Ania Bąk (1984, Poland) are born from the union of seemingly irreconcilable elements that acquire new meaning through their combination. With *Confession* (2025) e *Untitled, gardener* (2019) everyday objects and materials, familiar and domestic, intersect with natural components often in advanced states of decay. Laden with the tension that marks an exhausted element, they converse with textiles and pigments that reflect the transience of the human condition. Here, death is no longer conceived as an end, but as a moment of rebirth, transcending the binary conception that separates it from life.

The artistic practices on display – an intricate weave of narratives – embrace and acknowledge human limitation, as well as the tension between violence and renewal, absence and presence. They embody the many faces of fragility, both in the themes explored and in the materials employed. These works steer thought toward forms of resistance, inviting stillness and reflection. Toward quiet.

Like a held breath, more resonant than a thousand words.

Because to see, one must listen.

And to listen, one must be silent.

Edoardo Durante

BIOGRAPHIES:

Anna Hulačová (1984, Czech Republic) lives and works in Klucov.

Hulačová works between contemporary and ancient traditions, blending myths, Christian symbolism, and folklore into sculptures that reflect the fragility and adaptability of nature. Using both durable and ephemeral materials, she explores a world in constant transformation, between decay and renewal. Her work has been exhibited at major international institutions such as the Centre Pompidou, Fondation Louis Vuitton, MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain, and the CAC – Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius.

Eliška Konečná (1992, Czech Republic) lives and works in Prague.

Konečná is a multidisciplinary artist investigating the boundary between the physical and the spiritual through tactile and sensual bas-reliefs. She translates abstract realities into material forms often using symbolic and allegorical figures. Her work evokes a sense of timelessness and emotional depth. She has exhibited at the National Gallery in Prague, Kunsthau Hamburg, and Public Gallery in London. In June 2025, she will participate in a group exhibition at Nicodim Gallery.

Olga Grotova (1986, Russia) lives and works between London and Paris.

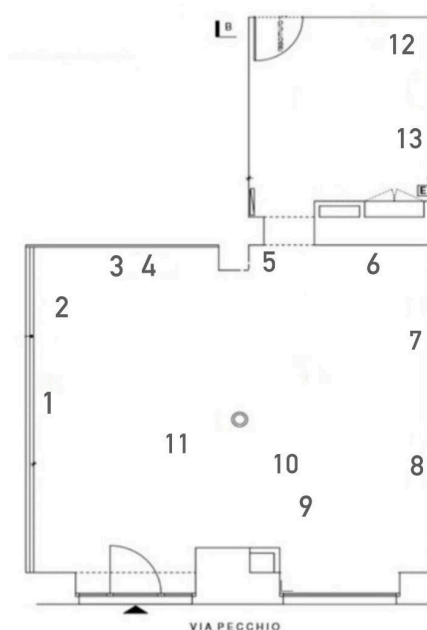
Her artistic research combines painting, photography, and installation to explore memory, time, and historical erasure, with a focus on the condition of women in the territories of the former Soviet Union. She uses archives and natural pigments to create layered works in which the earth becomes a symbol of memory and a link between personal and collective histories. Her works are held in the collections of the Roberts Institute of Art, Kadist Foundation, Schoeni Projects, and Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. She has recently exhibited at Studio Voltaire, Château La Coste, Les Rencontres d'Arles, Mimosa House, and Thaddaeus Ropac in both Paris and London.

Dimitra Charamandas (1988, Switzerland) lives and works between Solothurn and Athens.

A Swiss-Greek artist, she explores the tension between fragility and strength. Grounded in ecofeminist thought, her practice draws on slow travel, embodied research, and oral traditions, translating subtle ecological and social shifts into tactile, multi-sensory forms. In her large-scale paintings, sculptures, and smaller works, landscapes are approached as bodies shaped by political and ecological forces, while acts of care and nourishment are elevated as political gestures. She has exhibited at Gypsum Gallery in Cairo, Livie Gallery in Zurich, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, and Helvetia Art Foyer in Basel. In 2024, she presented a solo booth in the Focus section at Frieze London, and this June she will participate in Art Basel's Premiere section alongside Basim Magdy.

Ania Bąk (1984, Poland) lives and works in Poznań.

Her practice explores the relationship between body and matter through found materials and pigments, creating dynamic and ephemeral landscapes. Her works are energetic chronicles that trace interactions between artist, environment, and materials, reconstructing connections and presences. Emerging from the post-industrial landscape of Łódź—once a center of textile manufacturing and radical artistic experimentation—Bąk's work engages with the legacy of the Polish constructivist avant-garde. Influenced by feminist materialism, her abstraction favors ambiguity and transformation, reflecting the instability of lived experience in late capitalism. She has recently exhibited at Zachęta National Gallery in Warsaw, the Museum of Art in Łódź, Turnus Gallery in Warsaw, and Christine Koenig Galerie in Vienna.



1. Ania Bąk, *A mouthful of petals and a handful of dirt*, 2023, gouache, acrylic, earth pigment, zirconia, varnish, textiles, 90 x 130 cm
2. Anna Hulačová, *Little Vest*, 2025, concrete and honeycomb, 23 x 32 cm
3. Eliška Konečná, *Long since I heard you sing*, 2025, velvet and embroidery, 30 x 40 cm
4. Eliška Konečná, *You squeezed it shut when you couldn't bear it song*, 2025, velvet and embroidery, 30 x 40 cm
5. Dimitra Charamandas, *Metal crops (fower felds IV.)*, 2025, acrylic and shellac on wood, 13 x 19 cm
6. Ania Bąk, *Confession*, 2025, plaster, putty, acrylic paint, iron filings, glass pellets, sunflower head, earth, pigment, varnish, ap. 25 x 11 x 7 cm
7. Olga Grotova, *Sprouting Stockings*, 2022, Haematite, soil, pigments and, photograms, on linen, 150 x 110 cm
8. Ania Bąk, *Untitled (gardener)*, 2019, plant fragment, steel, 15 x 13 x 6 cm
9. Dimitra Charamandas, *Auricular whorl (Small 2)*, 2023, ceramics burned and glazed, 30 x 15 x 12 cm
10. Dimitra Charamandas, *Auricular whorl Medium*, 2024, ceramics burned and glazed, 50 x 43 x 17 cm
11. Dimitra Charamandas, *Auricular whorl Large*, 2023, ceramics burned and glazed, 75 x 54 x 23 cm
12. Dimitra Charamandas, *Shoreline*, 2023, acrylic on cotton, diptych, 130 x 360 cm (130 x 180 cm each canvas)
13. Dimitra Charamandas, *Ripple*, 2025, acrylic and shellac on wood, 19 x 13 cm