

PLATO

Press Release

17. November 2025, Ostrava

Four projects, four social phenomena: PLATO opens an international cycle of exhibitions

For the end of the year, PLATO has prepared four individual exhibitions featuring artists from France, Czechia, Germany, and Slovakia. Boris Camaca, Marek Meduna, Alina Schmuch, and Monika Pascoe Mikyšková present varied perspectives on power, water, body, and memory while discussing issues related to society and nature. The exhibition opening will take place on Wednesday, 19 November 2025 at 6 pm; exhibitions will remain open to visitors until 22 March 2026.

At PLATO, the Ostrava municipal gallery, visitors once again have a chance to meet distinctive artists whose work reacts to present-day social issues—from power without responsibility and the social importance of water to reflections on identity and the preservation of memories across generations. Three projects were created under curatorial guidance of Daniela and Linda Dostálková, while the fourth one was curated by Edith Jeřábková.

Alina Schmuch

In recent years, German artist Alina Schmuch (b.1987) has focused intensely on the theme of aquatic infrastructures as places where technologies, body, and environment meet. Schmuch's Plato exhibition *seeping in* will feature a large video installation custom-made for the gallery space. Schmuch approaches aquatic ecosystems and technical networks as live organisms intertwined with human bodies and social structures. In her work, sewage systems and bathrooms are viewed as the indoor spaces where physical intimacy meets public infrastructure, and as spaces where large microbial communities hide while connecting people with their environment in an incessant cycle.

"What fascinates us about Alina Schmuch is her ability to approach—by means of photography and video—the theme of water not only as an element indispensable for life but also as a metaphor for a physical and environmental experience. We also chose her

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because she is a wonderful art documentarist who has the ability to unmistakably focus on an important social phenomenon,” explain curators Daniela and Linda Dostálková.

Marek Meduna

For his Ostrava exhibition *An Island of Relative Stability*, painter Marek Meduna (b.1974) chose the theme of power without responsibility. He presents an allegory on human nature and temptation and plays with the question of what people do when they aren't being watched. Meduna references the story of the Ring of Gyges as depicted by Cicero in his book *On Duties*: A shepherd finds a magical ring that grants him invisibility and thus the possibility to act without fear of being discovered. By means of the literary metaphor, Meduna brings the viewer into a space where he intertwines political and historical images with medical objects altered into artifacts—bearers of beauty, horror, and transience.

“We enjoy working with Marek Meduna because he brings the present moment, humour, and unrest into art,” say curators Daniela and Linda Dostálková, adding: *“Marek Meduna will present a series of new paintings, wooden objects shaped as reclining number eight and complemented by iron elements, curtains hiding the unknown ‘something’, and borrowed prosthetic devices for eyes and ears—the motif of invisibility weaves through like a red thread.”*

Boris Camaca

The hyperrealist photographs by French artist Boris Camaca (b.1987) are characterized by their intense colours and intentionally exaggerated stylization. The artist creates improbable environments in staged situations with enigmatic characters whose visual beauty contrasts with unsettling and ironic issues. Camaca is primarily interested in creating identity via self-presentation. For his exhibition *Locomotion (The Unfinished Path)*, he and the curators chose photographs that accentuate movement—especially walking, since it is walking that enables us to form a relationship with space, time, and perception.

“Boris Camaca’s work has the ability to translate sensitive issues into an expressive visual language that is easy to understand yet unique and always recognizable. In staged scenes he presents characters in unflattering and grotesque situations, thus breaching traditional gender roles and reversing well-established codes in photography and elsewhere. It was this ability to mix an intense visual code with a critical view of social phenomena that caught our

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attention. Camaca's staged intimacy is full of paradoxes: it oscillates between comedy and tragedy, sensuality and the grotesque, and thanks to the considerable theatrical exaggeration and colour oversaturation it makes a very strong impression," say curators Daniela and Linda Dostálková.

Meduna, Schmuch, Camaca – a trilogy inspired by gastronomy

While the exhibitions by Meduna, Schmuch, and Camaca function as individual projects, they are connected by a curatorial notion inspired by the sociology of food. Food, like art, connects mass with imagination and creates rituals and sensory experiences. The curators aren't so concerned with food as such but rather with what is hidden "behind" the idea of food. *"Alina Schmuch follows the circuit of water in nature and approaches the theme of metabolism and digestion—both in its physical and symbolic meaning. Boris Camaca, in his precisely directed theatrical stagings, stresses diversity, abundance, and surfeit—aspects referring to excess and to a stylized, food-oriented spectacle. Marek Meduna's relation to gastronomy is more general, it is primarily a social ritual and symbolism that resonates in his work, i.e., on levels where food transcends the primary function of nutrition and becomes a cultural phenomenon,"* comments Linda and Daniela Dostálková on the idea of exhibition trilogy.

Monika Pascoe Mikyšková

The exhibition by Slovak artist Monika Pascoe Mikyšková (b.1983) entitled *Memories That Aren't Mine* is dedicated to St John's wort and Mikyšková's grandmother. Artist's grandmother, who used the herb, was the model of femininity and inner strength for the artist in her childhood. Memories of the hypericum plant thus become memories of both the artist and her grandmother, as well as memories of all those who ever picked and used the herb. Curator Edith Jeřábková designed the exhibition for the *Keyhole* space surrounding the gallery where PLATO connects art with a permaculture garden.

"This exhibition, just like all exhibitions by Monika Pascoe Mikyšková, includes personal experience, a specific memory, as part of the collective experience of difficult present moments, which—thanks to the author's depiction—become shared and more bearable. These drawings and stylized objects by the artist have an almost meditative quality as well

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as a cathartic and calming effect: they don't erase experiences, but help absorb them," says the curator about the artist's work.

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Příloha – medailonky

Alina Schmuch: *seeping in*

20. 11. 2025 – 22. 3. 2026

Opening 19/11 at 6 pm

Curators: Daniela and Linda Dostálková

Alina Schmuch is a German artist working with moving image and photography, exploring the relationship between visual media and reality through artistic publications and video installations. In recent years, Schmuch has focused intensively on the theme of water infrastructures as sites where technology, the body, and the environment intersect. She studied Media Art at HfG Karlsruhe and was a fellow at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht. Her work has been presented in exhibitions and screenings including at Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Urbane Künste Ruhr, Akademie der Künste, Sonic Acts, Rupert, and at the 15th Venice Architecture Biennale in collaboration with the collective Forensic Architecture. She was part of the artistic research project Hydromedia, the residency programme Alterlife and is currently participant of BPA // Berlin Programme for Artists. Among other awards she received the Visual Arts work stipend of the Berlin Senate and the MAK Schindler Scholarship in Los Angeles.

Marek Meduna:

Island of Relative Stability

20. 11. 2025 – 22. 3. 2026

Opening 19/11 at 6 pm

Curators: Daniela and Linda Dostálková

Marek Meduna is a Czech artist whose work is based on a distinct drawing and graphic style. He often explores the body and identity through grotesque situations in which awkwardness, vulnerability, and liberating humour intertwine. The work of Marek Meduna is permeated with personal reflections and nostalgia, while systematically focusing on the value of emotions and their revolt when confronted with ideological, physical, and political structures. His trajectory, not just as a painter and a graphic artist, fluctuates between positions without inhibition and borders, where human personas and inanimate objects appear, through which the artist explores the world in absurd and impossible constellations. At the same time, he also explores formality, ceremonialism, and rigidity, and incorporates them into his reflections

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on values, language, and the zeitgeist. Marek Meduna studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. He received a PhD from the Academy of Arts, Architecture, and Design in Prague, where he also worked as an assistant in the Painting studio. From 2000 to 2018 he was a member of the Rafani art collective. He is a member of the Skutek Association and heads the Painting 4 Studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague.

Boris Camaca:

Locomotion (The Unfinished Path)

20. 11. 2025 – 22. 3. 2026

Opening 19/11 at 6 pm

Curators: Daniela and Linda Dostálková

Boris Camaca is a French artist who explores identity formation by reflecting on self-presentation, gender fluidity, and the economy of images. His photography is marked by vivid colours, intentionally exaggerated stylization, and an emphasis on narrative, thanks to which he creates images that enchant the eye as much as provoke thought. In these scenes he stages performative situations in which the physical entanglements and unexpected difficulties of the protagonists turn into allegories of identity processes. By connecting mysterious figures and unlikely environments, Camaca creates a particularly oppressive atmosphere through which he critically reflects on current social and political issues. Camaca is the co-founder of *Télévision* magazine, and his work has been exhibited at the NICOLETTI gallery of contemporary art in London; Voiture14 and Art-o-rama in Marseille; Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery in Leeds; MuseumsQuartier in Vienna; and the NADA Miami art fair. He co-authored the art book *Jeeper Creepers*, published by Goswell Road in Paris.

Monika Pascoe Mikyšková:

Memories That Aren't Mine

Opening 19/11 at 6 pm

Curator: Edith Jeřábková

Monika Pascoe Mikyšková lives and works in Bratislava where she also completed her master's and PhD studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design. In 2004 she participated in a study-stay at Roxy Walsch's UK studio at Newcastle University. She was a finalist for the Oskar Čepan Award for 2022. In 2020, she received a scholarship from the NOVUM Foundation, and in 2015 she won the Selector Selection Prize in the Essl Art Award CEE

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competition. Monika Pascoe Mikyšková has been interested in the relationship between people and plants as well as in plant rituals, ethnobotanics, ecology, and shared more-than-human emotionality. In addition to her art activities, she also dedicates herself to educational work. She says about her art: *"... since nature is one of my major inspirations, I care about its protection and support all environmental activities that strive to change today's climatic situation. I also believe that the departure point for my works is the experience of being a woman in the contemporary world..."* Pascoe Mikyšková has presented her works at exhibitions at the Arosita Gallery in Sofia, Bulgaria, at the Tsekh Gallery in Kiev, at the New Synagogue in Žilina, at the OTS Las Cruces Research Station in Costa Rica, at the Kunsthalle Bratislava, at the Jiří Švestka Gallery in Prague, at Expo 2020 in Dubai, and elsewhere.

PLATO, Porážková 26, Ostrava

Opening hours: daily from 10 am to 6 pm, on Wednesdays until 8 pm, closed on Mondays

Entrance fee: Fan: 1 CZK, Supporter: 30 CZK, Love: 100 CZK

<http://plato-ostrava.cz>

PLATO is a dynamic and open institution founded by the city of Ostrava. Since 2016, the gallery presents present-day forms of (visual) art. Since September 2022, it resides in the former heritage slaughterhouse premises whose conversion project was one of the five finalists in the EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe 2024 Award.

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