“…each thing is itself in not being itself, and is not itself in being itself…”

Anchan/Anna Daučiková, Anna Andreeva, Jędrzej Bieńko, Igor and Ivan Buharov, Stano Filko, Denisa Lehocká, Yutaka Matsuzawa, Luboš Plný, Kazuna Taguchi, Philipp Timischl, Petr Válek, Cici Wu, Guan Xiao, Leah Ke Yi Zheng

curated by Boris Ondreička

16.1.–28.2.26

The exhibition *“…each thing is itself in not being itself, and is not itself in being itself…”*[1] departs from the foundations of the religious/spiritual and ontological philosophy of Keiji Nishitani (1900–1990). The Japanese thinker explained that things exist only in relation to other things and understanding them therefore also requires exploring what they are not. His thinking was significantly shaped by his studies with Martin Heidegger in Freiburg, Germany, and ultimately made him a key figure in intellectual exchange and mediation between the hemispheres who could critically compare and synthetise various schools of thought of the West and the East.

According to Nishitani, the transcendence of consciousness means going beyond the typical field of consciousness (as one of the stubborn domains of Western thought, establishing a subject that perceives objects and is alienated from them) by going through a process that involves experiencing nihility in order to ultimately reach a state of emptiness. This step is necessary in order to encounter things as they are and to touch the deeper nature of reality, which cannot be found through objective categorization. We believe that art carries such a capacity in its congenital nature itself. The selected artists–going beyond typical areas of explicit language, or, even though they express themselves through “objects”–have the ability to mediate much deeper “subjects” through them.

With its initial point in Nishitani’s realm of thoughts, the exhibition is set against the background of several notions and moments of interrelatedness: Philosophical, spiritual, scientific and artistic pursuits share a common curiosity to engage with the unknown. Artistic ontology, understood as the study or creation of becoming and being, correlates with sci-fi, and its discourses are linked with neuro and cognitive sciences as well as with the inseparable technological expansion of “I”. Ontology is related to cosmology, referred to as the study of the general structure of the universe and world-making–discussing and examining the latter from different perspectives seems all the more important in these turbulent and corrosive times we live in.

“…each thing is itself in not being itself, and is not itself in being itself…” intuitively investigates aspects and notions commonly associated with each other, such as abstract–concrete–realist–surrealist; idealist–spiritual–mystical–materialist; material–immaterial; natural–artificial–cultural; normal–paranormal–normative; rational/conscious–subconscious/intuitive; visible–invisible–transparent (something and nothing); body–mind; personal plural “I”–collective singular “we”–diverse personhood and (one) world-making, East and West. Anti or versus… sometimes means productiveness, charged with growing affection. By exposing and delving into otherness and diversity, we try to install a certain kind of antiphonic constellation that produces melodic oscillations–Pythagorean music of spheres.

[1] Keiji Nishitani, Religion and Nothingness (University of California Press), 1982, pp. 149; translated by Jan Van Bragt after the original from 1961.