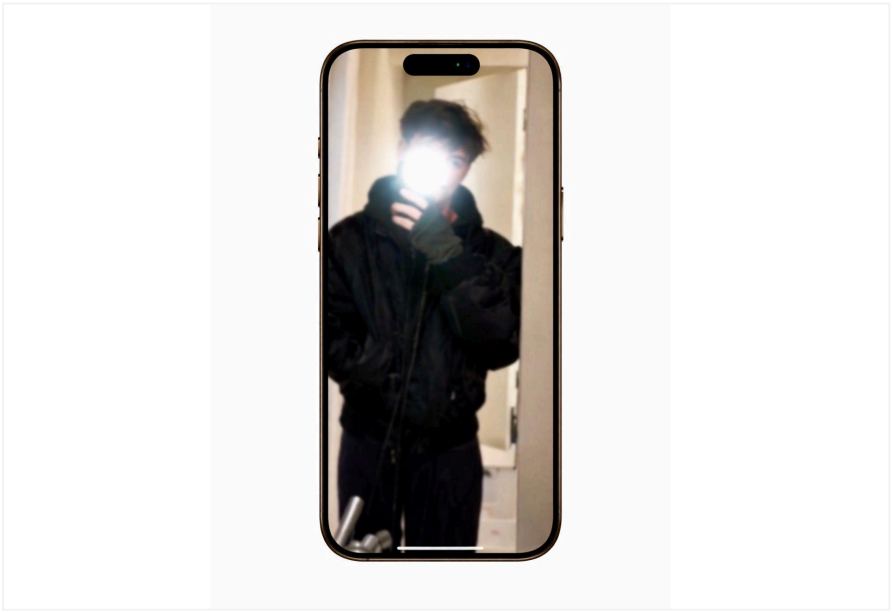
Cheers! So she goes
Karlo Štefanek

March 31 – April 4, 2026.
Galerija Miroslav Kraljević, Ul. Pavle Šubića 29, Zagreb



Cheers! So she goes, series *Self-titled* (2022-), video on loop, 3'55", 2026 © courtesy Karlo Štefanek

The exhibition *Cheers! So she goes* by artist Karlo Štefanek opens on 31 March 2026 at 7 PM at Galerija Miroslav Kraljević in Zagreb (Pavla Šubića 29) and remains on view until 4 April 2026.

The exhibition explores contemporary forms of communication in digital space and the paradox of connectivity that often results in an intensified sense of isolation. Drawing on the experience of everyday interactions on social media, the works examine how digital platforms produce a feeling of constant communication while simultaneously making genuine encounters more difficult. As curator Leopold Rupnik notes, although social networks were created as infrastructures of connection, "the apparent connectedness offered by digital platforms paradoxically results in an even greater sense of social isolation."

Referencing the concept of the non-place introduced by French anthropologist Marc Augé, Štefanek transforms the gallery into a café — a space that in Balkan culture traditionally signifies slow conversation and social proximity. In the installation *Café Nonplace* (2026), this environment is reconfigured according to the logic of digital platforms. Tables and chairs are arranged throughout the gallery, while television screens display the artist seated at a table in various settings — on a beach, in a forest, on a busy street, in a metro station, or in a studio where his body is animated like an emoji reaction. Although the locations change, the gesture of sitting at a table remains the same, while the conversation never fully takes place. The café thus begins to function like a digital interface in which presence unfolds through mediated and incomplete exchanges.

This logic continues in the performance *Just Ask (Prijatna kafica)* (2026). At the exhibition opening, the artist will address the audience in the Zagreb gallery live via a TikTok broadcast from his studio in Amsterdam, adopting an anonymous online identity and inviting visitors to communicate through chat. Interaction here takes place in a mediated form — through comments, reactions, and digital symbols — maintaining the distance characteristic of networked spaces.

The video installation *Cheers! So she goes* (2026) reinterprets the familiar gesture of the mirror selfie. Starting from a single self-portrait captured in a mirror, the artist uses artificial intelligence to generate a series of variations of the same scene that repeatedly return to the original position, forming an endless loop of self-referential imagery. The textual layer of the work is composed of fragments of internet slang and casual phrases collected from real café conversations, appearing like a social media feed and reproducing the rhythm of digitally mediated speech.

The sense of digital saturation is further developed in the audio work *Archie, don't cry* (2026), constructed from fragments of TikTok videos gathered through the process of endless scrolling. From isolated words and short phrases, a narrative gradually emerges, revealed as a breakup letter addressed to an entity named Archie, an artificial intelligence model. The intimate act of emotional address thus emerges from the voices of strangers whose original contexts have been removed.

Through installations, video works, performance, and sound interventions, *Cheers! So she goes* maps a condition of contemporary communication in which the boundaries between private and public, human and algorithmic, gradually dissolve. In this process, digital spaces — once functioning as sites for the creation of alternative identities and communities — increasingly appear as infrastructures that produce new forms of distance, mediation, and surveillance.

The exhibition is part of the *qIZLOŽBE* program of the Split-based collective queerANarchive, and Štefanek's presentation marks the first iteration of this program in Zagreb. The project is realized in collaboration with Galerija Miroslav Kraljević, with the support of the City of Zagreb.

Karlo Štefanek is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores how identity is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed through the mediums of self-portraiture and performance. At eighteen, Štefanek moves to Amsterdam, where he begins laying the groundwork for his artistic methodology. The series *Self-titled* (2022-), which integrates both visual and performative elements, has become a cornerstone of his practice, challenging evolving notions of selfhood and perception. Štefanek has been showcased at *CC Amstel*, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2022); *Stedelijk Museum*, *Rietveld Uncut*, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2023); *Treehouse*, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2024); *2nd Floor*, Groningen, Netherlands (2024); *La Biennale*, Venice, Italy (2024); *Museum of Contemporary Art*, *Sounded Bodies*, Zagreb, Croatia (2024); *The Holy Art Gallery,* London, United Kingdom (2024); *SerformanceP Festival*, São Paulo, Brazil (2024); *Echo Studio*, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2024); *KIC*, Zagreb, Croatia (2025); *Vagon Gallery*, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2025); *Multimedia Institute MaMa*, Zagreb, Croatia (2025); *ARL*, Dubrovnik, Croatia (2025); *HDLU Istok*, Osijek, Croatia (2025); *HDLU*, *60th Zagreb Salon*, Zagreb, Croatia (2025); *EMAD*, *Perforations*, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2025); *Performance in Flux*, *Immerse*, Orlando, USA (2025); *Youth Biennial*, Belgrade, Serbia (2025); *Biennale del Vesuvio*, Naples, Italy (2025), amongst others. The artist lives and works between Zagreb, Amsterdam and New York.

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