

Jana Hojstričová

Retrospective

doc. Mgr.art Jana Hojstričová, ArtD. (*1972, SK) was born in 1972 in Myjava /Slovakia/. She graduated in the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. She works as a photographer and as a teacher. Since 1998 she has been teaching at the Department of Photography and New Media at AFAD.

As the author, she participated in a full range of domestic and foreign exhibitions and photographic festivals such as: Fotofest Houston, Month of Photography Bratislava, International Festival of Young Photography in Ljubljana, International Photography Festival in Łódź, Septembre de la Photographie, Lyone, Moisdelà Photo a Paris in France. In 2013 she was awarded as the Photographer of the Year, awarded by the Central European House of Photography, OZ FOTOFO, Photoport and the Association of Slovak Professional Photographers.

In the art scene she entered in the 90s of the 20th century. The main theme of her photographic work is a body, which she puts into context with the growing influence of consumer society on it. Currently she focuses her photographic creation on visual sociological interpretation of the state of today's family.

In 2010 she began to collaborate with a glass designer Palo Macho intensively on joint projects with an author's photographic image in the glass. Since 2011 a series of solo exhibitions and curatorial projects have been offered to them e.g.: they exhibited in the Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, in the international project „Body Talk“ in Denmark, in the curatorial project of the Slovak National Gallery „Krv/Blood“ and a number of other exhibitions in Slovakia and abroad.

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Jana Hojstričová: Retrospective

Jana Hojstričová finished a study of photography at Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava in the mid nighties of 20th century. So more than two decades she has filled her authorial artistic program, which might not is so extensive, but certainly is concentrated and focused. Every single project continues in something else that former one, but at the same time moves on into deeper interpretation levels. At the beginning she used to tend in her artistic production to the positions of subjective document, she was interested in a situation of a woman of the today's society and that is mainly through confrontation between her intimate world and that public. And so after 1989 she integrated into a wider stream of Slovak authors/female artists, who were interested, after years of communist regime, in an identity and intimacy of women, in their sensuality and bodily/physical changes. Later she focused her attention possibilities of staged photography. It namely enabled the author to release from subjective perception of the world in direction to the more analytical approaches. Although she continued shooting photographs of her relatives and friends, still she developed more universal

attitude, which she confronted with sociology, psychology, theory of art but architecture and arts too. She asked questions in what way today's society has been changing, what is a position and a role of today's woman, how can we characterize a term 'family' and all the ways it can exist nowadays. Therefore, if we had to define artworks of Jana Hojstričová in some way, maybe the best fits an imagination of interdisciplinary conjunctions, about an effort get into photography sociological aspects. Maybe a term 'visual sociology' defines quite concisely her artistic production, on the other hand this term is not quite balanced and equal with a creativity and uniqueness of the artistic production. Through it all still it is possible to talk about interconnection of art, sociology, because a key content of her individual photography cycles is always a man, his existence in this world.

The first distinctive photography cycles of Jana Hojstričová are two series called From seven to eight (2000) and From ten to a midnight (2002). Time period of the both titles refers to everyday activities of women being executed in morning and evening. The author approaches to both topics through a subjective document, in which discovers a view of really intimate

moments of women, fragments of their private environment, intimately familiar things. An application of a small depth of field shows a sharp segment of reality, which indeed at the same time sinks into expanded environment. Autobiographical features of individual photographs are entirely obvious. A way of taking photographs and consequently a content statement of photography invokes something, what possibly is relating to a phenomenon of memory, calling to mind or removal of some moments from own lives.

Each photo solves a woman's personal hygiene thematically, her private world. These are classical themes from the history of art. Many artists have shown their interest in these regular female rituals already in the past. However, Jana Hojstričová does not repeat the view of a man on a woman, but as an author of the 21st century she notices women's corporeality, their biological needs but also their limitations.

In the following years, she gave birth to two children and her world view changed sequentially. It was performed in the project titled Everyday (2005). These photographs record the relationship of the author with her first-born son. By the way of photoshooting and with a small depth of field Hojstričová creates

an almost blurred image, which acts ephemeral and indefinite, just like a childhood memory. Colour photographs show a testimony of the relationship between the mother and the child, about the chamber world, that is limited to a child's needs for a certain period of the time. Poetic images of her child, small toys, his little living space, all this is an interpretation of the mutual need of being together, but at the same time they do not traumatize the public by the split of the woman's maternal and working roles. This polarizing aspect is just not found in the photographs, although this debate has been communicated to the public not seldom in recent years. At present, Jana Hojstričová has returned, like bend back, to the themes that generated her initial parental duties.

Photography cycle titled Album of nature (2017) is a combination of various life experiences of the author. Frequent visits to natural history museum and other museums along with her children and spending time in particular exposition influenced the character of these photos. However, Jana Hojstričová's research focus was associated with that. It was a research of historical photographs of the 19th century, her interest in their registration, archiving and preservation. The inclination towards the museum culture along with the so called archival turnaround has become the starting point for the implementation of this project. Fragments of expositions, museum's still-lives, references to recordings of all exhibits are present in the photographs, but this visual world also reach out the experience of spending time with the family in these spaces. It is the ongoing project and not completely closed yet, but the basic ranges are built on it already.

By photographic work titled „40 in 36“ Large in Small (2005) Jana Hojstričová critically expresses towards to the enforcement of opinion of the mass media communication advocacy. These opinions influence the attitudes and the values of the majority society especially. Massive and diverse media campaigns draw attention to the life, which is such a perfect and immensely delightful illusion. However, it is too far away from the real one. Fashion magazines, advertisements draw attention to things that are not important to life itself. But by our consumption of them, we become part of a commodity carousel, part of a very thoughtful business strategy. Women become „the face of a product“ in the advertising and fashion world very often, becoming the brand, which sells. At the same time, her own identity is being displaced and remains unrecognizable. This beauty market affects the standards of the ideal of beauty in women in our real life fundamentally. In the photographs, the author stages women dressed in tight translucent clothes made from plastic. The dresses are made in an ideal fitting size and they are, of course, narrower than the body dimensions of the photographed women. The bodies deformed by the plastic, which are rounded and overhanging stand against the current ideal of the female body. And so, the body is symbolically paralyzed by social dogmas in the photographs.

Peripheral Bodies (2008)

The author solves a body problem also in a cycle “Peripheral Bodies”. Jana Hojstričová connects by means of diptychs two views: of body and of town. Both these images connect a common

denominator and it is a periphery. The periphery in our perception is on the edge of social interest and the interest of society. Way of life in these days, life values, values which are enforced to decrease a value of natural change of human body, as well as a peripheral town and a country ever. The author observes the body in its natural shape. She puts to it as a parallel so called ‘territorial body’, which can be found in outskirts of big densely populated areas, therefore it is in a periphery of public interest about such a housing. An aesthetic aversion towards a deficient body or residential area without a human face turns into an ethic problem, which overturns a ladder of values of society upside down. Diptychs are not so much shaped and politically exalted like for example in a cycle „40 v 36“/Large in Small. Maybe the reason is that, photographs are not staged, the author does not use plastic pre-requisites, she retains a body (female and male) in its nature, she also leaves it alone and combine it with a not tempting urban periphery. However, pairs of photographs often connect a shaped parable, a small detail, or colourity. She approaches to the body and town while photographing

equally, without emotions, symbols, rather realistically ‘it is like that’.

The year 2012 was in the artistic production of the author especially intensive. In that time she realized several crucial photographic collections, which she introduced in 2013 on her first serious independent exhibition in the Gallery of Bratislava. A former artistic production influenced mainly her collection of photographs Hana (2012). It concerned about time-lapse project, which has not achieved its final appearance. It does not have exactly defined extension, number and even not a date of finishing it. The number of photographs will be gradually increased, so as life periods of Hana will be changing. As for individual photographs the essential role plays her body, his topography, sculptural modelling by light, but also atmosphere of space and human, emotional conditions. On one side the thing is a concrete, assertive view on a situation with a photographed subject and on the other side in photographs you can find certain conditions of mind. To this ambivalence a way of realization of photographs contributes also, which in this case balances on the interface between a document and

staging. An extensive collection of photographs called “Family Portrait” (2012) is somewhat contrary to the cycle Hana. The author implements an analytical way of seeing at photographing of individual members of her family, which is concrete and objective. In this case the point is not standard family portraits with characteristic features of face, but mainly portraits of bodies. She leaves out a head as a basic identical moment of every human and concentrates her view at photographing of body. She follows a process of making photographs, she mostly selects a neutral background, and removes whatever surrounded narrations. It concentrates viewer's attention on the body alone. Without an evident stylization she leaves the body in its natural posture. So the author brings simple news about a condition of body: about its age, gender, its an old age and fatigue. She perceives the body as a map of years gone by, as something, what in an essential extent reflects single life periods of man. In spite of the fact, that she makes photographs of her relatives, in this case she applies at photographing already an analytical language. It relies on a precise photographic perfection

and objective, assertive, visual language. So the photographs belong to the stream so called the 'deadpan' aesthetic.

Jana Hojstričová realized one of her most remarkable photographic projects "Tired Household" (2012) by method of staged photography. The first time she steps back from a familiar background she does not photograph her family or close friends. She focused on a visualization of incomplete families. She depends on opinions of sociologists, who dedicate to family problems, its today's transformation. If we look at a character of today's family, we find out, that it is impossible to talk uniquely about 'traditional family'. The family has acquired much more variabilities and in nowadays societies do not exist one sainted type of family, but many families. According to sociologists a variability of norms is considered for legitimate, even desired. This transformation causes not a few problems mainly in such society, that keeps traditional family values and do not accept other models of a family structure. On one side a differentiation of family forms brings freedom in decision making how to live, on the other side it creates an economical and existential

pressure on individual. An impuls for creation of this collection was a short conversation with a sociologist, who explained reasons why men in a certain age leave their wives. Besides traditional, for all of us well known reasons, she also introduced an obsession of women by care about their family and household. Even up to the point, that they lose themselves, they are unable to transmit their own impulses, motivation and attitudes from outside in direction into their families. She even mentioned that in these cases happen, a woman can be a part of house furniture in a metaphoric sense. Women on the photographs blend with furniture, they sit tired on sofa, or lean against a kitchen cabinet. They are lonely, but in absolutely clean, household. Many women in these days have ambitions to devote to their families, leaving behind their professions, hobbies. Their mental world has gradually shrunk and servis, which they provide for their families lose their values. Art relies on a sociological research or opinion becomes more and more essential in the author's artistic production. She operates on borders of two terrains - art and visual sociology.

In the last years Jana Hojstričová started to cooperate on common

List of Artworks:

1. Tired Household, 2012

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 100 x 82 cm)

2. Hana, 2012

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 100 x 82 cm)

3. Family Portrait, 2012

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 120 x 100 cm, 100 x 82 cm, 90 x 75 cm, 80 x 65 cm, 60 x 50 cm)

4. Peripheral Bodies, 2008

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 120 x 50 cm)

5. Large in Small, 2005

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 100 x 70 cm, 30 x 20 cm)

6. Album of nature, 2017

(author zine, digital print, cyanotype)

7. Hojstričová/Macho, Boyhood, 2017

(digital print, sanded sheet glass with fired photographs)

projects with an artist - glassmaker Palo Macho. Their projects range from little objects to big installations. An application of photography on glass, a glass board, it is a particularly unique combination and in Slovak artistic practice maybe only one. Besides handling of technological process of a placement of photographic print on glass, this project is unique by the similarity of views shared by the duo of authors. Inclination towards autobiographic conclusions, an interest in the depiction of simple everyday items, small objects which reflect upon us, form a good foundation for communication of the artwork with the viewer.

At the same time, this is not about pleasant compositions; on the contrary, the facticity of photography is particularly appropriate for glass. While painter interventions render glass more decorative, photography manages to conceptualize it. We are more concerned with the content of the glass installation rather than its esthetic qualities. Although these are significant in both works.

doc. Mgr. Bohunka Koklesová, PhD.

Tired Household, 2012

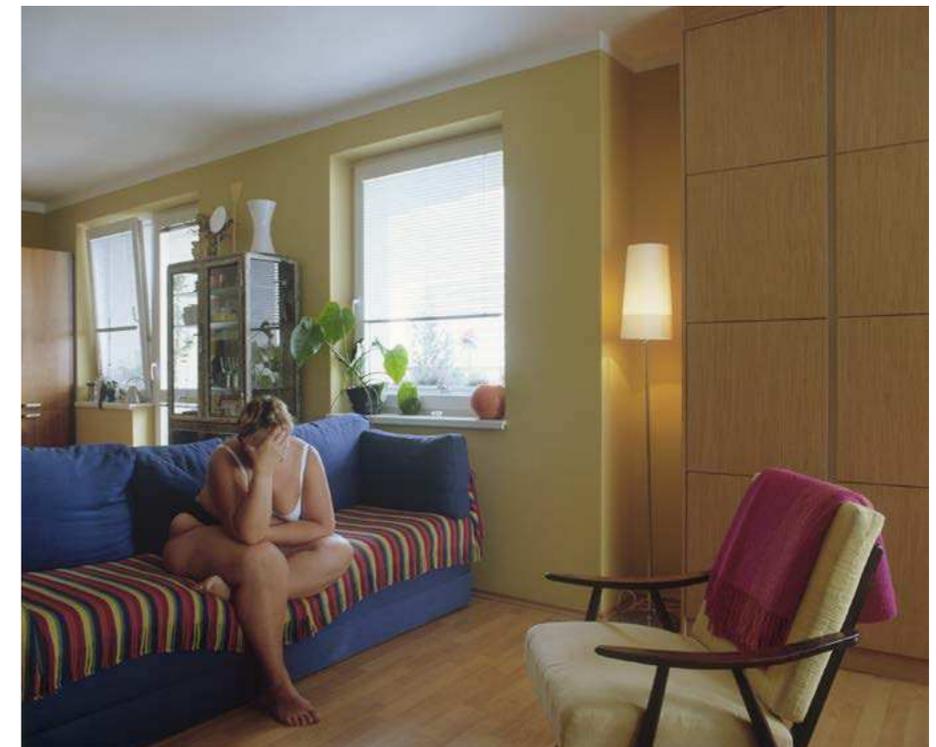
(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 100 x 82 cm)





Hana, 2012

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 100 x 82 cm)



Family Portrait, 2012

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 120 x 100 cm,
100 x 82 cm, 90 x 75 cm, 80 x 65 cm, 60 x 50 cm)





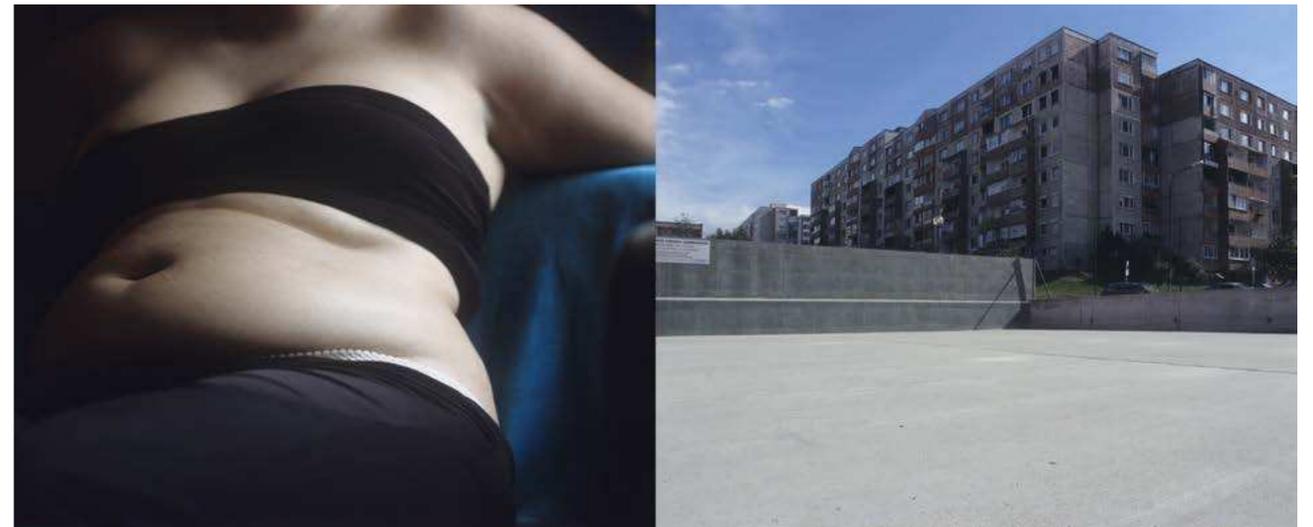




Peripheral Bodies, 2008

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 120 x 50 cm)





Large in Small, 2005

(Fine Art Digital Print, Aluminium, Size 100 x 70 cm,
30 x 20 cm)

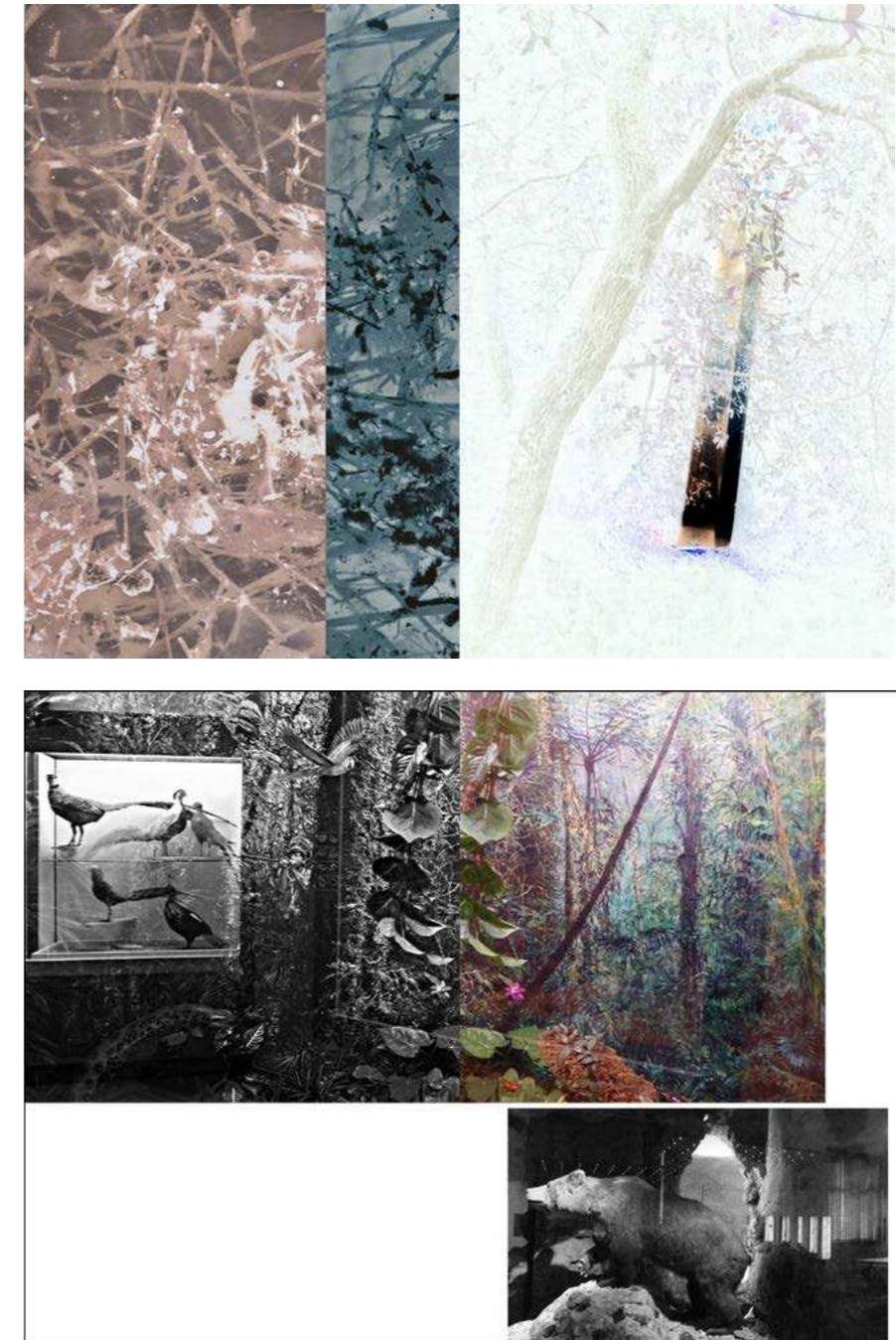
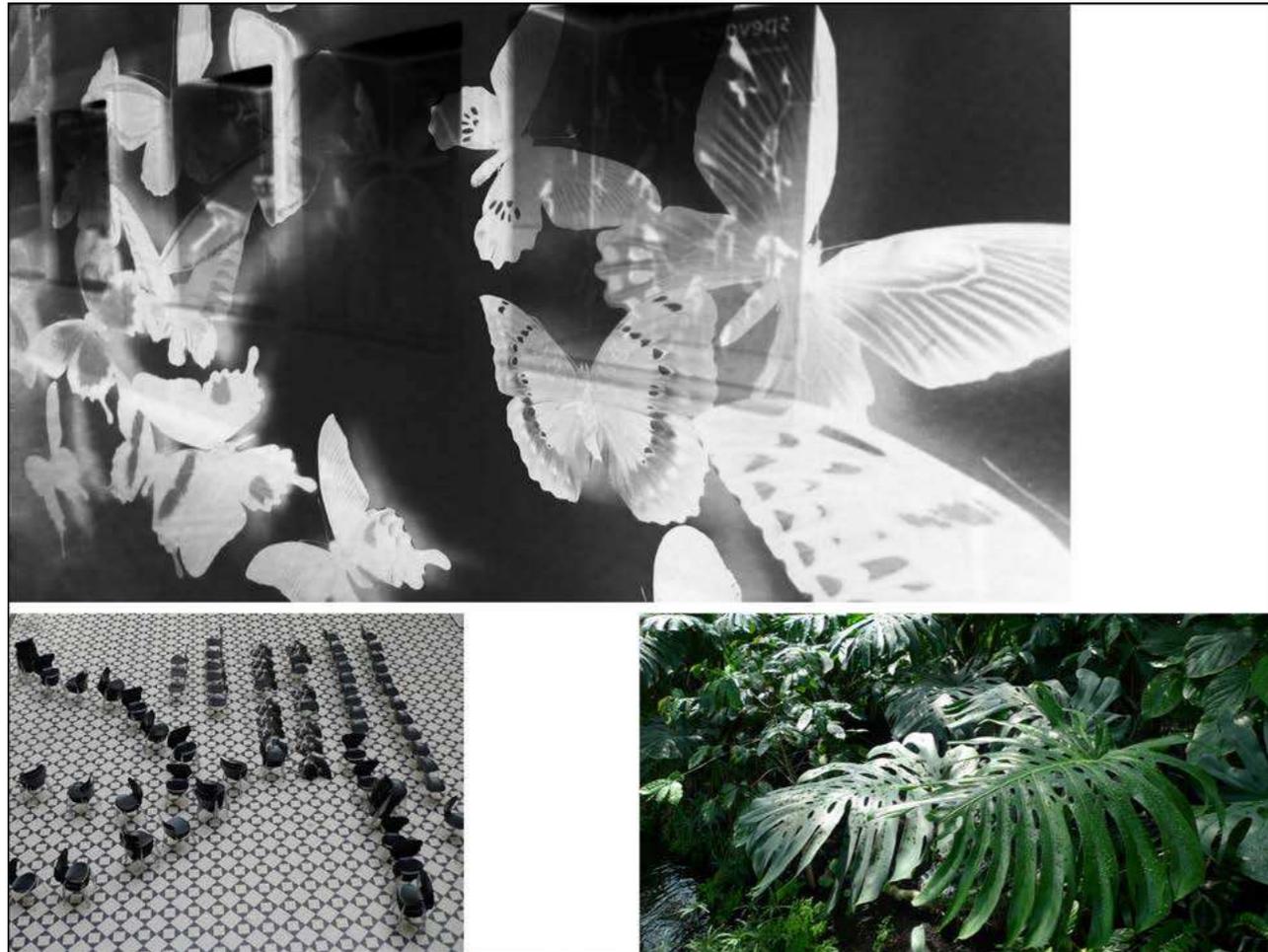


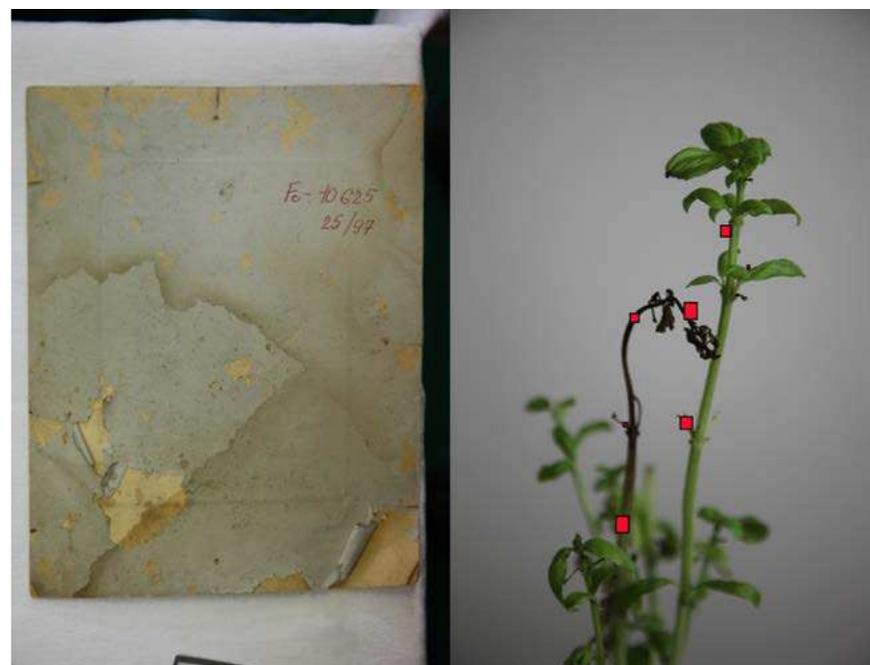
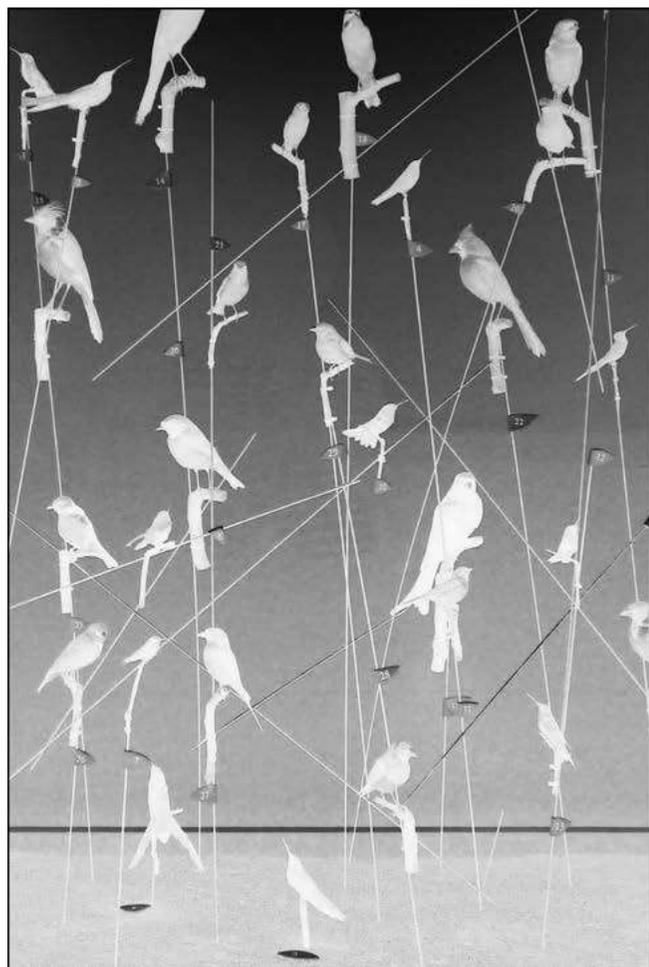


Album of nature, 2017

(author zine, digital print, cyanotype)







Hojstričová/Macho, Boyhood, 2017

(digital print, sanded sheet glass with fired photographs)

