

Lenka L. Lukačovičová

Everyday Life in Various Slides and the Constant Carousel of Art

Abstract

The philosophy of Lenka L. Lukačovičová's work is based on her interest in our cultural and personal identity, collective memory, but also problems with functioning, and problems associated with current situations in the area where she works. The presented portfolio shows her broad interest scale, which is, however, anchored in the three most dominant themes. When processing them, she works with relationships with several media: happening, performance, installation and photography. She continuously focuses on issues of culture, time and space, on woman, mother and her internal experience; transformation and disappearance associated with the change of the urban environment, its gentrification in connection with the presentation "place-specific" in public space. Her key projects began to emerge in 2012, 2013 (Quo Vadis Galleria; Permanent Exposition) with focus mainly on how the cultural institution works. She continuously develops her interest in cultural and collective historical memory in a series of exhibitions called the Grey Book. From the collected photos of portraits of persecuted women (1950s to 1970s

of the 20th century), she created hand-enlarged glass plates from digital archives; then she laid them out on the floor Status quo ante in the space of the Trnava Synagogue and left them to disappear. Post-media and political works were created, but they slowly became also a kind of silent meditation on the everyday life of post-communist Slovakia. Everyday life has also become a theme in her other projects: (Non)decisive Moments, 2020, and Lonely Planet Trnávka (from 2020). Here, her photographs remarkably deal with urban spaces, the surroundings, space where we live. She gradually exhibits them directly at the place of creation, in the Vitrine Gallery ZORA, a bulletin board that functioned as an information board at the dilapidated, non-functioning Zora Cinema in the local Trnávka district of Bratislava. She creates an imagined bedeker, an obscure Instagram account playing with the world brand – the online guide lonely_planet_trnavka. (Note: In addition, from 2021, she realized a series of other billboard and vitrine gallery exhibitions in the cities in Slovakia which seem to be at a freezing point).

The last presented level of her work derives relatively intensively from

the work of other Slovak authors from the 1970s to 1990s of the 20th century. She creates a free interpretation of the works with roots in performance, which are usually recorded by photography. She calls cycles with the prefix RE., as they are fundamentally based on repetition of re-creation, citation, or appropriation. Lukačovičová processes topics whose starting points, as well as solutions, are extremely fluid and changeable. She layers them and asks herself questions.

Key words

Action Art. Analogue Photography. Archive. Billboard Art. Collective Memory. Contemporary Photography. Cultural Identity. Happening. Installation. Lonely Planet Trnávka. Participation. Performance. Place Specific. Public Art. Public Space. Site Specific. Visual Art. Vitrine Gallery.

The Issue of Space, Women

She presented the first signs of her direction towards passive-active commentary on the cultural and social situation in the projects Permanent Exposition¹, 2012, and Quo Vadis Gallery, 2013. By scanning the empty gallery spaces, she dealt with the question of where the current institutional form of the gallery is aiming. Technically, the act of questioning, performing, and meditation is repeated and experienced twice, namely when an empty space is shot on a large-format camera (note that all preparation and shooting on a 4x5 inch camera takes a few minutes, as does shooting on high apertures, so that the images can be absolutely sharp and enlarged to large formats), and the second time when large-format images are re-exposed on the wall. The empty spaces of the gallery seem uncertain, waiting for art, restoration, grants. Thanks to the size of the photos and the central composition, they are at the same time impressive and harmonious.

Lukačovičová continuously develops her interest in collective memory in the long-term series of exhibitions Grey Book, Red Book and Black Book. In the Grey Book, she takes the name of

the eponymous title of the file of the Ministry of Justice on the trial of Milada Horáková, which was supposed to cover up and clean up illegal behaviour. Lukačovičová collected photographs of imprisoned women who were victims between the 1950s to 1970s. She placed women's faces on glass plates and spread them on the floor Status quo ante in the synagogue in Trnava, Slovakia. A light bulb was on in the foreground. What is this light? Lamp light during interrogations? The light of the guards watching over the prisoners? It would be reminiscent of Michel Foucault's words from his book *Watch and Punish*: "*Visibility is a trap*". Or is it an eternal light that, although, it cannot illuminate each of those faces, still somehow symbolizes their existence or at least their memory²?

In the synagogue, through the sound of the space itself and the participation of the viewer, one large work was created during the exhibition, a special performance during which you have the opportunity to step on faces with your feet³. The final work was recorded only by photos.

She gradually researches the cycle and later exhibits it in the Nitra Gallery under the title Red Book, 2016, where, in addition to persecuted women, the prison premises themselves become the main motif. Prisons as part of the country, our society, spaces with their own aura and as places full of people's stories. She lets the negatives of

portraits of women taken from archives or websites ritually crystallize, disappear and fade away in a huge glass object.

Lonely Planet Trnávka, Dailyness

The circle of interest in Slovakia and everyday life with a critical commentary on the current situation appears against the background of the project called Lonely Planet Trnávka (from 2020)⁴. The author concentrates on shooting the local part of Trnávka in Bratislava, with the reputation of a wild periphery, where she lives⁵. Trnávka, as a part of the city inhabited by working-class families, the unemployed and those in poverty, was the object of sociological research during the 1920s. It was photographed by Jaromír Funke in the critical search engine as "bad living"; and there is also a unique publication, a documentary about life in worker colonies by amateur photographer and journalist Il'ja Jozef Marek: *Dornkappel. Suburb of three languages* (1938). Lukačovičová presents her photos to the public by placing them in the Vitrine Gallery ZORA⁶ and online on the lonely_planet_trnavka Instagram account, which functions as an inconspicuous bedeker mapping the corners of Trnávka. With minimal gestures and regular contributions, she

1 Author's note: Premostenie, or Bridge, of the Slovak National Gallery was closed from March 1, 2001, due to its state of disrepair; the empty installation, white on white, lasted for a long time, until 2022, when it was reopened after its reconstruction. In 2012, Lukačovičová exhibited the space again. If we are to think simply from John Berger's point of view, namely that photography is a reminder of what is absent, we would come to the conclusion that both photography and reality have been present without change for twenty years. See: BERGER, J.: *Understanding the Photographic Image*. In ČÍSAŘ, K. (ed.): *What is Photography?* Prague : Herrmann & synové, 2004, p. 63.

2 VYDRA, A.: *Female Prisoners and Trampling on Heads*. [online]. [2023-03-17].

3 Author's note: Portraits of those who were enlarged on glass, on which the viewer could walk in the synagogue in Trnava.

4 Author's note: The project can also be followed online at www.trnavka.online.

5 Author's note: In the 1970s, at the time of the toughest normalization, the Salesian parish gradually began to shape and develop the cultural life in the local part of Trnávka, in Bratislava, thanks to the completion of the functionalist church.

6 Author's note: Vitrine Gallery Zora is the original display case at the defunct former Zora cinema, where the current program of the cinema was located in the past.

draws attention to the intensive process of gentrification and also intervenes in wider social events, economic, political, artistic and cultural problems⁷. She is aware of the absence of opportunities for cultural enjoyment, but also the transformation of the rural-urban environment. The photography she works with is a living, shared medium that we see non-stop. This is precisely why she focuses more and more intensively on public art presentations and the creation of exterior exhibitions. Exhibitions on advertising areas, which were and are a symbol of profit and a significant visual smog on the Slovak landscape.

In 2021/2022⁸ at the Hanácka bus stop in Trnávka, she had “a large-scale photo of the local cultural center placed on an unused billboard, together with another photo of the architectural detail of the facade and a short annotation, thus imitating common outdoor advertising. In our (Western) cultural space, this is a proven art-communication strategy, even if this type of artistic presentation will be rather rare in Slovakia, often they don't even understand”⁹.

In addition to a series of billboard and showcase exhibitions in Trnávka, Lukačovičová realized another one, under the SNP Bridge, at the Bajkalská public transport stop in Bratislava¹⁰, where she

presented the cycle Ice melts, Temperature Drops, 2021; and the most current Personal Autonomy project, 2022 (with the subtitle of individual locations such as Bastova Resort, Hanacka Resort in Bratislava, Pod Furcou Resort in Košice) on non-functional outdoor areas. In the projects, she presents a place-specific approach to the locality of the urban environment and greenery, the coexistence of man and nature, and points to the ambivalent relationship of man to the landscape and space. Through photography, which is close to her, the author tries to return to humanity, banality, the search for a feeling of “enjoyment”, switching off and discovering something new.

She processes topics, the starting points of which, as well as solutions, are extremely fluid and changeable, she layers them. Individual images are created on analogue film during a visit to selected recreational locations in Slovakia as documents of the situations and genius loci of the given place. Others are rather more abstract – formed by clusters of (not only) visual impressions and can also be seen as sketches for further creation. The author repeatedly returns to the original photograph and changes it by using the author's technique of scanning, cutouts, and collage. Gradually, from 2021, 2D space became not enough for her, she goes out of the surface into space. In cooperation with the artist and sculptor Klaudia Korbelič, she recycles their works and transforms found recycled material into objects, fictitious, plastic/plastic plant species – triffids. Exhibitions of natura morte, literally “dead nature” of the past present future, are emerging.

RE: Cycles

In her work, Lukačovičová deals quite intensively and repeatedly with the creation of projects with the prefix RE, which means in her works a kind of repetition,

reprocessing, and questioning of what has already been created. Most often in the context of created works, but also the work of unofficial artists from the 1970s to the 1990s in Slovakia, who worked with photography as a secondary medium. These are cycles RE:Photography, 2014, RE:action, RE:Performance, 2017/2018, etc. and exhibitions called Situations Which were Occurred as Yesterday¹¹. With photographs, she records small changes and plays with the question of time, the moment of pressing the trigger, authorship, or the (in)necessity of photography (?) in a performative performance, etc.¹².

Happening After All, One Is Not Crazy to Get Wet¹³, 2018, is a partial exception¹⁴. At the FAVU Czech Gallery in Brno, visitors to the opening were part of the event. Hired performers were sunbathing in the gallery, artists were enjoying the mountain sun, taking selfies and eating hotdogs. After a few minutes, the radio announced that it would rain and ended the session. It is a happening that, despite the created video recording, the viewer had the opportunity to fully experience only at a given place and time.

7 Author's note: Trnávka is subconsciously bordered by two cultural buildings closed due to inadequate technical conditions, the Zora cinema and OBKaSS peripheral cultural and social center Bratislava II. (it was opened in 1981).

8 Author's note: Since there was no interest in renting the billboard, the displayed photo remained at the stop for 6 months.

9 ŠTEPÁNEK, B.: Lonely Planet Trnávka – Cultivation – Participation – Action. In *Jazdec / Revue súčasného umenia*, 2022, Vol. 13, No. 46, p. 4.

10 Author's note: The project can also be followed online at www.vitrinky.ba.

11 Author's note: In the TIC Gallery in Brno, in Germany in Leipzig – Kunstraum ping pong, or at the group exhibition What Did You Expect?. Pilotenkueche.

12 Author's note: Sometimes, she appears alone in front of the lens, other times she appears in more abstract positions.

13 Author's note: Interpretation of the happening by Vladimír Kordoš and Matej Krén from 1983.

14 Author's note: The author becomes a director.

Portfolio

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Self-portrait, RE:interpretation, 2017



Permanent Exposition, 2012



Jan Koniarek Gallery, Quo Vadis Galleria, 2013



East Slovak Gallery, Quo Vadis Galleria, 2013



Synagogue of Neologs, Quo Vadis Galleria, 2013



Grey Book, 2016



Exhibition view, Jan Koniarek Gallery, from cycle *Grey Book*, 2016



Red Book, 2017



(Non)decisive moments, 2020



RE:action, RE:Performance, 2017



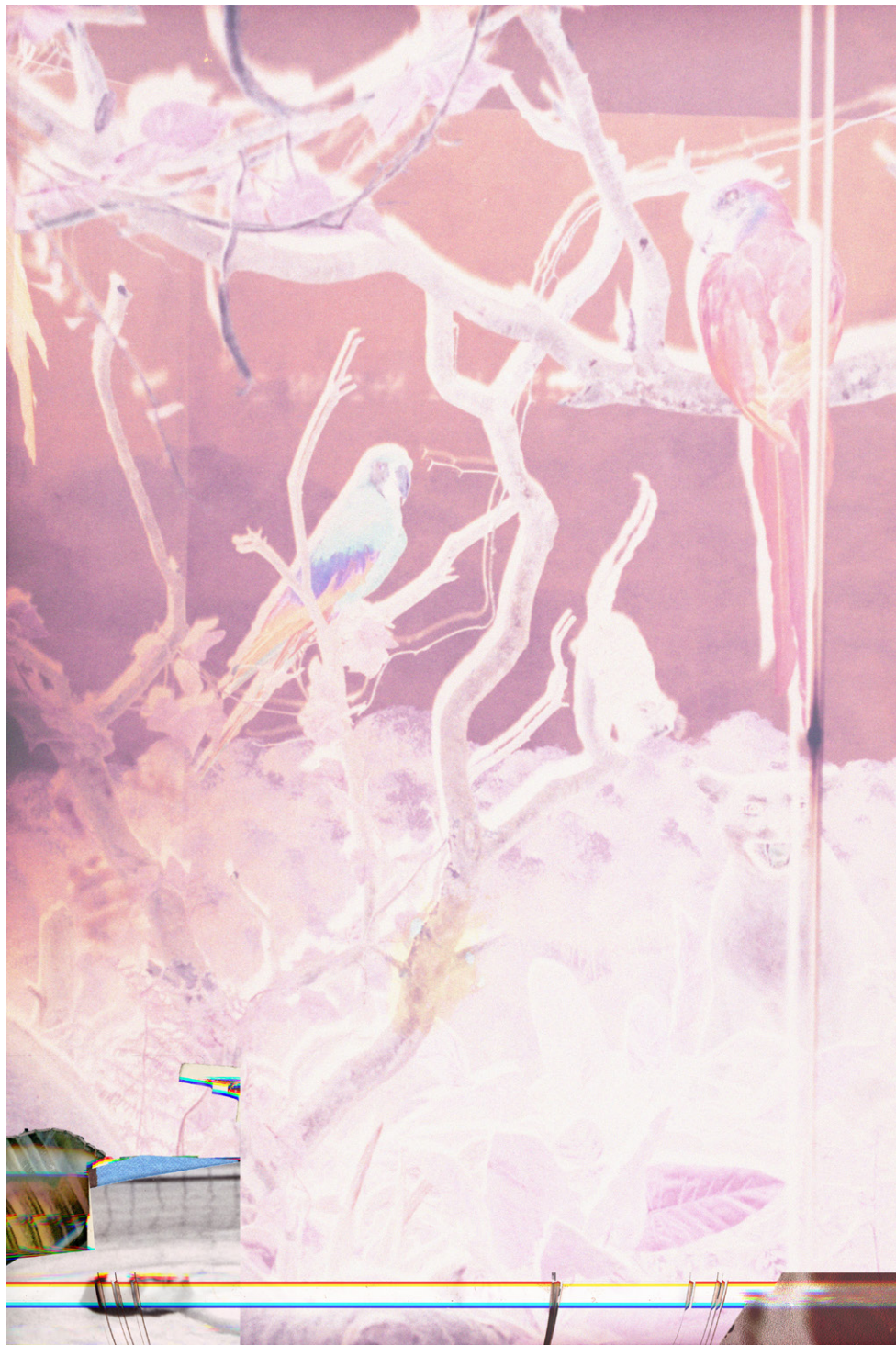
After All, One Is Not Crazy to Get Wet, happening, 2018



Triffids, exhibition view Blast Cries Laughter, Pragovka, Prague, in collaboration with Klaudia Korbelič



Paradeisos, exhibition views, Corso Zálesie, 2022



Extase, Paradeisos, 2022



Ice Melts, Temperature Drops, 2021



Ice Melts, Temperature Drops, 2021



Ice Melts, Temperature Drops, 2021



Ice Melts, Temperature Drops, 2021



Pod Furcou Resort, from project Personal Autonomy,
Košice, exhibition view, 2022/2023



Personal Autonomy, 2022



Personal Autonomy, 2022



Vitrine Gallery Zora, from 2021



Lonely Planet Trnávka, 2020 - ongoing



Lonely Planet Trnávka, 2020 - ongoing



Lonely Planet Trnávka, 2020 – ongoing



Lonely Planet Trnávka, 2020 - ongoing

Lenka L. LUKAČOVIČOVÁ

(Slovakia, Trnava, 1987)

Education

2014-2018

Academy of Fine Arts and Design,
Bratislava, SKArtD. Candidate - study program:
fine arts

2012-2014

Academy of Fine Arts and Design,
Bratislava, SKMaster Studies - Department of
Photography and New Media, Studio
Laboratory of Photography led by
Ľubo Stacho

2013

Photography, LUCA, Sint-Lukas
Brussels, University College of
Art and Design, mentor Ana Torfs,
Brussels, BE

2007-2012

Constantine the Philosopher
University in Nitra, Faculty of Arts,
SKCultural Studies, Master's Degree,
awarded as the best student of the
Department for cultural studies

2009

Academy of Fine Arts, New Media
Department, Zagreb, HR
exchange program**Pedagogical Skills****2022** Head of Studio Protoatelier
Academy of Fine Arts
and Design, Department
of Photography and New
Media, Bratislava, SK**2019-22** Assistant Professor
Academy of Fine Arts
and Design, Department
of Photography and New
Media, Studio Laboratory
of Photography, Bratislava,
SK**Competitions, Grants****2022** *The Novum Foundation*,
laureate, Lonely Planet
Trnávka
Bratislava Foundation,
scholarship, Lonely Planet
Trnávka*Slovak Arts Council*,
scholarship, project
Personal Autonomy, SK**2021** *Different Worlds*, 3rd Place,
Photon Gallery, competition
in contemporary art
photography from the CEE
region**2020** *Bratislava Foundation*
Scholarship, Lonely Planet
Trnávka**2017** *3-month working*
scholarship Slovak Arts
Council, pilotenkueche.net
residency**2015** *Poznan Photo Diploma*
Award 2015, finalist 2013
PHOTO of the YEAR,
finalist**2013** *VUB Photo of the Year*,
finalist, Bratislava, SK**2012** *Phenomenon Book*,
honorable mention, Brno,
CZ**Individual Exhibitions (Selected)****2022** *Lonely Planet Trnávka*,
edition titled "Elsewhere",
OFF Festival, Bratislava, SK
Bašťová Resort, Flatgallery,
Bratislava, SK
Torso Zálesie, incollaboration with
Klaudia Korbelič, exterior
exhibition,
Corso Zálesie, SK
Local Esthesia, Central
European House of
Photography, Bratislava, SK*Extase*, in collaboration
with Klaudia Korbelič,
Station Contemporary
Gallery, Bratislava, SK**2021** *ANTROPOS/TOPOS*, in
collaboration with Michal
Huba, Zahorie Gallery of
Jan Mudroch in Senica, SK**2020** *SNAP&GO*, in collaboration
with Viktor Šelesták, New
Platform Gallery,
Bratislava, SK*(Non)decisive Moments*,
M. A. Bazovský Gallery,
Trenčín, SK
(Non)decisive Moments,
FIDUCIE Gallery, Ostrava,
CZ*Common Sense*, Galerie
XY, Olomouc, CZ
Fragility of Being, Vitrina
Deniska, Olomouc, CZ
Attention to the Act(s),
Vitrine Gallery ARTA
Piešťany, SK**2018** *postMEDIUM*, in
collaboration with Diana C.
Garafová, Galerry FAVU,
Brno, CZ*"Situations which were
if they occurred as
Yesterday"*, TIC Gallery,
Brno, CZ*RE:action - RE:(per)*
formantion - RE:activation
- RE:creation, Gallery
Medium, Bratislava, SK**2017** *"Situations which were
if they occurred as
Yesterday"*, Kunstrraum
Ping.Pong, cur.
Marcel Noack, Leipzig, DE

- Red Book*, Nitra Gallery, Youth Gallery, SK
- 2016** *Grey Book I.*, Jan Koniarek Gallery, Synagogue - Center for Contemporary Art, Trnava, SK
- 2016** *Grey Book I.*, Jan Koniarek Gallery, Synagogue - Center for Contemporary Art, Trnava, SK
RE:exposition, Slovak Institute, Moscow, RU
- 2015** *Quo Vadis*, Slovak Institute, Warsaw, PL
Grey Book, edition titled *Intepret Art*, OFF Festival, Bratislava, SK
- 2014** *RE:Photography*, amt_ project gallery, Bratislava, SK

Exhibitions / Selected Group:

- 2022** *Different Worlds*, Foto Wien, Photon Gallery, Vienna, AT
Blast Cries Laughter, in collaboration with Klaudia Korbelič, Pragovka, Prague, CZ
- 2021** *OFF Grid Fotofestival*, Wien, AT
Different, Worlds, Photon Gallery, Ljubljana, SI
FUTURE NOW, SET Space & BONFIRE, London, GB
Unseen realities, Divadlo NUDE & Beata Jablonská, Pistori Palace, Bratislava, SK
FOG/HMLA, FOG Gallery, Bratislava, SK
- 2020-21** *Document*, M. A. Bazovský Gallery, Trenčín, SK
- 2020** *Smoke&Mirrors*, Medium Gallery, Bratislava, SK
- 2017** *What Did You Expect?*, Pilotenkueche, Leipzig, DE
Salon Similde Therapeutics,

- Salon Similde/KULTURNY DOM LIPSK*, Leipzig, DE
- 2016** *Das beste was wir zu Hause haben*, Slovak Institute, Berlin, part of European Month of Photography, DE
Poznan Photo Diploma Award, Poznan, PL
Maison de la Photographie, Lilles, FR
- 2015** *Paratissima* Skopje, MK
Poznan Photo Diploma Award 2015, Stodownia+1, Stary Browar, Poznan, PL
Grey Book, Paratissima Festival, Skopje, MK
Renaissance of 19th Century Photography, Central European House of Photography, Bratislava, SK
PPDA finalist's exhibition, House of Photography/ Maison de la Photographie, Lilles, FR
- 2014** *Diversity necessary/AFAD Model*, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, SK
KAUNAS PHOTO festival, projection, Riga, LT
- 2013** *The FWD Festival*, LUCA, Brussels, BE
KE-BA-BB 13 curated by Mira Sikorová, Roman Popelár, Gallery of Art "Považská galéria umenia", Žilina, SK

Residences, Festivals

- 2021** *Festival DOM, Wild Fruit*, Bratislava, SK
- 2017** *Pilotenkueche*, Leipzig, DE
- 2016** *Symposium HALA 2016*, SK

Permanent Collections

- 2021** *Lonely Planet Trnávka*, in collection Zahorie Gallery Jana Mudrocha, SK

Books, Publications, Critics

- 2022** ŠTEPÁNEK, B.: *Lonely Planet Trnávka - Cultivation - Participation - Action*. In *Jazdec / Revue súčasného umenia*, 2022, Vol. 13, No. 46, p. 4. ISSN 1338-077X.
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- Čo sú kultúrne udalosti roka 2021? *Odpovedajú Janovic, Kirschnerová, Ondák, Pauhofová, Šateková a ďalší*. [online]. [2023-03-21]. Dostupné na: <<https://dennikn.sk/2649168/rok-2021-v-kulture-milan-lasica-zilinska-sphera-aj-film-cenzorka-anketa/>>.
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- 2021** *Personal / Public Space*, Hviezdoslav Square 2007 - 2021, VŠVU, in collaboration with Jozef Sedlák, editor, curator, SEDF, edit. 2021
- 2020** *DOFO*, Art House of Piešťany, ALF VŠVU (non)decisive moments,

- 2019** GMAB, author's catalog
Document Magazine, ed.
Ján Viazanička & coll.
Children of the Patronka,
ed. J. Sedlák, D. Čarná,
2019
- 2017** *Catalogue of the Youth
Gallery for the Year 2016*,
Gallery "Nitrianska galéria",
pp. 68-77.
- 2016** *EMOP Catalogue*,
European Month of
Photography 2016, Berlin,
p. 76.
- VYDRA, A.: *Female
Prisoners and Trampling
on Heads*. [online]. [2023-
03-21]. Available at:
<[https://www.tyzden.sk/
kultura/35671/vazenkyne-a-
sliapanie-po-hlavach/](https://www.tyzden.sk/kultura/35671/vazenkyne-a-sliapanie-po-hlavach/)>.
- 2014** *Art Academy – VŠVU, 65
years of foundation*, ed. Iva
Pašternáková, 2014.

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17]. Available at: <[https://www.tyzden.sk/
kultura/35671/vazenkyne-a-sliapanie-po-
hlavach/](https://www.tyzden.sk/kultura/35671/vazenkyne-a-sliapanie-po-hlavach/)>.

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