

Lucia Papčová

Selected solo exhibitions

Wind! One has heard it a thousand times already!, 2017

I Woke Up In A Valley, 2017

For more works please visit
luciapapco.com



Statement

I work with the visual and audial recordings- mostly taking place at or referring to natural environment- as a material for creating an abstract experience. Creating an open ended work, not trying to communicate an idea formulable in language and by use of the mediums which are described as having a certain exact relation to the commonly shared outside world, I adopt the limitations set by it as a part of the process.

Image, formed by light in my analogue photographs is without adjustments and has a direct link to the moment in past, to a certain cumulation of light- space- presence in the environment we share. What was before the camera is dimmed, obscured by the amount of information I let to be printed on the film. Although these are photography works, the importance is put on the physical print with exact grey scale and lucidity, on the shared presence between the viewer and the artwork- getting back to what W. Benjamin claimed to be disappearing. This causes that most of my works are not reproducible and can only be viewed in original.

Similar strategy is applied within my video works where certain fragments of personal histories appear. With a unique action taking place in the fleeting conditions of landscape, memory or imagination, the record of the image, sound and words becomes a unique constellation of different aspects, where I play the role of a trigger- only preparing the conditions for something to happen and leaving the process to develop on its own.

Landscape, memory, imagination are my co- workers and co- performers. The time in nature, being outside a human constructed rhythm of the day, has a different duration and different purpose.

My strategy is to invite the spectator to enter, to co- create, to stare, without distraction, on something one can't finish.

Wind! One has heard it a thousand times already!

Salón at Nitra Gallery, Slovakia, 2017

Present. Present moment. Landscape. Transcendancy. Here and now. Then and there. Retrieving the absent. Light. All of these words and sentences may seem to have nothing in common. Nevertheless, they can be found all over the work of a young artist, Lucia Papčová. They surface in all of the media she uses to express herself – photography, video installation and object.

The exhibition titled *Wind! One Has Heard It a Thousand Times Already* begins with a video art piece, accordingly titled *Greenery* (2017), whose aim is to draw the viewer into the story and the exhibition itself. Lucia uses an authentic event in her video art, while disrupting its narration on purpose. The story is divided, fragmented, its key places (background, environment, the main character) are explicitly absent, deleted or just suggested. The actual landscape, being the artist's main theme, is often retrieved with abstract words that stimulate the viewer's imagination- the landscape is then newly recreated in their minds where it takes the same vague, abstract, impalpable, mystic form as in the case of the artist's photographs. Sound plays a very important role in this process of "retrieving" it.

The element of deconstruction has a different nature in the photography medium. Lucia negates the presence of the material world using specifically positioned cut-outs and achromatic tones that go against the main purpose of photography – to depict. This is the basic concept of her formally clean work. She deletes the landscape in the process of photographing it. She uses it as means or material in order to build an abstract image. The artist responds to our current information abundance by reducing and suppressing the depicted and to the circulation of redundant digital photographs across social media by avoiding post-production and opting for analogue photography. The presented photographs demonstrate a radical shift towards a clean abstract image. The horizon – a fundamental reference to the material world- is missing.

Analogue photography and video are dependent on the physical conditions of our reality which adds another dimension to the artist's strategy- a performance dimension. The artist often spends several hours in the mountains without any social or cultural interference until the natural elements (light, wind, air, humidity, etc.) are in the perfect constellation. The unpredictable conditions the artist finds herself in give her work the performance dimension. The process of creating the photograph thus becomes a part of the artwork. At the same time it serves as a metaphor of the ideal world we are trying to create, but we always hit an obstacle. The idea that man is subjected to nature is brought into the exhibition concept – a part of the exhibition is illuminated only by daylight. At a certain moment, some of the images become suppressed in the shadows and remain only in the viewer's mind.

Erik Vilím, curator



Two sisters argue about the old setting in their village where a fatal event for one of them took place when they were children. The memory is distorted, they fail to agree on the setting. The only vivid memory is the one of personal experience during the fatal moments, which remains enclosed inside one of the sisters. Recordings from the house overlap with soundscape of land with a blank screen.

Still from the installation 'Greenish'. HD video 10 min, sound, object made of natural resin of spruce trees, analogue photograph





Black and white analogue photographs on FB paper



Installation views

I Woke Up In A Valley

Medium Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2017

Installations composed of video, sound, found and donated objects

Although these works, exploring the landscape setting, turn out to have common premises with her series of photographic works, Papčová concentrates more on the aspects of performance and story in the video installations. What makes her approach inimitable is how she welds the duration of performance and fragments of a personal story into the plotlines of individual videos. The video installations are connected by the common motif of a performer – boy, mature man, old man – isolated in the activity of recollection. Although Papčová is working with an authentic story, she does not create narrative-style films. On the contrary, she disturbs the story's continuity and concentrates on the extreme subjective experience of trauma and its processing. The landscape in which the action is situated is not at all shaped as a backdrop. The artist uses the reverse perspective of the film image: frequently we see the performer from a sharp angle, in a detail shot, or even lost somewhere on the horizon in the distance; on occasion we only hear his voice. The immediacy of the action, the sensitive and at the same time raw manner of recording, compels the viewer to feel his way into the reality being experienced. Steps plunging down to forest land, harsh light refracted in the camera's object, sudden gusts of wind resounding in the hall of a railway station...

Papčová suppresses the social and political associations of her videos and concentrates on a transformation of reality using the abstraction of landscape. She is orientated more towards object traces, synopses, gaps and speech pauses. The insoluble controversies of personal fates produce tension between the seen and the represented. Participants are deeply marked by the transition of society and its legal system from real socialism to democracy. Hence the seemingly banal scenes make reference to complex social changes which have traumatised many citizens' lives. The inability to attain fundamental human rights has led them to a renewed effort to accomplish social justice and not come to terms with the given state of affairs. Papčová accordingly presents a reflection on the possibilities of human justice, with answers merely hinted at and left open to further interpretation. Memory is uncovered and simultaneously silenced, between that which can be mediated in language and what the viewer, now entirely reliant on signs, may experience with landscape and in landscape, which swallows up all traces of trauma and transcends to another quality.

The cycle of four separate video installations uses contrasts of static and dynamic camera and is built on the principle of synopses. *Spring After 33 Years* directs attention to a place in a landscape where an inconspicuous event is occurring, shot from a great distance so that it is swallowed up in the surrounding countryside. *A Journey to the Ridge*, on the other hand, presents a dramatic climb to the summit right to the moment when memory is confronted with a written document, though the viewer has no access to this and can only guess its content. *The Landscape There again* draws us, by monotonous depiction, into a narrative about landscape. Gradually we discover that it is a landscape beyond this world. The station hall, scene of the last of the four videos *I Woke Up in a Valley*, is a place of controversy and physical transition from one reality to another. The landscape here is represented in a complex system of framing, where props from the past are confronted in an image of a landscape which encounters injustice and simultaneously, in the figure of a singing child, indicates faith in the world's good. In the contemporary art context Lucia Papčová's cycle of video installations is an exceptional work, because it is based on the hitherto little-used procedures of film narration, subjectivity and the representation of landscape.

Daniel Grúň, curator



'Spring After 33 years', video installation 6 min, sound, cherry tree bark

I asked this man to carve a word from his own thoughts into a tree in blossom. 33 years ago, already the father of two girls, he was placed under arrest in the early morning with no indication of the reason. Only slowly he was going into the story that was plotted against him. After being threatened with the death penalty during the hearings, he was finally sentenced as a participant in a murder which was fabricated and publicised in the media by the government investigators. Having spend a life as a murderer in the eyes of society. The word remains as an artifact in landscape, visible only to those who can find it.





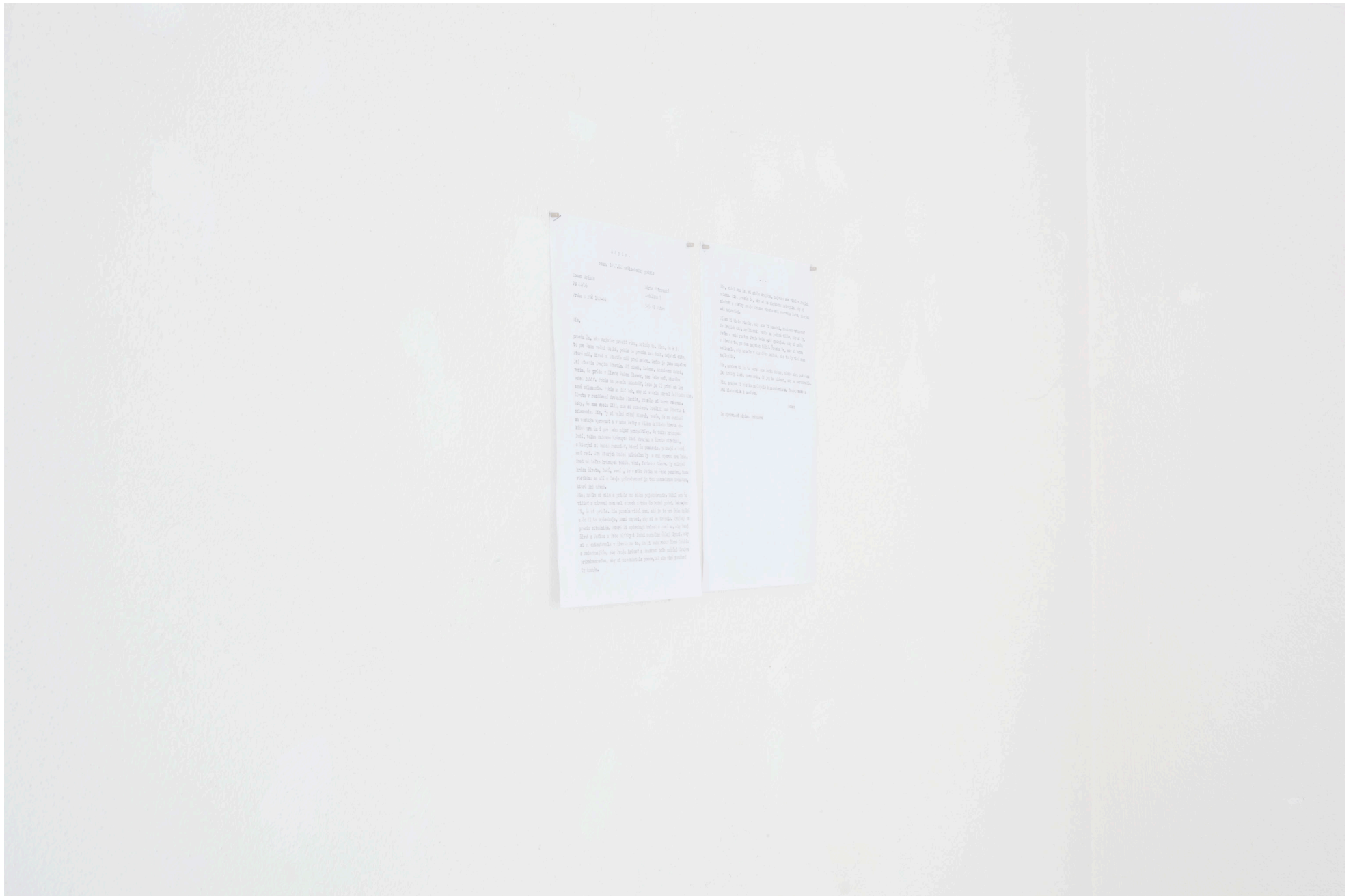


'The Landscape There', video installation 6 min, sound, donated photocopy of a letter

An old man, a father, answers the written questions about a fictional land. It is his first time reading the questions and the one and only time he answers them. The son of this man was falsely accused and sentenced for a murder. After the fall of the regime in Czechoslovakia he was released on account of being diagnosed with cancer. After he was further diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia which had originated from brutal interrogations and developed during his time in prison, he stayed at home in the care of his parents, where he turned his paranoid suspicions against his loving mother.



'Letter of my son which can be published only after his death'. Photocopy of a letter turned facing the wall, part of the 'The Landscape There'



'Letter of my son which can be published only after his death'. Turned with text towards the viewer in December 2017.



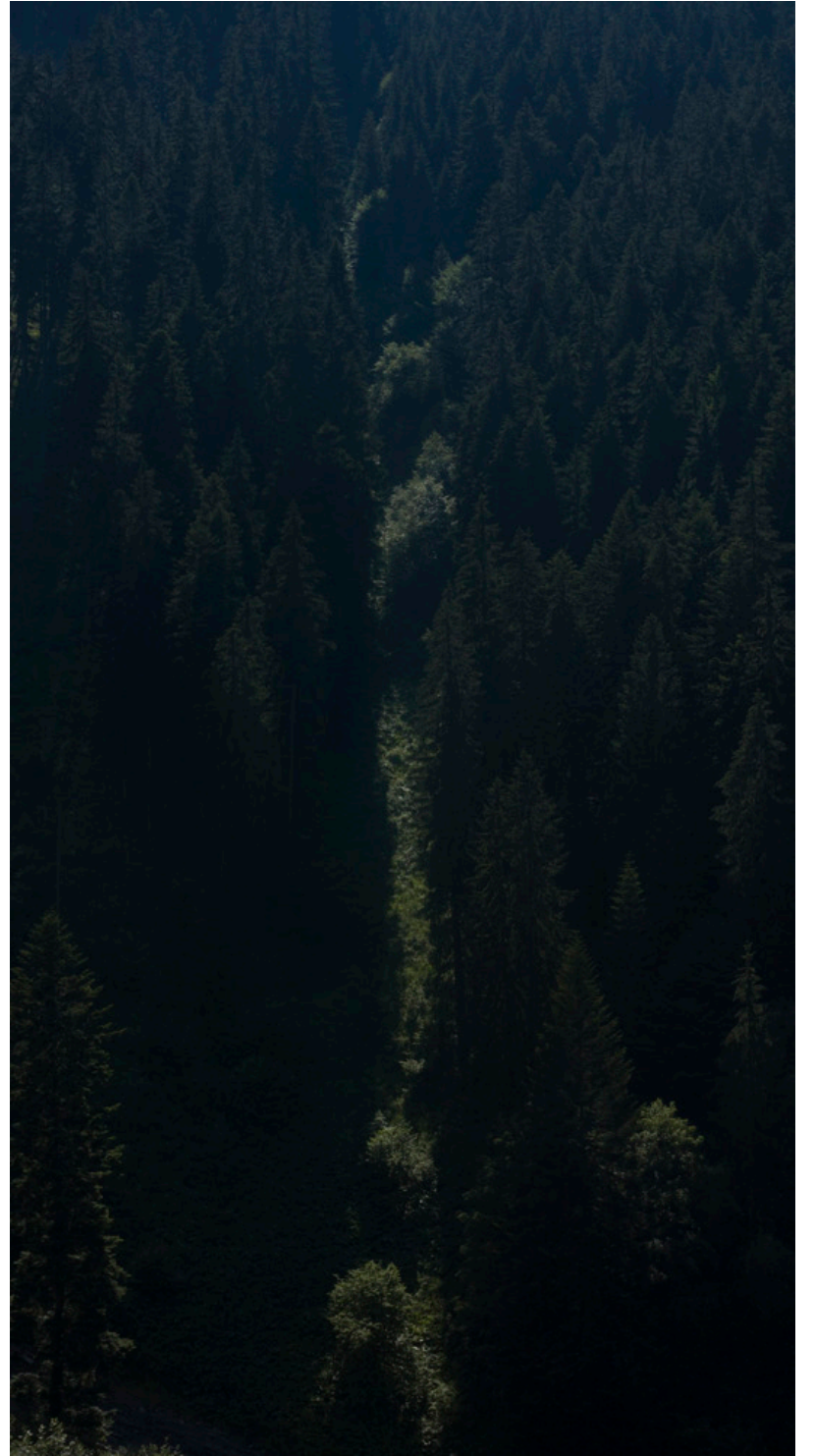
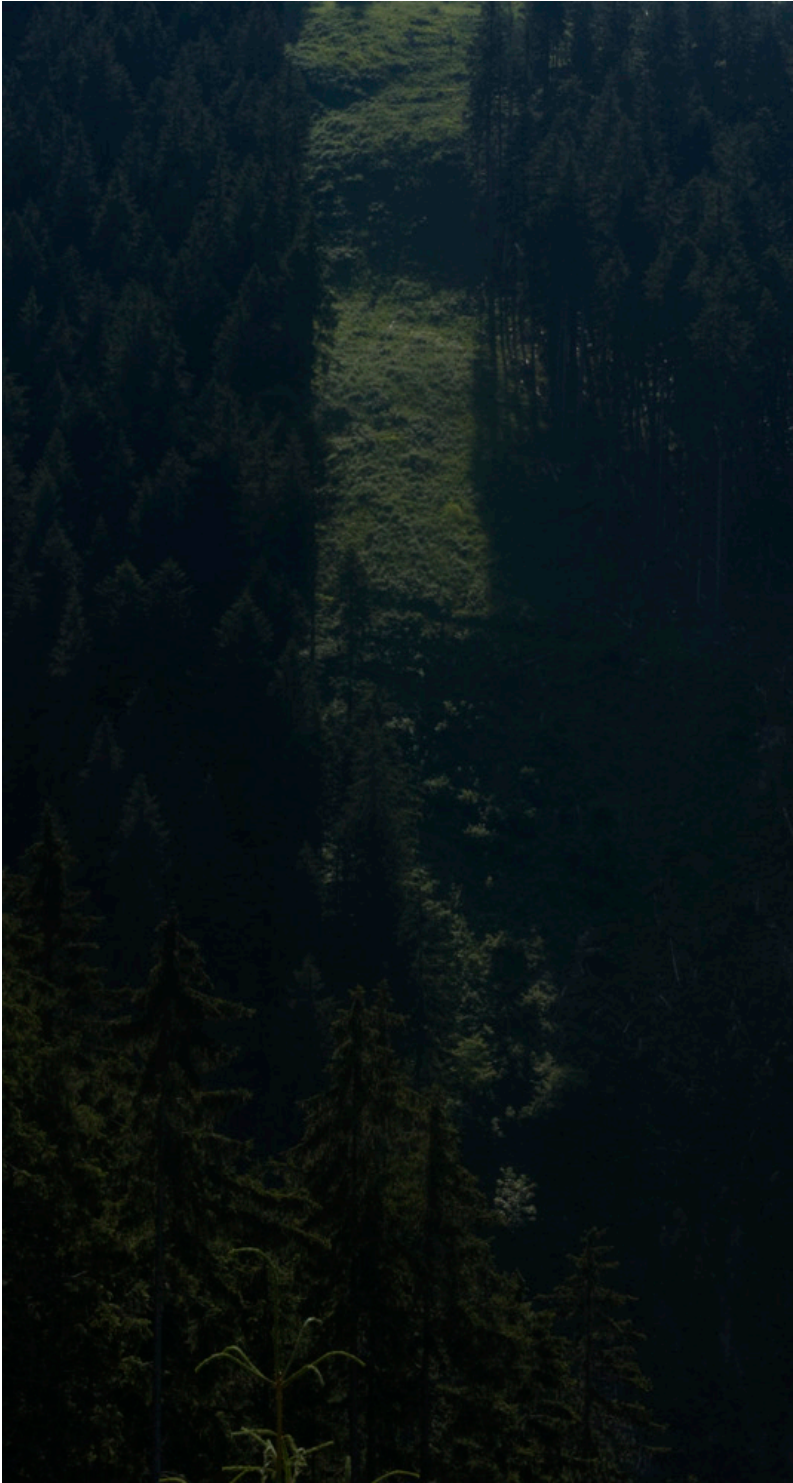
A Journey To The Ridge, 3 channel video installation 11min, sound, donated object.

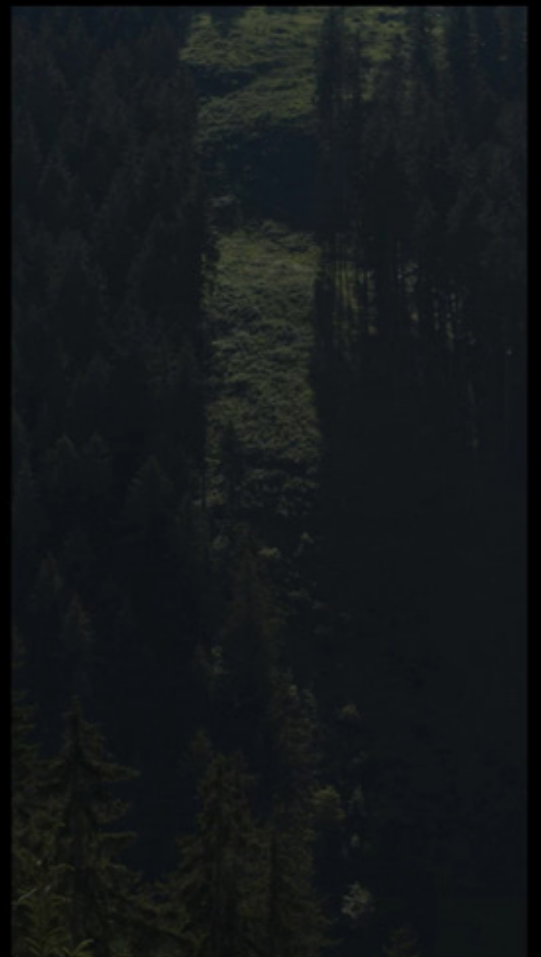
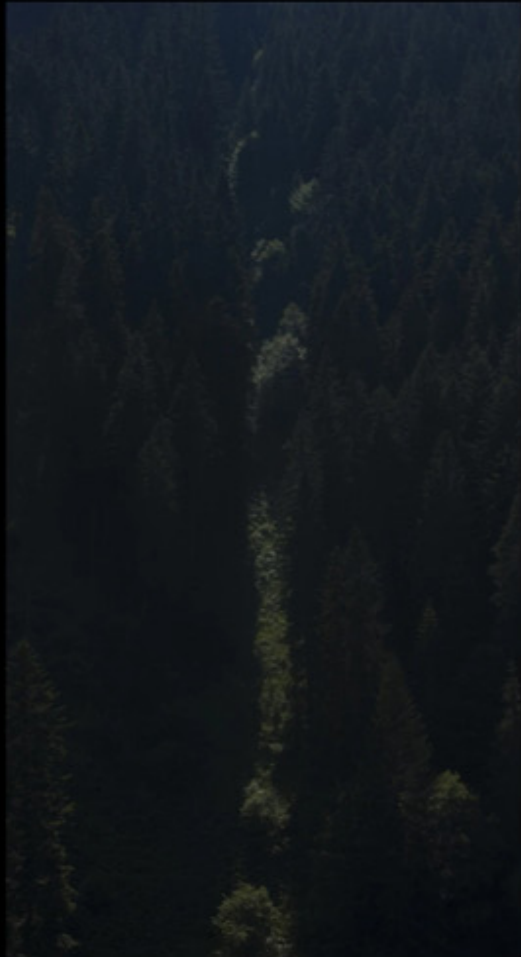
I asked my friend to find, without reading it, a letter from over 30 years ago which he had told me about once, and which had a fateful influence on his life.

“For me, the saddest thing was that it wasn’t signed.”

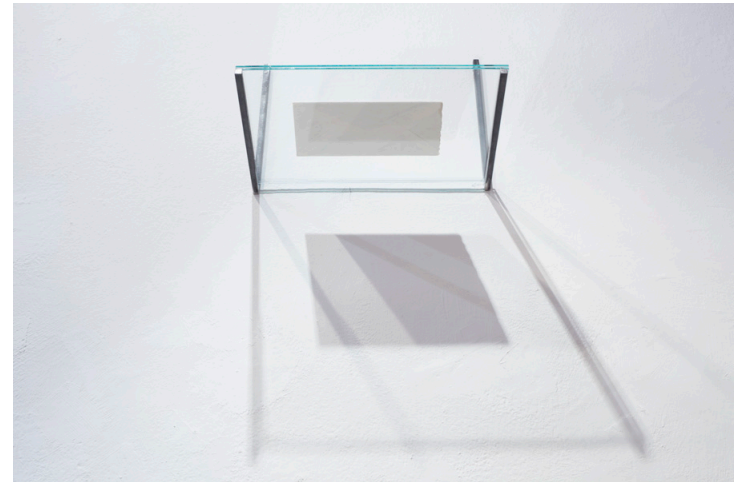
After three direct ascents (which were necessary to shoot all the scenes) off the regular path to the summit of a ridge where he works as a forester, he reads the letter again after all this time.

The present moment overlaps with the past in an altered context, after an exhausting journey through a space that he knows well.









'The Letter', donated original letter covered o with glass plates

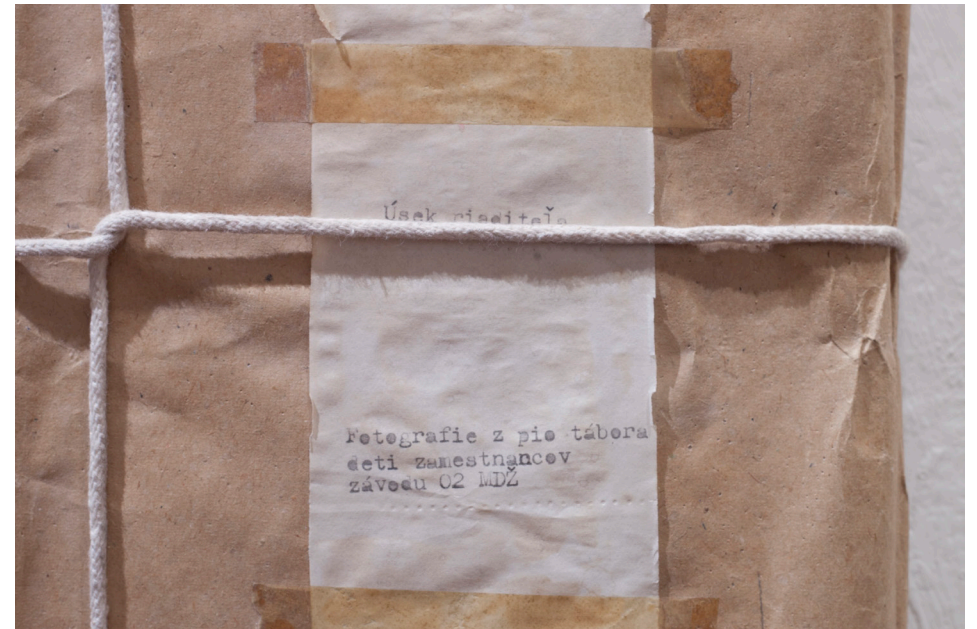


'I Woke Up In A Valley'

2 channel video installation 5 min 29 sec, sound, found object.

A boy enters the old railway station and sings a song to his favorite tune, describing a fictional valley.

The faded pictures on the walls from the communist era disappear in the glare of daylight coming from the other side of the hall. Square-paned windows shape the view of the sky outside like a painting.



Detail of the object that reads:

"Division of the director. Photographs from the pio camp of O2 MDZ manufacture employees children"



I'D BE AFRAID TO LEAP FROM THE PEAK

