



Communication Space Školská 28
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Gallery hours Tue – Fri 1pm-6pm (Tue till 7pm)

Butterflies in the Stomach

Tomáš Uhnák, Matěj Smetana

11. → 27.06.2012
opening 10.06., 6pm
closing 27.06., 6pm

This exhibition is an attempt to consider the possibilities of a kind of “remote therapy,” i.e., the mediation of psychological support, reassurance, tenderness, caring, and intimacy by means of audiovisual recordings distributed throughout the internet.

The artists proceed from the observations of a widespread phenomenon known as ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response). Here, they attempt to critically analyze this little explored internet phenomenon, but at the same time, attempt a parallel manifestation in the local context.

Smetana and Uhnák have consulted many experts in the fields of medical and psychological care, and asked them, without them actually knowing anything about ASMR, to create their own personal version of remote mediation therapy. Subsequently, the participants asked for their critical reflections on ASMR, as well as other possible solutions. The artists then attempted to realize these solutions.

The project consists of two parts: an audiovisual installation in the Školská 28 Gallery, and a YouTube channel set up by the artists to present and distribute videos created in connection with the project.

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response is a term that arose in 2010 to describe the reflexive physical and psychological sensations that come about from viewing a certain kind of video, usually found material, created for other purposes, such as technical manuals, instructions, and the like.

According to the owner of the ASMR channel Waterwhispers, the purpose of the videos is “as an aid for relaxation.” Symptoms present as “a calming, relaxing feeling and pleasant tingling in different parts of the head and the upper body - particularly the

shoulders and spinal cord.” ASMR sensations arise solely from exposure to certain sound or visual stimuli.

The creators of these videos advise the use of some stimulus, for example, tapping fingers, scratching, rustling or folding clothes, for ASMR. Also, frequent role-playing games, fictitious visits to the hairdresser or doctor, etc., together with a whispering and caring tone, are effective. The video camera, representing the viewer, provides professionally prepared questions, which are then answered.

Matěj Smetana graduated from FaVU VUT with doctoral studies at AVU. He is currently a lecturer at VŠVU in Bratislava. He creates in a variety of media, including objects, installations, and animations. His works often consider physical laws, and the viability of things and ideas.

Tomáš Uhnák is a graduate of AVU and member of the group P.O.L.E. He promotes Korean gastronomy (together with his father, he is author of the first Czech-language Korean cookbook) and culture. In addition to his work, often related to utopian constructs, he is actively engaged in other activities (Pro-AVU, Mánes Umělcům, etc.) and he also incorporates his culinary activities into an artistic context.



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