

Mycelium Project
tranzit.cz / Matter of Art
Press Release, September 30, 2021

The program for the development of community life in the Janov neighborhood of Litvínov continues with an October exhibition of drawings in the public space

Within the scope of the *Mycelium* project, many events and activities took place in September 2021 involving members of the North Bohemian cultural scene (the music group Gipsy G from Ústí nad Labem, creative workshops with regional artists, and so on). The program was prepared by artist and activist Bára Bažantová and anthropologist Lenka Podroužek Polčová, who moved to Janov for the month of September. The facilities for *Mycelium* were provided by the local socio-cultural center Libuše, on whose activities the project builds. The program continues in October with an exhibition in the public space featuring drawings by Michal Karvay, a promising student from the Janov primary school. The exhibition, which will be displayed on advertising columns around the city, will take place October 4–24. Polčová and Bažantová are also preparing a publication that will be released in spring 2022 comprising texts created in connection with the authors' stay in Janov.

Mycelium

Mycelium commenced on September 1, 2021, with many different events organized over the course of the month, including a video creation workshop, a trip to the zoo in connection with an art workshop, a Graffiti jam coupled with a concert by the hip-hop group Gipsy G, and a workshop with artist Laura Filáková. Dozens of children from the local community took part in the program. The organizers wanted the project to demonstrate the possibilities of collaboration between actors from different areas of civil society with the common goal of making culture accessible and sharing free time.

The project's administrator, the initiative for contemporary art tranzit.cz, which is dedicated to organizing various cultural activities, took on the role of the initiator and facilitator of the *Mycelium* project in Litvínov.

“We are not only interested in what art can do in galleries in big cities but also in what form it can take as well as how and in what language it can reach people in places where there are no galleries. We would like to use art to highlight the massive chasm and inequality in Czech society while also supporting the already existing ‘mycelium’ of a future, better, more solidary society,” says Tereza Stejskalová, program director of tranzit.cz.

For the project’s concept design and realization, tranzit.cz approached activist and artist Bára Bažantová. She had previously worked with the Brno House of Art and painter Šimon Sýkora to realize a similar project working with (not only) children from the Brno neighborhood of Cejl, which she continues to freely build on in her spare time in cooperation with the children’s parents. Bažantová invited Lenka Podroužek Polčová to participate in the project on the basis of their encounters in the Ramus Association – a platform for meeting and the active use of free time for young people with and without disabilities. By working together, *Mycelium* is further developing existing relationships and connections in the Janov community, which have been built over the long term by the association MY Litvínov through the activities of the Libuše community center. Libuše serves as a base for various cultural and civic activities during which its visitors themselves actively participate in its design and development.

Exhibition on advertising columns

Mycelium is entering its second stage with an exhibition of drawings by Michal Karvay entitled *Dyk more* (a phrase meaning “Hey, man” in the Roma language). Citizens and visitors of Litvínov will be able to encounter his drawings in an unusual setting – on advertising columns in several locations in the city center and the Janov neighborhood. The drawings were created during the art workshops that took place in September as a part of *Mycelium*. They will be on display from October 4 to 24, with the official opening taking place on Saturday, October 9 at 17:00.

Michal Karvay – Dyk more

Exhibition of drawings on advertising columns

Exhibition duration: October 4–24, 2021

Opening: October 9, 2021, 17:00 (in front of the Libuše center)

Appendix – profiles

Bára Bažantová

Barbora Bažantová (*1989) is a student of the Environmental Studio at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Brno University of Technology. She deals with themes of autonomy, social exclusion, and poverty, viewed from various angles. She uses text as her primary means of expression. In the past, she has been part of several collectives that functioned extra-institutionally, non-hierarchically, and independent of external funding, and she is currently active in the art-curatorial platform Fitness 3000 and as editor of the student magazine *Bublina*. She is an external collaborator of the Ramus Association, which has long been dedicated to the creation of new realities through the principles of radical social work.

Lenka Podroužek Polčová

Lenka Podroužek Polčová (*1991) is currently completing her doctoral studies in sociocultural anthropology at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University under the supervision of Tereza Stöckelová. Her field is at the intersection of artistic and ethnographic practices and the search for the possibilities/limits of interdisciplinary collaboration. During her master's studies, she explored the constitution of autistic subjectivity through an alternative therapeutic practice and, more generally, explored the limits of human beings, sociality, and the materiality of bodies on a neuroatypical basis. She is a member of the Ramus Association, which provided her with, among other things, her connection with fellow artist Bára Bažantová. She lives and works in Prague.

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Tranzit.cz is a contemporary art initiative which organizes exhibitions, discussions, and workshops and publishes books. It develops its activities in the Czech Republic (Prague, North Bohemia) as well as abroad. One of the topics tranzit.cz has engaged with over the long term is the accessibility of culture, the preservation of which is one of the conditions for the development of civil society. Tranzit.cz helps to cultivate the activities of artists, collectives, and organizations that strive to make culture accessible to audiences and actors from various communities who cannot afford cultural activities – whether due to time or material constraints (for example, parents of small children).

Socio-cultural center Libuše

The space for culture, music, art, learning, sustainable development, and mutual inspiration is found in the heart of the Janov housing estate in the town of Litvínov. The building has a rich history and previously served as a sanatorium, a city archive, and an institute for mentally-disabled women. The current owner is Petr Globočník, a member of the municipal government of Litvínov and chairman of the association MY Litvínov. During his campaign, Globočník promised that if elected, he would move to Janov. As a newly-elected representative of Litvínov do toho! (a coalition formed by the Green Party, the Pirate Party, and independent candidates), he is gradually making good on his promise, renovating the building that had been falling into disrepair. Together with a team of colleagues, he wants to turn Libuše into a community center where locals and visitors can meet with mutual respect, and where visitors themselves can participate in the development of the space. Globočník's inspiration for his vision comes from similar community projects in the nearby German state of Saxony. A program of meetings, lectures, projections, and other activities is already taking place at Libuše today.

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