

# Final report from the residency

Date: 21. – 30. 07. 2024

Venue: Valdštejnská lodžie, Jičín

Project: In search of a bird

Participants: Theresa Schrezenmeir, Frieda Gawenda

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## OBJECTIVE OF THE RESIDENCY

In the residency we were aiming for the first steps of creating a musical object theatre around five fragmentary short stories of Franz Kafka, namely: Poseidon, Prometheus, The little ruin dweller, The wish to become an Indian and The whirligig. The basic idea was to search for the child-like, romantic or sentimental and somehow anarchistic and funny moments of Kafka's prose which is so often perceived as only dark and fatalistic. We therefore were thinking of diverse children's toys as the scenographic realm. We planned to gather scenic material, choose the included objects and find a dramaturgical order as well as dealing with the text material with a musical approach.

## CONTENT AND PROGRESS OF THE RESIDENCY

Generally, we worked each day around 8 hours, except for Sunday which was the departure day, where we were mostly occupied with documenting of the results, packing and cleaning. Theresa Schrezenmeir left in the early afternoon of June 30 due to a long way back.

We arrived on the evening of June 20, 2024 (people of Lodžie were so nice to let us arrive one night early). We started early on June 21 by sorting and reviewing the scenographic elements we had brought, as well as the chosen texts and musical instruments. We decided on a large table and two differently sized and shaped fish tanks (see pictures below) as the basic stage structure. We wanted the scenography to also include the instrumentarium. Synthesizers, microphones, various types of piezo pickups, loop machines, etc., were incorporated into the basic stage setup. Our approach to the objects/protagonists of the different "acts" was minimalistic and metaphoric. Many of the objects used reappear in different scenes with different functions, symbolizing various aspects of the texts. Objects used include, for example: marbles, figurines, different-sized whirligigs, a fish-shaped balloon, covering foil, various types of paper, and cardboard, etc.

A big part of the rehearsal time span was taken by working with the text material. Since these short prose texts are not particularly scenic, we tried to approach them through breaking them open, using just phrases and fragments of the text, working with the text visually, using the rhythm of the text as musical material, associating own texts or an acoustical sphere for the texts. This was definitely a quite intriguing, somehow very intuitive and new way of textwork and revealed many interesting outcomes that we want to investigate

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further. During the residency we managed to create a tableau or scene and much text and musical material for each of the chosen texts. Definitely a solid base to finalise the piece in September in another planned rehearsal period in Germany.

## THE SPECIFIC BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES OF THE RESIDENCY

First, we have to mention our residency space Valdštejská Lodžie. The friendliness, openness, trust, freedom, spontaneity and infrastructure that are provided here are extraordinarily amazing! Many last-minute changes from our side were answered with ease and friendliness. Everything we asked for was made available and always someone was reachable for our requests. Space and technical infrastructure are outstanding. This atmosphere creates a huge freedom in working. The dramaturgical exchange with the residency was mostly theoretically through small conversations with the hosts throughout the residency, feeding our process very well. Short visits to the rehearsal space conveyed trust and friendly curiosity. Living conditions were also beyond belief luxurious. Next to being so welcoming, Lodžie and its environment is such an inspiring and calm place overall. We think we experienced the best working conditions imaginable.

Concerning the artistic benefits: our cooperation was quite fruitful and inspiring so far, we found ourselves with quite similar or rather complementing taste and ways of working with objects and texts. So far, we just cooperated in musical contexts. Having been given the opportunity for extensive theatrical work together is a long-time dream come true and we are very thankful to Nová síť and ART-IN-RES program, also for the very easy, friendly and very cooperative communication beforehand.

## FUTURE VISION

As said before we are thrilled to continue working in autumn, widen our common artistic language and finalise this performance to show it in Germany and Czech Republic in the future. The different scenes need refinement, the dramaturgical bow is not quite built yet, lighting is only provisional so far. Luckily another funding by the Czech-German Fund for the Future makes further rehearsing in Germany as well as showings in Czech Republic and Germany possible.

## CONCLUSION

We are very satisfied with the outcome of the residency. As a first step, these ten days in Jičín were quite productive thanks to the support given by Nová síť and Lodžie. Since this rehearsal period was the very beginning of the project, we cannot provide Nová síť more than photographs at the moment. We will keep you updated about further developments of the project. Thank you very much!

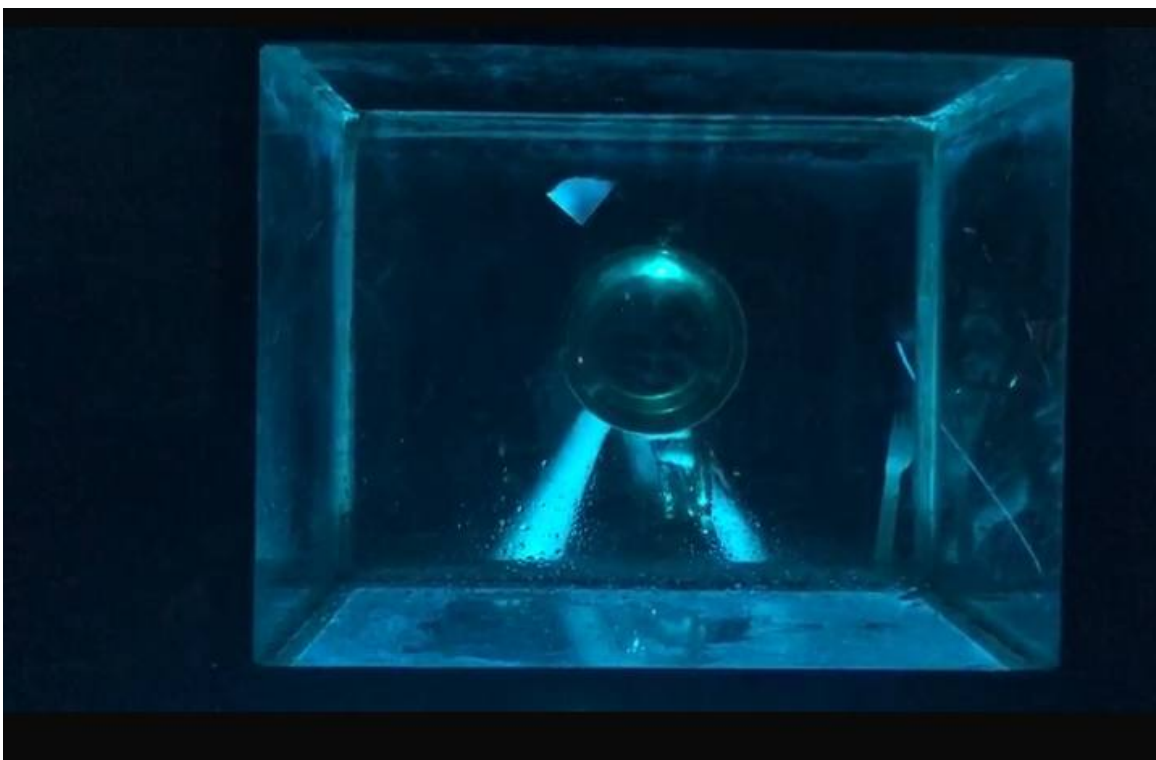
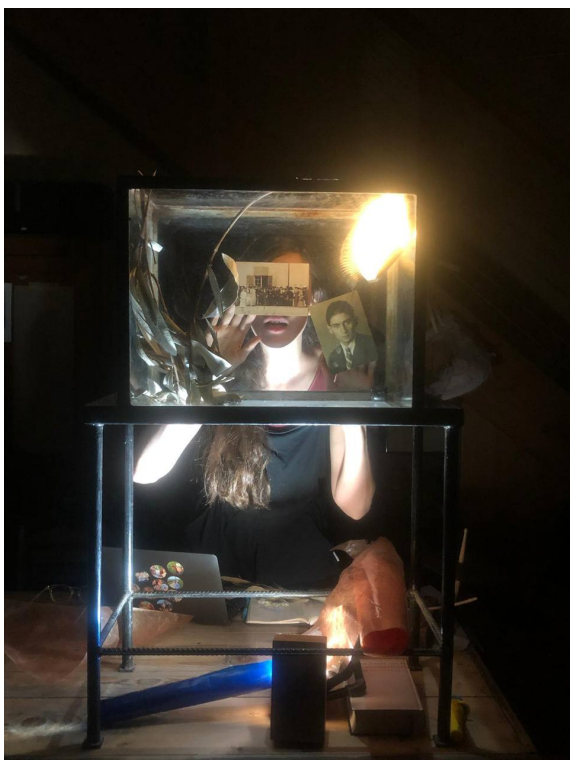
30. 6. 2024  
Frieda Gawenda

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