

## KEYSTONE

Antonín Jirát

Curated by Jen Kratochvíl

Opening: March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016, 6 pm

part of the outdoor installation series ProLuka – openair gallery in Vršovice,  
Prague 10 / between the streets Krymská and Moskevská tram stop Ruská

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EXT CAVE - NEW ROCK

Moonwatcher comes face to face with the New Rock when he leads the tribe down to the river in the first light of morning. He had almost forgotten the terror of the night, because nothing had happened after that initial noise, so he does not even associate this strange thing with danger or with fear. There is nothing in the least alarming about it.

It is a cube about fifteen feet on a side, and it is made of some completely transparent material; indeed, it is not easy to see except when the light of the sun glints on its edges. There are no natural objects to which Moonwatcher can compare this apparition. Though he is wisely cautious of most new things, he does not hesitate to walk up to it. As nothing happens, he puts out his hand, and feels a warm, hard surface.

After several minutes of intense thought, he arrives at a brilliant explanation. It is a rock, of course, and it must have grown during the night. There are many plants that do this - white, pulpy things shaped like pebbles, that seem to shoot up in the hours of darkness. It is true that they are small and round, whereas this is large and square;

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but greater and later philosophers than Moonwatcher would be prepared to overlook equally striking exceptions to their laws.

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The earliest technological moment of the human race; the humanoid picks up the bone from the ground to be his first tool – to be his first weapon – only to throw it up to the heavens in a sign of triumph.

The material itself does not matter; bone, branch; transparent crystal structure, cold metal surface, polystyrene, heat, a touch of something completely unknown and at the same time instantly familiar. The conflict of consciousness.

The observer of the moon is the first of people to turn their gaze to heavens, to the undiscovered and the new horizons.

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The keystone, transmitting the pressure of the vaulted ribs, keeping up the static equilibrium of the curve. The keystone effect, also known as the tombstone effect, correction of the image projection that is not right–angular, correction of the angle distortion. They keystone, the basic element of the illusion of the coherent society structure.

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The air transport of the future is suspiciously stabilized since the '70s. Concord is a dream of the past to which we persistently return, yet cannot achieve. With the fervour of the boarding controls after 9/11 everything got a little complicated. Watching films from the '50s and '60s, where people drive to their planes by car is now like watching yet another old sci-fi. EasyJet and other low-budget airlines have simplified it for us financially and we were only glad to give up our comfort. In the years (and in the flights) to come, we will go even further with plans for vertical seating and doing away with the possibility of having carry-on luggage on board - the one that would fit all the necessities for a short trip. After all, for those kinds of flights you should only need your passport, phone with boarding pass and your laptop. There is no space to waste.

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After all, the Czech art scene is still a bit isolated. But even 'we' are slowly getting into a jet-set mode. Curators' trips from one side of the world to the other in search of the 'new' artists, the ones we missed in magazines and endless e-flux newsletters. Artists' trips to residencies and exhibitions, wherever possible. Whether to the edge of Prague, to Brno or to Amsterdam is irrelevant.

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The Monolith, a crystal cube in the original Clarke and Kubrick's scenario, allowed our ancestors to understand and use the resources from their natural surroundings.

Antonin Jirát's *Monolith* momentarily opens a window to our utopias – “it's only a plane that landed in Vršovice.” A fragment of an aircraft, a fragment of visions and ideas, expected, unfulfilled, planned, fragile. A wedge made of material susceptible to climatic conditions, accessible and offering itself to the public; a running time of gradual entropy. We will no longer read the unknown object as a new rock, grown overnight in a vacant lot. At the first glance it looks like an intervention in the public space, if you know anything about the context of local exhibition activities - or, while riding by in the tram, you just consider it a peculiarly placed billboard. It takes a little faith and imagination, an innocent gaze of a prehistoric man (or an informed contemporary art viewer, a special closeness) to attune to its role. Would the plane in Vršovice inspire to throw 'bones' up to the heavens? Would Jirát offer us an opportunity to reconsider our jet-set mode? Or our expanding internationalization? Or will you book a flight at once - to the city with an exhibition that you read about yesterday?

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unsurely in front of his band.

Though he is a veteran of numerous combats at the water's edge, One-Ear has never been attacked by an enemy who had not first displayed his fighting rage; and he had never before been attacked with a weapon. One-Ear, merely looks up at the raised club until the heavy thigh bone of an antelope brings the darkness down around him.

The Others stare in wonder at Moonwatcher's power.

Moonwatcher surveys the scene. Now he was master of the world, and he was not sure what to do next. But he would think of something.

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