



Eva Koťátková: Out of Sight

May 22 – July 26, 2015



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For her installation *Asylum* shown at the 2013 Venice Biennale, Eva Koťátková arranged numerous small sculptures, paper cutouts of masks and limbs, and illustrations from medical textbooks on a large pedestal. For an hour every day, performers provided an uncanny human presence by poking heads or arms into the cage-like metal structures from inside the plinth. Based on the artist's ongoing visits to the Bohnice Psychiatric Hospital outside of Prague, the work illustrated an assortment of patients' delusions, phobias, and fears, as well as people's struggle to communicate. All of these are recurring motifs in Koťátková's work. The artist—who was born in Prague in 1982 and spent part of her childhood under the totalitarian regime of the former Czechoslovakia—takes as her central theme the individual's relationship to normative social structures and institutions, such as the government, school, the family, and the hospital. While frequently appearing grotesque, Koťátková's work often also strikes a poetic or darkly humorous note. Along with Czech Surrealism and Absurdist fiction, the artist counts slapstick and Charlie Chaplin among her sources of inspiration. Throughout her work, she gives form to the invisible, disciplining force exerted by rules, conventions, and rituals.

For the exhibition *Out of Sight* at the List Center, Koťátková is creating several new groups of works building upon her signature visual vocabulary. An obsessive collector of historical books on psychology, medicine, and social science, the artist culls from these sources time and again for her collages and drawings. Floating on white or black backgrounds, some of these new works depict blindfolded people tangled up in strings, animals with human heads, and people stuck to rocks or vases.

When entering the first room, a tabletop installation displays an enlarged model of human teeth with braces, dental and medical instruments, as well as typed pages. The latter recount fragments from a semi-fictional story of a small girl who hid a message describing her misery and worries in her braces. A constructed corridor that leads from one gallery space to another contains smudges and scratches on the walls that function as ominous traces of imaginary past events. From a spot within the wall, an audio recording plays back a secret conversation between two children. They talk about their anxiety induced by the hallway, fears of their own inner worlds, and frightening imagery they see around them at all times.

Three human-scale, metal sculptures installed in the center of the gallery were modeled on book illustrations of old animal traps. One of them called "Out O'Sight" was especially evocative to Koťátková; advertised for being nearly invisible when placed, it lends its name to the exhibition as a whole. Many of the artist's earlier welded works are also structures of entrapment, harking back to antiquated orthopedic appliances, outmoded restraints for mental patients, or medieval torture devices. And yet, "I am not pointing...to some drastic imprisonment or actual physical violence," she has said, "but rather to the invisible, mental cages that we carry in ourselves supported by inner fears, anxieties, or those that others build around us because we do not fulfill society's expectations."

Hayden Gallery May 22 – July 26, 2015

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Eva Koťátková (b. 1982, Prague) lives and works in Prague, Czech Republic.

Eva Koťátková: Out of Sight is curated by Henriette Huldish, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Public Reception and Conversation with the Artist Thursday, May 21, 5:30–8 PM

- 5:30 PM Conversation between artists Eva Koťátková and Anicka Yi, and curators
Henriette Huldish and Alise Upitis
Bartos Theatre, E15 Lower Level
- 6 PM Reception
Upper Atrium and galleries

Family-Friendly Workshop and Tour Saturday, June 13, 12–4 PM

- 12 PM Kinetic Collage Workshop
- 2 PM Public tour

Film Screening Saturday, June 20

- 2 PM Bartos Theatre, E15 Lower Level

In *Titicut Follies* (1967), director Frederick Wiseman examines the treatment of patients at Bridgewater State Hospital, a facility in southeastern Massachusetts where psychiatrists and psychologists evaluate individuals charged with or convicted of crimes. Introduced by Henriette Huldish.

Curator's Tour Thursday, June 25

- 6 PM Hayden Gallery, List Center

SUPPORT

Eva Koťátková: Out of Sight is supported by the Council for the Arts at MIT, the Office of the Associate Provost at MIT, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the MIT List Visual Arts Center Advisory Committee, the Friends of the List, and Meyer Riegger.



MIT List Visual Arts Center
20 Ames Street, Building E15
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COVER *Anatomical Orchestra*, 2014, mixed media installation, dimensions variable
Installation view, Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin

INSIDE *Untitled*, from the series *Not how people move, but what moves them*, 2013,
collage on black and white photograph, 12 x 18 in.
Wilhelm Otto & Followers Collection

Both courtesy Meyer Riegger, Berlin and Karlsruhe, and Hunt Kastner, Prague



MIT List Visual Arts Center