

EXCURSION

Katarzyna Depta-Garapich/
Kasia Garapich



Excursion

The brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) is the most widely distributed species of bear in the world. Historically, the species covered the whole European continent including Britain, Ireland and Sicily. However, due to human expansion, the range of bears has been limited to areas less accessible and far from human settlements. In Western Europe, there are currently only isolated populations in the mountainous regions of the Cantabrian Mountains, Pyrenees, Apennines and Alps. In Eastern Europe, the most numerous is the Carpathian bear population, including a small number of brown bears that live in the Tatra Mountains in Poland and Slovakia.

At the beginning of the 20th century, bears in the Tatras were almost completely exterminated. They fell prey to the hunting aristocracy, as well as to local poachers. Nevertheless, thanks to their curious nature and the efforts of humans, the bears have returned. Although the brown bear is a living, real creature – it is not easy to encounter and for many it may be more of a fairy tale beast that belongs in the realm of myths and stories from the world of fantasy, than to the natural world. In the region of Podhale in Southern Poland, the pronoun ‘he’ (curiously never ‘she’) was commonly used to refer to the bear. Substituting the name of the animal with the pronoun had animistic and magical features, connected with superstition as well as with the anthropomorphisation of its image. At the same time, the bear became infantilized which is symbolised by the popularity of the ‘white bear’ mascot that entertains tourists on the main street of Zakopane, Poland. The place of the white bear in popular culture is therefore a case of role rever-

sal where wilderness is tamed, and humanity made infantile.

In *Excursion*, artist Katarzyna Depta-Garapich approaches the theme of the brown bear in the Tatra Mountains through its popular culture alter ego represented by a ‘white bear’. As part of the project, Depta-Garapich made a white bear costume and climbed the most difficult mountain trail in the High Tatras, recreating the routes used by local brown bears. The white bear costume refers to the mascot, a person dressed as a white bear that is providing entertainment for tourists while simultaneously side-lining the real bear. The resulting work takes the form of a multi-channel video installation. Viewers are invited to take part in the *Excursion* through adopting many points of view, watching the projections of the Tatra landscape and the climbing white creature. By focusing on the bear, the artist wants to direct our attention to the impact of humans on the environment, the use of animals in tourism promotion and its negative impact on nature.

Excursion is part of the artist’s practice-led doctoral project that took place between 2017-2023 at the Slade School of Fine Art University College London. In her PhD, Katarzyna approaches the problem of protecting nature and endangered species and our relationship with non-human beings. The body of work created as part of the artist’s project is positioned within the debate around the ecological and ethical issues resulting from the impact of humans on nature, our own fears and anxieties and place within natural systems to which we belong. The work includes bronze casts of brown bear claws taken from the specimen at the Tatra Museum incorporated into casts of artist’s fingers and toes and drawings on archival family photographs.



Claws, bronze, performative objects, dimensions variable, 2022



Claw, bronze, 9cm x 2,5cm x 2cm, 2022



Trophy, bronze, fur, 24cm x 8cm x 7cm, 2022



Hands, bronze, fur, 24cm x 16cm x 7cm, 2023



Hands, bronze, fur, 24cm x 16cm x 7cm, 2023



Hands, bronze, fur, 24cm x 16cm x 7cm, 2023



Hands, bronze, fur, 24cm x 16cm x 7cm, 2023



Feet, bronze, fur, 25cm x 13cm x 15cm, 2023



Feet, bronze, fur, 25cm x 13cm x 15cm, 2023



Feet, bronze, fur, 25cm x 13cm x 15cm, 2023

White Bear, performance costume, sheep skin, thread, 2021





White Bear, performance, Tatra National Park, Poland, 2021



Excursion, five screen video installation, 8'20" loop, HD, sound, aspect ratio 16:9, exhibition view, Watermans Art Centre, 2023



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Excursion, performance, video still, 2021 <https://youtu.be/DkdC7Y9hghQ>



Excursion, performance, video still, 2021 <https://youtu.be/DkdC7Y9hghQ>



Excursion, performance, video still, 2021 <https://youtu.be/DkdC7Y9hghQ>



Family Album, drawing on giclee print, black and white markers, 30cm x 30cm (50cm x 60cm framed), 2021-2022



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Family Album, drawing on giclee print, black and white markers, 30cm x 30cm (50cm x 60cm framed), 2021-2022



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Postcard from Zakopane, drawing on found image, animation still, 2021 <https://youtu.be/DXVWG57ACMM>

Claws, giclée print on fine art photo paper, 75cmcm x 50cm
edition of 5 + 2AP, 2023





Trophy, giclee print on fine art photo paper, 100cm x 150cm unframed, edition of 5 plus 2 AP, 2023



Diptyque, two giclée prints on fine art photo paper, 75cm x 50cm, edition of 5 + 2AP, 2023

BIO

KATARZYNA DEPTA-GARAPICH / KASIA GARAPICH

<https://katarzyna-depta-garapich.com/>
instagram @kasiagarapich
Tel 0044 7725941355
Email: kasiagarapich@gmail.com

Katarzyna Depta-Garapich is a visual artist born in Poland, living and working in London. She works across various media including sculpture, performative gestures and video, site specific installations and drawing. Her recent body of work explores mythmaking in family storytelling positioned within the debate around the ecological and ethical issues resulting from the impact of humans on nature. She is fascinated by the absurd and finds inspiration in situations, stories and objects that deviate from the 'norm', are non-obvious or occupy a place on the border of worlds.

Katarzyna is graduate of art history at Jagiellonian University Kraków (1999), sculpture at the Wimbledon College of Art (BA 2010) and Slade School of Fine Art (MA 2012) in London. She is in the final stages of a practice-led PhD at the Slade (2017-2024). The artist's doctoral project is devoted to the relationship between nature, art and society. In her project, she uses *ferality* as artistic strategy and the costume of the *white bear* as a metaphor for the relationship between humans and non-human beings. The project was partly carried out in collaboration with the Tatra Museum and the Władysław Kenar School in Zakopane

and supported by Polish Cultural Institute London and Malcolm Hughes and Jean Spencer research bursaries from the Slade.

Katarzyna is a recipient of the prestigious Gessel Foundation for the Zachęta National Art Gallery Scholarship 2023 (Poland). In 2022 she received Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize for student entry for drawings from *Family Album* series.

Recent exhibitions: *Ferment*, CU AT SADKA, Kraków, Poland (2024); *NOW INTRODUCING*, Studio West Gallery, London, UK (2023); *Mothers!*, with Małgorzata Markiewicz, Centre for Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor CRICOTEKA, Kraków, Poland (2023); *Excursion*, Watermans Art Centre, London, UK (2023); *...You Ate Three Hundred Devils #2*, with Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Skala Gallery, Poznań, Poland (2023); *Claw*, Goethe Institute, Kraków, Poland (2022); *...You Ate Three Hundred Devils #1*, with Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Tatra Muzeum Zakopane, Poland (2022); *Juemai, Objects in Dialogue*, Antoni Miralda Foodcultura Barcelona (2021); *Melancholia*, Freud Museum, London (2020); *Matter of the Anthropocene*, Centrala Gallery, Birmingham (2020); *Simple Gestures*, BWA Katowice, Poland (2020); *Re-Domesticated*, Grymsdyke Farm, Buckinghamshire (2019); *Handiwork*, Władysław Hasior Gallery, Zakopane, Poland (2019); *Near Thing*, APT Gallery, London (2018).

Selected residencies: Tatra Museum, Zakopane, Poland (2019); Grymsdyke Farm, Buckinghamshire, UK (2019); Grizedale Arts, Coniston, UK (2014). In 2015 Katarzyna curated Karen Guthrie and Grizedale Arts project *House of Ferment* for ArtBoom Festival, Kraków, Poland.

CV

KATARZYNA DEPTA-GARAPICH / KASIA GARAPICH

<https://katarzyna-depta-garapich.com/>

instagram @kasiagarapich

Tel 0044 7725941355

Email: kasiagarapich@gmail.com

EDUCATION

2017-2024 PhD, The Slade School of Fine Art UCL

2012 MA Fine Art Sculpture, The Slade School of Fine Art UCL

2010 BA Fine Art (First Class Hons) Sculpture, Wimbledon

College of Art University of Arts London

1999 MA History of Art, Jagiellonian University Kraków, Poland

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2023 Gessel Foundation for the Zachęta National Art Gallery Scholarship

2022 Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize for Student Entry

2022 - 2019 Malcolm Hughes and Jean Spencer Memorial Bursaries from the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL, London

2019 Polish Culture Institute London grant support for *Re-Domesticated* residency and exhibition at Grymsdyke Farm

2018 London Arts and Humanities grant support for attendance and research paper at European Artistic Network Inter Nation conference in Dublin, Ireland

2018 London Arts and Humanities grant support for *Arte Util Working Group* at Calthrope Project, London

2015 Arts Council England Grants for Arts award for *House of*

Ferment ArtBoom Festival, Kraków, Poland (lead artist together with Karen Guthrie); project was also supported by grants from Polish Culture Institute London and Kraków Festival Office (KBF)

SOLO AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2023

Excursion, Watermans Art Centre, London, UK

Mothers! with Małgorzata Markiewicz, Centre for Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor CRICOTEKA, Kraków, Poland

...You Ate Three Hundred Devils #2, with Małgorzata Mirga - Tas, Galeria Skala, Poznań, Poland

2022

Claw, Goethe Institute, Kraków, Poland

...You Ate Three Hundred Devils #1, with Małgorzata Mirga - Tas, Władysław Hasior Gallery, Tatra Museum, Zakopane, Poland

2019

Comfort Zone, Second Colleex Workshop, Cieszyn, Poland, supported by Malcolm Hughes Research Bursary and the Jean Spencer Memorial Bursary

Re-Domesticated: Katarzyna Depta-Garapich and Poppy Whatmore, Grymsdyke Farm, Buckinghamshire, UK

Handiwork, with Małgorzata Markiewicz, Władysław Hasior Gallery, Zakopane, Poland

2015

Unexpected Encounters: Katarzyna Depta-Garapich and Stanisław Wejman, Belmacz Gallery, London, UK, supported by Polish Culture Institute

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

2024

Ferment, CU AT SADKA, Kraków, Poland

2023

NOW INTRODUCING, Studio West Gallery, London, UK

Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize 2022, ArtHouse Jersey, St Mary, Jersey

A Body A Part, APT Gallery, London, UK

2022

Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize 2022, Trinity Buoy Wharf, London, UK

Planetary Ferment, the Showroom, London, UK

Objects From the Misanthropocene, Octagon Gallery, UCL, London, UK

SPIIIINELESS, UCL Art Museum, London, UK

Broadcast, University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland

2021

JUEMAI IV Objects in dialogue, interactive, multidisciplinary project with Antoni Miralda Food Cultura, Barcelona, Spain

2020

Melancholia, Freud Museum, London, UK

Matter of the Anthropocene, Centrala Gallery, Birmingham

Simple Gestures, BWA Katowice, Poland

2019

Matter of the Anthropocene, Mathare Art Gallery, Pamoja Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya

Visions of Protest. Blake the March, The Slade School of Fine Art, UCL, London, UK

Sharing Borders, The Slade Research Centre, UCL, London, UK, supported by London Arts and Humanities Partnership

2018

Arte Util Working Group, Calthrope Project, London, UK, supported by London Arts and Humanities Partnership

Near Thing, APT Gallery, London, UK

Little Clown, My Heart, Arthouse1, London, UK

2015

Village Table, Coniston Institute, Lake District, Cumbria, UK

House of Ferment, Science Gallery, London, UK

House of Ferment, ArtBoom Festival Kraków, supported by Polish Culture Institute London, KBF and Arts Council England

2012

In Paradisum, Richmix Cinema, London, UK

Threadneedle Prize, 2012 Mall Galleries, London, UK

Subject to Change. Perspectives from UK Based Polish Artist, Kursaal Space, Southend on Sea, UK

VIDEOOOOOH, Slade Research Centre, London, UK

Polish Contemporary Artists-Film Screenings, Richmix Cinema, London, UK

2011

Deep Cuts/Last Measures, Stephen Lawrence Gallery, Greenwich, London, UK

Print and Design Now! SW1 Gallery, London, UK

Jerwood Drawing Prize 2011, selected by Iwona Blazwick, Rachel Whiteread and Tim Marlow, London, UK

2010

Volume and Void, Wimbledon College of Art Sculpture Studio, London, UK

Taking a Line for a Walk, Sculpture Project Space Wimbledon College of Art, selected and curated by Soraya Rodriguez YPA, Metal Gallery, Southend-On-Sea, UK

RESIDENCIES

2023-2024 Tatra Museum, Zakopane, Poland

2019 Grymsdyke Farm, Buckinghamshire, UK

2019 Tatra Museum, Zakopane, Poland

2013-2014 Henrietta Barnett School, London, UK

2013 Artist Re-orientation Residency Grizedale Arts, Lake District, Cumbria, UK

2011 Merz Barn, Lake District, Cumbria, UK

CONFERENCES AND SELECTED TALKS

2023

Situated Knowledge, speaker; Post-Dependence Studies Centre, Mikołaj Kopernik University, Poznań, Poland

Excursion, artist talk and films screenings, Watermans Art Centre, London, UK

Katarzyna Depta-Garapich in conversation with Joy Sleeman, Watermans Art Centre, London, UK

2022

Making Artistic Research Public, speaker; EARN European Artistic Network, The University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland

Inheriting the Family, speaker; *Storytelling: Intangible Inheritances*, Oxford Brookes University, UK

In Focus: Young Poland Today, speaker; *Young Poland* exhibition at William Morris Gallery, London, UK

2021

Post Research Condition, speaker; EARN European Artistic Network, Utrecht, Netherlands

2020

Art and The Rural Imagination, speaker; Arts University Bournemouth and The Tree Houses, New Forest, UK

2019

The use-ful-less-ness of the experiment. Anthropology and the Assembly of the Unexpected, speaker; Second Colleex Workshop, Cieszyn, Poland

Sharing Borders, co-organiser; Slade School of Fine Art UCL

2018

Inter-Nation, speaker; EARN European Artistic Network, Grad Cam, Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin, Ireland
Impacts of Gender Discourses, Polish Politics, Society & Culture, speaker; SSEES, UCL, London, UK

2014

In Search of Public Space, seminar and book launch of *Where the Beast is Buried* by Joanna Rajkowska, speaker; SSEES, UCL, London, UK; hosted by eMigrating Landscapes

PUBLICATIONS

2023 *Teddy Bear or Bear - and does it matter at all? Emilia Chorzępa talks with Katarzyna Depta-Garapich*, Art/Conversations/Environment, Czas Kultury, Nr 17/2023

<https://czaskultury.pl/autor/katarzyna-depta-garapich/>

2023 *Family Album*, images and text for Czas Kultury, volume on human-animal relationships, summer edition.

2022 *Miś: White Bear from Zakopane*, text in *Art and the Rural Imagination*, published by More Than Ponies and Arts University Bournemouth

2022 *Ghost from the Mountains*, cover image and text for *Siggi Le Magazine de Sociologie*, L'Esprit Libre, SODEC, Quebec, Canada, Autumn

2022 *Three Sisters. Practices of Usership*, The Slade Press, UCL, London