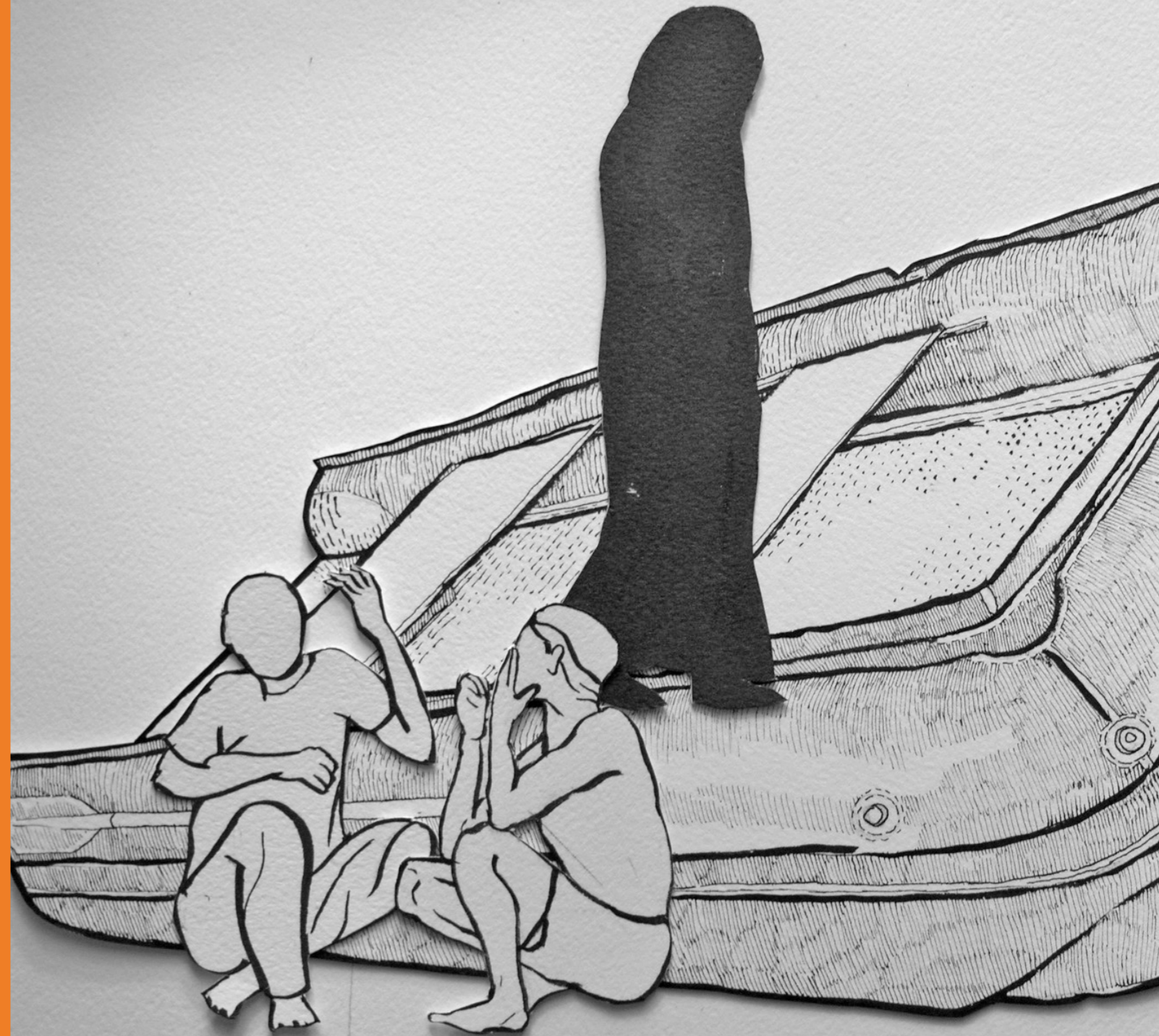


# LONGINGS



LENKA HOLÍKOVÁ

# LONGINGS





# dialog city

## DIALOG CITY

### A HOLISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS A DIGITAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Digital transformation is more of a mindset than a purely technical innovation. Hence the overall goal of this project proposal is to create a socially inclusive, environmentally friendly, and economically sustainable urban digital environment.

By developing new practices on how to connect digital innovation directly to citizens' physical participation, DIALOG CITY aims at contributing to increase access to culture through a dialogical approach. Co-creation is at the core of our project idea encompassing a CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM for the cultural heritage sector and an innovative design thinking toolkit on FUTURES LITERACY. Three HYBRID FESTIVALS serve as physical and digital cultural platforms to reach diverse audiences.

An ART FOR PUBLIC RESIDENCY PROGRAMME invites artists to develop ideas for urban interventions dealing with local or global topics that are of great significance for the respective urban society based on participatory approach.

The CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM is a web tool to archive all kinds of data-based objects of various citizen groups, direct engagement and mediation with the audience in the interpretation, communication and presentation of cultural heritage will be widened.

The creation of a FUTURES LITERACY toolkit and the subsequent implementation of workshops by trained artists, the methodology has outstanding potential to give citizens and stakeholders a compass in the face of the increasing complexity of our globally interconnected world.

DIALOG CITY builds partnerships between small and medium-size cities in five European countries – Austria, France, Germany, Greece and Italy - based on collaboration comprising city museums, city archives, cultural organisations, urban activists, social architects as well as training facilities.

This way, it includes different viewpoints and creates the basis of humane digitization and ongoing 'user engagement'. And it enables a sustainable network where creative solutions are continuously developed in the most diverse areas of society.

# LONGINGS

This is the title of the second DIALOG CITY ART FOR PUBLIC RESIDENCY, featuring visual artist Lenka Holíková. Her artistic practice primarily delves into themes of migration and borders, which resonate deeply with her personal background; she grew up in a border region during the era of East-West division.

In recent years, her focus has broadened to encompass migration as a more expansive subject. Holíková's work connects research with artistic production, now focusing on migrant narratives closely tied to the City of Graz.

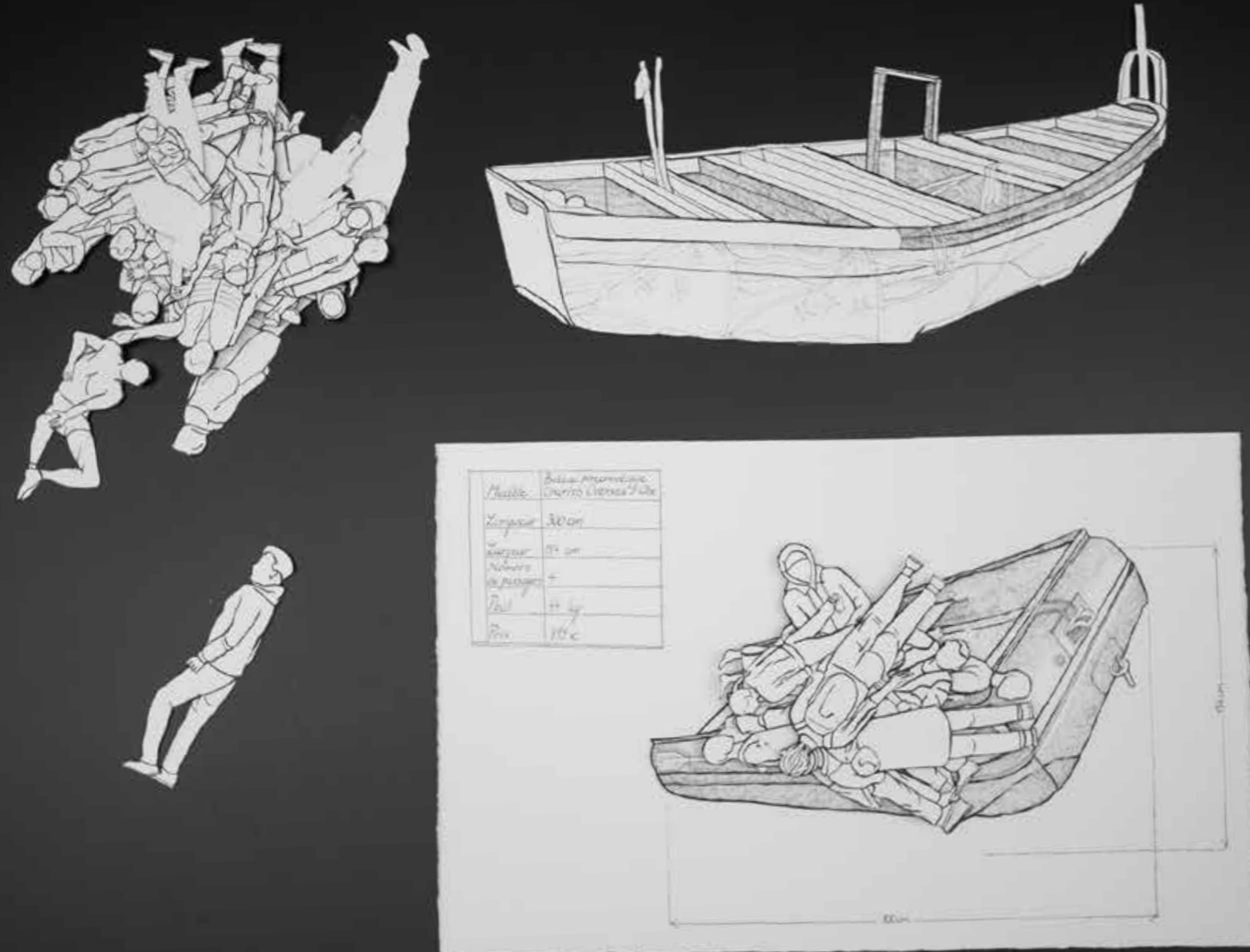
The issue of forced migration remains a pressing concern in Central Europe, particularly in Austria, which serves as a key transit hub for migrants and refugees fleeing conflict, persecution, or economic hardship. Austria's complex historical relationship with migration - shaped by its past during the Austro-Hungarian Empire and more recent experiences during the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s - continues to influence current attitudes and policies regarding migrants.

Additionally, the rise of populist and nationalist movements has fuelled anti-immigrant sentiment, resulting in stricter immigration policies and heightened social tensions surrounding integration efforts. Media portrayals often emphasize negative aspects of migration, shaping public perception and instilling fear among local populations.

Ongoing conflicts in regions such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Africa are driving waves of forced migration, highlighting that this phenomenon is not an exception but a global and ongoing reality. These crises place significant pressure on European countries to respond effectively, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address the influx of migrants.

Economic disparities between nations further exacerbate these migration flows, fuelling debates about labour market impacts and resource allocation within Europe. It is essential to recognize the moral imperative to address the needs of those fleeing violence, hunger, lack of prospects, or persecution.

This challenge complicates the balance between humanitarian obligations and national or local interests, emphasizing that migration is a shared global responsibility that requires collective action. And empathy!





# LOCAL ASPECTS OF MIGRATION

## GRAZ, AUSTRIA

Lenka Holíková addresses forced migration through her art. Selected for the Artist Residency in Graz 2024 in March 2024 from 31 fully-fledged applications, Holíková's concept resonated with us due to her commitment to engaging in open dialogue with individuals to retell their personal stories through her artwork and create visibility around their experiences.

Migration has significantly shaped Graz throughout its history; since industrialization began in the mid-19th century, immigration has contributed to population growth in the city. Since the 1960s, people from Southeast Europe and Turkey have settled in Graz, followed by migrants from Asia, Africa, and America since the 1990s. Recent conflicts in the Balkans, Middle East, and Ukraine have also brought refugees to Graz.

From May to mid-June 2024, Lenka Holíková served as Dialog City Artist in Residence in Graz. During this six-week period, she worked intensively on her exhibition „Longings,” which opened as part of the Hybrid Festival on June 8. Collaborating with local associations JUKUS, Chiala, and Ridna Domivka allowed her to connect with refugees residing in Graz who were willing to share their migration stories.

Through several interviews, she collected deeply emotional narratives that informed her artistic creations. The three associations represent Graz's diversity and commitment: JUKUS promotes exchange and social participation; Chiala fosters connections between individuals with and without migration experience, while Ridna Domivka supports Ukrainian refugees.

At the exhibition opening on June 8, Lenka presented her artworks alongside insights into the stories she had gathered and her creative process. The exhibition was displayed at the Graz Museum until early September 2024 and attracted over 480 visitors. The objects showcased will become part of the museum's collection.

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PORTUGALIA  
ARABIA

### LONGINGS

### SEHNSÜCHTE





# A TERRITORIAL POLITICS OF AFFECTION

**ULISES MATAMOROS ASCENCIÓN, ARTIST AND CURATOR**

Lenka Holíková was born in Cheb, a small border town in former Czechoslovakia located just seven kilometres from Germany. Although she was only five years old during the Velvet Revolution, echoes of communism and the Iron Curtain continue to resonate throughout her life and work;

history does not fragment into a 'before' and 'after.' Its effects are both proactive and retroactive; they persist within human psyches across generations, shaping behaviours and emotions alike.

The border landscapes and dense forests imprinted in her earliest memories evoke a constant unease, a weight she has never been able to leave behind. This restlessness prompted her voluntary nomadic exile as she sought new cultures that would challenge her thinking and transform her creative process. Paradoxically, physical distance brought her closer to her Czech roots; despite attempts to escape existential angst, it reappears within her artistic work as an unavoidable echo.

What began as an investigation into communist-era repercussions soon expanded into contemporary migrations' complexities. Her artistic practice draws from a personal archive built through research transformed into visual dialogues about historical crises interconnecting past with present - microhistory with macrohistory - and intertwining personal narratives with political contexts.

Using travel as a tool for displacement has allowed Lenka to forge deep connections with communities encountered along her journey, creating networks of affection reflected within her work.

Through drawing, installation, photography, and video art forms, Holíková explores themes of belonging while inviting reflection upon physical barriers dividing us all; she first addresses migratory phenomena through individual microhistories before challenging metanarratives that define border discourses—creating spaces that suspend these barriers while advocating for a territorial politics rooted firmly within affection itself.

Her project LONGINGS, developed collaboratively alongside Graz Museum staff members exemplifies this philosophy permeating every aspect found throughout Holíková's oeuvre: connecting research directly back towards artistic production via testimonies shared by migrants arriving at Graz due solely because forced displacement necessitated such journeys

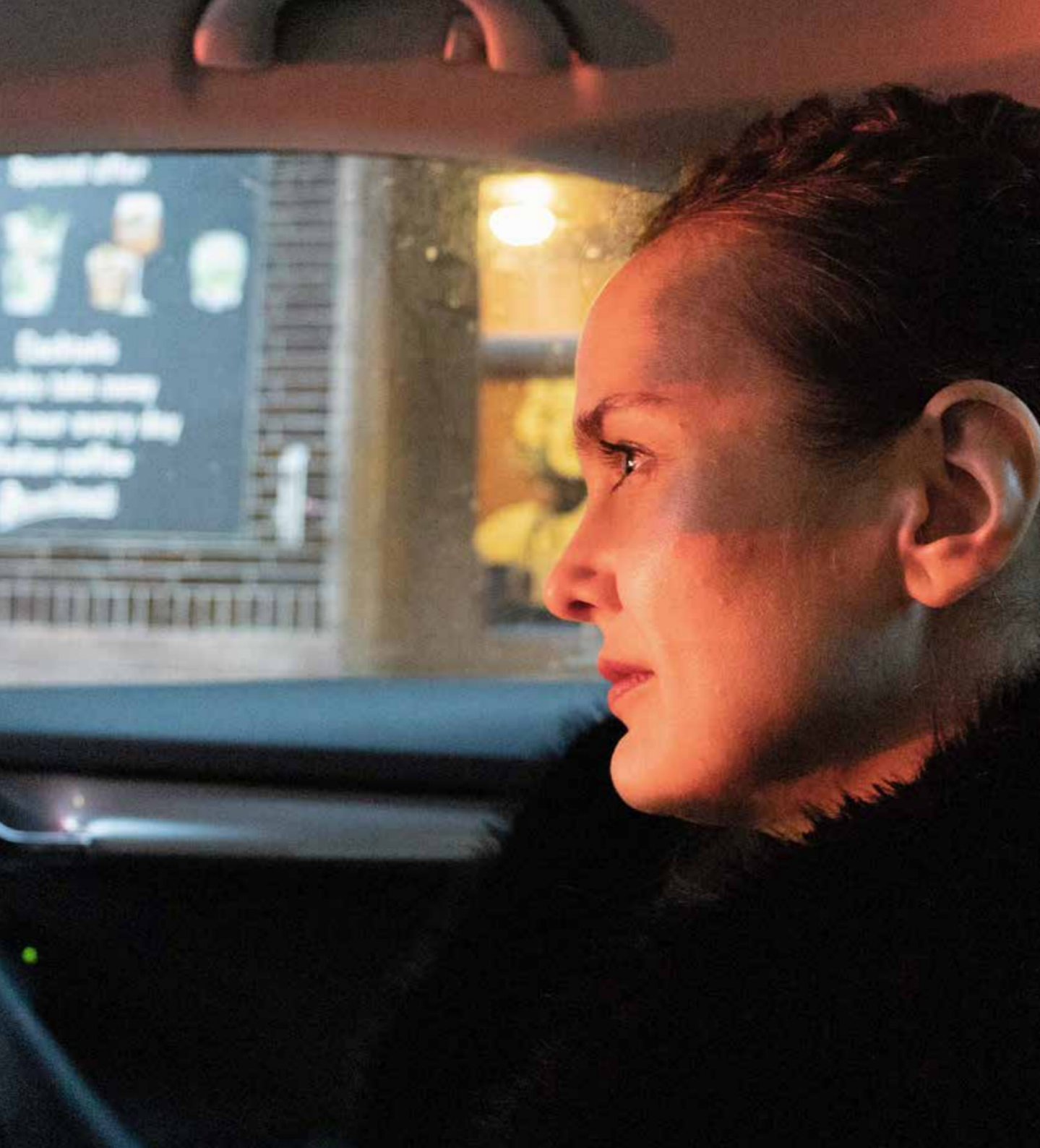
undertaken away from home seeking safety instead, a reminder underscoring how 'no one leaves home unless it's necessary'. Transforming these testimonies into visual metaphors invites viewers alike into participating actively within creation processes themselves, a deeply human endeavor striving towards transcending borders through empathy coupled alongside artistic reflection alike.

Through this body-of-work created thus far, Holíková seeks unification between local and global realms whilst bridging intimate and collective experiences together connecting official histories alongside subaltern voices alike: every space worked becomes part-of-home; every person shared time becomes family within artistry itself!

By challenging notions surrounding borders and the binaries that define identity versus otherness, as well as belonging versus exclusion, her practice transforms itself. It becomes a bridge that spans worlds separated both geographically and culturally. Yet, despite these separations, it emphasizes our shared common humanity.







**LENKA HOLÍKOVÁ**

# THE ARTIST

Born in Czechia in 1984, Lenka is a visual artist, illustrator, and university educator. She earned her master's degree in Fine Arts from Hradec Králové University in 2011. In 2024, she was selected for prestigious artist residencies, including the Schiesslhaus AiR programm in Germany and Dialog City in Austria.

In 2023, Lenka participated in notable residencies such as The Other Edges of the World at MeetFactory in Prague, Hablarenarte in Madrid, Ukraine's Artistic Response to the Russian Invasion in Lviv, and Ateljé Stundars in Finland. She was also chosen for the National Fund for Culture and Arts' Program for the Promotion of Cultural Projects and Co-investments in Mexico as part of the working group "Limit of What Belongs."

Lenka has received awards for her work, including recognition from the Ministry of Culture in Puebla for her project „Sin sYembra.“ Her exhibitions in 2024 include „The Borders Burn“ at Zwitschermaschine in Berlin, „Limit of What Belongs,“ curated by Michel Blancsubé in Santa Inés Ahuatempan, Mexico, and „Über die Grenzen“ in Segovia, Spain. She has participated in various group exhibitions such as „Graphic Popular and Contemporary“ at Espacio 14 and „1989“ at MPAC MinEastry of Postcollapse Art (Oregon, USA). Her solo exhibitions include „Frontiers: Methods of Escape“ at Arte Mare (Finland) and „In the Realm of Memory“ at Galería Garco.

In 2023, Lenka conducted an art workshop at Norra Korsholms skola with support from Korsholms kommun. She has attended several seminars and workshops focused on critical studies and artistic techniques. Additionally, Lenka illustrated Jiří Orten's poems for Piacca Salgari Milano and collaborates with Mexican artist Ulises Matamoros. She is actively involved in the Chasen Thajni community space project located in Mixteca Poblana.

[www.lenkaholikova.com](http://www.lenkaholikova.com)

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