

## **Jakub Jansa**

is an artist working in various media ranging from film to sculptural elements, installations and live performances. His practice crosses the boundaries of genres from drama to absurd comedy and employs fiction, humour and elements of the grotesque to develop complex exhibition environments that tell stories about today's social struggles. His exhibitions tend to merge with the architecture of the spaces they inhabit. They are reminiscent of film or TV sets, where the narrative gradually unfolds through a carefully designed dramaturgy of various elements (video, objects, live action), while we – the visitors – move through the space.

Jansa has presented his works in Tel Aviv, New York, Basel, Strasbourg, Prague, Zagreb and Ljubljana, among others, and is the recipient of the 2021 Jindřich Chalupecký Award. In 2017, after several works dealing with the topics of manipulation and self-development (Spiritual Fitness), Jansa launched Club of Opportunities, an episodic project starring hybrid human-vegetable creatures that questions authority and cultural and class relationships. The latest, eighth episode of the Club, has been commissioned for the Flower Union exhibition organised by the National Gallery in Prague as part of the Czech Presidency of the European Council in 2022.

### **Selected Solo shows**

2021, Shame to Pride, Mocvara Gallery, Zagreb, HR  
2020, Matter of sensitivity, Porthcimka museum, Prague, CZ  
2019, Ten Years Night, Mihelic's Gas Station, Ljubljana, SLO  
2018, The Club at PAF, Pioneers Works, New York, US  
2018, Britannica Bootcamp, CAAC, Strasbourg, FR  
2018, Keeping in Line NoD, Prague, CZ  
2018, My name is Red Herring, Fotograf Gallery, Prague, CZ  
2017, The Club: Bowling Bar, Hunt Kastner, Prague, CZ

### **Selected Group shows**

2023, Flower Union, National Gallery Prague, CZ  
2022, Flower Union, EU Council, Brussels, BE  
2021, 34th Ljubljana Biennial, Ljubljana, SLO  
2021, Jindřich Chalupecký award, Brno, CZ  
2020, Spiritualities, Meetfactory Gallery, Prague, CZ  
2020, Sanpaku Eyes, Espai Tactel, Barcelona, Spain  
2019, Stumbling Through the Uncanny Valley, CCA, Tel-Aviv, IL  
2019, Healing 2.0, Meet Factory Gallery, Prague, CZ



**CLUB OF OPPORTUNITIES**  
Episode 8: Opening Ceremony

Rada Evropské unie, Brusel, Belgie, 12. 7.–31. 12. 2022  
Národní Galerie, Praha  
Opening Ceremony, 10 min, 4K video, 2022

A film directed by Jakub Jansa, created for Flower Union exhibition produced  
by National Gallery Prague, as part of Czech Presidency of European Union 2022, 10min, 4K

What happens inside a floral puget during an important political meeting? Maybe flowers are  
not only decorative, beautiful and even more beautifully smelling. But what if they could be  
more proactive and get involved in issues of global proportions?





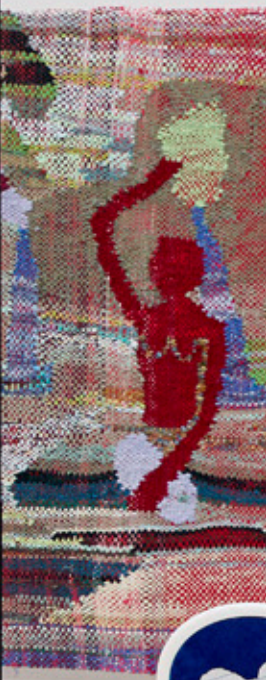
By the way here is also  
the almighty Seer,

the almighty Seer,  
the almighty Seer,





You my dears  
can be the new generation  
of active flowers;



**CLUB OF OPPORTUNITIES**  
Episode 7: Shame to Pride

(1) Jindřich Chalupecký Award  
September 24, 2021 - 30/1/2022  
Moravian Gallery, Brno  
(2) Močvara Gallery, Zagreb  
October 26-28 2021



The 7th episode of the Club was made for the Jindřich Chalupecký Award 2021 exhibition. It portrays Celeriac again in a surprising situation: he has symbolically moved up within the vegesociety and been invited into Avocado circles. However, he cannot relate internally to this new social class and, despite the respect he has earned, feels no sense of belonging with anyone around him. At the same time, he has already broken ties with his home environment. He experiences an intense feeling of rootlessness and the only thing that can help is a coming out of his class.













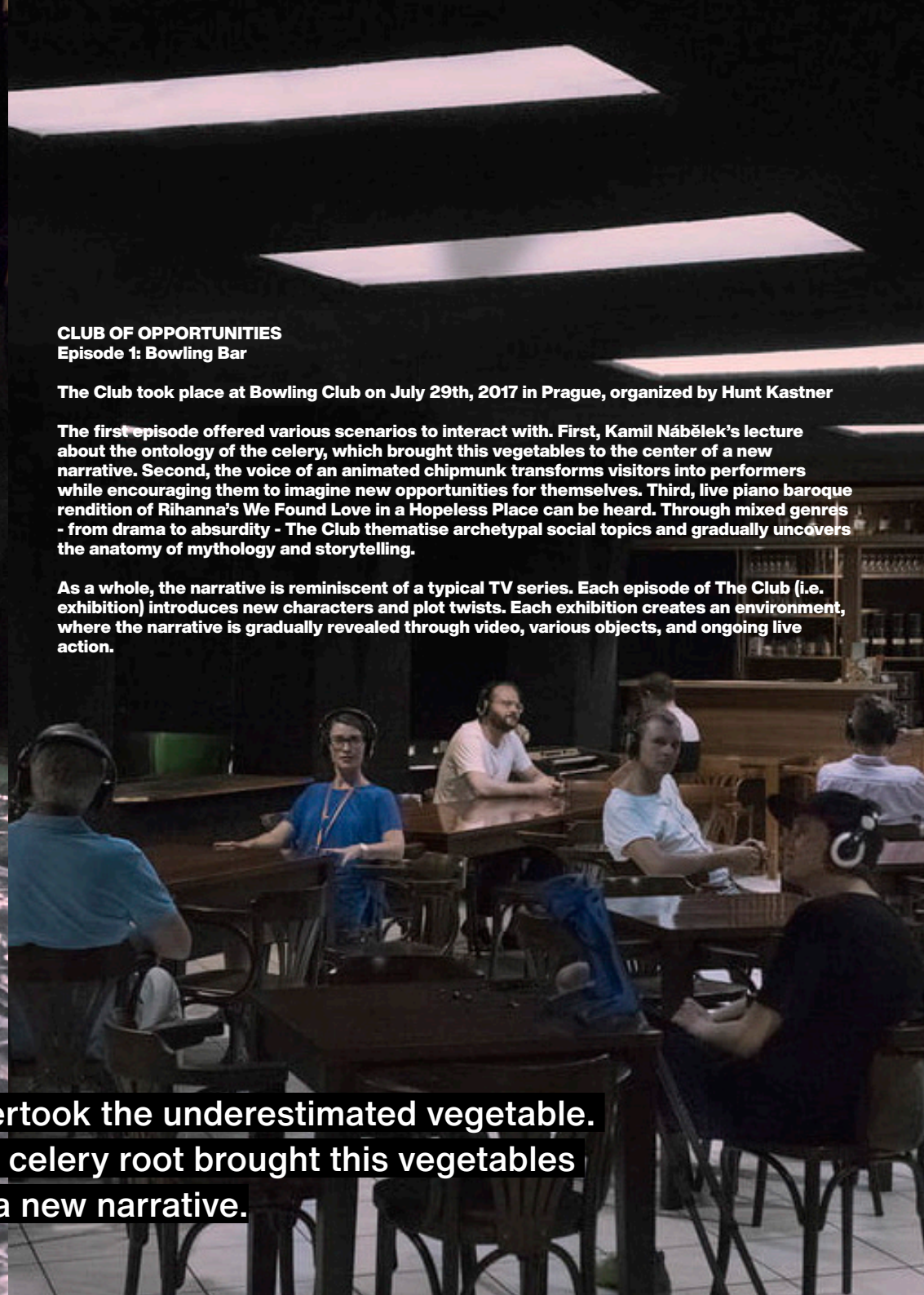
**First, philosopher Kamil Nábělek undertook the underestimated vegetable. His lecture about the ontology of the celery root brought this vegetables to the center of a new narrative.**

## **CLUB OF OPPORTUNITIES** Episode 1: Bowling Bar

The Club took place at Bowling Club on July 29th, 2017 in Prague, organized by Hunt Kastner

The first episode offered various scenarios to interact with. First, Kamil Nábělek's lecture about the ontology of the celery, which brought this vegetables to the center of a new narrative. Second, the voice of an animated chipmunk transforms visitors into performers while encouraging them to imagine new opportunities for themselves. Third, live piano baroque rendition of Rihanna's We Found Love in a Hopeless Place can be heard. Through mixed genres - from drama to absurdity - The Club thematise archetypal social topics and gradually uncovers the anatomy of mythology and storytelling.

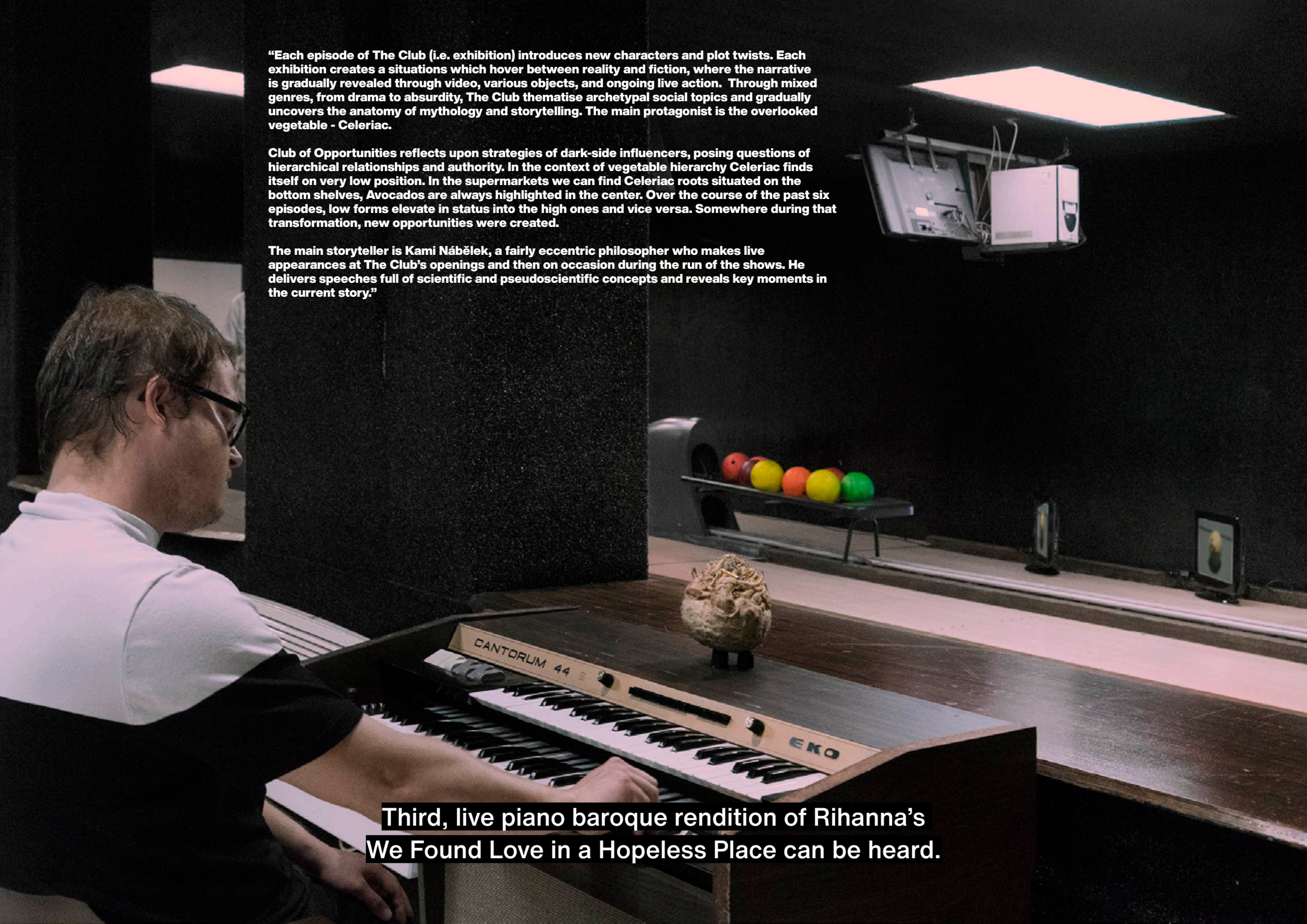
As a whole, the narrative is reminiscent of a typical TV series. Each episode of The Club (i.e. exhibition) introduces new characters and plot twists. Each exhibition creates an environment, where the narrative is gradually revealed through video, various objects, and ongoing live action.



“Each episode of The Club (i.e. exhibition) introduces new characters and plot twists. Each exhibition creates a situations which hover between reality and fiction, where the narrative is gradually revealed through video, various objects, and ongoing live action. Through mixed genres, from drama to absurdity, The Club thematise archetypal social topics and gradually uncovers the anatomy of mythology and storytelling. The main protagonist is the overlooked vegetable - Celeriac.

Club of Opportunities reflects upon strategies of dark-side influencers, posing questions of hierarchical relationships and authority. In the context of vegetable hierarchy Celeriac finds itself on very low position. In the supermarkets we can find Celeriac roots situated on the bottom shelves, Avocados are always highlighted in the center. Over the course of the past six episodes, low forms elevate in status into the high ones and vice versa. Somewhere during that transformation, new opportunities were created.

The main storyteller is Kami Nábělek, a fairly eccentric philosopher who makes live appearances at The Club's openings and then on occasion during the run of the shows. He delivers speeches full of scientific and pseudoscientific concepts and reveals key moments in the current story.”

A man with glasses and a white shirt is seated at a dark piano, playing. The piano has "CANTORUM 44" and "EKO" written on it. A celeriac root sits on the piano's surface. In the background, a shelf holds several colorful fruits (red, yellow, orange, green). A television screen is visible on the wall to the right, and a bright light fixture is mounted on the ceiling.

Third, live piano baroque rendition of Rihanna's We Found Love in a Hopeless Place can be heard.

## CLUB OF OPPORTUNITIES

Episode 2: April showers bring May flowers

Venue: Pioneer Works, New York  
Curator: PAF & Alexander Campaz  
Date: November 20th, 2018

Venue: AMU Gallery, Prague  
March 14 - April 4, 2018

If we wanna put it simply - It's the story in which the character of SEER (Oracle) feels anxious in this world. She looks for a way to be more active in forming the surrounding world and herself. We witness the SEER touching every individual celery root and getting them tattoo with positive predictions - or functions. She is trying to realize her own ambitions and desires for hope.

The collaborative exhibition of Jakub Jansa and Karolína Juříková is the second part of a series whose pilot version originated as an invitation to Jansa's own Club of Opportunities. The bowling bar became the setting for a seminar devoted to the ontology of celery for all the senses.

In this new, narrative episode featuring Karolína Juříková, our intrepid heroes relocate beneath the arched ceilings of GAMU for an initiatory séance of young stalks, their hag watching from backstage, where bodies flagrantly transform with the promise of a new beginning. An old sage rambles from her ritually refurbished throne, her avuncular visage showing signs of new hope. Through the rejuvenated language of folk verbiage, we call for a new spring of shared imagination.



When I'm frustrated,  
it helps me to talk about it.





The character of SEER (Oracle), who has no vision of the future anymore and feels anxious.

**CLUB OF OPPORTUNITIES**  
Episode 3: My name is Red Herring

Venue: Fotograf Galery, Prague  
Date: March 20 - April 14, 2018  
Curator: Jiří Ptáček

The character of Red Herring, a hybrid creature between a human and a celery, is introduced. And now he's revolting against the origin that gave birth to him, so he is revolting against the Seer. He discovers that this mythology is simply a storytelling. By taking control of this storytelling, he is able to steer it in a different direction. So from his safe place, inside the myths, he enters a battlefield and wrestles on a political level. He is individualizing himself and becoming dark-side influencer.



**The character of Red Herring, a hybrid creature between a human and a celery, is introduced.**



**And now he's revolting against the origin that gave birth to him, so he is revolting against the Seer.**

**CLUB OF OPPORTUNITIES**  
Episode 4: Britannica Bootcamp

Venue: CEAAC, Strasbourg, France  
Date: September 20 - October 28, 2018,  
Curator: Elodie Gallina

Oh yes! We're here. This is the fourth episode of The Club of Opportunities. We're in the middle of a story which started a little bit earlier, let's say in some mythological proto-form and maybe



**Other celerists are shocked by Red Herring's acting,  
but they don't know how to react.**

the story is only starting to show itself. We don't know yet.

Other celerists are shocked by Red Herring's acting, but they don't know how to react. That's why they are looking for help.

They are based in the department called Britannica Bootcamp, reminding us of a hybrid of training camp and library. Soo, on which page to start, hm?





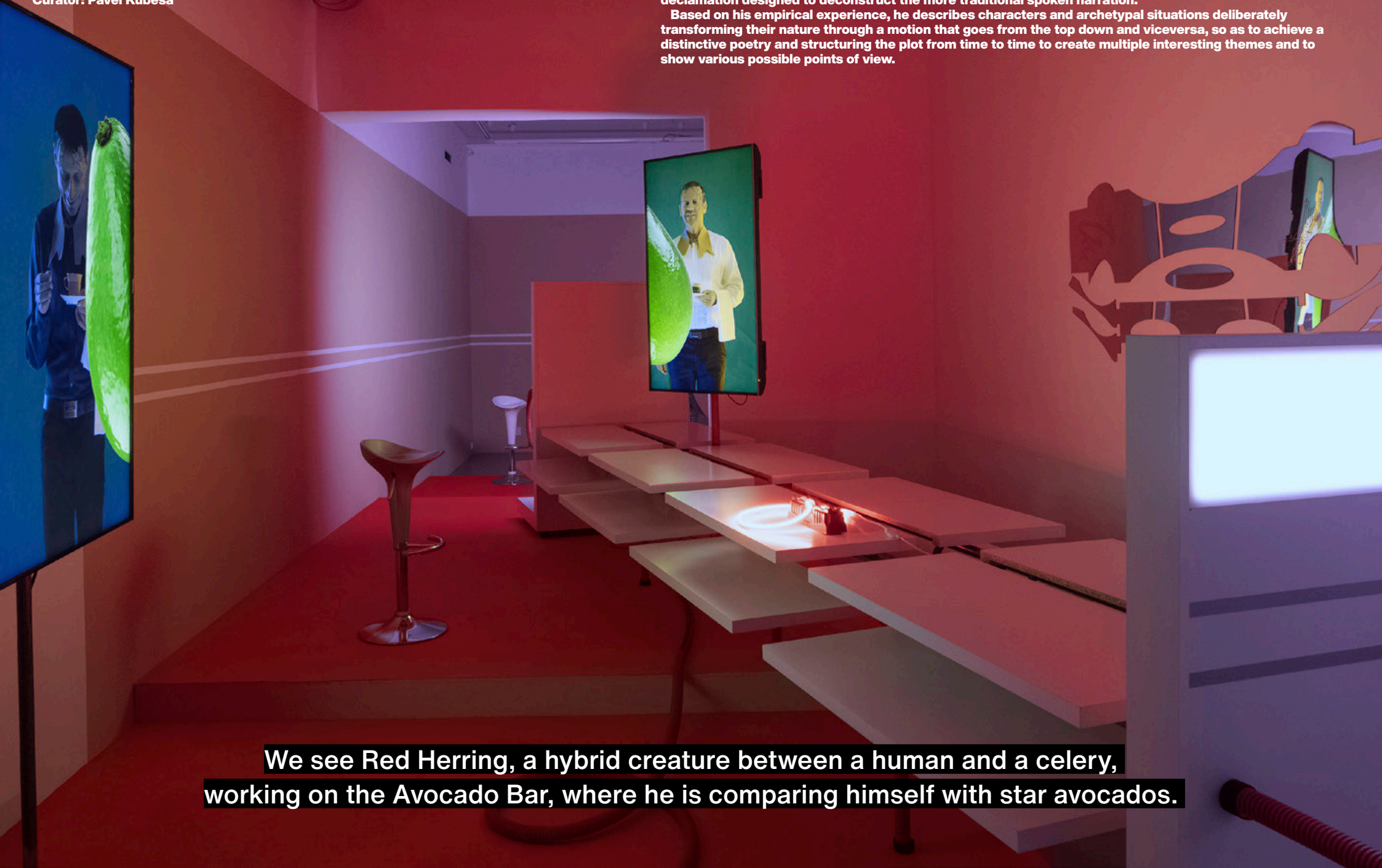
**CLUB OF OPPORTUNITIES**  
Episode 5: Keeping in Line

Venue: NoD Gallery, Prague  
Date: 23. 10. - 26. 11. 2018  
Curator: Pavel Kubesa

Red Herring is here ready to fight against himself in a cerebral and almost videogame-y “mise en scène” centred around his own two battling personalities, each constantly trying to take control of his attitude towards the outside world.

His poetry, seemingly twisted and dreamlike, is based on expanded and elaborate metaphors and his language, carefully structured and polished, turns out to be intentionally rhetorical, a sort of subversive declamation designed to deconstruct the more traditional spoken narration.

Based on his empirical experience, he describes characters and archetypal situations deliberately transforming their nature through a motion that goes from the top down and viceversa, so as to achieve a distinctive poetry and structuring the plot from time to time to create multiple interesting themes and to show various possible points of view.



**We see Red Herring, a hybrid creature between a human and a celery, working on the Avocado Bar, where he is comparing himself with star avocados.**



He wants to become a part of higher veggiesiety.  
During that he must undergo an insulting duel with his inner self.

The sixth iteration of an immersive multi-channel art project that explores polyphonic ideas about the nature of reality in the 21st century, albeit with a silent twist. Instead of bombarding viewers with overly didactic wall labels and long convoluted texts, the video installation is composed of narrators who debate the nature of reality from the perspective of a celery root.



**CLUB OF OPPORTUNITIES**  
Episode 6: Ten Years Night

Venue: Fotopub Project Space  
at Mihelic's Gas Station, Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Date: September 26 - October 29, 2019  
Text: Dorian Batycka

**He reveals key moments in the current story.**



"In Czech culture, however, we have an absolutely crucial problem - MÁCHA. Everyone wants to have their own Mácha. There simply cannot be a history of Czech literature without Mácha. And so a whole series of Máchas have appeared before our historical eyes." In this case, Mácha functions in a similar way to the personality of Karel Gott, symbolizing the "atmosphere of the times" across Helena Třeštková's time-lapse documentaries. Putna describes several examples of ideologically tinged views of Mácha's personality and work: he distinguishes a nationalist, surrealist and revolutionary Mácha, a materialist Mácha and a diaristic lecher, and, in contrast, a Catholic Mácha. Jans' video-essay visually benefits from these ideological appropriations and demonstrates how easy and decent it is to "dress" one's hero in a preconceived interpretive and ideological costume. The video presents Mácha in the form of a fashion show, for which a special collection of clothes was designed by designers Karolína Juříková, Vojtěch Bašta, Zdeněk Marek and Kristýna Lovasová.

**THE MÁCHA, 2022**  
10min, 4K short film

Jakub Jansy's video-essay does not deal with K. H. Mácha on a biographical level, nor does it search for the key features of his work. It focuses on his role as a symbol that permeates modern Czech history. During his lifetime, Mácha published only one work, *Máj*, the rest were published posthumously. Many times more extensive than his own work is the work of literary scholars and theorists. They often treat Mácha's legacy and personae with a period-recognisable ideological handwriting. Through these theoretical works, we have the opportunity to uncover the key demands and motives for the reactivation and reinforcement of the poet's legacy as a symbol. The subject of the video-essay is the text by M. C. Putna *Whose is Mácha?* Some material for a critique of ideological criticism from 1993. Putna says:



**IT'S SO PHYSICAL**  
(6-channel video, full HD)

Venue: Meetfactory Gallery, Prague  
Date: 25. 5. - 16. 8. 2020  
Curator: Tereza Jindrová

34th Ljubljana Biennial, Ljubljana, SLO, 2021



Commissioned by MeetFactory for Spiritualities show including artists Jakub Jansa, Melanie Bonajo, Priscilla Telmon & Vincent Moon

Jansa deals uniquely with collective trauma, using exaggeration and playfulness. Simultaneously, he diverts the theme of spirituality onto another path. An absurd tale about a fictitious conspiracy of tapeworms, who narrate the story, raises a sarcastic eyebrow at the idea that "leaving the body is so fucking easy today". In the background, then, remains a question we each must ask ourselves: how do we want to, and how can we experience authentic connection with the world around us and achieve inner transformation while remaining aware of the daily material reality of all of those bodies

