





# Jakub Jansa

Works with film, installation and performance.

Explores issues of hierarchy and class.

Jakub Jansa is an artist with a distinctive approach to combining film, installation, and performative elements.

Through a nuanced and reflective sensibility, his work raises questions about the mechanisms of social structures and the ideologies shaping them.

His exhibition series with the umbrella title *Club of Opportunities* reflects dynamics of class issues and power hierarchies in a way that is poetic yet intellectually provocative.

In his work, Jansa blends fiction, humor, and elements of the grotesque with contemporary leftist theories. He creates imaginative environments that expose the fragile and illusory nature of social systems we live in.



# WHEN CELERY DECIDES TO BREAK THROUGH THE GLASS CEILING

“A visual artist, Jakub Jansa has been working on a rather unique art project for several years. Exactly according to the opening motto of his new book mapping the *Club of Opportunities*, he “settled into the comfort zone of his mind” and began to develop the fates of several fictional characters through his

Text by Jan Bělíček:

A visual artist, Jakub Jansa has been working on a rather unique art project for several years. Exactly according to the opening motto of his new book *Club of Opportunities*, he “settled into the comfort zone of his mind” and began to develop the fates of several fictional characters through his installations with the help of theorist Kamil Nábělek. At the very beginning there was allegedly a miniature budget for the new project, for which Jansa bought ten celery roots and called the theorist Kamil Nábělek to see if he knew how to use them creatively. The eccentric thinker Nábělek immediately began to develop a theory of celerist ontology and to talk about the hierarchies of vegesociety. At the very bottom of this hierarchy is the unattractive and neglected celery root. The admired and praised avocado works as its complete opposite. These are the two poles of the social hierarchy between which this whole art project moves. Why celery root and avocado?

Celery root is one of the most overlooked crops in Nábělká's ontology. People often consume it only as an obligatory component of meals. It is an ingredient that is necessary in most dishes, but aesthetically it is almost

nonexistent for us. It doesn't taste unique on its own, there is no special story built around it as an important superfood, and its appearance doesn't promise anything fantastic either. We don't usually think about the taste and aroma of celery root, even though its contribution to the final enjoyment of a meal is often irreplaceable. Its presentation in supermarket chains is very simple, and proper celery root is sold covered in layers of soil, which signifies its freshness but also clearly defines its place in the spatial hierarchy of the vegesociety.

Jansa's long-term art project was created in 2017 and includes eight projects so far. The last episode of *Opening Ceremony* was part of the presentation of contemporary Czech art in Brussels during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. From November 2023, for the first time, it was possible to see all these episodes together in one place as part of *Thinking Through Film* exhibition at Prague's GHMP, at Stone Bell House, where one entire floor was dedicated to Jansa. The exhibition was planned as a set of several video installations with performative elements, mixing an accomplished visual language with humour, contemporary leftist theory, and exploration of political strategies on social media, while



## Club of Opportunities

Welcome to the Club of Opportunities, a temporary new world in the middle of your brain. That's where your comfort zone hides.

Jakub Jansa

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The eccentric thinker Nábělek immediately began developing the theory of celery ontology and discussing hierarchies within the VEGE-SOCIETY.”







also including comedy, absurdity, and playfulness. The installation also featured Kamil Nábělek, who casually explained to the audience which phase of the story they were in and which dynamics of the action they were observing.

Jansa's artistic project basically follows, over a long period of time, two main characters whose fates he gradually develops in each instalment of the project. One of them is the Seer - fortune teller, a kind-hearted and empathetic character who is going through an inner crisis and has paradoxically lost her ability to predict the future. For Jakub Jansa, this figure partly represents the crisis of liberalism and liberal democracy. The Seer used to be someone who had a natural place in society and could guess, relatively effortlessly, what the near future would bring. But now she is struggling and feels that she no longer understands the contemporary world.

The second important character is the Celerist, half human, half celery root, and a bit of an outsider to the vegesociety. The Celerist is a human who starts at the very bottom and we follow his inner development which in many ways follows the important social debates of the last few years. In the third episode, 2018's *My Name is Red Herring*, Celerist is suddenly an arrogant and somewhat comical alt-right influencer. In the video, which features aesthetics reminiscent of speeches by motivational coaches, Celerist advises the audience on how to crack down on leftist opponents. In this work, Jansa partly follows up his diploma thesis *Spiritual Fitness*, in which he worked on the phenomenon of motivational coaches and their rhetorical manipulations.

Celerist's far-right anger stems mainly from his social status. As people become more interested in him, his aspirations change.

Suddenly he craves admiration and fame. For the first time, he hesitantly begins to observe the higher, avocado class of beings in the vegesociety and wants to penetrate these higher levels. Back in 2018, in the fifth episode entitled *Keeping in Line*, Celerist confronts his own conscience. His conscience reminds him, subtly at first and then more insistently, that he is gradually losing his true identity and trying to be something he is definitely not. His interaction with his conscience is brisk, comic, and visually appealing, but at the same time contains a deeper message concerning issues of authenticity and social mobility.

For the wider public, the figure of Celerist became visible in 2021 when Jansa won the *Jindřich Chalupecký Award*. In the Pražák Palace of the Moravian Gallery in Brno. The video installation clearly showed that, for the first time, the artists had the financial and institutional support making it possible to bring their vision to formal perfection. The seventh episode, *Shame to Pride*, marks the provisional peak of the series and is the most accomplished visually and conceptually as well as in terms of acting, set design, design and camera, and lighting work.

At this exhibition, the audience encountered Celerist in his self-inquiring phase. Through hard work, he has finally managed to break into the upper echelons of society, but he feels out of place there. Pretentious avocados constantly let him know that he is not one of them, and he feels a whole range of social barriers that his celerist habitus is simply not up to. This episode perhaps most clearly picked up on some of the themes that are of key importance to contemporary art, namely questions of origin, social belonging, and the search for one's own identity and authenticity in a world that, while craving the effect of authenticity, is also constantly increasing a gap between fact and fiction, self-design, and pure lies.

“At the very bottom of this hierarchy sits the unappealing and often overlooked CELERY ROOT, while its complete opposite is the admired and celebrated AVOCADO.”

In the Celerist story, we find ourselves in a bizarre world where imagination permeates the well-known laws of contemporary society and where purely social issues intersect with the wilderness of vegetation. Jansa, assisted by Nábělek, sees the formation of hierarchies in the realm of fruit and vegetables, which in an absurd way copy the hierarchies we know from our social reality. He took a path radical in both aesthetic and thematic terms by deciding to anthropomorphize the issue. In many ways, this brilliant idea also brings with it very interesting aesthetic possibilities. Celerist, a celery root in human form, may fit in with the elite in the way he dresses and expresses himself, but his face shows the unpleasant roots that remind us of his being born from mud and dirt. Although he aspires to join the Club of the Highest Opportunities, his visual appearance immediately draws attention to the inappropriateness of these aspirations. In a grotesque and dramatically urgent way, he is reminiscent of the Italian writer Elena Ferrante's exclamation that it is unimportant whether one goes up or down the social ladder. Class origin will always manifest itself in extreme situations, just as a person suddenly blushes.

In addition, Jansa's opulent visual style also deals with the dilemmas facing today's society. He stresses the importance of the

search for sources of aggressive male energy, which mutates into increasingly radical political expressions and is driven forward by frustration and lack of appreciation. In the figure of the Wisewoman, he introduces into this game the wandering and groping of contemporary liberalism, which cannot confront these phenomena in any way and loses touch with reality and its own ideas about the future. He also reflects on how self stylization affects the formation of the identity of people today and observes how strongly the influence of social networks is imprinted on this process. Although his work appears to be an elaborate grotesquery about the rise and fall of a fictional character, it is in fact also a peculiar way of responding to disturbing tendencies in contemporary society. In each episode, he attempts to capture phenomena that escape other people's observation and experience of reality while offering his own subtle comments and suggestions on how to relate to these disturbing phenomena. His work, however, effectively envelops these aspects in a visually opulent and witty form which leaves the viewer a great deal of room for imagination and reveals an experience of the elusiveness and openness towards reality that simply cannot be separated from the experience of contemporary life.





“The series of films and installations *Club of Opportunities* functions as a kind of container, with its main characters—the CELERIAC, AVOCADO and the SEER—absorbing, depending on circumstances, the alter ego and deconstruction of their creator’s role, a critical institutional reflection on the precarious conditions of their own production, and a contemporary social satire on the general commercialization of storytelling. The episodic structure simultaneously delineates the problem Jakub Jansa has set for himself—allowing him to operate artistically, engage in creative acrobatics, succumb to self-destructive coercive tunnels, and thus explore and deconstruct himself while also attempting to escape something that, in the end, cannot be escaped through knowledge alone.”

—  
Michal Novotný, “The Desire for Stories of Reassurance and Hope,”  
*The Garden of Problems*, 6-14





What on the surface  
appears as criticism  
is simply complacency;

THE SEER in *Opening Ceremony* (10mins, 4K), Garden of Problems , GHMP House at the Stone Bell

In 2023 had an extensive solo exhibition at the Stone Bell House of the Prague City Gallery. He has also presented his work at Pioneer Works (2018) and Anthology Film Archives (2023) in New York, the 34th Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts (2021), HEK in Basel (2020), and the 6th Athens Biennale (2018).



*Opening Ceremony* (10mins, 4K), *Garden of Problems*, GHMP House at the Stone Bell

#### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

*Garden of Problems*  
(1/3 *Thinking Through Film*)  
Curator: Sandra Baborovská  
GHMP House at the Stone Bell,  
Prague, Czech Republic  
November 8, 2023 – February 18, 2024

*Shame to Pride*  
Curators: Lea Vene, Lovro Japundžić  
Mocvara Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia  
October 20 – 28, 2021

*Club of Opportunities*  
Curatorial team: PAF  
Pioneer Works, New York, United States  
November 20, 2018

*Britannica Bootcamp*  
Curator: Élodie Gallina  
CAAC, Strasbourg, France  
September 20 – October 28, 2018

*Keeping in Line*  
Curator: Pavel Kubesa  
NoD, Prague, Czech Republic  
October 23 – November 26, 2018

*My Name is Red Herring*  
Curator: Jiří Ptáček  
Fotograf Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic  
March 20 – April 14, 2018

*Club of Opportunities: Bowling Bar*  
Curator: Jan Vitek  
Hunt Kastner, Prague, Czech Republic  
July 29, 2017

*Ten Years Night*  
Curator: Dorian Batycka  
Mihelic's Gas Station, Ljubljana, Slovenia  
September 26 – October 29, 2019

*Britannica Bootcamp*  
Curator: Élodie Gallina  
CAAC, Strasbourg, France  
September 20 – October 28, 2018

*Matter of Sensitivity*  
Curator: Kamil Nábělek  
Porthemka Museum,  
Prague, Czech Republic  
May 9 – November 29, 2020

*Keeping in Line*  
Curator: Pavel Kubesa  
NoD, Prague, Czech Republic  
October 23 – November 26, 2018

*My Name is Red Herring*  
Curator: Jiří Ptáček  
Fotograf Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic  
March 20 – April 14, 2018

*April Showers Bring May Flowers*  
(feat. K. Juříková)  
Curator: Lumír Nykl  
GAMU, Prague, Czech Republic  
March 14 – April 4, 2018

*Engstligenalp, StartUp*  
Curator: Monika Čejková  
GHMP, Prague, Czech Republic  
March 7 – April 9, 2014

## AWARDS

2021: Jindřich Chalupecký Award

## COLLECTIONS

National Gallery Prague – Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art:

Acquisition 2023: Opening Ceremony, film, 10 min, 4K, (1/5)  
Acquisition 2022: Shame to Pride, film, 20 min, 4K, (1/5)

Prague City Gallery Collection (GHMP):

Acquisition 2024: April Showers Bring May Flowers, film, 10 mins, 4K, (1/5)  
Acquisition 2024: My Name is Red Herring, film, 6 mins, 4K, (1/5)  
Acquisition 2024: Britannica Bootcamp, film 5 mins, 4K (1/5)

Havrant Art Collection:

Acquisition 2018: Spiritual Fitness ep.1-3  
Acquisition 2022: Shame to Pride, film, 20 mins, 4K, (2/5)  
Acquisition 2023: Opening Ceremony, film, 10'15", 4K, (2/5)  
Acquisition 2023: Opening Ceremony, C-Print, 160x120cm (1/5)  
Acquisition 2023: Protest banners, various dimensions, (1/1)

Museum of Literature, Prague:

Acquisition 2023: The Mácha, film, 15 mins, 4K, (1/5)

Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague:

Acquisition 2023: Art Life Con, film, 15 mins, 4K, (1/5)

## CINEMATIC SCREENINGS

2023: Club of Opportunities series,  
Anthology Film Archives, New York, US

2024: Club of Opportunities series  
35th Liffe, Ljubljana international Film  
festival, SLO

## COMMISSIONED WORKS

2024: Steirischerherbst,  
*Pumpkineville* (15mins, 4K)  
a new short film and installation

2022: National Gallery in Prague,  
*Opening Ceremony* (10mins, 4K)  
a new short film and installation

2021: 34th Ljubana Biennial,  
*It's so physical II*  
a multi-channel video installation

2021: Meet Factory Gallery,  
*It's so physical I*  
a multi-channel video installation

2021: CJCH Award,  
*Shame to Pride* (20mins, 4K)  
a new short film and installation

## RESIDENCIES

2023: Residency Unlimited, New York, USA  
2022: KULT XL Ateliers, Brussels, Belgium  
2017: CEAAC, Strasbourg, France  
2015: Five Eleven, New York, USA  
2013: Watch Out, Engstligenalp, Basel,  
Switzerland

## LECTURES

2024: TRAF0, Szczecin, Poland  
2024: CAMP, Prague, Czech Republic  
2023: Academy of Fine Arts,  
Prague, Czech Republic  
2019: CCA, Tel Aviv, Israel  
2018: Cooper Union, New York, USA  
2017: Cooper Union, New York, USA  
2017: FAMU, Prague, Czech Republic  
2017: CAAC, Strasbourg, France  
2013: Engstligenalp, Basel, Switzerland

In 2021 was awarded the *Jindřich Chalupecký Award*. His work *Shame to Pride* is part of the new permanent exhibition at the National Gallery Prague. In 2022 he created an new comprehensive work for the exhibition *Flower Union*, which was organized by the National Gallery Prague on the occasion of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The latest, ninth episode of *Club of Opportunities* was commissioned for the 57th steirischer herbst (2024) at the Neue Galerie Graz.



*Opening Ceremony* (10mins, 4K), Garden of Problems , GHMP House at the Stone Bell



(1)



(2)

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

*Steirischer Herbst: Horror Patriae*  
 Curators: Ekaterina Degot,  
 Pieter Vermeir, David Riff  
 Neue Galerie Graz, Austria  
 September 19 – February 16, 2025  
 (1)

*The 28th Biennial of Design (BIO28)*  
 Curators: Alexandra Midal, Emma Pflieger  
 Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO),  
 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
 November 21, 2024 – April 6, 2025

*Publiek Park*  
 Curators: Jef Declercq, Anna Laganovska,  
 Koi Persyn, Adriëne van der Werf  
 Harmoniepark, Albertpark & Provincietuin,  
 Antwerp, Belgium  
 September 15 – October 1, 2023

*End of the Black-and-White Era 1939–2021:  
 Permanent Collection of the National Gallery  
 Prague*  
 Curators: Michal Novotný, Eva Skopalová,  
 Adéla Janíčková  
 National Gallery Prague, Czech Republic  
 May 1, 2023, – December 31, 2025  
 (2)

*Flower Union*  
 Curator: Michal Novotný  
 Council of the European Union,  
 Brussels, Belgium  
 12th July – 31st December 2022  
 National Gallery, Prague  
 10th February – 7th May 2023

*34th Ljubljana Biennial*  
 Curator: Tjaša Pogačar  
 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
 September 10 – November 21, 2021

*Jindřich Chalupecký Award Exhibition*  
 Curator: Veronika Čechová  
 Moravian Gallery, Brno, Czech Republic  
 September 24, 2021 – February 27, 2022

*Spiritualities*  
 Curator: Tereza Jindrová  
 MeetFactory, Prague, Czech Republic  
 May 25 – August 16, 2020  
 2020: Sanpaku Eyes  
 Espai Tactel, Barcelona, Spain

2019: Avatars, Doppelgangers  
 HEK, Basel, Switzerland

2019: Stumbling Through the Uncanny  
 Valley  
 CCA, Tel Aviv, Israel

2019: Healing 2.0  
 MeetFactory, Prague, Czech Republic  
 May 25 – August 16, 2020

2019: Soft Objects – Real Feelings  
 House of Arts, Ústí nad Labem, Czech  
 Republic

2018: 6th Athens Biennale  
 Curatorial team: Stefanie Hessler, Kostis  
 Stafylakis, Poka-Yio  
 Athens, Greece

2018: Supernova  
 NTK Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic

2018: Healing  
 Czech Center, Berlin, Germany

2017: In a Landscape  
 House of Arts, Brno, Czech Republic

2016: Better Ideas for Life 1 & 2  
 Karlin Studios, Prague, Czech Republic /  
 Ausstellungsraum Klingental, Basel,  
 Switzerland

2016: Better Ideas for Life 2  
 Karlin Studios, Prague, Czech Republic  
 2016: In a Landscape  
 EA Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic

2016: Tesseract  
 AMU Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic  
 2016: Name of the Project is Project Itself  
 CC, New York, United States

2016: It Looked Different in a Dream  
 Klementinum, Prague, Czech Republic

2015: How Not to Want Anything  
 4+4 Days, Prague, Czech Republic

2014: Coriander Tunnel  
 GHMP, Prague, Czech Republic

2013: The Shot Shrapnel Will Calm the  
 Observer  
 CCC, Beijing, China

2013: Industrial Revolution  
 VPI, Ostrava, Czech Republic

2013: Watch Out  
 Engstligenalp, Bern, Switzerland

2013: Conductor  
 Prague, Czech Republic

2013: Enter 6  
 NTK Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic

2012: Umprum 2012  
 DOX, Prague, Czech Republic



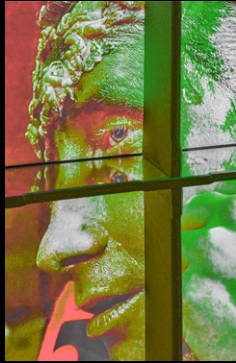
## PUBLICATIONS

*Jakub Jansa, Club of Opportunities:  
The Garden of Problems*

Texts by: Michal Novotný, Julie Béna, Kamil Nábělek, Noemi Purkrábková, Jozef Mrva Jr., Ernestyna Orłowska, Klára Vlasáková, Jan Bělíček

Publisher: UMPRUM

ISBN: 978-80-88308-55-3



*Thinking Through Film*

Editors: Jiří Anger, Sandra Baborovská

Texts by: Jiří Anger, Sandra Baborovská, Georges Didi-Huberman, Sergei Eisenstein, Noemi Purkrábková, Ondřej Vavrečka

Publisher: GHMP

ISBN: 978-80-7010-194-0

*Mapping Moving Images: Media, Actors,  
and Places in the Czech Environment*

Editors: Martin Mazanec, Sylva Poláková

Publisher: National Film Archive

ISBN: 978-80-7004-199-4

*Supernova: Studio of Supermedia,  
UMPRUM*

Editor: David Kořínek

Publisher: UMPRUM

ISBN: 978-80-87989-79-1

*Jakub Jansa, Spiritual Fitness*

Texts by: Jakub Jansa, Alexander Campaz,  
Petr Hák

<http://thespiritualfitness.com/>

*Other Knowledge: Texts, Images,  
Documents*

Editors: Tereza Jindrová, Eva B. Riebová  
ISBN: 978-80-906994-8-9

## CATALOGUES

*End of the Black-and-White Era 1939–2021:  
Permanent Collection of the National  
Gallery Prague*

Curators: Michal Novotný, Eva Skopalová,  
Adéla Janíčková

National Gallery Prague

ISBN: 978-80-7035-848-1



*Publiek Park 2023*

Texts by: J. Declercq, A. Laganovska, K.  
Persyn & A. van der Werf

Location: Harmoniepark, Albertpark &  
Provincietuin, Antwerp, Belgium

In addition to the presentations in the  
parks, artworks can be seen at TICK TACK,  
Moonstreet, Red Herring Salon, Annie  
Gentils Gallery, and LLS Paleis.

Participating artists: A. Ragno Capone, J.  
Dehnen, N. Dockx, L. Duclaux, J. Jansa, M.  
Emmanuelle Kazi, J. Kim, Metahaven, M.  
Mu, Y. Park, P. Siri Renard, L. Schönweger,  
H. Shikha, P. Wang & G. Woueté, and others.

*The 34th Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts:  
Iskra Delta, 2021*

Texts by: T. Pogačar, N. Šivavec

Participating artists: J. Akomfrah,  
Astrosuka, BCAA system\*, J. Citarella, S.  
Denny, Himera, J. Holder, INSIDE JOB (U.  
Lucińska & M. Knychaus), Interdependence  
(H. Herndon & M. Dryhurst), J. Jansa, Z.  
Keresztes, B. Keresztesi, P. Ketamine, Nimaš  
Izbire\*, K. Novitskova, OMSK Social Club,  
Protektorama (aLifveForm, fed and cared  
for by J. Raether), J. Rafman, Ž. Božičnik  
Rebec, A. Selmeči & T. Kocka Jusko, P.  
Supply, Umru, T. Vangelis, and others.

*Uncanny Valley, CCA Tel Aviv*

July 13 – September 7, 2019

Texts by: C. Tamir

Participating artists: C. Arcangel, A.  
Domanović, C. Dror, A. Fluman, J. Jansa &  
K. Juříková, O. Laric, A. Mersy, nabtceeri, K.  
Novitskova, P. Hardware, E. Papamargariti,  
R. Patir, H. Phillipson, S. Price, J. Rafman,  
E. Salomon, M. Segal, T. Si-Qin, A. N.  
Wilson, and others.

*6th Athens Biennale*

Texts by: S. Hessler, K. Stafylakis, Poka-Yio

Participating artists: M. Al Qadiri, K.  
Arunanondchai & A. Gvojic, I. Bašić, T.  
Chen, B. Condon, C. Daskopoulou, T.  
Davis, D. Dean, J. P. Downer, E. Fornieles, J.  
Holder, C. Höller, C. L. Hughes, A. Huizenga  
(of Patriarchy), J. Hurwitz-Goodman & D.  
Keller, J. Jansa, B. Magdy, E. & F. Mattes,  
Metahaven, S. Moulton, O. Social Club, A.  
Polska, J. P. Raether, J. Rafman, T. Shani, H.  
Shin, A. Shvarts, M. Simnett, R. Trecartin,  
T. Triantafyllidis, A. Uddenberg, L. Wy, L.  
Yang, Y. B. Dancing Group, and others.  
MEDIA

*ETC.Magazine, Issue 2: Fever Dream,  
Spring 2023*

Editor: Hana Čefarin

Rozhovor s Tjaša Pogačar

Jazyk: Anglicky

<https://etcmagazine.art/Issue-2-1>



*Art Forum, recenze Noemi Smolik*

FEBRUARY 2019

VOL. 57, NO. 6

Jazyk: Anglicky

<https://www.artforum.com/events/jakub-jansa-243605/>

*PW Magazine, Crisis of the uprooted veggio*

*Jakub Jansa: Crisis of the Uprooted Veggio*

<https://pw-magazine.com/2021/jakub-jansa-crisis-of-the-uprooted-veggio>

*Quartal, GHMP*

*Qartal 12. Život x Galerie*

prosinec 2023 - únor 2024

<https://www.ghmp.cz/qartals/qartal-12/>

*Fotograf - 32 ne-práce*

Nakladatel: Fotograf 07 2018

Jakub Jansa, Entrepreneur lidských duší,

Text: Tina Poliačková

<https://fotografmagazine.cz/issue/ne-prace/>

*Art Antique, portfolio, červen 2019*

Ak potlačíš cynizmus, dám ti príbeh plný

nádeje / Jakub Jansa

Text: Tina Poliačková