

Final Record of Residency - Lucie Nováčková – CCAiB

1.8.–30.9., Outputs: 21.9., 10.10.–19.10. 2024

Residency Outputs:

1. Happening: **(RE)Union with Lucie Nováčková and Klara Hobza**, Culterim Biesenthal, 21.9.2024 at 15:00
2. Presentation of Works: **(RE) Union** at the *Culterim Residency Show/#6*, Kurfürstendam 69, Berlin. 10.10.–19.10.2024

Residency Course:

- 1.8.–26.8.: Walking from Prague to Berlin (23 days, over 430 km)
- 26.8.–30.9.: Residency at CCAiB Culterim, Biesenthal: editing and sorting materials for the exhibition, finalizing notes and artwork (tarp), working on outlines for the happening, and preparing pieces for the final show.

Project Basis:

What do we normally do with cousins? We spend holidays together, share secrets, and hang out. Usually it is someone who is accompanying us throughout our life, without us really noticing he/ she is somehow presented, but is always there, if we ask. Mostly, we see each other at family celebrations and sometimes, we became close.

My distant cousin, Berlin-based artist Klara Hobza, is from the part of our family that emigrated to West Germany in the early '80s. Though our families stayed in touch, no one told us until my 40th birthday that another artist was in the family—a surprise to her as well. We were virtually introduced by a mutual friend from New York but hadn't yet met in person.

I decided to walk to Berlin to finally meet her, navigating with a map that also served as a tarp, raincoat, and journal. Along the way, I embroidered significant sentences and images, symbolizing my journey through the landscape with a red fiber.

Several questions lie beneath this project, linking art and walking: We're familiar with coming-in-age walks, but what about coming-of-age? What makes the meditation of walk with a body and brain of somebody, who probably is in age of mid-life crisis, if something like that exist? What would be the stories of an artist's life in Czechia versus Germany? Questions of female midlife, feminism, and the impact of the Iron Curtain on everyday people's lives all lie subtly within this project, without necessarily being spoken.

Course of the residency

During my journey, I discovered a lot about myself, my art, its roots, and about Czech-German cultural differences and similarities. Without planning, I found myself going through German villages just before the elections, noticing signs of right-wing extremism in some areas I passed through, yet also meeting people who were supportive and helpful in the same places. Being on such a journey without fully knowing the language and culture makes a person very vulnerable.

Along the way, I made little performances or happenings, stretching a red fiber through the landscape. I was searching for the right rhythm in response to parallel walking and sewing. I wrote into my notes: "Watching how the trees are going up and down with breath when you stop during climbing the hill. Watching the slope hotheaded by sun. Thinking about timing on the way. On the rhythm. Stand up with the sun. Walk as if my steps were little stitches crossing the landscape. They

are so little, only I know about them. My hike, my steps, are leaving a huge, invisible embroidery through the landscape—known only to me and these people who know about the project.”

I recorded these little happenings as short videos, some parts of which appeared in the work-in-progress video presented at the Culterim Residents #6 exhibition. After arriving in Biesenthal, I found it necessary to process the story of my journey. Each day, I woke up at 5:30, writing for over four hours until around 11. I now have three full books of notes waiting for editing, as writing emerged as the right medium for this project.

The rest of my time was spent preparing the happening, finishing the embroidery and final look of the tarp, editing the videos, and sorting out the material collected during my journey.

During the journey, I shared stories and pictures when I had power and signal, and the Czech Centre published an article on the project:

[Link to Czech Centre article.](#)

The Czech Centre, in cooperation with Culterim, also managed PR for the happening:

[Link to Czech Centre program.](#)

(The original date, 14.9. at 15:00, was postponed to 21.9. due to weather.)

After the happening, we recorded material for a podcast (waiting for post-production and release).

Results of the Residency

The project somehow became bigger than expected regarding the amount of material it created, intensity, number of inspiring moments, such as using text as part of my artistic practice for the first time. Therefore, the work was presented in its work-in-progress variant, and I intend to delve deeper into the text editing, where the shortened version will become part of the video. I believe the size of the project was exactly right for these two months with a work-in-progress output, but to fully process all the material, I would still need half a year of concentrated work. I would say the journey was transformative for me as an artist; I could have done art that I wouldn't do without the support, and in the end, I hope it moved my artistic thinking even within my PhD project and offered new ways of looking at the parallel text-textile. I believe such a situation, as leaving the project which exceeds the residency by time and by effect to an artist's work, could be valued as a usefully spent residency.