

THE END OF FUN

Exhibition Guide

Krištof Kintera
THE END OF FUN!

17 September — 22 November 2020
First and Second Floor Galleries

Czech artist Krištof Kintera (b. 1973, Prague) is known internationally for his sculptural, often kinetic assemblages exploring environmental issues, consumerism and waste. Throughout this exhibition Kintera recycles obsolete technological materials – transistors, circuits, electrical cables and lights – in order to present a vision of the world that we live in and, with a dark wit and humour, encourages us to reflect on our place within it. Materials are at times juxtaposed with, or carefully arranged into, forms associated with ecology, such as miniature post-apocalyptic cities, a snow drift made of expanding foam or anthropomorphised tree branches. Recent global events and a growing attention to environmental issues provide a backdrop for Kintera's work, making this exhibition of new, recent and earlier works particularly timely.

This exhibition is supported by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in London, Czech Centre London and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. It is accompanied by a catalogue with texts from independent curator and writer Miroslav Ambroz and Ikon curator Melanie Pockock.

IKON

First Floor

Gallery 3



4. Nervous Trees (2013 - 17)

Exit

Gallery Exterior



1. Paradise Now (2009)

Gallery 2



3. Postnaturalia (2016 - 17)

Gallery 1



2. Postnaturalia Laboratory (2016 - 17)

Entrance

First Floor

Gallery Exterior



1. *Paradise Now* (2009)
Zinc coated steel
Courtesy the artist

Serving as an introduction to the exhibition, Kintera's *Paradise Now* sculptures – a herd of crowd-control barriers with antlers made from tubular steel – invade the space outside Ikon's building. Modified modules of fencing, they resemble creatures that should not be fenced in, giving pause for thought in an urban environment that is becoming increasingly regulated, according to the laws of "nature we have made".

Gallery 1



2. *Postnaturalia Laboratory* (2016 – 17)
Mixed media
Courtesy the artist

Entering *Postnaturalia Laboratory* is like visiting the artist's studio. The components used in his installation *Postnaturalia* (2016 – 17) can be seen here in close detail, allowing a different perspective of the work. Among the items are familiar metals, such as copper, and other materials recovered from scrap yards in Prague. For Kintera, this is an extension of *Postnaturalia* which creates the "atmosphere of a work in progress".

Gallery 2



3. *Postnaturalia* (2016 – 17)
Mixed media
Courtesy the artist

This artificial landscape, made of discarded electrical components, gives the impression of a post-apocalyptic city in miniature. The installation sprawls across the floor, taking over the gallery like an invasive organism. It is also – to quote the artist – "an excavation of the geological remnants of our time". With this work, Kintera reveals similarities between systems of technology and nature, which not only coexist but are part of the same network.

Gallery 3



4. *Nervous Trees* (2013 –17)
Fibreglass, globes, electronics
Courtesy Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář, Prague and Private Collection

These works draw an analogy between plants and the human nervous system. Leafless and positioned upside down, branches and twigs spread towards the floor, resembling arms and legs, while globes at the top of the sculptures suggest heads. Motors cause their anthropomorphic forms to shake and move across the gallery.

Gallery 6



16. *Disappearing (Large)*
(2013)



14. *My Light is Your Life – Shiva Samurai II* (2009)



15. *Evolution Revision*
(2015)



17. *Revolution*
(2005)



12. *Neuropolis*
(2020)



13. *Relics for Holy Monday* (2012)

Stairwell



5. *I see I see I see*
(2009)

Lift



18. *Hand Tools of Brain*
(2012 – 2017)

Gallery 5



11. *Tower of Unsustainable Development* (2020)

Entrance

Gallery 4



10. *Postnaturalia*
(2017)



6. *Drawings*
(2007 - 20)



8. *Nothing Good*
(2011)



9. *Spirit Leaving Gravitation* (2013)



7. *We All Have That Under Our Clothes*
(2018)

Second Floor Stairwell



5. *I see I see I see* (2009)

Mixed media, mechanical and acoustical object
Courtesy Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář, Prague

A raven dressed in human clothing sits above the glass stairwell uttering corporate slogans such as “Let’s make things better” (Philips) and “Just Do It” (Nike). This animatronic figure is characteristically creepy, uncanny, yet darkly humorous. Kintera is interested in the mythology of the raven, an intelligent creature often associated with paradox or contradiction.

Gallery 4



6. *Drawings* (2007 – 20)

Mixed media, lights
Courtesy the artist and Private Collections

Kintera refers to these works as drawings despite their resemblance to collage or three-dimensional relief. According to the artist, they are sharp and direct observations on everyday life. Much of his technical work involves slow processes, whilst drawing allows him to work quickly.

Some of these drawings have been made recently during lockdown, such as *I Like Angela and Germany, and I Also Like Greta, and Also Denisa* (2020). This is a reference to the dispute between teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg and German Chancellor Angela Merkel – specifically Merkel’s use of a photo opportunity with Thunberg to make herself “look good”. The inclusion of a third person – “Denisa” – complicates what might otherwise be interpreted as a binary debate about political virtue.



For this presentation of drawings at Ikon, Kintera has included a light installation. Combined with the drawings, the changing lights create the feeling of being inside a “crazy cabinet”.

7. *We All Have That Under Our Clothes* (2018)

Lamps, clothes, metal, electronics
Courtesy the artist

8. *Nothing Good* (2011)

Polyurethane
Courtesy Marcel Skula Collection



In this work, poured polyurethane (an expanding foam) gives the impression of liquid overflowing from a container. The label indicates a toxic material, reminding us of our excessive use of polluting substances.



**9. *Spirit Leaving Gravitation* (2013)
Polyester, epoxy, mixed media
Courtesy COLLETT Prague | Munich**

A taxidermy dog, adorned with pink and silver baubles and wearing human clothes, gazes upwards towards the gallery's ceilings. Like much of Kintera's work, the title gives a strong indication of its meaning. This human/animal hybrid form is intended as an ironic low-tech symbol that gestures towards a higher power.



**10. *Postnaturalia* (2017)
One-channel video, silent. 23 minutes
Courtesy the artist**

The installation was documented at Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague. The video gives an aerial perspective of the work as if filmed from a helicopter or drone. Like *Postnaturalia Laboratory* (2016 – 17), it encourages close observation of the surface of Kintera's miniature landscape.

Gallery 5



**11. *Tower of Unsustainable Development* (2020)
Mixed media
Courtesy the artist**

**12. *Neuropolis* (2020)
Mixed media
Courtesy Sbířka s.r.o**

These works comprise electrical components, wires and tube lights, reimagined by the artist as towering skyscrapers and city landscapes. Their compositions emphasise as much above as below ground, such as the often-hidden presence of building foundations and underground cables. Their exposed wires mirror the rhizomatic patterns of natural root systems.



**13. *Relics for Holy Monday* (2012)
Silver plate coated epoxy
Courtesy the artist**

The position of these socks, made of epoxy coated in silver, suggests a person standing on their toes, as if they were about to take off in flight. The title of the work evokes a religious sense of spirituality, which jars with the mundane clothing.

Gallery 6



**14. *My Light is Your Life – Shiva Samurai II* (2009)
Old lamps, cables, electronics
Courtesy the artist**

This four-metre-high sculpture is made up of 250 recycled table lamps, strip lights, cables and power sockets. Light may be seen to represent life, energy or spirituality, yet Kintera is equally interested in our dependence on electricity. The artist draws attention to our excessive consumption of energy and depletion of natural resources.



15. *Evolution Revision* (2015)
Metal structure, A-crystal, wires
Courtesy Marcel Skula Collection

These small figures comprise metal structures surrounded by copper wires from electrical cables. According to Kintera, they are depictions of the nervous system caught in a state of panic. Their entangled forms imply our struggles with the traumas of contemporary life. Grouped together, the figures look like they are engaged in a fight or debate: one covers its head with its hands; another kneels and stretches as if it were a cat or dog.



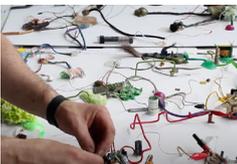
16. *Disappearing (Large)* (2013)
Styrodur, epoxy
Courtesy the artist

Disappearing (Large) is Kintera's representation of snow in his home city of Prague. Layers of dirt caused by urban pollution cover the white snow. Shown in the process of melting, its image brings to mind the effects of global warming on ice caps and rising sea levels.



17. *Revolution* (2005)
Electromechanical system, microchip controller, metal construction, polyurethane, clothes
Courtesy Private Collection

Revolution is an animatronic sculpture of a hooded childlike figure which repeatedly bangs its head against the wall. According to the artist, this work is about an individual's frustration at wanting to change the world around them, yet being unable to do so.



18. *Hand Tools of Brain* (2012 – 17)
One-channel video, sound. 1 hour 18 minutes
Courtesy the artist

With this film, Kintera is keen to show the many facets of his art practice in close detail. We see the artist carefully applying silver leaf to a tree branch, soldering components for *Postnaturalia* (2016 - 17) and wiring the innards of an animatronic raven for *I see I see I see* (2009).

Stay in touch

Subscribe to our e-bulletin at ikon-gallery.org/subscribe

   [ikongallery](https://www.ikon-gallery.org)

Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / ikon-gallery.org

Open Tuesday – Sunday, 11am–4pm
Free entry, donations welcome

Ikon is supported using public funding by Arts Council
England and Birmingham City Council.

Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon.
Registered charity no. 528892.

IKON



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Birmingham
City Council