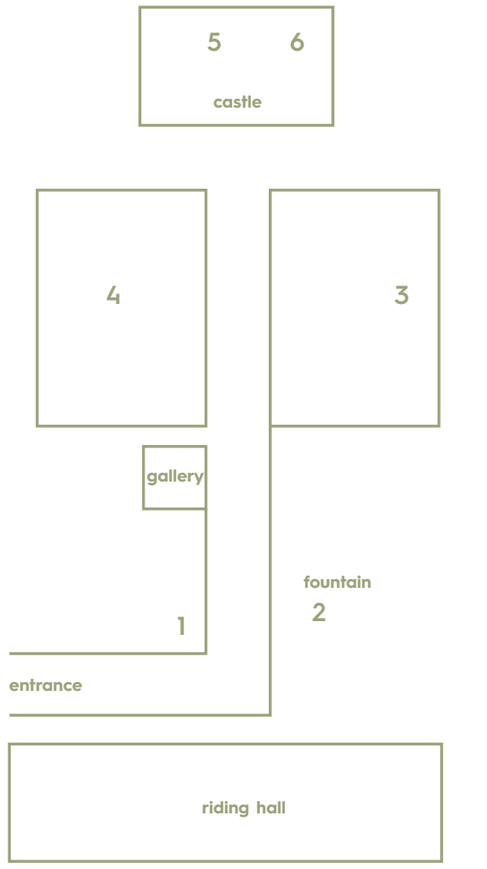
Contemporary Art and Sculpture Park

in collaboration with Galleria Continua



1. Hans Op de Beeck
2. Pascale Marthine Tayou
3. Nari Ward
4. Jiří Příhoda
5. Michelangelo Pistoletto
   Accessible only during a guided tour of the castle.
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Hans Op de Beeck (1969)

The Horseman (2020)

The Horseman, a life-size sculpture of a man on a horse, presents us with an enigmatic, nomadic horseman, a figure that evokes both to the lonely traveler of all times and the homeless migrant of today, in search of a better life. His companion is a little monkey sitting on his shoulder, holding a parasol in its hand to protect its owner from the sun. The horse carries handy work tools on the flanks and small collections of banal as well as mysterious objects that presumably are of great importance to the traveler.

Pascale Marthine Tayou (1966)

Pétalos de Piedra (2022-24)

The central work for the sculpture park is the installation entitled Pétalos de Piedra by Pascale Marthine Tayou, which was exhibited in Havana, Cuba, in 2022. The colorful rocks surrounding the fountain appear like flower petals in the grass. In Tayou's vocabulary, the rocks are reminiscent of his postcolonial heritage. Yet, their cheerful colors and insertion into another surrounding make them into symbols of peace. Through his colored stones, Tayou celebrates life while addressing themes of inclusion and activism, prompting reflection on the complexities of human existence and the pursuit of growth. Bechyně Castle is a place of freedom, a place to enjoy art, exchange ideas, and share knowledge, which strikes with Tayou's positive outlook on the future.

Nari Ward (1963)

Stallers – Series (2013)

Symbolically, strollers mark the decisive moment when the child leaves the arms of the parents to be "pushed into the world." Here, their disproportionate size and their concrete wheels divert them from their original use. The hammocks invite us to take a seat and let ourselves go to a comfortable regression. The title, created from the verb "to stall," reinforces this idea of being stuck.

Jiří Příhoda (1966)

Carbola (2023-24)

With Carbola (Karbola), the artist unveils his latest piece from a series blending sculpture and architecture. Drawing inspiration from the lightweight wooden design of a clog, he constructs a structure that deviates from traditional clog shapes, featuring unconventional geometric proportions.

The Timber House's plank cladding, with its wider gaps between the individual planks, produces a visual and spatial effect. This technique, employed multiple times throughout architectural and artistic history, blurs the distinction between being inside and outside the building.

Michelangelo Pistoletto (1933)

Labirinto e Grande Pozzo (1969-2017)

The labyrinth contains within itself the permanent idea of a threshold: thinking about it and acting upon it are subject to the need to identify an exit. In the labyrinth there is a change of scenery, disorientation, fear; but also discernment, will-power and control of thought. In the labyrinth, the mirror presents itself as a screen of mental meditation between the opposite extremes of fear and security, loss and reunion, doubt and certainty, the sealed-off path and the open road. To re-emerge from the labyrinth is in a way the same thing as finding oneself once again on the road one took to get there in the first place. An image comes back to the surface, that of the well. At the bottom of this well there is a mirror. "By restoring reality, the mirror brings us knowledge; it makes us infinitely aware that there is no point in pushing the imagination beyond our faculties. The immersion in the mirror corresponds to a loss of self which is a pledge of future discoveries. Like Narcissus or Alice, we are invited to take part in an initiatory voyage." M. P.

Mirror Cage - Double Square (1975-2007)

The artwork consists of five elements, each made up of two large structures with mirrors, meticulously crafted to reflect self-replicating forms when viewed from different angles. Through these innovative structures, the artist explores themes of division, multiplication, accumulation, and exclusion, which are fundamental to organic development. Originally conceptualised in the '70s, this work has been further developed, inviting viewers to contemplate the intricate interplay between form, perception, and universal principles.

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The 2024 edition of the Bechyně Castle and Sculpture Park exhibition explores the theme of freedom in various ways: artists' freedom now and then, as well as the collector's freedom to give their art another context. The exhibit celebrates diversity and individual perspectives.

In the historical building of he granary, visitors will see a special selection from the Stava Family Collection for the first time. This exhibition showcases over 120 works by about 40 artists, offering insight into avant-garde movements of the 20th century, especially in Europe after World War II. More importantly, it provides a glimpse into the collector's personal favorites in avant-garde art, offering a unique perspective on this important period.

In the sculpture garden and throughout the castle, visitors will find a few works from the 21st century. These pieces by contemporary artists like Hans Op de Beek, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Nari Ward, and Jiří Příhoda explore themes such as the absurdity of human existence, the relationship between reality and concept, blurring the lines between art and life, and sociopolitical and cultura issues. These artworks highlight the freedom contemporary artists today have in expressing themselves and their ability to tackle both timeless and current themes in their work.

Curator and author of the texts: Nicole Stava and Claudia Rajlich
Production and installation: Jiří Novotný and Miroslav Topič
Logistics: Vedes s.r.o.
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Hans Op de Beeck (1969)

Hans Op de Beeck, born in Turnhout, Belgium, now based in Brussels, is a multidisciplinary artist known for installations, sculptures, films, drawings, paintings, photographs, and texts. His work reflects on contemporary society's complexities, addressing universal themes of meaning and mortality with a tragi-comic lens. Through immersive installations and films featuring anonymous characters, he challenges conventional exhibition spaces, offering viewers tactile experiences and introspective moments. Over two decades, Op de Beeck has exhibited widely, with solo shows at renowned institutions like the GEM Museum of Contemporary Art and the Hirshhorn Museum, and group exhibitions at venues like the Reina Sofia and the Tate Modern. Continually evolving, his art explores identity, society, and the human condition while pushing the boundaries of global artistic expression.

Nari Ward (1963)

Born in St. Andrew, Jamaica, and now based in New York, Nari Ward is renowned for his sculptural installations crafted from discarded materials. Utilizing items like baby strollers and television sets, Ward repurposes them to address societal issues like race, poverty, and consumerism. His work invites viewers to interpret multifaceted narratives, reflecting on their own perspectives. Ward holds a BA from City University of New York, Hunter College (1989) and an MFA from City University of New York, Brooklyn College (1992). His solo exhibitions worldwide, including recent ones in Milan (2024) and Denver (2020), illustrate his artistic evolution. Ward's pieces have been featured in prestigious group exhibitions, and he's garnered international recognition, with works housed in esteemed collections like The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Awards such as the Joyce Award (2015) underscore his significant impact on contemporary art and social discourse.

Michelangelo Pistoletto (1933)

Born in Biella, Italy, Michelangelo Pistoletto's artistic journey began with exhibitions in 1955, peaking with his Mirror Paintings of 1961-1962, which garnered international acclaim. A key figure in the Arte Povera movement in the mid-1960s, Pistoletto explored unconventional materials and spaces. He continued to innovate with exhibitions like Le Stanze in the 1970s, delving into themes of mirrors and division. In the 1990s, he founded Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto and the University of Ideas, promoting social change through art. The concept of the "Third Paradise" in 2004 marked a new phase in his practice. Pistoletto received prestigious awards, including the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion and the Praemium Imperiale. His influence reached globally, with exhibitions in esteemed institutions like the Louvre and the Palais des Nations. In 2022, his latest book, La formula della creazione, celebrated his enduring legacy, inspiring artists and thinkers worldwide.

Pascale Marthine Tayou (1966)

Born in Cameroon, Pascale Marthine Tayou resides between Ghent, Belgium, and Yaoundé, Cameroon. Achieving international recognition since the 1990s, notably through Documenta 11 (2002) and the Venice Biennale (2005, 2009), Tayou's art defies categorization, spanning various media and themes, all anchored in his personal experiences. By adding an „e" to his middle name, Tayou humorously distances himself from traditional notions of authorship and gender. His work traverses cultural and political boundaries, emphasizing the fluidity of identity and the interconnectedness of humanity and nature. Tayou's pieces, spanning objects, sculptures, installations, drawings, and videos, often revolve around individuals navigating the complexities of the global community. Rooted in the idea of travel and encountering the unfamiliar, his art challenges fixed notions of origin and embraces diversity, reflecting on his African heritage amidst broader societal expectations.

Jiří Příhoda (1966)

Born in the Czech Republic, Jiří Příhoda now dividing his time between Prague and Albuquerque, New Mexico, is known for his spatial and multimedia installations as well as his interventions in architecture with the frequent use of new technologies and materials. Through his monumental installations that interact with the specific locality, he explores how people can live meaningful lives in today's complicated world. He graduated from the Industrial Secondary School of Graphic Arts in Prague (1981-1985) and the Prague Academy of Fine Arts (1990-1996), where he attended the studios of Stanislav Kolíbal and Aleš Veselý. He also completed study visits to Salzburg, Strasbourg, New York and San Francisco. In 1997, he won the Jindřich Chalupecký Prize. From 2005 to 2015, he headed the Studio for Intermedia Creation at the Prague Academy.

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