

KATEŘINA VINCOUROVÁ

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SKIN CARE, GALERIE RUDOLFINUM, 2 OCTOBER 2025 – 4 JANUARY 2026

## PREFACE

This book is the first major monograph of the sculptor and installation artist Kateřina Vincourová. It is published on the occasion of *Skin Care*, the artist's most substantial solo exhibition to date, held at Galerie Rudolfinum in Prague from October 2025. These accolades are long overdue. Ever since 1996, when she became the first female laureate of the prestigious Jindřich Chalupecký Award for young visual artists in the Czech Republic, Vincourová has been acclaimed as one of the most bold and original artists who emerged in the immediate aftermath of the Velvet Revolution. And as the essays in this book show, Vincourová's work remains refreshingly vibrant and relevant today, proving how she has been consistently ahead of her time.

1. "Perhaps the Core Is More Appealing to Me than the Apple Itself: Kateřina Vincourová in conversation with Denisa Kujelová," page no. 84.

"I see myself first of all as a human being, next as a woman, and then as an artist," Vincourová tells exhibition curator Denisa Kujelová in their interview.<sup>1</sup> Vincourová's perception of this hierarchy is no doubt influenced by the gendered roles that have been assigned to her, especially the many years she spent as principal carer of her young children and elderly parents which might otherwise have been devoted to her artistic practice. However, those "female" experiences have also fuelled great leaps forward in her art. Out of her history of caregiving, Vincourová has learnt to take the ordinary into the realm of the extraordinary and reveal the wondrous potential of that which is overlooked. And by forming landscapes and dreamworlds from the everyday objects that connect us all, the artist creates a closeness between artist and audience to which many aspire. It is Vincourová's ability to synthesize her self-identity as human, woman, and artist in a single, compelling whole that makes her especially appropriate to be the first Czech female artist to receive a major solo exhibition at Galerie Rudolfinum. While this other long overdue first speaks to how female artists even today are often denied the recognition they deserve, Vincourová's *Skin Care* takes up this challenge without need for compromise and thereby creates space for other artists of all genders to follow in her footsteps.

Julia Tatiana Bailey  
Director, Galerie Rudolfinum

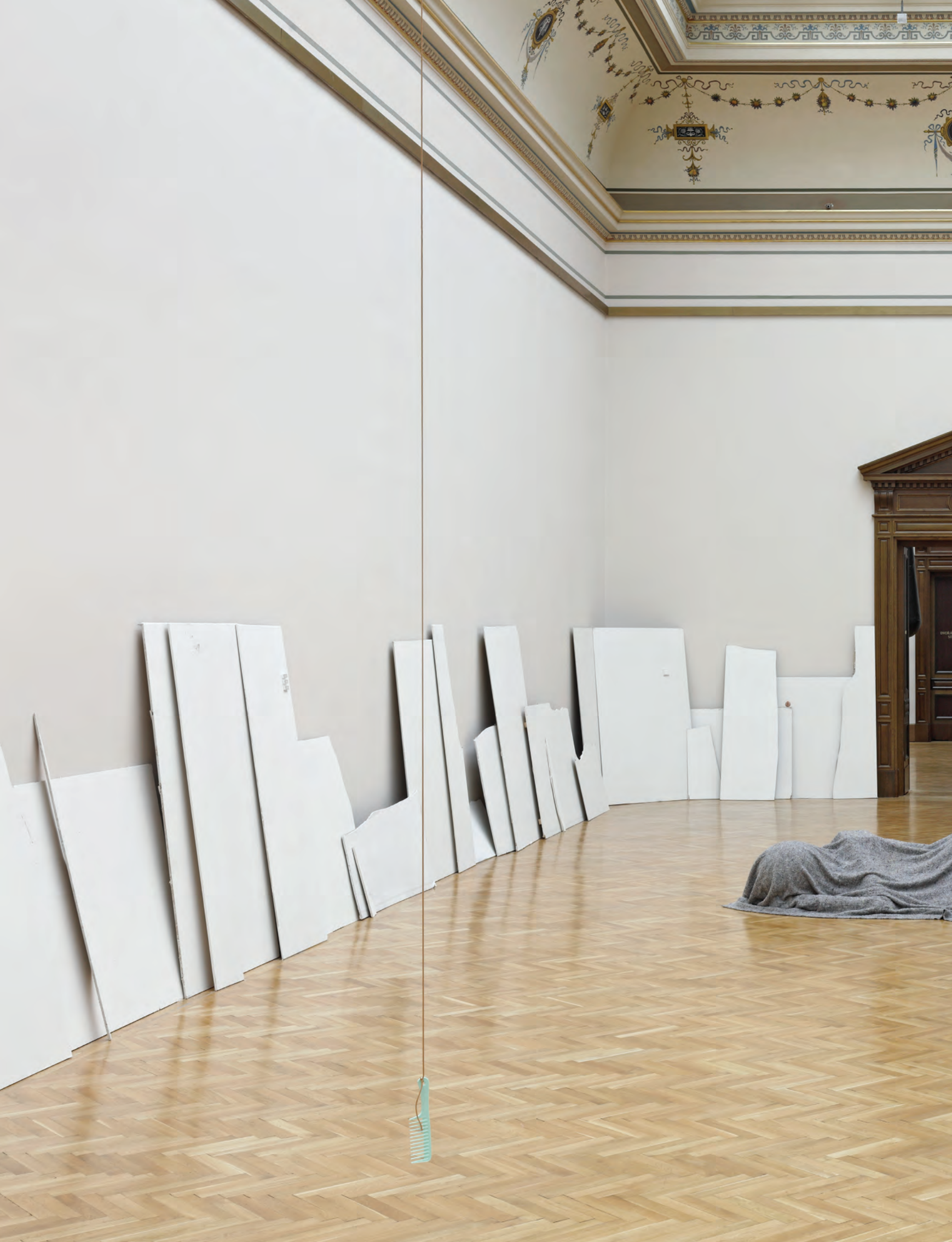






MOLECULES









WITH HER



POEM AMONG SHELVES





ALL YESTERDAY





ALL YESTERDAY

ME WITHIN YOU





SUNSET

RAIN













THE BAGROOMS







PENDULUM  $T = 2\pi\sqrt{\frac{l}{g}}$

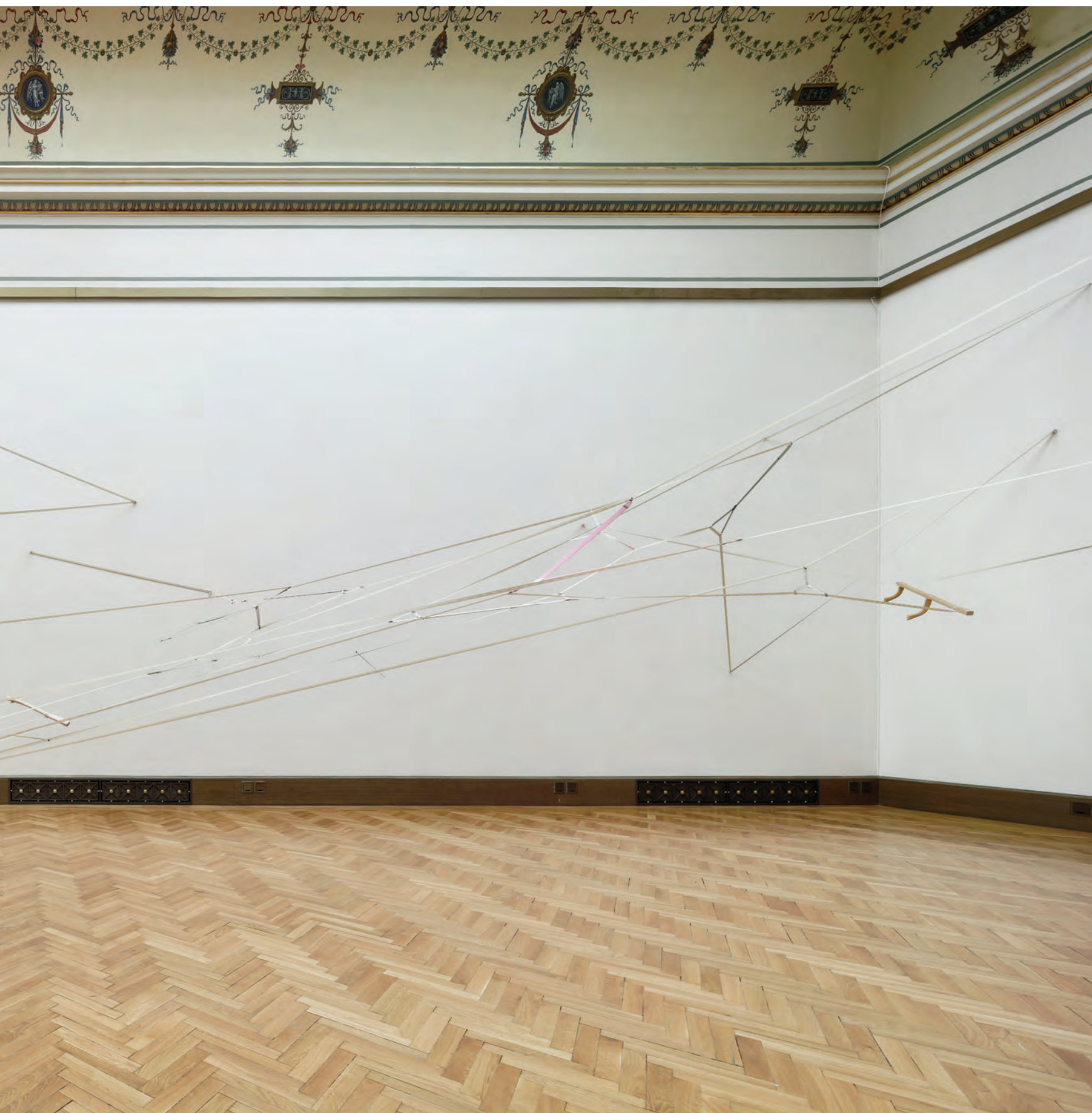


PLANET



UNDER THE LAMP















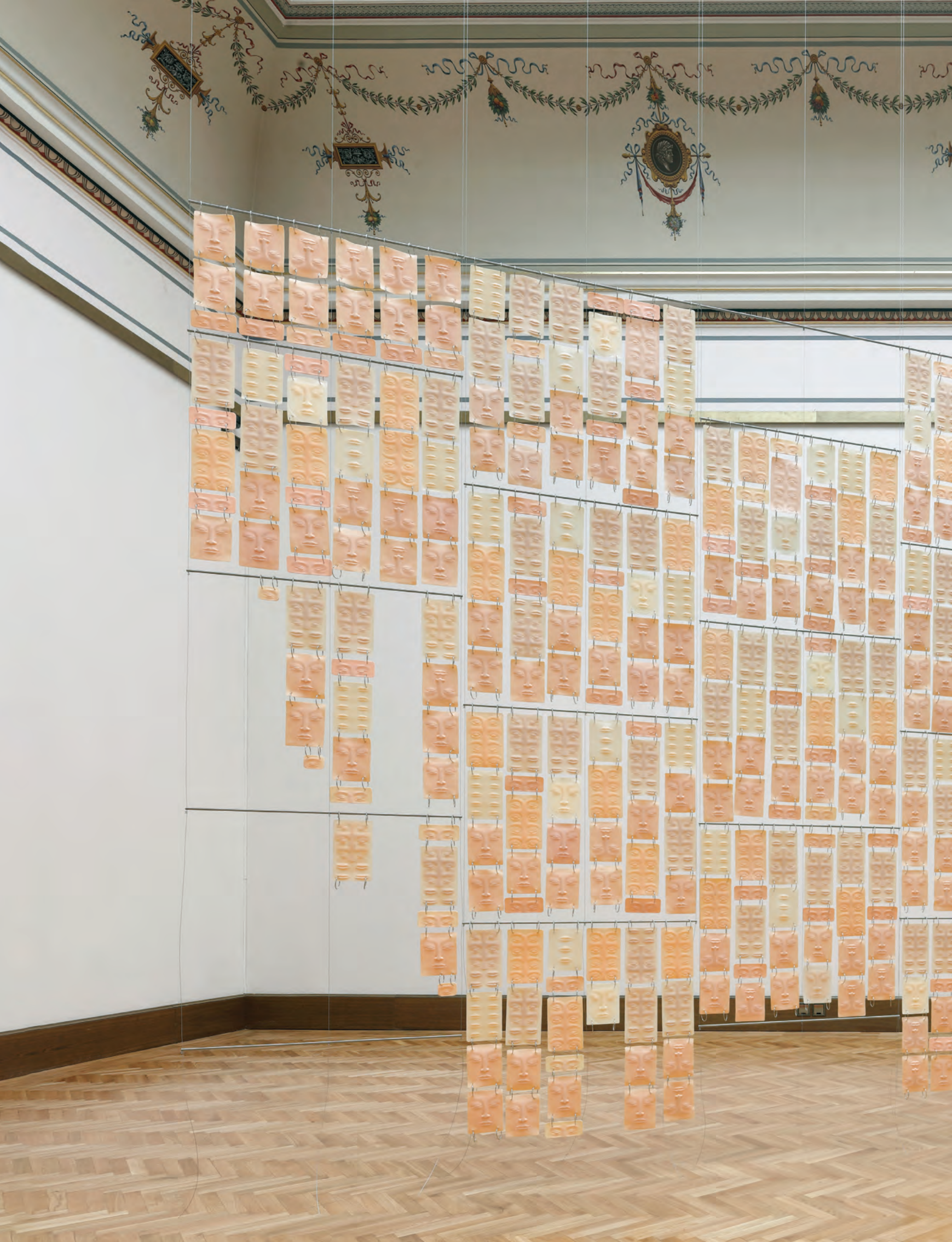
MILKY WAY PLANET





SILENCE









SILENCE











MEDUSA



ABUSED BILLBOARD

SKIN CARE  
EXTENDED CAPTIONS  
INSTALLATION VIEWS

MOLECULES, 2006/2025  
TEXTILE, PLASTIC  
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
[pp. 4, 6–9]

WITH HER, 2016/2025  
TEXTILE, METAL, PLASTIC,  
POLYSTYRENE  
70 × 280 × 180 cm  
[pp. 10–12]

ALL YESTERDAY, 2025  
PLASTERBOARD, MIXED MEDIA  
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
[pp. 10–17]

POEM AMONG SHELVES, 2010–2011  
WOOD, SILK, HABERDASHERY  
340 × 35 × 35 cm  
[p. 13]

ME WITHIN YOU, 2019  
MIRROR, PLASTIC, STRING  
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
[p. 17]

SUNSET, 2019  
METAL, TEXTILE, SILK  
20 × 35 × 10 cm  
[p. 18]

RAIN, 2025  
TEXTILE, POLYSTYRENE BEADS  
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
[p. 19]

THE BAGROOMS, 2025  
TEXTILE, PLASTIC, MIXED MEDIA,  
ELECTRIC FANS, AIR  
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
[pp. 20–25]

PLANET, 2019  
PAPER, WOOD  
37 × 16 × 0.5 cm  
[pp. 26, 28]

UNDER THE LAMP, 2019  
PORCELAIN, METAL, PLASTIC, PAPER, WOOD  
45 × 35 × 20 cm  
[pp. 27, 29]

PENDULUM  $T = 2\pi\sqrt{\frac{L}{g}}$ , 2010–2011  
LEATHER, WOOD, FELT  
70 × 160 × 67 cm  
[p. 27]

ARTERIES, 2010–2011/2025  
HABERDASHERY, WOOD, GLASS, FELT, THREAD  
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
[pp. 2, 27, 30–33]

WITHOUT THE WEIGHT OF JUSTICE, 2018  
WOOD, PLASTIC, METAL, STRING, GRAPHITE  
76 × 43 × 0.7 cm  
[pp. 30, 34]

5 MINUTES, 2019  
METAL, STRING, PLASTIC  
67 × 17 × 20 cm  
[pp. 32, 35]

MILKY WAY PLANET, 2010–2011  
POLYSTYRENE, WOOD, TEXTILE, STRING  
16 × 55 × 23 cm  
[pp. 32, 36–37]

SILENCE, 2025  
SILICONE, METAL  
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
[pp. 32, 37–43]

WITHOUT A WEAPON, 2017  
PLASTIC  
100 × 80 × 120 cm  
[pp. 38, 44]

MEDUSA, 2018  
POLYSTYRENE, WOOD, ROPES  
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
[pp. 46–47]

ABUSED BILLBOARD, 2011  
TEXTILE, GLASS, HABERDASHERY,  
POLYSTYRENE  
150 × 100 × 30 cm  
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SKIN CARE  
DENISA KUJELOVÁ

Kateřina Vincourová integrates everything that interests her into her spatial drawings, objects, and installations – including the space in which she is exhibiting. She reacts to it subtly but precisely, creating a gentle, unobtrusive order that draws attention to detail, to the fleeting, to that which is usually overlooked.

The non-standard usage of ordinary materials associated with the body and the everyday is a defining element of Vincourová's expression; in the installations, they stand in for the body through physical memory and work with negative space, which not only performs a formal function but becomes an active field of meaning-making. Emptiness, gaps, and absence operate as part of the artist's testimony – like spaces of projection, expectation, or internal tension. This approach is particularly legible in her spatial drawings, where an object expands in the space – never as a dominant element but as an open structure.

Through her lived practice, the artist thus accents the tension between the individual's subjective introspection and the mediating cultural and social paradigms, opening space to interrogate critically the architecture of relationships – i.e., structures that are not only physical, but primarily relational, symbolic, and ideological. Her installations thus reflect the processes through which identity forms and transforms in a dynamic combination of personal patterns and social narratives. They create a space for sharing, where memory and emotional awareness merge with collective experience.

The starting point for Kateřina Vincourová's practice is thus immediate, lived experience – embodied, emotional, and situational – which she reshapes into visually and materially specific installations. The artist works systematically with ordinary, often ephemeral, materials of everyday life that bear the traces of touch, use, or movement – which further accentuates the human body's indirect presence in her works.

The title of the exhibition *Skin Care* evokes surface and depth, physicality and fragility, exposure and protection. It is also a deliberately provocative and ironic gesture – a reference to a banal, commercialised concept that is commonly associated with bodycare routines, but which in the context of Vincourová's work acquires a critical charge. Just as the title itself connects past with present, the exhibition brings older and new works into dialogue.

The environment of the exhibition is conceived as a landscape, a changing terrain that fluidly transforms across the individual sections of the installation. The space does not follow a narrative logic but creates a perceptual map, in which the individual parts coalesce into a related but open whole. Vincourová has long dealt with the tension between utopia and dystopia, researching the possibilities and properties of these stable and unstable places; by sharing fragments of her thoughts and visual associations, she facilitates a collective experience and consciousness in a landscape that is as subjective as it is relational. Here, space is not read as a linear zone, but respects the nonhierarchical, cyclical logic of the installation. This looping structure of the exhibition is not only a formal strategy arising from the possibilities suggested by the gallery's

layout but also reflects a fundamental principle of Vincourová's thinking about the world – like a system that never ends but ceaselessly reorganises, redefines, and turns back upon itself.

## THE FEMALE EXPERIENCE IN THE NETWORK OF SOCIAL STRUCTURES

In *Molecules* (2006/2025) and *Abused Billboard* (2011), Vincourová scrutinises the body not only as a physical entity but also as a social field that is formed and deformed by both internal and external relationships. Composed of torsos made of women's compression underwear and inflatable balls, *Molecules* references bodily norms shaped by cultural, social, and ideological standards of beauty. At the same time, these objects are metaphors for the physical and emotional burdens that society places on the individual through these subliminal patterns – becoming, de facto, a critical reflection on the conditioning of bodily perception by cultural and historical factors.

The artist does not create narrative stories; her work operates rather as a sensitive field in which physical, emotional, and cultural layers of experience meet. In her work, the body can thus be approached as a field of influence, where social structures are stored and embodied both from the perspective of social determination<sup>1</sup> and emotional experience.<sup>2</sup> Their association then allows the body to be understood in the work of art not only as a carrier of subjective experience – of anxiety, pressure, or resignation – but as a visualisation of structural tension. The body, then, bears not only an emotional imprint but also a social one.

Embodiment is latently present in Kateřina Vincourová's works through soft, pliable materials, suspension, hints of touch, heaviness, or movement. This is not about the direct representation of the body, but rather its traces, absence, experience. Thus the artist creates tension between duration and transience, between visibility and the imperceptible.

The American artist Senga Nengudi works with the dynamics of space, time, and embodiment through elastic materials in a similar way to Vincourová, who creates a tension in her installations between deformed, tense forms and space through the use of flexible lingerie and elastic lingerie bands. Both artists have been inspired by personal experiences of motherhood and care, which led them to a reevaluation of their relationship to the body. In their works, they explore the possibilities of the abstracted body's elasticity, influenced by pregnancy, changes in weight, illness, or ageing, including the relentless pull of gravity. The elasticity of Nengudi's stockings and Vincourová's compression underwear and lingerie bands becomes a metaphor not only for these physical transformations, but also for the resilience of the female psyche – as flexible and resistant as the materials with which they both work.<sup>3</sup>

As in *Molecules*, in *Abused Billboard* the artist emphasises the relation between the body and visual norms. *Abused Billboard* critically responds to the omnipresent visibility of advertising culture that manipulates body and identity in public space.<sup>4</sup> Deprived of its aesthetic function and content, the billboard acts here as a disrupted sign communicating nothing; it addresses absence but also reveals hidden power structures. Its abuse lies in the reversal: it no longer

1. That is, a set of internal dispositions that are the product of a particular social environment and subsequently structure the individual's behaviour, as defined by Pierre Bourdieu under the term *habitus*. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

2. As conceived by Michalinos Zembylas, in "Emotional Capital and Education: Theoretical Insights from Bourdieu," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 55, no. 4 (December 2007): 443–63.

3. A strong association with Eva Hesse's methodology is evident in the approach to vulnerability and use of atypical materials that also oscillate between firmness and flexibility.

4. This approach resonates with Judith Butler's view that the body is always culturally, historically, and socially conditioned. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2006).

manipulates the viewer, but instead fails in this function, allowing for a backward glance – at the infrastructure of depiction and communication itself.

## THE RESIDUE OF SILENCE

An environment with a central reclining figure reflects the body as a spatial structure and subjective interface. The sprawling female figure *With Her*<sup>5</sup> (2016/2025) can be read as a landscape, a horizon, and a projection of the viewer or the artist's alter ego, made present by its imprint on the surrounding environment.

Vincourová deliberately destabilises the historicising plane of the space, disturbing its given architectural logic with plasterboard plates. With this intentionally raw material she creates a paradoxically soft, bodily encoded structure, which evokes the internal space of the body.

However, the plasterboards here appear as fragile sediments of catastrophes – ruins of extinct civilisations, remnants of war-torn cities, the alarming state of the planet, or the current world on the brink of self-destruction, rising from the rubble like a silent memento. Among them, at occasional intervals, ring out the despairing sounds of petitioning bells; but they ring into a void. Their urgency is met with deafness from a community that does not respond.

Symbolic fragments in other works in the hall expand the meaning of the installation towards a reflection on female identity and universal human vulnerability, intimacy, and care. This environment, however, primarily operates as a spatial system for perceptual activation. The relation between the body, spaces, and fragments of the everyday operates as a matrix, in which the spectator articulates their own experience. The installation thus does not present the individual as an essence, but as a site of construction, instability, and possible identification. The figure of the woman here is thus not an object of contemplation but, above all, an agent of memory<sup>6</sup> and relationality.<sup>7</sup>

The sculpture of a dreaming woman with entrails made of defunct computer components defines the body as a hybrid formation oscillating between the biological and the technological, between the natural and the artificial. She is not represented as a stable identity, but as an open configuration of relations – somatic, emotional, and technical. Given her exposed technological innards, the figure cannot be read as a woman in an essential, natural sense but rather as a postgender body reflecting both intimate experience and the cultural construction of subjectivity in the digital age. This is not, however, merely a dystopian vision of dehumanisation but also a latent presentation of a strategy for survival in the conditions of late modernity, where the body is constructed through technology, knowledge, and power.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, *With Her* rewrites the conception of the body – as an entity that is not only vulnerable but also a record, capable of carrying the memory of technological and gender norms. While the curves of the figure and the graceful composition of the body evoke traditional notions of femininity, the internal structure composed of computer parts disrupts this aesthetic, presenting the body as a landscape of data shaped by the circulation of information, technology, and social expectations. Further questions are raised by the figure's placement in a dismal, dystopian landscape, with entrails exposed.

5. The original Czech title, *S\_ní*, has a double meaning, reinforced by Vincourová's inclusion of the underscore, and may be read both as "with her" (*s ní*) and "she dreams" (*sní*).

6. Louise Bourgeois also understood the body as a carrier of memory and emotional experience.

7. In dialogue with the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, who refutes the notion of the body as an autonomous, closed whole, the body can also be perceived here not as an entity of interiority, but as a site of exposition; through this openness, corporeality can be understood as a structure of shared experience. See Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

8. In the sense of Donna Haraway's 1985 definition of the cyborg in "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, by Donna J. Haraway (London: Routledge, 1991), 149–81. See also N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

Vážení čtenáři, právě jste dočetli ukázkou z knihy Kateřina Vincourová.  
Pokud se Vám ukázka líbila, na našem webu si můžete zakoupit celou knihu.