

Lumír Hladík

MASTERCLASS

Anotation

It was the National film archive of the Czech Republic (NFA), who initiated the idea of a Lumír Hladík MASTERCLASS presentation. In 2019, the NFA acquired his 70s film documentation of his work and included it into its permanent collection. On the occasion of the premiere of these films at Prague's PONREPO cinema (2022), NFA asked the artist to generate a lecture that would explain in further detail how his performances originated, what inspired them, and above all, how they relate to the artist's current work. Hladík recognized that bridging a time span of roughly 45 years would require a more comprehensive approach, and decided to offer a much deeper analysis. While uncoiling and exploring a multitude of interrelated memes, he also expounds the theory of cognition, the theory of art and eventually even detects a close tie between quantum physics and the role of art in our civilization's struggle for survival. In March 2023, Hladík's MASTERCLASS had an English premiere at the short film festival (Dresdner Schmalfilmtage) in Dresden, Germany. Here are some key points from Hladík's Masterclass:

How to incise the texture of Existence.

How to outwit improbability.

Non/thinkthrough/ability.

What is a pattern-gap.

10 trillion info-combinations in a work of art?

Notion as an anti/non/representational interpretation in a state of superposition.

Rituální vražda pitomého úsměvu

Ritual Murder of a Stupid Smirk

Mám rád loutky. Jednou jsem však narazil na loutku, vystavenou ve výloze hračkářství, která mi šla šíleně na nervy. Měla ten nejpitomější úsměv, který mě pronásledoval i ve snu. Tenhle úsměv mě nakonec dohnal k tomu, že jsem tu nešťastnou loutku koupil, hodil do prázdné sklenice od zavařeniny a zalil vodou až po okraj...

I love marionettes. However, there was one, displayed in a toy store shop window, which irritated the hell out of me. It had the most stupid smirk ever. It gave me nightmares. Unable to take it anymore, I purchased this ill-fated toy, placed it in an empty Mason jar and poured water into it until it filled up....



Neznámý zůstal neznámý

Anonymous Remained Anonymous

V mém životě hrály stromy velkou úlohu. Některé byly moudré a zamyšlené: smuteční vrby. Praktické a užitečné: třešně nebo jabloně. Náročné: jedle, na které jsem coby kluk šplhal na naší zahradě. Znal jsem je důvěrně. Stále je mám, i po 44 letech, před očima. A pak jsou ty ostatní. Triliony anonymních stromů, které se promění v magickou a záhadnou záležitost - les. Hodně anonymních stromů pohromadě. Rozhodl jsem se osobně zakusit jeden z těchto nevýznamných stromů. Vybral jsem si otevřenou polní krajinu s lesem uprostřed a vyšel směrem k lesu. Asi 100 metrů od kraje jsem zavřel oči a pokračoval v chůzi, až jsem po hmatu našel strom. Objal jsem ho. Vrátil jsem se zpět, maje oči zavřené až do té doby, než jsem usoudil, že jsem dostatečně daleko, abych svůj strom už nebyl schopen identifikovat. Otočil jsem se a neviděl nic než les.

Trees played a huge role in my life. Some of them were wise and pensive; weeping willows, practical and useful; fruit trees, challenging; pine trees. I used to climb (Mowgli style) in our garden. I knew them intimately, and I can still see them in my mind 44 years later. What about the rest of them? Trillions of anonymous trees make up a magic and mysterious entity: a forest — a lot of anonymous trees living together. I decided to “experience” one of these insignificant trees. I selected a site where open fields formed a circle around a forest and I started walking towards it. When I was about 100 m away from its edge, I closed my eyes and kept walking until I was able to single out, by touch, a tree and hugged it. I turned around and walked away from the forest and kept my eyes shut until I felt that I was far enough from my “selected tree” in order not to be able to identify it ever again. Indeed, I looked back and all I saw was a forest.



Zmenšil jsem průměr Země I Reduced the Diameter of Earth

Rozhodl jsem se vykonat monumentální čin – zmenšit průměr Země. Vyhledal jsem pole s obnaženým povrchem a počal hloubit díru. Ve chvíli, kdy byla podle mého úsudku díra dostatečně hluboká, jsem přestal kopat a změřil její hloubku; bylo to 73 cm. Průměr Země jsem odhadl v místě akce na zhruba 12 735 km, zmenšil jsem ho přesně o 73 cm.

I decided to undertake a monumental task – to reduce the diameter of Earth. I selected a field with bared soil and started to dig a hole. When I sensed that it was deep enough for my cause, I stopped and measured its depth; it was 73 cm. The diameter of Earth, around my action site was ~12,735 km; I diminished it by exactly 73 cm.



Můj osobní „nekonečný“ vector

My Personal “Infinite” Vector

Rozhodl jsem se, že se stanu vlastníkem kosmického vektoru. Obstaral jsem si bílý „nivelační“ patník a kovovou silniční značku. Na černé ceduli byl vytištěn diagram, který obsahoval malý bílý trojúhelník, jehož se dotýkala tenká vodorovná linka, na obou koncích zakončená symbolem nekonečna. Tento vektor byl náhodně vybrán z nekonečného počtu vektorů probíhajících vesmírem a zveřejněn díky nivelačnímu patníku. Patník jsem dal do jamky na vrcholu kopce a zabetonoval. Tři metry od něj jsem zabetonoval do země značku. Instalace postupně chátrala, aby pak po 25 letech definitivně zmizela.

I decided to become an owner of a cosmic vector. I secured a white mark stone and a metal road-sign. The black road-sign depicted (in the form of a diagram) a small white triangle touched by a thin horizontal line with the symbol of infinity on each end. This “depicted” vector was randomly selected (out of an infinite number of vectors running through the universe) and made visible and public by the very point of the mark stone. I placed the stone in a small pit on top of a hill and poured concrete around it. Three feet away, I erected the metal sign and secured it in the same manner. The installation gradually deteriorated and disappeared after ~ 25 years.



Už nikdy tenhle balvan

The Never Boulder

Už v mládí jsem objevil na vrcholu kopce Klepec balvan, který na mě udělal velký dojem. Jednoho dne jsem usoudil, že balvan je dostatečně veliký a důležitý, abych s ním jednou provždy skoncoval. Rozhodl jsem se po tři dny k balvanu stále více přibližovat, abych k němu byl co nejbližší, ale nedotkl se ho po zbytek svého života.

From my early childhood explorations, I knew about a large boulder on top of a hill, which made a big impression on me. One day, I came to the conclusion that it is big and important enough to terminate our "relationship" forever. I decided to approach the stone in decreasing increments for three days and to come as close to it as possible in order not to really physically touch it for the rest of my life.



Moře v zrcadle

The Mirrored Sea

Uvědomil jsem si, že to jsou dva roky, co jsem naposledy viděl moře. Moře bylo vždy symbolem svobody. Rozhodl jsem se, že dva roky byla dostatečně dlouhá doba (z emocionálního hlediska), abych se vypravil znovu k moři za účelem ho „nevidět“. Požádal jsem přátele, aby mě dovezli se zavázanými očima a s velkým zrcadlem na pobřeží Baltického moře ve východním Německu. Po našem příjezdu přátelé postavili zrcadlo na pláži tak, aby zrcadlilo moře. Dovedli mě k zrcadlu a já jsem se posadil zády k moři, sejmul pásku z očí a sledoval odraz moře v zrcadle. Po hodině pozorování moře v zrcadle jsem si opět zavázal oči a přátelé mě odvezli zpět do Prahy.

One day I realized that it had been two years since the last time I saw the sea. The sea always was, for us Czechoslovakian citizens, a special place. In a geographical sense, the country is landlocked, as well as in a political sense; the sea became a symbol of freedom. Thus, I decided that a time span of two years was emotionally significant enough to allow me to “not see it (again).” I asked my friends to drive me (blindfolded), and a large mirror to the Baltic Sea coast in East Germany. Upon our arrival, my friends placed the mirror in an upright position on the beach facing the sea. I was escorted towards the mirror, where I sat down, removed the blindfold and watched the sea’s reflection in the mirror. After an hour of mirror-sea-watching, my friends blindfolded me again and we returned back to Prague.



then (45 years ago)

1

In this presentation, I will try to take a closer look at my action artworks from the 70s, their origin and roots and, above all, to explore how they relate to my current work. Let me, before I start, emphasize the fact that during the very process of creation of my art, I only follow my intuition, I engage in an intimate dialogue with the universe. This presentation - is therefore a post-production analysis. A combination of self-reflection, some probe into human evolution, art history and science. The entire presentation is divided into two basic segments; then and now.

Who inspired me?

Joseph Beuys
Karel Miler
Jiří Kovanda
Master of the Třeboň Altarpiece
Dennis Oppenheim
Michelangelo Pistoletto
Božena Němcová
Hans CH. Andersen
Jack London
Chris Burden
Allan Watts
Karel Čapek
Eva Hesse
Franz Kafka
King Crimson

2

A lot of people are grilling me about this; here are a few names... we'll see if and how it changes.

What did I care about then?

Incising the texture of existence!

Somewhere in between the disciplines of art, metamathematics, informatics, philosophy, and cognitive psychology, there is an entrance to the otherworld, to a mysterious realm where everything is connected to everything. A domain filled with such an overabundance of lucidity and truth that if we had the audacity to enter it **unrestraint**, it would **kill** us on the spot. If we dare to enter, then only incrementally, gingerly and carefully, in an **infinite amount of steps**, and with squinted or closed eyes or, preferably, **blindfolded...**

3

The texture of existence - it may sound scary, but as a young boy, I loved everything mysterious and I passionately desired to see places on my world map designated as "Terra incognita" and "Hic sunt leones"; white spots—unexplored, unknown land. However, a bit later, after I have read Franz Kafka's short story "Entering the Law*", I understood that such white spots are only the beginnings of a quest... that never ends. And, it is amazing that 100 years after Kafka's death, Sean Carroll, a contemporary theoretical quantum physicist admits; "We know how it works (meaning quantum physics), but we don't know why! And we have stopped asking! – and there are eminent physicists who maintain that we will never ever know..."

**Entering the law - a countryman comes to town and wants to enter the law. The doorman refuses him entry, saying it's not possible now, maybe later. The villager waits and waits, trying to bribe the porter, who accepts the bribes but refuses permission to enter. The villager grows old, finally feels that he is dying and suddenly he thinks of a question that never occurred to him: "how come no one else tried to enter this door all this time?" "This door was meant only for You", says the doorman, "Now I will go and close it."*

Derailed situations

4

This is how Pavlína Morganová (2010) described my action art – and, of course, she was right and it took me a long time to fully understand it...

Incising the texture of existence!

then
Derailed situations

Nonprobability
Tit for tat

Non-thinkthrough-ability
Inter-pattern gap!

5

So here we are...**I'll try to explain how to "incise the texture of existence".**

Today I will focus on two basic methods that I use in my practice. However, this slide is a bit of a teaser, as I first need to dive into some cognitive theory before I begin to shed light on these 'methods'. The first method - I address the improbability / impossibility challenge via the "tit for tat" method: let's go to Hans Ch. Andersen and his Little Mermaid for help - she gave up her voice to gain legs. The second method - about non-thinkthrough-ability, is about peripheral cognition and the method of inter-pattern gaps.

Reality is a **human construct**

6

Reality as such does not exist. We live in an illusion that all humans have agreed upon and in which we all exist. So let's explore the origins of this illusion, its benefits, side effects, and perhaps how to use it to our advantage. There are many reasons - let's call them "filters, blockers and traps" that cause this phenomenon. Today I will discuss only 5 of them.

We are condemned to observe!

1 Observation affects reality

- interference in a double slit experiment occurs only if no one is watching

1¹ Objectivity is a pipedream

- different observers and different observation methods are condemned to observe different realities

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The very existence of an observation point is, in itself, the creator of reality. Without an observation point(s), we would end up in a **realm of an infinity of probable viewpoints**. Consequently, we would thus erase notions of time and distance, form and void. Evidence of this claim has been delivered via numerous experiments such as the double slit effect, where the dualistic nature of particles (particle or wave) can be detected only if no one is watching. Moreover, the most recent quantum physics experiments have also revealed that different observation methods deliver different results, resulting in an absurd, yet beautiful conclusion: **an infinite number of methods will declare an infinite number of realities.**

We are deprived!

Reality is a human construct

2 Spectral deprivation

- protects our senses from being inundated, we perceive **0.0035%** of existing wavelengths

3 Oxygen deprivation

- defence system protects our brain from being overwhelmed - the brain uses **20%** of the oxygen we breath



Biological blockers and defence systems

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Of all the existing wavelengths crisscrossing the universe, we perceive about 0.0035%. **So, let's remember this: we get a sliver of "reality"**. However, this narrow slice of information is still, for us humans, an **unbearably high volume**. The brain consumes 20% of the oxygen we breathe to cope with this onslaught; moreover, if it were to think too hard, it would endanger our entire organism and survival. **Our brain reduces this tiny sliver of reality to a yet smaller sliver of reality**. This fact fundamentally affects our thinking. **The aforementioned observation paradox combined with this drastic information reduction - becomes the foundation of reality as a human construct.**

We are trapped!

4 Fiction trap

- human society has the ability, in order to further itself, to designate a chosen fiction as reality - *Yuval Noah Harari*

5 Paradigm trap

- Prevents us from stepping outside of the present Zeitgeist – we cannot cross our own shadow

Cultural / historical filters and influencers

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And we are not done yet. Human society as a whole has the ability to come to a consensus and establish a **designated fiction as reality**. This convention, according to Yuval Noah Harari, moves civilization forward, he cites the phenomenon of money as an example. This is a double-edged sword, sometime it leads to progress, some other times regress.

Most of our thinking, opinions and logic operate within our current Zeitgeist. History repeatedly shows us that people are attached to the beliefs, values, ethics, scientific knowledge or philosophy of their current time. **Science offers no exception, even here, the wicked Zeitgeist effect favors development within the limits of accepted theories, assumptions, beliefs.** Here I am actually quoting Sabina Hossenfelder, a German scientist - theoretical physics / quantum gravity. **This is a paradigm trap.**

It's very difficult to cross your own shadow.

Despite all this, a gateless gate opens...

Notio⁽ⁿ⁾ = magical conversion

- The brain fights back – via peripheral cognition it creates:

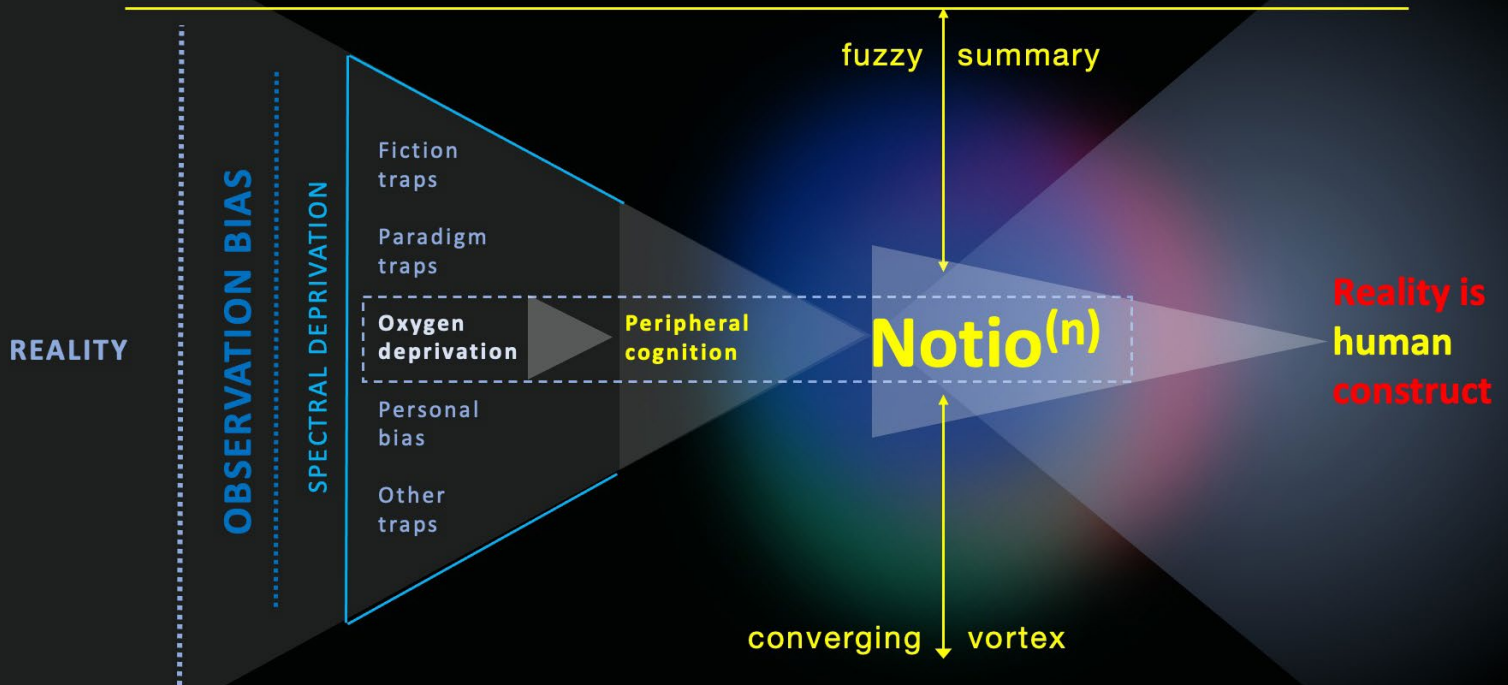
a) Patterns and inter-pattern gaps

b) Synopses / converging vortexes / fuzzy summaries

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Despite all these obstacles, a “gateless gate” will open for us...yes, a little Zen won't hurt—understandably within the framework of existence as a human construct. The brain defends itself - it applies the method of peripheral cognition. The brain summarizes by default; via peripheral vision and peripheral cognition. From an unprocessable amount of data, and at the cost of certainty or precision...it creates patterns and synopses, **anti-representational or non-representational interpretations - Notio⁽ⁿ⁾s—without them, the excess” of insightfulness” would kill us.**

...via a non-representational interpretation



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This infographic summarizes everything we talked about. How did we get to this “gateless gate” or converging VORTEX? How do we construct our reality? Staging the insensate universe as a starting point, we humans assumed the role of a self-aware sentient being and have become an observer. We deal with the attenuation of wavelengths through spectral deprivation in order to further reduce its volume via peripheral cognition, but at the same time we are adding an abundance of confusing informational burdens that we collect along the way. **And here, we find ourselves in Plato’s cave or the MATRIX....**

...what about this protective fence?

Soothing transformation = obviousness

- Obviousness doesn't warrant insightfulness. Obviousness protects us, lulls us into a feeling of comprehension without offering an insight. **A non-representational interpretation of our day to day existence leads to - everydayness**

The comforting embrace of the obvious

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The comforting embrace of obviousness. This process is another important building block of our human construct. I am borrowing a quote from the Czech philosopher Karel Kosík. He argued that "obviousness does not warrant access to insight". If something is obvious and seemingly self-evident, it does not necessarily mean that we have grasped some underlying deeper meaning. **The obvious lulls us into some kind of existential insensitivity and we get immersed into a bathtub filled with tepid water of everydayness.**

The ultimate paradox!

**our biology blocks, distorts and skews
information to help us to survive!**

**In order to survive, we need as much
information as possible!**

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I am sorry, but we had to go through this exercise to fully appreciate the paradox we are experiencing, day in, day out. Without exposing all the aforementioned limitations and constraints, we cannot fully appreciate the issue. On average, we spend 35% of our lives learning, absorbing information in order to make a living - to survive. Typically, people graduate from university at age 23 and retire at age 65. If I take into consideration that after graduation one has to keep learning - **we are getting to the vicinity of 50% of our lives.**

So, how do we survive?

Storytelling as a life-simulator delivers ultimate understanding—insight, without **endangering our lives**

(Brian Greene)

We do not have the opportunity to live for millions of years in order to experience everything and test everything empirically!

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Gilgamesh, Homer, fairy tales, Shakespeare, Hollywood...we need stories. Brian Greene compares; without flight simulators we would have many dead pilots and crashed planes. Stories teach us how to live without putting our lives at risk. Years ago, I read a profound science fiction story that influenced me in a big way. An archeologist found a metal capsule, box; a million years old. Without a doubt, made by aliens. Whoever opened the lid and saw what was inside died on the spot. Scientists ruled out radiation and toxic gases. They programmed a robot to take pictures, in a sealed room, of the content. Scientists who saw the resulting image died on the spot as well. Only the person who had a very low IQ didn't die - he went crazy. Scientists agreed that the box contained some kind of a symbol, a message that disclosed, within a hundredth of a second, the meaning of life—the meaning of existence. In my opinion, the aliens were able to deliver the message by circumventing the brain's oxygen deprivation defence mechanism, which role is to protect a human / a "scientist" from a lethal message overdose. **When I said initially that we can only get closer to the secret source of ultimate lucidity and truth by taking an infinite number of small steps - I had this warning in mind.**

Via multidimensional transmission, via
exponentially condensed stories revealing the
deepest wisdom...

...art delivers insight

Warning! Do not cut; only incise the texture of existence!

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So, finally, let's ask the ultimate question—what the hell is art?

There was some kind of art in that box. And it was damn good. A super-efficient transfer of information. It packed a punch. Now comes the big question—how do we get below the surface, how do we transcend into the next dimension, without **ending up in a mental asylum or even a morgue**. Evolution / nature has actually solved it for us; it provided us with **all the deprivations and limitations**, and, in addition, also came up with the **Pauli Exclusion Principle** (if we want to determine the speed of a particle, we have to accept that we will never know its position and vice versa).

So, let's try to emulate this principle.

plus....just incise the texture of existence, don't cut into it; that's a big difference!

then

Derailed situations

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Just a reminder, this is how Pavlina Morganová described my action art (2010...

How to incise the texture of existence!

Nonprobability / impossibility
Tit for tat

Impossibility gets replaced by an unexhausted possibility

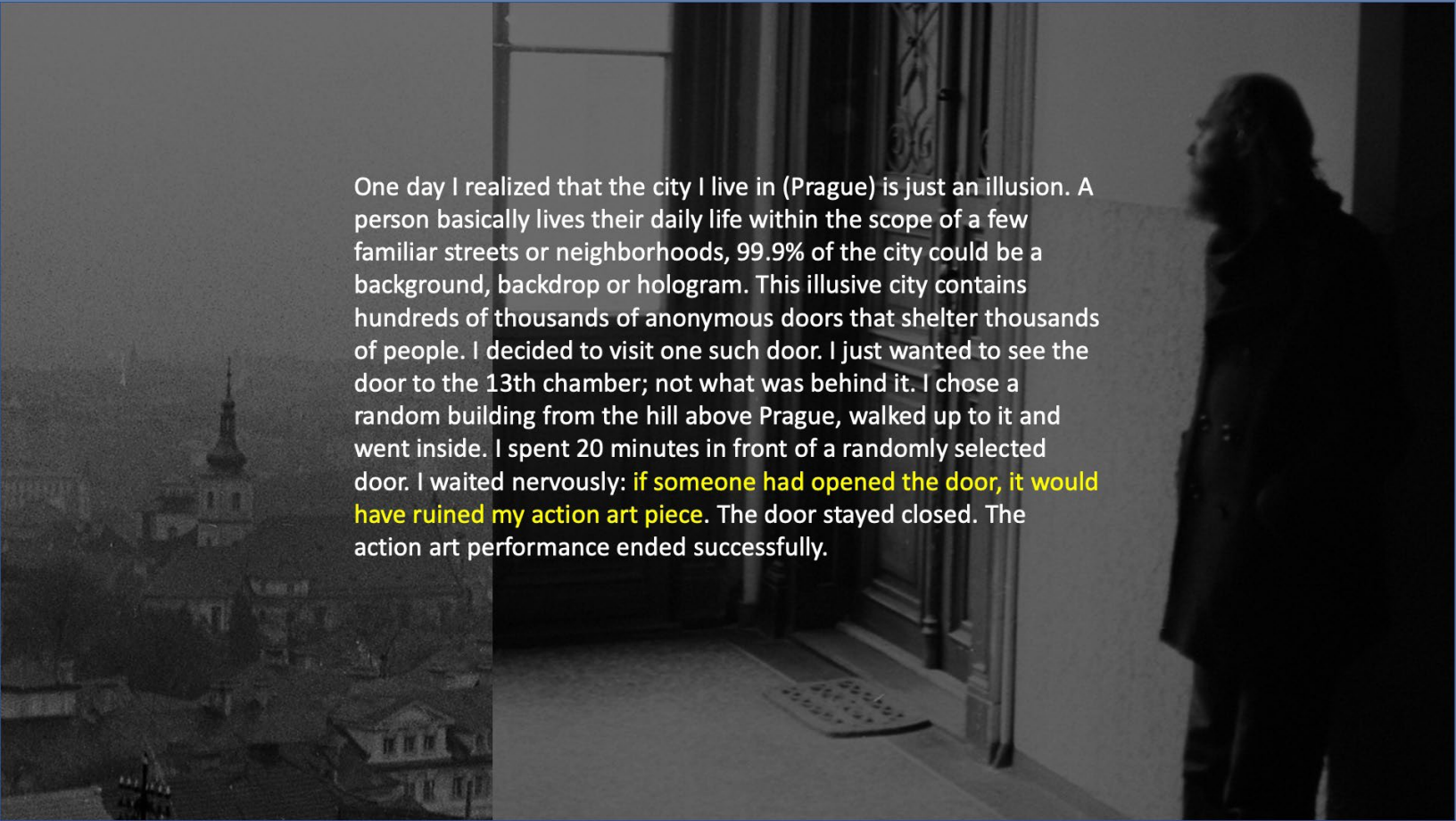
17

So let's have a look at one action art piece - as an example where derailment turns out to be the path to insightfulness - that is, to some deeper level of comprehension. Rails - that's the obvious and everyday thing, that's clear. But, beware, once we derail, get off track, the brain starts to fight back. This is the right time to deploy the Little Mermaid principle - otherwise we won't get anywhere. Yes, we can take this path thanks to the exclusion principle—**tit for tat**. **Let's halt in front of the 13th chamber—and exchange the impossibility for an unexhausted possibility!**

Action / Anonymous Doors/ 1978

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Here we go...let's go to the year 1978



One day I realized that the city I live in (Prague) is just an illusion. A person basically lives their daily life within the scope of a few familiar streets or neighborhoods, 99.9% of the city could be a background, backdrop or hologram. This illusive city contains hundreds of thousands of anonymous doors that shelter thousands of people. I decided to visit one such door. I just wanted to see the door to the 13th chamber; not what was behind it. I chose a random building from the hill above Prague, walked up to it and went inside. I spent 20 minutes in front of a randomly selected door. I waited nervously: **if someone had opened the door, it would have ruined my action art piece.** The door stayed closed. The action art performance ended successfully.

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I have selected an action art piece that contains several aspects that will be very useful for our presentation. It is based on the concept of improbability and impossibility and, inconceivability, and it's also taking place in the city of Prague. One day, I realized that the city, where I lived is just an illusion. In essence, one lives his/her daily life within the vicinity of a few familiar streets or neighborhoods; 99.9% of the city could be a just a stage set, backdrop or hologram. The city contains hundreds of thousands of anonymous doors, behind which, in turn, hundreds of thousands of people live their daily lives...I realized, on a very intuitive level, that in this sense, I could NEVER EXPERIENCE "PRAGUE". **So, I decided to visit one door. Only one!** I just wanted to catch the sight of the door to the 13th chamber; not what was behind it. I walked up a hill above the city to gain a panoramic view, chose a random building, walked up to it and went inside. I spent 20 minutes in front of a randomly selected door. I waited nervously: **if someone opened the door, it would ruin my event. The door didn't open. Success.**



0 possibility

230,000,000 YEARS

PROBABLE DURATION OF A COMPLETE DE-ANONYMISATION OF THE CITY OF PRAGUE

Prague 1980

1,200.000 inhabitants

500.000 doors

3 doors per day = 450 years

the chance of all doors opening in my presence / 230,000,000 years

Impossibility gets replaced by one unexhausted possibility

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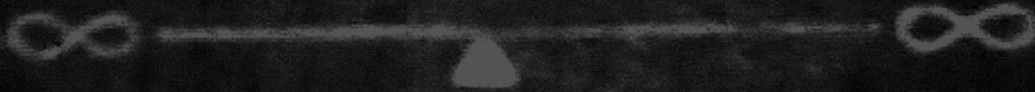
So, here is the proof that we live in an illusion; that reality per se is a construct. Everything around us, as we walk the street, is actually some kind of a Potemkin village. And when my mathematician friend and I sat down and did the math—we were amazed. It would take me 450 years to see all the city doors, and, approximately 230 million years to be able to observe people opening or closing those doors in my presence. **So, again, here is a proof of how the notional combination of obviousness and everydayness cages us, via peripheral thinking into the aforementioned illusion.** I stopped in front of **the door to the 13th room / chamber** – and exchanged **an impossibility for an unexhausted possibility.** Yes, I know, I can't leave the matrix.

Action / My Personal Eternal Vector / 1977

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Here we go...let's go to the year 1978...

then
Derailed situations



One day I decided to become the owner of an infinite cosmic vector...

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We saw this one at the beginning. So it will be easier to analyze this action.

then

Derailed situations



impossibility

Vectors are human constructs
There are infinitely many of them
This one goes from infinity to infinity
Vectors don't belong to anyone
Is it a total nonsense to own one?

Impossibility is replaced by
one depleted possibility

Tit for tat

23

It is impossible to grasp the very concept of infinity. How do we tackle such an uncanny idea? What about this. Let's reduce an infinite number of infinities to **ONE tactile, albeit arbitrary, point of contact**. By going through with this process, we have supplied the evidence that arbitrarily claimed personal ownership of owning a vector makes sense. This is a demonstration of the power of action art, when bringing about a seemingly a priori irrational synthesis of thought, space, feelings, body and objects gives rise to a new, higher principle. It is somewhat reminiscent of the question of how life originated. Why do some atoms form rock and other arrangements form living tissue that has a will...

How to incise the texture of existence!

then
Derailed situations

Non-throughthink-ability Inter-pattern gap

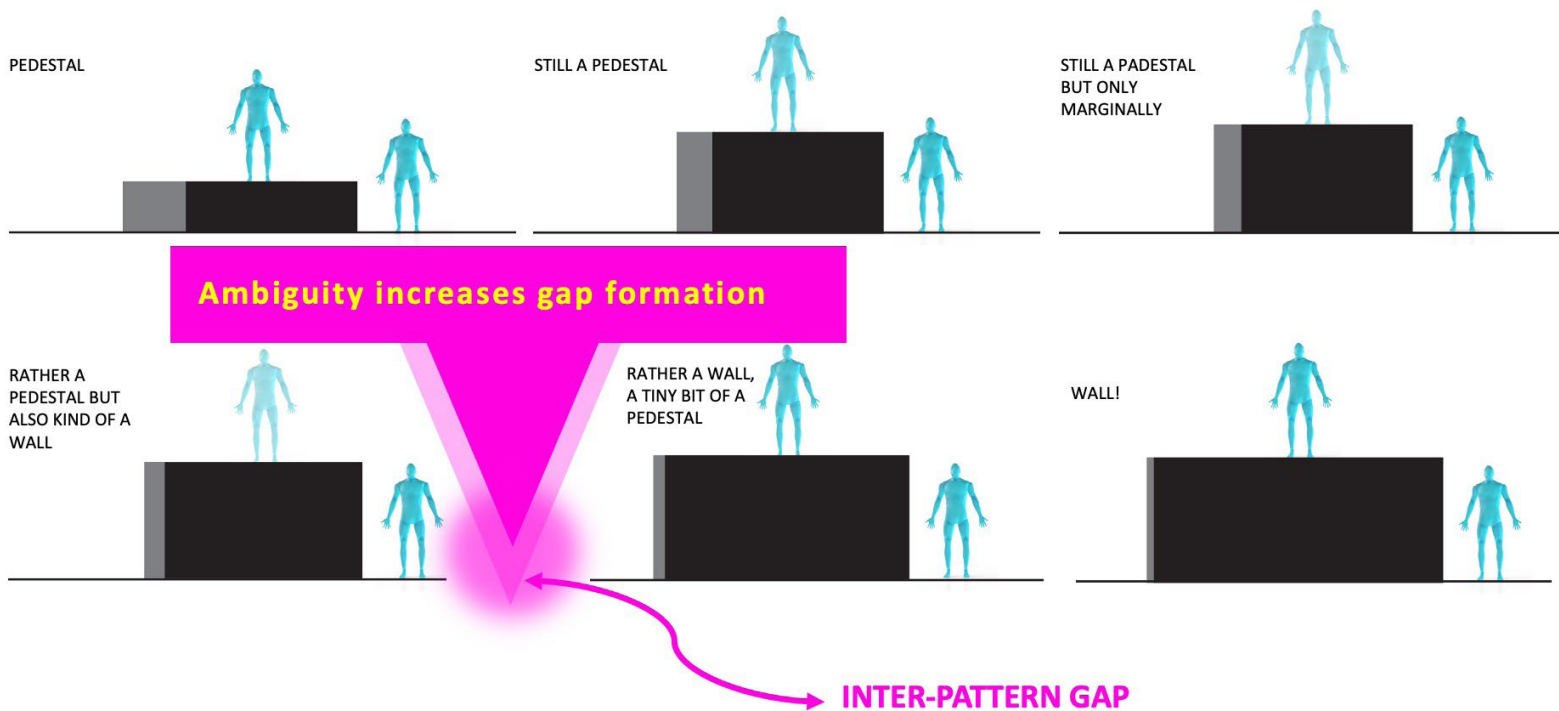
- what is a **pattern** - how the brain defends itself from oxygen deprivation
- let's find a weak spot in the **texture** in between patterns?
- When a pedestal is a pedestal: when a wall is a wall?

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So now let's look at method number 2.

I assume that most of you are aware of this. The brain is looking for a familiar pattern, something it already knows. Yes, we have a box for everything. But...now comes the magic moment! What happens when the brain doesn't find a familiar pattern? It has to make a quantum leap... this is an opportune moment to make an incision. **We're discovering an inter-pattern gap!**
When is a plinth a plinth, and when is a wall a wall?

Patterns; is it a pedestal, is it a wall?



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Here is an arbitrary attempt – to exemplify a case when the inter-pattern gap phenomenon can occur. Yes, our brain has the capacity to store millions of patterns– this is a plinth, a pedestal, an obelisk, a column, a wall! However, if we challenge ourselves and create a fuzzy version that cannot find a match in our memory, we can trick the brain - derail it, force it to make a quantum leap. **And, as I already mentioned, art is very good at this, it digs a new groove to a new orbit or meme.**

**Action /
A Ritual Murder
of a Stupid Smirk
/ 1976**

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Here I will give a specific example, an action art piece from the 70s.

then
Derailed situations



Action / A Ritual Murder of a Stupid Smirk / 1976

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...you have seen in the beginning of this presentation.

Jester

x 1,000

- 1 symbol of a toy
- 2 symbol of the artist's mental disorder
- 3 symbol of the actor's bizarre fixation
- 4 symbol of marionettes
- 5 symbol of the desire to imitate human behavior symbol of a
- 6 cultural icon
- 7 symbol of a mischievous child
- 8 symbol of murder
- 9 symbol of tragic destiny
- 10 symbol of retribution
- 11 symbol of an epic hero
- 12 symbol of injustice
- 13 symbol of a happy goofball
- 14 symbol of a smart hero
- 15 symbol of Czech fairy tales
- 16 symbol revenge
- 17 symbol of social injustice
- 18 symbol of disabled child / person

Jar

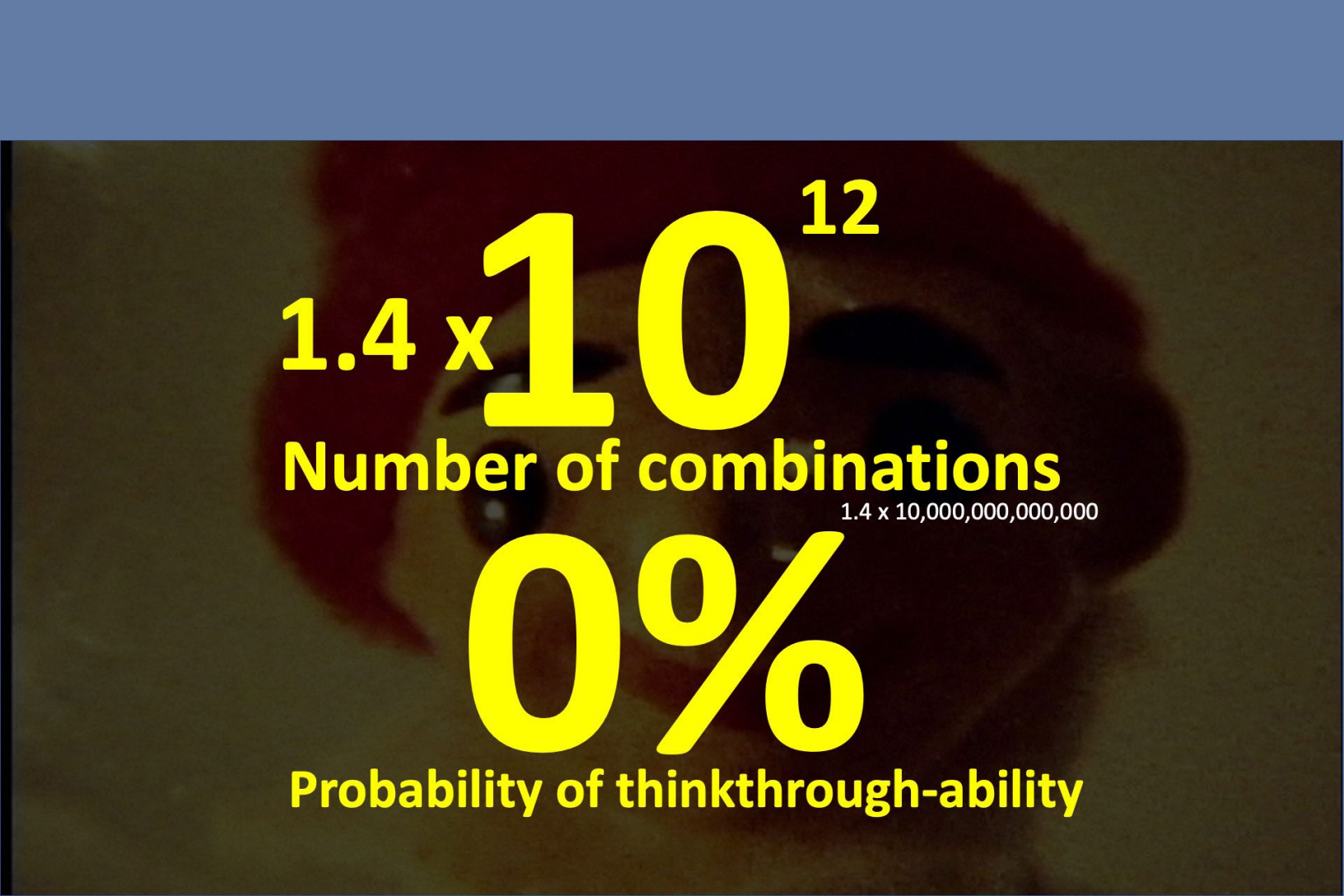
- 1 symbol of death
- 2 symbol of a ritual
- 3 symbol of disproportionate punishment
- 4 symbol of hatred
- 5 symbol of preserving food for the winter
- 6 symbol of canning
- 7 symbol of pickles
- 8 symbol of consumer glassmaking
- 9 symbol of anticipation
- 10 symbol symbol of vanity

Water

- 1 symbol of a whim
- 2 symbol of the desire to mirror life
- 3 symbol of drowning
- 4 symbol of execution
- 5 symbol of unfulfilled destiny
- 6 symbol of water as such
- 7 symbol of water as a menace
- 8 symbol of water as a murderous instrument
- 9 symbol of water as a necessity of life

28

Here is an example of 37 evocations or associations of what this action art piece reminds me of, roughly divided into three segments - Jester, Jar, Water. Each evocation, of course, gets further divided into thousands of sub-combinations. So, after a lot of considerations, we have determined that each evocation can (on average) be subdivided into 1000 related sub-evocations. This is a realistic number that can be achieved, if we put in the work. But, once we start combining those numbers—everything with everything, we end up with an absurd flood of data anyway—a **proof that the brain must deploy its default peripheral cognition process and cluster all the incoming data into non-representational interpretations - notio"s.**

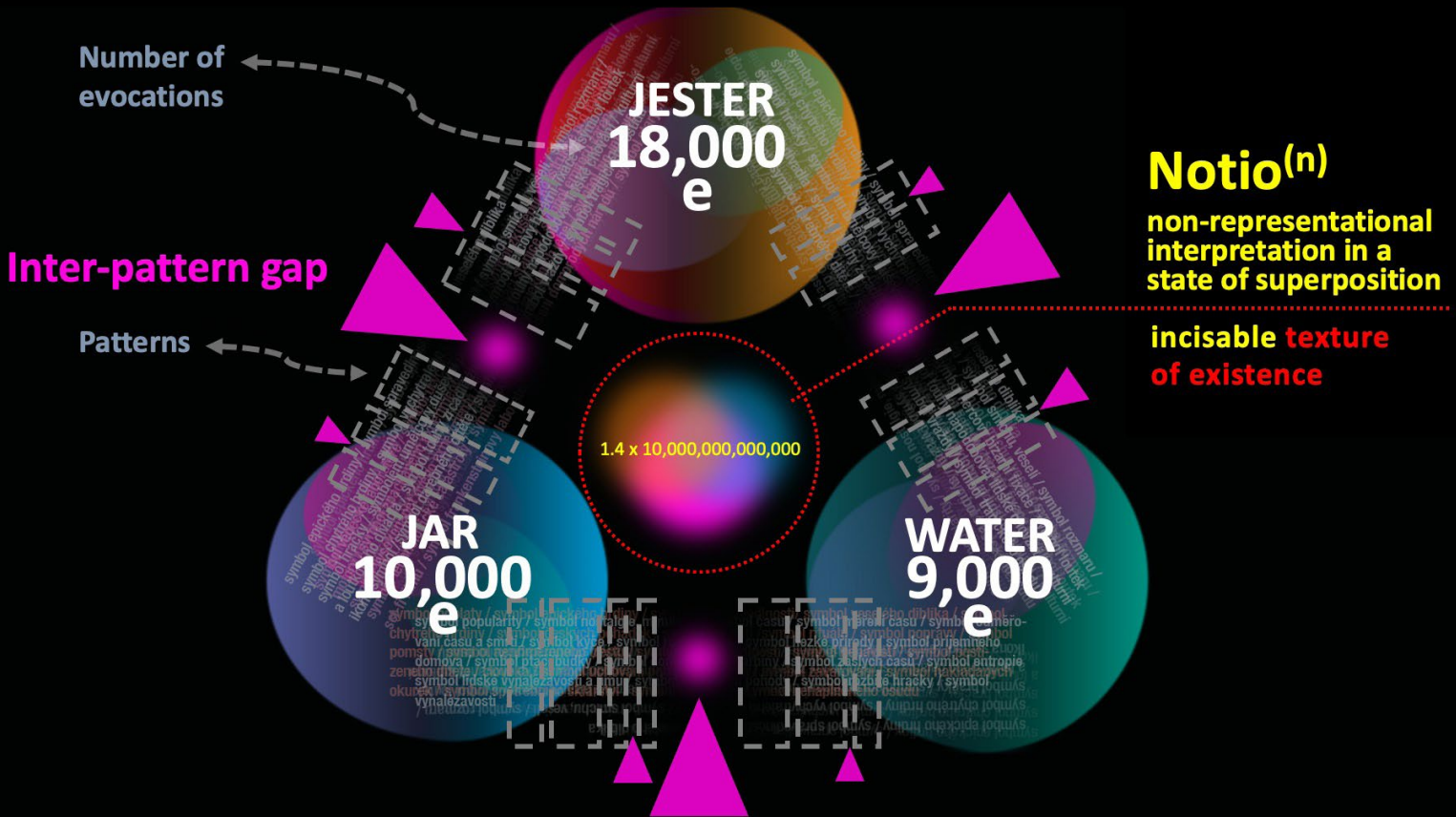


1.4×10^{12}
Number of combinations
1.4 x 10,000,000,000,000
0%
Probability of thinkthrough-ability

29

YES—over ten trillion combinations... that's the irony and the beauty of this amazing ability of our bizarre thinking process...that the brain, by the virtue of its oxygen deprivation defense system and its peripheral cognition mechanism refuses to process these absurd numbers—in a subserviently linear manner. All we get is **but a non-representational interpretation - notioⁿ**, or better yet a set of notions – I dare say, a **notional chaining event**. Yes, totally intangible, but still “comprehension”—moreover, we are now coming to a realization that thanks to the inter-pattern gap phenomenon we may have probably reached one of the deepest layers—below the threshold of all thresholds, **and we know that it is a vital bit of information, we keep holding on to it, often, for the rest of our lives... what if this very story is the one which will warrant our survival...**

Action / A Ritual Murder of a Stupid Smirk / **infographics**



30

Here, I am using an infographic in order to attempt an organized visualization of what we are talking about here. It's not as complicated as it looks. As per previous slide, you can imagine the insanely enormous number we get when we start combining all the evocations. **And, the inevitable consequence; the generation of notio⁽ⁿ⁾s, which, in turn, opens up the opportunity for an incision. The fact that it resembles a diagram of a PROTON QUANTUM CHROMODYNAMICS model is probably a pure coincidence.**

Now

31

So here we are in 2022...

Who inspires me?

Brian Greene
Jiří Kovanda
Master of the Třeboň Altar
Mark Twain
Hans CH. Andersen
Douglas R. Hofstadter
Ray Kurzweil
Ken Wilber
Karel Čapek
Yuval Noah Harari
Sean Carroll
Neo Rauch
Lucien Freud
Franz Kafka
Johann Sebastian Bach

32

Many stayed, others joined...

What do I care about now?

Incising the texture of existence!

33

Nothing has changed here...

Installation / The Rise and Fall of a Quantum Brat / 2022

34

So, let's travel in time, to the year 2022. This time, the subject of my examination is the exhibition at NEVAN Contempo in Prague. I would like to thank everyone who came to see it. My special thank you goes to Mikuláš Nevan and Pavel Švec for having the courage to make it happen.

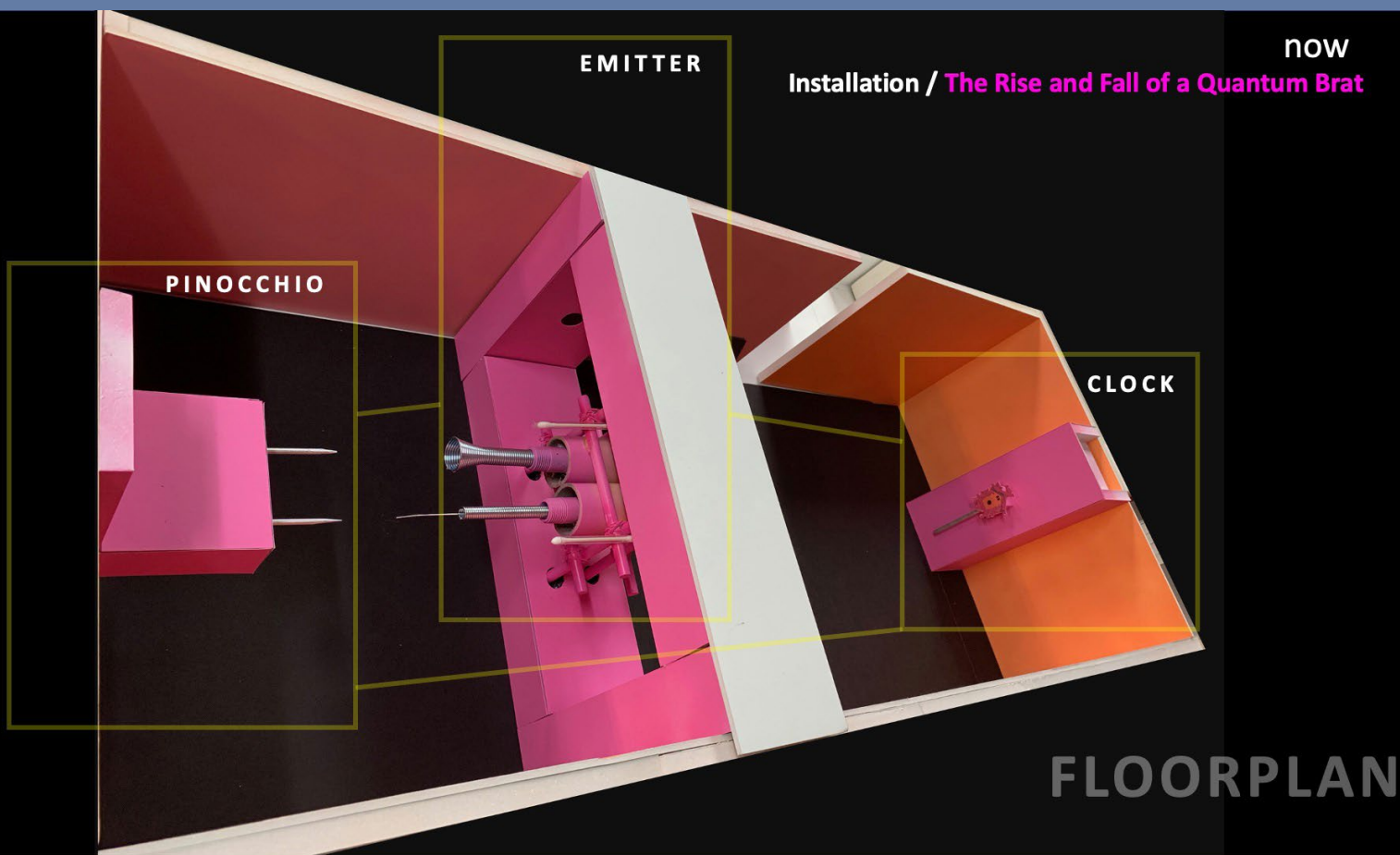


VIDEO

35

Let's have a closer look...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdr4VzbTeII>



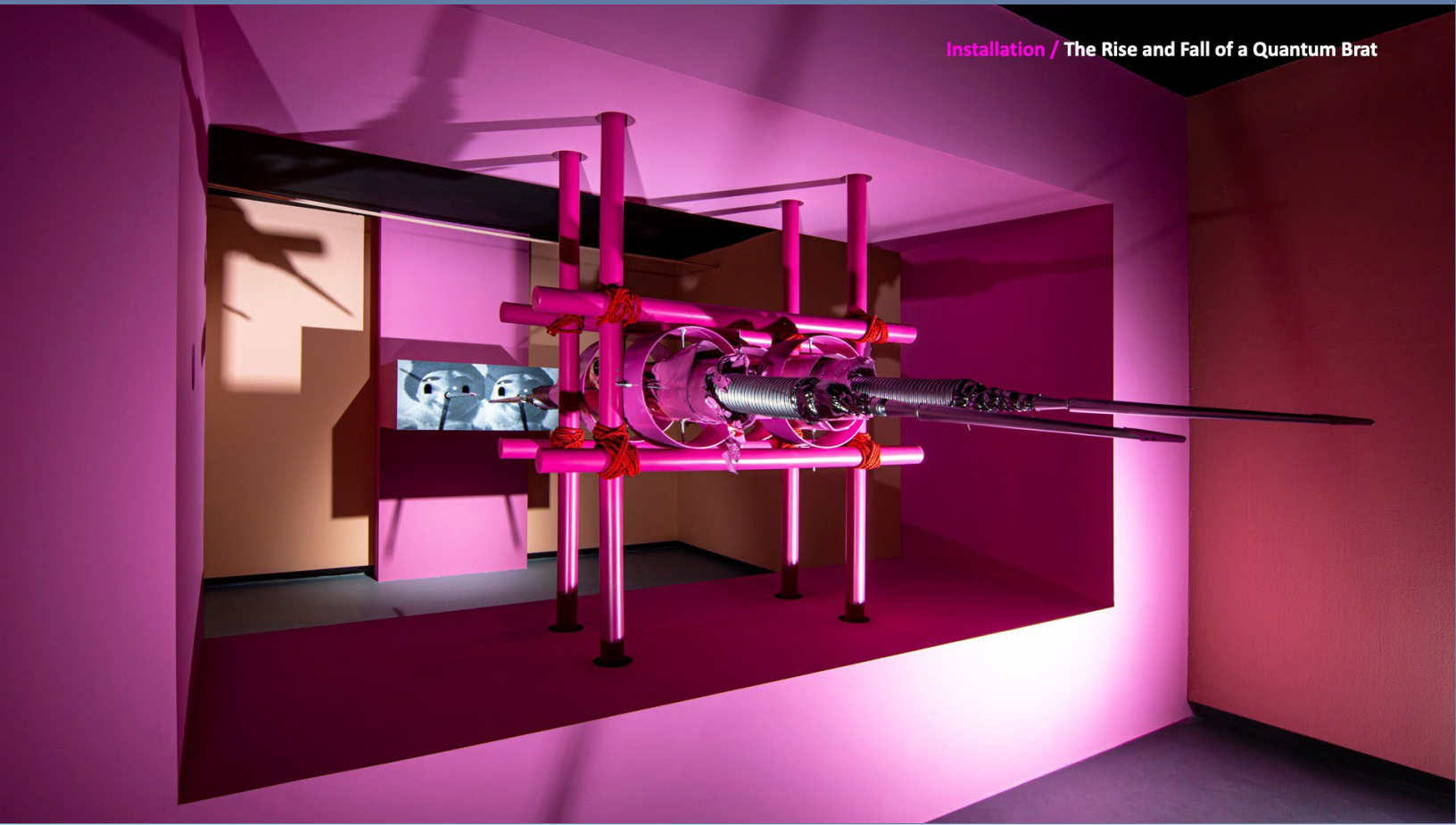
36

This is important to our discussion. What we see here is a 3D floorplan of the gallery—mainly for those who have not seen the exhibition to have an idea of how and where the installation objects were placed.



37

A view of the installation – clock side...



38

A view of the installation – Pinocchio side...

clock

- 1 symbol of popularity
- 2 symbol of nostalgia, old days
- 3 symbol of time
- 4 symbol of time measurement
- 5 symbol of measuring time and death
- 6 symbol of kitch
- 7 symbol of cuteness
- 8 symbol of beautiful outdoors
- 9 symbol of a pleasant home
- 10 symbol of a birdhouse
- 11 symbol of a Barbiedoll house
- 12 symbol of bygone times
- 13 symbol of entropy
- 14 symbol of human ingenuity and skill
- 15 symbol of bucolic contentment
- 16 symbol of a broken toy
- 17 symbol of human innovativeness
- 18 symbol of rococo

18 x 1,000 combinations

emitter

- 1 symbol of a scientific laboratory
- 2 symbol of a particle accelerator
- 3 symbol of a jet-engine test rig
- 4 symbol of a botched experiment
- 5 symbol of a broadcasting station
- 6 symbol of a radiation emitter
- 7 symbol of a high-voltage experiment
- 8 symbol of giant hypodermic needles
- 9 symbol of technological catastrophe
- 10 symbol of the burial scaffold of the indigenous peoples
- 11 symbol of vintage sci-fi movies
- 12 symbol of Frankenstein's laboratory
- 13 symbol of animal testing
- 14 symbol of collaboration with animals

14 x 1,000 combinations

40

Attributes, evocations... and the number of combinations. This time it concerns the EMITTER - I would like to mention that # 14 is absolutely true. **For those who are not familiar with my work—I produce these tubular objects in collaboration with wild black bears and other animals in the Canadian wilderness.**

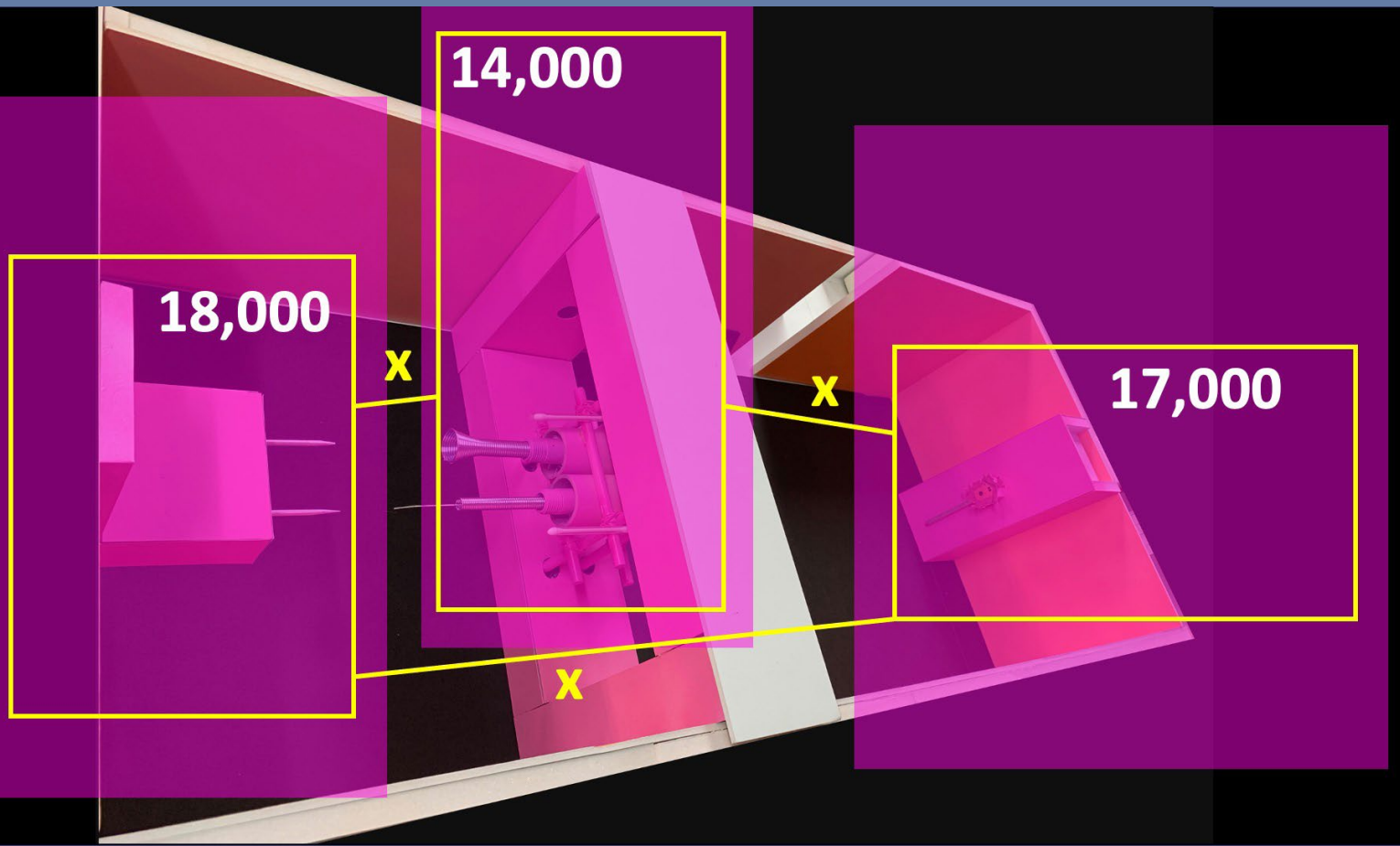
pinocchio

- 1 symbol of an artificial human
- 2 symbol of a naughty boy
- 3 symbol of a marionette and marionette theater
- 4 symbol of the desire to create life
- 5 symbol of the desire to imitate God
- 6 symbol of a cultural icon
- 7 symbol of proneness to lying
- 8 symbol of a mischievous child
- 9 symbol of death - (Pinocchio was executed)
- 10 symbol of murder - (the marionette was drowned)
- 11 symbol of a tragic destiny
- 12 symbol of disgrace
- 13 symbol of an epic hero
- 14 symbol of justice
- 15 symbol of a happy goofball
- 16 symbol of a smart hero
- 17 symbol of the cunning adventurer
- 18 symbol of laughter, merriment

18 x 1,000 combinations

41

Attributes, evocations... and the number of combinations. **This stereo Pinocchio object, as you may have noticed, is a repurposed screen capture from the 1976 action piece you saw earlier.**



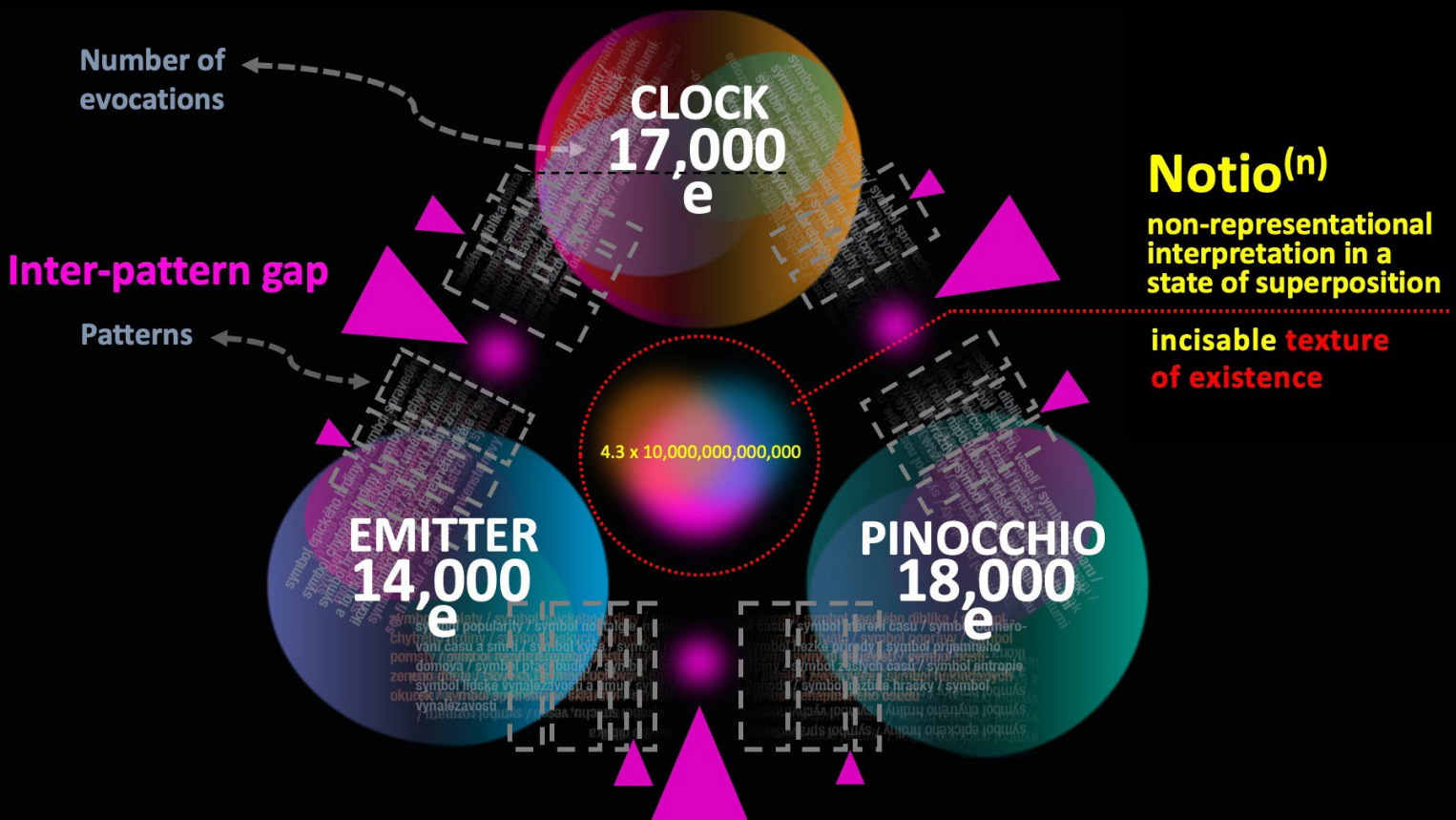
42
Combining all combinations.

4.3×10^{12}
number of combinations
4.3 x 10,000,000,000,000
0%
probability of thinkthrough-ability

43

And the result... 4.3 x 10 trillion... the possibility of thinking it all at once is ZERO. And with the help of ambivalence (clock-birdhouse-toy), **white spots appear and we can start incising.** Ambivalence and the change of context (the so-called "light of the gallery" effect) is a hotbed of pattern gaps, **that's why we need art.**

Action / The Rise and Fall of a Quantum Brat / infographics



44

That crazy diagram again...where thousands and hundreds of thousands of possible perceptions, memories, associations and feelings intertwine and combine into absurd numbers. **But as I said, that does not intimidate our cognition system; it cuts through it like a knife through butter.**

The brain is **not** a **computer**

45

I will cite Robert Epstein, former editor-in-chief of Psychology Today: Our shoddy thinking about the brain has deep historical roots, but the invention of computers in the 1940s got us especially confused. For more than half a century now, psychologists, linguists, neuroscientists and other experts on human behaviour have been asserting that the human brain works like a computer. **Well, this a great example of a paradigm trap.**

The brain is a

Quantum gravity and entanglement story!

46

Now this: the huge question mark of all neuroscience—**what is consciousness? What causes it? What is it?** Why does our survival depend on long episodes of sound dreaming? Why some individuals survive drastic brain injuries and make a full recovery: the remaining brain matter replaces the missing part after some time. These three points alone provide dramatic support for the argument that the brain is not a computer. **It's something else!**

Using a technique to test quantum gravity, scientists at Trinity College Dublin have shown that entanglement may be at work in our brains. This could help us explain the enormous power of the brain and its ability to create consciousness.

It took millions of years of evolution for this organ of cognition, control, command, and dreaming to form; with one single objective - to ensure our survival.

Notio⁽ⁿ⁾

Notio⁽ⁿ⁾ as a non-representational interpretation

Notio⁽ⁿ⁾ as a superposition state

Notio⁽ⁿ⁾al chaining

Consciousness as a Notio⁽ⁿ⁾al super-chains?

47

Why all these big numbers? To demonstrate that the realm of non-probability and non-thinkthrough-ability is in fact an astounding breeding ground for notion production through art. Despite the fact that our cognition machine is cutting through a potential of 4.3 trillion pieces of information, somehow, we know, although unspecifically, what we are looking at. With the help of some kind of a super high-speed processing elevator, our mind aggregates recognizable patterns into interpretive clusters and, most importantly, wedges itself in between pattern gaps. At this crucial moment, our mind is forced to form Notio⁽ⁿ⁾ superpositions. Art is a prolific Notio⁽ⁿ⁾ generator. Thinking in Notio⁽ⁿ⁾s enables us to deepen our non-specific, nebulous, yet profound understanding without the use of any consciously rational and linearly logical procedures.

The brain is not a computer.

It's something else!

This nebulous understanding, or rather, **non-representational notio⁽ⁿ⁾al chaining, defines us humans the most. It shapes, modulates, creates – constructs our lives, our human EXISTENCE and exponentially increases our chances in the fight for survival!**

48

That's the story I wanted to share with you. Over the past 100 years, we have made tremendous scientific progress. New discoveries are made at a dizzying pace. Yet at the same time, **we have not succeeded in creating a unified theory of the Cosmos and Existence as such**, and there is no indication that we will achieve this anytime soon. Physicists admit stagnation. We are bombarded daily with discussions of artificial intelligence that will enhance or threaten ours, or both, yet we don't know how our brains work, how our own intelligence works, or even what intelligence is. **All I know is that in order to survive, we humans, need consciousness, dreams and art. And that somehow, this omnipotent, sovereign trio is tied to the very foundations of our universe.** We don't know a whole lot about all this, but we are taking baby steps in that direction. **The white spots from the old maps have not disappeared, they have just moved on—to a different location, we still have a lot to look forward to.**



Incising the texture of existence!

49

This Action piece performed in 1980 changed everything; at least in my life...and the life of my family. Three years later, in 1983, professor, historian and philosopher Petr Rezek was the first one to describe and analyze this action in his book *BODY, OBJECT AND REALITY*. He came to the conclusion, and he was absolutely right, that at the time when I performed this action, **I had not the slightest idea that I would eventually leave my country of birth.** "...the meeting with the sea may have revealed his own situation to him (Hladík). The very presence of the sea is missing in the mirror image—the sea is present here as "absent" and speaks all the more urgently. / Hladík decided to move to a country (Canada) where direct contact with the sea is feasible anytime. **For he lived in a country where it is possible not to see a sea until one's death."**

Petr Rezek died on November 8, 2022

Will we
survive
our story?

50

And finally; a question...**no, I don't expect any answer—not yet.**

Somewhere between art, metamathematics, computer science, physics, philosophy, and cognitive psychology is an entrance to the otherworld, into mystery; into a world where everything is connected to everything. There is so much light and truth in there that if we entered **it unrestrained** we would not survive. If we dare to enter, than only **incrementally** in an infinite amount of tiny steps, and with squinted eyes and a **very elastic mindset...**

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Lumír Hladík / CV

Lumír Hladík je poválečný neoavantgardní umělec, průkopnická osobnost východoevropského konceptuálního hnutí 70tých let. Fascinován je jeho bezprostředností a formální svobodou se společně s podobně smýšlejícími umělci, Karlem Milerem, Petrem Štemberou, Janem Mlčochem a především Jiřím Kovandou, zabýval uměním performance/akce, instalace a intervence. Vytvořil velmi svéráznou formu body-artu, popsanou historičkou umění Pavlínou Morganovou jako aranžování "vykolejených situací", které dokumentoval pomocí fotografie a 8mm filmu. Jeho rané práce se zabývaly zkoumáním konceptu alterity, smrtelnosti a determinismu.

Po přestěhování do Kanady v roce 1982, strávil umělec více než tři desetiletí studiem přirozené entropie v kanadské divočině. Jeho umění, eklektická směs jak gotické majestátnosti, tak i barokní přebujelosti, retrokurie a uhlazeného městského pompézního kýče využívá široké spektrum disciplín; kresbu, kombinovaná média, starožitné ready-mades, performance, video, zvukové nahrávky a fotografie. Hladíkovy bio-intervence, ve své podstatě mezidruhový Gesamtkunstwerk, který zahrnuje destruktivní stopy divokých černých medvědů a další kanadské divoké zvěře, zkoumá problematiku historické a kulturní amnézie.

Prostřednictvím křížového propojování široké škály vzájemně rozporných témat; kvantové fyziky, biologie, popkultury, historie, filozofie či náboženství, Hladík syntetizuje frenetickou alchymii mnohvrstevnatých narážek, prostoupených dvojznačnostmi a myriádami subtilních odkazů. Tvrdí, že jeho umění reaguje na všudypřítomě směšnou „racionální“ obhajobu vlastní iracionality dnešní společnosti. Jeho umění zařadily do svých sbírek významné umělecké instituce: Národní galerie v Praze, Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze, National Gallery of Canada, The Tichy Ocean Foundation Collection v Curychu, Národní Filmový Archiv České republiky, Galerie Moderního Umění Hradec Králové, GAVU Cheb, GASK Kutná Hora a mnoho dalších.