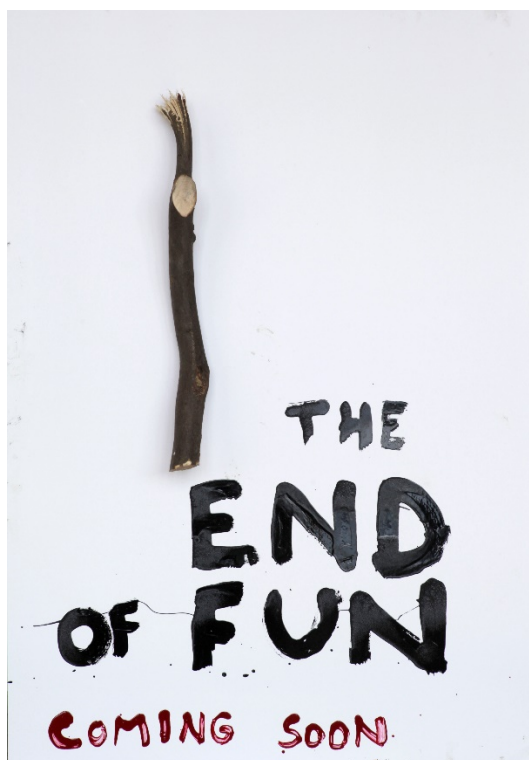


Krištof Kintera *THE END OF FUN!*

17 September — 22 November 2020



Left: Krištof Kintera, *My Light is Your Life – Shiva Samurai* (2009), electronic controlled lights. Courtesy the artist.
Right: Krištof Kintera, *THE END OF FUN* (2018), mixed media. Courtesy the artist.

Ikon announces the most comprehensive UK exhibition of work by Czech artist Krištof Kintera (b. 1973, Prague). Internationally acclaimed for his sculptural, often kinetic works imbued with a characteristic energy and imaginative wit, Kintera offers an overview of new, recent, and archival works, shown in the UK for the first time. Filling both gallery floors, whilst also expanding into the public realm, *THE END OF FUN!* is a timely exhibition probing the apocalyptic environmental issues we currently face, taking on a new poignancy in today's climate.

Crafted with a dark sense of humour, Kintera's artistic practice addresses current affairs. Striking a balance between feigned triviality and fatality, his works comprise a lively and philosophical critique of hyper-capitalist systems, especially with respect to ecological concerns: "I am aware of our responsibility for drastic changes of climate, extinctions of species and all kinds of living organisms, and therefore we'll face sooner or later fatal problems. It is our shame, it is my shame."

Serving as an introduction to the exhibition, Kintera's *Paradise Now* sculptures (2009) – a herd of crowd-control barriers with antlers made from tubular steel – invade the space at the front of 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".

In the gallery, Kintera's recent installation *Postnaturalia* (2016) sprawls across the floor. A model landscape made from discarded electronic components – interconnected like a nervous system – this postapocalyptic microcosm reminds us that we are part of the natural world, despite our technological pretensions. However, rather than simply condemning our unsustainable behaviour and throw-away mentality, Kintera is more philosophical: "you can hesitate for a while and ponder whether this is nature or not, but I am sure... this is the nature we have made."

Perched at the top of Ikon's main staircase, *Mr. Raven (I see I see I see)*, (2009) – a mechanical sculpture of a crow dressed entirely in black western clothing, complete with leather jacket – moves its head and legs back and forth, whilst intoning a mix of inspirational corporate slogans, such as "Let's make things better" and "Just do it". The ominous pronouncements ("I see your future ... fuuuuuture") from this creature of belittled intelligence, hint towards the character of the 'fool' in an Elizabethan play, conveying wisdom through a veil of madness.

Kintera places great emphasis and importance on the titles of his artworks; in *Nervous Trees* (2013) the environmental message is clear. Leafless and positioned upside down, branches and twigs spread out towards the floor to resemble arms and legs, and roots are replaced by globes to suggest heads. Inspired by the walking, carnivorous plants in John Wyndham's post-apocalyptic novel *The Day of the Triffids*, the sculptures tremble across the gallery space in a jittery motorised movement, signifying both a human affliction, and the fact that the natural world is in trouble. Another anthropomorphic work which epitomises this problem is *My Light is Your Life – Shiva Samurai* (2009), a heroic figure consisting of 250 table lamps, towering four metres high. Shielded by translucent globes and neon tubes, a halo hovers over its notional head as if to indicate that it is on the side of the angels. An ironic gesture, the work belies the artist's awareness of the effects of pollution and devastating depletion of natural resources, as a result of our excessive consumption of energy:

"... my long-term fascination with electricity ... comes together [in *My Light is Your Life*] with a mighty strength, and we suck it out of the sockets very clearly. At the same time it is one of the pressing issues which an enormous number of people are dealing with and will in the future too. We need to do so because everything is a question of energy. What is up with it, how much of it do we consume, how do we treat it and if we will continue to have these seemingly inflexible options."

The idea that we have been spoiling things for ourselves is a fundamental proposition in Kintera's work, and nowhere is this more explicit than in the poster campaign planned for dedicated sites across Birmingham. Featuring details of his drawings (also on view in the exhibition) incorporating electrical circuitry, wiring and faces fashioned out of expanding foam, it constitutes a smart eco-propaganda, with texts that are as frankly funny as they are confronting – "Am I Also Responsible?", "The Revenge of Nature", "The End of Fun (Coming

soon)". An appeal beyond the art world, the messages speak on behalf of a world that soon might not be a natural habitat for us.

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 Pocock.

For more information, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Milly Carter Hepplewhite and Emma Gilhooly on 020 8969 3959 or email milly@pelhamcommunications.com and emma@pelhamcommunications.com

Social Media Handles:

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook:

@ikongallery #IkonGallery #KrištofKintera

Links:

ikon-gallery.org

kristofkintera.com

Note to Editors:

1. Ikon exhibition opening: TBC
2. Krištof Kintera (b. 1973) lives and works in Prague. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Prague and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam. Exhibiting internationally, selected solo exhibitions include at: Maramotti Collection, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2017), Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic (2017), Kunsthalle LAB, Bratislava, Slovakia (2016), Kunsthall Rotterdam, Netherland (2015) and Tinguely Museum, Basel, Switzerland (2014).
3. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. ikon-gallery.org

4. Admission to Ikon Gallery is free. Ikon is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For opening times and the latest news and events visit ikon-gallery.org and follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
5. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. ACE support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, ACE will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. artscouncil.org.uk