

## Voyage in Liquid Times

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*“We have advanced from canoes to galleys to steamships to space shuttles—but nobody knows where we’re going.”*

– HARARI, Y. N.: *Sapiens. Stručná história ľudstva. Aktuell 2018, s. 399.*

This opening quote, drawn from the closing of Yuval Noah Harari’s book on the history of humankind illustrates technological and civilizational progress through the evolution of vessels. At the same time, through the archaic metaphor of a voyage, it evokes the equally archaic human need to define values and seek meaning. The phrase liquid times in the exhibition title is itself an aquatic metaphor, one prominently used by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman in describing the nature of our contemporary world and its social phenomena, while describing the concepts of liquid modernity, liquid life, liquid evil, liquid time, liquid fear, and liquid love.

The exhibition *Voyage in Liquid Times* presents works of contemporary Slovak visual art that engage with imagery of sailing and nautical themes. Imagination and metaphor connected with water, liquidity and voyaging are today being richly developed across diverse contexts, discourses, and genres. Because a voyage—despite the risk of shipwreck—is fundamentally based on hope of reaching a harbor, and because its assumed success depends on orientation and navigation, it becomes an essential image of seeking direction, maintaining a course, and justifying the meaning behind efforts to resist shifting, adverse, and often unpredictable conditions and dangers. As the voyage serves as a metaphor for human existence, its visual interpretations naturally lead us to reflect on meaning and values.

The artists address the theme of voyage through various visual media and authorial strategies, whereas using the visualization of navigation serves to comment on a wide range of existential, ecological, political, and social issues.

To think about voyaging as a metaphor for living in motion compels us to continuously reassess our own position and perspective from which we view the world. It confronts us with the radical need to describe our current situation: Where are we? What are the conditions of the voyage and navigation, and what are the reference points, what is our expected destination? The suggestive power, vitality, and potential of nautical metaphors lie in their ability to adapt—especially in response to profound societal changes.

This exhibition is therefore conceived as an invitation to follow the transformations, adaptations, and numerous reinterpretations of the meanings behind this archaic image of the voyage in today’s “liquid” times.