

Kateřina Šedá

(Brno, Czech Republic, 1977)

Working in close contact with reality, Kateřina Šedá's practice defines art as a form of collaboration capable of establishing a terrain of interaction and dialectical exchange. Acting almost as a social worker, Šedá points out uncomfortable problems or conditions and, revealing them, utilizes art as a tool that can trigger subtle changes. Her works, in which the object is only the most tangible part of a long process that begins with research and multiple conversations, always conducted personally by the artist, can be interpreted as mechanisms that are intended to modify reality from within, promoting values such as dialogue among people, and family and community ties. An early series of works, for example, emerged as an attempt to shake the artist's elderly grandmother, Jane Šedá, out of a state of depressive apathy. The hundreds of drawings that resulted are the result of a collaboration that endured more than two years, over the course of which granddaughter and grandmother engaged in an intense dialogue and Jana was invited to draw from memory all the types of utensils sold in the housewares shop she had managed in Brno for over thirty years. In subsequent works the artist focused similarly on small communities in her native Czech Republic, or in other countries where she was invited to work, always identifying specific criticalities; stimulating the inhabitants to engage in playful participation, she conceived projects that often succeed in establishing new forms of interpersonal relationships.

No light, 2009, relates to Nošovice, a small rural village of less than 1,000 inhabitants where, in agreement with the Czech government, the automobile giant Hyundai set up a factory that, since 2009, has mass-produced models destined for the European market. Listening to doubts of the local population, which found itself incapable of opposing a change that proved to be violent and radical, Šedá developed a multi-part project that gives voice to the new problems created by the factory's presence. The first part of the project - the installation seen at the Castello - is a metal model that reproduces in miniature the various sections of the plant erected amid the Nošovice countryside. Arranged at floor level, each of the parallelepipeds has written on its top surface, in the Czech language, the purpose of the corresponding building, from administrative offices to the hangar where the final assembly of the cars takes place. Created in polished gray metal, the elements appear like a cold, alien body, impenetrable and decidedly lacking in any relationship to any context. As a whole, this three-dimensional mapping visualizes the impressions of the inhabitants that the artist initially collected, and their perception of the factory as an obstacle, which, having arrived from above, has heavily altered their natural and social landscape, cutting in half ancient paths and usual means of communication. The title *No light* is the approximate English translation of a common Czech expression that indicates a condition of disinterest or inability to make a decision. (MB)