

Kaja Lahoda | No Place Like Home

Curator: Lumír Nykl

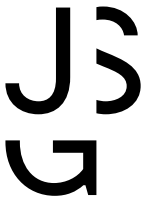
28 November, 2025 – 24 January, 2026

*The solitary mud-dauber wasp *Sceliphron asiaticum* originally comes from the foothill regions of Central and South Asia, especially India and Pakistan. In the Czech Republic, it was first recorded in 1995, though some sources mention 1990. It is believed that larvae were brought here in their cells, which had been attached to objects imported from Asia.*

Mud-daubers, willow catkins, silverfish. The names of all these species captured or depicted in the exhibition *No Place Like Home* often rely, both in Czech and other languages, on childish anthropomorphisms. Humanity uses them, even outside biological taxonomy, as a fairy-tale veneer over the bleak reality of their utilitarian behavior toward entire species of animals and plants. Through similar logic, people construct “natural” environments for rodents, reptiles, and other captive animals. Their wildness is enclosed in a sensory-deprivation room like the so-called hysterical hallucinating protagonist of the key feminist psychological-thriller short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*, which Kaja Lahoda referred to already in her earlier work. Through an idiosyncratic re-signification, surfaces imitating minerals connect in the framework of *No Place Like Home* with peculiar domestic objects severed from their original decorative and cosying functions into a multilayered scene. And in it, seemingly random associations of cabinet-of-curiosities elements amplify the genre features of the Gothic novel and horror tales of uninvited guests and parasites living with us in secret.

Among the works on display, the series of paper prints stands out with its potential conventionality and serves as a kind of signpost through the haunted apartment. Although they are executed using the traditional technique of photogravure, each framed image is crowned with lace. This might lead us deeper into the genre of the Gothic novel, were it not for all the surrounding DIY artifacts from the furnishings of a Prague panel-block apartment. Combined with fragments of ancient statues, we sense the presence of Victorian macabre and mediumistic “ectoplasmic” photography. The framing, reminiscent of animated images, could also lead the restless viewer’s eye into archival atlases and lapidaries. Yet considerations of anachronism and fallen draperies do not resonate here as strongly. More important are the references to veiling the body, bundling oneself into one’s delimited space, until the figurative study becomes nothing more than a warm, shapeless mass.

A person socialized in the Czech environment recognizes familiar grandmotherly or state socialism-era props and nooks; international viewers, however, may perceive instead an unmarked strangeness or even the exoticism of the former Eastern Bloc. Which would be a mistake, not least because of the cosmopolitan background of the previous owner of the often imported furniture and decorations. The central element of *No Place Like Home* is the relationship to the other from a broader perspective of home. Of personal space, of inside and outside. Kaja Lahoda observes the imaginary boundaries between the home and the bodies that inhabit it. Using sculptural methods and manipulations of found objects, she guides us along the interface between protective layers and their breach. Exoskeletons and biomineral motifs reveal an inhabited interior space that can hardly be separated from the exterior. Whether it is a river pearl and its shell, a silverfish in plate armor, the casing of fake candles from an electric chandelier out of which the wax ones have emerged, or a mud wasp nest on the back of an embroidered picture. *No Place Like Home* is a spatial discourse on the “home invasion” of unwelcome visitors who occupy our walls, settle into our furniture, and make present the world behind the mirror or the yellow wallpaper.



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Kaja Lahoda (1994) studied at the School of Visual Arts at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. This year she prepared a solo exhibition, *Within The Wall*, at Tranen in Hellerup, Denmark. In recent years her work has been shown in group exhibitions such as the intervention *Floral and Machine* at St. Paul's Church in Basel, *Rosenvængets Salonen* at Kunstsalon in Copenhagen, and *This is Not a Memoir* at Polansky Gallery in Prague. She is a laureate of the Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen Foundation award. Her works are included in the public collections of the University of Copenhagen and Aarhus University.