

Dani Žbontar: Migration

Migration, a multimedia installation by Dani Žbontar, transports us to the habitat of asteroids, among solitary lumps of matter doomed to travel the same orbit forever, among fleeting encounters, partings, and collisions in the abysmal blackness of the cosmos.

These lonely space migrants suffer tragic fates, having lost their homes before even managing to create one. Their trajectories are not a matter of free choice, their solitary orbits a result of cosmic forces of gravity.

These cosmic outliers are material remnants of the primordial Solar System that could not coalesce into a whole and have never become a planet.

Symbolically, they are lonesome memories of a dream of a world that never came to be. All that remains is disconnected cosmic debris, guided through solitary orbits by the relentless hand of gravity. Within this symbolism of incompleteness, asteroids are not merely celestial bodies; they are also fragments of unrealised potential.

Ever since then, these loners have been silently drifting through the black sea of the universe. With no chance of return, no compass, no destination—captives of the gravitational forces of Mars and Jupiter, which chart their invisible trajectories.

In the installation *Migration*, Dani Žbontar froze stoneware lumps or clay objects of various shapes and sizes, fired at high temperatures, at a random point in time during their never-ending rotation around an invisible centre. We experience them as both solid and fragile—as fired moments in time, caught between creation and decay. They bear the subtle traces of the artist's shaping, while radiating an ancient, cosmic energy. Rough textures, scrapes, surface wounds, indentations, holes, and various irregularities evoke cosmic collisions, fractures, divergences, and erosion that eventually transform everything. Colonies of tiny, shimmering white forms inhabit some of them while barely appearing on others. Whether these are unknown migratory creatures or it is cosmic debris, stardust, or something entirely different, one can only speculate. Perhaps it is creatures who migrated from distant galaxies and found a new home on migratory asteroids—the artist thus encouraging reflection on the motif of migration that becomes home for new migration.

The spatial arrangement follows the logic of an orbit. Stopped in invisible tracks, the objects evoke a sense of frozen motion around an invisible gravitational centre. The visitor enters this field as an active participant, their body and movements becoming part of the spatial composition. The installation is complemented by a video projection that extends the material presence of the objects into the digital dimension, establishing a dialogue between the static and the dynamic, between the physical and the virtual, thus creating a new experiential field.

Created specifically for the exhibition, the asteroids are reborn in the digital dimension as movement: approaching, receding, vanishing, and returning as echoes of themselves. Migration, therefore, becomes an experience of uninterrupted flow.

This cosmic silence, with the asteroids tracing their orbits, gives rise to an intimation that much like them, we humans, too, travel along our solitary orbits of dreams, beliefs, unconscious impulses...

That we, too, are often guided by forces that nullify our freedom of choice and chart the unchanging course of our movement. That each of us often travels on our own, in a cycle that is not always our conscious choice. That we, too, are merely fragments of something greater that could not come together into a whole. That sometimes we cannot choose our path, just as the asteroids cannot choose theirs.

Dani Žbontar's *Migration* establishes a connection between the cosmic and the human, between the living and the non-living, inviting reflection on migration as a natural phenomenon. Perhaps the universe is nothing but a space of migration, of ceaseless transitions, from stars to dust and from dust to stars. From creation to dispersion, everything follows the same logic of movement, without an endpoint or conclusion.

Even humans cannot seem to escape this flow. Each of us charts our own orbit of longing. We are all yearning creatures, all migrants, all embedded in a broader current that transcends us even as it defines us. Our trajectories converge for a moment, touch, and then diverge again. The universe thus unfolds before us as a field of relationships where every point is both isolated and part of a broader flux.

Nataša Sedej

Dani Žbontar works at the intersection of architecture and ceramics. In 1982, she graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana, where, under the supervision of Prof. Niko Kralj and in collaboration with the Jugokeramika factory in Zaprešič, she developed the project "Ceramic Tableware System for the Hospitality Industry." Before completing her studies, she pursued further training at the University of Mississippi (USA) in 1979, deepening her knowledge of ceramics—a medium that remains the central vehicle of her creative expression. Since the early 1980s, she has been based in Ljubljana, engaging in ceramic art and teaching. She has showcased her work at numerous group exhibitions both in Slovenia and internationally. She is a member of the G12 group and several professional and artistic associations, including the Association of Ceramists and Potters of Slovenia, the Union of Slovenian Architects' Societies, the Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies (ZDSLJU), the Croatian Association of Artist of Applied Arts (ULUPUH), the Glineraj Association, and the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC).

Accompanying event: ceramics workshop on Thursday, 11 June 2026, 4 pm.

Author of the video: Jure Žbontar

Dani Žbontar: Migracije

Migracije, multimedijška instalacija Dani Žbontar, nas prestavi v habitat asteroidov, med osamele gmote materije, obsojene na kroženje po večno isti tirnici, mimobežna srečevanja, razhajanja in trke v brezdanji črnini kozmosa.

Usoda teh osamljenih vseмирskih migrantov je tragična; izgubili so svoj dom, še preden jim ga je uspelo ustvariti. Njihove poti niso svobodna izbira, kozmične sile gravitacije že od vsega začetka zarisujejo njihove samotne orbite.

Ti kozmični osamelci so snovne ostaline iz prvobitnega Osončja, ki se niso mogle povezati v celoto in nikoli niso postale planet.

Na simbolni ravni so to osamljeni spomini na sanje o svetu, ki se ni mogel uresničiti. Ostal je le nepovezan kozmični drobir, ki ga po samotnih krogotokih vodi vztrajna roka gravitacije. Znotraj te simbolike nedokončanosti asteroidi niso le nebesna telesa, so tudi fragmenti neuresničenih potencialov.

Vse od takrat ti osamelci nemo plujejo po črnem morju vsemirja. Brez možnosti povratka, brez kompasa, brez cilja – ujetniki gravitacijskih sil Marsa in Jupitra, ki jim zarisujejo nevidne orbite.

Kameninske gmote oziroma objekte iz gline različnih oblik in velikosti, žgane na visoki temperaturi, je Dani Žbontar v prostorski postavitvi *Migracije* zamrznila v naključni časovni točki njihovega brezkončnega kroženja okoli nevidnega središča. Doživljamo jih kot trdne in krhke hkrati – kot odžgane trenutke časa, ujete med nastajanjem in razpadanjem. Zaznamujejo jih subtilne sledi avtoričinega oblikovanja, obenem pa sevajo starodavno, kozmično energijo. Grobe teksture, odrgnine, površinske rane, vdolbine, luknje in različne nepravilnosti evocirajo v nas kozmične trke, lomljenja, razhajanja in erozijo, ki sčasoma vse preoblikuje. Nekatere od njih naseljujejo kolonije drobcenih bleščečih belih oblik, na drugih se te komaj pojavljajo; le ugibamo lahko, ali so to migracije neznanih bitij ali je to vesoljski drobir, zvezdni prah ali kaj popolnoma drugega. Mogoče so asteroidne migrante poselila bitja, ki so migrirala iz oddaljenih galaksij in našla na njih novi dom in nam avtorica ponuja v razmislek motiv migracij, ki postanejo dom novim migracijam.

Prostorska postavitve sledi logiki orbite. Objekti, zaustavljeni na nevidnih tirnicah, vzbuja občutek zamrznjenega gibanja okoli nevidnega gravitacijskega središča. Obiskovalec vstopi v to polje kot aktiven udeleženec, njegovo telo in premiki postanejo del prostorske kompozicije. Instalacijo dopolnjuje video projekcija, ki materialno prisotnost objektov razširi v digitalno dimenzijo in vzpostavi dialog med statičnim in dinamičnim, med fizičnim in virtualnim. Na ta način se oblikuje novo izkustveno polje.

Asteroidi, ustvarjeni posebej za razstavo, se v digitalni dimenziji znova rodijo kot gibanje: prihajajo, se oddaljujejo, izginjajo in se vračajo kot odmevi samih sebe; migracije tako postanejo izkušnja neprekinjenega toka.

V tej kozmični tišini, v kateri asteroidi zarisujejo svoje orbite, pa se poraja slutnja, da tudi ljudje krožimo po svojih samotnih orbitah sanj, prepričanj, nezavednih impulzov ...

Da tudi nas velikokrat vodijo sile, ki izničijo našo svobodo izbire in zarišejo nespremenljivo tirnico našega gibanja. Da pogosto krožimo vsak zase, v krogotoku, ki ni vedno naša zavestna izbira. Da smo tudi mi le drobci nečesa večjega, kar se ni moglo povezati v celoto. Da včasih ne moremo izbrati svoje poti, kot je ne morejo izbrati asteroidi.

Migracije Dani Žbontar vzpostavljajo povezavo med kozmičnim in človeškim, med živim in neživim ter odpirajo razmislek o migracijah kot naravnem pojavu. Morda je vsemirje samo prostor migracij, neprekinjenega prehajanja, od zvezd do prahu in od prahu do zvezd. Od nastanka do razpršitve se razpira ista logika gibanja, brez končne točke in zaključka.

Zdi se, da tudi človek ne more izstopiti iz tega gibanja. Vsak od nas zarisuje svojo orbito hrepenenja. Vsi smo lepe vide, vsi migranti, vsi vpeti v širši tok, ki nas presega in hkrati določa. Naše tirnice se za hip približajo, dotaknejo in znova razidejo. Vesolje se nam tako razpira kot polje odnosov, v katerem je vsaka točka osamljena in hkrati del širšega gibanja.

Nataša Sedej

Dani Žbontar deluje na presečišču arhitekture in keramike. Leta 1982 je diplomirala na Fakulteti za arhitekturo v Ljubljani, kjer je pod mentorstvom prof. Nika Kralja in v sodelovanju s tovarno Jugokeramika iz Zaprešiča razvila projekt Sistem keramične posode za gostinstvo. Že pred zaključkom študija se je leta 1979 izpopolnjevala na Univerzi v Misisipiju (ZDA), kjer je poglobila svoje znanje s področja keramike – medija, ki ostaja osrednji nosilec njenega ustvarjalnega izraza. Od začetka osemdesetih let deluje v Ljubljani, kjer se posveča oblikovanju umetniške keramike ter pedagoškemu delu. Svoja dela je predstavila na številnih skupinskih razstavah doma in v tujini. Je članica skupine G12 ter več strokovnih in umetniških združenj, med njimi Društva keramikov in lončarjev Slovenije, Zveze društev arhitektov Slovenije, ZDSLU, ULUPUH, Društva Glineraj in IAC – International Academy of Ceramics.

Spremljevalni dogodek: delavnica keramike v četrtek, 11. 6. 2026, ob 16. uri.

Avtor videa: Jure Žbontar