Berlin, 28 April 2025

HAMBURGER BAHNHOF –
NATIONALGALERIE DER GEGENWART

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EXHIBITION TEXTS

Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart
CHANEL Commission: Klára Hosnedlová. embrace
1 May – 26 October 2025

For the inaugural CHANEL Commission, Klára Hosnedlová (b. 1990, Uherské Hradiště, Czechia; lives and works in Berlin) has created a monumental installation that transforms the Historic Hall of Hamburger Bahnhof into a mythical landscape. Sculptures composed from glass, concrete, flax, hemp, thread, sand, metal, and sound create points of encounter, extending the former train station's architecture into a layered embrace. These elements expose dualities between organic and inorganic, permanence and decay, handmade and industrial.

Hosnedlová works with materials tied to the regions of Bohemia and Moravia, located today in Czechia. Combining handcraft traditions, regional folklore, and brutalist architecture, she interweaves historical, political, and cultural narratives. Her installation creates a space where childhood memories open up a universal language of imagination.

The CHANEL Commission at Hamburger Bahnhof is a partnership that supports artists in creating installations that engage with the museum's Historic Hall, presented annually during Gallery Weekend Berlin

Glass
Nine pieces of colourful, opaque glass jut out sharply from sand-coated reliefs set on metal walls. The contrast between the delicate glass and the solid, stone-like sculptures creates a composition that suggests both fragility and strength. To produce the glass pieces, Hosnedlová collaborates with artisans whose craftsmanship is shaped by generations of tradition and knowledge. By working with hand-cast glass— a material shaped by both nature and human intervention—she highlights the long histories embedded in these techniques of making. Drawing on regional traditions, her installation explores the interplay between natural forces and human industry, revealing how landscapes, materials, and cultural practices are continuously reshaped over time.

Sound
Four towering stacks of speakers positioned throughout the Historic Hall project a layered sound composition. The vocals of Lada, a women's choir who sing in Moravian micro-dialects, weave through a soundscape of ringing church bells, instrumental elements and lines in Czech spoken by rapper Yzomandias. The soundtrack was specifically developed by Berlin-

and Brussels-based composer and performance artist Billy Bultheel for this installation. The speakers themselves were sourced from techno clubs in Berlin, some of which no longer exist. Still, the speakers carry their own memories, shaped by past gatherings and collective experiences. They are dusty and scratched, and some no longer work, highlighting the broader theme of obsolescence that runs through the installation.

Concrete
More than 3,000 concrete slabs pave the floor of Hamburger Bahnhof's Historic Hall, recalling the sidewalks of Hosnedlová's hometown: spaces of childhood games and imagined worlds. Their uniform surface is occasionally disrupted by patches of dirt and mirror-like puddles that reflect the Hall's architecture. The rigid, industrial concrete slabs laid across the floor offer a point of contrast to the soft flax and hemp sculptures hanging from the ceiling. These concrete squares reference both the brutalist architecture of communist East-Central Europe and the urban landscape of Berlin, which surrounds the museum. The reflective puddles interrupting their rigid geometry open portals to imaginary worlds.

Flax and Hemp
Six sprawling, woven tapestries hang from ceiling to floor. Their muted colours, rough textures and branching appendages make them resemble animal skins or creatures from another world. These suspended elements are made of a combination of flax and hemp, which has been woven entirely by hand and dyed in earthy tones. To produce them, the artist collaborates with the last remaining flax and hemp processors in the region. From the outside, these tapestries disrupt sightlines and cast shifting shadows. From the inside, they create areas of refuge and safety, embracing viewers as they walk through the museum's Historic Hall.

Thread
Ten embroideries are set into sand-coated sculptures, hung on flax and hemp tapestries, and integrated onto metal walls. Each depicts a fragment—fingers extended, a lighter held, a bare back—drawn from quiet, unobserved performances the artist staged and photographed in earlier exhibitions and at brutalist structures in Berlin. Then, in a slow and meditative process, she creates embroideries that portray small details from these performances. One such performance staged at Hamburger Bahnhof will provide the source images for the artist's next installation. These finely detailed works highlight contrasts between traditionally feminine and masculine knowledge, between detail and large-scale. Hosnedlová expands embroidery beyond domestic tradition, using it as a tool to explore memory and transformation

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Sand

Seven sand-coated sculptures are scattered throughout the installation, fixed to its hard walls and soft tapestries. Their textures evoke fossils, referencing Moravia's prehistoric past beneath the sea, while their monumental scale recalls socialist-era wall friezes that once adorned public buildings across communist East-Central Europe. As a child, Hosnedlová collected fossils, viewing them as treasures that held traces of another world. Like those imprints of long-dead creatures, her sculptures hold memories, bringing together embroidered images with hand-cast glass to capture fleeting, fragile moments. Embedded in heavy material but full of movement, these sculptures exceed the size of the fossils from the artist's childhood. Like other elements in the exhibition, they shift the viewer's sense of scale, creating endless possibilities for imagination.

Metal

Eight arches in the Historic Hall are filled with metal panels that frame and contain Hosnedlová's installation at the centre of the space. Echoing the museum's prominent metal beams, the panels extend the architecture itself, transforming elements of the historic building to become part of the installation. The cold, industrial surfaces of these panels stand in stark contrast to the warm, organic materials that fill the Hall. By enclosing part of this vast interior, the panels introduce a sense of intimacy and clarity, redefining how the space is experienced. The interplay of sculpture and structure reinforces the spatial coherence of the installation, drawing its various elements into a unified whole.

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