

PRESS RELEASE

Kitchen Table Imagery

Contemporary Czech ceramics in New York

April 1 – May 20, 2026

Czech Center New York, 321 E 73rd Street, New York, NY

The exhibition **Kitchen Table Imagery**, opening at New York's Bohemian National Hall, presents contemporary ceramic design through the work of both established artists—Jimena Mendoza (MX), Trae Story (US), and Antonín Tomášek (CZ)—and emerging talents from the Ceramics Studio at the Faculty of Art and Design at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem. The project is part of the official NYCxDESIGN festival program.

“Collaborating with the Faculty of Art and Design at UJEP allows us to introduce a new generation of Czech designers in New York and support their entry into the North American creative industry. At the same time, we build on the strong Czech tradition of ceramics and porcelain, which contemporary artists continue to expand through new forms of reflection and experimentation,”

says Tereza Porybná, Director of the Czech Center New York.

Czech artist Antonín Tomášek employs exceptional craftsmanship to create tension. His work oscillates between a critical subversion of porcelain figurative tradition and a narrative engagement with memory, personal symbols, and cultural references. Story, as a key element, gradually dissolves in his work to the point of disappearance, merging with the viewer's own experience.

Mexican artist Jimena Mendoza, based in Prague, connects transcultural cosmology with an exploration of how we perceive visual resemblance and signs. Color, space, raw materials, and found objects come alive in her work. Moving between physicality and abstraction, she speaks in a language of semantic poetry. Her work sensitively reflects the human need for ornament, tradition, and systems of organization.

In a new series by New York-based artist Trae Story, chains and grids emerge as both expressions of vulnerability and as pointed critiques of society. Materially fragile objects, scaled close to the human body, raise the question of whether beauty itself may paradoxically be complicit in social failure. The contrast between Chinese traditions of replication and Western notions of authenticity introduces another question: does beauty lose its value when it becomes ubiquitous?

Through his pedagogical work, Antonín Tomášek also plays a key role in shaping the emerging generation. Helena Patelisová, Artem Nurvan, and Josef Kocman move beyond the boundaries of traditional ceramics, transforming technique into a rhetorical tool. Agáta Bourová and Kateřina Hermann Klyuchko engage with rawness and the unstable nature of memory. Nela Krulišová, Josef Tomšej, and Rozálie Vlachová employ technological innovation to articulate both aesthetic and symbolic statements. Each of these young artists develops a distinct voice that, through the diversity of approaches, forms a compelling and authentic whole.

"Their work confidently navigates between material experimentation and critical reflection. The diversity of perspectives and creative approaches highlights the vitality of contemporary ceramics and its ability to respond to current themes in original ways. The title of the exhibition metaphorically refers to the events of everyday life. The imagined kitchen table becomes a site of sharing—a space for doubt and anger, as well as for plans, faith, and dreams,"
adds curator Kryštof Hejný.

A defining element of the installation is the use of black plastic bags, which symbolically ground the entire space. Their slightly dangerous, provocative, and almost profane aesthetic—evoking associations ranging from marble to the ambiguous nature of value—serves as a stage for the exhibited works. The installation, designed by exhibition architect Josef Tomšej, lends new meaning to everyday materials and foregrounds the uncompromising truth of the creative process.

The exhibition's accompanying program also includes a workshop led by Antonín Tomášek, offering visitors the opportunity to actively engage with the themes of the works and experiment with ceramic media firsthand.

Artists:

Agáta Bourová^(CZ) / Kateřina Hermann Klyuchko^(CZ/UA) / Josef Kocman^(CZ)
Nela Krulišová^(CZ) / Jimena Mendoza^(MX) / Artem Nurvan^(CZ/RU) / Helena Patelisová^(CZ)
Trae Story^(US) / Antonín Tomášek^(CZ) / Josef Tomšej^(CZ) / Rozálie Vlachová^(CZ)

Exhibition Concept: Tereza Porybná, Antonín Tomášek

Curator: Kryštof Hejný

Exhibition Architecture: Josef Tomšej

Graphic Design: Adéla Janatová

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