

Emoji are nothing new. They are the digital reincarnation of a visual tradition stretching from cave paintings through Sumerian pictograms and Chinese ideograms, medieval iconography, all the way to the neon glow of today's screens. Culturally coded symbols have always conveyed not only information but also carried an emotional charge. Modern emoji are therefore not a cultural revolution in digital communication, but a contemporary version of an ancient principle: reducing the complexity into a visually coded message.

Emotions themselves are not fixed; they are not universal bodily reactions, as was long believed. Modern research shows that emotions are constructs. The brain assembles them from the body intertwined with society and its culture. They are insistently felt and yet born as agreements. We do not feel anger, sadness, or joy directly—our culture and language provide the framework in which they are named and grasped. Today, digital interfaces are radically reshaping this framework. They bake emotions into a repertoire of just a few symbols, presenting limitation as an advantage that promises clarity and choice. Platforms determine which emotions can be expressed and which cannot. The emotional landscape is transformed into a flattened map of predictable affects.

Today, attention is a commodity. Emotions are currency. Algorithms monetize our laughter, our anger, our sadness. Hashtags turn into emotional waves that connect, but at the same time manipulate and frame identity. Every emoticon is a microtransaction in the vast market of attention. Emoji have become icons of a new faith; their power lies not in nuance but in repetition, not in authenticity but in the contagion of micro-addictions. The rhythm of clicks resembles a tic more than a dialogue. And each like is a fragment from which we piece together our self-worth.

Demoticon. Dramatikon. Hypnotikon. Denisa Ponomarevová's cycles lead us into the spiral of digital emotionality: from playful saturation and irony through pain and intimacy to paralysis. Her drawings are not ornament or illustration but rigorous visual analysis and perceptual experiment.

Hypnotikon is a descent into a space where emotions transform into signs and signs into simulacra. It is an image of a world in which every heart is monetized datapoint, where surprise turns into a viral meme and sadness mutates into algorithmic prediction.

Ponomarevová uses ballpoint pens, threads, fabrics, and adhesive tapes to create layers and textures through which she perceives and patiently records the living emotional currents hidden beneath the surface of screens.

The exhibition does not depict a dystopia; *Hypnotikon* is not a demon, but a deep mine shaft leading to the treasures of experience behind the mirror of the digital world. It shows that drawing—activating the part of the brain responsible for our feeling—is a precise tool for analyzing the transformation of emotions in the digital environment. It is both an artistic research and a personal testimony, while also functioning as a form of digital detox with a therapeutic effect that extends beyond the artist's creative process into the experience of the audience.

Barbora Trnková

Denisa Ponomarevová is a graduate of the Drawing and Graphic Arts Studio at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Brno University of Technology. Her work refers to the system of emoticons and to simplified visual forms or signs present in the virtual environment. She deconstructs their meaning through drawing and material (textile) elements, which are often part of a larger whole or site-specific installations. In her practice, she responds organically to the ways in which the digital age influences and transforms our relationship with ourselves and with others.