

Visual Glossary → a non-linear network of concepts that together, work to build the stories of both the exhibition, and its individual works; the user can begin from any point, proceeding horizontally or vertically to trace different patterns and obtain different readings; the glossary includes all the basic concepts associated with the exhibition, the key ethnographic concepts and actors associated with the works, and a number of concepts related to the works’ content.

Visual Glossary	↓ Dominika Trapp	↓ Krisztián Kristóf	↓ Ádám Albert
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	trap and dimension door standpoint relativity Sylvia Plath	tjurunga and dreamtime field notes Géza Róheim	root carving and immortality cup and tile Ted Chiang
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observational interplay → a perspectival approach and mode of thinking that stresses the differences between readings and interpretations; sometimes points of view change according to where observers are standing, where their gazes originate, and what knowledge they possess: accordingly, different people—private collectors, European travellers, researchers from different ages, members of local culture, museum curators, contemporary artists—see different things and think differently about the world; though these observers may have radically different stand-points, each can contribute to our understanding of a phenomenon; it is this multi-vocal interpretive process we call ‘observational interplay’.

suspension of disbelief → a concept most often associated with the realm of theatre: ‘suspension of disbelief’ refers to the way an observer attempts to place doubt on hold for the sake of enjoyment or experience, to view the unrealistic without skepticism, and to give credence to what is improbable or fictive; in literary texts, suspension of disbelief underpins the creation and presentation as credible of things that are ‘supernatural’ or ‘fantastical’; the appearance of truth liberates the imagination, whether in theatre, literature, film—or the museum, which we peer (and step) into via an open ‘fourth wall’.

fourth wall → a performance convention inseparably linked to the world of theatre and film, the development of television and video games, and the concept of ‘suspension of disbelief’; the ‘fourth wall’ is an invisible—that is, an imagined—partition between performers and audience that the audience can ‘see through,’ yet is regarded by creative convention as real and visible to the actors on stage; its acceptance is enabled by the suspension of disbelief, whereby the audience regards what is happening on stage as reality.

artistic research → a type of inquiry based on artistic practice that is conducted by artists, who turn their findings into works of art; while neither the fields involved, nor the reasons for conducting the research necessarily differ from those associated with scientific inquiry, the presuppositions, methods, and objectives of artistic research create a different kind of medium: the work of art and the act of artistic intervention; artistic research can, however, diverge from

↓ ↘ **Dominika Trapp**: The paths narrowed into the hollow

diorama → the signs of trapped animals, voices of the baited and imprisoned, unfurled animal skins, and paintings of animal traps together create a hybrid diorama in the exhibition space—an artistic expression of authentic experience and ‘faithfully’ reproduced environment, using fictive objects and stories born of the artist’s The paths narrowed into the hollow creative processes.
installation → an artistic approach that blends the ‘conventional’ museum display (the wall-mounted glass case) with an arrangement of the artist’s works (paintings, prepared/painted animal skins) and audio accompaniment to convey, both artistically, and institutionally, the capture, suffering, and death throes of animals within an artificial, and thus necessarily deficient, museum landscape.
reproduction → a creative practice based on the observation, modelling, artistic translation, and discussion of museum objects, composed simultaneously of mimicry (animal calls), contour (bird silhouettes), and life-sized works of art, created as both models, and metaphors.

trap and dimension door → traps from the museum’s collection tell us as much about comparative and typological thinking on the part of scientists and museums as they do about peasant hunting; in everyday practice, traps only function where a hunted animal fails to notice them: that is, where the game walks into the trap; thus, the worlds of hunter and game collide: the hunter manipulates the animal’s environment by placing the trap and stepping back to let it work;the animal steps unknowingly into the hunter’s world and finds itself at the hunter’s mercy; success in bagging game presupposes precise knowledge of the animal’s environment, in which the hunter must be able to pass unnoticed.
standpoint relativity → an epistemological concept that holds that for every description of reality, one can discover the standpoint from which it was observed—one that, being singular, necessarily leaves out all others; the science of ethnography discovered both the parallel existence of multiple perspectives, and the methodological questions these raise—the roles varying scientific approaches play, how local interpretations differ—early on; where different parties view things from each other’s standpoints, entirely new interpretations are born and comprehension of other creatures’ behaviour improved.

hunting → hunting, supplemented by gathering and fishing, was the earliest and longest-standing mode of human sustenance; over the course of three hundred thousand years, *homo sapiens* sustained itself largely from hunting, as evidenced by physical characteristics such as the ability to run, use tools and weapons, aim and throw objects long distances, and set traps; hunting presupposes both knowledge of animals’ traits and habits, and an ability to utilise various features of their environments; in the field of ethnography, hunting tools, such as weapons and traps, were some of the earliest objects researchers collected.

suffering → the degree to which a trapped or hunted animal suffered depended on the knowledge and will of the people who hunted them: whether it was game, or a household pest, an animal could be caught live, injured, or killed outright; how an animal fell into a trap and how much it suffered was, however, unpredictable: traps that mimicked the landscape and natural environment attempted to outwit the animal, so that it only understood what had happened to it after the fact; traps, writes British anthropologist Alfred Gell, are ‘lethal parodies of the animal’s *Umwelt*’.

empathy → the capability of feeling what someone else is feeling; to experience, for example, the emotional state of another person or creature; empathy is the feeling evoked by another person’s sorrow or another being’s suffering, regardless of how developed this sense is; in artistic discourse, ‘empathy’ can also refer to how an observer understands and experiences a work of art.

absence → everyday objects are intermediators between people, animals, plants and things; when an everyday object becomes a museum piece, however, it abandons this role, becoming a mere reference to its former functions; when an object is placed in an exhibition, the goal is to show the things it used to do, purposes it cannot fulfil in the museum setting; one peculiarity of the museum is the absence of original environment—in the case of a trap, the absence of both human, and animal; the question arises: how can this void be filled in the context of an exhibition?

↓ ↘ **Krisztián Kristóf**: Illiterate Magic

narration → a museum-visual story in which the artist—through the selection, modelling, and observation of objects—creates and conveys what is not actually there:human, animal, and what happened to them; a story reconstructed and retold from traces left behind; a story of hunting, suffering, imprisonment, death throes, empathy, nature, and learned skill, all rolled into a museum experience.

nature → flora, fauna, and the totality of the living environment as described using the tools provided by biology and geology; alternately, nature may be described at the level of ordinary experience:human beings may acquire knowledge of nature and its various actors through their senses; it is this experiential knowledge that objects like animal traps, created expressly for use in nature, can help us explore.

Sylvia Plath → Rabbit-catcher (excerpt)

There was only one place to get to.
Simmering, perfumed,
The paths narrowed into the hollow.
And the snares almost effaced themselves—
Zeros, shutting on nothing,

Set close, like birth pangs.
The absence of shrieks
Made a hole in the hot day, a vacancy.
The glassy light was a clear wall,
The thickets quiet.

reading signs → a condition for success in hunting is that the hunter be able to read the various traces animals leave behind them, signs from which virtually all essential traits can be deduced; hunting peoples have honed this skill to a very high degree; the traces they ‘read’ include various instances of contact: signs in which the mutual effects created by two ‘participants’ can be seen; an animal caught in a trap, for example, leaves claw marks that divulge both the strength of the animal, the physical properties of the wood, the ways in which the animal fought death, and the ability of the trap to resist them; reading signs can even be viewed as a precursor to abstract thought.

rutting → the word ‘rutting’ refers to the period in which the male European fallow deer is sexually active; in Hungarian, the equivalent word *‘barcoágás’* is an onomatopoeitic rendering of the sound the deer makes; each year, male fallow deer grow a new set of antlers, which they use to scrape shallow ruts in the ground; does are attracted to these hollows by the bucks’ smell and characteristic rutting sound; hunters frequently mimic the calls animals produce for potential mates to lure them into traps and blinds.

blue → the colour blue (despite its occurrence in nature, e.g. in the colour of water) is little-adapted to use in camouflage; the blue of the exhibition’s translucent, artificial resin skinning post enables not its concealment, but its use as a metaphor for something far removed from everyday life.

glass case architecture → here, magical and mysterious objects are arranged behind glass without even the suggestion of their original environments; as one type of museum panorama, glass case architecture both accentuates, and frames objects in a setting they create for each other, one that is both artificial, and symbolic, complete with curatorial/creative accessories:explanatory text, labels, diagrams, all in a freely navigable order—like the pages in a picture book.
installation → an arrangement that both depends, and reflects on the space in which it is constructed, one that is form-fitted to the surrounding architecture (external factors), but that, by its composition, creates an environment in which each object interprets the other: the ordering’s own (internal) narrative.
reproduction → the creation of artistic reproductions and poetic forgeries, as an artistic practice, in turn creates the internal standpoints by which culture is absorbed: accordingly, it is not enough that one simply look at an object or image, as to truly comprehend it requires the creative

tjurunga and dreamtime → a *tjurunga* is a Central Australian ritual object of clay or wood that represents the world, its creation, and its duration; families safeguarded and passed down their sacred *tjurungas*—used in the initiation of boys into manhood—over the course of generations; in 1930, Géza Róheim succeeded in collecting a number of such objects, a project only made possible because young aboriginal men, under the influence of Australian colonisers and missionaries, had grown distant from their native religion, and older men no longer passed them down; instead of destroying them, their owners preferred to enlist the aid of a ‘foreigner’; the question arises: what happens to a sacred object once it has entered a museum?
dreamtime → ‘dreamtime’ or ‘the dreaming’ is a concept first used by anthropologists during the first half of the 20th century; the word refers to the entirety of the Central Australian aboriginal religious notion that holds that the ancestors both created, and sustain the world through dreams; the concept of dreamtime binds local culture, language, terminology, and the *tjurunga* together, making it in essence a synonym for aboriginal ‘religion’.
field notes → ethnographic field notes are a tool researchers use to describe cultures that are ‘foreign’ and ‘differeent’; the classic field journal records community

magic → magic was one of the most intensely studied themes in early ethnography; an act of magic was a ritual practice that stepped beyond the limits of everyday reality; the more the norms of a local community differed from those of the West, the more exotic and magical its lifestyle, mentality, and worldview seemed; the word ‘magic,’ then, can only have meaning when compared to a ‘rational’ Western standard; the question arises: from whose perspective is something viewed as rational or magical?

defunct (Daedalian) objects → when an ordinary object is placed in a museum, it loses its quality as an item of daily use: an ‘artefact,’ in other words, while still usable in principle, has had its function rendered inactive; for ritual objects, this thought can be pushed a step further: when a magical object loses its ritual function, does it cease to have magical power? Does it go to sleep, hibernate, even die a little? If so, can it be revived? What does science have to say about this? How about the community where it used to reside, or an artist it has inspired?
illiteracy → illiteracy is the absence of cultural knowledge associated with the alphabetic notation of a given spoken language; thus, one can only be illiterate in a culture familiar with writing; illiteracy can be understood more broadly, however, as a metaphor—one that refers to the difficulties in or impossibility of translating between the symbols and cultural/magical expressive forms of one culture and those of another very different one, whether in terms of readability, or comprehensibility.
pictographic message → a way of recording content that stands somewhere between speaking, writing, and graphic representation; a pictograph simultaneously refers to a given situation or event, while also recording it and making it accessible in pictorial form; speech goes beyond the present, while writing is used to make a record of what can be spoken; a pictograph, on the other hand, preserves both the reference, and the gesture of its making—in numerous cultures, pictographs were used for this purpose even before the appearance of writing; at the same time, the pictograph’s visual mode of expression makes it suitable for communication between people who speak different tongues, in a manner similar to sign language.

↓ ↘ **Ádám Albert**: Ship of the Immortals

diorama → this atemporal, aspatial arrangement of stories from Chinese culture places immortals and time-travellers over a ‘background’ of artistically rendered black-and-white landscapes and animations, and in so doing, positions them in the unknown—in an environment that is both institutional, and artistic; a poetic diorama space, in which are visible not only the stage, but also the curtains.
installation → an artistic practice that draws museum objects into a set space, creating temporal and spatial relations through the inclusion of a variety of media (videos, sculptural groupings, projected landscapes); in this case, the space is a fictive narrative one, into which the viewer is drawn through stories of immortality and dreams.

reproduction → a technology that renders a physical museum piece mappable into virtual space—not in the form of a large data set of virtual points, but as an animatable aesthetic quality.
narration → though there are many ways one can take a museum piece without a backstory and push its domain of meaning toward a narrative or fictive outcome, in truth, the visual character of an artefact alone is enough to set stories in motion; indeed, the number of tales one can weave about an object are, for all practical purposes, infinite.
nature → beyond the experiential and scientific approaches to nature, there is also a spiritual one, in which animated, soul-imbued natural objects and creatures act as a conduit between humankind and the natural world: a thought-space with nature as its spiritual medium: a sacred place where creation plays out and where time and space expand: a place where past, present, and future draw nearer, or even converge.

root carving and immortality → a root carving is a sculpture representing a transitional state: its point of departure is a root complex that in the course of being worked, takes on an anthropomorphic shape; pieces of this type were called ‘root carvings’ by Europeans; the figures they depict are Taoist saints and immortals who protect the world of humans; root carvings were once placed in temples and homes, before ending their lives in statue cemeteries; the essence of their making was to ‘see’ a saint—an immortal old man—in a piece of wood, a potential portrait in a natural formation; in the Chinese hierarchy of materials, wood is not considered particularly valuable in and of itself, but the living tree’s role in connecting sky to earth makes it a symbol of life and death, a role that confers a measure of significance all the same; here, the usual cycle ending in a statue cemetery or tree hollow has been broken by the museum, which has lifted the object out of time and space to place it in a collection.

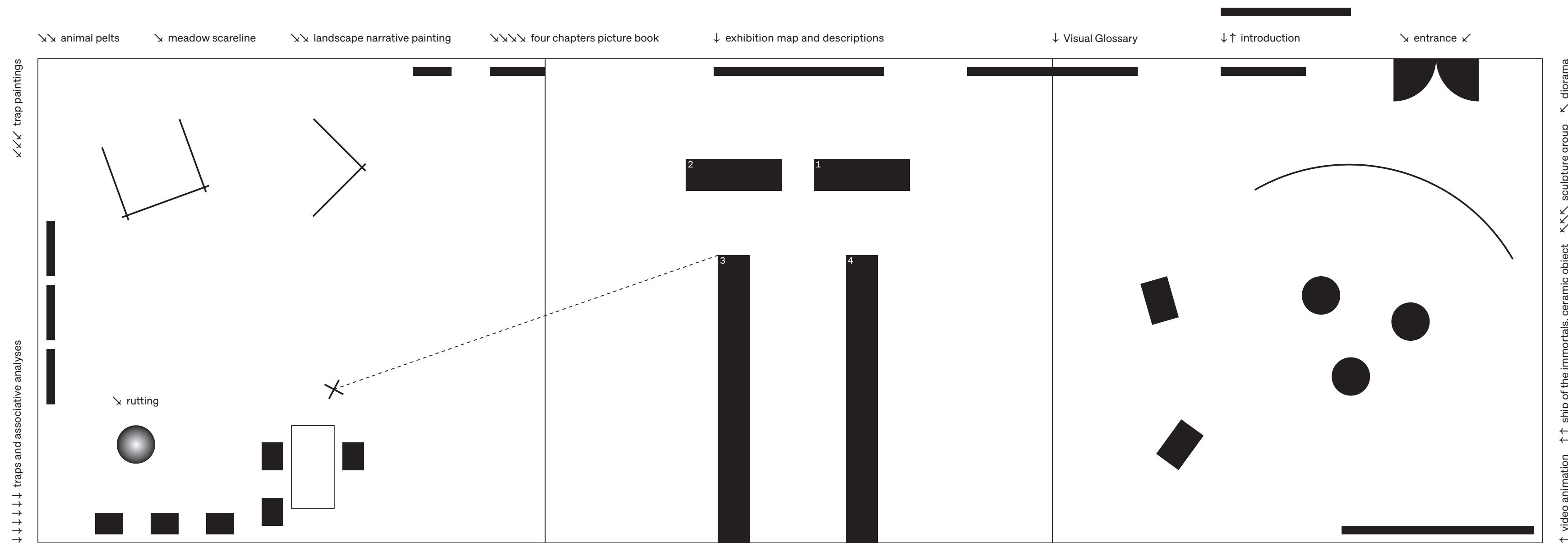
immortals → the immortals are revered figures from China’s past that today are associated with the Taoist religion; during their lives, they are said to have gained the ability to avert harm, becoming perfect and incorruptible; the immortals travel freely between heaven and earth, protecting humans and helping them to attain perfection; in images, they are frequently depicted with grotesque facial expressions; their feet are always bare, and each one carries an object indicative of his or her character; best known are the Eight Taoist Immortals, including the one-legged beggar, Iron Crutch Li, who is typically shown leaning on a support.

hybridity → the terms ‘hybrid things’ and ‘hybrid sets’ first made their way into social science terminology from the work of French philosopher Bruno Latour; to Latour, humans and non-humans form a community or network in which each has an equal voice, working jointly in both a social, and natural capacity; hybridity can be expanded to include any set in which participants of different types function as one, such that their worlds are interwoven; the passageways between them can bring digital and analogue, real and virtual closer together.
prothesis → a prothesis is an artificial piece that is fitted to a whole in order to remedy a deficiency; in medicine, the term is used to refer to an artificial body part, attached to compensate for one that is missing; in the case of museum artefacts, missing or damaged parts are repaired or replaced through the process of restoration; museum interpretation, for its part, helps to conjure up some semblance of the artefact’s original environment; in art, supplementation falls under the umbrella of creative intent: as artistic thinking supplements museum knowledge, it either takes from it, or adds to it.

materials hierarchy → the hierarchy of materials in Chinese culture is shaped by an concept of art that differs from that of Europeans: standing at the peak of the aesthetic ranking are the materials associated with calligraphy: paper and ink; jade—a stone as hard as diamond and symbol of indestructibility—is a material of great cultural and symbolic significance equal in value and status to gold; at the same time, while painting—an activity derived from calligraphy—is considered an ‘art,’ carving and sculpture are regarded as crafts; and while bamboo, also associated with writing, is considered important, other woods do not enjoy the same legitimacy; one exception to this is peach wood, whose spiritual connotations accord it a higher position in the hierarchy.

peaches → in Chinese culture, the peach tree is sacred and the peach itself the fruit of immortality; peaches are also closely associated with the immortals and peach wood used for the carved guardian figures placed at the entranceways to homes; seen here is a series of figures emerging from wood and root, perhaps the natural outcome of a ritual practice; figures made from the various organic parts of the peach tree (such as its root system) most often take the forms of the Eight Immortals, of whom seven are men and one a woman.
mushrooms → in biology, mushrooms belong to a kingdom all their own, not only due to the large number of fungal species, but also because the life strategies and communications abilities they harbour display characteristics typical of both plants, and animals; specifically: mushrooms participate in intelligent trans-species communications, producing networks of below-ground fungal lines that can span up to several kilometres; as transitional flora, mushrooms are also suitable receptacles for tales and metaphors.

blue → the blue colour of the paint applied to glazed Chinese porcelain derives from the element cobalt; this ‘cobalt blue’ most often features on glass and ceramics, though in the third millennium B.C.E., the same colouring was applied to at least a few items of Persian jewelry; in China, it is seen on painted porcelain dating to the 7th century onward; the word ‘cobalt,’ however, is of European derivation: the German ‘kobold’ is a superstitious term used by miners in reference to cobalt ore.



➤ **Dominika Trapp:** The paths narrowed into the hollow

The dramaturgy of All Paths' fictive museum environment reflects the process of 'artistic research' by which it came to be. Its central elements are skinning posts of translucent blue stretched with animal pelts: an experiment in the display of environmental traps in the museum setting, as well as an invitation to a metaphorical space; a dimension door through which to step. The creative antecedents of this spatial structure can be found in narrative landscape paintings in which the openings of nature (vents, hollows, caves) and those of the human body mutually reference one another. At the pivot point are artistic renderings of a deadfall, a pitfall, and a snare: three types of trap representing three different situations. In particular, the paintings capture various stages of activation and deactivation: situations guided by human intention and mechanical operating forces. Prompting further exploration are the museum's own collection pieces, to which visitors' eyes and bodies are directed by a meadow scareline. The associative analyses adjacent the traps represent an experiment in intrusive placement, an inner gaze residing alongside the external, institutional point of view. The shifting standpoints reveal the universe of traps from the angle of the prey animal. The notes, sketches, and lengthier texts—along with the installation's unflinching soundtrack—stand as documents to their juxtaposition. Thus, the trap, as model, points the viewer beyond the contexts of the museum and the hunt to the relativity of familiarity—of the comfort of home.

➤ **Krisztián Kristóf:** Illiterate Magic

Composed of chapters that read like a book, *Illiterate Magic* threads together stories of culturally disparate communities with no mutual language using pictographic signs, sketched scenes, and human-made objects: equality before the law; a message from prison; the voices of indigenous people vis-a-vis colonial power; object-embedded powers over life, death, and love. The work uses the concept of illiteracy as an intercultural metaphor, its first two chapters operating in the manner of a 'sandbox' game: an unordered place in which to practice the thinking that will be required to absorb the work's message. The themes of the introduction are perplexity, misunderstanding, mastery, use, and misuse—and it is these thought mechanisms that the third and fourth chapters employ. To tell what? Stories of the relationships between people and objects, of magical content, and of cultural and magical illiteracy. Through what? Artefacts supplied with labels, marks of originality, and backstories. In what form? Replicas, poetic and artistic reproductions, and forgeries. To do what? To create the world and to fathom it—to seek understanding of others via the experience of the artistic process.

➤ **Ádám Albert:** Ship of the Immortals

Composed of a diorama, statuettes, animated video work, and specimens from the museum's collection, *Ship of the Immortals* creates a thought space around the concepts of immortality, the dreamstate, transitionality, temporaneity, and travel whose point of departure is a Chinese ritual object known as a root carving, usually a portrayal of a Taoist saint. Here, characters, material use, and production of form can all be described via the concept of transitionality—of existence between nature and culture, human and spirit, worldly and supernatural—with spirits emerging from wood and anthropomorphic beings sporting botanical protheses: characters in a story that poses such questions as How can what was once essential but now passed out of existence be preserved? Can one exist in multiple places at once? and How can death be made an integral part of life? The ship of the Immortals installation takes the artefact of the same name, then offers it up as a 3D scan: not a reproduction, but a reshaping, a changed essence of it, a version raised into another world. *Ship of the Immortals* links the deep past to the present, leaving the door onto the future open. It is an experiment in how different forms of being—departing, preserving—can fit together. It is a vehicle between worlds about which very little is known.