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## Constellations of Women's Life Writing and Re-construction of Ideological, Geopolitical, and Artistic Spaces. The Case of Charlotta Kotik's Biography

This paper aims to present both the methodological questions and the preliminary thematic findings brought by the currently evolving research project dedicated to the personal and professional life of the Czech-American curator of modern and contemporary visual art, Charlotta Kotik (Kotíková), who is also well-known to the Czech general public as a grand-grand-daughter of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. This project builds upon an ongoing series of biographical interviews which deal with diverse palette of topics: personal family histories and memories; the entanglements of the family and the national history; the experience of geopolitical and ideological transition through emigration; the high-profile curatorial career in the field of the North-American contemporary visual art; the return to Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic after 1989; and the articulation of curatorial practices, which draw upon the philosophical understanding of space, public space, volume, body, and movement.

In the first part of the presentation, the key thematic categories, identified through a biographical analysis (Riemann, 2003) conducted from a reflexive perspective (Denzin, 2001), are introduced, contextualized, and connected. Specifically, two larger thematic umbrellas will be constructed: (1) the movement between geographical and ideological realms, and (2) the movement within the gallery and public space. Under these two rubrics, the narratives of emigration, othering, inclusion, women's experience, everydayness and labour, identity re-construction, and political public engagement will be followed. They will come with the presentation of individual quotes and relevant contexts.

The second part of the paper problematizes the research project's methodological framework. It emphasizes the researcher's self-reflective position

through the paradigm of women's life writing (Mitroiu, 2022). It questions affective and symbolic levels of communication as well as the embodied proximity of the conducted interviews. It thematizes the interactions of care and solidarity that accompany the interviews, while asking about the benefits and limitations of such an engaged research experience. Lastly, it reflects on the employment of visual and personal materials from the narrator's archive and their role in triggering affects and memories, providing context, and serving as conceptual anchors in constructing the personal narratives into public life writing.

## References

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<https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-4.3.666>

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