

Hesitation  
Marks

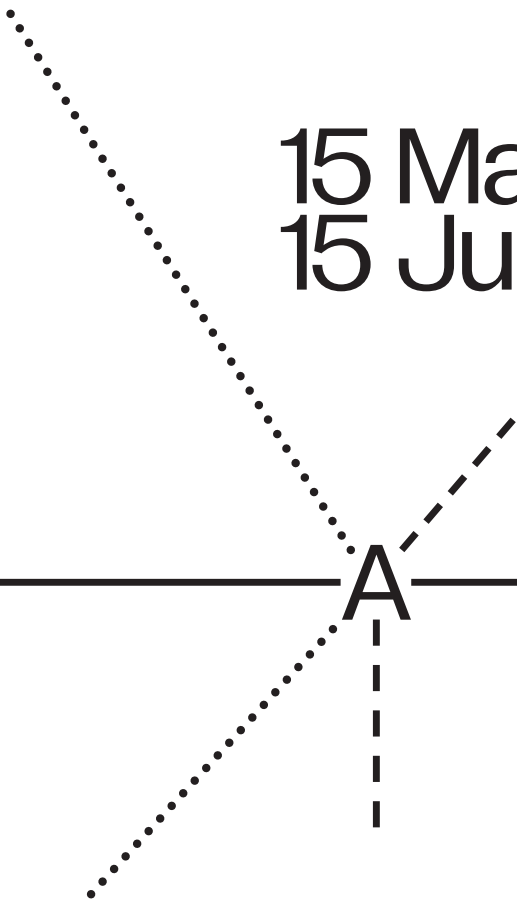
15 Mar —  
15 Jun 2025

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Exhibition

GES-2



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The title of this exhibition, *Hesitation Marks*, reveals the common thread shared by punctuation marks and hesitation in their role of signalling pauses and interruptions within communication. Punctuation marks are used in text to indicate pauses, intonations, and accents. Thanks to them, the written word acquires the qualities of speech, or at least hints at a physical dimension. Undoubtedly, speech is a bodily phenomenon, and its somatic nature is most evident when it breaks down: when we are out of breath, painfully search for words that are “on the tip of our tongue,” or swallow words due to haste, anxiety, or embarrassment; when we turn to unconscious gestures, giggles, stuttering, and spasms. In a figurative sense, speech has its own “hesitation marks,” but unlike punctuation marks in a text, they do not provide assistance. Hesitation marks in speech rather embody a conflict or show resistance against the environment. At the same time, language as an abstract structure encounters hesitation in the form of the untranslatable or inexpressible—which also often manifests itself physically.

The central theme of the exhibition is stumbling, or “hesitation,” materialised in marks whose forms are based on their connection to (con)text. For some artists, these marks look like figures of bodily resistance, or, conversely, of synchronization with spatial or temporal limitations. Sometimes, they are like membranes separating real and fantastic worlds, serving as communication interfaces that transmit and hold messages. At other times, these marks are traces of the past hidden in landscapes, preserving memories of both human and natural activity (or inactivity). Some marks are difficult to interpret or are completely indecipherable, as they intentionally highlight minimal but significant differences between environments. These marks may even interrupt the flow of time, like pauses in poetry, opening access to other rhythms—the forgotten, the lost, and the unfulfilled.

In language, as in the body, obstacles are never purely negative: they form a structure that generates beats and movements, and sets a direction—and also shows the need to change that direction.

**Anna Garafeeva*****Tunnel, 2025***

Multi-channel audiovisual installation

Concept, choreography, performer: Anna Garafeeva

Sound design: Arman Gushchyan

Video editor: Asya Mukhina

Camera operator: Sergey Koltsov

The video captures the slow, micro-choreographic movement of a woman along a narrow concrete gutter. The cramped space even seems to hinder breathing, but the woman uses every possibility of her body to overcome the pressure and resistance of the environment. Her exposed, vulnerable skin comes into contact with the rough, uneven concrete surface.

This gutter runs along the fence separating the pedestrian zone from the road in the Mériadeck business district in Bordeaux, France. In the 1970s, Mériadeck became a site of experimental transformation, a future embodiment of urban utopia. Predictably, this utopia was doomed to fail: although the district is of great interest to fans of futuristic architecture, it remains a rather sparsely inhabited environment, a culturally impoverished office district.

The fragile protagonist struggles against resistance, moving forward—or backward? Her movement seems like a battle—perhaps not entirely hopeless—not only with physical obstacles but also with the materialised memory of the place itself: with the closed flows of movement, the unrealised hopes of the avant-garde, and the fading energy of architectural ambition.

**Anna Garafeeva*****Caesura, 2025***

Multimedia installation, dance performance

Concept, direction, movement composition: Anna Garafeeva

Performer: Alexey Narutto

Composer: Egor Savelyanov

Set design: Dina Borovik

Consulting psychologist: Pavel Stroganov



The caesura is a rhythmic pause in poetry, a break or stop. The delineated area in the exhibition space becomes the site of a dance performance, the score of which is based on Sigmund Freud's essay *The Unconscious*. The aggressive and sexual drives and unconscious desires described in the essay become the driving force of the dance. However, the performer also has another regulating mechanism: the caesuras, the stops in the dancer's movement, are controlled by the audience. Do they want to slow down the performance, are they disturbed by how the performer moves, or do they want to assert their dominance over the performer? The tool for control becomes a familiar flat screen, a chat interface from which messages are anonymised as they become public. This method references both the scattered attention that flickers today between the digital and the "offline," and the specifics of contemporary forms of supervision and control.

The installation also functions outside of the performance. As you cross the line, you find yourself in a slightly displaced space of light and

sound, designed by Anna Garafeeva to let you feel and express yourself a bit more freely—perhaps in a new and unexpected way.

By scanning the QR code, you will see instructions for collective interaction with the space—some people may dance or sing if they wish, while others may mark movements with pauses.

### **Gentle Women (Aleksandra Artamonova, Evgenia Lapteva)**

#### ***The Place of a Space, 2025***

Multi-channel video installation, objects

Architecture: Nikita Goynov

Camera operators: Evgeny Ivanov, Sergei Meshcheryakov

Sound: Danil Akimov

Graphic design: Trofim Popov

The video installation by Kaliningrad art group Gentle Women focuses on the landscape of the Curonian Spit, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2000. Over the centuries, its sand dunes have been the setting for ecological, historical, and socio-demographic events that remain relevant today. The sand itself is slowly but irreversibly advancing towards the shore. The dunes are altering the landscape and reminding us that the future is uncertain.

The core of the installation consists of black rectangular columns covered with a grid of metal pipes. This visual solution is inspired by the landscape of the Curonian Spit—a fence line of charred trees and structures designed to stabilise the dunes. The niches contain glass and metal objects found on the beach that were transformed by the artists, as if in a desire to render them harmless. A sense of barely perceptible anxiety, evoked by the shifting reality of the landscape, is also transmitted to the women in the video. They seem to playfully engage with the threat by brushing away the encroaching sand and interacting with potentially dangerous yet typically “feminine” objects: knives, hairpins, and needles.

Some of the imagery presented here emerged through a dialogue with the paintings of artists Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) and Gertrude Lerbs (1902–1968) who both lived in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) and depicted local scenery. The landscape becomes a realm of the sublime, encouraging contemplation, but at the same time it embodies action with its own dynamic. In the work by Gentle Women, the landscape is akin to a sheet of paper where signs of natural and human history emerge. Cutting across the exhibition space with diagonal lines, the installation also resembles lines of text, creating a situation where the viewers become like readers as they pass through the columns.

**Liza Bobkova*****Go I Know Not Whither And Fetch I Know Not What, 2025***

Sculptures, drawings

Stainless steel, copper; ink on tracing paper

The work by Liza Bobkova is built around the human tendency to seek the familiar when encountering the new, and to react with discomfort when expectations are disrupted. Sculptures resembling ladders prove to be objects with impaired functionality when seen up close—their proportions do not match reality. A spilled liquid near one of the sculptures also humorously alludes to a mishap, through associations with leaking pipes.

In Liza Bobkova's oeuvre, language and communication take centre stage, and thus utilitarian objects rendered useless can be likened to familiar words that reveal their inadequacy when placed in a new context and cease to serve as instruments of exchange. These objects and words, propelled by inertia, close in upon themselves, revealing their discrepancy with the present space and time.

The drawings presented alongside the sculptures resonate with earlier graphic series, where soundwave images reflected fragments from correspondence with friends read out loud by the artist, interrupted by pauses caused by stuttering. But unlike the earlier works, the soundwaves in the new drawings are nothing but white noise. They do not correspond to any text, and the fairy tale phrases at the bottom of the pages, "Go I know not whither" and "Fetch I know not what," echo this disruption, intensifying uncertainty while seeming to call for the search of new ways to communicate.

**Maria Romanova*****Lingua ignota, 2025***

Multimedia installation

Maria Romanova's work references the "spirit box"—a device that produces white noise and is used by enthusiasts who are trying to communicate with ghosts. The installation continues and expands Romanova's sci-fi narrative about the contact between two female scientists from parallel universes, which was interrupted by the destruction of one of the worlds. *Lingua ignota* (Latin for "unknown language") is not the direct consequence of the tragedy, but rather the obsessive, phantasmagorical efforts of one scientist to reconsider the death of another person.

The "sci-fi laboratory" created by the artist consists of multi-layered objects that combine elements that are magical, technological, imaginary (sentimentally attached to past episodes), and real (vaguely corporeal), in an attempt at synthetic intervention in a disaster. The membrane separating one world from another, life and death, breaks through in poetic language—a "found object," a replica materialised from noise—which by the very (un)intentional mechanics of its appearance comments on the possibility of influencing events and emotions connected with them.

**Eugenia Suslova*****Mother Tongue Pavilion, 2025***

Single-channel audio installation

Architectural concept: Stanislav Nikolaev

Sound: Vladimir Markov

Coding: Aleksandr Sudaev

***My Hands Are Mothers to Each Other, 2025***

Performance

Performers: Irina Provorova, Yulia Gorbunova

The transparent pavilion in the shape of a hemisphere embodies the personal cosmos that forms in the newborn through contact with the mother, serving as a stage, simultaneously invisible and in full view, where the relationship between mother and child unfolds. Beginning with touches and lullabies, their communication increasingly relies on language over time.

At the base of the pavilion, a rotating cone functions as the “machine of the maternal language,” highlighting not only language’s communicative role but also its structuring role. Familiar phrases and expressions, such as “Don’t get in the way!” or “How many times do I have to tell you?,” emerge from the cone, invoking order and drawing a direct link between words and actions. As Eugenia Suslova explains, “The words uttered by a mother’s voice form our inner image and deform our bodies. They are equally capable of protecting and consuming us.”

Twice during the exhibition, the pavilion transforms into a stage for a performance, where two dancers respond with body movements to the phrases resonating from the cone. In the performance, mundane gestures are combined with choreography rooted in the unconscious. Through these unintended reactions and movements, the primordial language of the body, memories, and unquestioned childhood concepts emerge, shaped by the deep currents of the unconscious. At the crossroads of dance and music (composed for this work by Vladimir Markov), a “map of states” emerges—scenarios that embody the body’s often painful responses to the language absorbed in childhood, where hesitations in speech are mirrored in the pauses of gesture.

*The schedule for the dance performances by Anna Garafeeva and Eugenia Suslova can be found on the Hesitation Marks exhibition page on the GES-2 website.*

## **Exhibition**

### **Hesitation Marks**

15 Mar—15 Jun 2025

Gallery C7

## **Artists**

Liza Bobkova

Anna Garafeeva

Maria Romanova

Eugenia Suslova

Gentle Women

(Aleksandra Artamonova,

Evgenia Lapteva)

## **Contributors**

Danil Akimov

Dina Borovik

Yulia Gorbunova

Nikita Goynov

Arman Gushchyan

Evgeny Ivanov

Sergey Koltsov

Vladimir Markov

Sergei Meshcheryakov

Asya Mukhina

Alexey Narutto

Stanislav Nikolaev

Trofim Popov

Irina Provorova

Egor Savelyanov

Pavel Stroganov

Aleksandr Sudaev

Anna Ushakova

The Vaults Centre

for Artistic

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Sergei Kalinin,

Artur Kodochigov

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Elena Yaichnikova

## **Architecture**

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## **Lighting**

Ksenia Kosaya

## **Producers**

Maria Kalinina

Veronika Luchnikova

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Vlad Kolesnikov

Victoria Kuzmina

Varya Merenkova

Vera Zamyslova

## **Technical team**

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Artem Kanifatov

Artem Marenkov

Nikita Tolkachev

## **Art logistics and registration**

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Daria Maksimova

Daria Pankevich

## **Graphic design**

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## **Editors**

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Aleksandra Kirillova

## **English texts**

Simon Patterson

## **Media specialist**

Katya Kiseleva

*All artworks were  
commissioned and produced  
by GES-2 House of Culture*

16+

Media partner

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