

Jonáš Gruska

ARTIFICIAL ULTRASONICS RESEARCH

4 June–4 July 2026

artKIT

The Inaudible Audible

Experimental sound artist **Jonáš Gruska**, born in Czechoslovakia, is regarded as one of Slovakia's most versatile and research-driven practitioners in the field. His work encompasses sound experimentation, instrument and device design, spatial installations, and live performance, as well as the founding of a record label and instrument-making company focused on Eastern and Central European experimental art and music – one that has grown into one of the most significant platforms in contemporary sound and intermedia art, recognized for its curatorial vision, breadth, and international reach. In these endeavors, Gruska has collaborated closely with Angakok Thoth and Or.lock, with a shared focus on innovative and experimental music by emerging, overlooked, and forgotten artists from Eastern Europe – work that later expanded into a label dedicated to new field recording.

He also developed Elektrosluch, an electromagnetic listening device that opens up the sonic worlds of electromagnetic fields to the human ear. Over the years, he has built a series of distinctive instruments for listening to electromagnetic phenomena. One of these, Geofón, uses industrial contact sensors capable of detecting subtle vibrations transmitted through materials and the ground – opening new sonic possibilities across field recording, sound art, and experimental music, as well as professional infrastructure monitoring and geophysical research. For field recording, sound design, and unusual sonic effects, Gruska also develops sensitive microphones and sensors, designed by an artist for artists. His omnidirectional microphones – built for field recording and sound design – stand out for their high sensitivity, low self-noise, ultrasonic capabilities, and reliable performance in demanding conditions. Compact yet highly sensitive, they are specifically designed for discreet, noninvasive recording.

Yet his versatility extends far beyond instrument design. In Bratislava, he runs his own workspace and event venue – the city's only dedicated hub for experimental sound and music. He organizes an open-air festival devoted to experimental music, has founded a platform and laboratory for the study of fungi, and launched a festival bringing together art, mycology, and foraging traditions. Lichens are another enduring passion. At the core of his artistic practice are chaotic and polymetric rhythms, unconventional tuning systems, the psychoacoustic properties of sound, and field recording. He creates site-specific sound installations drawn from the resonant characteristics of spaces and materials, and regularly leads workshops for artists on sonification, field recording, electromagnetic listening, and creative programming.

It seems only natural, then, that **Jonáš Gruska** – also known by the aliases **Mrkva** and **Binmatu** – should bring a new body of work to Maribor for his first solo exhibition in the city. The show features a two-part sound installation exploring the ultrasonic and near-ultrasonic layers of our environment. The two components take contrasting approaches – one generative, the

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other documentary – spanning two extremes of our reality and two modes of perception: one experienced as natural and delicate, the other as human-made and intrusive.

In *Bat Ears* (2026), Gruska deploys a custom-made speaker system designed to distribute ultrasound around a central axis. Algorithmically generated sounds – inspired by bat calls and vocalizations – are shaped into a generative composition of artificial echolocation signals, broadcast through a specially constructed rotating speaker array. Bat detectors demodulate these signals into the audible range via portable heterodyne frequency shifters (ultrasound detectors), translating the ultrasonic into something listeners can actually hear. The work operates as a variation of the Axis Mundi sound-diffusion system – a temporary sonic pillar bridging the celestial and the terrestrial, the ultrasonic and the audible.

The second part of the installation, *Research of Tokyo's Ultrasonics* (2026), takes a documentary approach to acoustic weapons, deterrents, interference, and stray emissions saturating Tokyo's soundscape. It maps near-ultrasonic and ultrasonic phenomena recorded on the city's streets – a city unusually dense with ultrasonic emitters – laying bare a hidden layer of the urban acoustic environment. Some of these sounds are deliberately designed to affect human hearing; others are accidental by-products of electronic devices. Though many such systems are primarily aimed at deterring so-called "problematic" youth by making public spaces uncomfortable, their reach extends to anyone capable of perceiving them – local wildlife included, as well as people with particularly sensitive or neurodivergent hearing. This invisible architecture of acoustic control and sonic pollution is mapped through field recordings captured across a frequency spectrum of 0 to 96 kHz with a calibrated measurement microphone. Presented alongside video spectrograms, the installation also includes unedited location footage that preserves the material and environmental context of each recorded sound.

Beyond his site-specific sound installations – rooted in the resonant properties of spaces and materials – and his performances and live concerts, and alongside the labels, festivals, venues, platforms, and instruments he has founded or developed, **Jonáš Gruska** has also led numerous workshops for artists on sonification, field recording, electromagnetic listening, and creative programming. With this exhibition, he invites us to listen electromagnetically and hear the inaudible through a unique set of instruments designed to reveal hidden electromagnetic worlds – encouraging us to extend the perceptual range of our ears, and indeed our entire bodies, and to explore realms that ordinarily remain beyond our senses. In doing so, we immerse ourselves in another side of reality: one that may not be biologically ours, yet is no less a part of nature – a world we can come to know and feel, perhaps even grasp, or at least begin to comprehend, as we open ourselves to its sounds.

– Peter Tomáš Dobrila

BIOGRAPHY

Website



Jonáš Gruska studied at the Institute of Sonology in The Hague (Netherlands) and at the Music Academy in Krakow (Poland). In 2011, he co-founded the record label LOM, which expanded in 2014 with the launch of Fields, a series dedicated to new field recording works by emerging artists. Since 2013 he has been organizing ZVUK, an outdoor festival dedicated to experimental music. In 2014 he ran a podcast called Rozvuk. He worked as a mastering engineer at Lunar Mastering studio from 2012 to 2015. In 2018 he opened LOM space, a place for contemporary sound in Bratislava. In 2019 he established the bioLOM/mykoLOM platform dealing with amateur mycology, lichenology and broader fungal perspectives. He established the mykoLOM lab with professional equipment for mushroom cultivation and culture work. In 2019 he started the mykoLOM festival, intersecting arts, mycology and foraging traditions. In 2021 he published a book about lichens growing in Petržalka district in Bratislava, Slovakia. In 2022 he started the first Slovak portal dedicated to lichens – lisajniky.sk. In 2025 he finished the first contemporary introduction guidebook to lichens of Slovakia, *Aha, lišajník!*. He has lectured on citizen science, lichens, and DIY mycology around Europe since 2019.

He has performed and exhibited in Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States; on festivals such as Sonic Acts (Netherlands), Borealis (Norway), Kraak (Belgium), Unsound (Poland), Norberg (Sweden), Sonic Experiments @ ZKM (Germany), Audio Art (Poland), Mélos-Ethos (Slovakia), Parallel Vienna (Austria), Ultrahang (Hungary), or Next (Slovakia).