

Rafani at Signal Festival: fire as a symbol of social excess and consumer rituals

The Rafani group, which has been operating at the intersection of action, visual art, and civic engagement for more than two decades, will present a site-specific performance entitled Grill Flame at this year's Signal Festival. A temporary ritual site will be created in the Čapek Brothers Park, where burning engines, flames, and actors in reflective hoods will enact a scene from the last supper of a world that is burning out. The approximately ten-minute ritual will take place every festival evening in three time slots: 7:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. Visitors will be able to watch it free of charge as part of the Vinohrady festival route.

The object installation and live event that Rafani will present at this year's Signal Festival combines industrial aesthetics with the physical presence of fire and an ironic gesture. The group wants to address the symbolic value of energy, social excess, and consumer habits that we cling to, even though they may make little sense. Grill Flame also presents an interesting contrast to most other festival installations, underscoring the multi-genre nature and broad scope of the Signal Festival.

Rafan's performance works with visual and auditory intensity, transforming part of the Čapek Brothers Park into a space for an intense collective experience. Engines start up, flames shoot out of exhaust pipes, and in their heat, a happening takes place that resembles the end of a civilizational cycle.

"Grill Flame is a ritual without nostalgia, reflecting the state of a civilization that may be falling apart, suffering from excess, but still feasting. We are looking for the moment when only flames and smoke remain. Without a story, without technology, without ambition. But still as part of a community," says the Rafani group.

Their installation works with the symbolism of the end and asks questions: **How long can the system run on inertia? And what will remain when the fire ceases to be just a design element and begins to burn again?**

Rafani prepared this year's event with an updated lineup, joined by musician and producer Oliver Torr, who uses modular synthesizers, field recordings, and experimental electronics in his work. Torr has collaborated with Signal Festival in the past, for example on the creation of sound branding.

"Rafani have sharp teeth and sharp humor, representing an artistic stance that is non-conformist but capable of radically reckoning with pop culture, politics, pathos, kitsch,

and commercialism. It is an ideal creative unit whose ferocity perfectly matches one of this year's festival themes: *'Attraction,'*" says festival curator Pavel Mrkus about the project's inclusion in this year's program.

Within this year's curatorial concept **Ecosystems** → **Solutions**, "Attraction" is understood as a force that draws attention and creates an intense experience, while the principle of Iteration brings repetition and variability, offering viewers different ways of perceiving the same event.

"The performance embodies these principles with its energy and ability to draw the audience into events that provoke and allow viewers to reflect again and again on the excess, unrest, and imbalance of our civilization. They show that the solution to current problems may not lie in harmonization or escape, but in a direct confrontation with the reality of our shared ecosystem," adds Pavel Mrkus.

The Performance Grill Flame, with the patronage of ČT Art, will last approximately 10 minutes and will be repeated three times each festival evening: at 7:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. Admission is free as part of the Vinohrady festival route. This year's Signal Festival will take place from October 16 to 19, 2025.

About RAFANI

The Rafani art group was founded in 2000. From the outset, it has functioned as a collective without a fixed hierarchy, systematically working with themes of public space, collective decision-making, and visual activism. Their projects arise through dialogue and conflict, often with significant political or civic undertones. Rafani regularly exhibits both in official galleries and contemporary art shows, as well as outside the institutional framework – in public space or informal situations. They have twice reached the finals of the Jindřich Chalupecký Award. Rafani's work is currently on display as part of the exhibition RAFANI: Před obrazem (In Front of the Painting) at the 8smička gallery in Humpolec, which will run until October 19, 2025. The exhibition offers a comprehensive overview of twenty-five years of their work and presents both well-known and previously unexhibited works from all periods of the group's existence.

About Signal Festival:

Signal is a festival of digital and creative culture. It combines contemporary visual art, urban space, and modern technology. It has become the most visited cultural event in the Czech Republic. The program features renowned foreign and Czech artists from the fields of visual art and light design. Signal Festival is one of the largest producers of contemporary art in the Czech Republic. It supports the youngest Czech artists and organizes accompanying programs for professionals, students, and children. It cooperates with a number of foreign festivals and cultural institutions. Signal Festival 2025 will take place from October 16 to 19, 2025.

More information on: signalfestival.com

Facebook: facebook.com/SignalFestival

Instagram: instagram.com/signalfestival

Organizer: Signal Creative

Main partners: Skupina ČEZ, Mercedes-Benz, Kooperativa

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