

NATIONAL GALLERY PRAGUE IN 2020

In 2020, National Gallery Prague will present exhibitions of Rembrandt, Mikuláš Medek and Buddhist art. The Trade Fair Palace will again feature a number of contemporary art projects. The Grand Opening in March will usher in the new season with exhibitions of Kurt Gebauer, brutalist architecture and others.

The traditional Grand Opening in the Trade Fair Palace will launch the new exhibition season at the beginning of March 2020, the year when the NGP celebrates the 224th anniversary of the founding of its predecessor, the Society of Patriotic Friends of the Arts. The gallery will open the most comprehensive retrospective to date of the sixty-year-long career of the sculptor Kurt Gebauer. In light of the increasingly frequent demolitions, NGP will present an exhibition of brutalist architecture in Prague between 1960 and 1980. In addition to these projects, NGP has also prepared an exhibition dedicated to the influences of Edgar Allan Poe's work on Czech art.



Ivo Loos, Jindřich Malátek, Václav Aulický, Jiří Eisenreich, Transgas, 1966–1978



Rembrandt van Rijn, Self Portrait with a Drawn Sword, 1634, NGP

Mara's Daughters Entice Buddha, Pakistan, 2–4th century, Museum Rietberg Zürich

Rembrandt and Medek

In April, NGP will open a pivotal old-art exhibition – Rembrandt in the Kinsky Palace. In addition to the iconic *Scholar in His Study*, the exhibition will show a number of prominent artworks on loan from important international museums, such as the MET, The National Gallery in London and Vienna's Albertina, as well as private collections. In June, NGP will open the second part of the permanent exhibition of its Old Masters Collection in the Sternberg Palace.

Three NGP buildings will host an extensive project devoted to Mikuláš Medek, one of the most prominent artists on the Czech postwar scene. The Waldstein Riding School will house the main part of the exhibition, while Medek's religious-themed oeuvre will be presented in the Convent of St. Agnes of Bohemia. The monumental *Decorative Paneau* from 1969, originally on display in the Ruzyně airport restaurant, will be exhibited in the Trade Fair Palace.

The Fall Opening and Buddha from Up Close

The Fall Opening in the Trade Fair Palace will launch an exhibition of artworks from Ljubljana's Modern Gallery and Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, the first institutional collection focusing on East-European art. Other shows to open in the Fall will feature the painter Igor Korpaczewsky, the photographer Markéta Othová and the Artists' Colony at Okoř which included artists such as Antonín Slavíček, Otakar Lebeda and Antonín Hudeček. The Trade Fair Palace will also house the traditional exhibition of the finalists for the Jindřich Chalupecký Prize.

In addition to regular shows in graphic cabinets at the Schwarzenberg Palace and Trade Fair Palace, drawings and prints will be represented by an exhibition of the American draftsman, caricaturist and illustrator Saul Steinberg. Another pivotal project – the exhibition *Buddha from Up Close* in the Kinsky Palace – will conclude the season. For the first time in its history, the National Gallery will present masterpieces of Buddhist art in cooperation with Zurich's Museum Rietberg.

New Permanent Exhibitions and Record-Breaking Attendance

Despite the turbulent changes in NGP's leadership, the 2019 exhibition plan was fully realized, presenting a number of successful projects to the public. The gallery opened two new permanent exhibitions: Old Masters in the Schwarzenberg Palace and 1796–1918: Art of the Long Century in the Trade Fair Palace. In 2020, NGP will continue preparing further permanent exhibitions, two of which are planned for 2021. An exhibition of postwar art will be opened on the second floor of the Trade Fair Palace and Asian art will be newly exhibited in the Salm Palace.

With attendance of 100,000 visitors, the exhibition of French Impressionism became the decade's best attended show and it will likely be nominated for the most successful Czech exhibition of the year. The exhibitions of Josef Šíma, Albert Giacometti, Milan Grygar and Václav Hollar also received positive response from the public. In addition to these exhibitions, NGP organized Stanislav Kolíbal's successful project at the 2019 Venice Biennale.

KURT GEBAUER

Place: Trade Fair Palace – 1st floor

Date: March 6 – August 2, 2020

Curator: Michal Novotný



Kurt Gebauer, Girl on a Chair, Paseky Public School, Ostrava Hrabůvka, 1980

The retrospective exhibition of Kurt Gebauer (1941) will be the most comprehensive probe to date into the sixty-year-long oeuvre of this original sculptor and pedagogue who has had a lasting influence on Czech public space. His lifelong interest in figuration (not the objective figure, but the perceived, animated and moving one) led Gebauer to a form of expression that is entirely unique in both the Czech and international contexts, and it also allowed him to offer a sensitive but biting critique of the political situation both before and after 1989.

NO DEMOLITION! FORMS OF BRUTALISM IN PRAGUE

Place: Trade Fair Palace – 3rd floor

Date: March 6. – September 6, 2020

Curator: Helena Doudová

Collaborating experts / co-curators: Klára Brůhová (UMPRUM), Radomíra Sedláková (NGP), Petr Vorlík (FA ČVUT)



Zdeněk Kuna, *Hotel Strahov*, 1970

The exhibition presents extraordinary “brutalist” projects, both materialized buildings and project proposals, in Prague between 1960 and 1980. In light of ever increasing demolitions, the exhibition encourages the public to accept and appreciate these buildings and their architectural qualities, which may not be obvious at first sight, as they are usually labelled “communist” architecture. The exhibition will help the public learn about brutalist architecture and inspire visitors to actively protect brutalist buildings.

The standard definitions of brutalism with criteria such as *béton brut* and “authenticity” of materials are too narrow in the Prague context. For this reason, the exhibition defines the term more broadly as a trend in late-modern architecture that revised modernist points of departure reducing architecture to mere “dwelling machine” or a structure containing an appropriate amount of air and sun. Brutalism renewed interest in architecture as an environment (in keeping with TEAM X principles) and incorporated a number of contemporary construction materials, aesthetic and technological tendencies, as well as international cultural trends (*béton brut*, organic shapes, naked constructions and oversized details). In terms of aesthetics, brutalism allowed for greater freedom and plasticity of expression, employing a diversity of colours and materials. Brutalist buildings enter the urban landscape with great intensity, their volume forming the space around them.

The exhibition will present, above all, original project documentation, in which the buildings often appear even more radical than in the actual urban setting, complemented with collages, photographs, original fragments of perished buildings and sculptures, furniture (design) and existing original models. The original documentation comes primarily from NGP’s Collection of Architecture and is complemented with selected objects on loan from collections in Prague and its surroundings.

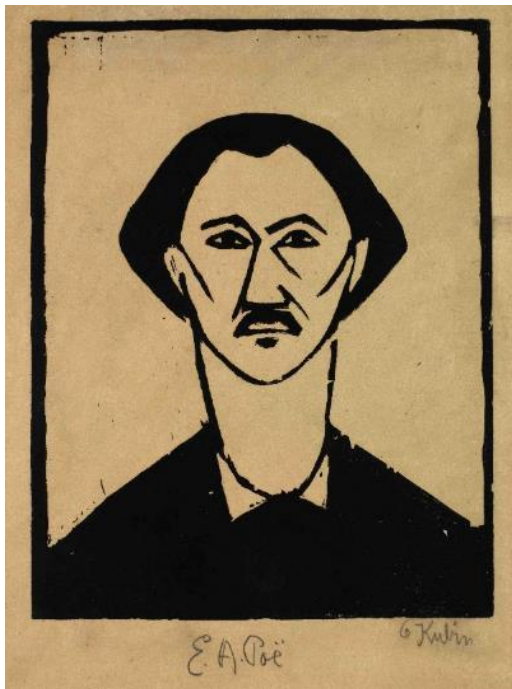
DREAM WITHIN A DREAM: EDGAR ALLAN POE AND ART IN THE CZECH LANDS

Place: Trade Fair Palace – 4th floor

Date: March 6 – August 30, 2020

Author: Otto M. Urban

Curator: Veronika Hulíková



Otakar Kubín (Coubine), E. A. Poe, NGP

This exhibition is devoted to reflections of the oeuvre of Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) in Czech art and the phenomenon of horror and fear in general. Poe's work continues to attract readers, and his short stories and poems inspire not only writers but also artists, film makers and musicians.

Artists took significant interest in Poe's literary oeuvre only after the writer's untimely death. This was mainly thanks to the poet Charles Baudelaire who translated Poe's works to French. As early as in the second half of the 19th century, prominent artists such as Edouard Manet, Odilon Redon, James Ensor and Gustave Doré created remarkable artworks inspired by Poe. Although the first Czech translations of Poe's works date to the 1850s, artworks inspired by them only appeared several decades later, at the turn on the 20th century. Poe's poems and short stories inspired František Kupka and soon after him, Josef Váchal, Jan Konůpek and František Koblíha. Alfred Kubin, a German artist born in Bohemia, made illustrations for the German translation of Poe's collected stories. Later on, Alén Diviš and František Tichý created further Poe-inspired artworks. Poe was a source of inspiration for Jan Švankmajer and more recently, František Štorm and Jaroslav Róna.

In addition to the above-mentioned ones, the project will feature a broad spectrum of artists, including Křištof Kintera, Josef Bolf, Martin Zet and others as well as artists of the youngest generation, such as Jan Vytiska and Marek Škubal. The exhibition aim to

demonstrate the close relationship that can occur between modern and contemporary art and a 19th-century author. As such, it supports the conception of the permanent exhibition 1796–1918: Art of the Long Century.

ECHOES OF THE VENICE BIENNALE: STANISLAV KOLÍBAL

Place: Trade Fair Palace – Small Hall

Date: March 6 – July 19, 2020



Stanislav Kolíbal: Former uncertain suspected (c) Martin Polák

The exhibition in the Trade Fair Palace's Small Atrium will echo the show of Stanislav Kolíbal (1925) at the 58th International Biennale in Venice. This show presented his earlier works from the 1960s and 1970s as well as his recent ones.

Kolíbal's life and work fully reflects the biennale's theme – the old Chinese curse “may you live in interesting times.” Time is one of the basic elements in Kolíbal's work; various periods in his life brought different ways of perceiving the artistic process. Kolíbal had successful exhibitions in prestigious international institutions, but after an exhibition in Milan in 1973, he was forbidden to show his works abroad. The ban was lifted in 1979, and Italy remained at the centre of Kolíbal's attention.

For Kolíbal, the presentation at the Venice Biennale thus also meant a symbolic return to his international beginnings. In his project, he calls for a greater understanding of the artistic process, placing emphasis on independent voices whose aesthetic connects the various “interesting times” from the postwar period to our present.

REMBRANDT

Place: Kinsky Palace

Date: April 17 – August 30, 2020

Curator: Lucie Němečková, Blanka Kubíková



Rembrandt van Rijn, Scholar in His Study, 1634, NGP

On the occasion of the 350th anniversary of his death, National Gallery Prague in cooperation with the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne are preparing an exhibition devoted to one of the most interesting Dutch painters, Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606 Leiden – 1669 Amsterdam).

The exhibition's central work, the portrait *Scholar in His Study* from the collections of National Gallery Prague, was painted in 1634, a successful time in Rembrandt's professional and private life. The portrait captures not only the physical appearance of an unknown elderly man, but also his dramatic spiritual life; the man's facial expression tells a rich story elevating the painting to a level of historical significance. Yet this outstanding work offers more questions than answers. In several interconnected parts, the exhibition project seeks to explore the theme of cognition and learning, contemplation and intimacy from various angles: from the artist's beginnings and early works to his increasing popularity in Amsterdam in the 1630s, through relevant works by his students and contemporaries, and through the modern understanding of Rembrandt's oeuvre.

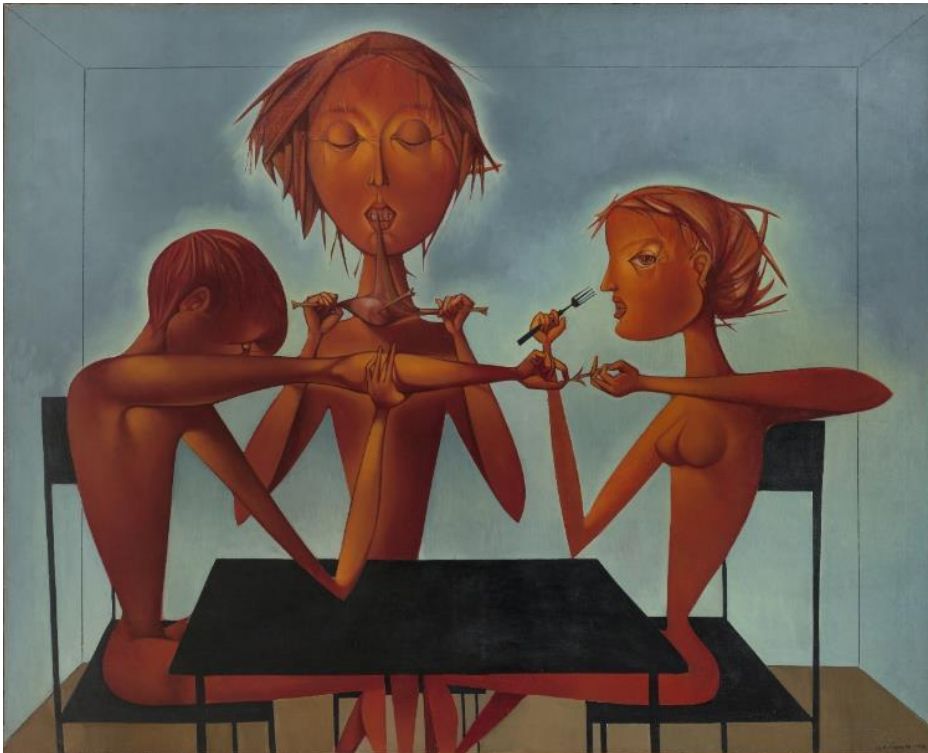
The exhibition will present a number of first-class artworks loaned by major museums and galleries, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp, the National Gallery in London and the Albertina in Vienna, and by private collectors. It is being held under the auspices of J. E. Kees J. R. Klompenhouwer, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Czech Republic.

MIKULÁŠ MEDEK: NAKED IN A THORN BUSH

Place: Waldstein Riding School, Convent of St. Agnes of Bohemia

Date: May 22 – November 22, 2020

Curators: Lenka Bydžovská, Karel Šrp



Mikuláš Medek, Great Meal, 1951–1956, NGP

Mikuláš Medek (November 3, 1926, Prague – August 23, 1974, Prague) was one of the most important Czech postwar artists. At the beginning of his career, he was influenced by the Surrealist group and later became a leading figure of Art Informel and non-figurative painting.

Medek's oeuvre is centred around the theme of the human condition. Through an emotionally charged expression of intense, mystical experience, the artist creates unified and powerful wholes that speak to spectators with an extraordinary urgency. The symbolism of semiotic systems creates peculiar visual metaphors of human existence in its tragic, painful and mysterious dimensions. Weighty subjects, the magic power of his personal artistic style and the spiritual energy emanating from Medek's paintings make him one of the most important and original figures in not only Czech but also international art of the second half of the 20th century.

The exhibition will introduce Medek as an artist who stands comparison with his international contemporaries, and presents Medek as a not only a painter but also a person whose worldview influenced a number of prominent artists of his generation. The exhibition will be one of the most comprehensive overviews of Medek's wide-ranging oeuvre, while also showcasing artworks that are not commonly presented at exhibitions.

The exhibition will take place in the Waldstein Riding School and the Convent of St. Agnes of Bohemia where Medek's religious-themed artworks will be featured. Medek's

monumental Decorative Paneau from 1969, originally on display in the Ruzyně airport restaurant, will be exhibited in the Trade Fair Palace's Small Hall.

THE BUDDHA UP CLOSE

Place: Kinsky Palace

Date: November 6, 2020 – March 7, 2021

Curators: Markéta Hánová, Johannes Beltz



Shaka Nyorai, the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, Japan, Kamakura period, around 1300, Museum Rietberg Zürich

National Gallery Prague and Museum Rietberg Zürich will present masterpieces of Buddhist art from their collections.

Who was the Shakyamuni Buddha and what does his teaching bring to us? How did Buddhism spread from the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia, China, Tibet, Japan and other regions? For the first time in the Czech Republic, the history of Buddhist art will be presented at an exhibition organized by National Gallery Prague in cooperation with the Museum Rietberg in Zürich. Art objects from the 2nd - 3rd century all the way up to the 20th century have been selected from sculptures, paintings and other artworks in the collections of both institutions. Employing these artworks, as well as audiovisual and interactive elements, the exhibition will guide viewers through the different periods of Buddhist art and introduce them to the beginnings and dissemination of Buddhism in Asian cultures, including its reflections in the Czech lands.

The introductory part of the exhibition will show the diversity with which artists depicted the Buddha in the regions where his teaching took root. The following section showcases artworks depicting the legends of Buddha's life – from miraculous circumstances of his birth to his entry into Nirvana. The section devoted to the Buddhist doctrine will present the two main currents within Buddhism (the Theravada and Mahayana), the *arhats* who were the first to disseminate the Buddha's teaching and, various buddhas and bodhisattvas – the members of the diverse pantheon of Mahayana Buddhism. The

following section will show how Buddhism spread across Asia – it will feature portraits of monks, handwritten and printed Buddhist texts, a sound installation with recited prayers and, models of stupas (structures for keeping relics). The last part will be devoted to reflections of Buddhist philosophy and practice in the Czech lands from the end of the 19th century to the present, including local collections of Buddhist art.

OLD MASTERS II

Place: Sternberg Palace

Date: from June 12, 2020 onward

Curator: NGP's Collection of Old Masters



Gerard ter Borch, Portrait of Willem II Marienburg, around 1661, NGP

This exhibition will complement the permanent exhibition Old Masters in the Schwarzenberg Palace, opened in 2019. Together, the exhibitions form a coherent whole, while presenting the artworks in different contexts.

The revitalization of the second and third floor of the existing exhibition in the Sternberg palace follows the historical tradition of exhibiting artworks in this building which, between 1811 and 1871, served as the seat of the Society of Patriotic Friend of the Arts, the

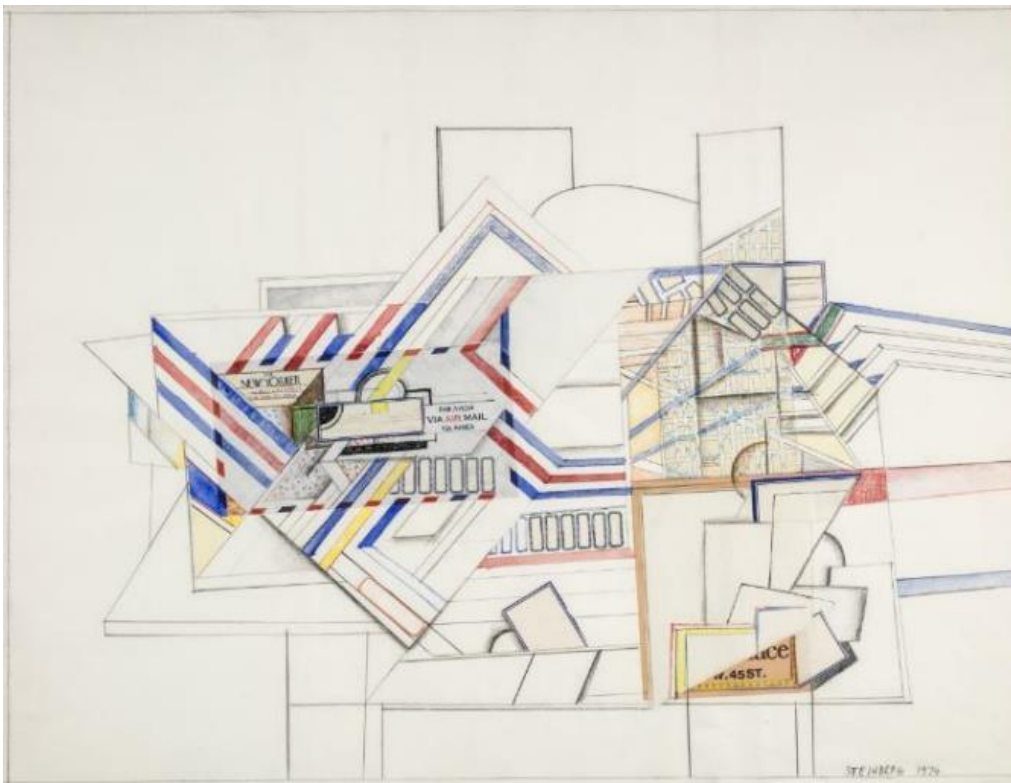
predecessor of today's National Gallery. The layout of the exhibition draws attention to the artistic centers where the works were produced and their mutual interconnection. The exhibition places emphasis on a clear, attractive approach to museum presentation and targets visitors of all ages (both local and international).

SAUL STEINBERG – VLADIMÍR FUKA

Place: Kinsky Palace

Date: September 18, 2020 – January 3, 2021

Curator: Adriana Šmejkalová



Saul Steinberg, The New Yorker Airmail, 1974, NGP, gift of The Saul Steinberg Foundation

The exhibition will introduce the American cartoonist and illustrator Saul Steinberg (1914–1999) who described himself as “a writer who draws.” He is most known for his drawings in *The New Yorker* magazine, but his significance goes far beyond cartoons. He influenced magazine illustration and caricature in the USA and abroad, including the Czech milieu. He was not only a talented artist but also a person of great politico-cultural insight. Capturing everyday life with all its paradoxes, he studied human relationships as an expression of both connection and misunderstanding or estrangement. For the first time, National Gallery will exhibit Steinberg's works which were generously donated to NGP's Collection of Drawings and Prints by The Saul Steinberg Foundation, New York.

On this occasion, we will also commemorate the Czech painter and illustrator Vladimír Fuka (1926–1977) who emigrated to New York in 1969, as Steinberg did earlier on. His work is related to Steinberg's in many ways – both were skillful draftsmen, solitary figures mapping the society and culture of their era through a number of common themes, such as New York, maps, labyrinths and music.

COLLECTIONS OF MODERN GALLERY AND MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART METELKOVA IN LJUBLJANA

Place: Trade Fair Palace

Date: October 16, 2020 – summer 2021

Curator: Michal Novotný



Exhibition ArtEast2000+, Hamburger Bahnhof, 2018

The exhibition will introduce the collections of the Modern Gallery and Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (Moderna Galerija / Muzej sodobne umetnosti Metelkova Ljubljana). The core of this exhibition – the collection ArtEast 2000+ – was built in the 1990s as the first institutional collection focusing on East-European art. This collection will be complemented with Balkan modern art from the collection of Ljubljana's Modern Gallery along with works from National Gallery Prague and artworks borrowed directly from Central-European and East-European artists.

In addition to questions such as “What is East-European art?” and “How was it influenced by the political regimes on the one hand and the inadequate infrastructure on the other?”, the exhibition will touch upon the importance of the legacy of East-European avant-gardes for artists in the 1960 and 1970s as well as the first decade of the 21st century.

IGOR KORPACZEWSKI

Place: Trade Fair Palace – 1st floor

Date: October 16, 2020 – February 28, 2021

Curators: Michal Novotný, Adéla Janíčková



Igor Korpaczewski, The Spell of a Drug, 2007

The comprehensive retrospective of this middle-generation artist (1959) will evaluate his approach to his medium. Korpaczewski's oeuvre begins in the 1980s and, in contrast to the social reflections of the back-then prevalent postmodern tendencies (Tvrdohlaví group), it remains strictly introspective. His three-decade-long focus on figuration is rarely direct or specific – rather, it has more general features of an allegory or personification. Veiled with a film-like nostalgia and semi-forgotten past, Korpaczewski's portraits refer to unclear but faintly familiar stories and roles.

MARKÉTA OTHOVÁ

Place: Trade Fair Palace – 5th floor

Date: October 16, 2020 – February 28, 2021

Curators: Michal Novotný, Adéla Janíčková



Markéta Othová, Untitled, 2019

The comprehensive retrospective of this middle-generation artist (1968) will evaluate her approach to her medium. Although in terms of form, Othová's work belongs to the tradition of Czech conceptual, archival, black-and-white photography (Michal Kalhous, Jasanský / Polák), it always maintains its intimate, diary-like character. Her concentration on the most mundane moments, neither staged, nor manipulated, shot in intervals and assembled into lyrical, melancholy series emphasizing the photographer's voyeurist perspective gives Othová a specific and autonomous place within contemporary Czech art. She is one of the few Czech photographers who established themselves internationally and one of the few Czech artists to have been represented in large international exhibitions in the 1990s. Her oeuvre has yet to be thoroughly evaluated in the Czech Republic.

THE OKOŘ ARTIST COLONY

Place: Trade Fair Palace – 4th floor
Date: October 16, 2020 – spring 2021
Authors: Veronika Hulíková, Otto M. Urban
Curator: Veronika Hulíková



Antonín Slavíček, A Day in June, 1898–1899, NGP

The ruin of the Okoř Castle near Prague inspired Czech artists from the Romantic period onward. In the mid-1890s, Okoř and its immediate surroundings became a popular destination for students of the landscape-painting studio at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts, led by professor Julius Mařák. The students would continue to return even after their graduation from the Academy. It is only a slight exaggeration to claim that this was the only “painters’ colony” on the Czech nineteenth-century art scene. Antonín Slavíček (1870–1910) was undoubtedly the group’s leading figure, but the “colony” also included other prominent painters: Otakar Lebeda (1877–1901) and Antonín Hudeček (1872–1941).

Despite their different personal and artistic temperaments, these artists shared a desire to find a modern approach to landscape painting. The large set of paintings created between 1897 and 1902 at Okoř showcases the short but intensive transformation of formal and thematic components in Czech painting around the turn of the 20th century. In this key period, a new generation of artists represented primarily by Hudeček, Lebeda and Slavíček was processing the influence of Impressionism, Pointillism and Symbolism, while trying to bring Czech art out of its isolation and connect it to the European art scene.

GRAPHIC CABINETS

LINE, LIGHT, SHADE: SELECTED MASTERPIECES OF EUROPEAN DRAWING AND PRINT FROM THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

Place: Schwarzenberg Palace – Graphic Cabinet
Date: 12. 2. – 10. 5. 2020

Curator: Petra Zelenková

This exhibition will follow the previous selection of old art from the Collection of Drawings and Prints. While the first exhibition in the newly reopened Schwarzenberg Palace currently displays Renaissance and Mannerist artworks, its sequel will present drawings and prints from the period of Baroque and Neoclassicism. Visitors will have an opportunity to see works on paper by famous European and local artists such as Rembrandt van Rijn, Václav Hollar and Karel Škréta. The selection will feature admirably detailed and visually arresting *vedute* and architectural structures such as large prints by Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Michael Heinrich Rentz. This second exhibition will be installed in both rooms of the new graphic cabinet.



Further themes and dates of exhibitions in Schwarzenberg Palace and Trade Fair Palace graphic cabinets will be announced over the course of 2020.

Václav Hollar after Leonardo da Vinci, Christ the Saviour, 1650, NGP

LEONARDO AS INSPIRATION

Place: Schwarzenberg Palace – Graphic Cabinet
Date: May–August 2020
Curator: Dalibor Lešovský

Leonardo da Vinci is among the artistic figures who have never ceased to inspire subsequent generations. The upcoming exhibition will present both works created after Leonardo's models and independent artworks loosely inspired by him. Leonardo's talent became inspiration for artists such as Albrecht Dürer and Peter Paul Rubens. Václav Hollar, too, modelled a number of his prints on Leonardo's drawings and paintings. The exhibition will also feature drawn designs from the circle of Polidoro da Caravaggio as well as prints by William Hogarth and Domenico Campagnola. Although the graphic cabinet in the Schwarzenberg Palace is meant to showcase primarily old art, this time it will also feature artworks from the 19th and 20th century. Visitors will be able to see drawings by Jan Zrzavý, Vilém Kandler and others. The exhibited set of artworks will be centered around Hollar's Christ the Saviour, a print modelled after the painting by Leonardo, the recent discovery of which was widely covered by the international media.

Printed Materials and Pictures

<http://vpn.ngprague.cz:8010/PRESS/>

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