

ALFONS MUCHA: THE SLAV EPIC

19 July 2018 – 13 January 2019

Prague City Gallery

Municipal House

Náměstí Republiky 5, Prague 1

Open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Exhibition Curator: Magdalena Juříková

After two years, *The Slav Epic* will be again presented to the public. This time on the premises of the Municipal House, connected with the founding of Czechoslovakia and with another work by Alfons Mucha, who decorated the Mayor's Hall there.

The exhibition space of the Municipal House is the most representative in Prague and its Art Nouveau character is very closely related to Mucha's decorative work. It gives a very suitable backdrop for *The Slav Epic* series, but its capacity is not enough for all of its twenty monumental canvases. Therefore it will feature eleven smaller-scale paintings mostly created during the First World War and later on, when Mucha was forced to adapt the original dimensions to the limited supply of canvas from Belgium. Nine large-scale paintings of the series are exhibited in Pavilion H at the Brno Exhibition Center, where they were part of the RE:PUBLIKA Festival 1918–2018. They will remain on display there until the end of this year.

For the specific conditions of the exhibition halls of the Municipal House we have opted for such technical solution that allows to present the canvases from both sides. It reveals how the monumental canvases are mounted on the frame, and the viewers can closely inspect the quality of the work performed, which, even after 90 years from the handover of the whole series to the City of Prague is still in good shape.

This is carefully supervised by a team of restorers led by Tomáš Berger, who is also the author of a detailed analysis of Mucha's brilliant painting technique and a thorough survey of the current condition of the work. He has accompanied Mucha's canvases at exhibitions at home and abroad for many years not only as their restorer, but he has also installed them together with his colleagues.

The architecture of the exhibition has been designed by the Qubus Studio led by Jakub Berdych, and the graphic design is by Studio Anymade, which has also designed the visual identity of Prague City Gallery.

The presentation of Mucha's *Slav Epic* in the Municipal House is a worthy contribution to the important anniversary of the state of Czechoslovakia, the original idea of which was inspired by the Slavic history and its legacy.

After a successful reception of Mucha's series in Japan, where *The Slav Epic* at the National Art Center was seen by over 660,000 people, there comes another opportunity for Czech and numerous foreign visitors to see the larger part of this series in the grand atmosphere of the Municipal House as the historic center from which our statehood arose.

Magdalena Juříková

A simple or, if you will, a purist approach to exhibiting Mucha's oeuvre is a must for us – we were constrained by a few limits dictated by the number of works to be exhibited, their dimensions, and the technical possibilities of the exhibition hall. We drew inspiration from the way in which Mucha painted the series in his studio at Zbiroh Castle. The works are presented to the public as the artist beheld them while working on them for several years, in an exposed construction of prefabricated lattices. For the first time, we hope to show the canvases without frames. For the first time they will be made publicly accessible from behind, where the format is pure in its monumentality, without any detail – or on the contrary, where it is sometimes marked with a note, or a calculation, or possibly by a sketch Mucha made there during the course of the work.

Jakub Berdych Karpelis

The exhibition at the Municipal House will feature the following paintings

Petr Chelčický, 1918

Jan Ámos Komenský, 1918

The Czech King Přemysl Otakar II, 1924

After the Battle of Vítkov Hill, 1925

The Hussite King Jiří of Poděbrady, 1925

After the Battle of Grunwald, 1924

The Bulgarian Tsar Simeon

The Coronation of the Serbian Tsar Stefan Dušan as East Roman Emperor, 1926

Holy Mount Athos, 1926

The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree, 1926–1928

Apotheosis of the Slavs, 1926–1928

Exhibition Curator: Magdalena Juříková
Architectural Design: Qubus Design Studio
Graphic Design: Anymade Studio

The exhibition is held under the auspices of Adriana Krnáčová, Mayor of Prague, and Jan Wolf, Prague City councilor for culture, heritage preservation, exhibition organization and tourism

Entrance Fee: CZK 250 full (adults) / CZK 100 reduced (children over 6 years, students, senior citizens) / families CZK 500 (2 adults and 3 children as a maximum), school groups CZK 50 per pupil (school groups with or without a lecturer from Prague City Gallery)

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Media Partners: Art&Antiques, ArtMap, Český rozhlas, protisedi.cz, Radio 1

Accompanying Program

Saturday Art Workshops

Saturday, 27 October 2018, 1:00 – 6:00 p.m., **Ornament and Decor**, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Saturday, 24 November 2018, 1:00 – 6:00 p.m., **Portrait and Figure**, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Within the workshops we will focus on the ornament and decor. Together with the participants in the workshop we will look for inspirational and stimulating ornaments in the reproductions of individual paintings which will be projected on a screen at the Education Center. We will let ourselves be freely inspired by these details and also design our own features. We will try to change and vary their colors, shapes and sizes. The participants will be able to apply their own ornaments to special reproductions of Mucha's canvases, from which the original decor was removed. We will create oversized large-scale paintings modeled after the details of some of the canvases of *The Slav Epic*. The resulting works will be temporarily displayed in the courtyard of the Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace and photographed from above in order to be documented. We will deal with the portrait and figure in two lines. The first line will focus on the early stage of preparation for the painting, where models were photographed in Mucha's studio. For this purpose, we will create an improvised studio environment. The second line will focus on the reinterpretation of the content of some of the paintings and an update of their topics. We will try to make thematic shifts of the scenes to the present and put them in the contemporary context, using projections, sketches, paintings and collages. The human figures depicted by Mucha in interesting compositions will inspire us to perform *tableaux vivants* against the backdrop of the original canvases projected on a large screen.

The Saturday workshops are intended for children, families with children and other interested parties of all ages, including the elderly and disadvantaged. The arrival and departure is optional – i.e., whenever within the scheduled time.

Art Workshops for Adults and Senior Citizens

Friday, 5 October 2018, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. **Egg Tempera I**, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sunday, 7 October 2018, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. **Egg Tempera II**, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

The workshop will focus on egg tempera, the technique used by Alfons Mucha in painting of *The Slav Epic*. It is one of the oldest painting techniques which the participants will try, mixing dry pigments in powdered form with an egg emulsion. They will use their own mixed paints to create works inspired by *The Slav Epic*. This process as such, as well as the process of preparation of colors will be an interesting creative activity, reminiscent of a craft workshop.

Interactive tours of the exhibition for all types of schools and other age and interest groups with the possibility of subsequent creative response in the form of their own work. We adapt the events in terms of time, theme and performance levels according to the specific requirements of each school.

Reservation required

Price: School groups CZK 50 per pupil (school groups with or without a lecturer from Prague City Gallery)

Contact Person: Lucie Haškovcová, lucie.haskovcova@ghmp.cz, 606 612 987, 608 216 418

In addition to the above-mentioned events, there will be other educational activities for other groups of visitors, such as the disadvantaged and parents on maternity and/or parental leave and their children.