

PROBE 1

The Story of Slovak (Post)conceptual Art

12 Dec. 2018 – 24 March 2019

Prague City Gallery

Stone Bell House

Staroměstské nám. 13, Prague 1

Open daily except Mondays, 10 am – 8 pm

Curators: Vladimír Beskid, Jakub Král

Exhibiting artists: Cyril Blažo, Stano Filko, Petra Feriancová, Viktor Frešo, Jozef Jankovič, Anetta Mona Chisa & Lucia Tkáčová, Martin Kochan, Július Koller, Marek Kvetan, Ján Mančuška, Roman Ondak, Boris Ondreička, Monogrammist T. D, Rudolf Sikora, Pavla Sceranková, Peter Rónai, Jaro Varga

Jan Brož, Alice Nikitinová, Vít Soukup, Pavel Sterec, Antonín Střížek, Michaela Thelenová

The exhibition *Probe 1* looks at the birth and evolution of Slovak art from the mid-1960s until the present day. In so doing, it shows the broader contexts that gave rise to Slovak conceptual art in 1964–1965 while also emphasizing the continuity of this form of visual thinking throughout the succeeding generations of artists. The exhibition's approach is neither linear nor based on a generational classification, but instead presents its information in four main thematic sections representing the primary artistic strategies for the past more than fifty years.

The first section, titled *TEXTmania*, looks at the international art scene's important turn towards the use of text in the 1960s, as well as the later rise of the administrative aesthetic under socialism. Július Koller radically tore down established ways of looking at a work of art and began to create text cards whose significance is as an entirely non-material statement of the bare facts – for instance of the fact that Koller was an academically trained painter. With the new way of looking art, artistic production – above all in the work of Rudolf Sikora – began to be characterized by critical appeals regarding human behavior towards the environment or within civilization in general.

The section *The Cosmos* explores mankind's expansion into space and how this development was reflected in individual projects and visions. The expanding radical utopias of late modernity led to a change in how people think about space and time. Along with space exploration's influence on the art of the 1970s, we also see an exploration of emptiness, which is presented in the section *The Zero Gesture*. One example is the exhibition's juxtaposition of two glasses – one by Július Koller from the 1960s and the other by Ján Mančuška from the first decade of the new millennium. Where Koller exhibited an empty glass (that, to paraphrase Heidegger, is “standing in itself”), Mančuška's is filled with an

amount of water that represents traces of present absence and ongoing disappearance. The final section, *Redefining the Image* looks at the new situation since 1989, when artistic production began to be influenced by digital media and new ways of relating to present-day reality. Naturally, the new definition of the image was not determined exclusively by the technological possibilities offered by the new media, but also and primarily by the range of critical approaches to the dynamic era of the past 30 years.

This exhibition of Slovak art from the 1960s to the present day is being held on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia. The shared story of our two nations is presented through a visual essay consisting of works by six Czech artists who loosely reflect on the shared path of our two East-Central European nations through the 20th century, including the era's changing paradigms and worldviews.

Jakub Král

The exhibition is being held under the auspices of Slovakia's Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Peter Weiss.

Curators: Vladimír Beskid, Jakub Král

Graphic design: Jan Šerých

Exhibition design: Tomáš Džadoň

Media partners: Art&Antiques, Art for Good, ArtMap, Czech Radio, Expres FM, protisedi.cz, Radio 1, XANTYPA

Admission: CZK 120 adults / CZK 60 students / CZK 30 seniors

Media contact: Michaela Vrchotová, +420 725 818 721, vrchotova@ghmp.cz

Additional information: www.ghmp.cz, www.facebook.com/GHMP.cz

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM:

Guided tours

Thu. 20 Dec. 2018, 5 pm – Vít Havránek (art theorist and historian)

Thu. 20 Dec. 2018, 6 pm – official presentation of exhibition catalogue

Wed. 16 Jan. 2019, 6 pm – Lucia Gregorová Stach (head curator of the Slovak National Gallery's collection of modern and contemporary art)

Tue. 12 Feb. 2019, 6 pm – Pavla Sceranková (exhibiting artist), Vladimír Beskid (curator)

Thu. 28 Feb. 2019, 6 pm – Monogrammist T. D, Jaro Varga (exhibiting artists)

Lectures

Concert hall, Stone Bell House

Tue. 22 Jan. 2019, 6 pm – Rudolf Sikora (exhibiting artist): *Cosmological-Ecological Notes*

Tue. 5 March 2019, 6 pm – László Beke (curator and art historian): *Czech-Hungarian Relations in the Field of Art in the 1960s and 1970s*

Wed. 27 March 2019, 6 pm – Kathrin Rhomberg (curator and director, KONTAKT. The Art Collection of Erste Group and ERSTE Foundation): *Central European Conceptual Art and the Kontakt Collection*

Saturday art workshops

Sat. 16 March 2019, 1–6 pm, *Other Dimensions*, Stone Bell House

Sat. 30 March 2019, 1–6 pm, *Communicating the Zero Gesture*, Stone Bell House

During the workshops, we will let ourselves be inspired by the exhibited works. Thanks to the works' immensely broad range, we will be creating various artistic experiments that combine linguistic and image systems into a visual message, all while making use of a broad range of artistic techniques and approaches: drawing, painting, collage, installation art, texts, the reinterpretation of maps, new media, and digital images. The workshops will look at all four thematic sections of the exhibition. Through their own creations, participants will explore the specific nature of conceptual and post-conceptual art and become aware of the value of content over form.

The Saturday workshops are intended for children, families, and any other interested persons of all ages, including seniors and socially disadvantaged members of the public. You may come and go at any time during the workshop hours.

Art studio for adults and seniors

Thu. 10 Jan. 2019, 3–6 pm, *The Author's Book I*, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu. 7 Feb. 2019, 3–6 pm, *The Author's Book II*, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Fri. 8 Feb. 2019, 3–6 pm, *The Author's Book III*, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu. 14 Feb. 2019, 3–6 pm, *Textual Forms in the Painting I*, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Fri 15 Feb. 2019, 3–6 pm, *Textual Forms in the Painting II*, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Participants in the interactive workshops will explore the exhibiting artists' works through one of conceptual art's main tools – text and its meaning and visuality. The works of art will be divided into two areas and will touch on the subject of the overlap between the public and the private. During the first artistic experiment, we will create artist's books as an intimate space for each workshop participant. The works may explore various subjects (story, poetry, memory, archives, collections) or artistic approaches (drawing, painting, printing, perforation, collage), or participants can explore their own linguistic and image systems. On the second phase, we will explore large-scale realizations created through the medium of painting, where we will apply words, citations, or fragments of texts. These projects will demonstrate the participants' communication with the public space.

Interactive tours of the exhibition for all types of schools, age categories, and interest groups offer a chance to respond to the exhibition by creating art of one's own. The program can be adapted in terms of length, subject matter, and level of difficulty to suit the specific demands of every school.

Reservations required

Price: children up to age 10, art school students, teachers CZK 5; over 10 years of age CZK 20

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

Besides the above events, there will also be other educational activities for other target groups such as socially disadvantaged individuals or parents on parental leave with their children.