



Eduard Steinberg / From Moscow to Paris

24 February – 28 May 2017

Prague City Gallery

The Stone Bell House

Staroměstské nám. 13, Prague 1

Open Tuesday – Sunday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Exhibition Curator: Hans-Peter Riese

Eduard (Edik) Steinberg (1937–2012) is one of the leading representatives of Russian Non-Conformists in whose life Prague played a crucial role. As early as the 1960s, especially during the Prague Spring, Czech art historians – such as Miroslav Lamač, Jiří Padrta and Jindřich Chalupecký from Prague – went to Moscow where they established contacts with isolated artists. All three of them also came into contact with colleagues in the West, who began to visit Prague in the mid-1960s, thanks to which they acquainted themselves not only with Czech artists, almost unknown in the West, but also with some Russian artists. These above-mentioned Western art historians included the curator of this exhibition, Hans-Peter Riese. Czech critics started to publish articles about their visits to Moscow in Western art magazines, and this is how Riese encountered the Russian Non-Conformists via a detour through Prague.

In the early 1970s, Jindřich Chalupecký and Eduard Steinberg befriended each other, building an extraordinary relationship through their correspondence. Chalupecký was also the first curator who exhibited his work outside the Soviet Union.

From his birth, Steinberg was practically predestined to a life on the edge. His father Arkady Steinberg, an artist, poet and translator, was convicted and deported to a labor camp during the Stalin era; after his release he was allowed to live only in the small town of Tarusa on the Oka River. His son did not have any chance of higher education, and so his father taught him himself how to paint and managed to pass on him his extensive knowledge of art and literature.

Edik Steinberg eventually returned to Moscow and he was admitted to the Union of Artists of the USSR, and so he could occasionally participate in official exhibitions. However, his painting took a direction which was not to be tolerated by Soviet officials. He was also a member of the unofficial movement of Non-Conformists. Because of his friendship with Ilya

Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits in seven buildings: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bílek, Troja Château and František Bílek's House in Chýnov.

Kabakov, Vladimir Nemukhin, Erik Bulatov and Oskar Rabin, Steinberg was ignored by the official establishment in Moscow, could not exhibit and was pushed into isolation.

Steinberg's work continued to develop even during this time. On the one hand, he drew from deep religiosity while, on the other hand, he was coming to terms with the early Russian avant-garde around Malevich and his circle. Steinberg, however, was also influenced by Russian culture and its roots in rural life. In the 1970s and 1980s he regularly spent the summer months in the typical Russian village of Pogorelka, where he lived together with people who represented for him the true, genuine Russia. He devoted an important series of paintings to his friends from Pogorelka, which can be viewed in full at the exhibition in Prague.

From the early 1990s Steinberg spent the winter months in Paris, where he was provided with the necessary support by his gallerist, Claude Bernard, who organized one or two exhibitions a year for him and became his most important art dealer. In summer Steinberg would go to Tarusa where he grew up and where he owned a country house.

The 1990s also brought about a growing interest in Steinberg's art in the West. He exhibited more and more, especially in France and Germany. He found his own unique style and was unusually productive, in particular in Paris. Together with Kabakov and Bulatov, he is ranked as one of the main leaders of the early Soviet Non-Conformism.

Subsequently, many monographs and catalogues about Steinberg were published in Russian, French and German. Despite serious health problems for which he was repeatedly hospitalized in Paris, Steinberg worked tirelessly on. In 2012 he succumbed to his disease and died in Paris. He is buried in Tarusa.

The exhibition at the Stone Bell House represents Steinberg's symbolic return to Prague, to the city through which he had established the first contacts with the West. It includes numerous works from a Russian private collection deposited in Prague. They have not yet been presented publicly, and therefore they fundamentally deepen and enrich our awareness of Eduard Steinberg's art.

Hans-Peter Riese

Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits in seven buildings: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bílek, Troja Château and František Bílek's House in Chýnov.

It is not entirely a coincidence that Russian art in the 1960s began to expand strongly westward. In 1962 a fundamental monograph by Camilla Gray, *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863–1922*, was published in the United Kingdom, which was reviewed in Czechoslovakia in 1965 in a comprehensive way by Bohumír Mráz in No. 8 issue of *Výtvarné umění* magazine. In the United States and in Western art in general this was in fact the first time when they learned about the Soviet avant-garde; in Czechoslovakia these Neo-Constructivist tendencies appeared in sculptures by Stanislav Kolíbal, Karel Malich and Radoslav Kratina.

However, from the beginning the actual link between Russian artists and the Czech art scene was the critic and art historian Jindřich Chalupecký (1910–1990), who in the 1960s worked as a curator of Václav Špála Gallery. There he presented many foreign contemporary Neo-Constructivist artists (Otto Herbert Hajek, exhibitions by members of the Concretists' Club as well the above-mentioned Stanislav Kolíbal and Karel Malich) – including Steinberg himself. Chalupecký and Steinberg kept in touch in the 1960s and 1970s not only through letters, but also thanks to several visits paid to Steinberg by Chalupecký together with Jiří Šetlík during their trips to Russia. Thus Czechoslovak critics were practically the first to take notice of what was happening on primarily the Moscow art scene in the 1960s.

Eduard Steinberg (1937–2012) in his art employed the legacy of the Russian Suprematism of Kazimir Malevich, whose oeuvre and references to it are nothing unusual in the Czech environment. Malevich's grave often appears in Conceptual strategies relating to his legacy in works by Rudolf Sikora, and the influence of his thinking is also apparent in works by the artist of the approximately same generation, Viktor Pivovarov, who has been living in Prague since 1982. However, Steinberg's position compared to the Czech tradition of Modernism is distinctly lyrical and his Suprematist reflections relate to the utopian ideas of metaphysical space, and later also to the deep religiosity of the Soviet countryside. Prague City Gallery returns to Russian neo-avant-garde art via the Steinberg exhibition after more than twenty years, when it then presented Moscow Conceptual Art including the circle of artists generationally close to Steinberg (such as Ilya Kabakov and Erik Bulatov) at the exhibition *Flight – Departure – Disappearance* curated by Milena Slavická.

Jakub Král

Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits in seven buildings: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bílek, Troja Château and František Bílek's House in Chýnov.

Eduard Steinberg / From Moscow to Paris

Organized by Prague City Gallery in collaboration with the Museum Wiesbaden, Galina Manevich donation 2013

Exhibition Curator: Hans-Peter Riese

Exhibition Coordinator: Jakub Král

Architectural Design: Tomáš Svoboda

Graphic Design: Zdeněk Ziegler

Czech-English Translation and Copy Editing: Vladimíra Šefranka Žáková

German-Czech Translation and Copy Editing: Lenka Vosičková

Head of Installation and Production: Diana Brabcová

Head of Public Relations and Marketing: Michaela Vrchatová

Educational Programs: Lucie Haškovcová

Acknowledgements:

Museum Wiesbaden, Schenkung Galina Manewitsch 2013

Art Audience s.r.o.

private lenders

Media Partners:

Art & Antiques

ArtMap

Český rozhlas

expats.cz

Protišedi.cz

PragueEventsCalendar

Radio 1

Xantypa

Venue: The Stone Bell House, Staroměstské nám. 13, Prague 1

Term: 24 February – 28 May 2017

Opening Hours: Tuesday – Sunday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Entrance Fee: CZK 120 full (adults) / CZK 60 reduced (students) / CZK 30 (senior citizens)

Contact Person for Journalists: Michaela Vrchatová, +420 725 818 721, vrchatova@ghmp.cz

More Information: www.ghmp.cz

Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits in seven buildings: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bílek, Troja Château and František Bílek's House in Chýnov.

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM TO THE EXHIBITION:

Guided tours:

Fri 24 February 2017 at 5:30 p.m.	Curator-guided tour with Hans-Peter Riese (in German with Czech interpreting)
Thu 23 March 2017 at 6 p.m.	Milena Slavická, art historian
Wed 19 April 2017 at 6 p.m.	Tomáš Glanc, associate professor of Slavic studies at the University of Zurich
Thu 27 April 2017 at 6 p.m.	Maria Černá Pivovarova, art historian, and Viktor Pivovarov, artist and Eduard Steinberg's close friend
Wed 17 May 2017 at 6 p.m.	Jakub Král, co-curator from the Prague City Gallery

Saturday art workshops

- Sat 18 March 2017, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. **Playing with Geometry**, The Stone Bell House
Sat 13 May 2017, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. **Abstraction and Spirituality**, The Stone Bell House
Sat 27 May 2017, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. **The Morphology of an Image**, The Stone Bell House

As part of educational activities, we will test and explore the potential of geometry and possibilities of abstraction. This focus will become the essence of creative activities – folding geometric shapes, working with details, experiments with scale, color changes, etc. Using the identical means of expression we will create a series of different images, exploring the possible variability of the composition. In our creative work, we will employ both the exploratory principle of chance and thought-out intention. The starting point for the creation of abstract images will be the visual language of Orthodox icons. This process will consist of the selection of individual elements and their reduction to the basic pure form of line and plane.

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.

Sunday art workshops for adults and senior citizens

- Sun 12 March 2017, 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. **Science versus Playing with Geometry**, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace
Sun 19 March 2017, 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. **Shapes and Bodies of the Non-Objective World**, Education Center, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Within the art workshops we will respond to the tradition of Russian Suprematism and to a representative Non-Conformism, Eduard Steinberg. The process of painting will be perceived from the point of view of a game, an experiment and science. Participants in the art workshops will touch the roots of the modification in abstract art. They will transform their ideas, feelings and visions into a non-objective world of color schemes.

Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits in seven buildings: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bílek, Troja Château and František Bílek's House in Chýnov.

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: Children under 10, students of art schools, teachers – CZK 5; children over 10 years CZK 20

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.

Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits in seven buildings: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bílek, Troja Château and František Bílek's House in Chýnov.