



Galerie hlavního města Prahy  
Prague City Gallery

## **Prague City Gallery exhibition schedule for 2020**

Prague City Gallery is opening several exhibitions that had been more or less ready to open prior to the declaration of the state of emergency, and is also reopening its two permanent exhibitions at Villa Bílek at Hradčany and the Bílek House in Chýnov near Tábor.

Our goal is to fulfil all the tasks still awaiting us this year, but unfortunately some of them are dependent on developments outside the country and are thus out of our control.

For instance, the Ivan Meštrović exhibition has been affected not only by the coronavirus, but also by the earthquake in Croatia. Since the Croatian Ministry of Culture is busy repairing damage to the country's museums and monuments, our preliminary agreement now aims for September of next year, when support for the project is more certain. Postponing the exhibition date also gives us time to renovate the Municipal Library's reception and restroom areas. Plans call for the creation of a modern lobby with a bookshop that will significantly increase the comfort of visitors to this leading exhibition hall. The design from the Josef Pleskot studio has already been approved and we have received funding from the city.

The exhibition of photographs by Frida Kahlo currently appears realistic, although it all depends on whether we can transport the works from Mexico in the second half of the year. The situation of the exhibition's other partners will play a role as well.

The exhibition by Chinese artist Xiao Quan, who recorded the revolutionary events on China's cultural and political scene in the 1980s, will of course be possible only if we can transport his works from China. Another possibility is that he would send his photographs digitally and they would be printed in Prague.

The other planned exhibitions are being worked on and there is currently no reason to cancel or change their dates.

### **Our reopening:**

Prague City Gallery is opening its venues during the usual hours and on the usual days, but with a new special time reserved for senior citizens, who can visit our exhibitions and venues daily except Monday from 10 am to noon.

We want to be there for those who feel most at risk from the current pandemic, and we are convinced that in this way we can expand their previously limited options for going out safely in public.

All our exhibitions will be launched without opening receptions. We nevertheless look forward to other events made possible by the gradual loosening of restrictions. We are planning a special event to present the catalogues being published in conjunction with our



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exhibitions, plus the “unveiling” of the completely renovated ceremonial stairs in Troja. This project, along with the renovation of the wet walls in the stables that threatened the building’s ceiling frescoes, is one of the most extensive restoration projects of the past five years.

Upon a proposal from councilor Hana Třeštková, the City of Prague added 10 million crowns to the gallery’s budget from the Arts for the City program specifically in order to support the arts during these difficult times when artists have had to give up their regular activities. Six million crowns have been set aside for the direct acquisition of works by living artists. The purchase will adhere to the standard conditions that all of the gallery’s acquisitions must follow, meaning that all proposals will be submitted to a purchasing committee that discusses and either approves or rejects each proposed acquisition. The proposals will focus on works that would suitably complement certain missing segments in the gallery’s collections. The Arts for the City program and this year’s UM 2020 program for temporary contemporary art in the public space have set aside two million crowns for the planned Mural Art festival, which invites contemporary artists to create murals and works of graffiti art in the public space. As part of UM 2020, the planned events will receive an additional one million crowns. Another million from the increased budget will be used for projects previously negotiated with partner institutions (e.g., the m3 festival, Tranzit).

Further details are available on our website, which will be continuously updated with information on how we are responding to this critical situation.

Magdalena Juříková  
director, Prague City Gallery

## **ANTONÍN KRATOCHVÍL**

**dates: 12. 6. – 18. 10. 2020, Stone Bell House**

**curator: Pavlína Vogelová**

This retrospective exhibition of the Czech photographer Antonín Kratochvíl presents a cross-section of the highly expressive, evocative photographic work of one of the most distinctive and important international representatives of social documentary photography and photojournalism. His photographs, which explore the nature of contemporary human society, are emotional, unsettling, and transformative. Working with sophisticated effects and carefully dosing the impact of his images, Kratochvíl depicts the labyrinth of human types and the dark side of humanity.

In his work, Antonín Kratochvíl focuses on images of want, desperation, alienation, pain, sorrow, and misery, as well as the arrogance of power and its consequences in various parts of the world. His photographs offer a historical witness to modern conflicts and the issues facing contemporary society and civilization (Afghanistan, Bosnia, Philippines, Haiti, Iraq, Rwanda, Zaire). They capture the tragic nature of humanitarian and natural catastrophes or the pressing social issues facing human society as such (epidemics, disappearing cultures, the devastation of the landscape, and drug-related crime, or a look at the life of today's golden youth in Moscow, among other topics).

Kratochvíl also imparts his original and distinctive style on his portraits of show-business celebrities and of ordinary, anonymous individuals who, taken as a whole, represent a kind of allegory that is of specific importance to him. By combining famous people such as Bill Gates, Willem Dafoe, Keith Richards, Patricia Arquette, Priscilla Presley, David Bowie, Milan Hlavsa, Pavel Landovský, Jean Reno, Bob Dylan, Billy Bob Thornton, Vittorio Storaro, Kyle MacLachlan, Judith Godrèche, Amanda Lear, or Debbie Harry with the unknown faces of people from various settings, each with their own experiences and life stories, he holds up a mirror to the current state of the human soul in today's world. These photographs do not celebrate any specific people, heroes, or celebrities. Kratochvíl relativizes beauty and relationships in order to find a suitable visual form for making a profound statement on man as the essence of being, on his personal and social space, and on living a meaningful life.

Antonín Kratochvíl (born 1947 in Lovosice, Czechoslovakia) is an internationally renowned Czech photojournalist. After spending five years in exile in Europe (1967–1972), including life-changing experiences in a refugee camp, prison, and the French foreign legion, followed by the study of art and photography at the Gerrit Rietveld Art Academy in Amsterdam, he left for the United States in 1972. As a photojournalist and war photographer, he made it among the very elite of international photojournalism. One important milestone in his photographic career was the publication of his book *Broken Dream: Twenty Years of War in Eastern Europe* (1991). His images have been published in some of the world's leading magazines, including *Rolling Stone*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *Mother Jones*, *Smithsonian*, *Condé Nast Travel*, *Geo*, *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Vogue*. For his contribution to world photography, he has received numerous prestigious awards: Dorothy Lange Prize, Ernst Haas Award, Golden Light Award, Gold Medal for Photography from the Society of Publication Designers (New York), Gold ARC Award for Best Annual Report, Lucie Award, and World Press Photo. In his home country, Kratochvíl was honored by being named Personality of Czech Photography for the year 2014.

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Antonín Kratochvíl, *Jean Reno*, 2006, photograph



Antonín Kratochvíl, *The Mountaineer Tomáš Humař*, 2002, fotografie





Josef Sudek, *The Saint of Homole*, 1935, digitally altered negative, 15 × 10 cm, Fototéka ÚDU AV ČR, inv. č. S 9092N. © Josef Sudek, heirs. Repro © Vlado Bohdan, ÚDU AV ČR

**LOOKERS FROM THE DRAWERS.  
SUDEK AND SCULPTURES SOCHY**  
dates: 23. 6. – 27. 9. 2020, House of  
Photography  
curators: Hana Buddeus, Katarína  
Mašterová  
in cooperation with the Institute of  
Art History of the Czech Academy of  
Sciences and the Museum of  
Decorative Arts in Prague

Josef Sudek (1896–1976) dedicated a significant part of his professional career to photographing works of art. For most people, the rediscovery of this extensive yet almost completely unknown part of his work will come as a surprise. The exhibition's focus on sculptures, a subject close to Sudek's heart, allows us to show the connections between his commissioned and "free" work. Sudek liked to call Madonnas and female saints "lookers," and often photographed sculptures just for himself. Besides his iconic photographs of St. Vitus Cathedral or from "the garden of a lady sculptor," the exhibition also presents photographs taken for sculptors, artists' associations, and publishers that had been stored in the "drawers" of the photothèque at the Institute of Art History, plus period reproductions from books and magazines. The selected works show the tension between the artifact and its photographic reproduction, between photography's ability to bring art to the masses and the photographic image as an original work of art in its own right.

The exhibition and accompanying publication represent the outcome of the grant project "Josef Sudek and Photographic Documentation of Works of Art: From a Private Art Archive to Representing a Cultural Heritage," initiated by professor Vojtěch Lahoda (1955–2019). The project was supported in 2016–2020 by the Czech Ministry of Culture as part of the Program of Applied Research and Development of National and Cultural Identity (NAKI II), ID number: DG16P02M002.

## MATTER OF ART I

### PRAGUE BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART

**dates: 22. 7. – 18. 10. 2020, Municipal Library, 2nd floor**

**curators: Tereza Stejskalová, Vít Havránek**

**in cooperation with tranzit.cz and the ERSTE Foundation**

Organized under the motto of “Come Closer,” the first edition of *Bienále Ve věci umění / Matter of Art* explores questions of co-existence in a society in which people no longer speak the same language. It looks at instances in which language has failed, exploring contempt, irritation, fear, frustration, anger, aggression, and fatigue. Sensing the need to find a common groundwork and conditions for empathy, the exhibition focuses on searching for the causes of the mood in today's society. It seeks these causes in the past and the present, and also views them from the perspective of possible future scenarios, trying to identify how the intimate space of interpersonal relations and emotional life relates to broader social, political, and economic conditions.

The exhibition's title, *Come Closer*, which was initially meant to call attention to the connection between art and empathy and the contradictory nature of intimate relations among people, has taken on an unexpected number of new meanings as a result of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its impact on our lives. Something as matter-of-fact as physical closeness has suddenly become a traumatic, burning issue. We yearn for closeness because we are not getting it, but at the same time we fear it as well. Today, we express that we care for others not through closeness, physical touch, but through distance – specifically, more than two meters. Physical closeness to a work of art in a gallery takes on new meaning after months during which contemporary art and feelings of closeness could be shared only through virtual platforms. The biennial is thus an opportunity for thinking about and experiencing our relationship to closeness, caring, and art differently than before. In the end, it is art that can help us to find a new language of intimacy and closeness for life in this new (post)corona world.



*Un film dramatique* (A Dramatic Film), 2019, France, dir. Éric Baudelaire, Courtesy LUX

**MONIKA IMMROVÁ**

**dates: 4. 11. 2020 – 7. 3. 2021,**

**Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace**

**curator: Iva Mladičová**

Monika Immrová studied under J. Zeithamml. She is one of the most distinctive sculptors of her generation. As a native of Louny, she was born with a strong affinity for abstract shapes. On the other hand, as someone who feels close to nature, she has no problem combining geometry with organic shapes. This bipolar identity gives her concrete objects and reliefs an aesthetic that brings to mind the interior of interplanetary spaceships and historical industries all at once. Immrová has raised concrete to a sculptural material par excellence. She works with it as often as another unconventional material – cardboard. These “technical” commodities aid her in her search for a free and strictly formulated spatial concept. Her main domain remains sculpture, although in recent years she has intensively worked with graphic art as well, even earning the Graphic Art of the Year award.



Monika Immrová, *Head IV*, 1999, wood, gold leaf

*Edges II*, 2012, concrete, plaster reliefs on the walls

## FRIDA KAHLO: HER PHOTOGRAPHS

2. 12. 2020 – 11. 4. 2021, Stone Bell House

curator: Pablo Ortiz Monasterio

Frida Kahlo had a strong relationship to photography. Her father and grandfather were both professional photographers, and she herself used photography in a number of different ways. For instance, she collected daguerreotypes and postcards from the 19th century, images from which she cut out details, into which she wrote various dedications, and which she worked with as if they were paintings. She gave them to her friends, they were mementos of her ancestors, she used them to study her own likeness, and most of all they were an important source of inspiration for her paintings.

The exhibition *Frida Kahlo: Her Photographs* presents numerous previously unknown photographs from Kahlo's estate. Today, they are organized into six thematic sections. The exhibition does not aim to provide a chronological overview of her life, but instead looks at her artistic background, her native country, and the era in which she lived. It is a collage that reveals new details from the life of an iconic figure of 20th-century art. The exhibition presents 241 photographs in six sections, focusing on her origins, the "blue house" (Casa blu), politics, revolution, Diego Rivera, her injured body, and her loves and friendships. These historical documents of their era also show the art and viewpoints of other artists, whose photographs are also included in the collection: Man Ray, Martin Munkácsi, Edward Weston, Brassaï, Tina Modotti, and Gisèle Freund (whose work our gallery showed in 2018/2019). The exhibition has been shown throughout the Americas, and so far has made European stops in Portugal, Germany, and Poland. The exhibition's organizer, the Terra Esplendida agency, contacted Prague City Gallery in response to the successful exhibition by Sam Shaw at the House of Photography in 2016/2017. After Prague, the exhibition will move to Ghent, Belgium.



Lola Álvarez Bravo,  
*Frida Kahlo*, ca. 1944





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**František Bílek House in Chýnov**  
**from 12 May 2020 in Chýnov near Tábor**  
**curator: Hana Larvová**

František Bílek's studio in Chýnov opens the 2020 season with a small selection of works from a long-term exhibition that will open on the third floor of Villa Bílek in Prague in May 2021, with a focus on Bílek's art inspired by the work of his lifelong friend, the poet Otokar Březina.

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