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SOUNDS CODES IMAGES: ACOUSTIC EXPERIMENTATION IN THE VISUAL ARTS

5 June – 13 October 2019

Prague City Gallery

Stone Bell House

Staroměstské nám. 13, Prague 1

Open every day except Monday, from 10 am to 8 pm

Curated and conceived by Jitka Hlaváčková
Cooperation on concept: Milan Guštar, Miloš Vojtěchovský

Reflections upon the common core of sound and image, shape and rhythm and the harmony of nature and music stretch far back into the mists of time. In art this approach is to be seen in the combination of colour, shape, tone, rhythm, light and new technology, later expanded to include real movement, sound and live performance. The result was a wide range of new art forms that laid the foundations of the rich tradition of modern and postmodern art.

The exhibition *SOUNDS CODES IMAGES: Acoustic Experimentation in the Visual Arts* is a cross-section of the history of the representation of sound and acoustic experimentation from the avant-garde to the present day. The works of almost seventy artists include many different forms, ranging from abstract image and unconventional scores, via resounding or resonating objects, to multimedia projections and interactive installations. By means of historical and contemporary works the exhibition sets out to show how sound acquires colour and shape, becomes an object, and a spatial composition of physical action. It examines the psychological and psychophysical, as well as the physical and mathematical factors that predetermine the visual appearance of sound.

Though the exhibition focuses on the Czech and Czechoslovak art scene, it also possesses an international character. It includes a number of works by foreign artists who have driven developments in artistic experimentation and had a significant influence on local figures. Someone who stands out in this respect is John Cage, whose work and ideas have laid the foundations of many generations of conceptual artists. The exhibition also includes representatives of Fluxus such as Joe Jones, Nam June Paik and of course Milan Knížák. Other foreign artists include Manfred Mohr, Peter Cusack, Morgan O'Hara and Keith Rowe. The collection also features Czech artists who spent a long part of their career abroad, such as František Kupka, Woody Vasulka, Ladislav Kupkovič, Rudolf Komorous, and Petr Kotík.

The exhibition also draws links between avant-garde or conceptual works created from the 1960s to the 1980s and individual phenomena in the work of contemporary artists. It reminds us of the long tradition of instruments creating not only sound but also coloured images in the work of artist and architect Zdeněk Pešánek. The sheer tenacity of this discipline is visible in the activities of Woody and Steina Vasulka, Pavel Mrkus and Jiří Suchánek, and the performances of Tomáš Dvořák (Floex).

Another lively trend is the Futurist-inspired creation of unusual noise instruments, an activity pursued recently by Martin Janíček, Luboš Fidler, Robert Vlasák and many others.

The latest trend in sound art is acoustic ecology. This is a sphere that reflects upon the current situation of humanity as a whole through the prism of an individual's acoustic experience in a shared sound space. It is shown to great effect at the exhibition in works by Peter Cusack and Michal Kindernay.

Jitka Hlaváčková

Curation and concept: Jitka Hlaváčková

Cooperation on concept: Milan Guštar, Miloš Vojtěchovský

Graphic design: Anymade Studio

Media partners: Art & Antiques, A2, ArtMap, Artiki, Český rozhlas, Expres FM, Flash Art, His Voice, Literární noviny, protisedi.cz, Radio 1, XANTYPA

Admission: CZK 120 full price (adults) / CZK 60 reduced (students, OAPs)



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ACCOMPANYING PUBLICATION

Jitka Hlaváčková (ed.), *SOUNDS CODES IMAGES: Acoustic Experimentation in the Visual Arts*, Prague City Gallery, 2019

The publication will contain texts by Josef Cseres, Martin Flašar, Jakub Frank, Milan Guštar, Jitka Hlaváčková, Michal Kindernay, Martin Klimeš, Helena Musilová, Michal Nejtek, Viktor Pantůček and Miloš Vojtěchovský. The catalogue will feature profiles of the artists and a list and reproductions of works on show.

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

Guided tour by the curator Jitka Hlaváčková

Wed 26 June 2019, 6 pm

Tue 10 September 2019, 6 pm

Accompanying musical programme [SONIC CIRCUITS](#)

Saturday creative workshops

Sat 28 September 2019, 1–6 pm, *Sounds in Images*, Stone Bell House

Sat 12 October 2019, 1–6 pm, *The Colours of Tones*, Stone Bell House

During the interactive tours and follow-up activities we will examine the interplay of sound and image. We will build on the principle of an intermedial and interdisciplinary concept of art and on the basis of acoustic ecology. This will give rise to visual and sound experiments that interrogate and react to the works on show. By creating acoustic drawings, visual scores and abstract paintings we will attempt to record visually and express the effects of sound, and on the other hand by creating a collective work by tracing a variety of objects we shall create visual scores that we shall “play” in real-time with the aid of the objects used. We shall also create calligraphic records of birdsong and the sounds of animals and natural elements, people and cities. We shall focus on the confrontation of industrial and natural sounds, noise and harmonic tones and their effect on our emotions.

Creative studio for adults and senior citizens

All events will take place at the Education Centre of the Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sun 2 June 2019, 3–6 pm, *Image as Score I*

Thu 6 June 2019, 3–6 pm, *Image as Score II*

Thu 13 June 2019, 3–6 pm, *Music in Colours I*

Fri 14 June 2019, 3–6 pm, *Music in Colours II*

Sun 16 June 2019, 3–6 pm, *Music in Colours III*

Thu 5 September 2019, 3–6 pm, *Sound Experiments in Images I*

Fri 6 September 2019, 3–6 pm, *Sound Experiments in Images II*

Sun 8 September 2019, 3–6 pm, *Sound Experiments in Images III*

Thu 19 September 2019, 3–6 pm, *Rhythms, Lines and Patterns I*

Fri 20 September 2019, 3–6 pm, *Rhythms, Lines and Patterns II*

Sun 22 September 2019, 3–6 pm, *Rhythms, Lines and Patterns III*

The exhibition, focused on the representation of sound in visual art, will be our inspiration for the realisation of interactive creative works. In the first series we shall seek inspiration in the work of Milan Grygar and his characteristic acoustic, tactile drawings and visual, colourful and geometric scores. We shall experiment with Grygar’s method of drawing and painting using sticks and attempt to create acoustic “live drawings” using mechanical objects.

In the second series of interactive workshops we shall focus on abstract art and the proximity of music and painting. We will examine for ourselves the possibilities of applying the colour spectrum, forms and elements. We will seek inspiration in the works of the pioneers of abstract art (František Kupka, Wassily Kandinsky), the unique compositions of Miroslav Ponc, and the fascinating works of Arne Hošek and Alois Bílek, who



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attempted to represent musical works visually and using colour. Using techniques such as drawing and watercolours, workshop participants will create visual forms of sound as well as compositions in their own right. In our follow-up works we will create acrylic paintings. Important elements of our work will be colour, shape and line. Rather than seek to imitate reality, we will look for the essence of phenomena, sounds and colour harmony. In the final series of workshops we will look at colour symbolism. The outputs of these workshops will be slow manual work that we will apply to creative textiles (handloom weaving).

Special events

On 6 June 2019 starting at 3 pm there will be a tour for gallery educational workers as part of the seminar of the Chamber of Education Workers of the Council of Galleries of the CZ + a presentation of the educational activities linked with the exhibition.

On 11 July 2019 from 1–6 pm there will be a special workshop as part of the Creative Week at the concert hall of the Stone Bell House.

Interactive tours of the exhibition for all types of school and other age and interest groups with the possibility of practical follow-up creative work. We will make every effort to meet the specific requirements of every school in terms of date, theme and level of difficulty.

Reservation necessary

Fee: children up to 10, art-school students, lecturers – CZK 5; 10-years old and above – CZK 20

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In addition to the activities referred to above, there will be other educational activities aimed at other target groups, such as disadvantaged visitors or parents with children on parental leave.



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