

Press release 15 March 2022

An exhibition dedicated to Jindřich Chaluppecký – an art critic who was searching for the meaning of art all his life.

The Jindřich Chaluppecký Society in cooperation with Prague City Gallery is presenting one of the main events of this year's programme in the exhibition halls of the Municipal Library – an exhibition dedicated to the work and life legacy of the art and literary critic, theorist, and curator who significantly influenced both Czech modern and contemporary art. Jindřich Chaluppecký (1910–1990) began writing between the two world wars, when surrealism was a novelty, and lived to report on the postmodernism that accompanied the end of the 20th century. The sphere of his critical activity encompassed events on the Czech/Czechoslovak as well as international scenes, and his influence on (not only) local culture can still be observed today. The exhibition brings together the works of more than sixty artists of several generations whose work was directly and indirectly influenced by Chaluppecký.

Throughout his life, Chaluppecký promoted and advocated for new forms of art and was interested in general questions of art, especially the meaning of art in modern society. He was an advocate of interconnecting art and life. In today's terms, we could perhaps afford to use the term activist art or engaged art. He did not believe in a purely aesthetic function of the work of art and culture in general. The breadth of Jindřich Chaluppecký's interests and influence guarantees that the viewers of the exhibition will encounter, in some form, a substantial part of Czech history and also the international cultural and intellectual history of the 20th century. The exhibition includes a wide range of works – from those created by Czech post-war artists, through works by Russian artists such as Ilya Kabakov, to reflections provided by contemporary artists such as Anežka Hošková and Václav Magid.

"The exhibition at Prague City Gallery is the result of three years of research and preparation. Through a dialogue of both historical works and the works by contemporary artists, writers, philosophers, and other notable figures, this project aims not to create a symbolic monument to Jindřich Chaluppecký but rather to reflect on Chaluppecký's ideas and activities that are

Press release 15 March 2022

relevant to the present and can be of use to us in these artistically, politically, and humanly difficult times," says the curatorial team – Tereza Jindrová, Karina Kottová and Tomáš Pospiszyl – about the exhibition's intention.

The Abstracted Apartment, Reading Room, and Picture Room

The diversity and richness of Jindřich Chalupecký's life and work determines the format of the exhibition: the spaces on the second floor of the Municipal Library on Mariánské náměstí are divided into several seemingly separate sections, different not only thematically but also formally. Here, we can find a glimpse into Chalupecký's apartment in Vršovice where he lived with his wife, the writer Jiřina Hauková, surrounded by paintings on the walls. In the "reading room", at a large table, we will meet more than thirty selected texts dealing with the work and life stories of Chalupecký's favourite authors. The "reading room" is adjacent to a "picture room" containing canonical and undeservedly forgotten works of Czech and Slovak art of the second half of the 20th century which, as a kind of reference to Chalupecký's texts, visitors can first see only through an opening in the wall before coming closer to them through other exhibition sections. The impressive exhibition space was designed by the architectural studio of Richard Loskot, a prominent Czech visual artist.

From Duchamp to Kabakov

A prominent place in the exhibition is devoted to the Frenchman **Marcel Duchamp** who, for Chalupecký, was the most important artist of the twentieth century. In 1969 he managed to organise an exhibition of Duchamp's conceptual works at the Václav Špála Gallery in Prague. A unique light and space installation by Richard Loskot was created at the current Prague exhibition based on Duchamp's iconic work known as "The Large Glass" and Chalupecký's sketches for a possible reconstruction of its unfinished part.

The section dedicated to Russian art is another part of the exhibition that has an international overlap. From 1965 until the second half of the 1970s, Jindřich Chalupecký repeatedly visited the USSR, mainly Moscow and Leningrad, where he mainly established contact with artists

Press release 15 March 2022

active in the unofficial or semi-official cultural scene. Visitors to *The Worlds of Jindřich Chalupecký* will see works that Chalupecký saw or could potentially see in the studios he visited. This section also includes a unique album of drawings that Chalupecký received from six Moscow artists, including **Ilya Kabakov** and **Viktor Pivovarov**, for his seventieth birthday.

"Chalupecký brought to the Soviet Union his ideas and valid information about what was happening in the international context of contemporary art. And he took home with him a fascination with the original artistic expression of many local artists, inspiring insights into the Russian avant-garde, and reflections on the conditions of artistic creation in the cultural underground," adds Tomáš Glanc, curator of the Russian art exhibition.

In view of the current ongoing wartime invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the Jindřich Chalupecký Society has decided not to carry out the planned loan of artworks from the Moscow Museum of Modern Art and to implement the section from local and other European collections. At the same time, the organisers invited Ukrainian and Russian artists working in the Czech Republic to freely contribute to the exhibition by commenting on the issue of how to currently approach the presentation of Russian art and the Russian cultural institutions – what we as an artistic community can expect and demand from them.

Contemporary Responses to Expressionism, Feminism and Cross-border Correspondence

In the so-called "cabinets", i.e., a series of smaller exhibition rooms, archival materials alternate with the reactions and interventions of contemporary artists. For example, there is a section focusing on the artists and writers of **Group 42**, followed by a recording of a site-specific production staged at the Opera Hotel in Prague. The production was based on contemporary authors' responses to Chalupecký's canonic text *The World We Live In*. With her installation combining references to historical ornamentation and contemporary neo-romantic subcultures, artist **Anežka Hošková** responds to Chalupecký's publication *The Expressionists*, dedicated to his favourite writers: Richard Weiner, Jakub Deml, Ladislav Klíma, and Jaroslav Hašek. The series of watercolours by Václav Magid is a response to the

Press release 15 March 2022

specific album format, widespread among the Moscow artists with whom Chalupecký was in contact, and also quotes his 1973 article called *Moscow Diary*.

Jindřich Chalupecký was the only art theorist who attempted to grasp and reflect on "women's art" in the 1970s and 1980s. In his reflections on the art of his contemporaries, however, he did not conceal his scepticism towards feminist art. The newly created works for the exhibition include a film by French artist **Julie Béna** entitled *Letters from Prague*. The artist, who has long been based in Prague, responds humorously and bitterly to the way patriarchal society treats women artists even today.

A unique contribution to the exhibition has also been prepared by the American curator/artist duo **Triple Candie** (Shelly Bancroft and Peter Nesbett). Based on the surviving correspondence with the American Slavicist William Harkins and Fluxus member Dick Higgins, an installation came into being that illustrates Chalupecký's intense interest in current events of the international art scene while also reflecting the difficulties of the time during which he tried to maintain and fulfil this interest – many letters and materials sent from overseas repeatedly failed to reach their Czech recipient.

"The exhibition attempts to work in unorthodox ways with the forms of documentation and contemporary readings of historical events and artistic production, and to show Chalupecký as a still-living figure of Czech culture," add the curators of the project.

Press release 15 March 2022

The Worlds of Jindřich Chalupický

Location: Prague City Gallery – Municipal Library, 2nd floor, Mariánské náměstí 1, Prague 1

Opening of the Exhibition: Tuesday 15 March 2022

Duration of the Exhibition: 16 March – 19 June 2022

Exhibiting Artists: Natalia Abalakova, Jiří Balcar, Václav Bartovský, Eva Bednářová, Julie Béna, Zdeněk Beran, Vladimír Boudník, Ivan Chuikov, Jiří David, Dvizhenie group, Michail Grobman, Jiřina Hauková, Anežka Hošková, František Hudeček, František Gross, Dalibor Chatrný, Vladimir Yakovlev, Vladimir Yankilevsky, František Janoušek, Věra Janoušková, Magdalena Jetelová, Ilya Kabakov, Olga Karlíková, Eva Kmentová, Jiří Kolář, Milan Knížák, Stanislav Kolíbal, Jan Kotík, Alena Kučerová, Kamil Lhoták, Richard Loskot, Václav Magid, Mikuláš Medek, Jan Mičoch, Alex Mlynářčík, Karel Nepraš, Ladislav Novák, Lev Nusberg, Petra Orišková, Theodor Pištěk, Viktor Pivovarov, Naděžda Plíšková, Vlasta Prachatická, Milan Ressel, František Ronovský, Zdeněk Rykr, Jan SágI, Zorka Ságlová, Zora (Járová) Smetanová, Ülo Sooster, Adriena Šimotová, Eduard Štejnberg, Petr Štembera, Triple Candie (Shelly Bancroft & Peter Nesbett), Jitka Vállová, Květa Vállová, Jaroslav Vožniak, Ladislav Zívr, Jana Želibská, Anatoly Zhigalov

Organizers: Prague City Gallery and the Jindřich Chalupický Society

Curatorial Team: Tereza Jindrová, Karina Kottová, Tomáš Pospiszyl

Curator of the Exhibition of Russian Art: Tomáš Glanc

Exhibition Architecture: Richard Loskot Studio

This exhibition is financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Prague City Hall, the State Culture Fund, and the Statutory City of Brno.

A complete list of long-term partners of the Jindřich Chalupický Society can be found on our website here: <https://www.sjch.cz/o-nas/>.

Press release 15 March 2022

CONTACT FOR JOURNALISTS:

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

More information:

www.ghmp.cz

www.facebook.com/ghmp.cz

www.instagram.com/ghmp.cz

Press release 15 March 2022

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

Guided Tours

Thu 24 March 2022, 6 pm

Karina Kottová and Tereza Jindrová: *Jindřich Chalupický from the Perspective of Contemporary Artists*

Thu 28 Apr 2022, 6 pm

Tomáš Pospiszyl: *Chalupický and Duchamp*

Thu 26 May 2022, 6 pm

Tomáš Glanc: *Chalupický and Russian Artists*

Discussion

Sat 7 Apr 2022, 6 pm

"Exhibiting is not the ideal way for art to enter society anyway." Jindřich Chalupický's curatorial, commissioning and exhibition activities.

In addition to writing, Jindřich Chalupický was also involved in organizing exhibitions. In the second half of the 1960s, he managed the Špála Gallery in Prague and prepared exhibitions of Czech art abroad. How do we evaluate Chalupický as a curator today? What characterised his exhibitions?

Tue 5 May 2022, 6 pm

"Czech woman artists don't need feminist programmes." Jindřich Chalupický and Woman Artists

What was Chalupický's attitude towards "women's art" and why, within the Czech context, did he praise woman artists on the one hand while, on the other hand, rejecting feminist ideas? And how can we view his complicated relationship to woman artists and their work from the perspective of contemporary (feminist) art theory and history of art, as well as from the perspective of the practice of art itself?

Press release 15 March 2022

Mon 9 June 2022, 6 pm

"But it's a strange world." The Political Thought of Jindřich Chaluppecký

Jindřich Chaluppecký's work often took place in politically turbulent times. He perceived art not as a world in itself but in connection with the life of society. How did Chaluppecký approach the historical events of his life and what political views did he identify with? How much did they affect his views on art and how do we evaluate them today?

Brunch at the Exhibition

Sat 9 Apr 2022, 11 am–2 pm

Marathon reading from the works by Jindřich Chaluppecký with coffee and cake

Saturday Art Workshops

In the art workshops we focus on stimulating themes with significant educational potential. One of these will be the work of Group 42 – we will explore the work of its members and take inspiration from the city and its periphery, technology, machines, the poetics of the everyday, and the elements of civicism, futurism, cubism and constructivism that can be traced in their work. As far as the form is concerned, we will test the possibilities of media – for example, we will try to translate painting into 3D forms and vice versa, we will engage new media and experiment with scale, details and composition. Through art actions, we will commemorate some well-known exhibitions from the Špála Gallery curated by Jindřich Chaluppecký – for example, following the example of Eva Kmentová's installation, visitors will be able to trace the shape of their shoes on white paper, cut them out and attach them to the floor where other visitors' footprints will be placed to mark routes through the exhibition space during the workshop and will lead visitors to key installations. This will create a temporary site-specific work. We will also explore the overlaps of fine art and other disciplines, especially the mingling of image and text. Here, the works by Jiří Kolář, as well as by other artists, will become a source of inspiration. A tribute to the rich correspondence of Jindřich Chaluppecký will be paid in the form of fictional letters addressed directly to him, where participants will try to express and record what art means to them in a creative way, both visually and textually, or to encrypt their personal message to Jindřich Chaluppecký. We will also incorporate Dadaist elements

Press release 15 March 2022

and principles, following the example of Marcel Duchamp, we will place our own ready-mades in interesting contexts, and will be inspired by his work *The Large Glass* (collages and assemblages on transparent damaged foils). We will also try to interpret imaginatively the work of the contemporary artists presented and reflect also the specifics and parameters of the unique concept and format of the exhibition.

Sat 26 March 2022, 1–6 pm, *In the Footsteps of the Nightwalker*, Municipal Library, 2nd floor

Sat 7 May 2022, 1–6 pm, *Testing the Boundaries of Art*, GHMP's Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Art Studio for Adults and Seniors

The art workshops will be dedicated to distinctive personalities and interesting techniques based on the work of the presented artists. During the first cycle of workshops entitled *Collage and Principles of Montage*, we will be inspired by Group 42 and especially by Jiří Kolář. We will focus on the records of reality, fragmentation and aesthetics of ordinary things. We will apply the principle of montage and experiment with collage and its overlaps. In the second series of interactive workshops entitled *Book Art*, we will focus on the artist Jiří Balcar and his following up on the civicism of Group 42. Attention will be paid to the artist's relationship to book art and graphic design (realisation of small format bookbindings, basic sewn binding). It will also be possible to enrich the processing of books by experimental prints in the field of typography. In the third series of workshops, entitled *Watercolour*, participants will try out the traditional process of its preparation, mixing powder pigments with a binder and using them for their own creations. The starting point will be the work of selected artists such as Anežka Hošková and Zdenek Rykr. In the fourth cycle of workshops, called *Portrait Drawing*, we will focus on the topic of figurative art (Petra Oriěšková, Naděžda Plíšková, Vlasta Prachatická, Adriena Šimotová, Jitka Válová, Květa Válová, and others). In the background of the Education Centre's studio, portrait drawing will take place using a live model. During the art programme *Graphics: Drypoint Technique*, we will focus on the intaglio technique and take inspiration from Vladimír Boudník, for example.

Press release 15 March 2022

Fri 8 Apr 2022, 10 am–1 pm, *Collage and Principles of Montage I*, GHMP Education Center in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Fri 8 Apr 2022, 3–6 pm *Collage and Principles of Montage II*, GHMP Education Center in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sun 10 Apr 2022, 10 am– 1 pm, *Book Art I*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sun 10 Apr 2022, 3– 6 pm, *Book Art II*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 21 Apr 2022, 10 am– 1 pm, *Book Art III*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 21 Apr 2022, 3– 6 pm, *Book Art IV*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 28 Apr 2022, 10 am–1 pm, *Watercolour I*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 28 Apr 2022, 3– 6 pm, *Watercolour II*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Fri 29 Apr 2022, 3– 6 pm, *Watercolour III*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 19 May 2022, 10 am–1 pm, *Portrait Drawing I*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 19 May 2022, 3– 6 pm, *Portrait Drawing II*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 26 May 2022, 10 am– 1 pm, *Graphics: Drypoint Technique I*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 26 May 2022, 3– 6 pm, *Graphics: Drypoint Technique II*, GHMP Education Centre in Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Press release 15 March 2022

Interactive tours of the exhibition for all types of schools and other age and interest groups with the possibility of subsequent artistic reaction in the form of their own work. We adapt the events in terms of time, theme and level of difficulty to the specific requirements of each school.

Contact:

edukace@ghmp.cz

For dates of workshops and a range of other educational activities aimed at other target groups, such as disadvantaged/disabled visitors or parents on parental leave with their children, please see ghmp.cz/edukace.