

JITKA SVOBODOVÁ: BEYOND THE EDGE OF THE VISIBLE

14. 4. – 20. 8. 2023

Prague City Gallery

Municipal Library, 2nd floor

Mariánské náměstí 1, Prague 1

Tue–Wed, Fri–Sun 10 am – 6 pm, Thu 10 am – 8 pm

Curator: Helena Musilová

The Prague City Gallery presents a long-awaited retrospective exhibition of painter and creator of drawings and spatial objects Jitka Svobodová, one of today's Czech and international art's most authentic artists. Since the mid-1960s, when she first entered the art scene, she has systematically explored visible reality, transforming it into distinctive works of art in a unique and – to the viewer – often perplexing way.

“We are preparing the first retrospective exhibition of the legendary artist Jitka Svobodová, which will take place in one of the most attractive exhibition halls in the Czech Republic. Her life's work could be characterised by a few terms – drawing, object, sensibility, quintessence, concentration and time. Each of these summarises a huge number of messages and possible interpretations.”

Helena Musilová

The exhibition presents her art since her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, which she graduated from in 1967, up to her most recent works. Jitka Svobodová began as a painter of abstract landscapes and natural elements. In the first half of the 1970s, she decided to abandon painting and devote herself to drawing; through this media, in flat as well as in spatial realizations, she depicted everyday life objects, constructions and various types of connections, as well as phenomena such as smoke, or the movement of the sea surface. In her lifelong work, she touched upon fundamental issues related both to creation itself and to the process of knowledge.

“Jitka Svobodová's drawings are events, they are independent occurrences taking place in space and time; they require a great deal of attention from the viewer. They seemingly emerge from the existing world, which they come to disrupt, thus challenging our ability to see.”

Helena Musilová

Jitka Svobodová works in series or thematic cycles in which she consistently reflects on the relationship between detail and whole, spatiality and flatness, appearance and

disappearance. The artist uses minimal means of expression, and the resulting drawings have a calm, sparing feel, although their drawing gesture itself has a strong inner dynamic. Her art of drawing finds a variant in spatial realizations, in spatial drawings – in wire objects accentuating the relation of the thing to the surrounding space. These spatial drawings are also an important contribution in the context of the international art scene.

Jitka Svobodová's lifelong work is remarkably compact. Therefore, this exhibition is not based on a classical chronological line, but rather suggests certain themes and sets of thought in which older works are intertwined with newer ones. Five main chapters, with five main themes, are introduced in the main exhibition halls: *Space and Connection*, where different possibilities of representing spatial relationships are shown; the *Essence of the Object* section presents a selection of large-scale series in which Svobodová deals with simple objects such as cups, chairs, tables, removing them from their natural environment and examining them from various new angles. The chapters *Phenomena and Movement* and *Energy and Light* suggest that an important component of Jitka Svobodová's work is processuality and, more generally speaking, the depiction of changing states and phenomena, including the ability to portray a pure concentration of light. The chapter *Trees*, located in the entrance corridor, highlights a theme that Jitka Svobodová has continuously returned to, also giving an overview of the transformation and interconnectedness of her whole work over time.

These five chapters develop ten "case studies" in booths, delving in more detail into certain themes (dwelling, landscape, etc.) or recalling important events, such as the author's participation in the Chmelnice symposium in Mutějovice in 1983.

Despite its seeming fragility, Jitka Svobodová's work is full of vibrant emotions and inner energy. It refers us to philosophical questions about the nature of existence, unity, of the whole, and of the relationship between man and the world, the universe.

Jitka Svobodová graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (1961–1967 Monumental Painting Studio, 1973–1976 Restoration Studio). She worked as a freelance restorer and artist. In 1991, after the Velvet Revolution, she was appointed professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague where she led the Drawing Studio until 2012. Her work has been presented at numerous solo exhibitions in Czech Republic and abroad, she also participated in many collective exhibitions. Her art is represented in important public and private collections.

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Entrance fee: CZK 150 full (adults) / CZK 60 discounted (students) / CZK 20 seniors

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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 at seven venues: 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 PROGRAMME

Thu 27 Apr 2023, 6 pm, **guided tour with curator Helena Musilová**

Thu 18 May 2023, 6 pm, **Martin Nitsche: *Jitka Svobodová and Phenomenology***

This lecture will approach Jitka Svobodová's work from the angle of phenomenological philosophy, highlighting two aspects: the stimuli that the artist retained from reading phenomenologists (mainly from Heidegger), but also (and above all) what inspirational impulses phenomenology can gain from the reception of Svobodová's work. Particular attention will be paid to the following themes: the thing, the phenomenology of the environment, and the relation between the inner and the outer.

Tue 23 May 2023, 6 pm

A danced dialogue between visual artist Jitka Svobodová's exhibited works and dancer Tereza Ondrová

In cooperation with the Tanec Praha festival and the Prague City Gallery, Tereza Ondrová has taken part in the research project Dancing Museums (2018-2021), which supports long-term collaborations between dance organizations, museums or galleries and the public, or local communities, striving to develop inspiring and long-term artistic and cultural programs.

Sat 17 Jun 2023, 10.30am

Philosophy for Kids

This philosophy workshop for children ages 8-15 emphasizes the skill of reflecting on and interpreting a work of art through philosophical dialogue.

Philosophy for Kids focuses on critical thinking, creative thinking, and collaborative exploration. It is based on a process where participants move forward to find answers. As a result, the children's cognitive abilities are improved, their emotional intelligence is developed, as well as their ability to listen to others, formulate questions, their reasoning skills, and their abstract thinking.

Capacity: 15 children

Price: 50 CZK / tickets via GoOut

Thu 22 June 2023, 6 pm, **Guided tour with art historian, curator and educator Iva Mladičová**

Thu 24 Aug 2023, 6 pm, **Guided tour with curator Helena Musilová**

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Saturday art workshops

Sat 5/20/2023, 1–6 pm

Possibilities and dimensions of drawing in space

Municipal Library of Prague, 2nd floor

Sat 17 Jun 2023, 1–6 pm

Metamorphosis, dynamic and energy of drawing in motion

Education Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Art workshops for adults and seniors / integration and intergenerational programs

Thu 13 Jul 2023, 11 am – 2 pm

Drawing everyday life objects I

Education Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 20 Jul 2023, 3–6 pm

Captures through Painting II

Educational Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 13 Jul 2023, 3–6 pm

Drawing everyday life objects II

Education Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sun 23 July 2023, 11 am – 2 pm

Captures through Painting III

Educational Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sun 16 July 2023, 11 am – 2 pm

Drawing everyday life objects III

Educational Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sun 23 July 2023, 3–6 pm

Captures through Painting IV

Educational Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sun 16 July 2023, 3–6 pm

Drawing everyday life objects IV

Education Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 3 Aug 2023, 11 am – 2 pm

Sculptures and Reliefs I

Education Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 20 Jul 2023, 11 am – 2 pm

Captures through Painting I

Education Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Thu 3 Aug 2023, 3–6 pm

Sculptures and Reliefs II

Educational Centre

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

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Sun 6 Aug 2023, 11 am – 2 pm
Sculptures and Reliefs III
Educational Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Sun 6 Aug 2023, 3 – 6 pm
Sculptures and Reliefs IV
Educational Centre
Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace

Interactive tours of the exhibition for all types of schools and other age and interest groups with the possibility of a subsequent artistic response in the form of the participants' own creation. The events are adapted in terms of time, theme and level of difficulty to the specific requirements of each school.

Reservations required: edukace@ghmp.cz



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