

## A photographer who transcended genres. A retrospective of Pavel Jasanský at GHMP Dům fotografie presents various aspects of his rich artistic oeuvre.

Press release, the 5th of May 2025, Prague – Prague City Gallery (GHMP) has prepared the first extensive retrospective of photographer, graphic designer and artist Pavel Jasanský. From 6 May to 31 August, GHMP Dům fotografie will offer a comprehensive view of his rich and multifaceted life's work, which innovatively spanned photography, painting, sculpture and video. Jasanský is best known for his photographic and design collaborations for numerous records, posters and multimedia productions. However, the exhibition—and the extensive monograph prepared by curator Pavel Vančát—focus primarily on his non-commissioned documentary and multimedia work.

The artistic career of Pavel Jasanský (1938–2021), who held a degree in geology, began in the bohemian milieu of the 1960s, when he photographed emerging musicians and also produced photographs for the Viola poetic wine bar and graphic designs for the *Divoké víno* magazine. From the late 1960s, he collaborated on photographs and designs for numerous LP records, posters and exhibition productions, but in the 1980s, Jasanský turned away from all this and established himself as one of the key figures in Czech photography. His creative courage ranked him among the pioneers of "intermedia" art.

*"From being a worker in the world of magazines, gramophone records and exhibitions, he elevated himself to become a truly supreme creator of images that paradoxically, yet logically, deny their own existence, whether in the broad genre of negative painterly gestures or, in the case of his key cycle New Landscape, New Inhabitants, through the complete detachment of the works from their creators and audience. Jasanský's world, presented as an endless, purposeless and overwhelming maze of self-serving images, which we ourselves can explore with interest, reflection, and amusement, is still completely relevant today,"* states curator Pavel Vančát.

Jasanský's pivotal work, the **New Landscape, New Inhabitants series (1985–1990)**, shows, in a general sense, the feelings of a sensitive individual at the peak of the modern age, overwhelmed by visual information. At the end of the first decade of capitalism, Jasanský embarked on the *Botič* series (1998–2001). On the threshold of the digital age, he surprisingly chose a large panoramic format of black-and-white negatives to create visual memories of the places of his childhood, where he had taken his first photographs and which were transformed under two different political regimes.

The exhibition at GHMP Dům fotografie will also feature the **Paristory series (1967–1976)** from his trips to Paris, which earned Jasanský artistic recognition and showed him to be a photographer of exceptional empathy and insight. He applied these same qualities in his depictions of the emotionally charged microcosms of institutions, hospitals and cemeteries.

The final chapter of Jasanský's work is a project entitled **Signed Photos (1965–2015)**. In this comprehensive album, he collected signed portraits of his relatives, friends, colleagues and

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international celebrities, taken from the 1960s to the turn of the millennium. It is a chronicle of the artist's own life, embodied in the lives of others.

**The counterpart of Jasanský's documentary work is his multimedia work.** This began with his collaboration on the **Most project (1981–1982)**, which consisted of sculptural and environmental interventions in the demolished historic centre of the city, which was forced to make way for relentless coal mining. The culmination of his intermedia efforts is arguably the first "video sculpture" in what is the Czech Republic today. The enormous installation **The Viewer (1989)** combines existentially conceived photo canvases with added paintings in ink and a sculpture of a seated figure with a television screen for a head. To this day, it remains an impressive image of the abrasive media subconscious of the late 1980s.

**The exhibition will also feature examples of the artistic experiments** that Pavel Jasanský began in the late 1970s: **Heads and Imprints** and the **Bodies** project, created in collaboration with dancers Eva Černá and Karel Vaněk.

Pavel Jasanský's work reflects his struggle with time and with the era in which he lived, which he approached with subtlety and irony. *"On behalf of the entire family, I am delighted that the exhibition at GHMP Dům fotografie crowns almost two years of work organising my father's rich archive. Last autumn, we presented a selection of his promotional work at the Dobeška Theatre, and a few days ago, we opened an exhibition of his photographs of artists at the Fine Art Archive in DOX. In doing so, we are fulfilling the promise we made to him while he was still alive. I think "the old man" would be very happy about all this,"* says **Lukáš Jasanský**.

**Helena Musilová, chief curator of GHMP, adds:** *"Pavel Jasanský is one of those artists who managed to push the boundaries of photography towards intermedia experiments and visual thinking. His work is inspiring today precisely because of the freedom and insight with which he connected various forms of visual expression. His work remains surprisingly relevant today—with its humour, visual thoughtfulness and scepticism toward media overload. Jasanský's work appeals to different generations and offers a new way of reading, not only in the context of the history of photography but also of visual culture in general. The exhibition continues the long-standing profile of GHMP, which gives space to complex personalities of Czech art who often worked outside the mainstream but had a fundamental influence on its development."*

*"Pavel Jasanský's work is not only an intersection of media, but also a living dialogue with the changes in society. His ability to capture the tension between personal memory and collective experience shows how art can be both a chronicle and a critic of its time. Prague is the ideal place for a retrospective of such a visionary whose work transcends generations and forces us to ask what it means to be authentic today,"* says Prague's Deputy Mayor for Culture, Tourism, Heritage, National Minorities, Exhibitions Sector, and Animal Welfare **JUDr. Jiří Pospíšil**.

Visitors can also learn about Jasanský's work thanks to an extensive monograph entitled **Pavel Jasanský (1938–2021)**, written by the exhibition's curator, Pavel Vančát. Published last year by the



**Prague City Gallery** is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, focusing its exhibition activities mainly on modern and contemporary art. It collects, preserves and professionally processes the art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the GHMP exhibits in seven buildings: GHMP Zvon, GHMP Knihovna, GHMP Coloredo-Mansfeld, GHMP Dům fotografie, GHMP Bílkova vila, GHMP Zámek Troja and GHMP Bílkův dům.

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Fine Art Archive in cooperation with GHMP, it provides readers with a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted and prolific oeuvre of this photographer, graphic designer and artist. The exhibition itself will be on until 31.

August at GHMP Dům fotografie and will be accompanied by programmes and guided tours.

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## **GHMP Dům fotografie**

Revoluční 1006/5, 110 00 Prague 1 – Old Town  
The building has wheelchair access.

## **Open**

Tue–Wed 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Thu 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Fri–Sun 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

For up-to-date information on accompanying programmes, guided tours and educational activities, please visit: [www.ghmp.cz/vystavy/pavel-jasansky/](http://www.ghmp.cz/vystavy/pavel-jasansky/).

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