

The Olomouc Museum of Art Presents Czech Photography in Sweden

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A set of over 200 works by leading Czech photographers will be presented by the Olomouc Museum of Art in Landskrona, Sweden, from 2 July to 6 September 2015. This is the first comprehensive exhibition of Czech photography in Scandinavia, and includes not only the works of classics such as Drtikol, Funke, and Sudek, but also contemporary photographers. The exhibition organized in collaboration with Vladimír Birgus, a historian of photography. The museum in Landskrona will publish a 274 pages catalogue to accompany the exhibition.

According to Štěpánka Bielešová of the Olomouc Museum of Art, the exhibition, entitled *View Czech Republic* and held under the auspices of Alena Schagen, Director of the Czech Centre in Stockholm, is a breakthrough. "It appears that we have succeeded in preparing the first large exhibition of Czech photography in Sweden and it will present a selection of the most important and famous Czech photographers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries," says Bielešová.

The works to be exhibited are from the Olomouc Museum of Art, the third largest public collection of photographs in the Czech Republic, and from private collections and also directly from contemporary photographers. According to Bielešová, the selection provides clear evidence of the high quality of Czech photographic art: "The concept of the exhibition evolved gradually in co-operation with the curator Björn Andersson. He was thrilled when he first saw the broader selection for the exhibition in Olomouc, containing works by names such as František Drtikol, Josef Sudek, Jan Saudek, and Emila Medková."

The exhibition is divided into seven sections. The collection of avant-garde photography was prepared by Birgus, who also prepared a selection of contemporary works. Birgus is also the curator of a smaller exhibition of works by Dita Pepe. Bielešová is the curator of the part concerning Czech photography ranging from the 1940s to the 1970s, and she has also selected a set of experimental works from the 1960s by photographers in the DOFO group. With Birgus and Andersson, she has chosen works for separate exhibitions of Jindřich Štreit and Viktor Kolář. "Their photos document the state of society and the social decline of Czech villages and towns during the waning totalitarianism of the 1980s, is otherwise difficult to explain," adds Birgus.

For several years now, the museum in Landskrona has been intensively involved in building a centre of European photography. Besides their collecting activities, which are aimed predominantly at assembling works of Swedish photography, the museum organizes large international exhibitions. *View Czech Republic* is the pilot project of the second year of the photographic festival of European photography, called Landskrona FOTO, and it will begin on 20 August. Last year, the festival, initiated and run by Göran Nyström, the former head of the arts and culture department

at Landskrona City Hall, presented, for example, Nan Goldin's retrospective or Turkish photography from the twentieth century to the present. "Czech photography, not only the avant-garde, has a good reputation worldwide. We are glad that we can exhibit such an extensive collection of famous photographers in Sweden. I believe that it will be attractive and inspirational for visitors," says Nyström, summing up the potential of the exhibition. Next year they are expecting to organize a similarly representative exhibition of Japanese and Irish photography.

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