

# The Triennial of Contemporary Central European Art

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exhibition | The SEFO 2021 Triennial of Contemporary Central European Art

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The Triennial of Contemporary Central European Art is the product of a long-term effort of the Olomouc Museum of Art. It is part of the Central European Forum Olomouc (SEFO) programme and complements the range of activities dedicated to this geographically and semantically unstable region. The triennial is thematically focused, community-oriented and open to partners, including the Palacký University, the Academia Film Olomouc, the Flora Olomouc Theater and the Olomouc Ecological Days, respectively the Ludwig Museum and Kassák Museum in Budapest, the East Slovak Gallery in Košice, the Kunstmuseum Lentos in Linz and the International Cultural Centre in Krakow.

The SEFO 2021 Triennial of Contemporary Central European Art is named *Universum*. This project is based on the long-term efforts of the Olomouc Museum of Art to embrace the Central European idea not only in the past but also in the present. Does Central Europe even still exist? Didn't it break apart definitively in 1989? Has it been reduced to political caricature today? Or, on the contrary, is it an escape into the utopias of childhood or homeland? While the Triennial naturally cannot answer these questions, it can at least ask them.

One of the most typical manifestations of efforts to create a concept of the world, to know it and understand it, to encompass it, is a museum – a collecting institution that expresses the community's belief that it knows how things are and how they relate to each other. An

art museum, of course, is a more complicated case, but it shares the same principle, at least to some extent. At a time of heightening criticism of institutions, we decided to dedicate the Triennial to the museum. The 2021 Triennial is focused on an exploration of the world and the ways in which we relate to it. Art is understood as an expression of the efforts of the mind, while paper, the primary artistic medium, is perceived as a means of deliberation, the carrier of the idea. The Triennial is interested in the issue of the system, which can generally be understood in two ways – as an ideal order that we discover, that we imitate and learn in an aesthetic way, or as an artificially formed construct which, often out of convenience, we call the truth. The fact is that we each design our own universe, but few of us can and want to share them. The museum does the same, only on a larger scale and with an objectifying aspiration. However, it is not the Triennial's ambition to change the world, but simply to pay attention to it. Its mission is not to be engaged, but stimulating. It does not understand art as autonomous or, on the contrary, servile, but as capable of creating the world. And paper is the best metaphor for that.

Due to the circumstances, the triennial program is significantly adapted. One of the key changes is its spreading to the whole of 2021, with overlaps in 2020 and 2022. The path of smaller but targeted events is chosen, respectively the remote ones, in which foreign partners are involved. The triennial is also associated with new research projects of the institution, workshops and conferences. The current situation really serves as a starting point for us to think about the possibilities of a public cultural institution in the post-pandemic period, in a world that is undergoing intensive reconstruction.

More informations: [www.trienalesefo.cz/en](http://www.trienalesefo.cz/en).

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