

# Czech Photography 1840–1950

## A Story of a Modern Medium

Press release

## Czech Photography 1840–1950 A Story of a Modern Medium

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**Robert Koch Gallery, San Francisco**

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**The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection**

**Jan Lukas**

**Marie Šechtlová**

**Ing. arch. B. Štorch**

and all those who did not wish to be mentioned

Galerie Rudolfinum would like to express its special thanks  
to the publisher of the publication accompanying this  
exhibition, **KANT Publishers**.

## Czech Photography 1840–1950 A Story of a Modern Medium

The first comprehensive publications and photographic  
exhibitions, for example, *100 Years of Czech Photography*  
in Prague in 1939, focused on technical issues. This  
approach was gradually replaced by the presentation of  
photography as an art form, which has flourished during  
the last thirty years in the boom of publications, exhibitions,  
museum collections, and university education.

The current information revolution, however, has created  
the need to view photography from a different perspective,  
as the media have become the dominant force of  
today's world. With photography, as Prague native Vilém  
Flusser noted, technical images have become the basis for  
mass-media communication. Modern society is inconceivable  
without the mass distribution of images, and thus the  
beginnings of many current phenomena – from the cult of  
celebrity and images of daily events to pornography – are  
closely associated with the workings of the photographic  
medium.

In this view, photography is an integral part of art as well as  
of science and technology, entertainment, politics,  
commerce and also private life. The twenty-one sections of  
this exhibition explore the beginnings of these long-term  
trends and their reflections in photographic endeavor, while  
placing select works into a broader cultural context by  
means of the accompanying material.

Rather than to present an overview of the history of  
photography in Bohemia and Moravia, the exhibition seeks  
to bring to life the diverse uses of the photographic medium  
with respect to their current significance. The story of the  
photographic medium brings together many fields, traditions  
and trends – all kinds of stories, together creating a rich  
network of relationships and contexts, which inform our life.

*Jaroslav Anděl*

The exhibition is accompanied by the publication of  
*Photography: The Stories of a Modern Medium in Bohemia  
and Moravia, 1840–1950* by KANT Publishers

## Exhibition Curator Jaroslav Anděl

Received M.A. in Art History from Charles University (1972), M.F.A. in Photography from the Film and Television Faculty of the Academy of the Performing Arts in Prague, and Ph.D. in Art History from Charles University in Prague.

Since 1982 has lived in New York and worked as an independent curator and consultant, educator, and author of numerous publications on visual arts. The subject matter of his publications ranges from painting and architecture to graphic design, artists' books, photography, film and new media. In 1990 was a Fulbright Scholar for Czechoslovakia, initiated and co-organized an international lecture series on nationalism in Central Europe for the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences' Institute of Sociology. Was Visiting Associate Professor at Columbia University in 1993–1994. In 1994 lectured at the School of Arts in Canberra, Australia. Has lectured in the U.S.A., France, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia and organized an international conference on the archeology of new media in Prague in 2002. From 1996 to 1998 was the director of the National Gallery's Museum of Modern Art in Prague. Has organized numerous shows, including the first exhibition of Czech modern art in English-speaking countries, *Czech Modernism 1900–1945*, which toured the U.S. in 1989–1990 (The Museum of Fine Art in Houston, the Brooklyn Museum, the International Center of Photography, the Anthology Film Archives in New York, 1989–1990). Organized the first comprehensive exhibition on The Artistic Avant-Garde in Czechoslovakia 1918–1838, IVAM, Valencia, Spain, in 1993, and the first exhibition of Czech modern art in France was the subject *Prague 1900–1938: Capitale secrete des avant-gardes for the Musée des Beaux-Arts*, Dijon, France (with Emmanuel Starcky). Co-organized a traveling exhibition *Painting the Universe: František Kupka, Pioneer in Abstraction*, the Dallas Museum of Art, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, the National Gallery in Prague in 1997–1998 (with Dorothy Kosinski). Was the curator of *The Avant-Garde Book 1900–1945*, Franklin Furnace, New York in 1989, which was the first historical survey of avant-garde books. He is the author and editor of numerous publications on 20<sup>th</sup> century art, including *Sovětská filmová fotografie* (The Soviet Cinematography of the 1920s), *Through the Eyes of Arcimboldo*; *Josef Sudek o sobě* (Conversations with Josef Sudek), *Avant-Garde Page Design 1900–1950*, and the forthcoming *The New Vision for the New Architecture and Photography in the Czech Lands: A Story of a Modern Medium 1840–1950*

In the 1970s several solo exhibitions of his photographs were held, and he participated in numerous group exhibitions of photo-based and conceptual art in the U.S.A., Germany, Holland, Japan, Poland, and Yugoslavia, including one of the most representative shows on art and photography titled *Photography as Art, Art as Photography* in Kassel, Germany in 1977. He also organized a couple of

exhibitions of Czech body and conceptual art in Poland and Yugoslavia between 1979 and 1981.

### Books

- Fotografie: Příběhy moderního média v Čechách a na Moravě, 1840–1950*. Prague: Kant, 2004.
- Avant-Garde Page Design 1900–1950*. New York: Delano Greenidge, 2002.
- Josef Váchal, The Eroticists*. Editor, author of the accompanying text and biographical notes. Prague: Paseka, 2001
- Josef Sudek o sobě*. Recorded and prepared for publication. Prague: Torst, 2001.
- Alexandr Hackenschmied*. Prague: Torst, 2000.
- Painting the Universe: František Kupka: Pioneer of Abstraction*. Editor (with Dorothy Kosinski), author of the introductory study. Stuttgart, Dallas, Wolfsburg, Prague: Hatje Verlag, Dallas Museum of Art, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, National Gallery in Prague, 1997.
- Prague 1900–1938: Capitale secrete des avant-gardes*. Editor (with Emmanuelem Starcky), author of the introductory study. Dijon: Musée des beaux-arts, 1997.
- Očima Arcimboldovými*. Prague: National Gallery in Prague, 1997.
- Reconstructing the Original: Czech Abstractions 1922–1935*. Portfolio. Editor and author of the introductory study. New York: AV Editions, 1994.
- Umění pro všechny smysly: Meziválečná avantgarda v Československu*. Editor and author of the introductory studies. Prague: National Gallery, 1993.
- The Art of the Avant-Garde in Czechoslovakia 1918–1938*. Editor and author of the introductory studies. Valencia: IVAM, Centre Julio Gonzalez, 1993.
- Czech Modernism 1900–1945*. Editor (with Anne W. Tucker) and author of the introductory studies. Houston and Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Bulfinch Press, 1990.
- The Avant-Garde Book 1900–1945*. New York: Franklin Furnace, 1989.
- Češka filmska teorija 1918–1937*. Belgrade: Filmske Sveske, 1983.
- Sovětská filmová fotografie dvacátých let*. Prague: Odeon, 1979.
- Vybrané kapitoly z dějin fotografie*. Prague: ÚKVČ, 1978.

### Forthcoming

- The New Vision for the New Architecture*. Prague: Slovart.
- Avantgarda o mnoha médiích: Josef Bartuška a skupina Linie 1930–1939*. Prague: Municipal House.

## Accompanying Programmes – Appendix

### Film Fridays

#### Screening of documentary films at the NFA cinema

##### **Konvikt/Ponrepo**

Bartolomějská 11 , 110 00 Praha 1

**6|2, 13|2** – always at 20:00

**20|2, 27|2, 5|3, 12|3** – always at 17:30

single ticket 40 CZK

#### **Travelogues – 6|2 20:00**

##### **Aloha-Oe**

Produced by Vladimír Krajina, 1930

Directed by Vladimír Krajina

b&w, 2037 m (72 min.), silent version

Film documentary of a journey around the world.

#### **War documentaries + Propaganda – 13|2 20:00**

##### **The Wheels Of History**

1945

Directed by Miloš Cettl

b&w, 1890 m, Czech version, German subtitles.

A propagandistic film from the time of the Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, based on edited shots from film newsreel of the period.

##### **Beauty And Power**

Produced by Unionfilm, 1940

b&w, 387 m, Czech version, German subtitles.

Directed by František Rejlek

Promotion of physical culture in German vein (Leni Riefenstahl, a prominent filmmaker of the Nazi propaganda, shot her films in a somewhat similar way, but with more sophistication and skill.)

Total length: 2277 m (77 min.)

#### **Avant-garde + Abstraction – 20|2 17:30**

##### **Just A Walk**

Produced by Ladislav Kolda, 1930

Directed by Alexander Hackenschmied

b&w, 219 m, silent version

Film essay on the moods and views of a city suburb with a lonesome man strolling about aimlessly.

##### **Light Penetrates The Dark**

Produced by Legiafilm Brno, 1930

Directed by Otakar Vávra

b&w, 113 m, silent version, Czech captions

Abstract composition inspired by a light sculpture created by the architect Zdeněk Pešánek.

##### **At The Prague Castle**

Produced by Ladislav Kolda, 1931

Directed by Alexander Hackenschmied

b&w, 324 m, sound film version without dialogues

Film sketch of the Prague Castle and its most outstanding landmark – the St Vitus Cathedral. The effect of the pictorial form of the film is enhanced by the music of František Bartoš.

##### **We Live In Prague**

Produced by AB, 1934

Directed by Otakar Vávra

b&w, 362 m, sound film version without dialogues

Film essay from the streets of Prague.

##### **November**

Produced by Lloyd, 1935

Directed by Otakar Vávra

b&w, 520 m, Czech version

Two lovers, after a couple of years, meet by chance again.

##### **Hands On Tuesday**

Produced by Čeněk Zahradníček, 1935

Directed by Čeněk Zahradníček

b&w, 300 m, silent version, Czech captions

The motions of the hands symbolize the course of everyday.

##### **The Road Is Singing**

Produced by FAB Zlín, 1937

Directed by Elmar Klos

b&w, 101 m, Czech version

Film advertising for Bata tyres makes full use of special effects.

##### **Magic Eye**

Produced by AB, 1939

Directed by Jiří Lehovec

b&w., 275 m, Czech version

The most common things around us seen in an unusual way – through the eye of the film camera.

##### **Rhythm**

Produced by FAB Zlín, 1941

Directed by Jiří Lehovec

b&w, 375 m, Czech version

Experimental film. An attempt at visual representation of music.

Total length: 2589 m (88 min.)

## **Photography – 2712 17:30**

### **Eternalized Seconds**

Produced by Jiří Lehovec, 1945  
Directed by Bohumil Vošahlík  
b&w, 75 m, sound film version without dialogues  
Advertising of photographic equipment and materials  
Neobrom Brno.

### **The Story Of The Czechoslovak Photography**

Produced by KF Praha, 1989  
Directed by Josef Harvan  
col., 1211 m, Czech version  
Film documentary about the history of Czechoslovak photography.

### **Reporter**

Produced by ČAF, 1963  
Directed by Pavel Háša  
b&w, 667 m, Czech version  
A portrait of the photographer Karel Hájek

### **Living One's Own Life**

Produced by KF Praha, 1963  
Directed by Evald Schorm  
b&w, 355 m, Czech version  
A portrait of the photographer Josef Sudek.

Total length: 2308 m (79 min.)

## **Technology, Industry, Scientific Film – 513 17:30**

### **Electrofarm At The Exhibition Of Contemporary Culture In Brno**

Produced by Elekta-journal, 1928  
Directed by Jan S. Kolár  
b&w, 479 m, silent version, Czech captions  
Film documentary from an exhibition showing the possibilities of effective use of energy in agricultural production and household.

### **From The Ten Commandments Of The Modern Car Driver**

Produced by Elekta-journal, 1930  
b&w, 225 m, silent version, Czech captions  
Promotional film showing the technical advantages of Praga Piccolo automobile.

### **Glassmaking Industry**

Produced by PK Praha, 1925  
Directed by Julius Prokůpek  
b&w, 330 m, silent version, Czech captions  
Production technology of blown, pressed, and cast glass.

### **The Motion Of Plants At Germination And Growth Accelerated By Film**

Produced by Masarykův lidovýchovní ústav, 1925  
b&w, 144 m, silent version, Czech and Latin captions  
Shots of growth and germination of plants, collected over time. A scientific film.

### **Motion – A Sign Of Life**

Produced by Masarykův lidovýchovní ústav, 1927  
b&w, 310 m, silent version, Czech captions  
Motion of living organisms – from unicellular to human.

### **The Production Of Paper And Newspaper**

Produced by AB, 1925  
b&w, 936 m, silent version, Czech captions  
The technology of paper production in Česká Kamenice and Melantrich printing house in Prague.

### **Carbide**

Produced by FAB Zlín, 1942  
Directed by František Gürtler  
b&w, 316 m, Czech version, German subtitles  
The production and industrial use of carbide.

Total length: 2424 m (83 min.)

## **Ethnographic Film – 1213 17:30**

The Song Of Ruthenia  
Produced by AB, 1937  
Directed by Jiří Weiss  
b&w, 306 m, Czech version, German subtitles  
Balladic film documentary about the life in Ruthenia.

### **Valašsko**

Produced by Unionfilm, 1937  
Directed by Adolf Lehner  
b&w, 332 m, sound version without dialogues, Czech captions  
Life, trades and folk dances in the Valašsko region.

### **Easter At Slovácko**

Produced by Josef Koza, 1937  
Directed by Josef Koza  
b&w, 165 m, sound version without dialogues, Czech captions  
Folk traditions of celebrating Easter at Slovácko region in Moravia

### **The Land Is Singing**

Produced by Matica slovenská/Ladislav Kolda, 1933  
Directed by Karel Plicka  
b&w, 1815 m, sound version without dialogues, Slovak captions  
Pictorial and musical symphony presenting folk art, traditions and culture in Slovakia.

Total length 2618 m (90 min.)

## Exhibition tickets

**Full ticket** **100 Kč**

**Reduced** **50 Kč**

senior citizens

students

handicapped (ZTP card holders)

**Free**

children under 15

handicapped with accompanying person

art school students

journalists

**Special offer** **180 Kč**

Multiple entry ticket (maximum 3 entries)

**Accompanying programs free**

**Reduced tickets also apply to**

AICA, ICOM, ICOMOS card holders

GO25, ISIC, ITIC card holders

RAS/ART club members (for information please see  
at [www.rasart.cz](http://www.rasart.cz))

Box office open daily except Monday from 10:00 to 17:30  
(for information please call 227 059 309)