

Admission

Regular admission 120 CZK

Discounted admission 60 CZK: Seniors, students,
ZTP card holders, journalists

Free admission: Children under 15 years of age, handicapped with
their attendant, holders of the ICOM card

Other discounts for Members of the club Open Dialogue (Otevřený Dialog)

Information (about the club): email: pliska@rudolfinum.org

Open daily except Monday from 10 am to 6 pm.

Barrier-free access to the building

Galerie Rudolfinum

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www.galerierudolfinum.cz

www.helnwein.com

Main partner

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GALERIE RUDOLFINUM

12/6 – 31/8 2008

ALŠOVO NÁBŘEŽÍ 12, PRAHA 1
WWW.GALERIERUDOLFINUM.CZ

**GOTTFRIED
HELNWEIN
ANGELS
SLEEPING**

GOTTFRIED HELNWEIN

ANGELS SLEEPING

12/6 – 31/8 2008

The exhibition *Angels Sleeping* is a thematic cross-section, predominantly of the painting work of the Austrian artist Gottfried Helnwein (born in Vienna in 1948). The five sections of the exhibition present the fundamental circuits of Helnwein's work. The introduction comprises heads – faces, including the artist's iconic self-portrait, painfully acute metaphors of the limits on freedom of expression in Austria in the 1970s and 80s. The artist's merciless approach to the residues of the Nazi past of his country is a further theme, developed in monochrome, hyperrealistic painting. The central and still extremely relevant theme of Helnwein's work however is *das malträtierte Kind*, the child exposed to suffering. The author engages with this theme in various positions from his early works from the 1970s up to the present day. His collection of works on this theme is given the largest space. Violence committed against children, in contrast with their passive exposure, distressed astonishment and impossibility of defending themselves against the world of adults is partially shifted into a further position, ironically entitled Art in Amerika. This presents the relationships of the white, frequently uniformed "majority" to other ethnic groups and minorities, particularly in the United States, sharpened by the photographic precision of the images. The final chapter, presenting metaphorical portraits of the punk singer Marilyn Manson, oscillating from the black and white tones of Mickey Mouse and paraphrased gestures of saints to demonic masks, flexibly documents the dark side of humanity on the face of the media star in large format photographs.

From the exhibition catalogue Gottfried Helnwein-Angels Sleeping

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The degree of authenticity, or rather the ability to evoke a feeling of authenticity of an event, communicated in addition with a considerable urgency given by the precision of the representation, thus a high degree of imitation of reality, is one of the main means of expression used by Helnwein in all his media. The second means used for the construction of a new reality, which is almost always directed towards a strengthening of the effect of the displayed image, is the selection and care dedicated to each historically authentic detail, which intensifies the result of the work.

In Helnwein this is an expression of a constructive and constitutive will to engage in serious social problems, a clear endeavour to create and depict urgent, even appealing, extremely strong pictorial messages, frequently directed beyond the framework of the world of visual art. His work has always been addressed to the ordinary man in the street, in which the intention is to disturb him out of his familiar and stereotypical thinking, to sensitise him and guide him in an alternative direction. In connection herewith it is necessary to note that since his very beginnings in the second half of the 1970s, Helnwein has also devoted himself to designing covers for various magazines, journals and publications. His title pages of magazines have reached a public numbering millions. He was always concerned primarily with reaching the public, in his own words *to constantly bring to everyday life, which is so normalised, disturbing elements, and to observe how people react*. The author did not hesitate to sacrifice the aura of exclusivity of artistic work, presented elsewhere only within the context of a specific gallery and museum environment, in favour of wider publicity. Transgressing the narrowly delineated and staunchly defended world of art, which is predominantly extremely subjective to the point of autism, is a project which assumes the importance almost of life and death for Helnwein, primarily for the reason of the necessity to communicate on a wider social basis. Resolving partial problems which ensue from artistic constructions of suppositional significance of the formal development of artistic expression and art in general is a vicious circle for Helnwein, within which it is not possible to communicate anything meaningful. Inanity echoing with emptiness holds no interest for him. The author is exceptional in that he intentionally stands outside of the core of the world of contemporary visual art. Helnwein feels the need to formulate sharply urgent questions of a social character on a general human level, to attempt to stimulate mental movement in the mind of the viewers through his images, rather than merely participating in the trends of the art markets. *It is not my image which people fear, but rather their own conceptions inside their heads. My work speaks openly about the fact that they already exist in the awareness of those who observe them.*

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Exhibition curator: Petr Nedoma