

# Josef Sudek: The Topography of Ruins

Prague witnessed several dramatic events during the final months before the capitulation of the Third Reich in May 1945. In February, the Czech capital suffered an air raid by Allied bombers. The planes had been headed for Dresden, but a navigational error caused them to drop their payload on Prague. Worst hit was the New Town. In May, the Prague Uprising erupted, and the fighting in the city's historical center transformed many buildings into rubble. The photographer Josef Sudek (1896–1976) recorded the tragic outcome of these events in the streets of his city.

Sudek's 1945 set of photographs "Ruined Prague," includes nearly four hundred negatives today held by the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Thanks to their renewed study and processing, we even managed to find several original positives scattered throughout various collections. The exhibition is the first time when a selection of these images has been presented in public. During his lifetime, Josef Sudek only used the photographs for various publications, creating prints at a maximum size of 18 × 24 cm. Besides positives made by Sudek himself, the exhibition also presents recent prints made from surviving negatives, most of which remain true to Sudek's chosen format for the images from this series. As a result, viewers are given the chance to see several unique and previously unknown photographs.

The exhibition also includes pictures by other photographers who recorded these important events at the end of the war in Prague.

We have sought out photographs that, like Sudek's, have remained hidden away in archives. Many of them have survived only as small-size prints without any indication of their author. With this exhibition, we aim to call attention to the exceptional nature and photographic quality of these images, which were previously appreciated only for their historical value and their ability to show us moments from a long-ago war.

1

**Zdenko Feyfar**  
**Josef Sudek (*During the Revolution*), 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

## The Calendar

After the end of the Second World War, Václav Poláček's Prague Publishers published the *1946 Prague Calendar* with the subtitle *Prague's Cultural Losses 1939–1945*. This weekly calendar, illustrated with 53 full-page reproductions of photographs by Josef Sudek with an accompanying text by art historian Zdeněk Wirth, was unfortunately printed at a less than satisfactory level of quality. Sudek's photographs, reproduced from 18 × 24 cm pre-press positives, are organized in the calendar without any immediately apparent chronological or thematic order. Besides several photographs from more extensive thematic groups of images – Emmaus Monastery, the metals scrapyards at Maniny,

or Old Town Square and Old Town Hall – the calendar also includes several photographs depicting wartime measures. These include protective walls built around the city's monuments to protect them against air raids, as well as the water reservoirs built in many public places around Prague for fire-fighting purposes.

2

**Josef Sudek**  
**"Oriental window of chapel on Old Town Hall, damaged during the fighting of 5–8 May 1945," 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

NOTE: The photographs from several archival collections are subject to strict requirements for their protection. The items from the Prague City Archives can be only exhibited for a maximum period of six weeks. For this reason, over the course of the exhibition several photographs will be replaced by new images that photographer Vlado Bohdan created in the darkroom using Sudek's original negatives. Prior to producing these new prints, Bohdan carefully studied Sudek's positives (if they existed) in order to try to come as close as possible to the originals. To a certain extent, however, his new prints are always a personal interpretation of the negative. One source of differences is the use of different materials (paper, chemicals) than the kind available during Sudek's lifetime.

3

**Josef Sudek**  
**"Water reservoir by the Jan Hus monument on Old Town Square," 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

4

**Josef Sudek**  
**"Houses on Old Town Square belonging to S. Hainz and F. Kynzl damaged during the fighting of 5–8 May 1945," 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

5

**Josef Sudek**  
**"House on Old Town Square belonging to S. Hainz damaged during the fighting of 5–8 May 1945. View of arcades," 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**6**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"Protective wall around tombs and the royal oratory at St. Vitus Cathedral," [1945]  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**7**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"Sculptures and carvings at St. Vitus Cathedral placed in storage in case of air raid," [1945]  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**8**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"Ball Games Hall at Prague Castle, burnt out from the fighting of 5–8 May 1945," 1945  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**9**  
**František Illek and Alexandr Paul**  
"Interior of the Ball Games Hall after the roof truss caught fire on 9 May 1945," 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Archives of Prague Castle

**10**  
**František Illek and Alexandr Paul**  
"Interior of the Ball Games Hall after the roof truss caught fire on 9 May 1945," 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Archives of Prague Castle

**11**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"Water reservoir on Hradčany Square," 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**12**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"J. V. Myslbek's sculptures of *Lumír*, and *Přemysl with Libuše* at the east end of Palacký Bridge, destroyed in the air raid of 14 February 1945," 1945  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**13**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"J. V. Myslbek's sculpture of *Přemysl and Libuše* making her prophesy at the east end of Palacký Bridge, destroyed in the air raid of 14 February 1945," 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Private collection in Prague

**14**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"Central part of former Jesuit College of St. Ignatius damaged in the air raid of 14 February 1945 and already partially rebuilt," 1945  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**15**  
**Stanislav Maršál**  
"Demolishing the central section of the former Jesuit College on Charles Square, 1945"  
gelatin silver print  
Military History Institute in Prague

**16**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"National Theatre painting studio at Větrov, burnt out during the air raid of 14 February 1945," 1945  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**17**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"Ruined interior of the National Theatre workshops at Větrov following the air raid of 14 February 1945, 1945"  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**18**  
**Stanislav Maršál**  
"Smoking ruins of the interior of the National Theatre workshops at Větrov following the air raid on 14 February 1945, 1945"  
gelatin silver print  
Military History Institute in Prague

**19**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"The Vinohrady Synagogue, damaged in the air raid of 14 February 1945," 1945  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**20**  
**Unknown author**  
"The burning synagogue in Vinohrady," 1945  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
Central Military Archives – Military History Archives Prague

**21**  
**Josef Sudek**  
"Moritz Gröbe's villa in the Havlíček Gardens, burnt out after the air raid of 14 February 1945," 1945  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**22**  
**Josef Sudek**  
“Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius of the Czechoslovak Orthodox Church (previously St. Charles Borromeo), damaged by gunfire on 18 June 1942 and the air raid on 14 February 1945,” 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**23**  
**Josef Sudek – Zdeněk Wirth**  
*1946 Prague Calendar. Prague's Cultural Losses 1939–1945*  
V. Poláček Prague Publishers, Prague, 1945  
original prints (2x)  
Library of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague  
Library of the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**24**  
**Josef Sudek's bills of sale 1944–1945**  
Page “4/VIII” [1945]  
“Receipt for Poláček Publishers / 62 photographs 18 x 24 for 1946 calendar (Ruined Prague)”  
Invoice booklet with Josef Sudek's signature  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, Documents from the Estate of Josef Sudek, donated by Božena Sudková

**25**  
**Josef Sudek – Zdeněk Wirth**  
*1946 Prague Calendar. Prague's Cultural Losses 1939–1945*  
V. Poláček Prague Publishers, Prague, 1945  
digital copy of original print  
Library of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

**26**  
*Zprávy Oficiny Babensis (Journal of Oficina Babensis) II, 1945–1946*  
no. 1 (20 November) 1945, no. 3 (5 April 1945)  
copies of original prints  
Private collection

NOTE: The mimeographed bulletin *Journal of Oficina Babensis* was written and published by the Prague publisher Václav Poláček. Named after his home in Prague's Baba neighborhood, it presented the latest news from his Prague publishers. The first issue of volume II included his notes on the publication of the *1946 Prague Calendar*. In the third issue of the same volume, Poláček presented an exaggerated interpretation of reader and bookseller feedback, including criticism of some of the calendar's shortcomings (poor print quality, unclear concept, etc.).

## Emmaus Monastery

The most tragic moment of the war for Prague and its inhabitants was the air raid by American bombers on 14 February 1945, when poor weather resulted in a navigational error that caused 62 heavy bombers headed for Dresden to drop their payloads on an unsuspecting Prague. The worst-hit buildings included the originally Gothic-style Na Slovanech monastery, otherwise known as

Emmaus. The monastery church's north tower was completely destroyed, the south tower suffered extensive fire damage, two thirds of the vaulted ceilings collapsed, and the monastery building – including the priceless murals in the cloister – was seriously damaged by fire. Unlike many other photographers, who documented the destruction of Emmaus immediately after the air raid, Josef Sudek apparently did not focus his camera on the destroyed landmark until later in May or in the second half of 1945, and did so in a more contemplative manner.

**27**  
**Josef Sudek's diary 1944–1945**  
Tuesday 13 February – Wednesday 14 February [1945]  
notebook with handwritten notes  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, Documents from the Estate of Josef Sudek, donated by Božena Sudková

**28**  
**Stanislav Maršál**  
**Emmaus Monastery and buildings in Prague 2 destroyed by the air raid of 14 February 1945, 1945**  
gelatin silver contact prints pasted on cardboard  
Military History Institute in Prague

**29**  
**Josef Sudek**  
“Western facade of the church and monastery at Emmaus destroyed in the air raid of 14 February 1945,” 1945  
gelatin silver prints (36x)  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (35x) and private collection in Prague (1x)

NOTE: Found among Josef Sudek's posthumous estate were two sets of photographs from Emmaus Monastery, always reproduced from the same negative. These images' format always corresponds to the size of a contact print made from the negative (13 x 18 cm). The number of copies points to their planned commercial use, although in all likelihood this plan was never realized and the photographs remained in Sudek's files. The images are not marked in any way on the rear. A detailed comparison of the copies reveals the individual character of each photograph, thus showing the amount of manual work involved in realizing photographic commissions.

**30**  
**Unknown author**  
**Emmaus burning, view from the north, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Czech Press Agency – The City of Prague Museum

**31**  
**Josef Sudek**  
“Church of Our Lady and Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian at Emmaus, damaged in the air raid of 14 February 1945. View from the north,” 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Private collection in Prague

**32**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus – view from the presbytery, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

- 33**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 “Church of Our Lady at Emmaus. Nave vaulting destroyed in the air raid of 14 February 1945. View of chancel,” 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Private collection in Prague
- 34**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus – view of nave from the west, 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Private collection in Prague
- 35**  
**Stanislav Maršál**  
 Smoking ruins of the interior of the monastery church at Emmaus following the air raid of 14 February 1945, 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Military History Institute in Prague
- 36**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus – view of southern aisle, 1945  
 new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
 Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences
- 37**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus – view of nave from the northwest, 1945  
 new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
 Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences
- 38**  
**Antonín Alexander**  
 Monastery church at Emmaus, view of pulpit and southern wall of church with frescoes, 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Prague City Archives
- NOTE: Photographer Antonín Alexander worked for the City of Prague Heritage Board, for which he systematically documented the city’s monuments up to 1945. His older negatives stored at the municipal archives at Old Town Hall were destroyed by fire during the Prague Uprising. Two other photographers – Jan Tuháček and Bohumil Končinský – produced photographic documentation for the State Institute of Photogrammetry. In 1945, all three documented Prague’s war-damaged buildings on 13 x 18 cm or 18 x 24 cm negatives. Their images were intended as visual records of the damage for heritage institutions.
- 39**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Monastery church at Emmaus – view of chancel windows, 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague
- 40**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 From the series *St. Vitus*, 1924–1928  
 gelatin silver print as postcard  
 Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague
- 41**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 “Staircase in the south tower of the Church of Our Lady at Emmaus, destroyed in the air raid of 14 February 1945,” 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Private collection in Prague
- 42**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus – view of nave from the southwest, 1945  
 new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
 Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

- 43**  
**Jan Tuháček – Bohumil Končinský**  
 “Prague 2, Emmaus, nave [of the church] and view from the west,” 1945  
 gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
 National Heritage Institute
- 44**  
**Jan Tuháček – Bohumil Končinský**  
 “Prague 2, Emmaus, interior, view from southern aisle across chancel onto eastern part of northern aisle,” 1945  
 gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
 National Heritage Institute
- 45**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Monastery church at Emmaus, view of nave from southern aisle, 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences
- 46**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Monastery church at Emmaus, view of southern aisle, 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences
- 47**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 “Church of Our Lady at Emmaus, damaged in the air raid of 14 February 1945. View of nave and aisles from the north,” 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Private collection in Prague
- 48**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 “Church of Our Lady at Emmaus, damaged in the air raid of 14 February 1945. View of chancel,” 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Private collection in Prague
- 49**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus – view of southern aisle from the west, 1945  
 new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
 Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences
- 50**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Interior of Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus – view of nave from the presbytery, 1945  
 gelatin silver prints (36x)  
 Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague
- 51**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Series of photographs of *Heads* published in *Blok, Magazine for Art II*, 1947, no. 6 (On Photography), p. 196  
 print  
 Private collection
- NOTE: In 1947, Sudek submitted a series of photographs of heads, which he intended as a self-contained set, to the new issue of *Blok* magazine. A recent survey of Sudek’s work performed in relation with this exhibition helped to identify the *Plaster Head* as the sculpture of a shepherd from the “Beroun Nativity Scene” at Emmaus monastery, which was in all likelihood damaged in the February 1945 air raid and which to this day is missing from the nativity scene erected every Christmas at the monastery.
- 52**  
**Josef Sudek**  
 Cloister at Emmaus Monastery, 1945  
 gelatin silver print  
 Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

**53**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Cloister at Emmaus Monastery, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**54**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Chapter hall at Emmaus Monastery, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**55**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Chapter hall at Emmaus Monastery, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**56**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**View of imperial chapel at Emmaus, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**57**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Sculpture of shepherd from the "Beroun Nativity Scene" damaged in the air raid at Emmaus Monastery, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**58**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Plaster Head (Sculpture of shepherd from the "Beroun Nativity Scene" damaged in the air raid at Emmaus Monastery), 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

**59**  
**Eugen Wiškovský**  
**Sculpture of shepherd from the "Beroun Nativity Scene" damaged in the air raid at Emmaus Monastery, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

**60**  
**Antonín Alexander**  
**The cloister garden at Emmaus Monastery, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives

**61**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**The cloister garden at Emmaus Monastery, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**62**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**The cloister garden at Emmaus Monastery, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**63**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Courtyard in front of Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

**64**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**"Chapel of Sts. Cosmas and Damien at Emmaus, damaged in the air raid of 14 February 1945," 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**65**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Northwest corner of the Monastery Church of Our Lady at Emmaus, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**66**  
**Eugen Wiškovský**  
**After the Air Raid, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

**67**  
**Jan Tuháček – Bohumil Končinský**  
**"Prague 2, Emmaus, arches between Church of Sts. Damian and Cosmas and the northwest corner of the north tower," 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
National Heritage Institute

**68**  
**Vilém Reichmann**  
**Arabesque (from the series Wounded City), 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

## The Metals Scrapyard at Maniny

A larger group of Sudek's images from 1945 are photographs of dismantled metal sculptures and bells kept at a scrapyard in Prague's Maniny neighborhood near Libeň Bridge. In 1942, Protectorate officials had begun gathering metal objects at the scrapyard that had been removed from their original locations as part of the requisition of non-ferrous metals for war purposes. During the war, boats would travel down the Vltava and Elbe to the metalworks of northern Germany, where the metal would be melted down and processed. Some of these objects survived the war and were later returned to their original locations. Another set of photographs that tells of the destruction of

Prague's sculptures (sometimes for political reasons) are Sudek's pictures of empty pedestals, for instance at the monuments to Karolina Světlá on Charles Square or František Palacký on Palacký Square.

**69**  
**Unknown author**  
**Interior of the National Museum with display cases damaged during the Prague Uprising, 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted in album  
Archives of the National Museum

**70**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**View of the Maniny metals scrapyards from the north – in the background, the monument on Vítkov Hill and the Libeň gasometer, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

NOTE: The largest enlargements that Vlado Bohdan produced from Sudek's original negatives for this exhibition are 50 x 60 cm in size – the size of the largest surviving original print by Sudek, a photograph of the cross-shaped memorial in front of Old Town Hall (item no. 141). The large format was typical for exhibition prints, of which there are only two in the set of Sudek's photographs of Prague in 1945, since he used the images exclusively for publication purposes.

**71**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**The Maniny metals scrapyards – in the background, the Libeň gasometer, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**72**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**The Maniny metals scrapyards, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**73**  
**Josef Ženíšek**  
**“On the photograph, a view of the bells stolen from the Czech lands by the German fascists,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
Central Military Archives – Military History Archives Prague

**74**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**The Maniny metals scrapyards, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**75**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**The Maniny metals scrapyards, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**76**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**The Maniny metals scrapyards, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**77**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**“The place where Sucharda's monument to F. Palacký stood,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

**78**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**“Dismantled stone sculpture of F. Palacký by S. Sucharda at the Maniny metals scrapyards,” 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**79**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Allegory of Oppression from Sucharda's monument to František Palacký at the Maniny metals scrapyards, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**80**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**“Bronze sculptures from the F. Palacký monument by S. Sucharda at the Maniny metals scrapyards,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

**81**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**“Graveyard of bells and Jan Štursa's sculpture of Svatopluk Čech at the Maniny metals scrapyards,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**82**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**“Ducháčková's sculpture of Jan Hus from the Agricultural Museum in Prague, stored at the Maniny metals scrapyards,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

83

**Josef Sudek**

**"J. V. Myslbek's bronze sculpture of František Ladislav Riegr from Riegr Park, stored at the Maniny metals scrapyards," 1945**

gelatin silver print

Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

**Sculptures at the Maniny metals scrapyards; in the middle, T. G. Masaryk by Otakar Španiel, 1945**

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018

Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3–15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print

Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

84

**Josef Sudek**

**The Maniny metals scrapyards – in the foreground, bust of John Amos Comenius, 1945**

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018

Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print

Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

85

**Josef Sudek**

**"Plinth from Zoula's monument to Karolína Světlá on Charles Square designed by Josef Fanta," 1945**

gelatin silver print

Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

86

**Unknown author**

**"Prague – Revolution, 5–9 May 1945," 1945**

gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard

Central Military Archives – Military History Archives Prague

87

**Karel Hájek**

**"Prague XII – Pile of refuse and various items in the courtyard. 1945 May Revolution," 9 May 1945**

gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard

Central Military Archives – Military History Archives Prague

88

**Tibor Honty**

**The Prokop & Čáp department store on Wenceslas Square after the Prague Uprising, 1945**

gelatin silver print

Private collection of Ivan Hoffmann

89

**Unknown author**

**"Prague 2, Wenceslas Square, facade of the Prokop & Čáp building after 9 May 1945," 1945**

gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard

Central Military Archives – Military History Archives Prague

90

**Karel Ludwig**

**People by the Prokop & Čáp department store on Wenceslas Square after the Prague Uprising, 1945**

gelatin silver print

Moravian Gallery in Brno

## People in Downtown Prague

From 5 to 9 May 1945, the people of Prague rose in what is known as the Prague Uprising, an event that helped to end the occupation but also resulted in damage to or the destruction of many of the city's buildings. Josef Sudek photographed the damage caused by the fighting on Old Town Square and its immediate surroundings and also on the upper part of Wenceslas Square. Many of these images are noteworthy for Sudek's surprising interest in photographing people, which except for a commissioned portraits is otherwise found only in his early works from the 1920s such as his photographs of Invalidovna, Stromovka, and the Kolín Island series. In the first days following the end of the war, Prague's citizens came downtown to see the damaged landmarks first-hand, but also to pay homage to the victims of the war, as for instance by a symbolic monument erected in front of Old Town Hall.

91

**Josef Sudek's diary 1945/2**

**Sunday 6 May – Monday 7 May [1945]**

notebook with handwritten notes

Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, Documents from the Estate of Josef Sudek, donated by Božena Sudková

92

**Josef Sudek**

**Wenceslas Square after the Prague Uprising – in the rear, the National Museum, 1945**

gelatin silver print

Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

93

**Josef Sudek**

**Wenceslas Square after the Prague Uprising; view from the stairs of the National Museum, 1945**

gelatin silver print

Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

94

**Josef Sudek**

**Wenceslas Square and building no. 812/II destroyed during the Prague Uprising; view from the stairs of the National Museum, 1945**

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018

Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences



**95**  
**Václav Chochola**  
**Wenceslas Square by the damaged building no. 812/II on 9 May 1945 – welcoming soldiers of the Red Army, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
B&M Chochola Archive

**96**  
**Unknown author**  
**“Destroyed shop windows on Wenceslas Square after the revolution – several firefighters with hoses in front of a damaged shop,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
Military Central Archives – Military History Archives Prague

**97**  
**Unknown author**  
**“Prague I – Old Town Square” [film still from *The Path to the Barricades*, director Otakar Vávra, 1946, made using original footage of the Prague Uprising], 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
Military Central Archives – Military History Archives Prague

**98**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Old Town Square and Old Town Hall after the Prague Uprising; view from Celetná Street, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**99**  
**Václav Chochola**  
**Old Town Square and town hall after the Prague Uprising – view from Celetná Street, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
B&M Chochola Archive

**100**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**View of the House at the Stone Lamb (left) and Old Town Hall (in rear) damaged during the Prague Uprising, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**101**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**“Detail of facade of the House at the Stone Lamb on Old Town Square, burnt out during the fighting of 5–8 May 1945,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**102**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**“Antonín Balvín’s House at the White Peacock on Celetná Street, burnt out during the fighting of 5–8 May 1945,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited until 1 July 2018)

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited from 3 July 2018)

**103**  
**Antonín Alexander**  
**House at the White Lion at Melantrich Street on Old Town Square, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives

**104**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**“Old Town Square damaged during the fighting of 5–8 May 1945. View from Little Square towards Old Town Hall and the Church of Our Lady before Týn,” 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (exhibited until 15 July 2018)

gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives (exhibited from 17 July 2018)

**105**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**View of Old Town Square from Celetná Street after the Prague Uprising – on the left, the House at the Stone Lamb, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**106**  
**Wanner**  
**“Prague I – Revolution” [Old Town Square and town hall], 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
Military Central Archives – Military History Archives Prague

**107**  
**J. Střihavka**  
**“Rescue work on Old Town Square on 9 May 1945 – close-up view of group of people removing rubble by the entrance,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
Central Military Archives – Military History Archives Prague

**108**  
**Alexandr Paul**  
**Old Town Square and town hall – in the rear, Týn Church, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Paul Studio Archive

**109**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Burnt-out Old Town Hall with astronomical clock surrounded by protective wall after the Prague Uprising, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**110**  
**Josef Bureš**  
***Evening on Old Town Square, 1945***  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

**111**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Old Town Square after the Prague Uprising – in the foreground, the water reservoir by the Jan Hus monument, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**112**  
**Josef Sudek**  
**Old Town Square and town hall after the Prague Uprising – in the foreground, the water reservoir by the Jan Hus monument, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

113

Josef Sudek

**Old Town Square with water reservoir after the Prague Uprising – in the rear, Old Town Hall and St. Nicholas Church, 1945**

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018

Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

NOTE: The water reservoir built in 1943 for wartime firefighting purposes stood on Old Town Square until the 1970s. It was one of several similar structures built on larger squares and other public areas in preparation for air raids and the associated firefighting needs. According to historian Zdeněk Wirth, there were as many as 67 of such reservoirs throughout Prague. Sudek also documented the reservoirs on Charles Square, Kinský Square, Hradčany Square, and Lesser Town Square, and in front of the City of Prague Museum at Florenc. Some of the reservoirs were filled in after the war; others were turned into ponds.

114

Josef Sudek

**Old Town Square during a memorial for the fallen on 13 May 1945 – in the rear, Old Town Hall, 1945**

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018

Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

115

Alexandr Paul

**Old Town Square after the Prague Uprising – in the foreground, a destroyed German tank, 1945**

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018

Paul Studio Archive

116

Josef Sudek

**People walking along today's Paris Street after the Prague Uprising – in the rear, the remains of Old Town Hall, 1945**

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018

Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

117

Karel Hájek

**"At around 5:30 pm on Sunday 6 May 1945, a plane dropped a bomb onto the radio building, which fell through a window on the roof of the second floor and crashed through the floor below. Floor on the second story," 1945**

gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard

Military Central Archives – Military History Archives Prague

118

Karel Hájek

**"Destroyed marble stairwell leading from the ground floor to the first floor of the radio building," 1945**

gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard

Military Central Archives – Military History Archives Prague

119

Karel Hájek

**"Basement of the radio building where a bomb exploded," 1945**

gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard

Military Central Archives – Military History Archives Prague

## Old Town Hall

A key moment of the Prague Uprising was the fighting around Old Town Hall, as a result of which the building suffered serious damage. A devastating fire on 8 May 1945 destroyed not

only the building's neo-Gothic wing (which later had to be demolished), but the valuable town archives as well. Also damaged were the astronomical clock and the building's Gothic oriel window. Sudek's attention was drawn to various details of the building, such as the great window of the historical building. This set of photographs shows certain similarities with Sudek's more famous photographic series created at the same time. The Second World War represented a turning point in Sudek's work and a turn to more intimate subjects such as his views from the window of his studio on Újezd Street.

120

Václav Buben, ed.

*Six Years of Occupied Prague*

Department of Education of the City of Prague, Prague, 1946

print

Library of the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

121

Zdeněk Wirth

*Lost Prague 5: Fortifications, the Vltava and Monuments Lost in 1945*

V. Poláček Prague Publishers, Prague, 1948

print

Library of the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

122

Jaroslav Pavelka

"Prague's Wartime Injuries"

*Dílo XXXIV, 1945–1946, 28 Dec. 1945, pp. 8–15*

print

Library of the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

123

Alexandr Paul

**Old Town Hall burning during the Prague Uprising, 1945**

new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018

Paul Studio Archive

124

Karel Ludwig

**Old Town Hall is Burning, Prague, 8 May 1945, 1945**

gelatin silver print

B&M Chochola Archive

125

Antonín Alexander

**Old Town Square with stands for festivities after the end of the Second World War, 1945**

gelatin silver print

Prague City Archives

126

**Josef Sudek**  
**Old Town Hall, burnt out during the Prague Uprising, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

127

**Josef Sudek**  
**Old Town Hall, burnt out during the Prague Uprising – view from the north, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

128

**Josef Sudek**  
**View through the portico of Old Town Hall towards the damaged oriel window, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

129

**Josef Sudek**  
**Main staircase of the historic building of Old Town Hall damaged during the Prague Uprising, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

130

**Jan Tuháček**  
**“Prague 1, Old Town Hall, interior stairwell,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
National Heritage Institute

131

**Jan Tuháček**  
**“Prague 1, Old Town Hall, demolished interiors,” 1945**  
gelatin silver print pasted on cardboard  
National Heritage Institute

NOTE: Jan Tuháček's photographs from the State Institute of Photogrammetry are today stored at the National Heritage Institute alongside other documentary images. After their transfer to the institute, contact prints were made of Tuháček's original negatives for the purpose of creating record cards. Other than that, they were treated as regular documentary material. Larger photographs were folded or cut up so they could fit into the file catalogue.

132

**Josef Sudek**  
**Large window of the historical building of Old Town Hall, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

133

**Josef Sudek**  
**Large window of the historical building of Old Town Hall – on the right, a model of J. V. Myslbek's sculpture of *Lumír and the Hymn*, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

134

**Josef Sudek**  
**Large window of the historical building of Old Town Hall – on the right, a model of J. V. Myslbek's sculpture of *Lumír and the Hymn*, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

135

**Josef Sudek**  
**View of inner courtyard through the large window of the historical building of Old Town Hall, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

136

**Josef Sudek**

**View of inner courtyard through the large window of the historical building of Old Town Hall, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

137

**Josef Sudek**  
**View of inner courtyard through the large window of the historical building of Old Town Hall, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

138

**Josef Sudek**  
**View of inner courtyard through the large window of the historical building of Old Town Hall, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

139

**Josef Sudek**  
**Detail of large window of the historical building of Old Town Hall, 1945**  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

140

**Antonín Alexander**  
**Inner courtyard between the neo-Gothic and historical wings of Old Town Hall – in the rear, the large window, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives

141

**Josef Sudek**  
**Cross made of charred beams (provisional monument to the fallen), seen from the neo-Gothic wing of Old Town Hall, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

NOTE: The large window of Old Town Hall consisted of a mosaic of glass panes. To this day, the window is located on the ground floor of the historical building. The new stained glass windows created in 1981–1990 by Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová are made of fused crystal glass, measure 820 × 730 cm, and depict motifs inspired by work of Mikoláš Aleš.

142

**Tibor Honty**  
**Old Town Square – in the foreground, cross made of charred beams from town hall, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
Private collection of Ivan Hoffmann

143

**Josef Sudek**  
**Damaged Gothic oriel window of Old Town Hall and honor guard by cross for the fallen after the Prague Uprising, 1945**  
gelatin silver prints (3x)  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

144

**Josef Sudek**  
**Damaged Gothic oriel window of Old Town Hall and cross for the fallen after the Prague Uprising – in the foreground, burnt beams from Old Town Hall, 1945**  
gelatin silver prints (2x)  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

145

**Václav Chochola**  
**Damaged oriel window on Old Town Square, 1945**  
gelatin silver print  
B&M Chochola Archive

146

Unknown author  
Damaged corner of Old Town Square, 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Military History Institute in Prague

147

Antonín Alexander  
"Building no. 1 – I, Old Town Hall, oriel window of chapel damaged by the Germans' rampage during the liberation of Prague 5–9 May 1945, phot. 17 May 1945," 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Prague City Archives

148

Josef Sudek  
Cross on the tympanum facade of Týn Church on Old Town Square – in the rear, St. Vitus Cathedral, 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

149

Josef Sudek  
View of Old Town Hall and St. Nicholas Church from the damaged gallery of the north tower of Týn Church, 1945  
new gelatin silver prints from original negatives, 2018 (15x)  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

150

Zdeněk Tmej  
Old Town Square – in the foreground, the ruins of the neo-Gothic wing of Old Town Hall; in the rear, Týn Church, 1945  
gelatin silver print  
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

151

Josef Sudek  
Remains of northern neo-Gothic wing of Old Town Hall after partial demolition following damage during the Prague Uprising, 1945  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

152

Alexandr Paul  
Remains of northern neo-Gothic wing of Old Town Hall after partial demolition following damage during the Prague Uprising, 1945  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Paul Studio Archive

153

Josef Sudek  
Old Town Square and historical part of town hall under scaffolding – in the rear, Týn Church, [1948]  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

154

Josef Sudek  
Old Town Square and remains of town hall under scaffolding, [1948]  
new gelatin silver print from original negative, 2018  
Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences

Title notes:

Quotation marks – title is taken from another source (mostly from the *Prague Calendar 1946*

or from the archive cards)

Italics – original title given by the author

No formatting – descriptive title added given by the curator

SUDEK PROJECT

## Josef Sudek: The Topography of Ruins

Prague City Gallery  
House of Photography, Revoluční 5, Prague 1

Prague City Gallery and the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences  
in collaboration with the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

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[ghmp.cz](http://ghmp.cz), [udu.cas.cz](http://udu.cas.cz), [sudekproject.cz](http://sudekproject.cz)

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