

LOVELIES FROM THE FILES. SUDEK AND SCULPTURE

June 23 – September 27, 2020

Prague City Gallery

House of Photography

Revoluční 5, Prague 1

Open daily except for Monday from 10 am to 6 pm, on Thursday to 8 pm

Curators: Hana Buddeus and Katarína Mašterová

The exhibition is organized by Prague City Gallery and the Institute of Art History, CAS in cooperation with the Museum of Decorative Art in Prague.

This exhibition is the first to present, in a comprehensive manner, photographs of artworks by Josef Sudek (1896–1976), thus shedding light on an almost unknown part of his professional photographic oeuvre. It focuses on Sudek's beloved sculptures and links his photographic series with his commissioned works.

“Sculpture is alive and it has to be photographed as alive,” said Sudek in an interview from the 1950s. His exhibitions and publications suggest that he liked searching for parallels between photographs of sculptures and living people and later also the timeworn but majestic trees in the Mionší primeval forest, which inspired his series *Vanished Sculptures*. His favourite sculptural motifs also included Czech Gothic Madonnas and saints whom he called “lovelies” – he photographed them during Prague exhibitions in the 1930s and then returned to them in the 1960s.

Sudek became friends with many artists and he also supported them financially. Because he often photographed their artworks in exchange for drawings, paintings and sculptures, he gradually gathered a large collection of artworks, now housed in the Gallery of Modern Art in Roudnice nad Labem and the National Gallery in Prague. Some of the sculptures are present at the exhibition both in photographs and as actual objects. Sudek's close friends, who were also his important clients, included František Tichý, Emil Filla, Andrej Bělocvětov, Hana Wichterlová, Josef Wagner, Jiří Jaška, Stanislav Hanzík and Otto Rothmayer. Sudek often found his own photographic motifs in their studios: Hana Wichterlová's garden inspired the series *The Garden of the Lady Sculptor* and the series *The Magic Garden (The Magician's Garden)* was shot in the garden of the architect Otto Rothmayer.

Sudek photographed artworks from the second half of the 1920s to the 1970s either as documentation for artists' archives or as reproductions for magazines and books. The exhibition therefore showcases not only original authorial photographs but also test shots, large-format negatives and period reproductions, revealing all phases of the creative process and the various ways in which the photographs were used. Inspired by contemporary theory of photography, the curators present Sudek's photographs in their complexity, showing not only the “highlights” but uncovering the entire ecosystem of Sudek's estate in which commercially successful art photographs are as important as reproductions for personal archives of both famous and lesser-

known sculptors. Sudek's archive offers an unusual and refreshing perspective on the history of Czech art.

The exhibition guides the viewer through Sudek's work with sculpture in eleven chapters, each representing an important category (e. g. the chapter "Heads" focuses on portraits of sculptures; "Sculptures in Apartments" thematizes reproductions and small sculptures sold in limited series by Krásná jizba, Družstevní práce and other companies; "Documentation" maps the diverse commissions for artists). Other chapters present large thematic sets (e. g. "St. Vitus" – photographs from the Prague cathedral, "Rodin and the Frenchmen" – French modern sculpture, "Kuks and the Veiled Woman" – Baroque sculptures in the late-1930s context, and "Lovelies" – medieval, Baroque and folk sculpture). Sudek's commissioned work typically overlapped with his personal photographic interests, a tendency exemplified by his photographs from the National Museum's Lapidarium (the chapter "Lapidarium"). In the 1950s, he was commissioned to make reproductions for an art-historical publication about this collection and he shot the same artifacts twice, changing the angle and the format to create authorial photographs which he then presented at his exhibitions.

Because the project focused on a specific set of Sudek's photographs and because the exhibition space has a limited capacity, the show only offers limited context to Sudek's works. It includes other important photographers who specialized in photographing artworks and architecture in the same period as Sudek: Drahomír J. Růžička, Jaromír Funke, Jan Štenc, František Illek and Alexandr Paul, Josef Ehm, Tibor Honty are represented with one or two photographs each. Works by Aleksandra Vajd, Jiří Thýn and Hynek Alt, made specifically for this exhibition, bring a contemporary perspective, exploring limits of photographic representation and showing how the themes that Sudek addressed in relation to artworks can be seen as topical today. The effort to present Sudek in a contemporary manner, as a historical material that has a potential to speak to today's viewer, characterizes all the outcomes of the five-year project and it also materializes in the emphasis on high-quality graphic design of the publications (all designed by Martin Groch in collaboration with Berlin-based Tim+Tim studio) and architecture (the present exhibition was designed by Zbyněk Baladrán).

JOSEF SUDEK

Josef Sudek (1896–1976), a world-renowned Czech photographer, was born in Kolín and spent most of his life in Prague. Between 1928 and 1976, he had a professional photographic studio at Újezd, at the foot of the Petřín hill. His commissioned work was focused on reproductions of artworks, promotional photography and photographs of heritage monuments. These photographs were largely meant for publications (Sudek published several books on Prague such as *Prague Castle – An Artwork of Centuries*, 1945; *Prague Panoramic*, 1959; and *Charles Bridge in Photography*, 1961), as illustrations for artists' monographs and as reproductions for art associations' magazines. Sudek's work on commissions was most intensive in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1958, SNKHLU press published his first monograph and in 1961, he received the 'merited artist' title. Sudek's most important photographic series include *Saint Vitus*, *The Window of My Studio*, *The Magic Garden*, *Labyrinths* and others. His favourite motifs were Prague's urban landscape and heritage monuments, gardens, landscapes and found or arranged still lifes.

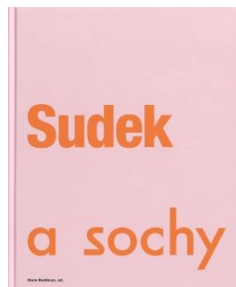
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SUDEK PROJECT

The exhibition emerges from the five-year research project of the Institute of Art History, CAS, entitled “Josef Sudek and Photographic Documentation of Artworks: From a Personal Art Archive to the Presentation of Cultural Heritage” (NAKI II, id. no. DG16P02M002, 2016–2020), or Sudek Project, supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic (for more about the project see www.sudekproject.cz). The project was initiated by Prof. Vojtěch Lahoda (1955–2019) who also headed it until 2019. The project's goal was to process and present the extensive collection of photographs of artworks (approximately 20,000 negatives and positives) that Božena Sudková, Josef Sudek's sister, donated to the Institute of Art History after Sudek's death. Božena Sudková, the only permanent employee of Josef Sudek's firm, is present at the exhibition not only in a photograph by Sonja Bullaty depicting both siblings but also through diverse documents, such as accounting books, in which she recorded all Sudek's commissions.

As part of the project, the exhibition concludes the long-term research of art historians Hana Buddeus and Katarína Mašterová in collaboration with the team of photographers, conservators, photo library employees and part-time workers who participated in the collection's blanked digitization, cleaning, moving all negatives and positives to a new storage and creating the database, gradually presented at the www.sudekproject.cz website. Over the past years, the project's important partial outcomes included *Josef Sudek: The Topography of Ruins*, the first exhibition to introduce the public to the extensive set of Sudek's photographs of Prague taken soon after the Second World War. Prepared by Katarína Mašterová, Mariana Kubištová and Vojtěch Lahoda, the exhibition took place in Prague City Gallery's House of Photography in 2018.

CATALOGUE



Hana Buddeus, ed., *Sudek a sochy*, Praha: Artefactum 2020

Hana Buddeus, ed., *Sudek and Sculpture*, Prague: Artefactum / Karolinum 2020 (English version)

The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated publication entitled *Sudek and Sculpture* with more than 400 reproductions and 600 print pages, edited by Hana Buddeus. The book includes texts by six authors and is published in Czech and English. It contains five scholarly essays and thirty six short texts that shed light on Sudek's commissioned work. Most of the illustrations are in full-page format. The graphic design is a work of Martic Groch and Tim+Tim studio.



Prague City Gallery is one of the most important galleries in the Czech Republic, which in its exhibition activity focuses in particular on modern and contemporary art. It collects, protects and professionally processes art collections of the City of Prague. Currently, the Prague City Gallery exhibits at seven venues: The Stone Bell House, Municipal Library – 2nd floor, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, The House of Photography, Villa Bilek, Troja Château and František Bilek's House in Chýnov.

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Four scholarly essays by the curators Hana Buddeus and Katarína Mašterová each use different perspectives to map Sudek's photographs of sculptures. The first text "The Life of Sculptures: Possibilities of Photographic Re-Contextualization" builds on the popular metaphor from the myth about the sculptor Pygmalion whose love brought a sculpture to life, describing how photography animates sculpture. In one of his interviews, Sudek said that "sculpture is alive and it has to be photographed as alive." The second text "Vanished Sculptures: From Finding Images to Image Production" interprets Sudek's interest in torsos, ruins and fragments, usually associated with Surrealism, newly pointing to Sudek's knowledge of art history and his numerous commissions to photograph timeworn Gothic and Baroque sculptures. The third text, "Light on a Sculpture, a Sculpture in Light" is devoted to light and shadow, the ultimate photographic theme. It describes Sudek's journey from using sunbeams and electric lamps in the studio to diffused daylight and also dusk and darkness. The fourth text, "Sudek's Archival Garden," treats Sudek's photographs of artworks as a specific archive, describing the different stages of its "life" and arguing that its opening up to the public will help rediscover forgotten artworks and artists.

The art-historical interpretation is complemented by the fifth text, "Glass, Plastic and Papers: A Conservator's Perspective" by Kateřina Doležalová who describes the conservation and restoration work associated with the five-year grant project focused on the preservation of Sudek's collection in the Institute of Art History.

The book's second part, authored by Hana Buddeus, Zuzana Krišková, Mariana Kubištová, Katarína Mašterová, Fedora Parkmann and Martin Pavlis, consists of short texts focusing on Sudek's clients such as his friends-sculptors (e. g. Hana Wichterlová a Bedřich Stefan, Josef Wagner a Marie Wagnerová-Kulhánková), art associations (Mánes Association of Fine Artists, Umělecká beseda), magazines (Světobzor, Pestrý týden and others) and publishing houses (in addition to Družstevní práce, Sudek closely collaborated with Melantrich and other presses).

Exhibition Curators: Hana Buddeus, Katarína Mašterová
Graphic Design: Martin Groch a studio Tim+Tim
Architecture: Zbyněk Baladrán

Media partners: Art&Antiques, A2, ArtMap, Czech Radio, protisedi.cz, Radio 1

Admission: 120 CZK full admission (adults) / 60 CZK reduced admission (students, senior citizens)

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More information: www.ghmp.cz

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ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM

Important notification: Due to the coronavirus crisis, the accompanying program schedule may be affected or changed. Please check our website www.ghmp.cz for updated information. The program may be subject to change.

Guided Tours

Thursday July 23, 2020, 6 pm, *Photographic Archive* (with curator Katarína Mašterová)

Thursday Aug 27, 2020, 6 pm, *Originals and Reproductions* (with curator Hana Buddeus)

Thursday Sept 10, 2020, 4 pm, *Restoration and Conservation* (a short guided tour followed by a visit to the conservation studio at the Institute of Art History and a viewing of damaged negatives with curator Hana Buddeus and conservators Kateřina Doležalová and Tereza Cíglarová)

Thursday Sept 24, 2020, 6 pm, *Publishing Houses, Art Associations and Exhibitions* (with curator Hana Buddeus and art historian Mariana Kubištová)

Workshop: *Photographing Sculptures*

Sept 3, 2020, 5 pm, House of Photography

How we perceive a sculpture does not depend only on its shape or material but also on where it stands, how it is lit and whether we can move around it. How does photography work with these perspectives? During the workshop, we will introduce different approaches to photographing sculpture, from catalogue reproductions to contemporary art. The exhibition's curators will lead the discussion with invited photographers based on concrete examples of their work.

Parallel Cinema: *Media Dialogues* (in cooperation with the National Film Archive)

Monday Sept 14, 2020, 6 pm, Kino Ponrepo, Bartolomějská 11, Prague 1

introduction by Hana Buddeus and Sylva Poláková

Media Dialogues are the exhibition's extension in different media and different time. They follow the intersection of performance, sculpture and moving image in works by contemporary artists. Barbora Dayef, Eva Kořátková and Pavla Sceranková will present records of these events in which video shifts away from its role as a document and enters into an active dialogue with the objects recorded.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Saturday Art Workshops

Saturday Jun 25, 2020, 1–6 pm, *Story of a Sculpture*, House of Photography

Saturday Aug 15, 2020, 1–6 h, *Veiled Living Sculpture*, House of Photography

As part of artistic responses and interactive guided tours, we will focus on Sudek's photographs of sculptures that have been largely unknown to the public. We will create collages in which sculptures will inhabit various environments (e. g. church interior, exhibition space, industrial environment) and observe how the surrounding space changes the impression we get from an artwork. We will also try to fill inventory cards for both sculptures in Sudek's photographs and the actual artworks in the exhibition and notice the parameters that are considered significant when describing an artwork. We will work with the sculptural portrait theme, making fragmentary collages in which sitters' photographs will combine with



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fragments of photographs of sculptural busts. This way, we will be able to visualize the imaginary transition between the sitter's actual appearance and its image captured in the sculptural form. Inspired by both photographs and actual sculptures, we will try to create the so-called living sculptures: participants will become living sculptures (e. g. a Gothic Madonna, a veiled sculpture), using simple materials, textiles and objects. This will help us appreciate the importance of stylization, context and attributes. The visitors can also play a game in which they will look for photographs of sculptures present in the exhibition. During gallery talks, we will notice technical aspects of photographs on display and compare and distinguish photographs, new prints, negatives and reproductions.

Art Workshop for Adults and Seniors

Friday Sept 25, 2020, 3–6 h, *Photographic Negative and Positive I*, Education centre

Sunday Sept 27, 2020, 3–6 h, *Photographic Negative and Positive II*, Education centre

Interactive workshops will be inspired by Josef Sudek's creative process. During our workshops, we will work with a photographic enlarger and learn about its technical parameters. We will focus on the process of creating the positive image by illuminating black-and-white negatives. This way, we will be reminded of the atmosphere in the darkroom and the way developer and fixer work. With the red light on, we will observe photographic trays until we see the familiar contours of realistic images appear on the papers.

Interactive guided tours for all types of schools and diverse age groups including the choice of a subsequent artistic activity. In terms of duration, theme and skills required, the activities are tailored to the needs of each group.

Registration required

Price: children under 10, art school students, pedagogues 5 CZK; visitors aged 10 and older 20 CZK

Contact: Lucie Haškovcová, lucie.haskovcova@ghmp.cz, 606 612 987, 608 216 418

In addition to the aforementioned activities, we will also organize education activities for other audience groups such as disabled visitors and parents with young children.



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