

## **The Power of the Powerless** **Political aspects in Czech and Slovak art after 1989**

**Curator:** Lenka Kukurová  
**Opening:** 21.11.2019, 18:00

**Duration of the exhibition:**  
22.11.2019 - 23.02.2020  
KHB (1st floor)  
Nám. SNP No. 12, Bratislava



***Ms Zuzana Čaputová, President of the Slovak Republic, has taken this event under her patronage.***

**Exhibiting artists:** Darina Alster & Tamara Moyzes, Dalibor Bača, Zbyněk Baladrán, Blažej Baláž, Pavlína Fichta Čierna, Jiří Černický, Eva Filová, Daniel Fischer, Andreas Gajdošík, Guma Guar, Oto Hudec, Anetta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová, Peter Kalmus, Kassaboys, Michal Kindernay, Krištof Kintera, Šymon Kliman, Lenka Klodová, Zdena Kolečková, Jan J. Kotík, Marie Lukáčová, Marcel Mališ, Peter Meluzin, Michal Moravčík, Mothers Artlovers, Michal Murin, Ilona Németh, Martin Piaček, Pode Bal, Tomáš Rafa, Reakcia, Emília Rigová, Rafani, Maroš Rovňák, Rudolf Sikora, Stojíme pri kultúre, Kateřinā Šedā, Maja Štefančíková, Novā Věčnost, Martin Zet, Jana Želibská

**The exhibition is held on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the November events.** Its focus is on art which critically reflects on social problems in the Slovak and Czech context. It maps how diverse political questions, and also more broadly social issues, have been mirrored in creative art in Slovakia and the Czech Republic during the last thirty years. The Czecho-Slovak dimension of the exhibition is important not only because of the interlinking and mutual influence of the Slovak and Czech art scenes but also in terms of a shared political past which forms our social atmosphere to this day.

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### **The title of the exhibition**

refers to an internationally known essay by Václav Havel, written in 1978, where he describes the possibilities of revolt in an unfree society. Applied to an art exhibition, Havel's title *The Power of the Powerless* becomes a metaphor of the influence which art has on society. Critical art, which on principle does not take part directly in political power, is frequently of marginal interest to the public and the political representatives, or it becomes a target of attacks by powerful people.

### **The range of themes which appear in the exhibited works is extremely broad**

and goes from targeted criticism of specific political figures to problems of the entire social order, for example the position of women in society, consumerism, and contemporary racism.

### **Some artworks are statements about their time but nonetheless have a timeless validity**

Although the political orientation of individual artists represented may be mutually contradictory, the message of their works always tends towards a shared assertion of the principles of freedom, human rights and democracy.

Some artistic groups and collective initiatives are also presented at the exhibition.

### **Freedom of expression and personal/collective responsibility for the state of the world**

The exhibition brings the viewer a space for thinking about the meaning of democracy and the values of freedom associated with it. It appeals for their constant maintenance and development, including via the stances of individuals.

### **RUDOLF SIKORA: Exclamation Mark (1974-2018) solution of the environmental problem**

Occupying an important place in the exhibition is a theme which we as a society have not addressed since the change of regime: the solution of **environmental problems**. Exclamation Mark (1974-2018), an exhortatory work by the conceptual artist **Rudolf Sikora**, represents these issues at the exhibition. Already in the 1970s this artist was drawing attention to the need to stop the pollution of the living environment. Since then he has constantly linked this theme with a symbolic exclamation mark.

**The work is located as a pilot installation in public space in the vicinity of KHB on Treskoňova Street, under the heading of its new project "Kunsthalle EXT".**



## **OTO HUDEC: Roots Deeper Than Walls (2019) the symbolism of bonding**

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany and the revolutionary events of November 1989 in Slovakia, a large-scale mural by the contemporary Slovak artist Oto Hudec was painted on the façade of the Slovak Embassy in Berlin. Extending for more than forty metres, the work focuses on the symbolism of bonding, inspired by relationships in the natural world.

This is a unique method of commemorating the anniversary of important events on the road to democracy. It recalls not only the Berlin Wall, which has since fallen, but also the many other symbolic or real walls that are still standing and need to be demolished.



The painting had its origins in an art competition initiated by the Slovak Embassy in Berlin. The winning entry was chosen by a Slovak-German jury of experts, consisting of: Franciska Zólyom (director of Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, curator of the German pavilion at Biennale di Venezia 2019), Verena Tintelnot (curator of contemporary art, Leipzig), Nina Vrbanová (acting director of Kunsthalle Bratislava), Lenka Kukurová (curator and theoretician of contemporary art), Peter Lizák (Slovak ambassador to Germany), Ivo Hanuš (director of the Slovak Institute in Berlin) and Oscar Buvalič (diplomat).

**Viewers will have the opportunity to see the painting in a smaller scale at the *Power of the Powerless* exhibition in KHB.**

In the exhibition is also presented the project of organization **Post Bellum** named **20th-century stories**. The visitors can listen to audio recordings describing the revolutionary events through the point of view the Slovak and Czech artist. In the records, they recall the life before 1989, the regime change and how was the influence of it on arts.

### **Media contact**

Zuzana Böhmerová  
PR and fundraising manager  
zuzana.bohmerova@kunsthallebratislava.sk  
0918 817 126

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