

SPRING 2020

A Publication of the
NATIONAL
CZECH &
SLOVAK
MUSEUM &
LIBRARY

Slovo



ARTISTS AS
ACTIVISTS

MUSEUM
INFORMATION

Hours:
Monday through Saturday
9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Sunday
Noon – 4 p.m.

Holidays (Closed):

- Easter
- Fourth of July
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day

Holidays (Open):

- Memorial Day
- Labor Day

Regular Admission:

Members FREE
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Seniors \$9
Active Military (with ID) . . . \$5
Students (with ID) 14+ . . . \$5
Youth 6-13 \$3
Children 5 & Under FREE

MORE FOR FAMILIES!

We've added several fun and family-friendly programs throughout the year, from craft workshops to summer camps. Check NCSML.org for details.

For up-to-date information on all programs and events, and event registration, check the NCSML website often. NCSML.org.

Each year, you make these programs, exhibits, and community events possible.

-Thank you.



A student shows off her newly-painted skateboard at Tonight's for Teens.



Finished wall project by Metro High School students created through "Revolution Starts in the Streets" exhibit.



Family Programs Manager Kaitlin Schlotfelt demonstrates a recipe during Immigrant Foodways.



Guests enjoying BrewNost 2019.

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For more information on naming opportunities, event sponsorships, corporate partnerships, and the benefits that come with it, please contact **Evelyn Rossow**, erossow@ncsml.org or 319-362-8500.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

CONTRIBUTORS

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**Taking a Stand:
Artists as Activists**

By Charlotta Kotik
Read through a thoughtful summary of noted artists creating work as activists to better understand the role they play in the NCSML exhibition of the same name.

**Spreading the News:
Czechoslovak Periodicals in the Displaced
Persons Camps in the Early Cold War**

By Martin Nekola, Ph.D.
Learn how Czechoslovaks fleeing Czechoslovakia in the late 1940s found ways to create and distribute news.

**"Peace with this Country Should Forever Stay:"
Singer and Dissident Marta Kubišová**

By Marek Vašut, M.A.
Take a look at the life of Marta Kubišová and the ways her music became the unofficial anthem of the Velvet Revolution.

**Karel Gott (1939 – 2019):
An Apolitical Artist?**

By Josette Baer
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**Exhibiting Dissent:
EXPO 1970 and the Czechoslovakian Pavilion's
"Fate of Small Nations"**

By Amy Hughes
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**Experience Dissidence Through Art:
Knowledge We Have Gained**

By Martin Palouš, Ph.D.
Examine some of the major turning points in Czechoslovak history and the variations of dissidence expressed through art to learn lessons we can apply today.

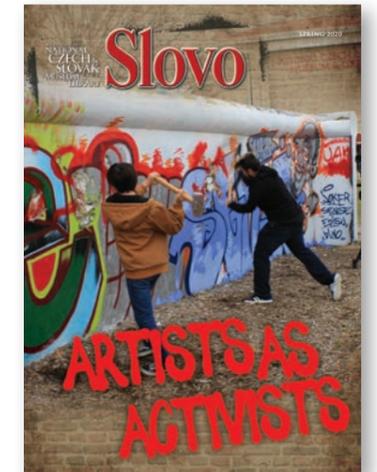
**Art, Activism, and STEAM:
Teaching about Revolution through
Project-Based Learning**

By Nicholas Hartmann, Ph.D.
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On the Cover:
NCSML visitors help bring down the replica Berlin Wall this past fall.

Slovo is published biannually by the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. The editor welcomes research articles and essays written for a popular audience that address Czech & Slovak history and culture. Please address inquiries to Editor, Slovo, 1400 Inspiration Place SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404.

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Slovo = Word

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., M.Sc., RDN
President & CEO
National Czech & Slovak
Museum & Library

NOTE: Just as we completed this issue of *Slovo*, the most unimagined global disaster became a reality in the U.S. We send all of our best wishes and prayers for a safe and healthy next few months. We are here for you, and know that we will survive and continue to be your National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library.

Letters to the Editor

We encourage discussion of the issues and stories presented in *Slovo*.

Please send your letters to:
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Or email to:
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Cherished friends of the NCSML,

In this first *Slovo* issue for 2020, we present to you a topic not often discussed, “Art and Activism.” In fulfillment of the Strategic Plan 2016-2019, we are presenting to you an interdisciplinary perspective of art forms all used to deliver a message of oppression and activism, during a time when individual freedoms were curtailed. Each of our authors have poignantly described the “activism” displayed in art, sculpture, music, and theatre. These outward exhibits of various art forms empowered people during a period in history when art was the primary voice against those who were disempowering society in former Czechoslovakia and much of Central and Eastern Europe.

The music of the dissident artists was especially impactful as we listen to rock groups like *Plastic People of the Universe* whose music was viewed as a direct subversion to Communist rule. Their music inspired Václav Havel and a small group of dissidents to draft Charter 77 that you will read about in this issue. Marta Kubišová was another dissident who survived and continues to inspire the world today. Her road was not an easy one but her message and example withstand all time. Most people probably recognize a more current Czech dissident artist, David Černý who on April 28, 1991 climbed the WWII era Monument to Soviet Tank Crews in Prague, and along with a group of friends painted the green tank bright pink. The Czechoslovak government, with pressure from Moscow, ordered the tank repainted back to green. Ten days later, making use of their parliamentary immunity, a group of Czech and Slovak deputies, all former dissidents, repainted it bright pink! The “Pink Tank” remains a treasured art piece symbolizing defiance and strong dissidence. Two of David Černý’s pieces – *Red Skull* and *Suitcase II* – will be on exhibit at the NCSML.

These forms of activism, although powerful in the country, were, and to this day, are not confined to former Czechoslovakia. In any country where people’s opportunity to live in a free democratic society is being challenged, artistic activism continues. We need only to look at countries like Cuba, China, Venezuela, Myanmar, and Syria to see where dissident artists continue to share with the world through art the pain and suffering of those being denied a democratic way of life. One of the most recognized Chinese artists, Ai Weiwei, has focused on the global migrant crisis through his works. His work is often described as shocking but it challenges the viewer to think differently about the art presented and at the same time to think about the social mores, conditions, and practices of a specific time in history. The NCSML will feature two of Ai Weiwei’s works: *Self Portrait in LEGO* and *Table*.

The art world and society has acknowledged dissidence in art for hundreds of years. The 20th century brought it to the forefront and now in the 21st century it is widely acknowledged around the world. We cannot separate the message of dissidence from the work of art presented to us. Enjoy this issue and please come and visit the *Artists as Activists* exhibit at the NCSML.

CONTRIBUTORS

Charlotta Kotik (*Taking a Stand: Artists as Activists*) a native of Prague, got her museum training at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York. She worked as a Curator and Contemporary Art Department Head at Brooklyn Museum, and served as an American Commissioner for Venice Biennale. Kotik now works as a lecturer and independent curator, facilitating projects for galleries, alternative spaces, and museums. She is a lecturer at the School of Visual Arts, New York and at the Academy of Art, Architecture and Design, Prague and works with the Jindrich Chaluppecky Award for Young Artists. Kotik is the great-granddaughter of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first President of Czechoslovakia.

Martin Nekola, Ph.D. (*Spreading the News: Czechoslovak Periodicals in the Displaced Persons Camps in the Early Cold War*) received his doctorate in political science at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. His research is focused on non-democratic regimes, the era of communism, Czech communities in the USA, and the East-European anti-communist exiles during the Cold War. He is the author of more than three hundred articles and has published twelve books. He is also coordinator for the Czechoslovak Talks Project (www.czechoslovaktalks.com/en).

Marek Vašut, M.A. (*“Peace with this Country Should Forever Stay:” Singer and Dissident Marta Kubišová*) is a Ph.D. student of modern history at Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, where he works on several pedagogical and Czechoslovak exile history projects. He was born a few years after the Velvet Revolution in Chrudim. Vašut worked as a history teacher at the Centre of Popularization of Science and wrote articles about the Czechoslovak exiled military intelligence service and Czechoslovak collaboration during WWII. In 2018, his poster exhibition *“Blindfolded: The Road to the Great War”* was presented at the NCSML. Vašut was the first Ph.D. scholar at the NCSML from Palacký University in Fall 2019.

Josette Baer (*Karel Gott (1939–2019): An Apolitical Artist?*) a Swiss citizen, graduated from the University of Zürich with a Ph.D. dissertation entitled *“Politics as Pragmatic Morality: The Notion of Democracy in the Political Thought of Thomas G. Masaryk and Václav Havel.”* She specializes in 19th century intellectual history of the Slavic-speaking countries of Central and Eastern Europe. She has taught and researched at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington, as well as in Minsk and St. Petersburg. She has published several books, including *“The Vesels: The Fate of a Czechoslovak Family in 20th century Central Europe”* out this spring.

Amy Hughes (*Exhibiting Dissent: EXPO 1970 and the Czechoslovakian Pavilion’s “Fate of Small Nations”*) is a Ph.D. Candidate in Art History, at the University of Wisconsin Madison and a researcher with The Josef Sudek Project, at the Institute of Art History, Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. The author for a number of publications, she lectures around the world, including being an invited lecturer at the U.S. Embassy in Prague, the U.S. Ambassador’s Residence, and the Czech Academy of Sciences. She has a Masters degree in the History of the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, from Bard Graduate Center for Studies in Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture and received her undergraduate degree from Marquette University.

Martin Palouš, Ph.D. (*Experience in Dissidence Through Art: Knowledge We Have Gained*) is Director of the Václav Havel Program for Human Rights and Diplomacy at Florida International University. He has his Doctorate of Natural Sciences (RNDr), Higher Doctorate in Political Science/Philosophy/ Associate Professorship from Charles University, and a Ph.D. in Public International Law from Masaryk University. Palouš is President of the Václav Havel Library Foundation and of the International Platform for Human Rights in Cuba. An original signatory of Charter 77, he served as its spokesperson in 1986, and participated at the creation of Civic Forum. After the fall of communism, he was a member of Parliament, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States, and is a Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations.

Nicholas Hartmann, Ph.D. (*Art, Activism, and STEAM: Teaching about Revolution through Project-Based Learning*) is the NCSML Director of Learning & Civic Engagement. He has worked as a public folklorist and educator for over a decade, doing ethnographic research and public folklife work in Kentucky, Arizona and Newfoundland. In 2015, he was named an Archie Green Fellowship recipient from the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, and currently serves on the editorial boards of *New Directions in Folklore* and *Journal of Folklore & Education*. Hartman earned a B.A. in folklore and anthropology from Indiana University, an M.A. in folk studies from Western Kentucky University, and a Ph.D. in folklore from Memorial University of Newfoundland.





Taking a Stand: ARTISTS AS ACTIVISTS

By Charlotta Kotik



Author Charlotta Kotik

Top: David Černý, Czech, b. 1967
Red Skull, 2017
Polymer Resin Assemblage
and LED lighting
55 x 39 x 4 in.
Artwork by David Černý, courtesy of
Hohmann Fine Art (www.hohmann.art/cerny)

Most artists are iconoclasts by nature. Together with scientists, they share the need to question generally accepted ideas, whether pertaining to prevailing aesthetic taste, the political structure of the society they are part of, or the accepted data of scientific discipline. The urge to discover formal configurations as yet untested, to establish new approaches, and ultimately alter general consciousness, lead them toward the intense questioning of the status quo. In order to create the new, to seek their own independent expression, they are inadvertently in a state of opposition. Mainly it is the set of artificially created societal rules, designed by often harsh, exploitative political structures that give artists frequent topics for critical ideas and investigations. It is happening especially in times when ruling powers are creating and enforcing nonsensical laws that oppress large segments of populations and hinder whole countries from creating more just and equitable systems. In situations such as these, artists' voices are an important catalyst for change. The very events of 1989 that began the dissolution of the Soviet block would not have been possible without the participation of the artists who brought keen awareness of the ills of the reigning Communist doctrine to the world's attention.

In the former Czechoslovakia, David Černý almost innocently highlighted the overpowering domination perpetrated by the Soviet Union over a large swath of Central and Eastern Europe. In Smichov (within Prague) there was a monumental sculptural tribute erected to celebrate the liberation of Prague by the Red Army in 1945. There a Soviet tank was elevated on



a massive stone platform to remind everyone of their debt to the Soviet Union for the country's liberation from the Nazi oppression during WWII. After the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 when Russian tanks rolled through the country, effectively ending a utopian attempt to reform socialism during the Prague Spring and Dubček's dream of Socialism with a Human Face. The meaning of the tank looming over public space was clear — it spelled domination, not liberation. However it took another 20-plus years to address the issue and it was David Černý, who undertook the task with courage and a large dose of humor. One late night in April 1991, he assembled his trusted friends, got a couple of step ladders, and with ferocious speed began painting the tank angelic pink. When the regular police patrol drove by and questioned the activity, he produced a homemade document that stated he was preparing the tank for the next day's film shoot. *Tank* remained pink and much public discussion ensued, some feeling the act was defiling the heroic heritage, but many more breathing a sigh of relief at the ultimate transformation of the object that, according to the artist, "no longer stirs up terror, but can also bring delight." And delight it was for thousand of visitors to the site who felt the Velvet Revolution of 1989 truly brought a long desired change.

Černý's act allowed others to pose questions that were until then unheard of and opened a large civic discussion. It also brought much attention to the function of an artist within a society. Černý continues creating more large public monuments as well as smaller pieces that all address pertinent issues of today.

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is a worldwide celebrity as well as one of the most controversial of contemporary Chinese artists. His work straddles media and his exhibitions are mounted on all continents in major institutions that also avidly collect his work. Ai Weiwei's criticism of Chinese governmental policies that often curb individual freedoms brought him an endless stream of problems in his own country while his international acclaim grew. He considers the rapid industrial development of China destructive to the rich cultural heritage and while the overproduction of cheap Chinese products floods the world market, the exquisite traditional craftsmanship is dying. A number of years



Top left: jc lenochan, American, b. 1970
"new human' in undoing whiteness.", 2019
Mixed media
62 x 50 in.
Courtesy of jcl studios

Top right: David Černý, Czech, b. 1967
Suitcase II, 2013
Polymer resin assemblage
16 x 21 x 6 in.
Artwork by David Černý, courtesy of
Hohmann Fine Art (www.hohmann.art/cerny)

Ai Weiwei, Chinese, b.1957
Self-Portrait in LEGO, 2017
LEGO bricks
15 x 15 in.
Courtesy Des Moines Art Center
Photo Credit: Rich Sanders, Des Moines





Top: Hong Hao, Chinese, b.1965
My Things No. 3, 2001 – 2002
 Scanned color photograph
 50 x 85 in.
 Courtesy of the Artist and Chambers Fine Art

Above: Ai Weiwei, Chinese, b.1957
Table with Two Legs on the Wall, 2004
 Wood
 50.875 x 44.125 x 39.375 in.
 Private Collection

ago, Ai Weiwei began disassembling historical furniture only to reassemble it in new often-fantastical shapes while always honoring the traditional woodworking methods and materials. *Table* still resembles a table, however its utilitarian function is subverted and the piece is elevated into the realm of sculpture. In many of his large works, Ai Weiwei points out the governmental disregard of the living conditions of his countrymen.

The photographic work of Hong Hao highlights the issue of fast production and the problems of the resulting waste. Studying filmmaking and photography simultaneously, Hao mastered many newly available technical processes and employed them brilliantly in large colorful compositions. Seductive in appearance, they are nevertheless urgent reminders of the suffocating effect of overproduction and overconsumption and its dire consequences on our environment.

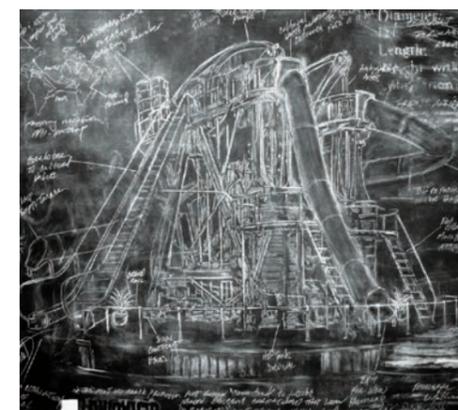
As we witness the never ending turmoil in the Middle East — where the dangerously unresolved issues of the coexistence of Israel and the Palestinian State fuel violence on both sides — it is often the ordinary citizens caught in the political entanglements of history that suffer the most. Palestinian artist Emily Jacir brings our attention to events in the lives of many of her countrymen subjected to the unnecessary hardships due to state bureaucracy. Often employed as a tool of oppression, it can elevate the ordinary tasks into the realm of struggle between the state and its citizens.

Going to a post office becomes a complicated task under the best of circumstances as we see through the eyes of Mahmoud, protagonist of one of Jacir's pieces. He was born in a Palestinian refugee camp and is forbidden to go to Jerusalem, where the closest post office is located. Thus he depends on the kindness of strangers to pay his bills to Israeli authorities in the Israeli territory he cannot access himself. The restrictions on individual movements also affect Munir, portrayed in another of Jacir's work. People of diverse religions all over the world honor their loved ones in life and in death. Munir, who lives in Bethlehem, goes to her mother's grave in Jerusalem to bring flowers and to pray on the anniversary of her death. However sometimes she is denied the entry permit to the very city where her mother was actually born. A myriad of small everyday occurrences such as these ignite bitterness and fuel conflicts — conflicts that often reach tragic proportions and seem to be almost unresolvable.

Tania Bruguera addresses the lack of freedom of expression in Cuba in her iconic work *Tatlin's Whisper #6 (Havana Version)*. Staged for the first time at the Havana Biennial in 2009, the piece provided an opportunity for visitors to speak uncensored for one minute to the surrounding audience. Ultimately a white dove was placed on the speaker's shoulder — as a reminder of a seminal event in the history of Cuba when a dove landed on the shoulder of Fidel Castro during his first speech in Havana after the victory of revolution in 1959. After the one-minute speech the protagonists were escorted away by actors in military uniforms — a grim reminder of the possible consequences. When attempting to re-enact the performance in Havana in 2014, Bruguera was detained prior to the event. A number of her supporters was arrested as well. Although released after only a few hours, it clearly spelled out the lack of freedom and the fallacy of the government claiming all is well and free. The unrealized performance garnered worldwide attention and became a hallmark in the history of politically engaged art. It attests to the power of art to focus on oppression of those living under an authoritarian regime and to reignite the struggle for positive change.

jc lenochan addresses persistence of racial inequality in the United States. His practice embraces multiple media while the artist strives to point out the ingrained prejudices. He firmly believes minds could be open to change through sensitive interpretation of past and present events and facts. jc poses questions about the institutionalized acquisition of knowledge that is often prejudicial and tainted with racism. He posits that through cultural research we can begin the deconstruction of stale and negative ideas and thus effectively utilize the transformative function of art. Deeply involved with education and social sciences, the artist advocates for “manipulating perspectives of dominant ideology, confronting of cultural bias, perception of otherness, and racial fabrication. Everything we see has a potential to become inexplicably something else in terms of justice and trans-pedagogy. Thinking and re-thinking possibilities through critical discourse in the canon of art history allows for an altered way of seeing the world, as a “new human” in undoing whiteness.”

Kashmiri artist Malik Sajad dedicates his work to chronicling life in the India-controlled part of the Kashmir territory. Endowed with legendary natural beauty but fraught by political conflicts following the partition of India and



Top: Tania Bruguera, Cuban, b. 1968
Tatlin's Whisper #6 (Havana version), 2009
 Video
 Courtesy Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Above: jc lenochan, American, b. 1970
De-structuralism “an attempt of de-racing a society,” 2016
 Chalk and charcoal pencil on canvas
 40 x 50 in.
 Courtesy of jcl studios

Below: jc lenochan, American, b. 1970
Street Players in the Killing Zone of White Mischief, 2015
 Discarded paperbacks w/concrete
 14 x 6 x 5 in.
 Courtesy of jcl studios



OP-ART MALIK SAJAD

A Wedding Under Curfew

Three months after India revoked the autonomy of Kashmir and arrested thousands, its seven million residents are still forced to live without access to the internet.



Pakistan in 1947, the everyday life in the “valley” is infinitely challenging. The complex history of this once thriving territory testifies to hardships imposed on ordinary lives by the political and religious conflict of two neighboring countries. Choosing to document seemingly insignificant every day events in the form of drawings, graphic novels, or straightforward cartoons, the artist highlights the crippling effect of extended periods of political and economic oppression on individual lives and the entire territory.

Through history, the artists we celebrate most were engaged with events in their time — always observing, frequently questioning, and often criticizing. When encountering negative developments their voices were indispensable reminders that change is needed if the world should remain a habitable place. In the current world fraught with migration crises, religious intolerance, impending climate change, and economic inequality artists are responding in multiple ways and in large numbers. Far from exhausting the vast lexicon of ideas and formal solutions, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library’s *Artists as Activists* exhibition points toward just a small number of issues addressed in politically engaged art. Nevertheless, even this small segment shows the strength

of art growing from recognition of the urgent need for ethical solutions to existing troubling issues. And it is this very recognition that is a first step toward the search for general understanding that could ultimately result in the creation of a more balanced and unbiased future worldwide. ■

Malik Sajad, Indian, b. 1986
A Wedding Under Curfew.
Op-Art by Malik Sajad for The New York Times, Sunday Review, Op-Art Section, p.2, November 10, 2019

Spreading the News:

CZECHOSLOVAK PERIODICALS IN THE DISPLACED PERSONS CAMPS IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

By Martin Nekola, Ph.D.



Author Martin Nekola, Ph.D.

Following the communist takeover in February 1948, thousands of people were escaping from Czechoslovakia. For the period between 1948-1953 only, the Czechoslovak State Security lists a total number of 43,612 people who illegally left the country; in reality we are probably talking about 60,000 or so. It needs to be emphasized that the representatives of all strata of society were leaving the country after the “victory of the working class,” as the official propaganda labeled the coup. Workers and peasants from the countryside fled as well intelligentsia and urban elites.

Czechoslovakia’s borders were not so heavily guarded and surrounded by barbed wire until 1951, so it was hard, but not impossible to get through to the free world. The most frequently used path led across the Šumava Mountains in southwestern Bohemia to Bavaria, or the American occupation zone of Germany, while people from Moravia and Slovakia took the more risky direction to western sectors of Vienna, at least thirty miles through the region of Lower Austria which was then under Soviet control. Sometimes the refugees were caught by Soviet patrols and delivered to Czechoslovak frontier guards.

In the Spring of 1948, when the first larger groups of Czechs and Slovaks arrived, the refugee agenda in western Europe was under the administration of the International Refugee Organization (IRO), but the gates of its camps were temporarily closed and in April 1947, American military authorities halted aid (supplies, clothes, medical care) for newcomers who had practically no other choice but to give themselves up to German or Austrian authorities, thus ending up temporarily in local camps under much worse conditions than the ones provided by IRO. Hygienic conditions and accommodations in these camps met only very basic requirements. Many were little more than wooden shacks, former prisoner-of-war camps, military barracks, schools, factories, or even more primitive housing, such as tents, train cars, and various provisional types of housing.

Every day about 200 refugees arrived in the U.S. zone of Germany alone and their presence was becoming a serious political issue since they had to share the camps with Sudeten Germans, the German minority expelled from Czechoslovakia after the war, and it is no wonder that relations between these two communities were not friendly at all.

The living conditions in the camps were hard, in some cases, there was a lack of drinking water, in winter months also a permanent lack of fuel and coal for heating, and the need for supplies became more and more urgent.



Editors work on camp periodicals using materials that were short in supply, such as paper, to the best of their ability. Photo courtesy of UNHCR Archives, Geneva - International Refugees Organization 1947-1952.



A variety of papers were printed to spread news throughout the camps. Here are the front pages, sometimes the only page, of various publications.

Photos courtesy of the University of Chicago - Archives of Czechs and Slovaks Abroad.

Everyone was waiting in a nervous vacuum. Everyone wanted to leave the camps and move to the U.S., Canada, Australia, Latin America, or elsewhere. Europe was still in ruins and slowly recovering from the war.

The daily life behind the walls and fences of the displaced persons (DP) camps could be easily likened to a unique microcosm, where you could have found prostitution, a black market, violent and boozy clashes between the members of nations, as well as churches, chapels, libraries, schools, kindergartens, sport associations (in Czechoslovak, it was the famous *Sokol/Falcon*), scout troops, and also nascent political organizations and political parties.

Since the latest news from the outside world was highly demanded among the refugees, a considerable journalistic activity developed from the first moments in the camps, even though economic conditions in Germany were far from favorable. There was a lack of paper and printing-ink, and printing machines were, naturally, also unavailable. At first, news about developments outside the camps was spread by word of mouth. It was customary to call a meeting once a week at which journalists informed the audience about the latest events. The first newspaper-like publication called *Deník* (Daily) appeared in May 1948 in the Dieburg camp. Its editor, Emil Lašák, always prepared several copies on a typewriter. The length of each issue was determined, not by the amount of news, but by the quantity of paper which the editor could lay his hands on. There were similar papers like *Hlas tábora* (Voice of the Camp) in Unterjettingen and *Čechoslovák* in Wiesbaden. *Svoboda* (Freedom), with its first issue in September 1948, was the very first weekly periodical, published by Pavel Tigrid (later a famous journalist and, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Czech Minister of Culture) in Frankfurt and, after 1949, we see many new titles like *Československé noviny* (Czechoslovak News) in Pforzheim, *Tribuna* (Tribune) in Murnau, *Československý odboj* (Czechoslovak Resistance) in Valka, *Táborové noviny* (Camp News) in Eichstätt, and many others. Upon closer examination of the content, we see all kinds of contributions: political news, practical advice for newcomers related to life in the camp, poetry, jokes, quotations from the speeches of exile leaders, and useful information about visa applications and resettlement.

There were three separate camps in Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart: Arsenalkaserne, Krabbenlochkaserne and Jägerhofkaserne. Most of the residents were Polish and Czech, and the camp was also served as a student center. The so-called National Union of Czechoslovak Students in Exile was founded there. The students in Ludwigsburg did not have education related to helping them develop the knowledge and skills on how to make a visa application or apply for a job. That was the main reason why the Masaryk's University College of Czechoslovak Students in Exile was established on October 28, 1948. This was on the Czech national holiday and the 30th anniversary of the foundation of Czechoslovakia. The college was named after the first Czechoslovak President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and a number of former university professors who also stayed in the camp, began to teach economy, philosophy, sociology, literature, and international relations lessons on a daily basis in Czech, Slovak, English, German, French, and Spanish, enabling the students to carry on their research and academic work. In the early 1950s, there was a peak of 250 students, who took part in the classes, passed exams, wrote seminary works, and received

a certificate at the end of the semester. Masaryk College was recognized by the International Refugee Organization (IRO) as an education facility, high school diplomas and vocational certificates issued by the college were taken into account by the immigration officials who reviewed all applicants destined to enter various countries. The disadvantage was a permanent fluctuation of students. During 1951 the majority of students and faculty successfully resettled. The college and its programs were abandoned. In every way, Masaryk College could serve as a case study of unique community building in the DP camps.

The Scout troop in Arsenalkaserne published its monthly called *Lilie* (Lily). The Y.M.C.A. published the magazine *Tep* (Pulse). Future editor of the “Voice of America” Vojtěch Nevlud was responsible for a political bulletin *Demokrat* (Democrat). There was also a children's bulletin *Malý čtenář* (Little Reader). Otto Gráf, who was later working for Radio Free Europe, created *Československé nezávislé noviny* (Czechoslovak Independent Newspaper) and *Doba* (Era), whose production didn't avoid a great deal of improvisation. Instead of an unavailable typesetting machine, toothbrushes and spoons served the same purpose. Moreover, lipstick, body powder, and shoe wax helped to create three-color illustrations on the front cover page. The periodicals were usually cyclostyled and few rare copies were quickly distributed among eager readers.

Probably more than 250,000 people left Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989, until the Fall of the Iron Curtain, whose thirtieth anniversary we celebrate in 2019. During the long years in exile, the émigrés established about two hundred organizations, associations, and clubs around the world and published dozens of periodicals in Czech, Slovak, and other languages. However, numerous brochures, leaflets, magazines, and newspapers that have appeared in the displaced persons camps are almost forgotten now. Only the Archives of Czechs and Slovaks Abroad at the University of Chicago holds a few on microfilms. It is an urgent task for the Czech historiography to preserve and catalogue them as the integral part of our history and the phenomenon of modern journalism. These publications often times contain the individually unique stories of distrust, anger, and gentle journalistic activism. ■



Dedicated editors worked to put together information for various clubs, organizations and political groups in camp periodicals.

Photo courtesy of UNHCR Archives, Geneva - International Refugees Organization 1947-1952.



“Peace with this Country Should Forever Stay:”
**SINGER AND DISSIDENT
 MARTA KUBIŠOVÁ**

By Marek Vašut, M.A.



Author Marek Vašut

The balcony of Melantrich, a house standing on Wenceslas Square in Prague, became in November 1989 one of the key points of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. This balcony served as some sort of stage for the leading persons of upcoming changes — roughly 200,000 people on the square were listening to the speeches of Václav Havel and actor Rudolf Hrušínský. On November 22, 1989, only five days after protests that triggered the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia, the crowd saw on the balcony a once-famous singer, who “disappeared” from the public eye twenty years earlier — Marta Kubišová. The fate of the revolution was still undecided and the army together with the police — still very loyal to the communist government — were standing armed and ready to suppress any protests by force. This scenario, however, never took place and Czechoslovakia eventually became a free and democratic country again.

Three decades after the events of the Velvet Revolution, Marta Kubišová recalls her special moment of a public comeback: “I saw few familiar faces — Standa Milota, Vlasta Chramostová and some members of the civic initiative Charter 77. And right there Jiří Černý told me: ‘Marta, we need a little prayer [her famous signature song Prayer for Marta]...’ and suddenly pushed me on the balcony. I didn’t have the right key and after twenty years I couldn’t remember the lyrics...” “Prayer for Marta,” after more than twenty years, became an unofficial anthem again: an anthem of widespread excitement, joy and a start of a new era of freedom.

Marta Kubišová was born in 1940 during World War II in the so-called “Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia,” a state that was created on the ashes of the former Czechoslovakia and was occupied by Nazi. Nevertheless, her life was influenced in a negative way much more by another totalitarian regime that (almost immediately) took control over the state — communism.

One of the symptoms of the new communist establishment after the coup in February 1948 was responsibility for family origins: elite parts of the society (such as physicians, lawyers, businessmen, academics, etc.) as well as a considerable part of the middle class. The new leading force in the state was the worker class, which excluded Marta and her family origins as her father was a physician. Her father also showed activism through his cardiology practice where he was unwilling to comply with the regime. As a result,

Pop singer Marta Kubisova with her dog Ginny at Charles Bridge. CTK Photo/Jovan Dezort

Marta was not allowed to go to study at the university and found a job in a glasswork factory. As the pressure from the regime grew stronger, the Kubiš family had to move to Poděbrady and Marta’s father was forced to close his practice. He even spent a few months in prison as he kept refusing to comply with the regime.

Marta’s resistant, strong, and unyielding character manifested during this period as she applied over and over for university studies. All of her applications were rejected and, on top of that, after the third rejection, she was dismissed from her job. Luckily, her mother suggested a free theatre singer position in Pardubice, which would turn into a lifetime decision.

Having no official music education, Marta learned to sing listening to Radio Luxembourg and reproducing well-known hits with her brother. Thanks to her talent, the unique color of her voice, and engagement at the theatre Marta found herself soon singing with famous

Czechoslovak artists on famous stages. Her star was on the rise throughout the 1960s, culminating in 1969, when she won the Golden Nightingale Award for the third time and was a member of a popular singer trio “The Golden Kids” altogether with Helena Vondráčková and Václav Neckář.

Dissident

On August 20, 1968, more than 5,000 army tanks of the Warsaw Pact crushed the invasion dreams of revised liberal socialism in Czechoslovakia altogether with many lives and careers. During the huge disillusionment caused by the occupation of the country, Kubišová’s signature song “A Prayer for Marta” became the anthem of the invaded nation, making Marta one of the faces of the opposition to the Soviet occupiers. In addition, her open support of the leading protagonist of the country during the reformistic “Prague Spring” in 1968 — Alexander Dubček — was considered unacceptable by the new, supported government.

The regime, frightened by the Prague Spring movement and its reformist spirit, started in the 1970s with the persecution of those who were not



The Golden Kids singing in Europe 1969 in Scheveningen. Photo by Joost Evers / Anefo



Czech singer Marta Kubišová received the French Order of the Legion of Honor at French Embassy in Prague, Czech Republic, on Monday, October 29, 2012. CTK Photo/Stanislav Peska.

obviously loyal. Marta was banned from performing in public and accused of making pornography. This allegation had been made on purpose by State Security (communist secret service) in order to defame the nonconformist artist. It was subsequently rescinded by the court immediately. At this point, Marta “said no to the devil” by refusing an offer to exchange her career for support of Normalization and the regime. This decision determined her next 20 years of life. Instead of fame and life in comfort, she was victimized and ostracized from society. Her family friend and later president of the free Czechoslovakia and Czech Republic claimed “she wouldn’t sing if it meant making compromises.”

As an enemy of the regime, Marta could take only the secondary manual jobs, such as gluing bags. And her bad fortune in professional life was even worsened by her personal life. She married her first husband Jan Němec, a director of successful films in 1970. In the following year, Marta had a miscarriage and survived clinical death. Although they once had a marriage full of happiness, it eventually broke. Němec was banned from filming and emigrated in order to live a normal life and fulfilling his career as a director. Marta, on the other hand, refused to

leave the country. After marrying another director, Jan Moravec, Marta gave birth in 1979 to her daughter Kateřina, which “filled her life with new meaning, joy and strength.”

Despite the disfavor of the destiny and despotism of those in power, Marta bravely faced all the misery bravely and with active resistance against injustice. Her consistent negative stance against the totalitarian regime was demonstrated again with her signature of Charter 77, a document that was created by Czechoslovak dissidents and criticized the government for failing to implement promised human rights provisions. She also became a spokeswoman of Charter 77, meaning even more scrutiny for her. The spreading of the Charter 77 message was considered a political crime and was punished in several ways, such as dismissal from work, forced exile, loss of citizenship, detention, imprisonment, and forced collaboration with the State Security.

All Kubišová’s songs were banned from public broadcast and there was no place where her recordings could be purchased. On the other hand, previously published LPs were shared, predominantly among underground groups. Although the voice of Kubišová was cleared out of the public waves, she managed to sing at least on at private sessions and events of anti-regime people, such as dissidents or other non-conformists.

The Velvet Revolution

The Velvet Revolution in 1989 was for Marta Kubišová, as well as for many others, a moment of satisfaction and victory after a long period (1948-1989) of persecution, humiliation, and exclusion from “normal” society. Her already high moral credit raised even higher after 1989 with her dedication not only to music and singing but also to charity and helping animals. Although she officially ended her career as a singer in 2007, her personality and legacy are still well known and respected among Czech and Slovak societies. ■



Karel Gott (1939 – 2019):

AN APOLITICAL ARTIST?

By Josette Baer

“In politics obedience and support are the same.”

This essay focuses on Karel Gott’s life against the background of the two political regimes he lived under: Soviet-type Socialism (1948–1989) and democracy (1989–2004), or rather, democratization that was accomplished with the Czech Republic’s membership in the European Union in 2004.

I am no expert on music and thus cannot comment on Karel Gott’s artistic talent. Mine is a purely subjective perspective as a Western citizen and political scientist who grew up with Gott’s music as a child in democratic Switzerland in the 1970s. My fond memories of childhood include Gott’s famous songs *Biene Maja* and *Kde ptáčko hnízdo máš*, the theme song of the film *Three Hazelnuts for Cinderella*. *Cinderella*, with the beautiful young Libuše Šafránková, is a Christmas tradition on Swiss, German, and Austrian national TV.

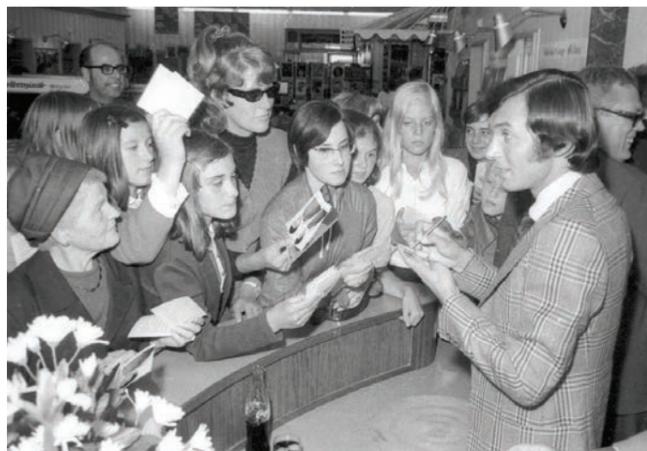
Karel Gott died in the night of October 1, 2019. His death came as a shock to Czech and Slovak citizens. Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš expressed elegantly and touchingly what most citizens must have felt: “I thought he would always be around, that he would always be with us.”

Gott was buried with all honors in St. Vitus Cathedral at Prague Castle on Saturday, October 12, 2019; before him, only President Václav Havel (1936–2011) and President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937) had been honored with a state funeral. This fact puts the singer Karel Gott in the pantheon of Czech democratic politicians. Does Gott deserve this honor? And was he really apolitical, hence not interested in politics? And is this question important for us to cast judgement, if we want to cast judgement at all? Let us look at the facts.



Author Josette Baer

Czech popular singer Karel Gott during his performance at the festival Rock for People in Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic, July 4, 2013. Photo credit: yakub88 / Shutterstock.com.



Gott signing autographs in August 1969. Photo by Magnussen, Friedrich (1914-1987) - Stadtarchiv Kiel, CC BY-SA 3.0 de, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=69630839>

Gott supported the Husák regime at home and abroad, particularly on popular West German TV shows such as *Wetten dass...* on Saturday nights. He was a frequent guest on West German TV, praised as the golden voice from Prague. He sold millions of records in Western Europe. He had a fan club of elderly West German women who used to travel every year to Prague to congratulate Gott on his birthday on July 14; the four ladies used to stand in front of his villa, waving their congratulations and, every year, Gott would appear on the balcony and thank them. At a time when the Capitalist West was the declared enemy of Socialist Czechoslovakia, Gott's performances in the West earned a lot of hard

currency for the regime. I think it is quite apt to call him the 'golden goose' of Husák's Czechoslovakia.

I quote from memory citizens who laid flowers in front of his villa in the Bertramka quarter of Prague on the morning of October 2nd, interviewed by various Czech TV channels. "He was there when we had to go through the hardest of times." "He could have left after 1968, but he stayed on." "His songs took the pain away from daily life under the Bolsheviks." "He gave us hope and joy." "He was always perfectly professional, a superstar who was modest and generous – he never put on airs."

The Velvet Revolution of November 1989 has to be understood in the context of the Cold War (1948–1991) and Soviet-bloc politics. Once it was clear to the citizens of the bloc states that Moscow would not send troops against the mass demonstrations taking place in each capital of the bloc, thousands of East Germans left for West Germany via Hungary in the summer of 1989. Hungarian border police had cut the fence in June, practically opening up a hole in the 'antifascist wall'. Romanian citizens toppled the Ceausescu regime in December, and Slovaks and Czechs stood up against the tyranny of the Party and the State Security Service (StB) in November. With hindsight, one could have expected the wall to fall, yet, the rapid pace of the democratic revolutions surprised me, a student of political science and Slavic languages. By December 1990, the Soviet bloc was history. Probably those in power were even more surprised – certainly Husák whose reaction to this shocking contact with political reality can be compared with that of another ruler in equally dramatic circumstances:

"Louis XVI : 'Mais c'est une révolte ?' — 'Non, Sire, c'est une révolution !'"
(Louis XVI: "But is this a revolt?" – "No, Sire, it's a revolution!")"

The Velvet Revolution of November 1989 prompted Karel Gott – like so many Czech and Slovak artists – to reconsider his activities under the Husák regime, during a period that in historiography is referred to as the period of Normalization (1969–1989). The concept of 'normalization' is telling since it was accompanied by the establishment of a neo-Stalinist regime following the Warsaw Pact invasion of August 21, 1968 that had put a brutal end to Alexander Dubček's reform politics.

Karel Gott had signed the *anticharta* in February 1977, the government-dictated statement of loyalty to Czechoslovak Socialism and Normalization politics that, so the Party must have thought, would discredit the dissidents of Charter 77, at least at home. Havel, the philosopher Jan Patočka and former foreign minister Jiří Hájek were the first three spokesmen for Charter 77; their

signatures confirmed the authenticity of the first manifesto, which they managed to smuggle to the West on January 1, 1977.

Naturally, I am speculating here, but I deem it possible that after 1989 Gott had a bad conscience about having signed the *anticharta*. Yet, he was certainly not the only artist who had caved in to the immense pressure of the authorities; almost all Slovak and Czech artists, painters, singers, actors and writers signed the *anticharta*, and those who refused, for example the Slovak writers Hana Ponická and Dominik Tatarka and the Czech writer Ivan Klíma, had to endure hardships that we Westerners can hardly imagine: manual labor in menial jobs such as cleaning the streets and parks, loss of privileges like publication and membership in professional associations, interrogation, constant surveillance by the StB and, probably most brutal, the psychological terror of the StB by threats of a lower pension and mountains of bureaucratic difficulties.

After the Velvet Revolution, Gott, as he had explained in an interview with ČT1 on July 14, 2019, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, had undergone a personal re-evaluation; after the Velvet Revolution, he was planning to retire from show business. Furthermore, he could not know how the new, democratically elected government would treat him; as an active supporter of the Normalization regime would he have to face legal persecution? I have heard experts on various Czech TV channels saying that Gott was deeply sorry for having signed the *anticharta*. He was so troubled by his support of the Husák regime that he thought he would be ousted, that nobody after 1989 would want him to sing and perform any longer.

But he was wrong; people wanted him back. He was part of their lives; Slovaks and Czechs alike could not imagine a life under the new regime without him. So he kept on working, performing, recording, and singing. When he asked the West German rock band Alphaville, which was very popular in Europe in the 1980s and early 1990s, to allow him to cover one of their songs, Alphaville replied that it would be an honor. At a concert in Moravian Ostrava on October 13, 2019, Alphaville officially dedicated their greatest hit *Forever Young* to Karel Gott.

To conclude: Was Karel Gott an apolitical artist or a fervent supporter of the Husák regime? In 1948, when the Czechoslovak Communist Party took power in a putsch, Karel Gott was nine years



Prague, Czech Republic May 30, 2017. Famed Czech singer Karel Gott in front of the Hybernia Theatre in Prague, Czechia. Photo credit: perous / Shutterstock.com.

old. Thus, his socialization as a teenager and young adult happened under the Socialist regime. Gott simply did not know any other regime or government, and even after the Warsaw Pact invasion of August 21, 1968, he was loyal to the neo-Stalinist government. Like so many of his fellow citizens, he was used to the fact that politics were made “on high,” by those in power.

However, this did not mean he was apolitical. I think Dubček’s reforms politicized him, made him aware of freedom of speech as a liberty the Czechs and Slovaks had so long been bereft of. After the invasion of 1968 he, for the first and last time, decided to engage in an independent act, an act of political self-determination. According to recent research by Czech historians, Gott left with the Štajdl brothers, his music producers, on a tour to Hamburg in West Germany in 1971, from where he did not return. In a letter to Husák, he condemned censorship and the invasion and declared that he would not return. The StB reacted immediately, opening a criminal case: if he did not come back home, they would release a psychiatric assessment to the press that indicated sexual deviation. They also threatened to interrogate his parents.

These were devilish threats. The artist was not married and an assessment hinting at a possible homosexual orientation or paedophilia signed by a psychiatrist would have finished Gott’s career in West Germany, while his elderly parents would have to endure the psychological terror of interrogation and social isolation. Gott returned home, and Husák – who always knew when to flaunt himself as the generous and wise father of the nation, although he was fully responsible for the StB activities – instructed the StB to close the case.

It would be staggeringly unfair to cast judgement on Gott as a supporter of “Communism.” Karel Gott’s voice was a gift from the gods; he was a kind person, never arrogant, and people loved him. Listen to *Hearts Will Go On*, the beautiful song he sang with his teenage daughter Charlotte Ella. ■



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Exhibiting Dissent:

EXPO 1970 AND THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN PAVILION’S ‘FATE OF SMALL NATIONS’

Czechoslovakian Pavilion, Expo 1970, Osaka, Japan.

By Amy Hughes

Unbeknownst to visitors entering the Czechoslovakian Pavilion at the Expo 1970 in Osaka, Japan, they were about to witness one of the 20th century’s most public protests against the Soviet invasion on August 20-21, 1968. The expression of this political unrest, however, came not from chanting crowds, but rather from monumental art exhibitions showcased in the pavilion. The invasion brought an abrupt end to the Prague Spring, a short-lived period in Spring 1968 involving the relaxing of censorship and greater tolerance of freedom of expression. Thus began the period known as normalization, in which the Communist government implemented severe crackdowns on freedom of expression advancements made during the Prague Spring, severed numerous international ties, and enacted both a new round of citizen imprisonments and purges from the Communist Party. Determined to draw attention to the political situation in Czechoslovakia and voice their opposition to the Soviet invasion, participating artists — who had to be affiliated with the party in order to present their works — transformed the pavilion’s main exhibition space into a collection of artistic statements condemning the government’s actions. Not only do these artworks shed light on public sentiment in the early years of normalization, but they also call attention to the importance of examining the under-researched sphere of individuals who worked within official structures but also expressed dissent, expanding understanding of dissent beyond actions in which only so-called dissidents engaged. These works also demonstrate the significant role of international fairs as “double agents,” spectacles projecting images of state grandeur and official propaganda as well as platforms giving voice to expressions of dissent. Numerous Pavilion works embodied these protests. This article will look at three.



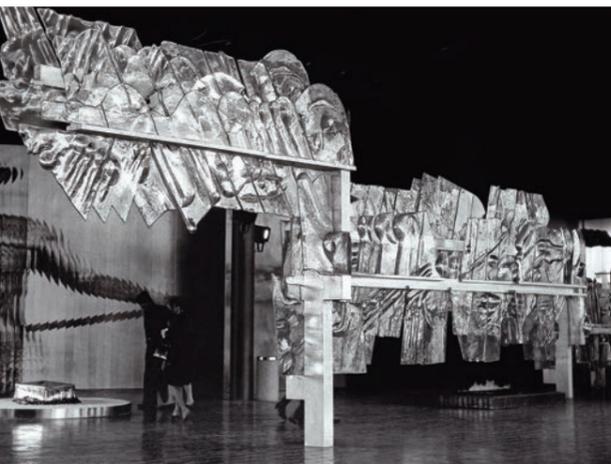
Author Amy Hughes



Adult admission ticket to the 1970 Expo in Osaka, Japan. Author's collection. Photo credit: Author.



René Roubíček, *Cloud* (1968-1970). Blown clear glass, steel, rubber, ceramic pool with running water.



Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, *River of Life* (1968-1970). Cast, colorless, mold-melted glass with negative relief carving and engraving, steel, ceramic pool with running water. In the background Jiří Kolář's *The Constancy of Thought* can be seen on the wall and Stanislav Kolíbal's *Homage to Japan* rests on the pavilion's floor.

In the world before the internet, world expos (also called world's fairs or international fairs) were what we would consider today to be major influencers seen on Instagram and Facebook.

Held every few years, the expos were one of the biggest global platforms of their time, attracting millions of people and press attention from all over the world. Displays and objects inside the pavilions became trendsetters in artistic and technological spheres; participating countries' and industries' pavilions exploited this exposure to sell goods and promote propaganda. Developing from 18th century trade fairs and markets at which vendors, artisan, and guilds would promote, display, and sell their goods, these fairs were not only places to sell goods and promote a country's or company's technical, scientific, or cultural achievements, but were also used to assert ideas of identity, nationalism, and political power. Amid Cold War tensions, both American and Soviet superpowers seized the opportunity to use these fairs to advance propaganda about their respective cultures, politics, and ways of life. For both superpowers it was imperative they appeared strong, successful, and unified, so both heavily invested in the design of their respective pavilions. The postwar world's fairs acted as a stage on which these propaganda campaigns were played out. While it may not come as a surprise that the most-visited pavilions were the United States' and the Soviet Union's, interestingly, the Czechoslovakian pavilion, representing a small Soviet-bloc country, was also one of the most visited pavilions for the world's fairs of 1958, 1967 and 1970, winning awards at all these fairs for architecture, technological, and artistic works. With all this global exposure, why would the Czechoslovak government allow works critical of it to remain on view?

The final approval for all the Czechoslovakian exhibits came only a few days before the August invasion in 1968. During the next year social unrest and tensions increased. As the political situation deteriorated, several exhibits meant for the pavilion were modified to more directly express opposition to the regime's actions. Expo 1970's main theme was "Progress and Harmony for Mankind;" the Czechoslovakian Pavilion was entitled "The Fate of Small Nations." Conceived by Aleš Janček, Vladimír Palla, and Viktor Rudiš, the Pavilion was designed as a flat, one-story structure composed of outer walls made of glass, a cantilevered wooden roof, and a dark ceramic tile floor and a cylindrical two-story movie theatre. Created as one open-concept interior space, the building showcased a central exhibition space spanning the length of the 79,000 square-foot structure. Receiving popular and critical acclaim, it was named one of the three best pavilions by the Japanese Institute of Architecture.

Monumental sculpture dominated the open-concept pavilion. At one end of the exhibition space was René Roubíček's (1922-2018) glass sculpture, *Cloud*, a massive work composed of bent, clear-glass rods over seven meters tall and eight meters wide attached at various points by rubber and metal supports.

Exploring glass's material and expressive properties and concepts of space, Roubíček broke glass out of its traditional functional role by making an abstract sculpture around which one could walk. Its shape evoked the image of a tornado, with glass rods rising up to form a swirling, funnel-shaped cloud. The work appeared to spring from one tiny, contained point in the ground to a massive explosion in the sky. Roubíček stated that *Cloud* "represented a... source of water, the foundation of all life." A small fountain with running water in a circular pool rested next to the piece, underscoring this sentiment. *Cloud*, with its complex maze of spiraling glass rods, appeared to be spinning out of

control, conveying a sense of unstoppable dynamism and momentum. In both concept and execution, it symbolized the exploding, unbridled force of life, in all its natural and raw power, a force larger than the oppression by the government.

Beginning near *Cloud* and dominating the central space of the pavilion was another monumental glass sculpture — Stanislav Libenský's (1922 - 2002) and Jaroslava Brychtová's (b. 1924) *River of Life*, a series of clear, vertical, double-layered glass panels hung on horizontally-placed steel supports. Spanning 22 meters, reaching four and a half meters in height, and weighing 12 tons, this was the largest glass sculpture ever made. Mimicking the natural trajectory of a stream originating high in the mountains that softly cascades downward, the first panels of *River of Life* were placed on metal supports high enough in the air so that an average-height adult could walk underneath. Incrementally these supports decreased in height, bringing the panels closer to the ground as the piece moved through space in an undulating line. Each of the panels showcased negative casting that created a series of abstract spheres, cylinders, and diagonal lines in the panels. In the center of the sculpture, two life-size human figures with outstretched arms — Ms. Brychtová's daughter and her friend — were cast into the work, along with young girls' feet, symbolizing, according to Ms. Brychtová, the acts of "swimming" and "dancing" in the river and the "various amusements [that] take place by the river." On the sculpture's exterior were engraved giant army boots, overt references to the Soviet invasion. *River of Life*'s figures mixed desperately out-stretched arms and haunting expressions with the solidness, size, and physicality of their bodies, creating forms that at once appeared both powerless yet defiant and strong. As the panels cascaded downward, the once-flowing and orderly forms grew more chaotic, symbolically referencing both the freezing of the river and the impairment of life and movement due to Soviet transgression. The work, in its sheer size and arresting figures, conveyed the gravitas, majesty, and pulse of life while simultaneously illustrating the life-ending consequences of violence and aggression. *River of Life* flowed towards three large, life-size cast-iron bells which, according to Roubíček, were intended to be the "the warning voice of a great bell [that] beat the alarm for all nations."

Another overt reference to the invasion was sculptor and painter Vladimír Janoušek's (1922 - 1986) large-scale installation, *Menaces of War*. Consisting of several life-size iron soldiers with abstract-shaped and jagged-edged bodies holding weapons and shields, they were placed appearing to march towards the center of the building. This procession of soldiers began outside, on the grounds of the pavilion, and proceeded into the building's interior. Only floor-to-ceiling windows separated the indoor sculptures from the exterior ones, visible from every angle of the pavilion and making an unmistakably ominous, malevolent, and arresting statement. The advancing army of faceless, jagged-edged soldiers symbolized the anonymous ruthlessness, violence, injustice, and fear the real-life armies occupying Czechoslovakia caused. Underscoring the unmistakable reference to the Soviet invasion was the unofficial name given to this work, *Entry of the Troops*. The soldiers' placement in the exhibition — coming from the direction of the Soviet Union's pavilion — produced a literal invasion of the Czechoslovakian pavilion from outside its borders.



Detail of the life-size figure cast into Stanislav Libenský's and Jaroslava Brychtová's *River of Life* (1968-1970).



Czechoslovakian stamp promoting EXPO 1970's display of historic bells included in the pavilion's exhibition.



Detailed view of Libenský's and Jaroslava Brychtová's *River of Life* with Vladimír Janoušek, *Menaces of War* in the background.

Vladimír Janoušek, *Menaces of War* (1968-1970). Iron, other metals. The solid figures carry iron weapons and shields.

SOURCES

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While the first use of the English definition of dissent dates to the fifteenth century, the term, “*dissident*” (“*dissident*”), only entered common Czech usage in the mid-late 1970s, imported by American and Western European journalists and scholars. While dissent, in Western contexts is something not only active and political, but also clearly defined, for Central Eastern European so-called dissidents, the term is anything but clear—or necessarily positive. As cultural historian Jonathan Bolton points out, the word was always considered problematic by opposition intellectuals throughout Eastern Europe because of the rigid binary structure of dissident versus collaborator, which they believed created artificial boundaries between members of society, as evidenced by the fact that many Czech opposition thinkers, including Václav Havel, Pavel Kohout and others, put the words “*dissidence*” and “*dissidents*” in quotation marks in their major writings. While the term was eventually adopted, albeit with ironic distance, its definition continued to be of major concern to opposition intellectuals in Eastern Europe throughout 1970s and 1980s. See “*Dissent, n.*” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2015. Web. 2, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/55409> (accessed 19 June 2015); “*Dissident, n.*” *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého online*. Institute of the Czech Language, 2011, <http://sjic.ujc.cas.cz/search.php?hledej=Hledat&heslo=dissident&sti=EMPTY&where=hesla&hsubst=no> (accessed 19 June 2015); Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, The Plastic People of the Universe and Czech Culture under Communism*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 2012, 3-4, 13; David Danaher, *Reading Václav Havel*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 59.

Sylva Petrová, *Czech Glass*, (Prague: Gallery, 2001), 49, 80; “World-Wide Success: Brussels 1958 Reporting,” *Czechoslovakian Glass Review* 14 (1959): 45; “Expo 67 Highlights,” <http://jdppeon.home.aH.net/expo67.html> (Accessed 20 November 2014; no longer in service).

Petr Kubica. Interview with Tereza Nekyindová, *Expo po česku. Období triumfů*, 2015, Česká televize <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10945007577-expo-po-cesku/214562261900002-obdobi-triumfu/> (Accessed 10 March 2019).

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“Czechoslovak Pavilion.” *East 5* (1970): 68.

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Roubíček, *Sklo*, 79.

Jaromíra Maršíková, “Expo 70.” *Revue du Verre* 3 (1970): 66.

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Ibid.

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“V japonké Osace proběhla světová výstava Expo,” Česká televize <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10266819072-vypravej/ve-stopach-doby/1970/170-v-japonske-osace-probehla-svetova-vystava-expo/> (Accessed 10 March 2018).

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Kubica, Interview with Jaroslava Brychtová, *Expo po česku. Období triumfů*.

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Ibid.

“V japonké proběhla světová výstava Expo,” Česká televize <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10266819072-vypravej/ve-stopach-doby/1970/170-v-japonske-osace-probehla-svetova-vystava-expo/> (Accessed 10 March 2018).

Peter Green, “Stanislav Libenský, 80; Redefined Glass Art,” *New York Times*, 2 March 2002.



The powerful statements of these monumental artworks collectively made a resounding public rebuke of the regime’s actions — on one of the era’s biggest global platforms. The message was at once understood by the Communist authorities. Upon viewing the pavilion shortly before it opened to the public and seeing the overt political nature of the works, officials briefly discussed not opening the pavilion for the duration of the fair, but realized closing it would cause a greater international scandal on an influential global stage. Instead, officials frantically searched for elements they could change, focusing on the boot prints on *River of Life*, which were subsequently ground out. Officials placed a strict embargo on publications and photos. Many of the artists who participated in the fair were not allowed to present their work for the next 20 years and faced threats and persecution for years afterwards. Both Libenský and Brychtová were expelled from the Communist Party and, along with Roubíček, faced intimidation and threats that lasted for years. Janoušek was not allowed to show his work until after 1989; Jiří Kolář, whose work, *The Constance of Thought*, was on display, also faced persecution, as did several workers who set up the fair. The General Commission of the Exhibition, Miroslav Galuška was expelled from the Party and barred from similar work until after 1989. Because glass was such a lucrative export, however, Libenský, Brychtová and Roubíček continued to receive commissions from the Communist government for large-scale works and, upon occasion, could travel abroad, but not with their spouses/partners. Sadly, the artworks suffered as well: *River of Life* was cut into three pieces and its whereabouts were unknown until recently when one of the sections was confirmed to be in Japan (the other two sections’ locations remain unknown); the whereabouts of *Cloud* and *Menaces of War* are unknown and are thought to be most likely destroyed.

These monumental artworks from Expo 1970 showcased the ways in which these artists manipulated their media to express artistic, political, and personal sentiments opposing the 1968 Soviet invasion, while also exploiting Expo 1970’s global platform and visibility to express their feelings about their experiences of witnessing the Soviet invasion and its aftermath. Transmitting emotions hostile to the regime into artworks displayed on the most public, international platform of its time required not only artistic mastery but also tremendous personal courage. Expo 1970’s artworks shed light on the way this fair became a vehicle for dissidence, affording artists working within official party structures a highly visible platform in which they could meld their personal convictions and experiences with their artistic and technical expertise to make powerful statements about both the strength and perseverance of the force of life and the horror and destructive nature of oppression. ■

Experience Dissidence Through Art:

KNOWLEDGE WE HAVED GAINED

By Martin Palouš

On February 21, 1990, Václav Havel – still under arrest less than four months before as a “subversive element” under the occasion of National Day – addressed in his new capacity as Czechoslovak President a joint session of the U.S. Congress. He was welcomed as a leader of the Velvet Revolution, which brought to an end the totalitarian communist rule in his country. In his speech, Havel said:

“The communist type of totalitarian system has left both our nations, Czechs and Slovaks – as it has all the nations of the Soviet Union, and the other countries the Soviet Union subjugated in its time – a legacy of countless dead, an infinite spectrum of human suffering, profound economic decline, and above all enormous human humiliation. It has brought us horrors that, fortunately, you have never known.

At the same time – unintentionally, of course – it has given us something positive: a special capacity to look, from time to time, somewhat further than those who have not undergone this bitter experience. Someone who cannot move and live a normal life because he is pinned under a boulder has more time to think about his hopes than someone who is not trapped in this way.

What I am trying to say is this: we must all learn many things from you, from how to educate our offspring, how to elect our representatives, to how to organize our economic life so that it will lead to prosperity and not poverty. But this doesn’t have to be merely assistance from the well-educated, the powerful, and the wealthy to those who have nothing to offer in return.

We, too, can offer something to you: our experience and the knowledge that has come out from it.”

To understand what is the gist of knowledge that can, as Havel promised, come out from the experience of totalitarianism, and to learn from the many expressions of dissidence expressed through countless art forms, we must study and learn from the actual events that led to this presentation by President Havel in 1990. We must also look at the relevance of this knowledge from the point of view of those who have been lucky to live their lives so far in a non-totalitarian world, let us depart from his own life story and highlight some of its major turning points in history primarily led by artists from all backgrounds.

The point of departure: the Czechoslovak “Normalization”

In order to understand the ideas occupying the minds of future revolutionaries/activists before the revolution broke out unexpectedly and found them rather unprepared for their new roles, we must return to the situation in Czechoslovakia in the first half of the 1970s. The political strategy of the new communist leadership – which got into power after the invasion of the Warsaw Pact countries led by the Soviet Union and set for itself the goal to “normalize” again the situation in the country – was immoral, dishonest, deceitful and treasonable. At the same time, however, it was realistic (with respect to the



Author Martin Palouš, Ph.D.

distribution of power in Europe divided into the East and the West in the framework of bipolar political architecture of the Cold War), and apparently working.

Step by step, the “normalizers” managed to suppress all aspirations for freedom that had suddenly burst out in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring of 1968, and to “convince” the absolute majority of Czechoslovak population – by means of pressure, harassment, blackmailing and omnipresent propaganda – to accept voluntarily again its totalitarian enslavement; “to extinguish in advance the smallest glimmer of independent social initiative,” as philosopher Jan Patočka put it in a lecture pronounced in a private apartment in front of a close circle of his disciples in the fall of 1973, after he had been forced for a second time to leave Charles University; “to deprive the society entirely, or almost entirely, of its moral strength,” but allowing at the same time “its external physical capacities, “its external physical capacities...to grow.” The form of government established in the process - bluntly characterized by Patočka as “human machinery of decline and degeneration” - didn’t need the iron fist to have its way. What could be seen in action here was rather “fear, disorientation, wiles of comfort, possibility to gain advantages in the environment of general scarcity creating here an artificially interconnected complex of motivations.”

Charter 77 and Dissident Art

What they all had in common at this time was certainly not an “ideology,” a world-view or a political orientation; it was their refusal to participate at the process of human degradation organized at large by the ruling regime. It was their saying “no more with me” to all these seductive games and tricks the Czechoslovak government played constantly with the populations to get its consent with its subjugation. Art become a way to express the degradation of human dignity and loss of individual freedoms going on.

It is no surprise – and any of the signatories of Charter 77 were so naïve to expect it – that the communist authorities didn’t make the smallest efforts to pay attention to all these philosophical and artistic “ruminations.” Instead, they did what they always used to do, determined to stay in power for whatever costs. They decided to suppress the Chartists’ revolt by all the necessary means and to keep punishing in this way or another all the individuals who dared to take part in it, for their “subversive” actions.

It turned out, however, that no matter what this group of “failures and self-styled leaders,” as the communist daily “Rude Pravo” put it in its first attack against Chartists in January of 1977, was much more resilient opponent than the ruling totalitarian regime had expected. What originally looked like just a desperate appeal of outcasts and artists without chance to have any measurable social or political effect, managed to open within the Czechoslovak society paralyzed by the totalitarian plague an independent public space.

It is to Patočka’s eternal credit that he succeeded in endowing it with this Socratic basis, leaving it to all, who alongside with him or in the subsequent years, put their signature to the founding document or in one way or another contributed to its work or aims. This is perhaps his most important philosophical legacy.

It is to Václav Havel’s eternal credit that he helped make Patočka’s Socratic questions accessible even to non-philosophers. Through his essays, plays (despite the fact they were not performed in Czechoslovakia and one had to settle for reading them), articles, interviews and public activities as such, in the

newly emerging public space in which the Chartists found themselves together and which one of them, Václav Benda, accurately dubbed the “parallel polis.”

These questions lived a life of their own in that space in the following thirteen years: they vexed its residents, opened up dialogues between them, sparked polemics, helped crystallize opinions on a wide variety of matters of public interest. If we consider their effect today, when the “parallel polis” that they established and whose pluralistic character they brought to life has long been a thing of the past, we can also perceive that which its residents could not and which they likely were not very cognizant of: that despite the general decrepitude that normalized Czechoslovak society had fallen into, something new was simultaneously springing to life and demanding to be heard; something previously unseen; something that would take shape – loudly and publicly, in an unpredictable and politically incalculable manner as a “revolution” – when its time came, because “great events,” as Friedrich Nietzsche put it in Zarathustra, a book for all and none, arrive on “doves’ feet.”

The Charter 77’s International Context

If the Helsinki Accords initially appeared as a major victory for the Soviet Union, there is no doubt that the emerging “nuclei” of civil society behind the Iron Curtain succeeded to add to the political process that started just with the aim to decrease international tension and define more peaceful relationships between “states with different social and political systems.”

During the series of Helsinki follow-up conferences (first in Belgrade, then in Madrid and finally in Vienna), the Charter representatives regularly met diplomats and politicians from participating states visiting their country, discussing topical issues relating to the process with them, expressing their views on documents prepared for the conference and commenting on all connected subjects, current and timeless.

Within the Helsinki Process, cross-border independent dialogue with neighboring Hungarians, Poles and East Germans was also initiated. It should be noted that rich communications were open not only with them but in solidarity with all those fighting for human rights in individual Soviet bloc countries, naturally including the Soviet Union itself, acquired an increasingly international dimension.

In short, the efforts to rid the Helsinki Process of “the specter of dissent,” Havel spoke in the opening sentence of his seminal essay from 1978 “The Power of the Powerless” totally failed, even though over the years whole columns of trained “exorcists” attempted something of that sort. “Helsinki from Below” became an essential element of international negotiations. The “human dimension” was given more and more space within the framework of continuing diplomatic talks and had ever-bigger impact on their daily conduct and successful conclusion.

There is a fundamental political lesson to be learned from this dissident time period. People are always capable to free themselves – at least their hearts and minds – from their bondage. They are always offered an opportunity to “say no to the devil” and stop coordinating themselves blindly with their situation and merely adapting to the given circumstances; an opportunity to pose fresh questions and resuming their personal responsibility for their lives; an opportunity to become again creators of their own identity and guarantors of their own thoughts and actions, and eventually to become players, when right moment comes and it happened in the miraculous years of 1989, in a

historical change which took place brought about by whole series of European revolutions. This can be done to in a peaceful non aggressive way and it further can be enhanced through many art forms that help to carry the messages out in varied venues to a myriad of audiences.

In conclusion: where are we today and what did we learn from this time period and from the dissident art that permeated itself?

The international system emerging in the first decades of the 21st century is definitely more open, more interdependent and definitely less “Eurocentric” than the “world of yesterday” of the previous century. There is no doubt, however, that the “grand opening” of the post-modern market of ideas does not necessarily generate more political freedom and improved communication between the nations. On the contrary, the result is the possibility of emergence of new, culturally motivated conflicts, the possibility that mankind, after it got rid of totalitarian ideologies, may be heading now into an era of the “clash of civilizations.”

The victory of the old well-tested liberal ideas in the ideological conflict having fueled the Cold War cannot change the fact of the endemic “deficiency” of the modern nation-state, the fact that modern liberalism as such is still finding itself in crisis. The ever more complex network of communications connecting non-state agents across national boundaries has been making it increasingly difficult for national governments to exert a decisive control over the growing number of important political issues, curtailing the possibilities of traditional liberal politics. The process by which vital decisions are taken remains often entirely opaque to most ordinary citizens, not discussed, not understood and not present in the public domain. This leads to a sense of insecurity and powerlessness among the people. What can be observed practically everywhere in the West is a growing democratic deficit. The whole game of politics is more and more distant from the lives of ordinary citizens and has begun to acquire, as some commentators point out, a bogus air and a kind of “virtual reality.” Although technology has made the dissemination of art more accessible permeating all sectors of our global society, it often times gets lost in our media overload and instantaneous communication.

Globalization – or complex interdependence – is the most important characteristic of the world situation today. It has not only changed the nature of world politics but has also introduced its own negative, hidden features. International crime generating enormous amounts of money that may be used to infiltrate and corrupt the political elites, the growing vulnerability of the population to extremist views, spread through nationalistic and xenophobic rhetoric of the lowest kind, the disintegration of basic social patterns and structures in some countries or regions, which has been called the “coming anarchy” – these and other phenomena represent the dark side of our post-modern, increasingly globalized world.

What remedies could be suggested in order to cope with the question of transforming a closed political regime into a republican form of government, and deal with the problems of the newly emerging international system and of the New World Order?

First, what must be paid the utmost attention is the international dialogue in the area of individual freedom and human dignity. The emergence of international mechanisms for their protection as a reaction to the unprecedented crimes committed by totalitarian regimes during World War



Author Martin Palouš with Václav Havel in 1986. Photo courtesy of the author.

II still represents one of the key factors in the contemporary world politics. International society ceased to be limited by nation-states and is populated now also by many non-state actors. All efforts to cope with the tasks which transcend the limited, closed space of territorial nation states – be it various problems which require “global governance” or the questions of regional arrangements and “integrative” frameworks – cannot be successful without the active participation of the civic element. What is urgently needed now – and all the conflicts having emerged in the post-communist world demonstrate this quite clearly – is a profound “democratization” of international relations.

The current situation in Europe, for instance, the discussions around the future European political architecture proves more than clearly this point. Maybe that a bigger threat to contemporary Europe than any external enemy is the frustration and the feeling of helplessness generated by the fact that no matter how skillful “professional” Euro-politicians and Eurocrats are, the Euro-debate monopolized by them could easily end in a dead end. If it were the case, what kind of future could our “old” continent expect?

So here is the Vaclav Havel’s message based on our Central European experience with totalitarianism: One does not need to be Cassandra, in order to predict that some scenarios of the future might be quite murky or even catastrophic. If Europeans still believe that the “univerzalistic” European civilization is something worth preserving in the age of multiculturalism and globalization, they themselves have to have the courage to overcome the shadows of the past: to enhance and actively promote the politics based on personal responsibility of each of us for the state of the world and in this context for effective trans-national communication, which includes art. Because it is nothing else but the dialogue of mankind in all forms that can be recommended as the best and perhaps the only possible “republican remedy,” in the sense of the Federalists, that can make both local, national and global governance stronger and keep that element of freedom in the newly emerging pattern of world politics, which is still the essence and real nature of our humanity. ■



Art, Activism, and STEAM:

TEACHING ABOUT REVOLUTION THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

By Nicholas Hartman Ph.D.



A scaled-down piece of the wall was created by Metro High School students to be used for educational purposes.

November 9, 2019: A crisp, chilly Saturday afternoon in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

One hundred sixty people gathered that afternoon to watch the conclusion of a unique initiative at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library: the ceremonial fall and breaking apart of a sixty-foot replica of the Berlin Wall. Many participants, in imitation of those who worked to tear apart the real wall in November 1989, tried to take a whack at the two-foot thick wall, using sledgehammers and axes to repeatedly make dents in the replica wall made from geofoam.

Covered in graffiti and murals, save for a space intentionally left blank to honor those trapped on the other side of the wall, the wall had been a major presence in the Czech Village for the last six months, attracting many visitors, students getting their senior pictures taken, and local artists who were grateful to have a space to paint – if only temporarily. On that day in November, the wall was ceremoniously knocked down by an excavation team from Dave Schmitt Construction, who played a major role in helping erect the wall several months earlier. What took months to plan, build and curate, now laid in a pile on the grounds of the NCSML, its graffiti marks covered in snow from a weekend storm.

However the product was destroyed, the process of its creation was a far bigger initiative, one that built upon a single question from NCSML K-12 Learning Specialist Sarah Henderson: “What if we built a replica Berlin Wall and tore it down?” It was not just a replica Berlin Wall, but a sixty-foot replica of the Berlin Wall, built by one group of students, marketed by another group of students, and covered with art from students, community members, and internationally renowned artists.

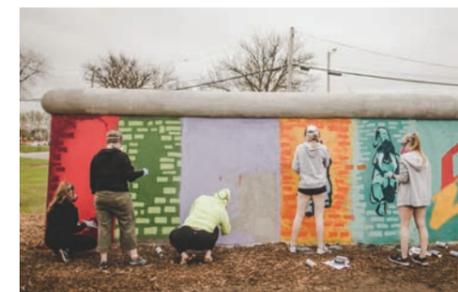
Titled *Revolution St(arts) in the Streets*, this project-based learning initiative, led by Henderson, served as the primary project-based learning experience for over 80 students from Metro High School and the IowaBIG program in Cedar Rapids. Building on the success of the 2018 exhibit construction for *Guts and Glory: The Train that Shaped a Nation* – which involved IowaBIG constructing an in-exhibit virtual reality program, and Metro STEAM Academy constructing replica train cars to look like the Czechoslovak Legion rail cars – *Revolution St(arts) in the Streets* was designed to not only involve both schools in the program, but also have them collaborating together for the first time.

In order to help students work together in the design, construction, and promotion of *Revolution St(arts)*, the NCSML brought in multiple community partners to work with students, including a local architecture firm, a trade union, construction companies, and manufacturing facilities. Each of these community partners came into Metro to work directly with students, whether in the development of blueprints, the physical testing of the building materials, or the process of construction. IowaBIG students played a unique role in *Revolution St(arts)*, developing a guerilla marketing campaign based around a mystery street artist by the name of Slon (Czech for “elephant”). Stickers, displays, stencils, and social media all displayed Slon’s art, building up publicity for *Revolution St(arts)* and providing BIG students a chance to build skills in community partnerships, marketing tactics, and working with professionals in the areas of fundraising, collaboration, and engagement. Local shops, restaurants, and breweries were eager to partner with the project, helping to build a campaign to get the word out about Slon’s work and presence in the community.

All of this was combined with learning in the arts and humanities. IowaBIG and Metro students simultaneously learned about the history, culture, and spread of street art as a global phenomenon, and about its connection to the actual Berlin Wall. Students also gained a stronger understanding of life under Communist rule in Czechoslovakia, getting a chance to speak with John Palka, whose family fled Communist rule in the late 1940s for the United States. In addition, students were asked bigger questions about freedom of expression, such as “Is free expression worth risking one’s life and well-being?” and “Would you leave to live elsewhere, or stay and try to make a difference at home?”

When the Berlin Wall project was formally dedicated in May 2019, the NCSML hosted many well-known figures from the Czech and Slovak community. Among the guests was the Honorable Ivan Korčok, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States, who met with the participating students and shared his experiences of not only growing up behind the Iron Curtain, but also of his experiences of serving as the Slovak ambassador to Germany, where he was able to run through the Brandenburg Gates during his morning jog. One of the most important parts of his talk with students was a reminder to them that, while the wall may have been covered in art on one side, the side in which East Germans – and those behind the Iron Curtain – lived only witnessed the dark grayness of the wall. Bearing that in mind, a panel of the replica wall was purposely left blank as a reminder to all who engaged with it.

From May to October, while the replica Berlin Wall served as a public space for art, as well as an opportunity for NCSML visitors to engage in docent-guided art activities around graffiti and stenciling, it was also a space for guest artists from around the world, some of whom had experienced first-hand the struggles of living in a place where free expression was limited, if even existent. The first, a Waterloo, Iowa-based artist named Paco Rosic, came to the United States with his family in the mid-1990s from Sarajevo, where they experienced discrimination for being a mixed Muslim-Catholic family. Paco worked with students to design the



Students had the opportunity to not only design and tag the replica Berlin Wall, but also take part in tearing it down after it being on display several months.



MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS



Some 160 people gathered to watch the NCSML's wall come down in November 2019.



Museum visitors got to try their hand at screen printing as an act of self expression.



first mural project, which featured a series of elephants in homage to Slon. Other artists followed, such as Des Moines-based artist Jordan Weber, a nationally known visual artist who worked with local students to design a Berlin Wall-themed Little Free Library, which currently resides at the African-American Museum of Iowa. Students were personally selected by local educators to work with Weber, who is slated to return in 2020 to the NCSML, along with nationally-recognized artist Dred Scott, for the upcoming robotics exhibit.

The most high profile artist to visit the NCSML was Ganzeer, an Egyptian street artist based in the United States who attracted international attention for his protest art during the Arab Spring revolts in 2011. Ganzeer not only gave a well-attended public talk about the wide variety of his work (which ranges from street art to digital installations) but also hosted a two-day workshop for the public that was widely attended and gave many local students a chance to engage with an international perspective.

Not all of our guest artists, however, engaged in two-dimensional work, with the other two artists at the NCSML bringing a more three-dimensional component to *Revolution St(arts)*. Iowa-born and California-based artist Rose Couch, whose work intersects graffiti with textile arts, was a featured artist who hosted a sold-out embroidery workshop during the summer of 2019. The final artist, Jan Kaláb, brought the strongest connection to the Czech and Slovak story to the NCSML; as part of the first street art crew in Prague, Kaláb not only gave a public talk about his role in spearheading the Czech street art scene but also created a special three-dimensional art piece for the NCSML, which is currently displayed in the Rozek Grand Hall. All five of these artists brought unique voices, as well as unique audiences, to the NCSML, building bridges between the Czech and Slovak stories and the stories of local, regional, and global artists.

This project built a strong sense of community among local residents, many of whom began to bring their own paint cans to the replica wall, view the wall on their everyday walks, and come by the NCSML to see the latest artistry. Not only was *Revolution St(arts)* an opportunity to discuss art, activism, and social change, it was also a strong creative placemaking project that attracted a wide variety of audiences, from small children to senior citizens – some of whom had seen the actual Berlin Wall themselves during their travels, or had their own personal memories of watching the wall being torn down on television.

Most importantly, however, it brought a strong sense of purpose and drive to the youth who were a part of the project. Project-based learning efforts, such as *Revolution St(arts) in the Streets*, can play a vital role in connecting youth with new and unique opportunities beyond school walls, and engaging them with the world in a way that extends beyond textbook learning. The youth engagement, combined with its inclusion of community partners, earned the project a 2019 Reaching Out Award from the Iowa Cultural Corridor Alliance.

While the wall is no longer on the grounds on the NCSML, the impact will continue beyond its physical presence. Several of the students had an opportunity to share their work with the greater public through sharing their stories with conference audiences, news media, and other venues. Additionally, some of the students will continue their work in 2020, when Metro and IowaBIG again collaborate to construct a robot for the upcoming NCSML exhibit, which highlights robots in honor of the play *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, which celebrates its centennial this year. The activism and artistry shifts from static walls to moving robots, but the spirit of *Revolution St(arts) in the Streets* continues.

A special thanks to the Cedar Rapids Community School District, Alburnett School District, Atlas EPS, Carpenters' Union Local 308, Dave Schmitt Construction, Found & Formed, Lion Bridge Brewing Company, M2B Structural Engineering, Neumann Monson Architects, North Liberty Transportation, Terracon, and Thew Brewing for support of this important educational initiative. ■

Heritage Caretakers of Moravia

Through June 14, Skala Bartizal Library

This exhibit tells the story of the incredible women who wear and use folk art practices in their daily life. Czech-American artist Sonya Darrow worked with women in South Moravia in order to preserve cultural heritage for future generations, and to use their stories to inspire Czech settlements in the U.S. It explores the current state of the folk art movement to keep the "everyday" folk dress (*všední kroj*) along with the working folk dress (*pracovní kroj*) from disappearing.



Artists as Activists

Through September 20, Petrik Gallery

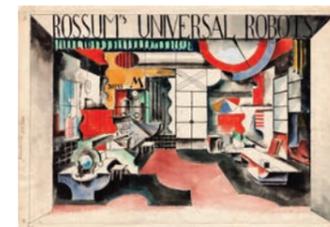
Artists are iconoclasts by nature. Examples can be found in the former Czechoslovakia where David Černý brought attention to the overpowering domination of the Soviet Union over a large swath of Central and Eastern Europe, or in China where Ai Weiwei points out the disregard for the living conditions of his compatriots. *Artists as Activists* investigates the roles of artists in addressing these issues. Curated by Charlotta Kotik, this exhibition is a new addition to the international art scene, as many of the pieces have not been shown together before.



A Century of Robots: From Čapek to Now

May 16 through October 24, Smith Gallery

This exhibition marks the 100th anniversary of Karel Čapek's play, *R.U.R.*, in 2020. Čapek (1890-1938) was a Czech writer, playwright, and critic best known for his science fiction works. *R.U.R.*, which stands for Rossum's Universal Robots, introduced the word robot. Visitors will gain an appreciation for Čapek's life and work, and understand the connection between a Czech author and one of the most fascinating technical revolutions of the 20th century.



Voices and Votes: Democracy in America

TBA, Skala Bartizal Library

When American revolutionaries waged a war for independence, they took a leap of faith that sent ripple effects across generations. That great leap sparked questions that continue to impact Americans: who has the right to vote, what are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens, and whose voices will be heard? The exhibit seeks to be a springboard for discussions about those questions and how they are reflected in local stories.

MUSEUM EVENTS

As we prepare to send this edition of Slovo to the printers, we are struggling with what put in this notice. Because of the fluidity of the COVID-19 crisis, we cannot say what events will go on as scheduled. While we hope to reopen as soon as possible, the safety of our staff, members, volunteers, and guests is our top priority. Information changes daily, so we encourage you to check our website and social media sites often.

Czech that Film

June 18 & 19

Czech That Film is a film festival of the best recent Czech films held throughout the United States every year to bring more attention to the genre.

Summer Family Free Day

Saturday, July 25

A full day of family-friendly activities, tasty food, and entertainment, all about robots. Enjoy free admission for the whole family to the NCSML's galleries, including our newest exhibit, *A Century of Robots: From Čapek to Now*. Presented by CRST International & Collins Aerospace

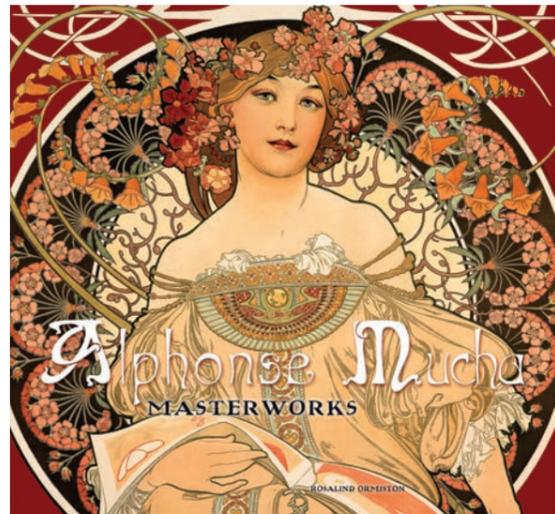


MUSEUM STORE

SHOP WITH US!

store.ncsml.org

Our Custom Poppy Charm Collection is created exclusively for the NCSML by KJK Jewelry of New York. Inspired by the beautiful art nouveau style poppies featured in many works by Alphonse Mucha, this lovely poppy is a delightful edition to our line of custom charms. Each charm features 24-karat gold overlay and is enameled by hand. The Pearl Collection features the beauty of genuine cultured pearls.



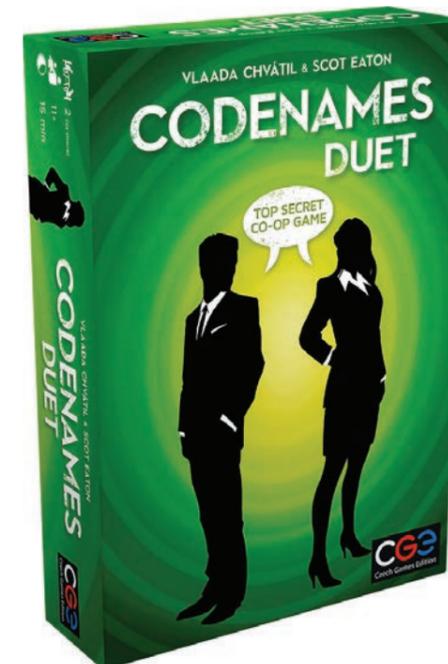
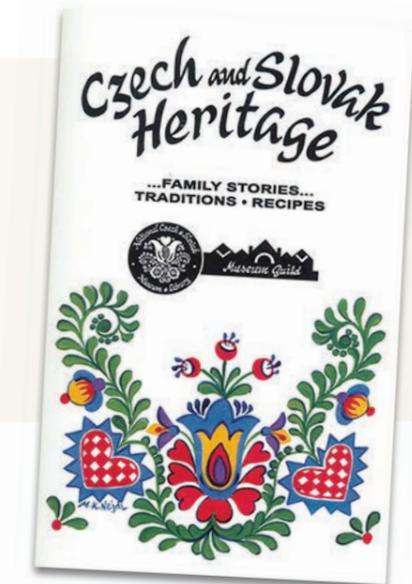
Though very much an individual and spiritual artist, Alphonse Mucha was a defining figure of the Art Nouveau era and is loved for his distinctive lush style and images of beautiful women in arabesque poses among the plethora of paintings, posters, advertisements, and designs he produced. In this coffee table book, admire a whole range of his work here in its full glory with succinct accompanying text.

Award-winning Lyra Chocolates strive to make the best chocolate in the world. From bean to bar, this Slovakia-based company uses the highest quality raw materials to produce distinctive and delicious chocolates. This selection of the best chocolate dragées includes pistachios in milk chocolate, almonds in milk chocolate and cinnamon, coffee beans in dark chocolate, roasted almonds and hazelnuts in dark chocolate, marzipan in chocolate, hazelnuts in milk chocolate and cinnamon, and almonds in white chocolate with coffee.



Master Folk Artist Marj Nejdil is a first-generation Czech-American. She learned egg decorating from her uncle when she was a child. Ms. Nejdil creates wax-resist Czechoslovakian decorated eggs, employing a variety of traditional techniques. She works also with wood, ceramics, glass and "anything with a good surface for painting." We've captured some of Marj's original designs to create these colorful kitchen must-haves, sure to brighten any décor!

A delightful collection of family stories, traditions, and recipes complete with photos, tributes, and histories of local families living and celebrating Czech and Slovak heritage in the Cedar Rapids area. Compiled with love and recently re-edited by the NCSML Museum Guild, it is so much more than just a cookbook – this one-of-a-kind treasure will be a favorite for generations to come.



Czech Games Edition is a small Czech company founded in 2007 by a group of people who love board games and enjoy creating entertainment for players like themselves. Czech Games Edition is focused on publishing the games of Czech and Slovak authors. Their games are now available around the world in over thirty languages. In Codenames Duet you and your partner are on a secret mission to contact 15 agents while avoiding a band of assassins. The game includes 400 new words so you don't need the original game to play but cards are interchangeable in all Codenames games.



MISSION

The NCSML preserves, presents, and transcends unique stories of Czech and Slovak history and culture through innovative experiences and active engagement to reach cross-cultural audiences local, national, and internationally.

VISION

NCSML is an innovative leader in lifelong learning, community building, and cultural connections. We encourage self-discovery for all ages so that the stories of freedom, identity, family and community will live on for future generations.

NATIONAL
CZECH &
SLOVAK
MUSEUM &
LIBRARY