

The National Museum of Photography in 2009

The Exhibition Programme of the National Museum of Photography

During the year 2009, the National Museum of Photography held a total of ten exhibitions, not including the exhibition 'In Search of Light' of Jan Pohribný (12.10. 2008 – 4.1. 2009), which overlapped from the previous year into the first week of January 2009. Moreover, the Museum also exhibited the fifth selection from its permanent collection of the 'Golden Fund of the National Museum of Photography,' an event which has become a tradition – this time with the theme of documentary photography - at the premises of the Czech National Bank in Prague (23.1 - 30.4. 2009),

In February and March, the Museum presented a weekend exhibition of Czech scientific photography, entitled the 'Microworld' (15.2. – 29.3.2009). The show offered a unique set of micro-photographs, depicting diverse microstructures from the plant and animal kingdom, which were photographed by leading Czech scientists. At the same time, visitors could see the travelling exhibition 'KontAKTfoto', from the workshop of the G4 Gallery in Cheb.

During the following two months, there was an exhibition of the Swiss photographer Henri Leuzinger who is, together with his wife Carla, an admirer of the beauties of our country, entitled 'Prague and Southern Bohemia' (4.4. - 10.5.2009). The exhibition offered a photographic comparison of landmark monuments in the capital city and the South Bohemian region between the years 1989 to 2009.

The next exhibition was 'Natura Magica' (26.4. – 7.6. 2009), which approached the current work of the solitary photographer Jiří Stach, reflecting the imaginative and mystifying perception of the world by an artist who uses only classic black and white photography. Jiří Stach is also the author of a photographic publication of the same title, which the Fotografie magazine voted the Photographic Book of the Year 2006.

During the main exhibition season, visitors could view the 'Retrospective * 75' (14.6. – 1.11. 2009) exhibition, comprised of 200 black and white photographs from the work of Miroslav Hucek, the legend of Czech humanistic and documentary photography. The exhibition also showed photos that the author took for the magazine 'Young World', where he worked as a photojournalist between 1960-1975. Miroslav Hucek has summarized his work in several photography books and is represented in many public and private collections. The exhibition in Jindřichův Hradec was part of the project 'Miroslav Hucek - Retrospective * 75', which was prepared to mark the the occasion of the author's 75th birthday.

The Museum's exhibition programme was also enhanced by the photographic exhibition of the European Photogroup of Art and Performance / EPHAP / (1.8. – 27. 9. 2009). It featured a variety of topics by 14 male and female photographers from Austria, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, but also from our country, represented by Karel Burda from Vodňany.

Four exhibitions were opened with a joint vernissage at the end of the year (11.12.2009 – 10.1. 2010). The first one, entitled 'Intimate Zones', presented a thematic collection from the 'Golden Fund of the National Museum of Photography', curated by Miroslav Vojtěchovský. The two smaller solo shows – the 'Musical Parallels' of Zdenek and Martin Taichman and the 'Great Little Blues' of Dana Čecháková – reveal the environment and atmosphere of classical and contemporary jazz concerts in our country and abroad. The exhibition of the painterly photographic images of Jiří Tiller, the 'Spiritual Landscape Silva Nortica', which presented small sacral architecture and wayside chapels from the regions of Southern Bohemia and the Austrian Waldviertel - became a magnet for the visitors.

The National Museum of Photography presented the Exhibition Projects ‘Closely Watched Hrabal’ and ‘Via Lucis 1989-2009’ Abroad

In 2009, the National Museum of Photography ventured with its exhibition activities three times across Czech borders, beyond which it introduced two of its own exhibition projects – ‘Closely Watched Hrabal’ and ‘Via Lucis 1989-2009’.

During the summer of 2007, at the premiere at the National Museum of Photography, the Hungarian Embassy in the Czech Republic expressed interest in the exhibition devoted to the personality of Bohumil Hrabal, which was prepared to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the writer's death. Its launching followed the completion of construction works on the first floor of the Jesuit College, the Museum's seat, and in the main Courtyard of Eden in June of that year. Less than two years later, the Hungarian public could view this extensive exhibition focusing on the life, work and enlightened ideas of this world renowned writer at the National Szechenyi Library in Budapest (24.3. – 26.4. 2009). Other European cities also showed interest in ‘Hrabal’.

The exhibition project ‘Via Lucis 1989-2009 / Czech Society in Photographs’, was also successful abroad. The Museum of Photography presented it in Brussels at the premises of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU as one of the cultural events during the CR Presidency of the European Union (5.3. – 31.3. 2009). At the end of the year, this exhibition enhanced the programme of the 19th Annual Month of Photography in Bratislava (3.11. – 29.11. 2009). Visitors were able to become familiar with photographic works by famous Czech photographers, such as Jindřich Štreit, Bohdan Holomíček, Karel Cudlín, Jaroslav Kučera, Jiří David, Alena Dvořáková, Viktor Fischer, and with images of yet unknown authors, including foreign ones.

This exhibition which contains more than 200 pictures which map Czech society over the past 20 years, expanded by new images from the same competition, was on view at the place of its conception, the National Museum of Photography, in the Spring 2010.

The Czech-Austrian project ‘Stories’

In April 2009, the National Museum of Photography in cooperation with the Lower Austrian Waldviertel Akademie in Waidhofen an der Thaya and the Museum of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, launched the historical and sociological and photographic project ‘Stories’, which is part of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programme Czech Republic - Austria 2007-2013, co-funded by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Based on selected locations in Southern Bohemia and in the Waldviertel, the project researches different social, economic and political developments in our country and Austria during the years 1945-1989, extending to the present. Historians provide scholarly research in addition to using written sources as well as interviews with eyewitnesses; photographers provide the photographic documentation - which will include both historical and current images. The intention is to focus particularly on the stories of the local inhabitants, their life stories, hence the name ‘Stories’. The results of the research and the visual materials which have been collected, will be presented to the public through an accompanying programme, two exhibitions, a scientific publication and a catalogue. The project will continue until May 2012.

Educational, Cultural and Photographic Events

In 2009 the Museum organized thirty photographic seminars for elementary and secondary school students which attracted more than 400 participants from Jindřichův Hradec as well as from more distant regions.

The 'Pirates of the Caribbean' was the title of a photographic event for children held at the end of the summer holidays in cooperation of the Museum of Photography with the local House of Children and Youth. Parents could have their children photographed in period costumes as pirates or princesses.

Concerts enjoy much public interest among the cultural events every year. Jazz fans were pleased by the traditional summer concert in the courtyard of the museum with the participation of our leading jazz musicians. Pleasant weather complemented the success of the evening.

As usual, the Christmas Photo Event which was premiered in 2008 received a very positive response. On the second Advent Saturday and Sunday, the Museum prepared a photographic studio where participants, in borrowed historical costumes with props in a stylized setting, are photographed by professional photographers. This time the project is aimed at families with children. Over 60 'historical' photographs were created, most of which soon served as a nice Christmas gift.

Commencement of the next phase of Reconstruction of the Jesuit College

The last but not least task of our institution is the progressive completion of the reconstruction of the Jesuit College. A week before Christmas Eve 2009, the opening ceremony of the project 'National Museum of Photography and Tapestry Workshop - Centre of the Original Crafts and Unique Technologies' took place, with the participation of the Minister of Culture Václav Riedlbauch, Mayor Karel Matoušek and other significant figures, accompanied by press conferences and the signing of the contract for the project. This project includes, among other tasks, the reconstruction of the second floor of the former Jesuit College for the requirements of the Museum of Photography.

The support from the funds of the European Union provides an opportunity to expand the Museum's facilities, fulfil its goals and ideas, and become an important centre of the visual arts, a project of the 21st century.