



Pravda vítězí!

NOVÝ DOMOV

THE NEW HOMELAND



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NATIONAL PRIDE by Vladimír Hornof

Sometimes I wonder, what is the true meaning of "national pride". What does it mean, to belong to some nation or to some ethnic group? After forty years in Canada, having been born in a country far away is becoming a somewhat abstract notion. At least, it often seems so. But is it really true? Do I still uphold there or am I a totally uprooted expatriate? How can I tell?

A couple of years ago, my wife and I went to Atlanta. Georgia was one of the few American states we had not yet visited. That year, the annual congress of the American Chemical Society was being held there. I sent in a paper and it was accepted, so there was a perfect opportunity to fill that gap in our knowledge of North America. Until then, my only link with the state of Georgia was Hoagy Carmichael's famous song Georgia on my mind, of which I have been inventing new variations on the piano for years. At the end, I always finish by listening to that song's famous version recorded by Ray Charles, to appreciate, once again, that huge difference between a real genius and my own earthbound mediocrity.

But, let us not wander away from the main story. Arriving in Atlanta and having gotten lost a few times in the labyrinth of one way streets, we finally found our hotel. While my wife was doing useful work connected with settling down in a hotel room where we planned to spend the next five days, I was lazily leafing through some information booklets left there by the management of the hotel. Quickly, I found out all about what we could buy in Atlanta's boutiques and where to overeat without overspending. But then, to my surprise, on the last page I found a little piece of information about that afternoon's concert presented



by the Atlanta Youth Orchestra. A part of the concert was Smetana's Vltava. The concert was to start in less than two hours, so we quickly located the address of the concert hall, asked the receptionist how to get there and in a few minutes we were on our way.

The entrance hall of the building was already milling with lots of well-dressed people. "Well," we commented while waiting in the line for tickets, "unlike Praha, where there are ten concerts like this every day, people actually come!" We were lucky and managed to get

a couple of good tickets. We found our seats in a nice modern auditorium and sat down. The podium was slowly filling up with young musicians of all imaginable races and colors of the skin. Vltava was the first piece on the program and I have to confess that we did

have some doubts as to whether they would be up for the task. But then the conductor stepped up on the podium. Before beginning the piece, he spoke about Smetana's composition. He started with Vltava's headwaters, followed the river through Český Krumlov and past a rustic wedding alive with a wedding dance, and finally meandering majestically through the beautiful city of Praha on the way to its quiet confluence with Labe.

And when they finally started to play, the big hall became filled with music so quintessentially ours that even the famous Czech Philharmonic couldn't make it sound more Czech. The spectators sat spellbound while listening to the music. Not a single whisper or chocolate wrap rustle was heard until the last drop of Vltava was devoured by the bigger Labe.

I will never forget the expression on the face of the black cellist, who was sitting right opposite to us. He couldn't have been more than 16 years old, and he played that Czech signature music with such raw enthusiasm that it appeared as if he had been born there, in the heart of Czech lands.

While looking at all those young people I felt something that one cannot call anything else but national pride. I was proud that we exist. I was proud that from our midst came someone, who was able to compose such beautiful music. Someone who was able to create something that gives so much pleasure not only to us who were born in that far away land, but also to those who come from many diverse lands and cultures. That, somehow, we have contributed positively to the development of the whole human society and to the happiness of countless individual people.

It is a wonderful feeling! &

Masaryk Memorial Institute

Masaryk Memorial Institute (MMI) is a charitable organization founded by immigrants from former Czechoslovakia. Its goal is not only to preserve these immigrants' heritage by hosting Czech and Slovak educational and cultural events, but also to share the beauty of these two countries and their peoples with all Canadians. Named in honor of T. G. Masaryk, the founder of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and father of modern Czech and Slovak society, the charity continues to be true to his vision of improving lives of everyone through assistance, education, cooperation and tolerance.

Information and contacts can be found at www.masaryktown.org

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Contemporary Czech Art Exhibit available to North American galleries and/or cultural organizations free of charge, for display in 2010 or later

After Czechoslovakia regained freedom from communism in 1989, an early effort was made to rehabilitate those artists who were forbidden to work or restricted in activities. An effort was also made to include those living in exile. Particularly, the goal was to open up the door to those working in the 70's and 80's of the last century. The results were very satisfying.

During the communist regime, before the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Russia and its allies in 1968, there was a period called the Prague Spring when several artists were allowed to exhibit abroad. They impressed experts in several countries, serving as an advanced guard for those we are featuring now.

THE GENERATION OF THE SIXTIES

Many of artists of this period belonged to the so-called "New Sensibility Group" featuring programs based on neo-constructive, optical or kinetic art, with fresh configuration and new approach to abstraction.

Individual members of this group were fortunate to get international exposure, before the regime put a stop to it. Some of the names here may be recognized outside the country: Karel Malich, Vaclav Bostik, Zdenek Sykora, Adriena Simonova, Jan Kotik, Stanislav Kolibal, sisters Vala, Jiri Kolar, Bela Kolarova, Hugo Demartini, Dalibor Chatrny and several others.

THE GENERATION OF THE SEVENTIES

Note: Most of these artists never had a chance to exhibit outside of the country. This group was influenced by prevailing trends in the outside world of conceptualism and action

art (performances in various forms). It meant in most cases leaving the classical media of painting and sculpture and adopting photography, video or other electronic forms. Often installations were placed in open spaces and in natural environments. Some involved outdoor performances. Later most of these moved to theatrical stages. Among artists representing this style are:

Milan Knizak, Zorka Saglova, Rudolf Nemeč, body art of Petr Stembera, Jan Mlcoch and Karel Miller (he got into serious troubles by publicly criticizing the regime), Ivan Kafka, Vladimír Merta, Margita Titlova-Ylovski, Jiri Valoch and others.

THE GENERATION OF THE EIGHTIES

A new wave of painting styles characterizes this epoch. It appeals to senses in an expressive manner, often including a measure of irony, related to the critical reflexive philosophy of that post-modern era. At the same time one can observe a number of humorous and mythical funny objects on canvasses or sculptures. The period features a number of well-known artists with their retinue of talented pupils. The following names, mainly represented by the group Tvrdohlavi- Stubborns, belong to this group: Jiri Sopko, Vaclav Stratil, Vladimír Kokolla, Jaroslav Rona, Michal Rittstein, Stanislav Divis, Jiri David, Stefan Milkov, Cestmír Zacek and others.

THE GENERATION OF THE NINETIES

This decade features an art scene with a post-modern flair that often reflects the rapid rise of prosperity in the country but cannot resist to criticize or show

an ironical face. Techniques are getting more sophisticated which enable artists to enrich their visual content. Gender problematic expressions also sometimes appear. The following artists belong here: Václav Skrepl, Milena Dopitova, Jiri Kovanda, Petr Niki, Petr Kvcicala, Martin Mainer, Petr Pisarik, Frantisek Skala, Jiri Prihoda, Veronika Bromova, Jiri Cernicky, David Cerny, Katerina Vincourova, Filip Turek, Tomas Lahoda and others.

THE GENERATION OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

New technologies and new media expressions play a significant role. Here there is a wide array of artists and the number continues to grow. There is such a wide choice of quality works that consideration may be given to mount a separate exhibit featuring this group. Here one can also consider including controversial artists such as Rafani, Podebal, Guma Guar and others.

Those included within the Millennium Group are: Kristof Kinters, Michal Pechoucek, Frederico Diaz, Milan Cais, Milan Salak, Barbora Slapetova, Lukas Rittstein, Lenka Klodova, MlCL, Jose Bolf, Jiri Votruba, Ladislava Gaziova, Patricie Fexova, Jakub Hosek, Anezka Hoskova, Katerina Seda, Zbynek Baladran, Eva Kotatkova and others.

So here you have an extensive and high quality collection of artifacts unknown in this part of the world. They are at your disposal to mount a large, medium or small exhibition of your choice. However, if you have available space of approximately 1000 square meters or more, you may be able to accommodate most of the artists mentioned in the above categories.

Note that all artists will provide their works framed and follow your rules. Also, if you wish to limit the exhibit to art from a definite time period, this is also possible. The works of selected artists may be viewed over the Internet, and for serious gallery presenters we are ready to prepare a professional brochure on the actual exhibit, which would also include photos of selected works and biographies of artists. We are very flexible to meet your requirements.

Planning for year 2010 is deliberate to give everyone time to draw up actual exhibition plans, negotiate with selected artists and settle all details of mutual cooperation.

Vlasta Cihakova-Noshiro
The Gallery of Critics,
The Association of Art Critics & Theoreticians
Prague, Czech Republic

Come and join us on our ski day!

All friends of the „white sport“ are invited to the 38th Annual Sokol Winter Games, to be held on Saturday, February 28, 2009 at the Horseshoe Valley Ski resort near Barrie, ON (110 km north of Toronto on Highway 400 via Exit 117 East towards Horseshoe Valley Road which leads directly to the resort).

The Ski resort has seven hills with ski lifts allowing skiers of various abilities - from beginners to experienced competitors, to fully utilize their time on the slopes. Cross-country trails of various distances also enable skiers of all ages to enjoy them. The Annual Sokol Winter Games are friendly gathering the skiers of all ages in lovely outdoor nature surroundings, providing all the opportunity to spend an active day with their families, in a good company and with a chance to measure their own skiing skills with other participants in friendly downhill and cross-country skiing competitions, conducted in separate age categories. The competitions are open to all. Cross-country races will take place in the morning, downhill competitions in the afternoon.

Additional information may be obtained in Toronto from: Hana Jurasek (905) 838-2541 or Jan Waldauf (416) 535-1413, in Kitchener from Jana Otruba (519) 884-9185, in Montreal from Marie and Josef Hrib (514) 683-2092, in Ottawa from Paul Vidlak (616) 731-5673. We look forward to meeting with you on Saturday, February 28, 2008 at the Horseshoe Valley ski resort!

The deadline for entries is Friday, February 20, 2009.

EUROPE IN LESSONS

Europe's mission in the 21st century is to:

- ☞ Provide peace, prosperity and stability for its peoples;
- ☞ Overcome the divisions on the continent;
- ☞ Ensure that its people can live in safety;
- ☞ Promote balanced economic and social development;
- ☞ Meet the challenges of globalization and preserve the diversity of the peoples of Europe;
- ☞ Uphold the values that Europeans share, such as sustainable development and a sound environment, respect for human rights and the social market economy.

I. Peace and stability

Before becoming a real political objective, the idea of uniting Europe was just a dream in the minds of philosophers and visionaries. Victor Hugo, for example, imagined a peaceful 'United States of Europe' inspired by humanistic ideals. The dream was shattered by the terrible war that ravaged the continent during the first half of the 20th century.

However, a new kind of hope emerged from the rubble of World War Two. People who had resisted totalitarianism during the war were determined to put an end to international hatred and rivalry in Europe and create the conditions for lasting peace. Between 1945 and 1950, a handful of courageous statesmen including Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi and Winston Churchill set about persuading their peoples to enter a new era. New structures would be created in Western Europe, based on shared interests and founded upon treaties guaranteeing the rule of law and equality between all countries.

Robert Schuman (French foreign minister) took up an idea originally conceived by Jean Monnet and, on 9 May 1950, proposed establishing a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). In countries, which had once fought each other, the production of coal and steel would be pooled under a common High Authority. In a practical but also richly symbolic way, the raw materials of war were being turned into instruments of reconciliation and peace.

II. Bringing Europe together again

The European Union encouraged German unification after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. When the Soviet empire crumbled in 1991, the former communist countries of central and Eastern

Lesson 1: Why the European Union?

Europe, after decades under the authoritarian yoke of the Warsaw Pact, decided that their future lay within the family of democratic European nations. The enlargement process continues to this day. Entry negotiations began with Turkey and Croatia in October 2005, while several countries in the Balkans have set out along the road that could one day lead to EU membership.

III. Safety and security

Europe in the 21st century still faces safety and security issues. The EU has to take effective action to ensure the safety and security of its members. It has to work constructively with the regions just beyond its borders: the Balkans, North Africa, the Caucasus and the Middle East. It must also protect its military and strategic interests by working with its allies, especially within NATO, and by developing a genuine common European security and defense policy.

Internal security and external security are two sides of the same coin. The fight against terrorism and organized crime requires the police forces of all EU countries to work together closely. Making the EU an "area of freedom, security and justice" where everyone has equal access to justice and is equally protected by the law is a new challenge that requires close cooperation between governments. Bodies like Europol, the European Police Office, and Euro just, which promote cooperation between prosecutors, judges and police officers in different EU countries, also have a more active and effective role to play.

IV. Economic and social solidarity

The European Union was created to achieve the political

goal of peace, but its dynamism and success spring from its involvement in economics.

EU countries account for an ever-smaller percentage of the world's population. They must therefore continue pulling together if they are to ensure economic growth and be able to compete on the world stage with other major economies. No individual EU country is strong enough to go it alone in world trade. The European single market provides companies with a vital platform for competing effectively on world markets. But Europe-wide free competition must be counterbalanced by Europe-wide solidarity. This has clear tangible benefits for European citizens: when they fall victim to floods and other natural disasters, they receive assistance from the EU budget. The Structural Funds, managed by the European Commission, encourage and supplement the efforts of the EU's national and regional authorities to reduce inequalities between different parts of Europe. Money from the EU budget and loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) are used to improve Europe's transport infrastructure (for example, to extend the network of motorways and high-speed railways), thus providing better access to outlying regions and boosting trans-European trade. The EU's economic success will be measured in part by the ability of its single market of half a billion consumers to benefit as many people and businesses as possible.

V. Identity and diversity in a globalized world

Europe's post-industrial societies are becoming increasingly complex. Standards



of living have risen steadily, but there are still significant gaps between rich and poor. Enlargement has widened the gap since countries have joined with living standards below the EU average. It is important for EU countries to work together to narrow the gap.

But these efforts have not been made at the expense of compromising the separate cultural or linguistic characteristics of EU countries. On the contrary — many EU activities help to create new economic growth based on regional specialties and the rich diversity of traditions and cultures.

Half a century of European integration has shown that the EU as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts: it has much more economic, social, technological, commercial and political clout than if its member states had to act individually. There is added value in acting together and speaking with a single voice as the European Union.

Why?

Because the EU is the world's leading trading power and therefore plays a decisive role in international negotiations, such as those at the 149-country World

Trade Organization (WTO), as well as in the implementation of the Kyoto protocol on air pollution and climate change;

Because it takes a clear position on sensitive issues affecting ordinary people, such as environmental protection, renewable energy resources, the "precautionary principle" in food safety, the ethical aspects of biotechnology and the need to protect endangered species;

Because in connection with the "Earth Summit" in 2002 in Johannesburg, it launched important initiatives for sustainable development on the whole planet.

The old saying 'unity is strength' is as relevant as ever to today's Europeans. But the process of European integration has not smothered the different ways of life, traditions and cultures of its peoples. Indeed, the EU makes its diversity one of its key values.

VI. Values

The EU wishes to promote humanitarian and progressive values, and ensure that mankind is the beneficiary, rather than the victim, of the great global changes that are taking place. People's needs cannot be met simply by market forces or imposed by unilateral action.

So the EU stands for a view of humanity and a model of society that the great majority of its citizens support. Europeans cherish their rich heritage of values, which includes a belief in human rights, social solidarity, free enterprise, a fair distribution of the fruits of economic growth, the right to a protected environment, respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and a harmonious blend of tradition and progress.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which was proclaimed in Nice in December 2000, sets out all the rights recognized today by the EU's member states and their citizens. These values can create a feeling of kinship between Europeans. To take just one example, all EU countries have abolished the death penalty.

(Source: EUROPA) -shm-

The Czech Republic will hold the reins of EU Presidency until the end of June

What is the EU Council Presidency?

The Council of the EU is the intergovernmental institution, advocating the interests of individual Member States. The Presidency of the Council is one of the most important instruments for promoting the interests of EU Member States and influencing the activities and functioning of the whole European Union. Accordingly, Member States hold the Presidency on a rotational basis in keeping with a predetermined schedule broken down into six-months terms. Therefore, two different Member States hold the Presidency over the course of the calendar year – the first from January to June, the second from July to December. This is a unique opportunity for these states to enhance their standing within the European Union and highlight the issues of European integration in their country.

The Presidency calls and chairs all meetings of the Council of the EU and its working committees, negotiates compromises across Member States, and acts on behalf of the European Union in negotiations with non-EU countries and international organizations. It represents the Council of the EU in interactions with other EU institutions, especially the European Parliament and the European Commission.

The Presidency is guided by priorities. These priorities are set by each Presidency and are first presented to the Council of the EU and the European Parliament. Priorities include objectives the Presidency is keen to pursue, as well as current affairs, and – in the interests of continuity – elements from the agendas of preceding Presidencies. For that purpose, a trio is formed, in which three successive Presidencies join forces and cooperate. These three Presidencies work together to create a joint eighteen-month program. The Czech Republic has formed a trio with France and Sweden.

The priorities, introduced by the government of the Czech Republic for its presidency are the three "E's": Economy, Energy, and Europe in the world. The motto is "Europe without barriers".

(Source: Government of the Czech Republic)

-shm-

The culture of our land: visual art part 3

by Ernie Zucker

The third and last installment of the series on Czech visual art combines with the hope that you – on a visit to Prague – will find a day dedicated for exploring the Czech National Gallery. The largest collection of modern and contemporary arts is presented on six floors inside the marvelous Functionalism style building. The Trade Fair Palace (Veletřní palác) was built in the years 1925 – 1928. At the time, architect Le Corbusier considered it as the most significant example of this architectural form in Europe. The Trade Fair Palace will charm you with its permanent expositions of 19th and 20th centuries French

Czech proponents of cubism and surrealism did reach high standards in their work. These art forms that flourished in the country during the 1920s to the 1940s, were in a way the art of making the fantastic real. They also happened to be incredibly important avant-garde movements whose influence is still being felt today.

Famed poet and art critic Guillaume Apollinaire first coined the term surrealism in 1917. The movement was also inspired by the political ideology of Karl Marx and the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud. Ironically, though it was

The formers painting Village Cemetery is notable for the delicacy of its coloring, while Toyen employed much bolder tones (canvasses Solitude or Fjords). Josef Šíma, who also lived in Paris, incorporated mythical and universal symbols. His sources of inspiration spanned from sensual experience, through civil themes, geometric abstraction, imaginative seeking of archetypes of nature, things and human existence pictured as crystals, cosmic egg and female torsos to fascination by landscapes and mythology, until he finally united all these elements and made a synthesis of them in cosmic visions and symbols of human destiny.

Sculptors working at that time included Vincenc Makovský and Josef Wagner. Unfortunately, the Second World War interrupted international contacts for the Czech artists, but in 1945 I was exposed to meeting several key artists through Mikuláš Medek who lived with my cousin at

that time. His images were often surreptitiously shocking, such as his Magnetic Fish (1949) and in the 1950's he concluded that

occupied Czechoslovakia, artists were able to work within the confines of the communist sphere of influence, but access to this



Czech surrealism was effectively dead and adopted a new painting style (Black Gambit – 1957).

By the end of the 1960's Czech painting and sculpture had adopted many of the styles of the contemporary art world. After armies of the Warsaw Pact

West was limited if not closed. Hence the request by Vlasta Ciháková-Noshiro for finding space to exhibit art from this era somewhere in this country, should receive our attention. It is reproduced elsewhere in this issue. &



art, Czech art 1960-1995, 20th century European art but also with its selected collections of interesting short-term exhibitions.

When I arrived in Prague with the Czech air force in 1945, through my cousin Gáby Mayerová, I was introduced to a group of young debutante artists, most of them around twenty years of age. They were swayed by post-war euphoria and enthusiastically proclaimed ideas of social progress and modern computer-based economy. They became members of the fashionable Devětsil Association - a popular organization of a wide-ranging group of avant-garde artists - architects, poets, writers, musicians, playwrights and theater people.

Cubism and surrealism

In the twenty years of Czechoslovakia's First republic (1918 – 1938), the Art Nouveau, Cubist and Surrealist generations produced interesting work, but unfortunately did not reach the quality standards of leading artists of the immediate past. These either died before the war (Antonín Slaviček), during the war (Stanislav Sucharda, Jan Preisler) or soon after (Bohumil Kubišta). However,

conceived as rebellion against commercialism and materialism, surrealism wound up having its greatest influence on the glamorous, elitist worlds of fashion design. Yet, for most of us, surrealist masterpieces combine the fantastic and the outrageous with a wild sense of humor.

The group of painters included Adolf Hoffmeister, František Muzika, Josef Šíma, Mikuláš Medek, Jindřich Štyrský, Toyen, the sculptor Bedřich Štefan and others. The organizer of the group was Karel Teige. Sculptor Otto Gutfreund in his Study of a Sitting Woman best expressed the cubist form. In painting, it was Emil Filla who closely adhered to cubist expression. So did Antonín Procházka, who was most prominent in his treatment of the vitality line of cubism, enlivened by primitivism. His Lady in a Sweater, displays a complex structure incorporating jigsaw-like pieces. The paintings of Josef Čapek also have their roots in cubism.

The birth of Czech surrealism, both in painting and sculpture, dates back to the work of artists living in Paris such as Jindřich Štyrský and his partner Toyen in 1925.

Praha - Paris: After Sudek and Atget

Peter Sramek, son of Czech parents in Canada, has been exhibiting since January 23 until March 13, his photographs in Galerie 35, Stepanska 35, Prague, Czech Republic. The exhibition presents a portion of Sramek's European rephotographic projects of the past 16 years, especially photographs taken in Prague and Paris. The Prague works are based on Josef Sudek's panoramic images of the 1950s published in Praha Panoramaticka. The Paris images were made after Atget's views of 3 specific sites made between 1890 and 1924. The exhibition places reproductions of the original works alongside the modern rephotographs.

The rephotography follows the urban architecture development and shows us a relation between the photograph and past, and confronts the image with memory.

Sramek's rephotographic work will be shown in Toronto in 2009 with a planned book publication.

Peter Sramek is a Professor of Photography at the Ontario College of Art & Design in Toronto, Canada. He studied under Minor White at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the early 1970's. He was a founding member of the Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography in Toronto and his work has been shown across Canada and internationally.

His aspiration also is to initiate an academic cooperation between the Ontario College of Art & Design and Czech

Universities: Academy of Fine Arts in Prague and Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design Prague. -shm-



Jan 23 – Mar 13, 2009

PETR ŠRÁMEK:
PRAGUE – PARIS, SUR LES PAS DE SUDEK ET ATGET
PRAHA – PAŘÍŽ, PO STOPÁCH SUDKA A ATGETA

Vystava bude otevřena od 23. ledna do 13. března 2009 denně kromě neděle od 10 do 19 hodin a v sobotu od 10 do 15 hodin.
 L'exposition sera ouverte du 23 janvier au 13 mars du lundi au vendredi de 10h à 19h et le samedi de 10h à 15h.

Galerie 35
 Francouzský institut v Praze,
 Štěpánská 35, Praha 1



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