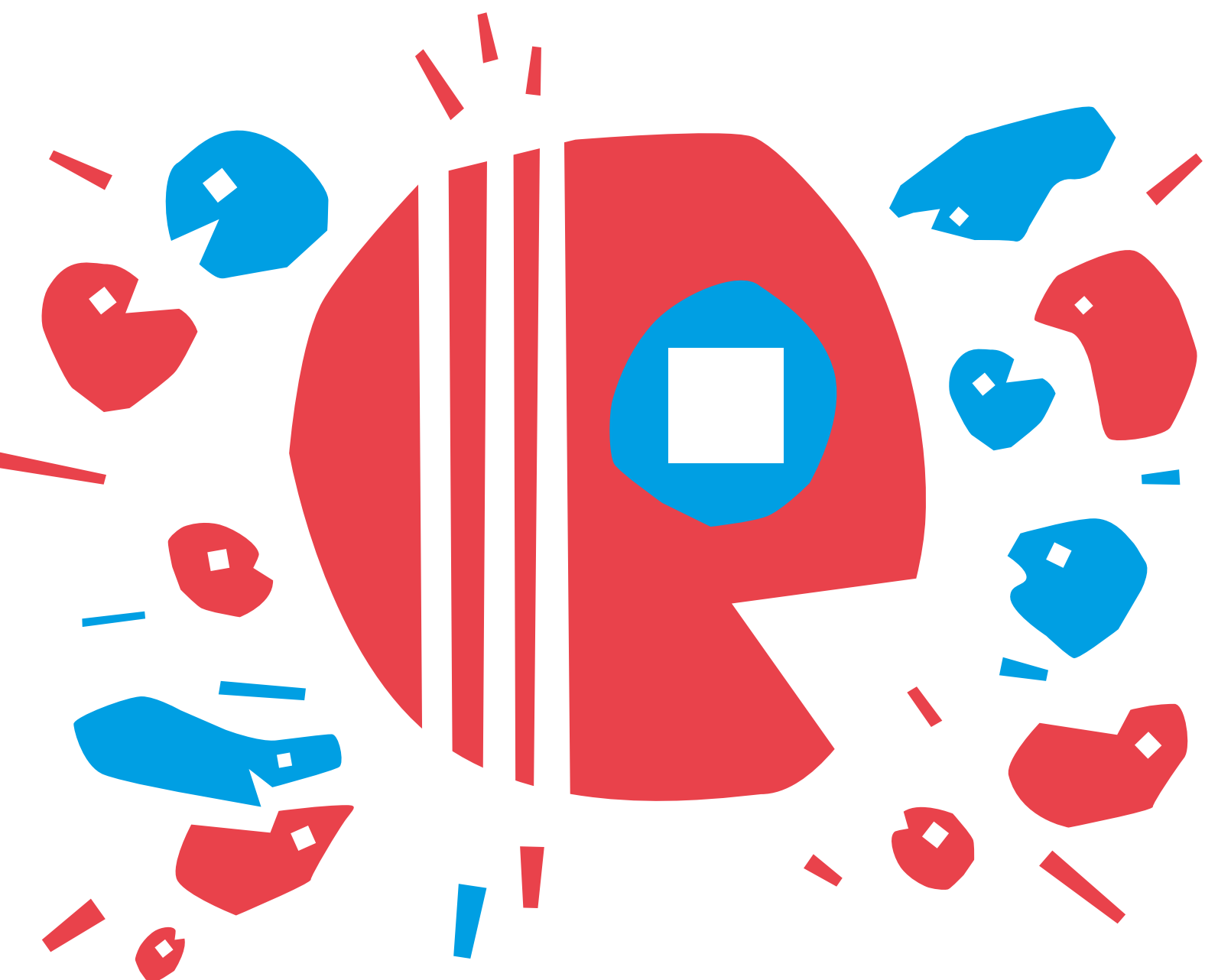




# COLLEC\_THINK TANK

*Konferencia a cseh és a szlovák designról*  
*Conference on Czech and Slovak Design*



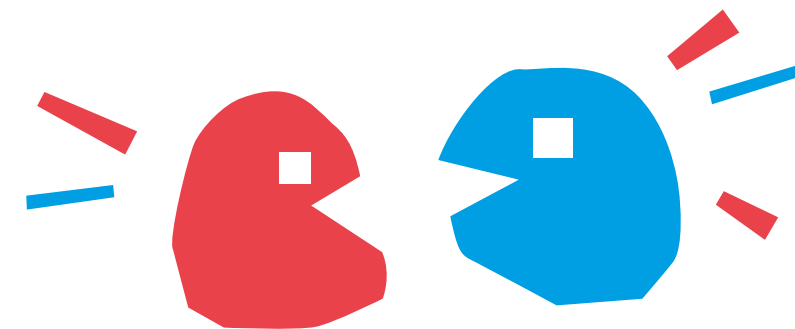
**Budapest, 2022**



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# COLLEC\_THINK TANK

**Konferencia a cseh és a szlovák designról**

**Conference on Czech and Slovak Design**



Museum of Applied Arts

Iparművészeti Múzeum – Museum of Applied Arts  
Budapest, 2022

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### A CSEH ÉS A SZLOVÁK DESIGN AZ IPARMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM KORTÁRS DESIGN GYŰJTEMÉNYÉBEN

„Wenn wir das Museum nicht bloß als Speicher der Eigentum denken, sondern als Raum in dem es möglich ist, um Dinge herum zusammen zu kommen, um zu verhandeln, was war, was es für die Gegenwart bedeutet und welche Zukunft wir uns erträumen, bekommt die Notwendigkeit von Sammlung als Relation eine neue Dimension.“<sup>1</sup>

(Ha a múzeumra nemcsak vagyontárgyak tárházaként tekintünk, hanem olyan térként, ahol össze lehet gyűlni a tárgyak körül, hogy átbeszéljük a múltat, hogy mit jelent mindez a jelen számára, és hogyan képzeljük el a jövőt, akkor a gyűjtemény mint kapcsolat szükségyszerűsége új dimenziót kap.)

1. Dechem Studio designers Michaela Tomišková and Jakub Jandourek in their own workshop © Judit Horváth, PhD



A *Collec\_Think Tank* sorozatot 2019-ben indítottuk útjára azzal a céllal, hogy a 2015-ben megalakult Kortárs Design Gyűjtemény új gyakorlatain keresztül az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményezési politikáját a jelenkor kihívásainak, problémafelvetéseinek megfelelően alakítsuk.

A múzeumi főépület 2018-ban megkezdődött rekonstrukciójának ideje alatt egyik fontos célunk, hogy a megújuló intézmény megnyitására felépüljön egy a 20–21. századi *design* és *craft* ágazatait reprezentáló gyűjtemény, elsődlegesen a poszt-szocialista régió országaira fókuszálva. Feladatunknak tekintjük, hogy a rendszerváltás előtti

„keleti blokk” jellegzetes design darabjait pótoljuk, hiszen ezen időszakból szinte alig található tárgy a gyűjteményünkben. A Kortárs Design Főosztály szoros szakmai kapcsolatot ápol a közép-európai régió múzeumaival, kulturális intézményeivel is.<sup>2</sup>

A sorozattal a gyűjteményezés hagyományos kereteit szeretnénk oldani, minél tágabbra nyitni a diskurzust arról, mit és hogyan gyűjteményezünk. Hiszünk a részvétel hatásában, és abban, hogy a történelem, melyet közösen élünk át, mindannyiunk ügye, ezért fontos, hogy közösen formáljuk. Rajtunk múlik, hogy gyerekeink, unokáink számára felülről irányítva vagy alulról

### CZECH AND SLOVAK DESIGN IN THE CONTEMPORARY DESIGN COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS

„Wenn wir das Museum nicht bloß als Speicher der Eigentum denken, sondern als Raum in dem es möglich ist, um Dinge herum zusammen zu kommen, um zu verhandeln, was war, was es für die Gegenwart bedeutet und welche Zukunft wir uns erträumen, bekommt die Notwendigkeit von Sammlung als Relation eine neue Dimension.“<sup>1</sup>

If we consider the museum not only as a repository of assets, but as a space where we can gather around objects, so that we can discuss the past, and what all of this means for the present, and how we imagine the future, then the collection as connection – by necessity – takes on a new dimension.

We launched the *Collec\_Think Tank* series in 2019 with the objective of shaping the collection policy of the Museum of Applied Arts – by way of the new practices of the Contemporary Design Collection, which was established in 2015 – in accordance with the challenges and problems raised in the current era.

One of our most important aims during the reconstruction of the museum’s main building, commenced in 2018, is for the revived institution to build a collection representative of the branches of design and craft of the 20th–21st centuries for its re-opening, with a primary focus on the countries of the post-Socialist region. We consider it our mission to supplement pieces characteristic of the design of the ‘Eastern Bloc’ prior to the political transition, as objects from this period can scarcely be found in our collection currently. The Contemporary Design Department nurtures a close professional relationship with the museums and cultural institutions of the Central/Eastern European region.<sup>2</sup>

With this series, we would like to relax the traditional framework of collection, and to broaden the discourse on what and how we collect.

We believe in the impact of engagement, and in the fact that history, which we experience together, is a matter for all of us, and thus it is important that we shape it together. It depends upon us that we preserve the era in which we are living and which we experience in our daily lives, for our children and grandchildren, either directing it from above or building it from the ground up. With this series, we are staking our vote on the latter.

Collections conserve time, but if we select appropriately what is worth preserving, the assembled objects can revitalise us and help us, through the past in comprehending the present, and in planning for our future.

With this series, we would like not only to collect new information on the design of the Central/Eastern European countries after 1945, but we would like to create a platform where we can encounter various viewpoints, and debate the questions arising in connection with these. We would like to develop fruitful relationships between the actors on the design scene of the post-Socialist countries, which will aid future collaborations.

<sup>1</sup> Martina GRIESSER, Nora STERNFELD, Sedimentierte Konflikte und alternative Archive (Sich mit) Sammlungen anlegen. In: *Sammeln in der Zeit*. Leipzig, 2018, p. 7. [https://www.academia.edu/36161063/Sedimentierte\\_Konflikte\\_und\\_alternative\\_Archive\\_Sich\\_mit\\_Sammlungen\\_anlegen](https://www.academia.edu/36161063/Sedimentierte_Konflikte_und_alternative_Archive_Sich_mit_Sammlungen_anlegen) [Utolsó megtekintés: 2022. 08. 09.]

<sup>2</sup> HORVÁTH Judit, *COLLEC\_THINK TANK – Konferencia a lengyel designról*. Iparművészeti Múzeum / Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, 2019. 2. [https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec\\_%20Think%20Tank\\_konferencia\\_kiadvany.pdf](https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec_%20Think%20Tank_konferencia_kiadvany.pdf) [Utolsó megtekintés: 2022. 08. 09.]



építkezve őrizzük meg azt a kort, amiben élünk, és amit mindennapjainkban megtapasztalunk. Ezzel a sorozattal mi az utóbbi mellett tesszük le a voksunkat.

A gyűjtemények konzerválják az időt, de ha megfelelően választjuk ki, mi az, ami megőrzésre érdemes, a begyűjtött tárgyak új életre kelhetnek, segíthetnek minket a múlton keresztül a jelenünk megértésében, és a jövőnk tervezésében.

Ezzel a sorozattal nem csak új információkat szeretnénk begyűjteni a közép-kelet-európai országok 1945 utáni designjáról, de olyan platformot kívánunk teremteni, ahol különféle nézőpontok találkozhatnak, és az ennek kapcsán felmerülő kérdések megvitathatók. Szeretnénk, ha olyan gyümölcsöző kapcsolatok alakulhatnának ki a poszt-szocialista országok design-szcénájának szereplői között, melyek segítik a jövőbeli együttműködéseket.

„A Collec\_Think Tank konferenciasorozattal a gyűjteményezés egyoldalúságát próbáljuk oldani, a hierarchikus viszonyokat kívánjuk csökkenteni, és egy mellérendeltebb viszonyrendszerben gondolkodni.”<sup>3</sup>

Fontosnak érezzük, hogy megkérdezzük azokat a szereplőket, akik közvetlenül érintettek az adott gyűjtőkör tekintetében, mi az, amit ők megőrzésre érdemesnek tartanak. Ütköztessük véleményeinket, hogy minél demokratikusabban és felelősebben, minél több szempont figyelembevételével szülessen döntés arról, mi válik a közjó részévé. A közgyűjteményeket fenntartó adófizetők mind-egyikét szolgálnia kellene a múzeumoknak.

A konferenciasorozat első részében a lengyel design volt a témánk. A *think tank* nem csak érdekes tartalmakkal bővítette a tudásunkat, de az előadókkal azóta is aktív kapcsolatban vagyunk, sokukkal más nemzetközi projektekben is együttműködünk.

A *Collec\_Think Tank* sorozathoz szorosan kapcsolódik a *Körforgásban* című sorozatunk, melynek keretében évente két kiállítást szervezünk az Iparművészeti Múzeum Ráth György-villájában. A program szerint ma élő designereket kérünk fel, hogy egy tárgyat vagy tárgyegyüttest kiválasztva a gyűjteményből és ebből merítve inspirációt hozzák létre a saját munkájukat, a megszületett új design pedig a gyűjteményünk részévé válik. A tavaszi időszakban – hacsak a pandémia vagy a háború nem akadályozza meg – mindig egy külföldi designert mutatunk be a poszt-szocialista országokból válogatva.

Minden évhez kapcsolódik egy ország. Az első külföldi designert Lengyelországból választottuk, épp abban az évben, amikor a *Collec\_Think Tank* a lengyel designra fókuszált.

A következő évben a prágai DECHEMA Stúdiót kérjük fel a kiállításban való részvételre. Michaela



2. Gustave Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*  
This edition was published in Paris by Éditions Conard in 1930.  
© Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest / Photo: Benedek Regős

“With the *Collec\_Think Tank conference series*, we attempt to resolve the one-sidedness, or bias, of collecting, to reduce the hierarchical relations, and to think in terms of a more co-ordinated network of relationships.”<sup>3</sup>

We feel that it is important that we ask the stakeholders who are directly involved in the field of interest, what it is that they consider worthy of preserving. We engage and collide our opinions in order to allow a decision to be made as democratically and responsibly as possible, taking as many perspectives into account as possible, on what should become part of the common good. The museum must serve every single taxpayer who maintains the public collections.

In the first part of the conference series, our subject was Polish design. The think tank not only expanded our knowledge with interesting content, but we have remained in active connection with the presenters, and we have also collaborated on other international projects with many of them. The *Collec\_Think Tank* series is closely interconnected with our series entitled, *In Circulation*, within whose framework we arrange two exhibitions a year in the György Ráth Villa of the Museum of Applied Arts. According to our concept, we invite living designers to select an object or ensemble of objects from our collections, and taking inspiration from these, create a new design, which will then become a part of our collection. In the spring season, we always (when not interrupted by a global pandemic or war) present an international designer, selected from a post-Socialist country.

Each year is linked with one country. We selected our first international designer from Poland, exactly in the year when *Collec\_Think Tank* focused on Polish design.

In the following year, we invited DECHEMA Studio from Prague to participate in an exhibition. Michaela Tomišková and Jakub Jand'ourek se-

lected a book of unique binding from the book art collection of the museum: Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. With their work, the designers of DECHEMA Studio reflected the book – both its appearance, and its contents. They produced a new object, with the use of glass that carried upon it markings very similar to the pattern of the marbled paper – none other than a mirror of unique design.

Lithyalin glass was developed 200 years ago by Friedrich Egermann in a northern Czech small town, Nový Bor. Precisely there, where the piece created by DECHEMA Studio for the *In Circulation* series was also produced. Marbled paper and lithyalin glass are very similar in outward appearance. In the course of their selection, the designers did not neglect the content of the book either, as glass and the motif of the mirror appear again and again in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.

The collections of the Museum of Applied Arts abound in Czech artworks. We also preserve many pieces from Friedrich Egermann's workshop. Works from the most outstanding Czech workshops are found in our glass collection.

While the collection is unfortunately, not rich enough in the works of contemporary artists, with thanks to this project, the collection has added two unusual mirrors, one of which was produced in Václav Kuželka's workshop, decorated with lithyalin glass inserts, as well as three paintings created during the design phase, and also unpolished lithyalin pieces.

Due to the closings caused by the Covid-19 virus, we were forced to postpone the opening of the exhibition planned for Spring 2020 by one year. In the same year, we had also planned to organise the second part of *Collec\_Think Tank*, on Czech and Slovak design. Due to the pandemic, this conference and exhibition were rescheduled to Autumn 2022.

<sup>3</sup> HORVÁTH Judit, COLLEC\_THINK TANK – Konferencia a lengyel dizájnról. Iparművészeti Múzeum – Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, 2019. 2. [https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec\\_%20Think%20Tank\\_konferencia\\_kiadvany.pdf](https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec_%20Think%20Tank_konferencia_kiadvany.pdf) [Utolsó megtekintés: 2022. 08. 09.]

Tomišková és Jakub Jand'ourek egy egyedi kötésű könyvet választott ki a múzeum művészi könyvgyűjteményéből: Flaubert *Madame Bovary*-ját. A DECHEM Studio tervezői munkájukkal reflektáltak a könyv küllemére és tartalmára is. Egy a márványozott papír mintázatához nagyon hasonló jegyeket magán viselő üveg felhasználásával készítették el az új tárgyat, mely nem más, mint egy egyedi kivitelezésű tükör.

A lithyalin üveget 200 évvel ezelőtt Friedrich Egermann fejlesztette ki az észak-csehországi Nový Borban. Éppen ott, ahol a *Körforgásban* sorozat DECHEM Studio által létrehozott darabja is készült. A márványozott papír és a lithyalin üveg külsőre nagyon hasonlítanak. A tervezők választásuk során nem siklottak el a könyv tartalmi része felett sem, hiszen Flaubert *Bovaryné* című regényében az üveg és a tükör motívuma újra és újra felbukkan.

Az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteménye bővelkedik cseh műtárgyakban. Friedrich Egermann műhelyéből is számos darabot őrzünk. Üveggyűj-

teményünkben megtalálhatók a legkiválóbb cseh műhelyek munkái.

Sajnos kortárs alkotók munkáiban a gyűjtemény nem ennyire gazdag, de ennek a projektnek köszönhetően gyarapodott a gyűjtemény két különleges tükörrel, melyek közül az egyik Václav Kuželka műhelyében készült lithyalin üvegbetétekkel díszített, illetve a tervezési szakaszban létrejött három festménnyel, valamint csiszolatlan lithyalin darabokkal is.

A COVID-19 vírus okozta lezárások miatt a 2020 tavaszára tervezett kiállítás megnyitását egy évvel el kellett halasztanunk. Abban az évben terveztük megrendezni a *Collec\_Think Tank* második részét is a cseh és a szlovák designról. A pandémia miatt ez a konferencia még a kiállításnál is később, csak most, 2022 őszén kerülhet megrendezésre.

A körülöttünk zajló társadalmi és politikai eseményektől a múzeum programja sem tud függetlenedni. A legszomorúbb példa erre a *Körforgásban* sorozat legutóbbi darabja, melynek meghívott de-



3. Glass nugget and objects from Friedrich Egermann's glass workshop, ca. 1830 and 1840  
© Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest  
photo: Benedek Regős



4. Dechem Studio: Panel Paintings, 2020  
© Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest  
Photo: Benedek Regős



5. Dechem Studio: Mirror, 2020  
Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest  
© Photo: Kristina Hrabětová

The programme of the museum cannot remain completely independent from the social and political events swirling around us. The saddest example of this is the most recent edition of the *In Circulation* series, which invited Russian designer Buliash Todaeva. The project was completed. In January 2022, we presented the material within the framework of a pop-up exhibition, in the Design Museum, found within the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. We

would have liked to confer on Russian design in this year's conference. We were interrupted, however, by war. Sadly, one month before opening in Budapest, we had to postpone the exhibition, which was completely ready. For the time being, we still do not know when we will be able to present the work. We were also forced to postpone the third edition of the *Collec\_Think Tank* conference.

We believe in the power of discourse, good relations, and intensive collaborative work, in the long-term perspective of culture, as opposed to war. "A contact perspective views all culture-collecting strategies as responses



signere az orosz Buliash Todaeva volt. A projekt elkészült. Az anyagot 2022 januárjában egy pop up kiállítás keretében mutattuk be a moszkvai Tretjakov Képtárban található Design Múzeumban, és az idei konferenciánkon már az orosz designról szerettünk volna értekezni. A háború azonban közbeszólt. A teljesen előkészített kiállítást sajnos egy hónappal a budapesti megnyitó előtt le kellett mondanunk, és egyelőre nem tudni, mikor kerülhet bemutatásra az anyag. A harmadik *Collec\_Think Tank* konferenciát is el kellett halasztanunk.

Hiszünk a beszélgetés, a jó kapcsolat, az intenzív közös munka erejében, a kultúra hosszútávú perspektívájában a háborúval szemben. „A kontaktus alapú nézőpont minden kultúragyűjtő stratégiát az uralomra, a hierarchiára, az ellenállásra és a mozgósításra épülő történelmi helyzetekre adott válasznak tekint.”<sup>4</sup> (az idézetek H.J. Ford.) Ha a hatalmi politika felől vizsgáljuk a közös történelmünket, a cseh–szlovák–magyar kapcsolatokban is bőven találunk konfliktust. Mi azonban a kulturális intézményi hálón keresztül közös tudásokat szeretnénk generálni, és igyekezni megóvni a közönségünket és a velünk együttműködőket attól, hogy az értetlenség és a gyűlölet vezérelje a gondolkodásukat, amikor egy számukra nem minden elemében ismerős kultúrával találkozunk.

Egységes Európáról álmodunk, de tagadhatatlan, hogy a posztoszocialista államoknak egy emberöltő sem volt elég arra, hogy behozzák a beágyazott demokráciákkal szembeni lépéshátrányukat. Vannak azonban tudásaink, melyek éppen abból a tapasztalatból születtek, hogy a történelmünk másként alakult.

Ez a platform annak is teret ad, hogy e közösség, mely évtizedeken keresztül Nyugat-Európához képest és mindig a vesztes pozíciójából definiálta magát, felkutassa identitásának azokat az elemeit, melyek a korunkat sújtó környezeti és politikai válságban ismét hasznos tudássá válhatnak. Hiszen még éppen él az a nemzedék, melynek tagjai háborúk, forradalmak, diktatúrák elnyomásában olyan életstratégiákat alakítottak ki, melyek sajnos az előttünk álló inséges időkben hasznunkra válhatnak. Érdekel minket, hogyan lehet különböző összefüggéseket figyelembe véve gyűjteni, hogy „gyűjteményezhetők-e a kapcsolatok, és hogyan őrizhetők meg az egyes gyűjtemények közötti relációk.”<sup>5</sup>

A pozsonyi Design Center, a brnói Moravska Galeria és a prágai UPM, az UMPRUM (Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague) és a Designblok munkatársaival jó viszonyt ápolunk. Mindegyik intézmény másban erős. Remélem, a *Collec\_Think Tank* alkalmat teremt majd arra, hogy ezek a kapcsolatok még jobban elmélyüljenek, és olyan bázist képezzenek, melyre a következő évek munkájában mindannyian támaszkodhatunk, és ez a közös erőfeszítés egyre szélesebb körben fejt majd ki a hatását.

A kortárs, Giorgio Agambennel szólva, bátorság: „(...) a kortárs sajátos viszonyt működtet a különféle idők között. (...) a törésből közös teret vagy találkozási pontot hoz létre a különböző idők és generációk között. (...) Vagyis a kortárs nem csupán annyi tesz, hogy érzékelve a jelen sötétségét, világosságot hoz, amely soha nem ér célba, hanem azt is, hogy, az időt megosztva és beékelve, képes azt átalakítani és kapcsolatba hozni más időkkel.”<sup>6</sup>

*to particular histories of dominance, hierarchy, resistance, and mobilization.*”<sup>4</sup> Examining our common history from the power politics standpoint, we find no lack of conflict in Czech–Slovakian–Hungarian relations, either. We would, nevertheless, like to generate common knowledge by way of the cultural institutional network, and we try to protect our audience and collaborators from having our thinking driven by incomprehension and hate, when we encounter a culture that is not familiar to us in every element.

We dream of a united Europe, but it is undeniable that a generation was not enough for the post-Socialist states to make up for the regressions facing embedded democracies. We have knowledge, however, that was born from our experience of our history evolving differently.

This platform gives space for this community – which defined itself for decades relative to Western Europe, and always in the losing position – to seek out those elements of our identity, which in this era afflicted by environmental and political crisis, can again become useful knowledge. As that generation, whose members developed life strategies under the oppression of wars, revolutions and dictatorships – which, tragically, may again become useful in the distressed times before us. “We are interested in how it is possible to collect, taking into account various correlations, how these relationships can be collected, and how we can preserve the relations between the individual collections”.<sup>5</sup>

We cultivate good relations with the staff at the Design Center in Bratislava, Moravska Galeria in Brno, and in Prague: UPM; UMPRUM (Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague), and Designblok. Each of these institutions is strong in a different area. I truly hope that *Collec\_Think Tank* can create the opportunity for these relationships to deepen further, so that they will constitute a foundation upon which we can all depend and lean on in the work of the next few years, and this common effort will evolve an impact over an ever increasing sphere.

The contemporary, in the words of Giorgio Agamben, is courage: “(...) the contemporary puts to work a special relation between the different times. (...) he also makes of this fracture a meeting place, or an encounter between times and generations. (...)

*This means that the contemporary is not only the one who, perceiving the darkness of the present, grasps a light that never reach its destiny, he is also the one who, dividing and interpolating time, is capable of transforming it and putting it in relation with other times.*”<sup>6</sup>

4 Brian DURRANS, “The Future of Ethnographic Exhibitions.” In: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, No. 118, pp. 125–129.

5 „Uns beschäftigte auch die Frage, wie relational gesammelt werden könnte: Wie können Beziehungen gesammelt werden, und wie können Sammlungen in Beziehung bleiben?” [Az is érdekelt minket, hogy hogyan lehet összefüggéseket figyelembe véve gyűjteni: hogyan gyűjteményezhetők a kapcsolatok, és hogyan őrizhető meg a gyűjtemények közötti kapcsolat? – H. J. Fordítása.] Martina GRIESSER-STERMSCHEG, Nora STERNFELD, Luisa ZIAJA, “Vorwort. [Introduction.]” In: Martina GRIESSER-STERMSCHEG, Nora STERNFELD, Luisa ZIAJA, *Sich mit Sammlungen anlegen*. De Gruyter – Universität für angewandte Kunst: Wien, 2020. p. 16.

6 Giorgio AGAMBEN, “What is the Contemporary?” In: Giorgio AGAMBEN, *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*. Stanford, 2009, pp. 52–53.

1 GRIESSER, Martina, Nora STERNFELD: “Sedimentierte Konflikte und alternative Archive (Sich mit) Sammlungen anlegen”. In: *Sammeln in der Zeit*. Leipzig, 2018, p. 7. [https://www.academia.edu/36161063/Sedimentierte\\_Konflikte\\_und\\_alternative\\_Archive\\_Sich\\_mit\\_Sammlungen\\_anlegen](https://www.academia.edu/36161063/Sedimentierte_Konflikte_und_alternative_Archive_Sich_mit_Sammlungen_anlegen) [Last accessed: 09.08.2022]

2 HORVÁTH Judit: *COLLEC\_THINK TANK – Conference on Polish Design*. Iparművészeti Múzeum / Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, 2019, 2. [https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec\\_%20Think%20Tank\\_konferencia\\_kiadvany.pdf](https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec_%20Think%20Tank_konferencia_kiadvany.pdf) [Last accessed: 09.08.2022]

3 Ibid. [https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec\\_%20Think%20Tank\\_konferencia\\_kiadvany.pdf](https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec_%20Think%20Tank_konferencia_kiadvany.pdf) [Last accessed: 09.08.2022]

4 DURRANS, Brian: “The Future of Ethnographic Exhibitions”. In: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, no. 118, pp. 125–129.

5 “Uns beschäftigte auch die Frage, wie relational gesammelt werden könnte: Wie können Beziehungen gesammelt werden, und wie können Sammlungen in Beziehung bleiben?” Martina GRIESSER-STERMSCHEG, Nora STERNFELD, Luisa ZIAJA, “Vorwort. [Introduction.]” In: GRIESSER-STERMSCHEG, Martina, Nora STERNFELD, Luisa ZIAJA: *Sich mit Sammlungen anlegen*. De Gruyter – Universität für angewandte Kunst: Vienna, 2020, p. 16.

6 AGAMBEN, Giorgio: “What is the Contemporary?” In: AGAMBEN, Giorgio: *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*. Stanford, 2009, pp. 52–53.

## ADAM ŠTĚCH

1. The lamps were designed by Pavel Grus, with graphic design by Jiří Rathouský.  
Photo: Filip Šlapal

### A kommunista reprezentáció luxusvilága: Reprezentatív belső terek egyedi kialakítása a kommunista Csehszlovákiában

A kommunizmus alatt Csehszlovákia nem egy jelentős épületét és enteriőrjét ösztönző alkotásként tervezték, előkelő stílusban, a *Gesamtkunstwerk* koncepcióját alkalmazva, vagyis annak az elképzelésnek a jegyében, hogy az építészet, a belsőépítészet, a formatervezés és a művészet egyetlen szerves eszmét alkot. Jelen esszé az 1948 és 1989 közötti időszak egy-egy különösen híres projektjét mutatja be, kevésbé ismert példákkal egyetemben; mind-egyiket neves építészek tervezték bútortervezőkkel, iparosokkal és művészekkel együttműködve. Ezek a kollektív modernista művek a

kommunista nemzeti reprezentáció és ideológia ünnepléseként jöttek létre, paradox módon a nemzetközi építészet és design legújabb irányzataival összhangban. Öt kiválasztott projektet – a brnói Hotel International, a prágai Café Alfa, a londoni csehszlovák nagykövetség, a sezimovo úti kormányzati villa és a prágai Hotel Praha helyspecifikus tereit – vizsgáljuk a korszak csehszlovák építészetének kontextusában, szem előtt tartva az egyedi tervezésű munkák témakörét, amely munkák napjainkra szinte mind megsemmisültek.

## ADAM ŠTĚCH

### The Luxury World of Communist Representation: The Unique Design of Representative Interiors in Communist Czechoslovakia

While the quality of industrially-produced goods in communist Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989 rapidly stagnated, unique custom-made design, created for important representative buildings and interiors, commissioned chiefly by the Communist Party for its own representation and other activities, flourished. This essay describes five significant projects, which architects, designers and artists developed together as total works of art. Architecture, interior and furniture design, and artwork created complex *Gesamtkunstwerk* together in these projects, ranging from a café to embassies and a luxury hotel. Unfortunately, many such projects have already been destroyed or extensively remodelled. Furniture pieces, lighting objects and artworks were sometimes salvaged and collected by museums or sold to private galleries and collectors.

This essay presents some important projects of leading architects, interior designers and artists, including architects Karel Filsak, Jan Šrámek and Jan Bočan, interior designer Zbyněk Hřivnáč, and artists such as Stanislav Libenský and Ludmila Brychtová, René Roubíček, and many others. All these figures collaborated together on various representative interior projects between the 1950s and 1980s.



2. Architect Jan Bočan designed a few different types of bentwood armchairs for the interiors of the Stockholm Embassy. Courtesy of Archive of Bukowskis – Arts & Business



## **The Forms of Communist Entertainment: The Interior of Café Alfa**

At the end of the 1950s, the political situation of the communist regime was slowly getting softer and freer. The tough communist repression and socialist realism of the late 1940s and 1950s was coming to an end. Architects and artists were able to continue the traditions of interwar Modernism again and create modern projects in the cosmopolitan international style. Paradoxically, most of these projects were commissioned by the Communist Party and its own state-directed apparatus.

Modernist interiors were again in fashion. One of the few fashionable places in 1960s Prague was Café Alfa, which was located in a very interesting and architecturally attractive space. This was the first floor of the Alfa Palace, built according to the project of architects Ludvík Kyšela and Jan Jarolím in the late 1920s. The facility surrounded the large oval space of the passage. The café also had a very specific layout, dictated by this large oval space.

Interior designer Zbyněk Hřivnáč undertook the project together with Jan Šrámek. The most significant part of the entire interior became the seating elements, developed especially for this purpose. The armchairs for the interior of Café Alfa became distinctive sculptural objects, which then determined the character of the entire space. Hřivnáč and Šrámek achieved extraordinarily sculptural and distinctive artistic qualities with their furniture, which they obtained by choosing the material, technique, and, above all, working in close cooperation with the manufacturer, Dřevopodnik Holešov, which produced chairs from bent veneer.

*“Architects Šrámek and Hřivnáč, collaborating together over the years on interiors for Czechoslovak*

*Airlines and embassies, in agreement with the investor, therefore decided for a café for young people. They left the dance floor where it was originally in the space. Nevertheless, they changed the arrangement significantly. First of all, they freed up its glass front wall, previously mostly blocked by the place for an orchestra; a continuous row of tables for four or two along the window wall created opportunities for more intimate seating, and at the same time, connected the café with the city and Wenceslas Square. By dividing the floor area into two levels and equipping the dance café with the necessary equipment for its own supply of cold food, desserts and confectionery, and setting up an adjoining dressing room for musicians, the café space was perfectly resolved.”<sup>1</sup>*

This cooperation thus conditioned the entire appearance of the interior of the Alfa Café and restaurant on Wenceslas Square. Individual forms of chairs were complemented by other very successful interior elements. Designer and artist Milan Míšek also played a significant role in the overall appearance, as well as Bohumil Míra, who, in close collaboration with the architects, created wooden relief walls, which consisted of



3. Armchair designed by Jan Šrámek and Zbyněk Hřivnáč for Café Alfa in Prague, 1965. Courtesy of Archive of Zbyněk Hřivnáč

wooden slats in some places, with colour-coded ‘Op Art’ patterns. The artistic solution for the surface parts of the air conditioning system, and the applied graphics of Bohumil Míra and Milan Míšek are so perfect that the visitor is almost not aware of them at all.

The final artist who contributed to the interior concept was glassmaker René Roubíček. He created two lighting versions for the interior. One was above the bar: these were a kind of blown glass balloons in a row that illuminated the entire length of the bar. Ultimately, stunning chandeliers in the form of glass shards were installed here as the main lighting fixtures for the space, which seemed to grow downwards from the lamella roof. Sharply cut pieces of glass hung from the ceiling, arranged together in layers to create visually imaginative glowing objects.

Café Alfa is certainly one of the most complex interior units of the epoch, with all its parts integrated to support the final effect. Later on, Hřivnáč’s, Šrámek’s and Jan Bočan’s furniture designs took on much more vigorous and monumental forms, which can be, on the contrary, associated with the golden era of Czechoslovak architectural brutalism. The interior of the café was renovated long ago.

## **Representation of the Communist State: Czechoslovak Embassies in London and Stockholm**

The typology of the embassy is a specific architectural task. During the communist era in Czechoslovakia, embassy offices were designed to represent advanced society and all its related ideological aspects. Paradoxically, the interiors of Czechoslovak embassies were deprived of all visual socialist propaganda, and their design was conceived in the spirit of international Modernism, bringing them closer to the world audience. Thus, since the early 1960s, many artistically high-quality realisations have been created within the framework of building Czechoslovak embassies, often fulfilling the principles of a complex work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), down to the last detail.

Every Czechoslovak embassy that was built during the second half of the last century was the bearer of new and often experimental trends, in most areas: in architecture and design, as well as in the fine arts. All three elements met side by side in these realisations, creating unexpected representative environments, often with impressive artistic invention. Architectural competitions were announced around a certain key or scheme in the artistic design of the individual buildings of the Czechoslovak embassies, and the winning designs were then carried out accordingly. Architects Karel Filsak and Jan Bočan achieved the best position of their time, and they were able to perfectly realise their distinctive architectural style in several remarkable buildings, identical in their basic ideological and artistic solutions.

*“In Karel Filsak’s best works, which I consider to be the buildings of Czechoslovak embassies and missions in Brazil, Geneva and New Delhi, I am fascinated by the knowledge that their dramatic, sovereign controlled forms compete with the qual-*

*ities of Western brutalism, not only in their harsh poetic beauty, but also in their ideological depth. Few other buildings in the Czech branch of the brutalist tendency can boast a similar understanding of brutalist-existential poetics.”<sup>2</sup>*

Jan Bočan took a similar approach in his work, and at the turn of the 1970s also established himself as an independent and ambitious creator, especially in two major projects: of the Czechoslovak embassies in London and Stockholm.

The building of the Czechoslovak Embassy in London occupies a very special place within the Czechoslovak architecture of the second half of the last century. Jan Bočan, Jan Šrámek, Zdeněk Rothbauer, Oldřich Novotný, and Zbyněk Hřivnáč followed up on the conceptually elaborate brutalism and created a representative work that met with a very positive reception, especially abroad. The local office of Robert Matthew, Johnson Marshall and Partners, and architect Karel Štěpánský also collaborated on the construction, which was



carried out between 1965–70, primarily by the construction company of John Walis. Ultimately, the London embassy truly succeeded. In addition to D. Rock’s admirable article, published in *The Architects’ Journal* in 1969, the building was awarded by the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1971.

The exterior of the building, located in the tranquil setting of Kensington Palace Gardens and brutally abstracted with a dynamic rendering of the masses, consists of the interpenetration of a concrete skeleton and glass. However, what we are particularly interested in in the overall project of the Czechoslovak Embassy in London are its interiors and free-standing furniture, which was designed for its purposes by Jan Bočan, Zdeněk Rothbauer, Jan Šrámek, and in part, by Zbyněk Hřivnáč.

*“The embassy building is located on the bustling Notting Hill Gate in the immediate vicinity of Hyde Park, in the tranquil setting of Kensington Palace Gardens. The project consists of a smaller four-storey residence and a larger seven-storey commercial, consular and residential block that lines the aforementioned Notting Hill Gate. The exterior of the building, brutally abstracted with a dynamic rendering of materials, which is the work of Jan Bočan in particular, consists of the mutual penetration of the concrete skeleton and glass. In the interior, the whole concept is complemented by wooden cladding. The positive side is the effort for the unity of the project, while at the same time distinguishing the exterior and interior. Needless to say, the task of the architects was not easy. Differentiation of the functions of individual spaces with respect to their operation, efforts to characterise them in the sense of the concept, and at the same time preserving the common denominator by using materials and modifying their surfaces, repeating some forms and connecting elements of the device was successful.”<sup>3</sup>*

The furnishings were developed exclusively for these projects. And perhaps it was in London that this way of working reached its peak. Just as unique works of art were realised for these projects, the furniture also performed as autonomous objects, in which the exact function was replaced by the importance of presentation and an autonomous artistic experience. The armchair thus becomes a sculpture, achieving the same artistic significance as lighting objects by René Roubíček, an outdoor relief by Stanislav Kolíbal, or pottery by ceramicists Lydia Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková. Seating furniture, made by OPMP Mimoň and upholstered by the Prague Arts and Crafts Centre, becomes a kind of miniature architecture, and with its swollen shapes, it can even resemble some amorphous artworks of the era, of both domestic and international artists. The furniture, which was assembled from a laminate construction with a Dural aluminium (Duralumin) matte polished base and upholstered with foam and leather, is an object that could be considered bizarre to anti-aesthetic, and fits exactly into its given brutalist environment. Certain parallels to these forms can be found in other works of art that are located in the embassy building.

*“In the designs of solitary seating furniture, especially in armchairs, the originality of sculptural forms has outgrown their very function. They comprise a nostalgic remembrance of some advice from Adolf Loos or Le Corbusier, who did not hesitate to use proven forms where it was not necessary to invent atypical elements of interior design at any cost.”<sup>4</sup>*

Organic glass chandeliers by René Roubíček are also amorphous objects of a bubbling mass – in this case, a glass mass. Flowing glass stopped as if in motion can certainly be compared with the fluid forms of organically designed armchairs.

*“There are many other works of art that complement the architecture of the London Embassy. It is ideal, and it should be a matter of course in similar cases where fine art is not a complement, but an organic part of the environment.”<sup>5</sup>* The concept of integrating individual works of art into a uniform architectural-design-artistic work, the leit-motif of this whole work, has thus reached its qualitative, as well as quantitative, peak in the building of the Czechoslovak Embassy in London. In addition to the names already mentioned, Jiří John, Oldřich Smutný, J. Mizera, Eva Kmentová, Adriana Šimotová, Aleš Veselý, Bohumil Míra, Milan Míšek, and others contributed to the artistic decoration of the building, which was awarded by the prestigious RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) in 1971.

One of the last realisations in a series of Czechoslovak embassies built in the brutalist style is the one in Stockholm. This is the work of Jan Bočan, Jiří Náhlík, Zdeněk Rothbauer and Jan Šrámek. The building was designed in 1970 and completed within two years. Conceptually, it builds on successful projects in New Delhi and London; however, they differ architecturally. The modular system was strictly adhered to in the architecture.

*“Modular 75x75x75 cm means a three-dimensional*



4–5. The interiors of the London Embassy were executed down to the last detail, with bespoke seating, lighting and other elements. Courtesy of Archive of Zbyněk Hřivnáč



cube into which a chair can fit. This helps one to develop a life activity that corresponds to human dimensions and feelings. Half the dimension, for example, is the seat height; four times the normal construction height. Four is a magic number for me, dividing a square into other squares. Eight times is 6 metres, another dimension to the spatial solution. It wasn't deadly to us, but we insisted on exploring these facts. The Embassy in Stockholm has encoded these principles, despite its diverse floor plan. Reinforced concrete construction of walls and ceilings, reinforced concrete cassettes, grey dark brown masonry, dark wood floors - hence the 'classic' embassy of the 1960s accompanied by oversized ceilings, etc. But glass boxes are inserted in these blocks in aluminium construction. Public relation areas have a rough wooden frame embedded in wide wooden frames, which have a print with a graphic motif of grasses or plants. The authors of these graphic sheets were Jiří John and Albín Brunovský.”<sup>6</sup>

Bočan was born in 1937, and in 1962 he graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the Czech Technical University in Prague. He later became one of the main representatives of Czech brutalism, within the Beta studio, which was centrally managed by an association of project studios. During this period, he realised, for instance, the London Embassy and the Intercontinental Hotel in Prague. Like the embassy in Stockholm, which completes his brutalist period, all his buildings have been designed comprehensively, including all the interior details and furniture.

“Luminaires, clear glass balls in concrete cassettes, are our design. These lamps evoke the mood of old Prague gas lamps. The main lighting elements of the social spaces are the works of Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, and also René Roubíček. Artists Hugo Demartini, Kuchařová, Fišar, Cíglér, Rudavský, Láluha and many others collaborated on partial tasks. Stanislav Kolíbal's miniature garden is beautiful and interesting. We

tried to create the atmosphere that Prague and the Czech landscape have within them, with a little of the melancholy of the epoch. At the same time, we wanted the environment to sound like an abstract garden, to feel the culture of the nation it represents. Below, in the connecting part of the visa department, there is a metal relief, an abstract shadow that, as if in a hint, casts a concrete ceiling.”<sup>7</sup>

Glass, concrete, metal and bricks were complemented by light curved bent or veneered furniture, which was also designed by Jan Bočan and his team. In monumental armchairs, he used the classic technique of bending wooden bars according to Michael Thonet. At that time, the factories of the former Thonet company in the Czech Republic took care of their production. In the 1970s, they operated as a state-owned enterprise under the name TON (Bent Furniture Factory). Cane armchairs with an organically designed construction were complemented by a dining table based on the same principle, or low tables made of bent plywood.

Today, the building in Stockholm no longer serves its original purpose, and at the beginning of 2020 it was transformed into the headquarters of the Swedish fashion brand Acne Studios. In charge of its reconstruction was creative director Jonny Johansson, in collaboration with architect Johannes Norlander. Today, this representative space has been given a completely new function and look.

6. The lounge room features a modular seating system and colourful tapestry. Courtesy of Archive of Zbyněk Hřivnáč

## **The Secret World of Communist Paradise: The Presidential Villa and Hotel Praha**

The adaptation of former Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš's 1930s villa was one of the most interesting interior realisations of 1970s Czechoslovakia. Reconstruction of Beneš's villa in Sezimovo Ústí took place in 1975–76 by an implementation team, consisting of Karel Filsak, Jan Šrámek, Jan Bočan, Karel Filsak Jr., and of course, Zbyněk Hřivnáč. Furnishings for the government lounge, dining room and other spaces were designed by the architects entirely in the spirit of ideas about the luxury of future users – high-ranking officers of the communist regime. The interiors of the villa were subjected to a complete modernisation, inspired by the original

historical environment, and created a compact whole, where modern design became a vehicle of comfort, providing an atmosphere that feels like home. This was achieved mainly through the use of dark wood and, again, exclusively designed furniture. The most interesting of all the furniture are certainly the classically designed armchairs, which again come from the workshop of the design duo, Jan Šrámek and Zbyněk Hřivnáč. In this case, they were inspired by the Scottish Art Nouveau designer, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and his vertically shaped furniture. The result was an elegant, and at the same time, monumental wooden armchair with a seat, which was formed by a dense vertical network of support rails. The architects convincingly combined contemporary brutalism and its power with a decorative historical legacy.







7. The interior furnishings in the Beneš Villa were inspired by the furniture of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Courtesy of Archive of Zbyněk Hřivnáč

One remarkable artistic element of the interior is a kind of lounge space. Rendered in bright purple and blue hues, the space consists of a variable upholstered seating area of multiple height levels. The individual cushions or mattresses can thus be assembled by the user into various functional solutions. The main purpose is to find the ideal resting position. The ideal interior solution for social events thus demonstrates completely how the designers tried to meet the requirements of the client and how the hedonistic way of using the villa was reflected in its interior furnishings. The room is further decorated with a colourful abstract tapestry, whose tones exactly complement its overall colour scheme and render the room a unique example of a kind of Pop Art design, as conceived in the 1960s by Danish designers Verner Panton and Joe Colombo. The aesthetics were similar, for example, to the British decorator Max Clendinning, among others. In the case of the villa in Sezimovo Ústí, however, only tentatively, and within completely different political conditions.

8. Detail of the bowling hall.  
Photo: Filip Šlapal

Colourful abstract tapestries by sculptor Josef Nálepa were added to the room. A collection of luminaires designed by Hřivnáč and his colleague, designer Milan Matěj, also appears for the first time in the interior of the villa in Sezimovo Ústí. This is a series of luminaires made of a light wire construction and covered with a translucent fabric. This design, which will also appear in Hřivnáč's other projects, is reminiscent of the famous design of the Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni table and pendant lamps.

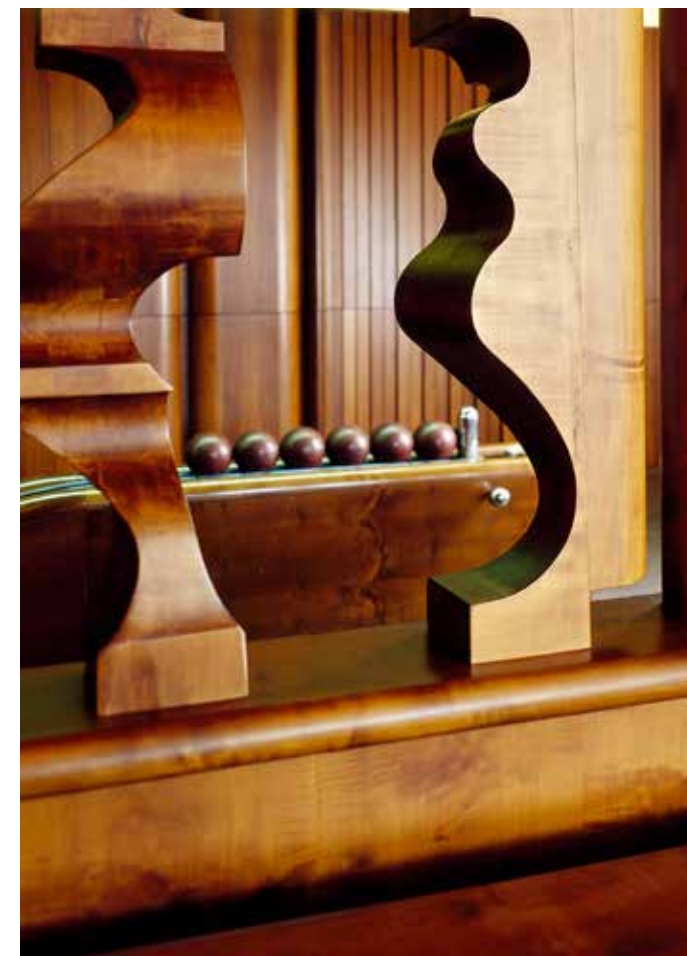
The interiors were again intended only for a limited government elite and political celebrities who used the villa for their own private recreation. Unfortunately, the interior was destroyed, and the villa was restored to its 1930s original form.

Completed in 1981, the Hotel Praha (Hotel Prague) symbolises even further the hidden



world of the communist political elite. It was commissioned by the Communist Party to host international events and important political delegations. It was constructed for the Comintern alone and with none of the usual financial constraints. The project enjoyed an almost unlimited budget, and most of the elements were developed exclusively to represent the idealism of the communist regime to foreign visitors.

*"A hotel of one hundred and thirty-six rooms, the smallest of which is 56 square metres and the largest, the royal suite, almost four hundred. Completed in 1981 as a non-commercial hotel used exclusively to accommodate state visits, the hotel is full of legends to such an extent that even today many people cannot look at the building without emotion. A Party hotel, a luxury palace that should be able to live at a safe distance from the rest of the world and without any need to have contact with it. A bit of a bizarre paradise, with trace elements*



*of communist megalomania, and one of the most original buildings built in the Czech Republic during the 1970s and 1980s."*<sup>8</sup>

Designed by the team of architects of Jaroslav Paroubek, Arnošt Navrátil, Radek Černý and Jan Sedláček, Hotel Praha was one of the most complex architectural commissions during the 1970s and 1980s in Czechoslovakia. Its organic sinuous line reflected the hill of the Hanspaulka residential area, above the Dejvice district of Prague. The innovative sensual architecture was complemented by lavish interior design and artistic interventions, custom-made for the entire range of spaces.

The project, which began construction in 1975, respected the terrain profile of the former Petschka Gardens. The five-storey building smoothly reflected the contour of the hill. The hotel was built on an area of 9,800 square metres, and the building contained 136 hotel rooms, conference rooms, a restaurant and a swimming pool. The hotel rooms were quite large (with the presidential suite of almost 400 m<sup>2</sup>). All rooms were south-facing and overlooked the Prague Castle.

The architecture, design and art met in a complex project, creating one of the most glamorous 'Gesamtkunstwerks' in the former communist Czechoslovakia. The hotel was furnished by some of the most important designers of the era, including: Zbyněk Hřivnáč, Zdeněk Wasserbauer, Karel Wolf, and Pavel Grus, and decorated by prolific artists: glassblower Stanislav Libenský, wood turner Antonín Hepnar, and glass artists Pavel Hlava and Benjamin Hejlek, among others.

9. The curved elements of the room divider in Hotel Praha were executed by Antonín Hepnar.  
Photo: Filip Šlapal



The unique ensemble of furniture pieces was produced with the best possible crafts skills, which could still be found in Czechoslovakia at the time. While mass consumer industrial goods were produced at a very low standard of quality, pieces of representative design of the political elite were created to suit its representative purposes, with impeccable attention to quality and luxury. These were products of the political and ideological representation of the communist society, and yet, they were designed in the international style of high design decoration, similar to work of the same era from France, Italy or Denmark. Their political and representative affiliations and symbolism created a unique quality in terms of design, craft and politics.

Following the collapse of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, the hotel was transformed into a state-owned commercial hotel, and was later bought by one of the richest Czechs, Petr Kellner, who arrogantly demolished it, ironically demonstrating the symbolic collision between Communism and Capitalism. It was torn down in 2014, despite strong opposition from architects and historians, who saw it as an important part of Czech history and called for its historical preservation. Some of the pieces were rescued by private collectors and museum institutions, mainly the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague.

This sad conclusion is extremely typical for the current situation and the way we address monuments of the former communist regime. Even high-quality projects that originated during this era are seen today by the public and the majority of politicians as monuments of the former regime – and ugly examples of communist architecture. It is fortunate that some of the artworks, furniture and objects from these buildings were saved and acquired by museums or individual collectors who take care of them.



10. Rhythmic wooden panelling of Hotel Praha.

Photo: Filip Šlapal

<sup>1</sup> Karel HETTES: "Prototyp obrozené pražské kavárny" [Prototype of a Revived Prague Café], in: *Architektura, ČSR XXXI*, no. 5, 1971, pp. 233–236.

<sup>2</sup> Rostislav ŠVÁCHA: "K dílu Karla Filsaka" [On the Work of Karel Filsak], in: *Architekt*, no. 7/8, 1997, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Jiří ŠETLÍK: "Velvyslanectví ČSSR v Londýně – Poznámka Chodcova" [The Czechoslovak Embassy in London – Note from a Pedestrian], in: *Architektura, ČSR XXX*, no. 1, 1970, pp. 3–9.

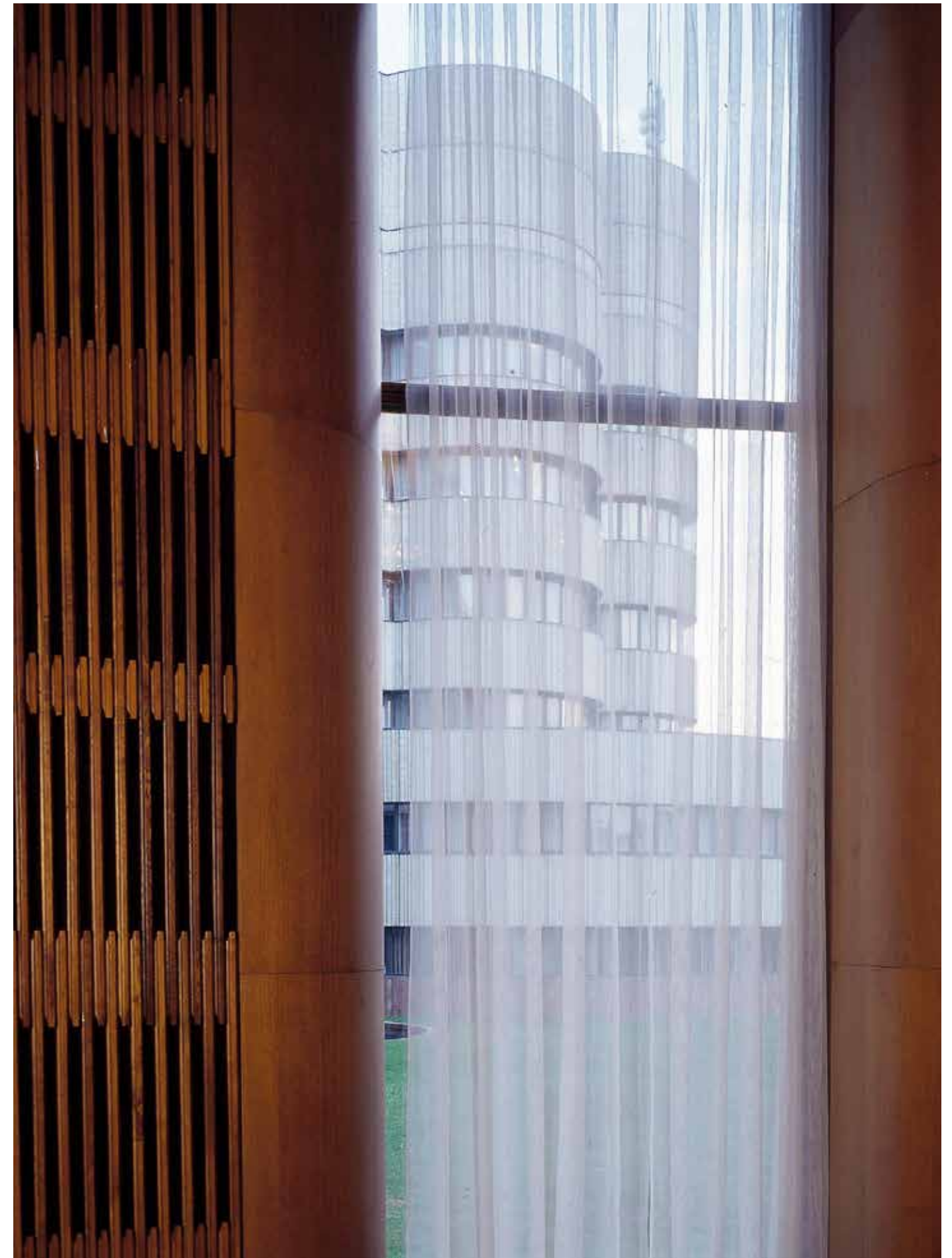
<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Jan BOČAN: "Bočan 80: Československé velvyslanectví ve Stockholmu" [The Czechoslovak Embassy in Stockholm]. See: <https://www.earch.cz/cs/architektura/bocan-80-ceskoslovenske-velvyslanectvi-ve-stockholmu> [last accessed 27 July 2022]

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Jiří MACEK: "Hotel Praha", in: *Blak*, no. 1, 2001, pp. 48–54.



11. View from the interior of Hotel Praha. Photo: Filip Šlapal







## MARKÉTA VINGLEROVÁ

1. Antonín Kybal: *Sleeping Menhir*, 1968 (detail)  
*Art Protis* wall-hanging, 192 × 400 cm.  
Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, inv. no.: 85 791.

### Gobelin határok nélkül:

### Az Art Protis feltalálása, hanyatlása és újrafelfedezése

Ez a tanulmány a divat és a textil területén végzett innovatív eljárások és kísérletek kutatásán alapul az 1950-es évek végének és az 1960-as évek elejének Csehszlovákiájában. A kutatás középpontjában a Protis elnevezésű textil áll, amelyet 1959-ben a brnói Gyapjúkutatási Intézetben találtak fel. A Protis nemzetközi szabadalomként is bejegyzett technológiája nem szövés: a gyapjút varrott szálakkal rögzítik az alaprétteghez. Ezen túlmenően a szövet új generációja, az Art Protis elnevezésű szövet a következő években Csehszlovákiában a

textilművészetre is hatással volt. Bár később az Art Protis túlzott használata a hanyatlásához vezetett, és csak az utóbbi években vitathatatlan kifejezőereje és különleges finomsága, valamint teljesen szabad alkotói és kísérleti folyamata segítette az Art Protis technológiának visszaszerezni elveszett pozícióját a kortárs divat területén, sőt, részben a képzőművészetben is. Ez a tanulmány a technológia történetét vizsgálja, azt, hogy miként hatott a Protis a kor populáris divatjára, valamint jelenlétét a kortárs divat diskurzusában.

## MARKÉTA VINGLEROVÁ

### Tapestry Without Borders:

### The Invention, Decline, and Rediscovery of Art Protis

#### *Two-Layer Warmth*

When the researchers at the Wool Research Institute<sup>1</sup> in Brno, the second-largest city in the former Czechoslovakia, developed a new textile technology, Protis, in the late 1950s, they could hardly suspect that this material would influence textile art for a long time to come in Czechoslovakia. Protis was originally intended for ladies' jackets and outerwear. The researchers' task, then, was to develop a material that would be warm yet light, and also easy to care for. Protis was a two-layer material made partly of woollen, fairly sparse and loose fabric, and partly of loose-fill fleece. Its two elements were joined using stitching equipment similar to a knitting machine, where these two layers are fed to a cylindrical mechanism to be stitched together, or more precisely, knitted together. The machine's output is a joined two-layer nonwoven textile.<sup>2</sup> Protis, manufactured at Vlněna, a Brno-based state enterprise, was placed on the market in 1963, and it then began to be used in the production of coats at the plants of several national clothing enterprises (e.g., at Makyta Púchov, in today's Slovakia). They were light and not expensive; at the same time, they were distinctively warm and didn't need ironing! Mass-production began. By 1963, Protis was patented as an original Czechoslovak textile technology. For the nation's foreign-trade agents, it briefly promised an influx of badly needed hard currency. However, market research ultimately showed no major interest in it, and the Czechoslovak Patent No. 107–159 was only maintained abroad for ten years.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Spread of the Technology*

We must note that Protis developed into several variants, and it did so in three places. First, at the Vlněna plant in Brno, Protis goods were produced on an East German Maliwatt machine; this technology was also supplemented by a variant of nonwoven fabric, which joined the two layers by merely sending a thread through them with a needle. Slightly different technologies were developed in Liberec – in North Bohemia, and in Kdyně, West Bohemia. But it was the production centre at Brno's Vlněna plant that achieved the greatest recognition. Even though the production of Protis for use in clothing gradually declined, the technology itself took on a 'second wind' in the second half of the 1960s. First, a new designation for its use was found: "textiles for decoration, residential, and similar purposes".<sup>4</sup> Quite soon afterwards – in 1965 – we can



find the first mentions of the name, Art Protis. In 1966, an Art Protis workshop was established at the Vlněna factory. Art Protis represented an application of an original technology – the non-woven two-layer Protis – to the textile (fibre) arts, which were experiencing a renaissance in this period. Fleece of a variety of colours and density was fastened onto a base of an arbitrary length. Prominent textile artists, such as Antonín Kybal (a professor at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague [UMPRUM]) and his colleague Alois Fišárek emphasised the advantages of Art Protis. These two artists, together with, for instance, the internationally renowned Jiří Trnka, and Brno artist, Inez Tuschnerová, were among the first to try out and promote Art Protis. This technology's potential was often compared to that of painting, and its style to the era's Art Informel. Art Protis was to become 'the new tapestry'.<sup>5</sup> Unlike large woven tapestries, which regularly took up to a year to create, an Art Protis in the same format could be produced within a few weeks, and besides, it was more affordable.

### The Art Protis Boom

Not only did countless Czechoslovak textile artists travel to the Vlněna factory to implement their designs on Art Protis, but also, thanks to state-supported promotion by the Rapid advertising agency, awareness of the new tapestry gradually also permeated abroad – and even into Western Europe. Rapid offered interested parties all needed services and consulting, and with its flyers full of sensationalist texts, it presented the Czechoslovak patent in the most lavish of lights. Art Protis provided even more hard currency for the State's coffers. The world-renowned French artist, Jean Effel travelled to Brno to execute his Art Protis works, as did Soviet painter, Andrei Konstantinovich Sokolov, a friend to cosmonaut, Alexei Leonov (and indeed, a Sokolov work depicted the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project); renowned Filipino artist, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz came here repeatedly to create literally hundreds of monumental Art Protis compositions. The two other studios – in Liberec and in Kdyně – remained 'backwaters' of nonwoven art;



1. Antonín Kybal: *Sleeping Menhir*, 1968  
Art Protis wall-hanging, 192 × 400 cm.  
Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, inv. no.: 85 791.  
Photo: Ondřej Kocourek

2. Inez Tuschnerová: *Janáček's Score*, 1979  
Art Protis wall-hanging, complete: 156 × 480 cm.  
Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, inv. no.: 89 724/abc.  
Photo: Ondřej Kocourek



nevertheless, artists travelled to them, as well. Kdyně saw regular production by distinguished female artists Inez Tuschnerová, Běla Suchá, and renowned Czech painters, including Richard Fremund and Josef Liesler, experimented here in the 1970s. Beginning with the technology's creation in the mid-1960s, exhibitions by Art Protis creators were held throughout Czechoslovakia, and several prestigious exhibitions were held abroad, as well.

### The Pitfalls of Art Protis

While Art Protis was original and full of possibilities, these were not enough to guarantee that every work would contain artistic value. The technology presented significant pitfalls, lying mainly in the mentioned speed and low production costs of the creation process, and in the limited nature of its means of expression. Unfortunately, in the end, quantity overpowered quality, and this promising technology with great ambitions was devalued to the very limits of what was bearable: while in 1967, Art Protis was presented by Mr and Mrs Kybal with great excitement at the *Montreal Expo*, and while it saw great success at the Cannes Film Festival, winning further awards at the *Lausanne Biennial* (1969 and 1971), at the *International Arts and Crafts Fair* in Munich in 1966, and at the *International Design Exhibition* in Monza – starting in the mid-1970s, we also see works *en masse* taking merely the silver, the bronze, or even less, unavoidably connecting this technology in the public's minds with gaudiness, kitsch, and 'normalisation'<sup>6</sup> aesthetics. As early as in 1965, the above-mentioned professor Kybal speaks with reserve in his text on this technology; he emphasises the danger of a shallow turn towards decorativeness and cheap effects.<sup>7</sup>



3. Unknown artist: *Art Protis wall-hanging in modern interior*, 1973  
Reproduced in the magazine *Domov [Home]*, XIII, No. 3, p. 49.  
Archive of the author.

But how did it come to pass that this promising technology with great ambitions was devalued to the very limits of what was bearable? We believe that alongside the qualitative devaluation wherein works of low quality were produced in very large quantities and very quickly, the era in which Art Protis sought its footing bears some of the blame. This new technology had no direct link to Czech pre-war textile tradition, but was developed purely within the environment of research institutes, with massive support from the Communist establishment. Art Protis slowly became a subservient element of the culture of communist Czechoslovakia, and it often resonated with that culture's propaganda through its motifs. A certain ideological burden in textile art



thus went hand in hand with fluctuations in its artistic quality, as well, while its affordability enabled a massive spread among the broadest layers of the public. The whole situation was 'aided' by the 1965 Construction Act of the Czechoslovak Republic, which set a budgeting percentage for artistic decoration, at 1%, and in exceptional cases up to 4%, of the overall budgets of newly constructed public buildings being devoted to artworks. Textiles, alongside decorative art pieces, were among the distinctive artistic aspects of the interiors of the era. Similarly, woven tapestries, and later nonwoven textile works, e.g., Art Protis, found a place as decorations for wedding halls, District National Committees, hotel banquet halls, embassies, etc. At the height of their boom, the majority of these works, just like decorative paintings and sculptures, etc.,<sup>8</sup> had to respect the ideological opinions of the Communist art committees.

After the 1989 regime change, the unmaintained and dusty Art Protis wall-hangings disappeared from many public spaces, and this technology gradually faded from public consciousness. With the situation in the textile industry during the economic transformation that occurred in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic of the 1990s, the majority of textile mills went bankrupt due to a fraud-ridden privatisation processes, as well as to the overall collapse of European textile manufacturing. This process eventually saw the death of the Art Protis studio at Vlněna, as well.

### The Rebirth of Art Protis

It is very difficult today to convince those who witnessed this withering-out that Art Protis is a technology of indubitable value that can offer more than a dusty, faded 'normalization' after-taste. But in recent years, distance and 'visual respite' have helped Art Protis to at least partially regain its lost position – within the milieu

of the youngest artistic generation. It is not just Art Protis: Aradecor is being 'dusted off', as well. The potential for expression in these innovative technologies has helped both Art Protis and Aradecor to at least partially regain their lost position in recent years within the Czech Republic (there are still 3 places where these technologies are maintained). We see individual artists, such as textile artist Světlana Kulíšková Ruggiero, who has produced Art Protis textile samplers, e.g., *Tesuti Arakne* and *Arazzi Arakne*, several of which have been used for the collections of such fashion houses as Calvin Klein, Jil Sander, Prada, and Marc Jacobs.<sup>9</sup> Karolína Juříková, a recent graduate of the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (UMPRUM), has also incorporated Art Protis into her two latest successful fashion collections (SS 2015 and SS 2016).



4. Karolína Juříková: Top and skirt, 2016

Wool, silk.

Courtesy of Karolína Juříková Archive. Photo: Petr Jandera

Another Academy graduate, Mia Jadrná, has gone on to push Art Protis towards recycling. In her SS 2017 collection, she innovatively stitched material from the cutting-room floor, rather than fleece.



5. Mia Jadrná: Top, Postkompost Trauma Couture, 2017

Recycled textiles.

Courtesy of Mia Jadrná Archive. Photo: Mia Jadrná



6. Daniel Vlček: Acoustic solution, 2017

Digital print on paper, 220 × 330 cm, wool, polyester panels, 90 × 90 cm, 180 × 180 cm.

Courtesy of Daniel Vlček Archive.

Photo: Ondřej Polák

Visual artist Daniel Vlček is bringing Art Protis back into the art world in a recent post-internet installation.

Contemporary art galleries are also in on the action: sam83 gallery in Česká Bříza,<sup>10</sup> for instance, organises symposia for contemporary artists focused on the Aradecor technology. Recently it seems that Art Protis, as well as Aradecor, and perhaps in the future, even Flordecor, as well, may find a firm place in the work of contemporary artists and designers, including the youngest generations.

<sup>1</sup> "The Scientific and Innovative Institute, founded in 1949 and supported by the Ministry of Light Industry, was focused on the research of new procedures and experiments for the woven industry, both textiles and fashion". (cited from: <http://www.vup.cz/cs/menu/about-us>, the website of the Institute's modern-day successor)

<sup>2</sup> Mertová, P.: "Art Protis – československý zázrak" [Art Protis – Czechoslovak Miracle], in: Lorencová, I. – M. Novotný (eds.): *Věda a technika v Československu v 60. letech 20. století* [Science and Technology in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s], Prague: Národní technické muzeum v Praze [National Technical Museum in Prague], 2011, pp. 275–283.

<sup>3</sup> This patent was granted in France, Belgium, Great Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia, Spain, Austria, India, both Germanies, and Canada. It was rejected in Japan, and withdrawn in the Netherlands. For more details, see: Moravian Provincial Archive, archival fund code: K 216, Vlněna, vlnářské závody, s. p. [Vlněna Wool Mills, State Enterprise], Brno, box 12.

<sup>4</sup> Official description of Art Protis in documents referring to the Art Protis Patent No. 107 159. For more details, see: Moravian Provincial Archive, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> For more details, see: Kybal, A.: *Výstava moderní tapiserie Art Protis let 1968–1970* [Exhibition of the Modern Tapestry Art Protis, 1968–1970], (exhib. cat.), Oblastní galerie v Liberci [Regional Gallery Liberec], 15.6.–5.9.1971, Liberec, 1971, not paginated.

<sup>6</sup> 'Normalisation' refers to the period after the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, in order to suppress the nation's 'Prague Spring'. Normalisation was marked by repression from the state apparatus, by renewed censorship, and in the official arts, by the return of topics connected with the aesthetics of communist propaganda, at the expense of artistic innovation.

<sup>7</sup> Kybal, A.: *Tapiserie Art Protis* [Art Protis Tapestry – exhib. cat.], Louny, CZ: Galerie Benedikta Rejta v Lounech, 1973, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> We should mention that Art Protis also found its way in smaller formats to private interiors. Světlana Kulíšková a studentkou diplomového ročníku UMPRUM v Praze Karolínou Juříkovou o minulosti a budoucnosti české techniky Art Protis ve spojení s oděvem", [Art Protis and Apparel: Dialogue between textile designer Světlana Kulíšková and a final year student of UMPRUM (Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague)], Karolína Juříková, about the past and future of the Czech technique Art Protis in conjunction with apparel], in: Březinová, A. (ed.): *Bulletin Moravské galerie* [Bulletin of the Moravian Gallery in Brno]. Brno: Moravian Gallery, 2014, no. 70, pp. 192–199.

<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.sam83.cz/rezidenční-pobyty>









## JIŘÍ PELCL

### Design és politika

Előadásom címe *Design és politika*, témája pedig a politika és a gazdaság hatása a design társadalmi alkalmazására. A volt keleti blokk országai évszázados történelmük során számos jelentős társadalmi változáson mentek keresztül, különös tekintettel a kommunista rendszer alatt államosított termelővállalatok tulajdonviszonyai terén történt változásokra. Megszakadt a társadalmi fejlődés természetes kontinuitása, ebből következően pedig a design mint alkotómunka szerepe

is háttérbe szorult. De a design mint tudományág az eltérő gazdasági feltételek miatt is másképp fejlődött, mint a nyugat-európai országokban. A múzeum gyűjteményezési politikájának ezeket a tényeket is figyelembe kell vennie. Előadásom a *Design és átalakulás* című kiállítás tanulságait viszi tovább, ami a politika és a gazdaság hatását mutatja be a cseh vállalatok történetén és pályáján keresztül, és jelenleg a Brüsszeli Design Múzeumban látható.

## JIŘÍ PELCL

### Design and Politics

Over the last two decades, design has been referred to within various contexts of societal development and has had a major impact on contemporary lifestyles. On the occasion of the Czech Presidency of the European Union (July – December 2022), I initiated an exhibition in Brussels on Czech design, entitled *Design and Transformation. Stories of Czech Design 1990–2020*.<sup>1</sup>

The exhibition addresses the influence of politics and economics on the function of design in society. Countries of the former Eastern Bloc have undergone many significant social changes during their century-long history, especially changes in the ownership of manufacturing companies that were nationalised under the communist regime. There was an interruption of natural development in society, and therefore, design was also affected.

The exhibition reveals that the term Czech design embraces many remarkable products and works. It traces the relationship between the transformation of society and design production. It not only presents beautiful objects, but also tries to reveal the backdrop of their creation: the stories of companies whose destinies document the specif-

ics of the Central European condition, centuries-old cultural and craft traditions, as well as the constant changes in state formations, economic, and political frameworks.

The phenomenon of Czech design is presented in the stories of 12 selected companies and projects, from the oldest ones founded in the middle of the 19th century, including Thonet/Ton, Škoda, and Český Porcelán, which have gone through a series of political and economic upheavals, to completely new manufacturers that emerged after 1989.



1. Linet: Sprint stretcher, Divan design, 2022

<sup>1</sup> The *Design and Transformation* exhibition was on display at the Design Museum Brussels, Place de Belgique, from 7 September 2022 to 8 January 2023.



The histories of producers differ, and so do the paths to their transformation into completely changed economic conditions. Some large and important companies, such as the Poldi Kladno steelworks, have completely disappeared, while others have succeeded in their transformation. Many companies were taken over by Western multinationals, which brought new modern technologies and business strategies, thereby contributing to the modernisation of production. The strategy of multinational companies has often been linked to purely commercial interests to exploit existing businesses with cheaper labour to generate quick profits. Product design was imported from abroad. The idealistic ideas of the Czechs about a Western capitalist society based on liberalism and business ethics failed. Over the last decade, the situation has been changing, and foreign companies invest more in the development and design of products in the domestic environment. For the development of design, newly established domestic companies that cooperate with Czech and foreign designers are of greater importance. It turns out that the history and tradition of manufacturers are not the only prerequisites for success, but the motivation and energy of people in promoting their business projects are much more important.

A good example of a successful manufacturer is Linet. In 1992, it started producing beds and equipment for hospitals in one small facility. The Czech designers of Linet have consistently improved its products, and after thirty years of existence, it is one of the largest manufacturers in the world in this sector. The production of glass products has a long tradition in the Czech Republic. In addition to established companies, such as Moser or Preciosa, many young companies have established themselves, including, e.g., Lasvit, Bomma, and Brokis, which mainly manufacture glass lighting fixtures.

A completely different discipline is represented in the exhibition with Amanita Design – which is part of a wider circle of development companies that underpins the international successes of the contemporary Czech gaming industry. The company’s concept of gaming projects, organisation of work, and core values are completely unique. Studio Amanita is just like the hallucinogenic mushroom it is named after (*Amanita muscaria*), an example that defies common practice.

The story of Josef Průša is also very interesting: as a student of economics in 2012, he became very interested in 3D printing. Because printers were extremely expensive and complicated to access at the time, he decided to start his own company. The enthusiastic start-up has gradually grown into a major company with an annual turnover of billions of crowns, with more than 700 employees. The company’s expansion has been lightning-fast, and it was named the fastest-growing technology company in Central Europe by Deloitte in 2018.



2. Bomma: Tim, olgoj Chorchoj design, 2017

As part of my contribution, I cannot report on all the exhibitors, but I would like to mention two exhibitions, from the field of textiles and fashion. The textile industry was historically one of the most highly developed industries in the Czech Republic, but after 1990 it became per-



3. Josef Průša, founder of Prusa Research

haps the most stagnant industry, due mainly to cheap production in Asian countries and the industry’s low ability to respond to this situation.

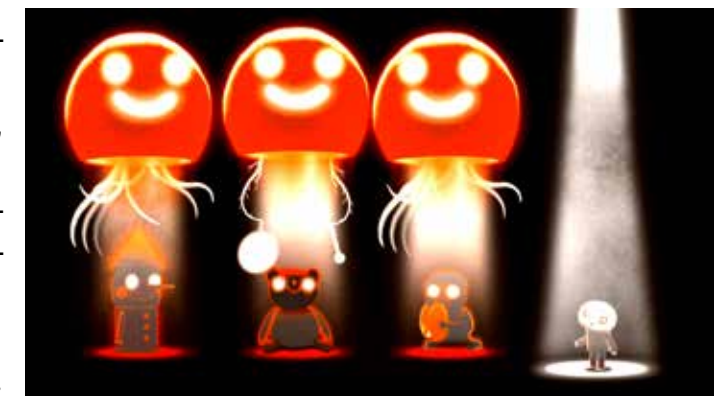
Studio Textile Mountain was founded in 2019 by fashion designer Lenka Vacková. In her brick-and-mortar store and e-shop, she offers exclusively “dead stock” goods, i.e., surplus materials from factories, clothing companies, and fashion studios that could no longer be used for their original purposes and would have otherwise ended up in landfills or incinerators. Since her studies, Lenka Vacková has focused on environmental and sustainability issues concerning textile and clothing production. In addition to the excessive production and consumption of clothing of so-called fast fashion, she began to perceive the creation of exclusive clothing collections as problematic. Textile Mountain is considered an example of a

project in which the focus of design shifts from the sphere of partial products and objects in the sphere of systematic relationships, connections, and gaps that need to be made visible, revised, or closed. Through her activities, Lenka Vacková transforms fashion design into a strategic activity

that is not only related to individual clothing or mass production of clothing collections, but above all to the “dark matter” of norms, rules, and standards that govern the fashion and textile industries. Entrepreneurship itself thus becomes a specific form of design through which to intervene at a local level in complex networks and problems on a global scale.

Another interesting project is Unique Client – a project by the students of the Fashion and Footwear Design Studio at the Academy of Arts, Architecture, and Design in Prague (UMPRUM). In the exhibition cata-

logue, the project is described as follows: “The project began in the summer semester of 2021. The impetus for the semester assignment was a meeting with a young man named Marek, whose physical characteristics differed from most of his peers since birth. Since ready-to-wear fashion follows ‘standard’ proportions, it was extremely difficult for Marek to find a suit in which he could



4. Amanita Design: Happy Game, 2021





5. Lenka Vacková, founder of Textile Mountain

attend the prom and would match the clothing of his classmates. In an intensive dialogue with Marek, UMPRUM students designed a collection of clothing for various occasions, which today form the basis of his wardrobe. However, it did not end with Marek: with the next step, designers were tasked with approaching many other clients with 'non-conforming' figures, as well as with specific needs, wishes, and aspirations. The unique proportions of some of the clients' bodies are due to congenital predispositions, serious illness, or injury. For others, however, their 'atypicality' of preferences in terms of clothing is due to identity or lifestyle. Thus, with the Unique Client project, students revised the stereotype of the 'standard' figure and 'normal' lifestyles and attitudes. In today's fashion industry, clothing sizes and shapes are subordinated to the average, but few people

have 'average' physical characteristics, and ideas about what is 'normal' are similarly individual. The Unique Client project became an example of so-called inclusive design, which rejects the ambition to design products suitable for everyone without distinction, and instead emphasises the need to pay careful attention to these differences and to treat them as the focus of the design process."<sup>2</sup>

After Brussels, the *Design and Transformation* exhibition will be installed in the Museum of Applied Arts in Brno. Hopefully, some of the projects will be included in their permanent collections, as evidence of an approach to design in changing times.

<sup>2</sup>Daniela Kramerová, "Unique Client," In: *Design and Transformation. Stories of Czech Design 1990–2020*, ed. Daniela Kramerová, Prague, 2022, pp. 129–135.



6. Unique Client: Katka, Valerie Vrbouá design, 2021



7. Unique Client: Dia, Jan Smejkal design, 2021

## GABRIELA ONDRIŠÁKOVÁ

4. Karolina Juříková: *Top and skirt*, 2016

Wool, silk.

Courtesy of Karolina Juříková Archive. Photo: Petr Jandera

### Kommunikációs design-gyűjtés:

#### A Szlovák Designmúzeum grafikai gyűjteményének története

A pozsonyi Szlovák Designmúzeum (a Szlovák Designközpont része) kommunikációs – vagy grafikai – designgyűjteménye fiatal, története hivatalosan csak 2013-ig nyúlik vissza. Ennek ellenére ma már hatalmas mennyiségű tárgyat őriz számos jelentős szlovákiai grafikus és művész alkotásai közül. A gyűjteményt Lubomír Longauer grafikus, grafikátörténész és tanár, a múzeum egyik társalapítója hívta életre. A múzeum gyűjt eredeti rajzolt, kézzel írott, festett és kollázsolt vázlatokat, korabeli nyomtatásokat, könyveket, valamint 3D modelleket is. A tárgyak többségét közvetlenül maguk a grafikusok ado-

mányozták, vagy családjuk és örököseik hagyatékaként kerültek a gyűjteménybe. Kortárs szlovák grafikusok munkáit is gyűjti az intézmény. A gyűjtemény hat alapvető algyűjteményre tagolódik: könyvtervezés, plakáttervezés, vizuális identitás, tipográfia, csomagolástervezés és webdesign. A gyűjtemény jelentős része jelenleg a *100 Years of Design in Slovakia 1918–2018* (A design 100 éve Szlovákiában 1918–2018) című állandó kiállítás keretében látható, valamint több kisebb kiállításon is bemutatásra került, és számos tárgyat kutatnak jelenleg is a jövőbeli kiadványok számára.

## GABRIELA ONDRIŠÁKOVÁ

### Collecting Communication Design: The Story of the Graphic Design Collection of the Slovak Design Museum

#### *The Basis of the Collection*

The Communication (or Graphic) Design Collection of the Slovak Design Museum was established by professor Lubomír Longauer, graphic artist, designer, graphic design researcher, teacher and one of the co-founders of the Museum. In the year 2000, he commenced collecting graphic design and typography works of the 20th century, including books, illustrations, posters, logos, packaging, and more. In late 2012, when the Slovak Design Museum was preparing to open, he donated his entire collection, laying the foundation for the Communication Design Collection. Lubomír Longauer documented his research and collection work in the books, *Modernity of Tradition*, *Taking Off Traditional Attire*, *Moderate Progress*, and *Typography and Type Design in Slovakia: It All Began with Cyril and Methodius*. These covered primarily (except for the latter) the graphic design of the first half of the 20th century. The most important Slovak designers – or foreign designers working on Slovak territory – of this era were Štefan Bednár, Martin Benka, Jozef Cincík, Ľudovít Fulla, Emil Makovický, Karol Onreička, Josef Vlček, and Jaroslav Vodrážka.

2. Lubomír Longauer: *Modernity of Tradition*, 2012 (book design)





## Collecting Authors

Collecting Communication Design is slightly different than Product Design. It is much more focused on the names of authors/designers, and less about producers or factories (in this field of design, the only producers are generally publishing and printing houses). After the year 2013, when the Slovak Design Museum was officially established, the majority of new arrivals were donated directly from the graphic designers themselves, or as a legacy from their families. In



3. Ivan Štěpán: Danuvius exhibition, 1968 (poster design)

this way, we acquired thousands of originals and print works, and in many cases, personal correspondence and photographs, as well. The most precious and irreplaceable pieces in our collection are original drawn, hand-lettered, painted or collaged sketches and models. These can be, e.g., maquettes for book covers, illustrations, quick sketches of logos, or painted posters. There are also valuable period prints (old letterpress, serigraphy, gravure printing, offset, first colour printings, etc.), which reflect the history of modern printing on Slovak territory. It is also important to remember that graphic design occurs not only on paper, but can also take 3D form, too. These can include, e.g., models of eye catchers, interior and exterior navigation systems, three-dimensional posters, and exhibition design maquettes or fragments. The most important designers of the second half of the 20th century in our collection are Rudolf Altrichter, Jozef Babušek, Emil Bačík, Oto Bachorík, Pavel Blažo, Martin Brezina, Robert Brož, Miroslav Cipár, Igor Didov, Jozef Dóka Jr., Yvonna Hanáková, Pavol Choma, Dušan Junek, Ľubomír Krátky, Ľubomír Longauer, Ján Meisner, Svetozár Mydlo, Ivan Popovič, Karol Rosmány, Vladislav Rostoka, Zoltán Salamon, Stanislav Stankoci, Ivan Štěpán, Dušan Šulc, Dezider Tóth, Miloš Urbásek, Milan Veselý, Viliam Weisskopf, among others. We also collect the works of Slovak contemporary graphic designers. The most important source for this is the Slovak Design Award, the competition of the best Slovak design, organised by the Slovak Design Center, which takes place as a biennial for graphic design (alternately with product design). Each year, we make a selection of 'the best of', to acquire them for museum collection. The newest graphic design collection always consists of various categories of works: classical books and posters, complex visual identities and campaigns, digital or web design, type design and typography, packaging or exhibition and navigation design. Collecting and preserving these works is extremely helpful for future research and exhibitions.



4. Emil Bačík: Book edition logo, 1953

## The Structure of the Collection

As Communication Design takes many different forms, we have structured this collection into six basic subcollections. Book Design also includes illustrations, caricatures, magazine and newspaper design, and catalogues. It is generally easy to discover an author of design and illustration in the book imprint. Antiquarian bookshops, where we can often find many quality books, are often a perfect source for research. On the other hand, almost the entire Poster Design collection depends on donations and legacies. It is

difficult to find older pieces in good condition, in e.g., printing houses or antique shops. Sadly, many are lost forever. This subcollection also includes postcards, New Year's cards, advertisements, and banners. Research of Visual Identity, like logos, trademarks, and navigation systems, can involve real detective work. Primarily during the years 1948–1989, hundreds of logos and brandmarks for state corporations and factories in Slovakia were made. However, in many cases, the author is unknown and needs to be discovered. Graphic designers, like Miroslav Cipár or Karol Rosmány, created a great number of logos and identity works. They preserved their sketches and prints, and they donated them to the Slovak Design Museum. The Typography subcollection, which consists of type design, calligraphy, and lettering, encompasses the core part of contemporary typography design. Today, this field of graphic design is very popular in Slovakia, and we have acquired many type specimens for our collection from contemporary type designers. As for older works, this design field is generally a part of book or poster design; thus, we usually include just sketches or fragments in this subcollection. Similar to logos and trademarks, Package Design is also difficult to research. The authors of design or artwork on packaging material (e.g., of groceries or products) are usually unknown and unsigned. The only exception is record album covers, where they are mentioned in the imprint. The youngest subcollection is Web Design, which includes the design of internet pages, e-shops, and applications. Although this might appear to rather be a part of a Multimedia Design Collection, we decided to assign it to Communication Design with respect to the main role of web pages, which is still to transmit information (i.e., to communicate). Web design is a relatively new field of graphic design, and its collection is still uncertain. The most stable way is to collect them as a printed copy on paper, which can be safely stored in a depository. Another option is to save them on hardware storage devices.

## Research and Exhibitions

In this form and structure, the Collection of Communication Design offers us many opportunities for the research of graphic design mediums, authors, themes, forms, materials, print, and more. The curators of the Slovak Design Museum are able to publish regularly under the museum rubric in *Designum*, the only Slovak professional journal of design. There have been articles about such graphic designers as Karol Rosmány, Jozef Babušek, Emil Bačík, Ivan Štěpán, Igor Didov, and about Slovak contemporary book design. In 2020, we established a specialised edition about Slovak design, called *DesignZoom*, within which we are preparing the release of compact publications dedicated to individual personalities of Slovak design. We are also pre-

paring an extensive publication on Slovak design — as a culmination of our research activities in the history of design on our territory. We regularly produce small exhibitions of Slovak graphic design every year, either in our gallery 'Satelit' at the Slovak Design Center in Bratislava, or in cooperation with our partner galleries and museums. Our most important exhibition is *100 Years of Design: Slovakia 1918–2018*, in the attic gallery of the Slovak Design Museum. In this first permanent Slovak design exhibition, we present selections of the best items from our collections, divided into categories such as *Type, Identity, Book Design and Illustration, Communication in Multimedia and Space, and Poster*. The exhibition was officially opened in 2018, and we are currently working on updates, with new items and new themes.



5. *100 Years of Design: Slovakia 1918–2018*, installation view of the exhibition opened in 2018

<sup>1</sup> Longauer, Lubomír: *Modernity of Tradition*, Slovart Bratislava, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Longauer, Lubomír: *Taking Off Traditional Attire*, Slovart Bratislava, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Longauer, Lubomír: *Moderate Progress*, Slovart Bratislava, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Longauer, Lubomír: *Typography and Type Design in Slovakia: It all began with Cyril and Methodius*, Slovart, VŠVU, Bratislava 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Ondrišáková, Gabriela: "Karol Rosmány and His Works in the Collections of the Design Museum", in: *Designum* 1/2018, pp. 54–61.

<sup>6</sup> Kružliaková, Silvia: "Unique JOŽINKO Babušek – (Not Only) a Child of His Parents", in: *Designum* 3/2019, pp. 44–50.

<sup>7</sup> Ondrišáková, Gabriela: "Emil Bačík", in: *Designum* 4/2019, pp. 56–63.

<sup>8</sup> Ondrišáková, Gabriela: "Graphic Design of Ivan Štěpán", in: *Designum* 4/2020, pp. 38–47.

<sup>9</sup> Kružliaková, Silvia – Maroš Schmid: "ID 2D Igor Didov – Unknown Graphic Designer", in: *Designum* 1/2021, pp. 42–51.

<sup>10</sup> Ondrišáková, Gabriela: "Contemporary Slovak Book Design in the Slovak Design Museum's Collections", in: *Designum* 1/2022, pp. 38–47.







## MAROŠ SCHMIDT, KLÁRA PREŠNAJDEROVÁ, SZLOVÁK DESIGNKÖZPONT, POZSONY

### A „szlovák design” elnevezésű detektívtörténet

A 20. század folyamán Szlovákia különböző államok és politikai rendszerek része volt. Szlovákia területén az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia, a demokratikus Első Csehszlovák Köztársaság, a fasiszta szlovák állam, a szocialista Csehszlovákia, a demokratikus Csehszlovákia és az első demokratikus Szlovák Köztársaság égisze alatt zajlott formatervezői munka. Ez az egyik oka annak, hogy a „szlovák design” nagyon sajátos helyzetben van a többi nemzet designjához képest, valamint annak is, hogy kutatása nehézségekbe ütközik. Szlovákiában például 2013-ig nem volt iparművészeti múzeum. Az intézményi háttér és a hosszú távú kutatás hiánya ezen a területen azt a téves benyomást keltette,

hogy a design a szlovák anyagi kultúrán belül nem számít releváns témának. Az intézményes kutatások hiánya összefügg a szlovákiai formatervezést feldolgozó szakirodalom hiányával is. Számos mű, dokumentum, forma és modell megsemmisült vagy feledésbe merült, jóval a Szlovák Designmúzeum 2013-as megalakulása előtt. Napjainkban ez az egyetlen intézmény Szlovákiában, amelynek gyűjteményezési tevékenysége a designra összpontosít. Elsődleges feladatai közé tartozik a szlovák design, illetve a Szlovákiában létrehozott design felmérése és dokumentálása, valamint egy olyan gyűjtemény létrehozása, amely a design területén található műtárgyakból áll, 1900-tól napjainkig.

## MAROŠ SCHMIDT, KLÁRA PREŠNAJDEROVÁ, SLOVAK DESIGN CENTER BRATISLAVA

### The Detective Story We Call Slovak Design

*The Slovak Design Museum in Bratislava, established in 2013 under the auspices of the Slovak Design Center, is the only official collecting institution in Slovakia focused on design. One of the primary tasks of the Slovak Design Museum is to systematically build a collection consisting of artefacts with cultural value of various types — ranging from the products of industrial production, or mass production, through small series and editions, unique pieces, solitaires and original works, to the originals that were a part of the preparatory process, served as prototypes or belonged to the production process of the final object, in the fields of design, applied arts, architecture, and related disciplines. Our most valuable acquisitions are the complete collections of the life's work of Slovak designers, which we acquire from the authors themselves, or as legacies. An important part of collecting is research. Surveying and documenting Slovak design is the fundamental task which all of our curators devoted to product and communication design continuously work on. We have the last chance in the present moment, thanks to our still living contemporaries and the availability of potential collection artefacts, to elaborate the history of Slovak design in detail – for example, during socialist Czechoslovakia.*

### Starting with Empty Shelves Collections first, then the Museum

Until the establishment of the Slovak Design Museum, there was no official collecting institution focused on this field, and this complicates the research and acquisition activities of the Slovak Design Museum. Up until this point, efforts to establish a traditional museum of applied arts in Slovak territory, which would over time extend its collections with contemporary design and represent one of the pillars of research in this field, always failed. The continued absence of a museum of applied arts in Slovak territory is not because the professional community is unaware of the urgency of such a lack. The first attempt to establish a museum of applied arts in Bratislava was made already in 1928 — lagging only slightly in comparison with other European countries. It was an ambitious project aimed at

building a modern institution that was supposed to be 'a new institute of this kind in Europe'. This first museum of applied arts in Slovakia was supposed to have a distinctly international and contemporary dimension. According to its main objective: *"The museum flexibly informs on the development and transformations of taste and worldview in production to allow sufficient time for the production facilities in the region to respond to the needs of the market"*. Much about the planned collection's character is suggested in its director's final concept, where he declared the effort to *"build on the production and works of the past 50 years"*. Unfortunately, this ambitious project was never realised: due to the lack of finances, it ended in 1932, after four years of intensive preparations.



Further efforts to establish a museum of applied arts in Slovakia appeared in the 1960s, 1970s, and also in the 1990s. However, these efforts came directly from designers who very strongly perceived the absence of a professional, collecting institution focused on applied arts and design. The neglect of the whole field led to a continuous lack of systematic research, as well as to the absence of a representative collection of Slovak design. As a result, many artefacts and archive materials, including designers' legacies, literally ended up in the trash. This adverse situation took a positive turn only several years ago with the establishment of the Slovak Design Museum, which initiated the collecting of Slovak design and research of Slovak design history with *empty shelves*, so to speak.

When the Slovak Design Center in Bratislava established the Slovak Design Museum in 2013 as its organisational unit, a collection of household items, appliances, chairs, garments, glass-



ware, ceramics, books, posters, and prints gathered several years earlier by the internal staff of the Slovak Design Center, as well as external collaborators and supporters, gained space in the former Hurban Barracks in the city centre. The shelves and chiffoniers in the depositories were mostly filled with socialist period design; however, even unique originals and prototypes were not missing. Since the establishment of the Slovak Design Museum, thanks to the regular media coverage of our activities, we are approached every day by people with various donations — especially with artefacts from recent

years. In the initial phase of collection-making, we accepted almost anything out of enthusiasm. We were clearing out apartments, attics, basements, and thus building the base for an extensive and varied collection. Gradually, our orientation in the field of design history expanded so that we have been able to sort out the collection and select the contributions we are still receiving until today. The most valued are the complete collections of life's work donated by the designers themselves. For instance, when Milan Biroš donated his work to us, we suddenly had a much clearer idea of the history of the Bratislava Automobile Plant (BAZ). We also contact descendants and acquire designers' legacies into our collections. After studying the precious lega-

cy of Igor Didov, we were able to determine the authorship of one of the most beautiful Czechoslovak Bakelite radios, the Tesla Talisman 408U; and thanks to the legacy of Ján Šuchaň, we know the author of a varied production programme of lighting equipment from Elektrosvit Nové Zámky. These are all critical milestones on the path to the knowledge of design history in the Slovak territory, and also the fundamental grounds for the concept of design collection based on the authors of design solutions and manufacturers.

gramme of lighting equipment from Elektrosvit Nové Zámky. These are all critical milestones on the path to the knowledge of design history in the Slovak territory, and also the fundamental grounds for the concept of design collection based on the authors of design solutions and manufacturers.

1. Igor Didov: Bakelite Radio Tesla Talisman 308U, 1953–1958

Produced by: Tesla Bratislava

Courtesy Slovak Design Museum – SCD. Photo: Marián Lukáč

## Concept first, then the Collection of Artefacts

In the first months since the establishment of the museum, we established the strategy for acquiring collections by classifying design into individual subgroups, which led to the emergence of depository units. We divide design into communication design and product design, and continue further by classifying according to materials and design approach. Our collections also include works that overlap with architecture and photography. A part of collection-making is the research which we carry out according to the research and development strategy of the Slovak Design Museum. The intensive work on defining the concept of the collections took several years, and it is based on our focus, possibilities, the state of research, exhibition planning, and the basic strategy of collection acquisition. The basic simplified rule that helps us classify the acquired works is straightforward: we collect artefacts that we can imagine as parts of meaningful and interesting exhibitions. We put it to the test during the preparation of our first large-scale exposition. Between 2014–2018, we focused our research and collection-making activity on the preparation of quality and an extensive first exposition of design from the Slovak territory. At the end of 2018, a long-term exhibition of the Slovak Design Museum was installed in the attic of the museum, entitled *100 Years of Design: Slovakia 1918–2018*.

We focused primarily on acquiring a collection of design artefacts from Slovakia; we researched personalities — designers of form and graphic solutions, visuals, illustrations, producers — companies, factories, cooperatives, printing plants, and the social and cultural context; and we did not omit the designers' stories and their works in design. The exhibition provides a comprehensive overview of our activity in the field of product and communication design in Slova-



2. Pavol Košťan: Table Lamp 06-04, 1960–1969

Produced by: VD Pokrok Žilina

Courtesy Slovak Design Museum – SCD. Photo: Adam Šakový

kia, and it also provides a platform for further research, based on the suggestions coming from the external environment and the visitors to the exhibition. The research into Slovak design history is not complete and continues into the horizon of the next two years, when the exposition should be modified and supplemented with new findings and acquisitions.

This key to the selection of collection artefacts has also proven successful in smaller exhibition projects. Although we classify artefacts in collections primarily according to authors and manufacturers, an exhibition can also be based on entirely differ-





3. Viliam Chlebo: Armchair T2403, 1980

Produced by: Kodreta Myjava

Courtesy Slovak Design Museum – SCD. Photo: Adam Šakový

## Methodology of Slovak Design

### Research

#### *The Search for Slovak Design*

Within our research of Slovak design, we focus on the period from 1900 to the present. During these years, the territory of Slovakia was a part of various political systems; therefore, it is possible to speak of Slovak design only in a figurative sense. Sometimes we use a more precise denomination: ‘design from the Slovak territory’, or ‘product or graphic design from the Slovak territory’. In general, the denomination, ‘a Slovak work of design’ refers to works created on Slovak territory, regardless of their author’s nationality. This applies chiefly to authors of Czech nationality working in Slovakia – especially in the interwar period, when Slovakia, compared to the Czech lands, was catching up in its lagging culture; many Czech designers, architects, and artists worked on our territory and spent their most productive years here. The emergence of design in Slovakia was significantly influenced by the personalities of Czech Modernism, such as graphic designer Zdeněk Rossmann, architect and scenographer František Tröster, photographer Jaromír Funke, ceramicist Julie Horová, and textile designer František Malý, whose pedagogical and artistic activity at the School of Arts and Crafts (ŠUR) in Bratislava was almost not documented at all from the side of Czech professional institutions. The situation is similar in the case of Czech designers active in Slovakia during the socialist period. The research and collection of their works originating on our territory naturally belong to Slovak design history.

It is a more complicated situation when an author, originally from Slovakia, creates works in another territory. However, here, too, we lean towards the term ‘Slovak design’. Contemporary automotive designers are an excellent example: Slovakia is one of the world leaders, not only in

ent principles (colour, region, material, geometry, prototype, beauty, ...). One of the essential parts of the broader concept of the Slovak Design Museum is the survey and documentation of the design of post-war Czechoslovakia. Due to the small staff at the Museum and the number of tasks we are engaged in, we have joined forces with relevant institutions from the Czech side: the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, the Moravian Gallery in Brno, and the Olomouc Museum of Art. Based on these memoranda of cooperation, we work on collaborations in exhibition and research projects and share research results. Within these collaborations, the Slovak Design Museum’s primary task is the research of design history in the Slovak territory. We cooperate with the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague on research of the interwar period; and with National Technical Museum in Prague, we document the activities of Czech designers in the Slovak territory after 1948.

the number of cars produced, but also in the number of automotive design graduates per capita. Ninety percent of them leave after graduation to research and development centres of foreign automobile companies outside the territory of Slovakia. They studied in Slovakia, and they then share their approach to automotive design abroad. Can we refer to their work as Slovak design? A car created at a large automobile company is a complex project. It would be wrong to claim that the only designer of a vehicle is the designer who contributed the main formal design concept.

In many cases, the exterior or interior project is under-designed by the department head, who generally acts as a supervisor. Only upon closer inspection do we discover the whole web of collaborating designers in a studio. The authorship of the Bugatti Veyron exterior design is often attributed to the most famous Slovak automobile designer, Jozef Kabáň, who demurs. In the making of the exposition, *100 Years of Design: Slovakia 1918–2018*, he did not allow such an interpretation, and he emphasised that several designers, technicians, and constructors worked on the vehicle and influenced its final design. Therefore, similar designations serve only to popularise and simplify interpretations, rather than to provide an accurate, objective description. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Kabáň prevailed with his design solution of Veyron and was given the opportunity to collaborate on the vehicle as a designer. We could also claim that he contributed to the design with his – Slovak – aesthetics.

Nevertheless, the final product cannot be called a Slovak design. The same applies to the interiors of modern Mercedes by Peter Balko, Škodas by Peter Olah, or Land Rovers by Michal Kačmár. Each of them is a Slovak designer in a foreign automobile company, working on a team collaboratively. The situation of Juraj Mitra, who designs and co-constructs sports vehicles of the revived Czech brand, Praga, however, is entirely different. The development and construction department of Praga is in Slovakia, in Orechová Potôň, which does not take away from the brand’s Czech roots in any way. Still, Mitra’s po-



4. Tibor Uhrin: Wooden Kit Gringo, 1993

Produced by: Veva Product Huncouce / NORIS WOOD, Kremnické Bane

Courtesy Slovak Design Museum – SCD. Photo: Adam Šakový

sition in this automobile company is much freer and more universal; thus, we can still speak in terms of Slovak design when we refer to his work for Praga.

When researching national design, it is important to recognise one fundamental fact: design knows and respects no boundaries. Therefore,

the territorial delimitation of national design rather refers to the place of research than to the territorial integrity or national principle. In the research of Slovak design, we found various specific influences, such as folk art, global fashion trends, and minimalist tendencies originating in addressing shortages in material and technology, as well as imitations of successful designs from abroad. This recognition brings unprecedented opportunities for outlining new exhibition projects to our curatorial work.

### **Slovak Design in the Context of the Era**

Each era has its specifics. Design in the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1939) was characterised by very high-quality production in both small and larger companies. There were not many producers in Slovakia, and most cases concerned the adoption of formal solutions and patterns. One exception was the flagships of Slovak industry, factories which had their own design and construction departments, and realised unique products known throughout the whole world. They were founded mainly in the second half of the 19th century and provided employment throughout the entire region. Sandrik Dolné Hámre manufactured metal cutlery and various dining equipment from alpaca, silver-plated alpaca, silver, and stainless steel, using their own designs (the designers of the most exceptionally successful products in the functionalist style were Bohumil Južnič, Ján Peterka, František Franc). The Bratislava Gummon factory, established in 1911 as a



5. Patrik Illo: Carafe, 2001

Produced by: Rona, Lednické Rovne

Courtesy Slovak Design Museum – SCD. Photo: Adam Šakový

subsidiary of Továrne na káble (Cable Factory in Bratislava), was one of the first plants in Europe to begin the processing and production of materials from Bakelite — Futurit — a revolutionary material for the design and production of new shapes. The design of many products was created by world-famous designers, while the factory used to obtain patents for their design solutions — for example, the Futurit 202 lamp, from the Bratislava Gummon factory (produced since 1931), was designed by Canadian-British designer, Wells Coates. During the Slovak State (1939–1945), the emphasis was placed on a new national style and new methods of production.

The post-war years in Czechoslovakia comprised a very fruitful period, in terms of the amount of production and variety of products, and is represented most in the Slovak Design Museum. The extraordinary self-sufficiency of the then Czechoslovak production has no equivalent either before or after this period. There are just too many producers to name, but I would like to mention at least the most important. In Czechoslovakia, lamps were produced (Napako Praha, Tesla Holešovice, Lidkov Boskovice, Drukovo Brno, Elektrosvit Nové Zámky, Pokrok Žilina, Kveta Nová Baňa, etc.), and various plastic products (Plastimat Liberec, Združená výroba Michalovce, Kveta Nová Baňa, Plastika Nitra); from the design perspective, the manufacture of many products in the Tesla concern company is interesting (television sets — Tesla Orava Nižná, radio receivers — Tesla Bratislava, sound mixers — Tesla Elektroakustika Bratislava, telephones — Tesla

Liptovský Hrádok and Tesla Stropkov, turntables — Tesla Litovel, radio receivers, tape recorders — Tesla Prielouč, battery tape recorders — Tesla Liberec, amplifiers, turntables and electronic devices — Tesla Valašské Meziříčí, television sets, tape recorders — Tesla Pardubice). Metal cutlery and kitchen equipment continued to be produced in Sandrik Dolné Hámre (later Hodruša Hámre), Mikov Mikolášovice, and high-quality knives in Sandrik Štós. Of large products, the production of aeroplanes

in Aero Vodochody was impressive (types L-29 Delfín, L-39 Albatros, L-59 Super Albatros, and L-159 Alca), Škoda passenger cars from Mladá Boleslav, Tatra in Kopřivnice, BAZ in Bratislava (Škoda Garde), trucks, trains, trams, etc.

While our perception of product design solutions is apolitical, the stories of their origin bear the load of the establishment of the era, and they naturally interest us. We are aware of the fact that with the separation of Czechoslovakia, the research of Czechoslovak design also divided into two parts. On the Czech side, there is much more thorough and detailed documentation, but it only reaches up to our border. It is, therefore, our task to complete the mosaic of Czechoslovak design with the Slovak counterpart. At the outset of our Slovak design research, we set a precise research plan. In the field of product design, we selected products made in the territory



of Slovakia and classified them according to producer. Subsequently, we tried to match them to their designers. When we found out how many designers working in Slovakia were of Czech nationality, a new, interesting topic arose for us, and perhaps even a theme for a future exhibition. As we have observed in other museums around the world, the concept of collecting socialist design according to personalities/designers is rather uncommon. In essence, we are elevating an industrially manufactured product to an

6. Lenka Sršňová: Colorcode Collection, 2015

Winner of Slovak Design Award

Courtesy Slovak Design Museum – SCD. Photo: Jakub Gulyás





7. Alt Studio, Elena Simoník: Bins CURAPROX (made from recycled toothbrushes), 2018

Produced by: Curaprox

Courtesy Slovak Design Museum – SCD. Photo: Alt Studio

## Designer or Author?

While Czechoslovak products from the socialist era are relatively easily accessible, it is often very difficult, if not impossible, to elaborate a thorough description that includes information about the producer and author of a design solution. In our research, we include references from quality period magazines, *Domov* [Home], *Tvar* [Form], *Línia* [Line], or weekly film magazines and documentary movies. Yearbooks and archives of the companies provide significant help with precise information, although even they do not always clarify authorship. In the 1950s, it was not common practise to list the author of a design solution of a mass-produced item, even in company archives. A radio receiver or sunlamp was described as a collective work under someone's supervision; however, the author of the creative solution has often remained a mystery until today. In many factories and production facilities, we have discovered that aside from trained professionals, there are also authors of design solutions who come from the ranks of workshop staff or production employees. Proving authorship is not an easy task. It requires a comparison of the statements of those concerned with archive documents, texts, or design drawings, and we pursue this activity intensively. In this way, we discovered, for example, Pavol Košťan, the author of the lighting design from Výrobné družstvo Pokrok Žilina. His well-known lamps thus received not only their creator's name, but also the story of their design, and they gained the status of full-fledged works of design. While many other museums are only interested in form, material, dimensions, and the life of a product after leaving store shelves, we are also interested in the process of its creation, together with all the unrealised designs.

is diametrically different. Czechoslovakia, and especially its Slovak part, is specific in the number of unknown authors of the designs of industrial products. Although we primarily based the creation of our collections on the material division, due to the depository system, we perceive its complexity primarily along the division according to the authors and manufacturers.

Collecting contemporary design is facilitated by our connection with the Slovak Design Center, which organises the Slovak Design Award, focused on communication design every even year, and focused on product design every odd year. An international jury of experts, which changes every year, selects the best of the hundreds of submitted designs in the categories of professional design, student design, and design with added value. The work awarded first prize in the professional design category is automatically invited to become a part of the Slovak Design Museum's collection. The Slovak Design Award has built a solid position as a respected design award. The final selection is a representative probe into the state of design in Slovakia.

## Slovak Design in Words and Images

In 2013, a significant publication by Adriena Pekárová and Zdeno Kolesár was released; it had the ambition to at least partially fill the numerous gaps in compiling the history of design in Slovakia. Currently, there are several titles on the market devoted, in dominant part, to the results of research on the history of individual fields of Slovak design. In 2012, a publication by Zuzana Šidlíková came out, which presents apparel culture in Slovakia between 1918–1939. We can find a comprehensive overview of the evolution of fashion from prehistory to the present on Slovak territory in the volume by Magdaléna M. Zuberová, Eva Hasalová, Zuzana Šidlíková, and Martin Vančo. In 2017, Zuzana Šidlíková published the results of her research into the history of fashion culture in Slovakia between 1945–1989. Ľubomír Longauer has elaborately pursued the research of graphic design on Slovak territory in his books. A groundbreaking publication in the field of graphic design, published as part of the research and exhibition project, *Typography and Type Design in Slovakia: It All Began with Cyril and Methodius*, realised by the Department of Visual Communication, Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, is the accompanying catalogue of the same title by authors Ľubomír Longauer, Palo Bálik, Stanislav Stankoci, and Mária Rišková.

The Slovak Design Center has published professional journal, *Designum*, since 1991, which covers the entire breadth of design at home and abroad, while providing space for the research of the applied arts in Slovakia. The newly established Internet platform, *e-designum* ([www.edesignum.scd.sk](http://www.edesignum.scd.sk)), provides up-to-date and concentrated information in an increased frequency and with excellent accessibility in the online space. Nevertheless, in general, awareness of Slovak design and its history remains insufficient.

Surveying and documenting Slovak design is, therefore, the fundamental task on which all curators of the Slovak Design Museum work continuously, as they pursue research on product and communication design. Following our exhibition and lecture projects, we plan several publications on our research results. In 2020, we established a specialised edition, *DesignZoom*, through which, in cooperation with the Slovak Design Center's Publishing Department, we are preparing the release of compact publications dedicated to individual personalities of Slovak design. Simultaneously, we are preparing an extensive publication on Slovak design — as a culmination of our research activities in the history of design on our territory.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Town Council, dated 20 October 1931, Štátny archív [State Archive] in Bratislava, Personal Funds, Antonín Hořejš PhD, box no. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript of Museum's Statute, *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> *Op.cit.*

<sup>4</sup> Since 2013, the Slovak Design Museum is an organisational unit of the Slovak Design Center; as of August 2014, it is a specialised department registered in the Register of Museums and Galleries of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>5</sup> For more on design from our territory, visit the long-term exposition of the Slovak Design Museum: *100 Years of Design / Slovakia 1918–2018*, in the attic of Hurbanove kasárne at Kollárovo nám. 10 in Bratislava. Please see: <https://www.100.scd.sk> [accessed 27 July 2022]

<sup>6</sup> The Slovak Design Museum's research and development strategy is a part of the Slovak Design Center's long-term plan to systematise and expand the organisation's research and development activities – towards building excellent R&D teams and projects, establishing technological infrastructure for R&D, and supporting international exchange in the field of research. The Slovak Design Museum is governed in the acquisition and professional activity of the museum, and scientific research in the field of design history, by Act No.206/2009 Coll. on museums and galleries and the protection of artefacts of cultural value.

<sup>7</sup> The cooperation between the Slovak Design Museum and the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague on the activity of the Czechoslovak Werkbund and specifically its Bratislava branch.

<sup>8</sup> The cooperation between the Slovak Design Museum and the National Technical Museum in Prague on the project NAKI – Research on the activities of Czech designers in Slovak territory after 1948.

<sup>9</sup> The Slovak Design Award (NCD) is an award given by the Slovak Design Center and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. The annual competition covers the works realised within the past two years. The public can view the selection of submitted works at the regularly organised exhibition of the finalists. The award ceremony is held in the form of a gala evening. Please see: <https://scd.sk/ncd/narodna-cena-za-dizajn-2022/> [accessed 27 July 2022]

<sup>10</sup> Adriena Pekárová – Zdeno Kolesár (eds.): *K dejinám dizajnu na Slovensku* [On the History of Slovak Design], Bratislava, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Zuzana Šidlíková: *Móda na Slovensku (v medzivojnovom období 1919–1939)* [Slovak Fashion (during the Interwar Period 1919–1939)], Bratislava, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Magdaléna M. Zuberová – Eva Hasalová – Zuzana Šidlíková – Martin Vančo (eds.): *Móda na Slovensku (Stručné dejiny odievania)* [Slovak Fashion (Brief History of Apparel)], Bratislava, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Zuzana Šidlíková: *Lost m(ODE). Clothing Culture in Slovakia from 1945 to 1989*, Bratislava, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Ľubomír Longauer: *Martin Benka: The First Designer of the Slovak National Myth*, Bratislava, 2009; *Modernity of Traditions*, Bratislava, 2012; *Taking Off Traditional Clothes*, Bratislava, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Ľubomír Longauer – Palo Bálik – Stanislav Stankoci – Mária Rišková: *Typography and Type Design in Slovakia: It All Began with Cyril and Methodius*, Bratislava, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Please see: <https://scd.sk/publikacie/> [accessed 27 July 2022]





Organized by  
the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest

# COLLEC\_THINK TANK

conference on **CZECH** and  
**SLOVAK DESIGN**

**8 OCTOBER 2022**  
9:30 AM - 5 PM

**A38 SHIP**  
BUDAPEST, PETŐFI BRIDGE, BUDA SIDE

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Museum of Applied Arts

Speakers:

Judit Horváth, PhD (HU)  
Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest

Mgr. Adam Stěch (CZ)  
DOKLO, Prague

Jiří Pelet (CZ)  
Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design, Prague

Markéta Vingerová (CZ)  
The Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague

Gabriela Ondříšáková (SK)  
Slovak Design Center, Bratislava

Klára Prešnajderová, PhD (SK)  
Slovak Design Center, Bratislava

Maros Schmidt (SK)  
Slovak Design Center, Bratislava

Moderator:

Judit Horváth (HU)





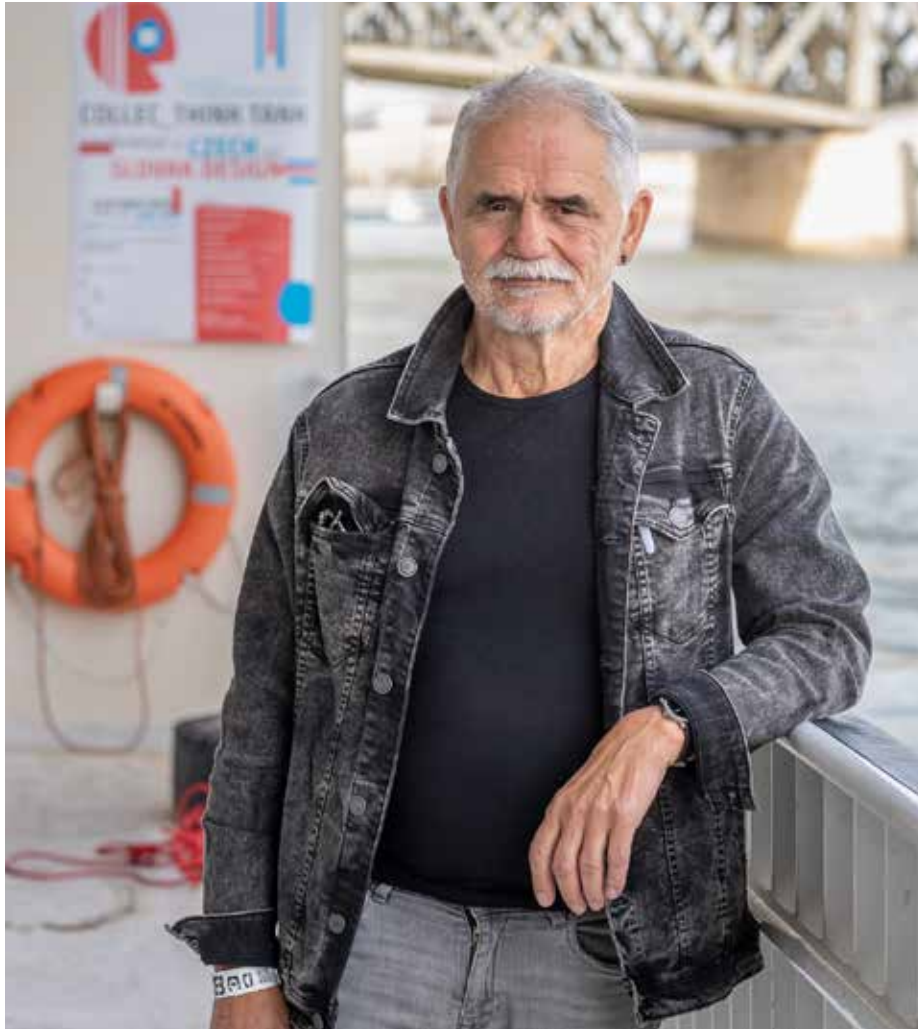
## ADAM ŠTĚCH

He has long been involved in design, architecture, and the visual arts as a theorist, journalist, and curator. He received his MA in the History of Art at Charles University in Prague, and since 2009 he works as an editor for *Dolce Vita* magazine. He is a co-founder of the creative group, OKOLO, with which he has prepared dozens of publication and exhibition projects in the Czech Republic and abroad since 2009. He is also the author of a number of texts on design and architecture, which are published in the Czech and foreign press, including: *Wallpaper*, *Modernism*, *Damn*, *Cool Hunting*, *Domus*, *Architonic*, *Mark*, *Frame*, *A10* and *SightUnseen*. He has also collaborated with brands and institutions such as Phillips de Pury, Casa Mollino, Gubi, Tolix, Design Museum Holon, Victoria & Albert Museum, Vitra Design Museum, Triennale di Milano, Depot Basel, Brompton Design District, Vienna Design Week, Maharam, and Phaidon, among others. He lectures at Scholastika in Prague and FUD in Ústí nad Labem. He is the author of the book, *Inside Utopia*, published in 2017 by the Berlin publishing house Gestalten, as well as *Modern Architecture and Interiors*, for the publishing house Prestel (2020).



## GABRIELA ONDRIŠÁKOVÁ

She is a Curator at the Slovak Design Museum (part of the Slovak Design Center) in Bratislava, responsible for the Communication Design Collection. Following her studies in Art History at Comenius University in Bratislava (2011–2016), in her professional work, she focuses on the graphic design of the second half of the 20th century in Slovakia, and on contemporary book design and typography. She has researched the work of 20th-century Slovak graphic designers and visual artists, including Karol Rosmány, Ivan Štěpán, and Emil Bačík. She has curated smaller graphic design exhibitions, and is co-curator of the permanent exhibition, *100 Years of Design: Slovakia 1918–2018*, on view in the attic gallery of the Slovak Design Museum.



## JIŘÍ PELCL

He is a highly distinguished designer with a strong international reputation, working across a range of media and materials. Professor and former Rector of the Prague Academy of Arts, Architecture, and Design. He studied at the Academy of Applied Arts in Prague, before studying furniture design at the RCA in London.

Alongside practical design activities for industrial production, he is concerned with the theory of design. He lectures at both Czech and foreign colleges (Rietveld Academy, RCA London, EnsAD [École nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs] Paris, Yale University, Pratt Institute, NYU).

Among his better-known commissions have been Vaclav Havel's study in Prague Castle, the interiors of the Czech Embassies in Rome and Pretoria, and Gustav Mahler's house in Kaliště. His work is internationally acclaimed in permanent design collections in prominent museums, such as MoMA in New York.



## JUDIT HORVÁTH, PHD

The Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest was established in 2015 under her leadership. She is a Lecturer at the Doctoral School of the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, as well as being a member of the Professional Advisory Board of the Hungarian Fashion & Design Agency.

Since 1999, over 150 contemporary art and design exhibitions have been connected with her name. She has decades of experience in both the public and private spheres, and a great outlook on the international contemporary art and design scene. The subject of both her degrees from the Universität für *angewandte Kunst* in Vienna and her doctoral dissertation from the Eötvös Loránd University Budapest is contemporary collecting.





## MARKÉTA VINGLEROVÁ

She is an art historian and curator, and since 2016, Curator of the Collection of Textiles at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (UPM). Her research concerns the intersection of textiles, fibre art, fine art, and fashion. She received her degree in the History of Art at Charles University in Prague in 2004, completing internships at Università degli Studi La Sapienza in Rome and Universität der angewandte Kunst in Vienna. Between 2007 and 2016, she led etc. gallery ([www.etcgalerie.cz](http://www.etcgalerie.cz)), a non-profit art space focused on contemporary art in Prague. She was active as an educator, as an assistant tutor in the *Textile Art Department at the Academy of Applied Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague* (2011–2016), where she is currently a PhD researcher (since 2016). She has published several reviewed book chapters and articles concerning textiles, exhibition, and educational practice. She was co-curator of the exhibitions, *Homage to Broadcloth: Textiles in the Context of Fine Art* (8smička, 2018) and *Fashion in Blue: Indigo in Japanese and Czech Textiles Then and Now* (UPM, 2021–2022), among others.



## KLÁRA PREŠNAJDEROVÁ, PHD

She is a researcher and curator at the Slovak Design Center in Bratislava, responsible for the Collection of the School of Arts and Crafts. She studied German language and literature at Comenius University in Bratislava, with several fellowships in Vienna, Hamburg, and Berlin. She achieved her PhD with a dissertation about Slovak interwar art journals in the context of the international avant-garde. Between 2017 and 2019, she worked at MAK – Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna as assistant for the European project, Bilateral Design Networks. She was the main curator of the exhibition, *Have No Fear of Modernism! 90th Anniversary of the Establishment of the School of Arts and Crafts in Bratislava* (2018), and co-edited the publication, *School as a Laboratory of Modern Life: On the Reform of Art Education in Central Europe (1900–1945)* [Bratislava 2020], as well as the publication, *ŠUR. Škola umeleckých remesiel v Bratislave 1928–1939* (ŠUR: School of Arts and Crafts in Bratislava 1928–1939) [Bratislava 2021].



## MAROŠ SCHMIDT

He is the Director of the Slovak Design Center (SCD) in Bratislava. Between 2016 and 2020, he was head of the Slovak Design Museum of SCD, and between 2019 and 2020, head of INOLAB, the research and development department of SCD. He studied Industrial Design at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design (AFAD) in Bratislava, with a scholarship at Volkswagen Wolfsburg and diploma work for Ford AG. Since 2013, he has been teaching Automobile Design History at AFAD. He was the main curator of the exhibition, *100 Years of Design: Slovakia 1918–2018*, and co-curator of the exhibition, *Have No Fear of Modernism! 90th Anniversary of the Establishment of the School of Arts and Crafts in Bratislava* (2018). Since 2017, he has been responsible for the development of the H.U.R.B.A.N. Selector, a software intended for hybridisation of multiple 3D mesh models while generating new aesthetic forms featuring traits of their parent models. His research and publication activity focuses on Czechoslovak product design.



## MELINDA FARKASDY

She is a curator at the Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. Also, she is a co-curator of its *In Circulation* exhibition series. She completed the course, Curating Contemporary Art and Design: Theory and Practice at the Royal College of Art, London and was one of the speakers of the ICOM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Decorative Arts and Design (ICDAD) annual conference, *Revivals* in 2021. She received her MA in Design Theory from Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design and her BA in Art History and Aesthetics from Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest). Her research and publication activity focuses on Hungarian design in the socialist era. She has published in magazines *Magyar Iparművészet* (Hungarian Applied Arts), *Hype & Hyper Central and Eastern European*, and *CeramicsNow*.





## RITA KOMPORDAY

She works as a Curator at the Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, as well as being a co-curator of its exhibition series, *In Circulation* and a contributor to the Homo Faber Guide. She is completing her MA in Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. In her postgraduate dissertation she investigates the role of artist-in-residency programmes in museums of applied arts. Previously, she received an MA in Luxury Goods Management from the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan) and her BA in Arts Management from the Oxford Brookes University (Budapest). She has published in *Hype & Hyper Central and Eastern European* magazine.



## COLLEC\_THINK TANK

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## COLLEC\_THINK TANK

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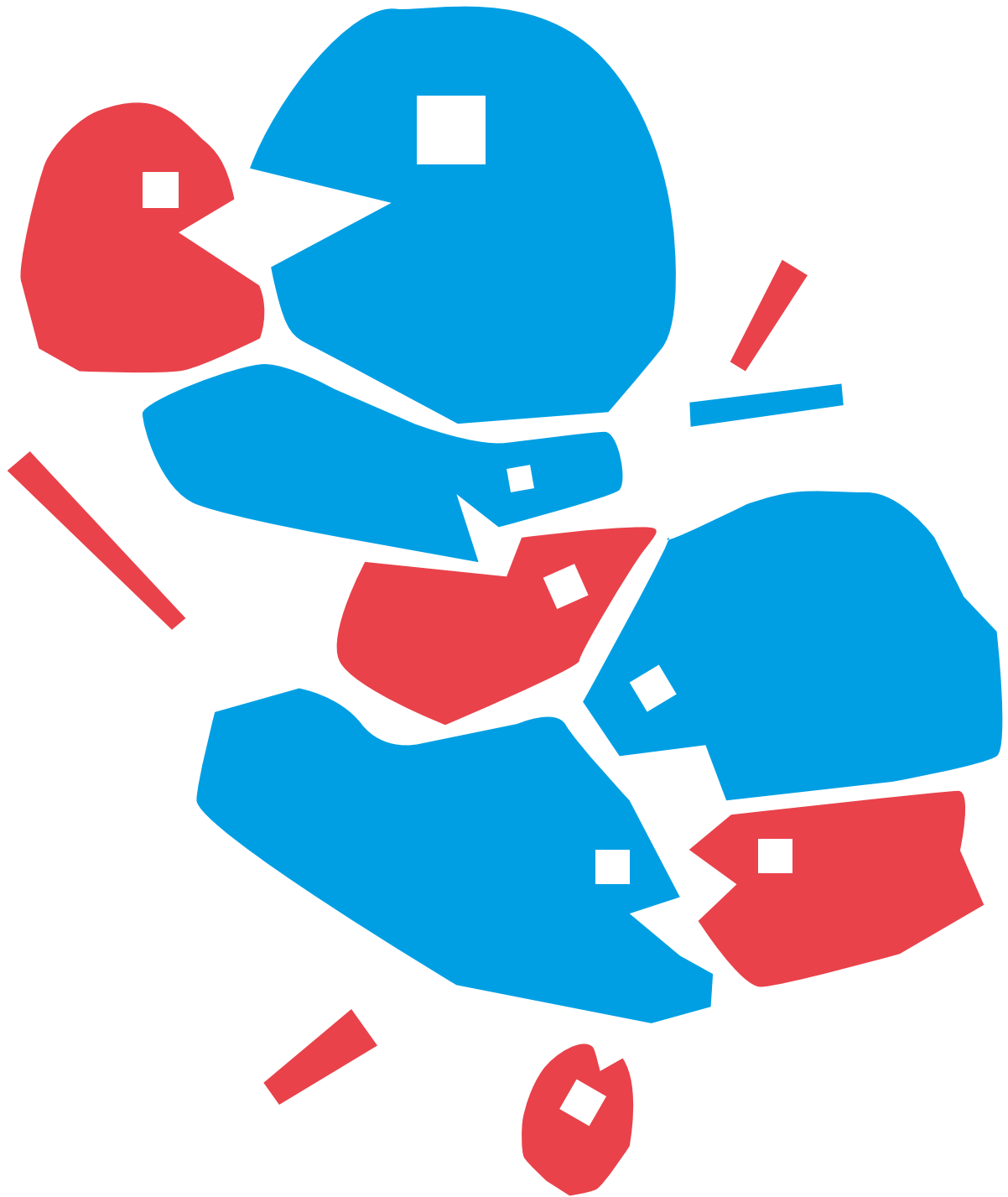
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