



Kunsthalle Praha has obtained the unique Fluxus Collection of Marie and Milan Knížák

Prague (22.06.2021) – **The new Prague-based space for Czech and international art has expanded its collection with an important set assembled by Marie and Milan Knížák which focuses on the art of the Fluxus movement. In doing so, Kunsthalle Praha has joined other institutions which possess collections and archives related to the Fluxus movement, such as The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection at the MoMA, Archiv Sohm at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, and the Jean Brown Archive at the Getty Research Institute. The acquisition of Marie and Milan Knížák’s collection makes Kunsthalle Praha an important center for research on the Fluxus movement in Central Europe.**

“This is an extraordinary event for Kunsthalle Praha’s collection as it places us among a select few centers worldwide whose collections and archives spotlight this powerful and highly significant period in the history of art in the second half of the 20th century,” explains **Štefan Tóth**, collection manager at Kunsthalle Praha.

The Fluxus Collection comprises some 700 items, mostly artworks and documents obtained by Marie and Milan Knížák through their close connections with other members of the Fluxus collective. The collection contains works by approximately **46 artists**, including names such as **George Brecht, Robert Filliou, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Benjamin Patterson, Mieko Shiomi, Ben Vautier, Robert Watts, and La Monte Young**. Most of the collection is formed by multiples, objects, and drawings, but it also includes photographs and films documenting various performances, as well as books dedicated to the ideas of Fluxus, artists’ books, and correspondences between artists.

“Once its registration is completed, Kunsthalle Praha will gradually make the collection of Marie and Milan Knížák accessible to experts and the general public for academic, educational, and exhibition purposes,” elaborates Štefan Tóth.

The term Fluxus denotes the international (anti-)art movement born in the early 1960s. Its activities were coordinated by Lithuanian-American artist George Maciunas. It was Maciunas who put Milan Knížák in charge of the movement’s presence in Eastern Europe (director of Fluxus East). Fluxus built on the legacy

of Marcel Duchamp and the work of John Cage. Its members focused on the intermedia overlaps of art forms and on combining visual art with experimental music, theatre, and poetry.

Fluxus is commonly understood as network of mutually connected artists active in several centers in the USA, Western Europe, and Japan. However, attention is rarely paid to the movement's existence to the east of the Iron Curtain, due in part to the fact that this topic has not yet been subjected to substantial research. After the year 1962, links between artists in the Eastern Bloc led to the development of artistic approaches reminiscent of Fluxus.

These activities provide a potential basis for utilizing the term **Fluxus East**. The question remains whether it should be conceptualized as a genuine art movement which defined itself against the political and cultural orientation of the given geographical region, or rather as a network of "independent" artists active outside of the official structures, developing new and alternative forms of communication and artistic practice.

Between 1960 and 1980, the artists developed ties across national borders and communicated their artistic ideas and political beliefs via mail, publications, or the organization of happenings.

"Today we know that there was contact between artists on either side of the Iron Curtain and a mutual awareness of the presence of these allied tendencies and forms. However, the history of relations between Fluxus West and Fluxus East still holds many unanswered questions," states **Barbora Ropková**, curator of Kunsthalle Praha's collection.

Kunsthalle Praha's art collection is an important means of achieving the newborn institution's mission of documenting and presenting the evolution of the Czech Republic's art scene throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, including its links to the international scene. The collection is assembled as a comprehensive array of artworks which includes gifts and long-term loans. The core of the collection is a set of several hundred works belonging to the founders of Kunsthalle Praha – Pavlína and Petr Pudil, operating as The Pudil Family Foundation. The collection will not be permanently displayed at Kunsthalle Praha, but you will be able to familiarize yourself with it through temporary thematic exhibitions and through the online database we are currently preparing. Kunsthalle Praha, a new space for art and culture at Klárov, Prague, will open to the public on **22 February 2022**.

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