

Special Programme

As part of our special programme, you can attend a guided tour with the exhibition curator Lenka Lindaurová and/or the collector Karel Babíček.

The development of the Czech art scene in the 1990s will be presented by some of its main representatives in a panel discussion.

You can learn about the advertising of the 1990s from marketing experts who will introduce the commercial context of this period.

Follow our website and social media for the times and dates of the events.

MIDNIGHT OF ART

Ways of Collecting: Karel Babíček's Collection
01 07 2022 – 30 09 2022

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CURATOR Lenka Lindaurová

EXHIBITION SERIES CONCEPT Christelle Havranek | EXHIBITION DESIGN Jiří Příhoda | GRAPHIC DESIGN OF THE EXHIBITION AND CATALOGUE Robert V. Novák | GRAPHIC DESIGN OF THE EXHIBITION'S PROMOTION Zuzana Lednická, Andrea Vacovská (Studio Najbrt) | EXHIBITION PRODUCTION Eliška Žáková | PROJECT ASSISTANCE Nikola Schnitzzerová | TECHNICAL PRODUCTION Matej Al-Ali | INCOMING LOANS COORDINATOR Kateřina Slavíková | LEARNING AND SPECIAL PROGRAMME Martina Freitagová, Barbora Škaloudová | PUBLICATIONS MANAGER Věra Janíčková | PR AND COMMUNICATION Ondřej Čížek, Zuzana Dušilová, Lucie Zelmanová | TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH Vít Bohal | TRANSLATIONS INTO CZECH Anna Žilková | EDITING AND PROOFREADING Theo Carnegie-Tan (EN), Pavlína Klazarová, Štěpánka Pašková (CZ) | EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE EXECUTION Vladimír Kosík, David Syrovátka | INSTALLATION Patrik Adamec, Matej Al-Ali, Leoš Drábek, Zdeněk Grosman, Eva Havlová, Vojtěch Jehlička, Matěj Páv, Filip Sigmund, Augustin Soukup, Jakub Šimek

Exhibition organised by Kunsthalle Praha.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS Jan Bačkovský, Veronika Bromová, Tomáš Čiřáňský, Larry Clark, Tony Cragg, Jiří David, Nancy Davidson, Stanislav Diviš, Martin John, Stanislav Judl, Křištof Kintera, Vladimír Kokolia, Martin Krajc, Petr Kvíčala, Martin Mainer, František Matoušek, Jan Merta, Vladimír Merta, MICL, Michal Nesázal, Julian Opie, Petr Písařík, Jan Pištěk, Viktor Pivovarov, Otto Placht, Jiří Příhoda, Philippe Ramette, Lukáš Rittstein, Jaroslav Róna, František Skála, Tomáš Smetana, Vít Soukup, Václav Stratil, Antonín Střížek, Adriana Šimotová, Pavel Šmíd, Margita Titlová-Ylovsky, Kateřina Vincourová, Josef Záček

LENDERS Karel Babíček, Veronika Bromová, Tony Cragg, COLLETT Prague | Munich, Nancy Davidson, Miroslav Jiřele, Petr Kvíčala, Vladimír Merta, MICL, Julian Opie, Lukáš Rittstein, Simon Lee Gallery, Pavel Šmíd, Xippas Gallery, Roman Výborný, Josef Záček

SPECIAL THANKS TO abART, Martin Polák, Ondřej Polák, Spolek Brandýs ve světě, Jiří Švestka, VVP AVU

The exhibition is accompanied by an eponymous publication and we would herewith like to express our gratitude to the editors, authors, and others involved in its preparation.

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Karel Babíček in Gordon Matta-Clark's exhibition *Bingo*, Nová síň, 1995
Photo Martin Polák, VVP AVU Archive

MIDNIGHT OF ART Karel Babíček's Collection

Lenka Lindaurová

The story of collector Karel Babíček is firmly set in the 1990s. Although he bought his first painting as a student in the 1970s, he only started systematically collecting art after 1991, when he founded Behémót Gallery – one of the first private galleries in Prague. He wanted to follow the New York model, and so he focused on creating a programme, following current happenings in the Czech art scene, and fostering intergenerational communication.

Over the years Babíček gradually expanded his collection. The core of it was acquired largely according to which artworks reflected his passions, and each acquisition was closely connected to different periods of his life. He bought works by Veronika Bromová, Křištof Kintera, Vladimír Kokolia, Petr Kvíčala, Vladimír Merta, Jiří Příhoda, Adriana Šimotová, Margita Titlová-Ylovsky, Kateřina Vincourová, Josef Žáček, and others. In addition to collecting, he supported the artists financially, published catalogues, and realised various programmes outside of the gallery itself.

In the second half of the 1990s, the city of Prague selected Babíček to manage and curate the Nová síň gallery, where he fulfilled his life-long ambition of presenting large international projects by well-known artists. He brought the works of Tony Cragg, Nancy Davidson, Gordon Matta-Clark, Julian Opie, and Philippe Ramette to Prague, and also produced a large-scale collaborative project by Jiří Příhoda and Brian Eno. In 2000, he stopped working in both galleries and continued in his art collecting efforts, expanding his collection to include works by young artists. He prepared exhibitions and initiated art projects in public spaces in the town of Brandýs nad Orlicí, and collaborated with Galerie kritiků in Prague. Most recently, he helped found the Municipal Gallery of Říčany this year.

Babíček's activities significantly impacted the art scene of the 1990s. His ambitious efforts were ahead of their time, and most importantly, their scope exceeded local boundaries. Today his collection includes over 120 works by the foremost Czech and

international artists, and closely documents the eruption of artistic energy in the years following the 1989 Velvet Revolution.

The exhibition presents a selection of Babíček's collection, emphasising the works of Behémót Gallery's core artists, and includes works by international artists who previously exhibited at Nová síň and remember it fondly to this day.

The title '*Midnight of Art*' was taken from the novel *Immortality* by Milan Kundera, where the term refers to a moment of fear for the future of art. The story of Karel Babíček's collection takes place at just such a time, and we have yet to see where it might lead us.

Ways of Collecting

In the Czech Republic, where for decades art collections were accessible only through state institutions, the role of private collectors is something of a mystery. *Ways of Collecting* sheds light on an activity that, although often overlooked, is inseparable from the art ecosystem. It also reveals the fascinating relationships that collectors have with their collections, which are just as intriguing as the connections between the artworks within them.

The *Ways of Collecting* cycle will present various approaches to collecting by unveiling local and international private collections seldom available to the public.

Tony Cragg
Administered Landscape, 1996
Karel Babíček Collection



Václav Stratil
Czech Landscape, 1998–1999
Karel Babíček Collection



Larry Clark
Untitled (T23), 1963
Edition 14 of 25
Courtesy of the artist, Luhring
Augustine, New York and Simon
Lee Gallery, London / Hong Kong



František Matoušek
Mount Sněžka, 2002
Karel Babíček Collection

Jan Pištěk
Costa Dorada, 1988
Karel Babíček Collection



Viktor Pivovarov
Vulcans as Black Triangles, 1988
Karel Babíček Collection



Martin Mainer
Frame on Albion River, 1995–1996
Karel Babíček Collection



Nancy Davidson
Hang 'Em High Again, 1999
Courtesy of the artist and the Robert Miller Gallery



Kateřina Vincourová
In Touch, 2006
COLLETT Prague | Munich

Křištof Kintera
Relatives, 1998
Karel Babíček Collection



Margita Titlová-Ylovsky
Lipstick Drawing, 1983
Miroslav Jiřele Collection

