

# Questions of Craft: Making for the State in Socialist Czechoslovakia

Rebecca Bell

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD (RCA))

History of Design

V&A/Royal College of Art

Thesis Submitted June 2019

*This thesis represents partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Royal College of Art. I confirm that the work presented here is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.*

Signed: 

Date: 21.06.2019



## **Copyright Statement**

This text represents the partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Royal College of Art. This copy has been supplied for the purpose of research for private study, on the understanding that it is copyright material, and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

**Word Count: 76, 257**

(Exclusive of footnotes, appendices and bibliography)

## Abstract

Rather than having one official centralised definition, craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia should be understood in diverse and competing terms. Czechoslovak thinking and practice stemmed from a history of critical discourse around applied arts, including nineteenth-century concerns of national identity and interwar investigations of craft and modernity. In the Socialist context, these historic strands continued via the interests of individuals who had been active before the Second World War alongside younger members of the art and design community. Terminology, theory and practice had to be negotiated within shifting ideological parameters.

Craft grappled with the requirements of Socialist Realism and Socialist Modernism. State organisations such as ÚLUV (Ústředí lidové a umělecké výroby, the Centre for Folk and Art Production), ÚUŘ (Ústředí uměleckých řemesel, Centre for Artistic Crafts), and ÚBOK (Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury, the Institute of Housing and Fashion Culture) led the official discussion around craft through publications, conferences, exhibitions and projects. Studios and factories were encompassed in these organisations and their work was presented in magazines like *Tvar* (Shape), *Umění a řemesla* (Arts and Crafts), and *Domov* (Home). Such publications demonstrated a constant negotiation of terms that took into account Soviet models, international influences and parallel movements in literature, art, and philosophy.

Points of tension tell us a great deal about the role of craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia. Techniques were devised by the individual maker in order to offer a commentary on the socialist condition. Integral to this was a frequent departure to the absurd; using

humour, whimsy and Švejkism (Kosík, 1963) to respond to a bureaucratic environment. Through a range of case studies, I demonstrate key moments in this ongoing dialogue, including Czech New Wave cinema, animation, magazines, show flats, publications, textiles and glass figurines.

This thesis proposes that craft practices in Socialist Czechoslovakia embraced a range of tactics in order to provide contexts for debate, considering questions of craft in a politically controlled environment. Relationships to traditional folk methods and motifs, as well as modernist approaches, resulted in a series of tactics that referenced or quoted, adapted, or rejected certain ideological, national and international interests. The resulting spectrums of value upon which objects were placed included craft to industry; kitsch to modern; authentic to false; capitalist to socialist; and moral to economic. The characteristics of craft were often positioned alongside or against folk practices as well as more scientific and didactic approaches such as ergonomics in the home. The values of craft were explored in relationship to territories of design. The Socialist Modern can be defined according to these multi-faceted terms.

Important Anglo-American publications have focused on Czech art glass (Petrova: 2001; Ricke: 2005). But less chartered territories are smaller scale works in textiles, glass and ceramics. These were also often positioned alongside and in relation to industrial objects and ventures into architecture, furniture and interiors, in publications of the time. Current Czech projects are beginning to address these areas (Hubatová-Vacková, Pachmanová, Pečínková: 2015; Bartlová, Vybíral et al: 2015), yet there is comparatively little in English. Additionally, the discomfort of approaching Socialist Realism and the

Socialist agenda in Czech scholarship remains, alongside a reliance on temporal divisions of objects according to accepted delineation of time periods (e.g. Socialist Realism, Normalisation). My research sets out to cross these historical, linguistic and temporal boundaries.

I follow in the footsteps of Soviet specialists (Svetlana Boym: 1994; David Crowley and Jane Pavitt: 1998 and 2008; Deema Kaneff: 2004; Juliet Kinchin: 2009; Nicolette Makovicky: 2009; and Greg Castillo: 2010). I hope to add to their scholarship by bringing Czechoslovakia and its complex definitions of craft further into the foreground.

## Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	4
<b>List of Illustrations</b> .....	9
<b>List of Accompanying Material</b> .....	24
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	25
<b>Author's Declaration</b> .....	27
<b>Introduction</b> .....	28
Historical Events .....	30
Research Time Period .....	33
Definitions of Nationhood .....	36
A Starting Point: Jaroslav Brychta and the Glass Figurine .....	40
Craft Discourse and Definitions .....	50
Czech Terminology .....	53
Czech-Language Literature and Influential Projects .....	58
Wider Craft Definitions .....	70
Methodology and Sources .....	75
The Chapters .....	81
Conclusion .....	85
<b>Chapter One – Craft and the Socialist State: Negotiating Czechoslovak Definitions 1945–1957</b> .....	87
Chapter Overview .....	87
Introduction .....	88
Organising Folk Art Production: ÚLUV and its History .....	91
Josef Vydra and Early ÚLUV Objects .....	96
<i>Sorela</i> Tactics and Criticism .....	133
Glass and the State: Miloslav Klinger .....	139
A Shining Example: Škrdlovice Glassworks .....	149
1957: A New Decree .....	156
Conclusion .....	169
<b>Chapter Two – Folk Fever and the Bureaucratic Machine in early 1960s Czechoslovakia</b> .....	172
Chapter Overview .....	172
Introduction .....	173
Czechoslovak New Wave Film and <i>Moravská Hellas</i> .....	176
'Folk Fever' in the Town of Strážnice .....	178
Awakening from a 'Dogmatic Doze': The Context of 1963 .....	186
Art and Literature in early 1960s Czechoslovakia .....	193
Czechoslovak New Wave Film as a Space of 'Interpretive Uncertainty' .....	196
Praxis in Craft and Design .....	200
Unhappy Victims of Systematised Making? .....	204

The 'Ideological Entanglements' of Craft.....	212
Conclusion .....	220
<b>Chapter Three – Directions for Taste: Craft and the Socialist Modern</b> .....	<b>223</b>
Chapter Overview .....	223
Introduction.....	224
Brussels Expo 1958 and the International Stage .....	226
ÚBOK: Experiment Invalidovna (1961) and the Socialist Home.....	231
Pantomime for Bad Taste: Advice on the Pitfalls of the Socialist Modern Home .....	251
The Hand Part 1: ÚLUV and Invalidovna .....	262
The Hand Part 2: From the Designer to the Consumer .....	271
Locating 'Individuality' .....	277
The Institute of Bread Rolls: Working for ÚBOK.....	287
Conclusion .....	303
<b>Chapter Four – State Peripheries: Making Practices in Textiles and Ceramics</b> .....	<b>306</b>
Chapter Overview .....	306
Introduction.....	307
Marie Rychlíková and the Collaborative Ceramic Practice of H + M + R from the 1950s to early 1970s .....	310
New Techniques in Textiles in the 1960s .....	350
Conclusion .....	376
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>380</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>398</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>561</b>



## List of Illustrations

Fig. 1: Karel Zeman and Jaroslav Brychta, *Inspirace*, 1948, stills from glass animation (Zlín studios)

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSWIxG89eAkm>> [accessed 11 January 2012].

Fig. 2: Jaroslav Brychta, Figures for *Inspirace*, 1948, glass, UPM Collection, Prague. Photograph: Author's Own.

Figs. 2A and 2B: Jaroslav Brychta, *Ptáčník*, 1926, wired glass; *Král Gustav V* (King Gustav V), 1931, flame-worked glass, from Oldřich Palata, *Skleněný svět Jaroslava Brychty* [The Glass World of Jaroslav Brychta] (Liberec: Severočeské museum, 1995), (n. pag.).

Figs. 3A, 3B and 3C: Jan Černý, Ladislav Ouhrabka and Jaroslav Brychta, Tableaux from *Universe*, 1958, glass, from Antonín Langhamer, 'The Past and Present of Glass Figurines and Chamber Sculptures, *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 30 (1975), 14-19 (p. 18).

Fig. 4: Detail from Jan Černý, Ladislav Ouhrabka and Jaroslav Brychta *Universe*, 1958, figure of Sagittarius from the *Neptune* composition, UPM Collection, Prague. Photograph: Author's Own.

Figs. 5 & 6: Josef Lada, *The Good Soldier Švejk*, 1923, illustration <<https://bit.ly/2CFIjRF>> [accessed 2 May 2014] Jaroslav Brychta, *Zápasník*, 1944, sketch from Oldřich Palata, *Skleněný svět Jaroslava Brychty* (Liberec: Severočeské museum, 1995), n. pag.

Fig. 7: Železný Brod glass figurines from *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 7 & 12 (1956), (n. pag.).

Fig. 8: Section 3: 'Lidé, věci, paradoxy: 1946-1970' [People, Things, Paradoxes: 1946-1970], *Věci a slova: umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870-1970*, [Things and Words: Art Industry, Applied Arts and Design in Czech Theory and Criticism 1870-1970], Moravská galerie, Brno (2014-15). Photograph: ©Andrea Bratrů Velnerová.

Fig. 9: Vladimír Bouček, Ceramic pitcher, c. 1948, made at the ÚLUV workshop, from *Tvar*, 1 (1948), 7 (p. 7).

Fig. 10: Classical and folk forms, from Josef Vydra, 'Návrat k tvarům' [Return to Form], *Tvar*, 1:5-6 (1948), 129-136 (p. 129).

Fig. 11: Wooden egg cup, from Josef Vydra, 'Návrat k tvarům' [Return to Form], *Tvar*, 1:5-6 (1948), 129-136 (p. 131).

Fig. 12: Lamp, from 'Odmítáme!' [We Reject!], *Tvar*, 1 (1948), 5-6 (p. 96).

Fig. 13: Dress in the Svěrázový style, 1920-29, Národní museum, Prague. Photograph: Alžběta Kumstátová.

Fig. 14: Svěrázový blouse, from 'Odmítáme!' [We Reject!], *Tvar*, 1:3-4 (1948), 64 (p. 64).

Fig. 15: 'Sunday dress worn by old women at Polomka – with indigo print skirts and sleeves – aprons, bonnets and jackets are woven and embroidered with red cotton – photo from beginning of this century', from Josef Vydra, *Indigo Blue Print in Slovak Folk Art* (Prague: Artia, 1954), plate 98.

Figs. 16-17: 'ÚLUV Presentation of New Czechoslovakian Fashion (two dresses using indigo blue print), 13<sup>th</sup> May 1948, Prague', from *Tvar*, 1:5-6 (1948), pp. 104-107.

Figs. 18-21: Attachment containing samples of indigo blue print, from *Tvar*, 1:4 (1948), (n. pag.).

Fig. 22: 'Hledá se definice kýče!', illustration, from A. Pelc, *Kulturní politika*, III (1947-48), (n. pag.).

Fig. 23: Exhibition catalogue cover, František Venera, *Úmění a kýč* (Brno: Dům umění města Brna, 1948).

Fig. 24: 'A painted egg from Nevšová in the Luhačovice region (Moravia)', from František Venera, *Úmění a kýč* (Brno: Dům umění města Brna, 1948), p. 5.

Fig. 25: Batik *kraslice* from Valašsko, c. 1940s, from Josef Jančář, *Lidová kultura na Moravě (Folk Culture in Moravia)*, (Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost, 2000), p. 221. Photograph: E. Večerková.

Fig. 26: Batik *kraslice* from Vnorov, c. 1940s and 1950s, from Josef Jančář, *Lidová kultura na Moravě (Folk Culture in Moravia)*, (Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost, 2000), p. 221. Photograph: E. Večerková.

Fig. 27: V. H. Brunner, Painted egg for Artěl, 1908, from Pavel Janák, 'Z počátku naší umělecké výroby' [From the beginnings of our artistic production]', *Tvar* 1:4 (1948), 87-94 (p. 88).

Fig. 28: *Kraslice* eggs, Ethnographic Museum, Prague. Photograph: Author's Own.

Fig. 29: 'From the exhibition *Culture in Living* in Zlín', 'František Kaláb, printing on fabric' and 'Artistic Industrial School, Zlín: Scissors', from František Venera, *Úmění a kýč* (Brno: Dům umění města Brna, 1948), pp. 7-9.

Fig. 30: 'Tools by Zdeněk Kovař', from *Tvar*, 6 (1953), 170-177 (p. 173).

Fig. 31: Front cover, *Tvar*, 6 (1953).

Fig. 32: *Úmění a kých* exhibition, 1948, photograph, from František Venera, 'Nové formy výstavnictví' [New Ways of Exhibiting'], *Blok*, 3:3 (1948-1949), 48 (p. 48).

Fig. 33A: Fifteenth-century tower in Tábor, photograph, in *Architektura ČSR* (1951), from Kimberly Elman Zareco, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 136 (p. 136).

Fig. 33B: T-series building with Tábor tower, photograph, in *Architektura ČSR* (1951), from Kimberly Elman Zareco, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 136 (p. 136).

Fig. 34: Advertisement for the Prague Cosmetic Company, from *Tvar*, 6 (1953), n. pag.

Fig. 35: Miloslav Klinger, *Girl*, c. 1950, glass. Courtesy of the Museum of Glass and Jewellery, Jablonec nad Nisou. Photograph: Aleš Kosina.

Fig. 36: Miloslav Klinger, *Gymnast figurines*, 1955, glass, from Jindřich Švec, 'Upomínkové předměty pro I. celostátní spartakiádu' [Souvenirs for the First National Spartakiad], *Tvar*, 7:5 (1955), 134-137 (p. 134).

Fig. 37: 'Examples of glass vases from Škrdlovice Glassworks', 1940s, photograph, from Jan Lichtág, 'Škrdlovické sklo do světa' [Škrdlovice glass goes into the world], *Tvar* (1948), 111-113 (p. 111).

Fig. 38: Jan Kotík, *Slunce, Vzduch, Voda* [Sun, Air, Water], 1958, forged iron and coloured glass, 1957-1958, Expo 58, Brussels, from Glass, Expo '58, Brussels, from Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* (Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels), (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010), p. 119.

Fig. 39: Jan Kotík, *Vrtulová* (Propeller) vase, 1955, glass, from Mark Hill, Robert Bevan Jones and Jindřich Parík (eds.), *Beránek & Škrdlovice: Legends of Czech Glass* (London: Mark Hill Publishing, 2014), p. 6.

Fig. 40: Dress with indigo blue print fabric by Zdenka Gottwaldová (ÚLUV, Prague); pattern by Anoška Eberhardtová ÚLUV, Uherské Hradiště); made by František Joch (ÚLUV, Strážnice), 1958, from Vladimír Bouček 'Výzkum a vývoj ÚLUV' [The Research and Development of ÚLUV], *Tvar*, 6:10 (1958), 304-315 (p. 306).

Fig. 41: 'Jan Kalous [Wicker wine holder], ÚLUV, Uherské Hradiště, made in the workshops in Brumovice, 1957, Photo M. Šotola', from Josef Raban, 'Pro museum či pro život?' [For the Museum or for Life?], *Tvar*, 6:10 (1958), 291-303, (p. 296).

Fig. 42: Advertisement for 'Krásné jizby ÚLUV' [Beautiful Parlours of ÚLUV], depicting show interior containing ÚLUV wares and folk dolls in inset image, from *Tvar*, 6:10 (1958), n. pag.

Fig. 43: Advertisement for items 'Prodejny ÚLUV' [Purchasable from ÚLUV], from *Tvar*, 8 (1955), n. pag.

Fig. 44: 'Instalace výstavy československé lidového umění v Anglii, 1956' [Installation of the exhibition of Czechoslovakian folk art production in England, 1956'], from *Tvar*, 6:10 (1958), n. pag.

Fig. 45: Investigative reporter Saudek with recording equipment, surrounded by folk dolls, in Strážnice, film still, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Fig. 46: Juxtapositions of folk and contemporary clothing, film still, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Fig. 47: Poster for *Moravská Hellas*, 1963. *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Fig. 48: Uncle Lebánek, film still, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Fig. 49: Josef Lada, *The Good Soldier Švejk*, 1923, illustration <<https://bit.ly/2CFIjRF>> [accessed 2 May 2014].

Fig. 50: Image to accompany Jiří Benda, 'Od diskuse k praxi' [From Discussion to Practice], *Domov*, 1 (1963), 21-26 (p. 21).

Fig. 51: Paní Sochorová, film still, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Figs. 52 & 53: Film stills, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Fig. 54: Front cover *Domov*, 1 (1960).

Fig. 55: Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, *Zoomorphic Stone*, 1957-1958, glass, 60.4 x 55 cm, Corning Museum of Glass. Photograph: The Corning Museum of Glass.

Fig. 56: Crowds lining up to visit Experiment Invalidovna, Prague, 1961, photograph, from Libuše Marková, 'Očima návštěvníků' [The Eyes of Visitors], *Domov*, 5 (1961), 14-18 (p. 14).

Fig. 57. Invalidovna interiors, photographs, from Marie Benešová, 'Nové byty v experimentálních domech na Invalidovně' [New Flats in the Experimental Housing of Invalidovna], *Architektura ČSSR*, 9 (1961), pp. 601-605.

Fig. 58: Left, Invalidovna, Prague, 2014. Photograph: Author's Own. Right, Experiment Invalidovna from *Architektura ČSSR*, 9 (1961), n. pag.

Fig. 59: Interior of Invalidovna Flat 8, for a family of four, interior design by Eva Hrušová, textiles and colour scheme by František Rauš, 1961. Image courtesy of Daniela Karasová.

Fig. 60. 'Láska musí mít střechu nad hlavou' [Love Must Have a Roof Over its Head]), photographs, using stills from Břetislav Pojar's *Jak zařídit byt* [How to Furnish a Flat], 1959, animation, from *Domov*, 6 (1960) - 4 (1961). (From top: issue 6 (1960), p. 33; 1 (1961), p. 49; 3 (1961), p. 65; 1 (1961), p. 49).

Fig. 61: Břetislav Pojar, *Balablok*, 1972, animation still  
<[https://www.nfb.ca/film/balablok\\_english/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/balablok_english/)> [accessed 1 October 2016].

Fig. 62: Jan Švankmajer, *Byt* (The Flat), 1968, film stills  
<<https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/26455-byt/>> [accessed 5 April 2014].

Fig. 63: Influences from Japan, Finland, Vietnam and a contemporary kitchen from England, from Raban, J. 'Moderní nebo módní' [Modern or Fashionable?], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 34-38 (p. 34).

Fig. 64: 'Srovnávejtesnámi' [Compare with Us], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 38-39 (p. 38).

Fig. 65: 'Pantomima nevkus' [Pantomime in Bad Taste], from *Domov*, 1 (1960), n. pag.

Figs. 66 and 67: Montisektor furniture and logo, from *Domov*, 1 (1961), n. pag.

Fig. 68: Photographs of Flat 1, 'Nedoma-Mrázek', 1961. Top: sitting room and dining area, Bottom: grandmother and son's bedrooms divided by partition, from Karel Koželka, *Experiment 61, Závěrečná zpráva k úkolu I-1/1961, ÚBOK, Praha 1* [Experiment 1961, Closing report to task I-1 1961, ÚBOK, Prague 1], Internal publication, from archive of Daniela Karasová, n. pag.

Fig. 69: Milada Jočová, Summer dress for ÚLUV Brno, 1968, poplin, blueprint, 64 x 90 x 47 cm. Moravská galerie, Brno, Ref: U 21 047.

Fig. 70: Ladislav Čech, Part of a series of *Situational Pictures for teaching: 'Home'*, 1971, print on paper, 100 x 250 cm, from Milena Bartlová, Jindřich Vybíral et al (eds), *Budování státu: reprezentace Československa v umění, architektuře a designu* [The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design] (Prague: UMPRUM, 2015), p. 278.

Fig. 71: Elektro-Pragy Hlinsko advert, from *Domov*, 1 (1961), n. pag.

Fig. 72: Chair design by Pavel Krbálek, from 'Udělejte si sami' [Do it Yourself], *Domov*, 1 (1961), pp. 47-49 (p. 47).

Fig. 73: Josef Lahoda, Milling Machine, 1966, from Josef Raban, *Czechoslovak Form* (Prague: Orbis, 1971), p. 30.



Fig. 74: Pravoslav Rada, *Guardian Angel*, 1966, ceramic, from Josef Raban, *Czechoslovak Form* (Prague: Orbis, 1971), p. 30.

Fig. 75: Děviana Mírová, Lydie Hladíková and Marie Rychlíková, *Tile with structural surface*, 1966, from Josef Raban, *Czechoslovak Form* (Prague: Orbis, 1971), p. 30.

Fig. 76: Book cover and illustrations from Emanuela Kittrichová, *Byt* (Flat) (Prague: Práce, ROH, 1969).

Fig. 77: Vladimír Jelínek and Emanuel Beránek, Plate with Abstract Decoration, Škrdlovice Glassworks, 1957, glass, 3.8 x 31.5 cm. Photograph: The Corning Museum of Glass.

Fig. 78: Moser Glass Factory, Karlovy Vary, 2014. Photograph: Author's Own.

Fig. 79: Jiří Šuhájek, Vase designed for Crystalex, Nový Bor, huť Flóra, version 28,5, 1978. Antik Mašek, Karlovy Vary  
<<http://www.antikmasek.cz/aukce/56/11033-vaza-jiri-suhajek.html>>  
[accessed 29.10.17].

Fig. 80: Photograph of a party held for Pavel Hlava by ÚBOK, c. 1985. Left to right: Vojtěch Svoboda, Zděnek Svoboda, Jiří Laštovička, Jiří Šuhájek, Pavel Grus, Vladimír Jelínek, Šneider, Pavel Hlava, Václav Šerák (lying down), Jiří Boháč, 'Pans'. Photograph: Daniela Karasová. [Names as provided by Karasová.]

Fig. 81: Party in the Glass Department at ÚBOK, c. 1985. Left to right: (Unknown), 'Pans', Václav Dolejš, Václav Šerák, Vojtěch Svoboda, (Unknown), Valdimír David, Vratislav Šotola, Jiří Laštovička, Ivana Čapková. Photograph: Daniela Karasová. [Names as provided by Karasová.]

Fig. 82: Research documentation for *Design in Great Britain*, a report on British design, by Daniela Karasová and Jiří Pelcl, 1987, from the personal archive of Daniela Karasová.

Fig. 83: Research documentation for *Design Schools of the World* by Daniela Karasová and Ivana Čapková, 1986, including images of Dessau (right), from the personal archive of Daniela Karasová.

Fig. 84: Lydie Hladíková, Marie Rychlíková, Děvana Mírová in their studio, 1960. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

Fig. 85: Marie Rychlíková, Lighting Fixture, Kulturní dům Příbram (the Cultural House of Příbram), Březové Hory, 1957–1959, from Oldřich Ševčík, and Ondřej Beneš, *Architektura 60. let, „Zlatá šedesátá léta“ v české architektuře 20. století* [Architecture of the 1960s, the "Golden Sixties" in Czech Architecture of the 20th Century] (Prague: Grada Publishing, 2009), pp. 100-101.

Fig. 86: Marie Rychlíková, Moka souprava Praha (Prague moka set), 1958 (used in the Brussels Expo Restaurant), porcelain decorated with steel glaze, Karlovarský porcelán, N.P., Závod (National Enterprise) Nová Role. Collection:UPM, Prague. From Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* [Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels], (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010), p. 138.

Fig. 87: Marie Rychlíková, Vases in the form of birds, 1958, glazed ceramic, studio work, 16 x 24 cm. Collection: UPM, Prague. From Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* [Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels], (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010), p. 298.

Fig. 88: Děvna Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Model for exterior ceramic sculpture, 1957, burnt umber glaze ceramic, 35 cm. Collection: UPM, Prague. From Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* [Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels], (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010), p. 141.

Figs. 89–91: Lydie Hladíková, Děvna Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Commissions for *Experiment Invalidovna*, 1963, ceramic and metal, Invalidovna housing estate, Prague. Photograph: Author's Own, 2016.

Fig. 92. Marie Rychlíková, *Maso* (Meat), shop sign in Malá Strana, Prague, 1966, ceramic and metal. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

Fig. 93: Marie Rychlíková, Shop sign for a florist in Hlavíčková 4, Prague, 1977, ceramic and metal. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

Fig. 94: Pravoslav Rada, Vase, 1961, ceramic. Collection: UPM, Prague. <<https://vltava.rozhlas.cz/keramicke-dilo-pravoslava-rady-5081127>> [accessed: 20 February 2011].

Fig. 95: Jindřiška Radová and Pravoslav Rada, Fontána / Královský dvůr [Fountain / Royal Court], Moravská Ostrava, 1967, concrete and ceramic. Location now unknown. Ceramic. Photograph: Fotoarchiv AMO, Petr Sikula <<http://ostravskesochoy.cz/dilo/288-fontana-Kralovsky-dvur>> [Accessed 8 December 2017].

Fig. 96: Lydie Hladíková, Děvna Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Structural wall for Femina shop, Prague, 1967, ceramic and concrete. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

Fig. 97: Lydie Hladíková, Děvna Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Exterior for obchodní dům DON, Hradec Králové, 1971. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

Fig. 98: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Exterior for obchodní dům DON, Hradec Králové, 1971. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

Fig. 99: Módní dům Don, Hradec Králové, Gočárova třída 1517/26, 27 March 2017. Photograph: Boris Jelínek.

<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Obchodn%C3%AD\\_d%C5%AFm\\_Don\\_02.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Obchodn%C3%AD_d%C5%AFm_Don_02.jpg)> [accessed 8 October 2017].

Fig. 100: Hotel Ještěd, 2002. Photograph: Creative Commons.

<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jested.jpg>> [accessed 10 August 2017].

Fig. 101: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Main hall staircase, Ještěd Hotel, 1972, ceramic tiling. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

Fig. 102: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Smaller staircase, Ještěd Hotel, 1972, ceramic tiling. Photograph: Author's Own, 2011.

Figs. 103 & 104: Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, Glass forms, Ještěd Hotel, 1972. Photograph: Author's Own, 2011.

Figs. 105 & 106: Dining area, Ještěd Hotel, 1972. Photograph: Author's Own, 2011.

Fig. 107: Documentation image of exhibition *Návrhy a Realizace 1969-1973* [Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, Designs and Realisation 1969-1973], May, 1973, Galerie Vincence Kramáře, Prague. Arranged by the Svaz českých výtvarných umělců [Union of Czech Fine Artists]. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

Fig. 108: Marie Rychlíková, *Čtverec* [Square], 1970, majolica, from *Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, Návrhy a Realizace 1969-1973* [Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, Designs and Realisation 1969-1973], (Prague: Galerii Vincence Kramáře and Svaz českých výtvarných umělců [Union of Czech Fine Artists], 1973), n. pag.

Fig. 109: Labels produced for Art Protis by Vlněna, Brno, c. mid-1960s. Moravský zemský archive in Brno. Archive location: K216, 74, 3. Photographed by Markéta Vinglerová, 25.10.2016.

Fig. 110: Label showing clothing produced by Vlněna, Brno, c. mid-1960s. Moravský zemský archive in Brno. Archive location: K216, 74, 3. Photographed by Markéta Vinglerová, 25.10.2016.

Fig. 111: Antonín Kybal and Ludmila Kybylová, *Kilim*, 1952, Wool, 222 x 153 cm, from Vlastimil Havlík & Ludmila Kybalová, *Antonín Kybal* (Nové Město nad Metují: Městský úřad a Městská knihovna, 1993), p. 43.

Fig. 112: Antonín Kybal, Hanging for the Smokers' Saloon at the Prague Laterna Magika Theatre, 1959, from Jan Spurný, *Modern textile designer: Antonín Kybal* (Prague: Artia, 1960), plate 54.

Fig. 113: Antonín Kybal, Kakemono (Hanging picture) for the *Good Taste* exhibition in the Czechoslovak Pavilion, Expo 58, Brussels, 1958, from Vlastimil Havlík & Ludmila Kybalová, *Antonín Kybal* (Nové Město nad Metují: Městský úřad a Městská knihovna, 1993), p. 32.

Fig. 114: Antonín Kybal, Head-square, screen printed, 1947, from Jan Spurný, *Modern textile designer: Antonín Kybal* (Prague: Artia, 1960), plate 32.

Fig. 115: Antonín Kybal and Ludmíla Kybalová, *Poslední rašení* [The Final Breeding], 1968. Tapestry. 155 x 220 cm from Vlastimil Havlík & Ludmila Kybalová, *Antonín Kybal* (Nové Město nad Metují: Městský úřad a Městská knihovna, 1993), p. 41.

Fig. 116: Article showing small tapestries for sale via ÚÚŘ, from Ludmila Kybalová, 'Malé Gobelíny' (Small Tapestries), *Domov*, 2 (1966), pp. 40-41. Top right: *Study-Ophelia* by Květa Hamsíková (1966).

Fig. 117: Květa Hamsíková, *Summer*, 1967, Art Protis, 1165 x 144 cm, V&A Collection, London. Reference: CIRC. 25-1969. Photograph: Author's Own.

Figs. 118–120: Details of Květa Hamsíková, *Summer*, 1967, Art Protis, 1165 x 144 cm, V&A Collection, London. Reference: CIRC. 25-1969. Photograph: Author's Own.

Fig. 121: Art Protis machine, Brno, used by fashion designer Karolína Juříková, 2015, for the 'Utopia' collection, film still, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZHRs4usB40>> [accessed 05 Dec 2016).

Figs. 122–123: Details of reverse, showing label, Květa Hamsíková, *Summer*, 1967, Art Protis, 1165 x 144 cm, V&A Collection, London. Reference: CIRC. 25-1969. Photograph: Author's Own.

Fig. 124: Patent number 990519, United Kingdom, Great Britain & Northern Ireland Controller-General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, September 1961, Moravský zemský archive in Brno, Vlněna material. Archive location: K216, 77, 3. Photographed by Markéta Vinglerová, 25.10.2016.

Fig. 125: Invitation to Heal's Art Gallery Art Protis exhibition, March 20 1973, Heal's Archive, V&A Collection London, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

Fig. 126: Publicity material to accompany Heal's *Splash!*, 1973, Heal's Archive, V&A Collection London, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

Fig. 127: Jan Sedláček, *Still Life*, c. 1973, Art Protis, from *Art Protis*, (London and Prague: Heal's London and Středočeské tiskárny, 1973), n. pag. Heal's Archive, V&A Collection London, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

Fig. 128: Ivan and Zbyněk Slaviček, *Signs of Heaven*, c. 1973, Art Protis, from *Art Protis*, (London and Prague: Heal's London and Středočeské tiskárny, 1973), n. pag. Heal's Archive, V&A Collection London, Blythe House. Reference AAD/1994/16/2877.

Fig. 129: Karel Svoboda, *Lost Veil*, c. 1973, Art Protis, from *Art Protis*, (London and Prague: Heal's London and Středočeské tiskárny, 1973), n. pag. Heal's Archive, V&A Collection London, Blythe House. Reference AAD/1994/16/2877.

Figs. 130 & 131: 'Pictures for Presents', *Homes and Gardens* (London: IPC, January 1973), p. 85, and 'Bassetti textiles', *Drapery & Fashion Weekly* (London, January 1973), n. pag. V&A Collection London, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

## **List of Accompanying Material**

At the end of this thesis can be found the following Appendices

### **Transcripts of Interviews:**

- Daniela Karasová, 24 October 2016
- Karel Vachek, 24 October 2016
- Marie Rychlíková, 21 October 2016

Consent forms for these interviews are included at the end of each transcript

### **Meetings:**

In the course of my research, several meetings took place with makers, for which no transcript is available. Notes taken during these conversations are included here for the purpose of examination:

- Jiří Šuhájek, 25 February 2014
- Vladimír Jelínek, 7 March 2014

### **Written Reponse to Questions:**

Finally, one interview that was meant to take place could not because the interviewee was taken ill. Via Daniela Karasová, Jaroslav Všetečka sent a written response to my questions, which is included here.

- Jaroslav Všetečka, 5 November 2016



## Acknowledgements

Over the process of this part-time PhD, I have had the fortune of four excellent supervisors, starting with Glenn Adamson, to whom I remain deeply grateful for encouraging me to begin this study. Enormous thanks goes to Professors Jane Pavitt and David Crowley for their patient supervision and support for the remainder of the research. And thank you to Dr Sarah Teasley for her help in the final stages. My initial correspondence with the V&A/Royal College of Art programme was thanks to Juliet Kinchin, whose support over the years, alongside Paul Stirton, has been greatly appreciated.

This research was brought alive by precious trips to Prague, where I was consistently met with generosity and enthusiasm. Thank you to Milan Hlaveš, Jiří Pelcl, Jan Němeček, Hlaváčková Konstantina and Markéta Vingerlová for excellent advice. A particular thanks to Markéta Vingerlová for allowing me to view her archival photographs. A similar gratitude goes to Milan Pech, who began my fascination with Czechoslovak *kýč* and shared his extensive bibliographic expertise. Two of the truly great Czech glass artists invited me into their homes and told me tales of their work and lives, a great honour – thank you Jiří Šuhájek and Vladimír Jelínek. My sincere thanks also to Jaroslav Všetečka for responding to questions in written form even when he was not well enough for interview. Then Karel Vachek and Marie Rychlíková: I cannot express what a privilege it was to interview these brilliant practitioners, whose knowledge has greatly enriched this research. I am also greatly indebted to Lada Hubatová-Vacková, who has met my every question with generosity and invited me both to speak at UMPRUM (a dream come true) and on a memorable research trip to Brno. Thank you to Tereza Porybná for allowing me to stay in her beautiful Prague flat, and for the research funding via


Czech Centre London. Also, thank you to the Design History Society for their travel research grant.

My heartfelt thanks throughout this process goes to a woman who has made this PhD experience shine, the late Daniela Karasová, to whom this thesis is dedicated. Daniela's boundless energy every time we met, complete delight in her subject, and incredible stories were infectious. She also took me to meet people I would never have met and to places I would never have been. She is sorely missed.

Finally, I cannot express the thanks that is due to those closest to me who have been there through and through: particularly my diligent Czech teacher and friend Michaela Sanytrová, Connie Cullen, Sophie Betts, my Glasgow women, Hui-Ying Kerr, my parents Amaryillis and Barney Bell, my sister Clare, and of course, my husband Steve Cole.

## **Author's Declaration**

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Signature: 

Date: 21.06.2019

## Introduction

Despite state regulations, decrees and institutional frameworks surrounding cultural production in Socialist Czechoslovakia, there was no one official, centralised conception of craft that prevailed. We should understand craft in the Czechoslovak context in pluralistic and competing terms, particularly in relation to the territories of art and design, as will be discussed. The complexity of the political period under survey, from 1945 until the 1980s, can be viewed through the overlapping biographies, practices and geographies of multiple artists and media. In the process of re-contextualisation<sup>1</sup> that was fundamental to the Socialist cultural field, historical and regional craft methods were applied for different purposes to achieve both political and individual aims.

Craft methods were variously integrated or applied by the relevant state organisations, its members and its outputs (in the form of publications, exhibitions, films or manufacture) in order to meet ideological requirements and the pursuit of Socialist modernity. It is the latter process that I attempt to understand further. Key research questions concern whether craft provided a context for criticality and contrast in an otherwise controlled environment; where points of tension arose in state projects and what they reveal about the role of making and design under Communism in Czechoslovakia; and what techniques the individual maker devised in order to offer a commentary on the Socialist condition in Czechoslovakia and the

---

<sup>1</sup> As will be discussed, usage of this term is associated with the work of Deema Kaneff, *Who Owns the Past? The Politics of Time in a 'Model' Bulgarian Village* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004), and Nicolette Makovicky, "'Traditional – with Contemporary Form: Craft and Discourses of Modernity in Slovakia Today', *Journal of Modern Craft*, 2: 1 (2009), 43-58.

stylistic tendencies of Socialist Realism and the Socialist Modern (to be discussed).

In order to find a footing amidst the rhetoric of state publications, oft-changing nomenclature, the restructuring of state organisations and shifting political environments, my method is to be led by both specific individuals and objects, but also by intersections between media. By individuals, I refer primarily to writers and practitioners from the period under survey. By objects and media, I mean a wide range of realisations from animation to magazines, wall-hangings, ceramics, textiles and glass. Whilst the tools of the design historian are central to my methodology, such as enquiries into sites of production to uses of technology, along with questions of materiality and social function, narrative and incident are also essential to this research process.<sup>2</sup>

This introduction will outline the chronology and geography under survey and the relevant case studies, theorists and writers that have impacted my research. I will also draw upon the work of glass artist Jaroslav Brychta (1895-1971) as a means of introducing thematic and methodological interests, for he was one of my starting points and serves as a way into the territory.

---

<sup>2</sup> I also follow in the footsteps of certain historians in my object-based approach, positioning objects within a wide range of influences and ideas, such as those outlined by historians Jonathan Woodham and Ben Highmore, who look beyond the 'realm of goods' (industrial design, architecture, fashion) to a 'sprawling' territory that is more widely concerned with 'the whole panoply of interconnectedness between the material and immaterial, between humans and things'. These are ideas that coincide with Glenn Adamson's expansive notion of craft and design overlaps, to be discussed. See Jonathan M. Woodham, *Twentieth-Century Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 8-9, and Ben Highmore, *The Design Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. xiii-xiv (quotations from Highmore).

## Historical Events

The research time period under survey starts in 1945 and reaches to the early 1980s. Before turning to the research framework, it is worth considering the key events that took place in Czechoslovakia during this time. During the Second World War, Czechoslovakia was partially incorporated into Nazi Germany as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the Slovak State. In the Prague Uprising of May 1945, citizens and resistance members attacked German occupiers, supported by the Russian Liberation Army who defected to fight with on the Czech side. By the time Red Army troops withdrew in November 1945, the Komunistická strana Československa (Czechoslovak Communist Party, the KSČ) held a popular position. Led by Klement Gottwald, a member since the Party's establishment in 1921, membership grew to 1.2 million between 1945 and 1947, making it the largest political party in Czechoslovakia – arguably capitalising on the role of Russian liberating forces to gain support for Communism.<sup>3</sup> Gottwald became deputy prime minister under president Edvard Beneš in 1945 and then prime minister in 1946. He moved into the position of president after the Communist coup d'état of February 1948. The Coup saw the KSČ take full control of government with Soviet backing, in what former personal secretary to Beneš Edward Taborsky called, 'unflinching personal fealty to Stalin', leading to the resignation of non-Communist cabinet members.<sup>4</sup> Militia and police took over Prague, thousands were arrested or fled the country; Beneš resigned, dying later that year. Gottwald's leadership was a decisive turn for Czechoslovakia's alignment to the Soviet Union at the start of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Rick Fawn, Jiří Hochman, *Historical Dictionary of the Czech State* (Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010), p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Taborsky, 'Political Developments in Czechoslovakia Since 1953', *The Journal of Politics*, 20:1 (1958), 89–113 (p. 102, p. 90).

Cold War. The KSČ initiated a series of purges to reform those considered disloyal to the Party, resulting in trials, imprisonment and executions.<sup>5</sup> Gottwald died in 1953, shortly after attending Stalin's funeral.

Communist thinking in Czechoslovakia divided those loyal to the Party, and the official requirements of Socialist Realism, from supposed bourgeois cosmopolitans who faced reprobation and were subject to attempts at 'rehabilitation'.<sup>6</sup> Soviet First Secretary Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev's criticism of Stalinism in his 1956 'secret speech' at a closed session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, began a process of de-Stalinisation.<sup>7</sup> Khrushchev's denouncement of Stalin's abuse of power in a speech entitled 'On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences' initiated the period known as the 'Thaw' (*rozmrazování*, in Czech). The coining of the term thaw is allotted to Ilya Ehrenburg's 1954 Russian novel *The Thaw*.<sup>8</sup> Thaw culture was characterised by the slow freeing up of censorship and discussions of democratic thinking. Historian Vladimir Kusin has noted that whereas revolts in Poland and Hungary in 1956 demonstrated widespread discontent with the existing regime, 'in Czechoslovakia the outcome lay more modestly in the awakening of the intellectuals', enabling reform from outside of Party structures.<sup>9</sup> The thaw period in Czechoslovakia is viewed as truly coming into being in the early 1960s (to be discussed in Chapter Two).<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Rick Fawn, Jiří Hochman, p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> Shawn Clybor, 'Socialist (Sur)Realism: Karel Teige, Ladislav Štoll and the Politics of Communist Culture in Czechoslovakia', in *History of Communism in Europe: Vol. 2, Avatars of Intellectuals under Communism*, ed. by Corina Palasan & Cristian Vasile (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2011), pp. 143-167 (p. 144).

<sup>7</sup> Vladimir V. Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring: the Development of Reformist Ideas in Czechoslovakia 1956-1967*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg, *Ottepel* [The Thaw] (London: Harvill Press, [1954] 1955).

<sup>9</sup> Kusin, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> See Maruška Svašek, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity. The Czech Art World in the 1950s and 1960s', *Journal of Contemporary European History*, 6:3 (1997), 383-403 and Hana Pichová, 'The Lineup for Meat: The Stalin Statue in Prague', *PMLA*, 123:3 (2008), 614-631.

Post-Stalinist, or thaw society was not fundamentally liberal or democratic, but it was 'manoeuvrable': debate around the past could now take place in 'considerable openness' and 'people in the 1960s displayed great confidence in their entitlement to express political and historical views', as well as consider Neo-Marxist approaches.<sup>11</sup> This movement culminated in the 1968 Prague Spring, when long-term First Secretary Antonín Novotný was replaced by Alexander Dubček, who demanded reforms to bureaucratic centralisation. Josef Smrkovský wrote in the newspaper *Práce* that the aim was for 'democratic principles' in order to avoid 'the dominion of individuals or administrations over the people'.<sup>12</sup> These significantly included abolishing censorship of the press. This period of liberalisation and protest ended when troops from Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Dubček resigned in April 1969 and was replaced by 'consolidator' Gustav Husák and new leadership of the Communist Party.<sup>13</sup>

In 1969, Husák's objective was to lead the people to a 'peaceful life' – as Historian Karel Šima notes, the ensuing period of 'Normalisation' (normalizace) was to 'overcome the crisis, re-establishing order and tranquillity at work'.<sup>14</sup> The term Normalisation is used to describe this era, up to the *glasnost* of the late 1980s before the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall. However, Milan Otáhal states that the term, introduced by the Communists, related primarily to the beginnings of the period – it is post-1989 historians who have

---

<sup>11</sup> Denis Kozlov, *The readers of Novy Mir: coming to terms with the Stalinist past* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Karel Šima, 'Who was the Czechoslovak State? A Re-Presentation of the State in the Hands of the People' [English section], in *Budování státu. Reprezentace Československa v umění, architektuře a designu* [Building a State: The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design] ed. by Milena Bartlová, Jindřich Vybíral et al (eds) (Prague: UMPRUM, 2015), pp. 131-136 (p. 132).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



adopted the term and use it to denote the whole period.<sup>15</sup> Paulina Bren suggests that the definition of Normalisation can be understood as a shift from collective, publicly-engaged Communism to an increased emphasis on the private space as a site of ideological activity.<sup>16</sup> Public criticism of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party was once again prohibited, press and cultural activities were again censored and centralised. The writers and practitioners discussed in this thesis worked in this shifting political climate, as will be explored.

## Research Time Period

As mentioned, the research time period under survey starts in 1945 and reaches to the early 1980s. Though the official Socialist period commenced in 1948, I begin with 1945, when, after seven years of Nazi occupation, an intense period of nationalisation and reconstruction of Czech industry took place. This was guided by a series of decrees compiled and issued by President Beneš, known as the Beneš Decrees, when he was President-in-Exile in London during the Second World War. One decree in particular marks the beginning of this research period: number 110, the '*Dekret presidenta republiky o organizaci lidové a umělecké výroby*' (Decree of the President of the Republic for the Organization of Folk and Artistic Production), which

---

<sup>15</sup> Milan Otáhal, *Normalizace 1969–1989: příspěvek ke stavu bádání* [Normalization 1969–1989: Contribution to State Research] (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2002), p. 6, cited in Libora Oates-Indruchová, 'The Limits of Thought?: The Regulatory Framework of Social Sciences and Humanities in Czechoslovakia (1968–1989)', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60:10 (2008), pp. 1767-1782 (p. 1767).

<sup>16</sup> Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and his TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

established ÚLUV (Ústředí lidové a umělecké výroby, the Centre for Folk and Art Production) in October 1945.<sup>17</sup>

Number 110 came into being following Beneš's return to Prague in April 1945. Though it preceded the start of the KSČ's leadership in 1948, ÚLUV became a key craft organisation in Socialist Czechoslovakia. As such, the content of Decree 110 is a useful document for understanding how craft discourse from this time was firmly built on the foundations of earlier debate and definitions, and how under the auspices of ÚLUV these were carried through into Socialism. It is a central part of the discussion in **Chapter One**, 'Craft and the Socialist State: Negotiating Czechoslovak Definitions 1945–1957'. To use the customary terms of Czechoslovak political epochs, this research follows a narrative arc that commences with the implementation of Soviet-led Stalinism in the late 1940s and early 1950s and the diktats of Socialist Realism; moves to the so-called thaw of the late 1950s and early 1960s and the consequent increasingly free atmosphere of the 1960s, until the 1968 Prague Spring and the normalisation period of the early 1970s.

It should be noted that the main case studies covered in detail extend only until the early 1970s. I include the 1980s in this time period bracket due to the oral history material of curator and historian Daniela Karasová, which relates to that period and is applied in **Chapter Three**, to offer further insight into working for key state organisations. But the main projects explored end during the early 1970s. To do justice to the nuances of the normalisation time period, a separate detailed research project would be required. But in terms of the impact of the beginnings of normalisation on craft, the 1973

---

<sup>17</sup> Decree 110: *Dekret presidenta republiky o organizaci lidové a umělecké výroby* [Decree of the President of the Republic for the Organization of Folk and Artistic Production], (27 October 1945) 257-261 <<http://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/ViewFile.aspx?type=c&id=49>> [accessed 26 July 2014].

dissolution of the Union of Czechoslovak Artists, and its direct consequences for the work of the key collaborative ceramicist partnership of Marie Rychlíková (1923), Lydie Hladíková (1925-1994) and Děvana Mírová (1922-2003), is taken in this research as a point at which relationships to both making practices and audience were significantly altered. This point marks the end of the research period discussed in detail, explored further in **Chapter Four**.

In Czechoslovakia, the impacts of the thaw in Czechoslovakia will be discussed in **Chapters Two and Three**. The thaw was primarily political but felt in a loosening of restrictions around abstraction, Modernism, and an interest in Western developments within craft, design, art, literary and film movements. As noted, it can be argued that in Czechoslovakia this shift was really felt in the early 1960s.<sup>18</sup> In relation to craft, fashion historian Konstantina Hlaváková has described the thaw as 'a more natural attitude toward traditional crafts', meaning a lessening of the Socialist Realist adoption of key motifs and tropes in order to support a Marxist-Leninist narrative.<sup>19</sup> An integrated approach, more nuanced and malleable in its engagement with notions of craft, was seen.

These political delineations and definitions are necessary to understand the shifting climate surrounding craft practice in Czechoslovakia, and are applied as time periods in this thesis. However, I am wary of a reading that relies on monolithic or enclosed epochs, as in reality there were overlaps between complex, pluralistic attitudes to craft throughout the time period under survey. In this

---

<sup>18</sup> See Svašek, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity', pp. 383-403 and Pichová, 'The Lineup for Meat', pp. 614-631.

<sup>19</sup> Konstantina Hlaváková, 'Czech Urban Dress, 1948 to the Twenty-First Century', *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion Volume 9 – East Europe, Russia, and the Caucasus, Part 3 : East Central Europe and the Baltics*, *Berg Fashion Library*, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/BEWDF/EDch9026>> [accessed 17 March 2013].

respect, the material concerns the time periods outlined but has narrative ripples that are not so easily contained. The epochs I have outlined also have thematic and theoretical overlaps with the inter-war period and earlier twentieth century craft and design exploration. Shawn Clybor has explored these issues in the Czechoslovakian cultural context, proposing that readings of socialist culture in Czechoslovak historiography have risked creating a monolithic myth that ignore relations between inter-war figures, between the avant-garde and state socialism, at the cost of understanding moral complexities and narrative layers in histories of the time period.<sup>20</sup> My research instead acknowledges biographical and thematic overlapping.

## **Definitions of Nationhood**

Questions of ethnicity and national identity within the geographical boundaries of former Czechoslovakia are complex, and relate to definitions largely established in the nineteenth century and up to the beginning of the Second World War. When I use the term Czechoslovakia, I mean the union of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia as defined in 1918 by the Czechoslovak 'founders', T.G. Masaryk and Edvard Beneš.<sup>21</sup> Edvard Beneš, subsequently Minister of the Interior, shared the future President Masaryk's vision for the Czechoslovak Republic.

---

<sup>20</sup> Clybor, pp. 143-167.

<sup>21</sup> The administrative authorities and territorial borders of these areas have changed over the centuries, but to briefly outline further details – The Czech lands are made up of three regions: Bohemia is the largest historical region of the Czech lands, occupying the western part. Czech Silesia borders Moravia, Poland and Slovakia. Moravia is the eastern part of the historical Czech lands. They joined with Slovakia in 1918 after gaining independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, forming Czechoslovakia. In 1992 Slovakia declared itself a sovereign state and the federation was dissolved in January 1993 to become the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Beneš befriended Masaryk at the Charles University in Prague in 1907, where they were united in anti-Habsburg sentiments. By 1914, both were prominent campaigners for the new state, and in 1918 received recognition for the Republic of Czechoslovakia from the Allies. In a 1919 *Times* article, entitled 'A Socialist State in Being: President Masaryk's Ideals', Masaryk stated that the independent Republic was achieved because of a shared 'burning faith in our national ideals' that was 'something sacred', which would be based on a Socialist 'sense of enterprise...shared by both workers and bourgeoisie' – key to this was a call for plurality, 'to recognise the national and linguistic rights of the racial minorities within the republic', getting rid of 'old disputes with regard to language and nationality, which so crippled Austria-Hungary...Our national policy will not be chauvinistic'.<sup>22</sup> This would allow minorities to be able to live in the Republic with their 'national life undisturbed', implying that nation and state were not co-dependent.<sup>23</sup> Here Masaryk participated in the thinking of British Slavonic historians Robert William and Hugh Seton-Watson, father (1879-1951) and son (1916-1984), both of whom lectured at the School for Slavonic Studies, which opened with Masaryk's inaugural speech at King's College London in 1915.

Writing in the 1980s, Hugh Seton-Watson discussed the belief adhered to by those of a '[Woodrow] Wilsonian persuasion' in his father's generation that small, new nations were somehow better, considered clean from 'political original sin'.<sup>24</sup> From the point of view of Robert William and his peers, the dissolution of the Habsburg

---

<sup>22</sup> T.G. Masaryk, 'A Socialist State in Being: President Masaryk's Ideals', *The Times*, 6 November 1919, <[http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/781/298/95607240w5/purl=rcl\\_TTDA](http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/781/298/95607240w5/purl=rcl_TTDA)> [accessed 4 October 2006].

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, 'On Trying to be a Historian of Eastern Europe', in *Historians as Nation Builders: Central and South-East Europe*, ed. by Harry Hanak and Denis Deletant (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), pp. 1-14 (pp. 6-8).

monarchy was the end of a historical process, 'the replacement of monarchical absolutism by democracy'.<sup>25</sup> This thinking is important for an understanding of the identity of Czechoslovakia, bound to the nineteenth-century 'Czech National Awakening', in which the nation was seen to grow from an inherent and collective sense of history, resulting in the nation-state of the Republic in 1918 (the significant discrepancy here between Czech and Slovak identity will be discussed shortly). Culture and language in this context are understood as natural manifestations of national identity, relating to Benedict Anderson's definitions of nationalism as 'imagined communities': 'Nothing was better suited to this end than the idea of nation which always looms out of an immemorial past, and more importantly, glides into a limitless future: '[it] is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny'.<sup>26</sup>

Ideas of growth from selected histories continued in Socialist Czechoslovakia, shifting according to the changing ideological climate, but supported an emphasis on the rural and folk as a means towards Socialist authenticity, and forging links between Socialist identity and Czech or Slovak national heritage. Marxist historians T. O. Ranger and Eric J. Hobsbawm's analysis of 'invented traditions' is relevant here, in which 'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature', sought to 'inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past'.<sup>27</sup> As historian Milena Bartlová has pointed out, the definition of state and associated notions of Czech identity were 'to a startling extent

---

<sup>25</sup> Seton-Watson, 1988, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Benedict Anderson, 'Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (London: Verso, 1991), cited in Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 146.

<sup>27</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 1.

determined by forms of social life from the nineteenth century' – something that continues to the present day.<sup>28</sup>

The central role of Czech language in this process has impacted on social hierarchies in the First Republic, assigning minority status to 3.5 million German-speaking citizens and 1.5 million Hungarians, Ruthenians, Jews and Poles.<sup>29</sup> This kind of division was perpetuated during the twentieth century through 'defensive-aggressive' relationships to Czech Germans and 'paternalistic' attitudes towards Slovaks, 'who continued to remain in the position of proverbial "kid brother"'.<sup>30</sup> Comparisons can certainly be made to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in Britain. The resulting 'Slovak Eastern nature' versus 'Czech Western culture' continues today. Significantly, after the 'Velvet Divorce' between the Czech and Slovak Republics in 1993, the Czech Republic took the former Czechoslovakian flag as its own. Czechoslovakia is, therefore, as Bartlová so clearly states, an 'ethnocentric concept of the defunct state'.<sup>31</sup>

My research focus is largely on Czech artists, writers, makers and designers, based in the historical areas of Bohemia and Moravia, two of the historical Czech lands. In calling those discussed Czech or Slovak in the thesis I refer to their ethnicity, but in calling an organisation or publication Czechoslovak I am indicating that it was a product of that geographical region and its political identification as a state in the time period concerned, rather than as something that

---

<sup>28</sup> Milea Bartlová, 'How a state is made' [English section], in *Budování státu. Repräsentace Československa v umění, architektuře a designu (Building a State: The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design)* ed. by Milena Bartlová, Jindřich Vybíral et al (eds) (Prague: UMPRUM, 2015), pp. 4-7 (p. 4).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

was produced by Czech and Slovak individuals collaborating on an equal basis.

### **A Starting Point: Jaroslav Brychta and the Glass Figurine**

Glass and its makers have remained at the heart of narratives concerning craft history in the Czech lands, particularly since the fifteenth-century origins of Bohemian glass, bound to both Romantic ideals and structures of economic value.<sup>32</sup> Bohemian glass refers to a high concentration of glass production in the region of Bohemia, such as Jablonec nad Nisou, Železný Brod, Kamenický Šenov and Nový Bor. Called 'attempts at structuring transparent mass'<sup>33</sup> and 'fragile poems'<sup>34</sup> by glass historians Susanne K. Frantz and Verena Wasmuth, glass objects in the Czechoslovak context have also been acknowledged as accounts of export success, as important to Bohemian trade in the eighteenth century as to the economic fortunes of the Communist period from 1948 to 1989. With the appearance of Czechoslovak glass at high-profile events such as the 1958 Brussels Expo, the 1959 Czechoslovak Glass Exhibition and the Osaka Expo in 1970, and the significance of Czech studio glass in collections like the Corning Museum of Glass, it is no surprise that glass as a material has dominated recent international craft histories concerning Czechoslovakia.<sup>35</sup> Whilst glass was also a starting point for this research, I offer a new reading of Czechoslovak craft and

---

<sup>32</sup> Karel Hetteš, *Glass in Czechoslovakia*, Prague: SNTL, 1958), pp. 16-36.

<sup>33</sup> Susanne K. Frantz, 'Twentieth-Century Bohemian Art in Glass: The Artistic and Historical Background', in *Czech Glass 1945-1980: Design in an Age of Adversity*, ed. by Helmut Ricke (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, 2005), pp. 14-33 (p. 25).

<sup>34</sup> Verena Wasmuth, 'Czech Glass in the Limelight: The Great Exhibitions Abroad', *Ibid.*, pp. 86-103 (p. 86).

<sup>35</sup> A key example is the aforementioned Ricke, *Czech Glass 1945-1980*, as well as Antonín Langhamer, *The Legend of Bohemian Glass* (Zlín: Tigris, 2003).



design histories by bringing other material narratives alongside glass (to be discussed).

Under the Soviet-backed leadership of the KSČ in 1948, the glass industry was consolidated. In the same year, filmmaker and animator Karel Zeman (1910-1989) and glass artist Jaroslav Brychta made an eleven-minute stop-motion animation called *Inspirace* (Inspiration). It was the story of a glassmaker, sketching ideas in his studio. He gazed dreamily into the rain beating on the window and, transported by the passage of a raindrop on a leaf beyond the pane, entered a world of dancing penguins, tropical fish and a lovelorn clown pursuing a ballerina [Figs. 1 and 2]. The animation ended with the glassmaker putting aside his sketchbook and taking up his flame to hurriedly make the glass figures inspired by his daydream. A feat of ingenuity and patience, each figurine had to be heated and reshaped for every shot. The animation was dedicated to 'those who transform hard material glass into magical poetic images'.<sup>36</sup>

Brychta was well known throughout the twentieth century for making glass *figurky* (figurines), miniature protagonists of the mantelpiece, shaped into the likenesses of famous kings and footballers, characters from folk tales and fantastical representations of the astrological and prehistoric. The story of their origins, production and dissemination can be seen as a conceit for my wider research concerns and methodologies. First among these is that Brychta's work is an example of how earlier craft forms and narratives were incorporated into Socialist identity in Czechoslovakia, the aforementioned method of recontextualisation, as explored by Nicolette Makovicky in relation to state craft and processes of

---

<sup>36</sup> Dedication at the beginning of *Inspirace*, by Karel Zeman and Jaroslav Brychta, (Zlín studios, 1948) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSWlxG89eAkm>> [accessed 11 January 2012].

modernity in Slovakia (to be discussed in **Chapters One and Two**).<sup>37</sup>

The town of Železný Brod, where Brychta had lived and taught since the 1920s, was known for the cottage industry of creating glass rods or tubes over kerosene or gas-fired blast lamps (seen in Brychta's earlier works, Figs. 2A and 2B). This included the Železný Brod Glass National Enterprise (Železnobrodské sklo), which produced the figurines. This centralisation enabled the state to absorb local, rural (and by association, a key demographic of working people's) techniques and associations with the Czech national folklore movement active in this region, incorporating specifically Czech nationhood and its folk manifestations into state identity: Železný Brod, as the first Czech-speaking (formerly German) glass school, established in 1919, one year after Czechoslovakia gained independence from the Hapsburg Empire, symbolised local revolt against imperial rule.<sup>38</sup> These layers of associative meaning were particularly relevant to the formation of Socialist cultural identity in Czechoslovakia in the late 1940s and 1950s, and played out in varying manifestations in relation to craft definitions.

---

<sup>37</sup> Makovicky, 'Traditional – with Contemporary Form', pp. 43-58.

<sup>38</sup> Frantz, p. 16.

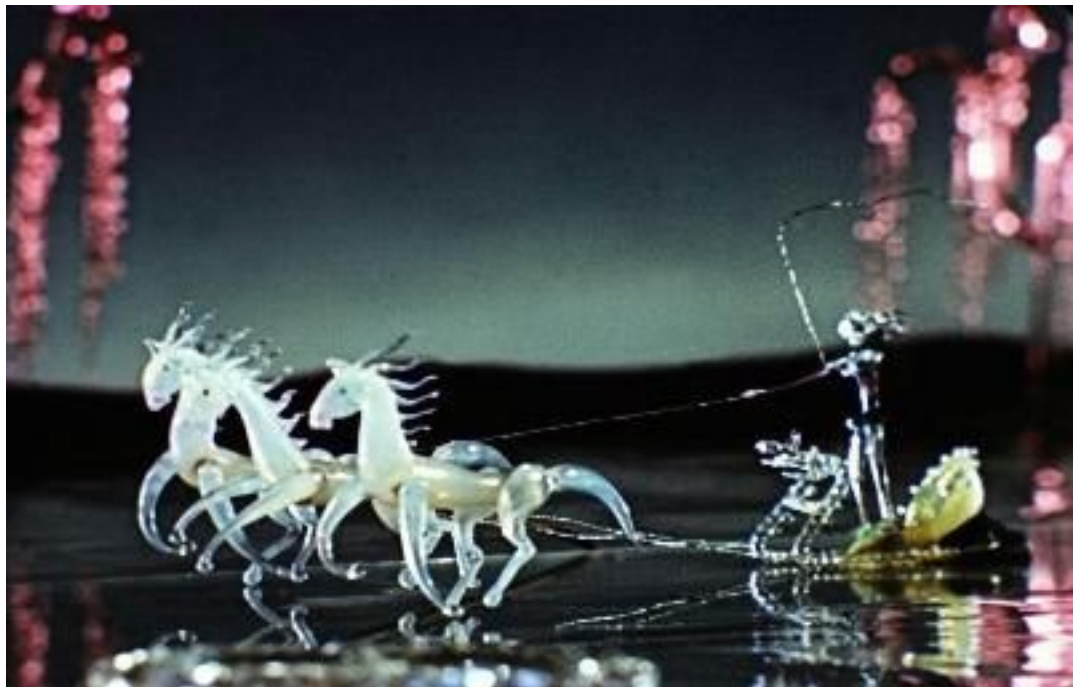


Fig. 1: Karel Zeman and Jaroslav Brychta, *Inspirace*, 1948, stills from glass animation (Zlín studios) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSWIxG89eAkm>> [accessed 11 January 2012].



Fig. 2: Jaroslav Brychta, *Figures for Inspirace*, 1948, glass, UPM Collection, Prague. Photograph: Author's Own.



Figs. 2A and 2B: Jaroslav Brychta, *Ptáčník*, 1926, wired glass; *Král Gustav V* (King Gustav V), 1931, flame-worked glass, from Oldřich Palata, *Skleněný Svět Jaroslava Brychty* (Liberec: Severočeské museum, 1995) (n. pag.).

In appearance, Brychta's figurines are best described through the characteristics attributed to them by writer Ivo Digrin and glass curator Karel Hetteš, writing for the *Czechoslovak Glass Review* in the late 1950s: 'humour and poesy' combined with the 'grotesque'.<sup>39</sup> They were referring to Brychta's work *Universe*, a series of glass tableaux representing the signs of the zodiac, made in collaboration with Jan Černý and Ladislav Ouhrabka [Figs. 3A, 3B, 3C and 4] for the 1958 Brussels Expo. Hetteš and Digrin's descriptions of the figurines highlight the importance of the absurd and humour as a key component of Czech culture, as will be addressed in this thesis. Brychta's amusing and satirical figurines recalled the form and content of Josef Lada's illustrations for Jaroslav Hašek's satirical novel *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1923), concerning the hapless adventures of a fictional Czech soldier in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War One. Brychta's sketches reveal similar features to those of Lada [Figs. 5 and 6] and in the first decades of the twentieth century both artists were members of the arts society Umělecká beseda (Arts Forum).

Hašek's stories of Švejk would be addressed in early 1960s Czechoslovakia by Neo-Marxist philosopher Karel Kosík as 'a way of reacting to this world of absurd omnipotence of the machine and of reified relations'.<sup>40</sup> 'Švejism' was offered as a critique of Soviet Marxism. Humour, absurd juxtaposition, and the grotesque<sup>41</sup> in socialist craft and design was a method of empowerment and

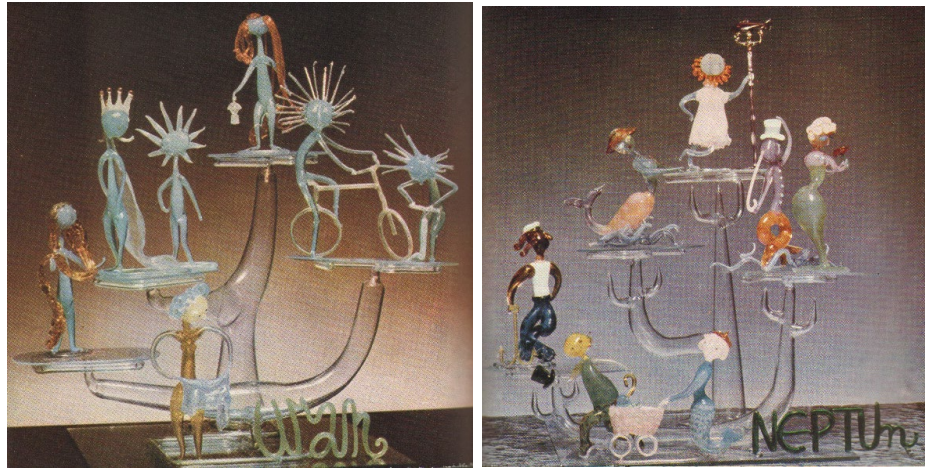
---

<sup>39</sup> Ivo Digrin, 'A Universal Assortment', *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 2 (1958), 7-9 (p. 16) and Karel Hetteš, 'Reflections on the Aesthetics of Glass', *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 8 (1958), 2-16 (p. 11).

<sup>40</sup> Karel Kosík, 'Hašek and Kafka', *Telos*, 23 (Spring 1975), 84-88 (p. 88). (This essay was originally prepared for the Liblice Conference on Kafka in Prague, 1963.)

<sup>41</sup> Relevant is Pavel Karous's discussion of the grotesque in relation to public sculpture in *Vetřelci a volavky: Atlas výtvarného umění ve veřejném prostoru v Československu v období normalizace (1968-1989)* [Aliens and Herons: A Guide to Fine Art in the Public Space in the Era of Normalisation in Czechoslovakia (1968-1989)], (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2013).

cohesion in the face of difficulty and restriction. Whether as a means of ridiculing political structures, locating a 'sense of hope for renewal',<sup>42</sup> or effecting real change, the tactic of humour arises in diverse areas such as Brychta's glass figurines, Czech New Wave cinema (Chapter Two), puppetry (Chapter Three) and public sculpture (Chapter Four) in this thesis.



Figs. 3A, 3B and 3C: Jan Černý, Ladislav Ouhrabka and Jaroslav Brychta, Tableaux from *Universe*, 1958, glass, from Antonín Langhamer, 'The Past and Present of Glass Figurines and Chamber Sculptures', *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 30 (1975), 14-19 (p. 18).

<sup>42</sup> Drawing upon Chrisoula Lionis's discussion of humour, humorology, and the grotesque – particularly in relation to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, in *Laughter in Occupied Palestine: Comedy and Identity in Art and Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), pp. 8-15.



Fig. 4: Detail from Jan Černý, Ladislav Ouhrabka and Jaroslav Brychta *Universe*, 1958, figure of Sagittarius from the *Neptune* composition, UPM Collection, Prague. Photograph: Author's Own.



Figs. 5 & 6: Josef Lada, *The Good Soldier Švejk*, 1923, illustration < <https://bit.ly/2CFIjRF> > [accessed 2 May 2014] Jaroslav Brychta, *Zápasník*, 1944, sketch from Oldřich Palata, *Skleněný Svět Jaroslava Brychty* (Liberec: Severočeské museum, 1995), (n. pag.).

Brychta's work illuminates an ongoing hierarchy of art and craft in Czechoslovak historiography that continued throughout the twentieth century, as his figurines retain a somewhat contentious position. Glass historian and curator Susanne K. Frantz suggested in 2005 that 'while the figures were charming and respected for the important economic role that they played, their acclaim should not be mistaken for aesthetic consideration within the Czech Fine Art academia' – and yet, Frantz continued, 'Brychta, an educated and sophisticated artist, apparently felt no hesitation about dedicating his long professional career to their creation'.<sup>43</sup> To demonstrate his 'fine art' status, Frantz discusses the distinctive similarity between Brychta's work and the ceramic figures made in the 1920s by Symbolist artist Jan Zrzavý, but in contrast she also highlights the influence of the Bimini Werkstätte, Vienna, and a popular form of German Christmas tree ornament.<sup>44</sup>

Produced in large numbers in the northern Bohemian town of Železný Brod, Brychta and his colleagues' figurines became under Socialism an example of humorous *lidovost* (or popular 'folkiness') central to Socialist Realist aims in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>45</sup> The status of Czechoslovak glass figurines as exported objects and accessible, collectable items undoubtedly impacted on their position in the art/craft hierarchy. Particular to this was the ways in which their reputation was shaped by articles and advertisements in the *Czechoslovak Glass Review (CGR)*, a publication produced from 1946 until 1992, in association with Skloexport (Glassexport), as part of a drive to reignite foreign sales. *CGR* gave significant attention and space to the figurines of Železný Brod, confirming both the town's

---

<sup>43</sup> Frantz, p. 21.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>45</sup> A characteristic criticised by Deryck E. Viney in 'Czech Culture and the New Spirit, 1948-52', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 31:77 (1953), 466-494 (p. 492).



status as a state-approved site of production and the popularist nature of the figurines made there. Their central role in international export relations is perhaps best illustrated by their positioning against the colours of the Czechoslovak flag, but in the form of evocative stripes suggesting an amalgamation with the American flag, seen on the cover of a 1956 issue of the journal [Fig. 7].

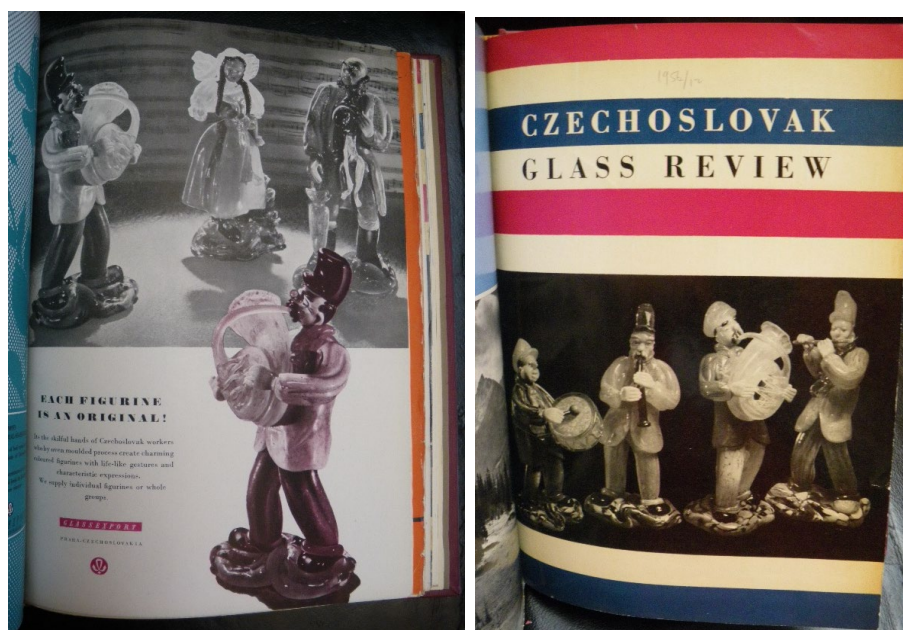


Fig. 7: Železný Brod glass figurines from *Czechoslovak Glass Review* 7 & 12 (1956) (n. pag.).

Brychta's figurines offer insight into national, geographical, economic and ideological narratives around craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia. These expand from local histories of traditional making processes to stories of international success, and reveal related hierarchies. He also bridges the gap between the inter-war period and post-1948, showing how continued interests were maintained both by state and individual, but shifted in ideological alignment in relation to official requirements, such as the value of rural production in Socialist Realism (as will be discussed in **Chapter**

**One).** Brychta's work thus introduces thematic and methodological concerns that will be seen throughout the varying case studies addressed in this thesis.

## **Craft Discourse and Definitions**

Czechoslovak modern craft, in particular the craft practices carried out in inter-war artistic circles and groups, were highly relevant to the framework of Socialist discourse. These included Topičův Salon (a Prague gallery that originally opened in 1894),<sup>46</sup> Artěl (founded in 1908 to produce furniture, glass, ceramics, toys and jewellery),<sup>47</sup> and Krásná jizba (Beautiful Parlour), a chain of shops which was opened in 1927 by Družstevní práce (Cooperative Work) to sell home accessories and clothing.<sup>48</sup> Though formalism and abstraction were prohibited in the Stalinist era of the late 1940s and into the 1950s in Czechoslovakia, with Socialist Realism as the official creed,<sup>49</sup> the functional nature of craft and its associations with folk culture enabled a continuation of theoretical and practice-based exploration, rooted in this inter-war activity.

Explanations for this centre on what David Crowley calls the 'politically mute' forms of studio crafts, in comparison to areas such

---

<sup>46</sup> Milan Pech, *Výtvarná kultura Protektorátu Čechy a Morava* [Fine Art in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia], (unpublished PhD thesis, Charles University, Prague, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> See Pavel Janák 'Z počátku naší umělecké výroby' [From the beginnings of our artistic production], *Tvar*, 1:4 (1948), 87-94; Josef Jančář 'Zvelebování řemesel. Tradice lidové a umělecké výroby v českých zemích' [Improvement of crafts. Traditional Folk and Artistic Production in the Czech Lands], *Dějiny a současnost*, 9 (2005), 22-23; and Victor Margolin, 'Czechoslovakia: Development of the Applied Arts', in *World History of Design, Volume 2*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 206-209.

<sup>48</sup> See Jančář, *Ibid*, pp. 22-23, and Lucie Vlčková *Družstevní práce - Sutnar, Sudek* (Revnice: Arbor vitae, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> As declared at the KSČ General Congress of 1949, by politician and journalist Václav Kopecký, according to a 'Zhdanov' model of Socialist Realism after Russian Stalinist Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov, discussed in A. A. Ždanov, *O umění* [About Art] (Prague: Orbis, 1950). Zhdanov defined Socialist Realism by its 'optimism, which arises from serving the victorious progressive class of workers', cited in Tomáš Vlček (ed.), *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art 1890-2010 / Part Two* (Prague: National Gallery, 2010), p. 42.

as painting or architecture.<sup>50</sup> Verity Clarkson similarly discusses the difficulty of classifying crafts, referring to both Crowley and Lou Taylor's scholarship in this field.<sup>51</sup> Writing on Hungarian ceramics, Juliet Kinchin claims that the 'functional "everyday" dimension of craft objects instantly rendered them less politically suspect',<sup>52</sup> a neutrality also referred to by Susanne K. Frantz in relation to Czechoslovak glass which, she writes, 'roused less suspicion' as craft and industry were 'assumed to be incapable of subversion'.<sup>53</sup> Ideas around the Modernist formalist virtues of technology and truth to material could be embedded in Czechoslovak state organisations by individuals who were often continuing theoretical debate from the inter-war period, and by the late 1950s and early 1960s such ideas were a particularly key part of wider projects for architecture, the public realm, exhibitions and the domestic interior, in which craft objects and values played an important role (as will be discussed in Chapters One, Three and Four).

These developments were particularly seen in the projects and publications of state organisations such as the aforementioned ÚLUV and ÚBOK (Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury), or the Institute of Housing and Fashion Culture, which was founded in 1959. Here, craft methods, and related folk traditions, were held up as inspirational models for industrial production, with the artist or maker as paramount in endowing manufacture with the 'allusive qualities' of

---

<sup>50</sup> See David Crowley, 'Stalinism and Modernist Craft in Poland', *Journal of Design History*, 11:1 (1998), 71–83, (p. 81).

<sup>51</sup> Verity Clarkson, 'The Organisation and Reception of Eastern Bloc Exhibitions on the British Cold War 'Home Front' c.1956-1979' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Brighton, 2010), pp. 223-224, discussing Crowley, *Ibid.*, and Lou Taylor, 'The Search for a Polish National Identity 1945-68: An Analysis of the Textile Design Work of Prof. Wanda Telakowska, Director of the Institute of Industrial Design, Warsaw,' in *Culture and Identity: Selected Aspects and Approaches*, ed. by Stern-Gillet et al (Katowice: Wdawnictwo Uniwersytetu Slaskiego, 1996), pp. 396-414.

<sup>52</sup> Juliet Kinchin 'Hungarian Pottery, Politics and Identity: Re-presenting the Ceramic Art of Margit Kovács (1902–77)', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 2:2 (2009), 161-181 (p. 173).

<sup>53</sup>Frantz, p. 32.

creativity and therefore greater value.<sup>54</sup> The latter was celebrated and asserted through publications such as the craft and design magazine *Tvar* (Form, published by ÚLUV, 1948–1970) and *Domov* (Home, published by ÚBOK from 1960), sources that will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

The interest in craft and its folk associations in the aforementioned state projects and publications can read as what Deema Kaneff describes, in relation to Bulgaria, as the centralised government applications of local practices ‘in order to construct coherent regional-national identity...which could be controlled by the state apparatus.’<sup>55</sup> Katherine Verdery proposes these are ‘value-laden exhortations, as well as attempts to saturate consciousness with certain symbols and ideological premises to which subsequent exhortations may be addressed’.<sup>56</sup> Verdery has applied this state methodology to language as a vehicle for achieving ideological consensus amongst the Czechoslovak public, intending to make Marxism-Leninism ‘the inevitable and glorious outcome of a discernible historical process’.<sup>57</sup> Through their magazines, projects and publications, ÚLUV and ÚBOK similarly sought ideological consensus from their readers and viewers through the discussion of craft and design. But, official state channels as they were, I argue this did not mean an empty rhetoric. This thesis will show how constant definitions and new practices were negotiated by individual

---

<sup>54</sup> Such as Josef Vydra ‘Návrat k tvarům’ [Return to Form], *Tvar*, 1:5-6 (1948), 129-136 and Josef Raban, *Modern Bohemian Glass* (Prague: Artia, 1963).

<sup>55</sup> Kaneff, *Who Owns the Past?* as discussed in Makovicky, ‘Traditional – with Contemporary Form’, p. 52.

<sup>56</sup> Katherine Verdery, 1991: 428, cited in Haldis Haukanes, ‘The Power of Genre: Local History-Writing in Communist Czechoslovakia’, in *Memory, Politics and Religion: The Past Meets the Present in Europe*, ed. by Frances Pine, Deema Kaneff and Haldis Haukanes, (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2004), 93-108 (p. 94).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

thinkers and makers, even within the parameters of centralised organisations.

## Czech Terminology

Terminology associated with craft in Czechoslovakia can be read as part of a continued debate concerning the hierarchy of fine art, the applied arts and industrial design, which finds its roots in nineteenth-century Europe. The word for craft is *řemeslo*, the root of which, 'rem', is thought to originate from the Sanskrit and indicate calmness, pleasure or delight: the peacefulness of craftsmanship as a humble form of work in contrast to the role of a warrior or hunter.<sup>58</sup> The more common usage in the time period under survey is *umělecké řemeslo*, translated literally as 'artistic craft', but more commonly as 'handicraft', whilst the adjective *uměleckořemeslný* can be seen as describing 'craftsmanship'.

In a 1957 decree concerning centralised craft production (number 56, which superseded the discussed 1945 decree, number 110)<sup>59</sup>, two phrases came together that were frequently seen in combination during this period and show the associative meaning of the crafts in relation to folk practices in Socialist Czechoslovakia: '*Zákon o umělecké řemeslné práci a o lidové umělecké výrobě*' (Law

---

<sup>58</sup> Václav Machek, *Etymologický slovník jazyka českého* [Etymological dictionary of the Czech language], 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Prague: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, [1971] 1997) <<http://www.ptejteseknihovny.cz/dotazy/etymologie-slova-remeslo>> [accessed 15 February 2017].

<sup>59</sup> The 1957 decree also established Ústředí uměleckých řemesel (Centre for Artistic Crafts, ÚUŘ) under the leadership of founder Karel Koželka, a furniture designer and design theorist. The ÚUŘ was made up of a membership of tradesmen, with specialist skills and traditions, inheriting the spheres of former guilds and preserving particular related crafts with the role of repairing historical monuments (such as Prague Castle). This thesis does not focus on the work on ÚUŘ, choosing instead to look at the dynamic between overlapping organisations like ÚLUV and ÚBOK, which provide the spheres of design and craft, as well as a focus on folk engagements with modernity, but ÚUŘ is referenced when relevant – and it is another key area for further research in the future. For the purposes of space and focus, as well as relevance to the topic under survey, it deserves room as a separate project.

on artistic handcraft work and folk art production).<sup>60</sup> Here we see the combination of *umělecko řemeslná práce* (artistic craft work or craftsmanship) and *lidová umělecká tvorba* (folk art, or folk artistic, production). Hand, skilled vernacular, or folk practices, were bound together. And as will be seen in magazines, texts and legal documents discussed throughout the thesis, the implied virtues of authenticity were central to socialist thinking around craft. In discussing Stalinism and Modernist craft in Poland, Crowley has called this viewpoint a 'fetish made of particular and historically specific constructions of 'authentic' working-class culture' in contrast to the 'élitist associations' of gallery and salon.<sup>61</sup> This was similarly true in the Czechoslovak context, where such emphasis can also be traced to early twentieth-century and inter-war interests in the Arts and Crafts Movement, in the 'primitive', and in the wider influences of international Modernism.

The 1957 decree also used the term '*umělecko-průmyslový*' (artistic industrial) in relation to production and producers. In the introductory essay of the 2015 anthology *Věci a slova: umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870-1970* (Things and Words: Art Industry, Applied Arts and Design in Czech Theory and Criticism 1870-1970), historian Lada Hubatová-Vacková explored the meaning of the Czech term *umělecký průmysl*. It was translated in the English title of the 2015 anthology as 'Art Industry', and Hubatová-Vacková describes it as being close in its original meaning to Gottfried Semper's *kunstindustrie*.<sup>62</sup> The phrase literally

---

<sup>60</sup> Decree 56: *Zákon o umělecké řemeslné práci a o lidové umělecké výrobě* [Law on artistic handcraft work and folk art production], (31 October 1957) 276-279 <<http://www.jurilogie.cz/sbirka/SB/1957>> [accessed 26 July 2014].

<sup>61</sup> Crowley, 'Stalinism and Modernist Craft in Poland', p. 75.

<sup>62</sup> Lada Hubatová-Vacková, 'Krása věcí, průmysl a moderní společnost (1870-1918)' [The Beauty of Things, Industry and Modern Society (1870-1918)], in *Věci a slova: umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870-1970* [Things and Words: Art Industry, Applied Arts and Design in

translates as 'artistic industry', though is variously translated from its Czech form as decorative arts and applied arts. An amalgam phrase could also apply to folk production: *lidově umělecký průmysl* (literally, 'folk artistic industry', or 'folk art industry').<sup>63</sup> The adjective *Umělecko-průmyslový* is also, in a slight shift from the associations of Hubatová-Vacková's phrase 'art industry', translated as describing the decorative arts, as seen in the name of the Decorative Arts Museum in Prague, the Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum. Known as the UPM, the museum's logo interestingly places the 'industry' (*průmysl*) in brackets, *U(P)M*, seemingly placing a hierarchy of art over industry. In Hubatová-Vacková's anthology title we also see another key Czech term in this field, which will be referred to and used throughout the thesis, which is *užité umění*, which literally translates as 'usedart' or implies 'art with use', and so can be translated as applied art.

Separately to all of these, as again shown in the anthology title, is 'design'. An analogous Czech word for this concept can be located in *návrh*, which translates as 'proposal', 'draft', 'suggestion', and sometimes 'project'. *Návrh* suggests something in process, particularly relevant to the socialist emphasis on the artist as a solver of problems, as well as resonant with the Western notion of the designer as responder to an identified social or technical issue. The term design, and its wider reaches into a form of thinking, as a quality that can be endowed or read in terms of its merit (something *has* 'good' or 'bad' design), is different to *návrh*. This is most clearly demonstrated through the adoption of the English term 'design' in the 1960s in Czechoslovakia. It had been used before this point in the

---

Czech Theory and Criticism 1870-1970], ed. by Lada Hubatová-Vacková, Martina Pachmanová & Pavla Pečinková (Prague: UMPRUM, 2014), pp. 27-63 (pp. 29-32).

<sup>63</sup> Decree 56, 1957, Introductory Statutes, First Part, No. 1 (1), 276-279 (p. 277) <<http://www.jurilogie.cz/sbirka/SB/1957>> [accessed 26 July 2014].

English summaries of articles in Czech periodicals concerning art, craft and design, but it was in 1965 that the ground-breaking historian, curator and theorist Milena Lamarová wrote about 'planners of industrial products' in the essay 'O citech a tradicích' ('On Sense and Tradition') and applied the separate meaning of the term design through the phrase *designeři* (designers), anticipating her later discussions of the English term design.<sup>64</sup>

From the late nineteenth century, relationships to the ideas of the Arts and Crafts Movement bound Czech formations of national identity to a wider European cultural context. Czech historian and UPM director F. X. Jiřík and critic F.X. Šalda were particular proponents of John Ruskin at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>65</sup> Ceramicists and sculptors such as Celda Klouček (1855-1935) directly followed the influence of Ruskin and William Morris in their efforts to promote the values and techniques of traditional craftsmanship.<sup>66</sup> Evidence of continued interest in the beginning of the Socialist period can be seen in a 1948 article by architect Bohuslav Fuchs (1895-1872), published in *BLOK*. Ruskin, wrote Fuchs, advocated the improvement of the living standards of man, in the 'urbanistic' sense – a fact that he backs up with a sardonic quotation from George Bernard Shaw, the like of which would not be seen in the Stalinist climate immediately following the year of the article's publication: 'Especially Ruskin is ahead of all expert socialists, even Karl Marx in the violence of his invectives. Lenin's

---

<sup>64</sup> Lamarová, 'O citech a tradicích' [On Sense and Tradition], in *Menschen und Dinge* [People and Things] (Prague: [publisher not provided], 1965), reproduced in Hubatová-Vacková, Pachmanová and Pečínková, *Věci a slova*, pp. 459-464.

<sup>65</sup> They both wrote about Ruskin's work and translated his writings into Czech in the early 1900s. See Lada Hubatová-Vacková (ed.) *Silent Revolutions in Ornament: Studies in Applied Arts and Crafts from 1880–1930* (Prague: Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design, 2011), p. 49.

<sup>66</sup> Jana Teichmanová, 'Odras secese v keramice Celdy Kloučka' [Reflections of Art Nouveau in the Ceramics of Celda Klouček], *Umění a řemesla* [Arts and Crafts], 1:10 (2011), 22-25.



critics of modern society are in comparison with him the sermons of a simple country parson'.<sup>67</sup> Despite his history as a functionalist architect, Fuchs continued in a position of authority as a professor in Brno.

The role of craft, the decorative, of function and relationships between artists, makers, design and industry, were developed by relevant writers and thinkers in the Czech regions during the twentieth century.<sup>68</sup> Examples include theorist and critic Vilém Dvořák's 1913-14 essay 'Umění, nebo umělecký průmysl?' (Art, or Artistic Industry?); artist Josef Šíma's 'Umělecký průmysl – umělecké řemeslo' (Artistic Industry - Artistic Handicraft) in 1925, and Karel Teige's essay of the same year expounding upon 'art industry and industrial art' ('O uměleckém průmyslu a průmyslovém umění'); whilst in 1966 artist and theorist Miroslav Klivar addressed 'Terminology in the Industrial Arts' ('K terminologii v průmyslovém výtvarnictví'). The spectrums between individual and standardisation, between artist and industry, between socialist and capitalist, between so-called good taste and kitsch, were all part of these discussions around the role of craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia, as will be explored in the following chapters, particularly in relation to a central question in my research concerning how objects were placed in frameworks of value and by whom.

---

<sup>67</sup> Bohuslav Fuchs, 'Industrialismus, urbanismus, architektura' [Industrialism, urbanism, architecture], *Blok: časopis pro umění* [Blok: A Journal for the Arts], 2:3-4 (1947-8), 71 (p. 71).

<sup>68</sup> This connects to Glenn Adamson's discussion of how craft has always been a crucial aspect of art and design. The Arts and Crafts Movement and preservation of craft in response to industrialisation highlighted its presence as a form of 'difference' to mass production, it is skilled production in smaller numbers (Adamson, *The Craft Reader*, pp. 2-5). The resulting negotiation of craft in relation to design is a key part of modernity and can be seen in the listed articles written in Czechoslovakia.

## Czech-Language Literature and Influential Projects

The Czech and Czechoslovak writers (and the histories they have produced) that have been influential in this research range from those that were active during the time period itself and those writing post-1989.<sup>69</sup> I start with two key writers from the period whose conceptual framework and definitions are considered throughout this thesis.

### Josef Vydra and Josef Raban

A figure whose influence on the definitions of craft remains prominent in contemporary historiographies is Josef Vydra (1884-1959), who was involved in the establishment of ÚLUV in 1945 (Ústředí lidové a umělecké výroby, the Centre for Folk and Art Production) as well as working as an editor and writer for Socialist craft and design magazine *Tvar* (Form, published 1948–1970). Vydra was an industrial designer, ethnographer, pedagogue, theorist and historian of folk art.<sup>70</sup> He founded the School of Applied Arts in Bratislava (1928-1939), called the 'Bauhaus of Bratislava' by one contemporary journalist – Vydra is thought to have been influenced by Bauhaus professor Josef Albers after attending his Prague lecture on art education in 1928.<sup>71</sup> Vydra's research into folk art as a prototype for modern design began in the mid-1920s and continued into the post-war period: he wrote in 1949 that it was necessary to

---

<sup>69</sup> I acknowledge here that I have used Czech-language publications, as well as English, rather than Slovak. This selection has been guided by my linguistic abilities and is due to the use of Czech in the official state publications relevant to this research in the collections I have accessed, such as *Tvar* and *Domov*. Contemporary Czech scholarship such as the work of Lada Hubatová-Vacková has also guided this direction.

<sup>70</sup> Lada Hubatová-Vacková, Martina Pachmanová & Pavla Pečinková (eds.), *Věci a slova*, pp. 555-556.

<sup>71</sup> Margolin, p. 214.

find a 'happy medium between the folk and the modern'.<sup>72</sup> This phrase epitomises the ongoing quest of a majority of craft and design pursuits in Socialist Czechoslovakia, and was returned to repeatedly as a means of judging value in both craft and design (as will be discussed in Chapters One and Three). At times the interpretations were more literal and at others they were integrated and complex, as will be explored.

Many of Vydra's ideas overlapped, and were continued by the theorist and writer Josef Raban (1912–1986), another key interlocutor in this research. Raban graduated in 1936 from the České vysoké učení technické (Czech Technical University, Prague), and worked as a set designer until the late 1940s. He joined the editorial staff at *Tvar* in 1951, was involved in the establishment of the periodical *Umění a řemesla* (Art and Craft) in 1958, and wrote for a range of publications including magazine *Domov* (Home), which covered industrial design, glass, furniture, fashion, textiles and ceramics, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. He was also the author of an English-language publication called *Czechoslovak Form*, written from 1967 but published by Orbis (Prague) in 1971, which provided a survey of art, craft and design in Czechoslovakia, focusing on relationships to 'folk art production' – and which was an influential starting point for this research.

In the publication, Raban stated that 'traditional folk-art manufacture and handicrafts play a triple role: they constitute a *stimulus to inspiration*, a *yardstick* of quality and cultural value and a

---

<sup>72</sup> Josef Vydra, 'O sloh v lidové tvorbě' [On Style in Folk Art], *Tvar*, 2 (1949), 206-214, cited in Lada Hubatová-Vacková (ed.), *Modfolk. Modernita v lidovém: Ateliér designu oběvu a obuvi Liběny Rochové na UMPRUM* [Modfolk. Modernity in Folkness: Studio of Fashion and Footwear Design of Liběna Rochová at UMPRUM], (Prague: UMPRUM, 2015), p. 31.

*contrasting element* to industrial production'.<sup>73</sup> His description shows how folk, or vernacular, craft practices were seen in Socialist Czechoslovakia as a means of endowing objects with measurable value: craft was a 'yardstick' of quality. Folk practices were also stimulating and inspirational – and offered a 'contrasting element' to industrial production, by which Raban meant the virtues of originality and authenticity in opposition to mass manufacture. In this, he echoed Vydra's aim to locate a position between folk traditions and modern practices. But Raban hoped to find scalable methods of production that would increase the standards of industrial design.

Raban's aim for a combination of industrial standards and so-called distinctive, expressive qualities located via local, folk influences echoed a recurring narrative in Socialist design discourse, as will be discussed in Chapters One to Three. But his emphasis on engaging the 'artistic' as a driving force in industrial design was aligned to international Modernist thinking and recalled the mid-1920s aims of Bauhaus thinkers such as Walter Gropius and László Maholy-Nagy,<sup>74</sup> and their notion of 'art and technics'.<sup>75</sup> The affiliation of crafts with local trades and modern technology was also indebted to a legacy of European debate around standardisation versus individualisation in industrial design, attempting to locate artistic creativity and define modes of production. In *Czechoslovak Form*, Raban outlined two 'types' of work excluded from his text, namely: 'unique works illustrating the personality of the artist rather than Czechoslovak

---

<sup>73</sup> Josef Raban, *Czechoslovak Form* (Prague: Orbis, 1971), p.7.

<sup>74</sup> See Gillian Naylor, 'Part III: The Bauhaus in Dessau – 3. From workshop to laboratory', in *The Bauhaus Reassessed: Sources and Design Theory* (London: The Herbert Press, 1985), pp. 144-164, reprinted in Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze (eds), *The Design History Reader*, (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2010), pp. 115-119.

<sup>75</sup> From Gropius's 'Art and technics – a new unity' from the lecture 'Bauhauswoche', Weimar, August 1923, discussed in Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War*, (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1996), p.1.

applied art as a whole, even if such works lend national creative activity its distinctive cast and flavour' and 'works in which – due to mass reproduction – the original author's design has been generalised to the point of anonymousness, notwithstanding their important role in the economy and culture of everyday life'.<sup>76</sup> His wording evokes the earlier twentieth-century debate around modern design, in which 'individualists' were pitted against 'industrial types' at the heart of questions of standardisation in machine-based industrial culture, in which the craft values of the handmade, of skill and smaller-scale production played an ongoing role.<sup>77</sup> The direct legacy of the Deutscher Werkbund and the development of the notion of 'types' is evident, and these strands were woven into the structures of state organisations in Czechoslovakia through the interests of prominent figures who worked and wrote for them.<sup>78</sup> In the post-war Czechoslovak context, such thinking became bound to variations on the Marxist-Leninist dictum of 'national in form and socialist in content' that combined local craft practices, such as the folk production discussed by Vydra and Raban, with Socialist Realist or Socialist Modern ambitions aligned to Soviet cultural ideology. The shifting manifestations of these ideas will be discussed in the following chapters.

---

<sup>76</sup> Raban, *Czechoslovak Form*, p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> This was particularly in relation to associations of 'Individualist artist-designers with roots in such heavily ornamented styles as Art Nouveau', which were viewed as out of date, a widespread sentiment that 'can be seen through the fact that even such vociferous critics of the Werkbund as the Viennese architect Adolf Loos helped further the anti-ornamental attitudes of early twentieth-century designers with his landmark essay, 'Ornament and Crime' – John V. Maciuka 'The Globalization of the Deutscher Werkbund: Design Reform, Industrial Policy, and German Foreign Policy, 1907-1914', in *Global Design History*, ed. by Giorgio Riello, Glenn Adamson, Sarah Teasley (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 99-100.

<sup>78</sup> See Schwartz, pp. 75-163. Connections to the Werkbund are also discussed in Hubatová-Vacková, *Silent Revolutions in Ornament*, p. 172.

## Current Czech Scholarship

During the seven years of this part-time PhD, an important reappraisal of Czechoslovak craft and design in the Socialist context has been taking place in the Czech Republic, questioning the relationships of art, craft and design to the formation of the state and related historiographies. The role of maker, artist and designer in relation to structures of Socialist power was the focus of the 2015-16 Prague exhibition *Budování státu. Re prezentace Československa v umění, architektuře a designu* (Building a State: The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design). The exhibition tackled the idea of 'building a state', a phrase coined by journalist Ferdinand Peroutka in the 1930s when discussing the creation of a modern democratic nation-state of Czechoslovaks, in opposition to the Austrian monarchy.<sup>79</sup> In the *Budování státu* catalogue introduction, 'How a state is made', historian Milena Bartlová writes that Peroutka's earlier self-assurance was later belied by the 'internal instability of the state structure and idea' - it is this very fragility, Bartlová asserts, that gave visual culture its importance as an instrument of authority. In this context, art, craft, architecture and design were not only 'tools of state representation' but also a means towards a stable state.<sup>80</sup>

*Budování státu's* focused on the period from 1918 to 1989 (interestingly choosing to exclude the Second World War),<sup>81</sup> and revolved around the premise that due to the nature of the state under Communism, wherein local authorities and cooperatives overlapped with the structures of centralised authority, everything

---

<sup>79</sup> Bartová, *Budování státu* [English section], p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> 1938-1948, when, according to Bartová, 'Czechoslovakia ceased to exist'. Ibid., p. 7.

that originated in the country at that time could be considered 'to have been commissioned by the state'.<sup>82</sup> In this context, Modernism in art, craft and design was an important method of conveying national identity but also became a means of demonstrating cultural resistance to the bureaucratic control of Communist society. In the 1960s, Socialist Modernism came to the fore, with its emphasis on Socialist humanism and epitomised in craft and design by the Brussels Style, as the movement surrounding the success of Czechoslovakia at the Brussels Expo in 1958 is known.<sup>83</sup> Bartová celebrates Modernism on its own terms, as forward looking and, by implication, of good 'quality'. She sets up this kind of 'artistic quality' against 'conventional artistic visual style', a vague allusion to work that had wider popular appeal. Despite these kinds of allusions, the term Socialist Realism is used for the first time in the final paragraph of the introduction, as a means of describing the split between artists who submitted to ideological demands, and were therefore eligible for officially commissioned work in the earlier years of the KSČ's leadership, versus those who would not, concluding:

'...most of the project intentionally shows officially sanctioned artworks that are not part of the mainstream of modernist-construed history and whose artists' political loyalty at that time and sometimes even artistic quality might not hold up against a present-day moral assessment. But that is how we were, and that is how we lived, and that is how we made our nation and state.'<sup>84</sup>

The defensive nature of this final paragraph belies the success of the exhibition as a rich and pluralist demonstration of visual culture from Czechoslovakia. The positioning of Socialist Realism in

---

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Explored in detail in publications such as Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* [Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels], (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010).

<sup>84</sup> Bartová, *Budování státu* [English section], p. 7.

current Czech cultural historiography retains a lingering discomfort that needs to be further addressed and I try to take up this challenge by focusing on its applications and implications across varying forms of craft and, where relevant to craft interests, related questions in design (**Chapter One**). An example of the discomfort is the earlier exhibition, *Československý socialistický realismus 1948-1958*, held at the Rudolfinum Gallery in 2002. Tomas Pospiszyl, editor of the Czech journal *Umělec* (Artist), writing for *Týden* in November 2002, stated that when questioned about the exhibition content at a press conference, Rudolfinum Gallery director Petr Nedoma 'hesitated to term some of the works on display 'art' and suggested the more everyday word 'production''. Pospiszyl continued that Socialist Realism is part of Czechoslovak history but it is an issue yet to be fully confronted.<sup>85</sup> Such areas remain hard to address when the vocabulary of texts on the subject are disparaging or defensive in tone.

Another example is the Národní galerie v Praze (Prague National Gallery)'s twentieth-century collection, held in Veletržní Palac (Exhibition Palace), which contains a small selection of work that illustrates this period, considered 'characteristic samples of Socialist-Realist art'.<sup>86</sup> The National Gallery's publication accompanying the collection highlights the period's suppression of form 'in favour of content' – something that 'a number of artists in fact fell for' in their quest to produce popular art.<sup>87</sup> The text goes on to assure the reader that this 'falling' was only temporary. The biblical terminology of 'falling' – a delusional act with great

---

<sup>85</sup> Tomas Pospiszyl, 'Toward a Brighter Yesterday', *TOL* (14 February 2003) <<http://www.tol.org/client/article/8797-toward-a-brighter-yesterday.html>> [accessed 28 December 2015] (This article originally appeared in the 18 November 2002 issue of *Tyden*).

<sup>86</sup> Tomáš Vlček (ed.), *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art 1890-2010 / Part Two* (Prague: National Gallery, 2010), p. 40.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.



consequences for humankind – hinders the serious appraisal of the work, and assumes victimhood rather than agency on the part of all artists working at that time. This type of thinking will be addressed in relation to the rural folk festival of Strážnice, critiqued through the Czech New Wave film of *Moravská Hellas*, by Karel Vachek in 1963 (**Chapter Two**).

An important Czech historian and curator addressing these areas in relation to craft is Lada Hubatová-Vacková. Her tellingly entitled section and essay for both the *Budování státu* exhibition and its catalogue, 'Use and abuse of folklore and folk art', explored ways in which patriotism and nationalism were bound to folk and vernacular imagery from the 1890s to post-war Czechoslovakia. But her aim, successfully fulfilled, was to demonstrate that 'an easily recognisable visual stereotype of 'official art' does not exist'.<sup>88</sup> Instead, the 'instrumentalisation' of folk art and folklore in state representation in Czechoslovakia came in a range of forms 'contingent on the artists' plans but also on historical and cultural-political contexts', which continued into the 1960s.<sup>89</sup> Importantly, this did not rule out experimentation on the part of art, craft and design practitioners.

Hubatová-Vacková here and in parallel publications (such as *Modfolk*, 2015), questions tensions around the role of folk art and craft as a national form with an assumed relationship to the state. She applies caution in relation to the associated racial implications of ethnographic practice concerning 'types', and is wary of the idea of a cultural 'genetic code' bound to anthropological discussion of the 'Slovak race' in the 1920s. Concerns around nationalism behind

---

<sup>88</sup> Hubatová-Vacková, 'Use and abuse of folklore and folk art', *Budování státu* [English section], p. 73.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

'applied ethnology' would be highlighted by the League of Nations, alongside the International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation and the International Commission for the Study of Folk Art, whose L'Art Populaire congress of ethnographers in Paris, established in 1928, addressed issues of 'racial exclusivity' in folk art. It was also at these events, notes Hubatová-Vacková, that the phrase 'the people' began to be used, not as a synonym for rural agricultural populations but as a means of describing the increasing working-class population of cities – this emphasised the important point that folk culture could be industrial and urban as well as rural and agricultural.<sup>90</sup>

Folk culture as a means of 'crossing high and low art' resulted in an exploration of hybridity and intersections between folk, modern, rustic, local, international and national that consistently played out in Socialist Czechoslovakia.<sup>91</sup> These points of overlap have been my interest since beginning this research, and Hubatová-Vacková's scholarship in the last three years has helped to confirm and support my enquiry into the types of integrative practices concerning folk, craft and the modern that are at work across the political epochs of Socialist Czechoslovakia. I take this into new realms of material such as fashion, textiles, architectural ceramics, animation and film, to try to show how these interests play out through the work of state organisations such as ÚLUV and ÚBOK, as well as on their peripheries. There is an energy conducted through this hybridity, a dynamism that is seen in the Socialist Modern, but – less explored and something that I wish to amend in the early part of this thesis – that also can be seen to contradict the notion of the supposed stagnancy of Socialist Realism. This also connects theoretical interests and practice to earlier parts of the twentieth century. The

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

First Republic (1918-1938) 'symbiosis of the modern and folk [that] represented a satisfactory artistic concept for the modern republic whose national identity was based on folkness'<sup>92</sup> continued to morph and adapt in Socialist Czechoslovakia. In the context of the *Budování státu* exhibition, this emphasis on complexity and adaptation was expressed in the nuances and myriad manifestations of state commissioning.

The aforementioned 2015 exhibition *Modfolk. Modernita v lidovém: Ateliér designu oděvu a obuvi Liběny Rochové na UMPRUM* (Modfolk. Modernity in Folkness: The Studio of Fashion and Footwear Design of Liběna Rochová at UMPRUM) featured work by students from the Studio of Fashion and Footwear Design at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, led by designer Liběna Rochová. The result was *Modfolk*, whose name indicates the nature of its emphasis on this hybrid culture, a series of work created in response to architect Jurkovič's (1868-1947) villa in Brno, built in 1906. The phrase 'Modfolk' was chosen with the intention of moving away from the 'undesirable connotations and secondary meanings [still] connected with the socialist cultural policy that artificially promoted an abused folk elements as part of national culture', and for its brand-like qualities, to give identity to the line of garments created.<sup>93</sup> Hubatová-Vacková states that 'its main objective is to highlight and introduce folk clothing and crafts as precursors of modernism' and well as to demonstrate 'the phenomenon of the intersecting, intertwining and merging of modernity and folk tradition in the broader context of applied arts'.<sup>94</sup> In everyday terms, this meant that a rural Slovak man in the 1920s purchased a new, urban

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>93</sup> Hubatová-Vacková, *Modfolk*, p. 17.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 33 and p. 43.

suit, whilst his wife wore a heavy, embroidered folk dress. In pedagogical, institutional and theoretical terms, it meant a kind of iconographical repurposing that lent itself well to both inter-war Modernist functionalism and post-war Socialist modernity.

The Modfolk project presents a trajectory of folk/modern relations that are central to understanding the pursuits of makers, writers and thinkers in Socialist Czechoslovakia. It is the very 'intersecting, intertwining and merging' that created a series of dialogues which contributed to a pluralistic conception of craft, one that dipped in and out of centralised definitions via techniques such as quoting, integrating or rejecting state-approved forms. It is the resulting dynamic tension, and what it means to definitions of craft under a Communist government, that is of particular interest to this research. Throughout this thesis, I will locate different points of intersection and synthesis. In varying contexts they can be deemed quotations, integrations and points of conflict, in terms of the extent to which state projects and individual practitioners employed craft or folk craft tactics to either align with or reject official state requirements.

Another large-scale recent project on which Hubatová-Vacková also worked, alongside Martina Pachmanová & Pavla Pečínková, was the anthology of writings 2014-15 *Věci a slova: umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870-1970* (Things and Words: Art Industry, Applied Arts and Design in Czech Theory and Criticism 1870-1970), accompanied by an exhibition at the Moravská galerie (Moravian Gallery) in Brno. Examining a hundred years of applied arts and design, *Things and Words* aimed to highlight the position of the applied arts and their relationship to industrialisation and modernity. This was located in a kind of bridging of the

conservative (described as the decorative, handicrafts, artistic integrity) and the progressive (new technology, standardisation, accessible culture and universalism). The exhibition section most relevant to this thesis was that researched by Pachmanová, spanning the years from 1946 to 1970 [Fig. 8], which focused on what she deemed the 'paradoxes' of the period.

The latter section spoke loudly of Brussels Style, markedly so in comparison to the objects shown at the discussed *Budování státu*. This thesis also looks at the Socialist Modern and the associated Brussels Style, but aims to show the divergences and variations possible within state, or official, design. This is enabled through integrated discussion with crafts organisations such as the work produced by ÚLUV, which had a lesser profile in the Socialist section at *Věci a slova*.



Fig. 8: Section 3: 'Lidé, věci, paradoxy: 1946-1970' [People, Things, Paradoxes: 1946-1970], *Věci a slova: umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870-1970*, [Things and Words: Art Industry, Applied Arts and Design in Czech Theory and Criticism 1870-1970], Moravská galerie, Brno (2014-15). Photograph: ©Andrea Bratrů Velnerová.

## Wider Craft Definitions

My use of the term 'craft', then, is bound to the discussed Czech and Czechoslovak notions of dynamic relationships that merge and intertwine with folk, the modern, and the wider context of design. In this research, craft is materially located in glass, wood, textiles, puppetry and ceramics. The items researched within state projects and discourse are often positioned by those in political and institutional power as supplementary, peripheral, everyday. These terms outlined by Glenn Adamson, who was the original supervisor for this research, have been dialectically positioned in relation to the typical characteristics of modernity, such as rationality, mechanisation, science and autonomy.<sup>95</sup> Adamson's description of craft as '...not a movement or a field, but rather a set of concerns that is implicated across many types of cultural production' is a form of flexibility and expansiveness that contributes to the ways in which my approach considers the range of craft definitions in Socialist Czechoslovakia.<sup>96</sup> This definition is key to the area of enquiry indicated in the title of this thesis: my research encompasses a range of making practices for state organisations and related projects. Each project, article or object raises *questions* of craft, that can also be read as Adamson's 'concerns'. These are the craft values located in traditional craft disciplines such as ceramics, textiles, glass-making and woodwork, but also, as Adamson encourages, in the context of areas considered design, such as architecture, posters, DIY and interiors.<sup>97</sup> Craft and design are not interchangeable in this respect, but are perceived in relationship to one another.

---

<sup>95</sup> Editorial Introduction, *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 1:1, (2008) 5-11 (p. 6).

<sup>96</sup> Glenn Adamson, *The Craft Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Glenn Adamson's definitions have guided my thinking, combined with relationships identified in research material from the period under survey. As previously mentioned, Adamson states that craft has

As a descriptor, craft can be purposefully slippery and expansive, a 'variable and problematic dynamic that is loose in the cultural landscape'.<sup>98</sup> In the complicated territory of creativity under controlled, and often restrictive, political circumstances in Socialist Czechoslovakia, the question of whether craft is bound to art, design, or another category altogether, is a question of its close relationships to the territories of folk tradition but also industrial and interior design. The projects and practitioners examined in this thesis centre on such intersections between craft and design in Socialist Czechoslovakia. In this 'interplay' between design, craft and art, is a shared 'concern for allusive and narrative qualities beyond functionalism' – a shifting quality that, in Grace Lees-Maffei and Linda Sandino's terms, questions normative usage of words like craft and design, instead acknowledging their mutability 'in relation to both time and space'.<sup>99</sup>

The crafted form wasn't just 'authentic' in its connection to Socialist idealism around the rural or small-scale maker, but connects to an idea of authenticity associated with craft in its wider history and understanding, which relates to the key virtues of skill, time and value.<sup>100</sup> They are also a means of accessing the personal, affection

---

always been a crucial aspect of art and design – there are not clearly delineated boundaries between the areas (Adamson, *The Craft Reader*, p. 2.). Craft can be understood in terms of 'irregularity, tacit knowledge, inefficiency, handwork, vernacular building, functional objects' (Ibid., p. 5). In this sense, 'craft should be seen in fluid and relative terms, rather than limiting and categorical, terms' (Ibid., p. 2). This thesis is aligned to Adamson's open-ended definition of craft as 'the application of skill and material-based knowledge to relatively small-scale production' (Ibid.). Relationships between craft and design are explored in this thesis: state organisations and their publications (e.g. *Tvar, Domov*, as well as texts like Josef Raban's 1971 *Czechoslovak Form*) bring together glass, textiles, ceramics and woodwork (Chapter One), as well as an interest in craft values within interior design (as will be discussed in relation to Invalidovna 61, Chapter Three) and overlaps between studio and factory (particularly in relation to textiles and ceramics, discussed in Chapters Three and Four).

<sup>98</sup> Editorial Introduction, *The Journal of Modern Craft*, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Grace Lees-Maffei, and Linda Sandino, 'Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships Between Design, Craft and Art', *Journal of Design History*, 17:3 (2004), 207-219 (p. 207).

<sup>100</sup> Glenn Adamson, *Thinking through Craft* (London: Berg, 2007) and Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (London: Allen Lane, 2008).

even, in the presence of human hands pressed into ceramics and made present in a glass figurine – the process of working made visible that is bound to craft.<sup>101</sup> Crafted objects became devices of individuality and adaptation in the Socialist Modern interior: they made visible the author's imprint and the means by which the consumer marked their territory as their own. As such, craft objects in Socialist Czechoslovakia also operated as vehicles and repositories of identity and memory, both cultural and personal. As Svetlana Boym wrote, in relation to Soviet Russia:

The private memorabilia are steeped in cultural myths; they are separated from the dominant discourses by a mere plywood partition... But in that space the elements of those myths can be reconstructed in a creative personal collage; it doesn't matter that it lacks aesthetic unity. The objects/souvenirs are minimal repositories of personal memory. Both priceless and cheap, conspicuous and private, they make us question certain commonplaces of commodity theory.<sup>102</sup>

Everyday craft and design in Socialist Czechoslovakia enabled these 'repositories', both for individuals and writers for key magazines such as *Tvar* and *Domov*. But the related sites of thinking and making, whether in the offices of organisations such as ÚBOK and ÚLUV or the studios of individual practitioners, also became repositories and dynamic spaces of identity formation. In the context of Socialism, the studio was bound to affiliation with factory or state union, but the 'new type of craftsman, called individual, studio or

---

<sup>101</sup> M. Anna Fariello, 'Making and Meaning: The Lexicon of Studio Craft', in *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art*, ed. by Maria Elena Buszek (Chapel Hill NC: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 23.

<sup>102</sup> Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 157.



creative' was still being 'worked out' in Czechoslovakia, as Bernard Leach wrote in the context of the UK in 1940.<sup>103</sup> It is this kind of negotiation that leads me to also at times use the term artist in this thesis, as this was widely used in Czech writings – often with all the associations of creative power intended and embedded in the Czech terms.<sup>104</sup>

Craft practice, as has been discussed, was perhaps a site of 'less suspicion' than literature, art or film. But it was taken seriously as part of the means to forge a 'new socialist reality'.<sup>105</sup> There is also potential beyond this debate of suspicion or not, which is of more interest to this research, and that is how personal, aesthetic and material meaning was formed within the confines of official definitions. This is something that was not valued by state authorities, similar to what Martina Margetts has called 'the hidden embodied knowledge of making, dangerously disregarded by government policy-makers'.<sup>106</sup> There was also the territory of adaptation and customisation, whether in changing the interior of the Socialist Modern flat or DIY furniture, offering the potential for what Fiona Hackney has described as 'socially engaged practice' as well as a lens through which we can 'reconsider [craft's] radical potential in the context of everyday life'. This is the power of amateur makers 'for whom craft is power', formed through the 'ability or capacity to act'.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book* (New York: Transatlantic, 1940), pp. 12-13.

<sup>104</sup> In Czech this is *umělec*, and as seen in the Czech terms described earlier, the virtue of 'artistic' is embedded in the very terms used to describe both craft (*umělecké řemeslo*) and industrial production of the applied arts (*umělecký průmysl*).

<sup>105</sup> František Venera, *Umění a kýč*, (Brno: Dům umění, 1948), p. 3.

<sup>106</sup> Martina Margetts, 'Action not Words', in *The Power of Making*, ed. by Daniel Charny (London: V&A Publishing and the Crafts Council, 2011), 38-43 (p. 39).

<sup>107</sup> Jack Z. Bratich and Heidi M. Brush 'Fabricating Activism: Craft-Work, Popular Culture, Gender,' *Utopian Studies*, 22:2 (2011) 233–60, cited in Fiona Hackney, 'Quiet Activism and the New Amateur', *Design and Culture*, 5:2 (2013), 169-193 (p. 170).

In this context, the hands began to mean something different. Craft can be read in terms of its access to something private and fulfilling, beyond being in service to the state. There is the role of pleasure and exploration, recalling William Morris's declaration in the face of industrialisation that 'Owing to the rise of producing for profit the workman has been robbed of one pleasure which as long as he is a workman is perhaps his most important one: pleasure in his daily work: he is now only part of a machine'.<sup>108</sup> This is the 'sanctity of work and distinctiveness of human labour', as Tanya Harrod has described Marx's famous statement concerning the architect and the bee, distinguished by the architect's ability to 'raise his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality'.<sup>109</sup> In theory, these abilities were valued under Socialism. The reality of morale and making in the Communist context was often not so lofty, as novelist Herta Muller has so stirringly described in her 1993 description of industry in Communist Romania:

The men knew that their iron, their wood, and their detergent didn't count. That's why their hands remained crude, that's why they manufactured lumps and clods instead of craft and industry. All that was supposed to be great and sharp-edged became a tin sheep in their hands. All that was supposed to be little and round, became in their hands a wooden melon.<sup>110</sup>

Such 'lumps and clods instead of craft' raise questions of individual agency, and of personal meaning, in relation to making for the state. It is important to note here that Nicolette Makovicky, in her research on Slovak women lace-makers in socialist Czechoslovakia,

---

<sup>108</sup> William Morris, 'Art and Labour' (Lecture given at St Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, 1884) <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/art-lab.htm>> [accessed 23 October 2016].

<sup>109</sup> Tanya Harrod, 'Visionary rather than practical': craft, art and material efficiency', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 371: 1986 (2013), 1-12 (p. 10).

<sup>110</sup> Herta Muller, *The Land of Green Plums* (London: Granta, 1993), p. 29.

discusses the ways in which centralised organisations like ÚLUV ordered local production. One reading is that lace work created in these state frameworks, ordered according to certain requirements to sell to tourists, meant that any other making became a hobby, reduced from a 'viable economic activity to an expression of cultural belonging'.<sup>111</sup> But Makovicky finds this to be an oversimplification, stating that there are multiple co-existing attitudes and 'an inextricable link between craftswomen's professional identities and their understanding of modernity'.<sup>112</sup> These 'ideological entanglements' of craft are highly relevant to the way in which I read the case studies set out in this thesis. My contribution is to bring these to new territories, crossing media and personal to official narrative, to try and discern the multiplicity of craft under Communism.

## **Methodology and Sources**

My research has been influenced by the availability of sources and material. Magazines such as *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, *Tvar* and *Domov*, discussed earlier, and also *Umění a řemesla* (Arts and Crafts) were published by state organisations and so must be understood as part of an official Socialist narrative. In order to understand individual experiences of making for the state, I have spent a great deal of time with those who were working and writing during the period. These people have influenced the direction of my research through allowing access to narratives of everyday experience, enabling an understanding of personal choice and agency, as well as insights into the practical considerations of state projects. They also provided images, documents and publications that

---

<sup>111</sup> Makovicky, 'Traditional – with Contemporary Form', p. 44.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid..

furthered this research. Speaking to those who worked on state projects at the time has, as Linda Sandino argues in her writing on oral history, provided 'the circumstance and opportunity for retrospective reflection' in which narratives are co-produced between the interviewer and interviewee.<sup>113</sup> Interviewing allowed me to bring research questions to a reflective space of conversation with someone who was there, providing a deeper understanding of making for the state.

One important person among these is the late Daniela Karasová, author and former furniture curator at the UPM, as well as, importantly for this research, an ÚBOK employee. Her oral testimonial plays a significant part in Chapter Three. She provided insights into personal narrative but also the interpretative role of organisations like ÚBOK, for whom she worked from 1975 until the early 1990s, carrying out research into international craft and design movements, as well as translating international magazines to disseminate an (often censored) understanding of activities abroad. She also enabled me to view certain ÚBOK publications and internal documents when the UPM museum was closed during the latter part of this research. Karasová's ÚBOK colleague Ivana Čapková was another oral source for one stage of this research, along with glass designers Vladimír Jelínek and Jiří Šuhájek who worked for ÚBOK. The latter allowed me to understand the processes of working with factories and glassworks, such as Jelínek's role at Škrdlovice Glassworks, as discussed in Chapter Three.

As mentioned, Chapter Two centres on 1963 Czech New Wave film, *Moravská Hellas* by Karel Vachek. Interviewing Vachek unlocked

---

<sup>113</sup> Linda Sandino, 'Introduction: Oral History *in* and *about* Art, Craft and Design, in *Oral history in the Visual Arts*, ed. by Linda Sandino and Matthew Partington (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 1-15 (p. 3).

answers to questions around the role of craft, individual agency and relationships between state and folk traditions, both supporting and furthering connections I had begun to make to the political climate of the early 1960s. Speaking to ceramicist Marie Rychlíková (see Chapter Four) was similarly illuminating. Her interview was a valuable means of understanding a career that spanned international success at the Brussels Expo in 1958 to large-scale commissions in the 1960s-70s, the relationships and networks that had facilitated those projects as well as technical and aesthetic choices. In writing about these interviews, I aim to consider them as 'encounters with the world (people, objects, artworks) that show identity created in narrative,' in the context of making for the state.<sup>114</sup>

The effort to give greater space to oral histories is relatively new in the Czech Republic. The method has been pioneered by organisations like the Oral History Centre at the Institute of Contemporary History in Prague, particularly in their recent *Velvet Revolutions: An Oral History of Czech Society* by Miroslav Vaněk and Pavel Mücke (Oxford University Press, 2016). This has been recognised as an overcoming of 'teleological historical narratives' that have continued to favour the ideological positions of those representatives of political power in the Czech Republic in the 1990s, which 'not only favoured their own position and interpretation but also buried important aspects of national and personal experience'.<sup>115</sup> But in relation to both craft and design, I have encountered a certain unease in contemporary scholars around speaking to those who may idealise a time that for others was characterised by deep political hardship.

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Michael Kilburn, 'Velvet Revolutions: An Oral History of Czech Society by Miroslav Vaněk and Pavel Mücke (Review)', *Oral History Review*, 44:2 (2017), 410-412 (p. 411).

Object collections have also been central to this research, particularly those in the UPM in Prague, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London, the Muzeum skla a bižuterie (Museum of Glass and Jewellery) in Jablonec nad Nisou, and the Moravská galerie (Moravian Gallery) in Brno. Their associated archives have been important, as well as their libraries, and also the Národní knihovna České republiky (National Library of the Czech Republic), the library at Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová (UMPRUM, the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design) in Prague, the National Art Library at the V&A, and the British Library in London. At UMPRUM, in particular, the resources of certain historians such as Lada Hubatová-Vacková have been made available, allowing me to view catalogues and publications that may not have been available elsewhere.

I place great value on the points at which conversation has led me to an informal history, and these have guided my methodology. As a complex time period of shifting political allegiances, leadership and censorship, this has been vital to my understanding of the period. I have also spent time with objects, in the public realm and museums, to understand material intimacy and process as a means of accessing history. I use film, animation and literature from the time period to accompany the voices of state magazines and publications. Contemporary scholarship also allows further insight into the rhetoric of the period. Just as my assertion is that this period must be read as a pluralistic set of definitions of craft practices, my material is also wide-ranging in its variety of materials and media. These come from a range of geographies, mainly across the Czech lands and at points into Slovak regions. They cover a wide set of organisations, centres and schools across these areas and offer insight into the institutional and pedagogical frameworks at work. I do not, however, aim to give a great list of organisations and their

transitions. Histories of craft and design in Czechoslovakia have followed this format before (for example, Antonín Langhamer's work in Helmut Ricke's seminal 2005 text *Czech Glass 1945-1980: Design in an Age of Adversity*), and, whilst this is very useful, I aim to animate my work with objects and narratives, rather than making a claim to have covered every small shift in organisational name or policy.

In this research process I have been led by the material relating to state projects, using a primarily object-based methodology, looking to publications, collections and interviews to understand the time period and its definitions. This thesis interrogates a wide-ranging cross-section of conceptions of craft during the Socialist period in Czechoslovakia, and its aim has been to consider the confluence of circumstances in order to account for craft's position (whether part of a wider project or given primacy) in the period, in relation to the state. The consideration of individual careers, including their training and employment, and discourse concerning the crafts has informed this. My route into these questions was through objects and state publications.

Inevitably, this gives rise to questions of gender, and the role of women as practitioners, as my study includes detailed discussion of significant figures such as Daniela Karasová, Marie Rychlíková, Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová, Květa Hamsíková and Emanuela Kittrichová, who had sustained and successful careers working for state organisations in the period (in particular, see Chapters Three and Four). Questions of gender can be discerned in the depiction of the body through glass figurines (Chapter One) and through advertising (Chapter Three). I am also cognisant of scholarship around craft and gender, particularly in relation to the role of

women.<sup>116</sup> In her 2015 Editorial Introduction to a special issue of *The Journal of Modern Craft*, entitled 'Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today', curator Jennifer Scanlan describes how 'Craft, with its implications of domesticity and tradition, as well as its marginalised status within the art world, provided an entryway for women into the professional world that circumvented the rigidly defined gender roles of the 1950s and 1960s'.<sup>117</sup> This is particularly relevant to territories such as Art Protis in Czechoslovakia, where women were more dominantly represented in a 1973 UK exhibition (Chapter Four).

The positioning of women in relation to the home resonates with material discussed in Chapter Three.<sup>118</sup> In the recently published *Czech Feminisms: Perspectives on Gender in East Central Europe*, edited by Iveta Jusová and Jiřina Šiklová (2016), Pavla Frýdlová's chapter 'Women's Memory: Searching for Identity Under Socialism' describes the Women's Memory Project, carried out with Jiřina Šiklová, founder of the Gender Studies Centre in Prague, which interviewed Czech women in order to understand their experience of socialism. Through collecting personal memories they aimed to challenge western perceptions that women were either 'not emancipated enough' or an exaggerated idea of a 'socialist woman', viewed as a 'heroic tractor driver' - the application of western feminist

---

<sup>116</sup> For example, Tanya Harrod (ed.), 'Craft, Modernism and Modernity,' Special issue, *Journal of Design History* 11(1) (1989); Tanya Harrod, *Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press, 1984); and Elissa Auther, *String, Felt, Thread and the Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

<sup>117</sup> Jennifer Scanlan, 'Pathmakers: women in craft, art, and design mid-century and today', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 8:2 (2015), 109–114 (p. 109). This journal issue was built around the exhibition of the same name at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, 2015-16.

<sup>118</sup> Writers like Barbara Havelková are also addressing this issue in relation to the current failures of Czech law to address discrimination against women, evidenced in her recent publication on the relations of gender norms to legal norms, *Gender Equality in Law: Uncovering the Legacies of Czech State Socialism* (Bloomsbury, 2017).



readings to the Communist period remains complex.<sup>119</sup> The research found that socialist models of emancipation in the work place did provide women 'with the opportunity to find self-realisation in employment, but it did not decrease their workload at home', where they were still expected to also do the majority of domestic and childrearing work.<sup>120</sup> These ideas are relevant to Emanuela Kittrichová's 1969 text *Byt* (The Flat) (Chapter Three). Whilst these areas have arisen in the research process and are important to my further interests in the field, the thesis surveys a range of projects in order to understand questions of craft in relation to the state, rather than addressing in detail issues of gender theory under Communism. Whilst the application of gender theory has not been a primary concern of this research, the thesis provides a thorough foundation of knowledge of state projects and debates, from which I feel empowered to focus further on gender in the future.

## The Chapters

Through looking at key projects, publications and commentaries in the ÚLUV magazine *Tvar*, **Chapter One, 'Craft and the Socialist State: Negotiating Czechoslovak Definitions 1945–1957'**, shows how tactical negotiations of relevant Socialist subject matter and folk art enabled inter-war debates to continue. This chapter charts the establishment of ÚLUV and its central premise of finding what Josef Vydra called a 'happy medium' between folk and modern, which, this chapter argues, became was a benchmark for the crafts. This was associated with the territories of small-scale production, rules for which were outlined in the aforementioned 1945 and 1957

---

<sup>119</sup> Pavla Frýdlová, 'Women's Memory: Searching for Identity Under Socialism', in *Czech Feminisms: Perspectives on Gender in East Central Europe*, ed. by Iveta Jusová and Jiřina Šiklová (Indiana University Press, 2016) pp. 95-108 (pp. 95-96).

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

decrees, which bookends the period covered in this chapter. Debate around standardisation and kitsch were embedded in negotiations of Socialist Realism and the related issue of taste was used as a defence of Modernism. This will be seen through the exhibition *Umění a kýč* (Art and Kitsch) in 1948, which has been explored by historian Milan Pech in relation to fine art,<sup>121</sup> but I bring its inclusion of applied arts and folk crafts to the fore. I also introduce under-attended to artists such as glassmaker Miloslav Klinger into the discussion. At the heart of this chapter is the question of how craft methods were integrated into state projects to meet ideological requirements, and upon what spectrums of value objects were placed, and by whom, in a time that transitioned from Socialist Realism to the thaw period.

The political and philosophical upheaval of the thaw is central to **Chapter Two, 'Folk Fever and the Bureaucratic Machine in early 1960s Czechoslovakia'**, which focuses on Karel Vachek's 1963 film *Moravská Hellas* (Moravian Hellas) and goes up to the mid-1960s. This film took as its subject the advocacy of folk traditions within cultural products promoted by the Communist authorities. A satirical critique of centralisation, the film threw into question the role of the individual maker as victim or perpetrator of Socialist ideology. The film serves as a point of ideological tension, criticising state attempts towards the integration of ideological requirements within creative practice, or tokenistic responses to these requirements. *Moravská Hellas* reveals a great deal around the tensions of Czechoslovak Socialist modernity in relation to the characteristics of craft (such as tradition, authenticity, individualisation, the hand-made), and a typically Soviet attempt to create a cultural science, or

---

<sup>121</sup> Milan Pech, 'Umění a kýč' [Art and Kitsch], in *Konec avantgardy? od mnichovské dohody ke komunistickému převratu* [The End of the Avant-Garde? From the Munich Agreement to the Communist Coup], ed. by Hana Rousová, Lenka Bydžovská, Vojtěch Lahoda et al (Řevnice: Arbor vitae, 2011), pp. 317-330.

scientism (in the forms of ergonomics, didactic advice for living and quantifiable measures). Humour, satire, dislocation and the absurd were key to Vachek's 'Švejkist' response to the 'reified conditions' and 'bureaucratic machinations' of the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>122</sup>

**Chapter Three, 'Directions for Taste: Craft and the Socialist Modern'**, takes as its starting point the Brussels Expo in 1958 and the resulting impact on craft and, where overlaps occurred, design thinking. The establishment of ÚBOK is bound to this movement, and its interiors magazine *Domov* (Home), established in 1960, was a self-proclaimed answer to the demand for a magazine devoted to the art of modern home-making. The magazine aimed to provide varying styles, from which the reader could choose 'to suit his individuality' and to provide inspiration for their socialist readership.<sup>123</sup> *Domov* also set out to combat 'petty bourgeois influence in interior decoration, debunking its cheap, fussy sentimentality and bad taste'. As such, it was a manifesto to the Socialist Modern, characterised by a 'greater beauty, comfort and quality of the new simplicity of form and vividness of colour'.<sup>124</sup> Humorous magazine features and animation accompanied state organisation proposals for the perfect interior for the Socialist Modern flat. Key to the development of taste and the Socialist Modern home was the inclusion of hand-made and crafted objects and origins. The characteristics of craft were positioned alongside more scientific and didactic approaches such as ergonomics in the home, and the forum of the 'experimental' was a key site in which research could be explored in prototype form (as will be discussed). This chapter will

---

<sup>122</sup> These terms are discussed by philosopher Karel Kosík in 'Hašek and Kafka', pp. 84–88, in relation to the authors Jaroslav Hašek and Franz Kafka and the importance of their writing in early 1960s Czechoslovakia. See Chapter Two.

<sup>123</sup> Ludvík Veselý, 'Do prvního ročníku' [In the First Year] [English summary], *Domov*, 1 (1960), n. pag..

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

show how such concerns contributed to conceptions of craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia, particularly through the collaborative housing project Experiment Invalidovna in Prague (1961) and via instructional publications, both of which were produced by ÚBOK and ÚLUV. This chapter follows those interests into the 1970s, but in many ways takes the narrative further through the material of Daniela Karasová and her insights into ÚBOK as a place of work.

**Chapter Four, 'State Peripheries: Making Practices in Textiles and Ceramics,** retains an interest in the state framework but looks at alternative craft engagements within its structures. These were 'peripheral' in terms of the ways in which that the individuals working in these contexts experienced the state. Architectural ceramics and the field of Art Protis textiles allowed for creative pursuits that were in alignment with state projects whilst allowing divergence and variation. These contributed to nuanced definitions of the artist under Socialism, whilst resulting in innovative forms of craft and design practice. The collaborative work of ceramicists Marie Rychlíková, Lydie Hladíková and Děvana Mírová will be discussed as a means of understanding studio practice and work in the public realm. In comparison, 1960s developments in non-woven tapestries such as Art Protis allowed new interactions between artists and factories, as explored by artists such as Antonín Kybal, Ludmila Kybalová, and Květa Hamsíková. This chapter does not just move into peripheral making spaces within Czechoslovakia, but also reaches to Britain, where Art Protis was acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) and sold at Heal's. This aspect of the research allows for an understanding of how narratives around Czechoslovak craft were articulated abroad, and for my material engagement with the Art Protis at the V&A. This is also an area for departure, fittingly

ending the thesis, as overlaps with Britain have potential for future research.<sup>125</sup>

## Conclusion

This thesis proposes craft can be understood in Socialist Czechoslovakia as a series of tensions and dynamics, as criticality and contrast in an otherwise controlled environment, and as overlapping spectrums of value and meaning. Together these enable a pluralistic and competing definition of making practices that engaged with the process of socialist modernity. In taking the related notions of conflict and integration, I propose a new reading of craft within state projects. Organisations and their members, such as ÚBOK and ÚLUV, constantly negotiated the parameters of state structures and in so doing, referenced, continued and at times rejected earlier twentieth-century debate whilst developing innovative aesthetic and technical methods.

My decision to intersect media, time periods and sites of practice is to widen scholarship in the field to enable understanding of craft as Adamson's flexible 'implications'. This closely relates to Lada Hubatová-Vacková's discussion of symbioses and the intertwine of modern and folk, which I also take into the realm of Socialist Modern flats and related publications to see how they also played out in the context of design forums. In the Czechoslovak Socialist context, craft and particularly its folk associations was often positioned as a contrasting value to industrial design,<sup>126</sup> but in reality it was more porous. In bringing to the fore such diverse territories such as Czech

---

<sup>125</sup> In terms of the public realm focus in Chapter Four, exploring connections to Britain would also enable discussion concerning parallel reappraisals currently taking place in UK scholarship, such as the recent exhibition *Out There: Our Post-War Public Art*, Somerset House, London (3 February – 10 April 2016).

<sup>126</sup> Josef Raban, *Czechoslovak Form* (Prague: Orbis, 1971), p.7.

New Wave film, animation, magazine articles, architectural realms and glass figurines, we can see that even within official discourse, there was hybridity and expansiveness. In this environment, we can see the flexing of creative muscles, the formation of collaborative relationships as a means to furthering practice, and the intimacy of material process.

## **Chapter One – Craft and the Socialist State: Negotiating Czechoslovak Definitions 1945–1957**

### **Chapter Overview**

In the years 1945 and 1957, two government decrees structured centralised craft production in Czechoslovakia, focusing on the heritage of folk techniques. The decrees offer insight into official terminology and definitions. The 1945 decree (number 110) established ÚLUV (Ústředí lidové a umělecké výroby, the Centre for Folk and Art Production), which continued to influence craft practices after the Komunistická strana Československa (KSČ) government came into power in 1948. In this chapter, ÚLUV projects will be explored and positioned alongside parallel assignments made for the state, such as glass work by artist Miloslav Klinger and Škrdlovice Glassworks, in order to understand wider themes in debate around craft encountered during this time period. Key to the latter were interests in the synthesis of folk and modern styles, and concerns around ideas of national heritage, particularly in relation to the work and writing of designer and theorist Josef Vydra, who worked with ÚLUV. Interests continuing from the Interwar period continued to be explored as well as international concerns, whilst considering the state's ideological requirements of Socialist Realism. ÚLUV's publication, the magazine *Tvar* (Form), provides access to debates around craft and folk production, giving insights into the ways in which ideas of craft were negotiated. Negotiations of taste and kitsch were key to these negotiations. The chapter will close with a discussion of the aforementioned 1957 new decree (number 56), to understand how it reordered craft production and impacted definitions of craft and relationships to state manufacture. Through

looking at a range of media including fashion, glass, architecture, textiles and ceramics, this chapter will explore how those writing and making for the state negotiated contemporary boundaries and definitions, as well as how their developments were communicated to a new Socialist public through the magazine *Tvar*.

## Introduction

With the establishment of the Komunistická strana Československa (KSČ) government in 1948, under the leadership of Klement Gottwald, Socialist Realism was adopted as the official artistic policy. At the KSČ General Congress of 1949, politician and journalist Václav Kopecký proclaimed that the 'Zhdanov' model of Socialist Realism (after Soviet Central Committee Secretary Andrei Zhdanov, known as the Zhdanov Doctrine, or Zhdanovism), was the only acceptable style.<sup>127</sup> Zdeněk Lakomý, Head of the Stavoprojekt architecture research initiative that was established in autumn 1948 as the nationalised institute for architectural practice, described this in terms that are useful for understanding the emphasis in relation to both craft and design in the late 1940s. He asserted that the 'key to socialist realism in Czechoslovakia was the dialectical synthesis of typification and creativity', echoing the official Soviet-aligned policy that was also promoted by Czechoslovak Minister of Education and Culture, Zdeněk Nejedlý.<sup>128</sup> Lakomý advocated the use of traditional, local forms – meaning in this instance vernacular architectural styles. This was an exercise in Soviet Communist affiliation that activated national meaning and tradition whilst negotiating the means by which

---

<sup>127</sup> A. A. Ždanov's (as his name is written in Czech) text *O umění* (About Art) was first published in Czechoslovakia in 1949 by Orbis. I worked with the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Prague: Orbis, 1950).

<sup>128</sup> Kimberly Elman Zareco, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), pp. 134-136.



the newly Socialist state of Czechoslovakia could integrate Soviet methods, whilst delivering against the Marxist-Leninist dictum of 'national in form, socialist in content'. Lakomý was an influential figure in relation to Socialist Realism in Czechoslovakia: it has been suggested that the 'la' in the pejorative Czech term for the movement, 'sorela', was a reference to his name (SOcialistický – REalismus – LAkomý).<sup>129</sup> An alternative interpretation is that the term came from a type of pomade or shoe polish popular in Czechoslovakia between the wars, a good example of the wit employed in relation to restrictive conditions.<sup>130</sup>

The term *sorela* seems to have been first used pejoratively by architect Josef Havlíček in order to describe the neo-historicist aesthetic of socialist realism in Czechoslovakia in the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>131</sup> Derogatory or otherwise, it's a useful word for indicating what was specifically happening in Czechoslovakia in the context of a wider Soviet socialist realism. *Sorela* was a search for a socialist style, anti-functionalist and anti-cosmopolitan, looking to Soviet examples and the nineteenth century, where 'the renewal of the past served as a tool of the expression of its own program...in which 'style' gained meaning in politically motivated symbolic relationships'.<sup>132</sup> In Czechoslovakia, this meant selecting folk styles, the architecture of the Renaissance and classicism, considered to have to the necessary attributes of 'popular character, nationality, and humanism' that fitted the criteria of Socialist Realism.<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> Jindřich Vybíral, 'The Beacons of Revolutionary Ideas: *Sorela* as Historicism and Rhetoric', *Centropa*, 1:2 (2001), 95-100 (p. 95).

<[http://www.academia.edu/202716/The\\_Beacons\\_of\\_Revolutionary\\_Ideas\\_Sorela\\_as\\_Historicism\\_and\\_Rhetoric.\\_Centropa\\_1\\_2\\_2001\\_pp.\\_95-100](http://www.academia.edu/202716/The_Beacons_of_Revolutionary_Ideas_Sorela_as_Historicism_and_Rhetoric._Centropa_1_2_2001_pp._95-100)> [accessed 27 September 2017].

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97–98.

The attributes of folk traditions and related practices profoundly impacted the Czechoslovak craft discourse in the early years of the KSČ government. The meeting points, or synthesis, of folk and modern styles, of an interest in ideas of typification and creativity, were not just characteristics of *sorela* but part of a wider and longer-term debate around the crafts in Czechoslovakia. In order to understand this dynamic better, the following chapter focuses on the period from 1945 to 1957, choosing this as a time period bookended by two important government decrees from these two years that structured centralised craft and folk production. The decrees attempted to define and organise the role of traditional forms of making, craft methodologies and relationships to state manufacture. This included glass, furniture, textiles, fashion and ceramics. Divergences and variations within the approaches in relation to the requirements of *sorela* were demonstrated via state-organised projects and writing around the subject, which were the direct result of the decrees. One important state organisation implementing these components was ÚLUV (Ústředí lidové a umělecké výroby, the Centre for Folk and Art Production), which also published the magazine, *Tvar* (Form), which discussed and documented craft, design and folk production from 1949 to 1970. Its writers and editors were official voices in their field, negotiating new definitions of both craft and design, in terms of theory, practice and manufacture, for a socialist public.

Relationships to pre-war and post-war craft theory and practice in Czechoslovakia during this initial period of Socialism were complex and multifaceted. Traditional craft methods and folk influences were central characteristics that were used both tactically, as a means of negotiating the ideological requirements of the political context, and as a manifestation of continued interest in Modernist ideas of truth to

material, of form being led by function, and formal aspects such as clean, simplified lines accompanied by debate concerning the role of decoration. The case studies in this chapter demonstrate that there was no single centralised conception of craft in this period, but rather a pluralistic and competing set of terms established by figures of authority in the field. The organisations, exhibitions and publications under survey show that objects made in this context can be read on a spectrum that include craft to industry, kitsch to modern, authentic to false, capitalist to socialist, and moral to economic value. The work of state organisation ÚLUV is instrumental to understanding how these spectrums operated in the early Socialist period in Czechoslovakia.

### **Organising Folk Art Production: ÚLUV and its History**

ÚLUV was established in October 1945 as the result of Decree number 110, entitled *Dekret presidenta republiky o organisaci lidové a umělecké výroby* (Decree of the President of the Republic for the Organization of Folk and Artistic Production).<sup>134</sup> It was one of many decrees compiled by Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš, the majority of which were issued when he was President-in-Exile in London during the Second World War. Though it preceded the establishment of the KSČ leadership in 1948, ÚLUV became a key craft organisation in Socialist Czechoslovakia. The content of Decree 110 is a useful document for understanding how craft discourse from this time was firmly built on the foundations of earlier debate and definitions, and how under the auspices of ÚLUV these were carried through into the Socialist period.

---

<sup>134</sup> Decree 110, pp. 257-261 <<http://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/ViewFile.aspx?type=c&id=49>> [accessed 26 July 2014].

However, it should be noted that Beneš's Decrees in general remain a contested part of Czech and Slovak history, as they dealt largely with the eviction of ethnic Germans from Czechoslovakia and the removal of their citizenship and property. Controversy surrounding the treatment of Germans in Czechoslovakia at that time is largely unresolved: as *The Economist* noted in 2002, the Czech reluctance to annul the Decrees (potentially resulting in claims for the restitution of property) caused doubts as to whether the Czech Republic should be allowed into the EU.<sup>135</sup> And indeed, Decree 110 referred explicitly throughout to Czech and Slovak workers, with an emphasis on 'domestic' practice (*domácí*), which can also be translated as 'native'.<sup>136</sup>

As proclaimed in its early clauses, Decree 110 was created 'in order to ensure the healthy development of the prerequisites of folk and artistic production', and it attempted to engage and support cottage industry by organising membership of small-scale applied art manufacturers and workshops.<sup>137</sup> These producers were specifically named as '*umělecko-řemeslný*' (artistic handicraft or the handmade) and '*umělecko-průmyslový*' (literally 'artistic industrial' but generally translated as 'art industry', though 'industrial arts' is also applicable). The Czech term *umělecký průmysl* was close in its original meaning to Gottfried Semper's *Kunstindustrie*, and Czech writers throughout the twentieth century negotiated its meaning. Decree 110 adhered to the distinction between the hand-crafted arts and the industrial arts, but for both advocated the combination of 'artistic' and 'industrial'

---

<sup>135</sup> 'A Spectre over Central Europe', *The Economist*, 15 August 2002

<<http://www.economist.com/node/1284252>> [accessed 21 December 2015].

<sup>136</sup> Section 1: General Statutes, numbers 1 and 2, in Decree 110: *Dekret presidenta republiky o organizaci lidové a umělecké výroby* [Decree of the President of the Republic for the Organization of Folk and Artistic Production], (27 October 1945) 257-261 <<http://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/ViewFile.aspx?type=c&id=49>> [accessed 26 July 2014], , p. 257.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

skill through the practice of *technický* (technical) and *výtvarný* (fine art) folk and artistic production.<sup>138</sup>

Criteria for ÚLUV membership included small-scale production, from home or a workshop, with an emphasis on collective cottage industry and the hand-made. Those named 'workers of intelligent creativity', or artists, were not covered by ÚLUV's membership. The term 'artist' was not used directly in the decree, but they were additionally described as workers of 'independent creativity'.<sup>139</sup> The latter would instead have been members of the Union of Czech and Slovak Artists. The term 'independent' and its rogue associations offers insight into why fine artists came under greater scrutiny than those in craft or design. Membership of ÚLUV was decided by a central managing Presidium composed of two Czech and two Slovak members, reporting to the Ministry of Industry. Members were eligible for loans and received advice on expected standards, technical guidance, wages and pricing, assistance with exhibitions, sales and trade. In turn the centralised structure meant that the information obtained on the nature of each member's production could increase the expertise of producers in Czechoslovakia as a whole. Standards were inspected, financial accounts were audited with penalties for negligence, and a percentage of the profits was collected.<sup>140</sup>

The Decree aimed to encourage, increase, preserve and organise national production of small-scale manufacture in the aftermath of the Second World War through a process of systemisation. The materials and modes of making were loosely indicated through the phrase: 'Artistic handcraft and artistic industrial production means

---

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., Section 15 (1), p. 259.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., Section 1. General Statute, 3 (3), p. 257.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., Section II. No. 6 (2), No. 7, 8, 13, 16, 19., pp. 258-260.

the production of objects, with industrially artistic standards or expressing distinctive creative activities'.<sup>141</sup> This aim for a combination of industrial standards and so-called distinctive, expressive handcrafted qualities echoed inter-war pursuits of design that emphasised the 'artistic' as a driving force and looked to the value of crafts. Such vocabulary recalled the mid-1920s aims of Bauhaus thinkers such as Walter Gropius and Lázló Maholy-Nagy,<sup>142</sup> and their notion of 'art and technics'.<sup>143</sup> In its pursuance of state affiliation of crafts, trades and modern technology, the decree was also indebted to a legacy of European debates around the role of the artistic in the early twentieth century, where 'individualists' were pitted against 'industrial types' at the heart of questions of standardisation in machine-based industrial culture.<sup>144</sup> The decree combined existing political and economic discourse, emphasising relationships to folk craft production, with terminology that was reminiscent of the dynamics of the Deutscher Werkbund and the development of the notion of 'types'.<sup>145</sup> Related lines of enquiry would continue throughout the Socialist period in Czechoslovakia.

ÚLUV can also be understood as part of a longer narrative in Czechoslovak craft history that sought a dynamic and harmonious relationship between folk influences and modernism. ÚLUV inherited the aims and language of its predecessors in this regard. From 1949, Krásná jizba (Beautiful Parlour), a chain of shops which had been opened in 1927 by Družstevní práce (Cooperative Work) to sell home

---

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., I. General Statute, No. 3 (4), p. 257.

<sup>142</sup> Naylor, pp. 144-64.

<sup>143</sup> Schwartz, p. 1.

<sup>144</sup> John V. Maciuika 'The Globalization of the Deutscher Werkbund: Design Reform, Industrial Policy, and German Foreign Policy, 1907-1914', in *Global Design History*, ed. by Giorgio Riello, Glenn Adamson, Sarah Teasley (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 99-100.

<sup>145</sup> See Schwartz, pp.75-163.

accessories and clothing),<sup>146</sup> was incorporated into ÚLUV. In 1948 ÚLUV had also absorbed Svaz československého díla (the Union of Czechoslovak Work, also translated as the Czechoslovak Arts & Crafts Association),<sup>147</sup> originally formed by architect Jan Kotěra in 1914 and reformed after the First World War in 1920 under the chairmanship of architect Josef Gočár, to develop cooperation between industry, crafts and the arts – influenced by the model of the Werkbund. This interest continued and can be seen in issues of ÚLUV's magazine *Tvar* (Form), throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, in articles such as Pavel Janák's 1948 discussion of the 'beginnings of our artistic production' in the work of the Artěl group and parallel references to the Werkbund model in relation to the need for a clear relationship between art and crafts.<sup>148</sup> Notably, international contemporary texts concerning modern definitions of the industrial arts and the role of the artist were also printed in *Tvar*, showing the interest in overlaps between design and the crafts – extracts from 'The Industrial Arts' by California-based Czech designers Antonín and Charlotta Heythum were reproduced from the 1944 publication *The Enjoyment of the Arts*, which advocated the design ethos of 'form follows function' and the need to avoid the overly decorative whilst not unnecessarily streamlining (with quotations from Lewis Mumford on working in unity with machines), and promoted a holistic, scientific and philosophical understanding of the customer's needs and lifestyle.<sup>149</sup> To understand ÚLUV and its role in Socialist Czechoslovakia is to view

---

<sup>146</sup> See Josef Jančář, 'Zvelebování řemesel. Tradice lidové a umělecké výroby v českých zemích' [Improvement of crafts. The Tradition of Folk and Artistic Production in the Czech Countries], *Dějiny a současnost*, 9 (2009) 22-23, and Lucie Vlčková, *Družstevní práce - Sutnar, Sudek* (Revnice: Arbor Vitae, 2007).

<sup>147</sup> Margolin, p. 207.

<sup>148</sup> See Pavel Janák, 'Z počátku naší umělecké výroby' [From the beginnings of our artistic production], *Tvar*, 1:4 (1948), 87-94, and Fr. Štefunko, 'Potřeba umenia v remesle dnesnych čias' [The Need for Art in the Craft of Today], *Tvar*, 1 (1948), 97-98.

<sup>149</sup> Antonín and Charlotta Heythumovi, 'Něco o novém bytě' [Something about the new apartment], *Tvar*, 2:5-6 (1949), 137-143.

it within this cross-referencing of influences and the modern, international craft and design histories that informed its foundations and ongoing aims.

## Josef Vydra and Early ÚLUV Objects

The application of these craft and design institutions and theoretical frameworks to the decree's definitions of handicrafts and folk culture bore the fingerprints of designer, theorist and history Josef Vydra (1884-1959), a key figure in the establishment of ÚLUV and an editor and writer for *Tvar*.<sup>150</sup> He founded the School of Applied Arts in Bratislava (1928-1939), 'the Bauhaus of Bratislava' – Vydra is thought to have been influenced by Bauhaus professor Josef Albers after attending his Prague lecture on art education.<sup>151</sup> Vydra's research into folk arts and crafts as a prototype for modern design began in the mid-1920s, not only as an interest in clean lines, simplified forms and natural materials that could be adapted to standardised production, but also as a sociological response to the movement of people from the country to towns during this time: a means of providing for the 'new urban proletariat'.<sup>152</sup> Vydra believed it was necessary to find a 'happy medium between the folk and the modern', as phrase that epitomises the ongoing quest of a great majority of both craft and design pursuits in Socialist Czechoslovakia, interpreted both in literal and more complex terms.<sup>153</sup> In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the concept was aligned to ideas of 'typification and creativity' and can be seen as a form of 'dialectical synthesis', demonstrating how inter-war aims could be subtly

---

<sup>150</sup> Lada Hubatová-Vacková, Martina Pachmanová & Pavla Pečinková), pp. 555-556.

<sup>151</sup> Margolin, p. 214.

<sup>152</sup> Lada Hubatová-Vacková, *Modfolk*, p. 29.

<sup>153</sup> Josef Vydra, 'O sloh v lidové tvorbě' [On Style in Folk Art], *Tvar* (Shape) II, (1949), 206-214, cited in Hubatová-Vacková, *Modfolk*, p. 31.



repurposed for the Socialist context and made suitable to the ideas of *sorela* as outlined by proponents like Lakomý.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, ÚLUV's workshops in Uherské Hradiště were run by Vydra's associate Vladimír Bouček, a fellow editor of *Tvar*. He was also influenced by the folk-influenced, modern Scandinavian style which, for both he and Vydra, resulted in a 'happy medium' whereby the modern was made rustic, or 'rusticified' (the closest translation of Vydra's term *rustikalizováno*) whilst folk was elevated.<sup>154</sup> An example of this approach is an early ÚLUV ceramic pitcher, made in the ÚLUV workshops by Bouček, combining the thick-handled, full-bellied form of a folk jug with the fine linear patterning and simple, natural colour scheme of modern pottery [Fig. 9]. Historian Josef Jančář has described Bouček's work as a form of research and activity based on the principles of 'relieving' small-scale manufacturers of the custody of their production.<sup>155</sup> The term 'relieving' implied that the cottage industry workers were incapacitated by their occupations, and needed state support. Through their research, documentation and then practice of traditional regional production techniques, ÚLUV leaders such as Vydra and Bouček located regional source material that could be aligned with modernist notions of 'technological discipline' and 'material truthfulness' and set these within a framework of advice and guidelines available to ÚLUV members.<sup>156</sup> This was a form of recontextualisation and didacticism that would be a key aspect of the Socialist Modern in Czechoslovakia from the late 1950s.

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Josef Jančář, 'Zvelebování řemesel' [Improving Crafts], p. 23.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

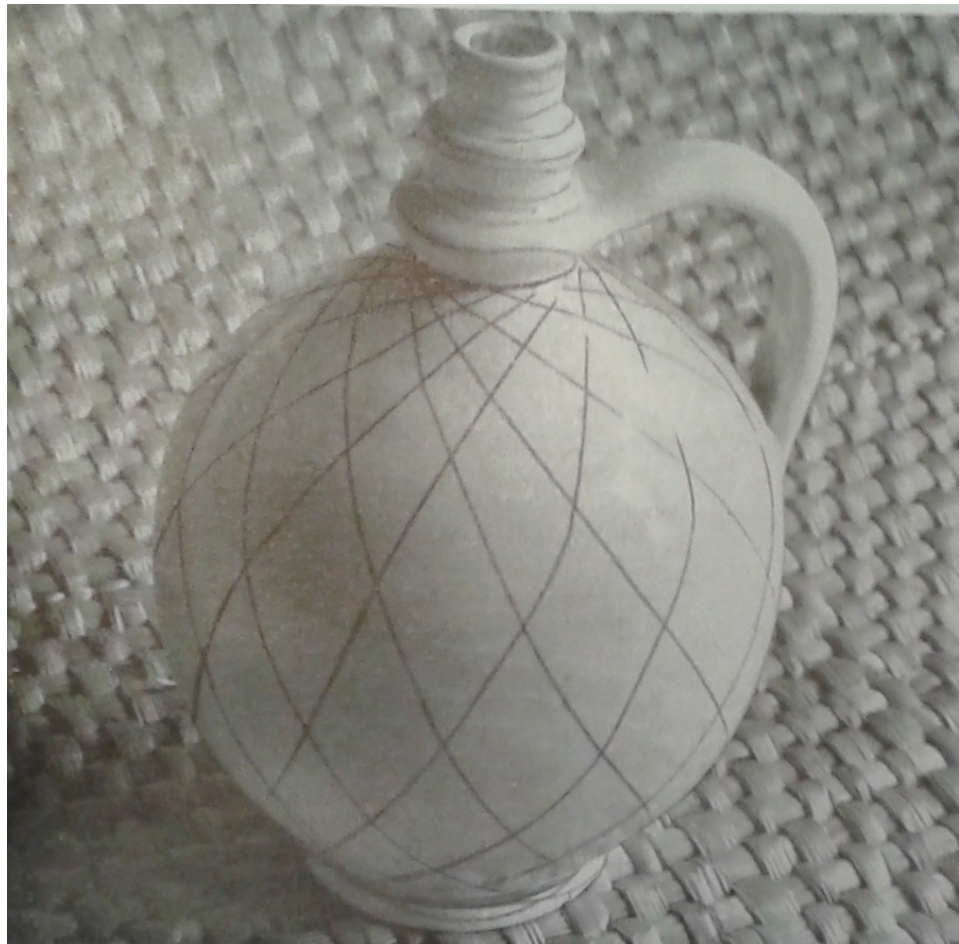


Fig. 9: Vladimír Bouček, Ceramic pitcher, c. 1948, made at the ÚLUV workshop, from *Tvar*, 1 (1948), 7 (p. 7).

It was the explicit aim of ÚLUV to educate its membership, but also the general readers of *Tvar*, about relevant formal principles. References both to classical and local folk forms were dissected according to their modern virtues: simple rather than adorned, true to the properties of the material from which they were made, and with an emphasis on 'gracefulness'. In 1948, Vydra described the 'Czech Style' as 'an excess of ornament and decoration', and encouraged artists and craftspeople to move away from this in order

to compete with the rest of the world.<sup>157</sup> His argument concerned both inter-war and contemporary objects, lamenting the second-rate work produced by Czechoslovakia at the Triennale di Milano in 1940, where the Italians took first place for their 'sublime harmonious technique'.<sup>158</sup> Vydra included a set of diagrams to demonstrate the desirable forms of classical Greek and Egyptian vessels and tools for drinking and eating, which were compared to Slovak vernacular forms such as the 'Slovakian dipper' [see right-hand objects, Fig. 10]. Contemporary Czechoslovak objects, such as an egg cup, illustrated how a rustic material like wood could be used to imitate the smooth form of ceramic, providing both a graceful visual object that took advantage of the wood's natural qualities whilst being so well made that it had the perfect 'hold' on the egg [Fig. 11].

The idea of 'hold' was a neat referencing of the passage of an object from the maker's hand to the consumer's. These aims also resonated with the assertions of Antonín and Charlotta Heythum in their aforementioned essay on the industrial arts reproduced in *Tvar*, which adhered to the notion of organic development – the human form and its movement were seen to guide the principles of designing objects.<sup>159</sup> This was also relevant to the arena of tools, as will be discussed. An interest in the international was part of this discussion, as shown in the Heythum article. Vydra believed ÚLUV's objects would be able to hold their own against the modest, 'utility' forms produced in Germany, Denmark and Sweden. He warned that

---

<sup>157</sup> Vydra 'Návrat k tvarům' [Return to Form], p. 129.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>159</sup> Antonín and Charlotta Haythum, 'Chapter V: The Industrial Arts,' in *The Enjoyment of the Arts* ed. by Max Schoen (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), pp. 131–158 (pp. 136–138). Extract reproduced in Antonín and Charlotta Haythumová, 'Něco o novém bytě' [Something about the new apartment], p. 37.

Czechoslovak applied arts would lose their footing in world markets if they did not follow this international trend.<sup>160</sup>

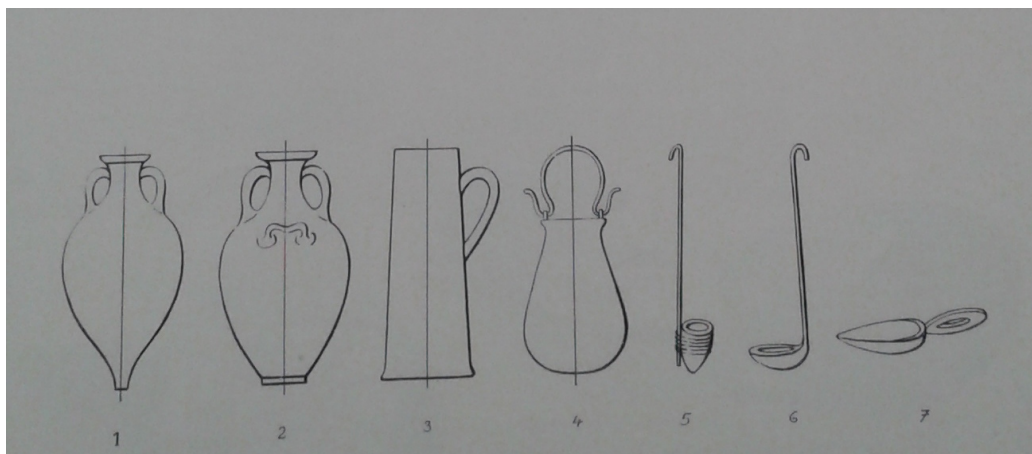


Fig 10: Classical and folk forms, from Josef Vydra,  
'Návrat k tvarům' [Return to Form], *Tvar*, 1:5-6 (1948), 129-136 (p. 129).

---

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*



Fig 11: Wooden egg cup, from Josef Vydra, 'Návrat k tvarům' [Return to Form], *Tvar*, 1:5-6 (1948), 129-136 (p. 131).

Vydra advocated modern designs that embedded the technical, decorative and material craft aspects of folk objects. This was also in opposition to the imitation of folk forms, a form of national romanticism that he viewed as kitsch.<sup>161</sup> A regular feature in late 1940s issues of *Tvar*, 'Odmítáme!' (We Reject!), demonstrated ways of negotiating the path between bad and good taste. Heavy with sarcasm, this short feature extolled the virtues of objects in a variety of materials. One example was a ceramic lamp that was not only able to 'shine, play, and listen', but could also dispense shots of liquor [Fig. 12]. This multifunctional object was critiqued by the (unnamed)

---

<sup>161</sup> Hubatová-Vacková, *Modfolk*, p. 31.

author as part of a lamentable trend towards circus-style attractions (*pouťová atrakce*), comparable to a vase that had been shown in a Prague exhibition a year earlier, which emitted a woodland scent as well as music. *Tvar* called for an end to this waste of both materials and the labourer's time. Parallels can be drawn between the items chosen for this feature and a chocolate image of Abraham Lincoln discussed by the Heythums: these were symbols of 'uselessness' that referenced national iconography alongside a certain pleasure-seeking consumerism, and provided examples of the antithesis of modern forms with authentic folk associations.<sup>162</sup>

A careful line was intentionally drawn between authentic and 'tasteless' applications of Czechoslovak folk forms. An earlier 'Odmítáme!' entry included a *svérázný* blouse. *Svéráznový* objects (which can be translated as 'original' or 'individual' but in English texts is sometimes interpreted as 'folklorist') were rooted in the nineteenth-century Czech National Awakening movement and its associated production of material culture that stemmed from an ethnographic interest in traditional folk art, textiles, clothes, ceramics and architecture. Historian Lada Hubatová-Vacková places the starting point of this development at the 1891 General Land Centennial Exhibition at the Prague World Fair, where the 'Czech Cottages' circle was founded, that advocated the rustic farm as a manifestation of national identity and so-called 'Czech distinctiveness'. Here ethnographic documentation of folk culture began its twofold role as a means to 'national consciousness of the future state' and 'a manipulative political instrument or nationalistic-themed kitsch'.<sup>163</sup> This discussion would be incomplete without reference to Renáta Tyršová, Sokol member and representative of the

---

<sup>162</sup> Haythum and Haythum, *The Enjoyment of the Arts*, p. 132.

<sup>163</sup> Hubatová-Vacková, 'Use and abuse of folklore and folk art' in *Budování státu* [English section], p. 67.

Czechoslovak National Council, a key mover in the Czech national movement. When reflecting upon the Czech Cottages circle in 1925, she wrote that 'in an attempt to preserve the old peasant traditions in our country, quite a bit of tastelessness and gaucheness was introduced', but despite this 'crudeness, presented in the name of "distinctiveness"', the 'healthy rustic traditions' are still valid, and folk imagery and action, when properly applied, can supply 'picturesque effect and joyous beauty'.<sup>164</sup>

The latter aims, and their attempted realisation in *Svérázové* objects, were popular in the years following Czechoslovakia's establishment as a sovereign state after its independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. This was particularly seen in clothing, as illustrated by a 1920s dress in the National Museum in Prague [Fig. 13]. By 1948 these objects had become, according to the 'Odmítáme!' column, 'debased', and a 'desecration of folk art', resulting again in the waste of the worker's (this time the embroiderer's) time and materials, returning, in the eyes of *Tvar*, to Tyršová's 'bit of tastelessness and gaucheness'. A crumpled blouse dense with folk embroidery illustrated this [Fig. 14], and the accompanying text declared that the shops needed to be cleared of such 'trash' to enable women 'gifted only with a little sense of taste' to instead buy 'treasures' of folk culture for themselves and their children.<sup>165</sup> Terms such as 'kitsch' and 'trash' were used frequently at this point, and throughout the Socialist period in Czechoslovakia, stemming from earlier twentieth-century debates, as will be discussed further. Taste was a matter of correct education, in which *Tvar*, as a voice of the state organisation ÚLUV, was instrumental.

---

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> 'Odmítáme!' [We Reject!], *Tvar*, 1: 2-3 (1948), 64 (p. 64).



Fig. 12: Lamp, from 'Odmítáme!' [We Reject!], *Tvar*, 1 (1948), 5-6 (p. 96).





Fig. 13: Dress in the Svěrázový style, 1920-29, Národní muzeum, Prague.  
Photograph: Alžběta Kumstátová.



Fig 14: Svěrázový blouse, from 'Odmítáme!' [We Reject!], *Tvar*, 1:3-4  
(1948), 64 (p. 64).

ÚLUV offered folk-influenced clothing that demonstrated the organisation's aims to integrate traditional forms and techniques with modern styles – and in so doing hoped to move away from the *kýč* (kitsch) folk objects so abhorred in *Tvar*. A Prague show in May 1948 presented new ÚLUV fashion, a particular feature of which was the use of hand-made lace and printed fabric. The latter featured indigo textile dyeing, a technique of great interest to Vydra, that had originated in Asia over a thousand years earlier and was abundantly used, particularly in Slovakia.<sup>166</sup> The earliest record of cloth dyeing in Slovakia dates from 1608; the first dated 'negative print', as it is also known, is from 1783: it was popular in the region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>167</sup> Indigo blue 'negative' print is defined by its use of 'reserve' to create white patterning on fabric that is then immersed in cold indigo dye, or 'kypa' – the print is created 'negatively' through the white 'reserve' patterns.<sup>168</sup> Vydra's 1954 publication *Lidový modrotisk na Slovensku* (Indigo Blue Print in Slovak Folk Art) extolled the virtues of this fabric and its connection to traditional culture in Czechoslovakia, illustrated with images of rural dress [Fig. 15]. Following the notion of transforming folk objects into modern, contemporary designs, dresses using traditional prints were made into new styles by ÚLUV for the 1948 show, which took place in Prague, with emphasis given to their wearable qualities, as well as the handmade virtues of the fabric [Figs. 16 and 17]. Vydra saw the distinctive technique of indigo blue print as a means by which 'the hand gives an artistic value to textile printing, building as it does

---

<sup>166</sup> Sigrid Piroch, 'Slovak Folk Art – Indigo Folk Printing', *Ars Textrina*, 9 (1988), 63–124.

<<http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/files/2014/06/4.Slovak-folk-art.pdf>> [accessed 12 September 2017].

<sup>167</sup> Josef Vydra, *Lidový modrotisk na Slovensku* [Indigo Blue Print in Slovak Folk Art] (Prague: Artia, 1954), pp. 20–29.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

upon the creative powers of a people which has long since recognised the great advantages of indigo blue printing and put them to good use in dress decoration'.<sup>169</sup>

The 'creative power' Vydra alluded to was double-layered. The dyers and wood-engravers would produce the colours and patterns; the 'people' would then be able to use these for their own regional and personal decorative choices. Indigo print thus brought together a suitably socialist method of production – rural, accessible and regional – with the virtues of handwork as means of confirming creative authenticity. As well as being popular, the fabric also carried a story of working-class triumph: originally, in the early nineteenth century, indigo blue print had been worn by well-to-do women, until it began to be used by dyers and printers in small towns and entered the domain of the 'poorer country population' – following a Veblen-style model of 'trickle down' consumption.<sup>170</sup> As well as this appropriately socialist narrative, in celebrating the combined skills of various small-scale manufacturers the fabric also supported Czechoslovak modern craft and industrial art notions that privileged a chain of 'organic' making. This is comparable to a model the Heythums called 'mind-hand-tool-labour-finished product'.<sup>171</sup> Such ideals were similarly at the heart of the ongoing pursuit of the combined 'technical' and 'artistic' aspects of crafts and folk production that was outlined in decree 110. In light of all these related factors, indigo fabric was a perfect material – and story – for the folk-modern, small-scale production advocated by ÚLUV.

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. For more on 'trickle down' theory see Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, London: Random House, [1899] 2001).

<sup>170</sup> Vydra, *Lidový modrotisk na Slovensku* [Indigo Blue Print in Slovak Folk Art], p. 7.

<sup>171</sup> Heythum and Heythum, *The Enjoyment of the Arts*, p.155.

In an unusual moment of wonderfully interdisciplinary and tactile publishing, *Tvar* showed its enthusiasm for indigo blue print by including fabric samples in a 1948 issue. Four samples were pasted into the pages [Figs. 18-21], offering evidence of ÚLUV's roots in Decree 110 as both an advisory organisation speaking directly to manufacturers and as an institution to guide the direction of folk craft consumption. The text alongside the fabric samples called them 'interesting specimens of ancient people's work, restored for use in the present era', advising that they could be used for both home accessories and clothing.<sup>172</sup> These fabric pages demonstrate how proximity to the hand and the hand-made was viewed as a virtue – both in terms of cottage industry and, as implied by the above caption, for the potential for the individual consumer to make their own items for their home and wardrobe.

---

<sup>172</sup> Attachment, *Tvar*, 1 and 4 (1948), n. pag.



Fig. 15: 'Sunday dress worn by old women at Polomka – with indigo print skirts and sleeves – aprons, bonnets and jackets are woven and embroidered with red cotton – photo from beginning of this century', from Josef Vydra, *Indigo Blue Print in Slovak Folk Art* (Prague: Artia, 1954), plate 98.



Figs. 16-17: 'ÚLUV Presentation of New Czechoslovakian Fashion (two dresses using indigo blue print), 13<sup>th</sup> May 1948, Prague', from *Tvar*, 1:5-6 (1948),pp. 104-107.



Figs. 18-21: Attachment containing samples of indigo blue print, from *Tvar*, 1:4 (1948), (n. pag.).

## The Fight against Kitsch

As seen in the discussed 'Odmítáme!' column in *Tvar*, the issue of taste, and the practice of traditional or folk crafts as a means of negotiating this territory, was key to ÚLUV's ethos. It also related to the aforementioned spectrum of value on which objects were placed (craft to industry, kitsch to modern, authentic to false, capitalist to socialist, and moral to economic value). The folk blouse [Fig. 14] was directly referred to as *kýč*, without further explanation – but it was not always so simply a binary of 'good' and 'bad' taste. The issue of how to advise on taste in the applied arts, specifically in the context of nationalised production, was frequently discussed in late 1940s and early 1950s Czechoslovakia. Terms such as 'technical' and 'cultural' were reiterated in relation to the aforementioned aim of combining the artistic and industrial. Reference was made in 1948 to the thinking of American writer Lewis Mumford, as well as the 1946 British exhibition *Britain Can Make It* to support *Tvar's* view that national enterprises had to take into consideration democratic, economic and technical needs – but also to consider ethics, morality, and, most importantly, what was loosely described as 'noble aesthetics'. This was in order to rid making and manufacture of 'bad taste and trash', whilst acknowledging that this was a complex issue.

173

Key to *Tvar's* assessment of *Britain Can Make It* was a critical attitude towards the extent to which institutions such as the Council

---

<sup>173</sup> See Otakar Mrkvička, 'Vytvárný hlas o veletrhu' [Artistic Voice on Fair Trade], *Tvar*, 1:1 (1948), 7, and Jar. Masák, 'Co se nelíbilo Angličanům na výstavě "Britain Can Make It"' ['What the English did not like at exhibition *Britain Can Make It*'], *Tvar*, 1:1 (1948), 26.



for Industrial Production involved artists and makers, alongside an admiration for the British awareness that beauty has the same 'worth and significance in life as health, education and safety'.<sup>174</sup> The reviewer asserted that the average man or woman would benefit from this quality as much as any intellectual or artist. A telling focus was given to the actual availability of the exhibited goods, how many firms were involved and what percentage of items could be taken away from the exhibition itself or obtained by the end of the year.<sup>175</sup> The 'national enterprise' was seen to have a significant responsibility for guiding taste, responding to economic and technical needs rather than just creating objects for show. The critic was seen to be needed as much for 'fabric, a tool or a cup' as for fine art.<sup>176</sup> The exhibition, and 'the English', were viewed as pursuing a balance between taste, modern systems and state awareness of the need for the consideration of artistic merit in industrial goods. Looking to Britain and its Utility wares was also indicative of how Czechoslovak discourse took into account the complexities of craft and modernism on an economic scale. As Matthew Denney writes in relation to Utility furniture, the latter was not just about stylistic questions of Modernism or the Arts and Crafts, not 'the result of one particular design ideology,' but 'the result of a complex scheme of rationing... under wartime conditions'.<sup>177</sup> The Czechoslovak situation was equally complex and methods of responding to issues of supply under restrictive conditions were of great interest. These sentiments were echoed throughout the work of ÚLUV in early Socialist Czechoslovakia and continued to be discussed in state publications.

---

<sup>174</sup> Masák, *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>176</sup> Mrkvička, p. 7.

<sup>177</sup> Matthew Denney, 'Utility Furniture and the Myth of Utility 1943-1948', in *The Design History Reader* ed. by Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze (London: Berg Publishers, 2010), p. 148.

Key to these discussions of industry, craft and the arts was the complicated negotiation of taste and kitsch. A satirical cartoon of the time by A. Pelc, published in an issue of the periodical *Kulturní politika* (Cultural Policy) captured this mood. It was entitled 'Looking for the definition of kitsch!', and depicted scientific experts (as indicated by their white coats and measuring device) sitting apparently in a glass dome amidst a heavily industrial landscape in the process of construction [Fig. 22]. Discussions of kitsch at this point were not just associated with recent Nazi ideas of 'degenerate' art, but were also rooted in Czech discourse that can be traced back to 1913. In that year, an exhibition examined taste in reproductions of works by Czech artists influenced by the landscape aesthetic of the late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century artist Bohumil Markalous. Czechoslovak encyclopaedias and dictionaries from the 1920s and '30s defined kitsch as 'pleasing...but without artistic sanctity', using what historian Milan Pech (whose work in this field is extensive) has called a sociologically orientated conception, in which kitsch was low-end and undiscerning, 'trivial', 'broad' and concerned with adapting formal means in order to reach something imitating an artistic work of art.<sup>178</sup> In the 1930s, kitsch was discussed by two influential Czech cultural figures: writer, journalist and psychoanalyst Bohuslav Brouk and writer, critic, and founding member of avant-garde group Devětsil, Karel Teige. In his essay *Poesie 1932*, Brouk put forward the idea of kitsch as the antithesis of art, stating that art made sense of reality whilst kitsch created the illusion of reality, enabling people to *zhlížet* (devour or gobble) the 'beautiful bodies of women, exotic

---

<sup>178</sup> Pech Zdeněk and V. Tobolka (ed.) *Masarykův slovník naučný Díl. 4* [Masaryk's Instructive Dictionary, Part 4] (Prague: Československý kompas 1929), p. 274; Pavel Vášla and František Trávníček *Slovník jazyka českého Díl. 1* [Czech Language Dictionary, Part 1] (Prague: SPN, 1937), p. 889; and František Bednařík (ed.), *Komenského slovník naučný Díl. 7* [Comenius Educational Dictionary Part. 7] (Prague: Komenského Spolek, 1937), p. 13, cited in Pech, *Konec avantgardy?* [The End of the Avant-Garde?], p. 323.

scenery and luxurious palaces'.<sup>179</sup> These ideas were developed by Karel Teige in his 1936 publication *Jarmark umění* (Fair art), based on a lecture originally given in 1933, describing kitsch as a consequence of the commercialisation of art during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Teige's notion of kitsch was based on the Marxist theory of class conflict and distinguished between a hierarchy of art that included *neumění* (non-art), the conservative art created by the bourgeoisie for the bourgeoisie, and a bourgeois art for the people, which he called *kýč*. Teige also identified *podumění* (sub-art), which was an even worse form of *kýč* than 'non-art' in that it was a manipulative form of entertainment which kept people in a religious, nationalistic, militaristic or moral 'hypnosis', 'reinforcing conservative elements in folk and frequently also proletarian psychology'.<sup>180</sup> *Umění* (art), at the top of the hierarchy in Teige's argument, was the avant-garde.

---

<sup>179</sup> Bohuslav Brouk 'Poesie 1932' [Poems 1932-, *Volné směry* [Free Directions] 30: 1 (1933-34), p. 72 in Pech, *Konec avantgardy?* [The End of the Avant-Garde?], p. 323.

<sup>180</sup> Karel Teige *Jarmark umění* [The Art Fair] (Prague: Nakladatelství a galerie Živého umění F.J. Müllera, 1936) p. 50, cited in Pech, *Ibid.*, p. 324.



Fig. 22: 'Hledá se definice kýče!', illustration, from A. Pelc, *Kulturní politika*, III ((1947-48), (n. pag.).

In a 1940 article in publication *Brázda*, Czech artist, critic and Devětsil member Otakar Mrkvička challenged artists to confront the kitsch forms that he saw as problematic amongst industrially produced prints, as well as the works of 'amateurs and forgers'.<sup>181</sup> Mrkvička became a key voice against kitsch during Nazi occupation: by 1946 he associated kitsch with anti-socialist activity in its failure to

<sup>181</sup> Otakar Mrkvička, 'Výtvarná kultura v národě' [Art Culture in the Nation], *Brázda* [Wake] 21:3 (1940), 511–512, p. 512, cited in Pech, *Konec avantgardy?* [The End of the Avant-Garde], p. 319.

articulate 'reality'. In so doing, he aligned himself to the Minister of Education and Culture Zdeněk Nejedlý, a key advocate of Socialist Realism and champion of Soviet policy, who asserted that fascism still existed in Czechoslovakia, despite its military demise.<sup>182</sup> By 1948 this was the official Party attitude to kitsch; that it was, like avant-garde culture, a product of capitalism and a form of falsified reality.<sup>183</sup> The discourse around kitsch continued in 1960 via such texts as 'Pantomime in Bad Taste', a series in living and interiors magazine *Domov* which highlighted objects considered to be 'bad taste', including paintings, furniture and ornaments. In the 1970s the topic was publicly broached again via an exhibition entitled *Co je kýč?* (What is Kitsch?), at the Středočeské muzeum (Central Czech Museum), Prague, in 1978.

In 1948, an exhibition in Brno called *Umění a kýč* (Art and Kitsch) demonstrated how the debate around kitsch was approached in the dawn of the new Communist era. In the same year that *Tvar* published the 'Odmítáme!' column and promoted the objects produced by ÚLUV as examples of the way applied arts and crafts should combine folk and modern aspects in Czechoslovakia, *Umění a kýč* (Art and Kitsch) covered similar themes at the Dům umění (the House of Art) in Brno (9 June – 11 July 1948). Though the exhibition primarily focused on fine art, it referred to applied arts and the work of ÚLUV as a means of illustrating how the relationship between folk crafts and modern art could defend the ongoing role of the modern in a Socialist Czechoslovakia under the new KSČ. Through a selection of inter-war and contemporary paintings, sculptures, folk crafts and applied art, curator František Venera called for Czech modern art to be part of the new socialist 'reality'. Just as Vydra had feared that the

---

<sup>182</sup> Pech, *Konec avantgardy?* [The End of the Avant-Garde], pp. 327-330.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

direct imitation of folk and vernacular forms would result in kitsch adaptations, so the *Umění a kýč* exhibition presented a case for an integrative approach to modern art and design as a means of avoiding 'bad taste'.

The exhibition was part of a series entitled 'Education in Art',<sup>184</sup> and as such had a didactic tone, the main thrust of which was to demonstrate that 'the aim of culture must be the remoulding of man'.<sup>185</sup> It was addressed to collectors but stated that it had a dual mission: to give makers an overview of present endeavours in modern Czechoslovak art and folk crafts, which served as a stimulus for new methods of making, and for the audience and cultural community to reject the 'ballast' (namely kitsch) which Venera viewed as plaguing contemporary culture. In *Umění a kýč*, Venera presented examples of Modern visual art from Czechoslovakia, arguing that their relationship to folk methods and forms rooted in a local proletarian culture denoted authenticity and a connection to 'the needs of every man' whilst, importantly, separating it from kitsch.<sup>186</sup> Venera was intrinsically linked to the Czech Modern art movement as a well-known collector, former secretary of the Group of Graphic Artists in Brno, and author of an influential monograph of Emil Filla, published in 1936. Venera believed that modern art had the power to suppress the 'decadent', 'visual trash' of kitsch that threatens a socialist state.<sup>187</sup> The visual artists he selected for the exhibition

---

<sup>184</sup> The other exhibitions in the series included one on portraiture (4 September – 3 October 1948) containing nineteenth-twentieth century works, with references in the accompanying catalogue to Jan van Eyck, Albrecht Dürer and Hans Holbein and an exhibition focusing on the painting of Lev Šimák (18 March – 27 April 1949), a member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party who had visited Moscow in the 1930s and, though influenced by Fauvism, Expressionism and Cubism, painted scenes of everyday life that fitted the ideological aims of Socialist art.

<sup>185</sup> František Venera 'Nové formy výstavnictví' [New Forms of Exhibiting], *Blok*, 3:3 (1948-1949), 48 [one-page span], 48.

<sup>186</sup> František Venera, *Umění a kýč* [Art and Kitsch] (Brno: Dům umění města Brna, 1948).

<sup>187</sup> Venera, *Umění a kýč*, statement repeated across catalogue cover.

included Max Švabinský, Josef Čapek, Jan Zrzavý, Václav Špála, Josef Lada, Ľudo Fulla, Emil Filla and Joža Uprka. But as well as this fine art section, the exhibition also included examples that were categorised as folk crafts and applied art objects.

Venera claimed that kitsch could only exist under capitalism, and to this effect the cover reiterated the following statement again and again in brown lettering on a cream background, with the exhibition's title in heavy black letters over the top [Fig. 23]:

...Art is possibly a life of beauty and joy. Enrich the environment in which one lives with works of art. Do not encourage the trading of visual trash. Refuse backstreet imitation folk-artistic creations. Buy only valuable originals. Refuse dealers of trash. Before buying, always consult with us or with a professional expert. Kitsch is the product of a bankrupt epoch. Capitalism has no permission in a socialist state. Suppressing Kitsch is one of the great political tasks. Decorate your flat resourcefully with perfect reproductions rather than a bad original...

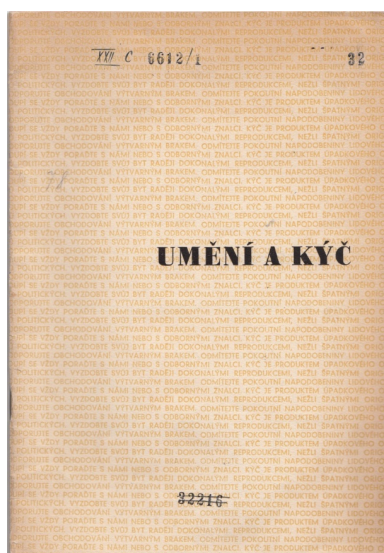


Fig. 23: Exhibition catalogue cover, František Venera, *Umění a kýč* (Brno: Dům umění města Brna, 1948)

In its typographic simplicity the cover recalled the work of Czech inter-war designers such as Devětsil members and Ladislav Sutnar, whose influence was also seen on the covers of 1940s editions of *Tvar* – and, indeed, Sutnar was directly involved in the publishing firm Družstevní práce, which had originally established Krásná jizba (absorbed by ÚLUV).<sup>188</sup> Just as these organisations had sold high quality, well-designed editions of publications and prints, so the ensuing ÚLUV bookshop sold ‘good’ reproductions of works of art for the home. Venera’s warning against ‘bad originals’ and ‘imitations’ continued a narrative of opposition to mass production and its feared pitfalls of poor quality. The Socialist era was for writers like Venera a potential opportunity to promote a kind of higher, authentic art, craft and design that aimed to enrich both the wider cultural field and the consumer’s home. Vydra and the editors of *Tvar* advocated the same ethos. Small advertisements inserted in *Tvar* took up Venera’s call to ‘Decorate your flat resourcefully with perfect reproductions rather than a bad original’: the ÚLUV bookshops sold reproductions of works by Max Švabinský, Václav Špála, Ludvík Kuba and Paul Cézanne and others, as well as Japanese prints.

These decidedly modern works tellingly appeared on the pages of the magazine from 1955 onwards, pre-empting Khrushchev’s 1956 ‘secret speech’ and offering a precursor to a groundbreaking 1957 Brno exhibition in the same location, *Zakladatelé moderního českého umění* (The Founders of Modern Czech Art), that has been credited with marking an opening up to abstraction and a shift away from Socialist Realism as the official style.<sup>189</sup> Švabinský, one of the artists whose work ÚLUV chose to reproduce as a purchasable print, had

---

<sup>188</sup> Lucie Vlčková, *Družstevní práce - Sutnar, Sudek* (Revnice: Arbor Vitae, 2007).

<sup>189</sup> Maruška Svašek, ‘The Politics of Artistic Identity. The Czech Art World in the 1950s and 1960s’, *Journal of Contemporary European History*, 6:3 (1997), 383-403.



remained a popular Czech artist, but Špála, another, was both listed as 'degenerate' by the Nazis during their occupation of Czechoslovakia, and then considered antithetical to Socialist Realism after 1948.<sup>190</sup> As art critic Vladimír Šolta outlined in 1950, this was because Impressionism, Cubism and Surrealism sought to 'construct an art outside reality, to deprive it of its effect as an instrument for enhancing knowledge and transforming reality' and 'covering up class conflicts'.<sup>191</sup> So the inclusion of Švabinský and Špála in both ÚLUV and *Umění a kýč* again connected the organisation and the exhibition in both intent and legacy, as advocates of the modern in alignment with Czech visual art and applied art. Špála had also created work for Artěl, a key organisation in Czech craft history.<sup>192</sup> This serves to support the notion that craft practices and folk associations raised 'less suspicion' than their fine art counterparts.<sup>193</sup>

The folk and applied art sections of the *Umění a kýč* catalogue demonstrate further how these kinds of objects were understood. The first section of *Umění a kýč*, 'Folk Art', included items such as a wooden bear from Malužín, South Moravia, holding a salt-cellar, and a *kraslice* (a traditional painted Easter egg) from Nevšová in the Luhačovice region, also in Moravia. The second, 'Folk Art Production', incorporated samples of work from the ÚLUV showroom in nearby Uherské Hradiště. The third section, 'Applied Art', comprised bookplates, posters and book designs by Josef Čapek and V. H.

---

<sup>190</sup> Pech, *Konec avantgardy?*, pp. 318-319.- As discussed in section 'Historical Events', Czechoslovakia was established as a protectorate of Nazi Germany named the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939-1945) after German occupation of the Sudetenland (1938).

<sup>191</sup> Vladimír Šolta, *Výtvarné umění* [Fine Art], 1:3 (1950), p. 110, cited in Svašek, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity', p. 388.

<sup>192</sup> As illustrated in Pavel Janák, 'Z počátku naší umělecké výroby' [From the beginnings of our artistic production], *Tvar*, 1:4, (1948), 87-94.

<sup>193</sup> See David Crowley, (1998) 'Stalinism and Modernist Craft in Poland', *Journal of Design History*, 11:1 (1998), 71-83 (p. 81), and Susanne K. Frantz, 'Twentieth-Century Bohemian Art in Glass: The Artistic and Historical Background', in Helmut Ricke (ed) *Czech Glass 1945-1980: Design in an Age of Adversity* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, 2005), pp. 14-33 (p. 32).

Brunner. There were overlaps between these items that demonstrated implicit connections to Czechoslovak craft history: the *kraslice* was an example not just of a local folk tradition but also of how such an object was used to demonstrate the hierarchy between good and bad taste. As with the indigo blue print fabric discussed earlier, traditionally *kraslice* had been decorated using a variety of methods – including batik-style waxing, the application of acid, and scratching colour away from the painting shell in order to create colourful decorative patterns – depending on region.<sup>194</sup> Craftspeople in the Luhačovice region, from which Venera's painted egg was selected [Fig. 24], were known for the practice of applying paint with a straw, which explains its thick, dripping line [Fig. 25] as opposed to more finely scratched decorations seen in craft objects from neighbouring regions, which have been compared to needlework [Fig. 26]. (Venera's egg also displays an uncanny likeness to the cartoon-like forms of Jaroslav Brychta's contemporary glass figurines (see Introduction), showing a connection between the stylistic tendencies of humorous depictions in Czechoslovakia at this time and folk imagery.) Historian Josef Jančář has commended such *kraslice*, comparing them to the less favourable 'aggressively multi-coloured' eggs found in areas around Brno, that showed a 'demise' in production quality.<sup>195</sup> From this hierarchy we can deduce that the egg chosen by Venera indicated 'good taste' folk examples, a conclusion supported by his alignment to Artěl members in the 'Applied Art' section of the exhibition: V.H. Brunner also made *kraslice* for Artěl, examples of the 'good' and 'beautiful' objects made by the cooperative [Fig. 27].<sup>196</sup> Painted eggs such as these continue to be

---

<sup>194</sup> Josef Jančář, *Lidová kultura na Moravě* [Folk Culture in Moravia] (Brno: Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost, 2000), p. 221.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>196</sup> Janák, 'Z počátku naší umělecké výroby' [From the beginnings of our artistic production], pp. 87-94.

displayed today in the Ethnographic Museum in Prague as key examples of folk production in Moravia [fig. 28].



Fig. 24: 'A painted egg from Nevšová in the Luhačovice region (Moravia)', František Venera, *Úmění a kýč* (Brno: Dům umění města Brna, 1948), p. 5.



Fig. 25: Batik *kraslice* from Valašsko, c. 1940s, from Josef Jančář, *Lidová kultura na Moravě* [Folk Culture in Moravia], (Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost, 2000), p. 221. Photograph: E. Večerková



Fig. 26: Batik *kraslice* from Vnorov, c. 1940s and 1950s, from Josef Jančář, *Lidová kultura na Moravě* [Folk Culture in Moravia], (Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost, p. 221. Photograph: E. Večerková.



Fig. 27: V. H. Brunner, Painted for Artěl, 1908, from Pavel Janák, 'Z počátku naší umělecké výroby' (From the beginnings of our artistic production)', *Tvar*, 1:4 (1948), pp. 87-94.



Fig. 28: Kraslice eggs, Ethnographic Museum, Prague. Photograph: Author's Own.

The *Úmění a kých* catalogue also contained photographs of printed fabric by František Kaláb, scissors from the School of Industrial Arts in Zlín and a photograph depicting the exhibition *Culture and Living*, also in Zlín [fig. 29]. The latter are undated and without further details, but accompanied by the phrase 'also in art with use is required the partnership of visual artists, who secure the production values of crafted and industrial products'.<sup>197</sup> Venera's terminology paralleled that of ÚLUV and Decree 110, attempting to locate the 'artistic' or creativity as a force that could enrich industrial and applied arts.<sup>198</sup> His phrase for this was 'art with use', a convolution of the Czech term for applied art, *užitě umění* (useful art). In these sections, Venera thus linked the modern with Czechoslovak vernacular histories of folk craft through the medium of a contemporary 'artist' who could to 'secure' the success of small-scale and industrial manufacture of objects deemed 'useful' – a criterion paralleling *Tvar* discussions of purpose and function as antidotes to kitsch.

---

<sup>197</sup> Venera, *Úmění a kých*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>198</sup> Decree 110, I. General Statute, No. 3 (4), p. 257.



Fig. 29: 'From the exhibition *Culture in Living* in Zlín', 'František Kaláb, printing on fabric' and 'Artistic Industrial School, Zlín: Scissors', from František Venera, *Úmění a kýč* (Brno: Dům umění města Brna, 1948), pp. 7-9.

Including work from the Zlín School meant referencing an institution that had been at the centre of design activity during the Second World War. Key developments that would influence post-war Czechoslovak industrial design originated there, an example of which was the 'first model tool by Vincenc Makovský'.<sup>199</sup> As well as being mentioned in articles on the School in the late 1940s,<sup>200</sup> Makovský's work continued to be celebrated in the 1950s and 1960s – his 1942

<sup>199</sup> See Jančář, 'Zvelebování řemesel' [Improvement of Crafts], pp. 22-23.

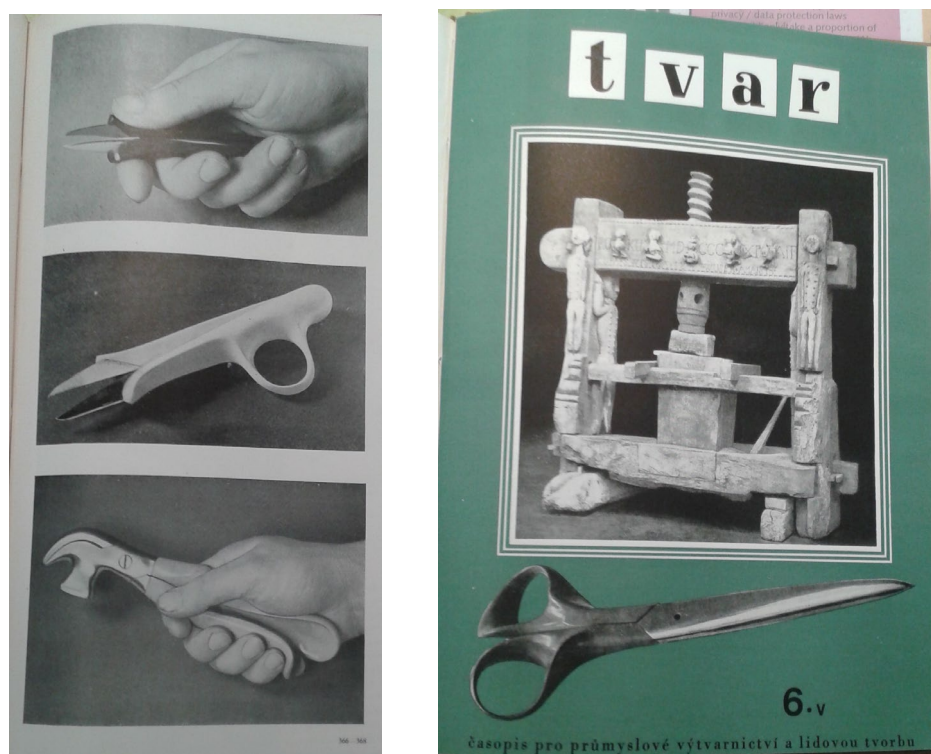
<sup>200</sup> See 'HR' [sic], 'Nový tvar kapesní svítilny' [The New Pocket Torch], *Tvar*, 5-6 (1949), 185 (p. 185).

VR8 model drill was reproduced in *Tvar* in 1953, alongside work by his renowned colleague Zdeněk Kovař, including scissor and hand tool designs similar to those included in *Umění a kýtč*. Their work was admired for its ability to respond to the hand, to its form and movements. As a town greatly expanded by Tomáš Bařa and his renowned shoe factory between 1890s and 1930s, it was a key centre of manufacture. Venera's use of the name Zlín dates the exhibition – in 1949 the city was renamed Gottwaldov after the KSČ President, Klement Gottwald (reverting to Zlín in 1990). The comparison between streamlined tools and folk objects implied by Venera's juxtaposition of these apparently opposing objects continued to be of interest in the Czechoslovak design discourse of the 1950s, as demonstrated by a 1953 article on Makovský and Kovař by theorist and critic Jindřich Chalupecký, entitled 'Sochařství strojů a nástrojů' (The Sculpture of Machines and Tools). The sculptural reference shows the kinship to the artistic in the vocabulary used for machines at the time. The images included in the article demonstrated the organic relationship between the form of the tool and the hand that used it [Fig. 30], recalling the aforementioned interest in the Heythum's writing on industrial arts, but in a specifically socialist context – alongside the illustrations was a quote from Marx's *Das Kapital* that read, 'The productiveness of labour depends not only on the proficiency of the workman, but on the perfection of his tools'.<sup>201</sup> In *Tvar*, the latest tools from Gottwaldov were discussed alongside articles concerning traditional folk tools. This presented the new tools as fundamentally connected to peasant culture and a longer-term history of tool development. In so doing, designs like Kovař's were

---

<sup>201</sup> Karl Marx, Chapter 14: 'Division of Labour and Manufacture', in *Das Kapital Vol. II*, (1894) [publication and edition details not given in citation], cited in Jindřich Chalupecký 'Sochařství strojů a nástrojů' [Sculpture of machines and tools], *Tvar*, 6 (1953), 170-177 (p. 173). (I have translated the quotation according to wording in Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (Washington, D.C: Regnery Publishing, [1867] 2012), p. 184.

aligned with socialist realist narratives – a theoretical rather than formal association that is underlined even today by the inclusion of his work in the Socialist Realist section of the Národní galerie Prague (National Gallery Prague) collection. *Tvar* illustrated the connection by juxtaposing a new pair of scissors next to a carved, wooden traditional press on a 1953 cover [Fig. 31].



Left, Fig. 30: 'Tools by Zdeněk Kovař', from *Tvar*, 6 (1953), pp. 170-177.

Right, Fig. 31: Front cover, *Tvar*, 6 (1953).

Such connections between folk craft and modern form were central to Venera's defence of the role of Modern artists in Socialist Czechoslovakia. He pointed out the direct links between modern painting and folk traditions. For example, the 'simplicity and colourfulness' of a work by Josef Čapek was compared to Czech folk



painting on glass.<sup>202</sup> The economy and harmony of a painting by Jan Zrzavý, the lyrical everyman narrative of Josef Lada and the visual effects and formal methods of Emil Filla – all these characteristics were highlighted in order to demonstrate how modern Czechoslovak artists drew upon traditional and folk influences, thus proving their proximity to the supposed authenticity of peasant or working-class culture<sup>203</sup>. But the objects chosen by Venera to illustrate positive developments in what he calls *lidový umělecký průmysl* (literally, ‘folk artistic industry’) produced by ÚLUV (including kitchenware, fabric, furniture and home accessories) and the School of Industrial Arts in Zlín were included to demonstrate how everyday objects for the home drew upon the forms and techniques of traditional Czechoslovak folk art. The objects made by ÚLUV, in the same way that modern works of art were contrasted with paintings of rustic landscapes, stood in opposition to those objects that he labelled ‘Kitsch as a utilitarian object’. From the illustrations that accompany Venera’s 1949 *Blok* article about the exhibition, ‘Nové formy výstavnictví’ (New Forms of Exhibiting), the latter referred to objects like garden gnomes and highly decorative glasses.

With its catalogue cover declaration, and its juxtaposing of modern art with folk objects and models for manufacture, *Umění a kýč* offered a defence for the continuation of inter-war and contemporary international cultural thinking that was also seen in the pages of *Tvar*. *Umění a kýč* was also an attempt to create a new form of exhibiting that intended to defend this theoretical framework with methods of presentation that would be relevant to the new socialist audience. In the *Blok* article, Venera asserted that it was necessary to find ‘criteria for genuine creativity, in order that artistic production

---

<sup>202</sup> František Venera, *Umění a kýč* (Brno: Dům umění města Brna, 1948), pp. 13-18.

<sup>203</sup> Venera, *Umění a kýč*, pp. 13-18. Also discussed in Pech, *Konec avantgardy?*, p. 321.

is in agreement with the dialectics of social progress and transformation to socialism'.<sup>204</sup> He attempted to make these Marxist aims visible by literally connecting groups of objects with lengths of string, arrows and short texts to call the attention of viewers to the 'dialectics of visual reality', a visual synthesis of modern and folk art that he believed would guide viewers to understand the modern as an antithesis of kitsch [see Fig. 32]. Physical indicators (strings and arrows) highlighted the similarity between formal characteristics of folk and the modern in traditional and modern Czechoslovak visual and applied art, whilst advising the viewing public about potential pitfalls by juxtaposing 'kitsch' items against examples of 'good taste'.

The aims of the exhibition were not dissimilar to the 'Odmítáme!' column, but Venera hoped that his exhibiting method would be a more scientific means of avoiding confusion or a lack of understanding. This was based on the premise that works exhibited alone, rather than alongside comparable works, could only be understood by 'specialists'.<sup>205</sup> In contextualising the works via his diagrammatic model, he believed the viewer would see how modern Czech art was part of a historical process, and therefore offered a means of critically engaging with reality. In its attempt at scientific rationalisation, Venera's model and justification drew upon a Marxist framework but also recalled arch-Modernist rationalised forms of historiography such as Alfred H. Barr's 1936 map of the origins of Cubism and Abstract Art.<sup>206</sup> In fact, František Venera's son Jiří had used the string and arrow connecting technique three months earlier in an exhibition linking Russian folk art with the paintings of Marc

---

<sup>204</sup> Venera, 'Nové formy výstavnictví' [New Forms of Exhibiting], p. 48.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Alfred H. Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936), back cover <[https://www.moma.org/documents/moma\\_catalogue\\_2748\\_300086869.pdf](https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_2748_300086869.pdf)> [accessed 28 August 2017].

Chagall. On that occasion it had been used to argue that the works came from the same vernacular origin, making a case for supporting formalism and subjectivism in modern art.<sup>207</sup>

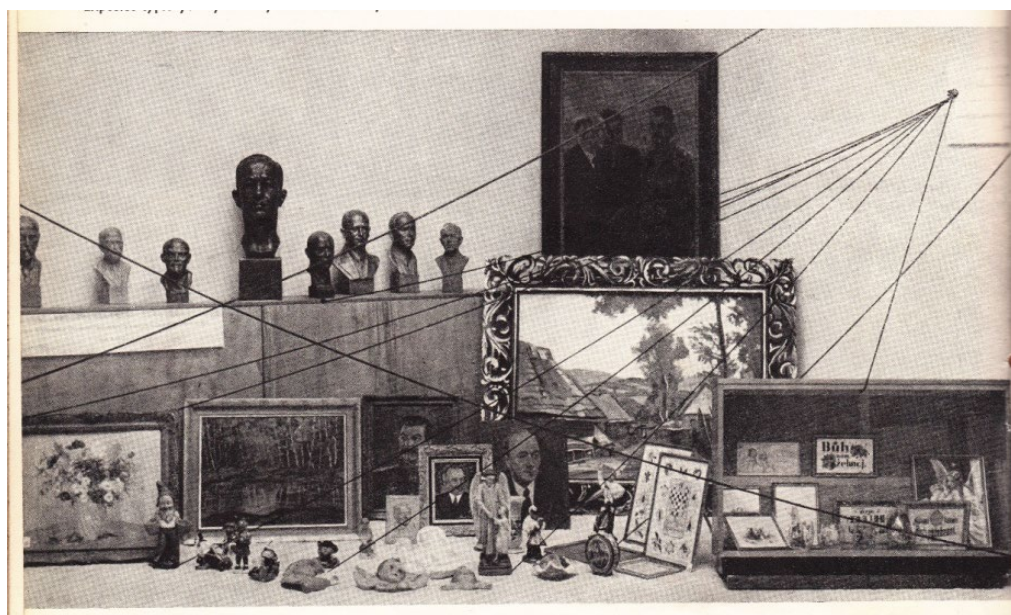


Fig. 32: *Úmění a kýč* exhibition, 1948, photograph, from František Venera, 'Nové formy výstavnictví' [New Ways of Exhibiting'], *Blok*, 3:3 (1948-1949), 48 (p. 48).

The *Blok* image gives an idea of its original appearance [Fig. 32], showing a medley of objects, including busts of political figures, garden gnomes and landscapes, that were considered 'the most glaring examples of common kitsch'.<sup>208</sup> The busts of political figures were particularly contentious, as they were symbolic of recent shifts in the political landscape: President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, first leader of the new Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, had died in 1937 and censorship surrounded reproductions of his image during Nazi occupation.<sup>209</sup> But they also looked to a new Soviet authority by

<sup>207</sup> Pech, *Konec avantgardy?* [The End of the Avant-Garde?], pp. 318-319.

<sup>208</sup> Milan Pech, *Výtvarná kultura Protektorátu Čechy a Morava* (Fine Art in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia), (unpublished PhD thesis, Charles University, Prague, 2012), p. 97.

<sup>209</sup> Pech, *Výtvarná kultura Protektorátu*, p. 64, p. 140.

including images of Lenin and Stalin; these would soon become problematic after Stalin's death in 1953, during the movement against the 'cult of personality' associated with Stalin.<sup>210</sup> But the busts shown in Venera's exhibition were also vehicles of recent discussion around the issue of reproduction: in the 1930s a series of exhibitions had taken place at the influential Topičův salon, the longest-running private gallery in Prague (established in 1894) that had emphasised how busts should be made in small series under the supervision of, and signed by, the artist.<sup>211</sup> The material used for these busts was significant: they should be terracotta, bronze or marble – not, like the ones illustrated in *Úmění a kýtč*, plaster.<sup>212</sup> They were meant to be easily portable too, and affordable, allowing them to be available to a wider audience. All these qualities were those that Venera also promoted in *Úmění a kýtč* – offering an argument for good quality work at affordable cost to the public, in the vein of his predecessors Topičův salon and Artěl (and also demonstrating the overlap between these Czechoslovak organisations and the aims of the international Arts and Crafts Movement).

Venera's argument that modern art could aid socialist reality only if properly displayed, using appropriate exhibiting practices – could, in fact, offer 'authentic' art that challenged the prevalence of kitsch – increases in poignancy when one considers the timing of *Umění a kýtč*. This took place four months after the KSČ gained power, and shortly before the Party's General Congress of 1949 when pro-Stalin Czech politician and journalist Václav Kopecký proclaimed Socialist Realism as the official style. Venera's show would have been one of the last public displays of work by these artists until the 1957

---

<sup>210</sup> Polly Jones *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>211</sup> Pech, *Výtvarná kultura Protektorátu*, p. 156.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

exhibition 'The Founders of Modern Czech Art' discussed earlier. Venera would have had an understanding of the Party-approved move towards socialist realism from recent exhibitions, such as *Obrazy národních umělců SSSR* (Pictures by National Artists of the SSSR), which took place in Prague in 1947 and sparked debate around the direction that contemporary art in Czechoslovakia was taking.<sup>213</sup>

Venera's web-like exhibition display was recreated in the 2011 exhibition *Konec avantgardy?* (The End of the Avant-garde?) at Prague City Gallery, which presented art produced in the period from the Munich Agreement to the beginning of the Czechoslovak Communist government – 1938 to 1948. A section dedicated *Umění a kýč* was researched by art historian Milan Pech, who has brought interests in kitsch and fine art into the fore again in Czech scholarship, but the implications for the sections on applied arts and crafts can be better seen in the context of comparison with contemporary publications on the subject, such as *Tvar*.

### ***Sorela* Tactics and Criticism**

Particular to the late 1940s and the period of Socialist Realism was a tension between Soviet and local (national) interests. Criticality could exist to some degree, and as we have seen this was largely through a discourse around folk and the modern that continued in areas of craft and related considerations of design. A consequence of this was the use of methods of juxtaposition, or the placement of folk motifs, to adhere to socialist realist precepts. Architecture is one example of this, as will be discussed. Vydra and Venera were trying to promote a more integrated approach. By the late 1950s and

---

<sup>213</sup> Pech, *Konec avantgardy?*, p. 329.

1960s, criticism of state tactics would increase, and integration be pursued further (see Chapters Two and Three). But in the late 1940s to early 1950s, it is also helpful to turn to an international source to locate criticism of socialist realist strategies, as will be shown in this section.

Historian Kimberly Elman Zareco has asserted that as an industrialised nation architects in Czechoslovakia focused on formal strategies that appeared to adhere to an acceptance of a Marxist-Leninist approach without losing their own architectural aims.<sup>214</sup> The Czech and Slovak architectural vernacular allowed for this. A direct example of the notion of 'dialectical synthesis of typification and creativity', discussed earlier, outlined in relation to *sorela* by Zdeněk Lakomý, head of the Stavoprojekt architecture research initiative, was his advocacy of standardised housing units in which architectural details were derived from regional traditions. An eighteen-page article in *Architektura ČSR* in 1951 illustrated this synthesis, showing proposals for T-series buildings decorated with vernacular motifs.<sup>215</sup> A fifteenth-century tower and a T-series building, both in Tábor, featured the same vernacular tower detail [Fig. 33A & B]. By directly transposing vernacular detail onto contemporary architecture, Czechoslovak architects implemented socialist realist practices by

---

<sup>214</sup> This reiterates a repeated view of Czechoslovakia's role as an 'industrialised nation', which is often used as a form of defence whereby historians have argued that Communism just didn't 'fit' Czech culture. In the words of Edward Taborsky (former Secretary to the Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia (1938) and Personal Aide to President Beneš during the World War II Government-in-Exile in London), writing in 1961, this was the problematic 'colossal attempt to pattern after the image of [a] Marxist-Leninist *Weltanschauung* the mind and soul of a nation thoroughly imbued with the ideas and concepts of Western democracy' which is a direct result of its industrial nature (Edward Taborsky, *Communism in Czechoslovakia 1948-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 570-571). The industrialised nature of the Czech lands was also used as a defence against Anglo-American assumptions that Czech modern art was a mannerist version of Parisian, Viennese and other western European models – see Jaroslav Anděl (ed.), *Czech Modernism 1900-1945*, (Houston, TX: Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1989). This does not apply to Slovakia, which was industrialised much later, so becomes problematic in relation to generalisations such as Taborsky's, which indicated the whole of Czechoslovakia.

<sup>215</sup> Zareco, pp. 134-136.

quoting local points of reference, an approach that can be compared to the use of indigo blue print in ÚLUV's early dress designs – a 'recontextualisation'<sup>216</sup> of national traditions within the structure of a new socialist style (again, the Marxist-Leninist national in form and socialist in content). In terms of content, sorela was ideologically aligned to the Soviet model in its aim of expressing the 'typical virtues of the new, socialist human being: strength, seriousness, bravery, confidence, simplicity, humbleness, truthfulness, and integrity', and in this it should also be 'joyous', 'gleeful' and 'warm'.<sup>217</sup>

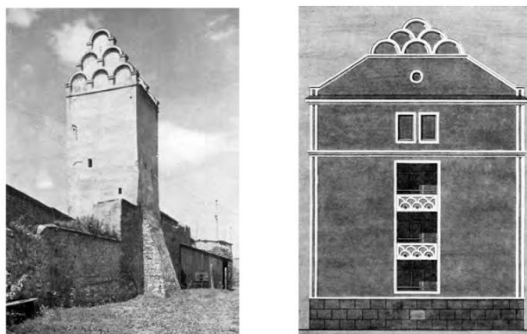


Fig. 33A: Left, Fifteenth-century tower in Tábor, photograph.

Fig. 33B: Right, T-series building with Tábor tower, photograph, both from *Architektura ČSR* (1951), from Kimberly Elman Zareco, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 136 (p. 136).

It was attributes such as these that led to international criticism of sorela by commentators like Deryck E. Viney in a 1953 article

---

<sup>216</sup> As discussed in the aforementioned Kaneff, *Who Owns the Past?*.

<sup>217</sup> Oldřich Starý. 'Poučení architektů z článku J.V. Stalina Marxismus v jazykovědě' [The Enlightenment of Architects from J.V. Stalin's article Marxism in Linguistics], *Architektura*, IX (1950), p. 305, cited in Vybíral, p. 98.

entitled 'Czech Culture and the New Spirit, 1948-52'. Viney was a journalist writing on Czech culture and a translator of political texts for periodicals, publications and the BBC.<sup>218</sup> In this article he analysed the role of the creative artist within the Marxist cultural 'superstructure', outlining the main conditions of art in the Czech context and the consequent 'mediocrity' of socialist realism, with its foundational assumptions of social cooperation and class consciousness.<sup>219</sup> The article explored the ways in which the notion of class conflict had been brought to bear on cultural practices, condemning the indiscriminating ethnographic practices of early socialist Czechoslovakian approaches to vernacular folk culture, and criticising the insipid 'ready-made' touring films screened for exhausted factory workers. Viney wrote of an artificial *lidovost* (a kind of 'folksiness', or popular feeling) in Czechoslovakia, a rhetoric of journalistic positivity that prohibited self-criticality, a kind of insecurity and indecisiveness amongst political authorities, and the replacement of Hollywood and bourgeois commercial banality with a new form of kitsch, namely socialist realism: 'The level of official taste has perhaps sunk lowest in the visual arts, where the emulation of Soviet painting, cartoons and placards has produced an idiom sorely familiar to all who have witnessed a festival or procession in Czechoslovakia since 1948'.<sup>220</sup>

One form of Czech Marxist indecisiveness that Viney highlighted was the definition of the new Socialist hero. Should this figure be

---

<sup>218</sup> Texts that have been translated by Deryck Viney include *The Secret Vysocany Congress: Proceedings and Documents of the Extraordinary Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 22 August 1968* (London: Penguin Press, 1971); Vaclav Havel *Vaclav Havel or Living in Truth*, ed. by Jan Vladislav (London: Faber, 1987); and Zdeňka Fantlová, *Tin Ring: How I cheated Death* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Northumbria University Press, 2010).

<sup>219</sup> Deryck E. Viney, 'Czech Culture and the New Spirit, 1948-52', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 31:77 (Jun 1953), 466-494.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 492.



idealised, or realistic? Soviet Socialism was a march to a potential future, rather than one that already existed – historian Sheila Fitzpatrick has described this as a form of socialist realist aspiration, whereby *kulturnost*<sup>221</sup> pointed the way to successful Socialism and a true image of society in the socialist future rather than the present: ‘If “life as it is” lacked culture and consumer goods, the socialist future promised both to all Soviet citizens’.<sup>222</sup> This was the idea of ‘...depicting reality in its revolutionary development’,<sup>223</sup> based on a selective understanding of humanist traditions and history: the aim for the resulting socialist realism was proclaimed as a ‘new type of artistic consciousness’.<sup>224</sup> This was intrinsically linked to Marxist materialist philosophy and Marx’s 1845 ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ notion that activity played a role in transforming the world in a revolutionary way.

Russia was apparently further ahead in this process: Viney stated that Czech Marxists saw themselves and the other ‘people’s democracies’ as merely in transition, whereas the USSR was ‘completely reborn’.<sup>225</sup> As the alma mater of socialist culture, satellite nations could look to Russia for guiding forms. Therefore, in answer to the socialist hero dilemma, Viney cited a key talk given in 1952 at the Czechoslovak Writers’ Club by Soviet professor Myasnikov,<sup>226</sup> who labelled three types of typicality: ‘mass typicality’, ‘exceptional

---

<sup>221</sup> Sociologist Jukka Gronow defines *kulturnost* as ‘special cultural consciousness’ originating in Russia in the 1930s, where the intelligentsia aspired to a cultured lifestyle of music, theatre, literature, good manners and taste in clothes. Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of The Good Life in Stalin’s Russia* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), p. 147.

<sup>222</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, ‘Middleclass Values and Soviet Life in the 1930s’, in *Soviet Society and Culture: Essays in Honour of Vera S. Dunham*, ed. by Terry L. Thompson and Richard Sheldon (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 20-38 (p. 36).

<sup>223</sup> *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* (1975 text published in 1979 edition)

<<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/socialist+realism>> [accessed 27 December 2015]; ‘The Great Soviet Encyclopedia in English’, *The Russian Review*, 35: 1 (January 1976), 77-93.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> Viney, p. 492.

<sup>226</sup> First name not given, research and discussion with various experts has not clarified this.

typicality' and 'the typicality of the new'. As Viney pointed out, exceptional typicality 'would appear to open a wide door'.<sup>227</sup> Though his statement was intended as mockery, he perhaps identified something that makes this concept more interesting: it does indeed imply fluidity or a wider spectrum – a search for a position between creative, artistic practice and ideological requirements that was central to socialist modernity in Czechoslovakia. It also echoes the terminology of individualisation versus standardisation noted earlier, a spectrum that continued to operate through organisations such as ÚLUV and their contemporaries.

'Mass typicality' applied to socialist realist forms such as the touring films of which Viney is critical, with his accusation of 'ready-made' culture, depicting socialist humanity through supposedly mass-appeal subject matter.<sup>228</sup> These were films that, according to the Stalinist Czech Communist politician and journalist Václav Kopecký, could celebrate the Five Year Plan, and, in showing 'the problems of the struggle of the world front of peace led by the USSR, to the problems of the socialist transformation of our village', present 'the growing heroes of labour and help to re-educate our people into men of a new socialist type'.<sup>229</sup> Viney summarised this movement in film as a means to glorify the wall-slogan mentality of a more 'joyful life'.<sup>230</sup> The audience for the latter was no indication of popularity: Viney saw the films' audiences as trapped by limited choice and utter exhaustion due to heightened demands on productivity in the Cold

---

<sup>227</sup> Viney, p. 489.

<sup>228</sup> Contemporary film examples from this time are discussed by Taborsky include *Warning*, which showed 'the struggle for the Stalin Works, a gasoline plant in Northern Bohemia, against traitors and foreign agents'; *The Churchwarden and the Hen*, 'a story of a farmer's wife persuaded to join the collective farm despite the saboteur efforts of a churchwarden'; and *Katka*, the tale of a naïve country girl who is 're-educated through factory works to become a socialist worker'. (Edward Taborsky, *Communism in Czechoslovakia 1948-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), , pp. 580-581).

<sup>229</sup> Václav Kopecký in *Lidové noviny*, March 21 1950, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 580.

<sup>230</sup> Viney, p. 493; Taborsky, p. 580.

War drive to produce more goods in the economic competition between the Soviet Union and America.<sup>231</sup> For Viney, the direct consequence of socialist realism was kitsch. In his overarching approach, he dismissed the possibility that, although ideologically restricted, it was the engagement with past and current art and craft developments that deserves acknowledgement. In many way Viney's ideas would be addressed ten years later in Czech New Wave film: *Moravská Hellas* made by Karel Vachek in 1963 would satirise just such socialist realist idealisations of rural folk culture, as will be discussed in Chapter Two.

### **Glass and the State: Miloslav Klinger**

The glass figurine was an object that trod a fine line between modern and kitsch. In the 1950s, it was a particularly popular form both nationally and internationally, heavily promoted by the organisation Skloexport, which exported glass. Jaroslav Brychta (discussed in the Introduction) was central to this movement and there was an emphasis on Brychta-esque figures from the traditional glass town of Železný Brod in the pages of Skloexport's international magazine, *Czechoslovak Glass Review*. Attempts to create an appealing, contemporary socialist realist subject matter were seen in advertising in *Tvar*. A 1953 advertisement for PKZ (Pražské kosmetické závody, the Prague Cosmetics Company) entitled 'Women in Socialism' informed the reader that 'under capitalism, only some women have the means to take care of their appearance': under socialism, however, all women can have good cosmetics at affordable prices.<sup>232</sup> Behind a central figure in a white coat holding pots of cold

---

<sup>231</sup> Discussed in detail by Greg Castillo in *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

<sup>232</sup> Advertisement for Pražské kosmetické závody [Prague Cosmetics Company], *Tvar*, 1 (1953), n. pag.

cream were ranged women supposedly from all areas of socialist society: factory and agricultural workers, a secretary, a mother and a rural woman in traditional headscarf [Fig. 34].<sup>233</sup> Such symbols of socialist vocation and fulfilment were also propagated in glass figurines.

---

<sup>233</sup> As discussed in the Introduction, these roles indicate the 'heroic tractor driver' perceived by western audiences as indicative of the 'socialist woman' – discussed by Pavla Frýdlová as 'one-dimensional roles' – see Frýdlová, 'Women's Memory: Searching for Identity Under Socialism', pp. 95-108 (pp. 95-96, p. 101).



Fig. 34: Advertisement for the Prague Cosmetic Company,  
from *Tvar*, 6 (1953), n. pag.

Czech artist Miloslav Klinger (1922-1999), who worked alongside Jaroslav Brychta in Železný Brod, made a series of related forms in the early to mid-1950s, depicting socialist figures in glass. *Girl* (1950), an anonymous rural worker with a traditional headscarf, is dressed in patriotic red and holds a sickle [Fig. 35). All Klinger's

forms share the quality of dynamism inherent in their very material, which was once fluid when in its hot and malleable form. The figure is captured in a breeze, the leaves in the tree above her blowing in the wind. She also holds her skirt down with the sickle – this seems a suggestive pose that indicates objectification: here was a socialist woman who was both a serious worker and potentially available for consumption. Labour was thus eroticised and made more glamorous.<sup>234</sup> Another form of idealised body at this time was the athletic gymnast, and in 1955 Klinger was selected for an important commission to create commemorative souvenir figures for the mass-exercise Spartakiad gymnastic event in Prague. His resulting glass figurines demonstrate a complex point of recontextualisation – in terms of aesthetics, national politics and the history of Czechoslovak glass production.

---

<sup>234</sup> The notion of a 'celebration of hard work [that] helped facilitate the socialist regime's hiding and legitimating the overload of, and discrimination against, women' is interesting to consider here in relation to the glamorisation of labour, as discussed in Frýdlová, *Ibid.*, p. 101.



Fig. 35: Miloslav Klinger, *Girl*, c. 1950, glass. Courtesy of the Museum of Glass and Jewellery, Jablonec nad Nisou. Photograph: Aleš Kosina

Though he is somewhat lost to the main narrative of Czechoslovak glass history, Klinger's impact on glass in the early period of Socialist Czechoslovakia was significant. In 1955, a new development in production was established as a result of Klinger's campaigning: a regenerative pot furnace was built for the use of both

the glassmaking school in Železný Brod and the national glassmaking firm established there, Železnobrodské sklo. This enabled increased income from flame-worked figures and larger furnace-worked pieces: an aspect related to the resulting promotion of the work seen in *Czechoslovak Glass Review*. As head of furnace-worked figurines in Železný Brod from 1956-67, Klinger created larger-scale work for the 1958 Brussels Expo: his crystal figures entitled *The Dance* not only won a silver medal but were also sold by the Skloexport (Glass Export) representative before the event had even begun. Glass artist Jaroslava Brychtová has described Klinger as a 'good member of the Communist Party' at this time.<sup>235</sup> Klinger succeeded the renowned glass artist Stanislav Libenský as director of the important glass school in Železný Brod in 1963.

In 1955, Klinger's gymnast figurines were amongst the designs selected to be sold at the first 'All-State' Spartakiad in Czechoslovakia [Fig. 36]. The Spartakiad event took place between 1st May (International Workers' Day) and 9th May (the anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia from Nazi occupation). The first official Spartakiad had taken place in Moscow in 1928 as a means of competing with the Olympics, demonstrating through synchronised exercise how individuals could work together to form a greater collective: the name referred to Spartacus, Roman gladiator and leader of the slave uprising. The word 'spartakiáda' was coined in 1921 by the Czech founder of the Workers' Federation of Sports Associations, Jiří Chaloupecký: Spartakiad events in Czechoslovakia overlapped with an older form of patriotic gymnastics event, organised by the Sokol movement, founded in 1862. During the

---

<sup>235</sup> From conversation between Tina Oldknow and Brychtová, Feb 11 2004, cited in Tina Oldknow, 'Painting and Sculpture in Glass – Czech Design Drawings from the 1950s and 1960s in The Corning Museum of Glass', in *Czech Glass 1945-1980*, ed. by Helmut Ricke (Stuttgart: Museum Kunst Palast, 2005), pp. 57-73 (footnote 73, p. 73).



1950s, Sokol's activity was completely eclipsed by the Spartakiad events.<sup>236</sup>

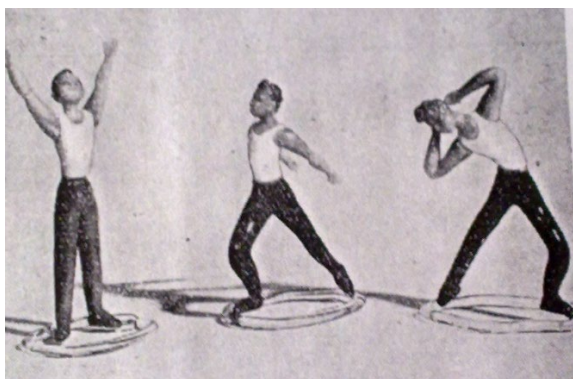


Fig. 36: Miloslav Klinger, *Gymnast figurines*, 1955, glass, from Jindřich Švec, 'Upomínkové předměty pro I. celostátní spartakiádu' [Souvenirs for the First National Spartakiad], *Tvar*, 7:5 (1955), p. 134.

A committee that included representatives of sport, manufacturing, distribution, the Ministry of Culture and the Central Union of Czechoslovak Visual Artists chose works that they felt met the Committee's aims of creating 'tasteful and valuable reminders' of the Spartakiad event for visitors to buy.<sup>237</sup> Criteria included an understanding of the ideological and cultural value of the event as

<sup>236</sup> Vladimír Macura, 'Spartakiad', in *The Mystifications of a Nation: "the Potato Bug" and Other Essays on Czech Culture*, ed. by Hana Píchová and Craig Cravens (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), pp. 92-103 (p. 93).

<sup>237</sup> Jindřich Švec, 'Upomínkové předměty pro I. celostátní spartakiádu' [Souvenirs for the First National Spartakiad], *Tvar*, 7: 5, (1955), 134-137 (p. 134).

well as reasonable production costs. There were three categories of objects: 'utility' objects such as gym shoes and sports bags decorated with the Spartakiad emblem; 'novelty' objects like cigarette cases, wrapping paper, pendants and cups, again displaying the Spartakiad logo, and the category in which Klinger's work belonged – artistic souvenirs such as figurines and posters, which had what was considered a more 'direct' relationship to Spartakiad in that they were inspired by it and would therefore also be able to interpret the ideological content of the celebrations.<sup>238</sup> Described as 'upomínkové předměty', variously translatable as souvenirs, reminders or keepsakes, but also commemorative objects, Klinger's figures were vehicles of both ideology and memory.<sup>239</sup>

A reason that Spartakiads replaced Sokol was not just a case of Soviet 'rebranding', but also due to the political allegiances of Sokol as seen at the 1948 11th Sokol *slet*, as Sokol events are called, which had become a site of political unrest. Strangely enough, English writer Edith Pargeter was amongst those in Prague attending this *slet* and was inspired to write an account of it in 1950, citing the Sokol motto 'Not for Glory! Not for Gain!' – a statement of Sokol's aims of cooperation and self-sacrifice.<sup>240</sup> Pargeter described the mounting tension as the *slet* parades became a demonstration, contributing to the undoing of the Sokol movement. Sokol members called out for former Czech leaders: 'We are the children of Masaryk... All the world knows that we want Beneš back', as Klement Gottwald, the Soviet-backed leader of the KSČ, looked on.<sup>241</sup>

---

<sup>238</sup> English Summary, *Tvar*, 7: 5 (1955), n. pag.

<sup>239</sup> Švec, p. 134.

<sup>240</sup> Better known as Ellis Peters, the English writer of mystery novels, who was also awarded the Gold Medal and Ribbon from the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations in 1968 at a celebration in her honour at the Prague Writers' Club.

<sup>241</sup> Edith Pargeter, *The Coast of Bohemia* (Pleasantville, NY: The Akadine Press, [1950] 2001), p. 187.

Spartakiads and Sokol *slety* both promoted tradition and folk motifs, a revolutionary spirit (Sokol's roots are in the nineteenth-century Czech National Awakening), and athletic endeavour. According to Czech writer on semiotics Vladimír Macura, the differences between the two formations were mostly quantitative: size of event, number of exercises, number of regions involved and the existence of regional Spartakiads.<sup>242</sup> The Spartakiad for which Klinger's gymnasts were created was arranged by organisations that purposefully aimed to dissociate themselves from the Sokol tradition, in a rejection of what were viewed as Sokol's bourgeois associations, forged in the capitalist past. At the 1954 Third National Meeting of Propaganda Instructors, the organisation of the 1955 Spartakiad was accompanied by demands that all evidence of Sokol, which had officially been dissolved in 1952, was removed.<sup>243</sup>

Macura offered a semiotic reading of the gymnasts as 'emblems of work became emblems of beauty, gymnasts became images of flowers, connecting aesthetics to images of labour'.<sup>244</sup> As such, their movements aimed to reach perfection, not repressing actions but ultimately, according to writer Marie Majerová in 1955, 'cleansing' them of 'unsightly involuntary movements'.<sup>245</sup> As Christel Lane later discussed, this was a wider Communist regime technique 'to convince the ruled with the help of symbolic action that reality actually corresponds with the ideological claim', to stabilise power and therefore minimise the risk of violence or radical change.<sup>246</sup> Klinger's

---

<sup>242</sup> Macura, 'Spartakiad', p. 95.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>244</sup> Macura, p. 100

<sup>245</sup> Marie Majerová 'Chvála spartakiády' [Praise of the Spartakiad], in Mucha, *První celostátní spartakiáda 1955* [First National Spartakiad 1955], pp. 7-8, as cited in Macura, p. 100.

<sup>246</sup> Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society – The Soviet Case*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 27, cited in Petr Roubal, 'Politics of Gymnastics: Mass Gymnastic Displays under Communism in Central and Eastern Europe', *Body & Society* 9:2, (2003), 1-25 (p. 11).

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

gymnasts were meant to reflect this stabilising effect. Klinger's figures assume a range of gymnastic poses, thus providing a visual illustration of what Petr Roubal, writing on the politics of gymnastics in Central and Eastern Europe, calls a 'grammar', a 'body language of obedience', to the Socialist mass.<sup>247</sup> In so doing 'it did what all its fascist predecessors did with the same problem: it aestheticized politics'.<sup>248</sup> In reading Klinger's figures in this way, they incorporated both traditional and national narratives (mass gymnastics) and a local material narrative (glass), which made them suitable objects of the *sorela* period.

Klinger's gymnasts also relate to the body in another way in terms of the role of the hand in their making process. Klinger's Spartakiad figurines drew upon the Czech glass craft tradition and the history of flame-worked glass, which is indicative of Klinger's training and Czech context, contrasting with similar figures made in Germany or the USSR, that tended to be porcelain. Discussion of Klinger's Spartakiad works in *Tvar* magazine in 1955 highlighted his connection to Northern Bohemian craft and production heritage, bound to the drive for post-war reconstruction of industry.<sup>249</sup> Just as the Spartakiad events represented an ideal set of forms and platforms for presenting Socialist Czechoslovakia, so did the origins of Klinger's glass figures, made at the *Železnobrodské Sklo* (see Introduction).

Writing in 1955, Jindřich Švec differentiated between the acceptable nature of Klinger's souvenir gymnasts and the contrasting rejected items that were submitted to the selection committee. He describes 'dubious kitschy' things, defaulting to 'tasteless production' by merely attaching the Spartakiad logo to various badly made

---

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>249</sup> Švec, p. 134.

objects to take advantage of consumer demand.<sup>250</sup> One example of this was a *svěrázový* plate, recalling the blouse so dismissed in the 'Odmítáme!' column in *Tvar*.<sup>251</sup> Klinger's practice was at this point successfully positioned in a fine balance between an inter-war history of Czech glass and popular figurine production, and was approved as 'good taste', but this was not maintained. Klinger went from being the first Czech glassmaker to win a State award in 1960, and creating larger-scale commissions for sites such as the restaurant at Hotel International in Brno in 1962, to being forbidden from exhibiting and making his own creations from 1970 due to his active participation in the 14th Special Meeting of the KSCĚ at Vysočany, which condemned the Soviet invasion of 1968. In a context in which materials, especially glass, were not available outside of official institutions, this would have been a grave punishment.

### **A Shining Example: Škrdlovice Glassworks**

After the Second World War, ÚLUV member Škrdlovice Glassworks and its founder, Emanuel Beránek, were given new equipment and facilities as an ÚLUV member and were promoted by Czech craft and design critics such as Josef Raban as an example of a crucial model for convincing industry of the importance of involving artists, and those knowledgeable in the crafts, in the process of design.<sup>252</sup> Between the world wars, glassmaker Emanuel Beránek had worked for the Rudihut glassworks in Polevsko, near Nový Bor, part of the Sudetenland region which was then annexed by the Nazis during the Second World War. Beránek and his wife were forced to return to his home town of Vysočina. After briefly working for the

---

<sup>250</sup> Švec, p. 134.

<sup>251</sup> 'Odmítáme!' [We Reject!], *Tvar*, 1:2-3 (1948), 64 (p. 64).

<sup>252</sup> Josef Raban, *Modern Bohemian Glass* (Prague: Artia, 1963), p. 16.

Karolinka Glassworks, which belonged to the Reich glassmaking company, in 1941 Beránek started his own glassworks near Polevsko with his brothers: the factory was known as Beránek Glassworks until it was renamed Škrdlovice Glassworks in around 1950.<sup>253</sup> Here Béránek used broken bottles and wood ash to make glass from very limited resources and fuel.<sup>254</sup> This history has contributed to a romantic narrative associated with Škrdlovice.

Despite hardship, the factory created innovative and often complex work, hiding imperfections in a bubbly, cloudy glass that had originally been developed in the 1920s by Napoleone Martinuzzi, director of Venini & Cie.<sup>255</sup> The glass was informed and affected by the scarce waste material available during the Second World War, a situation that was seen as advantageous since it resulted in simple, plain forms in soft pastel colours, whose bubbly texture provided enough decoration without the need for painting or engraving – an aesthetic that was seen to make them suitable for the ‘modern flat’, as well as attractive to international markets [Fig. 37].<sup>256</sup> Škrdlovice vases were also bound to the landscape in which they were produced, a beautiful area of Bohemian woodland, which was advertised as a creative influence.<sup>257</sup> Work from this time is rarely available now, and knowledge of the items produced is largely sourced from contemporary photographs and workshop pattern books.<sup>258</sup>

---

<sup>253</sup> Mark Hill, Robert Bevan Jones and Jindřich Parík (eds.), *Beránek & Škrdlovice: Legends of Czech Glass*, (London: Mark Hill Publishing, 2014), pp. 6-7.

<sup>254</sup> Jan Lichtág, ‘Škrdlovické sklo do světa’ [Škrdlovice glass goes into the world], *Tvar* (1948), 111-113.

<sup>255</sup> Hill, Jones and Parík, p. 8.

<sup>256</sup> Lichtág, pp. 111-113.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Hill, Jones and Parík, p. 8.

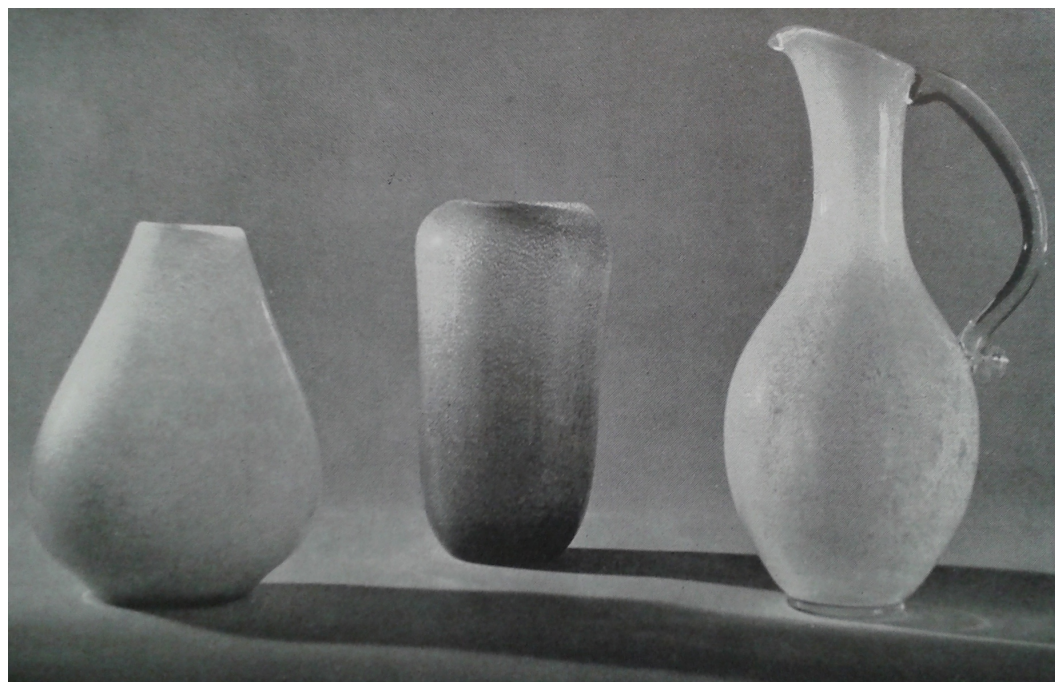


Fig. 37: 'Examples of glass vases from Škrdlovice Glassworks', 1940s, photograph, from Jan Lichtág, 'Škrdlovické sklo do světa' [Škrdlovice glass goes into the world], *Tvar* (1948), 111-113 (p. 111).

Josef Raban later wrote that though the glassworks were enhanced by new technical equipment when they became part of ÚLUV, the production continued along the same lines as before, based on the extensive knowledge of Emanuel, who bought out his brothers but whose family continued to work for the firm.<sup>259</sup> Historian Jan Mergl states that in fact the firm nearly closed under nationalisation in 1948 but was 'saved' by ÚLUV, advantaged by falling under the Ministry of Education and Culture rather than the Ministry of Industry.<sup>260</sup> And indeed, with nationalisation came the involvement of artists, many of whom carried out innovative and beautiful projects; one of these is of particular interest – Jan Kotík, the principal artist and ÚLUV manager who, historian Frantz states,

<sup>259</sup> Josef Raban, *Modern Bohemian Glass* (Prague: Artia, 1963), p. 16.

<sup>260</sup> Jan Mergl 'The Artist and Industry 1945-1965: Conditions, Potentials and Results of the Artist-Industry Relationship', in Ricke, pp. 77-80.

'typified the predicament of an individual wishing to work in a modern style'.<sup>261</sup> Kotík designed rugs, ceramics, jewellery and exhibition installations, and wrote on crafts, glass and the problems of industry. After 1950 he made blown and hot-worked vessels at Škrdlovice Glassworks and with Bor Studios, as well as creating a monumental abstract sculpture for the 1958 Brussels Expo [Fig. 38]. Raban saw the involvement of Kotík at Škrdlovice as 'invaluable', as he and the framework of ÚLUV 'introduced a very intensive method of working and, for that period, an unusually close collaboration of plastic artists with glassmakers'.<sup>262</sup> Raban saw this as resulting in an comprehensive abandonment of 'desk' designing, allowing both artists and glassworkers to explore ideas together.<sup>263</sup> The creativity of the artist and pragmatism of industry were considered combined and Škrdlovice an example of a successful model for Czechoslovak design, drawing upon the craft values of making.

Jan Kotík was also an editorial board member for the magazine *Tvar* from 1948 to 1963, and during the 1940s was a member of the Skupina 42 group of artists. His interest in the theory associated with the role of fine art and applied art objects and their relationships to industry was demonstrated through key essays written on this subject in the 1940s and '50s.<sup>264</sup> As a painter turned glass designer in order to pursue work within the restrictions of Communist ideology, his designs not only drew upon Italian and Scandinavian influences but were so successful that they continued to be produced

---

<sup>261</sup> Frantz, p. 32.

<sup>262</sup> Raban, *Modern Bohemian Glass*, p. 16.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Examples include Jan Kotík, 'Výtvarná stránka předmětu' [The Creative Side of Objects], *Tvar*, 1: 4 (1948), 65-70; 'Výtvarník a kvalita předmětu' [The Maker and the Quality of Objects], *Tvar*, 3:4 (1950), 193-194; 'Člověk jako reproduktor a člověk jako tvůrce: poznámky k X. hlavě Platonovy Ústavy' [Man as Reproducer and Man as Creator. Observations on the Tenth head of Plato's Republic], *Tvar*, 7:10 (1955), 291-292.



into the early 1970s: for example, his 1955 *Vrtulová* (Propeller) vase [fig. 39].<sup>265</sup> According to recent research by glass expert Mark Hill and collectors Robert Bevan Jones and Jindřich Parík, each of the latter was hand-made, varying slightly in every edition, with various colour tones depending on how the glass was mixed on the day of manufacture.<sup>266</sup> Through Kotík, a connection to pre-war Modernist interests and intellectual investigation in relation to the hierarchies of art, craft and industry was directly maintained. But, importantly for their role in a state-run organisation, his work was 'simple to make, so a number would often be made by glassmakers at the end of a day so they could earn a little extra money'.<sup>267</sup> However, despite this the politically fragile context in which they were made is emphasised by the fact that by 1969 Kotík had left Czechoslovakia and fled to West Berlin.

Items produced in Škrdlovice were much sought after and the small glassworks was unable to meet demand, meaning that designs were also transferred to larger-scale corporations. Raban states that this 'convinced economists' of the benefits of artists, designers and glassmakers working together to successfully develop glass.<sup>268</sup> From speaking with an artist who worked for Škrdlovice from 1958 into the 1960s, Vladimír Jelínek, it is apparent that one reason that this glassworks has retained such a strong place in the hearts of those who worked there was also the infectious atmosphere of productivity and exploration created by Beránek, which was 'positive and enthusiastic': when Jelínek and fellow designers took their ideas to show him, he was 'excited about their designs and saw them

---

<sup>265</sup> Hill, Jones and Parík, p. 8.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Raban, *Modern Bohemian Glass*, p. 16.

through'.<sup>269</sup> This activity continued to be supported when the glassworks was absorbed by the by the Ústředí uměleckých řemesel (Centre for Artistic Crafts, ÚUŘ) in the late 1950s, under the leadership of founder Karel Koželka, a furniture designer and design theorist who was also active in maintaining a position for crafts under the pressures of increased mass production.<sup>270</sup>

The ÚUŘ was made up of a membership of tradesmen, with specialist skills and traditions, inheriting the spheres of former guilds and this preserving particular crafts, particularly with the role of repairing historical monuments. The fear under Socialism was that such 'artisans' would be placed in roles in heavy industry. In this respect, the absorption of glassworks like Škrdlovice into the state organisations of ÚLUV and ÚUŘ allowed them to be both held up as examples of production success by figures like Raban, whilst simultaneously 'saving' them from being obliterated in favour of larger-scale manufacture. It was in such locations that a form of individual craft freedom could thus be preserved.<sup>271</sup>

---

<sup>269</sup> Conversation between author and Vladimír Jelínek, 7 March 2014. See Appendices.

<sup>270</sup> See Karel Koželka, 'O nový tvar průmyslových výrobků' [A new form of industrial products], *Tvar*, 1:9 (1948), 216–217.

<sup>271</sup> Information sourced from written answers to questions sent to former head of ÚUŘ, Jaroslav Všečetka, who had agreed to be interviewed but was unfortunately too ill to meet (5 November 2016). (Jaroslav Všečetka, Email correspondence with Rebecca Bell, via Daniela Karasová (5 November 2016)).



Fig. 38: Jan Kotík, *Slunce, Vzduch, Voda* [Sun, Air, Water], 1958, forged iron and coloured glass, 1957-1958, Expo 58, Brussels, from *Glass, Expo '58, Brussels*, from Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* (Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels), (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010), p. 119.



Fig. 39: Jan Kotík, *Vrtulová* (Propeller) vase, 1955, glass, from Mark Hill, Robert Bevan Jones and Jindřich Parík (eds.), *Beránek & Škrdlovice: Legends of Czech Glass* (London: Mark Hill Publishing, 2014), p. 6.

## 1957: A New Decree

In a climate of change in the late 1950s, surrounding the Brussels Expo (to be discussed in Chapter Three) and in the aftermath of Khrushchev's 1956 Secret Speech, a new law abolished Decree 110 of 1945. This was law number 56, *Zákon o umělecké řemeslné práci a o lidové umělecké výrobě* ('for artistic handcraft work and folk art production'), issued on 31 October 1957. According to architect, curator, and former employee of ÚLUV Lenka Žižková, the new decree focused ÚLUV's remit on the preservation and development of folk art production to create designs for larger series of products in the field of textiles, ceramics, clothing, furniture and home accessories.<sup>272</sup> UPM curator and historian Konstantina Hlaváková has observed that the transition of fashion and textiles produced by ÚLUV during the 1950s reflected a gradual increase in a 'more natural attitude towards traditional crafts', as a result of 'a certain political thaw',<sup>273</sup> indicating the changes following the death of Stalin in 1953 and the aftermath of Khrushchev's 1956 speech.<sup>274</sup> In this context, the 'Socialist Realist view of art was no longer presented as the indisputable truth, but came to be regarded as yet another artistic movement that should also be open to criticism'.<sup>275</sup>

Decree 56 demonstrated a shift in vocabulary regarding small-scale production. Rather than '*umělecko-řemeslná*' (artistic handicraft) and '*umělecko-průmyslová*' (artistic industrial) producers, it used the phrase 'artistic handcrafted work' (*umělecká řemeslná*

---

<sup>272</sup> Lenka Žižková, 'Krásná jizba a vše kolem' [Beautiful Parlour and Everything Around], *CZECHDESIGN*, 11 April 2008, <<http://www.czechdesign.cz/temata-a-rubriky/krasna-jizba-vse-kolem>> [accessed 25 February 2013].

<sup>273</sup> Konstantina Hlaváková, 'Ústředí lidové umělecké výroby' [The Folk Art Production Center], Berg Fashion Library online <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/BEWDF/EDch9026>> [accessed 22 March 2014].

<sup>274</sup> György Péteri, 'Intellectual Life and the First Crisis of State Socialism in East Central Europe, 1953-1956', *Contemporary European History*, 6: 3 (1997), 259-262 (p. 261).

<sup>275</sup> Svašek, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity', p. 396.

*práce*) and spoke of 'folk artistic production' (*lidová umělecká výroba*). The introduction to the decree acknowledged that

Artist handcrafted work and folk art production create an important part of our socialist culture and contribute to the rising material and cultural standards of our working people. Is it therefore necessary to produce prerequisites for their preservation and further development in the spirit of socialist principles, which are an integral activity in other fields of creative work, especially also in the field of fine art.<sup>276</sup>

Special attention was then given to the 'choice of workers' who had professional expertise and ideological knowledge.<sup>277</sup> Guidance in 'Ideological supervision' and organisational structure for areas of handcrafts and folk art would be given by the Ministries of Education and Culture.<sup>278</sup> The decree also outlined the establishment of a new specialist organisation for 'artistic handcrafted work': the discussed ÚŘ in Prague, which would exist alongside ÚLUV as subsidiary bodies to the Ministry of Education and Culture.<sup>279</sup>

Artistic handcrafted work was defined as a hand-made (*rukodělný*) means of 'implementing artistic works of creation, decorative and structural art' by workers from relevant occupations, who would use 'classical methods of masterful first-hand techniques or according to designs' (using the Czech term, *návrh*).<sup>280</sup> Within this definition, ÚUŘ would create objects that preserved traditional crafts

---

<sup>276</sup>Decree 56, 1957, Introductory Statutes, First Part, No. 1 (1), p. 277.

<sup>277</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 1, 1 (2), p. 277.

<sup>278</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 2, 2 (1), p. 277.

<sup>279</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3, (1), p. 277.

<sup>280</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3, (5)., p. 277.

and guide research, documentation, and experimentation; support younger generations, ensure sales and 'promote artistic handcrafted work through exhibitions and bespoke specialised publication activities'.<sup>281</sup> Folk art production ('the making of useful artistically rendered objects, predominantly from natural materials' by 'workers, who during their creative work continue in folk art traditions and assert upon their experiences handmade productions of the past'<sup>282</sup>) would be managed by ÚLUV, who could specialise in the cultural and social function of folk art, nurturing the 'correct ideological bearings' and raising the 'standards of folk art production' – with the same requirements in terms of guidance, research, sales and promotion, as ÚUŘ.<sup>283</sup> An additional item was that ÚLUV was tasked with 'materially safeguarding folk art production'.<sup>284</sup> All would be accountable to the Ministry of Education and Culture: finances and membership would be overseen by them, but sales would be overseen by the Ministry of Interior Trade.<sup>285</sup> Section 4, No. 15, specified that the new decree replaced Decree 110 from 1945.

Two key features are different from the 1945 Decree. First, the detailed outlining of how members are selected, their respective nationalities (Czech or Slovak), who they report to and how they are held accountable, all of which were omitted in the 1957 document. Instead, the simple phrase 'Membership in the advisory body is fairly operated' was used wherever relevant throughout the decree, showing the assumption of unquestioned power implicit in the Communist legal framework. The second difference was the division of 'folk art production' (or literally, folk artistic production, *lidová*

---

<sup>281</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3, (6), (a) to (e), p. 278.

<sup>282</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3 (7), p. 278.

<sup>283</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3 (8), (a) to (f), p. 278.

<sup>284</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3 (8), (e), p. 278.

<sup>285</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3 (14), p. 279.

*umělecká výroba*) from 'artistic craft work' (*umělecká řemeslná práce*). In 1945, these were fused together as forms of domestic practice, though works of purely 'artistic' (non-functional) merit were identified as separate: in 1957, all categories were encouraged to work together in collaboration, including fine art. First, artistic craft work was defined as needing to be the handmade (*rukodělný*) implementation of artistic works of creation, decorative and 'structural' art, made by workers from occupations which created these works using basic classical methods of 'masterful first-hand techniques', or made them according to designs.<sup>286</sup> Here the term *návrh* is used: this can be more directly translated as 'plan', since at this point the English word 'design' was used only in translated texts rather than as a critical term – the latter would be questioned in theoretical essays from the mid-1960s.<sup>287</sup> The decree then defined folk art production as the making of useful, artistically rendered objects, made predominantly from natural materials, by workers who through their creative work continued folk art traditions and built upon their experience of hand-made processes from 'the past'.<sup>288</sup>

An issue of *Tvar* published in 1958 was dedicated to explaining the status of ÚLUV and the legal transition. In 'Nová právní norma' (A New Legal Norm), Jaroslav Hendrych explained that the 1945 decree no longer applied, due to the 'extensive changes' of the intervening years, and established both the 'Central Office of Popular Art Manufacture' (as the English summary reads – meaning ÚLUV) and

---

<sup>286</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3 (5), p. 277.

<sup>287</sup> In 1965 the historian, curator and theorist Milena Lamarová wrote about 'planners of industrial products' (in 'O citech a tradicích' – 'On Sense and Tradition'), for which she used the new phrase *designer* (designer), anticipating her later discussions of the English term design, not used before in the Czech context. Lamarová, 'O citech a tradicích' [On Sense and Tradition], in *Menschen und Dinge* [People and Things] (Prague: [publisher not provided], 1965), reproduced in Hubatová-Vacková, Pachmanová and Pečinková, *Věci a slova*, pp. 459-464.

<sup>288</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3 (7), p. 278.

the 'Central Office of Artistic Crafts' (ÚÚŘ) were under the Ministry of Education and Culture, which would be 'trusted with the care of the development of these two fields of our material culture'.<sup>289</sup> The priority for ÚLUV's role was more firmly the interaction with industrial production, considering the preservation of folk culture and crafts, but in a way that would further its development with an emphasis on 'useful function'. As Josef Raban wrote, in the same issue of *Tvar*: 'Popular manufacture has mainly a predominantly handmade character and therefore cannot compete financially with industrial manufacture', so the focus was on how the objects made by ÚLUV could be financially feasible.<sup>290</sup>

Raban's proposed in 1958 that a division could be made between items for the museum and those for daily life. Souvenirs such as dolls should be kept as they were, museum-like, since they were meant to be a kind of replica of past national costume, but other items, such as fabric, lace, wicker, embroidery and leather-work, should fit into industrial contexts – like the modern home, where they could be added as a furnishing fabric, or used as material for a dress [Fig. 40], as a plate or bowl, a wine holder, coaster or place mat [Fig. 41]. The key to achieving this was to draw 'on popular motifs and technique, [transforming] them, however, in quite a personal way'.<sup>291</sup> Significantly, in this issue the makers of the items were associated with specific components of the making process rather than just naming them as by ÚLUV – or as one representative from the organisation (see illustration captions e.g. Fig. 40), as had previously been the format in early 1950s and late 1940s issues of *Tvar*. This also showed the reader that one item could originate from

---

<sup>289</sup> Jaroslav Hendrych, 'Nová právní norma' [A New Legal Norm], *Tvar*, 9: 10 (1958), 290 (p. 290).

<sup>290</sup> Josef Raban, 'Pro museum či pro život?' [For the Museum or for Life?], *Tvar*, 9: 10 (1958), 291-303 (p. 291).

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.



several places, the design, fabric and making process taking place in workshops across Czechoslovakia. So the idea of 'personal' was not just the consumer but the named maker or artist. This sets the tone for the ways in which 'individualisation' would be a key aspect of socialist modernity and its humanisation in the 1960s, as will be discussed in Chapter Three.



Fig. 40: Dress with indigo blue print fabric by Zdenka Gottwaldová (ÚLV, Prague); pattern by Anoška Eberhardtová ÚLUV, Uherské Hradiště); made by František Joch (ÚLUV, Strážnice), 1958, from Vladimír Bouček 'Výzkum a vývoj ÚLUV' [The Research and Development of ÚLUV], *Tvar*, 6:10 (1958), 304-315 (p. 306).



Fig. 41: 'Jan Kalous [Wicker wine holder], ÚLUV, Uherské Hradiště, made in the workshops in Brumovice, 1957, Photo M. Šotola', from Josef Raban, 'Pro museum či pro život?' [For the Museum or for Life?], *Tvar*, 6:10 (1958), 291-303 (p. 296).

Raban's differentiation between the objects described was epitomised in a 1958 advert for shop chain *Krásná jizba* (Beautiful parlour), which depicted folk dolls alongside an image depicting a modern room containing modular furniture. The room also displayed objects showing folk influences, such as a traditional plate on the wall

and an embroidered mat on the coffee table [Fig. 42]. We can see the contrast to an earlier ÚLUV advertisement from 1955, which heaped up folk pottery and fabric as a still life [Fig. 43]. The 1958 advertisement shows that the method of exhibiting via a show flat or room was beginning to be accepted practice by that point, using an imaginary domestic context for ÚLUV's wares. This method of display was important as alternative approaches were believed to be problematic. A short critical piece on a touring exhibition of ÚLUV's work visiting 'industrial cities', in 1956 underlined this emphasis. The English version (as opposed to the exhibition's visit to the GDR and Belgium in the same year) was criticised for displaying the exhibits so badly that the viewer would never be able to understand the purpose of ÚLUV's objects, as an important part of their identity.<sup>292</sup> Images from the English exhibition showed the items heaped up without context [Fig. 44]. In many ways this was reminiscent of Venera's earlier methodology: the modern context for the folk object was a means of understanding and promoting its continued relevance and purpose in socialist everyday life. But in the inclusion of folk-influenced craft objects in the modern room arguably became an addition or a decorative extra to promote the socialist agenda.<sup>293</sup> Attempts to locate a place between modern and traditional forms recalled Vydra's 'happy medium', taking the concerns of ÚLUV and its activities into the wider, representative domestic sphere, as will be discussed in relation to the site of the 'show flat', in Chapter Three.

---

<sup>292</sup> Raban, 'Pro muzeum či pro život?', p. 316.

<sup>293</sup> Using Glenn Adamson's notion of craft as decorative or 'supplemental', which he relates to the idea of a Derridean 'lack', see Adamson, *Thinking through Craft* (London: Berg, 2007), p. 11. .



NÁBYTEK A BYTOVÉ DOPLŇKY VÁM DODAJÍ

**KRÁSNÉ JIZBY ÚLUV**


PRAHA II, Národní 36  
 BRNO, náměstí 25. února 20  
 KARLOVY VARY, Vřídelní 1  
 OSTRAVA, Dimitrovova 35  
 BRATISLAVA, Molotovova 10

*V našich prodejnách naleznete i modelovou konfekci, módní doplňky a dárkové předměty – pro sběratele a návštěvníky z ciziny krajové loutky ze všech krajů CSR*



TVAR, měsíčník Ústředí lidové umělecké výroby. Řídí vedoucí redaktor Josef Raban. Redakce a administrace Praha II, Národní třída 36, telefon redakce 230-590, telefon administrace 231-405. Vychází 10 čísel za rok. Novinová sazba povolena ředitelstvím pošt. v Praze, č. j. IA-Gre-2372-OB ze dne 8. I. 1948. Dohledací poštovní úřad 022 – A-10487

Fig. 42: Advertisement for 'Krásné jizby ÚLUV' [Beautiful Parlours of ÚLUV], depicting show interior containing ÚLUV wares and folk dolls in inset image, from *Tvar*, 6:10 (1958), n. pag.



**PRODEJNY ÚLUV**

Ústředí lidové a umělecké výroby zřídilo výběrové prodejny výrobků tradiční lidové výroby a řemesel. V prodejnách dostanete lidovou keramiku, výrobky ze dřeva, proutí, orobince a slámy, vyšívané stolní prostírání, halenky, dívčí a dětské šaty zdobené výšivkou nebo krajkou, ručně tkané látky, ručně tištěné tkaniny, kroje a krojové součástky, paličkováné krajky, pletené zboží, hračky a krojové loutky, kraslice a lidové pečivo, malůvky na skle, výrobky z perleti a jiné.

*Ústřední prodejna Praha I, Národní 37 (Platýz)*

PRAHA II, Národní 36	BRNO, Nám. 25. února 20	OSTRAVA, Dimitrova 35	KARLOVY VARY, Vřelá 1
-------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

T V A R, měsíčník Ústředí lidové a umělecké výroby. Řídí vedoucí redaktor Josef Raban. Redakce a administrace Praha II, Národní třída 36, telefon redakce 237-595, telefon administrace 237-962. Vychází 10 čísel za rok. Novinová sazba povolena ředitelstvím pošt v Praze, č. j. 1A-Gre-2372-OB ze dne 8. 1. 1948. Dohledací poštovní úřad Praha 022. — A 09783

Fig. 43: Advertisement for items 'Prodejny ÚLUV' [Purchasable from ÚLUV], from *Tvar*, 8 (1955), n. pag.



Fig. 44: 'Instalace výstavy československé lidového umění v Anglii, 1956'  
[Installation of the exhibition of Czechoslovakian folk art production in England,  
1956'], from *Tvar*, 6:10 (1958), n. pag.

The touring exhibition and the interest in its reception in Western Europe indicated a shift in emphasis as a result of the 1957 decree. Whereas Decree 110 had discussed 'native' practice, and in the years following its implementation in Socialist Czechoslovakia, as discussed, regional and local form had been the focus within the Socialist Realist agenda, the 1957 Decree marked an increasing interest in the international folk form as a kind of universal motif for industrial production. Raban stated that the 'basic principles of popular manufacture are the same in the whole world',<sup>294</sup> and an article by Vladimír Bouček in the same year pointed out (without a clear source) that 40% of products being manufactured in Czechoslovakia were folk art products, and within this 25% were Czechoslovakian and 15% 'foreign'.<sup>295</sup> He continued that working alongside 'friendly countries' and gaining acquaintance with their 'popular production' was the way forward.<sup>296</sup> In the late 1950s and 1960s, Czechoslovak magazines such as *Domov* (for whom Raban wrote extensively) would look to Poland, Russia and Hungary, but also Vietnam, China and Japan, as will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Like Venera and Vydra, Raban saw folk culture and traditional, local methods of craft as a means of improving both contemporary Czechoslovak craft and design – for him, this meant improving industrial design through craft values. This was valued because of attributes such as a slow production logic, formed over time, that allowed for 'technical ethics' and values of 'truthfulness', that then related to specific places and traditions – responsive to need and usefulness, and closely associated with material. These were the

---

<sup>294</sup> Raban, 'Pro museum či pro život?' , p. 291.

<sup>295</sup> Vladimír Bouček, 'Výzkum a vývoj ÚLUV' [The Research and Development of ÚLUV], *Tvar*, 9: 10 (1958), 304-315 (p. 306).

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

kinds of values Raban saw as yardsticks for small-scale, but also, eventually, industrial production. It was this power that Decree 110, in 1945, attempted to harness and support through the centralised membership of small-scale applied art manufacturers and workshops – cottage industry (*domácký průmysl*). Raban positioned these localised methods as oppositional to interests in the classical, arguing for an integrated form of craft methodology in industry that resonated with Herbert Read's critiquing of 'the superficial styles and mannerisms of the Renaissance tradition or ornament' in 1934.<sup>297</sup> Read's thinking was of interest in Czechoslovakia, and an earlier 1948 *Tvar* article had analysed a visiting lecture delivered by him in that year – Read was admired for his critical and poetic sensibilities, his wide knowledge of world culture, and for his texts *Education through Art*, *Art and Industry* and *Art and Society*. Of particular continued interest, as also seen in 1960s editions of *Domov* magazine, was how administrative structures worked within the British Council of Industrial Design and Society of Industrial Artists, and the 'new terminology' that could combine purpose, manufacture and art – 'industrial design'.<sup>298</sup> <sup>299</sup> As the late 1950s progressed and 1960s commenced, this territory would have a greater focus, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. The Socialist Modern was grounded in such debate.

---

<sup>297</sup> Herbert Read, 'Introduction', *Art and Industry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), p. 7.

<sup>298</sup> P. Kotíková, 'Herbert Read, O umělecké výrobě v Anglii' [On Industrial Arts in England], *Tvar* 1:1, (1948), 50 (p. 50).

<sup>299</sup> Czechoslovak textiles – and in particular, indigo blue print – were of interest to British craft and design circles during the Socialist period. Example exhibitions and publications include Linda Brassington and Monique Fuchs, *Indigo Country Cloths and Artefacts from Czechoslovakia*, (Surrey: James Hockey Gallery, 1987) and Frank Lewis, *Czechoslovak Textiles* (Leigh-on-Sea: Survey of World Textiles, 1962).



## Conclusion

From 1948 to 1957, definitions of the handmade, applied arts and small-scale manufacture – all aspects of craft discourse – transitioned from responses to the official style of Socialist Realism to a closing, and then opening, discourse around modernist interests. The establishment of ÚLUV in 1945, and the terminology used in Decree 10, was relevant to this direction. These were overlapping spheres, which continued momentum from the interwar period. Folk crafts played a key part in attempts to locate a new ‘style’ that looked to local traditions whilst fitting the wider international criteria of Socialist Realism. There was an ongoing dynamic relationship between folk and modern influences, recalling interwar discussions around craft. Vydra’s aim for a ‘happy medium between the folk and the modern’ was echoed across differing realisations, from textiles, to architecture and exhibition making, related to ideas of ‘dialectical synthesis’. The local was recontextualised, whether a Tábor vernacular detail on a T-series building, or the way indigo print drew upon regional textile methods.

Viney’s term ‘exceptional typicality’ seems to also describe this synthesis, the attempts to harness creative authenticity via folk craft methods to create new ‘types’ for socialist life. But he missed the debate and questioning taking place in public forums like *Tvar*. Kitsch was part of the debate, reaching back to the early twentieth century. Through ÚLUV’s process of utilising folk and handcrafted methods as tactics to remain aligned to socialist aims whilst continuing an interest in international modernist characteristics, figures like Vydra and Venera believed folk crafts were ‘elevated’. Simultaneously, craft, fine art and design, benefitted from technical and material understandings of folk production: in *Umění a kýč*, local folk objects,

folk art production and applied art, shared craft attributes. They were connected to the hand and an authentic individual making process, thus (echoing the terms of Decree 110) benefitting from the association with an enriching 'artistic' force. Folk tools were used to show how designed objects were endowed with craft values, intrinsically connected to the hand, as well as linked to Marxist ideas of productiveness.

Such attributes were positioned in contrast to the supposed tastelessness and wastefulness of kitsch. *Tvar* aimed to educate its readers on taste and material thriftiness. Through all of the discussed examples runs a current of didacticism. ÚLUV was seen to 'relieve' workers from their custody of production and the 1945 decree emphasised 'healthy development' through creating structures of support for small-scale applied art manufacture. Craft was a 'distinctive' form of expression, but with the intention of being economically fruitful in its potential as a model for industrial standardisation, particularly amidst fears that Czechoslovakia would lose its footing in world markets if they did not follow international trends. Methods of display continued to be important didactic methods, from Venera's strings to criticism of the way in which the English ÚLUV exhibition was arranged, embedding folk and handcrafted influences against ideas of the modern.

The notion of a socialist hero and connected typification was also seen in gendered work and public roles, as shown in the 1953 Prague Cosmetic Company advert. Klinger's 1950s' figurines similarly demonstrated how the body was part of the socialist realist narrative and available for consumption, eroticising ideas of socialist labour. Klinger's glass spartakiad figures were also intended as a stabilising 'interpreter' of the ideological meaning of the mass gymnastics,

recontextualising mass exercises away from earlier Sokol traditions towards Socialist spartakiada. As objects, they were heralded as alternatives to kitsch. Like indigo fabric and the discussed painted eggs, glass figurines forged connections between interwar interests and the Socialist period, combining narratives of localised production and national manufacturing success – this time through the glass industry. Škrdlovice shows how the protective role of ÚLUV, as outlined in Decree 110 and *Tvar*, was that smaller-scale production allowed specialist workers to pioneer models which convinced wider design industry of the importance of the role of artists and creative practice. This held an implicit plea away from mass industrial production and in favour of craft.

The end of the 1950s saw a legal division in handmade production, via the new Decree 56 (1957) which superseded Decree 110 (1945). The delineation of 'folk art production' from 'artistic craft work' was new. An emphasis was placed on working collaboratively across media. ÚLUV would now be responsible for preserving folk culture and its handmade, material attributes in direct dialogue with industrial design and ideas of function. The consequences for state projects, as well as wider shifts in attitudes towards the folk associations of craft and the changing political climate of the early 1960s, will be explored in Chapters Two and Three.

## **Chapter Two – Folk Fever and the Bureaucratic Machine in early 1960s Czechoslovakia**

### **Chapter Overview**

In the early 1960s, neo-Marxist philosophical debate questioned the bureaucratic processes of Socialism and the role of the individual in the context of de-Stalinisation. This chapter turns to a 1963 Czech New Wave film called *Moravská Hellas* (Moravian Hellas), made by Karel Vachek, to understand the position of folk craft traditions in relation to this changing political and philosophical climate. The film provides a critical attitude towards both the state's promotion of folk practices and related ethnography as a means of promoting socialist ideology. Vachek portrayed contrasting attitudes towards making for the state as well as ways in which folk craft methods were pivotal to state identity. The latter interest continues themes discussed in Chapter One, but *Moravská Hellas* will be explored as a critique of state promotion of folk crafts. A description of the film will foreground an investigation of contemporary debates around politics, philosophy, literature and art, particularly in relation to the writing of Czech Neo-Marxists Ivan Sviták and Karel Kosík, and a resurgent interest in writers Franz Kafka and Jaroslav Hašek. An important source for this chapter is also Karel Vachek himself, whose interview offers further insight into the film and its context. The chapter explores the wider cultural context in which folk craft practices became a site of criticism and controversy in Vachek's film, before returning to considerations of specific characters and scenarios presented in the film. In looking through this wider lens at a film around folk craft, this chapter offers

a deeper critical reading of ideas concerning the agency of individual makers and their relationship to the state and socialist ideology.

## Introduction

In the latter half of Chapter One, I discussed decree number 56, *Zákon o umělecké řemeslné práci a o lidové umělecké výrobě* ('for artistic handcraft work and folk art production'), issued in 1957 to replace its 1945 predecessor. An emphasis in the new decree was placed on the ways in which a centralised organisation could consider the virtues of craft, such as authenticity and associations with folk tradition, to provide an impetus and guide for both small-scale and wider industrial production. Feasibility and economic value was central to this drive. As Josef Raban wrote, 'Popular manufacture has mainly a predominantly handmade character and therefore cannot compete financially with industrial manufacture', and so ways methods were sought to incorporate the 'character' of craft into objects for the modern home.<sup>300</sup> Raban made a distinction between items for the museum (such as dolls in national costume), and those for everyday life (objects made from fabric, lace and wicker; embroidery and leather-work), that should be considered as models for a wider industrial potential (furnishing fabrics, dresses or domestic crockery). The use of 'popular' or folk craft methods would be the quality that transformed these into something 'personal' for the consumer.<sup>301</sup>

Approaches to folk and popular craft methods such as Raban's were central to the state publications produced by organisations like ÚLUV. As such, his publications and writing for magazines like *Tvar*

---

<sup>300</sup> Josef Raban, 'Pro museum či pro život?' [For Museum or for Life?], p. 291.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid, p. 320.

offer the present-day scholar a nuanced but essentially optimistic view of how traditional craft methods could be integrated into Socialist production in order to meet ideological requirements. In order to gain insight into an alternative viewpoint that goes beyond the often rhetoric-heavy nature of such official discourse, in this chapter I wish to turn to a point of conflict in relation to the ways in which state organisations centralised folk traditions and crafts, a challenge to the dominance of these narratives and characteristics, to question what the resulting tension reveals in relation to the role of making in Czechoslovakia at this turning point when the 'thaw' began to be felt in real terms.<sup>302</sup> In order to do this, I will focus on Karel Vachek's 1963 film *Moravská Hellas*,<sup>303</sup> which took as its subject the way in which folk traditions were advocated within cultural products and events, or activities, promoted by the Communist authorities.

*Moravská Hellas* is a part-fictional, part-documentary approach to an annual folk festival in the rural Moravian town of Strážnice. It is a critique of the restrictive ideological and quantitative demands of Czechoslovakia's centralised state, highlighting the fetishisation of folk culture. The film offers insight into attitudes to making in Socialist Czechoslovakia, providing a platform from which Czechoslovak craft and design discourse in the early 1960s can be understood and analysed. The film also throws into question the role of individual maker as either victim or perpetrator of Socialist ideology. *Moravská Hellas* reveals a great deal around the classification of ethnography and the Marxist-Leninist utilisation of folk tradition. Whether inadvertently or not, Vachek's film demonstrates the complexity of creativity in Socialist Czechoslovakia.

---

<sup>302</sup> As discussed in the Introduction, the term 'thaw' refers to the wider Khrushchev Thaw, seen as originating in the 1956 speech given by First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, at the 20th Communist Party Congress

<sup>303</sup> A reference to the term *Hellás*, meaning Ancient Greece, as symbolic of an idealised civilisation.

Vachek's folk craft-making and singing small-town characters are often absurd; cinematic techniques such as montages of folk and technological imagery create a nonsensical disorder; folk and modern objects are juxtaposed in the home as allusions to mental confusion around Socialist reality. *Moravská Hellas* is a clear example of early Czech New Wave cinema. Thematically, technically and philosophically it is also deeply indicative of the shifting politics of the era in which it was made and questions ideas of illusion, delusion and inauthenticity.

In Chapter One, legal decrees, magazines and exhibitions were explored to show how approaches to Czechoslovak traditional craft practices, and associated folk traditions, were employed by state organisations. *Moravská Hellas* questions what Vachek portrays as the typification of rural traditional material cultures in Socialist production. As such, it was intended as a criticism of Marxist-Leninist ideology, particularly the tropes of *sorela* and its imposition of folk motifs, techniques and behaviours – viewed by Vachek as empty quotations whose sole purpose was to assert Communist hegemony. The film was a controversial take on its subject, and as such was indicative of the atmosphere in early 1960s Czechoslovakia, where the impact of de-Stalinisation was finally being felt. A key influence in this chapter is the writing of Peter Hames, who has looked at the literary and philosophical activities of the early 1960s and their impact on Czech New Wave film. It is a reading that allows greater understanding of Vachek's *Moravská Hellas*, to which Hames did not directly apply these notions, but which are highly relevant and demonstrate the wider context of Vachek's satire.

## Czechoslovak New Wave Film and *Moravská Hellas*

The Czechoslovak New Wave film movement, called the 'Czechoslovak Film Miracle' at the time, is credited as beginning with Slovak director Štefan Uher's 1963 film *Slnko v sieti* (The Sun in a Net).<sup>304</sup> Over the next five years, around 60 films were made by filmmakers like Věra Chytilová, Jiří Menzel, Miloš Forman and Jan Němec, gaining international renown – Menzel's 1966 film *Ostře sledované vlaky* (Closely Observed Trains), based on the novel by author Bohumil Hrabal, won Best Foreign Language Oscar in 1968. Czech director Karel Vachek's *Moravská Hellas* was one of the early New Wave films and shared their reputation as 'decadent, pessimistic and reactionary'.<sup>305</sup> The films often cast non-professional actors, used dark humour, surrealist methods and critiqued systems of authority. *Moravská Hellas* displayed all of these characteristics, as will be discussed. Vachek studied alongside many other New Wave filmmakers at FAMU in Prague (Filmová a televizní fakulta Akademie múzických umění v Praze, The Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague), filming in the nearby state-run Barrandov Studios. Vachek was expelled for his last project, a film about the secret police during World War Two, but returned to graduate with *Moravská Hellas*. In 1965, Italian film critic Lino Micciche called Czechoslovak New Wave a 'phenomenon of international significance with an importance reaching well beyond cinema'.<sup>306</sup> New Wave was

---

<sup>304</sup> Robert Buchar, *Czech New Wave Filmmakers in Interviews* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2003), p. 9.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>306</sup> Ivan Sviták, *Lidský smysl kultury* [The People's Meaning of Culture] (Prague: Čs.spisovatel Prague, 1968) p. 52, cited in Peter Hames, 'Alienated Heroes: Marxism and the Czechoslovak New Wave' in *Marx at the Movies: Revisiting History, Theory and Practice*, ed. by Ewa Mazierska and Lars Kristensen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 147-179 (p. 147).



both bound to, and critical of, the political and philosophical developments in 1960s Czechoslovakia.<sup>307</sup>

*Moravská Hellas* documented the annual folk festival at Strážnice, a town located in the far east of the Moravian region. In the film, two investigative reporters, Karel and Jan Saudek<sup>308</sup> wander the town with camera and microphone [Fig. 45]. The film opens with twins sitting among rows of folk dolls, singing in harmony – the phrase ‘Notes on folklore’ appears on the screen followed by a series of images including an astronaut and figures wearing folk costume. ‘And nowadays folklore is a kind of anachronism’, the twins say in harmony before documentary shots of Strážnice folk festival (to be discussed) appear, showing streets lined with people watching folk performers. The twins proceed to tour shops, visit a painter, a clockmaker and a local embroidery school where women apprentices line up for the camera and discuss traditional techniques of ‘decorative sewing’. The film is composed of talking heads, speaking into the microphone held up by the twins and looking at the camera: performers tell jokes, a woman bemoans the lack of respect of young people, a singer speaks of his folk songs and sings with his daughter, an elderly man shows the camera his ancient house, a stone mason and folk storyteller describe their work, and a writer describes the history he wrote of the town and gave to a local museum. Folk cottages and wall-painting techniques are presented to the camera, ribbons, garments, blankets and plates are pointed out, books are held up, hands are captured making, people parade in traditional dress, musicians play instruments. Folk narrator Uncle Lebánek, who

---

<sup>307</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, in discussing *Moravská Hellas* I will use the phrases ‘New Wave’, Czechoslovak New Wave, or, as it is the term used by Vachek and writers on his specific work for his Czech-language films, ‘Czech New Wave’. This is not to disregard the origins of this movement as both Czech and Slovak, but to denote films considered specifically Czech.

<sup>308</sup> Twin brothers, who in real life would become a well-known comics illustrator, Kája Saudek, and a photographer, respectively.

will be discussed further, often speaks into the camera. All the while, the twins attentively follow those speaking around, holding the microphone.

As the film progresses, the town prepares for the folk festival. The scenes are short, creating a sense of activity and busyness. A bell regularly chimes to change scenes, there close-up shots of faces. The film's momentum increases as the festival opens: feet dance on the floor, glasses of beer are tipped to mouths, couples embrace, and drunken men tumble in the dark and leer, caught in a sudden beam of strong light. People pass out on the grass. A folk storyteller speaks of how hard it is to organise the festival, the amount of food and drink needed, and how everyone sells things and starts their own programme. The film captures a pride in folk traditions as well as criticism of state authorities and changing times. In the final scenes, a director of a nearby ethnographic museum in Uherský Brod, Dr Pavelčík, speaking of the difficulty of finding 'real' expressions of folklore, as will be discussed further. Three folk musicians sing and play instruments as the twins shake hands with residents, saying their goodbyes. The words of Uncle Lebánek abruptly end the film, discussing 'folk fever' and his boredom with it (to be discussed). The film is a surreal and evocative New Wave depiction of a small-town festival that sits between a love of tradition and a demand for change, as will be discussed.

### **'Folk Fever' in the Town of Strážnice**

The official gaze was very much on the Strážnice festival; it was a site of importance in the Czechoslovak Socialist narrative. The name Strážnice was already synonymous with folk song and dance due to the establishment of a town folklore festival in 1946. The Moravian town Strážnice was a natural home for the festival, as it

had been a focus of Czech national movement activities in the late nineteenth century, including the founding of a Czech national singing, reading and dancing 'Beseda' group in 1868 and a Sokol gymnasium in the 1880s – folk activities in the town and area continued to be documented by artists and visitors during the First Republic.<sup>309</sup> The festival's reputation was both national and international, attracting overseas delegations, including a representative of the British government in 1947. From 1948 the festival was added to the new Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's (KSČ) list of events of 'national interest', and as such was coordinated and organised by Party representatives.<sup>310</sup>



Fig. 45: Investigative reporter Saudek with recording equipment, surrounded by folk dolls, in Strážnice, film still, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Folklore and folk art had been dominant in Socialist Czechoslovakia in the 1950s, promoted by key figures like the critic

<sup>309</sup> Josef Jančář (1995), *Strážnická ohlédnutí: 50 let mezinárodního folklorního festivalu ve Strážnici* (Strážnická Flashback: 50 years of the International Folklore Festival in Strážnice), (Brno: Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost; Strážnice: Ústav lidové kultury, 1995), p. 13.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-70.

Zdeněk Nejedlý, the politician and journalist Václav Kopecký (a key advocate of Socialist Realism) and the Marxist literary critic Ladislav Štoll.<sup>311</sup> Historian Lada Hubatová-Vacková identifies the Slavic agriculture exhibition held in Stromovka Park in Prague in May 1948 as a key starting point for the development of Czechoslovak Socialist Realism, part of which was the 11<sup>th</sup> Pan-Sokol Festival, the posters and costumes for which drew on folk forms. Linked to National Liberation and First Republic patriotism, the Sokol association was also the base of the first Czechoslovak army.<sup>312</sup> The event organisers and designers combined harvest festival and other folklore motifs with stars, sickles and hammers, underlining, as Hubatová-Vacková notes, Milan Kundera's later statement, made in his 1967 novel *The Joke*, that 'nobody ever did as much for folk art as the communist government'.<sup>313</sup>

The Strážnice Folk Festival was another manifestation of this movement, co-opted by the state to assert its ideological stance. But by the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, the popularity of mainstream music and dance had begun to undermine the dominance of folklore, coinciding with a widening interest in new currents in art and mass culture,<sup>314</sup> a development that caused the older women who figure in *Moravská Hellas* to worry that their younger neighbours would forsake folk dress for alluring new products such as make-up and hair dye. These tensions are seen through Vachek's incongruous juxtapositioning of folk and contemporary dress. [Fig. 46] One character in the film, a folk painter called Martínková criticises the lack of interest in folk costumes amongst young girls from Strážnice,

---

<sup>311</sup> Pech, *Konec avantgardy?*, pp. 327-339; Zareco, pp. 134-136; Hubatová-Vacková, *Budování státu*, p. 72.

<sup>312</sup> Hubatová-Vacková, *Budování státu*, p. 73.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>314</sup> Jančář, *Strážnická ohlédnutí*, pp. 76-77.

whilst her colleague Adámková states that folk objects are only really created to catch the eye of passing customers, in order to sell wine.<sup>315</sup> The film captured a declining public interest in folk production, and on a wider cultural level, dissatisfaction with the slow process of de-Stalinisation. When the film was made in 1963, the appeal of the festival was waning: in the years from 1957 to 1959 around 100,000 visitors had attended, but this declined to 40,000 in the first half of the 1960s.<sup>316</sup>



Fig. 46: Juxtapositions of folk and contemporary clothing, film still, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Vachek's use of the event to criticise the authorities was both pertinent and problematic. The very title *Moravská Hellas* is a reference to the sculptor Auguste Rodin's remark, when he travelled

<sup>315</sup> Martin Švoma, *Karel Vachek Etc.* (Prague: Academy of Performing Arts, 2008), p. 33.

<sup>316</sup> Jančář, *Strážnická ohlédnutí*, p. 82.

to Moravia in 1902 to visit Czech artist Joža Uprka, that the area reminded him of ancient Greece.<sup>317</sup> The title therefore connotes the idealisation of Moravia in state policy as an idyll of peasant culture whilst playfully implying that the situation has become some kind of 'hellish' joke. Vachek's emphasis on disillusion with the state system stemmed from personal experience: he created *Moravská Hellas* whilst he was temporarily expelled from the Prague Film Academy, working as a manual labourer in Zlín (then Gottwaldov). Vachek's discontent with the system found its expression in the nearby town of Strážnice.

The film had a mixed response, receiving an Honourable Mention at the annual film festival in Karlovy Vary in 1964, but it caused a furore that resulted in it being removed from cinema distribution for several years. This reaction shows just how poignant the use of Strážnice was as a vehicle for criticising the State. Vachek was not the first to bring a critical eye to the festival: reviewer František Pokorný wrote in 1961 that it was made up of 'illusionistic pursuits' and 'unsuccessful vaudeville' stereotypes.<sup>318</sup> Pokorný questioned the hollow reconstructions of history and the depiction of rural life as made up of 'ornaments' and 'bows'. Vachek's incisive portrait of the festival explored similar contrivances, insinuating idiocy at institutional and personal levels whilst simultaneously creating an (at times) empathetic portrait of human and individual fallibility: surely a dangerous combination amidst the supposedly perfect (and collective) environment of socialism. The very

---

<sup>317</sup> This is both according to Karel Vachek

<<https://vimeopro.com/backgroundfilms/vachek/video/119437717>> [accessed 16 May 2016]) and also statements concerning Uprka, particularly in relation to the photographer Erwin Raupp who a few years later photographed folk subjects and landscapes in Moravia, as discussed in Helena Beránková, Antonín Dufek, Andreas Krase, František Sysel *Erwin Raupp – Moravská Hellas 1904* (Lomnice nad Popelkou: Studio JB, 2010) to accompany an exhibition at Palác šlechticů MZM Brno, September 2010.

<sup>318</sup> Cited without further details in Jančář, *Strážnická ohlédnutí*, p. 82.

reconstructions that Pokorný criticised, these 'vaudeville stereotypes', were in fact ideal vehicles for Vachek to present a picture of socialist futility and absurdity. The poster for the film played with this characterisation of the town's inhabitants by using folk figurines rather than real inhabitants of the town, stiff in their traditional costumes, overlooked by two ominous eyes formed by the letters of the film's title, under which the two reporting Saudek brothers sit almost hidden in the crowd of props [Fig. 47].

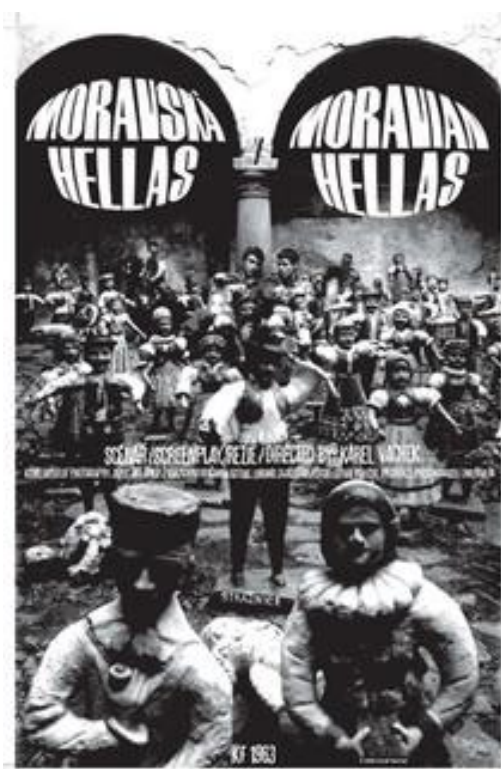


Fig. 47: Poster for *Moravská Hellas*, 1963. *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

*Moravská Hellas* gathers momentum with dances, stories, and groups of villagers in costume. It ruptures around the drunken antics of those who in earlier scenes had been neat and presentable folk performers at the festival. Merrymakers loll on the grass, grinning at

the camera. The characters appear to reach a pressure point, finding an outlet via alcohol and dance. In this Learesque plot structure, it feels appropriate that one character plays the part of a truth-speaking fool.<sup>319</sup> This role is taken by farmer and folk storyteller Uncle Lebánek [Fig. 48], who also worked at the local Uherský Brod Museum and as such had an understanding of ethnographic collections of folk objects.<sup>320</sup> When discussing ethnographic approaches to folk practices, he says: 'So today in my old age I'm bored by it. I see it now as some kind of fever. No more a kind of creativity, it's more for those people who wish to profit from it'.<sup>321</sup> Lebánek's feelings about the categorisation and commodification of folk products and practices imply a wider cultural 'sickness' at this time, a fatigue resulting from the drawn-out process of de-Stalinisation in Czechoslovakia.

Vachek first got to know Lebánek when he became interested in the town as a subject, and it was through his eyes that he encountered many of the activities of the inhabitants. Lebánek plays a similar role to Miloš Forman's Jan Vostrčil in contemporary New Wave film *Konkurs* (Audition, 1964), the captivating brass band conductor who gains the loyalty of his band members through his infectious passion. Vostrčil was a musician, but acted in this and other films by Forman.<sup>322</sup> Like Lebánek, he took on a muse-like role in inspiring the content of the film. But the evident fondness and respect in depictions of characters such as Vostrčil and Lebánek is absent in many of the others who feature in *Moravská Hellas*: they

---

<sup>319</sup> In asking him about this area in our interview, Vachek confirmed his admiration for Shakespeare, so the application of such plot devices seems reasonable. Karel Vachek, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

<sup>320</sup> Švoma, p. 33.

<sup>321</sup> *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD]

<sup>322</sup> Vostrčil also appears in Forman's *Černý Petr* (Black Peter, 1964), *Lásky jedné plavovlásky* (The Loves of a Blonde, 1965) and *Hoří, má panenko* (The Fireman's Ball, 1967).



are often apparently devoid of inherent wisdom and become tools for displaying foolishness. In keeping with the atmosphere of doubt and the shifting cultural and political events of its era, the underlying structures and characteristics of events and people in *Moravská Hellas* are often intentionally confusing. For example, though Lebáněk was a real inhabitant of the town, as were the majority of the cast, the occasional actor was selected too, adding to the mix of surreal referencing and reality.



Fig. 48: Uncle Lebáněk, film still, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (1963, Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

## Awakening from a 'Dogmatic Doze': The Context of 1963

### The Philosophy of Švejk

In 1971, writer and academic Vladimír Kusin described the toll of the bureaucratic grip of the Communist government on the Czechoslovak population in the late 1950s as 'a tidal wave of physical and mental strain'.<sup>323</sup> The year of 1964 was, to adopt a metaphor from the anthropologist Maruška Svašek, when 'the dam finally burst'.<sup>324</sup> Tidal waves crashing, dams bursting – these are terms to describe reactions to Stalinist political restraint. Made in 1963, *Moravská Hellas* can be seen as one expression of this release from the strain of the period. Czech Neo-Marxist Ivan Sviták wrote of philosophers at this time finally being 'awakened from a dogmatic doze'.<sup>325</sup> This suggests the same amnesic, mentally compromised connotations as Lebánek's 'folk fever', evoking a sense of illusion and the need for clarity.

At the centre of Sviták's statement was frustration that debates about intellectual freedom and wakefulness were even necessary 'in the heart of Europe and in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century'.<sup>326</sup> This was a desire for 'truth' in opposition to ideological rhetoric: as Kusin wrote, '[Sviták] gave Czech meaning to [György] Lukács' definition of ideology as "false thinking"'.<sup>327</sup> Relationships between individual freedom and the power of the state had been debated between the years of 1956 to 1957 in the philosophical writings of Sviták and his fellow Czech Neo-Marxists Karel Kosík, as well as the semiotician

---

<sup>323</sup> Vladimír V. Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring: the Development of Reformist Ideas in Czechoslovakia 1956-1967*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 13.

<sup>324</sup> Svašek, p. 401.

<sup>325</sup> Ivan Sviták, *Lidský smysl kultury* [The People's Meaning of Culture] (Prague: Čs.spisovatel Prague, 1968) pp. 18-19, cited in Kusin, p. 36.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Kusin, p. 38.

Ladislav Tondl, in the publication *Literární Noviny* (Literary Newspaper).<sup>328</sup> These exchanges have been discussed in detail by Peter Hames in application to the wider climate of Czech New Wave cinema.<sup>329</sup> The impact of Sviták and Kosík's writing was gradual, influencing such texts as *Stát a člověk* (State and Man), by Zdeněk Mlynář, published in 1964. In his book, Mlynář called for a theoretical analysis of political reality, demanding an end to false thinking, to 'strip the system of its mythical clothes' – a thorough de-mystification involving the 'removal of fetishes, mysteries, incomplete answers, unspoken questions, obscure schemata of ideological postulates', in order to make 'politics more human' – vocabulary typical of the humanist emphasis of thaw-period discussion.<sup>330</sup>

Public discussion of such concepts taking place at this time, alongside notions like alienation, had been considered unthinkable in Stalinist Czechoslovakia where such notions were considered an inherent product of capitalism. One public forum was the Liblice Conference on Kafka in Prague in 1963. It was the eightieth anniversary of Kafka's birth, and upon this occasion a Kafka Conference (Kafkovská konference) was held in Liblice, hosted by the Czech Academy of Arts, which invited leading Marxist critics and philosophers from across the Eastern Bloc to discuss the relevance of Kafka's work to socialist societies after a period of his work being censored.<sup>331</sup> The writing of Kafka and its role in the Soviet Union and satellite nations was re-examined in the context of ongoing debates

---

<sup>328</sup> Discussed by Peter Hames, 'Alienated Heroes: Marxism and the Czechoslovak New Wave' in *Marx at the Movies: Revisiting History, Theory and Practice*, ed. by Ewa Mazierska and Lars Kristensen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 147-179, (p. 150).

<sup>329</sup> Hames, *Marx at the Movies*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>330</sup> Kusin, p. 40.

<sup>331</sup> David Bathrick, *The Power of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 67, and Antonin J. Liehm, 'Franz Kafka in Eastern Europe', *Telos*, 23 (1975), 53-83 (p. 54).

around theoretical Marxism, revisionism and the early writings of Marx.

The conference has been seen as marking Kafka's 'official rehabilitation' in Eastern Europe, and particularly in Czechoslovakia, where it 'became one of the signals for far-reaching changes within the country's social, political and cultural structures', which reached a climax in 1968.<sup>332</sup> Hames has discussed the wider international impact of this reappraisal of Kafka, which prompted an enormous interest in his work.<sup>333</sup> Of greater interest here is a quotation from Karel Kosík's 1963 essay 'Hašek and Kafka', prepared for the Liblice conference, from which the second part of the title of this chapter is sourced: 'the bureaucratic machine'. Kosík (at this time head of 'dialectical materialism' at the Institute of Philosophy in the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences)<sup>334</sup> asked:

What is the Kafkaesque world? It is the world of absurdity of human thoughts and action, of human dreams, a world of a monstrous and unintelligible labyrinth, a world of human powerlessness in the network of bureaucratic machines, mechanisms, reified creations. Švejkism is a way of reacting to this world of absurd omnipotence of the machine and of reified relations.<sup>335</sup>

Discussion of the two writers allowed Kosík to address the complexity of the role of the proletariat and their viewpoint, to assert the multifaceted nature of human beings that needed to be understood as nuanced rather than singular. For Kosík, the character

---

<sup>332</sup> Liehm, p. 53.

<sup>333</sup> Hames, *Marx at the Movies*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>334</sup> Peter Hruby *Fools and Heroes: The Changing Role of Communist Intellectuals in Czechoslovakia*, (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 192.

<sup>335</sup> Kosík 'Hašek and Kafka', pp. 87-88, also cited in Hames 2014, p. 157.

of the Good Soldier Švejk in Jaroslav Hašek's 1923 novel of the same name, whose mishaps in World War One satirised the Habsburg authorities, was a representative of humankind as well as being a Czech, and, as such, was 'irreducible' and incalculable [*The Good Soldier Švejk* was illustrated by Josef Lada, Fig. 49].<sup>336</sup> As Kosík noted, Švejk was a figure 'in a system motored by make-believe and jerry-building: those who take things seriously and literally, as he does, reveal the absurdity of the system while their own activity appears absurd and grotesque'. In this context, the authorities were convinced that their inferiors were troublemakers, whilst 'the people' could recognise the comic and grotesque qualities of their officials. As Kosík claimed, 'This is a system in which masks, masking and unmasking are among the fundamental relationships'.<sup>337</sup>



Fig. 49: Josef Lada, *The Good Soldier Švejk*, 1923, illustration  
<<https://bit.ly/2CFIjRF>> [accessed 2 May 2014].

Kosík was arguing for Hašek to be taken more seriously and for Švejk's foolishness to not be underestimated, nor simplified. He

---

<sup>336</sup> Kosík, 'Hašek and Kafka', p. 87.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

asked, in 1963: 'What is the meaning of Hašek's work...Does the Good Soldier Švejk really lack a unified structure, and is its narration really fragmented? What is the point of all its anecdotes? Is it at all feasible to question problems of time, of comedy, tragedy, and grotesqueness in Hašek's work?' Kosík suggested four possible Švejks: 'Sancho Panza without his Don Quixote'; Švejk as 'a fool, buffoon, a clown with the privilege to talk the truth'; Švejk as a 'popular joker, a wag, a modern *Eulenspiegel* whose magic powers make him invulnerable to this world', and Švejk as 'the personification of little Czech people, humble as grass...reduced to his biological needs, who survives world catastrophes because he cares only for mundane matters', but he also has 'nobility and generosity' and is not a 'narrow-minded philistine'.<sup>338</sup>

I have interpreted Vachek's Lebáněk as a 'wise fool', but he is also a character who could be seen as a 'humble as grass' Czech. There is a distinction that Kosík identifies in Švejk that is a helpful for considering Vachek's 'fools'. Kosík did not see 'the usual low fool of comedy and high ruler of tragedy' as applicable to 'the clown-official relationship', which was 'not one of comedy-tragedy'. Instead, 'authority itself is captured in comic circumstances, and the traditional barrier between the two worlds is torn down. Hašek's world is an integrated world of comedy, in which the so-called vulgar characters and the august ones both appear in comic and grotesque situations'.<sup>339</sup> This is the nature of absurdity, in which types and hierarchies are not fixed. In a period of Marxist-Leninist scientific methods and typification, to address Hašek as an example of how human fallibility (Švejk) was actually something to be celebrated in

---

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

the face of an authoritative (and flawed) system of leadership (the Habsburg authorities – but the parallels to Socialism are clear).

Kosík's central thesis concerned the flexible nature of human beings, the need for authorities to try and deduce and reduce, only to be constantly met with the realisation that man 'is more than a system of factual relations in which he moves and is moved'.<sup>340</sup> A hero in this context is both an expansive being of nobility and mistakes and, importantly, a distinctive individual rather than mere type – this was the revisionist placement of the 'beingness' of human experience at the centre of post-Stalin, Marxist philosophy. As Kosík added: 'Švejk – is Švejk'.<sup>341</sup> Such an assertion was indicative of the 1960s humanist emphasis on individuality.<sup>342</sup> It is also a significant departure from the discussion of typified heroes at the Czechoslovak Writers' Club ten years earlier, when Soviet professor Myasnikov had labelled three types of typical hero: 'mass typicality', 'exceptional typicality' and 'the typicality of the new'.<sup>343</sup>

*Moravská Hellas* and its appraisal of the inhabitants of Strážnice can be seen as part of this wider discussion concerning the role of the individual in relation to 'systems of factual relations'. The film conveys a world of absurdity and human powerlessness, of which Hašek would approve. Vachek also questioned the structures of authority and control imposed by Communist authorities in Czechoslovakia through the absurd antics of participants and craftspeople at the Strážnice folk festival. Both the working citizens of the town and the officials who governed the ways in which the events and the activities were carried out were unmasked. Everybody faced

---

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>342</sup> A shift that will be discussed in relation to 1960s state design projects in Chapter Three

<sup>343</sup> Viney, p. 489.

the scrutiny of the reporters' lens and were found to be mere humans, fallible and resistant to being reduced to so many parts. The entity that can really be reduced in this context is the political framework, the diktats and simplification of bureaucratic Socialism. As Hašek shone a light on these complexities against the backdrop of Habsburg dominance, through the powerful tools of absurdity and humour, so Vachek offered a similar critique of Communism. In an interview in 2004, Vachek proclaimed that 'Hašek is the key', though he admitted he may not have realised this in the 1960s.<sup>344</sup>

The Kafka conference has been explored in detail by writers such as Antonin J. Liehm (1975), David Bathrick (1995), František Kautman (2003), Martin Reiman (2003) and Martin Endres (2008), and Peter Hames.<sup>345</sup> The exact content of the Kafka conference is of less interest here than the fact of its taking place, the very occasioning of discussion that, in selecting Kafka as its object, could focus on themes such as the problematics of bureaucracy and the meaning of a concept such as alienation. The point of focus here is the opening up of a new kind of conceptual conversation, prohibited in the 1950s, that enabled more expansive criteria for considering socialist reality.<sup>346</sup> *Moravská Hellas* was part of the disruptive philosophical questioning of socialism in the late 1950s and early 1960s: the projectionist at the production company with whom Vachek made the film told him there was peace before *Moravská Hellas*, but no peace after it.<sup>347</sup>

---

<sup>344</sup> Robert Buchar, *Czech new wave filmmakers in interviews*, (London: McFarland, 2004), p. 157.

<sup>345</sup> Hames, *Marx at the Movies*, pp. 147-170.

<sup>346</sup> See Milan Kundera's speech made at the Fourth Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union, 27-29 June 1967, in Dušan Hamšík, *Writers Against Rules*, (London: Hutchinson, 1971), pp. 167-177.

<sup>347</sup> Karel Vachek, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).



## Art and Literature in early 1960s Czechoslovakia

*Moravská Hellas* can be seen as part of this drive to expose ideological mythologies in everyday contexts, parodying an event that idealised and commodified the 'authentic' popular culture associated with folk performances and material culture. When Vachek made *Moravská Hellas* in 1963, state systems and their authority were experiencing upheaval, during what political scientist H. Gordon Skilling has called a 'deepening crisis'.<sup>348</sup> In the aftermath of the 22nd Congress of Communist Party of the Soviet Union in October 1961, when Khrushchev had reiterated his criticism of Stalinism, the KSČ had to demonstrate its alignment with de-Stalinisation.

In a bid to avoid crises like those in Budapest or Warsaw, Antonín Novotný's government blamed former KSČ leader Klement Gottwald and the 'cult of personality', opening up a re-examination of the controversial 1952 Slánský show trial which had resulted in the hanging of thirteen Party members. In 1962, key ministers from the early 1950s, including Rudolf Barák, were dismissed and the 15-metre statue of Stalin that had briefly dominated Prague's skyline (1955-62), towering from Letná hill, was destroyed. Novotný was re-elected by a unanimous vote of the National Assembly at the end of 1964 but his authority gradually declined until his leadership ended in 1968.<sup>349</sup> It was indeed Novotný himself who banned *Moravská Hellas* shortly after its screening at the Karlovy Vary film festival in 1964, which shows the extent to which Vachek's folk festival critique struck at the heart of ideological foundations.<sup>350</sup>

---

<sup>348</sup> H Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 45.

<sup>349</sup> See Skilling, pp. 45-49.

<sup>350</sup> Buchar, p. 158.

Demonstrative removals of Stalin imposed opaque layers of shifting political allegiance, a tactic later allegorised by Josef Škvorecký in his novel *The Miracle Game*, set in the late 1960s. He describes the main street in the small town of Hronov, 'which over the past thirty years had been named after Eduard Beneš, Frederick the Great, Stalin, Lenin, Professor Nejedly, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, and finally, once more, Lenin'.<sup>351</sup> Economically, the similarly layered and distorted effects of centralised planning were becoming evident during this time. The national income fell between 1962 and 1963, there were shortages in consumer goods, and the government withheld information on the economic situation, until announcing in 1962 that the newly established Five Year Plan was to be abandoned in favour of a reactive One Year Plan to address the most immediate problems.<sup>352</sup>

The duplicitous nature of Party manoeuvres was often most actively commented on in literary circles in Czechoslovakia, by writers who the Nobel Prize-winning avant-garde writer Jaroslav Seifert had in 1956 famously called 'the conscience of the nation'.<sup>353</sup> The literary ferment of the early 1960s was encapsulated in congresses of writers across Czechoslovakia: in 1963 these took place in Bratislava in April, and Prague in May. Their principal organs were the Czech *Literární noviny* (Literary News) and the Slovak *Kulturní život* (Cultural Life)<sup>354</sup>. Speakers at the Third Czechoslovak Writers' Congress in 1963 condemned Socialist Realist representatives such as Vaclav Kopecký and Ladislav Štoll, declaring that 'art was hampered'.<sup>355</sup> In the same year a campaign against writers who did not toe the Party

---

<sup>351</sup> Josef Škvorecký, *The Miracle Game* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), p. 2.

<sup>352</sup> Skilling, pp. 57-62.

<sup>353</sup> Comments delivered at the Second Writers' Congress, Prague, April 1956, cited in J. Holy, *Writers Under Siege: Czech Literature Since 1945* (Falmer: Sussex University Press, 2008), p. 41.

<sup>354</sup> Skilling, pp. 62-64.

<sup>355</sup> Vladimír Mináč, 'Slovak writer', in *Literární noviny* May 25 1963, as cited in Skilling, p. 65.

line was launched by the Central Committee, criticising cultural periodicals in particular, whilst the publishers of those periodicals launched a counter-attack, defending their need for a critical outlook – censorship continued, but a very gradual freeing of expression took place.<sup>356</sup>

This shift was also occurring in art, and had been since the late 1950s. Articles like 'Umění a skutečnost' (Art and reality), written in 1957 by key Czech art critic and historian Jindřich Chalupecký for *Výtvarné Umění* (Fine Art), criticised pre-formulated artistic programmes, suggesting that they made artistic creation impossible.<sup>357</sup> Jiří Padrta's two-part 1957 article 'Umění nezobrazující a neobjektivní, jeho počátky a vývoj' (Non-representative and non-objective art, its origins and development), claimed that knowledge about the historical development of abstract art was a necessary prerequisite for any criticism on the subject.<sup>358</sup> Anthropologist Maruška Svašek points out that 'by accepting abstraction as a historical process, Padrta deconstructed the Cold War notion of abstract art as a "timeless mythical entity" (the art of the arch-enemy), and redefined it as a series of events and processes which could only be understood in their historical context'.<sup>359</sup> She implies here that Padrta offered a kind of 'timefulness' rather than 'timelessness', a cultural form that could be measured and utilised. Padrta thus presented Modern visual art as comprehensible to the socialist citizen, making it acceptable in the Czechoslovak Marxist

---

<sup>356</sup> Skilling, pp. 66-68.

<sup>357</sup> Jindřich Chalupecký, 'Umění a skutečnost' [Art and reality], *Výtvarné Umění* [Fine Art], 18 (1957), 57, cited in Maruška Svašek, *Styles, Struggles and Careers: An Ethnography of the Czech Art World, 1948-1992* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1996), cited in Péteri, p. 396.

<sup>358</sup> Jiří Padrta 'Umění nezobrazující a neobjektivní, jeho počátky a vývoj I' [Non-representative and non-objective art, its origins and development], *Výtvarné Umění* [Fine Art], 18: 4, pp. 174-81, then part two in same volume and year, but no. 5, 214-21, cited in Svašek, *Styles, Struggles and Careers*, p. 396.

<sup>359</sup> Svašek, *Styles, Struggles and Careers*, p. 396.

context and paving the way for the more flexible cultural scene that would gain strength in the 1960s. In some ways, his efforts to redefine the modern as comprehensible if viewed in its original context echoed the aims of curators like František Venera and his more literal realisation of these connections, particularly in relation to folk and the Modern, seen in his exhibition *Umění a kýtč* in 1948 (discussed in Chapter One). But then years later, Padrta's assertions fell on more fertile ground. In 1964 Stalinists quickly lost power in artistic circles, and key Czech art critic and historian Jindřich Chalupický was made Chairman of the Union of Czechoslovak Artists, reinstating those who had been discriminated against during the 1950s, reducing censorship on exhibitions, exhibiting abroad and giving scholarships irrespective of political opinion.<sup>360</sup>

### **Czechoslovak New Wave Film as a Space of 'Interpretive Uncertainty'**

Historian David Bathrick has proposed that the open-endedness of literary interpretation created a 'continued space of interpretive uncertainty' that meant 'the centre of interest and conflict within the ideological sphere of state socialist societies shifted from philosophy to culture'.<sup>361</sup> Czechoslovak New Wave film can be viewed as an example of a space of 'interpretive uncertainty', and as such allowed an expansive fluidity that makes it a helpful platform for understanding subtler nuances of Czechoslovak cultural movements. The early 1960s in Czechoslovakia, due to its late adoption of de-Stalinisation, was not so much a slow cold Thaw as a rapidly surfacing disturbance, a restlessness in the long shadow of Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 secret speech denouncing Stalinism. In the early

---

<sup>360</sup> Svašek, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity', p. 401.

<sup>361</sup> Bathrick, p. 70

1960s, Czechoslovak New Wave cinema was an important arena where demands for political and ideological revision were being made. Hames discusses Evald Schorm's controversial film *Každý den odvahy* (Everyday Courage), made a year later than *Moravská Hellas*, in 1964.<sup>362</sup> Schorm's film concerned the disillusion of the Party worker in relation to the stultifying constructs of centralised bureaucracy: 'The lack of morale, everyday materialism and the failure of the socialist dream is everywhere apparent.'<sup>363</sup> The film was also banned because, according to Hames, it did not present workers in positive terms, which demonstrated that 'the deficiencies of the system could no longer be attributed to the failings of individuals.'<sup>364</sup>

Similarly, *Moravská Hellas* is not so much a detailed interrogation of craftsmanship or creativity as an exploration of what happens to creative pursuits when the forms in which it is manifested are under political control. It is a film concerned with presenting a version of reality that was formulated by centralised mechanisms of the Communist government in Czechoslovakia. Along with the work of film-makers such as Věra Chytilová and Miloš Forman, Vachek's films marked a departure from earlier Socialist Realist cinema towards a new depiction of reality. After the release of Forman's 1964 *Konkurs*, philosopher Ivan Sviták suggested that new Czechoslovak films had 'abandoned dramatic rhetoric', marking a change in 'the grammar of film expression and a change in the relationship with the audience' – instead, film-makers like Vachek and Forman were concerned with 'ideas, authenticity, exactness, and truth'.<sup>365</sup> The tendency was found not only in Czechoslovak New Wave film, but

---

<sup>362</sup> Hames, *Marx at the Movies*, pp. 147-170.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>365</sup> Peter Hames, Guide and talk to accompany *The Image Speaks: Miloš Forman and the Free Cinema Movement*, Close-Up Cinema, London, 29 April 2017.

also in the British Free Cinema productions of directors like Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz – ideas that would influence the work of Ken Loach.<sup>366</sup> In this sense, this genre of film was an international rebellion against the romance and melodrama of fictional narratives and an assertion of realism, both in terms of foregrounding the everyday but also, in relation to New Wave film, as a means of criticality. It was this approach, rather than a well-behaved adoption of accepted Socialist Realist tropes, that created tension, or conflict.

Hames argues that it was public debates such as the dialogue between Kosík and Sviták in *Literární noviny* from 1956 to 1957 that enabled ideas of neo-Marxism to influence New Wave film-making, part of the general movement towards humanism and the representation of the human experience.<sup>367</sup> To illuminate his meaning, Hames refers again to Sviták, who argued: 'Above all, we must believe in ourselves, in our experience of what life around us is like'.<sup>368</sup> When I put this to Karel Vachek, he agreed that the Czech Marxist philosophical context was influential to his film-making at this time. He added he had also been reading Sartre, which had been translated into Czech.<sup>369</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre's 1960 text *Critique of Dialectical Reason* similarly emphasised humanist values alongside existentialism in the early works of Marx, and was being read by Vachek and his intellectual peers (among them Milan Kundera).<sup>370</sup> The translation of Sartre is significant as it shows the nature of engagement with wider discussions of Marxism at this time,

---

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Kusin, , p. 37. Also discussed by Hames, *Marx at the Movies*, p. 150.

<sup>368</sup> Sviták cited in Kusin, p. 48, cited by Hames *Marx at the Movies*, p. 152.

<sup>369</sup> Karel Vachek, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

<sup>370</sup> Hamšík, p. 201.

particularly in relation to the existential – an area that was now, as evidenced by the translation, permissible in Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovak New Wave film was undoubtedly linked with a disruption of the system enough to allow it to question itself: *Moravská Hellas* was part of this enquiry. To read *Moravská Hellas* in this way in some ways aligns with Hames's discussion of Sviták's notion that socialist art was 'art produced in a socialist epoch': through a demonstration of responsibility to social questions, the 'dynamics of historical change', or the 'movement of ideas', a cultural form produced in this dynamic became a 'socialist' artwork.<sup>371</sup> Hames writes: 'the kind of profound analyses present in the films of Miloš Forman or Evald Schorm could, in theory, make a more significant contribution to a progressive socialist art than art conforming to any political directive', meaning that the definition of 'socialist' was more nuanced and formative – a response to the wider notions or possibilities of socialism and Marxism, rather than following the specific criteria of a Socialist directive such as Socialist Realism.<sup>372</sup> But this assumes a Marxist agenda on the part of the practitioners which is complicated to unravel. On being asked whether making films under Socialism makes the work by default socialist, Vachek compared his work to any art being produced in times of conflict during that period across the world, whether in relation to civil rights in America or the student uprisings in Paris: 'when you have an important movement in society, so too will you have it in art'. For Czechoslovak artists, this meant addressing the possibility of democratic socialism.

---

<sup>371</sup> Hames, *Marx at the Movies*, p. 149.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*

However, such a thesis can be superimposed on reality and depictions cannot be relied upon – as Vachek added, ‘it’s very complicated. Take Voltaire’s phrase, that which is around us is the best of possibilities’.<sup>373</sup> This paraphrasing of the Panglossian outlook (‘If this is the best of possible worlds, what then are the others?’) is one that resonates particularly well with *Moravská Hellas* and, indeed, with the Czechoslovak response to socialism seen through many of the examples examined in this thesis (see discussion of animation in Chapter Three, and ceramics in Chapter Four).<sup>374</sup> Continuing Vachek’s reference to Voltaire’s *Candide, ou l’Optimisme* (1759): wit, absurdism and pseudo-naivety were used to address complex political and existential concerns. Humour was a means towards a common front against the bleak or restrictive nature of the political climate – it also was a means towards humanising the socialist context. In the case of *Moravská Hellas*, this became a form of blasphemy, which serves to demonstrate how important folk practices were to the formation of official socialist identity – and so we can understand how the film, following Vachek’s and Hames’s logic, is an access point to a wider socialist narrative and contributor to the 1960s thaw.

## **Praxis in Craft and Design**

Revisiting Modernism and locating a place for its forms within the Socialist narrative in the early 1960s was bound to neo-Marxist ideas of clarity, truth and a call to action. The latter resonated with an increased philosophical interest in Marx’s early writings during the late 1950s and early 1960s, particularly in his notion of *praxis* and

---

<sup>373</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

<sup>374</sup> For example, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, Czech ceramicist Marie Rychlíková, who worked throughout the 1950s to the 1980s, stated in our interview in October 2016 that humour was necessary to art, craft and design because they ‘lived in such a mess’. Glass, ceramic and textile works frequently showed this absurdist tendency. Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).



the need for enacting or realising theory and skill. This was a shift to a claim for greater authenticity, away from the 'the pseudo-concrete, the pseudo-scientific, the pseudo-rational, the pseudo-historical'<sup>375</sup> towards philosopher Karel Kosík's notion of the 'concrete' – wherein human praxis could 'unite causality and purposiveness'.<sup>376</sup> Kosík's highly influential text *Dialektika konkrétního* (Dialectics of the Concrete), which was also published in 1963, was a key articulation of this thinking. The latter was a popular text that was published in several editions, and Vachek himself read and was influenced by it.<sup>377</sup>

Film historian Peter Hames discusses *Dialectics of the Concrete* in relation to New Wave cinema. He points out that for Kosík, art, like all human praxis, 'has an indivisible two-fold character: it expresses reality but it also forms it' - praxis is a person's way of living in the world, a human reality in which humans are both subject and object.<sup>378</sup> Hames continues, 'Once again, we return to the problem of morality, understood by Marxism as the problems of overcoming reified and fetishized praxis. The morality of the dialectic is *revolutionary praxis*...a fairly clear reference to the frozen reality of bureaucratic socialism, which the New Wave films were to challenge in its essence'.<sup>379</sup> This 'frozen reality' was mocked by Vachek in *Moravská Hellas* through the absurd dislocation of festival performers and makers, calling into question their role as subject and object within the Socialist narrative.

The assertion of the modern as a means to enable a similar drive towards action that attempted to question the 'frozen reality' of

---

<sup>375</sup> Preface to Karel Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World*, Vol LII, (Boston USA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1975 [1963]), p. v.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vi

<sup>377</sup> Karel Vachek, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

<sup>378</sup> Hames, *Marx at the Movies*, p. 151.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

Socialist Realism was seen in the clothing, applied arts and interiors magazine *Domov* in 1963. Particularly relevant is an article entitled 'Od diskuse k praxi' (From Discussion to Practice). Written by Dr Jiří Benda, this five-page article reviewed discussions of the aims of applied arts and industrial design held by Soviet theoreticians and artists over the preceding two years.<sup>380</sup> Benda's conclusions were that 'the conservative search for traditions of the last century has come to an end in the Soviet Union'. Instead, the avant-garde 'progressive experience' of the 1920s was being revisited and compared to developments at contemporary design events. The work shown at the 1958 Brussels Expo and 1960 Triennale di Milano were held up as Czechoslovak examples that coincided with the renewed Soviet interest in modern, 'architecturally clean, purposeful and economical' forms.<sup>381</sup>

The turn from discussion to practice, rather than theoretical searches for neo-traditionalism, demonstrated the appetite in cultural circles to shift from 'pseudo' and 'frozen' Stalinist reality to an internationalist, modernist trend that was fundamental to Socialist Modernist theory. Whether it removed fetishisation is more questionable; the continuing dominant emphasis on modernist interiors so celebrated in the Brussels Style would dominate state craft and design theory and practice during the 1960s (as will be discussed in Chapter Three).<sup>382</sup> But the interest in praxis was symbolic of neo-Marxist progressiveness and de-Stalinisation – the images accompanying Benda's article show contemporary light fittings and a hotel front façade that are reminiscent of the

---

<sup>380</sup> Jiří Benda, 'Od diskuse k praxi' [From Discussion to Practice], *Domov*, 1 (1963), 21-26.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>382</sup> Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* [Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels], (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010).

modernism of the inter-war period, but, more significantly, they also show an assortment of architects and engineers apparently caught mid-discussion in a modern hotel setting. They are striking in their diversity: men, women, black and white, in neutral 1960s suits and dresses. They are surrounded by texts, papers, images, casually left open in a disarray that is indicative of action. The group's informality speaks of a more representative youth, a liveliness – tradition for tradition's sake, the image says, has no place here [Fig. 50]. These were the next generation of Socialist citizens, recalling those young people captured in contemporary dress in *Moravská Hellas*, who were dismissed by their elders. At this point, the energy of change so encapsulated by the youth movement seen across Europe in the 1960s was actively harnessed as positive propaganda, though this would change dramatically in the aftermath of 1968.



Fig. 50: Image to accompany Jiří Benda, 'Od diskuse k praxi'  
[From Discussion to Practice], *Domov*, 1 (1963), 21-26 (p. 21).

## Unhappy Victims of Systematised Making?

In 1963, *Moravská Hellas* shone a crude light on folk crafts and song, showing them up as fetishes of the centralised system, the hollow ethnographic trinkets of performative socialism rather than purposeful actions – the antithesis of praxis. As a result, it is difficult to assess the agency of the artists and makers depicted in the film. The individuals are not held in the sacred light of makers but they are also not necessarily victims of ‘false thinking’, just toeing the Party line. However, in relation to the notion of purposefulness and action, there is a sleepiness to the characters’ movements: they are often filmed standing waiting in a doorway or slouched at a table. In folk costume they carry out their roles, typified in a stream of similar town inhabitants who have dressed this way for festival audiences for decades. In this respect, Vachek seems to seek reality, whilst presenting it as a façade of stereotypes.

The movements and notes of festival song and dance, the painting of folk motifs on a cottage, the traditional costumes, become objects whose value exists in terms of neither their capital exchange nor their intrinsic personal value to those who create, use or wear them. In questioning the value of physical commodities in this way, Vachek questions the value of human identity in the Marxist-Leninist system and thus his work resonates with the early 1960s Czechoslovak philosophical interest in early Marxism, in bringing the human, or Marx’s ‘species-being’, back to the Communist framework. The individual in this context could gain agency in the process of social change. Such a stance conceded that alienation, in the Marxist sense, could exist under socialism despite its alleged impossibility in

the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' – and discussion of this in Czechoslovak philosophy in the early 1960s, and at events like the 1963 Kafka Conference, instead located the problematic in positivist Marxism, enabling criticism of centralised bureaucracy.<sup>383</sup>

If the makers living in Strážnice fashioned folk objects for the state and for tourists, the question arises of what meaning was portrayed by their individual actions in *Moravská Hellas*. Did Vachek see these characters as victims, made dull by the Socialist system, or were they in themselves guilty perpetrators of Communist kitsch? In 2016 Vachek responded to this question by referring to the Romantic tradition: he claimed that they were not 'artists' because they did not have 'genius' – citing William Blake as the ultimate example of artistic genius. But, he continued, the key message in the film was more than this: many of the town inhabitants were rendered idiotic by the context in which they were forced to play, actors in a badly written drama. He explained: 'The thing that looks like a festival of art is actually a conglomeration of the unhappy fates of people who are tasked to present themselves as artists, when they are not artists at all and do not know what art is'.<sup>384</sup> By implication, then, Vachek himself is the artist and his film is 'true art', freely created rather than demanded by the political authorities.

---

<sup>383</sup> Bathrick, writing on the different approaches to Marxism and Communism in the GDR and other Eastern Bloc countries in the early 1960s, pp. 67-70.

<sup>384</sup> Karel Vachek, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).



Fig. 51: Paní Sochorová, film still, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

One character in the film is a painter named paní Sochorová [Fig. 51]. She shows the camera her book of patterns from the Ministry of Culture, which she carefully applies as decorations to walls and objects, including embroidery. Her manner and way of speaking to the camera is typical of the film: she recites her prepared talk rapidly in one long shot, with a microphone from one of the reporters.<sup>385</sup> She says:

What would I tell you about our painting? You know, thousands of hours, I used to work on the folk art and today when I get older I'm worried about my eyes and my right hand, which helps me to do the ornamentation. I don't know what this will be like when we stop and young people are not here to do it. Time is fast now and young people don't

---

<sup>385</sup> Švoma, p. 33.

have patience for this type of work. If you do not sit and paint patiently, you cannot do it. That's it from me, thank you very much and come again. Goodbye.<sup>386</sup>

According to writer Martin Švoma, in the publication *Vachek Etc* (2008), this 'fast tour' through the house museum was the means by which Vachek intentionally conveyed his attitude towards visitors in Strážnice – and to the folk craft of its inhabitants. Their creative work was portrayed as performative, mannerist and insubstantial, part of the quotation of motifs and formats noted earlier that were demonstrations of alignment with state policy. Their audience consisted of visitors from all over the world. Among the jolting, overlapping images that open the film, accompanied by penetrating sounds that ping and bong, we see a group of men in Arab dress. Though at first glimpse they appear out of place in this small Moravian town, they were in fact there that year among the many visitors. The reason for their inclusion in Vachek's footage was twofold: a testament to the international status of the event<sup>387</sup> and an 'absurd tableau' on account of the accompanying folk music.<sup>388</sup> As such, they are part of a commentary on anachronism.

Changing photographs shown in a montage early on in the film contrast folk culture with 'attributes of civilization's progress' – a folk costume placed alongside a steam engine, car, rocket and (that Cold War hero) an astronaut [Figs. 52 and 53].<sup>389</sup> Vachek thus demonstrated an interest in modernist visual techniques and reiterated the celebration of technology and design that was key to

---

<sup>386</sup> Paní Sochorová, *Moravská Hellas*, in *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>387</sup> I had initially thought this was one of the montage images placed in the film by Vachek, as there are sequences of mismatched images of contemporary and past objects, but in my interview with him (24 October 2016) he confirmed that the dancers had actually been at the festival.

<sup>388</sup> Švoma, p. 31.

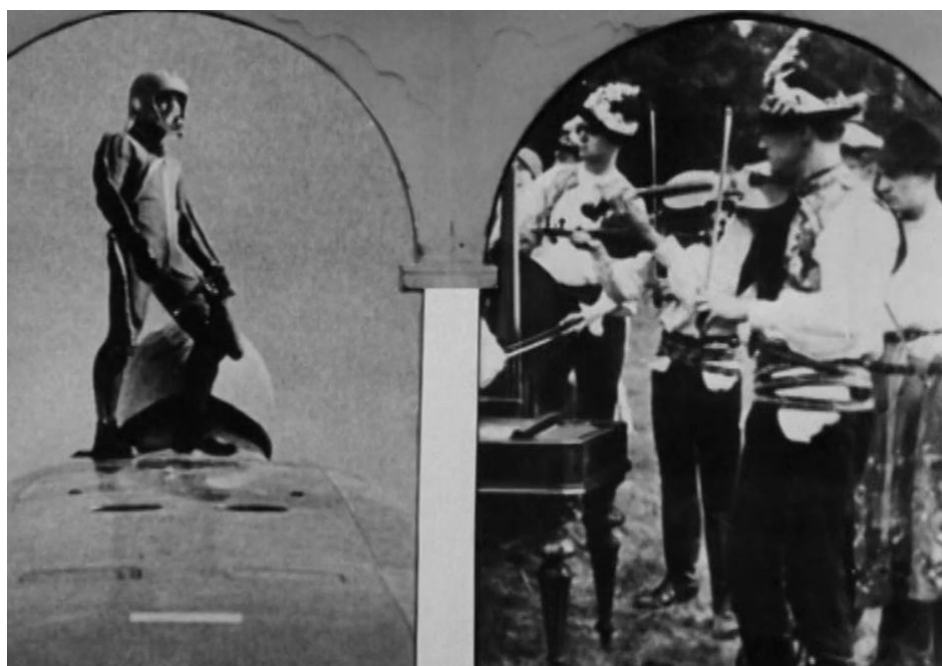
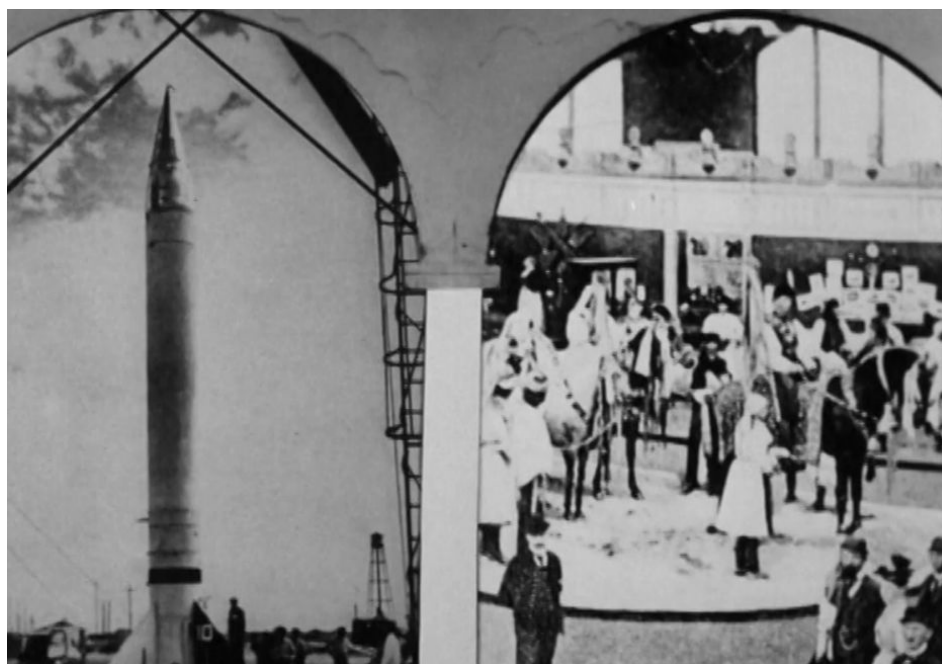
<sup>389</sup> Švoma, p. 31.

Socialist Modernity, epitomised by events like the Brussels Expo of 1958. The locating of folk and craft amongst this transitioning official emphasis was just one of the backdrops for *Moravská Hellas*. To demonstrate its often incongruous realisations, Vachek emphasised façade and artifice in the performances of the state. Bathrick has observed that in the Soviet context (specifically the GDR), 'the breakthrough of modernism (and a critical discourse about 'modernisation') in the 1960s brought with it a fragmenting and pluralising of cultural expression, thematically as well as aesthetically'.<sup>390</sup> He continues that such a fragmentation meant an exploration of the crisis of the individual, and 'evacuated and reconvened notions about the "real", about "socialism"'. Such evacuation, reconvention and fragmentation in order to question the 'real' can be seen in Vachek's methods.

---

<sup>390</sup> Bathrick, p. 22.





Figs. 52 & 53: Film stills, from *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

Despite its New Wave methodologies and controversial reputation, *Moravská Hellas* also participated in traditional art hierarchies that assumed a lower status for craft practitioners. For Vachek, folk festivals like Strážnice resulted in meaningless objects made by rote. But the makers he depicts are not indifferent to their creations. They are also informed about, and critical of, the context in which they work: Uncle Lebánek called his performances at the festival 'pseudosocialistický songs', performing them as a sideline alongside farming.<sup>391</sup> One elderly villager claims that the 'bosses from Prague', employees of the cultural offices, don't think of the 'whole'. He lives with his goats and has a tree growing through his cottage – 'that's not folklore', he states. Another key figure in *Moravská Hellas* is the director of a nearby ethnographic museum in Uherský Brod, Dr Pavelčík. On screen, he claims that the museum is like a 'theatre' rather than a real depiction of rural life, the practices by which its collection was built rendered inauthentic and over-played:

The ethnography is at its end, everything has perished, and only exceptionally we succeed in finding something like it... It seems to me like a slowly dying cow, at the end of its tether and all jumping on her to get a last drop of milk off her, and this poor animal is not even milk-giving but blood-shedding and with the last drop if its blood feeds us all, the filmmakers, the TV people, researchers, professors and museum deputies and I don't know who else.<sup>392</sup>

Such a visceral description again evokes the themes of strain, fatigue, fever – even the letting of blood. The Czechoslovak

---

<sup>391</sup> Karel Vachek, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

<sup>392</sup> *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD], minute 31.

ethnography that Pavelčík laments can be traced back to key events such as the 1895 Czech-Slavic Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague and Renáta Tyršová's infamous 1918 book dedicated to folk costume, *Lidový kroj v Čechách, na Moravě, ve Slezsku a na Slovensku* (Folk Costume in Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia), both of which were bound to the trajectory of the Czechoslovak National Awakening.<sup>393</sup> From the 1920s, attention to folk forms in costume, design and music had been realised on what historian Lada Hubatová-Vacková has called a spectrum that ranged from 'pseudo-folk forms' and 'national romanticism' to the more integrated 'happy medium between folk and the modern'.<sup>394</sup> Artists, theorists and pedagogical thinkers like Josef Vydra had been questioning ways of integrating folk forms to the modernist agenda in the inter-war period (as discussed in Chapter One).<sup>395</sup> This was a necessary contrast to the preceding Socialist Realist quotation of forms and promotion of a perfect rural narrative: the overuse of the 'slowly dying cow'.

In the inter-war period the racial stereotyping of ethnography was seen in projects such as 'Slovak population types' by Josef Tachecí, a set of around seventy negatives taken in the 1920s that documented local rural people as ethnic types – a form of photography whose reputation would be affected by German racial theories of *Volkgesicht*.<sup>396</sup> And yet, as the Prague School of Art, Architecture and Design Fashion studio project *Modfolk*, led by Hubatová-Vacková in 2015, has recently shown, many of these images also revealed a more nuanced approach to the traditional and the new: they featured men in urban suits alongside women in

---

<sup>393</sup> Hubatová-Vacková *Modfolk*, p. 11.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>395</sup> See also Josef Vydra, 'Distinctiveness, Temperament and Non-Distinctiveness, Three Periods and Three Kinds of Distinctiveness', *Věci a lidé* [Things and People] IV (1952-1953), 404-454, and Josef Vydra 'Style in Folk Art', *Tvar*, 2 (1949), 206-214, cited in Hubatová-Vacková, *Modfolk*, p. 31.

<sup>396</sup> Hubatová-Vacková, *Modfolk*, p. 21.

traditional folk costume, showing that 'the folk coexisted with the modern'.<sup>397</sup> The juxtaposition of modern and folk that was central to Czechoslovak socialist modernity is revealed in Strážnice through Vachek's film, adding complexity to the narrative of *Moravská Hellas*.

### **The 'Ideological Entanglements' of Craft**

By undermining the role of craft making and folk culture, Vachek was criticising a much wider Socialist narrative, and the use of vernacular peasant culture as a means of communicating the wholesome authenticity of Communist life. As discussed in Chapter One, such a device was most clearly seen in Socialist Realist cultural forms in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union during the late 1940s and 1950s, but was more subtly continued in an integrated form during the 1960s through the development of socialist craft and design in centralised institutions like ÚLUV that often leaned on folk and craft language to continue a theme of 'authentic making'. What this meant in practical terms was the insertion of local practices into the State framework, a form of re-contextualisation, as discussed in Chapter One (Makovicky, 2009 and Kaneff, 2004). Relevant here is Deema Kaneff's concept of the re-contextualisation of peasant traditions into 'reified folklore' by Socialist institutions, and what Nicolette Makovicky describes as 'the cause of fragmentation of local traditions and practices' through an 'ethnological approach to modernisation'.<sup>398</sup> Makovicky's research into lace makers in Central Slovakia revealed how the making of lace shifted from being produced for traditional rural dress to domestic use, such as in tablecloths, furniture covers and pictures.<sup>399</sup> One reading of this is

---

<sup>397</sup> Hubatová-Vacková, *Modfolk*, p. 21.

<sup>398</sup> Makovicky, 'Traditional – with Contemporary Form', p. 43.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

that it became a hobby, reduced from a 'viable economic activity to an expression of cultural belonging'.<sup>400</sup> Makovicky considers this an oversimplification, stating that there are multiple co-existing attitudes and 'an inextricable link between craftswomen's professional identities and their understanding of modernity'.<sup>401</sup>

The terms 'integration' and 'quotation' which I have deployed in my discussion of the practices recorded in *Moravská Hellas* are related to the concept of re-contextualisation, as by their very nature they demand a point against which a varying stance can be positioned. They also concern modes of engagement which relate to notions of authenticity and identity. If motifs from the pattern book of folk imagery, as referred to by the painter Sochorová in *Moravská Hellas*, are transposed onto a building in order to create the correct backdrop for festival visitors, this can read as a kind of performative imposition rather than meaningful integration. In his undermining of these forms in a film that calls into question the cognition and engagement behind such performative making, Vachek uses the same motif to create conflict. This process, whether viewed as integration or conflict, is intrinsic to the nature of socialist modernity. Makovicky views modernity as Other (when discussing specifically Slovak society), an imported process: 'how modernity and modernisation have been accepted, rejected or incorporated by craft practitioners in their practice and professional identities'.<sup>402</sup> Makovicky's approach offers not only a discussion of the processes of modernity but also a more nuanced understanding of the function of hand-making in a town like Strážnice. She points out that craft practices for centralised organisations like ÚLUV were being 'enacted',

---

<sup>400</sup> Ibid.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

and therefore became 'lived'.<sup>403</sup> As a result, '...these craftswomen were not simply an ethnological curiosity, but rather a group of professionals capable of grasping and solving the challenges brought on by design change'.<sup>404</sup> So we can argue that, however Vachek chose to depict the makers in his film, the reality of each inhabitant's daily experience was a lived one, and therefore an engaged process.

The original subheading of *Moravská Hellas* was 'Notes about folklore' –focusing on phenomena which were aligned to the local culture.<sup>405</sup> As discussed, the film was not pure reportage and actors were used: in the town's embroidery school, Vachek employed actress Alena Krapilová to act as one of the students 'in order to express something more clearly'.<sup>406</sup> The aim of the scene, aided by the appearance of the director and the deputy director of the textile factory in Letovice, was to demonstrate that the local students did not have many work opportunities in 'real life' – instead they worked in a school of decorative sewing that keeps girls from being 'outside'.<sup>407</sup> What they produced – mainly tourist items for Americans – was sold during the Strážnice festival. In the film, Krapilová shows embroidery patterns to Lebáněk, demonstrating an ethnographic source used to disseminate 'correct' forms. Lebáněk then leads the viewer to the next scene – a collection of textiles owned by a villager named Potamák, who discusses the local embroideries he has collected, which are, in his words, 'wider, more colourful and more difficult to make. They look better than the ones from the last

---

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> Švoma, p. 29.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

century. But scholars and artists say that it [embroidery] should stay in the original form, simple and humble.<sup>408</sup>

By including Potamák's description of works that are more exploratory, Vachek shows the engagement with modernity described by Makovicky. Even the fact that the women's works are then required to 'stay in the original form, simple and humble' displayed a negotiation of form and changing technical requirements that both seems to both prove and disprove Vachek's assertions. On the one hand, it is the system, the official ideological framework, that is at fault. On the other hand, the engagement and adaptation shows that this is not just a case of mere quotation and following orders, using the required formats and imposing motifs and techniques considered socialist, but instead that a certain questioning and negotiation existed – what Makovicky has called 'ideological entanglements' – and questions of authenticity and self, which are intrinsic to the process of modernity.

Dialogue with industrial products is presented briefly in *Moravská Hellas* and demonstrates another form of engagement on the part of the characters, this time as discerning consumers. Folk painter Martinková describes what Švoma has called 'the contemporary schizophrenia of a living culture in Strážnice'<sup>409</sup> in her account of the interiors of standard village houses in Strážnice:

I'll tell you what it looks like in that village. You will be surprised... They have two boxes, wardrobes, beds put together, a mirror, two carpets, they only look inside, they don't sleep there because they have it only for showing, and they also bought a sofa and a TV, well why not, I like TV

---

<sup>408</sup> Potamák, *Moravská Hellas*, in Švoma, p. 33.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

too, but they sleep somewhere in the back of the house in stables where they have their beds. And the kitchen is perfectly decorated, everything, the plates from walls, they took everything away because they are ashamed of it, they do not want to use them because they are colourful, they want the china ones, the white ones. To me, the white plates are nice with little roses, as if I were in paradise.<sup>410</sup>

Just as the young were veering towards make-up and new music, so were the older residents attracted to industrial domestic items rather than the rustic, folk objects displayed to the tourists. The implication in Martinková's words is that the residents of Strážnice were living two lives: one in the front room, displayed with all the objects with which they would like to be seen, and then another in the hidden rooms where they had what they loved, including TVs and white plates with little roses, which were 'paradise' to Martinková. Hardly passive consumption, this is the territory of preference and choice, which also adds a layer of complexity that concerns more than just contrast between backrooms and the front-facing rustic interiors shown to the camera in the earlier scene at folk painter Sochorová's house. This also ties into a wider contemporary Soviet discourse around encouraging participation in a new socialist modernity: Martinková's 'paradise' rose plates did not only meet disapproval due to their industrial rather than folk-rustic nature, but also because they were not part of the approved Khrushchev-era modern look, which in Czechoslovakia found its epitome in the Brussels Style (to be discussed further in Chapter Three). Instead of organic, clean, modern forms, Martinková's crockery recalled the 'nasty traditions' of 'silk-fringed lampshades, etched crystal and

---

<sup>410</sup> Martinková, *Moravská Hellas*, in Švoma, p. 34.



plates decorated with “tasteless bouquets of roses” that were contrary to the advice of Soviet experts on the socialist modern interior.<sup>411</sup> To use Svetlana Boym’s description of Russian communal apartments, these were the ‘messy ordinary’ existences of everyday life.<sup>412</sup>

The anachronism of state attitudes to folk culture is thus underlined, but also Vachek shows a sympathetic attitude to the ways in which the inhabitants of a town like Strážnice had to maintain a multi-layered facade. The folk object plays an important role here, highlighting similarity rather than difference between national motifs of the past and present. In appealing to the assumed associative qualities of a material object (in the case of *Moravská Hellas* a folk costume, embroidery or painted decorative folk embellishment), the state’s aim was to attract the public. The everyday object, whether costume or a painted cup, is particularly powerful here because of its (as Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeill have helpfully described in relation to fashion) ‘lived and quotidian dimensions’.<sup>413</sup> Because of these qualities, Riello and McNeill argue fashion is ‘much more susceptible to [a form of] cultural amnesia’ in which time is ‘collapsed’.<sup>414</sup> Such thinking is applicable to the everyday objects worn and used by the inhabitants of Strážnice. In *Moravská Hellas*, the entire socialist performance of the festival and its props can be said to induce this ‘cultural amnesia’: this is the emphasis Vachek

---

<sup>411</sup> M. Tikhomirova, ‘Chitateľ prodolzhaet razgovor. Nas dolzhny okruzhat’ krasivye veshchi. Vypuskat’ izdeliia, radiushchie cheloveka,’ [The reader continues the conversation. We must be surrounded by beautiful things. Release products that please a person], *VL*, 2 (11 April 1959), as cited in Christine Varga-Harris, ‘Homemaking and the Aesthetic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet Home during the Khrushchev Era.’ *Journal of Social History*, 41:3 (2008), 561-589 (p. 576).

<sup>412</sup> Svetlana Boym, ‘The Archeology of Banality: The Soviet Home’, *Public Culture*, 6:2 (1994); 263-292 (p. 275). Cited *Ibid*.

<sup>413</sup> Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeill, *The Fashion Reader: Global Perspectives* (Abington: Routledge, 2010), p. 2.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid*.

brings to the event and its participants. Sudden bursts of contemporary reality – an industrially produced white plate with roses on it – locate the festival in both era and place, rather than ‘collapsing’ time and space through the quotation of official styles and forms. Folk objects, in particular, operated on both a past and present plane in their Socialist usage.

The vocabulary of mental illness, this time schizophrenia (Švoma) and amnesia (Riello and McNeill), is very relevant to what Ivan Sviták described as the ‘dogmatic awakening’ in culture, politics and philosophy of early 1960s Czechoslovakia.<sup>415</sup> In Martinková’s ‘schizophrenic’ living culture, she highlights the agency of objects in this narrative. The role of socialist objects was a powerful one, and they frequently figure in visual culture as means of conveying ideological authority. This is perhaps most vividly seen in the later animation *Byt* (The Flat, 1968, to be discussed further in Chapter Three), by Jan Švankmajer, where objects take on their own character and turn on the inhabitant: the usual laws of the everyday are flouted. This was a metaphor for political dogmatism and confusion, ideological oppression and oblique rules, but in relation to the craft and design field, both Švankmajer’s anarchical flat and the Strážnice inhabitants’ juxtaposition of old and new domestic objects, there is an insight into the attempts to frame the home as a site of socialist function and idealism. The stage of the pre-fabricated show home was a key site in this realm, as will be discussed in relation to housing project Experiment Invalidovna (1961) and its surrounding discourse in Chapter Three.

---

<sup>415</sup> Ivan Sviták, *Lidský smysl kultury* [The People’s Meaning of Culture] (Prague: Čs.spisovatel Prague, 1968) pp. 18–19, cited in Kusin, p. 36.

Interiors such as those discussed by Martinková were sets both in Vachek's film and in the wider Socialist Czechoslovakian context, created to a large extent for the audience (whether official, tourist or filmmaker) visiting Strážnice. It is their very 'lived and quotidian dimensions' that make them powerful, and key actors in Vachek's story. As such, they were under considerable strain from the requirements placed upon them by what one villager calls 'bosses from Prague', but also potentially by Vachek in his assumptions that, in contrast to Makovický's view, they were victims of a system rather than active participants in an ongoing dialogue with modernity.

However, the selection of Strážnice as a site for *Moravská Hellas* was due to its richness as an area of visual production. Vachek has described visits to relatives in the area of Strážnice at the time of filming and how he found an interest there in things that were already 'aesthetically treated'.<sup>416</sup> These were objects that he described as remaining from 'the original folk output' but demonstrating the traits of more modern aesthetic virtues – he declared the detailed painting in the interior of one cottage so 'amazingly well painted' that it looked like 'tachism [sic] paintings'.<sup>417</sup> His term for this painting was 'splashing', demonstrating that he saw in the forms the intuitive, action-based expressive abstraction of Tachisme, an interesting western European and American reference that places Czechoslovak folk well beyond the restrictive framework of formulaic ethnography and socialist tropes, showing that Vachek must have had some respect for the work produced, despite his comments about a lack of 'genius'. (It is odd that he chooses the

---

<sup>416</sup> Švoma, p. 29.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

term 'tachisme', implying no particular painterly skill, to describe an interior as well painted.)

Through the references to industrially-made objects and the occasional insights into greater expansiveness in creative practice (exploratory embroidery and Tachisme-style painting), depictions of making in *Moravská Hellas* resonate with Makovický's assertion that greater engagement with modernity was taking place in the rural enclaves of state-sponsored schemes. Even in the practice of ethnography and socialist folk production, the impact of critical dialogue based on and stemming from the guild structures, studios and theoretical notions of inter-war and earlier developments around craft and design can be deciphered. Vachek does not dwell upon this critical dialogue directly, and in so doing risks undermining the creative production of individuals in Strážnice. However, his territory used craft and folk not to further the design and making discourse but to question Socialist reality and the meaning of its tools: in so doing he foregrounded a key issue for craft and design in Czechoslovakia – the issue of locating what Vydra called the 'happy medium' of modern and folk, the pursuit of hybridity, synthesis and integration that was central to definitions of Socialist Modernity and the work of state organisations such as ÚLUV and ÚBOK.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has explored a wider contextualisation of the early 1960s to broaden understanding of the context of approaches to folk crafts. Karel Vachek's 1963 film *Moravská Hellas* highlighted the state's fetishisation of folk culture at the annual festival of Strážnice. By the early 1960s, the public were questioning Strážnice's relevance in the climate of de-Stalinisation, and visitor numbers were declining.

Vachek captured a moment of awakening from Ivan Sviták's 'dogmatic doze' and Lebáněk's 'folk fever', a vocabulary of mental strain that connected to a wider Neo-Marxist demand for a new analysis of political reality and a demystification of Communist ideology.

The characters' actions in the film can be viewed through what philosopher Karel Kosík's called the absurd and comic Švejkist responses to a Kafkaesque centralised system. Vachek questioned socialist reality and the role of individual identity within the context of de-Stalinisation. Czechoslovak New Wave film was means of criticality that can be seen as part of an international movement towards realism and reflection on hegemonic systems of power. Through folk craft, Vachek questioned democratic socialism and the meaning of actions within the system, part of a wider questioning taking place around Neo-Marxist ideas of praxis. Vachek intentionally created a sense of unreality, gathering both real town inhabitants and actors, using techniques of montage, juxtapositions of old and new, folk and modern. In applying Bathrick's concepts of fragmentation and pluralisation, we can see the film as a site where cultural expressions were colliding and 'reconvening' meaning in the early 1960s.

Whether the craftspeople and folk performers that Vachek documents had agency as makers or artists is complex. He saw them as a 'conglomeration of unhappy fates', making for the state system rather than freely creating. They are depicted in the film as performative, but they also critically respond to their situation. Relevant to this, as discussed, is Makovický's scholarship: the enactment of the making processes carried out by the craftspeople and artists of Strážnice are also 'lived' and so the individuals are actively engaged in understanding the self in relation to ideological

frameworks and questions of modernity. Rather than a clear relationship to folk craft, this is Boym's 'messy ordinary' life, symbolised in *Moravská Hellas* through the attachment to objects like a mass-produced white plate decorated with little roses, hidden behind closed doors. *Moravská Hellas* threw open the authenticity of folk craft for public criticism, and met with controversy as a result. *Moravská Hellas* questioned the *sorela* adoption of national motifs and techniques in the late 1940s and 1950s Czechoslovakia. Vachek's portrait of a small town's inhabitants revealed 'ideological entanglements' with structures of centralised making. The role of craft in relation to official state projects at this time of shifting ideological meaning, and the ways in which practitioners and writers approached ideas of humanism and the role of the individual maker, will be explored further in Chapter Three.

## Chapter Three – Directions for Taste: Craft and the Socialist Modern

### Chapter Overview

In 1959, the state organisation ÚBOK (Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury, the Institute of Interior and Fashion Design) was founded, succeeding and absorbing Textile Design (Textilní tvorba). Similarly to ÚLUV, discussed in Chapter One, the organisation worked with a range of practitioners and writers to produce projects and publications. This chapter opens with a discussion of their magazine *Domov*, founded in 1961, which covered a range of debate and theory in the 1960s. Founded in the immediate aftermath of Czechoslovakia's success at the 1958 Brussels Expo, the term *Úbokový*, used to describe the distinctive look of ÚBOK's creations, demonstrates its importance to understanding Socialist Modern style. Craft played a key role in ÚBOK's projects, particularly as a means of endowing value and notions of taste, continuing debates discussed in Chapter One. This chapter looks to one of ÚBOK's key housing projects, Experiment Invalidovna in 1961, as well as articles in *Domov* and contemporary publications, to understand the ways in which craft concerns and characteristics related to projects led by ÚBOK such as flat interiors, advertising in *Domov* and DIY. ÚLUV also collaborated in certain projects. I look to key theorists writing for ÚBOK such as Josef Raban, who emphasised a relationship between folk crafts and mass production as a method of enriching the latter, as well as questioning the role and meaning of the artist in this context. Testimonials from those who worked for ÚBOK, both as glass artists and in head office, figure later in the chapter as a method of understanding differing attitudes to working for the state. Key to this

period are interests in the role of the consumer and a continuation of ideas of humanisation and a quest for individuality in the socialist context, introduced in Chapter Two.

## **Introduction**

The first issue of interiors magazine *Domov* (Home), published in 1960, proclaimed itself an answer to the Czechoslovak demand for a magazine devoted to the art of modern home-making. Produced by ÚBOK (Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury, the Institute of Interior and Fashion Design), *Domov* presented the organisation's perspective on what it described as a perceived rise in living standards, on the strong technical abilities of Czechoslovak manufacturers, and around those hailed as Czechoslovakia's talented practitioners in the applied arts. Enthusiastic foreign responses to Czechoslovak glass, ceramics and crafts at exhibitions in Brussels (1958) and Moscow (1959) were seen as evidence of Czechoslovak 'good taste', which the magazine aimed to build upon. The state planned to build 1.2 million apartments over the ten years that followed *Domov's* establishment, and house furnishings and objects would thus be required.

The magazine editors' underlying aims were threefold: to implement technological and scientific developments, to respect 'new human and social relationships in Czechoslovakia' (relevant to the changing neo-Marxist emphasis at this time to a human-centred perspective, as discussed in Chapter Two), and to build upon the national traditions of Czech and Slovak people. Key to the content would be the provision of varying styles from which the reader could choose 'to suit his individuality' and to provide inspiration for key socialist categories of worker: the young worker, the scientist, the author, the farmer, the officer clerk and the family member (with the



emphasis on being married with children). 'We are all working together', emphasised the opening statement in the magazine, 'designers in applied arts, theoreticians and critics as well as our readers'.<sup>418</sup>

*Domov* also set out to combat 'petty bourgeois influence in interior decoration, debunking its cheap, fussy sentimentality and bad taste'.<sup>419</sup> As such, it was a manifesto to the Socialist Modern, characterised by a 'greater beauty, comfort and quality of the new simplicity of form and vividness of colour'.<sup>420</sup> These changes were heralded in the first issue's bright cover, with its glimpses of plastic and metal chairs and the edges of a bright table and patterned rug [Fig. 54]. Such forms would be the protagonists of both the magazine and *ÚBOK* over the next decade, as will be seen in this chapter. Key to the development of taste and the socialist modern home was the inclusion of objects of handmade and crafted origin. The characteristics of craft were positioned alongside more scientific and didactic approaches such as ergonomics in the home, and the forum of the 'experimental' was a key site in which research could be explored in prototype form (as will be discussed). This chapter will show how such concerns contributed to conceptions of craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia, questioning the spectrums of value on which craft and design were judged, by whom and for what purpose – and how this again produced competing and pluralistic terms for understanding cultural practices.

---

<sup>418</sup> Ludvík Veselý, 'Do prvního ročníku' [In the First Year] [Opening statement, English summary], *Domov*, 1 (1960), n. pag.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

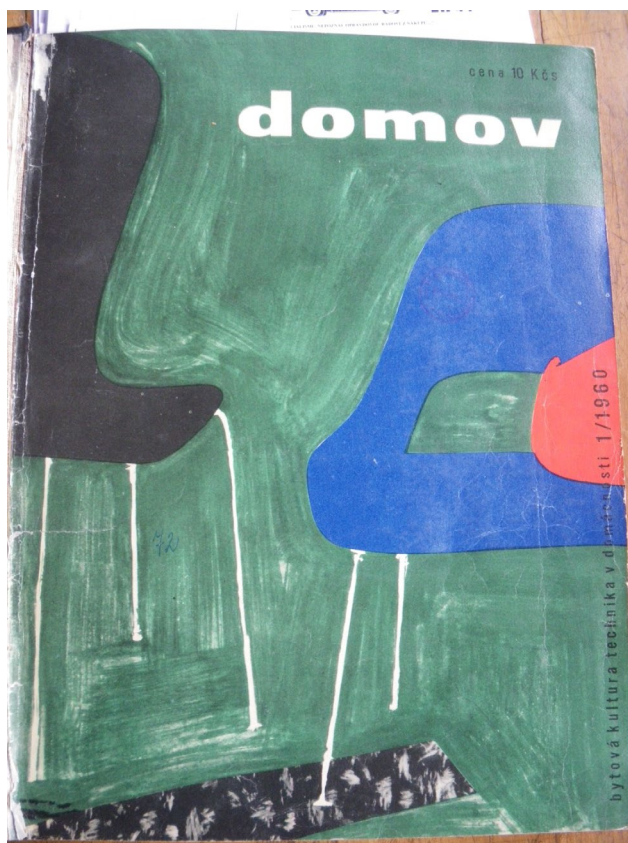


Fig. 54: Front cover *Domov*, 1 (1960).

## Brussels Expo 1958 and the International Stage

The Brussels Expo of 1958 was an international success for Czechoslovak practitioners, creating the 'Brussels Style' that became a key part of socialist modernity in Czechoslovakia. International trade fairs such as Expo 58 aimed to put products on the world-wide market. In the competitive context of Cold War relations between America and the Soviet Union in the 1950s, Khrushchev pledged to overtake American consumption via such methods as the Seven Year Plan, 1959-65, aiming for basic goods for all citizens<sup>421</sup>. The so-called soft power 'kitchen debate' that ensued between America and the Soviet Union, as played out in the model kitchen at the American

<sup>421</sup> Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis – London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959, demonstrated Soviet aims to locate a new global position for Socialist society.<sup>422</sup> This focused on domestic objects as well as technology, a shift in Soviet production that can be seen by comparing a 1927 Soviet Commodity Encyclopaedia, listing goods such as bulk commodities and raw materials, with a 1956-61 Commodity Dictionary published by the Ministry of Trade, which urged producers to face the customer, tempting them with the addition of lavish illustrations,<sup>423</sup> appearing to contradict the Party line on temperate commodity culture.<sup>424</sup> Cultural historian György Péteri has called the Communist project in Eastern Europe the 'largest deliberately designed experience in globalisation in modern history'.<sup>425</sup>

International trade fairs were part of this development. The Brussels 58 Czechoslovak pavilion, designed by architects František Cubr, Josef Hrubý, and Zdeněk Pokorný won high acclaim for its design and displays both with the official judges and fair goers, receiving a total of 171 prizes including *Grand Prix* for the best national pavilion, drawing 6 million visitors.<sup>426</sup> The pavilion was displayed according to a narrative structure called 'One Day in Czechoslovakia' and its motto was, 'we live in 1958, the year of technological miracles, when all is possible.'<sup>427</sup> It was notable in

---

<sup>422</sup> Susan E. Reid, 'Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev', *Slavic Review*, 61:2 (Summer 2002), 223-224.

<sup>423</sup> Julie Heisler, 'Cultured Trade: The Stalinist turn towards Consumerism', in *Stalinism: New Directions*, ed. by Sheila Fitzpatrick (Routledge, 1999), pp. 182-209 (p. 183).

<sup>424</sup> Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (University of Minnesota Press – Minneapolis – London, 2010).

<sup>425</sup> György Péteri (ed.), *Nylon Curtain – Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East Central Europe*, (Trondheim: Program on East European Cultures and Societies, 2006), p. 6. cited in Greg Castillo *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design*, (Minneapolis – London: University of Minnesota Press – 2010), p. xv.

<sup>426</sup> Including 52 Grand Prizes, 36 Honorable Diplomas, 35 Gold Medals, 23 Silver Medals and 15 Bronze Medals. See Cathleen M. Giustino, 'Industrial Design and the Czechoslovak Pavilion at EXPO '58: Artistic Autonomy, Party Control and Cold War Common Ground', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 47:1 (2012), 185–212 (p. 187).

<sup>427</sup> Kimberly E. Zarecor and Vladimir Kulić, 'Socialism on Display: The Czechoslovak and Yugoslavian Pavilions at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair', in *Architecture Publications* (Iowa State University Digital

containing neither the red stars and flags of the Soviet pavilion, nor the 'radical' expressionist artworks of the American pavilion, but was praised for its elegant modern industrial design, glass, ceramics and textiles.<sup>428</sup> Of particular note was glass, with works like Jan Kotík's *Sunlight, Air, Water* causing concern from the Czechoslovak Ministry of Culture due to its abstract qualities.<sup>429</sup> However, the pavilion and its displays achieved a cult status in Czechoslovakia in the following years, opening the way for further key developments such international influences in the work of ÚBOK and a new aesthetic known as 'Brussels Style', tolerated by officials despite its interwar avant-garde and western influences.<sup>430</sup>

The Czechoslovakian success at Brussels meant the country again played an important role a year later in Moscow. A key moment in Cold War 'soft power' relations, the American National Exhibition opened in Moscow in 1959 showing the USA's 'uncontested superiority of modern housewares'.<sup>431</sup> At the same time a Russian exhibition of Soviet Exhibition of Science, Technology and Culture opened in New York's Coliseum and a simultaneous exhibition of Czechoslovak glass was hosted in Moscow. A news reel from the time<sup>432</sup> shows crowds admiring innovative displays of functional and art glass, indicating as Susan Reid has stated, how consumption was, in this context, a symbolic activity.<sup>433</sup> In the initial stages of this research, discussions of trade fairs were a key access point to names of makers, organisations and understandings of activity in

---

Repository, 2014), pp. 226-239 (p. 230) <<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/38934213.pdf>> [accessed 8 March 2019].

<sup>428</sup> Cathleen M. Giustino, pp. 187-188.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>430</sup> Zarecor and Vladimir Kulić, p. 231 and Cathleen M. Giustino, pp. 210-211.

<sup>431</sup> Castillo, p. vii.

<sup>432</sup> LinkmanSK, *Czechoslovak glass exhibition in Moscow (1959)* (2009), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCpP8J\\_\\_CeE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCpP8J__CeE) [accessed 1 February 2019].

<sup>433</sup> Susan E. Reid, 'Who Will Beat Whom?: Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959,' *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 9:4 (2008), 855-904.

Czechoslovakia. Notably, the heritage of Czechoslovakia's success at the 1937 Paris Expo also anticipated the 1958 Brussels Expo and the glass exhibition in Moscow in 1959. Displays at the 12th Milan Triennial 1960 and Montreal in 1967 were also renowned for their 'spectacular' qualities. At the Osaka Expo, 1970, *The River of Life* by Stansilav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová was a particularly significant international glass display, which caused controversy by including Soviet footprints in reference to the suppression following the Prague Spring. Expos such as Brussels 58 were also a form of propaganda, showing the achievements of centralisations just ten years after the nationalisation of Czechoslovak industry, to demonstrate an 'all-round rise in the level of standard production'<sup>434</sup>. The success of glass at international trade fairs features heavily in issues of *Czechoslovak Glass Review* at the time. Trade fairs enabled further understanding of the international role of Czechoslovak craft and design, both as soft power propaganda and their impact on developments at home, invigorating and enabling new paths of creative endeavour. But the trade fairs are not central case studies in this chapter. The reason is two-fold: there is a great deal of strong and in-depth international scholarship covering this territory.<sup>435</sup> The focus of such texts is often art glass and studio glass, often used as a form of evidence not only of a high standard of production but also of experimentation (particularly through the work of artists like René

---

<sup>434</sup> Josef Raban *Czechoslovak Form* (Orbis, Prague, 1971), p. 15.

<sup>435</sup> For example, Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis – London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); David Crowley, D. and Jane Pavitt, J. (eds) (2008), *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970* (London: V&A, 2008); Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* (Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels), (Prague: Arbor Vitae, 2010); Verena Wasmuth, 'Czech Glass in the Limelight: The Great Exhibitions Abroad', in *Czech Glass 1945-1980: Design in an Age of Adversity*, ed. by Helmut Ricke (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, 2005), pp. 86-103; David Crowley, 'Humanity Rearranged: The Polish and Czechoslovak Pavilions at Expo 58', *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*. University of Chicago Press, 19:1 (2012), pp. 88-105.

Roubíček and glass duo Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová [Fig. 55], whose work is known internationally and is held in collections such as that of the Victoria & Albert Museum). I instead focus on national activities, departing from those to international developments where relevant, to understand domestic projects that explored craft. In order to do so, this chapter will focus on publications such as *Tvar* and *Domov*, alongside projects initiated by ÚLUV and ÚBOK.

In this context, craft continued to be viewed as both a means of enabling 'good taste' (as discussed in relation to the 1940s and '50s in Chapter One). This debate was actively addressed in key magazines of the late 1950s and 1960s such as *Domov*, not just in relation to glass but also to ceramics, textiles and furniture. Together these made up the Socialist Modern interior, a key site for exploration and debate, often addressed through new housing projects and led by ÚBOK as well as ÚLUV.



Fig. 55: Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, *Zoomorphic Stone*, 1957-1958, glass, 60.4 x55 cm, Corning Museum of Glass.

Photograph: The Corning Museum of Glass.

## **ÚBOK: Experiment Invalidovna (1961) and the Socialist Home**

The home as a site for Cold War politics has been analysed in detail by writers such as Katherine Pence, Paul Betts and Greg Castillo.<sup>436</sup> Castillo has discussed the Khrushchev-era increase in products for domestic consumption: proprietary housing units gave

---

<sup>436</sup> Paul Betts and Katherine Pence (eds), *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008) and Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

Russian residents 'new identities as socialist consumers', as 'active engineers' of 'domestic modernisation', which allowed them to compare their standards of living to those outside the Soviet bloc.<sup>437</sup> The important role of the home environment in Socialist countries therefore went beyond the private, the living space becoming what Friedrich Moebius in the East German home design magazine *Kultur im Heim* (Culture at Home) described as part of the public ideological discourse: 'its primary significance in the education of the human being, in the richer formation of socialist conditions of reality, as well as in its chief function within social psychology makes it a paramount public affair.'<sup>438</sup> This was the case in Czechoslovakia too, where interest in the modern home stemming from inter-war architectural and design practice continued, particularly in relation to the prefabricated home (known in Czech as the *panelák*) and so-called 'experiments' in housing construction and decoration.

The term 'experimental' in relation to architectural projects was used across the Soviet Union and satellite states in order to gain support from the State for new design. The subject was explored by David Crowley in his 2008 essay 'Thaw Modern: Design in Eastern Europe after 1956', for the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition catalogue *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970*: 'The term "experimental" also represented a new kind of contact with the state on the part of architects. In taking on the role of researchers, they agreed to limit their sphere of interest to technical matters. The logic of design was now to be found within practice'.<sup>439</sup> *Domov* regularly

---

<sup>437</sup> Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*, p. 204.

<sup>438</sup> Friedrich Moebius, 'Der Wohnraum als 'Abbild' und 'Aktion'', *Kultur im Heim*, 20(April 1974), 34,, cited in Paul Betts, 'Building Socialism at Home: The Case of East German Interiors,' in *Socialist Modern: East German and Everyday Culture and Politics*, p. 124, as cited in Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*, p. 206.

<sup>439</sup> David Crowley and Jane Pavitt (eds), *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970* (London: V&A, 2008), pp. 135–136.



documented such state experimental projects during the late 1950s and 1960s, particularly housing developments in Prague and Brno. Architect Julius Šif, writing for *Domov* in 1961 in an article entitled 'Architekti experimentují' (Architects Experimenting), acknowledged the association of the term 'experiment' with test tubes, fumes, goggles, and the blowing up of yellow and green fluids – a context that he felt could have been as absurd in relation to design. But in applying this to housing 'experiments', he looked to architect Karel Honzík who, when writing about Mies van der Rohe and the Tugendhat villa in Brno (1928-30), used the term 'experiment' – and readers could learn from this. 'Yes. Under capitalism much came into being,' he admitted, and there were great structural creations as a result. However, Šif noted, for all their worth, cost and value they were often uninhabitable and only valid as novelty – a charge that continues to be laid against the 'starchitects' of today. A point that Šif felt should be taken forward was that contemporary architects could associate the development of new architectural concepts with the term 'experiment' – within the framework of state approval. This meant that Czechoslovak architects were advised to avoid wasting real materials in pursuing their ideas but be 'experimental' during thinking and planning approaches: in laboratories, on paper and in project studios – 'and only until then, once approved, [would they] use them during experiments'.<sup>440</sup> The call to avoid waste, seen in magazines like *Tvar* (Form, produced by ÚLUV) in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as discussed in Chapter One, thus continued as an aspect of the Socialist Modern.

---

<sup>440</sup> J. Šif, 'Architekti experimentují' [Architects experimenting], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 5-8 (p. 7).



Fig. 56: Crowds lining up to visit Experiment Invalidovna, Prague, 1961, photograph, from Libuše Marková, 'Očima návštěvníků' [The Eyes of Visitors], *Domov*, 5 (1961), 14-18 (p. 14).

One example of an experimental project that gained renown in Czechoslovakia in the early 1960s was the Invalidovna housing estate in Prague, which featured in the early 1960s pages of *Domov* [Fig. 56]. Experiment Invalidovna was a collaborative building and interiors project for a new housing estate for 4100 residents in 1100 residential units, built between 1960 and 1965 in Prague 9, developed by the State Project for the Construction of the City of Prague (SÚPRO), led by architect J. Voženílek and the Research Institute of Construction and Building (VÚVS). The interior design was directed by State organisation ÚBOK, which though founded in 1959, had succeeded and absorbed the organisation Textile Design (Textilní tvorba, established in 1949). At ÚBOK, a department of Textiles and Fashion was joined by a department of Housing Culture, as well as a Spatial department (*prostorový*), described in present-day Czech-English translations as Interior Design; Surface (*textiláci*), made up

of textile designers; and Plastic (*plastický*) dealing with glass and ceramics.<sup>441</sup> The two buildings in Prague that housed ÚBOK also contained a library, and the organisation published books, reports and the magazine *Domov*, with writing on both national and international design. As such, it had a theoretical, practical and didactic purpose in the field, similar to ÚLUV (whose origins were discussed in Chapter One), with whom ÚBOK worked closely.

ÚBOK's involvement in the Invalidovna Experiment was first discussed in 1959 by Voženílek and Emanuela Kittrichová, the manager at the time of the Spatial or Interior Design department.<sup>442</sup> In consultation with VNP Brno (Vývoj nábytkářského průmyslu, the state organisation Development of the Furnishing Industry), proposed layouts were designed by Kittrichová and Ivan Nedoma and drawn by Eva Hružová. The first section of the Invalidovna estate was completed in 1961, and designers from ÚBOK were allocated five flats to furnish [Fig. 57]. They could not intervene in the ground plan, but were able to add lightweight polystyrene partitions.<sup>443</sup> The latter would be an topic of obsessive discussion in contemporary publications such as *Domov*, where adaptation within restricted domestic environments was a central concern. Whilst ÚBOK designers were given Flats 1, 5, 7, 8 and 10, Flats 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 were furnished with so-called 'market' furniture, predominantly the lightweight section series U and M 100.<sup>444</sup> The latter was made by Nabýtek Praha (Furniture Prague) with pieces designed by František Luska, Libuše Marková, Jaroslava Přinesdoma and Vladimír

---

<sup>441</sup> Daniela Karasová, 'Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury v Praze, řečený ÚBOK', [Institute of Interior and Fashion Design in Prague, known as ÚBOK], *Revue Umění a řemesla* [Arts and Crafts Review], 1 (2010), 7-13.

<sup>442</sup> Daniela Karasová, *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna* (unpublished version of manuscript, provided courtesy of Daniela Karasová, 2014), p. 1.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*

Paperstein, but the final furnishing was completed in consultation with workers from ÚBOK.<sup>445</sup> This meant that each flat had what was termed an *Úbokový* look, a term used with varying degrees of approval. The so-called Brussels Style that dominated after the success of the 1958 Expo now had an heir, similar in look in its colourful, bright, modern and organic forms, but attempting to bring an established strand of Czechoslovak Socialist Modern to the flat.

---

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 57: Invalidovna interiors, photographs, from Marie Benešová, 'Nové byty v experimentálních domech na Invalidovně' [New Flats in the Experimental Housing of Invalidovna], *Architektura ČSSR*, 9 (1961), pp. 601-605.

ÚBOK designers approached the Experiment Invalidovna project in small groups, allocating one researcher-designer and one textile-colour scheme expert to each flat. Additionally, a core group of designers was then responsible for creating storage, lighting and furniture, working across the five flats. Each flat was devised on the premise that a family of four lived there, composed of different members (for example, two working parents, a son studying

construction and a grandmother, the latter becoming increasingly important during this period in looking after the home whilst both parents worked), of varying ages and employment. In terms of their supposed requirements, play rooms were created for small children, folding desks for those who were studying, sofa beds for additional family members, living rooms made into multi-functioning spaces with kitchen corners, overhead storage and adaptable shelving.<sup>446</sup>

The ÚBOK guide that was handed to visitors to the flats claimed that the designers' research and work was in response to the needs of Czechoslovakia, which, like many of its post-war Eastern and Western European neighbours, was building vast amounts of new housing. The government planned to build 1,200,000 new apartments to house a third of the entire population. ÚBOK's aim was to create flats that presented a functional, harmonious whole, that met living needs but also created potential standards for housing development, with the ambitious desire to create a varied range of options to allow a greater meeting of individual needs.<sup>447</sup> But sizes were small in the new pre-fabricated flats, and designers had to work with very limited space, as well as limited resources. To contextualise the size of the spaces, in 1966 Czech sociologist Jiří Musil (also a regular writer for *Domov*) carried out a study at the University of Glasgow comparing the housing policy and needs of Britain and Czechoslovakia. His results showed that at the time that Experiment Invalidovna was being built, England and Wales had approximately 0.7 persons per room, due to the high average number of rooms (4.5) per dwelling. Only 15 per cent of dwellings had fewer than this, whereas in Czechoslovakia it was more than 80 per cent. In

---

<sup>446</sup> *Experiment 61*, publication to accompany the project (Prague: ÚBOK, 1961).

<sup>447</sup> Guide included in *Ibid.*, inserted between pp. 16-17.

Czechoslovakia there were 1.33 persons per room, demonstrating the imbalance between the number of households and the number of dwellings. According to the Economic Commission for Europe, in 1961-62 Britain built more than half of its dwellings with five rooms or more. Czechoslovakia built only 2.9-3.2%.<sup>448</sup> As a result, issues of restriction, whether spatial or material, were in the forefront of designers' minds when working on projects like Experiment Invalidovna [Fig. 58].



Fig. 58: Left, Invalidovna, Prague, 2014. Photograph: Author's Own. Right, Experiment Invalidovna from *Architektura ČSSR*, 9 (1961), n. pag.

The history of the prefab building, or *panelák*, in Czechoslovakia, has been explored at length by architectural historian Kimberly Elman Zareco. Paralleling inter-war developments across Europe and the United States, in the early 1950s prefabrication and lightweight concrete mixtures were researched intensively by the Czechoslovak Ústav montovaných staveb (Institute of Prefabricated Buildings). The first official *panelák*, the G-domy, was designed by two former Bat'a architects from the 1930s, Bohumil Kula and Hynek

---

<sup>448</sup> Jiří Musil, *Housing Needs and Policy in Great Britain and Czechoslovakia* (University of Glasgow social and economic studies. Research papers. no. 2.) (Edinburgh; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), pp. 17-24.

Adamec, at the institute's Gottwaldov (Zlín) branch in 1950 (the 'G' stood for Gottwald).<sup>449</sup> By the 1960s visitors from across the Eastern Bloc were visiting Czechoslovakia to learn more about *panelák* research, and the building form became widespread. One issue that arose was addressed by the groups of designers working on the interiors of Experiment Invalidovna: that of individualisation and need for variety contained within a set of flexible types. This is also the space of experimentation suggested in the title of the project. As Crowley has proposed, this is the optimism informing Eastern European industrialised architecture, heralding a new world through Socialist Modern form whilst allowing architects and designers a space to explore.<sup>450</sup> Associations with individualisation had been considered antithetical to the Socialist Realist aim for an architectural 'type' that would enable the new socialist reality for everyone, as seen in this 1955 quotation from Oldřich Starý:

Architects... must fight against the backward, harmful idea that typification is antithetical to artistic aspirations. It is really thanks to typification that uniquely beautiful, integrated spaces succeed in being created in the world; for example, the celebrated Greek temple was in fact a type. Our architects, with the awareness they have moved from the private atelier to a collective workplace, must... give preference to mass building production before individual commissions, however more enticing.<sup>451</sup>

I draw upon Starý's words here to highlight the shift seen at the beginning of the 1960s. Developing a socialist type by using localised forms and references was seen in early to mid-1950s

---

<sup>449</sup> Zareco, p. 225.

<sup>450</sup> Crowley, *Cold War Modern*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>451</sup> Zareco, p. 224.



architectural forms that pursued the Socialist Realist agenda, as discussed in Chapter One. But by the time of Experiment Invalidovna, the emphasis was on how architecture and interior design could still follow set models, such as the pre-fabricated flat, but locate possibilities for what was loosely deemed 'individualisation', or 'individuality', within those models, a term that will be discussed further. This was a key aspect of the Socialist Modern, and demonstrated the transition to humanism as a form of resistance to the bureaucratic control of the 1950s (as discussed in Chapter Two). The maintenance of the 'collective workplace' and the aspiration to remain in service to the masses, however, continued as aims of Socialist Modern interiors, in which the employees of state organisations were expected to take the technocratic role of problem-solvers. The documents and publications that surrounded their 'solutions', such as Experiment Invalidovna, were thus didactic in nature.

In a publication produced by ÚBOK to accompany the Invalidovna Experiment, designer and writer Karel Koželka articulated the project's aims to educate and facilitate the socialist lives of citizens in Czechoslovakia. Koželka had been active in the 1930s, arguing for an 'aesthetic' building programme that brought 'civilisation and culture' to inexpensive housing units.<sup>452</sup> Koželka's rack system, resembling the String shelving system by Swedish designers Nisse and Kajsa Strinning (1949-1950),<sup>453</sup> was used not only in Flat 7 in Invalidovna, which he designed in its entirety, but also in the other flats for suspended shelves, cupboards and work surfaces. In the Invalidovna publication, Koželka emphasised the aim

---

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>453</sup> Daniela Karasová, *The History of Modern Furniture Design* (Prague: Museum of Decorative Arts, 2012), pp. 191-192.

of creating industrial standards whilst allowing for creative flexibility, a kind of consumer participation, responding to the requirements of differing shapes and dynamics of families, trying to address the 'contradiction in terms' of standardisation and individualisation whilst creating a richer form of design exhibiting, an 'educational teaching exhibition of interior furnishings' within the show flats at Invalidovna that 'favourably differed from the existing practice of creating featureless exhibitions of interiors for imaginary typical families'.<sup>454</sup> In this they were influenced by housing projects in Brno, where the homes were supposed to look partly lived in, with books and discarded knitting, bright colour palettes and textiles – a tactic to humanise the flat through the suggestion of everyday activity and adaptation (seen through reading, knitting, making – referencing ideas of craft) that was continued in the Invalidovna show flats [Fig. 59].

The designers did not always succeed in this aim to humanise. Marie Benešová, writing for *Architektura ČSSR* in 1961, criticised Experiment Invalidovna for being impersonal, saying it reminding her of a dentist's waiting room, overly prescriptive in its allocation of spaces to specific activities and allowing no flexibility for anything except eating, sleeping and working, and 'modish' (a term applied negatively in *Domov* articles at this time, as will be discussed) in its choice of aesthetic, to the detriment of real consumer desires.<sup>455</sup> The one example she praised was Flat 5, designed by Emanuela Kittrichová and Jaroslav Horný with textiles and colour scheme by Jaroslava Hrušková, intended for two parents with two small girls.

---

<sup>454</sup> Karel Koželka, *Experiment 1961, Závěrečná zpráva k úkolu* [Closing report to task] I-1 1960, Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury [Institute of Interior and Fashion Design], Praha [Prague] 1, Příkopy 21, 20.X.1961, Internal publication, p. 67, as cited in Karasová *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna*, p. 3.

<sup>455</sup> Marie Benešová, 'Nové byty v experimentálních domech na Invalidovně' [New Flats in the Experimental Housing of Invalidovna], *Architektura ČSSR*, 9 (1961), 601-605.

Benešová admired it for its understanding of space and good storage, and its demonstration of experience and virtuosity in furniture arrangement – though she complains about a ‘dummy’ cabinet that was merely a façade.<sup>456</sup> Given the ‘show’ nature of the flats, this is an interesting accusation of deception and can be read as a metaphor for way in which many of the objects designed by state organisations like ÚBOK remained in prototype.



Fig. 59: Interior Invalidovna Flat 8, for a family of four, interior design by Eva Hrůšová, textiles and colour scheme by František Rauš, 1961. Image courtesy of Daniela Karasová.

Indeed, this echoed a complaint voiced by many of 75,000 visitors to the project from Prague and beyond, including delegates

---

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

from factories and companies and international visitors. Whilst the flats generally met with a favourable response, the limited availability to the public of the items on show was questioned.<sup>457</sup> Libuše Marková, reflecting on the visitor experience for *Domov*, concluded that shops should be able to be true to their word and fulfil the promise to sell the exhibited goods, in the 'national economic interest!'.<sup>458</sup> The majority of items from the project remained in prototype, with the exception of a very small number of products – for example, a plain deep blue carpet in Kittrichová's flat. Jan Michl has called this a failure of industrial design within the centralised economy, which lacked incentives to turn prototypes into first-class objects.<sup>459</sup> The socialist system of 'production for use' rather than 'production for profit', he claimed, struck at the heart of industrial design and resulted in mediocre products.<sup>460</sup> The crafts, influenced by folk techniques and traditions, as seen in objects made by both members of ÚLUV and ÚBOK, aimed to address this system by proposing models that could be scaled up, such as the glass vases made by Škrdlovice (see Chapter One) and ceramic tiles made by collective Marie Rychlíková, Lydie Hladíková and Děvana Mírová (see Chapter Four). Editor and theorist Josef Raban was a particular proponent of the crafts as a solution to this issue, as will be discussed in this chapter.

As well as this overt press criticism, there was also a form of quiet and humorous mockery from those within the state organisations trying to solve the issues presented by small flats and minimalist, adaptable interiors. Between 1960 and 1961 *Domov* ran a

---

<sup>457</sup> Karasová, *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna*, p. 13.

<sup>458</sup> Libuše Marková, 'Očima návštěvníků' [The Eyes of Visitors], *Domov*, 5 (1961), 14-18 (p. 15).

<sup>459</sup> Jan Michl, *Institutional Framework Around Successful Art Forms in Communist Czechoslovakia* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 1999), p. 47.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*

five-part photo-story in each issue, called 'Láska musí mít střechnu nad hlavou' (Love Must Have a Roof Over its Head) [Fig. 60]. Using shots taken from Břetislav Pojar's 1959 animation *Jak zařídit byt* (How to Furnish a Flat), the feature used a well-known Czech craft medium, puppetry, to show a modern-day Adam and Eve comically wrestling with the concerns and requirements of moving into the restricted space of a pre-fabricated flat. If Eve, the first photo story explained, had not persuaded Adam to eat that tempting apple, then all future troubles may have been avoided. And, the story continued, those troubles directly 'stirred up' something that will have to be dealt with for ever: namely, (in upper case lettering): THE FLAT.<sup>461</sup>

*Jak zařídit byt* featured an architect in a scientist's white lab coat, a technocratic guide showing off a new flat but inadvertently demonstrating to Adam and Eve the pitfalls of modern flat living. In so doing, he mocked the underlying ergonomic principles so important to social housing interiors in the early 1960s. The images parodied the movements necessary for a human in such a restricted space: when considering your wardrobe, one strip read, you'd need to think seriously about where to fit your hat, and whether the storage would allow you to buy a winter overcoat or not. At another point the architect demonstrated an exercise in balance as he stood on a stool to reach the storage, whilst a *babička* (grandmother) crouched on the floor to view a teapot problematically stored in the folding lower compartment of a cupboard. Doorways from multiple rooms opened to block the hallway, which was too narrow to accommodate them, and havoc was caused by the close proximity of a window and a precarious small table for flowers in a vase. The

---

<sup>461</sup> 'Láska musí mít střechnu nad hlavou' [Love Must have a Roof over its Head], *Domov*, issues 6 (1960), p. 33; 1 (1961), p. 49; 2 (1961), p. 40; 3 (1961), p. 65; to 4 (1961), p. 45, using stills taken from Břetislav Pojar's 1959 animation *Jak zařídit byt* [How to Furnish a Flat]. Dir. Břetislav Pojar (Prague: Studio Barrandov, 1959). Artworks by Svatopluk Pitra, furniture and architecture by Vladimír Malík.

answer, concluded the last story in the series, was to think carefully about what you buy, to plan your route around the flat and know what will be in your way, and have enough space for what you have with useful things ready to hand.<sup>462</sup> At one point the main character became an ergonomic form, a rounded-out, puppet-like version of the ergonomic diagram that would have been familiar to designers in Czechoslovakia at this time.<sup>463</sup> In one image, this form sat in a reclining chair next to a low dining table to show how it could be used for both eating and resting, the subtle zigzagging of his stomach outline demonstrating that bending towards the table would result in digestive issues [Fig. 60].

---

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> ÚBOK designers were interested in ideas of ergonomics and its related Taylorist origins during the 1960s and 1970s. Texts on this increased in the early 1970s, as will be discussed, influenced by international publications such as Geoffrey Salmon's 1967 *Storage: Suiting the System to the Requirements* (London: Macdonald & Co. in association with the Council of Industrial Design, 1967, which used ergonomics diagrams.

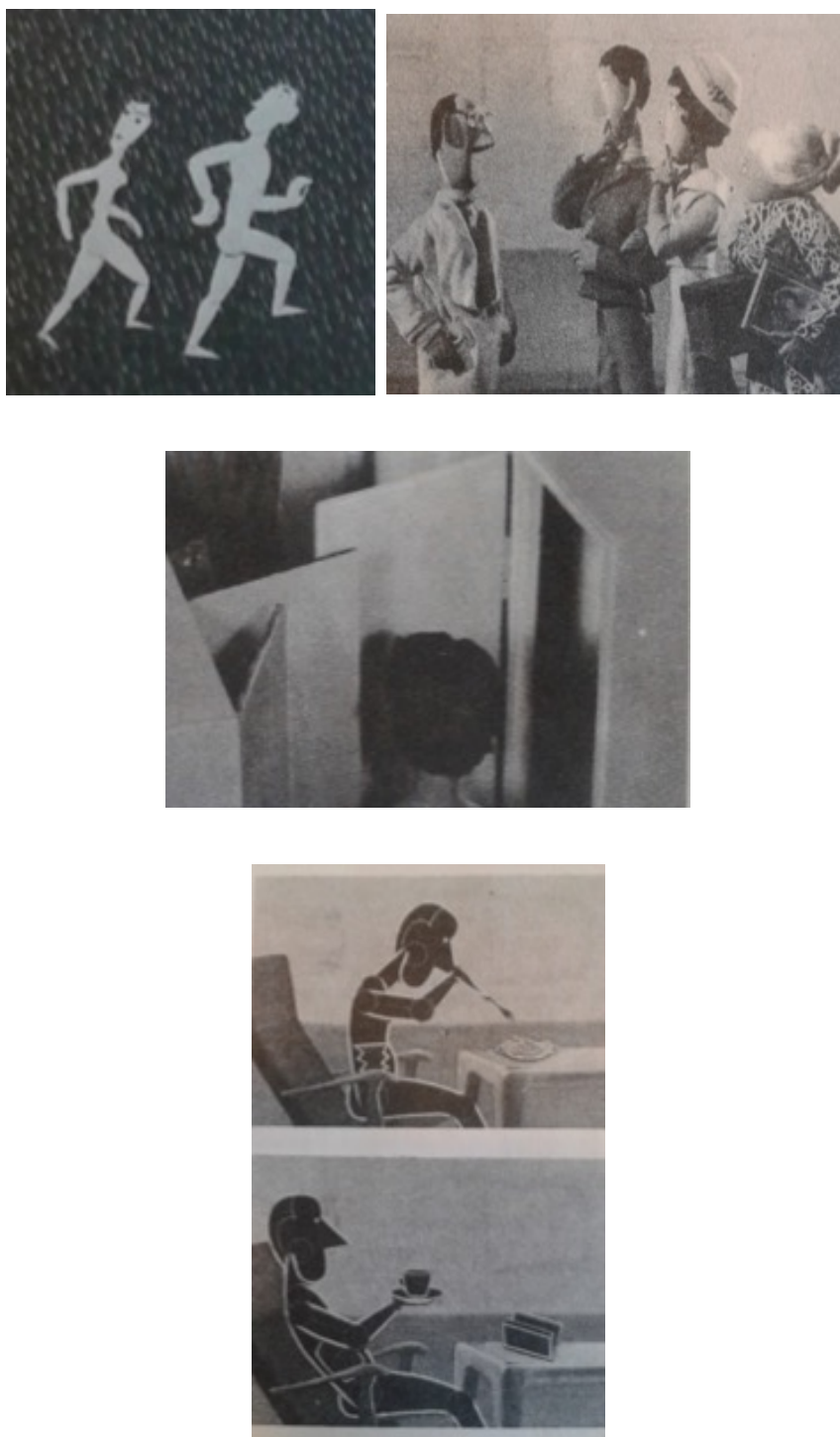


Fig. 60: 'Láska musí mít střechu nad hlavou' [Love Must Have a Roof Over its Head], photographs, using stills from Břetislav Pojar's *Jak zařídit byt*, 1959, animation, from *Domov*, 6 (1960) - 4 (1961). (From top: issue 6 (1960), p. 33; 1 (1961), p. 49; 3 (1961), p. 65; 1 (1961), p. 49).

The production of an animated film and its reproduction in *Domov* is another iteration of Czechoslovak humour as a method of responding to centralised, bureaucratic structures. The Švejkist parody was again at work in 'How to Furnish a Flat', using comedy as an invitation for audience collusion in the problem at hand. The flat could be solved together, and the tone of *Domov* and ÚBOK publications, as well as *Tvar*, frequently deployed this tactic as a kind of aside, breaking the didactic fourth wall in order to find commonality. There is something here about scale, too. Pojar's fellow animator and film director Jiří Trnka said, in the same year that the *Domov* feature appeared (1961), that: 'The Czech artists have always looked for the world's reality not in size but rather in depth...it is in these places also that we find reality. Perhaps it is for this reason that we love puppets, because in this smallest of worlds we attempt to express everything about life, about beauty and about love...'<sup>464</sup>

Pojar had been producing animated work since the 1940s, and had worked closely with Jiří Trnka. His work combined humour and social commentary, which would become more overt after his emigration to Canada in animations such as *Balablok* (1972). The latter was a tale of conformity and destruction that explored social violence, played out through a war between a community of squares and a community of circles whose instinct was to destroy one another, breaking parts from their enemies until they are no longer disparate forms [Fig. 61]. On the pages of state magazine *Domov*, Pojar's earlier 1961 commentary on the flat can be seen as a cautionary tale against bad design. *Jak zařídit byt* distorted space and

---

<sup>464</sup> *Paris-Prague*, 11:12 (1961), 12-13, as cited in Harriet R. Polt, 'The Czechoslovak Animated Film', *Film Quarterly*, 17:3 (1964), 31-40 (p. 33).



objects to demonstrate how badly designed flats could have a negative impact on the everyday lives of their inhabitants. The agency of bad design was located in the personality of 'THE FLAT', which was anthropomorphised, rebelling against its designer and inhabitants. The character of the flat and its contents emerged again in Czech filmmaker Jan Švankmajer's 1968 animated film of the same name [Fig. 62], in which the protagonist is trapped amongst objects that increasingly torment him; the film ends by showing him hacking through the door only to find a wall covered with the names of Surrealist artists and writers, a denouement that Jonathan L. Owen has argued identifies Surrealism 'with the attempt to forge an escape route, at once individual and collective, from the prison of contemporary society'.<sup>465</sup> Švankmajer's animated objects were an act of defiance: he stated that '...The irrationality of the dialogue of objects in my films is... a rebellion against utilitarianism'.<sup>466</sup>



Fig. 61: Břetislav Pojar, *Balablok*, 1972, animation still, <[https://www.nfb.ca/film/balablok\\_english/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/balablok_english/)> [accessed 1 October 2016].

<sup>465</sup> J. L. Owen, *Avant-garde to New Wave: Czechoslovak Cinema, Surrealism and the Sixties* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), p. 190.

<sup>466</sup> 'Interview with Jan Švankmajer' in Peter Hames, *The cinema of Jan Švankmajer: Dark Alchemy* (New York: Wallflower Press, Columbia University, 2008) p. 110, cited in Owen, *Avant-garde to New Wave*, p. 211.



Fig. 62: Jan Švankmajer, *Byt* (The Flat), 1968, film stills  
 <<https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/26455-byt/>> [accessed 5 April 2014].

Švankmajer's statement recalls Vachek's surreal collage of folk motifs and activities in *Moravská Hellas* (1963), another act of rebellion against what could be deemed the utilitarian use of rural craft, dress and musical practices to perpetuate Communist ideology (Chapter Two). Though much more coherent in narrative, and gentle in delivery, Pojar's animation also critiqued the Socialist Modern by drawing attention to both the set-like conditions of the experimental show flats and the fallibility of their designs. Humans, suggested the animation, had to negotiate the scientific rationalisation of the interior and its ergonomic requirements – and the result could be disastrously idiosyncratic. This was also the danger latent in the 'experimental'.

Pojar's architect in his white coat was thus related more closely to the laboratory scientist of haphazard test tubes and fumes described by Julius Šif. Similarly, Pojar's animation inadvertently underlined the 'paper' nature of the Socialist experimental: these were puppet people in model rooms, rather than photographs of real people using the spaces. As seen in Fig. 57, photographs of

Experiment Invalidovna were decidedly empty of people. Pojar's puppets peopled the flat and made it safe, humorous: a place where the reader could collude in the comedy. Outside the scope of this research, but worth mentioning as highly relevant, is Věra Chytilová's 1979 film *Panelstory*, a satire that took as its subject the inhabitants of a Prague prefab estate – still under construction, surrounded by mud and riddled with flaws. The socialist modern flat was a shared experience, and as such could be drawn upon for collective understanding, but often in opposition to the original utopian hopes that it would both solve the housing crisis and support a strong socialist future.

### **Pantomime for Bad Taste: Advice on the Pitfalls of the Socialist Modern Home**

In Czechoslovak interior design, the role of textiles, colour schemes and natural materials, related to craft practices, were key to the aim of bringing the personal into the socialist modern. Historian Daniela Karasová has noted that Invalidovna was the first example of a Czech interior that combined different materials and differently coloured furniture in perfect unity, with a consultant for each flat focused on this specific area.<sup>467</sup> The handmade, crafted object, associated with folk methods, such as those created by members of ÚLUV, delivered this too, aiming to visibly bring in the touch of the human hand and soften the utilitarian appearance with natural materials and textures. But in terms of the spectrums of value upon which these actions were placed, it was important to the writers and editors of associated ÚLUV and ÚBOK publications that this moved towards the Socialist Modern rather than perpetuating a kind of

---

<sup>467</sup> Karasová *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna*, p. 1.

bourgeois kitsch. Whilst the restricted spaces were problematised, they were also advantageous to what Karasová has called ÚBOK's 'long-standing fight against traditional furniture sets'.<sup>468</sup> This position, that can be seen in the pages of *Domov*, attempted to challenge both what the accompanying *Invalidovna* publication called the 'danger of uniform flats' and tendencies towards 'kitsch'.<sup>469</sup>

In this context, publications sought to both educate and cajole, in recognition of consumer agency. In Castillo's words, 'In the dawning years of Khrushchev's Thaw, portents of a post-Socialist citizen – the socialist mass-consumer – came to light', a figure who was 'a descendent of the cultured proletarian of a socialist realist pedigree...'<sup>470</sup> The socialist citizen in early 1960s Czechoslovakia was both ideological producer and consumer, educated yet assumed to be compliant, with an increasingly acknowledged desire for choice in their daily life. They were also asked by writers for ÚBOK publications like *Domov* to become active in the 'fight' against the polluting forces of bad taste, against which craft was often held up as a preventative force.

Four years before *Experiment Invalidovna*, in 1957 in the Czech town of Pilsen a department store staged a 'showcase window pantomime' called *A Day at Home*, marking a new dawn in socialist advertising.<sup>471</sup> A male fashion model, two regional stage actresses and three local children portrayed a family of modern consumers whilst an off-stage narrator described the products used via external loudspeakers. The event was a point of transition, as Castillo has

---

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

<sup>469</sup> Guide to *Experiment 1961*, p. 1.

<sup>470</sup> Castillo, p. 173.

<sup>471</sup> Discussed by Castillo in relation to its coverage in the same year in German periodical, *Neue Werbung* – see Castillo, p. 173.

described: '*A Day at Home* heralded a new era. An absence of objects, rather than the presence of socialist realist culture, would define the real-and-existing socialist home'.<sup>472</sup> Despite the presence of rose-covered cups and 'bloated easy chairs' (cousins of the mass-produced rose-patterned plate portrayed in *Moravská Hellas* and the despised Soviet 'silk-fringed lampshades', seen as antithetical to the Socialist Modern,<sup>473</sup> – discussed in Chapter Two), which would soon disappear in the pages of state magazines in favour of the modern interior, the event was one of 'Socialist modernist cultural diplomacy', demonstrating aims to compete in the global marketplace.<sup>474</sup> In the same year as *A Day at Home*, the Conference of the Advertising Workers of Socialist Countries took place in Czechoslovakia. These events together demonstrated the self-awareness, critical discussion and concerns of socialist consumption that provided a backdrop to the 'experimental' housing projects, and explain why *Invalidovna* could be seen as a public/private frontier in which moral and aesthetic 'fights' were taking place behind the 'dentist's waiting room' furniture.

The presence or absence of certain objects in the socialist interior introduced dilemmas around issues of taste and the definition of 'correct' choices. This was directly addressed in *Domov* in somewhat didactic features like 'Vybrali jsme pro vás' (We have chosen for you), in which recommended items for the home were placed alongside vendors and prices. The prolific writer Josef Raban, who in the 1960s became a particularly vocal advocate of the Socialist Modern style in its relationships to folk, craft and new models of industrial design, grappled with potential loopholes in

---

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Tikhomirova cited in Varga-Harris, p. 576

<sup>474</sup> Castillo, p. 177.

consumer choice. Once such example is his 1961 *Domov* article 'Moderní nebo módní?' (Modern or Fashionable/Modish?), which offers an insight into an important point on the spectrum of value upon which craft and design were placed in Socialist Czechoslovakia at this time. The article was based on the correlation (and resulting room for confusion) between the two Czech terms, *moderní* and *módní* (modern and fashionable), the latter inferring something more like the English term *modish*.

Raban wrote the article in response to an alleged flood of queries, received by the ÚBOK offices, about how to negotiate this territory. His initial response to the question of whether an object should be fashionable or modern was the somewhat unhelpful: 'Both! But in the right place'.<sup>475</sup> The article contained terms through which the reader could better understand 'the modern' as opposed to 'the fashionable', where the modernist idea of a lasting universalism was implicit, largely in relation to past examples: Raban looked to the turn of the twentieth century's 'revolutionary break' in architecture, when the 'steel spider web of the Eiffel tower... gave the world metropolis a new dominating feature, exceeding every great cathedral, victorious arch and obelisk of the past'.<sup>476</sup> Here 'modern' was associated with the new and the contemporary, but also the epochal, the revelatory, and the progressive. Anything other than this, Raban wrote, needed to be purged from modernity, to free it from mere fashionable bias. And the way to do this was to use one formula, though not a simple one – namely to 'penetrate the basic regularities of the modern era, its scientific, technical and chiefly social and world view, to adopt the outcomes of modern culture and

---

<sup>475</sup> Josef Raban, 'Moderní nebo módní?' ['Fashionable or Modern?], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 34-38 (p. 34).

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

art and to demonstrate from this the angles to measure and evaluate – to be simply a man of today's era, a modern man'.<sup>477</sup>

In short, the ergonomic, Vitruvian form was the aim: the rationalist, the absolutist notion of designer as technocrat. And in achieving this scientific approach, the socialist modern designer and consumer could hope to avoid the pitfalls of their western counterparts, whose use of 'fashionable' styles based loosely on historical elements were highlighted as blatantly false, and nothing like the historic interiors they aimed to imitate. An image of a western interior was accompanied by an explanation that such furniture and interiors could be seen 'In wealthy echelons of capitalist society, invariably asserted to render social superiority through "stylish elements"'.<sup>478</sup> Taste was a fine line that needed to be trodden by *Domov* readers, and modishness was seen as both capitalist and flippant, as opposed to the researched scientism of Socialist modernity. This did not mean that all western and international forms were rejected, as an extended article on the Design Centre in London in an issue of *Domov* in the same year showed, but that the 'right' kind of modern needed to be located.

Craft and tradition played a key role in this negotiation: Raban drew upon examples from Scandinavia and the Far East. Domestic interiors from the latter countries were frequently admired in Czechoslovakian magazines, as was Finnish and Danish design, with its perceived use of traditional materials and processes to make modern objects. Czechoslovakian socialist modern commentary commandeered international histories as a means of guiding public taste: Raban stated that 'A millennium of culture from China, Japan,

---

<sup>477</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

Vietnam enriched our material means of production, which remained invariably modern. Our purchasers, of course, often predominantly imported objects from these countries which were made as curiosities for foreigners' – but he saw these as suiting the tastes of the international purchasers, so the comment was not as disparaging as the term 'curiosity' implied.<sup>479</sup> In fact, Raban explained that lacquered dishes, which were ordered by ÚLUV from Vietnam, contributed to the enrichment of Czechoslovakia's material culture [Fig. 63]. He viewed them as a testament to the ways in which export goods and popular items do not have to be 'contaminated' by a market for 'kitsch'.<sup>480</sup> This is the only time the term *kýč* is directly used in the article, showing the general shift of *Domov* to a terminology focused on 'taste' and 'fashionableness' rather than the earlier heavily worded diatribes against kitsch in the late 1940s and 1950s, such as Venera's 1948 *Umění a kýč* exhibition catalogue cover text, discussed in Chapter Two.

---

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid.





Fig. 63: Influences from Japan, Finland, Vietnam and a contemporary kitchen from England, from Raban, J. 'Moderní nebo módní?' [Modern or Fashionable?], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 34-38 (p. 34).

One means by which *Domov* attempted to steer audiences away from the hazards of taste was the use of 'before and after' images. Visual comparisons between old and new apartments were shown, with guides on how to combine inherited objects with newly acquired modern interiors. A photo story entitled 'Srovnávejtesnámi' (Compare with Us), warned: 'Look around yourself. Very carefully!

You might discover something the same or very similar to a curious camera in the family flat...'.<sup>481</sup> A candid camera revealed items in the flat which were then altered to create a new and improved setting for such occupations as 'feeling', 'working' and 'thinking'. The authors acknowledged that they were creating a kind of set, saying, 'Our little show begins'.<sup>482</sup> In this show, objects like a lamp held by the sentimental figure of a child were replaced with modern vases and modernist figures [Fig. 64]. Similarly, the multilingual *Domov* feature 'Pantomima nevkus' (Pantomime in Bad Taste) [Fig. 65], written in Russian, German and French, derided sentimental and decorative objects, from dresses to ornaments and illustrations.

The notion of bad taste continued to be bound to wastefulness: 'correctness' in the home was emphasised, which should eliminate the need for surplus. In this way, the lack of available materials and goods in the centralised economy conveniently supported the aims of minimal socialist modern interiors whilst advocating an economically viable style. The debate around ornament was not just a legacy of Modernist notions like those of Adolf Loos, but also about socialist consumer and producer responsibility, in which notions of taste were intrinsically bound to aims for efficiency. As historian Eli Rubin states, '...Porcelain figurines depicting angels or gnomes or other sentimental forms were kitsch, not because angels or gnomes are inherently wrong, but because porcelain was needed for more important, more functionally necessary ends, such as eating wares',<sup>483</sup> again recalling both Josef Šif's emphasis on the need to perfect experiments in the

---

<sup>481</sup> 'Srovnávejtesnámi' [Compare with Us], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 38-39 (p. 38). The images are credited to Petr Hrdliček who worked with Josef Váchov (named in the article as set designer and director of the film *Beautiful and Functional*) alongside photographer Petr Polák.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Eli Rubin, 'The Form of Socialism without Ornament Consumption: Ideology, and the Fall and Rise of Modernist Design in the German Democratic Republic', *Journal of Design History*, 19: 2 (2006), 155-168 (p. 163).

laboratory and *Tvar* magazine's regular 'Odmítáme!' (We Reject!) column of the late 1940s, addressing kitsch as an issue of waste (see Chapter One). The shift in *Domov* and articles like 'Srovnávejtesnámi' was into the expanded form of the socialist modern domestic interior as a site where such ideological criteria could be constructed and imitated by the consumer in the environment of their home. The consumer was asked to join in, to be active, to care about objects.



Fig. 64: 'Srovnávejtesnámi' [Compare with Us], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 38-39 (p. 38).

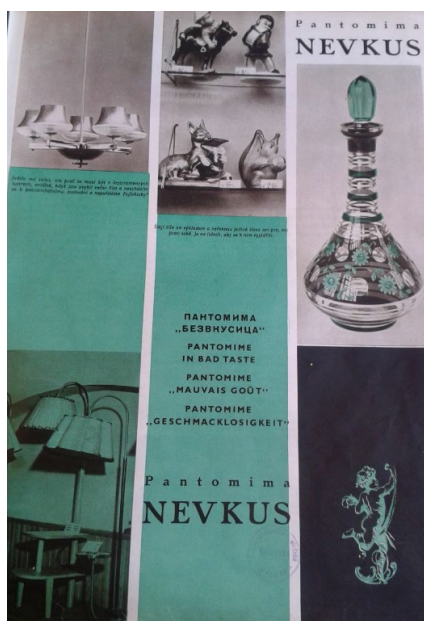


Fig. 65: 'Pantomima nevkus' [Pantomime in Bad Taste],  
from *Domov*, 1 (1960), n. pag.

A central aim of ÚBOK, ÚLUV and projects like *Invalidovna* was to demonstrate the importance of their research around craft and design. Their role was to provide ideas for adaptable flat interiors which would facilitate productive, harmonious lives for the socialist working family and therefore, it was hoped, allow the economic system of Socialism to thrive. This participative role was made physically possible by objects such as temporary partitions, units made by the company Montisektor, and folding beds.<sup>484</sup> Montisektor furniture, designed by the Furniture Design plant in Brno, was advertised as Czechoslovakia's response to the global movement towards abandoning 'the system of rigid 'suites' in order to give the consumer maximum mobility in arranging his home' – it could be 'broken up into individual parts and reconstructed to form an entirely

<sup>484</sup> For example, architect Oldřich Stalík designed armchairs that could be put together by the customer, storage furniture with shutters and partition panels made from small sections of polystyrene. In the latter partition panels he collaborated with Zdeňka Zapletal (Discussed in Daniela Karasová *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna*).

different arrangement' [Fig. 66].<sup>485</sup> The company's logo emphasised this functionality through variously sized letters that were fitted together like building blocks, conveying through the wonky awkwardness of an upward-pushing 'T' the potential for dynamism and re-shuffling [Fig. 67]. Such shelves became the backdrop for books, ornaments, vases and reproductions.

The show flat as a site of display for such adaptable interiors was a means of emphasising the importance of functional objects as social and creative entities. The relationship between objects and their display and use was described by *Domov* writer Dušan Šindelař in 1962 as a 'special aesthetic science' in which the applied arts had an important role as an art form, but one that had a fixed purpose, and so needed to be understood in its functional context, as opposed to a museum.<sup>486</sup> Šindelař applied the notion of form following function, using the example of a Gothic stove tile whose shape and material properties were the result of the need to emit heat and enable it to be cleaned. As both a historical and aesthetic argument, Šindelař warned against the 'isolation of things', which, in opposition to the value systems of other art forms, had to be understood in their environment. It was an argument for the crafts and their display as a means of bringing both creativity and purpose to the socialist interior, but also as a science that could be rationalised according to the purpose of the object. In some ways, Šindelař's ordered objects could be compared to Venera's lines of connection between modern and folk items in the 1948 Brno exhibition *Umění a kýč* (Chapter One): methods of display and the context of an item were as important in conveying taste to the consumer as the objects themselves.

---

<sup>485</sup> Montisekor feature, *Domov* 1 (1961), n. pag.

<sup>486</sup> Dušan Šindelař, 'Proti izolaci věcí' [Against the Isolation of Things], *Domov*, 4 (1962), 4 (p. 4).



Figs. 66 and 67: Montisektor furniture and logo, from *Domov*, 1 (1961), n. pag.

## The Hand Part 1: ÚLUV and Invalidovna

Along with this focus on modular furniture, early 1960s Czechoslovak publications included items that reflected an ongoing interest in craft and traditional techniques within institutional design. These were instrumental in the quest to personalise space in projects like Experiment Invalidovna. Here, items made by ÚLUV designers came to the fore, like a papasan chair created by Alan Fuchs and chairs by TON, designed by Antonín Šuman, which used traditional wood-bending techniques. Ceramics and glass were made by smaller companies absorbed within larger organisations such as ÚBOK or the organisation Ústředí uměleckých řemesel (ÚUŘ, the Centre of Artistic Handicraft), established as a result of the 1957 Decree (discussed in Chapter One) and overseen by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Both organisations aimed to nurture 'correct' ideological aims, raise standards of work, guide research and documentation in order to enrich processes of production and support and educate younger generations of makers (termed 'workers', *pracovníci*, throughout the 1957 decree). As discussed in Chapter One, the 1957 decree defined

'artistic' craftsmanship as the hand-made (*rukodělný*) implementation of artistic works of creation. These were made by workers from occupations that either used 'masterful first-hand techniques', implying a kind of instantaneous production, or made them according to a design (*návrh*).<sup>487</sup> The loosely identified area of folk art production was further defined as the making of useful, artistically rendered objects, made predominantly from natural materials, by workers who through their creative work continued folk art traditions and built upon their experience of hand-made processes from 'the past'.<sup>488</sup> The key differences between the 1945 and the 1957 decrees, then, were that the craftwork was delineated as artistic and 'masterful', whilst folk art was connected to the preservation of traditional processes, and was 'useful'.

In Experiment Invalidovna, items made by hand using traditional techniques or natural materials were central to interior design schemes. Interiors were white-washed and then overlaid with curtains, drapes, rugs and upholstery fabrics that combined set colour schemes and tones. Most fabrics were plain-coloured and without pattern, although some patterns were used as 'highlights' against predominantly 'earthy' colours, used in a structured 'composition' based on 'so-called Scandinavian colour schemes combining different saturation and brightness of tones'.<sup>489</sup> These were complemented by the incorporation of hand-crafted work considered 'artisanal' alongside modular, modern furniture. An example is Flat 1, designed for a family of four by head researcher Ivan Nedoma, with a colour and textiles scheme by Jiří Mrázek. The hypothetical family was composed of two parents with a son and

---

<sup>487</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3 (5), p. 277.

<sup>488</sup> Decree 56, 1957, 3(7), p. 277.

<sup>489</sup> Karasová, *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna*.

grandmother – the son studying in the construction industry and pursuing sports, the grandmother tending to the household needs. As Karasová has pointed out in her in-depth study of the Invalidovna projects, as younger women and mothers were employed full time in Socialist Czechoslovakia, grandmothers were an indispensable part of the household – cooking, helping with the family’s children and running the household.<sup>490</sup>

Flat 1 showed how the collaboration between national companies, ÚLUV and ÚBOK, came together in practical terms. One bedroom was allocated to the parents and the other divided with a temporary partition for the son and grandmother. White walls were considered suitable locations for posters in the son’s room; subdued colour schemes and earthy tones were chosen for the rooms of the grandmother and parents. The son’s room contained a natural beech sofa bed upholstered in blue fabric, cupboards made of ash, a TON chair made by traditional bent-wood techniques by experts in this field, designed by Antonín Šuman, curtains in off-white, and a handwoven beige pile carpet designed by Jiří Mrázek.<sup>491</sup> The same colour scheme extended into the grandmother’s room, with the exception of bedding and a cushion in purple fabric – and here a papasan armchair made by ÚLUV added a traditional, folk-influenced item to the older inhabitant’s room (notably missing from the son’s room), another of which was found in the living room – and throughout the Invalidovna flats [Fig. 68]. They were frequently placed alongside modern shelving systems such as those designed by Karel Koželka for flats, including Flat 1. In the living-cum-dining area of Flat 1, hand-made curtains, armchair upholstery (black and silver), cushion covers (orange), curtains dividing the kitchen from the living

---

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.



area, and handwoven woollen carpets (off-white), dining table linen (grey), aimed to tie together the room alongside more natural wood (ash, walnut) and metal (the papasan chair and cupboard legs).<sup>492</sup> Priority was given to natural and tactile materials that combined Czech heritage, through companies like TON, with pragmatism – adaptable furniture, easy maintenance, durability and low costs. The colour schemes were calm and ‘rustic’, as were the materials.<sup>493</sup> In these aims the influence of Scandinavian design could be seen, as well the ideas of combining traditional methods and the hand-made with the modern, as advocated by Josef Vydra in the formation of ÚLUV. ÚBOK’s designers also drew on this ethos in the designs for textiles and furniture and the colour schemes.

---

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

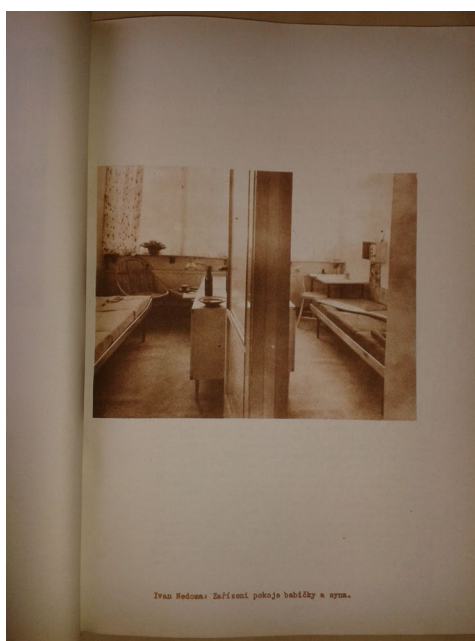


Fig. 68: Photographs of Flat 1, 'Nedoma-Mrázek', 1961. Top: sitting room and dining area, Bottom: grandmother and son's bedrooms divided by partition, from Karel Koželka, *Experiment 61, Závěrečná zpráva k úkolu I-1/1961, ÚBOK, Praha 1* [Experiment 1961, Closing report to task I-1 1961, ÚBOK, Prague 1], Internal publication, from archive of Daniela Karasová, n. pag.

Writing in 1967, Josef Raban encapsulated the aims relating to the joining of industry with folk influences and crafts that can be seen in the Invalidovna flats. He wrote that 'traditional folk-art manufacture and handicrafts play a triple role: they constitute a *stimulus to inspiration*, a *yardstick* of quality and cultural value and a *contrasting element* to industrial production'.<sup>494</sup> The hand-woven mat, papasan chair, natural wood, pottery tableware and earthy colours in the Invalidovna flats were physical realisation of Raban's later three-part paradigm, in which folk-art manufacture and handicrafts were used as creative stimulation, indications of cultural value, and a contrast to industrial production that could personalise and create an empathetic environment for the 'real' family. In this way, a splash of colour and texture added a form of narrative play, enabling a shift from the problematic 'dentist's waiting room' appearance of modern flats. The human hand was evident, and nature and tradition were made part of the socialist modern interior. These elements were set alongside ornaments and framed reproductions of modern art – pinnacles of 'good taste' that show how the ideas of Vydra and his associates in ÚLUV magazine *Tvar* in the 1940s and '50s were now firmly positioned in state projects. The advisory nature of organisations like ÚBOK and ÚLUV becomes highly visible in projects like Experiment Invalidovna, presented as the result of a combination of historical and scientific research, in which craft and design combined forces to create the perfect socialist home. Raban's amalgam of craft, folk and industrial design encapsulates that thinking.

---

<sup>494</sup> Raban, *Czechoslovak Form*, p. 7.

The direction of ÚLUV's search for a combination of national identity, contemporary products and traditional forms by the late 1960s can be seen in Milada Jochová's 1968 Summer Dress, sold via Krásná jizba in Brno, made from poplin and blueprint [Fig. 69]. The indigo blueprint textile method, discussed in Chapter One, was used again. But rather than neat floral patterns, lines or geometric patterns, Jochová splashed reserve on the surface in dynamic, gestural, expressionist forms. The base of white shapes against the dark blue was pushed into a new dynamic rather than direct imitation of folk-making legacy. The dress represents the late 1960s well, as it concerns a dialogue between limitation and boundary in textile form that resonates with the political ambitions towards an expansive, democratic Socialism that would result in the Prague Spring, which took place in the year the dress was made. It is in many ways emblematic of that political shift.

Jochová's dress was exhibited in the 2016 Prague National Gallery exhibition *Budování státu*. Also exhibited was a later image that provided a telling contrast to the dress's integrated approach to folk forms: Ladislav Čech's series of *Situational Pictures for Teaching* from 1971. Of particular interest was an image entitled 'Home', a set of tableaux depicting everyday domestic activities. One of these showed a solitary *babička* (grandmother), sitting quietly and sewing [Fig. 70]. The striking aspect of the image is the fact that she is wearing full traditional dress, complete with peasant headscarf, but is situated in a perfect socialist modern interior, *úbokový* in every detail. This juxtaposition reversed the integrated approach to folk promoted by designers like Jochová, and demonstrated the post-1968 attitude to the home, in which folk in many ways returned to a position that was not unlike the Socialist Realist forms of the early

1950s.<sup>495</sup> Rather than being brought together in combination – the folk-modern hybridity that Raban and Vydra had advocated – the components of folk and Socialist Modern form were instead just placed next to one another. Čech's illustration was an uneasy conflation of urban and rural modernity, unintentionally recalling the tropes parodied by Vachek in *Moravská Hellas* in 1963. With this image, as with many of the 1960s *Domov* articles about altering domestic space, old or new, to make it modern, the notion of meaning and human intervention into the modernist space is brought to the fore. Judy Attfield's discussion of the way Harlow new town's residents in the 1950s added net curtains to their Modernist homes, and their use of front versus back rooms, showing that meaning is made 'to reside temporarily through human intervention', through experience rather than things, is relevant here – in this case, to the rustic grandmother performing her craft in a prefabricated flat.<sup>496</sup> But instead of her knitting and headscarf causing a kind of disruption of the Modernist agenda, as seen in Attfield's example, Čech's illustration shows how the state actively employed the alignment of old and new to assert a socialist idea of 'home'. ÚBOK and ÚLUV's efforts to make the home and fashion consistently Modern (Karasová's aforementioned 'long-standing fight against traditional furniture sets'<sup>497</sup>), to use folk crafts as Raban's 'yardstick' and 'inspiration', as epitomised in Jochová's dress, contrast with Čech's image of a traditional grandmother.

---

<sup>495</sup> As noted in the introduction, for more on normalisation and the home, see Paulina Bren, 'Weekend Getaways: The Chata, the Tramp, and the Politics of Private Life in Post-1968 Czechoslovakia' in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by David Crowley & Susan E. Reid (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), pp. 123-140; and Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968* (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 2010).

<sup>496</sup> Judy Attfield 'Inside Pram Town: A Case Study of Harlow House Interiors, 1951-61', in *A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design*, by Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham (London: Women's Press, 1989), pp. 215-138 (p. 235).

<sup>497</sup> Karasová, *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna*, p. 1.



Fig. 69: Milada Jochová, Summer dress for ÚLUV, 1968, poplin, blueprint, Moravská galerie, Brno, Ref: 21 047.

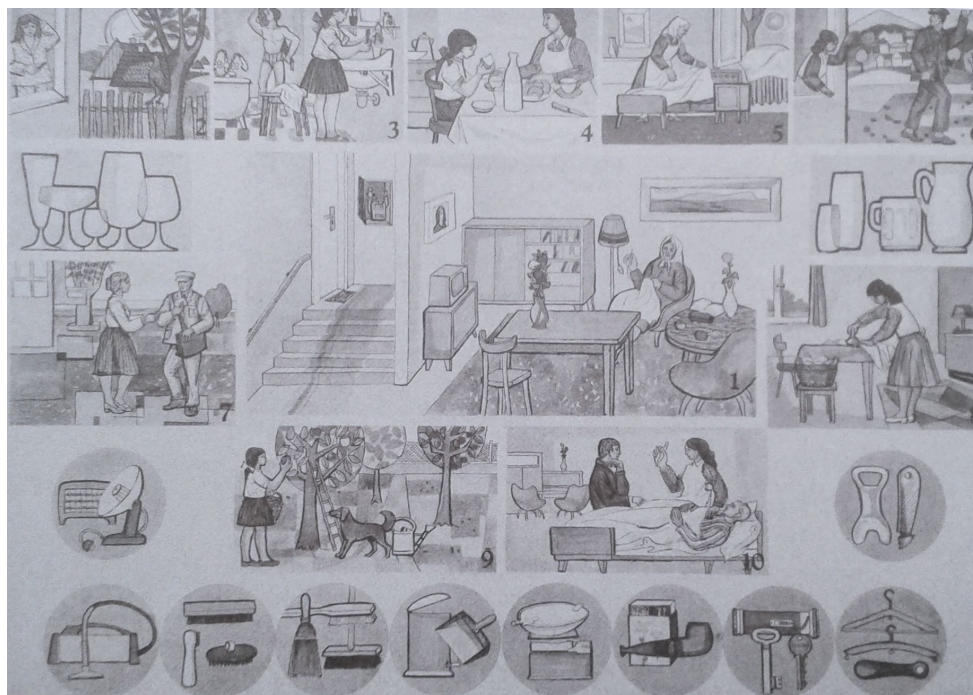


Fig. 70: Ladislav Čech, Part of a series of *Situational Pictures for teaching: 'Home'*, 1971, print on paper, 100 x 250 cm, from Milena Bartlová, Jindřich Vybíral et al (eds), *Budování státu: reprezentace Československa v umění, architektuře a designu* (The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design (Prague: UMPRUM, 2015), p. 278.

## The Hand Part 2: From the Designer to the Consumer

The meeting places between folk craft and industry, and the role of tradition, also featured in advertising in Czechoslovakia at this time. In the early 1960s, a series of advertisements were published by electronics company Electro-Praga Hlinsko (EPH - still operating today as ETA, an anomaly of survival in the post-1989 market). The latter company features in the current collection at the Národní technické muzeum (National Technical Museum) in Prague as an important case study for twentieth-century technology design. The advertisements show how the maker and the hand-made were

positioned in relation to the factory environment and technology. Simultaneously, DIY was encouraged in the home, making the consumer into a producer, as will be discussed.

The early 1960s EPH advertisements featured 'artist-designers' (*výtvarníci-designéři*), depicted in action in the form of woodblock-style illustrations. One of these, entitled 'Tvarový vývoj', which can be variously translated as 'Formative Process' or 'Shaping Development', featured a worker, resembling a wood turner, joiner or potter, intent upon making an object at the wheel, the presence of the hand was emphasised through the cross-hatched black and white lines of the print [Fig. 71]. The text read: 'It's not chance that we have our own sculpture studio and our own *tvarový vývarník*', an amalgam that in literal translation means shape-maker, a shape-designer, or a designer who specialises in shapes – in essence, the artist-designer. Creative, artistic involvement was thus again connected to the idea of experimentation and the establishment of ideas in the laboratory discussed by Šif in 1961. But in the case of the Electro-Praga advertisement, the exploration took place in a studio, and so a touch of creative romance was added to the consumer's vacuum cleaner.

Essential to the embedded value of the latter was the craft-associated notion of haptic knowledge. The Electro-Praga advertisement noted that its products would 'respond to people's hands' – the implication being that an artist's hands were involved in its making and thus the knowledge of its function was transferred to the consumer. Michael Polanyi's contemporaneous definitions resonate here: the 'unspecifiability' [sic] of skill similar to the findings of Gestalt psychology, in which *subsidiary awareness* and *focal awareness* work in parallel, alongside learned and inherited




experience, to enable the operation of tools (a hammer hitting a nail, a pianist playing the piano) via a form of implicit physical and acted knowledge.<sup>498</sup> The Electro-Praga advertisement emphasised that just such a tacit, movement-based knowledge could be imparted to the consumer. The artist-designer's knowledge was made manifest by the producers, the technical experts and the industry ('Experiences from one of our producers help during further production') and, therefore, 'they are our good wares'.<sup>499</sup> This was in answer to a question that ran vertically down the edge of all their advertisements: 'Why are they good – the wares of Electro-Praga Hlinsko?'

---

<sup>498</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, (Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 55-57.


<sup>499</sup> Advert for Electro-Pragy Hlinsko, 'Tvarový vývoj' [Shape Development], *Domov* 1 (1961), n. pag.

Proč jsou dobré - výrobky Elektro-Pragy Hlinsko?



## Tvarový vývoj

*To není náhoda, že máme vlastní sochařský ateliér a vlastního tvarového výtvarníka. Od svých výrobků nechceme jen to, aby dobře pracovaly a plnily svůj úkol. Chceme současně, aby byly fyziologicky správné – aby odpovídaly lidské ruce a aby se s nimi snadno pracovalo, chceme současně, aby byly krásné – aby jejich tvar byl ladný a jejich barvy příjemné, chceme současně, aby vhodně zapadaly do prostředí, do něhož jsou určeny. Při své práci dbá tvarový výtvarník i na to, aby byly dobře vyrobitelné. Zkušenosti z jedněch výrobků nám pomáhají při tvorbě dalších. Proto jsou naše výrobky dobré.*



**ELEKTRO-PRAGA HLINSKO**

Fig. 71: Elektro-Pragy Hlinsko advert, from *Domov*, 1 (1961), n. pag.

The relationship between the artist-maker-designer and the designer-producer as a point of merit in their advertising campaign shows how Electro-Pragy's advertising operated in relation to the craft and design divisions in late 1950s and early 1960s Czechoslovakia: the supremacy of rationalisation and the scientific, the Cartesian separation of mind and body, in which mind is artist and body is industrial producer. Craft was positioned in this balance

in order to measure and convey value. The style of the advertisement contributed to this, seen vividly in a 1960 Electro-Pragy example in which figures working or using tools were rendered in the recognisable woodblock style, whereas the images of tools such as vacuum cleaners were depicted in diagrammatic clarity. The advertisements' manipulation of craft values in both the text and the woodblock images demonstrated a contemporary view of the hand-made as authentic, value-giving and worth preserving, similar to the definitions of making that were outlined in the 1957 Decree and fundamental to the continued importance of the role of organisations like ÚUŘ, ÚBOK and ÚLUV.

If the Electro-Pragy advertisements implied a transfer of creative knowledge to the consumer, state organisations like ÚBOK also did this by encouraging DIY-style objects for the home. In Socialist Czechoslovakia, knitting or making garments was a means of engendering a certain amount of freedom to enhance the range of objects that were in everyday use, a creative hobby that gained importance in consideration of the lack of available resources and what were considered 'ugly' clothes in the limited range on sale in the shops – tailoring for oneself easily became making clothes for those one knew, too, and for customers: fashion curator Konstantine Hlaváčková at the Decorative Arts Museum Prague has written extensively on this 'shadow economy'.<sup>500</sup> To support this process, State organisations provided classes for women to learn how to make clothes, and ÚBOK sold a range of desirable modern fabrics designed for industry, managing their own atelier for this purpose.<sup>501</sup> In a similar vein, features were included in *Domov* during the 1960s that

---

<sup>500</sup> Konstantina Hlaváčková, *Czech fashion 1940-1970: Mirror of the Times*, (Prague: UPM and Olympia, 2000).

<sup>501</sup> As well as the aforementioned publication by Hlaváčková, this information also was covered in conversation with her at the UPM Prague, 8 June 2011.

encouraged readers to make simple chairs, shelves, tables and lamps from metal, plastic, cheap cuts of wood and folded paper.

One feature was called 'Udělejte si sami' (Do it yourself), which, as seen in an example from 1961, took a design by a named designer, such as a chair by Pavel Krbálek [Fig. 72] and gave detailed instructions for its construction (alongside a disclaimer, however, that copyright was reserved for serialisation).<sup>502</sup> The article recommended asking an ironmonger to assist with welding the iron frame, but the reader could then knot insulated electrical tubing to form the straps for the back and seat. The chair was recommended for its light, airy qualities, and the reader was reassured that it would take even more than a 'moderate weight', despite its apparent fragility. It might not have been a traditional chair, the text read, but this kind was being used the world over, not just in the garden but in the house, too, and would be able to 'make it easy for you, to ease your peace of mind, and to give you a wonderful world of poetry and joy'.<sup>503</sup> The feature specified that it was not an 'artistic work', but one that offered comfort and whose contrasting colours (combinations of yellow and blue, or black and gold, were recommended) would give the appearance of a 'graphic object'. In this way, the items still in prototype could be produced by the consumer – getting them one step closer to a socialist modern home. In both this environment and the Electro-Pragy advertisements the creativity of the individual was paramount, but in the service of set patterns and technological requirements.

---

<sup>502</sup> 'Udělejte si sami' [Do it yourself], *Domov*, 1 (1961), pp. 47-49.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.



Fig. 72: Chair design by Pavel Krbálek, from 'Udělejte si sami' (Do it yourself), *Domov*, 1 (1961), pp. 47-49.

## Locating 'Individuality'

In *Czechoslovak Form: Arts, Crafts & Industrial Design*<sup>504</sup>, Josef Raban selected work from a range of media that for him epitomised 'form' from Czechoslovakia, defining criteria that spoke to the notions of individualisation and craft within socialist design.<sup>505</sup> Significantly, Raban outlined two 'types' of work that he excluded from his text,

<sup>504</sup> Published in English by Prague publishing firm Orbis. The text was written in 1967 but the publication dated 1971.

<sup>505</sup> Josef Raban (1912-1986) was a prolific writer whose training was in the history of theatre production design. Raban graduated in Architecture in 1936 from the České vysoké učení technické (Czech Technical University, Prague), and worked largely in theatre until the 1940s: at the City Theatre Prague from 1939-54 and in the theatre department of the Academy of Musical Arts Prague. Raban was a production designer for several plays at the National Theatre in Brno, including *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, Gogol's *Marriage* and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. But Raban's main output during the period in question was his prolific writing on craft, applied art and industrial design for magazines like *Domov*, and as an editor of *Tvar*. He produced a great number of articles and books on craft and design during the 1950s and 1960s.

namely: 'unique works illustrating the personality of the artist rather than Czechoslovak applied art as a whole, even if such works lend national creative activity its distinctive cast and flavour', and 'works in which – due to mass reproduction – the original author's design has been generalised to the point of anonymousness, notwithstanding their important role in the economy and culture of everyday life'.<sup>506</sup> This was a place somewhere between the studio work of an artist and the mass production of industrial design – and as such reiterates the balance sought by organisations like ÚBOK and ÚLUV, particularly in the latter's definition of small-scale, applied art and folk manufacture as outlined in the 1945 and 1957 decrees (as discussed in Chapter One).

Raban wrote that such 'centralised development work was cut off from practical industrial production'<sup>507</sup> but enabled artists to develop their practice in relation to the theoretical. Raban stated that ÚLUV, in particular, saw the cultivation of folk-art manufacture as existing in the function of the product, the material properties of the product, conscientious workmanship and purity of form, embracing such principles as 'technical ethics' and 'cultural economic standards' demonstrated by folk-art manufacture, which was then possible to extend to more complicated industrial production.<sup>508</sup> Though his writing appeared ten years afterwards, it was thus aligned with the aims of the 1957 decree and, again, to the hopes of Josef Vydra. But Raban's emphasis was on the centralised craft and design organisation as a site of potential for experimentation that could eventually lead to larger-scale production – and wider economic impact.

---

<sup>506</sup> Raban, *Czechoslovak Form*, p. 7.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*

The role of the artist or maker was key for Raban. As he suggested, this individual personality should not to be asserted too far, 'even if such works lend national creative activity its distinctive cast and flavour', but should also not be lost in anonymity as is the case with industrial mass production ('notwithstanding their important role in the economy and culture of everyday life').<sup>509</sup> Whilst in many ways a standard recapitulation of Communist rhetoric, Raban revealed in these exclusions the aim of harnessing the creative impulse to the service of socialist needs, resulting in imaginative solutions to mass-produced design. Or, as Raban put it, combining 'free-rein' in the studio with 'consideration of social needs, levels of technology and the possibilities of the material'.<sup>510</sup> In charting how this had taken place in Socialist Czechoslovakia, he used key works in the crafts: ceramics, glass, wood and textiles. He claimed that 'A more detailed description of this kaleidoscopic picture of twenty years' growth – its major and minor developments, organisational measures, successes and failures – would be mere enumeration of dry and often dead facts', and so specific designers and makers were held up as examples of models for greater development.<sup>511</sup> The criterion for the selection of works in *Czechoslovak Form* was whether there was potential for partnerships with industry. Raban named a 'trend' to 'blend', by which he meant the ability to combine emotion with reason, aesthetics and ethics, science and art.

Designer Zdeněk Kovař and his pupils featured in *Czechoslovak Form*, reiterating discourse around machinery and tool-making as a site for bringing together purposeful objects, science and creative exploratory form (an example was used for similar reasons in *Tvar* in

---

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

the early 1950s, and in the *Umění a kýt* exhibition, as discussed in Chapter One). Josef Lahoda was one of these pupils, whom Raban included as a good example of 'creative process, based on a rational approach' [Fig. 73].<sup>512</sup> Škrdlovice Glassworks and the work of Emanuel Beránek was another example of this kind of success for Raban: he had also referenced Beránek's work in his earlier book *Modern Bohemian Glass* (1963), as a crucial model for convincing industry of the importance of involving artists in the process of design. Czechoslovak glass was the ultimate example of success in terms of this relationship for Raban, but he also saw ceramics as successful in this context, citing Jaroslav Ježek, whose Elka tea set from 1957 was so popular at the 1958 Brussels Expo. He also included ceramicist Praroslav Rada, whose hand-made ceramics used traditional craft techniques and folk motifs through a hybrid use of folk-like forms and fragments of decorative pattern [Fig. 74]. Raban extended the discussion to architectural and public settings, citing the work of Děvana Mírová, Lydie Hladíková and Marie Rychlíková, whose ceramics for architectural contexts such as Invalidovna and the Jěštěd Hotel near Liberec, according to Raban, supplied industry with real 'precepts' rather than just 'stimulating principles' (to be discussed in Chapter Four) [Fig. 75].<sup>513</sup>

Such a conflation of media and practitioners in *Czechoslovak Form* was a means by which Raban presented a defence of the experimental nature of studio work via the support of centralised institutions, whilst simultaneously arguing for the need for studio 'experimentation' to equip larger-scale production models. His choice of examples consisted of those promoted by ÚBOK in their publications, such as *Domov*, and projects such as Invalidovna. In the

---

<sup>512</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid., p. 23.



same way that the DIY chair used a prototype design to bring the model of socialist modernity into the home by engaging in consumer interaction, a ceramic ornament such as Rada's, or a Škrdlovice vase, could endow the home with a sense of 'the creative', something experimental from the studio brought into the socialist modern flat, thus improving it. Techniques such as those used by Beránek could be traced to smaller-scale applied art traditions rooted in the northern Bohemian glass industry, alongside new forms of innovation (as discussed in Chapter One). The aim was to construct a framework in which the socialist consumer could create and build their domestic interior themselves, and gain a sense of ownership.

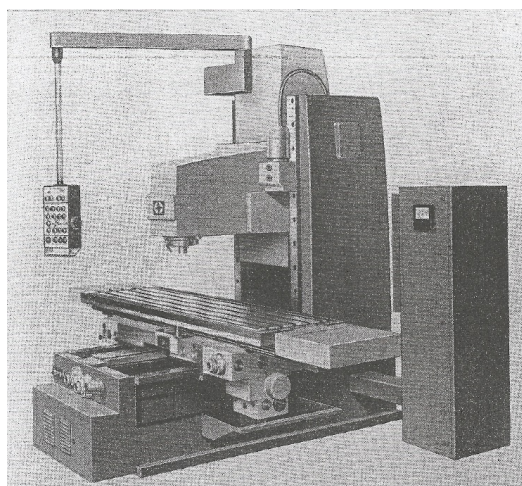


Fig. 73: Josef Lahoda, Milling Machine, 1966, from Josef Raban, *Czechoslovak Form* (Prague: Orbis, 1971), p. 30.

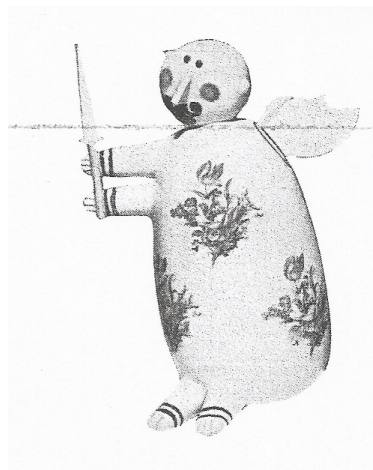


Fig. 74: Pravoslav Rada, *Guardian Angel*, 1966, ceramic, from Josef Raban, *Czechoslovak Form* (Prague: Orbis, 1971), p. 30.



Fig. 75: Děvana Mírová, Lydie Hladíková and Marie Rychlíková  
*Tile with structural surface*, 1966, from Josef Raban,  
*Czechoslovak Form* (Prague: Orbis, 1971), p. 30.

A key writer who advised on this aspect of design for the family home was Invalidovna designer Emanuela Kittrichová. Kittrichová worked for ÚBOK, researching household furnishings with the particular aim of 'devising rationally conceived kitchen worktops'.<sup>514</sup> She had studied architecture at the Czech Technical University in

---

<sup>514</sup> Karasová *The History of Modern Furniture Design*, p. 266

Prague and established her career in the inter-war period, but was also an active designer and writer on Czech design after World War II. Kittrichová wrote a small book called *Byt* (Flat) in 1969 for a series of publications called *Malá rodinná škola* (Small Family School). The series was aimed at young families, mainly directed towards women, giving advice on areas which included subjects such as cooking, sewing, cosmetics, marriage and motherhood. *Byt* was a guide for those getting married on how to furnish their new home. It described the difficult age they lived in, the effects of environments on nervous systems (especially in cities), and the need for private spaces that could be easily managed. The aim was for modesty, comfort, practicality and organisation – a combination that resulted in ‘modern living’.<sup>515</sup> Particular emphasis was placed on the need to find ‘individuality’ in standardised flats – interestingly, the word was written in English with no inverted commas, so Kittrichová must have felt this concept was more effectively expressed in English than in the Czech *osobnost* or *individuální*.

The choice of domestic objects was focused, again, on avoiding wastefulness, but also on the idea that making changes on a small level in personal environments connected to a kind of Marxist *praxis*, where actions of ‘radical change’ in the home affected the mental needs of ‘all people’. She wrote, ‘We will not throng our flats with furniture nor will we choose the arrangement and furnishing of things, which we could not replace, replenish nor relocate. Not only therefore, will they change our needs, but also therefore, that alteration belongs to the mental needs of all people. Sometimes joyful feelings in novel small details suffice, sometimes our various

---

<sup>515</sup> Emanuela Kittrichová, *Byt* [The Flat] (Prague: Práce, ROH, 1969), p. 10.

circumstances – for example, just moving – drive towards quite fundamental and radical change.’<sup>516</sup>

Kittrichová’s *Byt* juxtaposed contrasting imagery and iconography in order to humanise and make accessible concepts presented through projects such as *Invalidovna*, which, although it had been created eight years earlier than *Byt*, was still used as a touchstone of socialist modern ideals. The patterned, chintzy rosebud wallpaper cover was in contrast to illustrations of modern interiors, including *Invalidovna* layouts and drawings, in which the ubiquitous knitting basket was seen below string shelves, abstract prints and lever arm lamps [Fig. 76]. Then, in a different narrative style reminiscent of children’s book illustration, the endpapers were drawings by Vítězslava Líbalová depicting an apparently stressed female protagonist surrounded by heaps of objects, which in the next picture were carefully laid out, allowing her to relax and read [Fig. 76].<sup>517</sup>

---

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.

<sup>517</sup> Surveys conducted in the late 1960s showed that the ‘average ‘socialist woman’’ had ‘an extremely limited amount of leisure time compared to her male partner,’ which decreased the quality of her life and created gender inequality (Pavla Frýdlová, ‘Women’s Memory: Searching for Identity Under Socialism’, p. 104). The birthrate was decreasing at this time and the state began to gradually increase maternity leave a result. The social effects of women’s ability to balance busy work and home, the emancipation of work combined with the need to still be the main domestic worker, seem to underlie Kittrichová’s vision of the efficient and orderly modern home as a place where society could be changed.

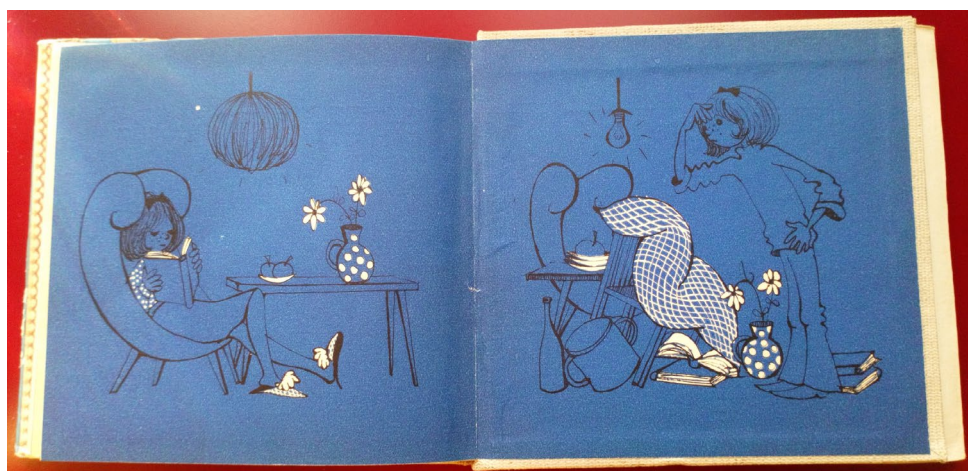
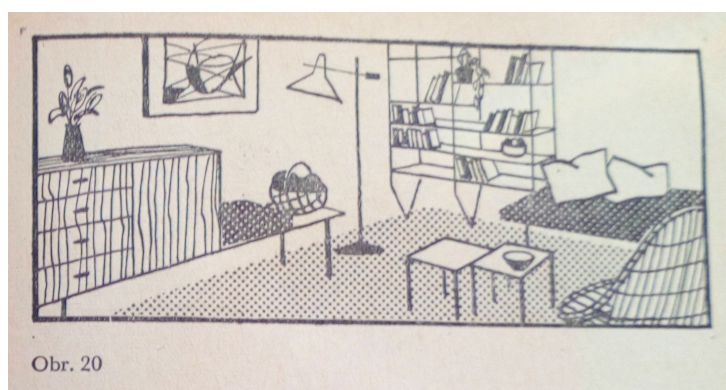
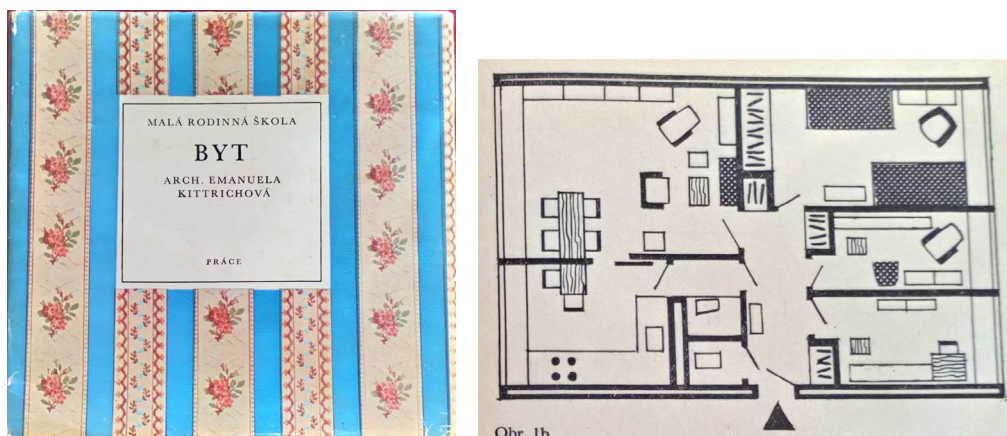


Fig. 76: Book cover and illustrations from Emanuela Kittrichová, *Byt (Flat)* (Prague: Práce, ROH, 1969).

Kittrichová was also known for her key 1971 publication *Nábytek, člověk, bydlení: základy navrhování nábytku a zařizování bytových interiérů* (Furniture, Man, Living and Housing: Basics of

Designing Furniture and Furnishing Living Interiors), that offered advice on the home, using ergonomic images to scientifically rationalise the use of certain types and positions of modern furniture. In this text, Kittrichová cited a guide on body measurements published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, as well as several Design Centre (UK) publications.<sup>518</sup> The latter included Geoffrey Salmon's 1967 *Storage: Suiting the system to the Requirements*, which discussed human limitation as a method for understanding how to furnish living spaces, referencing American research into the most economic energy expenditure and the circumstances in which that energy is used, again with ergonomic diagrams.<sup>519</sup>

Salmon's description ranged from hand sizes to the heaviness of the object and the location of where the object is stored. Salmon emphasised that a vital component was that of *looking*: 'Our angle of vision when we are reaching up or down is a vital factor. If we can't see what we are reaching for then we strain farther in an attempt to locate with certainty. We may stand on tiptoe or lean out further, both of which are energy-consuming and downright dangerous.'<sup>520</sup> (Such concepts were foreseen and parodied in Pojar's architect balancing on a stool in front of the wardrobe.) Kittrichová's interest in 'individualising' the home through colour, texture and the applied arts stemmed from her involvement in the production of objects for

---

<sup>518</sup> The bibliography of *Nábytek, člověk, bydlení* (Prague, 1971) references William Edgar Martin, *Children's body measurements for planning & equipping schools: a handbook for school officials and architects* (United States Office of Education. Special publication; no. 4 [Washington] : U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1955), and Geoffrey Salmon *Storage. Suiting the system to the requirements* (London: Macdonald & Co. in association with the Council of Industrial Design, 1967), n. pag.

<sup>519</sup> According to design historian Lada Hubatová-Vacková in discussion at a meeting 5 March 2014, Frederick Taylor's ideas on effectiveness of work, diagrams of movements for workers, transforming the kitchen into a laboratory, were known through his key monograph from 1911.

<sup>520</sup> Salmon, p. 5.

organisations like Krasná jizba in the inter-war period. As such, ÚBOK, and its close partner ÚLUV, offered a direct continuous Czechoslovak heritage of craft and design from the 1930s into the Socialist period.<sup>521</sup>

### **The Institute of Bread Rolls: Working for ÚBOK**

The publications and projects created by ÚLUV and ÚBOK needed to find a means of incorporating making processes such as wicker, weaving, ceramics and glass to align with decrees like number 56 in 1957, but also a method of developing creative practice in a way that appealed to the consumer. Bringing the hand into the discussion, whether via a papasan chair or hand-woven carpet, allowed a departure from the associations of a 'dummy cabinet' to something more tangible. The involvement of the hand as a prototype for industry was promoted by writers like Josef Raban, and even became part of the industrial design of organisations like Elektro-Pragy, as we have seen. Historian and curator Daniela Karasová, who worked for ÚBOK for 15 years, also confirmed in an interview that these relationships to material, texture and the hand were directly influenced by folk production and the work of organisations like ÚLUV.<sup>522</sup>

Whether or not this was a reality can be understood via oral histories: glass artists like Vladimír Jelínek viewed his time working for ÚBOK and glass factory owners like Emanuel Beránek at Škrdlovice (discussed in Chapter One) as one of great exploration,<sup>523</sup> whereas other 'young generation' designers feared being sent off by a

---

<sup>521</sup> Daniela Karasová, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016). Karasová shared an office with Kittrichová when they worked together at ÚBOK in the 1970s.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> Vladimír Jelínek, Conversation with Rebecca Bell (7 March 2014).

State organisation to rural factories. Designer Jan Němeček felt they were at the bottom of the creative hierarchy and could only see a 'little dirty town future'.<sup>524</sup> Despite this, during interviews and meetings with key historians, curators and practitioners in the Czech Republic, one repeated assertion was that whilst Communism in Czechoslovakia was morally and politically corrupt, an infringement of human rights and a regime that turned nations into prisons, there was one thing it delivered that could be considered relatively successful for those involved: state-organised design.

Entering the Moser glass factory, in the Bohemian spa town of Karlovy Vary, in 2014 was striking for one immediate reason: heat [Fig. 78]. The building, busy with glass workers producing what is now some of the most expensive glass in the world, was filled with the intense and all-consuming impact of heat. The workers drank a specially brewed beer and worked in teams of three, moving insect-like around their glowing kilns, lifting molten vases and whiskey glasses, turning them, cooling them. They work in teams to stop the glass from cracking as the temperature drops. Two artists who worked for Moser and consequently ÚBOK were Vladimír Jelínek and Jiří Šuhájek. Their lives have followed a pattern typical for the period in terms of their looping movement from small town to Prague and back to small town again, becoming in the process embedded in the state structure of nationalised design.

The elder of the two, Jelínek, worked for Moser for 40 years. From 1949 to 1952 he studied glass in the oldest glass school in Europe, Kamenický Šenov, in northern Bohemia, moving to the Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová, Prague (VŠUP, which translates

---

<sup>524</sup> Jan Němeček, Conversation between Rebecca Bell and Jan Němeček, Olgoj chorchoj studio (3 March 2014).



as the High School or College of Art Industry, its English meaning closer to an Academy of Art, Architecture and Design) from 1952 to 1958. There he studied under the famous painter, sculptor, graphic designer and glass artist Josef Kaplický. Alongside Jelínek was his school friend, artist Rudolf Volráb. By the age of fifteen, Jelínek had a very clear view of what he wanted in life. His parents weren't happy, but Kamenický Šenov was inspirational: the important Czech glass designer René Roubíček taught him drawing there. The inspiration continued in the VŠUP studio of Kaplický, a free-minded tutor who let his students develop as they wanted and encouraged them to do so, demonstrated by the fact that he allowed Volráb to paint rather than design glass.<sup>525</sup> Jelínek agreed that this means of developing aims and work outside of glass, which could also be pursued as hobbies, created duality in their creativity. Glass in some ways was limiting, and artists wanted other mediums too. However, as a result of the success of the work shown at Brussels Expo 58, glass artists could be more free and creative.

After working in a freelance capacity, and for Moravské sklárny (the state-run organisation Moravian Glassworks), in 1966 Jelínek was invited to Prague to join ÚBOK. He worked there for thirty years, alongside glass artists such as Adolf Matura and Pavel Hlava. His work with Škrdlovice Glassworks [Fig. 77] was particularly notable and impactful – not only did he meet his wife there, who was an administrator for ÚUR, but it was due to ÚUR that Škrdlovice existed – he believed that it was thanks to organisations like this that craft did not disappear in the face of mass production. In this atmosphere of a 'saved atelier', Emanuel Beránek was an encouraging owner (as discussed in Chapter One). The resulting work was sold through the

---

<sup>525</sup> Vladimír Jelínek, Conversation with Rebecca Bell (7 March 2014).

Art Centrum shop and to visiting international collectors. Production numbers were very small.<sup>526</sup> Throughout his career, Jelínek worked not only for ÚBOK but also concurrently for other small organisations. Art glass work (rather than mass-produced items) did not occur in studios: 'it was mentally created in ateliers but realised within corporations'.<sup>527</sup>

Jelínek and his ÚBOK colleagues accepted the situation not as a limitation but as an opportunity: the centralised system apparently meant that factory workers didn't view the presence of a state designer as 'meddling in their work' and the glassworks didn't have to negotiate the direct entering of competitions. But the situation was complex: a Socialist citizen had to have their employment stated on their identity card or they risked penalisation. Artists could be registered in centralised organisations but getting any work realised or sold was then difficult within the centralised framework of sales and export. The process could be debilitating: Jelínek received an offer from the German company Rosenthal to work there, and after a long debate it was allowed. But it was necessary to ask for permission to go there three months in advance. He tried three times and then gave up – Rosenthal could not wait and he missed the opening. But glass artists such as those working for ÚBOK did have a better experience than other artists: money could be made abroad from their work, so they were comparatively privileged.

---

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 77: Vladimír Jelínek and Emanuel Beránek, Plate with Abstract Decoration, Škrdlovice Glassworks, 1957, glass, 3.8 x 31.5 cm. Photograph: The Corning Museum of Glass.



Fig. 78: Moser Glass Factory, Karlovy Vary, 2014. Photograph: Author's Own.

Jiří Šuhájek studied at Kamenický Šenov a decade after Jelínek, from 1957 to 1961. At the end of the training, every artist was allocated a place in a factory town. Šuhájek was given Karlovy Vary, where he made sketches for designs at Moser until they agreed to fund a course at VŠUP. Here he studied from 1964 to 1968 in the glass studio of Stanislav Libenský. Šuhájek visited London in 1968; while he was there the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia, prohibiting his return, and through a series of contacts and grants he remained for three years and studied at the Royal College of Art. It was here that he gained a skill that was unusual in a Czech glass artist: the ability to blow his own glass.

At the RCA, Šuhájek was taught by Sam Herman, who had been head of the Glass department there since late 1967, and who is considered one of the founders of the British Studio Glass movement. In Czechoslovakia Šuhájek had spent four years learning drawing and painting, but it was in London that he learnt to blow. It is still unusual to find a Czech glass artist with this skill.<sup>528</sup> He returned to Czechoslovakia to work for Moser again, drawing designs to be made by the glass workers and only occasionally obtaining access to use the facilities a little for his own work. Eventually 'things changed in Karlovy Vary' – he was accused by the supervisors of stealing.<sup>529</sup> He had not stolen anything, but the accusation coincided with his recent award of a Gold Medal in Munich. Suspicions of international connections were aroused. Šuhájek considers himself lucky to have

---

<sup>528</sup> On discussing this with the head of the Olgoj chorchoj studio, designer Jan Němeček (03.03.14), he agreed that Jiří Šuhájek remains rare in his ability to directly blow glass.

<sup>529</sup> Information from meeting with Jiří Šuhájek at his studio in Prague, 25 February. 2014.

gained employment with ÚBOK soon afterwards, in 1979. He remained there until the early 1990s.

Working as a designer with factories and manufacturers required collaboration. The socialist categorisation of *umělec* versus *pracovník* (artist versus worker) divided up labour on paper, but in reality one assumes that this definition did not remove the potential tension between a Prague-educated expert (often one who could not even blow or mould glass) coming to a small town factory and instructing men who themselves were experts in the craft to follow the artist's designs. Jelínek described the way that once an object based on his design was made, he would go and check the object and either approve it or not. He describes his providing of coherence between his designs and the workers' production as a mutual quest for perfection, particularly at a factory like Moser, that took pride in its high standards.<sup>530</sup> Šuhájek compared working with the factory to conducting a different orchestra each time – the artist was present and oversaw the work's realisation, much as a conductor would: 'one is a symphony, whilst another is a quartet'.<sup>531</sup> Jelínek used a similar metaphor for working with factories in the 1960s, comparing the artist to a playwright and the workers to actors. At times, he said, the workers would carry on working after the artist had left and there were instances where he did not want to sign the final products. These were primarily collector's pieces and it was important to the artist that ideas that were not their own did not appear.<sup>532</sup>

For artists like Jelínek and Šuhájek, ÚBOK was greatly enabling. Through it they felt it was possible to see most of the factories in Czechoslovakia. Each one was different: different people, workers,

---

<sup>530</sup> Vladimír Jelínek, Conversation with Rebecca Bell (7 March 2014).

<sup>531</sup> Jiří Šuhájek, Conversation with Rebecca Bell (25 February 2014).

<sup>532</sup> Vladimír Jelínek, Conversation with Rebecca Bell (7 March 2014).

technologies, materials, chemicals, techniques – for example, Moser was all cut and polished glass. Artists had to change their approach according to the manufacturer. ÚBOK had a very diverse group of people working together to produce all sorts of different types of objects. Artists would specialise in certain types of glass and this indicated which factory they would then work with. An important issue was export. The state organisation SkloExport (Glass Export) would dictate what was needed and when, whether this was drinking glasses, vases, or painted or engraved glass. These requirements were then sent to different glassworks factories according to their specialisation. ÚBOK committees chose who needed what and who would do it, sending artists out to manufacturers. An example of Šuhájek's work for ÚBOK in the late 1970s and '80s included items for the manufacturer Crystalex, produced in relatively large numbers [Fig. 79].<sup>533</sup> Šuhájek believes that ÚBOK worked well, and was a fair system. It enabled presentations at international fairs such as the annual Frankfurt Meissen Glass Festival, and created a strong, business-like organisational framework around the research and design of theorists and artists.

---

<sup>533</sup> Antonín Langhamer, *Legend of Bohemian Glass* (Södertälje: Tigris Press, 2003).



Fig. 79: Jiří Šuhájek, Vase designed for Crystalex, Nový Bor, huť Flóra, version 28,5, 1978. Antik Mašek, Karlovy Vary  
 <<http://www.antikmasek.cz/aukce/56/11033-vaza-jiri-suhajek.html>> [accessed 29.10.17]

In a photograph from the mid-1980s, provided by historian and curator Daniela Karasová who worked for ÚBOK from 1975 until its dissolution in the early 1990s, Jelínek and Šuhájek stand among a group of glass and ceramic designers and makers at ÚBOK [Fig. 80]. They had gathered to celebrate glass artist Pavel Hlava's birthday. The picture also includes Vojtěch Svoboda and Zdeněk Svoboda, who were *modelaři*, model-makers, who created plaster prototypes for ÚBOK works; and Václav Šerak and Jiří Laštovička, both ceramicists. In a second photograph [Fig. 81], we see furniture designer Ivana Čapková, glass designer Vratislav Šotola, ceramicist Vladimír David, model-maker Svoboda and others who also featured in the first

photograph. A party environment can be seen: the picture captures animated talking, eating and drinking. 'We had a lot of fun there', recalled Karasová, 'I think it was some kind of oasis, in this Communist period, you know, this ÚBOK'.<sup>534</sup> One of the reasons for this was that they had more freedom than fine artists, it was 'not so ideologically controlled because what can you ideologically do with a cup?'<sup>535</sup> This supports Crowley and Frantz's discussed notions of craft and design as less subversive (Chapter One).<sup>536</sup>

Importance was placed upon the objects serving their purpose, but also on competing with international products in order to enable export. For this reason, ÚBOK members could travel abroad to design fairs, and Karasová frequently carried out research trips in her role as researcher and writer on international art and design. ÚBOK received foreign money so that research could be carried out abroad, and then they devised seminars and lectures for factories – educating factories was an important part of ÚBOK's work. All the factories had recreational buildings, including cottages or hotels, so they would meet and share knowledge in a 'very nice atmosphere' – everybody from the factory would attend, including the workers.<sup>537</sup> ÚBOK representatives talked through trends and movements and produced publications to accompany their research, such as 'Design in Great Britain', a report on British design, written in collaboration with designer Jiří Pelcl, who had studied at the Royal College of Art in London (1983-84), that entailed travel to Britain in 1987 in order to research subjects such as the Crafts Council, Habitat and Pop Art. Another example was 'Design Schools of the World': this had included

---

<sup>534</sup> Daniela Karasová, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

<sup>536</sup> See Crowley, 'Stalinism and Modernist Craft in Poland', p.81 and Frantz, p. 32.

<sup>537</sup> Daniela Karasová, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).



travel to Dessau with ÚBOK designer Ivana Čapková in 1986. [See accompanying research documentation, Figs. 82 and 83]

Karasová also consulted international magazines for her research: these were held in the ÚBOK library and could be viewed by others. Her role was to interpret the material and write it up for both internal and external publication – the content would vary accordingly. Internal publications had a relatively free rein, and in these she wrote about censored areas such as postmodernism. Publicly-orientated versions of the research were published in *Domov*. Karasová was considered particularly well qualified for this as her undergraduate degree had been in English language and Art Education in the Pedagogical Faculty at Charles University in Prague in the mid-1960s; she went to London from 1967 to 1968, having answered an advertisement and taken the role of au pair for the family of the Liberal politician Reverend Lord Beaumont of Whitley and his wife Lady Mary Whitley, who supported her language studies and interests by ordering her books from Harrods, delivered with the weekly groceries.<sup>538</sup>

---

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 80: Photograph of a party held for Pavel Hlava by ÚBOK, c. 1985. Left to right: Vojtěch Svoboda, Zděnek Svoboda, Jiří Laštovička, Jiří Šuhájek, Pavel Grus, Vladimír Jelínek, Šneider, Pavel Hlava, Václav Šerák (lying down), Jiří Boháč, 'Pans'. Photograph: Daniela Karasová. [Names as provided by Karasová.]



Fig. 81: Party in the Glass Department at ÚBOK, c. 1985. Left to right: (Unknown), 'Pans', Václav Dolejš, Václav Šerák, Vojtěch Svoboda, (Unknown), Valdimír David, Vratislav Šotola, Jiří Laštovička, Ivana Čapková. Photograph: Daniela Karasová. [Names as provided by Karasová.]

The biggest problem was that the research had little influence in terms of changing state production. The places where they really hoped to have an impact – large-scale factories, where goods could be produced in higher numbers and influence the design scene – were reluctant to change what they were producing. Key theoreticians such as Emanuella Kittrichová (with whom Karasová shared an office), Karel Kouželka and Jindřich Chalupecký continued to devise approaches to socialist design, but it was hard to make a significant impact on manufacture in Czechoslovakia in real terms. Their ideas influenced the overseeing councils, which included employees of ÚBOK, and recommendations were made. Karasová felt that these were listened to, but the factory directors ultimately had to follow the economic criteria set by the Ministry of Industry.

For this reason, at parties such as those depicted in the image above, they called themselves *Ústav pro tvarování housek*, 'the Institute for Designing<sup>539</sup> Bread Rolls'. The joke amongst the ÚBOK employees was that they were carrying out scientific studies that had no impact: they may as well have discussed at length whether a bread roll should be bigger, smaller, yellow or with salt.<sup>540</sup> Another nickname was 'the cemetery of elephants', because various important people, Communist Party members from industrial or other branches of the government, were sent to ÚBOK when they were no longer considered important enough to stay in the Ministry. This was a mixed blessing, as ÚBOK's role was protected by these figures.<sup>541</sup> Despite this mockery, a common trait of former ÚBOK employees is a fierce loyalty to the organisation – not just because it was an 'oasis' for designers, makers and thinkers, but because it was built on sound

---

<sup>539</sup> Or more literally, shaping, creating, or forming - *tvarování*

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

principles, to which historians like Karasová firmly adhered until her death in 2017. Kittrichová's research into ergonomics in the home, housekeeping, avoiding waste and living simply, continued to underpin the beliefs of ÚBOK employees like Karasová.

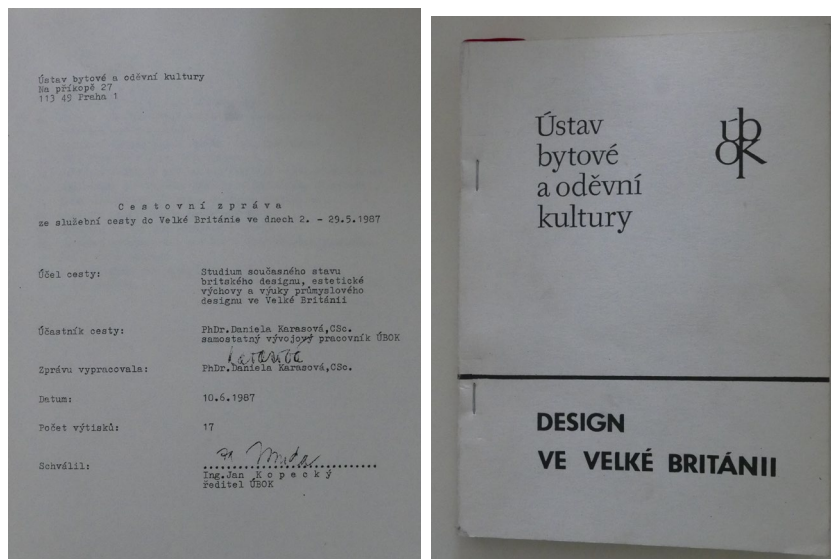


Fig. 82: Research documentation for *Design in Great Britain*, a report on British design, by Daniela Karasová and Jiří Pelcl, 1987, from the personal archive of Daniela Karasová.

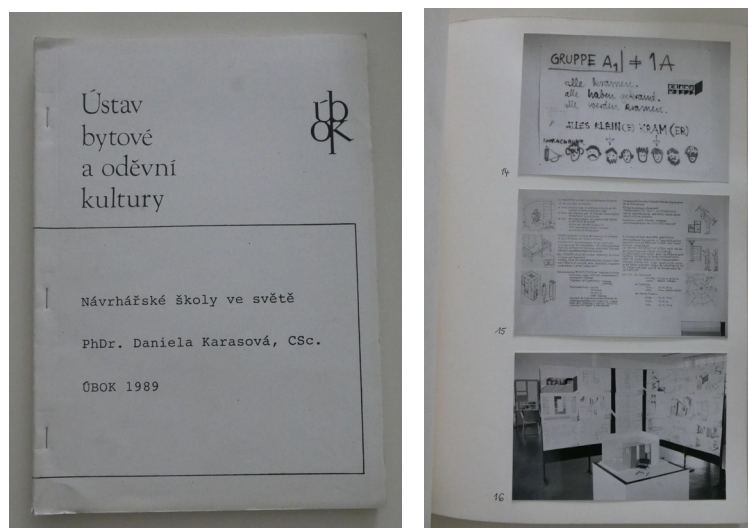


Fig. 83: Research documentation for *Design Schools of the World* by Daniela Karasová and Ivana Čapková, 1986, including images of Dessau (right), from the personal archive of Daniela Karasová.

Employees of ÚBOK did not need to be Party members, though the heads of departments usually were. They also enabled their employees to access further education, which may not have been possible if they were not members of the Party. Karasová studied for a degree in 'Socialist Good Living' ('but it was nothing to do with the Socialists') – it concerned how to choose equipment, the requirements of a family, how a flat should grow with its inhabitants, and how colour influenced the inhabitants.<sup>542</sup> The content echoed that of publications like Kittrichová's *Byt* (1969). The emphasis on crafts like textiles, material and colour as means of bringing homeliness and individuality into the socialist modern domestic interior was similarly important in this education process. Key to personalising this space, as discussed in Chapter One, was the display of poster reproductions of modern artworks, both Czechoslovak and western European. These were advertised in *Tvar* and sold by ÚLUV bookshops in the 1950s; they continued to be featured consistently in illustrations of interiors in ÚBOK projects and publications and were popular amongst younger generations in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>543</sup>

Karasová's position as an interpreter of international trends placed her in the interesting position of watching the changing use of the term 'design'. She gradually felt that it was a problematic term, and grew to hate it, seeing it as something that was an endowed quality of an object, whether some 'had' design, rather than the process of thinking, planning and responding that was captured in the Czech *návrh* (meaning a dynamic mixture of proposal, draft, suggestion, motion or offer).<sup>544</sup> She was particularly influenced by the writing of design theorist Victor Papanek, though his work was not

---

<sup>542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

translated into Czech.<sup>545</sup> Karasová wrote an article in 1990 'Victor Papanek – sociální a ekologický design' (Victor Papanek – Social and Ecological Design), that summarised his ideas and advocated the importance of his outlook.<sup>546</sup> Karasová believed that the Socialist period in Czechoslovakia was, by virtue of restricted materials and economic restraints, more ecological in its outlook: objects were designed to last, and it was therefore less wasteful than the post-1989 period. In this context, the resistance to waste seen in magazines like *Tvar* and *Domov* (discussed in this chapter and Chapter One) was also a form of resistance to socially irresponsible design and the factory production of poorly made objects for export to Russian and Eastern markets. But this was the challenge: it was possible to conceive of modern designs that were considered innovative and theoretically sound, enabling figures like Kouželka and Kittrichová to pursue inter-war ideas, but 'you had to go right back', you had to 'be very clever' and try to think around the ideological requirements in order to assert what you wished.<sup>547</sup> But the reality for designers such as Jan Němeček and Jiří Pelcl was that the environment was restrictive. In this context, from one angle the convenient application of Papanek's ideas is complex and nostalgic in terms of considering a design agenda, though from the perspective of the state politicisation of design process at ÚBOK, the environment did result in theoretical debate that had to consider both social responsibility and mindfulness of resources, designing for specific use, even if this was due to restriction rather than choice.

---

<sup>545</sup> Ibid.

<sup>546</sup> Daniela Karasová, 'Victor Papanek – sociální a ekologický design' [Victor Papanek – Social and Ecological Design], *Domov*, 31:9 (1990), 6-9.

<sup>547</sup> Daniela Karasová, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown how issues of taste, as discussed in Chapter One in the 1940s and '50s, continued to be central to debate around creative production in the 1960s. Experimentation was encouraged, but alongside a warning that this should be in the studio to avoid wastefulness. The didactic tone seen in *Tvar* continued, now directed towards an active consumer who assumed to be both educated and compliant, who was willing to join the 'fight' for socialist modern craft and design, supported by ideas around the efficient use space in small flats through new furniture systems. Šindelař's 1962 writing on the importance of applied art objects as part of structures of display in the home resonated with Venera's notion of educating the public in taste through forms of object display in *Umění a kýtč* (Chapter One).

*Domov*, a key source for the period, frequently used tactics such as humour to break the didactic fourth wall and humanise their instructive tone, as well as soften the hard edges of the prefab flat, such as Pojar's *How to Furnish a Flat* (1959). The notion of the flat as a site of disobedience or obedience was later allegorised in Švankmajer 1968 *The Flat*, using surrealist tactics that recalled the visual methods of *Moravská Hellas* (Chapter Two). Craft played a key role in negotiating this territory of state didacticism and socialist modern utilitarianism (the 'dentist's waiting room'). The use of humanising craft objects in projects like *Invalidovna* operated in a dynamic alongside scientific approaches to the home, with an emphasis on adaptation and personalisation – a kind of homeliness – via the use of woven fabrics, textures, glass, colours and references to traditional methods of making. This continued interests (discussed in Chapter One) in craft objects as a solution to 'mediocre' products incurred by Socialist mass production. The virtues of handmade

craftsmanship were also manifested in new ways, through EPH adverts and DIY.

In the wake of the 1957 decree, using traditional folk processes were important methods of preservation as well as useful approaches for contemporary production. ÚBOK and ÚLUV objects carried ideological meaning, recontextualising a national heritage into the socialist present and engendering local ownership of international modern forms such as the prefab flat. Changes to the private forum of the home could even, as articulated by Kittrichová, be an action of 'radical change' in terms of its positive effects on public mental health. Kittrichová's discussion of 'individuality' paralleled interests in humanising socialism, concurrent with Neo-Marxist philosophical discussions (Chapter Two). The idea of individuality was complex in the Socialist context and Raban tried to define it in 1967 as somewhere between the personality of the artist and mass reproduction. Raban's aim was complicated, optimistically collating freedom in the studio with economic responsibility.

Pursuits of taste as specifically anti-kitsch continued. Now positioned against modish capitalist historical imitation and badly produced mass manufactured objects, both Czechoslovak folk heritage and imports from Scandinavia Far East Asia were selected as remedies. Raban claimed folk craft methods were inspiring, a yardstick of both quality and cultural value, and a necessary contrast to industrial production. Milada Jočková's 1968 blue dress pushed folk methods into a space of play and chance, taking Josef Vydra's ideas of synthesis (discussed in Chapter One) to new realms of possibility.

ÚBOK was enabling for artists like Jelínek and Šuhájek, allowing designs to be created both by themselves and glass workers. Though there was a hierarchy of making processes: Jelínek's work was altered by glass workers whilst Šuhájek was unusual in his ability to work directly with glass. Working for ÚBOK enabled a certain creative



and intellectual freedom, as discussed by Karasová: objects like a cup were not deemed subversive. Though in contrast, this meant that ÚBOK employees joked the authorities would not care if they designed housing or bread rolls. Testimonials from those who worked in these structures show roles were limited and the ground was at times fragile, but there were opportunities for developing creative practice. In the next chapter, we will look to two forms highlighted by Raban as exemplary models of official state craft, that trod the precarious path of forging craft 'precepts over principles': the ceramics of Děvana Mírová, Lydie Hladíková and Marie Rychlíková and Art Protis textiles.

## **Chapter Four – State Peripheries: Making Practices in Textiles and Ceramics**

### **Chapter Overview**

Making for the state, as shown in Chapters One to Three, differed in meaning and experience. In this chapter, we look to two key areas of practice to explore questions of craft in contexts that allowed a certain level of creative distance from state requirements, exploring new territories whilst still producing work for the state. Firstly, the architectural ceramics of artists Marie Rychlíková (1923-) and her partners Lydie Hladíková (1925-1994) and Děvana Mírová (1922-2003), known collectively as H + M + R will be explored. The latter worked collaboratively both as a trio in the studio and with factories, shops and architects. An interview with Marie Rychlíková offers further insights into their practice, alongside looking to key writers on their work, such as the curator Jiří Šetlík. H + M + R questioned the role of ceramics as a material and theoretical process, influenced by historical and international interests. Questions of craft and new technologies will also be explored in this chapter via the non-woven textile Art Protis. This method enabled new interactions between artist and factory in the 1960s, particularly through the work of artists such as Antonín Kybal (1901-1971), Ludmila Kybalová (1905-1975), and Květa Hamsíková (1921). We will look to the role of Art Protis in the UK context to understand how it was promoted through an exhibition at Heal's Art Gallery in 1973. Object-based research was key to this section, visiting H + M + R's commissions for the Invalidovna estate and Art Protis in the Victoria & Albert Museum's collection. In this chapter, we move from discussions of the

didactic and taste-making in relation to craft to a more focused presentation of technological and personal aims for developing new craft methods under Socialism.

## **Introduction**

Relationships to hand-made forms remained a consistent means through which centralised projects were valued. As seen in Chapters One, Two and Three, these were manifested across a spectrum of projects and discourse, from the ways in which organisations like ÚLUV and ÚBOK and their publications emphasised the 'rustic' (Vydra in the late 1940s to mid-1950s); local folk techniques as a 'yardstick' of good industrial quality (Raban in the late 1950s to the late 1960s), and natural materials or DIY as a means of accessing an allusive human touch, and by association authenticity or 'individuality' (Invalidovna 1961, and Emanuela Kittrichová, from the 1960s to the 1970s). These weren't just methods of locating meaning in centralised structures, or of developing the Socialist Modern. They were also ways in which changing maker identities could develop, and be questioned.

This chapter looks at two areas of individual making practices in Socialist Czechoslovakia. While these were within the parameters of the state, they can to some extent be considered forms of an expanded field in comparison to the projects and sites discussed in previous chapters. In the Socialist Modern context, the associations of the 'expanded field', as articulated in Rosalind Krauss's well-known sculpture-related definition, are not strictly relevant to the state-commissioned work under discussion here, but I am taking into account her notions of malleability and surprise, of rupture and contrast, that allow for a wider set of understandings. The methods of

making and the sites of their representation discussed in this chapter are in this way a form of expansion, or 'expanded field', in the Socialist Czechoslovakian context.<sup>548</sup> I will question how making and craft within these projects thus provided a context for criticality and contrast in an otherwise controlled environment.

The role of the individual artist in the context of centralised craft and design in Socialist Czechoslovakia has been touched upon in previous chapters. The examples discussed here will show that there were further negotiations of the state structure that allowed for creative pursuits in alignment with official projects whilst enabling divergence and variation. These contribute to nuanced definitions of the artist's role under Socialism, as well as innovative forms of craft and design practice. The first case study under discussion is the architectural ceramics of artists Marie Rychlíková and her partners Lydie Hladíková and Děvana Mírová (H + M + R). As mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, my research has been significantly influenced by the narrative bent of personal encounters. One such interaction was interviewing and corresponding with ceramicist Marie Rychlíková, to gain greater understanding of the collaborative practice of H + M + R.

I lean towards Rychlíková's oral history and personal archival material, but the works discussed here are largely the results of her collaborative endeavours with Hladíková and Mírová. Their work called into question the relationship between the studio and large-scale state projects through dialogue with the architect and questions of the public realm in Socialist Czechoslovakia between the late 1950s and the 1970s. As will be seen, their work was the focus of theoretical and critical writing concerning the role of ceramics in an

---

<sup>548</sup> Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', *October*, 8 (Spring, 1979), pp. 30–44.

architectural context, raising questions around ceramics as a material, its aesthetic qualities, its technical possibilities and its historical function. This concerned the studio environment and architectural spaces and the role of craft, as well as relationships to folk making traditions, whilst it continued to expose the position of the artist in Socialist Czechoslovakia as solver of problems. H + M + R's work followed the edicts of the state but was at one step removed from the administrative process, that step often consisting of an intermediary architect with whom H + M + R would work on a project.

The non-woven tapestries of 1960s Art Protis allowed new interactions between artists and factories like Vlněna, in Brno. These created new frontiers and interfaces between technology and studio making that were explored by artists such as Antonín Kybal, Ludmila Kybalová and Květa Hamsíková. Again, this was craft produced in a centralised system, enabled by nationalised production and disseminated through official channels, but which also embedded notions of the experimental and enabled a certain level of market flexibility in terms of enabling more independent making and selling in conjunction with access to factory equipment. The title of this chapter alludes to this place of periphery that, while it was still within the state structure, used centralised resources to further personal aims rather than presenting a didactic case for craft and design. The latter has been explored in this thesis through the ways in which ÚLUV presented work as case studies for improving craft and small-scale manufacture (Chapter One), as a means of critiquing state approaches to folk practices (Chapter Two), and in a project like the Experiment Invalidovna interiors, which was firmly embedded at the heart of ÚBOK's state discourse (Chapter Three). Together, the sites of making investigated in this chapter, whether ceramics or textiles,

contribute instead to a more nuanced understanding of the pluralistic conceptions of craft operating within state structures in Socialist Czechoslovakia, through what can be considered alternative state spaces understood via the selected practitioners within them.

## **Marie Rychlíková and the Collaborative Ceramic Practice of H + M + R from the 1950s to early 1970s**

The members of H + M + R all studied at VŠUP (Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová, the School of Industrial Arts) in Prague. Rychlíková, who attended the School between 1943 and 1949, was taught by sculptor and ceramicist Otto Eckert and polymath Josef Kaplický, whose influence on the young Rychlíková, along with that of her father, mathematician Karel Rychlík, and his friend the painter Václav Špála, was substantial.<sup>549</sup> Affiliation with Kaplický was helpful, as he held a privileged position at international exhibitions, being well respected by the organisers as a professor and expert in the field.<sup>550</sup> Špála, as discussed in Chapter One, was a significant figure in Czech Modernist visual art who crossed varying political and chronological boundaries in his practice: labelled 'degenerate' by the Nazis during World War Two and celebrated by František Venera in his defence of Modernist art as connected to folk art and craft in the 1948 exhibition *Umění a kýč*, he was also one of the artists whose work was sold in reproduction by state organisation ÚLUV in the 1950s.<sup>551</sup> Through these teachers and influential figures, Rychlíková had an informed view of historical and contemporary art, both Czechoslovak and

---

<sup>549</sup> Marie Rychlíková, *Marie Rychlíková: Keramika, architektura* [Marie Rychlíková: Ceramics, Architecture] (Prague: Carter/Reproplus s.r.o, 2016), p. 6.

<sup>550</sup> Petra Nováková, *Čeští a slovenští umělci na Triennale di Milano 1923–1968* (unpublished thesis, Palacký University, Olomouc, 2012), cited in Lada Hubatová–Vacková, Iva Knobloch, *Václav Cigler*, (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2014), p. 50.

<sup>551</sup> Pech, *Konec avantgardy?*, pp. 318-319.

international, but was also intrinsically connected to the ideas and themes of the inter-war period.

However, Rychlíková's education was fragmented, and crossed disparate political epochs. First, during Nazi occupation all universities were shut down, including the Prague Academy of Fine Arts (Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze) – but not VŠUP, so many students fled to the latter in opposition to German conscription, 'swelling the studios' with artists who would be instrumental in rebuilding the various creative fields after the war.<sup>552</sup> During Rychlíková's time at the School, there was a high turnover of tutors as they appeared and disappeared according to allegations of Nazi collaboration. She became pregnant during this time and left the School to give birth to her son. When she started specialising in ceramics in 1948, a key part of the students' daily education but this point were 'Bolshevik' morning readings from *Rudé právo*.<sup>553</sup> The shift to socialist realist material in VŠUP's pedagogical structure in the early to mid-1950s can be traced in the pages of *Tvar*. Posters, graphic design and work made by art-school students - approaches to Socialist reality were discussed in lengthy articles filled with proposals for book covers, paintings, animation and applied arts. Here the working man and woman were displayed as heroes – but as anonymous heroes, in categorical types of agricultural worker, peasant clad in folk dress, engineer or family member.

---

<sup>552</sup> Frantz, p. 29.

<sup>553</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).



Fig. 84: Lydie Hladíková, Marie Rychlíková, Děvana Mírová in their studio, 1960.  
Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

From the beginning of the 1950s, H + M + R [Fig. 84] shared a studio in the area of Vinohradská, in Prague, working mainly on applied and decorative ceramics.<sup>554</sup> Their parents provided them with some money and they bought a kiln, creating a small workshop as artists registered as members of the Ústřední svaz československých výtvarných umělců (Central Union of Czechoslovak Fine Artists).<sup>555</sup> They considered themselves lucky to have a large studio with three light rooms – their initial next-door neighbour was not so fortunate:

<sup>554</sup> Jana Kybalová [no further details provided], cited in *Marie Rychlíková*, p. 60.

<sup>555</sup> The union would then be known from 1956-1990 as Svaz československých výtvarných umělců, with varying cessations and alterations between 1962-63 and 1970-73.



he was a young cabinet-maker who had established a small firm but was 'liquidated' by the authorities, his hard-earned work and materials taken, and he was sent to work in a factory.<sup>556</sup> Such a story was common for those forging a path independent of state organisations in Czechoslovakia at this time, and H + M + R knew the precarious nature of their endeavours – being a group of three was helpful and allowed them to support one another. Of the trio, only Hladíková was a member of the Communist Party ('Her mother was Russian', Rychlíková added significantly when discussing this subject), though not actively engaged with politics. Despite her inactivity, Rychlíková thought it noteworthy that when the 'legitimacy' of Soviet Communism was 'thrown away' in 1968, Hladíková still did not admit that such political alignment 'had been a mistake'.<sup>557</sup>

Rychlíková's work for public spaces in the 1950s was very different from the work she would carry out with her collaborative partners in the 1960s and early 1970s, but showed the beginnings of her interest in geometric form. In looking at the changes in her ceramic practice over the time period, we can see the transition from associations with *sorela* to Brussels Style and then to physically expansive, architecturally innovative work in a Socialist Modern context. As an example of the first setting, between 1957 and 1959, a Socialist Realist 'mammoth' building, Kulturní dům Příbram (the Cultural House of Příbram) was built as part of a housing development in Březové Hory. It included a hotel, theatre, cinema, restaurant, café, library and club room.<sup>558</sup> The interior was designed in marble, stone, and Finnish birch. In one of the central stairwells, there was a

---

<sup>556</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

<sup>557</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

<sup>558</sup> Oldřich Ševčík, and Ondřej Beneš, *Architektura 60. let, „Zlatá šedesátá léta“ v české architektuře 20. století* [Architecture of the 1960s, The 'Golden Sixties' in 20th century Czech Architecture], (Prague: Grada Publishing, 2009), pp. 99-102.

ceramic lighting fixture designed by Rychlíková, its simple, bell-like white porcelain lamp shades both complementing the figurative relief it lit in the nearby wall and anticipating the organic, abstract forms that would continue to dominate both her individual and collaborative practice [Fig. 85].



Fig. 85: Marie Rychlíková, Lighting Fixture, Kulturní dům Příbram (the Cultural House of Příbram), Březové Hory, 1957–1959, from Oldřich Ševčík, and Ondřej Beneš, *Architektura 60. let, „Zlatá šedesátá léta“ v české architektuře 20. století* [Architecture of the 1960s. the 'Golden Sixties' in Czech Architecture of the 20th Century] (Prague: Grada Publishing, 2009), pp. 100-101.

Whether or not Hladíková's Party membership was advantageous to H + M + R in terms of their practice and its reputation is hard to establish, but what is evident is that their position as artists was strengthened by the recognition they gained at the Brussels Expo in 1958, where they were awarded a gold medal. At this point they were members of the artist group *Bilance*, whose exhibitions from 1957 onwards focused on the applied arts – they described themselves as *skupina průmyslových výtvarníků*, a group of industrial artists or makers – and whose work was shown at the

Expo.<sup>559</sup> H + M + R worked both together and separately. Rychlíková's *Moka souprava Praha* (Prague moka set, Fig. 86), exhibited at the Expo, shows the direction of her work at this time, an object typical of what would become known as Brussels Style,<sup>560</sup> heralding the Socialist Modern and the Czechoslovak *úbokový* look that was associated with state organisation ÚBOK.<sup>561</sup> It was again made from clear white porcelain, but unlike her work for Kulturní dům Příbram, this time each piece incorporated a delicate, geometric dotted pattern. The set's form echoed the tilting triangles of Czech Cubist ceramics from the 1920s, whilst looking towards the shapes and finish of contemporary international modern domestic ware. The evocation of Czech Modernist heritage can be read as a three-fold assertion here. Firstly, it was the welcoming of International Modernism as both antithetical to Socialist Realism and a demonstration of transnational connection, so important to the Czechoslovak cultural narrative that had historically claimed a privileged position at the 'crossroads' (or as the 'melting pot') of Europe.<sup>562</sup> Then, the whimsical asymmetric lips and handles continued relationships with the research and practice of inter-war designers and artists, and can be seen as a kind of revival of work considered to have been interrupted by Nazi and Soviet occupation (whether literal or ideological). Finally, there is also a reference to

---

<sup>559</sup> Karel Hetteš *Bilance 66* (V. členská výstava skupiny průmyslových výtvarníků U.B., exh. cat.) (Prague: [s. n.], 1966).

<sup>560</sup> Explored in detail in aforementioned publications such as Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* (Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels), (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010).

<sup>561</sup> Daniela Karasová *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna*, p. 4.

<sup>562</sup> A conception of Czechoslovakia and its positioning in cultural influences as discussed in František Kovárna, 'Painting and Sculpture in Czechoslovakia', *The Studio*, 115:542 (May 1938), 236-249; Peter Cannon-Brookes (ed.) *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, National Museum of Wales, (London, 1986), p.5; and *Devětsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and '30s*, (Oxford, 1990), p.7. I explored this area in my MPhil, 'The Twentieth-Century Reception and Representation of Czech Modernist Art with the UK and Anglo-American Writings' (unpublished thesis, University of Glasgow, 2007).

Soviet Constructivism, Bauhaus and De Stijl. Associations with the inter-war period were bound to a nostalgia for the First Republic ethos of Masaryk and Beneš, forever linked with a form of intellectual, democratic and national pride – seen as supplanted by Stalinist Communist Party leaders like Gottwald.<sup>563</sup> But it was also the era of the Czech Modernists and Avant-Garde, who linked Prague as a centre of cultural activity with the positioning of Berlin, Vienna and Paris. Rychlíková was acquainted with this period through the personal connections of her family and education.



Fig. 86: Marie Rychlíková, Moka souprava Praha (Prague moka set), 1958 (used in the Brussels Expo Restaurant), porcelain decorated with steel glaze, Karlovarský porcelán, N.P., Závod (National Enterprise) Nová Role. Collection: UPM, Prague. From Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* (Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels), (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010), p. 138.

---

<sup>563</sup> As discussed in Chapter One in relation to the political unrest at the 11th Sokol Slet in 1948.

The Brussels Expo marked a departure from sorela. This change in 'mood', as Rychlíková has described it, was consolidated by the general international success of Czechoslovak art and design in Brussels.<sup>564</sup> The collaborative practice of H + M + R was admired both in terms of their work at the Expo but also as a means towards obtaining both individual and group identity, a pooling of techniques and resources between three practitioners that was frequently cited as a highly successful means towards 'solutions' in ceramics and architecture. And in 1963, they worked on a series of projects for the Invalidovna housing estate, whose interiors, designed by ÚBOK and ÚLUV, were discussed in Chapter Three. The participation of artists in the public spaces of estates like Invalidovna in the so-called 'Zlatá šedesátá' (Golden Sixties) enabled an exploration of new tendencies in European modern styles, with an emphasis on abstract and geometric forms.<sup>565</sup>

In the year of Invalidovna's initial construction (1961), a new system of realisation for the work of artist union members came into being, according to a Decree entitled 'Vyhlášky ministerstva školství a kultury o nákupu, zadáváníí a prodeji děl výtvarných umění' (Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture on the purchase, commissioning and sale of fine arts), Decree number 149. The decree stipulated that public organisations must invest financially in the purchase of artworks as a part of architectural projects. A decree for maximum collaboration between the artist and the architect was issued in 1965 in 'Usnesení vlády Československé socialistické

---

<sup>564</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

<sup>565</sup> Pavel Karous, 'Umění ve veřejném prostoru' [Art in Public Space] in *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna* [Experimental Estate Invalidovna], ed. By Ladislav Zikmund-Lender (Prague: NPÚ, 2014), pp. 102-109 (p. 104).

republiky o řešení otázek uplatnění výtvarných umění v investiční výstavbě' (Resolution of the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on the Solving of the Issues of the Application of Fine Arts in Investment Construction), establishing what became known as the *čtyřprocentní zákon*, the four per cent law, stipulating that projects should give between one and four per cent of their overall budget to the commissioning of art.<sup>566</sup> In a period when many building projects were being carried out, this was no small financial consideration. The artist for an architectural project was selected through a public competition organised by the Český fond výtvarných umění (Czech Foundation of Fine Arts) (ČFVU) and within this an Art Commissions division proposed candidates. But the last word came from the main architect for the project.<sup>567</sup>

From the early 1960s, H + M + R's positive reputation as suitably socialist modern ceramicists led to their increasing collaboration with architects on interior and exterior ceramics projects, and they became the pre-eminent Czech artists in this field. From the early 1960s they worked with the highly regarded architects Karel Fiksak, Jan Šrámek and Karel Prager of the Liberec architectural studio SIAL, and went on to work with a range of other architects, as the following projects show. Their work for the Invalidovna housing estate grounds demonstrated a proximity in form to the smaller-scale applied art vases, tea sets and ornaments created in the late 1950s, though they were created for a completely different context and function. The form of Rychlíková's 1958 bird vases [Fig. 87] was echoed in *Slon* (Elephant), a set of similarly anthropomorphic forms placed in the grounds of the Invalidovna estate, reduced to the abstract suggestion of an elephant's head, ear and body [Fig. 90].

---

<sup>566</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid. and Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

The work is still there today, but without its original setting of a shallow pool of water, which must, through its mobile reflections, have added to the evocation of an animal at play. Geometric shapes in earthy, organic colours were also used for a frieze made for Invalidovna, a free-standing wall perforated with ceramic tubes in brown, orange, white and terracotta. This work seems to question the transition from interior to exterior, allowing glimpses of the courtyard in which it was, and is, located [Fig. 89]. References to earlier work, such as Mírová and Rychlíková's 1957 model for an exterior sculpture, also displayed at the Brussels Expo [Fig. 88], can be seen. But this time they were activated as responses to an outdoor setting: the ceramic forms became both vessels and portals, leading the eye through the frieze and containing air, light and shadow within them.

The transition from the vessel as container, such as Rychlíková's Brussels Expo coffee pots and birds, to these outdoor abstractions of the contained was also a commentary on the role of ceramics. H + M + R exposed the very question of the utilitarian, whether through a humorous nod to function in a headless bird vase for the home or by recontextualising architectural pipes and chimneys against the backdrop of the Invalidovna housing estate. The artists' interest in the vessel was also maintained in a more literal manner through the placement of decorative square jardinières, designed to hold small plants, in the grounds of Invalidovna [Fig. 91]. Such forms have been compared to the furniture of Czech Cubist designers Pavel Janák and Vlastislav Hofman – but H + M + R used folk-derived earthenware colours and textures that resonated with the colour schemes of the ÚBOK interiors, and brought these objects into the very different context of the outdoors, where they have been

tempered and adapted by nature.<sup>568</sup> Pavel Karous has argued that after 1968, in the climate of normalisation, such associations with Czech Cubism (and the organic abstraction of the Brussels Style) as a kind of national form would arguably defend, or 'hide', neo-Constructivist forms.<sup>569</sup>



Fig. 87: Marie Rychlíková, Vases in the form of birds, 1958, glazed ceramic, studio work, 16 x24 cm. Collection: UPM, Prague. From Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* (Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels), (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010), p. 298.

<sup>568</sup> Text by Jana Kybalová for an exhibition for 90<sup>th</sup> year of MR in June 2013 in the exhibiting hall Atrium in Prague's Žižkov [these are the full citation details provided], as reproduced in Marie Rychlíková, p. 60.

<sup>569</sup> Karous, *Aliens and Herons*, pp. 363–363.





Fig. 88: Děviana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Model for exterior ceramic sculpture, 1957, urnt umber glaze ceramic, 35 cm. Collection: UPM, Prague. From Daniela Kramerová, Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* (Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels), (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010), p. 141.



Fig. 89



Fig. 90



Fig. 91

Figs. 89–91: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Commissions for *Experiment Invalidovna*, 1963, ceramic and metal, Invalidovna housing estate, Prague. Photograph: Author's Own, 2016

In developing work like the commissions for Invalidovna, the architects would consult closely with the commissioned artists concerning their designs and choice of materials. It was a

collaborative process, but Rychlíková and her partners were then relatively free to pursue the direction they wished during the 1960s and early 1970s. The Invalidovna works feel like a tentative place of exploration that still emphasised the solitary, sculptural nature of a ceramic work, small in scale and somewhat swallowed up by the expanse of the housing estate – this is especially true in the case of the *jardinières*, which barely impinged upon the wide grass, and were overshadowed by the high-rise flats. From this project, Rychlíková's individual work and further commissions as part of H + M + R seemed to take two main directions: one in the form of figurative shop signs that signified direct meaning, and the other an exploration of ceramics and architectural form through suggestion and abstraction. The latter was realised in both built environments and exhibition contexts.

The *vývěsní štít*, or shop sign, in Czechoslovakia can be recognised as part of a wider, international tradition of creating objects to indicate the nature of a shop's trade (such as a boot to indicate a cobbler, for example).<sup>570</sup> In keeping with the folk history of this craft, Rychlíková enjoyed employing humour. Part of this connects to the shop sign genre that was so well articulated by Jonathan Swift in 1732: 'I have not observed the Wit and Fancy of this Town so much employed in any one Article as that of contriving Variety of Signs to hang over Houses where Punch is served.'<sup>571</sup> One example of these was Rychlíková's *Maso* (Meat) (1966), for a shop in the Malá Strana area of Prague, depicting a plump ceramic pig in the process of being butchered by a spinning metal blade, the word 'Maso' hanging below [Fig. 92]. The juxtaposition of sweet innocence

---

<sup>570</sup> 'Signs' in R. Kenny, J. McMillan, and M. Myrone, *British Folk Art* (London: Tate Publishing, 2014), pp. 20-35.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

in the pig and the sharp metal in the blade, alongside the crude word, seems to offer an evocation of the absurd and the grotesque. The term 'grotesque' was applied to Brychta's glass figurines in 1958 by Karel Hetteš (see Introduction), in speaking of a similar caricatured playfulness. Rychlíková's work here also fits into a canon of humorous Czechoslovak ceramics, which includes the work of her contemporary and friend Pravoslav Rada as well as anticipating some of the Normalisation-era understanding of the grotesque.

Pavel Karous has defined these later characteristics of the grotesque as 'intentionally mis-proportioned', 'common boring or embarrassing situations', 'lacking expressions of intelligence', and 'parody pathos with exaggeration', which in many ways apply to *Maso*.<sup>572</sup> In a 1980 samizdat by Josef Krouter, *Manifest české grotesky* (Manifesto of the Czech Grotesque), the principle of the grotesque would be described thus: 'One says something different, does something different and thinks something completely different about all of it'. I would add that also relevant here is the discussion of Czech absurdism and neo-Marxist Karel Kosík's appraisal of Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*, as discussed in Chapter Two. Kosík wrote in 1963 that Švejk was a figure who revealed that ordinary people could recognise the comic and grotesque qualities of their officials and the situations in which they found themselves.<sup>573</sup> This 'Švejkist' approach to the 'bureaucratic machine' was relevant for critiquing Socialism in the early 1960s. The humorous approach of ceramicists like Rychlíková and Rada feels like part of a similar movement, less overtly critical, but still as a means of collusion between makers and the consumers or viewers of their practice, of just creating moments of joy and ridicule. On asking her about this subject, Rychlíková

---

<sup>572</sup> Karous, *Aliens and Herons*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>573</sup> Kosík, 'Hašek and Kafka', p. 86.

agreed that absurd humour was employed because life was 'such a mess' that they needed to laugh.<sup>574</sup>

A shop sign made by Rychlíková later on, in 1977, was less a joke than a detailed ceramic signifier of the shop's produce – in this case, a flower for a florist in Hlavíčková 4, Prague [Fig. 93]. They are both striking in their contrast to the large-scale ceramic installations and abstract smaller-scale works that were created in the years between the two shop signs, but they were also indicative of a relationship with contemporary ceramic forms such as those by Rada, known for his ceramic ornaments, vases and public installations, often created in collaboration with his wife Jindřiška Radová [Figs. 94 and 95]. Rada and Rychlíková's work overlapped from their days at VŠUP, and together they took part in a small group show held in Rychlíková's flat in 1945. They shared an interest in abstract form, as well as in humour and the anthropomorphic. Forms like Rada and Radová's can also be seen as an anticipation of public sculptural forms that find a meeting point between what Karous has deemed 'triffids' (from John Wyndham's novel *The Day of the Triffids*, published in Czechoslovakia in 1972) and Alexander Calder mobiles – forms that are seen in Brussels Style manifestations.<sup>575</sup>

---

<sup>574</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

<sup>575</sup> Karous, *Aliens and Herons*, p. 251.



Fig. 92. Marie Rychlíková, *Maso* (Meat), shop sign in Malá Strana, Prague, 1966, ceramic and metal. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.



Fig. 93: Marie Rychlíková, Shop sign for a florist in Hlavíčková 4, Prague, 1977, ceramic and metal. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.



Fig. 94: Pravoslav Rada, Vase, 1961, ceramic. Collection: UPM, Prague.  
<<https://vltava.rozhlas.cz/keramicke-dilo-pravoslava-rady-5081127?>>

[Accessed: 20 February 2011].



Fig. 95: Jindřiška Radová and Pravoslav Rada, Fontána / Královský dvůr (Fountain / Royal Court), Moravská Ostrava, 1967, concrete and ceramic. Location now unknown. Ceramic. Photograph: Fotoarchiv AMO, Petr Sikula <<http://ostravskesochoy.cz/dilo/288-fontana-Kralovsky-dvur>> [Accessed 8 December 2017].

H + M + R's interest in large-scale reliefs, as well as in ceramic facing tiles within architectural projects, continued into the 1960s. In 1967, their commission for a Prague-based women's clothing shop, Femina, showed a continued interest in questioning the nature of structural elements through ceramics, as had been seen in the Invalidovna free-standing frieze [Fig. 96]. Blocks and cubes of ceramic finished in varying textures, patterns and glazes both played



with references to bricks and stone within the structure of a wall and drew attention to the qualities inherent to the material and its malleable surface. Like the Invalidovna frieze, its repeated shapes created a geometric patterning and anticipated the facing tiles work carried out by H + M + R. In the same year as the Femina commission, Josef Raban had described in *Czechoslovak Form* the artists' pursuance at the time of a place for decorative ceramics in architecture, with a particular interest in ceramic tiling as a way of working by hand and with factory workers, creating a model that could stand alongside glass as a means to create real connection between the studio and wider industry, supplying real 'precepts' rather than just 'stimulating principles' (as discussed in Chapter Three).<sup>576</sup>

---

<sup>576</sup> Raban, *Czechoslovak Form*, p. 23.

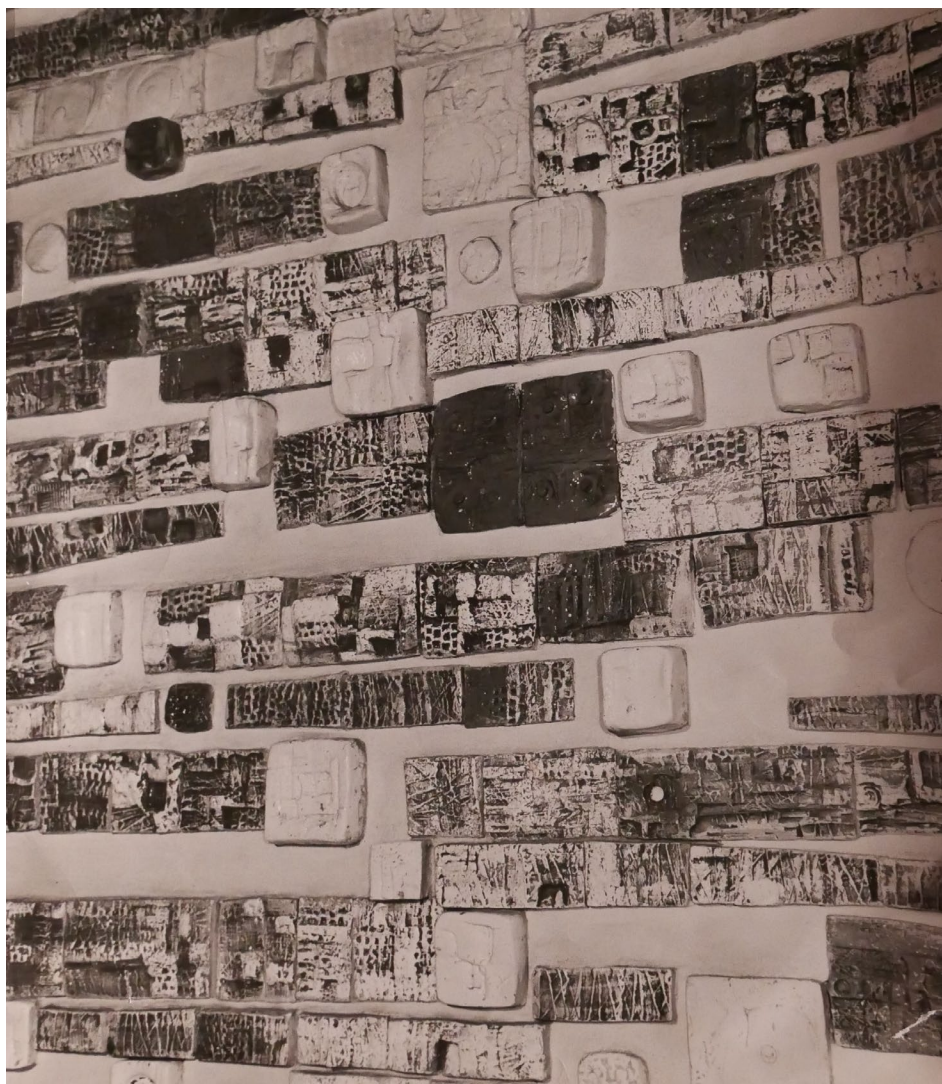


Fig. 96: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Structural wall for Femina shop, Prague, 1967, ceramic and concrete. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

From the late 1960s, H + M + R's integrated wall pieces expanded beyond the contained sections of decorative wall seen in Femina and Invalidovna, and began to creep across entire architectural surfaces. One key example was the ceramic tile cladding of the top section of the Czechoslovak Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal. For this, the ceramicists had to think on a much bigger scale than had been seen previously in their work: the pavilion

covered over 6,500 yards on the Île Notre-Dame.<sup>577</sup> H + M + R were admired for their ability to cross boundaries between 'higher' and 'lower' art through one of the world's oldest crafts, finding a meeting place between functional practicality and aesthetic achievement.<sup>578</sup> In the late 1960s and early 1970s, they increasingly tested themselves through their articulation of the architectural surface.

One admirer of H + M + R in the late 1960s was Jiří Šetlík, Head of the Contemporary and Modern Art Collection at the National Gallery in Prague from 1958. He also worked on the Brussels Expo. Between 1968 and 1970 he was director of the UPM in Prague, as well as Editor at *Výtvarná práce* (Fine Arts) and *Literární noviny* (Literary Newspaper) magazines. He was expelled from the Communist Party from 1970. After the intervention of the trade unions he was kept on, but as a construction technician. He would later secretly sign the illegal Charter 77, which criticised the government for its failure to respect human and civil rights.<sup>579</sup> In 1968, Šetlík wrote of H + M + R's tendency to 'break rules', pointing out that their 'protest against the lingering mode of naturalistic decoration and historicism', as early as the 1950s, was due both to their instruction in the functionalist tradition of the 1920s and 1930s and the 'firm basis of the simplicity of folk expression' in their work.<sup>580</sup> His terminology is demonstrative of the relative freedom of the late 1960s, just before the invasion of the Russian military – though reminiscent of the connections made by Josef Vydra and Josef

---

<sup>577</sup> Montreal Expo 67 Souvenir guide (Banque Nationale de Paris, 1967).

<sup>578</sup> Excerpt from text that accompanied their group exhibition at Betlémská kaple, 1968. Written by Jiří Šetlík. [No further publication details given]. Reproduced in Marie Rychlíková, pp. 10-12.

<sup>579</sup> From an interview with Jiří Šetlík recorded as part of the Post Bellum oral history project, *Osudy umělců v komunistickém Československu* [The Fate of Artists in Communist Czechoslovakia] in collaboration with the Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů (Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes) as part of the wider *Paměť národa* (Memory of the Nation) collection, see *Paměť národa* (2009-2019) <<http://www.pametnaroda.cz/story/setlik-jiri-1929-3649>> [accessed 13 November 2017].

<sup>580</sup> Šetlík in Marie Rychlíková, p. 10.

Raban between the folk and modern, articulated throughout the preceding twenty years, alongside the writing of their peers, in the pages of *Tvar* and *Domov* (as discussed in Chapters One and Three). Šetlík went significantly further in relating H + M + R's work directly to Functionalism and the inter-war avant-garde: the three ceramicists took forward the avant-garde tendency to combine new technology with the progressive application of a traditional craft in innovative, geometric forms. He described their ability to celebrate the dialogue between exterior and interior by entering 'the organism of architecture'.<sup>581</sup> It was an integrated approach that removed craft from its role in providing 'decorative supplements of the flat's interior' or indeed the building's exterior: instead, '[H + M + R], little by little, denied that ceramics was mere accompaniment to architecture'.<sup>582</sup>

In this context, ceramics became part of an invigorating dialogue around fine art and architecture, articulated at the time by architectural theorists such as Dalibor Veselý. Veselý claimed that in the relationship between architecture and art there was a shared 'natural space' that was understood and owned by Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architects. Baroque architects and sculptors worked together, but he feared that if the architect worked primarily with the engineer, this shared and 'natural' space would be at risk of being lost.<sup>583</sup> Of particular interest to Veselý in this discussion was artist Čestmír Janošek, whose rough surfaces and assemblages of objects bore a visual resemblance to works like H + M + R's 1967 *Femina* wall. Janošek's approach resonated with the gestural aspects of Art Informel, seen in the existential works displayed in two group shows known as the *Konfrontace* (Confrontations) exhibitions that

---

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>583</sup> Dalibor Veselý 'Plastická architektura' [Plastic Architecture], *Domov* 1 (1969), cited in Oldřich Ševčík and Ondřej Beneš, *Architektura 60. Let* [Architecture of the 1960s], p. 71.

were held in Prague in 1960. This branch of Czech radical art often used similarly monochromatic or dark palettes, in which the application of layers spoke of the process of making, the passing of time and the precariousness of the resulting object. In his work of the 1960s, which included architectural installations (1964-1968), Janošek created a set of painting-objects entitled *Centrální princip* (Central Principle, 1963-64) in which amorphous masses applied to the surface were endowed with symbolic meaning: that from chaos arose new life.<sup>584</sup>

Like H + M + R's practice, these works were indicative of an interest in architectural spaces as material expressions of a new structural aesthetic reality in 1960s Czechoslovakia. But H + M + R's work instead took the decorative, applied art form of their material – ceramics – and their origins as makers of vessels, coffee sets and light fittings, into an enquiry concerning geometrical balance, shape and the nature of surface. Rather than social commentary, or a free-standing work of art, their creations were posed again and again in contemporary texts as 'responses' to a question: an architectural query which they answered with a functional and aesthetic solution. In this process, they occupied Veselý's 'shared space', collaborating closely with the architect but also with the factory and construction workers, approaching the project as a whole and working on site – as will be discussed in relation to their architectural work in the early 1970s.

The gestural and expressive was also a key part of H + M + R's relationship to ceramics as a craft practice. To accompany an exhibition of their work in the Moravian Gallery in Brno in 1971,

---

<sup>584</sup> Ivona Raimanová, 'Čestmír Janošek, Artlist — Centrum pro současné umění Praha' [Čestmír Janošek, Artlist - Center for Contemporary Art Prague], <<http://www.artlist.cz/cestmir-janosek-4046/>> (accessed 03 November 2017).

curator and writer Jarmila Novotná wrote that in this they brought their individual personalities and viewpoints to collective benefit. Hladíková's 'manifold variations of static folk character, their symbolic meaning... underlined with hand gestures' that became manifest in flowing forms were combined with Mírová's 'loose, sculptural feeling' in 'energetic contrasting forms and structure', whilst Rychlíková brought 'very lyrical' creations, moving towards 'free modelling...finding inspiration in inorganic and organic natural formations'.<sup>585</sup> Resonating with the vocabulary of contemporary art and the interest of artists like Janošek, Šetlík described the work of H + M + R as 'space-making', not only functionally and aesthetically but also conceptually.<sup>586</sup> In this process, he saw them as connecting a 'chain of hands, that reach into our profound past', invoking the question, 'what next?'<sup>587</sup> The evocation of hands is a powerful craft-related image – the maker becomes physically connected to Czechoslovak history through an inheritance of tacit and haptic knowledge, and creates a linear direction of cultural production. As such, Šetlík demonstrated the teleological and historicist nature of Socialist Modern craft. The chain of hands can be seen as a variation of Vydra's folk-rustic-modern hybridity, in which value is endowed through a connection to making in the past.

Šetlík was optimistic about the ceramicists' answer to his question 'what next?', and indeed justifiably so, as H + M + R refined their response in two large-scale projects that defined their relationship to ceramic tiling and architecture in the early 1970s. The first of these was the exterior of a large department store, Don (obchodní dům Don) in Hradec Králové, for which H + M + R

---

<sup>585</sup> Extract from a text for an exhibition in the Moravian Gallery in Brno, year 1971. Written by Jarmila Novotná. [No further publication details given.] Reproduced in Marie Rychlíková, p. 22.

<sup>586</sup> Šetlík reproduced in Marie Rychlíková, p. 11.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

designed a ceramic tile cladding in 1971, working with architect Jan Doležal. The building was clad in linear white tiles that were interrupted by three large circles composed of jutting tiles that had been curved into waves, heavy blocks and angles [Fig. 97]. These raised, textured shapes gave the effect of fur brushed the wrong way, emphasising the smooth surface of the surrounding walls [Fig. 98]. The three artists drew up a complex plan which was submitted to the workers at the ceramic factory in Horni Bříza – each project required a different factory and was allocated according to its expertise, guided by whether the artists required porcelain, stoneware or a particular glaze.<sup>588</sup> The plan was effective, as the factory got every part right – every tile was then numbered and installed under the supervision of H + M + R, dictating the placement from the base upwards. Hladíková was particularly thorough and accurate in ensuring it was correct, especially around the corners, since the building was of significant scale and they wished the edges to appear solid, so half-tiles were avoided and the corners were carefully rendered to remove any cracks. The resulting effect was of a giant block whose surface was disturbed only by the circular textures.<sup>589</sup>

According to Rychlíková, the workers from the factory enjoyed the job because it was different to their usual brickwork, a change from the monotony of miles of indistinct wall. After the building was completed, the approving Creative Committee would visit the work, and if they were satisfied, H + M + R would be paid. Their trust in the architect was profound – as artists, they felt they had a strong understanding of architectural requirements, and the scale of their projects shows that the architects agreed – Rychlíková considered

---

<sup>588</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

this cooperation with the architects to be 'impeccable'.<sup>590</sup> The result was indeed perfectly ordered.

H + M + R's work for Don concerned the surface of the building as the work itself, and as such played with the very edges of architectural form through subtle textures and divergences. In this respect, they celebrated the ceramic surface as a boundary between building and surrounding space. It is helpful to think here of what Victoria Kelley has called the binary oppositions of surface/depth: H + M + R appear to have made the surface the subject, rather than referring to oppositional values as they did in earlier works, such as the frieze for Invalidovna which explored ceramics as a series of containments.<sup>591</sup> Today, the building's surface does not remain so unsullied – the textured circles are blocked by signage, a testimony to the shift in financial power from state to brand [Fig. 99]. There is also something of the postmodern joke at work: the ordered Socialist Modern façade becomes bricolage, what Glenn Adamson, in discussing the postmodern surface, has called an 'approach to the fragmentary... in which the joints are left raw and exposed', not modernist collage but postmodernist 'mismatch' – 'What lies between the fragments, in the divisions of these surfaces, is sublimated antagonism'.<sup>592</sup> In this way, the overlaying of commercial signage, joints and all, onto the meticulous surface of H + M + R's exterior is a benign comment on Socialist architectural agency, the gravity of geometrical form made light by a commercial disregard for the past. It is a rupture that speaks to the proliferation of Socialist sculptural commissioning, a consequence of the aforementioned *čtyřprocentní*

---

<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

<sup>591</sup> Victoria Kelley, 'A superficial guide to the deeper meanings of surface', in *Surface Tensions: Surface, Finish and the Meaning of Objects*, ed. by Victoria Kelley and Glenn Adamson (Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 1-23.

<sup>592</sup> Adamson discussing stylist Ray Petri and photographer Jamie Morgan's work for *The Face* in 1985, in 'Substance abuse: the postmodern surface', in Ibid. p. 205.



*zákon* [four-percent law]; so many public sculptures were made that they became invisible. There also remains, alongside a certain fondness, or familiarity at times, an embarrassment about objects considered monuments to the Socialist period.

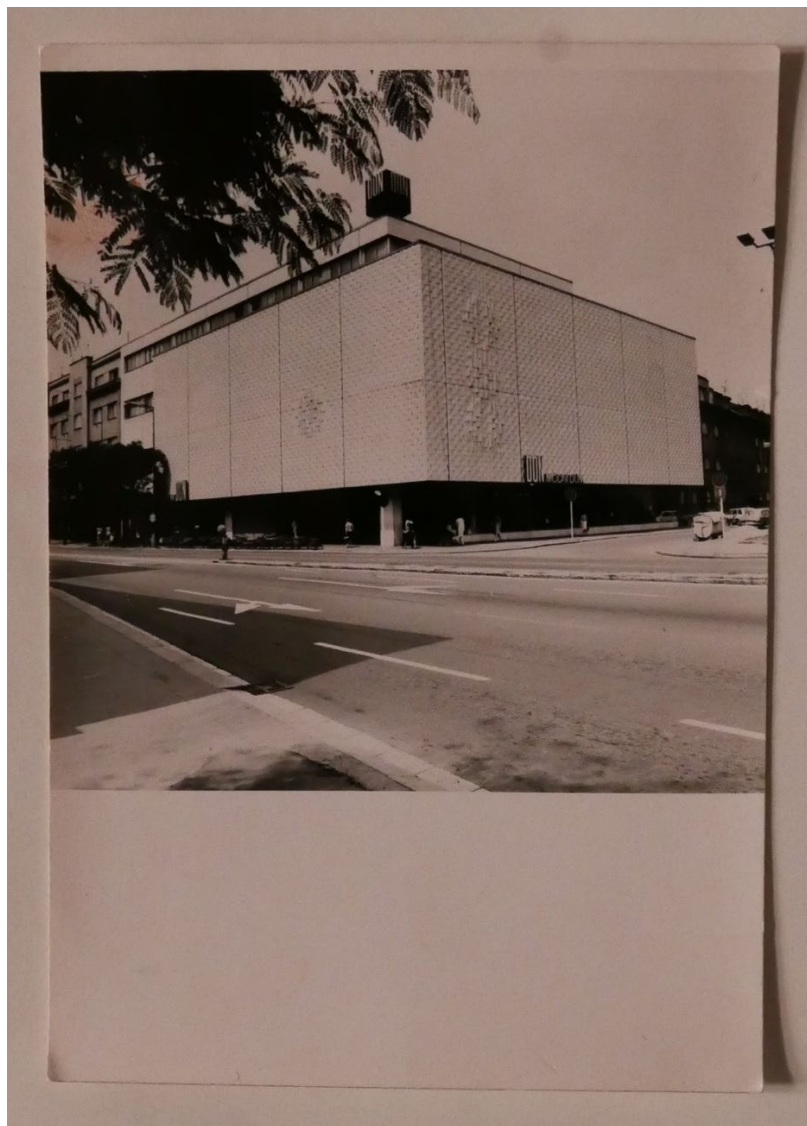


Fig. 97: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Exterior for obchodní dům DON, Hradec Králové, 1971. Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

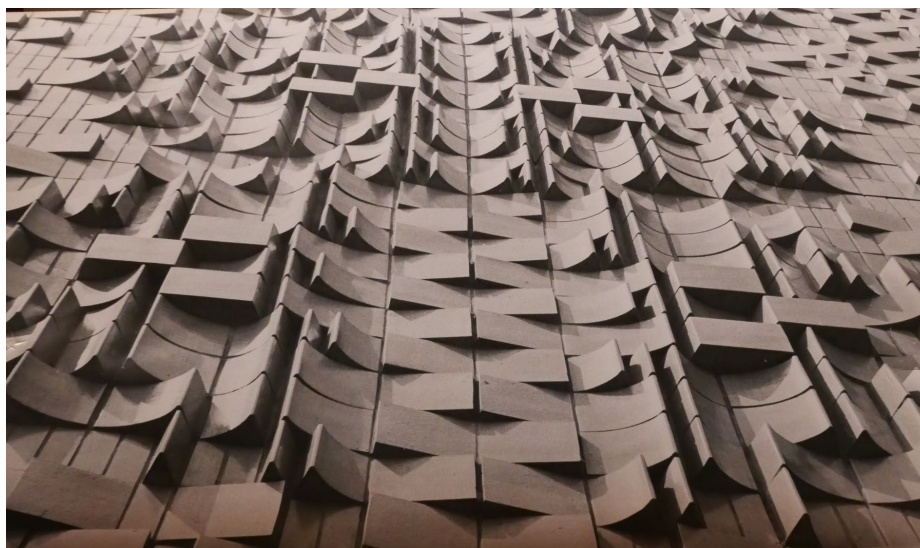


Fig. 98: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Exterior for obchodní dům Don, Hradec Králové, 1971.

Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.



Fig. 99: Můdní dům Don, (Hradec Králové, Gočárova třída 1517/26), 27 March 2017. Photograph: Boris Jelínek.

<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Obchodn%C3%AD\\_d%C5%AFm\\_Don\\_02.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Obchodn%C3%AD_d%C5%AFm_Don_02.jpg)> [accessed 8 October 2017].

In the year after completing the Hradec Králové project, H + M + R carried out an iconic commission that used similarly clean white tiling, but this time in collaboration with a wider group of artists who worked on the interior of Hotel Ještěd, just outside Liberec (1972). Glass artists, ceramicists, textiles and furniture designers worked together, and the project involved over a hundred suppliers in terms of artists, factories and materials, working in collaboration with architects Karel Hubáček and Miroslav Masák. M + H + R were allocated the interior hall walls and staircase, for which they used a glazed porcelain produced in Louny – a material that was admired, according to curator and theorist Dagmar Tučná, who specialised at that time in ceramics and textiles, for its 'very good technical and aesthetic quality.'<sup>593</sup> The area was split into vertical lines of flush tiling, with segments raised in relief, which were drawn from a press. The aim was to emphasise a geometric, formal conception, 'accented by the play of light and shadow, elevated mass, their colour pointed in bright white, and last but not least, in a row of delicate consonance' in a 'noble-minded manner'.<sup>594</sup> Just as the light played on the expansive outdoor surface of the Don in 1971, questioning its nature as a man-made building, Ještěd drew the passer-by's attention instead to the very material and surface of an enclosed staircase, a spatial experience somewhere between sculpture and architecture, drawing the eye up into the space above but also to the immediacy of the surface [Figs. 100, 101, 102].

The commissions for Ještěd, which also included bubbling glass balls by Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová (daughter of

---

<sup>593</sup> Dagmar Tučná, Introduction to exhibition catalogue, *Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, Návrhy a Realizace 1969-1973* [Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, Designs and Realisation 1969-1973], (Prague: Galerii Vincence Kramáře and Svaz českých výtvarných umělců [Union of Czech Fine Artists], 1973)., n. pag. [Catalogue in personal collection of Marie Rychlíková].

<sup>594</sup> Dagmar Tučná, *Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková*, n. pag.

Jaroslav Brychta, discussed in the Introduction and Chapter One) that emerged from concrete walls [Figs. 103 and 104], added to its 'Bond lair' feel, perched like a science-fiction hideaway on the mountain above Liberec. Today the whole building still continues the form of the mountain, rising into a sharp point, and its interior is an echo partly of the landscape within which it sits (craggy and amorphous) and partly of the sky by which it is surrounded (when I visited, this was grey and laden with clouds, fitting for the concrete, ceramic and clear glass interior) [Figs. 105 and 106]. As a building it marks the site in which it sits: the commissioned works within it are modernist, brutalist, permanent – but there is also something edging onto the periphery of the postmodern break, a kind of '*landscape and not-landscape*' (to use Krauss's words), in experiential terms, where the interior continues, and plays with, the exterior.<sup>595</sup> M + H + R's work in this context offers not just a tiled staircase – there is something of Richard Serra's work about its containment – the 'logical conditions' of its creation for a stairwell also ultimately maintain its modernist impetus.

---

<sup>595</sup> Krauss, p. 41.

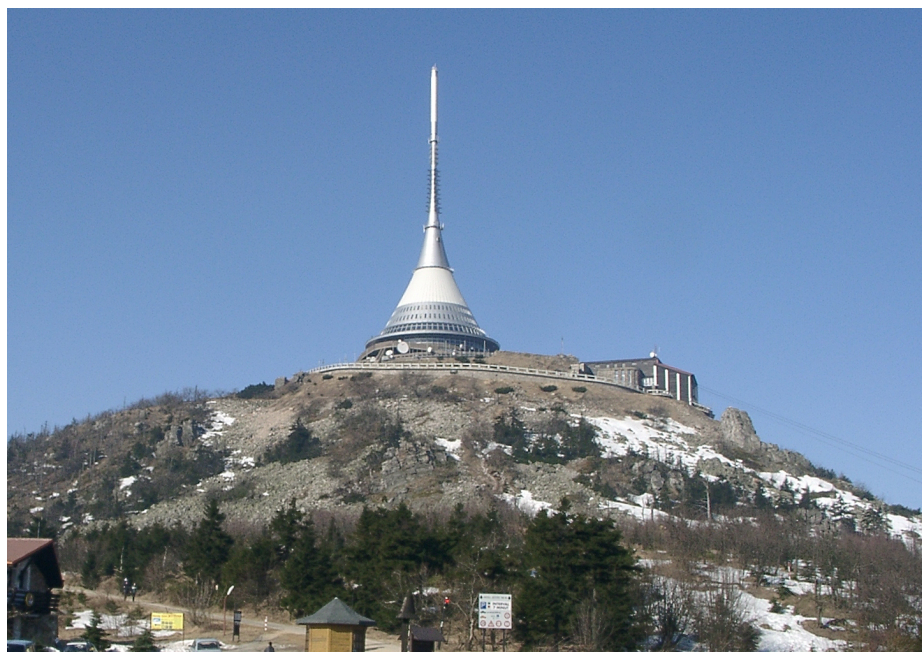


Fig. 100: Hotel Ještěd, 2002. Photograph: Creative Commons.  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jested.jpg>> [accessed 10 August 2017].

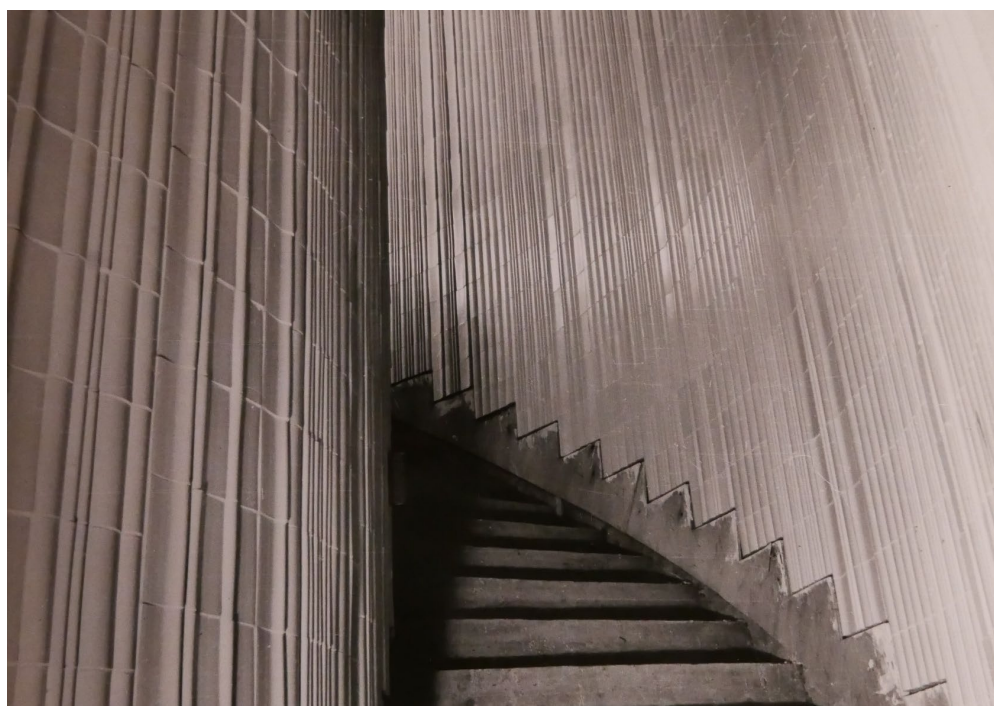


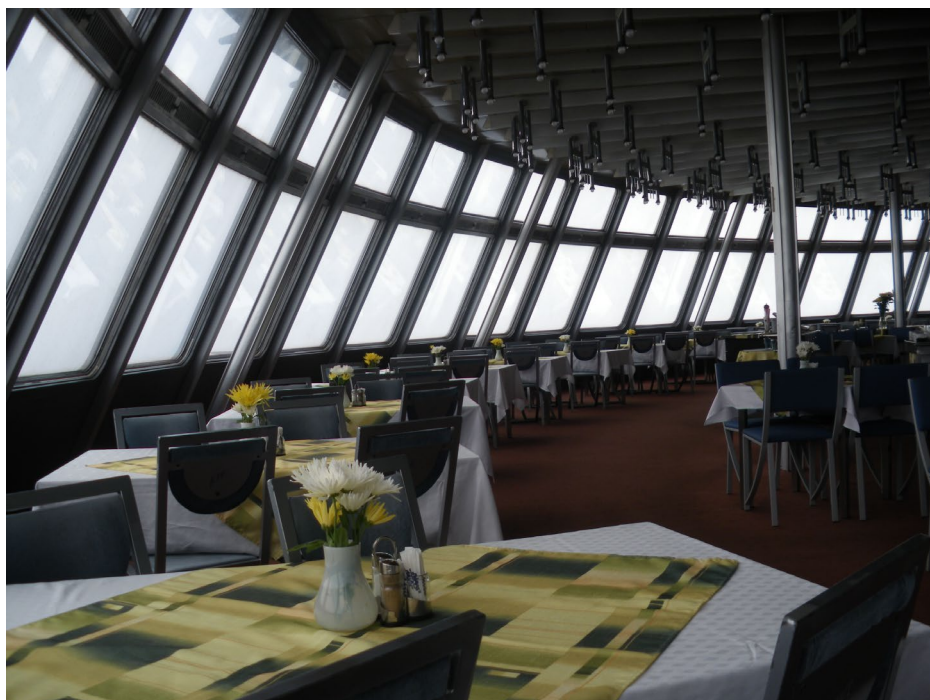
Fig. 101: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Main hall staircase, Ještěd Hotel, (1972, ceramic tiling).  
Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.



Fig. 102: Lydie Hladíková, Děvana Mírová and Marie Rychlíková, Smaller staircase, Ještěd Hotel, 1972, ceramic tiling. Photograph: Author's Own, 2011.



Figs. 103 & 104: Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, Glass forms, Ještěd Hotel, 1972. Photograph: Author's Own, 2011.



Figs 105 & 106: Dining area, Ještěd Hotel, 1972. Photograph: Author's Own, 2011.



The early 1970s commissions marked a turning point: by 1973, M + H + R had been told that they would be able to exhibit as members of the Union of Czechoslovak Artists for one more year, but that under the increasingly restrictive atmosphere of normalisation (see Introduction), the Union would cease to exist. The three artists would not be accepted in the new version of the organisation, and did not gain admittance for ten years. They requested commissions during that time, but it became much harder – Rychlíková sold most of her work only to friends and close acquaintances, as it became ‘dangerous’ for her in the 1970s.<sup>596</sup> One of the key group exhibitions before this point was in 1973, at Galerie Vincence Kramáře, in Dejvice, Prague. The gallery had opened in 1964 with an exhibition of works in the modern collection of renowned Czech inter-war collector and theorist Vincenc Kramář, which included work by Picasso, Braque, Kubišta and Filla.

The gallery had become a site for exhibitions of the international avant-garde, but in the early 1970s its programme focused on Soviet-affiliated content. The H + M + R exhibition in 1973 celebrated both their architectural ceramics and smaller studies [Figs. 107 and 108]. In a re-assertion of the same virtues of their work seen in the writing of Raban and, to some extent, Šetlík, curator Dagmar Tučná argued for their ceramics in architecture as ‘a phenomenon conclusively of merit, assessed from all aspects, including in economic respects’.<sup>597</sup> She emphasised that such ceramic materials were durable, resistant, did not demand any maintenance, were ‘an organic part with aesthetic function, tectonic and also operational’. Their simplicity belied great effort and artistic experience, intrinsically linked to their knowledge of how to work with

---

<sup>596</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

<sup>597</sup> Dagmar Tučná, *Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková*, n. pag.

planners and manufacturing enterprises: despite facing disappointments in certain contracts, they always found favourable results and could lay aside problems to take up the challenge of a new assignment. Fundamental to this, she continued, was the unique position of the author of the work – someone who was qualified by years of thinking and experimentation, and a ‘point of view from a river of inspirational sources’.<sup>598</sup> This recalled Šetlík’s historicist ‘joining of hands’ with the past as a virtue. In light of what came next for the Artists’ Union membership and the period of normalisation, in which work for the public realm continued but shifted in possibility (arguably eventually more free than its predecessors, though in the 1970s, this was not the case for H + M + R), the exhibition was a defence of the role of explorative ceramics in architectural contexts. Indeed, the discourse surrounding their work, as has been seen, maintained this tone throughout, with their expertise as modernist crafts practitioners at the centre of this argument.

Issues of maintenance and the imposition of advertising hoardings on top of work have become more pertinent with recent projects such as Pavel Karous’s *Aliens and Herons*. The main issue is one of ownership, which remains unclear, both in legal and cultural terms – one third of today’s Czech population lives on housing estates and is surrounded by commissions such as those of H + M + R and their successors in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>599</sup> But they are left to deteriorate – as Karous states,

Only a few decades have passed since they were created, and yet no one lays claim to them. If there are covered over by vegetation or they simply disappear one

---

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> Karous, *Aliens and Herons*, pp. 416-417.

day, only a few people even care. If they are not in the way they are not actively being destroyed, but apart from that they are superfluous and for the majority of the population, they remain mostly invisible. We perceive public art made during the era of socialist Czechoslovakia as a remnant of an alien, long-gone or even denied civilization.<sup>600</sup>

There are also comparisons to be made here to recent interest in reappraising Post-War public art in Britain, particularly in relation to considerations of relationships to public perception, and understandings of ownership in the public realm.<sup>601</sup> As Karous states, it is the invisibility of these commissions that make them important to revisit today, to understand what they mean to those who made them as a material process and a continuation of practice, not as claims to ideological alignment but as evidence of human activity and thoughtfulness, as the collaborative work of H + M + R shows. The success or value of such works can surely be measured as such, no matter what their position is on a spectrum of approved styles, whether Socialist Modernist, neo-Constructivist or Brussels Style.

---

<sup>600</sup> Ibid., pp. 414-415.

<sup>601</sup> Tanya Harrod, Review. *Out There: Our Post-War Public Art*, East Wing Galleries, Somerset House, London, *Sculpture Journal*, 25:2 (2016), 288-290.



Fig. 107: Documentation image of exhibition *Návrhy a Realizace 1969-1973* [Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, *Designs and Realisation 1969-1973*], May, 1973, Galerie Vincence Kramáře, Prague. Arranged by the Svaz českých výtvarných umělců [Union of Czech Fine Artists].

Photograph: Personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

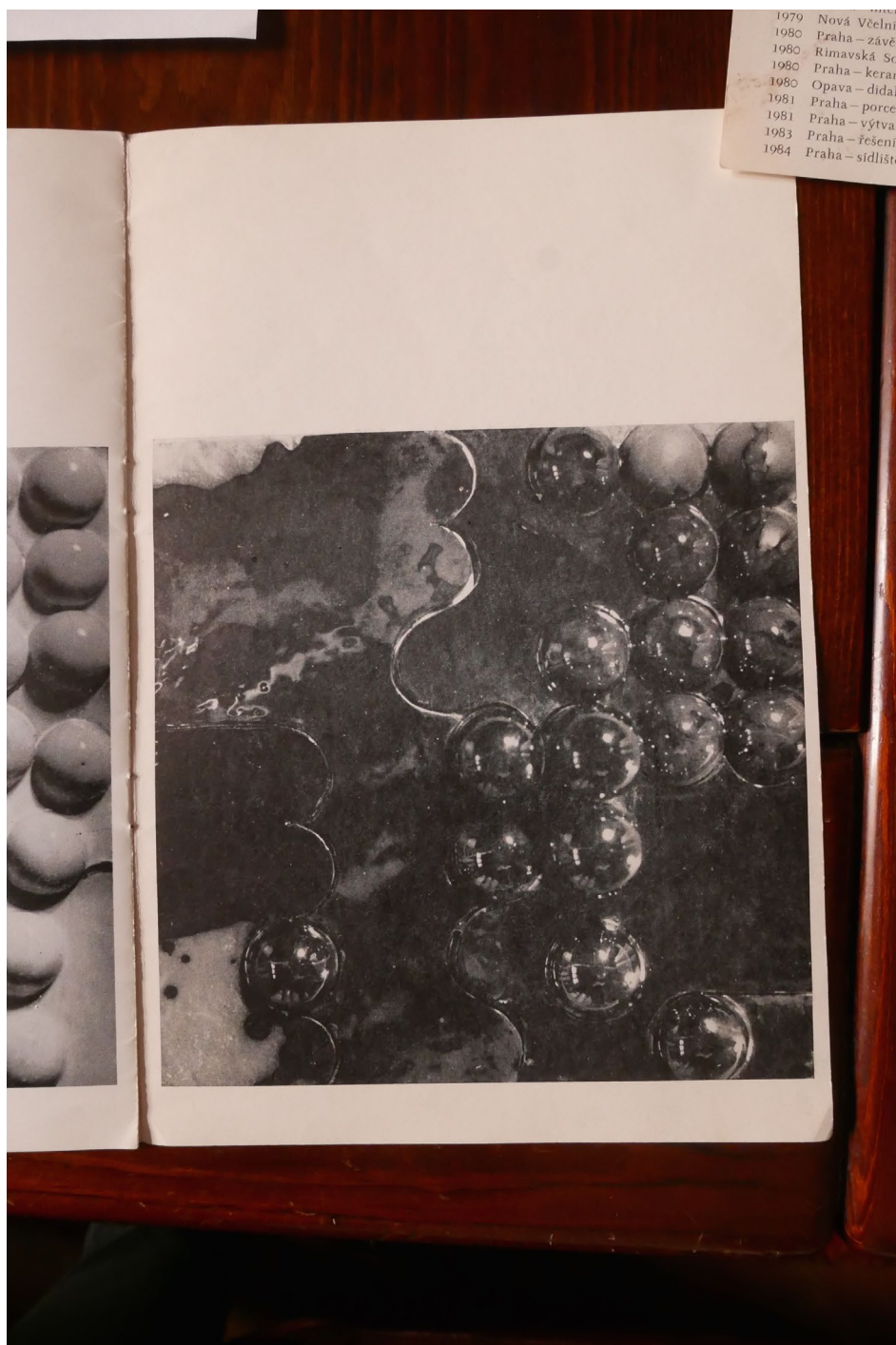


Fig. 108: Marie Rychlíková, *Čtverec* (Square), 1970, majolica,  
 from *Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, Návrhy a Realizace 1969-1973* [Hladíková,  
 Mírová, Rychlíková, *Designs and Realisation 1969-1973*], (Prague: Galerii Vincence  
 Kramáře and Svaz českých výtvarných umělců [Union of Czech Fine Artists], 1973),  
 n. pag. Catalogue in personal archive of Marie Rychlíková.

## New Techniques in Textiles in the 1960s

In the 1960s, there was significant coverage in magazines like *Domov* and *Tvar* of Czechoslovak *gobelin* (tapestry), a generic term referencing the Parisian tapestry manufacturer Gobelins. Along with this came an innovation in weaving that forged a position between home and factory, allowing for exploration that called into question the division between useful, industrial items and hand-made, decorative objects that showed how craft in this context could offer a place of creative possibility that retained approval due to its connection to industry. This was Art Protis, a form of tapestry based on the nonwoven fabric technique Protis, resulting in items that won awards at Expo 67 in Montreal and Expo 70 in Osaka.

The Protis technique combined sparsely constructed fabric (or knitted mesh or lace) faced with processed or natural wool, with stitching over the top. This method was developed in 1962 by the Wool and Knitting Research Institute in Brno, and the resulting patented technology for decorative nonwoven fabrics, used from the mid-1960s in tapestries, was labelled 'Art Protis'. Art Protis used wool fibres, in a choice of 120 colours, which were attached to an underlying fabric that could be applied in transparent layers. This technique allowed artists to combine multiple fabrics, which were sometimes patterned, as well as materials like lace and foil.<sup>602</sup> According to historian and curator Petra Mertová the process owed its origins to the development of sewing machines based on the Czechoslovak Arachne, designed by J. Zmatlík in the 1950s, which

---

<sup>602</sup> Petra Mertová, Text to accompany exhibition: *Art protis 45 / Netkaný textil v minulosti a dnes* [Art protis 45 / Unwoven textiles in the past and today] (16. 6. - 6. 12. 2009) <<http://www.technicalmuseum.cz/2009-menuvpravoarchiv-247/art-protis-45-16-6-6-12-2009>> [accessed 01 April 2016].

functioned well with lower cost yarns.<sup>603</sup> Art Protis enabled a form of craft that embraced new technology and economical means through its mode of production, as well as apparently offering the potential for creative exploration: in 1967 Josef Raban wrote that at that time tapestry-making was widespread in Czechoslovakia but offered a counterbalance to industrial design, due to the invention of nonwoven 'art-protis' [sic] tapestry, which allowed coloured textile fabrics to be combined without the 'usual warp and woof' and therefore offered 'the artist scope for inventive composition'.<sup>604</sup> This is another instance of 'experimentation' which could be justified as a means towards increasing industrial production (the 'experimental' as a key aspect of socialist craft and design practice in the 1960s was discussed in Chapter Three). Art Protis works were for domestic contexts, but also public settings such as offices and schools, an example being B. Matala's work for the Boardroom of the 1967 Business Centrum building in Brno, designed by architect Ivan Ruller.<sup>605</sup>

Textile methods like Protis, as it became known industrially, was the specialist product of the Vlněna Factory in Brno. Here it was made into clothing, as shown on a label of the time [Fig. 109]. Mid-1960s Vlněna marketing material contained the words, 'Co je Protis?' – what is Protis? The label explained: 'it is a double-structured textile of very good quality, manufactured in the national enterprise Vlněna, Brno, according to a Czechoslovakian patent. It is suitable for the manufacture of superior clothing. This textile is distinguished principally by its warmth, lightness, and its avoidance of creasing'. [See Fig. 110]

---

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

<sup>604</sup> Raban, *Czechoslovak Form*, p. 27.

<sup>605</sup> Oldřich Ševčík, Ondřej Beneš, *Architektura 60. let*, p. 343.



Fig. 109: Labels produced for Art Protis by Vlněna, Brno, c. mid-1960s. Moravský zemský archive in Brno. Archive location: K216, 74, 3. Photographed by Markéta Vinglerová, 25.10.2016.





Fig. 110: Label showing clothing produced by Vlněna, Brno, c. mid-1960s. Moravský zemský archive in Brno. Archive location: K216, 74, 3. Photographed by Markéta Vinglerová, 25.10.2016.

The use of adhesion to reinforce fibres originated in the manufacture of paper in the United States and Britain in the mid-nineteenth century – in the Czech context the technique was first introduced in Klatovy in 1885 and was the first production of its kind in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>606</sup> In the 1920s, nonwoven fabric was tested in Germany: the first products were manufactured by Textilwerke Franz Kalf und Co., Stotzheim, and were intended for the footwear industry, while in the United States, the production of nonwovens focused on items like handkerchiefs, wash cloths and napkins. The first bonded nonwoven was Perlon, used as an interlining in garment manufacturing.<sup>607</sup> From the 1930s to the 1950s, nonwovens were used as a cheaper substitute for conventional woven fabrics, and their development was influenced by

<sup>606</sup> Petra Mertová, Art protis 45 / Netkaný textil v minulosti a dnes (16. 6. - 6. 12. 2009) (Art protis 45 / non-woven textiles in the past and today), National Technical Museum Prague <http://www.technicalmuseum.cz/2009-menuvpravoarchiv-247/art-protis-45-16-6-6-12-2009> [accessed 01 April 2016].

<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

the chemical industry, which produced new chemical and synthetic fibres.<sup>608</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, manufactured textiles expanded from clothing and domestic items to textiles for healthcare, aerospace and the automotive industry. This meant that towards the end of the 1960s there were new types of needles and needling machines, which enabled the production of patterned fabrics. Nonwoven fabric, as formed on the basis of weaving techniques, began in 1949 in Czechoslovakia with patents by Heinrich Mauersberga, in the GDR, and Joseph Zmatlík in Czechoslovakia. A form of rapid prototyping design using interlacing tools resulted in mass-production machines like Arachne (CSSR), Molimo (NDR), Maliwat (NDR) and VP or AČV (USSR). During the 1960s, research and development of nonwovens and machinery for nonwovens was dealt with primarily by the Research Institute of Textile Technology in Liberec and the Research Institute of Wool in Brno. The latter patented technology for decorative nonwoven fabric that was used from 1965 for the creation of Art Protis works. Brno was an ideal centre for this development: it was known as 'moravský Manchester' (Moravian Manchester), due to its textile industry. In the inter-war period, when there were almost forty large wool factories in Brno, the production of high-quality wool materials in Brno competed with that of British companies.<sup>609</sup>

Britain's later interest in Art Protis can be seen in its presentation of the material by Heal's in London in 1973 and the acquisition by the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), as will be discussed. Another type of nonwoven fabric was also known as Artaig, or Arteg, and

---

<sup>608</sup> Ibid.

<sup>609</sup> Exhibition *Brno – moravský Manchester. 250 let metropole textilního průmyslu* [Brno - Moravian Manchester, 250 years of the Metropolis of Textile Industry], Moravská galerie (Moravian Gallery) Brno <<http://www.moravska-galerie.cz/moravska-galerie/vystavy-a-program/aktualni-vystavy/2014/brno.aspx>> (accessed 30 October 2016).

Aradecor.<sup>610</sup> The latter was developed in 1966 by painter František Šlegl (1921-79), using the Arachné machine which similarly layered wool fibers rather than weaving the threads. This was located in the Elitex factory space in Kdyně, from which it was saved in 1992 by artist Milada Hynková who took it to her workshop.<sup>611</sup>

Renowned Czech textile artist Antonín Kybal's Art Protis work won the gold medal at the International Exhibition of Arts and Crafts in Munich in 1966, and his work in Brno, and his association with the form, remain an integral aspect of the Art Protis history.<sup>612</sup>

Czechoslovak Art Protis technology won the gold medal at an international exhibition of interior accessories at Monza in 1974,<sup>613</sup> and Art Protis artists represented Czechoslovakia at Expo 1967 in Montreal, Expo 1970 in Osaka and the International Tapestry Biennial in Lausanne. Other artists using the technique included Jiří Trnka and, much less well known internationally, Květa Hamsíková. I will focus on the work of the latter but first look at the way in which the aesthetic associated with Art Protis was largely indebted to Antonín Kybal.

Kybal's interest in technological developments and experimental forms was demonstrated in his dedication to Art Protis between 1965-69, while he was working in Brno with Vlněna, experimenting with the nonwoven tapestry method. This coincided with the creative development of his work, which departed from the

---

<sup>610</sup> Mertová, 2009.

<sup>611</sup> Ewelina Chiu, 'A Practice within a Vision: Sam83 and Aradecor, Agosto Foundation', <<https://www.agosto-foundation.org/a-practice-within-a-vision>> [accessed 23 January 2018].

<sup>612</sup> A new publication has just come out around this subject (not yet available in the UK, though I received an unpublished version of Markéta Vingerlová's essay for book, "Vychovávati tvůrčí navrhovatele" / Fenomén Kybalovy školy' [Raising Creative Designers / The Phenomenon of the Kybal School]), in *Antonín Kybal / Cesty designu a textilní tvorby* [Czech Design and Textile Creation], ed. by Lucie Vlčková (Prague: KANT Uměleckoprůmyslové museum, 2017).

<sup>613</sup> Mertová, 2009.

figurative and became focused on abstract compositions based on natural forms. In the 1920s, Kybal had been head of the Textile department of the organisation Družstevní práce (Cooperative Work), which was absorbed by ÚLUV (discussed in Chapter One), where he won public and industry appreciation, particularly for carpets and tapestry. Under his leadership the Textile department at the College of Industrial Arts cooperated widely with industry, and Josef Raban mentions how Kybal's students used workshop practice to solve issues faced by industrial production – solutions were expected to be found as part of their State Examination.<sup>614</sup>

Between 1926, when he graduated from the School of Industrial Arts in Prague, and his death in 1971, Kybal was primarily a textile artist, but he also painted, drew, and wrote about art and pedagogy. His interest in the hierarchy of craft and the fine and applied arts was directly related both to an emphasis on the function of a work and its relation to the process of making. He believed that the textile artist should both study the theory and history of the craft and find inspiration by directly working with the 'actual technical handling of the material, that is the techniques of dyeing and weaving', in order to create work that would be much more 'natural and appropriate in character' than those the artist 'conjures up in drawings.'<sup>615</sup> This emphasised direct experimentation with technique as a means to craft knowledge rather than proceeding by way of a design, for the latter would create a gap that he viewed as indirect and somehow inauthentic – as he had stated in 1935, 'Textiles are not designed, textiles are woven; if a textile is designed and woven, the product is an imitation of the design'.<sup>616</sup>

---

<sup>614</sup> Raban, *Czechoslovak Form*, p. 27.

<sup>615</sup> Jan Spurný, *Antonín Kybal* (Prague: Artia, 1960), p. 13.

<sup>616</sup> Statement to accompany Kybal's first exhibition of carpets, 1935, cited in Spurný, p. 17.

According to Kybal, many of whose works were made in collaboration with his wife Ludmila, textiles needed to be led by 'the old principle of subordinating the formal to the material and purpose of the object' rather than operating on an 'island' in the way that contemporary art did, 'somewhat aside from the real struggles of life'.<sup>617</sup> These interests in the dynamics between the final work and the making process were embedded in works such as *Kilim*, made by both Kybals in 1952, in which they wanted to accentuate the application of themes directly related to the kilim technique as a form of woven-tapestry rug [Fig. 111].<sup>618</sup> Kybal worked not just in tapestry but also in print and hand-painting, such as his appliqué curtain for the Laterna Magika theatre at the Brussels Expo in 1958, using nonwoven material cut out using a pattern and joined with a flat stitch.<sup>619</sup> This could also be seen in the large-scale, screen-printed and hand-painted hanging for the Smokers' Saloon at the Prague Laterna Magika Theatre, made in 1959 [Fig. 112]. Other works from this period show the connections to compositional principles and gestural influences seen in the contemporary movement of Art Informel<sup>620</sup> (as discussed in relation to Janošek and H + M + R), and emerged not just from the Brussels Style of the late 1950s [Fig. 113] but also from the aesthetics of earlier wearable objects, such as a 1947 headscarf [Fig. 114]. The continuation of these interests, in abstracted natural forms and organic, geometric compositions, can be seen in the work the Kybals carried out in Brno in the mid- to late 1960s [Fig. 115].

---

<sup>617</sup> Quoting Kybal in 1947 [citation not given], in Spurný, p. 20.

<sup>618</sup> Vlastimil Havlík, Ludmila Kybalová *Antonín Kybal* (Nové Město nad Metují: Městský úřad a Městská knihovna, 1993), p. 43.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*

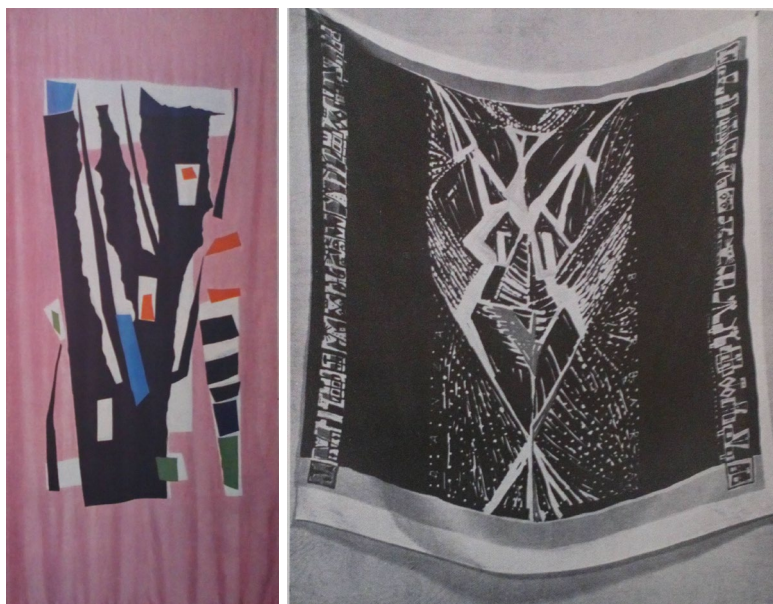
<sup>620</sup> Markéta Vingerlová, *When Textiles Become Form*, (Prague: Hunt Kastner Gallery, 2016) [Accompanying exhibition text], p. 2.



Fig. 111: Antonín Kybal and Ludmila Kybylová, *Kilim*, 1952, Wool, 222 x 153 cm, from Vlastimil Havlík & Ludmila Kybalová, *Antonín Kybal* (Nové Město nad Metují: Městský úřad a Městská knihovna knihovna, 1993), p. 43.



Fig. 112: Antonín Kybal, Hanging for the Smokers' Saloon at the Prague Laterna Magika Theatre, 1959, from Jan Spurný, *Modern textile designer: Antonín Kybal* (Prague: Artia, 1960), plate 54.



Figs. 113 & 114: [left] Antonín Kybal, *Kakemono* (Hanging picture) for the Good Taste exhibition in the Czechoslovak Pavilion, Expo 58, Brussels, 1958, from Vlastimil Havřík & Ludmila Kybalová, *Antonín Kybal* (Nové Město nad Metují: Městský úřad a Městská knihovna, 1993) p. 32; [right] Antonín Kybal, *Head-square*, screen printed, 1947, from Jan Spurný, *Modern textile designer: Antonín Kybal* (Prague: Artia, 1960), plate 32.



Fig. 115: Antonín Kybal and Ludmíla Kybalová, *Poslední rašení* [The Final Breeding], 1968. Tapestry. 155 x 220 cm. from Vlastimil Havlík & Ludmila Kybalová, *Antonín Kybal* (Nové Město nad Metují: Městský úřad a Městská knihovna, 1993) p. 41.

Ironically, given Kybal's emphasis on spending time with the process of making, many of his tapestries were actually woven by his wife, Ludmila, with whom he worked closely all his life. Kybalová also wrote about textiles, and in this way she influenced the manner in which tapestry works were disseminated, as seen in her article in a 1966 issue of *Domov* featuring a work by Květa Hamsíková [Fig. 116]. The article focused on the affordable nature of small tapestries, a crafted art form that could be purchased for the private home or public setting. Works included prices: *Studie – Ofelie* (Study – Ophelia) by Květa Hamsíková (1966), was priced at Kčs 1050 – the equivalent of approximately £320 today, which does not seem cheap as an object for the home, especially in a relatively limited economic climate, but it could perhaps be considered affordable as a single



edition work of art. The impact of this style, so associated with the Kybals, and its popularity in magazines like *Domov*, was felt throughout Art Protis production.

Hamsíková is a particular example of this. Born in 1921, she was a pupil of Alois Fišárek and known for print, tapestry and Art Protis work. She was also a member of ÚBOK, and her work was collected internationally. Fišárek was a painter and professor at UMPRUM, but also known for his work in tapestries and mosaics. He would later create a mosaic celebrating space travel, entitled *Kosmonauti* (Cosmonauts) for the Háje metro station in Prague, opened in 1980 to accompany a housing estate of the same name (now called Jižní Město, South Town). Fišárek's interest in work for the public realm and his response to wall sites was a significant influence on Hamsíková's practice for Art Protis wall hangings.

Between 1959 and 1985, over twenty exhibitions of Hamsíková's tapestry work took place, and she was frequently included in commemorative shows of Czechoslovak applied art and industrial design to mark occasions like the establishment of the Czechoslovakia Socialist Republic (1965) or the Soviet Liberation (1985). Hamsíková was chosen to represent the fiftieth anniversary of International Women's Day in Czechoslovakia (1960) and was a winner of Women in Contemporary Art in the International Year of Women (1976). Hamsíková's Art Protis tapestry *Summer* (1967) is in the collection of the V&A Museum, London. Despite this, she seems to have remained relatively unknown outside of the Czech Republic.



Fig. 116: Article showing small tapestries for sale via ÚUŘ, from Ludmila Kybalová, 'Malé Gobelíny' (Small Tapestries), *Domov*, 2 (1966) pp. 40-41. Top right: *Study-Ophelia* by Květa Hamsíková (1966).

To examine an Art Protis work closely in person is to understand better the intrigue of this technique, something that speaks of craft, technology and the personal. Hamsíková's work *Summer*, acquired by the V&A in 1969, is a mixture of the painterly and the referential [Fig. 117]. Composed of bright yellow, orange, pink, white and black wool, it lives up to its name through joyful chaos: there is an atmosphere of heat and explosion, with the lick of bright flames and slices of dark shadow cutting through – evocative of a hot summer's day. The Art Protis layering is highly effective: single pieces of felt contain slits through which the underlying dense fabric is seen: lines of gold thread squiggle the surface, denser parts have the quality of embroidery or crochet (one section is almost like the frayed end of a knitted scarf, or more appropriately, the fringed edge of a traditional tapestry) – and then across all are spread skeins that have the effect of cloud-like pools of colour, apparently painted

on with the wide sweep of a brush, until one looks closely and sees the texture of the wool [Figs. 118 and 119].

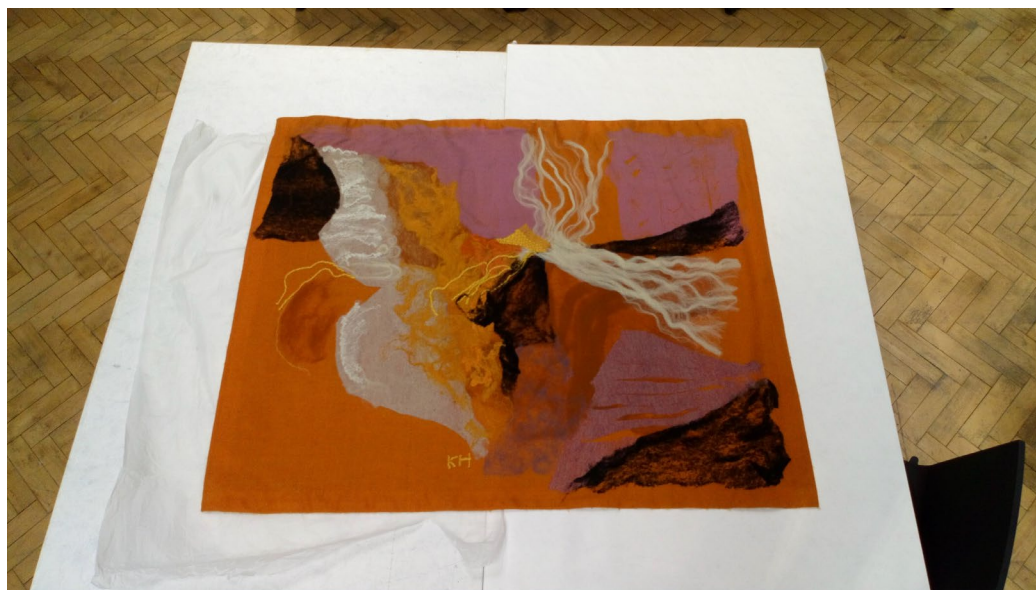


Fig. 117: Květa Hamsíková, *Summer*, 1967, Art Protis, 1165 x 144 cm, V&A Collection, London. Reference: CIRC. 25-1969. Photograph: Author's Own.

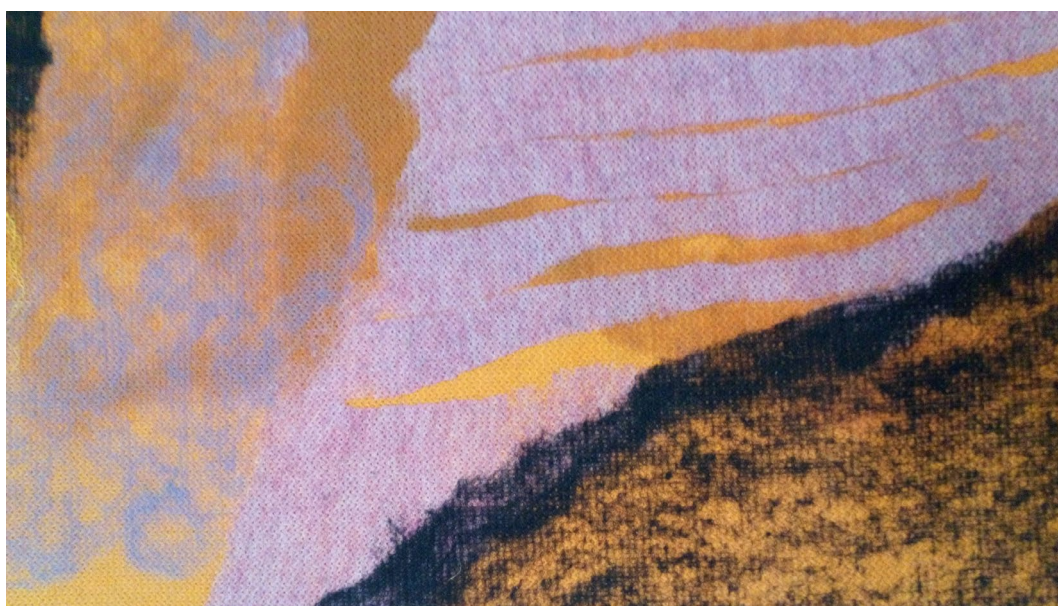


Fig. 118

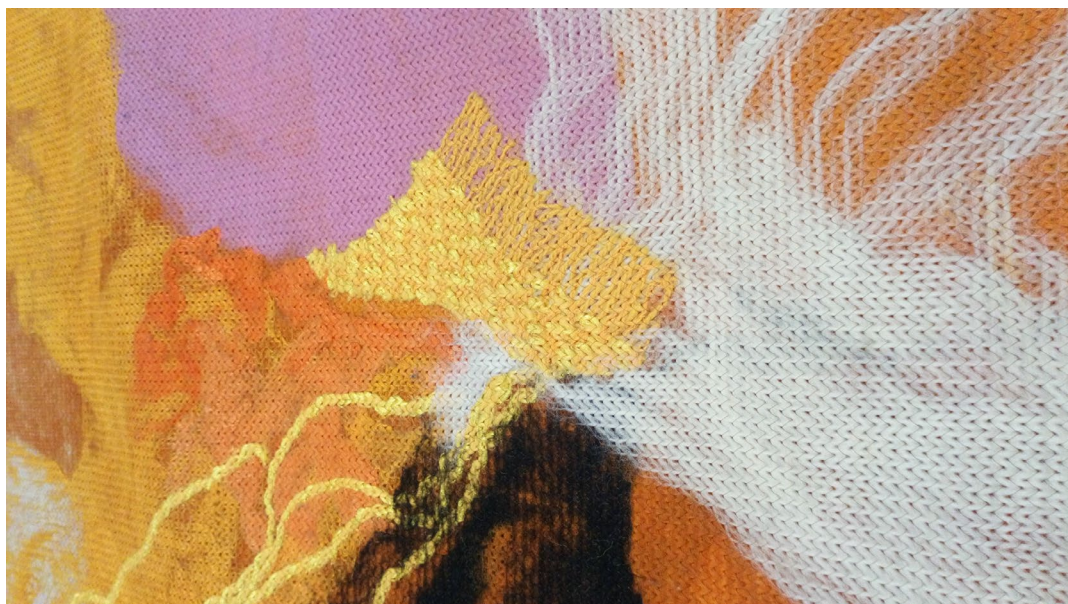


Fig. 119



Fig. 120

Figs. 118–120: Details of Květa Hamsíková, *Summer*, 1967, Art Protis, 1165 x 144 cm, V&A Collection, London. Reference: CIRC. 25-1969. Photograph: Author's Own.

Like Milada Jochová's 1968 dress for ÚLUV (discussed in Chapter Three), Hamsíková's work seems to be an integration of Socialist Modern form, craft history and modern technology, to create something self-referential, gestural and emotive. The embryonic forms used by Hamsíková [Fig. 120] are reminiscent of the Kybals' interest in landscape and nature, seen in contemporary work such as *Poslední rašení* (The Final Breeding), [Fig. 115]. But the forms also reach further back to the work of Surrealist artist Toyen (1902-1980), whose name translates as 'to je on': 'it is he', or 'she's he' – overtly exploring gender binaries. A member of the inter-war avant-garde group Devětsil, and proponent of Artificialismus (Artificialism), Toyen explored abstraction in relation to the subconscious, poetic perception, memory and material properties. Hamsíková's work contains similar motifs, as well as evocations of memory and feeling, the poetic alongside possibilities of the erotic and bodily. In Art Protis, a new dimension of technology is at play, with the fluidity of wool and expressive qualities alongside the hard machinery required to press together the layers [Fig. 121].



Fig. 121: Art Protis machine, Brno, used by fashion designer Karolína Juříková, 2015, for the 'Utopia' collection, film still, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZHRs4usB40>> [accessed 05 Dec 2016).

Karel Teige, a founding member of Devětsil, had advocated what were considered 'Constructivist-Poetist' picture poems, in essays such as 'Our Basis and Our Way: Constructivism and Poetism' (1924). Through the use of typographic and multi-media images, Teige aimed to synthesise poetry and the visual image to express lyrical feeling and poetry in combination with the use of Constructivist materials and composition. New technology was central to this Modernist approach, and indeed Vlněna's Art Protis machines were an accessible method of using new equipment to make expressive work. Whilst the end result was very different from works such as Hamsíková's, the emphasis on the subconscious, on poetry, combined with new technology, makes it possible to consider Art Protis in light of the Czech avant-garde.

Hamsíková's *Summer* has not been on display at the V&A since 1990, though details are hard to establish – the work was acquired by the Circulation Department, notorious for its patchy record-keeping.<sup>621</sup> The work appears somewhat bunched up, with a creased surface, and its backing is held in place with black straps to weigh the edges and support hanging [Fig. 122]. The backing seems to be slightly too small for the piece, which, alongside fairly regular display, could have had an impact on the weave of the tapestry. What can be seen on the reverse is the original Vlněna label [Fig. 123], showing its origins in Brno, bearing Hamsíková's signature and the information that it was exported by the Czechoslovak state organisation Art Centrum.

---

<sup>621</sup> According to requests for further information at the V&A, January 2018.



Figs. 122-123: Details of reverse, showing label, Květa Hamsíková, *Summer*, 1967, Art Protis, 1165 x 144 cm, V&A Collection, London.  
Reference: CIRC. 25-1969. Photograph: Author's Own.

As a non-woven textile production technique, Protis had been of interest in the UK since the granting of a patent to Vlněna in Brno in 1961 [Fig. 124]. The document ascribed to them the 'sole use and advantage of an invention for Textile-like non-woven fabric for clothing decoration, household and other similar purposes'.<sup>622</sup> But it took another twelve years for the sales potential of the material as an art form to be explored (except for the V&A Circulation department's

<sup>622</sup> Patent number 990519. United Kingdom, Great Britain & Northern Ireland, signed by Controller-General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, September 1961. Document in Moravský zemský archive in Brno, Vlněna material. Archive location: K216, 77, 3. [Photographed and kindly supplied by Markéta Vinglerová, 25.10. 2016.]

acquisition of Hamsíková's piece), by none other than the leading London craft and design purveyor, Heal's, on Tottenham Court Road, in 1973. An exhibition of Art Protis work from Czechoslovakia opened at Heal's Art Gallery on March 20 of that year [Fig. 125], in close collaboration with the Czechoslovak Embassy and its Ambassador, Dr. M. Zemla, and with the support of the Rapid Advertising Agency. Heal's Chairman, Anthony S. Heal, commended the 'inimitable skill of Czechoslovak craftsman designers' (an interesting combination of terms) that would 'bring good commercial effects for both sides'.<sup>623</sup> Heal continued that he was 'glad to say the initial success has been very encouraging.' This was echoed in the fact that the Czechoslovak Art Protis wall hangings were included in the Buyer's Choice exhibition and guide that ran from March that year.

The exhibition gathered items considered as demonstrating the 'experience and expertise of Heal's buyers, who together establish the concept of modern living'.<sup>624</sup> Art Protis was promoted by the Heal's Art Gallery buyer at the time, Rita Kaye, and featured on publicity material alongside such contrasting items as Boda Swedish glass and the early 1970s Heal's 'Splash!' range, designed by Julek Heller for fabric, toys and breakfast crockery [Fig. 126].

---

<sup>623</sup> Correspondence between Ambassador, Dr. M. Zemla and Heal's Chairman Anthony S. Heal, 7th February to 22nd March 1973. Heal's Archive, V&A Collection, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

<sup>624</sup> Heal's Buyer's Choice invitation and pamphlet, March 1973. Heal's Archive, V&A Collection, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.



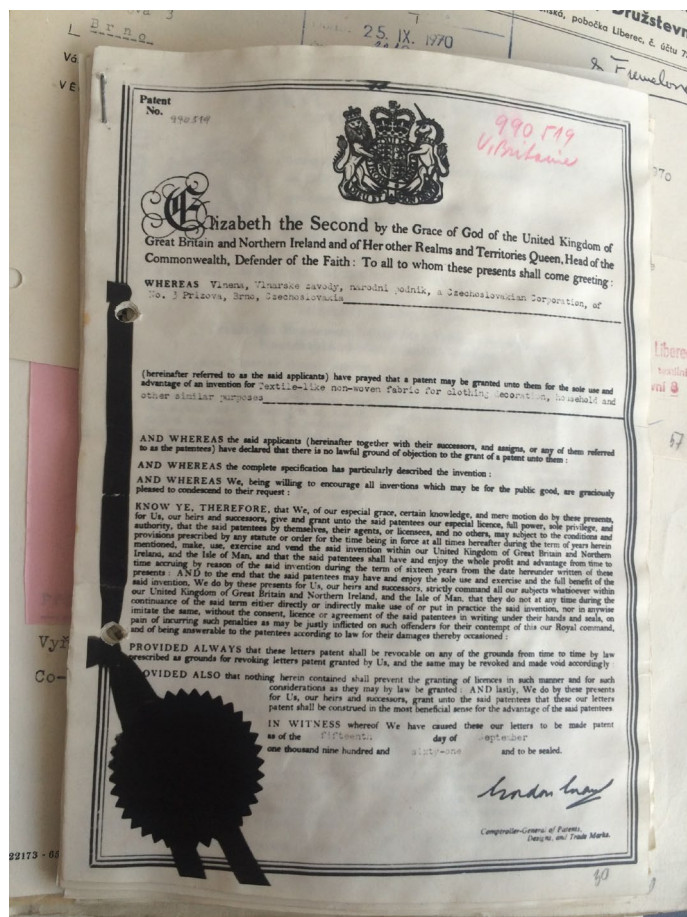


Fig. 124: Patent number 990519, United Kingdom, Great Britain & Northern Ireland  
 Controller-General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, September 1961,  
 Moravský zemský archive in Brno, Vlněna material. Archive location: K216, 77, 3.  
 Photographed by Markéta Vinglerová, 25.10.2016.



Fig. 125: Invitation to Heal's Art Gallery Art Protis exhibition, March 20 1973, Heal's Archive, V&A Collection, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.



Fig. 126: Publicity material to accompany Heal's *Splash!*, 1973, Heal's Archive, V&A Collection, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

The Art Protis exhibition catalogue emphasised the role of its makers as contemporary artists working with the Wool Research

Institute in Brno. The process was described as 'superimposing a webbing onto a backing', with the aforementioned 'over 120 shades of web [sic] at their disposal', a feature advertised as a great benefit of Art Protis.<sup>625</sup> (The latter phrasing indicates that this was a Czech catalogue in translation.) The artists were named as graduates of the School of Industrial Arts (though later biographies show they came from Schools across Czechoslovakia) and it was pointed out that they could also work to commission at the Art Protis studios in Brno, if architects and designers wished to send them designs. Using wording that recalled earlier 1940s and 1950s Czechoslovak export advertising (a 1949 Skloexport advert boasted: 'handmade by the glassmakers of Železný Brod, *real artists*'<sup>626</sup>), the catalogue reassured the reader that the machinery needed for Art Protis did not distance it from 'art': 'The mechanical process does not exceed 5% of the manual and artistic work.'<sup>627</sup> This was reassurance of originality and craftsmanship, a hand-technology hierarchy that has persisted throughout industrialisation to the present.

Art Protis works could be purchased from Heal's for sums from £50 to £200, and there were eighteen artists altogether, twelve women and six men, all at various stages in their career but many with credentials to their names such as solo exhibitions and awards.<sup>628</sup> The works varied from the dramatically titled *Heaven and*

---

<sup>625</sup> Exhibition catalogue introduction (author not given), *Art Protis*, Heal's Art Gallery (London and Prague: Heal's and Středočeské tiskárny, 1973), n. pag.. Reference AAD/1994/16/2877.

<sup>626</sup> Advertisements for the firms of Josef Barta and Rudolf Lubas, *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 4: 1 (1949), p. 1.

<sup>627</sup> Exhibition catalogue introduction (author not given), *Art Protis*, Heal's Art Gallery (Heal's London and Středočeské tiskárny Prague, 1973), n. pag. Reference AAD/1994/16/2877.

<sup>628</sup> The dominance of women artists is interesting and relates to gendered roles associated with the traditional related territories of weaving and needlework, as discussed by Rozsika Parker in *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press, 1984). The access of women to professions through craft practices, and related scholarship, is discussed by Jennifer Scanlan in 'Pathmakers: women in craft, art, and design mid-century and today', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 8(2) (2015), 109–114 (p. 109).

*Hell* by Jarmila Lorencová, to the innocent-sounding *Violet Composition* by Jitka Štenclová. Subject matter ranged from figurative to abstract, with visible gravestones in Lorencová's work and a bird in Eva Červinková's *On Blue Bay* – but most tended towards abstraction. One still life by Jan Sedláček was distinctively Cubist [Fig. 127], whereas Ivan and Zbyněk Slavíček's *Signs of Heaven* [Fig. 128] and Professor [sic] Karl Svoboda's *Lost Veil* (which also has something of the traditional Japanese print in its rolling, horizontal composition) [Fig. 129] were gestural, expressive works similar to Hamsíková's *Summer* – though the Slavíček planted a puppet-like padded god-figure in the centre of *Signs of Heaven*.

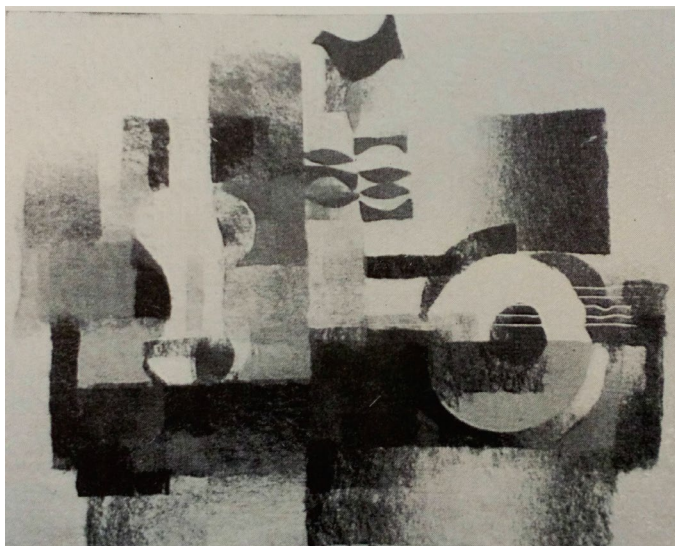


Fig. 127: Jan Sedláček, *Still Life*, c. 1973, Art Protis, from *Art Protis*, (London and Prague: Heal's London and Středočeské tiskárny, 1973), n. pag. Heal's Archive, V&A Collection, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

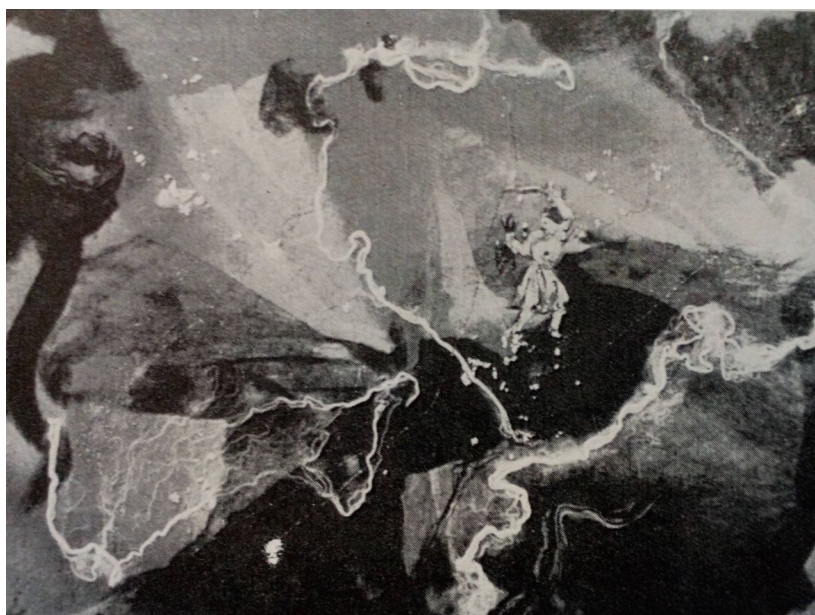


Fig. 128: Ivan and Zbyněk Slaviček, *Signs of Heaven*, c. 1973, Art Protis, from *Art Protis*, (London and Prague: Heal's London and Středočeské tiskárny, 1973), n. pag. Heal's Archive, V&A Collection, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.



Fig. 129: Karel Svoboda, *Lost Veil*, c. 1973, Art Protis, from *Art Protis*, (London and Prague: Heal's London and Středočeské tiskárny, 1973), n. pag. Heal's Archive, V&A Collection, Blythe House. Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

From comparisons with the fabrics and items available at Heal's during this period, the potential appeal to the British market becomes more apparent. Heal's Art Gallery exhibited artists at this time whose compositions were not dissimilar in their interest in partly figurative, partly abstract landscape and nature, and the use of bright block colours and blurred edges (for example, Padraig MacMiadhachain, Bert Isaac, Anthea Chapman and Susan Shaw). The aesthetic also loosely resonated with the fashionable look of early 1970s interiors and textiles in Britain, seen in the vibrancy of popular Liberty fabrics in the 1970s by Susan Collier and Sarah Campbell, in the bright colours, bold forms and textures of items selected by Joy Hannington for *Homes and Gardens* magazine in January 1973 in a feature entitled 'Pictures for Presents', and in a piece on Bassetti textiles for *Drapery & Fashion Weekly* [Figs. 130 and 131].<sup>629</sup> The actual impact

<sup>629</sup> Joy Hannington, 'Pictures for Presents,' *Homes and Gardens*, 19 January 1973; , and unnamed piece in *Drapery & Fashion Weekly*, January 1973, [pages and further details not available on clippings]. Blythe House Archive Reference: AAD/1994/16/2787.

on the British public of the Czechoslovak Art Protis is hard to fully establish: press coverage, in particular, seems to have been very minimal. One small item in *Cabinet Maker and Retail Furnisher* on 23 March 1973 called them 'Art Probis [sic] decorative wall hangings', though the heading used the term 'artistic wall hangings', and again highlighted the new technique of 'non-spun wool fibres superimposed on a backing', developed in Brno.<sup>630</sup>



Figs. 130 & 131: 'Pictures for Presents', *Homes and Gardens* (London: IPC, January 1973), p. 85, and 'Bassetti textiles', *Drapery & Fashion Weekly* (London, January 1973), n. pag. V&A Collection, Blythe House.

Reference: AAD/1994/16/2877.

Folk forms and craft methods were fashionable at this point but it seems to have been the innovative method of Art Protis that created appeal. This hybrid of technology, craft, a local material (wool) and artistic creative agency again adds to a pluralistic

---

<sup>630</sup> Small insert (no author), *Cabinet Maker and Retail Furnisher*, 23rd March 1973. Blythe House Archive Ref: AAD/1994/16/2787.

conception of craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia. Something that would have been less appreciated in the unconfined creative environment of the UK was the combination of artistic exploration and financial means that a technique such as Art Protis could offer. Whilst artists may have been members of state organisations like ÚBOK (as Hamsíková was), and were using centralised technology, there was still the potential for independent economic activity via using the Art Protis atelier at Vlněna to make work that could be sold via Art Centrum, both nationally and internationally.

From the 1970s onwards, interest in the form of Art Protis decreased and 'caused its gradual disappearance'.<sup>631</sup> The practice, and the related textile technique of Aradecor, have recently attracted interest among UMPRUM fashion students in Prague. Karolína Juříková used Art Protis in her 2015 *Utopia* collection<sup>632</sup> and Sráč Sam has focused on 'the revival of this technique' with residencies organised at artist Milada Hynková's workshop, where the related Arachné technology is still located.<sup>633</sup>

## Conclusion

The case studies discussed in this chapter have shown that craft from this period can be considered as a forging of interests in technology and new explorations of the material surface. Practice relied on collaboration with state organisations, architects, factories (Vlněna for Art Protis or Horní Bříza for ceramic tiles) and between artists (the partnerships of the Kybals, or H + M + R). However, H + M + R worked relatively independently, protected by the architects

---

<sup>631</sup> Vingerlová, p. 2,

<sup>632</sup> Lucie Nohejlová, *Two-day showroom*, Czech Design (2015), <<http://www.czechdesign.cz/kalendar-akci/dvoudenni-showroom>> [accessed: 03 November 2017].

<sup>633</sup> Vingerlová, p. 2.



between them and the state commissioners. Simultaneously, their work was enabled by state networks of unionised artists and structured investment. As my interview revealed, despite the fragile foundations of Rychlíková's early career, the work she and her partners Hladíková and Mírová carried out was experimental and draw upon historical, international and contemporary influences, including interwar avant-garde and Modernist interests.

H + M + R 's practice offered a commentary on ceramics. Their work highlighted ceramic's function in the context of housing estate and shops, and questions of utility and play through anthropomorphic forms or the role of ceramics as vessels, holders or partitions. At times through humour, artists like Rychlíková and Rada critiqued the political atmosphere through creating moments of the ridiculous. Writers like Šetlík admired H + M + R for their ability to push the boundaries of ceramics, exploring functionality and utility alongside installation art and architectural surfacing. In so doing, he believed they were not only questioning the hierarchies of creative practice but protesting against historicism. They could do this through their deep understanding of both folk craft and functionalist forms.

Šetlík's asserted that H + M + R took craft into a realm which was not merely accompaniment or decorative. They instead explored a new structural aesthetic reality that relied upon a shared space of collaboration between artist and architect (e.g. obchodní dům Don and Hotel Ještěd). Connections to the past, whether Baroque, Modernist or folk, were viewed as value-making. H + M + R were also praised by writers like Novotná for their hand gestures, free modelling, and lyricism. These terms indicate the climate of the 1960s, celebrating artistic individualism. The hands were also claimed as direct inheritors of craft heritage, an intriguing celebration of tacit

and haptic knowledge. By 1973 and H + M + R's removal from the Artists' Union, the commentary on their practice shifted to an economic defence, highlighting how the ceramicists worked well with manufacturers and so could be relied upon as problem solvers for society. This recalled Raban's 1967 defence of M + H + R's ceramic work as offering 'real precepts' for industrial design and wider manufacture (Chapter Three) and demonstrated the increasingly restrictive political climate of the 1970s.

Ideas of experimentation were defended as a means to both creative possibility and practicality throughout the Socialist period (see Chapter Three). This emphasis was relevant to Art Protis, whose non-woven aspect offered inventive freedom whilst being industrially viable. The English phrase used for Art Protis makers in the 1973 Heal's catalogue was 'craftsman designers'. Indeed, students in Kybal's classes had been expected to solve issues facing industrial production, a pedagogical link between craft experimentation and wider manufacture demands in interwar Czechoslovakia. Weaving was fundamental to this process, carrying out the action oneself rather than creating designs. This hierarchy was echoed in the Heal's Art Protis catalogue, emphasising only 5% of the process was by machine and handmade work constituted the majority of Art Protis production.

The profile of Art Protis was raised by artists like Kybal and Kybalová. The work of Květa Hamsíková is key to understanding Art Protis's role in the UK due to the work's position in the Heal's exhibition and V&A Collection. The British press responded with the term 'artist wall hangings', implying something in between art, craft and interior design. Revisiting Hamsíková's Art Protis is a powerful insight into the material nature of her exploration in the 1960s, of

expressive uses of wool and machinery, in a fascinating meeting point of technology and craft that echoes areas also explored by M + H + R in ceramics. Hamsíková's works speak to an avant-garde history of interwar Czechoslovak creative practice, recalling artists like Toyen. Hamsíková was well-known through her success in Czechoslovakia: it is significant that Art Centrum exported her Art Protis tapestry, acquired by the V&A collection.

The current signage partially eclipsing H + M + R's work in Don is testament to the lost position of Socialist public sculpture in today's Czech Republic, as articulated by Pavel Karous. It is important to revisit the intentions of individual practitioners, so these works are not left to deteriorate on housing estates or remain hidden in museum storage. Vingerlová's discussed allusion to the depreciation of Art Protis can be compared to Karous's view of public-realm ceramic ceramics and sculpture as monuments to a 'long-gone civilisation', neglected and with unclear ownership – once overused in the public realm, they now have a kind of invisibility. These works explored the combined virtues of technology, the handmade, local heritage and the role of maker – fundamental to definitions of craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia. They enable understanding of the position of individual makers, and the dynamic tensions between maker and state parameters.

## Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that processes of craft in the politically controlled environment of Socialist Czechoslovakia were rich and plural engagements with both state requirements and personal ambitions. In the Introduction, I turned to the glass figurines of Jaroslav Brychta as an initial means of understanding craft practices in Socialist Czechoslovakia. Were these small, curious flame-worked objects singular in how they layered historical, sociological and personal meaning – or was this layering typical of craft practices when making for the state? What I found in them was indeed reiterated across state projects from the late 1940s to the 1970s, albeit with shifts in relationships to ideology and intention. Brychta's work layered a national history of glass manufacture with a state drive for export, alongside a poetic narrative of creative studio craft. He continued interests pursued since the 1920s, which proved relevant even after the KSČ came into power in 1948. His work demonstrates there was no single official, centralised conception of craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia. Instead, as this thesis has shown, makers and theorists constantly questioned and negotiated the requirements of the system in which they worked.

Craft in Socialist Czechoslovakia can be defined as a series of changing concerns or questions, which are 'implicated' across media, enabling a multiplicity of creative exploration. This thesis's assertion that there were ranging *questions* of craft at play under Socialism is aligned to Glenn Adamson's notion that craft is a 'set of concerns', which are 'implicated across many types of cultural production'.<sup>634</sup> Questions centred on the value of the handmade and ideas of authenticity, particularly in relation to folk heritage and methods, and

---

<sup>634</sup> Adamson, *The Craft Reader*, p. 3.

their role in the new socialist context. These craft values were drawn upon to strengthen state projects and actively explored by state organisations across their publications and outputs. A 1948 ceramic pitcher by Vladimír Bouček made at the ÚLUV workshop was promoted in state publication *Tvar*, as discussed in Chapter One, highlights a key concern for craft practice: the need to draw upon Czechoslovak folk forms for modern objects. Škrdlovice Glass, born of the struggles of Emanuel Beránek, demonstrates the concern of how to combine local rural glassmaking traditions with Italian influences (see Chapter Three). Craft 'implications' can be understood as associations with the values of handmade, traditional and often rural, associated with production in small numbers, which allowed writers and practitioners to defend and justify their creative work and connections to international interests in a time of economic hardship and political censorship. These were combined to create proposals for new forms considered appropriate for a so-called Socialist reality.

Craft was not consistently used as a tool for political subversion, but allowed makers a certain level of creative freedom in ways that tested the ideological frameworks of the state. Daniela Karasová, whose reflections on working for ÚBOK are discussed in Chapter Three, asked in our interview, 'what can you ideologically do with a cup?'<sup>635</sup> As David Crowley has noted, studio crafts were considered 'politically mute' under Socialism and Susanne K. Frantz writes that craft and industrial design were fields 'assumed to be incapable of subversion'.<sup>636</sup> This thesis has shown that craft had a certain amount of freedom, but within ideological parameters: interests were pursued but in so far as they had a compatible position

---

<sup>635</sup> Daniela Karasová, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

<sup>636</sup> See Crowley, 'Stalinism and Modernist Craft in Poland', p.81 and Frantz, 'Twentieth-Century Bohemian Art in Glass: The Artistic and Historical Background', p. 32.

within the political and ideological frameworks of Socialism. A recurring example of this was the attempt to locate a meeting point between folk and the modern, as shown in the work of ÚLUV and ÚBOK (Chapters One and Three), to which this thesis has contributed a more nuanced definition. This was central to the discussed work of ÚLUV designer and theorist Josef Vydra, who sought a 'happy medium' between the two areas.<sup>637</sup> In fact, we can see in the magazines studied that interactions between craft forums such as *Tvar* and Modernism precede dates cited in writing around fine art. As discussed in Chapter One, Maruška Svašek claims that *The Founders of Modern Art* in 1957 was the first public opening up of abstraction away from Socialist Realism.<sup>638</sup> But from 1955 there were adverts in *Tvar* for purchasable reproductions by Modern artists considered controversial under both Nazism and Socialism, such as Václav Špála, who had also worked for applied arts organisation Artěl – thus connecting the trajectory of modern fine art and craft across pre and post-war periods. From this we can see, although craft was not a tool for explicit political subversion, nevertheless its environments enabled a certain creative flexibility, where pre-Socialist intellectual pursuits could be continued and parameters tested.

Craft was seen to have a moral and social purpose, an ability to solve the problems of Socialist modernity, and as such overlapped with discussions of design, particularly in relation to using craft values to humanise the modern interior. I have used the decrees of 1945 (number 110) and 1957 (57) as new tools for investigating craft definitions in Socialist Czechoslovakia. Decree 110, discussed in Chapter One, which established ÚLUV in 1945 and structured the

---

<sup>637</sup> Vydra, 'O sloh v lidové tvorbě' [On Style in Folk Art], cited in Hubatová-Vacková, *Modfolk*, p. 31.

<sup>638</sup> Maruška Svašek, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity. The Czech Art World in the 1950s and 1960s', *Journal of Contemporary European History*, 6:3 (1997), 383-403.

organisation's activities after 1948, excluded 'independent creativity.'<sup>639</sup> Such a delineation of creative independence indicated that folk production and related crafts were somehow interdependent creativity, rather than working independently, with a socially responsible position. As such, we can question the notions of craft outlined by Crowley and Frantz, as a space of assumed neutrality. The crafts were still seen as problem solving, in moral and economic terms, and in this respect overlapped with the aims of design. An area wherein which this was particularly apparent was Experiment Invalidovna (Chapter Three), where craft values were used to soften or humanise Socialist Modern interiors. In opposition, objects that could be associated with an individual maker working for the state were promoted as a means of obtaining good taste and of humanising an interior, quite literally, with signs of the human hand – such as a handwoven beige pile carpet designed by Jiří Mrázek for Invalidovna (Chapter Three). I argue that even puppetry, an established craft in Czechoslovakia, was used to make Socialist Modern interiors more homely and accessible, as opposed to the 'dentist's waiting room', through the inclusion of Břetislav Pojar's puppets in *Jak zařídit byt* (How to Furnish a Flat) in early 1960s' issues of *Domov* (Chapter Three), making light of the restricted spaces of the prefab *panelák*. Boundaries between craft and design were often porous and a characteristic of socialist modernity was an overlapping of disciplines. This is shown in how, as discussed in Chapter One, publications like *Tvar* combined objects such as tools, painted eggs and posters, fashion, glass and ceramics, weaving and domestic products like lighting and furniture. Such overlaps have impacted recent exhibitions, like *Věci a slova* (Things and Words, 2015-16), discussed in the Introduction, where objects from multiple disciplines were

---

<sup>639</sup> Decree 110, Section 1. General Statute, 3 (3), p. 257.

intentionally gathered together in assemblages that also aimed to expose the uncertainty found in systematic attempts to record history.<sup>640</sup>

Craft methods can be seen as tactics that aligned work to the state and socialist aims, which ranged in terms of the extent to which they were applied or integrated. Craft methods were variously integrated or applied by the relevant state organisations, its members and its outputs in order to meet wider ideological requirements. In my study, the case of indigo print textiles has proved to be a particularly revealing example of the way in which craft methods operated as tactics for negotiating the Socialist framework. If we look from the sprigged fabric made into 'modern' dresses in the 1950s (Chapter One) to the gestural abstraction of Milada Jochová's 1968 Summer Dress (Chapter Three), we can see the latter as a kind of meta-object that speaks to the history of its making and form. The previously contained, ordered patterns that drew upon ethnographic recordings of folk practices were thrown into a liberated chaos of fluid expression, questioning through its formal values the very methods by which indigo print is made. In the earlier dresses, I related Vydra's ideas of synthesis to notions of dialectical synthesis and Zhdanovist notions of 'typification' and 'creativity'.<sup>641</sup> Jochová's 1968 dress pushed folk methods into new territories. Bringing these ÚLUV commissions from two different periods together demonstrates how craft enables understanding of the transition from 1950s' *sorela*, centred on the Marxist-Leninist idea of national-in-form, socialist-in-content, to expanded territories in the 1960s. The two examples are

---

<sup>640</sup> Rebecca Bell, 'Review: *Věci a slova: Umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870–1970* / Things and Words: Art Industry, Applied Arts and Design in Czech Theory and Criticism 1870–1970,' *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 23: 2 (2016), 333-337.

<sup>641</sup> Zareco, pp. 134-136.



testament to the way in which individuals negotiated the possibilities of their political context, and turned to craft do so, moving from an *application* of folk methods (Chapter One) in the environment of *sorela* to their full *integration* in the build up to the Prague spring (Chapter Three). Craft spoke to the changing political climates of socialist modernity.

Craft was not simply a vehicle of state ambition nor merely ideological propaganda, but a space in which artists could intentionally explore the complexities of human agency within socialist modernity. The ideas of intersection and symbiosis, terms used by Lada Hubatová-Vacková,<sup>642</sup> were both characteristic of craft objects and the intentions of their makers. Miloslav Klinger's 1955 gymnasts, like Brychta's glass figurines, were intersections between national heritage and the new ideological intentions of Socialism. Chapter One discussed how they both celebrated the prowess of national glass production and were declared able to interpret the ideology of mass cooperation.<sup>643</sup> I explored Deryck Viney's 1953 discussion of 'exceptional typicality' because, though it related to a specific Soviet pursuit of the Socialist hero,<sup>644</sup> it reveals a wider socialist realist concept where citizens had to be exceptional in their abilities but subject to the typical mass, with whom they collaborated. Klinger's figurines participated in this ambition, which demonstrates the intriguing role of craft in relation to ideological frameworks. My research has shown that practitioners understood this, and were frequently engaged in a negotiation of its parameters. We must look to the human agency in these interactions rather than underestimating objects as mere vehicles of state or ideological

---

<sup>642</sup> Lada Hubatová-Vacková, 'Folklorismy' [Folklorisms], *Budování státu*, p. 70.

<sup>643</sup> English summary, *Tvar*, 7: 5 (1955), n. pag.

<sup>644</sup> Viney, p. 489.

meaning. Klinger's figurines may have been frozen in a state of obedience, captured in correct gymnastic positions to avoid the risk of what were deemed 'unsightly involuntary movements,'<sup>645</sup> but his agency as an artist remained. The figures demonstrate individual variation through the craft methods employed. The state drew upon this: Klinger's personal biography was entangled with the cottage flame-working industry and pedagogical success of Železný Brod, as I explored in Chapter One. As a western observer, Viney underestimated this tension, located in the constant negotiation between creative practice and state authority that was a key part of socialist modernity.

Whilst issues of gender were not the primary focus of this thesis, which aimed to take a cross-section of projects from the time period and analyse related questions of craft, led by the research material. But important gender-related considerations have arisen. Klinger's figurines demonstrated how the body, both male and female, was part of the socialist realist narrative and available for consumption, eroticising ideas of socialist labour and visualising order and obedience to the state (Chapter One). As such, the objects have illuminated questions of the body in society. The importance of gender roles has been exposed by the material. The makers depicted in the Electro-Praga Hlinsko adverts were men (Chapter Three). There were dominant numbers of women Art Protis makers at the 1973 Heal's exhibition and women ceramicists such as H + M + R held a key position in developing architectural ceramics (Chapter Four). Gendered social hierarchies have been seen shown in the working roles of women illustrated in a 1953 Prague Cosmetic

---

<sup>645</sup> Majerová, pp. 7-8, cited in Macura, p. 100.

Company advert or the knitting peasant grandmother in Ladislav Čech's series of *Situational Pictures for Teaching* from 1971 (Chapter Three). Writing around the home has revealed that attempts were made to encourage the role of mother or woman in the domestic environment as a possible space for criticality, in acknowledgement of her often being both in employment and responsible for the home (Chapter Three). The changes made in the private forum of the home could, according to writer and designer Emanuela Kittrichová, invoke 'radical change', resonating positive effects on the mental health of not just the specific homeowners but 'all people', impacting the public sphere.<sup>646</sup> This thesis has aimed to platform key oral sources, such as Rychlíková and Karasová, as well as female artists and designers like Květa Hamsíková and has been fundamentally impacted by writers like Milena Bartlová and Lada Hubatová-Vacková. The material addressed reveals that a deeper consideration of gender and craft in the Czechoslovak Socialist context is needed. This thesis acts as a strong foundation from which to be able to do that, providing an understanding of the wider context within which craft practices operated.

Craft values played a role in state ambitions to educate the public on ideas of good taste, particularly in relation to fears of kitsch. One such important territory addressed in this thesis that builds a foundational understanding of the time period, is how the combined virtues of folk influence (as ennobling) and the modern (as pure and purposeful) were specific methods used in craft practices to avoid kitsch. As discussed in Chapter One, Viney called Socialist Realism kitsch, whilst Brno curator František Venera saw kitsch as a

---

<sup>646</sup> Kittrichová, *Byt* [The Flat], p. 10.

consequence of the 'bankrupt' nature of capitalism.<sup>647</sup> But as shown, beyond this west/east dichotomy vibrated a fear of wanton consumerism in Czechoslovakia. By the late 1950s, the Socialist consumer was an active figure, addressed in *Domov* articles and advertising (Chapter Three), but their role was uncertain. They were required to build a perfect socialist life through aspiring to have state produced modern design in their home. However, given the lack of availability, and that the advertised products often remained in prototype, consumers might resort making them through newly introduced DIY methods, whilst avoiding what were deemed in *Domov* the pitfalls of bad quality, wastefulness and bad taste. Chapters One and Three have shown that craft was a key tool in this arsenal of avoiding bad taste and successfully gaining techniques for modern living, simultaneously offering a form of sought after individualisation whilst attempting to move the customer away from cheap mass production. Articles like 'Odmítáme' (We Reject) (1948) in *Tvar* and 'Pantomime in Bad Taste' (1960) in *Domov* indicate that this was a fine line to tread. In discerning the differences between ÚLUV indigo print, for example, and a cheap folk-influenced blouse held up for mockery in *Tvar*, we can see that, as objects seemingly departed from the approved ideals of folk-influenced purity and modern cleanliness, the more dangerously kitsch they were deemed to be.

The fear of kitsch was bound to both a drive to avoid material and economic wastefulness, and capitalist indulgence. The moral aversion to crass consumption and risks of capitalist fetishisation, were reminiscent of Bohuslav Brouk's 1932 idea that kitsch created the illusion of reality, enabling people to *zhlížet* (to devour or gobble)

---

<sup>647</sup> Venera, *Umění a kýč*, statement repeated across catalogue cover.

culture (Chapter One).<sup>648</sup> The pared back modernist aesthetic perpetuated by state organisations like ÚLUV and ÚBOK happily seems to have coincided with the economic drive to avoid surplus materials. In our interview, discussed in Chapter Three, curator Daniela Karasová retrospectively applied the ideas of design theorist Victor Papanek to this area – she believed that the Socialist period in Czechoslovakia was more ecological by virtue of restricted materials and economic restraints: by necessity, objects were designed to last.<sup>649</sup> This is a complex assertion, relying as it does upon economic restriction as a positive framework, but opens an interesting territory for further investigation. The material investigated in Chapters One and Three demonstrates that the fear of waste was more directly bound to avoiding kitsch, used as a byword for capitalist indulgence – *Tvar* and *Domov* consistently warned against the dangerous creation of novelty objects for profit. Here I have addressed a space in Czech scholarship: writers like Milan Pech (2011) have focused on relationships between kitsch and fine art, but in focusing on the folk objects, crafts and applied arts included by Venera in the 1948 *Umění a kýč* exhibition (Chapter One) and across the pages of *Tvar*, I have shown that the position of craft was also fundamental to the defence of Modernism and anti-kitsch feeling, which was also connected to an aim for restrained consumption.

Wider production and manufacture was central to the narrative of craft, which was held up as a model for larger production, but in so doing the territory of independent creative exploration was also defended. Decree 56 (1957), which superseded Decree 110 (1945), newly delineated ‘folk art production’ from ‘artistic craft work’

---

<sup>648</sup> Brouk, ‘Poesie 1932’ [Poems 1932], p. 72, in Pech, *Konec avantgardy?* [The End of the Avant-Garde?], p. 323.

<sup>649</sup> Daniela Karasová, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016) and Karasová, ‘Victor Papanek – sociální a ekologický design’ [Victor Papanek - Social and Ecological Design], 6-9.

(Chapter Three). A new emphasis was placed on working collaboratively across media. At this point, ÚLUV's role was clarified as primarily being responsible for preserving folk culture and its handmade, material attributes, but in direct dialogue with industrial design. This thesis has argued that craft in part overlapped with spheres of design, because writers like Josef Raban used its values as a means of defending creative practice in general, presenting work produced by Škrdlovice and H + M + R as 'precepts' for larger-scale commissions and industrial design (Chapter Three). In this, I believe Raban's 1967 assertion was pivotal: the notion that 'traditional folk-art manufacture and handicrafts play a triple role: they constitute a *stimulus to inspiration*, a *yardstick* of quality and cultural value and a *contrasting element* to industrial production' was paired with the declaration that items should not be too distinguished by the stamp of its maker, but also not 'anonymous'.<sup>650</sup> The very unquantifiability of these aims, the attempts to make the unmeasurable measurable, was part of a Socialist drive to endow creative practice with scientific value. But it also indicates the view of folk crafts as humanising, as a method of defending individual exploration. Though studying *Tvar*, my research has found that in the late 1940s and 1950s the maker was often an unidentified positive force, subsumed within wider organisations such as ÚLUV (Chapter One). But by the late 1950s and 1960s, the individual was named and celebrated as the author of specific objects in magazine captions (Chapter Three). Raban's defence of sites of craft highlighted the merits of named individual authors, of formal characteristics that showed they had been made by hand, and a heritage of longer-term folk or cottage industry production. His proposal that such qualities could improve industrial design can be traced in varying forms, for example in the marketing

---

<sup>650</sup> Raban, *Czechoslovak Form*, p.7.

of Electro-Praga Hlinsko (Chapter Three), who used woodblock prints of makers in their 'sculpture studio' to endow objects like vacuum cleaners with the virtues of an artist's tacit and haptic knowledge.<sup>651</sup> These developments coincided with wider Neo-Marxist discussions of humanism that characterised the thaw period in Czechoslovakia.

If we return again to this question of the ideological meaning of a cup, it is important to acknowledge what a politically flammable site the crafts could be in Socialist Czechoslovakia, particularly in association with folk heritage. Chapter Two examined Karel Vachek's 1963 satirical depiction of the Strážnice folk festival, the banned Czech New Wave film *Moravská Hellas*, as a means to reveal the potency of folk craft and its instrumentalisation by the state. The 'folk fever' critiqued in *Moravská Hellas* was part of an early 1960s concern with exposing the bureaucratic machinations of the state.<sup>652</sup> This related to philosophical positions on neo-Marxism, a shift to a claim for greater authenticity, away from a Stalinist 'pseudo' reality towards philosopher Karel Kosík's notion of 'concrete' and human-centred socialism.<sup>653</sup> A key research question for this thesis has been whether craft provided a context for criticality and contrast in an otherwise controlled environment. *Moravská Hellas* shows that criticising ethnographic practices and folk crafts was highly controversial, which in turn reveals their crucial role in state identity. The film presented characters going through the motions of folk performances requested of them. But Vachek also, as my discussions with him clarified, exposed how those living in Strážnice, depicted in the film, had individual critical engagements with the rural practices of painting cottages, of making embroideries for local sewing schools

---

<sup>651</sup> Advert for Electro-Pragy Hlinsko, 'Tvarový vývoj' [Shape Development], *Domov* 1 (1961), n. pag.

<sup>652</sup> *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

<sup>653</sup> Preface to Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, vi.

and decorating folk pottery. This is an example of the co-existing attitudes and the 'inextricable link' between makers 'professional identities and their understanding of modernity' highlighted by historian Nicolette Makovicky.<sup>654</sup> These included co-existing backstage/frontstage domestic identities, where traditional folk objects were on display whilst televisions and rose-patterned mass-produced plates remained hidden behind closed doors.

Karel Kosík's notion of a Švejkist response to authority in the Socialist context offers a new lens through which the political undertones of craft practices can be analysed. *Moravská Hellas* critiqued the ways in which the state distorted reality, creating a kind of sickness – Uncle Lebánek's 'folk fever'<sup>655</sup> – that aligned with contemporary feelings of the need for an awakening, as philosopher Ivan Sviták wrote, from 'a dogmatic doze'.<sup>656</sup> As Chapter Two showed, folk craft held a potent role in this process. The role of *Moravská Hellas* in this thesis underlines my methodological aim to extend research beyond museum archives and specialist magazines to other modes of representation in order to widen an understanding of the role of craft within socialist modernity. *Moravská Hellas* reveals the conflict surrounding the perpetuation of folk craft as a state articulation, casting its advocates as Švejkist fools responding to a Kafkaesque 'bureaucratic machine', vocabulary that spoke to the shifting philosophical climate of 1963. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, the use of craft forms in the Invalidovna flats and the pages of *Domov* were also critical responses to state initiatives, albeit in less controversial forms. The aforementioned methods of humanisation and individualisation created contrasts to the 'rose

---

<sup>654</sup> Makovicky, 'Traditional – with Contemporary Form', p. 44.

<sup>655</sup> Lebánek in *Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD].

<sup>656</sup> Sviták, in Kusin, p. 36.



patterned plate' of mass production and the repetitive folk tropes described in *Moravská Hellas*, as much as the clinical 'dentist's waiting room' of prefabricated flats.<sup>657</sup> These were part of what Karasová called in our interview, ÚBOK's 'long-standing fight against traditional furniture sets'.<sup>658</sup> Vachek's film can be seen as a similar fight against the tropes of the 1950s. Humour persistently played a role in all these examples, engendering collective human feeling.<sup>659</sup> Pojar's aforementioned 1959 puppets used the comical as an invitation for audience collusion in the problem at hand; ÚBOK's self-designation as *Ústav pro tvarování housek*, the Institute for Designing Bread Rolls, and the 'cemetery of elephants' demonstrated how humour could coexist with a loyalty to the state organisation (Chapter Three).<sup>660</sup> Ceramicist Marie Rychlíková agreed that absurd humour was employed because life was 'such a mess' that they needed to laugh through a caricatured playfulness, as seen in her work and that of her friend Pravoslav Rada (Chapter Four).<sup>661</sup> These are Švejkist moments, a commentary on authority and frameworks of power through Kosík's 'humble as grass' everyday observations.<sup>662</sup> This research has opened up a foundation from which the role of humour in craft can be investigated as a mechanism for subtle critiques of power in Socialist Czechoslovakia.

Many craft practitioners and theorists working for the state did have a sense of autonomy that allowed them to explore new material and intellectual territories. The latter relates to the final research question, concerning whether the individual maker offered a

---

<sup>657</sup> Benešová, pp. 601-605.

<sup>658</sup> Karasová, *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna*, p. 1.

<sup>659</sup> Chrisoula Lionis, *Laughter in Occupied Palestine: Comedy and Identity in Art and Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), p. 10.

<sup>660</sup> Daniela Karasová, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

<sup>661</sup> Marie Rychlíková, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016).

<sup>662</sup> Kosík, p. 86.

commentary on the Socialist condition in Czechoslovakia. Chapter Four showed how ceramicists H + M + R explored their own interests with relative freedom, protected by the architects who stood between them and the commissioners, until they were removed from the Union of Artists in 1973. H + M + R 's innovative investigation of a traditional craft was described by UPM Director Jiří Šetlík as an integrated approach that removed craft from its role in providing 'decorative supplements of the flat's interior' or indeed the building's exterior: instead, '[H + M + R ] denied little by little ceramics as mere accompaniment to architecture'.<sup>663</sup> Thus they challenged the idea of craft as supplementary, a term which indicates, as Glenn Adamson has discussed (noted in Chapter One), a form of 'lack'.<sup>664</sup> Instead, as discussed in relation to the writing of Dalibor Veselý in Chapter Four, H + M + R 's work occupied a shared collaborative space with factories and architects to carry out material enquiries into the role of the vessel and the nature of surface. Thus, they questioned their position as makers in a context that privileged social purpose and, as Raban's writing showed (Chapter Three), an aim for functionality that would increase economic industrial success. Marie Rychlíková's personal testimonials were key to understanding this personal creative exploration of making for the state through her discussion of collaboration with factories and architects (Chapter Three).

A certain freedom was also seen in Art Protis, but the state structures that enabled independent craft practices were fragile as their parameters changed. Art Protis, discussed in Chapter Four, showed how making for the state was a matter of simultaneous distance and proximity. Like H + M + R's autonomy when working for

---

<sup>663</sup> Šetlík, p. 11

<sup>664</sup> Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft*, p. 11.

an architect and ceramic factory workers, Art Protis artists found creative exploration in the Vlněna factory. It is notable that the role of the hand was still emphasised in the Art Protis 1973 catalogue's reassurance that the machinery needed did not distance Art Protis from 'art' or the hand of the maker, only making up '5% of the manual and artistic work' (Chapter Four).<sup>665</sup> Chapter Three also showed how the social parties of ÚBOK's head office consolidated a feeling of autonomy, where the Party-member management (Karasová's 'cemetery of elephants') hovered quietly in the background, not interrupting debates around craft and design.<sup>666</sup> Rychlíková spoke of this in relation to ceramics, emphasising that they carried out individual responses to public environments (Chapter Four). But it must also be noted that this was politically fragile and had to service the changing state. As discussed in Chapter Three, dominant voices like Raban continually emphasised that if individual production did take place, it was to then be used as a model for wider state production. As discussed, Vachek, Kotík and Klinger all left Czechoslovakia after 1968, in 1973, H + M + R were removed from the Union of Artists. Karasová's explorations abroad (Chapter Three) showed a continued territory for international debate but it has not been possible to cover the ensuing period of normalisation within the limits of this thesis (see Introduction). However, the methodology of my research using a cross-section of projects has enabled an understanding of changing parameters of state structures that could be extended to encompass later craft practices under Socialism.

Histories of craft-related territories in Socialist Czechoslovakia have been long-dominated by key international trade fairs such as Brussels: I chose to study a cross-section of projects taking place on

---

<sup>665</sup> Exhibition catalogue introduction (author not given), *Art Protis*, Heal's Gallery, n. pag.

<sup>666</sup> Daniela Karasová, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016).

a domestic level to challenge the dominance of these key sites and offer a more pluralist understanding of individual practices. The aforementioned methodology has provided insight into the ways in which practitioners and writers were part of a wider network of debate, and of political and philosophical transitions. In answering the research question of whether there was a centralised conception of craft despite state regulations, this thesis has shown this was not the case and that dominant historical narratives can be challenged to provide a nuanced understanding of national creative practice under Socialism. Key international trade fairs like the Brussels Expo 1958 are central to histories of state craft and design under Socialism in Czechoslovakia and have been covered in relevant scholarship.<sup>667</sup> As a key public forum of creative practice, it was undeniably a pivotal moment in Czechoslovakia's craft and design history, with significant impact on individual practice such as that of Marie Rychlíková. It also opened the way for Socialist Modern interiors projects such as Invalidovna. But I have set out to expand beyond Brussels and the trade fair environment. This also enables us to debunk monolithic assumptions that there was a line between pre and post-Brussels existence, even though it undoubtedly had an important impact (Chapter Three). To show this, I have drawn attention to debates taking place around modern forms in the 1950s (Chapter One). Importantly, this allows us to reposition the agency of the individuals working to negotiate the boundaries within which they found themselves.

Working with definitions from the time and focusing on state publications is a methodology that has highlighted the role of craft as a means of extending existing historiographies on creative practices

---

<sup>667</sup> For example, Helmut Ricke (ed.), *Czech Glass 1945-1980: Design in an Age of Adversity* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, 2005).

under Socialism. My research methodology has relied upon looking at contemporary definitions from multiple angles and within a network of wider material in order to reposition the importance of craft. I have been led by the individuals who were there, via both their testimonials or their projects, in combination with key state magazines. This has demonstrated that craft is an expansive field: its technical and aesthetic values crossed media and disciplines, offering the means for artists to create new proposals for socialist society. Making for the state responded to constantly shifting paradigms, within which this thesis has repositioned the importance of individual agency. We can see craft practices as a series of conceptual frameworks within which the negotiations of practitioners and theorists can be understood, drawing upon personal and theoretical histories of interwar, national and international influences. State writing and craft practices during this time period, as seen in the discussed projects and publications, were ultimately not so much a dissatisfaction with the framework in which craft now had to function, but rather a tactical negotiation by individual thinkers, locating subject matter and approaches that could enable debate around the role of creative practice under Socialism to continue, even under politically controlled circumstances. Craft objects act as an important repository of historical, material and personal meaning, ultimately enriching how we understand creative practices in Socialist Czechoslovakia.<sup>668</sup> It is here too that the voices of those negotiating the parameters of state requirements whilst maintaining agency and intellectual courage, can be heard.

---

<sup>668</sup> Drawing upon the notion of object as repository in the Communist context, see Boym *Common Places*, p. 157.

# Appendices

## List of Appendices

### Transcripts of Interviews:

- Daniela Karasová, 24 October 2016
- Karel Vachek, 24 October 2016
- Marie Rychlíková, 21 October 2016

Consent forms for these interviews are included at the end of each transcript

### Meetings:

In the course of my research, several meetings took place with makers, for which no transcript is available. Notes taken during these conversations are included here for the purpose of examination:

- Jiří Šuhájek, 25 February 2014
- Vladimír Jelínek, 7 March 2014

### Written Reponse to Questions:

Finally, one interview that was meant to take place could not because the interviewee was taken ill. Via Daniela Karasová, Jaroslav Všetečka sent a written response to my questions, which is included here.

- Jaroslav Všetečka, 5 November 2016

**Transcript of Recording****Daniela Karasová (DK), Curator UPM and Former ÚBOK Employee****Interview with Rebecca Bell (RB), 24 October 2016****UPM Prague**

[General introductory discussion]

DK: Photograph – c. 1985. Celebration of... it was the 60s of famous Czech glass designer. Wait a minute there is another photo. This is the same... This man! Pavel Hlava! It says something to you? Very famous Czech designer. It is Pavel Hlava. He was the head, not really head, head of department. Head of the department was Schnieder, and he was chemical engineer, he was colleague of my husband (laughs) very funny. His name was Pans. He was not designer but he was kind of clerk who knew a lot about glass. This was Jiří Buchar, who knew a lot about the glass industry. ÚBOK was about the industry. Jelínek.

DK: Wife is very sick. He looks after her. He seldom goes to our meetings. Because we still meet. He is lovely and very intelligent and very good designer. He is wonderful I loved him, this man. I think many of them will in this red book which I gave you. Pavel Grus. He was designer of lights etc. He died already. Pavel Hlava died also, he was old. This man, he was very nice man, the son of very famous Czech painter, Grus also...

DK: Šuhájek with his hair... twenty years at least, maybe 30 years ago. His story is quite interesting

DK: Jiří Laštovička (it means like this birth actually, the swallow, but small). He is fact is a ceramic person and china. He worked for this factories in western Bohemia. This... I don't know... he lives and it is possible to meet him, he lives outside Prague. I don't know if I have. Maybe if I found contact I could give it to you. I organise an exhibition some years ago, it was about ÚBOK, a little, and some of these people... Jelínek, Šuhájek. It was about birds. Maybe I can find the poster for it. It was an anniversary of UBOK, 60 years or something like that, I think it was a very interesting exhibition.

[GIVES EMAIL ADDRESS FOR HIM]

DK: This is Svoboda he was a modelar, two brothers, Votěch Svoboda and this one is Zdeněk, maybe. And they worked in ÚBOK and they did these models, they worked in plaster, also some prototypes made in UBOK. These for ceramics and china. And this one works still in the Academy of Applied Arts. You meet Hubatová in the school, so he might still be there, he is a lovely man, Votěch Svoboda, he is a lovely man and very funny. They would make the model for something designed by Laštovička. They would make a prototype and then they would make it again.

Václav Šerák, he still lives he is 85. We have celebrated last week, his 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He is a wonderful man, he was very seriously sick, very dangerous operation on the heart but he survived it. He did wonderful things. I think he one of our best ceramic designers.

RB: Brussels tea set?

DK: maybe. I was there but I certainly participated in this kind of party but I don't know. Write also here. There are other people too. This is Ivana Čapková. This is L, this is this man, this is Vratislav Šotola, a very important glass designer. This is also a very important person he died already, 93 already, Vladimir David. Figurky for Moser. I made an exhibition for David and Šerák in Bucov (?) a few years ago, there was not a catalogue or anything but maybe I have something in these papers. I don't know who is this boy. But this is again Svoboda. He is younger here. This is a little later photograph I think. I think it is in the glass department at ÚBOK. We had a lot of fun there. I think it was some kind of oasis, in this Communist period, you know, this ÚBOK.

RB: More freedom than fine art?

DK: Yes, certainly, certainly. It was not so ideologically controlled because what can you ideologically do with a cup or with an I don't know what, with a chair etc. The importance was so that it was, well, so that it was sort of, serving its purpose. Well, beautiful also in fact, especially in the moment when the country started to concentrate on export, you know. So then these things had to be compatible for...with the foreign things, it was the interest of the state. We even travelled abroad, can you imagine? Maybe even I told you that, that we travelled to the fairs of design of... I went also several times, everybody, we, we all said you will go



there, I have never been there so I will go there etc. Because the institute got foreign money for that, so we could see what was happening abroad and then we sort of, made organised seminars and lectures for the designers of factories, and it was very important part of our work. My friend, who I am going to meet in the evening, on that opening hopefully of that exhibition or whatever it is, she was this public relations sort of person there and she organised these seminars and these trips etc because one of ÚBOK's tasks was to educate designers in factories.

RB: So you would take a seminar to the factories?

DK: Yes, we gave lectures in factories or sometimes we went somewhere because all these factories had recreational buildings or cottages or hotels so we all met there, usually there was some very nice atmosphere and so...

RB: And would the workers who made the work as well as the designers go there?

DK: Yes, everybody would go there

RB: What kind of things would you talk about?

DK: Well, we talked about the trends, what is happening abroad. Actually I, I hope I have it here... [background noise] These are books and all that was actually, for example design in Great Britain, I did it with Jiri Pelcl, we did it together, as he was at the Royal College of Art also one year, and I was following, my task, one of my task, yes, for example I wrote this, 'The Schools of Design in the World', but I took it from magazines which went to the library.

RB: Could other people go and see those magazines or were you the interpreter of those magazines?

DK: Well, I think that they could see it in the library, it was possible, there was a reading room or something like that. But this was not available on normal, it was an internal publication, it was not publically... so it was not censored actually, we could write..

RB: So you would write about postmodernism and all sort of things?

DK: Oh yes, everything like that. I actually brought Šípek to this country also. This was also one of my works. Of society in relation to living. I got it from magazines of course. I did some kind of sociologist work.

RB: So was that your main job?

DK: Yes, it was. To interpret...Yes, to transl... and then, in fact, also, at the beginning ÚBOK was subsidised by the state. These were reports from these trips from abroad which we made. So this was the GDR where I was with Ivana, we were there together. It took place in Dessau. We went there about two weeks and we were there were other people from other countries, there was a woman from Japan there also. This was what they exhibited there. And we did some kind of research actually, you know. Some rather funny... It was also trading it. Yes.

RB: Maybe after could I photograph them?

DK: Yes, certainly, you can everything. I wish I could give you that.

RB: No, this is special.

DK: Yes.

RB: And then did this kind of information, was it used for things like Domov and the magazines?

DK: Yes, we contributed to Domov also so yes, yes, yes.

RB: So this was research that could be used for public reading as well?

DK: Yes, it was, but it didn't influence anything. That's the problem. It was the biggest problem. Because in fact the production, these sort of socialist productions, these were huge factories which had no interest to change the, what they are producing and so on. Especially in furniture, it was very difficult. You spoke about, you asked about theoreticians. This was one, this was, wait a moment – in fact here are some. Jindřich Chaloupecký, the most important person. Kittrichová, Kouželka, Skalík, Nadoma. Illya Snavicka. Jindřich Chaloupecký, I think he was the editor of that also.

RB: What was Kittrichová like?

DK: She was lovely, we shared the office about ten years. I was there from 75 till the 90s. She left sometime in the 80s, so for at least 5 years we were together. Lovely.

RB: She does lots of ergonomics?

DK: Yes, ergonomics, and in fact this book was published by ÚBOK

RB: Ah I saw this in VŠUP, I think. *Nábytek, člověk, bydlení*. So this is a public book, that you could buy in...

DK: Yes, yes yes, it was possible. And you know all these measures, how big, how many, should be, these er distances between something, it all goes, all these chapters.

RB: What did you think of these kind of ergonomic...

DK: I think it is very important. Very good.

RB: Because of the restricted space of the housing or?

DK: Well, no, but in fact the ergonomics of the human body requires certain positions, I criticise it always seems for example, this is good chair [sound of moving to chair], chairs and armchairs, very often the table is too high and chairs are too low, now. That is probably why we have such bad postures...Yes, I think these should be kept. And these are for... This was published also. Kittrichová, the, the, byt, flat, and again... how should it be organised, the way of equipment.

RB: And do you think people in the public would buy something like this and definitely use it? Or would they go home and do something different with the things they had from years ago?

DK: Well, it depends, you know, it depends. Maybe some, those who wanted actually... I think that people, it is difficult to say how many, you know, but

certainly... this was Božena Kuchová [??] she dealt with the kitchens also, this was a series of books. I think that this actually, the kitchen equipment, these positions, how you work or when you wash the dishes, or these, everything is exactly described there, I think this was one of really foremost targets of ÚBOK's activities also. This was, Vladimír Jelínek, Adolf Matura... There they all are. Yes, it was published by ÚBOK, it was an exhibition so I think that this was also available for public, this book. Jelínek when he was young. I think he went directly to ÚBOK.

RB: And he also went to Škrdlovice.

DK: Škrdlovice. And another person, Adolf Matura, he died already when I came to UBOK but he was very famous for the pressed glass also. And Pavel Hlavel must be here at the beginning somewhere. Yes that's Pavel, very handsome. Actually he was a Communist but he was a good designer.

RB: So how many people – how did that work? How many people were in the Party?

DK: Well, usually the head of the department was Communist but it was not sort of, regular, but most of them just pretended.

RB: So you didn't have to have Party membership? To be part of something like ÚBOK?

DK: No! No. Actually in this department I even managed to get this degree, this CSC, Candidate of Science, which was rather difficult if you are not a Communist, but I managed it.

RB: Ah! That was your training before ÚBOK?

DK: I did it when I was in ÚBOK already. It was possible.

RB: So what did you study?

DK: The topic was how to teach and learn good living. Yes. I have it somewhere but I didn't think of that but it might be interesting.

RB: And it was 'socialist' good living?

DK: Yes, the name was the socialist good living, but it had nothing to do with the Socialists. It was normal that I don't know, how you should choose the equipment, which family should have what, how the flat should grow with the person, with the family etc., how it should, well, I can't say it by heart, all that, but it was also a little of sociology and a little bit of psychology, how does it, the colours actually influence a person and so on.

RB: Oh yes, that is very interesting. So colour was important?

DK: Colour scheme was also important, it was the topic of one, this textiles department. Actually, let's go now to these materials... We have just two more people, three more people... [photograph] Ah ha, yes. So this is Vaclav Dolejš and he was a famous china designer also, he worked for these factories and also all these people were members of so-called councils over production in these, for these factories, for the unions of factories. Because all these factories were under certain general directorship, the same with glass, the same with furniture, the same with textiles, and these councils they in fact also approved what they do also, which was good, in fact.

RB: And do you feel the people who ran the councils were wise, did they know what they were talking about?

DK: Those who ran the factories, the directors, they had to follow the economic criteria, but also I think they were rather wise, they perhaps tried to listen to what these people... I don't know whether these councils had to say, you won't produce that, I don't know whether it was that, but after all they had some kind of, they could recommend, you should do this and not to that, etc etc.

RB: And did they report to the ministry of industry?

DK: Yes, we were under the institute, run, well run by – yes – the Ministry of Industry, and in fact we called the institute the [in Czech] the Institute for designing rolls [laughs, both laugh]

RB: Little rolls?

DK: Yes, small rolls, because it was a joke of course. It means that we don't influence anything actually, you know, that we make some scientific studies, whether the roll should be bigger, smaller, or yellow with salt, with something. ÚBOK! ÚBOK! I think it was lovely. I mentioned it in some of my articles, which I wrote about ÚBOK later, when it was cancelled already, after the 90s. And another nickname of ÚBOK was the 'cemetery of elephants'... [both laugh] That means that some important people, communists from maybe from industrial or other branches, one day did not become so, like, positive, they were sent to UBOK also [laughter]. So that was why UBOK was somehow protected by these former important people, maybe still important, because all these, er, all these... depreference... were rather reliable, one day he was good, one day he was thrown away, etc etc, you know? So we have Václav Dolejš, and this was Pans... Pans, yes, and oh! Actually, this man, was the head of the glass department, in that time. Here, so, I see that this is an older photo and this was younger, this was the new head or replaced this man, and this man, what was his name, I know his nickname, his nickname was very funny... but I think he was from the foreign trade so that was his important experience there, but he, the nickname, maybe I will remember later... the nickname was 'Trepifajksl' and do you know who is it? It is a devil actually, from one fairy tale [laughter].

RB: Did you say it to him or behind...when he wasn't there?

DK: I think behind! [Laughter] Yes, I think behind! So let us go through the papers. [background muttering, opening computer, printer – mention Ivana's model] I can give you that. But that it is not published material. Yes, not published material, ok. So this is, in fact ÚBOK was... before ÚBOK was Textilní tvorba if manage to translate it.

RB: Luckily I enjoy translating, more than speaking!

DK: You do. We prepared this museum about ten years ago, this book on institutions of the twentieth century, design institutions, so far it now probably now being prepared for publishing, but I think it is such a shame that it has not been published, for that book we all prepared some chapters. So in fact this probably will be there but so far it is a, so there is a textile de... Textilní tvorba which previewed ÚBOK, it was founded 194... and I did it with Kristýna, Tina, so we wrote this about

the Textilní tvorba, so that we don't make, yes she first did that but I am going to give you this, only that, but then I think this is good also because it is only mine. Hopefully it is. There are some missing things...

RB: You are still working on...

DK: Yes. This is the textiles institution. There were three departments in the interior part of ÚBOK. There was fashion and textiles and then the interior.

RB: And that included everything?

DK: Yes, Ústav bytové oděvní kultury. Oděvní was fashion and bytové included these three departments. There were architects, interior, furniture and all that. So this is that. Then this is actually the... wait a moment, it is a little bit mess, this should be at the beginning. Jiří Benda, he was a theoretician, also, in ÚBOK, and I think it was to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary there is also one of those books there some kind of review, of course, what ÚBOK was doing. Of course, it had to be somehow, we had to actually follow the socialist way of thinking, we could not write the truth quite, but, so it seems to be a little bit, maybe, more positive, than it was. In this. Maybe. But the facts are here.

RB: When did you write this, ten years ago did you say?

DK: No, this was when it still exist, it was 19.... The anniversary was 85 or 89, I think it was maybe... I think you will find that this was actually... this was the department of education

RB: Interesting, very interesting. I love this idea of how the ideas move out into the world.

DK: This was Václav Šotola, he was a very clever man, glass designer, he was some kind of theoretician of UBOK at the beginning, in fact, because ÚBOK was founded 1959

RB: Ok, so yes, so he would have been in thinking about that change between the Socialist Realist and the...

DK: Yes, exactly!

RB: ...And the Modern.

DK: Yes, in fact what he wrote here was about the transition of the pre-war glass production into the nationalised glass production after the second world war, after 1948. This is very important to me. And now pictures, they are still ok, this is the production of furniture. Kittrichová, Invalidovna.

RB: These images are in UPM? If I wanted to reproduce one of these images in my thesis would I get them from UPM?

DK: I think that if you publish it in the... sort of... just the dissertation, I think that is ok. Maybe these are my photographs which I brought from ÚBOK. I don't know exactly.

RB: I am interested in the way the photos have things like some knitting, it's kind of like it's lived in...

DK: Yes, of course, that was the target of this Invalidovna, it was supposed to show how to equip these small panel.... These flats, which were really very small. So UBOK tried to explain that no more you have... you can use these dining room sets or bedroom sets etc. That you can compose from different pieces, and that was the target. And also they tried to show to public, in fact, how to live in it.

RB: Yes, and do you think that because I know in one of my questions I wrote of Marie Benešová saying that it very cold like a dentist's waiting room. And I wondered if ÚBOK, and working with ÚLUV, would add these kind of material, textiles, colour as a way of kind of making it more homely.

DK: Yes, certainly, and also some kind of a folklore influence was also in it. ÚLUV was a wonderful institution, there is one person, I don't know if you met her Lenka Žižková...

RB: I wrote to her a couple of years ago but she was in hospital.



DK: But I think she is ok, do it, because she was one of the last directors of ÚLUV before it was cancelled so she could tell you a lot about it. ÚLUV was wonderful, I loved ÚLUV, I bought a... I still have one coat from ÚLUV, beautiful woollen coat.

RB: They sold their work in Art Centrum or?

DK: No, they had a big beautiful functionalist house on Národní třída, I don't know the number, but it is so sad when I go past this house it has been privatised unfortunately, I don't know how because it was built for the institution Družstevní práce, you have heard about? It was a publishing house. But they also founded these Krásná jizba shops in which many of these designers between wars, actually, so maybe older generation, but Kittrichová and Kouželka also, because they are from this between war generation, they designed beautiful objects which my parents bought, my mother, we had at home quite couple of such things also. Dishes and textiles, and it was not that expensive and it was beautiful and these shops were all over the country.

RB: In the 50s and 60s...?

DK: No, well, yes it lasted even in the 50s and 60s, in fact, but it became nationalised – Šedečka would tell you a lot about that, it was this Umělecká řemesla, it was

RB: I was hoping to hear from him but...

DK: Yes, what a pity, but he will answer your questions, he will do that, he is very kind, very nice man. Unfortunately, probably this happened. But they tried to save these small workshops which existed between wars, for furniture, for metal work, because they were nationalised –

RB: They were, or there weren't?

DK: They were, but, these people from ÚLUV most were these people in the between war avant-garde, they managed that they united in the Umělecká řemesla institution, which somehow was a state institution, but these small workshops, survived.

RB: And that was different to ÚLUV, they did quite different things?

DK: Yes, ÚLUV was more concentrated on folklore, so they were more... I think it was similar but they were two different institutions, all that will be described in this book, which hopefully I will still be alive when it is published, because now, unfortunately, this man, this young tall man you have seen when he came here also, he was responsible for this task, many years, this museum got several millions for it and nothing was done, they just bought some cameras and some I don't know what, and so then other people started to work with it, like Radim Vondráček. I don't know, you have not met him, probably. He is the head of the graphic department, and Ivana Knobloch, and they work now last year on this, on finishing this and putting it into the publicable [sic] material, but we did it, I did two chapters in it about 5, 6 years ago already, which is such a shame..

RB: It is such a shame, it is wonderful knowledge which...

DK: Yes, which you could get it in this book, now, I... but most of it is in these papers.

RB: I have another question which is, I never know who to ask, when I look at these photos in Domov and things, who chose, what was the kind of thinking behind these pictures, because they are often kind of modernist – do you know, who decided we must have one picture by Cezanne, one picture by – was it important that it was very standard modern imagery?

DK: Yes, it was, when I was young and I went to the school, art school, also, I bought these reproductions like mad.

RB: So these were reproductions...

DK: ...Yes, yes, reproductions.

RB: And they were very popular?

DK: Very popular.

RB: But there were only certain ones that you could buy? Some were not allowed, were they censored?

DK: No I do not think that this was actually censored.

RB: No? Oh ok, because I know that in the early 1960s, that's when modernist art began to be available again? Is that correct?

DK: Yes.

RB: So by the time that you were doing this, you wouldn't be able to have something contemporary from Europe, from western Europe, but you could have Van Gogh or something?

DK: Yes, certainly, these too.

RB: You could?

DK: What?

RB: Something contemporary from western Europe, so something from the 1960s France, wouldn't be reproduced, but you would have French modernism?

DK: Yes, certainly. I wanted to say something, but I have forgotten. Actually, the 60s was a wonderful time. This liberation, this slow liberation, which ended up by this, Russian invasion etc. I was in England a year, 67-68, I was studying English and Art Education and I interrupted my studies and I, it was possible in that time, I think it was a wonderful time. I applied for only, for a two weeks stay, I had an invitation, someone had to invite me, and that sort of well give me money or something, and I interrupted my studies and they let me go. And begin there, I found wonderful job, au pair actually, in this family of Lord and Lady Beaumont of Whitley, I found it on the advertisement in newspaper actually. [Laughter] Incredible! I am lucky person in fact. So I spent there one year which was wonderful for me, I was doing there my thesis also in fact. They ordered books for me from Harrods and some libraries, I have written what I need and then their kind man was bringing food etc which was ordered every week, and he brought these books which I was studying.

RB: That's so wonderful! What was your thesis?

DK: The thesis was the interpretation of language meaning by picture.

RB: Oh wow.

DK: Yes, it was quite funny wasn't it.

RB: By picture, so illustrations to text or...?

DK: Yes, something like that. I have, wow. The man who actually gave me this suggestion he was, what was his name, I have forgotten already, but he was quite a scientist and linguist in Prague in the English, and he said that in fact, no, he advised me also some materials which were abroad already, on this topic, how to... language from learning...

RB: So what was your original degree, or bakalář...

DK: My degree was actually at first it was graded, there was no doctorate then in the Communist Republic but it was povinný... what was it for God's sake, well I was supposed to teach art education on the second grade, on the second degree, but then I did a doctor's thesis later when I was at ÚBOK.

RB: And did you study at...

DK: Charles University

RB: Charles University

DK: I did, the English, which was wonderful people there at that time, and Art Education I studied at the Pedagogical Faculty, they were wonderful people too.

RB: In the 60s?

DK: Yes, this famous illustrator Cyril Bouda, he was a wonderful graphic artist, I don't know if you have met him, he illustrated also books and wonderful man. And

then there was a famous sculptor also, Karel Libický, very famous Czech sculptor also, who did, for example, the John Hus which is in the Karlovory... the school had a very good level. The History of Art was taught by Miroslav Mičko, who was quite a famous critic also, and so on.

RB: Wow so it was an environment of thinking, talking and theory, and it must have been so exciting because the 50s had been so... because you were finally seeing de-Stalinisation –

DK: Yes. Yes.

RB: Actually. Wow.

DK: And at the end of the 50s I did this secondary school, this very famous art school also, in Prague. Výtvarná škola, this school of arts, of fine arts, actually. It still exists. And we were taught everything, even the graphic techniques, and painting and drawing, producing pigments even and such things.

RB: And was it still socialist realist content that you were taught?

DK: Well... not really, no [Laughter] You have one of your questions is about it but I think I can't speak about any Socialist Realism. Of course it existed, yes there were some prominent artists who did it, but we were laughing at it. We didn't take it seriously and neither the teachers in this secondary school. There was the director, who was quite famous Communist. His name was Famíra. He was a strong Communist but he was a very good sculptor actually. Sculptor, and even painter. But he was only actually one year the director, then there were others. But I think this art, branch of art, never too much politicised.

RB: No, but it was fine art more than design.

DK: Well, more or less, fine art. My school mates became quite famous artists also. And then...

RB: Did you used to use the word design?

DK: Well, not much.

RB: Did you say, what is it, navhr? No, but did the word get used for designer?

DK: Ah ha the word designer?

RB: Did you use it when you were at ÚBOK?

DK: Well, I think that 'design' had appeared already in that time, also. It was not so popular probably, but for me being the, sort of, English linguist also...

RB: You saw it all the time?

DK: I knew exactly what is it, but in fact I think that later I hated this expression.

RB: Really?

DK: Do you know why? Because it has been misused, terribly misused. I think that later, especially now after this Velvet Revolution, the people, those who are involved in design, sometimes they seemed to me that they have invented, actually, design. Us, knew nothing, what is it, they have invented it and that design is something that an object either has or has not. Can you imagine the stupidity? I have a nephew who also studies some of these things and I had to laugh on his expressions sometimes and attitude. For example, they brought a rug in front of the door in their house, and I don't know it had some colour, and er, I think I said, what a colour, and he said, oh, it has to be from the viewpoint of design combined with the colour of the door. [Laughter] You know? And something like this. But you can hear it even now. I think if you read some the philosophy of contemporary design doesn't exist. I think it is a mess, and I think that the theory is that the Communist period, it was the totality of er, Communism but now we live in the totality of money.

RB: Yes.

DK: It spoils everything. I am not the so-called Boss the Bolshevik, as we call these people who were Bolsheviks and then became right-wing most, sort, of very many of them, something like that. But sometimes I think there were a lot of good things in this period, so. For example, this period was somehow much more ecological

than is contemporary times with all this wasting. I think that I mentioned also something say to you Victor Papanek, I think Papanek was my, I have discovered him already during the Communist period.

RB: You did?

DK: I did, I wrote a big article about him in Domov.

RB: When, in the 80s?

DK: Yes, in the 80s.

RB: Was he published here?

DK: No, he has never been translated. But he spoke to my soul actually.

RB: Because he speaks about the waste makers.

DK: Yes, exactly, and about styling and all that.

RB: And about social responsibility.

DK: Yes. I think that mostly what people mean today by design is styling, nothing else.

RB: Yes, yes. 'Designer'. But when you were sitting in a room, like this, would you debate these kinds of ideas?

DK: Yes, perhaps. Maybe.

RB: What you mean by the –

DK: But actually I was reading a lot also and –

RB: You must have been a big source of information with all of your reading.

DK: Exactly. And also going abroad to these big fairs, I could see that there was a lot of rubbish.

RB [Laughs]

DK: Yes, for example, these fairs, there was this, historical-like furniture.

RB: Ah.

DK: And the really modern design was only a tiny part. The people mostly wanted this rubbish.

RB: That looked as if it was historical.

DK: Yes, it was some kind of face, actually, it looked as if it is historical.

RB: Like those articles in early 60s' Domov by Josef Raban, saying exactly this – Moderni nebo moda?

DK: Ano, fashionable or modern, yes, yes, exactly. For example, I was in Stockholm on this very famous I think 75, 76, it was the first year I came to UBOK and they sent me to this furniture fair, which was wonderful experience for me to see Stockholm, so beautiful. It was winter and terribly cold but still I was watching the sea and all these, it was so wonderful, I mean it was frozen and all that, but the fair was, there was a part, amazing, there was a group innovator, there were two young designers, Johanne Hult and Jan Granger/Dranger. Halt [?] is, was also, the head of this Swedish Design Centre. He went to Prague also, we met then he was already old grown-up person and I was in the museum, old person already. And I admired this innovator group because they reacted to this crisis with petrol and so on [?]. So they designed very single furniture from the cases for fruit or something like that.

RB: Recycling.

DK: Recycling! Which is very contemporary, now – I think the future of design is in ecological attitude otherwise we shall spoil this globe completely.



RB: It has to be.

DK: But I am afraid that we will never achieve this because this industry, it is terrible. Wasting of everything, and all that, all that.

RB: And the capitalist belief that everybody deserves more.

DK: Yes, yes. I think that capitalist is terrible.

RB: Because there is also the idea is that Communism in general was quite a wasteful project, because of deforestation and huge industrial waste.

DK: Yes, exactly, all this pollution etc. But I am afraid that the contemporary pollution by cars, by these stacks of cars is... we went through Europe recently, I wrote about -

RB: In your car! Your beautiful car!

DK: Yes, but this traffic, even over these passes, all these lorries. I think it is absolutely terrible. Lord Beaumont being in the, we have visited them also later on in England, and he was, yes, in this House of Lords, and he told us that he suggested there that why these producers don't exchange the recipes, for example, for some cakes or something! [Laughs] instead of sending [can't hear - laughter]... very good idea but of course where would be the prosperity!

RB: Wonderful idea! Yes but you wouldn't make all the money -

DK: No, of course.

RB: But when ÚBOK would create a design for a factory, and that was produced in a certain number, was that there quite large numbers of ÚBOK designs produced.

DK: Very little, very little - very little.

RB: So you then were then producing an industrial version

DK: Very rubbish also. Because there were these eastern markets – Russia, lots of these were sent to Russia and they took everything so in fact, that's what.

RB: So in a way something like your writing articles and magazines, was trying to get people's attention and say, this is good quality.

DK: Yes, yes, at least in that time, if they wanted they could. I wrote about it also that there were these magazines, Domov, or Tvar, or Umění a řemesla, where it's possible to learn how to even from this very poor, er, ekonomobytká [?], you could compose interiors. It was complicated. Maybe even I told you about that also, kitchen equipment, but still I have kitchen which I bought, normally produced in, we married 72 – I still have it.

RB: Oh wow

DK: It still works.

RB: That's wonderful. So you think it was well made?

DK: Yes, well-made, from the lasting material also. I think that this sort of capitalist products are produced so that they last just two years, which is true, in fact. The cars and all that. It has to be changed very early. It is not resistant at all. And it was already, we had friends in France and those better run people, and they brought me lovely bag but from artificial material. I loved that bag but it lasted one year and then it was all broken and all went to pieces. This artificial material. It was not resistant at all.

RB: No, it falls apart very quickly.

DK: Yes. Um. Let's... Let's finish this and then let's go through the questions also. This is the furniture, yes, and this is the ÚBOK and its influence on Czech china and ceramics. This is very interesting. And all these objects are in the museum, in our museum, because that's when when I was preparing the book. This is Václav Šerák, it's so beautiful, and I think he is a genius this man. But Laštovička –

RB: Rada, is it?

DK: Rada. Yes. These were decorative object, this was, sort of, a project, done by ÚBOK in the 80s to renew the sortiment of what the royal DUX was producing. They produced, the factory was founded in the, er, wait a moment, I think 1850 or something like that, or 70, so it is one of the oldest factories and they produced this Rococo sort of ladies etc., these rather pitch here a little bit, and then ÚBOK organised a competition and some production by famous ceramicists etc by ÚBOK but also by other people, and in order to renovate or innovate the sortiment. And these, many of these objects, these little figures, were produced.

RB: And they were available?

DK: They were available. Rather cheap, sort of money.

RB: And were they popular?

DK: Um, I don't know. Perhaps they were.

RB: I always think it's interesting, I asked Mrs Rychlíková about this idea of humour being important, and also Jaroslav Brychta –

DK: Yes, these glass figures –

RB: And she said, that we had to have humour, we had to, because we couldn't take it all too seriously, because it was too difficult to take it all too seriously.

DK: Yes, I think humour was very important part of our life. There were lots of jokes, you know. And all that. And now, there's no humour.

RB: No. So something like this, would hope to add a bit of, be something joyful for someone?

DK: Yes, certainly, someone, I don't know, but maybe some player or something. But it was meant, actually, to be, to be –

RB: Funny –

DK: Yes. There's the text waiting. That's again it is already here. [papers shuffling]  
I think it is about this department. No! Plástické – this is glass –

RB: Ah –

DK: Glass! Yes! So glass, ok. And this was my text for er... I think for the magazine.  
It was for the newspaper, the newspaper... [walks across room to locate so hard to  
hear] ... Časopis noviny... [distant muttering] ... Ateliér! Ateliér! It was an article for  
Ateliér! I shall write it here but I think it was 1989.

RB: Good memory!

DK: 1989. Because it was the time when the wall was slowly finished. And this  
article was about, I hope, we wanted to reorganise... but I am not sure...ÚBOK into  
some kind of a design centre... so what's this. And this is, here, this is the article for  
Umění a řemesla, here it is –

RB: Oh thank you –

DK: You can photograph it or do whatever you want [writes and spells out Umeni a  
remesla]. In fact this was from the exhibition that Ivana told you about, in fact,

RB: Ah

DK: These furniture - Tisic na bytu – for a 500 thousand flats, only this actually,  
the others are different. This is a table by Eva Jiřičná ... which I brought from ÚBOK  
to the museum.

RB: Ah that's great

DK: And I was sitting at it.

RB: Great, yeah.

DK: And this is Karel Kouželka

RB: He is very important

DK: Yes Karel Kouželka, wonderful man

RB: And he wrote a lot

DK: Yes, yes, yes. This is Kouželka too, this is Jiříčná, and this is Ivana

RB: So someone like Kouželka is also continuing ideas from the...

DK: Before the war

RB: Interwar period. And so did he think of it being much different, did he feel that he could carry on his ideas, or did he –

DK: He tried to.

RB: He tried to.

DK: He was a member of the Communist Party I think. Well, why not. He was the director of ÚLUV also, sometime, before he came to ÚBOK. I think that this period, the Communist period was difficult actually to do things, but it was possible, you had to be very clever. You had to somehow go right back. But I think it was fun, actually. Because now, probably everything is possible. But I think that nobody tries to do good things. Everyone tries as quickly as possible earn money, I think it is awful. I think young people probably criticise it already. I don't know what Hubutová tells you, because she teaches, but I teach also at the Chemical Faculty, Futurist Styles [?] and the young people are very good.

So here just briefly, this is my article about Papanek and British fashion also.

RB: Oh great, I would love to –

DK: Yes, maybe you can get these Domov.

RB: It is quite hard to get some of them. I can do them afterwards.

DK: Yes, I think this Papanek.

RB: I still teach him to my students.

DK: Yes. This is that Swedish wood stock. Here was the ÚBOK article 40 years old, but maybe it is one of those texts. [Lots of going through papers]. But there is also about Šípek here. Yes. I think here I wrote all about this, interesting fashion magazine, Žena a móda. Wait a moment... But I was inventing this, I think that yes I was sewing a lot.

RB: Making your own clothes?

DK: Yes, for my husband, and for some skiing equipment.

Well it was hard to get some things. It was possible to get very good textiles. Very good choice. Now there is nothing but in fact I don't sew anymore because... oh, where is it. Chair.

RB: Oh interesting, is that sit or kneel? My dad had one of those in the 80s.

DK: It started much earlier. Ok, so there is this. And ok, so. So let's go through the questions now. It may be... anyway take it too. [papers shuffling] There are some medallions of the people from ÚBOK and take this too. This too. You don't need this... [papers] Now the questions. I think we might have answered some as we have been talking. But still one you sent me... Let's go through this. I put a lot of notes. I will give it to you.

RB: Oh wow, thank you.

DK: Magazines, so Domov, Tvar, U&R... Průmyslový design.

RB: I don't have ... design

DK: Ah it was interesting, probably by the Institute of Industrial Design, then. UPD, Ústav průmyslového designu, which existed, interesting.

RB: Is that Milena Lamarová?

DK: I don't know whether she was there, but there were people like Jaroslav Kadlec, architect, he still lives. Wonderful man. Architect who taught at this

Academy of Fine Arts, then he was thrown out, but he is now 85. He has an exhibition for his 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

And to me he was also a kind of theoretician to me, he was very clever, interior and so on. I worked in ÚBOK 75 to 90. Surely they had positive influence, I think. Not in masses actually but they at least tried to, very much. I suppose it's hard to know – Tried to. It's hard to measure in some ways isn't it. Mmmm. It's hard to measure, exactly. So. Yes, that she criticised. I think this is wrong. I know that she was a theoretician of architecture etc., she wrote a lot of good books about Kotera etc.

RB: Was it a –

DK: Ahoj... [interruption as others enter room. Need to move to another room. Conversation with other staff takes place. General chat about photographing items and moving papers] I was Finland, and Japan, and this is very interesting, social department of living...

RB: Do you have one by you?

DK: Yes, this is one, you have, actually, the manuscript. The colour schemes are very interesting. [Chat far away, hard to hear] then there were books. Ah this is mine also. We shall take them with us.

RB: Ah you have Habitat, Conran –

DK: Terence Conran, yes I admired that very much, this also...

RB: And Pop Art

DK: Pop Art. Yes. I got in fact, a scholarship, from the British Council, sometime in the 80s and I spent three weeks in Leicester. Yes.

RB: What did you do in Leicester?

DK: Well, I was, the invitation came from – I was member of the International Society of Education Through Art, in Zere [?]. And I was in touch with these people also in England, because it was an international organisation. And there was a lady who taught at the educational department there and she invited me. Rachael Mason

was her name. And so I spent wonderful time there, studying British design or something like that.

RB: How interesting, what did you think of British design at that point?

DK: Well! [Laughs] I think that er, well. I think that compared to Scandinavian for example, or Italian, that it was not that actually – top thing. Actually. [Laughter] But actually after all, for example, I love Mackintosh, and this period, the Arts & Crafts, and the beginning of the twentieth century. But after all I like this Heals, for example, and what else, was this Robin Day, for example. Earnest Race, actually, also. I think all this is here, those I found interesting.

RB: This is tantalising because I want to photograph everything but it's tricky to photograph everything. Are these showing influences on Czech – shaker chairs.

DK: Shaker. Yes, yes. I think, this influenced our designers as well. Yes, in fact. Yes, and Mackintosh. Some of these designers. For example, there is one which I meet quite often, he is now also almost 85, Karel Vičita. His workplace was in Drsvota nablone [see docs she gave you, list of exhibitions.] and they did very good furniture during the Communist period, also. Very good. Very much influenced by Scandinavian design. They were sent to Scandinavia, these designers, also. And in fact his father had the factory which was then nationalised but they let him do work there, this Karel Vičita. He still lives, you could meet.

RB: Yes, I need to come! I wish I lived here, I would like live here.

Yes, so I could organise in advance these meetings. Anyway.

[Speaking in background, going through papers, photographing sounds]

RB: But Jiří Pelcl's furniture was obviously very different –

RB: Jiří Pelcl?

DK: ...Furniture was very different...They did postmodern design at the beginning, very much. I wrote about them quite a lot, in fact –

RB: And was he able to do that, was it possible –



DK: He worked for some factory also, but, he did not like it very much because it was rather boring and so he did some, his sort er, private designs.

RB: In his own studio?

DK: Yes, this postmodern, because they could not be, of course, officially published or produced even. This is quite interesting this paper furniture – I like this quite, I have forgotten these names, there is some... mistakes in probably, oh yes, so many mistakes

[Laughter]

DK Not even, because these books were not much for corrections.

RB: Who would edit?

DK: Well it was was edited by the institute in fact, we wrote it on this special sort of er paper which could then be multiplied, because there was no computers at this time. Now we just typed it and then it was rewritten by our secretary in fact on these special sheets. But this lady was very funny, she made mistakes! But she made very special mistakes. She was thinking all the time about sex.

[Laughter]

Can you imagine? She was small, fat, but very... and there was a group of young men there, actually, mostly were only me and Ivana were the girls but otherwise there were four or five men so she was writing and for example she wrote a mistake, she wrote about prádelník, do you know what is prádelník? It is a commode or a, you know. But instead of prádelník she wrote praceldáník, which means breast!

[Laughter]

We were just dying of laugh... you know

[Laughter]

Such a wonderful. She was cooking coffee for us when we were up there, but in fact I was a compulsory, jako, attendance, you know – we had to be there from certain times to certain times, of course everybody did something else and how to get rid of it, but we had a very strict er, strict er, porter, a lady, horrible. She was a little bit handicapped, we called her Šedivka, something like a grey person, because she was grey, and she looked grey. Anyway, and Šuhájek had many problems with her because he is not very disciplined, he has never been, even there. And once there was some conflict between him and her and he said that she is an old witch, ježibaba, and she complained about that, and there was a big meeting, the whole institute, and that was the straight union meeting because we were all members of the trade union and it was discussed, in front of these hundred people, whether she is an old witch or is she is not an old witch.

RB: No!

DK: Or whether he said that or whether he didn't and we were bursting of laugh [sic]. It was so funny all of that, we remember it all the time when we meet. Or another story was with Šerak, Vachek Šerak, because he still lives in Čakovice, and it is quite a long way, in fact, and there are the railway crosses the road, and he came late and he said, that there were the, that the crossing was closed, long time. Can you imagine? [Pause]

RB: [Laughter] Oh, I see!

DK: He came two hours late. There was one or again, Šuhájek, again, he didn't came at all. And the secretary telephone, ahoj, ma tady jo, and er, she said, where are you, she telephone home, there were no cell phones. And he said, oh, I would like to have breakfast, but the butter is too hard, from the fridge, I have to wait till it gets soft!

RB: [Laughter] That is wonderful!

DK: Yes. I think that we were thinking sometimes when we were remembering all these stories, that it would be a lovely film.

RB: Oh that would be wonderful!

DK: Jelínek, he has all these stories –

RB: That would be wonderful, oh please do make a film

DK: But I am sort, of... I think this actually shows the atmosphere that was there. When we meet, all these people who still remain we think of ÚBOK as it was wonderful time, wonderful time actually. We were young also, that is one point. But also that we so much laugh, which we had never had since.

RB: Sounds wonderful.

DK: Yes, it was.

RB: That's what I want to know, is to be able to imagine, imagine what it was like every day.

DK: Yes, I think that contrast with this complaints that there was this Normalisation and all that, you know, which probably was horrible and Havel was in prison and so on, but in fact Halinka Taboukovanksa, she signed the Charter, 77, and she left the country, she went to Austria, and she lived there.

RB: Ah ok.

DK: She still lives there. But they have returned now and they have a cottage in Southern Moravia, lovely. And that's it. Helča. She was a lovely girl. There was fun with her, she probably was a friend of Ludvík Vaculík, also, close friend actually. She was very beautiful, She was lovely, small, blonde with blue eyes. She looked like the illustrations, you probably don't know, this Czech painter, Višovák Višovam, Maria Višovák Višovam [?], she illustrated books and she was famous for these typically Czech girls with the round faces and red cheeks and so on, and so this Halinka – Yes. She still, lives, actually. She was a close friend of Ivana. I think she would be wonderful also to meet. She was vital this girl, can you imagine, when she young I think there was some circus er, people who wanted to take her. No! Not so, but learn her, but she learned going on hands and being in ÚBOK, when we were drinking, and that was a good atmosphere, so she performed walking on hands in the corridor.

[Laughter]

Can you imagine? She just had to take trousers from someone if she had a skirt. She took it usually from Karel Úprka, and other... man. So she walked.

[Laughter]

And when I first came to ÚBOK it was also very funny. When I was accepted there with very low salary, but anyway, I was very happy, actually, to get there. When I came, there was a party there, as usually, and there was this guy, architect Jaroslav Kadlec, who came from the institute of industrial design to meet friends, in UBOK, and we were drinking, but there were not enough glasses and they told me, who knew nothing, to go to the head of the department, to the architect Choda [?], next door, to bring some glasses, jo, and I came, and I went, I have never seen him before, and asked for these glasses. And they were looking at me, they gave me those glasses, but everybody was laughing!

[Laughter]

In these futures of colleagues and I went there with a pale blue face, for some glasses, there is a party next door. It is funny because some of the things that you read are very serious. Serious drawings –

RB: Yes, of course.

DK: Serious design ideas and concepts and theories

RB: But behind – I like to think that behind you are all having parties and laughing – how did you, did you apply for the job?

DK: I did, this my, what was this word, the doctors, this doctor's thesis in my previous place, it was the institute of philosophy and sociology, where I worked in the publishing, the department called society and leisure. They published a magazine, they put me there probably because of English, in fact. Because it was published also in English. And being there I did this doctor's these on the, er, furniture, already on this how to teach the equipment of interior because we did it

with Ivana, together, we taught future teachers in the pedagogical faculty, who taught on the second-grade, so-called jako domácí práce –

RB: House work?

DK: House work. And we included there actually how to equip the interior. She was writing all the layout and it was published, there is some kind of material.

RB: It must have been fun, it must have interesting to sit and work these things out, like what should we –

DK: Yes, and then I did that and when I finished it in this institute, it was a horrible institute, there were Communists there and there were people who wrote these speeches for the Communist party, for the government and all that, these philosophers and sociologists, in fact, some of them. But er, there was this Society and Leisure and it was international and it was part of some international also, sort of, sociological something. There came people from France and also America there also. Those who are involved in this branch, actually, how to use the, er... leisure. It was fashion at this time.

RB: Yes, yes, how to – it makes me think, maybe – what is the time

DK: Half past 12, we still have one hour. And you don't want to.

RB: I do, but I am more interested in hearing your answers and then I will have a look and I will need to live about 1.00, quarter past 1, so

DK: Ok, so we will finish

RB: Where did we get to. I think Papanek. And this on with Raban saying –

DK: Yes, certainly this folklore art was influencing the ÚLUV production

RB: Yes, and he calls it a way of measuring –

DK: Because Communists approved folklore. It was something that had nothing, it was not dangerous.

RB: Yes. Did you know Raban?

DK: Not personally, no. I think it was –

RB: Handwork was a helpful way of –

DK: I think it could not be so much ideologically compromised actually

RB: Working by hand and the hierarchy –

DK: I think that *úžitě umění* is a very good expression, applied art, I think it is very good.

RB: Being used and applied.

DK: Yes, I think it is very good. Actually design, of course design you know better than anyone else that it means to, not to design, to do this and do that, etc. But then it got this broader meaning, which I think is very good, that it is to design something so that it is used etc and then to somehow also care for this puzzle, which is Papanek's idea also.

RB: Yes, so it is the whole system.

DK: The whole process, which I think has been forgotten, absolutely. Now design means something, I hate this expression, that this chair has design or has not. If it has, that's ok, if it does not, it's horrible. Theoreticians use this. I think it is absolutely crazy, stupid. So these other theoreticians, Papanek, or in Czech design, Jindřich Chaloupecký, Jaroslav Kadlec, architect, Karel Vyčítal, that's the designer also who still lives, Kittrichová, wonderful lady. Really wonderful. Actually, this Jaroslav Kadlec, was the story I came, he was there, I was sent for these glasses, because I was amazed that he was here, because I was quoting him in my thesis, so I thought oh lord, how wonderful to meet this man.

RB: Oh wow, wonderful

DK: I told him and he was laughing, because he said that he was not a theoretician at all, but he was in fact. Yes.

RB: Did you, did this kind of philosophy, wider -

DK: I think yes this, Karel Kosík, very much. The Dialectics of the Concrete – I think it was wonderful. There were others also, there was the sociologist Musel, Jiří Musel –

RB: Oh Musel, he went to Glasgow.

DK: Yes.

RB: I found something he had written while he was in Glasgow.

DK: Um yes, Musel is a very good man. [Sounds of reading questions] Bohumil Markelous.

RB: These are your favourites?

DK: Yes, yes. Especially how to teach design, how to teach, sort of, to like good things. Something about taste

RB: The appreciation of taste.

DK: I think he was a very clever man, very clever man. He was a writer, also. He wrote funny books. There is a book called Výbušný zlotvor, it means, sort of, bursting some very bad creature, and it is cars, it about, it is meant, the beginning of cars. Which is illustrated by Kamil Lhoták, he was a wonderful illustrator, of airplanes and these modern technology and he published, I was quoting him very much in my works also. Education for Living.

RB: Education for Living. What do you wish people would remember? From that era? Too big a question?

DK: It is becoming now rather popular under this label of 'retro' for example this exhibition, this permanent exhibition in Cheb, it deals with the retro, retro which

means the sixties, mainly, is becoming very, very popular. You can, these objects are bought in auction also and they become very expensive. So, that's it. People discovered it now. And they certainly don't take it together with a socialist... sort of... at all.

RB: Do you think that matters? Do you think they should understand the context with the object?

DK: Sorry?

RB: Do you think it is important they do understand the context that the object came from or do you think that it's ok that they just say, it's retro?

DK: Nooo, I think it's retro, I think they say mostly only this, actually.

RB: Do you think that is ok? Good or bad?

DK: At least that, I think. Because generally the attitude was also among us when this Velvet Revolution came, that everything was wrong during the Communist period, that now comes the paradise. But now after this 26 years, we can very well see that there is no paradise at all. Of course, this morning I heard quite a good explanation... sort of conversation between one famous lawyer, head of some department, I don't know, and he said that in fact we live in the best period in which we could live. Which is true in a way from the viewpoint of liberty.

RB: In terms of what we *have*, yes -

DK: Yes, and even the rather... well-being, but it's rather difficult, because for example us, normal people, maybe intellectuals during the Communist period, we were very poor actually. To buy something I had to buy one shoes one month, maybe next month maybe some jumpers or something, but otherwise I did not have more money. But now, I can buy whatever I want. But I am lucky because I have quite a high pension due to my teaching of American students last ten or fifteen years, apart from the museum, and I was very well paid. And so my, so, then my sort of pension, which is twice as big as my husband.

RB: [Laughter] That's good.



DK: Yes, so I am so-called 'behind the water' as they say here. Za vodou.  
[Laughter] It is a very funny expression. That's it. So that's quite rare [sic.]  
actually. Jo.

RB: You have given me a lot, wonderful ideas.

DK: Yes, we talked about that. [Looking at sheet of questions] Design has more...  
Socialist design didn't exist. Well, I think it did not. It depends what, if you were  
put in it the panel houses, they were all over the world in fact. Just they were  
maybe left earlier in the west, and they continued much later here because of the  
poverty and because of all this sort of lack of everything etc.

RB: So you wouldn't say that any of this ÚBOK, or the items that you made, they  
were not socialist, they were Czechoslovakian design?

DK: Yes, exactly. Maybe it was written that it is the socialist design, but it was just  
the cliché. But behind, if you look at some of it you can compare it with what was  
done in the west.

RB: Yes, yes, exactly.

DK: Certainly, maybe even better things, like glass, I think.

RB: So what do you think makes it different to the west. A chair that looks  
Scandinavian, but is made in Czechoslovakia, do you think it's different?

DK: Both. We are speaking actually in the past, aren't we. About the past. It is  
hard.

RB: It's a difficult question.

DK: It is difficult. Well, I think we have to go back to the before the second world  
war, there was this wonderful tradition, that Czechoslovakia accepted the  
Functionalist style but before there was this wonderful Cubist style, have you seen  
the Black Madonna House?

RB: Yes, beautiful.

DK: I think it is absolutely. There is a wonderful exhibition now, the cartoons, the Cubist cartoons, which is wonderful, I love this. There are cartoons of furniture also, because people were mocking this. And I am thinking very much of it. We are preparing also a book on this Black Madonna, and I think that perhaps the Cubist furniture was some kind of the caricature of normal furniture.

RB: Cubist furniture was a caricature? Oh that is wonderful! So again it's the Czech sense of humour.

DK: Yes, in a way. Though they took it seriously these men, if you read their definitions, their explanation –

RB: Manifesto –

DK: Manifesto, I don't understand those sentences. I read it and when at the end I think, what the hell, they wanted to say! And I read it twice, maybe three times, and I think that they were very complicated theories. Very sort of abstract and so on. After all, the result was from the aesthetic... but let's go back to your point, so it was this. Then was accepted the Functionalist style *but* we spoke with Kittrichová about it a lot, in Bohemia, or in Czechoslovakia at that time, it was the so-called humanistic branch of it, it was not this cold sterile and so on. There was this strong social... social er... background also, that these architects wanted to design for good people. They wanted, not like the Bauhaus, Bauhaus was extraordinary something, expensive, not for normal people. Like these buildings. The Tuganhadt for example.

RB: Yes

DK: Their sitting room is as big as was our exhibition hall in the museum. Can you imagine? While cleaning the sitting room with two hundred square metres! They had to have er, servants. So it was not sort of very humanistic attitude at all.

RB: The aims were socialist, with a small s, in that they were for society. But it wasn't Socialist, with a big S?

DK: Yes, yes. So in fact this, Czechoslovakia [sic] Functionalist style, was really, that's what also Kittrichová stressed very much because she lived in it, they were exhibitions the Lidový byt, which they did during, at the beginning of the second world war, for, living for poor people, which they tried really to do.

RB: So the social consciousness was very important to ÚBOK?

DK: It was. And even after the second world war, somehow. Though it was promoted officially by Communism, but still, I think the designers wanted to do that.

RB: So you were with this group in ÚBOK, that was what people were hoping to, ultimately, achieve?

DK: Yes, yes. Exactly.

RB: So interesting, thank you.

DK: Ok. Ok so we have done that, it doesn't exist. Yes and it was the, actually in spite of all the criticism, it was anti-consumption society, somehow, because we had lack of everything. I turned around and everything before I thrown it. Even now, I have lived in it and I still have such a horrible feeling I had it when I was in Leicester, for example, and I was working through, on Saturday morning, through this street with the shops and I saw all these shops, I don't know 1, 2, 3, 4 with the shoes. I was asking myself, why so many, what do this good for? And I spoke with Rachel about it, and she said oh, that's normal, it's good, you can choose things.

RB: Choice

DK: Choice! But I said oh Lord, this is wrong. Or when I was in the United States and we went to this bistros, these Chinese and these Eastern, these fast food, and they, it was served in this artificial, this plastic packets and plastic cutlery, and I was asking myself how many they are, in the United States, and where does this go. Can it be recycled?

RB: Landfills. Very frightening.

DK: And then I saw these piles of sort of, these leftovers, on the outskirts of New York

RB: It's horrible

DK: Yes, but that is what this society is based on. And here is the work in ÚBOK, Škrdlovice, I don't know much about, especially I have told you a lot, especially the sixties and seventies.

RB: Yes, wonderful

DK: And this is stuff for Tvarové výtvarny – the small rolls

RB: [Laughter] Thank you

DK: So in fact here is the same thing.

RB: That is the same. Oh that is wonderful, thank you.

DK: Yes, ok.

RB: I would love to have some more photographing, but I am worried I am running out of time.

DK: Try to photograph, I will give you these.

RB: Thank you so much, and I have this for you. If it is ok, if you would take permission, the Royal College of Art, if you could sign this. This is yours and this is for you to sign for me. Do you have a pen?

DK: I have. And you did the 40s? You have done the 40s?

RB: Well I have been reading since 1948 –

DK: 48, yes. Yes I think that is a good time. Yes, yes, ok.

RB: But I have been reading the 1945 –

DK: So you will find here in the papers I have you because, actually this Textilní tvorba was founded 1949, actually, so it is very important.

RB: That is very important.

DK: And film projects also. So it is this man you are going to meet. There were also, there were people who also did, there was Kodelský, the conductor, yes film director. Kotetský [sic]. There is one president of the academy, I always mix them, one is Kodelský, one is Kotetský. Unfortunately he died. But maybe ask this Vachek, who you are going to meet about this Kotetský. He died actually, it was a tragedy, he has fallen down from these high rise buildings here in Prague where he was doing some documentation. And terrible thing. But there is also a festival on his name, on his behalf, quite famous festival of these documentary films. We met several times also. Wonderful man. Yes.

RB: When was this one written about colour, this Barevnost v bytě, do you know which year it was written?

DK: Josef Hesla

RB: Do you know which year it was written?

DK: It should be here, somewhere at the beginning in fact, it will be there I am sure. It is not here. But it will have been sometimes the 80s probably. But he was wonderful man, also, his wife was Chinese. He was in China. We called him Chinese also. [Laughter] He was a Communist also, originally, but he was a very clever man and he was specialised on these colour schemes and he did some research on it also and he wrote about the psychological influence of colours in flat, etc. He was somehow funny, also, because he, during his time, because probably actually he influenced the colour scheme of these carpets etc for some wallpapers, and his theory was that if there is a blue-green floor, that you get the information of your urine bladder.

RB: Oh, really? [Laughter]

DK: So it was possible to get in that time some of such carpets. [Laughter] Yes! And we have at home a lovely set from Biedermeier period, which originally had some kind of some kind of, um, textile on the upholstery and it was worn out and we wanted to have it re-done, but we looked for such textile, this colour. And then I had a friend in France and she got it there and she brought it.

RB: That's amazing!

DK: So it was impossible to get it here.

RB: He had that much power?

DK: Well, not really, but it was just some such coincidence and because usually people didn't influence much.

[discussion of signing sheets, muttering]

DK: It is, you are right, and he is a very funny man. We met some years ago, actually, when we were lending something to the Senators [?], to the Senate, to the room of the president or something, not the president but the Chairman of the Senators, and we had, or parliament, or something, but I think it was the senators actually – yes, senators. And he, Všetěčka worked there he looked after the equipment and all that, because he was already in pension and he found this as a job, someone helped him to get there. And then, so he was very helpful to us, he was showing us round all the senators and we saw it is a lovely palace, it in the Vynstein palace, in Prague, which is lovely Baroque palace. And er, then we met, in the mountains! Because we have a cottage, the family has a cottage in Šemova, in Southern Bohemia, and he went to a neighbour pension, or pension, and these are friends of us, and we do every Christmas, every New Year's eve, some performance, some theatre performance there, and we also included him and his wife in this. And we had a lot of fun since that, already. So that is why we are friends now. And he was also that one who gave the archives of Umělecká řemesla to our museum, which is deposited in this place.

RB: So that was where, where was it kept?

DK: Brandys nad Labem it is in one my mails for you. Actually, another point. I spoke to Šuhájek but he was interested in you because his daughter is now in London or in England. She is quite a lot like him, she is not disciplined and is quite a funny young girl. I think she is a nice girl, rather able. She studied this secondary art school, she paints also, perhaps she has sold some paintings, I do not what exactly what does she do in England.

RB: I wonder what she does there. If she ever likes to meet I would be very happy.

DK: Ok, I shall ask Šuhájek to give me her contact. Let's telephone him now.  
[Discussion of where he is and what he is doing 2:22]

[Speak of photographing one that goes back to the beginning of ÚBOK. I think I got it. Huge thanks etc.]

RB: This is like gold to me.

DK: I am glad that I can give to someone these things.

**[End of Interview]**

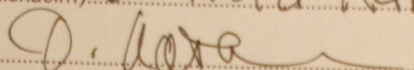


Royal College of Art

# RESEARCHRCA

Rozumím tomu, že všechny informace, které budou během rozhovoru pořízeny, budou bezpečně uloženy a mé názory budou správně reprezentovány. Jakékoliv fotografie, na kterých můžu být zřetelně identifikován/a, budou zveřejněny pouze s mým souhlasem nebo se souhlasem mého zákonného zástupce.

Jméno (tiskacím): Daniela Karasová

Podpis: 

Datum: 24/10/16



Tento projekt bude proveden v souladu s etickým kodexem pro výzkum na Royal College of Art.

**Daniela Karasová consent form**



**Transcript of Recording****Karel Vachek (K.V.), Filmmaker****Interview with Rebecca Bell (RB), accompanied by Ivona Klemensová (I.K., translation support as advised by Mikuláš Novotný who arranged the interview, equipped with list of Rebecca Bell's questions, also sent to Vachek in Czech)****24 October 2016****Prague Film and TV Academy**

(sounds)

**I.K.:** You should read Komenský, Hašek and Klíma to get the best.**R.B.:** Ah, ano.  
*Ah, yes***K.V.:** Ale Ladislav Klíma ne Ivan, jo, ten je blbec.  
*But LK, not Ivan, yes, he is a moron.***R.B.:** A Hrabal?  
*And Hrabal?***K.V.:** No tak. No ne.  
*Yes also. Well, no.***R.B.:** (laughing). Ne?  
*No?***K.V.:** Ten Hrabal, on má chvíle, kdy mluví přesně, a zase chvíle, kdy přesně nemluví. To se tomu Klímovi nestane. Ani tomu Haškovi.  
*That Hrabal, he has moments when he speaks accurately, and again moments, when he is not speaking accurately. This doesn't happen with Klíma. Nor Hašek.***R.B.:** Ano.  
*Yes*

**I.K.:** Hrabal is less clear.

**R.B.:** Okay.

**K.V.:** I když Hrabal celý život mluvil vo tom, že se chce stát tím Haškem.  
*Even though Hrabal for his whole life spoke about how he would like to become Hašek.*

**R.B.:** A mám dárek pro tebe. Doufám, že máte rád.  
*I have a present for you. I hope that you like it.*

**K.V.:** To vypadá dobře. Co to je? To je alkohol?  
*It looks good. What is it? Is it alcohol?*

**R.B.:** Ano. Je anglický uhm...  
*Yes. It is English um...*

**K.V.:** Gin.

**I.K.:** Gin.

**R.B.:** Gin.

**K.V.:** Jé, gin, mám rád gin.  
*Yes, gin, I like gin.*

**R.B.:** Ah, dobře. Děkuju. Jsem ráda.  
*Ah, good. Thanks. I am glad.*

**K.V.:** Gin je dobrěj, protože z toho se dá zblbnout.  
*Gin is good, because from it you can go gaga.*

**R.B.:** Ano.  
*Yes.*

**I.K.:** Mad.

**R.B.:** Ano. Haha. Uhm, okay, so tak...

*Yes. Haha. Um, ok, so so...*

**K.V.:** Děkuju.

*Thank you.*

**R.B.:** Ano. Mám hodně otázek. (laughing). Bohužel. So. Jsem Phd studentka na Royal College of Art a studuju české design.

*Yes. I have many questions. Unfortunately. So. I am a PhD student from the Royal College of Art and I study Czech design.*

**K.V.:** Jo.

*Yes.*

**R.B.:** Ale, a zajímám se o postoj k řemesla a lidové kultury v socialistické kontext.

*Á jsem, hmm, how do I keep saying that? I'm very interested in Moravská Hellas..*

*But I have an interest in the attitude towards folk culture in the socialist context.*

*And I, hmmm, how do I keep saying that? I'm very interested in Moravská Hellas.*

**I.K.:** Rebeccu v podstatě zajímá jakoby ta kultura řemesla a všechno ostatní, co se v té době jakoby vytvářelo a tak dále, ale hlavně ji zajímá Moravská Hellas.

*In essence, Rebecca is interested in craft culture and everything else that seems to have been created at that time and so on, but she is mainly interested in Moravská Hellas.*

**R.B.:** Moravská Hellas.

*Moravská Hellas.*

**I.K.:** To je hlavní jakoby téma, o kterém by dneska chtěla mluvit s vámi.

*This is the main theme about which she would like to talk with you today.*

**R.B.:** Ano.

*Yes.*

**K.V.:** No, to je docela šílenej film, no.

*Yes, it is a crazy film, huh.*

**R.B.:** Crazy film, hmm, ano. Hmm, so, možná moje, můj první otázky.

*Crazy film, hmm, yes. Um, so, perhaps my, my first questions.*

**K.V.:** No, když ji přeložíte, tak jí to zhruba vysvětlím.  
*Well, if you translate it, I will roughly explain it to her.*

**I.K.:** He's going to explain a little bit.

**K.V.:** V těch padesátých letech vlastně stát hlavně propagoval lidové umění, aby moh' nedovolit těm skutečným umělcům, aby se vystavovali, aby prostě vystupovali na veřejnosti. Takže ty lidové umělce používal proti skutečným umělcům.

*In the fifties as a matter of fact the state mainly publicised folk art, in order to not allow artists of real value, to simply perform in public. So those folk artists were used against real artists.*

**I.K.:** So basically during the fifties they really focused on the communist party tempt to promote the folk culture so that they would not leave a space for the real artists and so basically that was replacing the real culture.

**K.V.:** Většina těch lidových umělců žádnými umělci nebyly.  
*Most of these folk artists were not artists.*

**I.K.:** But there were not any folk artists, were not real artists.

**K.V.:** Protože neměli žádnou filozofickou hloubku.  
*Because they had no philosophical depth.*

**I.K.:** They didn't any philosophical background.

**K.V.:** Ta filozofická hloubka pro mě znamená ty autory, co jsem jmenoval, ty české, nebo třeba Williama Blakea, jo, nebo Fieldinga. Rozumíte, to je opravová shakespeare. To je opravdu filozofická kvalita. Tihle lidi, to byl vodpad, většinou. Ale někteří z nich byli velmi zvláštními lidmi, jako lidé byli zvláštní. A oni, oni, vlastně když byli směšní, a v tom filmu jsou směšnější, jo, dělali to nejlepší sami pro sebe.  
*The philosophical depth means to me those authors I named, the Czechs, or even William Blake, yeah, or Fielding. You understand, this is the ultimate Shakespeare. This is really a philosophical quality. These people, it was rubbish, mostly. But some*

*of them were very special people, as humans they were strange. And them, them, actually when they were funny, in the film they are funny, yeah, they did the best of themselves.*

**R.B.:** Uhm. For themselves. That's what he said?

**I.K.:** Já, basically what he was saying that they didn't have that philosophical depth as the author he mentioned earlier, Blake and Fielding or Shakespeare. That would be only like purpose or intention to say something.

**K.V.:** Protože prozrazovali to svoje zneužití tím režimem.  
*Because they were telling the truth about how the regime abused them.*

**I.K.:** So, basically he was saying that the folk authors weren't, didn't have and depth, they were ridiculous, but they were strange as well, because they were kind of used by the regime as a... [interrupted]

**K.V.:** A proto se lidé na tom filmu smáli.  
*And that's why people laughed at this movie.*

**K.V.:** Smáli se.  
*They laughed.*

**I.K.:** They laughed.

**K.V.:** Tomu filmu se smáli.  
*They laughed at that film.*

**R.B.:** Ah. Se smáli.  
*They laughed.*

**K.V.:** No, no a já jsem po tom filmu nesměl pět let točit.  
*Well, well and after the film I was not allowed to shoot for five years.*

**R.B.:** Pět let...  
*Five years...*

**K.V.:** Protože ten film zakázal prezident republiky.

*Because the film was banned by the president of the Republic.*

**I.K.:** So it was forbidden by the president.

**K.V.:** Jo? Ale po dalším filmu jsem nesměl točit pětadvacet let.

*Yeah? But after the next film, I could not shoot for twenty-five years.*

**R.B.:** Ano. Dvacet... Ano

*Yes. Twenty... Yes.*

**K.V.:** (laughing) Chápete, ona to je hrozná sranda. No ale vo tom to, vo tom umění je, že vlastně říkáte lidem nebo mluvíte o modelu myšlení, který má jakýsi metafyzický rozměr a přitom se snažíte ten model myšlení uplatnit na posuzování té společnosti nebo té situace, která je kolem vás. No a tak to je. Takže heleďte se, to jsou moje filmy, jo. Každěj je delší než tři hodiny. Takže tadyhle jen ta Moravská Hellas nad váma je.

*You see, it is a terrible joke. Well, but that is what is art about, that you tell people the truth or speak about a model of thinking, which has a kind of metaphysical dimension while trying to apply the model of thinking on the assessment of the society or the situation which is around you. Well, that is how it is. So look, these are my movies, yeah [indicating posters around the office walls]. Each one is more than three hours. So over here just the Moravská Hellas is above you. [Looking at a poster.]*

**R.B.:** Áno!

*Yes!*

**K.V.:** Je půl hodinový nebo čtyřicetiminutový film. Všecky ty ostatní mají tohle. A všecky jsem udělal až po revoluci. Až támhle ten jsem udělal v roce šedesát devět.

*It's a half hour or forty-minute long film. All the others have this. And all I made after the revolution. And that one that I made in sixty-nine.*

**R.B.:** Áno!

*Yes!*

**K.V.:** Spříznění volbou.

*Elective Affinities.* [name of film from 1969]

**R.B.:** Spříznění volbou.

*Elective Affinities.*

**K.V.:** Jo?

*Yes?*

**R.B.:** Je skvělé.

*It's wonderful.*

**K.V.:** Rozumíte? Takže já jsem teďka po tom osmdesátým devátým jsem opravdu pracoval a když to spočítate, jeden, dva, tři, čtyři, pět, šest filmů, každéj má víc než tři hodiny. Jo? No a je mi to, je to takový nepraktický rozměr filmu. Ale mně to stojí za to, protože ty filmy jsou jiný než běžný filmy a hlavně to nejsou dokumentární filmy, protože já se snažím, aby měly ten filozofický rozměr a aby to byla analýza skutečnosti, ne jako nějaký atrakce, na který se lidi podívaj.

*Do you understand? So I have really worked after 1989 and if you count it, one, two, three, four, five, six films, each have more than three hours. Yeah? Well, it's such an impractical sized movie. But to me it is worth it, because those movies are different than regular movies and most importantly they are not documentaries because I'm trying to have this philosophical dimension and it was to analyse reality, not as some kind of attraction, at which people look.*

**R.B.:** A co myslel o lidové umění?

*And what did you think about folk art?*

**K.V.:** Podívejte se, mezi lidovými umělci jsou taky významní umělci.

*Look, amongst the folk artists are also prominent artists.*

**I.K.:** So, some of them are important.

**K.V.:** Že jsou mezi nimi umělci, ale musí bejt jaksi na takový vnitřní úrovni, aby jim mohli bejt.

*There are artists among them, but they have to be somehow on also a meaningful level, in order to be artists.*

**I.K.:** (whispering, translating).

**K.V.:** Víte, na to si nemůžete hrát. Tady, když se projdete po Čechách, tak tady je tolik významných malířů a všechno je to špatný.

*You know, you cannot not pretend to be one. Here, when you walk through Bohemia, there are so many significant painters and it's all bad.*

**R.B.:** A umělci na Moravské Hellas, myslel jsi jsou hloupá, hloupí nebo...?

*And the artists in Moravská Hellas, did you think they were stupid, stupid or...?*

**K.V.:** Hlavně nejsou umělci.

*Mainly they are not artists.*

**R.B.:** So. Ne. Neřekli. You would not call them 'artist'.

*So. No. They were not. You would call them 'artist'.*

**I.K.:** They are not artists.

**K.V.:** Tam je jenom trošku takovej, je tam taková kapela nějaká z Nízkých Tater, která tam prostě hraje chvíli mezi dveřma, tak ty mají takovej, jak bych řekl, skoro by to bylo zajímavý, no.

*There is only one a little bit like that, there is a band from the Low Tatras, that there just playing for a moment between the door way, so you have kind of a, I would say, almost it would be interesting, yes.*

**I.K.:** So there is only one band from Tatra Mountains that he would call them interesting.

**K.V.:** A jinak to je divadlo hrůzy ta Strážnice. Jo opravdu. Kdybyste tam někdy vlezla, jo. Protože podívejte se, umění nemá nic společnýho se vzbuzováním sentimentu. Když byste jako poslouchala většinu té lidové muziky, tak je to vyrábění pocitů, jo. Ale z pocitů se umění nedá dělat. To je stejně blbý jako třeba filmař Herzog. Rozumíte? A já nevím, to sou hovada. Jo s prominutím. Nebo takový ty Tarkovsky, to je na zvracení, jo. Co je umělec, je třeba William Blake. Rozumíte? *And otherwise it is the theatre of horror that Strážnice. Yeah, really. If you had ever gone there, yeah. Because look, art has nothing to do with arousing sentiment. If you listen to much of that folk music, so it's like producing feelings,*



*yeah. But art cannot be made from feelings. That's just as stupid as the filmmaker Herzog. Do you understand? And I do not know, they are beasts. Excuse my language. Or the sort of Tarkovsky, that makes me sick, yeah. An artist is for example William Blake. You understand?*

**R.B.:** Mmm.

**K.V.:** Protože von to vidí do hloubky. Co se kolem toho. Shakespeare je na tom stejně, ale to není když si vezmete Shakespeara, tak von vám vykládá hloupé historky, jak se dva měli tak rádi, Romeo a Jülie, až se zabili, jo. Ale na tu hloupou historku navěsí spoustu filozofických dialogů, které ti lidé když jsou takhle hloupí ani nemůžou mít, takové myšlenky. Přesto je tam řeknou, jo. A to z toho dělá toho velkého Shakespeara. Když nemáte, když nemáte, není ve vás žádný filozofický přínos, tak jste úplně, jo, to je, to je prostě. Tady v Čechách je tolik spisovatelů a číst se nedá nic, jo. Hrabal ten byl jako ten poslední, který vobčas se do něčeho trefil. Když si vezmete, jaká literatura je, já nevím, Škvorecký nebo ten autor toho pamfletu, honem, Sekyra. Víte?

*Because he sees it in depth. What's around this. Shakespeare is the same, but it's not when you look at Shakespeare, so he tells silly stories, as two people like each other so much, Romeo and Juliet, so they kill themselves, yeah. But on that silly story he hangs a lot of philosophical dialogues, which those people who are so stupid cannot even have, these kind of thoughts. Yet they say it there, yeah. And that's what makes Shakespeare great. If you don't have it, if you don't have it, it is not your philopsophical contribution so you are completely, yeah, it is simple. Here in the Czech Republic are so many writers and you cannot read any because they are bad. Yeah. Hrabal was the last one, who occasionally hit something. When you consider what literature is, I do not know, Škvorecký or the author of this pamphlet, come now, Sekyra. You know?*

**I.K.:** Víím. Víím, ale nevím. Haha.

I know. I know, but I don't know. Haha.

**R.B.:** Mm, mm.

**K.V.:** Jo, tak prostě, to nejsou velcí spisovatelé. To jsou spisovatelé jako dobový, který vobčas něco řeknou, co je i pravda, ale tím to jako hasne. Jo. Tak vo čem?

*Yeah, so just, they are not great writers. I mean like contemporary writers who occasionally say something that is true, but that's it. Yeah. So what about?*

**I.K.:** He was saying that it's not about creating emotion and producing them so he was basically talking about Shakespeare and story but [interrupted] even though the people would not be able [interrupted].

**R.B.:** A myslím, že Moravská Hellas je jako, trochu jako King Lear.  
*And I think, that Moravská Hellas is like, a little like King Lear.*

**I.K.:** Král Lear?  
*King Lear?*

**R.B.:** Král Lear. Co myslíte?  
*King Lear. What do you think?*

**K.V.:** No, myslím si, že ano, že je smíchová  
*Yes, I think that yes, that is a thing of ridicule.*

**R.B.:** Mmm, protože...  
*Mmm, because...*

**K.V.:** Král Lear je k smíchu. Dyť to je starý blázen. Když to domyslíte, tak si udělal kolem sebe konstrukt rodinnej, kteréj ho zabil. *King Lear is ridiculous. He is an old fool after all. If you look in to it, he made around himself the construct of a family, which killed him.*

**R.B.:** Ano, a to je jako storm. What's storm?  
Yes, and it is like the storm. What's storm?

**I.K.:** Bouře.  
*Storm.*

**R.B.:** Bouře.  
*Storm.*

**K.V.:** No, podívejte se.

*Well, Look.*

**R.B.:** Když lidi...

*When people...*

**K.V.:** Já ještě, co jsem třeba. Vy si musíte uvědomit, že třeba ta maximální literatura, třeba v Anglii, to je taky třeba Větrná hůrka, jo, Bronteyové.

*I still, what did I. You have to realize that for example the ultimate literature, for example in England, it is for example Wuthering Heights, yeah, Brontë.*

**R.B.:** Ano.

*Yes.*

**K.V.:** To je prostě stejně skvělý jako Shakespeare, ale vypráví, je to vyprávěný jinak, jo. Je tam. (laughing) Je tam ta Kateřina. Kateřina myslím. Catherine.

*It is just as great as Shakespeare, but says, it is narrated differently, yeah. It is there. (Laughing) There is that Catherine. Catherine, I think. Catherine.*

**I.K.:** Catherine. Wuthering Heights.

**R.B.:** Catherine? Oh, Wuthering Heights, yes.

**K.V.:** Jo, je tam ta Kateřina, ten Heathclif a ten druhej muž. Jo? A ani jeden z nich nerozumí. A ona je filozofický stvoření. A oni ji ti voba chlapi zabijou. Rozumíte, to je něco velkolepýho. To je asi, asi vedle Selmy Langerlefové je to, Gösty Berlinga, je to asi nejlepší ženský román, co znám. Je to prostě skvělý. Jo.

*Yeah, there's that Catherine, that Heathclif and the other man. Yeah? And neither of them understand. And she is a philosophical creation. And they both those guys kill her. . Understand, this is something of magnificance. That's probably alongside Selma Lagerlöf's Gosta Berling, it's probably best female novel, I know. It's just great. Yeah.*

**R.B.:** These books are wonderful, aren't they.

**I.K.:** Yeah, there is the female character. They don't understand and they kill her in fact.

**K.V.:** Víte, a to znamená, že ta Strážnice pro mě byl takovej jako příšernej cirkus.  
*You know, and it means, that the Strážnice for me was such a horrible circus.*

**R.B.:** Ano.

*Yes.*

**K.V.:** Jo? A vlastně to vyprávění. Jak věc, která se tváří jako festival umění, je vlastně konglomerátem nešťastnej osudů lidí, který mají za úkol se představit jako umělci, i když umělci vůbec nejsou a nevědí, o čem to je.

*Yeah? And actually the story. How the thing that looks like an arts festival, it is actually a conglomeration of unhappy fates of the people who are tasked to present themselves as artists, and when they are not at all artists and do not know what it is all about.*

**R.B.:** What's the last bit? They don't see what?

**I.K.:** It's a very unhappy event, when people are forced to play roles of artists who they are not basically.

**R.B.:** Hmm, okay. And Uncle Lebanek, Lebanek?

**K.V.:** Lebáněk?

**R.B.:** Co myslíte o...?

*What do you think about...?*

**K.V.:** Že to byl výbornej člověk. Výbornej člověk.

*That he was a wonderful man. A very good man.*

**R.B.:** Výborný člověk.

*A very good man.*

**K.V.:** No, já jsem přišel do těch lesů, viděl jsem nějakou chalupu, tak jsem tam vlez a našel jsem tohodle Lebánka. A tak jsme si popovídali a on pak s tím filmem se mnou prošel. Jo. To. Úžasněj člověk, přestože dělal takový ty pseudosocialistický písničky a vlastně se tím trošku živil. Pro něj to byl jako vedlejší výdělek. Von byl normální zemědělec. V kopcích. Na těch Kopanicích, jo.

*Well, I came to the woods, I saw a cottage, I went in there and I found this Lebánek. And so we talked and he went through the film with me. Yeah. That. Amazing person, even though he did such pseudo-socialist songs and actually he did it even for a living a little. To him, it was like a side income. He was a normal farmer. In the hills. On the Kopanice, yeah.*

**R.B.:** A řekla, řekl pravdu. Like he spoke the truth.  
*And he said the truth. Like he spoke the truth.*

**I.K.:** Mluvil pravdu.  
*He spoke the truth.*

**R.B.:** Mluvil pravdu. Jako he uses the phrase. Oh. Řekl, o lidové horečka.  
*He spoke the truth. Like he used the phrase. Oh. He said about folk fever.*

**K.V.:** No, že to byla taková lidová horečka. Tam bylo hezký, ten ředitel těch toho strážnickýho festivalu, jo, to byl primáš Slávek Volavý, který tam hraje na housle, a ten na nás poslal policii, nás normálně jaksi přijela policie, zabavila nám materiál, odvezli nás do Hodonína, rozumíte, voni nás chtěli, voni mi ukradli scénář.  
*Well, it was such folk fever. It was nice there, the director of the Strážnický Festival, yeah, it was a bandmaster Slávek Volavý, who plays there the violin, and he called the police to arrest us and the police simply came for us, normally somehow police arrived, and confiscated our material, took us to Hodonin, you understand, they wanted us, they stole my script.*

**I.K.:** Opravdu?  
*Really?*

**K.V.:** A z toho, No jistě. A z toho odvodili, že jako máme něco proti nim.  
*And from that, yes sure. And from that they inferred that we have something against them.*

**I.K.:** Aha.

**K.V.:** No a nechali nás policií zavřít, vzali nám ten materiál no a vodvezli nás na nějaký výbor komunistický strany někam do Hodonína nebo kam, že jo, no byla to sranda. A zdálo se, že to ani nedotočíme.

*Yes and someone made the police lock us up, they took our material yes and took us away to some kind of communist party committee in Hodonin or somewhere, that it, yes it was a gag.. And it seemed, that we would not even finish the film.*

**K.V.:** A tehdy tady byl takový solidní ředitel, v Praze, toho krátkého filmu, toho studia, tomu se to podařilo jaksi obrátit a já jsem to potom mohl dotáčet, ale do té Strážnice jsem už nikdy nejel.

*And that time there was such a nice director, in Prague, of this short film, the studio, that somehow managed to turn it round, and I could then follow through, but I never went to Strážnice again.*

**I.K.:** So basically the director of the festival, who was a musician himself, he called the police and they took them away to the police station. They took the, the script and they basically thought they had something against the festival.

**R.B.:** Aah, Strážnice.

**I.K.:** And it was, in the end it was the director of the short film institute here in Prague who managed to, to smooth everything but they didn't go back to Strážnice.

**R.B.:** Protože byl...Karlovy Vary.  
Because it was... Karlovy Vary.

**I.K.:** Aha, it was at the festival in Karlovy Vary.

**K.V.:** No jo, jenomže všichni si mysleli, že to ten festival vyhraje, jo. A nakonec to vyhrál průměrný film a já jsem se svým profesorem Klosem, vodjeli jsme domů, ani jsme na nic tam nečekali, prostě. To je. Představte si, týden se nemluví o ničem jiném než o tomhle filmu a pak se na vás jako vykašlou, protože už tam za tím byl to politický přání, že teda se o tom nemá mluvit. To znamená, že ten film se nesměl hrát ani v zahraničí jo. Mí kolegové, jako třeba Juráček, rozumíte, ti udělali film a pak dostávali v zahraničí ceny. Já jsem to nesměl ani vyvézt.

*Yeah, but everybody thought the film would win the festival, yeah. And in the end an average movie won, and I was with my professor Klos, we returned home, we did not even wait for anything there, basically It is. Imagine, during the week nobody talked about anything else but this film and then they betray you, because already there behind that it was a political desire not to talk about it. This means*

*that the film was not allowed to shown even abroad yeah. My colleagues, like Juráček, you know, they made a film and then they were receiving prizes abroad. I could not even export it.*

**R.B.:** Nesměl vyvézt. Co to?

*He was not allowed to export it. What is...?*

**K.V.:** Nesměl jsem to brát na festivaly.

*I was not allowed to take it to festivals.*

**I.K.:** He, they couldn't take the film abroad.

**K.V.:** Jo, takže von to nikdo neznal.

*Yeah, so nobody knew [the film].*

**R.B.:** A co, sorry, what was the, jaké byly cenzury strach, lidi by se učit od Moravská Hellas... to lidové umírala, že lidi jsou nostalgické, že socialistický systém byl chyby, co měli strach? Does that make sense?

*And, sorry, what was the, what was the censorship fear, what people would learn from the Moravská Hellas...folk is dying, that people are nostalgic, the socialist system had mistakes, what were they afraid of? Does that make sense?*

**K.V.:** To v tom všechno bylo. Podívejte. Tam je jeden člověk, který říká, napsal jsem paměti, smí být uveřejněnej jen první díl, a ten druhěj až po mé smrti. Ještě by mě někam zatáhli, čímž myslel strčili ho do vězení.

*Everything was there. Look. There is this one man, who says, I wrote my memoirs, but only the first part can be published and the second part after my death. They could pull me somewhere, by which he meant the prison.*

**I.K.:** There was a man who, who said I wrote memoirs but only the first part can be published and the second one after my death otherwise they would probably put me into prison.

**K.V.:** To je ten Šopík, ten tanečník, co tam tancuje.

*It is Šopík, this dancer, who dances there.*

**R.B.:** Tanečník?

*A dancer?*

**K.V.:** Jmenuje se Šopík. Takže byly tam věci, který jako nehledě na to, že ehm tam byla ještě scéna, která tam chybí. A měl jsem tam jsou takový, takový trampové, takoví divně oblečení kluci, který tam v jedné fázi recitovali Majakovského Lenina. A ten Lenin je zhruba o tom, že by mu bylo nepříjemný, kdyby viděl, co se děje, jo. A to jsem musel vyhodit. To mně řekli, že když to nevyhodím, tak ten film vůbec nikdo neuvidí. To do dneška je tam pasáž, kde se začne rozcházet zvuk a to jsme museli prostě už vyndat z hotové kopie.

*His name is Šopík. So there were things that, aside from the fact that there was a scene missing there. And I had there also some tramps, also weirdly clothed boys, who at one stage recited Mayakovsky's Lenin. And that Lenin is roughly about this, that it would be unpleasant, should he see, what was happening, yeah. And I had to cut it out. They said to me, that if I did not delete it, then no one would ever see the film. To date, there is a passage where the sound starts to break and so it is because we had already removed it to delete it from the finished copy.*

**I.K.:** So basically the copy was ready but they had to take away one scene about tramps and they were saying a poem by *Mayakovsky* called Lenin and Lenin in the poem says he would be kind of disappointed by seeing what's happening. So they had to, when it was ready, they had to take it away from the film so you can see the difference between what you can see and the sounds. Because they said that otherwise they would not show it anywhere. That was the condition.

**K.V.:** A ty kluci, co to tam recitovali, oni nemuměli ani dobře číst, takže to byla hrozná legrace.

*And these guys, who recited it there, they could not even read well, so it was a terrible joke.*

**I.K.:** And the guys who were reading that they could not even read properly so...  
(laughing)

**R.B.:** (laughing) Ve stejný rok byl konferenci o Kafka?  
*Was the Kafka Conference the same year?*

**K.V.:** No ano.

*Yeah yes.*



**R.B.:** Ano?

Yes?

**I.K.:** Ovlivnilo vás to nějak?

*Did it affect you somehow?*

**K.V.:** Ne, Kafku nemám rád. Ani jsem to nejmenoval. Protože Kafka je problém určitýho druhu psychózy z konce devatenáctého století. A to mě opravdu, to není Hašek, jo.

*No, I do not like Kafka. Nor did I name him. Because Kafka is a problem specific to the kind of psychosis from the end of the nineteenth century.*

And for me really, it's not Hašek, yeah.

**R.B.:** Ne. Hašek. So the, yeah, absurdní...

*No. Hašek. So the, yeah, absurd...*

**K.V.:** Ale pravda je, že ten Kafka byl jaksi používán opozicí jo i jako popis toho světa soudu a to ten socialismus taky vypadal jako svět soudů, jo jako tam bylo, jo, mluvit o něm bylo svým způsobem progresivní, jo, ale já nemyslím, že by to bylo správně postavený. Myslím, to je taková fáma. Je to něco jako třeba koukat na filmy Lars Von Teriera. Jo, to jsou nedomyšlený věci, které působí strašlivě intenzivně a v zásadě jsou špatně, jo.

*But the truth is that this Kafka was somehow being used by the opposition as a description of the world of a court and that socialism also appeared as a the world of a court, yeah like there was, yeah, talk about this was in a way progressive, yeah, but I do not think it was properly constructed. I think it is also a rumor. It's kind of like watching movies by Lars Von Trier. Yeah, they are half-baked things, which militates dreadful intensity and in principle are terrible, yeah.*

**R.B.:** Zajímavé.

*Interesting.*

**I.K.:** Rozumíš?

*You understand?*

**R.B.:** Víte, tentokrát doba, to je, že destalinizace opravdu začalo? Kdy destalinizace začalo...

*You know, in this time, that destalinization really started? When did destalinization start...*

**K.V.:** Kdy začalo? Heleďte ten zhruba v té době, kdy jsem dělal tu Moravskou Hellas, to znamená šedesát dva, šedesát tři.

*When did it start? Roughly at the time when I was making Moravská Hellas, that is sixty-two, sixty-three.*

**R.B.:** Šedesát tři.

*Sixty three.*

**K.V.:** Jo, tam se to, to se měnilo. Ten můj profesor, ten Elmar Klos, to byl dostal Oskara za film o tako, tako, takovém židovském příběhu, Obchod na korze prostě se to jmenovalo. No a von předtím byl vláčenej v tisku, že udělal něco jak bych řekl protistátního, pak jim udělal takovej film, aby se jim to líbilo, no a pak udělal teprve ten Obchod na Korze jo a to byl člověk. Podívejte se, já jsem se málem do tédle školy nedostal, jo. Protože jsem měl z národního výboru od nás z městečka papír v kádrových materiálách "máte-li za něj náhradu, nepřijmejte ho." To jsem měl v kádrových materiálech a kdybych zcela náhodou neměl strýce, kterej byl generálem a ten generál bojoval ještě v legiích za první republiky, jo. A on měl generálskou uniformu, protože byl tím generálem až do čepičky, do nějak padesátej let, jo. On šel a nechal si ukázat ty moje kádrový materiály, oni se ho báli, jo. Protože tak vysoce postavený a ten papír z mých materiálů vyndal a strčil tam jiněj vod nějakého známého komunisty, kterej napsal, jak jsem hodnej chlapec, jo a mě pak za rok vzali, jo, chápete. A to ještě po třech letech mě zase vyhodili z týhle školy za jak bych řekl velmi dobrý film, který sami ti profesoři chválili, a já musel jít do fabriky, rozumíte. Protože to bylo prolezlý fízlama všecho, tadle katedra byla prolezlá fízlama, to bylo hrozný. No a Moravskou Hellas jsem vůbec nesměl točit ve škole. A ten Elmar Klos mě zařídil, že jsem ji mohl natočit v Krátkým film. Ve škole pro mě nebyly peníze, jo. A pro jiný byli, jo, na voloviny.

*Yeah, there it is, it changed. My professor, Elmar Klos, he was awarded an Oscar for the film also, also, about this Jewish story Shop on Main Street it was called.*

*And previously he had been dragged through the press for doing something I would say was treasonous, then he made the sort of film that would please them, yes and then he made Shop on Main Street and it was the man. Look, I didn't almost make it to that school, yeah. Because I had a paper in a dossier from a local National Committee, "if you have a replacement for him, do not even take him." I had it in*

*a dossier and if it was not for my uncle who's the general and the general fought there in legions behind first Republic, yeah. And he had a general's uniform, because he was the general to the cap, until the fifties, yeah. He went and let them show him my stuff, materials - they were afraid of him, yeah. Because of such a high ranking. He took the paper out of my materials and put another one from an unknown communist, who's written that I was a good boy, yeah, and they accepted me next year, yeah, you know. And even after three years they again kicked me out of this school for what I would say a very good movie that they themselves professors praised, and I had to go to the factory, you understand. Because it was riddled with police, all things, that Department was riddled with police, it was terrible. Moravská Hellas well, I could not shoot at all in school. And that Elmar Klos arranged for me that I was able to shoot the short film. At school there was no money for me, yeah. And for the other was, yeah, it was bullshit.*

**R.B.:** He had to make it outside of school for money.

**I.K.:** Yeah, because apparently there were not any money.

**K.V.:** To znamená, víte, měl jsem hrozný štěstí. No a ještě jsem měl to štěstí, protože že vod toho osmdesát, že vod roku devadesát čtyři jsem zase tady. Tak po roce osmdesát devět mě taky nechtěli. Tady byla taková parta, že oni mě sem nechtěli vůbec pustit.

*That means, you know, I was terribly lucky. Well, and I was luckier yet, because that from the eighty..., that from the year ninety-four I have been here again. So after eighty-nine they also did not want me. There was such a bunch here that they did not want to let me in.*

[Pause]

**R.B.:** [To I.K.] I think it's easier if you try to read my questions. It's not really working.

**I.K.:** Rozumíte, nebo mám to raději číst? Rozumíte, když mluví?

*Do you understand, or would it be better to read it? Do you understand, if it is spoken?*

**R.B.:** I was thinking, yeah – je film taky komentář o tom, jak lidé přednost průmyslově vyrobené výrobky, nebo chtěla by spíše než ruční práce, byl to inspirovaný vaší manuální práci v Zlíně? Like, co je, co je....

*I was thinking, yeah – is the movie also a commentary on how people prefer industrially manufactured products, or would rather rather the handiwork – was it inspired by your manual work in Zlín? Like what is, what is...*

**K.V.:** To ne, to ne. Podívejte se, můj strýc byl evangelickým farářem ve Strážnici, jo. A my jsme tam s tatínkem jezdili, takže já jsem věděl, jak ty slavnosti vypadají a pak jsem jaksi několik měsíců objížděl ty vsi a navštěvoval jsem různé lidi, co s tím folklórem měli něco společného, protože jsem viděl, jak je to šílený. Jak je to hloupý, jaký to je neštěstí. Protože musíte si představit, že na ty slavnosti tam jezdili prezidenti, jako Novotný, rozumíte, měli na zámku svůj byt. To měl ministr zdravotnictví Plojhar tam měl svůj byt a tam se opíjeli a tam měli ty holky, prostě to byl celý systém takovej, jo. Tak vo tom já jsem udělal, ale vlastně naštěstí to měl být původně hraný film a měl to být příběh, měl tam být příběh holky, která oteče, jako, že je těhotná, aby si mohla vzít takového krásného velkého černocho, jenomže, jak bych řekl, von ji nechtěl a vona zase splaskla. Rozumíte, přeložte ji to.

*It is not, it is not. Look, my uncle was the Evangelical pastor in Strážnice, yeah. And we were there with my dad, so I knew how the festivities looked, and then I went around the villages for some months and I visited people who had something to do with the folklore because I saw how crazy it was. How stupid it is, how unhappy it is. Because you have to imagine the presidents like Novotny, you understand, they had their apartment at the castle. The Health Minister, Plojhar, had his apartment there, and there they drank and there were the girls, it was just the whole system, yeah. That's what I did, but fortunately it was supposed to be a feature film, and it was supposed to be a story of a girl who swells up like she's pregnant so she could marry such a beautiful big black man, but how do I put it, he did not want her, and she again deflated. You understand, translate it.*

**R.B.:** I just didn't understand the last bit.

**I.K.:** So the story of a girl who is pregnant so she could marry a black guy but he does not want her so she gets slim, unpregnant.

**R.B.:** That's the end of the story.

**I.K.:** It was meant to be played.

**K.V.:** To je psychiatrií popsaný případ jo, je to, to je jaksi opravdu lékařskéj případ, takovej proběhl. Jenomže. A mělo to být jako symbolický, přes to napsaný, přes tu Strážnici. Ale ukázalo se, že jsem nedostal velkého černocho, že jsem neměl tu herečku, kterou jsem chtěl, a vlastně to pozadí, já jsem najednou začal točit to pozadí, těch, toho příběhu, netočil jsem už ten příběh, a vlastně čím víc to bylo děsivější a šílenější a čím víc jsem se mohl při tom smát vevnitř, tak to mě vlastně, tam jsem vlastně pochopil, jakěj film mám dělat. Já jsem nikdy do té doby takovej film nedělal. Jo. A vlastně všechny ty moje filmy jsou založeny na tom smíchovým.

*This case is known in psychiatry, it is, it's a really medical case, that's what happened. However, it was supposed to be a symbolic, despite being written through Strážnice. But it turned out I did not get a big black man, that I did not have the actress I wanted, and actually the background, I suddenly started to film the background, those of that story, I did not film that story anymore, and actually the more it was more scary and crazy, and the more I laughed inside, so I actually, I actually understood what movie I should make. I had never done such a movie before. Yeah. And in fact, all my films are based on 'the laughable'. [Vachek has coined this term, an amalgam meaning that he has created this for laughter.]*

**I.K.:** So what was he saying that it was little original. This original story and also this one was just a background of the story. But then when he started shooting, he started to focus on the background only and the more it was horrible the more he laughed. And he's saying that all his film are based on 'laugh'.

**K.V.:** To znamená, to znamená, že já jsem na tom filmu vlastně více méně definoval můj příští celoživotní způsob práce.

*That is, I mean, I more or less defined the next lifecycle of my work through that film.*

**R.B.:** Příští celo.... What was that?

*The next whole... What was that?*

**I.K.:** He basically defined his way of working for the rest of his career.

**K.V.:** Víte, co je, co to smíchové je? Radši ji překládejte a já budu... Smíchové znamená, že vy víte, že žádnou věc nemůžete popsat úplně přesně. Že nemůžete mít doopravdy v životě úplnou pravdu.

*Do you know what it is, what 'smíchové' is? You better translate it and I will be ... 'smíchové' means you know that you cannot describe anything exactly. That you can not really have the real truth in life.*

**I.K.:** So you can't just describe anything precisely and you can't be truthful.

**K.V.:** A jakmile si to uvědomíte, tak všechno, co nevíte, zůstává v tom, čemu nerozumíte, co nevíte, zůstává v tom poli toho smíchu. To znamená, to znamená, že vy vždycky připouštíte, že to, co vidíte, není úplně celá pravda.

*And once you realise it, everything you don't know remains in what you don't understand, you don't know, it stays in that field of laughter. This means that you always admit that what you see is not exactly the whole truth.*

**I.K.:** Okay, so once you realize that ...[speaking together].

**K.V.:** To znamená, že já, vím, že lidé, kterým se směju, za to nemůžou. Já je mám rád.

*This means that I know that the people I laugh at have not done anything wrong. I love them.*

**I.K.:** So he is laughing about people but he likes them.

**K.V.:** Jo, rozumíte a tímto způsobem, když vedete tu analýzu a řeknete ty základní věci, jo, třeba, že ten přístup k umění v rámci toho socialismu byl špatně, tak vlastně řeknete takovou jako základní tézi no a teď vlastně líčíte, jak tak asi vypadalo to špatně a zaplat' pámbu za každé špatně. To je hrozně složitý. Vemte si tu Voltairovu větu, že to, co kolem nás je, je to nejlepší z možného.

*Yeah, you understand and in this way, as you conduct the analysis and you say the basic things, yeah, for example that the approach to art within socialism was wrong, so you will actually say as the basic theory yeah, and well now you actually describe how it looked wrong and thank God for every wrong. This is terribly complicated. Take Voltaire's theorem that what's around us is the best of all the possibilities.*

**R.B.:** The best possible.

**K.V.:** Jo a to znamená, že všechno to obsahuje nějaký tendence a ti takzvaní umělci, co tam jsou, všichni mají nějaký důstojný obsah.

*Yeah, and that means it all has some tendency and those so-called artists who are there, all of them have some decent content.*

**R.B.:** Obsah?

*Content?*

**K.V.:** Jsou to zajímaví lidé. Jo. A vlastně jsou uvnitř nějakého sevření, co je nutí k tomu, aby se často chovali jako hovada.

*They are interesting people. Yeah. And there's actually some force in them that makes them often behave like beasts.*

**R.B.:** So the interesting people, what was the last? They...?

**I.K.:** This is all the people they have something adorable and nice about them it's just they are like enclosed that it make behave in the situation.

**K.V.:** Nikdo se nikomu nevysmívá.

*No one's laughing at anyone.*

**I.K.:** So it's not about. It's never joking about them.

**K.V.:** Já se jenom směju. Jak se můžete, jak se můžete jinak zachovat k nějakému monstru. Když je monstrum nějaké vznikne, rozumíte, no tak vidíte, že to je k smíchu, ale nemůžete tím pohrdat, protože to je, nemůžete se tomu posmívat, můžete se tomu jenom divit. A čím se víc se u toho můžete smát, tím víc je to v pořádku. To, ten, to znamená, že se tím smíchem vlastně vyjadřujete, že se toho monstra nebojíte.

*I just laugh. How can you, how can you otherwise behave towards a monster.*

*When the monster comes into being, you understand, you see that it's funny, but you cannot despise it because it is, you can not mock it, you can only wonder. And the more you can laugh at, the more it is ok. That, that, it means that by laughing you actually express that you're not afraid of the monsters.*

**R.B.:** Mmm, moc zajímavé. Ano.

*Mm, very interesting. Yes.*

**K.V.:** Musíte si říct, že třeba v té době, já nevím, mezi mé přátele patřili surrealisti. Jako Mikuláš Medek a Effenberger a další, který nesměli nikde nic vystavit a pro tyhle pitomce se dělaly slavnosti, chápete.

*You must say that, for example, at that time, I don't know, amongst my friends belonged surrealists. Like Mikuláš Medek and Effenberger and others, who were not allowed to exhibit anything, and these fools made festivals, you understand.*

**R.B.:** Ah, já, hm. Za několik dní jsem se setkala s několika designery a jsem se zeptal jich, them, jich, jestli myslí, že vtip je nejdůležitější věc za komunismu a každý řekl ano, keramiky, keramika, umění, nábytek, každý.

*Ah, I um. Within a few days I've met several designers and asked them, them, whether they think the joke is the most important thing behind Communism and everyone said yes, ceramics, ceramics, art, furniture - everybody.*

**K.V.:** No jistě, a to taky je podstata, podstata, nová podstata toho Komenského. Dyť ty jeho nejdůležitější sentence, on přišel na to, že děti se mají učit v mateřském jazyku, ne latinsky a že je nemají učitelé mlátit rákoskou, že je nemají trestat.

*Certainly, and that is also the essence, the nub, the new essence of that Comenius. Nevertheless, his most important sentence, he arrived at the idea that children should learn in their mother tongue, not Latin, and that teachers shouldn't thrash a cane to punish them.*

**I.K.:** He's going back to Comenius. He was kind of like ehm, he worked like in education, he wanted to improve education, and finally came up with an idea that the kids should learn in their own mother tongue not in Latin and that teachers should not beat them, there should not be any physical punishments in classrooms.

**K.V.:** A přitom k tomu rozvíjel teorie, jak by měla vypadat vláda na světě. Co by to měli být ti vládcí. A jak by to vlastně mělo být demokraticky uspořádáno. To znamená, že to čtete a musíte se smát, protože musíte okamžitě vidíte, jak to bylo nepřijatelné pro to okolí. Jo tak je to všechno ty kvalitní věci jsou smílové. Teď si vezměte, jak ten Blake je přesnej. Já se k němu pořád jako vracím, tak dokola.



*In doing so, he developed theories of what government should look like in the world. What the rulers should be like. And how it should be democratically organized. That is, you read it and you have to laugh because you must immediately see how unacceptable it was for peers. Yeah, so it's the case that all that good stuff is funny. Now, see how accurate Blake is. I keep coming back to him, over and over.*

**I.K.:** Okay, he was talking about that Komenský an origin for the world democratic system. He talked about again the humor, laughing is the most important thing and referred back to Blake.

**K.V.:** Ten katolicismus byl stejně příšerný jako ten komunismus provozovaný tady. Naprosto je to samá mrtvola prosím vás, jo. A přitom v zásadě to není špatně, protože, protože ten bůh opravdu existuje, ale s tím bohem se nemůžete stýkat na základě rituálu. Rozumíte, s bohem se stýkáte tak, jak se stýkají ti skuteční mystici, jako já nevím, svatý František, rozumíte mě, nebo já nevím, třeba Darwin, s prominutím. Protože, protože mají hluboký myšlenky. Věda, je založená na tom, že vy si vyčistíte, že se zbavíte toho ego a slyšíte se uvnitř, jo, jo, to ti velký umělci uměli. Vono opravdu nejde vo nic jinýho. Tady v Čechách je třeba já nevím, Mucha nebo Mikuláš Aleš, jo. To je naprosto geniální, ale je tu taky spousta umělců, který jenom napodobují ty druhý, rozumíte jo, a dělají, co se v tom čase nosí. Já říkám potom, že dělají design, ale je to úplně na prd.

*That catholicism was as gruesome as the communism which operated here. Absolutely it's the same corpse, yes. And basically it is not wrong because, because God really exists, but a God you cannot associate with ritual. You understand, you meet God as the real mystics meet him, as I do not know, Saint Francis, you understand me, or I do not know, like Darwin [sic], forgive me. Because, because they have deep thoughts. Science is based on the fact that you will cleanse yourself to get rid of that ego and hear yourself inside, yeah, yeah, those great artists knew it. They really don't do anything different. Here in Bohemia I do not know, Mucha or Mikuláš Aleš, yeah. This is absolutely brilliant, but there are also many artists who only imitate the others, you understand and do what is fashionable at that time. I'm saying then, that they're doing 'design', but it's complete rubbish.*

**R.B.:** So there, there was a word. Different artists – Aleš...

**I.K.:** Okay....he's saying that comparing Catholicism and communism were the same but... It cannot be, you cannot approach God through rituals, it can be done only in a mystic way as like saint, the saints would do, when you kind of get rid of everything unimportant and you kind of focus on, on what's left.

**K.V.:** Jo, já jsem se vás ani nezeptal, nevadí vám to moc?

*Yeah, I did not even ask you, do not you mind it too much? [refers to pipe]*

**I.K.:** Is that okay?

**R.B.:** Abso... ano, ano [yes, yes]. It's fine.

**I.K.:** And then he was talking about artists like Mucha, Aleš who are original. And the other people who are just kind of followers. They do more design than the art.

**K.V.:** Ty velký umělci vypadají vždycky trošku hloupě, víte.

*Those great artists always look a little stupid, you know.*

**R.B.:** A Hellas od Rodin, Rodin?

*And Hellas from Rodin, Rodin?*

**K.V.:** Rodin, Rodin je zajímavěj no.

*Rodin, Rodin, is interesting yeah.*

**R.B.:** A Rodin um. He called 'hellas'...

**K.V.:** Takhle, o Rodinovi se v Hellas mluví. Jo. Ten Rodin někdy kolem tak osmnáct set devadesát nebo devatenáct set deset, někdy kolem toho devatenáct set byl, oni ho přivezli na Slovácko a ono se mu to hrozně líbilo, jak to bylo. Jak bych řekl, takový fyzický a krásný a bylo to barevný. No ale to byla taková Rodinova iluze. Já to tam mám jenom proto, protože to je prostě trošku legrační.

*I talk about Rodin in Hellas. Yeah. That Rodin sometime around eighteen hundred ninety or ninety-nine, sometime around nineteen hundred, he was brought to Slovácko and he loved it the way it was. How would I say it,, also so physical and beautiful and it was colourful. Well, that was Rodin's illusion. I only have it there because it's just a little funny.*

**R.B.:** So Rodin thought that it's very beautiful as a part of a joke.

**K.V.:** Tam byl takový, takový, kolem toho roku devatenáct set a potom, byl takovej malíř, který se jmenoval Józsa Úprka.

*There was there also, also around the year nineteen hundred, was also a painter named Józsa Úprka.*

**R.B.:** Úprka. Zním.

*Úprka. I know.*

**K.V.:** A ten maloval takový. Víte, co je to na hranici kýče, jo. To znamená není to moc kvalitní malování.

*And he painted also such. You know, it is on the edge of kitsch, yeah. It means it is not a very good quality painting.*

**R.B.:** Ne moc? [*Not much?*] It's not quality art?

**I.K.:** It's not very good quality.

**R.B.:** Národní. [*National*] I guess. Is it national painting. Narodní. [*National*]

**K.V.:** Ano, národní. Byl takovej lidovej no. A je to hrozný. Je to vyvázaný taky na ten katolicismus a prostě je to pochybný no, ale taky von potom se mu líbili trošku na konci života ti náckové. Von to je to strašně složitý. Ach.

*Yes, national. It was also kind of folk, yeah. And it's terrible. It is also connected to this Catholicism, and it is simply dubious, but then he also liked Nazis a little bit [pejorative slang for Nazi] at the end of his life. He is...that is terribly complicated. Ah.*

**R.B.:** Mmm. A byla dva hlavní reporterů. Byli Brechtian nebo herecký chór.

*And there were two main reporters. They were Brechtian or an acting chorus.*

**K.V.:** Víte, ti dva reportéři, to je pro mě moc důležitý. Za první, jsou to bratři Saudkové. Jeden je slavný fotograf a druhý je slavný karikaturista.

*You know, the two reporters, that's very important to me. Firstly, they are Saudek brothers. One is a famous photographer and the other is a famous cartoonist.*

**R.B.:** V té, v té době?

*At that, at that time?*

**K.V.:** No, v tomhle čase. Jeden umřel nedávno a ten druhý je fotograf, jo. Ale téhdy ještě ničím nebyli. A já jsem je na ten film vzal proto, že to byli dvojčata, že si byli podobní, víte. A oblékl jsem je do těch uniforem, protože v uniformách si byli ještě podobnější.

*Yes, at this time. One died recently and the other is a photographer, yeah. But then they were nothing else at that time. And I took them in the movie because they were twins, because they were alike, you know. And I put them in those uniforms because in uniforms they were even more similar.*

**R.B.:** Podobnější?

*Similar?*

**I.K.:** They were twins and they were wearing uniforms.

**K.V.:** No a je jsem strčil do toho prostředí, které taky chodilo v uniformách, teda v krojích.

*Yes and I put them in that environment, which was also in uniforms, that is, in costumes.*

**R.B.:** Ah, uhm, ah, zeptal [he asked], did he ask them to be kind of Brechtian, that's my... jako Brecht? [like Brecht]

**I.K.:** Jestli jste jim jakoby řekl, že mají mít ty dvě role, jedna ta brechtovská a jedna ten řecký chór, jako jestli mají takhle reprezentovat dvě různé jakoby linie nebo přístupy?

*Did you tell them to have the two roles, one Brechtian and one Greek chorus, as if they were to represent two different lines or approaches?*

**K.V.:** Podívejte se, voni byli sami tvořiví. To já jsem ani nevěděl, co z nich ještě bude, jo. Ale pravda je, že jak je ta písnička, kterou zpívají na začátku, jo. Tak to začli zpívat sami od sebe, ten text k té melodii někde sami napsali, jo. A mně se to tak

líbilo a najednou to vysvětlovalo i, podívejte se, oni tam říkají, to byste musela přesně přeložit. Banálnost lásky a všeobímající cit.

*Look, they were creative themselves. I did not even know what they were going to be one day, yeah. But it the truth is, that how the song, which they sing at the beginning, yeah. So they started to sing on their own, they wrote the lyrics of the melody somewhere, yeah. And I liked it, and suddenly they explained it, look, they say, you'd have to translate it exactly. The banality of love and all-encompassing emotion.*

**R.B.:** Banal, they always speak together and...

**I.K.:** Banality of love.

**K.V.:** Jako, že láska je banální.

*Like, that love is banal.*

**R.B.:** Banality of love.

**K.V.:** Ale je to všeobímající cit.

*But it is the all-encompassing emotion.*

**I.K.:** It's an emotion that would embrace everything.

**K.V.:** A víte co, láska jako všeobjímající cit vlastně je něco, co všichni ti mystici znají. Oni to vlastně jen pojmenovali náhodou na začátku. Jo, to je, co je Dante s Beatricií, jo ve všech, co je Diotima v Hölderlinovi, to je prostě úplně základní filozofický element, no tak jsem to tam strčil na začátek a pak oni tam pobíhali v těch uniformách, tak jako kolem nich ti Slováci pobíhali v těch svéj krojích, v těch uniformách, a ty uniformy, dívejte se ještě, padesát let předtím, než jsem to točil, tak ty obleky těch lidí na vesnici byly daleko jednodušší a byly daleko hezčí. V tý době, kdy já už jsem to točil, to bylo všechno pošíťý těma perličkama a tím zlatem. Rozumíte. Něco, co tam dřív vůbec nebylo, jo. A byl to hlavně důvod, že každá vesnice měla svůj kroj. Tím oni poznali, že ten mládenec je z jiné vesnice, nebo ta holka že je z jiné vesnice. A to používali zase že ti kluci dávali pozor, aby ti kluci z jiné vesnice jim neodvedli hezký a bohatý holky. Hned je poznali a hned je zbili.

*And you know, love as an all-embracing feeling is actually something that all these mystics know. They actually just named it at the beginning. Yeah, that's what Dante and Beatrice are, all of Diotima in Hölderlin, that's just a basic philosophical element, but I put it in the beginning, and then they were running around in those uniforms. The Slovaks were running around in those costumes, in those uniforms, and the uniforms, look, fifty years before I was shooting, so the clothes of those people in the village were much simpler and they were far nicer. At that time when I was shooting, it was all covered with the beads and gold. You understand. Something that had not been there before, yeah. And it was mainly the reason that each village had its own costume. So they knew that the boy was from another village, or the girl was from another village. And they used it again so that the guys were careful not to let the guys from another village bring them nice and wealthy girls. They immediately recognized them and they were beaten.*

**I.K.:** So back to your question. He didn't tell them any, any. They didn't know... [speaking together].

**R.B.:** Just said to be banal and speak together.

**I.K.:** No, no, no. They came up with the song by themselves, they wrote the text and he talked about the text, about the banality of love and this is a kind of like the the classical philosophical thought really about that love would embrace everything but they it was spontaneous and so he left it them and then he past [sic] to talking about the traditional costumes, like fifty years before he started shooting the film, they were much more simple and more beautiful and later they started adding pearls and gold which wasn't really very traditional. But there was another meaning to the costumes because each village would have a slightly different one so you would understand who is from which village and the guys would also be careful about the girls the rich girls from their village would, they would not be taken by guys from elsewhere. They were protective.

**K.V.:** Víte, to Slovácko bylo hrozně krutý, jo. Ta Morava vesnická byla krutá. Moje maminka z takové vesnice pocházela odsud, takže já jsem, a ti lidé kvůli kousku pole se nenáviděli třeba celý život. Bratr mé maminky nemluvil s moji babičkou celý život, protože mu dala málo pole. Když jaksí dělali odkaz. To není žádná idylická společnost tam nebyla, to bylo opravdu příšerný.

*You know, Slovácko was terribly cruel, yeah. Rural Moravia was cruel. My mother also came from that kind of village, and so I was... and these people, due to a piece of field hated each other for their whole life. My mother's brother did not talk to my grandmother whole life [sic] because she gave him too small a field. When they were making a will. It is not an idyllic society there, it was really horrible.*

**R.B.:** It makes me think of.. A co si myslíte o městské a venkovské předělu v té, v té době. Like the divide between urban and rural?

*It makes me think of.. And what do you think about the urban and rural divide in the... at that time. Like the divide between urban and rural?*

**I.K.:** You mean the difference?

**K.V.:** Víte.

*You know.*

**R.B.:** Or like there was a divide, in the film it mentions the man from Prague who was like a state representative versus the way the village gets kind of used as a tool, it's like urban versus rural.

**I.K.:** Ona se ptá vlastně jakoby na tu roli toho člověka, který přichází z města. Jestli je to, jestli jsou tam vesničané jakoby využíváni, nebo zneužíváni, nebo jaká je tam vlastně ta rovnováha nebo nerovnováha.

*She actually asks for the role of the man who comes out of town. Whether it is, whether the villagers are used or abused or what is actually the balance or imbalance.*

**K.V.:** Podívejte se, v osmnáctém století byl vynalezen parní stroj.

*Look, in the eighteenth century a steam engine was invented.*

**R.B.:** In eighteenth century there was...?

**I.K.:** It's the steam engine was.

**K.V.:** Ten parní stroj skončil, ukončil film. A všichni šli do měst do továren, jo. No a ti, co zůstali, na tom venkově, se pomalinku od těch feudálů osvobozovali.

*The steam engine finished, it ended film. And everyone went to the cities to the factories, yeah. Well, and those who stayed in the countryside, freed themselves from the feudalism.*

**R.B.:** So is that freedom of being outside the city.

**I.K.:** Yeah, those who stayed in the countryside were slowly liberated.

**K.V.:** Jo, takže moje maminka když chtěla číst, tak měli na návsi elektrické osvětlení, tak si tam chodila pod tu lampu v noci sednout, jo. A doma nemohla, protože neměli světlo, měli jenom svíčky a bylo špatně vidět. To je, no a to znamená, že to město bylo strašně důležitý. Město mělo najednou elektřinu díky parním strojům a já nevím co, no a ti lidi za tím šli. No a ti, co tam zůstávali, tak se se ještě, ještě po druhé světové válce v podstatě neměli moc dobře. Ted' vám řeknu něco, se vám nebude moc líbit, ale díky těm komunistům, kteří udělali ty družstva. No, spojili více zemědělců dohromady. Odstranili statkáře. Nebyly velké statky. *Yeah, so my mother, when she wanted to read, they had electric lights on the main street, so she went to sit down under that lamp at night, yeah. And she could not do it at home because they had no light, they only had candles, and it was bad to see. That is, well, and that means the city was terribly important. The city suddenly had electricity through steam machines, and I do not know what, and those people went for it. Well, those who stayed there were still, after World War II, they didn't have it it very good. Now I will tell you something you will not like very much, but it was thanks to those Communists, who made the co-operatives. Well, they brought more farmers together. They have removed landowners. They were not big farms.*

**I.K.:** So they got rid of the rich landowners and they had united a few fields and they worked together.

**R.B.:** Collective farming.

**K.V.:** Najednou prostě byli daleko bohatší. Oni v těch padesátých letech vlastně to byli nejbohatší lidé v Čechách. Nebo v šedesátých letech, jo. Protože oni opravdu měli víc prostředků.



*Suddenly they were much richer. They were actually the richest people in Bohemia in the 1950s. Or in the sixties, yeah. Because they really had more money.*

**I.K.:** Yeah. It's coming from the situation where the city could progress also for example, for example, of having the lightning at home or not... [speaking together]. And then he's saying that it was like a hub until the war... [speaking together]. They made them richer, the poorer people.

**K.V.:** Máte to jako v Anglii, že jo. Byl lord, že jo, a ten měl všechno a ty ostatní byli společensky níž. Dokonce to ještě v tý Anglii ještě dodneška přetrvává.  
*You have it in England, right. There was a lord, that yes, and he had everything and the others were socially lower. Even that there in England still exists today.*

**I.K.:** So it was similar as in England. The lower society there is still, still this kind of poor... [interrupted].

**R.B.:** ...Section.

**K.V.:** Jo, kdežto, kdežto díky těm komunistům se tyhle společensky levely na tom venkově setřely.  
*Yeah, while, thanks to those Communists, the social levels in the countryside have faded.*

**I.K.:** As basically all they did, they basically obviously kind of cancelled the very poor and very rich so everybody was more equal which was kind of from certain point of view kind of good that people were not so poor.

**K.V.:** Jo, v každé vsi byl jeden dva statkáři a ty ostatní pro ně pracovali, že jo.  
*Yeah, there were two landowners in every village and the others worked for them, right.*

**R.B.:** There was state work.

**I.K.:** Yeah, there would be two rich families... [interrupted].

**K.V.:** Takže je to ten život je skutečně divadlo hrůzy. To není žádná legrace.  
*So it's this life is really a theatre of horror. It's not any fun.*

**R.B.:** Jeden britský spisovatel přečetla, že české nové vlny filmy by být, can be, může called, řekl socialism, socialistické film, protože byly vyrobeny za socialismu. Co si myslíte?

One British writer I read, that the Czech new wave of films would be, can be, can be called, said socialism, socialist film because they were made under Socialism. What do you think?

**K.V.:** Podívejte se, šedesátý osmý rok a demokratický socialismus byl obrovský intelektuální výkon, jo. Byl stejně kvalitní, i když nebyl v takovém rozsahu jako dejme tomu hippies ve spojených státech nebo Martin Luther King ve spojených státech. Rozumíte a nebo i to, že tam byl ten Kennedy, který to postavil na jinou úroveň. Že nechal, nechal ty, nechal ty hippies a ty černochoy dosáhnout toho, co chtěli. A taky ho zabili za to si myslím. To znamená a ten demokratický socialismus znamenal pro východní Evropu něco podobného, něco podobného jako byli třeba pařížský studentský bouře v osmašedesátém a když máte důležitý pohyb ve společnosti, tak máte hned taky umění. Když ten pohyb není, tak nemáte obvykle žádný kvalitní umění a to bych chtěl ještě zdůraznit, když dneska se dívám na filmy svých vrstevníků, tak obvykle zjistím, že to nejsou moc dobré filmy, až na pár výjimek. Ale všechny jsou udělaný tak, že každý se snažil nedělat, dělat to jinak, dělat to tím způsobem, jakým se film nedělal. Jo a rozumíte mě a to je vlastně to pro, to bylo v celé té společnosti, dělat ten socialismus tak, jak se nikdy nedělal. No a to se na sebe, jako tenhle vztah k té skutečnosti se vrstvil, jo. A proto ta nová vlna je dodneška zajímavá. Vždyť takhle se taky nedělaly filmy, chápete to. Jo, kdybyste viděla, jak se ke mně chovali, jo, to prostě, prostě, promítač v té firmě, pro kterou jsem to dělal, říkal, že jako před tou Moravskou Hellas tam byl klid a pak už nikdy tam žádný klid nebyl. Chápete, to je prostě, tak to je, že každéj to dělal, jak se to nedělá. A z toho to všechno vzniklo. Že to potom jako vklouzlo zas do toho systému, jak se to dělá, že jo. Ten Forman udělal hloupýho Amádea a podobné pitomosti, jo, ale na tom začátku to nevypadalo špatně, jo. No tak je to tak.

*Look, the sixty-eighth year and democratic socialism was a tremendous intellectual performance, yeah. It was just as good as it was, not to such an extent, as the hippies in the United States or Martin Luther King in the United States. You think, or the fact that there was Kennedy, who put it on a different level. That he let, let, let the hippies and the blacks get what they wanted. And they also killed him for that. This means that the democratic socialism meant something similar to Eastern*

*Europe, something similar to the Paris student storm in 1985, and when you have an important movement in society, you also have art. If that motion is not happening, you do not usually have any good art, and I would like to emphasise this when I look at the films of my peers today, so I usually find out that they are not very good movies, except a few exceptions. But all are done so that everyone did not do it, they did it differently, doing it the way the movie was not made. Yeah and you understand me, and that's what it was for, it was in the whole society, to do socialism as it never did itself. Well, that, like this relationship to that fact, lay upon it, yeah. And that's why the new wave is interesting nowadays. That's not how movies were doing it, you know. Yeah, if you saw how they treated me, yeah, just that, just, the projector in the company for which I was working, said that there was peace there before the Moravská Hellas, and then there was no peace. You see, that's just, so it is that everyone did it, how it's not done. And that's everything about it. That it then slipped into that system again, as it is, that it does. Forman made stupid Amadeus and such stupidity, yeah, but it did not look bad at the beginning, yeah. Yes well, it is as it is.*

**I.K.:** Yeah, there was movement everywhere in society and this generates the art.

**R.B.:** To do something different to the socialist film in the 1950s.

**I.K.:** Yeah, when he now watches films made by people from his generation they are not great but he can still see that they are trying to do it differently and that what he can say about that year they did it as it was not supposed to be done in a different way. So that was at the beginning and then he talked about Forman and his *Amadeus* which is kind of like it's not the same but the beginning it was, doing things differently.

**R.B.:** Doing things differently. Hm. Jaký um, filozofické přečetla... [Jaký um, filozofické přečetla...] I'm trying to say, what kind of which philosophers was he reading at the time?

**I.K.:** Aha, jakého filozofa jste četl, o koho jste se zajímal v té době, když jste to točil?

Oh, what kind of philosopher did you read, who were you interested in at the time when you shot it?

**K.V.:** Já to, ale, tady v Čechách byl zajímavý Antonín Kosík.  
*I did, but here in Bohemia Antonín Kosík was interesting.*

**R.B.:** Karel Kosík.

**K.V.:** Karel Kosík, jo. Dialektika konkrétního.  
*Karel Kosík, yeah. Dialectics of the Concrete.*

**R.B.:** Ano, Dialectic of... dialectika konkrétního.  
*Yes, Dialectics of... Dialectics of the Concrete.*

**K.V.:** Ale samozřejmě se četl Sartre a rakouský Fišer.  
*But of course I read Sartre and the Austrian, Fišer.*

**R.B.:** Ano, Fišer.  
*Yes, Fišer.*

**K.V.:** Ale mně osobně pro mě je důležitěj Nietzsche, Kant, jo, Sokrátes k Platónovi.  
To je pro jako mě zajímavý.  
*But personally, Nietzsche, Kant, yeah, Socrates to Plato, are important to me. That's interesting for me.*

**R.B.:** Protože myslím, že je..um, unusual?  
*Because I think, that is... um, unusual?*

**I.K.:** Neobvyklé.  
*Unusual.*

**R.B.:** Neobvyklé, že spisovatel jako Karel Kosík, ehm, každý mohli četli Kosík.  
*Unusual that a writer like Karel Kosík, er, everyone could read Kosík.*

**K.V.:** No, proto ho taky vyhodili po revoluci z Karlovy Univerzity.  
*Well, that's why they fired him after the revolution from Charles University.*

**I.K.:** Aha, Rebecca se ptá, jakoby, jestli to bylo neobvyklé v té době, jako vůbec to, že lidé mohli číst Karla Kosíka, že byl k dispozici.

*Oh, Rebecca asks, as if it was unusual at the time, like the fact that people could read Karel Kosík that he was available.*

**K.V.:** Protože on byl součástí té obrozující se komunistické strany.  
*Because he was part of that revivalist Communist Party.*

**R.B.:** Napsal články na *Literární noviny*.  
*He wrote articles for Literary News.*

**K.V.:** Podívejte se, ty komunisti nebyli všechno zločinci a v těch šedesátých letech se tam objevili jaksi vzdělaní lidé v té straně a ty podporovali se navzájem, to znamená, že byl tam ten Dubček, byl tam ten Smrkovský a k tomu patřili i vědci, jo, jako ten Kosík, nebo byl ekonom Šik.  
*Look, the Communists weren't all criminals, and in those sixties there were some educated people in the party, and they supported each other, that means that Dubček was there, Smrkovský was there, and the scientists, too, yeah, like the Kosik, or the economist Šik.*

**R.B.:** A Ivan Sviták.  
And Ivan Sviták.

**K.V.:** Sviták. Taky ano, taky ho mám, některý z těch filmů. Kosíka jsem tady měl kdysi na semináři. Ale jako charakteristický je po tom roce osmdesát devět, jak ta revoluce, která tady proběhla byla v podstatě pod kontrolou tajných služeb víte, takže já o žádný revoluci nevím, jo. Je to až legrační. Támhle existovaly dvojí tajné služby. Tajné služby, které jaksi poslouchaly Gorbačova a tajné služby, které poslouchaly ty bývalé, v tom Rusku. Zrovna tak, to bylo v Čechách. Část těch tajných služeb už šla s těma lidma toho Gorbačova a do toho samozřejmě bylo to CIA, že jo. A prakticky jaksi alespoň, co já vím, tak toho Havla vybrali nejméně dva roky před revolucí, že bude tím prezidentem, takže byla to taková jako hra sehraná na lidi, který ovšem se na ní těšili a účastnili se jí potom.

*Sviták. Also, yes, I also have one of those movies. I had a seminar here with Kosík. But as a characteristic of that year, eighty-nine, as the revolution that took place here was basically under the control of secret services, you know, so I don't know about any revolution, yeah. It's funny. There were double secret services there. Secret services that somehow listened to Gorbachev and the secret services that listened to the former, in Russia. Just as it was in Bohemia. Part of the secret*

*services had already gone with the people of that Gorbachev, and of course it was the CIA, right. And at least somehow I know, Havel was chosen to be the president at least two years before the Revolution, so it was like a game played on people, but they were looking forward to it and participating in it.*

**R.B.:** To Havel becoming a president and writing a play?

**I.K.:** Ehm, no, what he was, like, it was, basically when you asked about Kosík, he was saying that there were good interesting intelligent people and then the revolution of the eighty nine he is saying that it was all under control of the secret services which there were two of them, one was listening to Gorbačov and the other services were following the other ex-communists and the Václav Havel, it looks like he was apparently selected to be a president two year prior so it means in eight seven.

**R.B.:** Hm, lepší než dneska prezident.

*Hm, better than today's president.*

**I.K.:** (laughing)

**K.V.:** No, podívejte se, zajímavý je, že ten Zeman byl velmi inteligentní člověk ještě kolem toho roku devadesát a napsal v roce myslím osmdesát sedm, vydal v technickém magazínu takovou ekonomickou analýzu, on byl prognostik a ta byla velice přesná, jo. A jako podepsal se na něm ten věk a on je bohužel úplně senilní a dělá prostě hlouposti, no je to, je to, je to hanba no, ale co, rozumíte, to se může stát každému, já můžu být zejtra úplně blběj, to je prostě hrozný na to koukat, je to smutný no.

*Well, look, it is interesting that Zeman was a very intelligent person around the year 1990 and wrote I think in eighty-seven, he published quite an economic analysis in a technical magazine, he was a forecaster and was very accurate, yeah. And as the age has caught up on him, he is unfortunately completely senile and just acting stupidly, but it is, it's shame no, but well, you understand, it can happen to everyone, I can be stupid tomorrow, that's it it's just horrible to watch, it's sad, no.*

**I.K.:** No, basically, he was very intelligent and in nineteen eighty seven he was working as a prognostic and he wrote a very precise analyse of what would be

coming but unfortunately, that is all due to his age, he is being senile and he's just talking....

**K.V.:** No, on bohužel udělal ty politický dohody s tím Václavem Klausem a tam existovala doba té opoziční smlouvy, kdy prostě ve všech oblastech narostla v Čechách korupce. A proto už ho ti sociální demokrati nechtěli volit za prezidenta, jeho to tak strašně urazilo, že teďka se snaží těm, co zabránili tomu, aby byl už před Klausem zvolenej prezidentem, tak vlastně, vlastně se jim mstí. Je to msta, je to neštěstí.

*Well, he unfortunately created the political agreements with Vaclav Klaus and there was the time of the opposition treaty, when corruption in the Czech Republic grew in all areas. That is why the Social Democrats no longer wanted to vote for him as president, and he was so offended that now he was trying to get those who prevented him from being elected as president by Klaus. It's a vengeance, it's a disaster.*

**R.B.:** Je to škoda. I know we have, yeah. Máme Brexit, tak to je nejhorší. *It is a shame. I know we have, yeah. We have Brexit, so it is the worst.*

**K.V.:** Voni vůbec nevědí, jak tu Evropu oslabili. Já nemám rád Evropu jako Římskou říši.

*They do not know, how they have weakened Europe. I do not like Europe as the Roman Empire.*

**R.B.:** Ne?

*No?*

**K.V.:** Ne. Ale na druhou stranu je to jediná možnost, jak se ubránit těm Rusům, jo, a dokonce jak se ubránit i Američanům. Oni taky nejsou často na výši, že jo. Rozdrbali ten střední Východ strašlivým způsobem a teď se divěj, že jo. Jo a vlastně, že jo. Rusové teď válčí o to, aby se tam natrvalo usadili. Oni tam nebyli ještě. No a to Turecko je podobný neštěstí, že jo, to je jaksi, Ataturk už není, to znamená, že teď se tam vytvořil náboženskej stát, má pětatřicet tisíc vězňů ten Erdogan. Chápete, to je šílený. Přitom na tom středním Východě by stačilo kdyby udělali Kurdistán, no, protože to je asi třicet miliónů lidí a to je přesně na tom místě, kde všichni furt válčej. Mít Kurdistán, tak pravděpodobně je po válce, jo. To nikdo nechce, že jo.

*No. But on the other hand, it is the only way to defend against the Russians, yeah, and even how to defend against the Americans. They're not often very high either. They crushed the Middle East in a terrible way, and now they wonder, right. Yeah, and actually, yeah. The Russians are now fighting to settle there permanently. They weren't there yet. And Turkey is a similar misfortune, right, it is somehow, Ataturk is no longer, that is, a religious state has been created there, Erdogan has thirty-five thousand prisoners. You see, it's crazy. Yet in the Middle East it would be enough if they had Kurdistan, well, because it is about thirty million people and that is exactly where everybody is fighting. Having Kurdistan, so probably after the war, yeah. Nobody wants it, right.*

**I.K.:** The solution to the situation just creating the state.

**K.V.:** To znamená, že když už mluvíme o takových věcech, tak vlastně mě připadá důležité si uvědomit, což si ti politici ani neuvědomují dneska, že jsme vstoupili do úplně nové éry, existuje internetová síť, jo, a v podstatě ty demokracie založený na těch zastupitelích začaly být zbytečný. My vlastně, vlastně, si myslím, že během takových padesátých let si lidi všechno odhlasují na síti a vůbec ty prezidenty a předsedy vlády nepotřebujeme. A to je něco, co je podobnej element, jak zničil ten parní stroj feudální Evropu, tak si myslím, že ta síť zničí tudle zastupitelskou Evropu a bude to vyřešený.

*This means that when we talk about such things, it really seems to me important to realise what the politicians are not even aware of today, that we have entered a completely new era, there is an internet network, yeah, and basically those democracies based on those representatives they became useless. Actually, in fact, I think that in about 50 years people will vote for everything on the net and we won't need those presidents and prime ministers at all. And that is something that is similar to how the feudal Europe steam engine destroyed, so I think the network will destroy that representative Europe and it will be resolved.*

**R.B.:** I think I understand but I might be getting it a bit differently. There is kind of, he is talking about sort of free democratic...

**I.K.:** Kind of he is saying that the politicians they don't take into consideration the internet and he thinks that the democracy where we elect parliament will disappear soon and we will vote online that and he made a point with a steam engine that finished an era.



**R.B.:** Ah, zajímavé.

*Ah, interesting.*

**K.V.:** No, já se na to těším, i když to už nevidím.

Well, I am looking forward to it, even if I don't see it.

**R.B.:** Hm, yes.

**K.V.:** Víte co, po každý revoluci byl vždycky hroznej masakr, ten bude i po týhle revoluci, ale je to důležité, aby proběhl.

*You know what, after every revolution there was always a terrible massacre, it will be after this revolution, but it is important to happen.*

**I.K.:** So every revolution is followed by a really violent period.

**K.V.:** Víte, po Cornwellovi byl hrozný masakr, ale máte parlament. A tak to je a to znamená, že každé změny jsou vždycky dobrý, nejlepší jsou pro zločince.

Rozumíte, ty jsou u moci nejrychlejc, ale ta změna sama o sobě je důležitá a nakonec se to zklidní a ti zločinci odsud budou vytlačeni. Co jako.

*You know, after Cromwell there was a terrible massacre, but you have a parliament. And so it is and that means that every change is always good, the best is for the criminals. You understand, they are fastest in power, but the change itself is important, and it will calm down and the criminals will be pushed out of here. So what.*

**I.K.:** So the changes are good for crowd [all talking together] it comes down.

**R.B.:** What goes around, comes around we would say. I don't know if you say it in Czech, do you?

**I.K.:** How do you say it?

**R.B.:** What goes around, comes around.

**I.K.:** Maybe we have. 'Co jde dokola, půjde dokola'. But it does not...

**R.B.:** Nedává to smysl, ne.

*It doesn't make sense, no.*

**K.V.:** Podívejte se, je to furt lepší. Jste najezený, je nám teplo, rozumíte, máme víc prostoru každéj pro sebe, není to středověk. Nějakej vzestup vlastně pořád existuje.

*Look, it's still better. You have eaten, we are warm, you understand, we have more space for yourselves, it's not the Middle Ages. In fact, there is still some improvement.*

**I.K.:** So we are living nice and comfortable live and we have enough space so there is a progress form the medieval times.

**R.B.:** To je pravda. A pro ženy.

*It is true. And for women.*

**I.K.:** A pro ženy ano.

*And for women, yes.*

**R.B.:** Myslím, že mám možná tři více otázky o Moravská Hellas, zase. Jeden. Proč jsou arabské tance, tancuje.

*I think I maybe have three more questions about Moravská Hellas, again. One. Why are there Arabic dances dancing?*

**K.V.:** Protože, protože tam přijeli, tam přijeli.

*Because they came there, they came there.*

**I.K.:** They arrived.

**K.V.:** Podívejte se, když uvidíte tančící Araby, tak jsou více směšnější než tančící Slováci.

*Look, when you see the dancing Arabs, they are more ridiculous than the dancing Slovaks.*

**I.K.:** A byli pozvaní?

*And they were invited?*

**K.V.:** No, oni tam přijížděli z různých zemí, dejme tomu Francouzi a já nevím, tam byl kde kdo.

*Well, they came from different countries, let's say the French and I don't know, there was everyone.*

**R.B.:** Ne v České republice?

Not in the Czech Republic? [sic]

**I.K.:** They were.

(All talking together]

**K.V.:** Tam byli Francouzi, Arabi. Já si musím dát nohu nahoru, já už takhle nevydržím.

*There were the French, the Arabs. I have to put my foot up, I can't stand it anymore.*

**R.B.:** Myslela jsem, že to je jako...

*I thought it was like...*

**I.K.:** To bylo z toho festivalu?

*Was that from the festival?*

**K.V.:** No z toho festivalu. To bylo úplně normální.

*Yes from the festival. It was quite normal.*

**R.B.:** I thought that it was like a clip.

**K.V.:** Tam šli Francouzi s Ninérama, jo a kdeco tam bylo, já nevím co.

*There went the French with Ninéras, yeah and whatever it was there, I don't know what.*

**R.B.:** Okay. Where is my other... Co, co si myslel o muzea a jejich ředitel ve Stážnici?

*Okay. Where is my other...What, what did he think of museums and their director in Stážnice?*

**K.V.:** No protože podívejte se, to byla ehm, za první republiky se učily ženský vyšívát, jo, to vcelku zmizelo, no a tam udělali takovou malou školu na vyšívání, jo. A ta mohla mít jaksi ti lidi mohli být k užítí pro výrobu těch krojů, jo, a to je tak asi všecko a jinak vlastně voni nedostali žádný pořádný vzdělání, tak si z toho dělám tam legraci. Víte, tam jsou všelijaký složité techniky při výrobě těch strojů jako paličkování, jestli víte, co to je, takový složité plastický vzory, jo. A to se tam ale neučilo, vony se učily jednoduchý věci.

*Well, look, it was ah, during the First Republic they taught women to embroider, yeah, that pretty much disappeared, and there they made a little school of embroidery, yeah. And it could have been somehow those people could be used to make those folk costumes, yeah, and that's probably all, and otherwise they didn't get any proper training, so I'm making fun of it. You know, there are all sorts of intricate techniques in making those machines like bobbin lace, if you know what it is, such intricate plastic designs, yeah. But it wasn't taught there, they learned simple things.*

**I.K.:** He is talking about that during the first republic, between the wars, there were women learning to do embroidery and it kind of disappeared but they opened a school to ornate [sic] the dresses and obviously people didn't not get any proper education, so he was kind of laughing at that.

**R.B.:** A pro mě vypadá, vypadý plakát jako Štýrský surrealismus. And for me it looks, the poster looks like Štýrský surrealism.

**K.V.:** No, to jsme našli, to měli v nějaké vesnici, ale kde, jak je taková ta vesnice, co se tam jezdí jízda králů, tak někde tam. No, to je jedno. Well, we found it, they had it in some village, but where, how is the village, the ride of the kings goes there – somewhere there? Never mind.

**I.K.:** Vlčnov.

**K.V.:** Možná, že v tom Vlčnově. No a měli to pod uhlím, víte a my jsme to vyhrabali. To je někde, já nevím, to bylo třeba z padesátech let, já nevím, kdo to, to byl takovej amaterskéj nesmysl. A my jsme to převezli do Uherského Brodu a tam jsme to postavili a otřeli a hlavně je to hezký, protože je tam moc různých krojů, to jsou různé kroje a ty figury byly asi takovýdle, že jo. No je to, je to

směšný, je to špatný, je to směšný a tam nahoře jsou ti dva Saudkové, ti tam zpívají.

*Maybe, in Vlčnov. Well, they had it under charcoal, you know, and we dug it up. That's somewhere, I don't know, it was from the 1950s, I don't know who it was, it was kind of nonsense. And we took it to Uherský Brod and there we built it and wiped it and especially it is nice, because there are many different costumes, these are different costumes and those figures were probably like that, right. Well, it's ridiculous, it's bad, it's ridiculous and there are two Saudeks up there, they sing there.*

**R.B.:** Co myslíte o kýče, definice kýče?

*What do you think about kitsch, the definition of kitsch?*

**K.V.:** Jo, podívejte, kýč může mít svoji rozumnou polohu, když třeba si koupíte z jara, tak prodávají takový žlutý kuřátka, jo. Nebo kýč je, že si někdo, já nevím, koupí perníkový srdce. Tak to je kýč, ale ten kýč není špatně. Ne. To je prostě jaksi velmi jednoduchý symbolický vyjádření nějakého principu, jako to srdce jako láska, to kuře žluté jako jaro, jo, to mně nevadí, to já si docela rád domů jako přinesu. Ale potom se stane, že takový nepře, že se ten kýč začne komplikovat a tváří se, jako, že je ne zobrazením principu, ale že to je zobrazení nějakých složitějších souvislostí, ale aby byl lidem příjemný, tak se stane zobrazením nepravdivým. Hm. Jo a to znamená, že je to příjemné zobrazení nepravdivých souvislostí, které jsou vydávány jako pravdivé za pravdivé. Hm. Jo. A to už je špatně.

*Yeah, look, kitsch can have a sensible position, for example when you buy in spring, they sell yellow chicks, yeah. Or kitsch is that someone, I don't know, who buys a gingerbread heart. That's kitsch, but the kitsch isn't bad. No. It's just a very simple symbolic expression of some principle, like the heart is love, that yellow chick is like spring, yeah, it doesn't bother me, I quite like bringing it home. But then it happens that such a thing does not mean that the kitsch becomes complicated and looks like it is not a depiction of the principle, but that it is a depiction of some more complex contexts, but it becomes too untruthful to be pleasant to people. Hm. Yeah, and that means it's a nice display of false connections that are being made true for truth. Hm. Yeah. And that's already wrong.*

**R.B.:** To už je špatně. Hm, ano.

*So that is already wrong. Hm, yes.*

**K.V.:** To znamená, když se, když je kýč popisem principu, tak všechno je správně, ale když je je kýč popisem světa, tak vlastně musí lhát. No a tak to jako.

*That is, when, when kitsch is a description of the principle, everything is right, but when it is kitsch by the description of the world, it must actually lie. Well, like that.*

**R.B.:** Karel Teige řekl že to je umění a neumění a kýč. Tři.

*Karel Teige said that it is art and non-art and kitsch. Three.*

**K.V.:** No tak, no, tak úplně ne. Umění a neumění a kýč. Já to takhle jednoduše nevidím, já si myslím, že prostě kýč a ten druhý kýč je vlastně součástí jako toho, co se vydává za umění. Víte, to není tak úplně. Je kýč, který mluví o základních principech života a ten je správně. Potom je umění, které se vydává za umění a je tím zjednodušeným a špatným popisem světa. No a vedle toho jako je to, co už je na cestě k umění. Než se stane tím filozofickým uměním, je to takový komplikovaný. Ale je spousta jako dobrého, sociálního umění, který, to znamená docela slušnou analýzou, který nemá ten, ten filozofický vrchol. To znamená, že to zůstává, jo, ale já tomu nerad říkám umění, víte. Tak ještě takhle, protože, jak já mám říkat, že, já nevím, ten Vaculík je umění.

*Come on, well, not really. Art and non-art and kitsch. I just don't see it as that simple, I just think that kitsch and the other kitsch is actually a part of what behaves as art. You know, it's not exactly that. There is a kitsch that talks about the basic principles of life and that is right. Then there is an art that pretends to be art and is a simplified and bad description of the world. And next to it is what is already on the road to art. Before it becomes a philosophical art, it is so complicated. But there is plenty as a good, social art that, that is, quite a decent analysis that does not have that philosophical top. That means that it stays, yeah, but I hate to call it art, you know. So like this, because, as I have to say, I don't know, that Vaculík is art.*

**I.K.:** So he was talking about the kitsch when it's very simple and symbolic.

**K.V.:** To znamená, že čím víc přibývá ty pravdy v tom kýčovitým umění, tím víc ubývá těch falešných popisů, tak tím víc se to blíží k umění, no a pak už to začne být umění. To neznámá, že to je ten Hašek nebo něco. Protože nakonec je to ztráta času, víte, číst ty skučidla, protože to je. To jsem absolvoval, ve své generaci jsem přečet téměř všechno, co vycházelo, a když se na to dívám zpátky, tak nevyšlo skoro nic. Jo. Ten Kundera je špatnej, já, já nevím, prostě hrozný. A vlastně zbývá

trošku těch Hrabalů a vlastně ty věci z První Republiky, to znamená z první poloviny dvacátého století, tak ještě se jako najde něco mimo toho Ladislava Klímu a toho Haška, to znamená, že je tam ten Deml, Březina, já nevím, něco tam je, jo a i v tý druhý polovině. Máte lidi, který k tomu taky mají náběh, třeba Nezval, jo. Ne Seifert ani ne Holan, to jsou strašidla. To vopravdu, to je to jsou. No ale jako je zbytečný se vo tom hádat. Ten Nezval je převyšoval, napsal Ódu na Stalina, no. (laughing). Strašný, rozumíte. Ale von potom moh chránit lidi jako byl ten Deml. Rozumíte, to je strašně složitý.

*That is, the more the truth in the kitschy art increases, the more the false descriptions are diminished, the more it approaches art, and then it becomes art. That doesn't mean it's Hasek or something. Because in the end it is a waste of time, you know, to read those scraps because it is. I did that, and in my generation I read almost everything that came out, and when I looked back at it, almost nothing came out. Yeah. The Kundera is bad, I, I don't know, just awful. And in fact there is a bit of the Hrabals and actually the stuff from the First Republic, that is, from the first half of the twentieth century, so there is something else like Ladislav Klíma and Hašek, that means that Deml, Březina, I don't know something is there, yeah and the other half. You have people who also have a start, like Nezval, yeah. No Seifert or Holan, these are ghosts. That's right, that's it. But it is useless to argue about it. That Nezval was above them, wrote Ode to Stalin, no. (laughing). Terrible, you understand. But then he could protect people like Deml. You understand, that is very complicated.*

**R.B.:** What's... strašně složitý? [*very complicated*]

**I.K.:** This is very...

**R.B.:** Don't worry. I think I got something earlier.

**I.K.:** He read most of the stuff, but it was really. Kundera wasn't good and Hrabal was kind of okay and but during the First Republic there was Deml and Březina and Nezval despite, because despite the fact that he wrote *Ode to Stalin* he did a lot of good stuff and he also protected authors like Deml.

**R.B.:** V moji dizertaci píšu o ehm designem a lidové umění jako ÚLUV. Co myslíte o ÚLUV?

*In my dissertation I write about design and folk art like ÚLUV. What do you think about ÚLUV?*

**K.V.:** Víte co, tam je zajímavý za první republiky bylo to družstvo, oni dělali hračky tady v Brně, heřgot, zase mě naskakuje. Prostě předtím ÚLUVem byl byl spolek umělců, který dělali dřevěný hračky. A to bylo moc kvalitní, ale, a to je První Republika, jo. Mně to naskočilo proboha, už jsem tam blběj.

*You know, that is an interesting place in the First Republic, it was a cooperative, they made toys here in Brno, damn it, it makes me jump again. Just before ÚLUV was an association of artists who made wooden toys. And that was very good, but, and that's the First Republic, yeah. It made me jumpy, I'm stupid.*

**I.K.:** Wooden toys in Brno were very good quality and he does not know the name. So before ÚLUV.

**R.B.:** Ehm, jako Artěl?

*Um, like Artěl?*

**K.V.:** Cože? Artěl, jo, chytrá holka. No tak to bylo opravdu to bylo kvalitní. A ten ÚLUV to byla už trošku taková pracovina. Víte, jako jak prodávat lidem něco draze. To už nebylo tohle. No ale jsou tady zajímaví ti skláři nějaký, jo.

*What? Artěl, yeah, smart girl. Well it was really good. And the ÚLUV was a bit of a workplace. You know how to sell people something dearly. It wasn't that anymore. Well, there are some interesting glassmakers here, yeah.*

**R.B.:** Ano, a textil?

*Yes, and textiles?*

**K.V.:** Textil, i textil. Moje žena byla tak dobře oblečená v Americe, že ji přepadli. *Textiles, also textiles. My wife was so well dressed in America that she was ambushed.*

**R.B.:** Mám tady ÚBOKové.

I have here ÚBOKové [ÚBOK-style]

**K.V.:** Jo, no, ale jako mně ten design vlastně moc nezajímal. Ten Artěl byl zajímavěj v tom, že to bylo taky ekonomický družstvo a že ti lidi se tím mohli i jako



živit a přitom dělali umění, jo, kdežto pak už jako to moc umění nebylo. Bylo to takový, spíš takový právě to předstírání tý lidový tvořivosti a to je hrozná věc. *Yeah, well, but I wasn't really interested in the design. The Artěl was interesting in the fact that it was also an economic cooperative, and that these people were able to make a living through being so while making art, yeah, but then it wasn't like much art. It was more like this pretense of folk creativity, and that's a terrible thing.*

**R.B.:** Myslím, že to je mám – all my questions.

*I think, that I have – all my questions.*

**I.K.:** To je všechno.

*That's everything.*

**R.B.:** Děkuje za ty užasné filmy, které jste natočili!

*Thanks for the amazing movies you made!*

**I.K.:** By to měl vidět.

*I will have to see it.*

**K.V.:** Podívejte, tohle je hezký. To jsem kdysi koupil. To je autentický. Autentická karikatura, která vyšla v *Literárních novinách* v roce šedesátosm. Jo. A je to hezký, protože v tom textu je napsáno, že to vlastně by dopadlo dobře, pokud ta těhotná Mariana to dítě donosí a voni ti Rusové přišli za osm měsíců po tom lednu, stačilo, kdyby to mohla donosit, tak by to bylo v tom devátém měsíci a prostě ten demokratickéj socialismus se nedonosil a na druhou stranu to bylo tak strašně důležitý a já z toho žiju celý život, z tý chvílky, nevíte, jak ti lidi se báječně chovali v tu chvíli, kdy sem ti Rusové vtrhli. Jo, a to nebyli jak bych řekl komunisti, nekomunisti, antikomunisti, všichni se v ten moment milovali, jedině ti, co už měli za sebou nějaký vraždy, ti se báli, jo. To bylo neskutečná doba a vůbec to nejde srovnávat s tím devětaosmdesátým. Tam už všichni mysleli na to, co si odnesou domů, víte. To je prostě, totální rozdíl. Taky si myslím, že ty tajný služby dobře věděly, proč ten režim nechaly padnout až nakonec. Všechny už ostatní státy se těch komunistů zbavili a nás pořád nechávali v tý situaci, že ještě ne. A já si jako myslím, že měli, taky ten tah, jako jak odstavit toho Dubčeka tím Havlem byl dělaný jako přesně. A kdyby ten Dubček bėjval zůstal, tak by to bylo jinak. Takže

pro mě to není tak jako ta pohádka, co se dneska vypráví, to je daleko složitější. Nehledě na to, že. No nic.

*Look, this is nice. I bought it once. This is authentic. An Authentic Caricature that was published in Literární noviny in 1960. Yeah. And it's nice, because it says in the text that it would actually work out well if the pregnant Mariana gives birth to the baby and the Russians came in eight months after January it was enough if she could carry on until giving birth, so it would be in that ninth month, so the democratic socialism simply did not make it to the end, on the other hand, it was so important and I live all my life, from that moment, you don't know how those people behaved wonderfully when the Russians came here. Yeah, and they weren't like the Communists, the non-Communists the anti-Communists, they all loved each other at that moment, only those who had already done some murders were afraid of you, yeah. That was an incredible time, you cannot even compare it with 1989.. Everybody there was thinking about what they would take home, you know. That's just such a total difference. I also think the secret services knew very well why they let the regime fall. All the other states had already got rid of the Communists and kept us yet in that situation. And I think that they had, too, the manoeuvre, of how to shut down Dubček by Havel, it was done exactly. And if Dubček stayed, it would be different. So for me it's not like the fairy tale that is being told today, it's more complicated. No matter that. Nevermind.*

**I.K.:** So he was complaining that in sixtyeight when after the invasion people were different in some ways and this can't be compared to eighty nine and according to him was kind of planned. They knew why they wanted Václav Havel to be a president instead of Dubček. It was much more complicated... [interrupted].

**K.V.:** Protože nikdo by v osmdesátým devátým nechtěl tu kapitalizaci, jo, jako to nikoho ani nenapadlo.

*Because no one would want the capitalism in the 80's, yeah, like no one had thought of it.*

**I.K.:** And there was also a difference between the sixty eight when people were protecting but eighty nine was all saying what I can gain from the new... [interrupted].

**R.B.:** To je kapitalismus.

*That's capitalism.*

**K.V.:** Jo a stačilo, stačilo třeba udělat když to tak mělo být, tak stačilo udělat zaměstnanecké akcie, to znamená, že ty lidi měli ty nedovoly. Tady se stalo to, že ti komunisti z nomenklatur, který ovládali ty podniky, vlastně se dostali, se stali majiteli často těch podniků a taky díky ty kupónový privatizaci a byl konec jo, a tady to rozprodávali, tady byly obrovský fabriky zničený a dokonce v zájmu třeba zahraničních koncernů, jo, protože oni potřebovali jako ty svoje konkurenty zlikvidovat, takže to není tak vůbec jednoduchý, jak se to lidem vypráví, jo. A je to škoda, je to hrozná škoda. A ten stát byl bez dluhů úplně v tom devětaosmdesátým, dneska jsou tady už biliónový dluhy, jo. A to si vodnosili domů, že jo, ti jako noví vládcí. Není žádná radost na to koukat. No, ale co můžete dělat. Tak to většinou běhá, že jo. Je to k vzteku.

*Yeah, it was enough, it was enough, when it was supposed to be, to make shares for the employee funds, it meant those people had to be illicit. Here it happened that the Communists from nomenclature, who controlled those businesses, actually got to, they often became the owners of the businesses and also thanks to the coupon privatisation when it [Communism] was over, here they sold them – there were huge factories destroyed and even in the interest of foreign companies, yeah, because they needed their competitors to liquidate them, so it's not as easy as people say, yeah. And it's a shame, it's a terrible shame. And the state was totally debt-free in '89, there are billions of debts here today, yeah. And they brought it home, didn't they, the new rulers. There's no pleasure watching it. Well, what you can do. That is how it usually goes, right. It's rage.*

**I.K.:** He is saying that the way they redistributed the wealth that you could buy it by the coupons, that was not really clever enough, because there were again important people from the past could get again good positions, and what he was just saying, maybe the better way would be like the employess could own a part of the company they worked for.

**R.B.:** And now?

**I.K.:** No, in the nineties. Yeah, so there would be probably better ways of dealing with the situation.

**R.B.:** Máme... [*We have...*] If this is okay. How would you say with your permission? I have my form to sign.

**I.K.:** Rebecca má takový formulář, kde v podstatě by potřebovala, jestli byste ji to mohl podepsat a je to jen pro vnitřní účely univerzity, že vás může jakoby citovat ve své práci, takže to nebude zveřejněno.

*Rebecca has a form where she basically would need if you could sign it and it's just for internal university purposes that she can quote you in her work, so it won't be published.*

**R.B.:** To je pro vás informace o mojí výzkum a tady je ehm souhlas, moc děkuju.

*This is information about my research for you, and here is an agreement, thank you very much.*

**K.V.:** A kam to mám podepsat. Máte nějaký písátko? Půjčíte mě. Nevíte, který mám podepsat. Já to nevidím.

*And where do I sign it. Do you have a pen? Lend it to me. I don't know which one to sign. I do not see it.*

**R.B.:** V česky.

*In Czech [indicating the version of the form in Czech].*

**I.K.:** Where is he supposed to sign?

**R.B.:** I think it is, is it... podpis. [signature] [points it out]

**I.K.:** Datum, podpis, tady.

*Date, signature, here.*

**R.B.:** A to je... Moc děkuju, moc děkuju. A to je pro...

*And it is... Thank you very much, thanks very much. And it is for...*

**K.V.:** To je pro mě.

*This is for me.*

**R.B.:** To je v česky. Když to chcete. Bedtime reading we would say in English! Can you say that?

*It's in Czech. When you want it. Bedtime reading we would say in English! Can you say that?*

**I.K.:** Čtení před spaním.

*Reading before bedtime.*

**R.B.:** To je anglický vtip. To je pro vaše... bedtime reading. Do you say that?

*This is an English joke. It is for your... bedtime reading. Do you say that?*

**I.K.:** We don't have anything like that. Odpočinkové. [*Relaxing*]

**K.V.:** Budu rád, že když to, co jsem říkal o té funkci té sítě, víte a o tom konci zastupitelské demokracie.

*I would be glad that if what I said about the internet's function, you know and the end of representative democracy.*

**I.K.:** He would appreciate if you could mention the part about the democracy, you know the online democracy when you can really vote online without having to vote.

**K.V.:** Pro mě to je moc důležitý, protože, protože ne moc lidí si to jako uvědomuje, ale je to opravdu, je to klíčová změna.

*For me it is very important because, because not many people realise it, but it's really, it's a key change.*

**R.B.:** Ale to je komplikované, protože internet, to je *jako* svoboda, ale tady to je taky velký firmu, který own the internet.

*But it is complicated because the internet, it is like freedom, but here it is also big business, that owns the internet.*

**K.V.:** Víte co, samozřejmě toho internetu se budou zmocňovat různí hekři a všelijaké pochybné společnosti, ale to neznamená, že když to existuje, tak, že ten, ta základní funkce zmizí, to propojení mezi lidma. Já jsem viděl, tady byli velký jaksi koncerty mládeže a ty lidi se svolali za pomocí telefonu a žádná coca cola nebo nikdo to neplatil. Oni se svolali sami. Ti lidi se učeť to používat a nakonec se to naučeť a opravdu si budou rozhodovat. To je opravdu velká naděje.

*You know what, of course, the hackers and all sorts of dubious societies will seize the Internet, but that doesn't mean that when it exists, that the one basic function disappears – the connection between the people. I saw, there were a lot of youth concerts here, and the people were summoned by phone and no coca cola, or*

*nobody paid for that. They summoned themselves. Those people learn to use it and finally learn it and really will decide. This is really a great hope.*

**R.B.:** So is this still about the internet and the companies?

**I.K.:** Ehm, ehm, the beginning was about, no he really think that there is a potential of the internet because there were different demonstrations which did not need support of the companies or anything.

**R.B.:** The Arab spring. I don't know what is that in Czech.

**I.K.:** Ehm, Arabské jaro.  
*Um, the Arab Spring.*

**K.V.:** No, jo, taky.  
*Well, yeah, also.*

**R.B.:** Ale, ale, [*but, but*] maybe say – I went to a talk once by a man who writes about the internet that said if you can't tell what the product is, the product is you. So we are using the social media but often we are the product they are selling. Because you are giving them all your information.

**I.K.:** Rebecca byla na přednášce, kde ehm někdo říkal, že když není možné říct, co je tím produktem, tak tím produktem je ten člověk, který to používá, jako v případě internetu nebo nějakých sociálních médií, vlastně tím produktem je ten uživatel samotný.

*Rebecca was at a lecture where someone said that if it is not possible to say what the product is, then the product is the person who uses it, as in the case of the Internet or some social media, actually the product is the user themselves.*

**K.V.:** No, ale to není pravda.  
*Well, that's not true.*

**R.B.:** [laughing] Ne?  
*No?*

**K.V.:** Podívejte se, tady byly prezidentský volby. Zvolili toho Zemana a ne Schwarzenberga. Každýj rozumnýj Čech si nemůže zvolit říšského prince prezidentem republiky, to prostě nejde, a to ti lidi tu základní věc pochopili. Že ten Zeman se změnil v nestvůru a v blbce, to je další věc, ale nemají říšského prince prezidentem, jo, chápete. I když ten Schwanzenberg, to není zlýj člověk, jo. Já jsem ho tu měl na semináři, a docela, von je skutečně tím založením ten feudál, který si myslí, že má ty lidi jako s nima manipulovat, že prostě se má o ně starat. A to prostě jsme někde, kde zaplaťpánbu už nejsme. Takže ti lidi jsou schopný ty základní věci pochopit, takže já už věřím na to, že v tom celku jsou lidi hrozně jako chytrý. Já udělám třeba film a oni mě v tisku nadávají, že jsou to nějaké intelektuální kombinace, který nikoho nezajímaj, ale moje maminka si pozvala kamarádky a smály se celý večer, když se na to mohly dívat, rozumíte jo. A moje maminka nebyla žádný intelektuál. Já vím, že lidi normálně jsou normální a chytrý, jako v tý většině. Já jsem taky pětadvacet let života jsem se živil rukama a já jsem mezi nima jako byl, já jsem pracoval ve fabrice, jako chápete, já vím, jaký jsou tam lidi, takže já tomu věřím, že to, čím se přenese moc a majetek mezi víc lidí, tím je ta společnost jako víc k žití, jo. To je, vy byste přece, já nevím co, neposílala děti střílet do Afganistánu, to byste řekla ne, ne, ne, no a tak podobně, že jo. Nehledě na to, že v tom Afganistánu už byli Britové, jo, byli tam Američani, byli tam Rusové a všichni vodsud museli utýct, to nejde prostě, jo.

*Look, here were the presidential elections. They chose Zeman and not Schwarzenberg. A reasonable Czech cannot choose the imperial prince by the president of the republic, it just does not work, and people understand the basic thing. That Zeman turned into a monster and a moron, that's another thing, but they don't have an imperial prince president, yeah, you see. Although Schwanzenberg, it's not a bad guy, yeah. I had him here at the seminar, and quite, he is really the foundation of that feudal idea who thinks he has to manipulate those people like them, just to take care of them. And that is just like to be somewhere where we are no longer, thank God. So those people are able to understand the basic things, so I already believe that in the whole people are so clever. I'll make a movie, for example, and they scold me in the press that they're some intellectual combinations that don't interest anyone, but my mother invited her friends and laughed all night, they could watch it, you understand. And my mother was no intellectual. I know people are normally normal and clever, like the majority. I was also a for 25 years working with my hands and I was among them, I worked in the factory as you understand, I know how the people are there, so I believe it, by which power and property are transferred between more people, the*

*society is more for living, yeah. That is, you would, I don't know what, would not send children to shoot in Afghanistan, you would say no, no, no, well, like that, right. Regardless of the fact that there were British in that Afghanistan, yeah, there were Americans, there were Russians and everyone had to run away, it just can't be, yeah.*

**I.K.:** He was talking about, as an example, he took the presidential election that we had with Schwanzenber and Zeman and the, he said that the common sense of the people was okay, we can't have the prince from the empire. He is a nice person but he still has this attitude that he could manage with the people so they voted for Zeman, unfortunately, with all his faults and then he was saying also, but you know, he shot the film and they said that it's over intellectual, but his mum and her friends would watch it and they would had plenty of laugh all way through so you can't say that it's intellectual if people, all you need is a common sense, nothing else and he says that when you divide the power and the world among people, the more you spread it, the more you divide it, the better it applies for living, yeah and he was talking about Afganistan and different countries where [not clear]... so the situation is all left without any success.

**K.V.:** Ne, já myslím, že umění je prostě je o filozofii, vo politice, jiný béjt ani nemůže, a to je jako všechno.

*No, I think art is just about philosophy, about politics, it cannot be different, and that's like everything.*

**R.B.:** Ano, to je pravda. Mm. Moc moc děkuju.

*Yes, it is true. Mm. Many, many thanks.*

**K.V.:** Není zač.

*You're welcome.*

**[END OF INTERVIEW]**



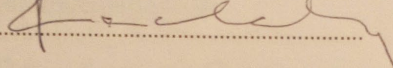


Royal College of Art

**RESEARCHRCA**

Rozumím tomu, že všechny informace, které budou během rozhovoru pořízeny, budou bezpečně uloženy a mé názory budou správně reprezentovány. Jakékoliv fotografie, na kterých můžu být zřetelně identifikován/a, budou zveřejněny pouze s mým souhlasem nebo se souhlasem mého zákonného zástupce.

Jméno (tiskacím): .....

Podpis..... 

Datum: .....

Tento projekt bude proveden v souladu s etickým kodexem pro výzkum na Royal College of Art.

**Transcript of Recording****Marie Rychlíková (M.R.), Ceramicist****Interview with Rebecca Bell (R.B.), accompanied by Katka Frontzova (K.F., to assist with translation) and Veronika Vysloužilová (V.V., MA student from VŠUP who assisted with arranging interview)****21 October 2016****Marie Rychlíková's apartment****[Initial discussion of papers on table, on arrival]**

**K.F.:** Pro ni je ta čeština těžká, takže potřebuje si to potom pustit několikrát.  
*For her, Czech is difficult, so she needs to try several times.*

**R.B.:** A budu překlá, překlá.  
*And I'll translate.*

**M.R.:** Je tam to ř.  
*The Ř is there.*

**K.F.:** Překládat.  
*Translate.*

**R.B.:** Překládat. Haha. Děkuju. A máme taky. To je. Není v Invalidovně?  
*Ne? Translate. Ha-Ha. Thank you. And we have it too. It is. It's in Invalidovna? Is it not? [Looking at photographs on table.]*

**K.F.:** To jo. Já myslím, že to je na Invalidovně.  
*It is. I think, that is in Invalidovna*

**V.R.:** Já myslím, že jo. Já to právě taky mám všechno zmapovaný, protože zatím...[whispering]  
*I think so. I just have everything I've written, because so far ... [whispering]*

**M.R.:** To je rok šedesát tři toleto.

*That's year sixty-three.*

**R.B.:** Šedesát tři.

*Sixty-three.*

**K.F.:** A je to na Invalidovně?

*And it is in Invalidovna?*

**M.R.:** No, to je ta Invalidovna.

*Yes, that is Invalidovna.*

**R.B.:** Ano, ano. Mám moc ráda.

*Yes, yes. I like it very much.*

**M.R.:** Pak jste se ptaly na Ještěd. To mám jedinou fotku tudle.

*Then you asked for Ještěd. I have a single photo of that.*

**R.B.:** Á, Ještěd, ano. Áaa. Byla, byla jsem několik, několik, několik let před tím.

*Ah, Ještěd, yes. Aaa. I was, I was there several, several years ago.*

**M.R.:** Byla jste tam?

*You went there?*

**R.B.:** Ještěd.

*Ještěd.*

**M.R.:** Já jsem tam po třiceti nebo čtyřiceti letech taky byla. A tak jsem tehdy jsme mluvili s těma autory, který dělali ostatní nábytek a podobně, takže.

*I was also there after thirty or forty years. So then we talked with those authors who made the other furniture and similar, so.*

**K.F.:** Other artists they discussed.

**R.B.:** Other artists.

**M.R.:** Takže mi říkali, že prostě měli asi sto dodavatelů, že nic nešlo koupit jako z našeho průmyslu, hotovýho, jako židle nebo textil nebo ani sklenička ani hrnek, že

prostě že měli asi sto dodavatelů.

*So they told me that they had about a hundred suppliers, that nothing could be bought from our industry, finished, like chairs or textiles not even a glass nor a mug, that they had about a hundred suppliers.*

**K.F.:** They had one hundred suppliers.

**R.B.:** Oh! Wow.

**M.R.:** Protože to byl...*Because it was...*

**R.B.:** Ještěd.

**M.R.:** Na Ještědu.

*In Ještěd.*

**R.B.:** Na Ještědu.

*In Ještěd.*

**M.R.:** Protože všechno objednávali prostě vod někde prostě tohle vod nás a když potřebovali židle, tak...

*Because everything they ordered just from somewhere, just from us, and when they needed a chair, well....*

**K.F.:** A všechno bylo česká výroba nebo zahraniční?

*And everything was Czech or foreign?*

**M.R.:** No naše.

*Yes ours.*

**K.F.:** Naše.

*Ours.*

**R.B.:** Naše.

*Ours.*

**M.R.:** Naše, ale prostě taková individuální. Prostě nešlo to koupit v obchodě. Židle nešla koupit, sklenička nešla, všecko tak vošklivý.

*Ours, but just individual. It just could not be bought in the store. The chair could not be gone and bought, the glass couldn't be got, everything so ugly.*

**R.B.:** (laughing) Ošklivý!

*Ugly!*

**M.R.:** Že sami si takhle objednávali.

*So they ordered from ourselves in this way.*

**R.B.:** Objednávali?

*Ordered?*

**K.F.:** So they had to order each one of it.

**V.R.:** A podílel se na tom nějak ten úbok nebo vůbec ne?

*And did ÚBOK take any kind of part in it or not at all?*

**M.R.:** Ne, nepotřeboval vod nich nic a voni od nás taky ne.

*No, it did not need anything from them, and they did not from us either.*

**V.R.:** Aha.

**R.B.:** A proč...

*And why...*

**M.R.:** Ptejte se.

*Ask.*

**R.B.:** What are the ideas behind this design?

**K.F.:** Aha, jak jste přišla na ten nápad vlastně za tím designem. Jaký je nápad za tím designem?

*Aha, how did you come up with the idea behind the design. What is the idea behind this design?*

**M.R.:** No, to je dlouhá historie.

*Yes, it is a long story.*

**K.F.:** Long story.

**M.R.:** My jsme prostě skončily školu, všechny tři dohromady a řekly jsme si ne do žádného zaměstnání nejdeme.

*We just finished school, all three together and said we wouldn't go to any job.*

**K.F.:** They didn't want to be employed.

**M.R.:** A prostě jsme si koupili pec, rodiče nám dali peníze nějaký, koupili jsme si pec a tady v domě jsme měli malinou dílničku a vystřídali jsme všechny materiály, co byly, až jsme skončili právě v roce sedmdesát u technického porcelánu. A potom už to teda jsme ho nikdy neopustili, protože se nám to tak nesmírně zalíbilo a to už potom všecko bylo, všecko bylo z porcelánu.

*And we just bought a furnace, our parents gave us some money, we bought a furnace and here in the house we had a small craft workshop and we replaced all the materials that we had when we finished, just in the year 1970, for the technical porcelain. And then we never left it, because we enjoyed it so much, and then it was all, everything was made from porcelain.*

**R.B.:** Aha. Krásné. Kde je?

*Ah ha. Beautiful. Where is this?*

**M.R.:** To byla lékárna. Myslím, že už to neexistuje, že to je nějaký soud místo toho.

*It was a pharmacy. I think it does not exist anymore, it is a court instead.*

**V.R.:** A lékárna kde? Nebo ehm?

*And the pharmacy is where? Or whereabouts?*

**M.R.:** Lékárna to bylo v Praze deset. Teďkom tam je docela soud, velikej soud nějaký. No ale vy máte. Todle je náhoda, že to existuje, protože většinou všechny věci jsou zlikvidovaný. To byl obchod. To je zlikvidovaný.

*The pharmacy was in Prague 10. Now there is a court, a big court of some kind. Well, there you have it. This is a coincidence that it exists, because most of the things are destroyed. It was a shop. It is liquidated.*

**R.B.:** Ještě existuje?

*Is it still there?*

**K.F.:** This does not exist any more.

**M.R.:** No tak.Yeah.

**K.F.:** Do you want to ask about you know the collaboration with Divana and Lýdie. Because we are talking about it.

**R.B.:** [laughing] Mám otázky.

*I have questions.*

**M.R.:** Ptejte se.

*Ask.*

**R.B.:** Ano, ehm, možná... Jak důležitý byl proces spolupráce pro vás?

*Yes, uh, maybe... How important was the collaboration process for you?*

**M.R.:** Cože?

*What?*

**K.F.:** Jak důležitý byl vlastně celý ten proces spolupráce s vašimi kolegyněmi s umělkyněmi Divanou a Lýdií?

*How important was the whole process of working with your colleagues, with the artists Divana and Lydia?*

**M.R.:** Výbornej, přestože každý jsme byla úplně jiná. Jedna dokonce byla komunistka. Lýdie.

*Excellent, though we were all different. One was even a Communist. Lydia.*

**R.B.:** Lýdie. Party komunistická.

*Lýdie. Communist party.*

**M.R.:** Její maminka byla Ruska.

*Her mother was Russian.*

**R.B.:** Áaa. Okay, rozumím, ano.

*Ah. Ok, I understand, yes.*

**M.R.:** My jsme s ní mluvily úplně otevřeně. My jsem si, tehdy se říkalo, až to praskne.

*We talked to her completely openly. We were, at that time, saying when will it burst.*

**R.B.:** Až to praskne?

*When it bursts?*

**K.F.:** [laughing] Oh, like you know when, when, the situation, the politic [sic] situation will change.

**M.R.:** My se o tebe postaráme.

*We will take care of you.*

**K.F.:** We will take care of you.

**K.F.:** Jestli to vlastně pro vás byla výhoda v té době, nebo bylo to pro vás užitečné, že vlastně ona byla komu...

*Was it an advantage for you at the time, or it was useful for you that she was actually someone who....*

**M.R.:** Že jsme byli tři?

*That we were three?*

**K.F.:** Ne, že ona byla komunistka.

*No, that she was a Communist.*

**M.R.:** Ne, ona vůbec se neangažovala.

*No, she did not engage at all.*

**K.F.:** She wasn't active, like politicaly.



**M.R.:** V roce šedesát osm jim hodila takhle legitimaci. Ale už s ní, bohužel, už s ní nebyla řeč, ona bohužel nikdy neřekla, že to byl všecko omyl.

*In the year '68 she threw this legitimacy away. But with her, unfortunately, she did not say anything, unfortunately she never said, that it was all a mistake.*

**K.F.:** She never admitted that it was a mistake.

**M.R.:** Pro nás to bylo dobře, že jsme byly tři, protože některý doby byly moc špatný a my jsme se držely a jako vzájemně jsme si pomáhaly. No.

*It was good for us that we were three, because some periods of time were very bad, and we stayed and helped each other. Yes.*

**K.F.:** Sometimes it was hard so they could help each other.

**R.B.:** I'd like to know - they had the studio but were the materials, could they access the materials on their own to make work on their own or did they have to wait for a state project to supply materials?

**K.F.:** I think she was talking about it already. Tak Rebecca by chtěla vědět, když jste tady měly tu dílnu společnou, tak ty materiály, ty jste si získávaly samostatně, úplně samy, nebo jestli vám třeba poskytoval nějaké materiály stát?

*So, Rebecca would like to know when you had the workshop here, the materials, you got them separately, all by yourself, or if you were given some materials by the state?*

**M.R.:** My jsme si všecko zařizovaly samy. To tady nebyly takový. Tady ani takový služby neexistovaly. A my jsme za tři roky v roce padesát tři myslím, tady zlikvidovaly, vedle byl truhlář, oni ho znárodnili, a my jsme ti, my jsme měli štěstí, že jsme sehnaly daleko lepší ateliér, vo třech místnostech, kde bylo světlo na Lobkowiczském náměstí tady blízko, takže my jsme, my jsme vlastně. To bylo hnusný vod těch bolševíků, že všecko vlastně takhle mladýmu truhláři sebrali, který si založil firmu, a už mu to sebrali a musel do zaměstnání.

*We did everything on our own. It was not like that here. There was no such service. And in three years, fifty-three I think, they were liquidating here, next door there was a cabinet maker, they nationalized it and we were, we were lucky to get a much better studio, in three rooms where there was light on Lobkowicz Square - close to here, so we are, we are actually. It was frightful of those Bolsheviks, that*

*really everything that this young cabinet maker had gathered, who had founded a company, now they had taken it and he had to be employed.*

**K.F.:** hmmm. No, actually there was one, there was one guy. He, like a cabinet maker. A cabinet maker and the state took everything from him and they were lucky, they got a new atelier and three rooms and they could use it.

**M.R.:** Ještě něco asi strašně užitečného, co já si uvědomuju teď až když pořád vo tom mluvíme, vo tý minulosti. Že vod nás si všechnu práci objednávali architekti a ne nějakej někdo jiněj. Čili my s úřadama neměly nic společnýho. A šlo to do fondu nebo do svazu výtvarníků. Tam byly komise. Nejdřív záměr, myšlenka, model a potom kolaudace už hotový, čili všechno to schvalovala ta komise a předtím to objednával architekt, kterej stavěl ten barák.

*Something else, perhaps tremendously useful, that I realize now we are still talking about it, in the past. That all work was ordered from us by the architects and not by someone else. So we had nothing to do with the authorities. And it went to the fund or the Union of Artists. There were commissions. First the intention, the idea, the model and then the final approval, so the commission approved it all, and before that it was ordered by the architect who built the housing.*

**K.F.:** They were cooperating with the architects.

**M.R.:** Čili s úřadama, my jsme neměli žádný styky naštěstí protože...  
*Or, we had no dealings with the authorities/offices, fortunately, because...*

**K.F.:** They didn't have to with the department. Department and offices they didn't need to communicate with them.

**R.B.:** They didn't need to?

**K.F.:** No. It was just them and architects.

**M.R.:** A to fungovalo dobře.  
*And it worked well.*

**K.F.:** It was working.

**M.R.:** Protože existovala vyhláška, kterou nikdy v Evropě neměli. Když jsme jezdili za keramikama po Evropě, tak nám záviděli, že my máme takový krásný úlohy. Že máme ty realizace. Že u nich to takhle nešlo, jako tady to dneska taky tak nejde. Ale za bolševiků to šlo, protože byla vyhláška, takovéh zákon, že každá budova mám mít asi 0,001 procent výtvarné práce.

*Because there was a decree they never had in Europe. When we travelled for ceramics across Europe, they were envious of us, that we have such beautiful tasks. That we have these realizations. That at their place it did not work like this, as here it also does not today. But for the Bolsheviks it did, because it was a decree, a law that every building should have about 0.001 percent artwork.*

**R.B.:** Ano. Rozumím.

*Yes, I understand.*

**M.R.:** A tím pádem ti architekti to mohli objednávat, protože to bylo už takhle ustanovaný. A my jsme nemuseli se s nikým jiným bavit. Což bylo skvělý.

*And so the architects could order it because it was already settled. And we did not have to deal with anyone else. Which was great.*

**K.F.:** The public noticed that it was unique in Europe.

**R.B.:** A to je 'Miniprocento'.

*And it is 'miniprocento'. [term used for this percentage.]*

**M.R.:** My jsme měly strašně práce. Já to nechápu dneska.

*We had lots of work. I do not get it today.*

**K.F.:** They were very busy.

**M.R.:** To byly naše realizace. Ale jenom do roku, já nevím, do roku tady. Já to nepřechtu.

*These were our realizations. But only until the year, I do not know, by the year here. I do cannot read it.*

**K.F.:** Osmdesát čtyři tu je.

*'84 is here.*

**M.R.:** No protože. V roce sedmdesát tři, to bylo tady zase, nám řek jeden dobrý muž ze svazu, ze svazu výtvarníků, můžete vystavovat, protože ještě teď chvíli v tomto roce, protože pak už nebudete mít šanci, protože pak nás vyhodili. Voni takhle to dělali. Zrušili svaz výtvarníků kde my jsme byli jako od školy, takže my jsme tam pak nebyli.

*Yes, because. In seventy-three, it was here again, one good man from the union told us, the Union of Artists, told us to exhibit, because for a while in this year, because then you will not have a chance, because then they fired us. They did it this way. They canceled the Union of Artists where we had been since school, so we weren't there then.*

**K.F.:** One guy from the offices he told them that you have like one. [sic]

**R.B.:** Which offices?

**M.R.:** Založili nový svaz. Nový svaz. Potom založili v roce sedmdesát tři snad a tam už jsme nebyli. A deset let jsme nebyli ve svazu vůbec protože jsme nebyli...

*They established a new union. New union. Then they set up in seventy-three perhaps, and we were not there anymore. And for ten years we were not in the union at all because we were not ...*

**K.F.:** They cancelled the old group and weren't a part of the new, the new like the group of artists.

**R.B.:** So what was in the old group? The three of them or?

**K.F.:** Yeah. Měl ten svaz nějaké jméno?

*Did the union have a name?*

**M.R.:** Svaz československých výtvarných umělců, svaz československých výtvarných umělců. A oni nás potom nechali pracovat, dovolili nám pracovat ve fondu. Nebyli jsme ve svazu. Třeba my bysme bejvali dostali zakázku v metro, v metro, jo. Ale protože nás vyhodili ze svazu po těch bolševíkách v osmašedesátým roce. Tak už jsme to nemohli dělat. A to je dobře, protože bych z toho neměla třeba žádnou radost.

*The Union of Czechoslovak Artists, the Union of Czechoslovak Artists. And then they let us work, let us work in the fund. We were not in the union. Perhaps we would*

*have got a job in the metro, in the metro, yeah. But they threw us out of the union after those Bolsheviks in '68. So we could not do it anymore. And that's good, because I would not be happy about it.*

**K.F.:** She would not enjoy it.

**R.B.:** With the architects, did they have quite a lot of freedom for what they could do when they were working with these architects or did the architects say you must do something like this?

**K.F.:** Když jste spolupracovaly s těmi architekty, tak, ehm, měli, jako měla jste pocit, že jste měla dostatečnou svobodu vlastně v tom, co jste dělala?  
*When you worked with the architects, so, uh, did you feel you had enough freedom in what you were doing?*

**M.R.:** Heleďte, my jsme vlastně pracovali s nejlepšíma architektama, co tady tehdy byli, jo. Bohužel jsou všichni mrtvý, tak. To je minulost. Vždycky s nima, vždycky, voni s nám věnovali a připravovali jsme je na to, jak bysme to mysleli a tak. Mluvili jsme o tom, o materiálech. Protože třeba každá věc je z jinýho materiálu. Todleto byl takovej velikej a to není porcelán, to je detail.  
*Look, we were actually working with the best architects that were here then, yeah. Unfortunately, they are all dead, so. It's the past. Always with them, always, with us they devoted and prepared them for what we meant and so on. We talked about it, about the materials. Because every thing is from a different material. This was also a big one and it is not porcelain, that's a detail.[Referring to photograph.]*

**K.F.:** Skvělé. Kde?  
*Amazing. Where?*

**V.R.:** Beton?  
*Concrete?*

**R.B.:** Existuje?  
*Does it exist?*

**M.R.:** Je to kamenina nějaká.  
*It's some kind of earthenware.*

**All:** [speaking together]

**K.F.:** Ještě to existuje?

*Does it still exist?*

**M.R.:** Tohleto existuje, protože to nejde tak jednoduše zbourat.

*It exists, because it would not be simple to demolish.*

**K.F.:** [laughing]

**R.B.:** Neexistuje?

*It doesn't exist?*

**K.F.:** Existuje. [*It exists.*] You cannot destroy it easily.

**All:** [speaking together]

**V.R.:** To je dům Don. Don v Hradci Králové.

*It is a house in Don. Don in Hradec Králové.*

**K.F.:** V Hradci Králové.

*In Hradec Králové.*

**R.B.:** V Hradci Králové. V Praze? Ne?

*In Hradec Králové. In Prague? No?*

**V.R.:** It's a small town. Small town one hour from Prague.

**R.B.:** To je skvělé!

*It's amazing!*

**M.R.:** No, tohleto je nějaká plovárna. To zase bylo, byly cihly normální takové jako.

To byl základní materiál. To jsme koupili a tohle jsme voglazovali, v dílně teda.

*Well, this is a swimming pool. It was again, the bricks were normal as well. That was the basic material. We bought that and we glazed it, in the workshop.*

**R.B.:** They bought the material, no?

**K.F.:** I don't know. Nevím. [*I don't know.*]

**M.R.:** Takže ty materiály byly vopravdu velice různý.  
*So the materials were really very different.*

**K.F.:** She is they were using a lot of materials.

**R.B.:** They would discuss everything to see what they thought but some of them were quite authoratitive. Is that...?

**M.R.:** Ještě za námi jednou přišli nějaký páni inženýři z nějaké loterie. No já už vůbec nevím. Jsme je neznali a šlo vo, vo, jak se jmenuje, budovu, nebo, to je Montrealy. Pavilon prostě, pavilon, pavilon. Československý pavilon v Montréálu. Takže voni potřebovali, byla podmínka, že zase když skončí výstava, že to musí zase všechno se vodklidit, čili nebude se nic zdít jako na maltu, aby to šlo všechno, aby to šlo... Aby se to dalo...

*Some engineers from the lottery come to us once. Well, I do not know anymore. We did not know them and went in, what's it called, the building, or, it was Montreal. The pavilion simply, the pavilion, the pavilion. Czechoslovak Pavilion in Montreal. So they needed, it was a condition that when the show was over, that it must be all taken down again, therefore there was no using of mortar, so that everything would go,... To make it possible...*

**K.F.:** There was no concrete. After the exhibition it has to be...

**R.B.:** ...Taken apart.

**M.R.:** Takže jsme....  
*So we...*

**R.B.:** A kde? Kam?  
*And where? To where?*

**M.R.:** Takže jsme vymysleli tento system. Že toleto byly kovový, kovový takový. A do toho se, my jsme, přišli jsme na to, že by se to mohlo dělat ze stropnic, to

bylo stodvacet až stoosmedesát centimetrů dlouhá věc nebylo to jenom kachlík nějak takhle.

*So we invented this system. That they were metallic, metallic like that. And to go ahead, we are, we figured out that it could be made from joists, it was a hundred and sixty-five-centimetres-long thing, it was not only just some kind of tile there.*

**K.F.:** The metal. The pieces that support the roof. Something like that they used to put it together.

**M.R.:** Byla tady továrně někde na Českomoravské vysočině, tak jsme tam jeli a teď to nemohlo zůstat, to bylo jak takovejhle, že jo, takovej, takovej, červenice, že jo, blbá barva.

*There was factory somewhere in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, so we went there and now it could not stay, it was like that, yeah, that kind of, red, right, stupid color.*

**K.F.:** Not a great colour.

**R.B.:** Ano. Yes.

**M.R.:** Prostě, bylo to dutý takový, dutá cihla, lehká. Měla na sobě nějaký razítka, jméno té firmy a tak to jsme tam udělali nějaký takový rastr dírky nějaký, otvory, dolíčky...

*It was just hollow, hollow brick, light. It bore some stamps, the name of the company, and so we did some sort of hole pattern, some holes, dots....*

**K.F.:** They made adjustments because it didn't fit their idea.

**R.B.:** Okay, yeah. I see.

**M.R.:** A potom jsme se snažili tam dát nějakou glazuru. Zkoušeli jsme, ale protože ta fabrika, tam docházelo k redukci a to nesneslo žádnou glazuru a to nemohlo to bejt celistý.

*And then we tried to put some glaze there. We tried, but because of the factory there was a reduction and it couldn't bear any glaze, and it could not be solid.*

**K.F.:** They couldn't put colour on it.



**R.B.:** Ano.

Yes.

**M.R.:** Takže my jsme, aby to vypadalo tak jako trochu, jo.

*So we, in order to make it look like a bit, yeah.*

**K.F.:** They wanted to make it a little better.

**M.R.:** Továrna zmobilizovala všechny zaměstnance. Každý měl takové košťátko, takhle na zametání, jo. Namočilo se do glazúry, bílý, a to je výsledek, no. The factory mobilized all employees.

*Everybody had a broom like this, sweeping like that, yeah. Soaked in the glaze, white, and that's the result, yeah.*

**M.R. and R.B.:** [laughing]

**K.F.:** So all the employees of the factory they had to....

**M.R.:** Ono se to....

*That's it...*

**K.F.:** Everyone was working on it.

**M.R.:** Při té redukci se to ztratilo a bylo to takový no. To byl komunistický přístup k věci. No tak to jsem vám musela říct.

*During this the reduction was lost and it was like that. That was the communist approach to the matter. Well, I had to tell you that.*

**R.B.:** Okay. So I'm interested in whether doing things by hand was kind of more the creative freedom or what the role of handmade was in her project. Like whether....

**K.F.:** Rebecca se ptá, co to vlastně pro vás znamená tvorba rukama, vy jste pracovala přímo vlastně jako ruční výroba a jestli jste se cítila svobodná vlastně přitom když jste...?

*Rebecca asks what does it mean for you to create by hand, did you actually work as a handmade production, and if you felt free when you were ...?*

**M.R.:** No tak já bych ještě tady přinesla nějaké věci, co jsem dělala já osobně, protože jak už jsme potom nemohli vystavovat...

*Well, I would still bring some things here that I personally did, because we could not exhibit then...*

**K.F.:** She will bring some, something she made by herself. Later on, as you said, they could not exhibit, she was working on her own.

**M.R.:** To jsou takový jak mi to ta Markéta dala, tak, je to tu. To jsou takový. To jsou takový moje nějaký věci. Tady jsme měli poslední výstavu.

*These are some of my things. We had the last show here.*

**R.B.:** A kdy...

*And when...*

**M.R.:** V tom třiasedmdesátým.

*In '73.*

**R.B.:** Sedmdesátým.

*'73.*

**K.F.:** '73, the last exhibition.

**R.B.:** Kde je byla?

*Where was it?*

**K.F.:** Kde, kde byla ta poslední výstava?

*Where, where was the last exhibition?*

**M.R.:** V Dejvicích, jak se jmenoval ten sběratel, co sbíral ty Piccasy, náš?

*In Dejvice, what was the name of the collector who collected the Piccasos, ours?*

**V.R.:** Aaa, no, já vím koho myslíte. [laughing]

*Aaa, yeah, I know who you are thinking of.*

**M.R.:** Podle toho ta galerie se jmenovala. Klamář, Klamář. Klamářova galerie.  
*The gallery was named after him. Klamář, Klamář. Klamářova gallery.*

**R.B.:** Kramář? [Galerii Vincence Kramáře]

**M.R.:** V Dejvicích. No, to jsou takový... No potom jsme tedy vystavovali tudletu, to je oblíbená, tu jsem dělala jenom kamarádům, protože jsem neuměla na to to technický, to bych byla nesměla nikomu prodat, protože to bylo životu nebezpečné. To bylo ještě v sedmdesá...  
*In Dejvice. Well, that's what ... Well, then we exhibited this, it's a favorite, I just made only for my friends, because I could not do it technically, I could not sell to anyone because it was dangerous for me. It was still in the seventies...*

**R.B.:** A sedm... ano.  
*In seven...yes.*

**M.R.:** To je ta poslední výstava. Tam byly tydlety lampy.

*It is the final exhibition. There was this lamp.*

**R.B.:** Ááá, hmm.

**M.R.:** Ti mají všichni naši kamarádi teďka.

*All of our friends have them now.*

**R.B.:** Maybe I'd like to know... kind of these shapes and images [indecipherable]

**V.R.:** Já bych se chtěla zeptat, jestli jste třeba sledovali nějaké dobové časopisy o umění.

*I would like to ask, whether you followed perhaps any art magazines from the period.*

**M.R.:** Já bych se chtěla zeptat, jestli jste třeba sledovali nějaké dobové časopisy o umění.

**V.R.:** Já bych se chtěla zeptat, jestli jste třeba sledovali nějaké dobové časopisy o umění.

*I would like to ask, whether you followed perhaps any art magazines from the period.*

**M.R.:** Prosím vás, to bylo trestný. To bylo trestný.

*Please, it was criminal. That was criminal.*

**V.R.:** Já právě mě napadl ten časopis, který vydával asi právě ten ÚLUV, Tvorba se to jmenovalo, tak právě jsem koukala, že tam jsou nějaké články i o vás, tak...

*I was just critiquing the magazine, which probably published just about ÚLUV, Creation it was named, so I was just wondering, there are some articles about you, so...*

**M.R.:** Doufám, že nejsou hanlivý.

*I hope they are not offensive.*

**V.R.:** Ne, ne, ne. A právě o tom Radovi, že jo, Pravoslav Rada a tak podobně, tak to tam ty články tam jsou.

*No, no, no. And just about Rada, yeah, Pravoslav Rada and so on, so there the those articles there.*

**M.R.:** Šílená minulost.

*Mad past.*

**V.R.:** Já nevím, jestli jste to třeba náhodou jako nesledovali nebo jako jestli jste to teda považovali za...

*I do not know, if you perhaps by chance had been following it or if you thought it was...*

**M.R.:** No tak to byl náš časopis, tak co bych se tam dověděla. A cizí časopisy prosím vás, těsně po válce, třeba našli něco když jsme byli v cizině v kufří našli nějaký časopis a byly z toho šílený maléry.

*Well, it was our magazine, so what would I learn there. And foreign magazines, come on, just after the war, when we were abroad and they found a magazine in our suitcase, there was crazy trouble.*

**R.B.:** A taky v šedesátých letech, to je taky problém?

*And also in the '60s, it is also a problem?*

**K.F.:** V šedesátých letech, když přišlo uvolnění?

*In the '*

**M.R.:** To už bylo uvolněný, to byly dobrý léta, to už jsme na hranicích ani nekoukali.

*It was already relaxed, they were good years, we did not even consider the borders.*

**K.F.:** To se nekontrolovalo.

*They didn't control it.*

**M.R.:** Ani na pasy. To už nás nechali jet. Jenže ono jim to trvalo vlastně dost dlouho ten svaz vlastně zrušili až pět let potom, že jo. Todleto jsem dělala už sama. Holky už nějak rezignovaly, to byla velikánská zeď. *Not even on passports. They'd already let us go. But it took them long enough to actually abolish the union up to five years after that. This I did by myself. The girls had already somehow resigned, it was a great wall.*

**K.F.:** Rebecca se ještě chtěla zeptat tady vlastně, kde jste sbírala inspiraci třeba pro ty tvary a pro ty kompozice.

*Rebecca still wanted to ask here where you gathered inspiration, for example, for those shapes and compositions.*

**M.R.:** To nevím, bohužel.

*I don't know, unfortunately.*

**K.F.:** To si nepamatujete.

*You don't remember that.*

**M.R.:** Todle byla moje teda poslední výstava. To už holky ani už zemřely. A todle to, vidíte, to byla krásná, velikánská, taková...

*This here was my last show. The girls had already died. And this, you see, it was beautiful, great, so ....*

**R.B.:** Kde to je?

*Where is it?*

**M.R.:** Bylo to, Dyje, je tam řeka Dyje a je to u Znojma. Mělo to vlastně něco z toho téct, myslím, tady vodtud. Ale jestli to, to nevím, už.

*It was, Dyje, there is the river Dyje and it's near Znojmo. It was supposed to flow some of it, I think, here. But whether it does, I don't know.*

**K.F.:** It was supposed to be a fountain, I guess. Like that.

**V.R.:** Možná ono je to asi ze zadu popsané bych řekla, ne?

*Perhaps it's probably from the back, I would say, right?*

**K.F.:** The wall and the river...

**M.R.:** A todle bylo ještě, to byl detail tady, to bylo v jednom obchodě a to jsme dělali ještě na z červenice, takový, s tím jsme začínali vlastně.

*And this was still, it was a detail here, it was the one in the shop and we were still doing it from red, so, we started with it.*

**R.B.:** Protože, ehm, přečetla jsem článek, článek od Josefa Rabana, Josef Rabana, a řekl, řekla, myslím, že diskutoval tento keramika?

*Because, um, I read the article, an article by Josef Raban, Josef Raban, and it said, it said, I think he discussed this ceramic?*

**K.F.:** Že Rebecca četla nějaký článek od Josefa Rabana a říká, že si myslí, že tam mluví o tomhle.

*That Rebecca read some article by Josef Raban and says she thought he was talking about this.*

**M.R.:** No tak, no. Tady mám ten návod, jak... Tady mám ty datumy všechny.

*Yes, well, yes. Here's the tutorial on how to... Here I have all the dates.*

**R.B.:** Lidi mohli koupit tento?

*People could buy this?*

**K.F.:** Jo. Rebecca se ptá, jestli bylo možné to koupit?

*Yes, Rebecca asks, whether it was possible to buy this? I think it was build in the wall.*

**R.B.:** It's in the wall.

**M.R.:** Tehdy, tady někde je obrázek tý.... Výstava, no prostě byla to taková, takovej, uzkej záležitost v obchodě s konfekcí.

*Back then, somewhere there is a picture of it... The exhibition, yes it was just such a sort of thing, in a clothing shop.*

**K.F.:** That was a wall in the shop.

**M.R.:** To jsme pak do toho šfouchali pak všelijak a glazovali. To ze začátku jsme si tak počínali.

*After we then slapped it on here and glazed it. That's what we did in the beginning.*

**K.F.:** They were like playing with the material and glazing it.

**M.R.:** Ano, rok šedesát sedm, strukturální keramická stěna pro prodejnu Fermena v Praze.

*Yes, in the year sixty-seven, the structural ceramic wall for the Fermena store in Prague.*

**R.B.:** Fermena. To je...?

*Fermena. It is...?*

**K.F.:** That's the name for the, the confectionary shop.

**R.B.:** Aha, Fermena.

**M.R.:** Tady mám právě všecko. Každá měly svoje takový. To bylo ta naše, to bylo Divana a Lydie. A ještě tady mám hezkýj článek od takový paní doktorky z muzea.

*Here I have everything. Everyone had their own. That was ours, it was Divana and Lydie. And here I have a nice article by a doctor from the museum.*

**R.B.:** Potom můžu fotografovat?*Afterwards can I take pictures?*

**K.F.:** Může si to vyfotit potom?

*Can she photograph it afterwards?*

**M.R.:** Mmm. [Agrees]

**R.B.:** Děkuju.

*Thank you.*

**M.R.:** Tohle je kolem auly Matfyz pro Prager. To byl takovej hrubej materiál řas. Řasy se to jmenovalo. No a ještě bych vám, vás uvedla do toho, jak jsme přišli, přišli třeba na takovýdle dekóry, dělat jako z továrně vyráběnejch prvků.

*This is around the Matfyz Assembly Hall [Matematicko-fyzikální fakulta, Faculty of Mathematical Physics, Charles University, Prague] for Prager [Karel Prager, architect]. It was such a coarse material of algae. It was called algae. Well, I would like to tell you how we came, perhaps to come up with such decors, from factory-made manufactured elements.*

**K.F.:** So she will talk about....

**M.R.:** My jsme dělali strašně dávno. Pardon, mohla bych se podívat na tohle. Dělali jsme soutěž na letišťě.

*We were making it an awfully long time ago. Sorry, I could look at this. We did a competition for the airport.*

**R.B.:** Letiště.

*Airport.*

**K.F.:** Airport.

**M.R.:** Možná byste to našla spíš je to tadyhle, že jsme. To je úplně soukromé sdělení.

*Maybe you could go and find it, it's here, that we are. This is a completely private message.*

**K.F.:** [Reads the back of an image] 'Sedmdesát čtyři'.

*'Seventy four'.*

**M.R.:** Je tam to letiště?

*It is the airport?*

**K.F.:** Šedesátý čtvrtý rok.

*The year 74.*

**M.R.:** Šedesátčtyři. Čili dávno. Podmínky se konaly v Mánesu.

*74. So long ago. The objects were held in Mánes.*



**K.F.:** It was a competition in Mánes.

**M.R.:** Prager a myslím Šrámek byli autoři. Byla přestavba letiště a jednalo se o stěnu.

*Prager and I think Šrámek were the authors. It was a rebuilding of the airport and it was a wall.*

**K.F.:** The wall... [whispering, translation for Rebecca]

**M.R.:** Strašně dlouhou, dvacet metrů nebo já nevím, tři metry vysoký, takovej pás prostě. Odbavovací hala nějaká. A tehdy tam byly samý umělci, který, já nevím, co tam teda vlastně tolik lidí se o to zajímalo. A my jsme.

*Extremely long, twenty metres or I do not know, three metres tall, simply a strip. Some kind of check-in hall. And then there were all the artists, who, I do not know what actually so many people were interested in. And here we are.*

**K.F.:** A lot of artists were interest...

**M.R.:** A my jsme tam šly jako keramičky, samy nějak mezi těma umělcema.

Výsledek byl, že my jsme byly druhý a nějaký slovak Končič to vyhrál. A vyhrál to v tom, že použil kolečka, průmyslově vyráběný, takový různý těsnění, prostě takový kovový kolečka, různý.

*And we went there as ceramics, somehow among those artists. The result was that we were the second and a Slovakian Končič won it. And he won it by using castors, industrially produced, such different seals, just such metal wheels, different.*

**K.F.:** Metal. Metal like not circles, but you know.

**R.B.:** The other? The first artist?

**K.F.:** The first one.

**R.B.:** Co znam... Jak se jmenuje?

*What name... What is his name?*

**K.F.:** Ten slovak se jmenoval?

*This Slovakian was called?*

**M.R.:** Kočič, Kočič. A my jsme si tehdy provedli šílenou blbost, ale bylo to pro nás šílené poučení. My jsme prostě udělali dvacetinu, dvacetinu, patnáct centimetrů dlouhý, takový keramické, pod to jsme dali nějaký keramický držení a dělali jsme to rukou, místama se to tak zvedalo a zase se to zklidňovalo a všechno to bylo vlastně vod ruky.

*Kočič, Kočič. And then we did a mad thing, but it was a crazy lesson for us. We just made twenty, twenty- fifthfifty, fifteen centimeters long, such ceramics, we put some ceramic holds on it and we did it by hand, so the rhythms soared and calmed down again, and it was all by hand.*

**K.F.:** They were making by hand like, like the waves.

**R.B.:** Aha. They were themselves making this?

**M.R.:** To nejde v keramice provést. To je úplná volovina. Úplný nesmysl. Nesmysl. Opravdu. Protože keramiku si nemůžete dát takhle jako kámen, dřevo, nebo něco. *It is not possible to carry this off in ceramics. It is complete tosh. Total nonsense. Nonsense. Truly. Because ceramics cannot give here like stone, wood, or something.*

**K.F.:** You cannot use it like stone.

**M.R.:** V tomhle můžete dělat menší věc, kam dosáhnete, ale když je to veliký, třeba Marta Taberyová, ta má takový vozíček a pracuje na zemi. *In this you can make small things, where you get it, but if it is big, for example Marta Taberyová, she also has a cart and works on the ground.*

**R.B.:** Na zemi?

*On the ground?*

**K.F.:** On the floor. Work on the floor.

**M.R.:** Aby k tomu mohla, jo. A potom ta věc musí se rozkrájet, že jo, když by bylo vod ruky, rozkrájet na ty kusy, aby to šlo vypálit.

*In order to be able to do that, yeah. And then this object must be cut, that is, if it was from hand, cut into these pieces, in order to be fired.*

**K.F.:** You have to cut it into pieces to put it into oven.

**M.R.:** A z druhý strany se to musí poškrábat nebo vyrýt ještě, aby to bylo tenčí, no. Prostě hrozný. Vod tý doby jsme ...Todleto. To, tenhleten velikej barák, ten.  
*And on the other hand it must be scratched or engraved it to make it thinner, well. Just terrible. From this time, we... here. That, this big housing, here.*

**V.R.:** Já jsem se jenom chtěla zeptat, teď nevím, jestli jste to říkala, ten slovak, co to vyhrál, tu zakázku, bylo to...  
*I just wanted to ask one thing, now I don't know if you said it, whether the Slovak you mentioned, what he won, this order, was it..*

**M.R.:** Třeba se to možná ani nerealizovalo.  
*Maybe it did not even happen.*

**V.R.:** No já jsem se chtěla zeptat, jestli se to realizovalo. Yes, I wanted to ask, whether it happened.

**M.R.:** To už, my už jsme si řekli. Kde to máme? Kde to máme takovej?  
*That's what we already said. Where do we have it? Where is it?*

**K.F.:** A kterou myslíte?  
*And what do you think?*

**M.R.:** To všechno prostě to je vyský, tohleto třeba, to jde vyskládat, to byl základní nějaký kachlíček, takhle čtvereček, trošku takhle, a todle jsme formovali, každej, každej ten prvek by trošku podobnej ale jinej. Úzkýj a všelijakýj.  
*All of this is giant, it can be stacked, it was just a plain basic tile, it can build, it was the base of some kind of tile, a square, a bit like this, and we formed it, each one, each element would be a bit similar but different. Narrow and of all kinds.*

**K.F.:** A to jste dělaly vy tři taky?  
*And did you three do that?*

**M.R.:** No to je ten Hradec.

*Yes, that's Hradec.*

**K.F.:** Jo, to je.

*Yeah, it is.*

**M.R.:** No a to jsme všechno nakreslili. Byly na to formy. Vymáčkalo se to ve fabrice. A potom bylo dost asi složitý pro ty vobkladače, pro ty pracovníky, co to jako kladli, protože, aby to někde nespletli, že jo.

*Well, we drew it all up. There were forms for it. It was squeezed in the factory. And then it was probably quite complicated for those vendors, for the workers who did it, because they did not get it wrong somehow.*

**R.B.:** And would they have help with people for making these pieces and putting them on for them, or did they do it all themselves?

**K.F.:** Vy jste to potom dávali jako zákazku do nějaké továrny?

*Did you then put it as a contract to a factory?*

**M.R.:** No, museli jsme spolupracovat s tou Horní Břízou, Horní Bříza to byla.

*Well, we had to work with Horni Bříza, it was Horní Bříza.*

**K.F.:** They had to cooperate with the factory.

**M.R.:** Tam prostě vznikly. To já už si přesně...

*They they were. It's just me...*

**R.B.:** Which factory?

**M.R.:** Nepamatuju. Musely se na to udělat formy a několik, vono toho zas nebylo tolik. To se vymáčkalo.

*I do not remember. There had to be moulds and a few of them, but there wasn't much. It was squeezed.*

**K.F.:** They had to make forms.

**M.R.:** Potom teda pro tu firmu, co to vobkládali, jsme to měli očíslovaný, každěj kachlík a takhle to diktovat ze spoda a hlídat, aby to nespletli.

*Then, for the company that put it in, we had it numbered, every tile, and that was the way to dictate it from the bottom and watch over it, to keep it right.*

**R.B.:** A byl všechno... dobre?

*And was everything...well?*

**K.F.:** Jestli to udělali správně potom? [laughing]

*They did that right, then?*

**M.R.:** Myslím, že jo. Myslím, že jo. A Lýdie, ta byla taková důkladná a přesná, aby to vyšlo takhle. To je velikej barák, rohovej, že jo. Aby to vyšlo jako scelým kachlíkem, aby tam třeba nebyla půlka, tak to měla rozkreslený, ty spáry mezi tím, maličký, aby to vyšlo, akorát.

*I think yes. I think, yes. And Lydie, she was thorough and precise, to make it work like this. That's a big building, corner, right. To make it look like a solid tile, so there wasn't a half, it had to be rendered, those joints between it, little ones, to make it, just so.*

**K.F.:** She was counting. For the whole bricks not only for parts of them.

**M.R.:** Takže. Ale. Když my jsme s těma zedníkama vlastně pracovaly moc často, vlastně pořád. A je to bavilo, protože to nebyla monotónní práce. Oni normálně dělaj kilometry a furt je to stejný.

*So. But. Actually, we worked with these bricklayers very often, all the time, actually. And it was fun because it was not monotonous work. They normally do miles and they are always the same.*

**R.B.:** Užilí protože...

*Enjoying it because...*

**K.F.:** They, the guys from the company enjoyed because it was something different.

**M.R.:** Takže je to bavilo, že to je jiný, že to je nějakej vzoreček takovej nepatrnej. So it was fun, that it's different, that it's some kind of little pattern.

**R.B.:** Did work like this get censored at all?

**K.F.:** Sorry?

**R.B.:** Was work like this censored or approved by a committee in terms of whether it's modernist or whether it's...

**K.F.:** Yes. Je vlastně, jestli tenhle typ budov vlastně vám schvalovala komise.  
*Yes. Actually, was this type of building approved by the commission?*

**M.R.:** Ovšem.

*Of course.*

**K.F.:** Všechno.

*Everything.*

**M.R.:** První byl záměr, idea, potom byl moder 1:10 nebo 1:20, podle toho, když ten, tohle bylo schválený, tak jsme to realizovali. A poto přišla komise na kolaudaci a kdyby se jim to nelíbilo, naštěstí to vždycky brali teda. Tak nám mohli zaplati.  
*First was an idea, then it was mode 1:10 or 1:20, depending on when that one was approved, then we realized it. They approved it. And then the commission came to approve it, and if they did not like it, fortunately they always took it. So they could pay us.*

**K.F.:** They, they... The committee came when it was built, they approved it and then they got paid.

**M.R.:** Čili my jsme jednali jenom s architektem. S tím jsme se docela složitě a příjemně, protože to byli, nebyli to žádní partajní pánové.  
*So we only dealt with the architect. With them we were quite complex and pleasant, because they were, they were no Party men.*

**K.F.:** They cooperating with architects was pleasant. [sic]

**M.R.:** Tak jsme se dohodli jakmile to půjde.

*So we soon agreed as soon as it was possible.*

**K.F.:** They agreed on...

**M.R.:** Aby to, oni s tím taky souhlasili a vzali to, no pak ty komise, to taky šlo.  
*And that was the way we agreed, and they took it, then the commission too, it went ahead.*

**K.F.:** Then the committee....

**M.R.:** Tam bylo několik komisí. Tahle s těma barákama, ta byla takzvaná velká. Tam byli i architekti jako v tý komisi, architekti to posuzovali a výtvarníci, sochaři, malíři a tak.  
*There were several commissions. This one with these barracks, that was so-called big. There were also architects in the commission, architects judged it, and artists, sculptors, painters and so on.*

**K.F.:** In the committee, there were artists... [whispering to Rebecca]

**V.R.:** Jak to bylo třeba s nějakou konkurencí tady právě? Vy jste asi moc konkurence neměly, ne, v té trojici keramiček, kdy v té době...  
*How was it to be with a competitor right here? You probably did not have much competition, no, in this trio of ceramicists, when at that time...*

**M.R.** Já to vůbec už nechápu, co my mohly nadělat takovej věci. Vopravdu. Další věc, co je, že my jsme vo tu práci jako nežádaly, protože nám to dávali sami. Frofláknutá trojice.

*I no longer understand how we could have done such a thing. Really. Another thing is that we did not ask for the work because they gave it to us. The well-known trio.*

**R.B.:** Maybe ask about whether it's, whether she preferred moving onto work in public spaces... [indecipherable]

**K.F.:** You want to compare the exhibition work and public spaces?

**V.R.:** Já si u vás odskočím a hned jsem zpátky.  
*I'll just pop out and I'll be right back.*

**K.F.:** Rebeccu by zajímalo, jestli vlastně jste preferovala vytváření nějakých těch veřejných prostranství a prostorů nebo vlastně to, co jste třeba vytvářela na ty svoje výstavy?

*Rebecca is interested in knowing, if you had any preference for creating some of the public spaces and spaces, or what you created for your exhibitions?*

**R.B.:** Nebo užité umění?

*Or applied art?*

**K.F.:** Nebo užité umění. Co jakoby jste dělala radši.

*Or applied art. What did you prefer to do.*

**M.R.:** Nás vždycky těšilo, když to... Zaprvé vždycky každá úloha byla úplně jiná. To bylo příjemný. To bylo fajn.

*We always enjoyed it when... First, every task was always completely different.*

*That was nice. That was fine.*

**K.F.:** Everything was different.

**M.R.:** A my jsme museli vždycky do nějaký fabriky za tím materiálem, protože na něco se hodil, že jo, na tohle se hodilo něco jiného a tadydle na tudle káru se hodil porcelán.

*And we always had to go to the factory for the material because it suited something, right, or something else was good for this, and porcelain was good for this part.*

**K.F.:** All the time, something else was suitable.

**M.R.:** Ta spolupráce s těma architektama byla bezvadná, protože my jsme zase pochopily, vo co těm architektum jde. Heleďte my jsme vyšly z gymplu. Neměly jsme předtím žádné vzdělání.

*The collaboration with those architectures was impeccable, because we once again understood what the architects were doing. Look, we came out of the school. We had no education before.*

**K.F.:** They finished school....



**M.R.:** Já přišla na UMPRUM, byla válka. Profesor byl kolaborant, pak zmizel, pak nebyl, pak bylo takový, pak nebylo nic, nebyl žádný kantor. Pak jsem otehotněla, porodila a tak. Pak jsem přešla na tu keramiku. To se začínalo, ten atelier tam ještě nebyl vůbec, no. To jsme dostali bolševíka šílenýho, kterej nám ráno čet z Rudýho práva.

*I came to UMPRUM, it was the war. The professor was a collaborator, then disappeared, then he wasn't, then it was, then there was nothing, there was no leader. Then I got pregnant, I gave birth and so on. Then I went over to ceramics. That was starting, the studio was not there yet, yeah. That's when we got the Bolshevik madman, who would read to us in the morning from Rudé Právo.*

**K.F.:** He must read to them at the classes from Rudé Právo. The you know communist... [sic]

**R.B.:** ...komunisty noviny.

*Communist newspaper.*

**M.R.:** Čili my jsme byli úplní samouci, úplní diletanti, my jsme.

*We were completely self-taught, complete dilettantes, we are.*

**K.F.:** They had to learn all the... It wasn't like... [not clear]

**M.R.:** Co jsme si sami neudělali, tak nikdo nám nepomohl nebo...

*What we did not make ourselves, no one helped us or...*

**K.F.:** Nobody helped them

**M.R.:** A jediná s těma architektama, kerý to už odezněla sorela, takzvaná. Víte, co je sorela? Socialistický realismus, to už nebylo potom. Potom Brusel, to byl rok padesát osm. Tam jsme dostali nějaký medály.

*And with the architects, the already fading sorela, so-called. You know it, this sorela? Socialist realism, it was not yet after that. Then Brussels, that was the year '58. There we got some medals.*

**K.F.:** Tam jste dostala zlatou medali, pokud se nepletu.

*There you got a gold medal if I am not mistaken.*

**M.R.:** To jsme se trošku proslavily. Pak už ti architekti samozřejmě ty domy ruský, takový to už pominulo, to už stavěli jen ty paneláky. Ale my jsme na paneláky nic nedělaly vlastně, protože vždycky to byla nějaká individuální budova.

*That made us a little famous. Then the architects, of course, the Russian houses, that was already over, they were building only these paneláky [prefabs]. But we did not do anything on the paneláky, because it was always an individual building.*

**K.F.:** Mě teď jenom tak napadla otázka. V tom padesátém osmém myslíte, že vlastně vám pomohla ta medaile, že jste si udělala jméno?

*A question just came to me. In '58, do you think the medal actually helped you to make a name?*

**M.R.:** No totiž, ten Brusel, tady najednou ta nálada byla, všichni prostě chtěli nějak jako, byli jako, že se, vono, původní myšlenka prý byla, že komunisti chtěli předvést Bruselu úspěchy Socialismu. Pak jim to někdo rozmluvil.

*Well, that Brussels, all of a sudden the mood here was, everyone just wanted somehow, they were like, well, the original idea was that the Communists wanted to show off the achievements of Socialism at Brussels. Then somebody talked to them.*

**K.F.:** She was so successful at the Brussel. [sic] Maybe this helped her to get you know her work afterwards.[sic]

**R.B.:** And was she saying that that was the change from socialist realism to modernism?

**K.F.:** Some Socialist party wanted to like...

**V.R.:** Make a name for themselves.

**R.B.:** Promote them.

**M.R.:** Pak si to rozmysleli, že by to mělo být trochu duchovní.

*Then they changed there mind, that it should be a little spiritual.*

**All:** [laughter]

**M.R.:** Jo a už to prostě. Potom bruselu že byla nálada, že prostě sorela nás už nezajímá, nic takovýho.

*Yeah, and that's just it. After Brussels that was the mood, that sorela was just not of interest, nothing like that.*

**K.F.:** So the mood has changed afterwards.

**R.B.:** And was she, was she then accessing the international influences around for kinds of contemporary modernist styles?

**K.F.:** Jestli jste měla možnost tehdy nějak vlastně uhm vnímat vlivy ze zahraničí třeba soudobé?

*Did you then have the chance at the time to actually see the influences from abroad, perhaps contemporary?*

**M.R.:** No, to jsme moc teda neměli. Ale já jsem byla v tom Bruselu se podívat, jo. No tak to jsem byla hodně překvapená, jak to tam chodí.

*Well, we did not have that much. But I was in Brussels to check it out, yeah. Well, I was pretty surprised how it was there.*

**K.F.:** She was really surprised in Brussel to see. [sic]

**M.R.:** Třeba tam byl ten ..... teď dobré jídlo, tam byly fronty.

*Maybe there was that ... now, good food, there were queues.*

**R.B.:** [laughing]

**M.R.:** Čili československý povel tam měl úspěch no. To bylo dobrý, no.

*So the Czechoslovak command was successful there. It was good, right.*

**R.B.:** Moc zajímavé. A co jak bylo pracovat na ÚBOK?

*Very interesting. And what, what, how was it to work for ÚBOK?*

**K.F.:** Jaké to bylo pracovat pro ÚBOK?

*What was it like to work for ÚBOK?*

**M.R.:** Já jsem pro něj nikdy nepracovala. *I never worked for them.*

**K.F.:** Nepracovala.

*She never worked for them.*

**M.R.:** Voni vode mně nic nechtěli a já nechtěla nic od nich. Totiž naše práce byla, my jsme dělali třeba návrh pro fabriku, což ten ÚBOK měl dělat, aby zvelebil prostě tu výrobu všemožnou, že jo, nábytek a oděvy.

*They did not want anything from me and I did not want anything from them. Our work was, we were making a design for a factory, which this ÚBOK had to make, in order to improve the production of everything possible, that is, furniture and clothing.*

**K.F.:** Improving manufacturing.

**R.B.:** ÚBOK?

**M.R.:** To byly ty sektorový skříňky, že jo. Všecky stejný.

*There were the sector wardrobes, oh yes. Everything the same.*

**K.F.:** A to vlastně na té Invalidovně to nebyly zakázky pro ÚBOK?

*And it wasn't at Invalidovna, that were orders for ÚBOKa?*

**M.R.:** No kdepak prosím vás.

*Yes anywhere for you.*

**K.F.:** Třeba ty bytové interiéry, na tom jste se nepodílela?

*For example, those residential interiors, there you did not participate?*

**M.R.:** No bytové interiéry to byly, jediný pod střechou byl tohle. Tohle.

*Well, the apartment interiors were, the only thing under the roof was that. This.*

**K.F.:** This is the only thing under the roof.

**R.B.:** Okay.

**M.R.:** ÚBOK měl jako zvelebovat výrobu. Ale jelikož ta výroba byla tak tvrdohlavá, tak se jim to vůbec asi ne, já nevím, možná, že jo.

*ÚBOK was supposed to improve production. But since the production was so stubborn, they probably didn't, I do not know, maybe it did.*

**K.F.:** [whispering, translating.]

**M.R.:** Za prvé, oděvy nešly kupovat v obchodu. To jsme se nemohli oblíkat. To bylo příšerný. Proto tady mám takovouhle skříňku, protože koupit si, koupit si jako výrobek, to nešlo, to byly sektorový takový světlý.

*First of all, the garments could not be bought in the store. We could not get dressed. That was horrible. That's why I have this wardrobe here, because it wasn't possible to buy, to buy as a product, it couldn't happen, it was this light sector.*

**K.F.:** There was like one type. One type of furniture and nothing else.

**R.B.:** Multisektor? [Aforementioned type of unit-based furniture]

**M.R.:** A ještě ke všemu třeba po tom bruselu, já tu udělala do restaurace něco a voni vode mě objednali, aby ještě udělala velkej konvér takový. Továrny ty byly takový, že vám třeba nezaplatily, jo. Zrovna tak artcentrum, tam třeba půl roku vony jim nabíhaly nějaký prachy. Něco. Nějaký prachy jim nabíhaly. Tím, že to neplatili. Artcentrum, to se tím vyznačovalo, že půl roku trvalo, než vám něco takže.

*And even, after Brussels, I made something for the restaurant and they ordered something from me, to make a big convector like that. The factories were such that they you might not get paid, yeah. Just like an Art Centre, there was some money for them in half a year. Something. Some money was on its way. They did not pay for it. By not paying for it, Art Centrum, it was characteristic that it took six months for them to give you something.*

**K.F.:** They were waiting half a year for the money.

**R.B.:** Wow.

**M.R.:** Nebyl zájem. Nebyl zájem.

*There was no interest. There was no interest.*

**R.B.:** Ano.

Yes.

**K.F.:** And there was no interest.

**V.R.:** A já se zeptám, když jste dělala třeba nějaké, já jsem koukala, ja nevím, nějaké vázy nebo konvice...

*And I would like to ask if you did some, I was looking, I do not know, some vases or teapots...*

**M.R.:** No jasně.

*Of course.*

**V.R.:** Tak vy jste většinou to nějak nedokorovala, že? Nebo spíš to byly jednodušší tvary nebo?

*So you mostly did not do that kind of thing, right? Or were they more simple shapes or?*

**M.R.:** Tak to bych zas musela hledat v šupletí. Totiž potom třiasedmdesátým, jak nás vyhodili z toho svazu, a nemohli jsme udělat výstavu, jak my jsme si představovali, tak jsme dělali do prodejen, do obchodů vlastně, které patřily dílu, drobný věci na prodej.

*So I would have to look for it in the drawer. Then, in seventy-three, as we were kicked out of the union, and we could not make exhibitions as we imagined, we made for the shops, the things that actually belonged to the shop, little things to sell.*

**K.F.:** Small things for sale.

**M.R.:** To jsme dělali ještě mimo tydlety zakázky. A to byly prostě mističky, vázičky, konvice, čtverečky taky, jo. A to bylo na prodej.

*That's what we did beside these orders. And it was just little bowls, vases, kettles, tiles too, yeah. And that was for sale.*

**R.B.:** And would there be one item or would the model be sent to a factory and more made of any of them?

**K.F.:** To nebyla jakoby tovární výroba, neposílali jste to potom nikam, to byly jednotlivé?

*It was not like factory production, you did not send it anywhere, it was individual?*

**M.R.:** To nikdo nechtěl. Pravděpodobně.

*Nobody wanted that. Probably.*

**K.F.:** No one was interested. It was one piece only.

**R.B.:** Okay. And that's not ÚLUV either.

**K.F.:** They were doing them on their own.

**M.R.:** To byly úplně takové individuální většinou. A každé dva roky měly, se takové výstavy konaly, tak jsme tam vždycky něco jsme daly. Nás to taky bavilo. Proč ne. Já toto, to dělala hranatý.

*They were all quite individual. And every two years, these shows took place, so we always put something in there. We enjoyed it too. Why not. I made this, it was angular.*

**K.F.:** Vy jste dělala takový typický jako hranatý tvar. S geometrickými tvary jste si hrála.

*You also typically did an angular shape. You played with geometric shapes.*

**M.R.:** No, to dělalo se. To víte, za tu dobu člověk zkouší všechno. Ale ještě, jak my jsme objevily ten porcelán, tak abych se vám svěřila, poslední výstavu jsme měli těsně po, po tý invazi těch Rusů v osmašedesátým. A my jsme, já tomu teda říkám, že to bylo naše baroko, protože jsme tam měli takový prostě věci všelijaký, šišatý, a když jsme vobjevily ten porcelán, tak to byla prostě najednou taková změna. Já začla dělat všechno nesmírně jako čistý tvary. Takový prostě, čtverec, koule.

*Well, it did. You know, during this time, one is trying everything. But as we discovered that porcelain, as I confided to you, the last show we had just after, after the invasion of the Russians in '68. And we are, I say, it was our Baroque, because we had such things, all sorts of things, crazy, and when we found the porcelain, it was just such a change. I began to do everything majorly as pure shapes. That's just a simple square, a sphere.*

**K.F.:** Simple shapes from the porcelain. [whispering]

**M.R.:** A to jsme opustili. To byla kamenina. No někde dělají podlahy. Hezká, to byla hlína, kamenina teda. Nějaká. Ty podlahy se dělají třeba černý, béžový, bílý, hnědý, všelijaký barvy.

*And we left it. It was stoneware. Well, somewhere we did the floor. Nice, it was clay, stoneware. Something. These floors are made of black, beige, white, brown, all kinds of colors.*

**V.R.:** Myslíte jako obklady nějaký? Do you mean some kind of tiling?

**M.R.:** Ne, ne, ne. To je probarvenej střep, jo. Ta hlína je probarvená uvnitř celá.  
*No, no, no. That's is coloured stuff, yeah. The clay is coloured throughout.*

**V.R.:** Jo, takhle.

*Yeah, like that.*

**M.R.:** A čili se to nevošoupe, když ta podlaha. Pěkný to je. No a to už tam šlo třeba udělat jako vázu nebo něco. A trčely z toho něco a už to bylo pevný, jako kamenina, jo, že už todleta, todleto třeba, že jo, todleta hlína ta červenice, to by vůbec nešlo, to by vám se přelomilo. Mám něco vytáhnout, nějaký vobrázky ještě?  
*Therefore it does not come off, when the floor. It's nice. Well, there you could have made it like a vase or something. And something stuck out of it, and it was solid, like stoneware, yeah, this, this for example, right, this clay this reddish one did not work at all. It would break. Should I pull something, any more images?*

**K.F.:** Do you want to see more pictures? She was talking about other, other type of clay. This is the red clay and this one is, I don't know how to call it. It's like stony, stony clay that has colour on its own. She puts colours inside, like you don't need to colour it afterwards.

**R.B.:** Okay. Yeah. Like a, like a terracotta.

**K.F.:** Yeah, maybe something like that.

**R.B.:** I would love to know. I guess I'm interested because in a lot of English texts there is this theory that something made under Socialism is automatically socialist



art and I would be interested in what she kind of thought of that and the other one I'd like to know is...[not clear].

**K.F.:** Ehm, Rebecca by se chtěla zeptat, ehm, že vlastně v hodně, v hodně třeba zahraničních člancích se přistupuje k socialistickému umění vlastně nebo k socialistickému realismu, že jako už z podstaty socialistický, co si o tom vy osobně myslíte?

*Um, Rebecca would like to ask, uh, that in a lot, in a lot of foreign articles, is art about socialism actually or socialist realism, that as socialistic, what do you personally think about it?*

**M.R.:** Já vám přinesu ještě jeden obrázek, kterej mě šokoval trošku, ale...  
*I'll bring you one more picture that shocked me a bit, but..*

**K.F.:** Some picture she was shocked about it and she wants to show you.

**M.R.:** Ono se mi nemusí líbit různý věci.  
*I do not like these different things.*

**K.F.:** [Laughing].

**M.R.:** Už jsem stará, už jsem stará, už se mi to nemusí líbit.  
*Already I am old, I am old, I do not have to like some things anymore...[unclear]*

**K.F.:** She said that in those days they liked different styles. And she was shocked how can people like...[continues talking but it's unclear]

**R.B.:** In those days?

**M.R.:** To je docela nóbl časopis. No ty kalhotky.  
*This is a pretty fancy magazine. Well, these trousers.*

**V.R.:** ..... [Not clear.] Takovou jednoduchou keramiku a todleto, měla jste pocit, že já nevím, že dekór se vám třeba nějak nelíbil nebo proč jste se rozhodla dělat takový jednoduchý tvary?

*With such a simple ceramics and these, did you feel that, I don't know, that you did not like any decoration, or why did you choose to make such simple shapes?*

**M.R.:** Já jsem si říkala, že nejsem po tom otci, kterej byl matematik a on když psal knížky, tak vždycky se vyjadřoval, neměl rád ty kecy, holý věty a tak, jako k věci. Byl rád, když to směřovalo.

*I said to myself, that I did not take after my father, who was a mathematician and when he wrote books, he always expressed, he did not like the bullshit, the way he did it was plain sentences, and so on. He was glad when it was heading somewhere.*

**V.R.:** Takže jste to vnímala spíš jako něco, něco zbytečného, co tam nemusí být ten dekór nebo...?

*So you perceived it more as something unnecessary, that there does not have to be decoration or ...?*

**M.R.:** Já to asi neuměla nebo já nevím.

*I probably didn't know it or I don't know.*

**K.F.:** She didn't need to decorate things.

**R.B.:** To, to decorate things?

**K.F.:** To decorate things.

**R.B.:** Oh, wow. Krásné... To je super.

*Oh how. Beautifully...It is super.*

**K.F.:** Look at that. Já, to je super.

*Look at that. Yes, it is super.*

**M.R.:** To jsem pracovala na zdi. No to jsme stavěli zeď.

*I worked on the wall. Well, we built a wall.*

**R.B.:** [Laughing.] Je horko? Nenosí...

*It is hot? Not wearing...*

**M.R.:** Todle no. Když z té měkký hlíny nešlo dělat. Když z té kameniny to šlo.

*Here yes. When the soft clay could not be made. If it came from the stoneware.*

**R.B.:** Wow!

**V.R.:** A to je na tom nějaká černá glazura?

*And is that some kind of black glaze?*

**M.R.:** To je glazura matná. To je úpl, to jsou úplný začátky.

*That's a matt glaze. That's finished, these are the beginnings.*

**K.F.:** There was difference between...

**R.B.:** Zнала jste Jaroslav Rada, Rada?

*Did you know Pravoslav Rada, Rada?*

**V.R.:** Pravoslav Rada, no, jo, jo, znala.

*Pravoslav Rada, yes, yes, I know him.*

**K.F.:** She said, she also said that there was difference between working with .....

**V.R.:** Vy jste říkala, že jste se s tím Pravoslavem Radou dobře znala, že?

*You said that you knew Pravoslav Rada very well, didn't you?*

**M.R.:** No bodejť.

*Yeah, you've got it.*

**V.R.:** Ale ten dělal takové spíš ale dekorativnější ne věci, keramiku? Jaký jste třeba na to měla názor?

*But he did more decorative things, ceramics? What was your opinion about this?*

**M.R.:** Mně se to líbilo. Jo, jo.

*I liked them. Yeah, yeah.*

**R.B.:** I also think that in a lots of design inform the fifties and sixties that humour is a very Czech characteristic. Often this humour is like, yeah... I wanted you to ask her whether she thinks that it's true. Does that make sense?

**M.R.:** Todleto je před nějakou vinárnou.

*This is in front of a wine bar.*

**K.F.:** Rebecca jenom chtěla říct, že má pocit, že když se dívá na obrázky designu, československého designu vlastně padesátých a šedesátých let, že je tam jako hodně často používán vtip, že takovým hodně typickým znakem je jako humor.  
*Rebecca just wanted to say that she feels that when she looks at the pictures of design, the Czechoslovak design of the 1950s and 1960s, that there were a lot of jokes, that used to be a typical feature, like humour.*

**R.B.:** Humor.

*Humour.*

**K.F.:** Co si o tom myslíte?

*What do you think about this?*

**R.B.:** Jako figurky od Brychty, Jaroslava Brychty.

*Like figurines by Brychta, Jaroslav Brychta.*

**M.R.:** To, že jsme žili v takovém srabu, tak jsme dělali alespoň blbosti takové.

*The fact was that we lived in such a mess, so we did at least that kind of crap.*

**K.F.:** They were making fun of it because you know the communists weren't...

**R.B.:** So it was on purpose?

**K.F.:** Something to laugh on. [sic]

**M.R.:** Ještě mi řekněte, jak se koukaj na ten socialistický design z těch, z toho doby komunismu teďko moderní lidi na Západě. Něco jste říkali o tom?

*Still tell me how they look at the socialist design of those of the Communist era, now the modern people in the West. Did you say anything about that?*

**K.F.:** How how what do you think is the point of view of like nowadays, from your point of view on social realism. And if you like it and what do you think about it?

**M.R.:** Nějak mi to vyložte přesně. Jestli se jim líbí takové věci. Ale tahleta dáma v těchhle kalhotkách.

*Somehow explain it to me. If they like such things. But this lady in these trousers... [Referring to a magazine.]*

**R.B.:** If we like social realism? Um. Dobrý, dobrá otázka. Myslím, že je moc zajímavé. But I think what's more interesting is how people here talk about it or not. I think...

*If we like social realism? Um. Good, good question. I think it's very interesting. But I think what's more interesting is how people here talk about it or not. I think...*

**K.F.:** Jo, že asi jim připadá zajímavý ten...

*Yeah, they probably seem interesting to them...*

**M.R.:** Já to strašně rozdělují. Oni třeba, teď jsou v televizi takový ty retrospektivní obrázky, tak tam je vždycky ehm vod Ježka takový konvice, ono se to kroutí, já to nenávidím.

*It is terribly divided. They need, now, the retrospective pictures on TV, so there is always things by Ježek, such a teapot, it twists, I hate it.*

**K.F.:** She hates some like some pieces that were made in those days like for example from Ježek, different shapes. So there are some she hates.

**R.B.:** I think, I think they should not be underestimated just because of the subject matter.

**K.F.:** Rebecca říkala, že si myslí, že jsou některé vlastně ty výrobky jako podceňované. A že by se neměly podceňovat jenom proto, že vznikly v té době. *Rebecca said she thought some of the products were underestimated. And that they should not be underestimated simply because they were created at that time.*

**R.B.:** Some of them. Některé.

*Some of them. Some.*

**M.R.:** Tady byla doba, kdy byly výborný filmy, byly tady divadlo bezvadný, jo, byl tady Jára Cimrman a ledacos inteligentního, nebylo všechno blbý.

*It was a time when there were great movies, the theater was perfect here, yeah, Jára Cimrman was here, and intelligent, it was not all stupid.*

**R.B.:** Ano.

Yes.

**K.F.:** Ale Rebecca říkala, že vlastně mnohem zajímavější je to, jak jakoby my tady na to nahlížíme a jak o té době jako mluvíme, nebo vlastně vy, co jste to zažili, tu dobu, ten pohled.

*But Rebecca said it was much more interesting how we looked at it now and how we talked about it at the time, or indeed what you, what you experienced, that time, that look.*

**M.R.:** No já myslím, já myslím, že jak takhle mluvíme, že to dost poznáte, co si vo tom myslím.

*Well, I think, I think, as I say, you'll know enough about what I mean.*

**K.F.:** She thinks that you can see what she thinks.

**M.R.:** Že když vezmete koště a jdete dělat, na světovou výstavu, tak asi, jak to vypadá. *That when you bury the broom and you go to make it at the world exhibition, probably this is how it looks.*

**K.F.:** You can make a picture of how it used to be, when she is talking about it.

**R.B.:** Mm, ano.

*Mm, yes.*

**K.F.:** You need a...[unclear, muttering.]When for she hear first time about it?

**R.B.:** I need to know more about people who are using this kind of word. Talking about design. I think Milena Lamarová, Milena Lamarová started using the word design. And I am interested in how they talked about it?

**K.F.:** Ještě jedna otázka. Rebecca by chtěla vědět, jestli si vybavíte třeba, nebo vzpomenete, když se vlastně, používaly se slova návrhář, ale pak v určité době se začalo používat slovo design.

*One more question. Rebecca would like to know if you recall or remember, when*

*actually, the words designer were used, but then at some point word design began to be used.*

**M.R.:** To až teď. To my to vůbec, tady se to nevědělo, neříkalo se to. Takže ne. *Not until now. It was not at all, it was not known here, it was not said. So no.*

**K.F.:** No one used the word.

**R.B.:** Protože...

*Because...*

**K.F.:** But they are in English.

**R.B.:** A taky Milená Lamarová [*and also Milená Lamarová*]- she was writing, questioning the word design but maybe that was not a part of general discussion.

**M.R.:** Jedna kamarádka dělá nějaký obklad na školu a moc si stěžuje, že prostě neví vlastně, kdo to projektoval. Nebudu tady do toho mluvit. Nikdo se jí nevěnuje prostě, nikoho to nezajímá, mluví do toho třeba paní učitelka, která nemá šajnu. Žádný komise neexistují.

*One friend is doing some cladding for school and complains very much that she simply does not know who designed it. I'm not going to talk about it. Nobody cares about her, nobody cares about it. Instead a teacher from the school who has no idea about it talks to her No commissions exist.*

**K.F.:** V dnešní době.

*Nowadays.*

**M.R.:** Stěžuje si opravdu, jak je to...

*He really complains about how it is...*

**K.F.:** Hm, she is talking about like ehm there are some problems in those days as well...

**M.R.:** Tak to jsme byli takhle zdivočelí.

*So we were so wild.*

**K.F.:** Some decorations of the wall, there aren't committees and one, one who understands.

**R.B.:** Now? Because I want to know what she, what she would like people to remember that was good?

**M.R.:** Zdivočelý, úplně a v zápětí asi za pár let z toho byl ten porcelán takovéj strohěj.

*Whitish, totally and in about a few years, that porcelain was so simple.*

**K.F.:** Rebecca se ještě chtěla zeptat, co vy si myslíte za to si pamatovat vlastně z té doby, z toho, co se vytvářelo.

*Rebecca still wanted to ask what you thought should be remembered from that time, from what was being created.*

**M.R.:** No já si to pamatuju všechno, já budu psát asi memoáry.

*Well I remember everything, I will write about it in my memoirs.*

**K.F.:** She will write memoirs and she remembers everything.

**M.R.:** Už jsem napsala, jak jsem studovala a nestudovala školu, jo. Opravdu to bylo, ještě mnohdy, když byly nějaký výstavy a vždycky k tomu někdo měl řeč, něco pronesl a napsal jo, to byste nevěřili, že jsme dělali my. Tak tam třeba jako je zmínka, jak ta škola jako nám něco přinesla. Teda na tý škole vlastně bylo jako nejlepší atmosféra mezi žákama, protože my jsme chodili po všech výstavách, všechno jsme sledovali a tak.

*I already wrote about how I studied and did not study at school, yeah. It was really, many times, even when there were some exhibitions, and someone always talked about it, said something and wrote it, you would not believe what we did it. So maybe there is a mention of how the school brought us something. So, at that school, it was actually the best atmosphere among the students, because we went to all the shows, we watched everything and so.*

**R.B.:** Them?

**K.F.:** Them.



**M.R.:** Ale ta doba byla tak bláznivá, teda blbá, špatná, že...  
*But the time was so crazy, so stupid, so bad, that...*

**K.F.:** Crazy times.

**R.B.:** Ano.Yes.

**M.R.:** Že ani ti kantoři neměli na nás čas nebo tak.  
*That even the teachers did not have time for us or anything.*

**K.F.:** Teachers weren't helping them and.. They, ehm, in the the text for exhibitions there was like school helped them but they didn't. [sic]

**R.B.:** Kde to byla, ta výstava? Kde?  
*Where was it, this exhibition. Where?*

**K.F.:** Šedesát osm? Kde?  
*'68? When?*

**M.R.:** No, to bylo to naše baroko. Šedesátéjosmej rok. K tomu už se ani nehlásím.  
*Well, it was our baroque. '66. I'm not even claiming that.*

**K.F.:** A, a, a kde jste vystavovali? And, and, where did you exhibit?

**M.R.:** Ehm, vedle Betlémský kaple, teď je to, je to galerie architektů...  
*Um, next to the Bethlehem Chapel, now it's a gallery of architects ...*

**V.R.:** Fragnera?

**M.R.:** Fragneru?

**V.R.:** Já myslím, že tam je Fragnera.  
*I think, that is Fragnera.*

**M.R.:** Tak to patří architektům, teď tam vystavují architekti. Teď je tam je tam zrovna nějaká zajímavá výstava nějakýho Japonce a já se tam nedostanu protože tam není kde zaparkovat.

*So it belongs to architects, now they are exhibiting architects. Now there's some interesting exhibition of Japanese work, and I can not get there because there is nowhere to park.*

**R.B.:** Moc děkuju! Jsem, jsem...

*Thank you so much. I, I...*

**M.R.:** Na to zapomeňte.

*Forget it.*

**R.B.:** Protože, čtu o komunismus v Anglii a máme, máme hodně časopisy jako *Domov*, jako *Tvar*.

*Because, I read about Communism in England and we have, we have a lot of the magazines like Domov, like Tvar.*

**K.F.:** Rozumíte?

*You understand?*

**R.B.:** V knihovně v Londýně.

*In the library in London.*

**K.F.:** Že Rebecca, Rebecca v Londýně hodně čte o době komunismu a socialistickém realism, čte časopisy.

*That Rebecca, Rebecca in London reads a lot about the era of communism and socialist realism, reads magazines.*

**M.R.:** No to povídejte, sama.

*Well, tell her yourself.*

**K.F.:** Ale jaká byla realita z toho nepozná.

*But she would not know what the reality of it was.*

**M.R.:** A máte pocit, že ze mě, že trošku, trošičku si to dovedete představit?

*And do you feel that from me, a little bit, can you imagine it a little?*

**R.B.:** Ano, ano. [Yes, yes.] And this is why, this is really wonderful.

**K.F.:** Že, že je to pro ní úžasná zkušenost, úžasný zážitek.  
*That it's an amazing experience for her, an amazing experience.*

**M.R.:** Já všechno říkám, jak jsem to cítila a cítím dneska.  
*I'm telling you how I felt and I feel it today.*

**M.R.:** Můžu vám uvařit kafe a mám koláč. Jo, můžu?  
*I can get you some coffee and I have a cake. Yes, I can?*

**K.F.:** Já si kávu nedám, děkuju.  
*I'm not gonna get coffee, thank you.*

**M.R.:** Tak čaj? Čaj by šel?  
*So tea? Would tea be good?*

**[General discussion. End of Interview]**



Royal College of Art

**RESEARCHRCA**

Rozumím tomu, že všechny informace, které budou během rozhovoru pořízeny, budou bezpečně uloženy a mé názory budou správně reprezentovány. Jakékoliv fotografie, na kterých můžu být zřetelně identifikován/a, budou zveřejněny pouze s mým souhlasem nebo se souhlasem mého zákonného zástupce.

Jméno (tiskacím):.....*MARIE RYCHLÍKOVÁ*

Podpis.....*Marie Rychlíková*

Datum: *21.10.2016*

Tento projekt bude proveden v souladu s etickým kodexem pro výzkum na Royal College of Art.

**Marie Rychlíková Consent Form**

## Meeting with Jiří Šuhájek [Notes taken during conversation]

**25.02.14**

### **His studio, Prague**

RCA - learnt in the studio of Geoffrey Clark and Sam Hermann  
Mr. Moon was Registrar and arranged his scholarship

Grew up Česká Lípa

Returned to London after diploma and spent 3 weeks in Venice on a scholarship with Morano, visiting all their glass factories

When he returned, he had to be in the army for one year

Originally learnt at Kamenický Šenov for 4 years, at the end of which everyone was given a place in a factory. He was given Karlovy Vary. The Director of his school at the time, Mr Kýn, said that he was a big guy and so would be fine being so far from home, not like the smaller men who would be given bad work like shovelling. So he did sketches for designs at KV, until Moser agreed to fund a course at AAAD. He failed to get this the first year but then succeeded the second time round.

After the army, he went back to work for Moser.

Before this era, wood, stone and metal were considered Art material in Czechoslovakia, not glass.

Harvey Littleton from Wisconsin University went to Bavaria, to the glass town Frauenau and there met [I think] Erwin Eisch who had studied at Munich University and whose family were in the glass trade. Together they started the Studio Glass movement alongside Sam Hermann whose studio Šuhájek was in at the RCA. Eisch worked with a furnace and apparently Littlejohn was fascinated due to his interest in ceramics. He built a furnace back in Wisconsin and Studio Glass was born. Sam Hermann was a student of that studio. They did an exhibition in Germany and symposiums in the 1960s. Czech started to do symposiums in the same field.

There was no furnace at AAAD at this point. An "infection of furnaces" then arrived in parts of Europe from the USA. In UK a furnace first arrived at the glass

department in Edinburgh, this was seen by the RCA and built there, and then shortly afterwards Jiří arrived at the RCA.

In Czechoslovakia he had spent 4 years learning drawing and painting, it was in London that he learnt to blow. And he is still very unusual as a Czech glass artist who can blow himself.

Moser functional design made by the workers. He could only use the facilities a little for his own work. He also taught at Valašské Meziříčí, which he calls a glass region on the border between Poland and Slovakia.

Glass shop and blowing centre in Soho where he sold goblets, and was surprised how many of his items were bought. Between 1969-71.

Eventually "things changed in Karlovy Vary" – he was accused of stealing by the supervisors. He had not stolen anything but had recently been awarded a Gold Medal in Munich. He had the SS on his back for a while and had to leave KV. Luckily, he got a job at ÚBOK.

ÚBOK meant you could work anywhere. Moser, Crystalex, Moravia. Committees chose who needed what and who would do it, sending artists out to manufacturers. 5 glass artists working together at ÚBOK whilst he was there. E.g. Jelinek

Example of Suhajek's work for ÚBOK, 1978 Crystalex work which was produced in large numbers.

He thinks ÚBOK worked well and was a fair system.

Could be presented at places like Frankfurt's Meissen Glass Festival for business, Spring and Autumn each year.

Unusual for him to work with big companies

Moser 1978-2005

Did handmade glass for Crystalex

Nowadays he does limited edition work

70s his own art glass was generally birds and figures. He could do bird by himself with two hands. He would do something whenever there was a break, he could go and make a bird. For figures you need 3 workers. Sometimes 6 workers for the larger ones. You have to work very fast before the glass cracks. He likes to work on a big scale, not the small-scale of flame working like figurky.

On Na Příkopě there is an exhibition of his work at Moser right now

2 big museums in Karlovy Vary

Things were more organised before. ÚBOK was a fantastic organisation. Though it you could to see most of the factories in Czechoslovakia. Each one was different, different people, workers, technologies, materials, chemicals, crafts. E.g. Moser is all cut and polished. You have to change your approach according to the manufacturer.

He went via ÚBOK to work for BAG (Bohemia Art Glass) and then worked there post-ÚBOK until it closed.

For Moser, you oversee one sample and then leave them to manufacture the rest from the sample.

Milena Lamarová was at the RCA at the same time as Jiří.

UPM he is doing a lecture in April

ÚBOK had so many projects, it's too many to exhibit

Madeleine Albright came to his San Francisco exhibition and spoke Czech with him.

**Vladimír Jelínek [Notes taken during conversation]****07.03.14****His apartment, Prague**

Accepted work in Moravské Glassworks (organisation combined three glassworks: Karolinka, Května and Vbrno) after his training at AAAD under Kaplický. He worked with the glass factory, 2 weeks in the glassworks and 2 weeks in school for 4 years then a short pause before working for ÚBOK.

Pleased to be invited by ÚBOK, glad it was based in Prague and he didn't have to commute. It was a very good place to go. Adolf Matura and Pavel Hlava were there. 1966. He was there for 30 years and during that time taught 4 years at Charles University in the design department before returning to ÚBOK.

The most important thing was export. SkloExport would dictate what was needed, whether glasses, vases, painted or engraved glass. These were then sent to different glassworks according to their specialisation.

Tokyo, Milan, Montreal – the main aim was exhibitions abroad, which were not commercial but just representative of the work of Czechoslovakia.

ÚBOK had a very diverse group of people working together to produce all sorts of different things. You would be specialised according to certain types of glass and who to cooperate with, e.g. Matura was pressed glass.

Jelínek has been working with Moser for 40 years. He created the Jubilee collection for their anniversary.

He would make a representative design and the workers made it. Always. When it was made by workers he would go and check it and say yes or no. Moser is between a manufacturer and a factory. He would supervise the works so they would keep to his designs but he know that the factory also wants perfection.

Studied in Slaný High School and he and his friend Rudolf Volráb (1933-69) (has current exhibition in Prague, see catalogue) and they were very impressed by their teacher and painting.



They didn't want to do Latin so they went to Kamenický Šenov to do glass.

By 14/15 years old, he had a very clear view of what he wanted in life. His parents weren't happy.

Kamenický Šenov was inspirational. Roubíček taught him drawing there. He was a brilliant teacher because he not only knew how to draw but also how to teach. Several of his class mates went with him to Prague to Kaplický's studio. The wonderful thing about Kaplický was that he was very free-minded. He let them develop as they wanted and encouraged them to do so. He let Volráb paint and not have to do glass.

Developing aims and hobbies outside of glass created duality in their creativity. Glass was too limited to he wanted other mediums too. However as a result of Brussels 58 glass artists could be more free. They could be more creative.

Pre-ÚBOK designing for industrial design or functional glass had its charms, the main one of which being to see items actually used. The tactile sensation is very important, to hold a product in the hand.

One of his achievements in this field was 1970 when he won a competition hosted by the Institute of New Technical Forms in Damstadt to create a new brewery glass for Konings. Something to do with first prize and then Munich International Trade Fair. [Check]

He liked to work with Moser glass because it was not just products but also art glass that he cut and carved himself. He's also made many friends at Moser and it's a pleasure to work with them.

Škrdlovice Glassworks was fatal – there he met his wife. In the age of mass production, a genius arrived and his name was Kouželka. Lots of craft was happening which would disappear if encompassed with mass-production. And so Kouželka founded Umělecka řemeslá, which is where Mrs. Jelínek worked in administration and their paths crossed. ÚÚŘ worked with gobelény [there was article in Domov about those], ceramics, glass – and saved many ateliers by bringing them together in one organisation. It was legal to have a cooperation but not a private company. So ÚÚŘ was under the Ministry of Culture not the Ministry

of Industry, which led to saving them as Communism wanted to be a cultural project.

One of the saved ateliers was Škrdlovice, managed by Mr Beránek. During his and his colleague's (assume means Volráb) university studies they collaborated with this glassworks, it was not designed for mass-production but atelier production. There were 8 glassworkers. Originally Mr Beránek had been the owner of the glassworks but he couldn't be under Communism. So they cooperated together and it was a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere. Mr B. was excited about their designs when they took them to him, so he saw them through.

Sold works via Art Centrum shop. The Communist system realised they could make money out of objects like this, so wanted to sell them. The Ministry of Culture had shops but they were mainly textiles.

It was hard to shift from capitalism to socialism after the war so - [phone rang, but think it was about changes in business]

During and before war Austrian and German there was German company Lobmeyr, which became Kamenický Šenov. See KŠ Museum. Krazná jizba sold glass and textiles and Lobmeyr sold through them. Then Lobmeyr went to Austria in 1951.

Škrdlovice works made in their atelier with their signatures and were sold to international collectors who came to visit. But Art Centrum administered the business side of things. Mainly for collectors. Then there was a second part that they made, which they thought could be made in small collections and they sold in their works. Production was very small.

He always did work for ÚBOK and small organisations at the same time.

Thinks ÚBOK theoretician Jiří Koupecký decided who and how products should be sold. Because of that it had great importance because it attracted even external people.

If you didn't work for a centralised organisation it was hard, but there were competitions that they could participate in and could then cooperate with glassworks that way.

Because Communism wanted to present itself as a cultural power they wanted artists to have a chance to realise their work in glassworks so they didn't need their own utilities. Art Glass didn't arise in ateliers. It was mentally created in ateliers but realised within corporations. There is the thought that art glass can only be made in small furnaces – not here. Important to realise that in places like the RCA there are no workers to help make your glass so of course artists have to make their own.

For ÚLUV he made a collection of vases for different types of flowers, violets, tall flowers...

Author present at the realisation every time so he got to visit every glassworks in Czechoslovakia. Like a musical production with a different orchestra – one is a symphony whilst another is a quartet. You had to make the people believe in your idea. Many times they did not. Sometimes the designs were too complicated and so they didn't want to do them.

You learned over many years that you went to certain places for certain works. For example, when he made a set of glasses for a top hotel (said Hotel Interhotel but both 1963 and 1975, check) he wanted to go to Moravské sklo.

He could see at the beginning when workers found it too hard and so he would invest time to go to the pub with the workers and then they could cooperate well! Then everyone was satisfied and proud because they had achieved something difficult. Like in a family, with work and a little time you can come up with an idea. They were happy years.

1960s – when the artists left the worker would carry on working on their own, which sometimes didn't result in great success. Of course the workers had their own ideas too. Artist is like a playwright and the workers the actors. Because the works are collectors' pieces you have to be careful that no ideas that were not his would not appear. The signature is his. Sometimes he would not want to sign some products.

Artists during this time accepted the situation not as a limitation but as an opportunity.

Cooperation with glassworks was easier under centralisation as they didn't view it as meddling in their works. Great for everybody as the glass works also didn't have to deal with directly entering competitions.

In ÚBOK they had separate ateliers and his friend Volráb came to see him and said he couldn't work at ÚBOK as it was too limiting for him. But there was also the fact that you had to have your employment stated on your identity card or you were put in jail. It was not easy to find a job and so you did whatever you could. People are wrong now when they say it was good because everyone had a job. You were in jail if you did not. Artists could be registered in centralised organisations so there were ok. Artists were often disliked for this as they didn't necessarily have to go to a place of work.

However, he thinks it might be age but he remembers only happy times.

He received one offer from the German company Rosenthal to work there. After a long debate it was allowed. But you had to ask for permission 3 months in advance to go. He tried 3 times and then gave up. Found the ridiculous process funny. Glass firm couldn't wait 3 months. And in the end he felt humiliated by it.

He could be in Germany if Communist hadn't happened but Moser are his family.

However, it was hard sometimes, for example he had an exhibition of his work in Holland and because of the 3 month stamp for permission he missed the opening. He worried people saw it as an insult but it was not his fault.

He and his wife laugh that when they were young they could not travel abroad because of Communism and now they cannot because of age. But it is good for the younger generations and their family speak good English, including their young granddaughter/niece (?) who was second best in the Czech Republic.

Thank you for helping me to revisit the memories of earlier times.

**Replies to Questions send to Jaroslav Všetečka, via Daniela Karasová  
[He had agreed to be interviewed but was sadly not well enough]  
Received 5 November 2016**

Odpovědi na otázky.

Answers to questions

1/ 1962-1990

2/ Samozřejmě organizace ÚUŘ velmi silně ovlivnila design v ČSSR. Je to patrné i na všech světových výstavách EXPO, kterých se tato organizace zúčastnila jako realizátor artefaktů a výtvarných děl. Že šlo o design špičkový, v mnoha případech světový, dokládají první ceny získané na všech světových i mezinárodních výstavách v řadě uměleckých i řemeslných oborech. EXPO 58 dokonce v poválečné Evropě udávalo mnoha zemím v designu směr a to nejen v užitém umění, ale i v kultuře.

V době komunistické éry design ČSR, pokud šlo o špičku byl na vysoké umělecké úrovni, což právě zajišťovaly organizace jako ÚUŘ, ÚBOK, ÚLUV, DÍLO atd. Tyto organizace se staraly i o výchovu mladé generace.

*Of course, the ÚUŘ organization has very strongly influenced design in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. This is also evident at all the EXPO world exhibitions, where the organisation participated as a creator of artifacts and works of art. It was top-of-the-line design, in many cases world-class, showing the first prizes won at all world and international exhibitions in a number of arts and crafts industries. EXPO 58, in post-war Europe, even has given many countries in design a direction not only in applied art but also in culture.*

*At the time of the Communist era, the design of the Czechoslovak Republic, it was the top, it was on a high artistic level, which was just the organizations of the ÚUŘ, ÚBOK, ÚLUV, DÍLO etc. These organizations also took care of the upbringing of the young generation.*

3/ Pracovní náplň výše uváděných organizací byla především zaměřena na odbornou stránku dle svého zaměření ÚUŘ mělo 50 řemeslných oborů vycházející z tradice jednotlivých cechů. Úkolem tohoto podniku bylo zajišťovat opravu významných historických památek, realizaci uměleckých děl a výroba artefaktů

v oborech užitého umění. Samozřejmě mnoho věcí podléhalo ideologickému trendu té doby např. monumentální mozaika s tematikou dělnického hnutí nebo gobelínová tvorba s námětem „Oslava SSSR“, přesto těmto dílům poplatné komunistické propagandě nelze upřít uměleckou hodnotu.

*The job description of the above-mentioned organizations was primarily focused on a professional area according to its focus. The ÚUŘ had 50 craft disciplines based on the tradition of individual guilds. The task of this company was to provide repairs of important historical monuments, the realization of works of art and the production of artefacts in the fields of applied art. Of course, many things were subject to the ideological trend of that time, for example, a monumental mosaic with the themes of the workers' movement or tapestry with the theme "Celebration of the USSR", yet these works of charged communist propaganda cannot be argued to have artistic value.*

4/ Kritiku „experiment invalidovna“ neznám, ale zase jiným veřejným společenským prostorám jako metro, vládní salonky, hotely, divadla nebo významné interiéry veřejných budov byly v mnoha případech doplněny výtvarnými díly, ať již šlo o sochy, skleněné objekty, keramické stěny apod. velmi citlivě a autory byly významní výtvarníci např. Libeňský, Bauch, Benda, Bouda.

*I do not know the critique of the "experiment invalidovna", but in other public spaces such as the metro, government lounges, hotels, theaters or important interiors of public buildings, they were in many cases supplemented with fine art pieces, whether statues, glass objects, ceramic walls, and the authors were significant artists such as Libeňský, Bauch, Benda, Bouda.*

5/ Ano, ruční nebo-li individuální výroba v době socialistické industrializace byla jakousi významnou podporou osobnosti člověka a jeho individuálních a myšlenkových potřeb.

Řemeslo, ať umělecké nebo lidové napomohlo přečkat nejbrutálnější dobu komunistického budování, kdy zanikaly cechy a umělečtí řemeslníci byly nahnáni do těžkého průmyslu. Proto výše uvedené organizace zajistily individuální tvůrčí svobodu.

*Yes, manual or individual production at the time of socialist industrialization was a*

*significant promotion of the personality of man and his individual and mental needs. Craft, whether artistic or folk, was helped to survive the most brutal period of Communist building, when guilds ceased to exist, and artisan craftsmen were thrown into heavy industry. That is why the above organizations have ensured individual creative freedom.*

6/ Nejlépe si přečíst několik ročníků časopisu Umění a řemesla, tam jsou kompetentní teoretici kulturního designu a směrů v umění a řemesle.

*Best to read several years of the Arts and Crafts magazine, there are competent theoreticians of cultural design and trends in art and craft.*

7/ Nevím, jak to je myšleno, ale ČSR byla již za první republiky významným aktérem v oblasti designu a ten byl přenesen pamětníky, umělci a mistry uměleckého řemesla v mnoha oborech i do komunistické doby. I ÚÚŘ stavělo na bývalých živnostnících a jejich dovednostech a tradicích.

*I do not know what it is meant for, but Czechoslovakia was already a prominent actor in the field of design, already in the first republic, and it was transmitted by witnesses, artists and masters of craftsmanship in many disciplines and communist times. The ÚÚŘ was built on former tradesmen and their skills and traditions.*

8,9,10/ Nevím co napsat. Je podivuhodné, jaké ti Angličané mají zkreslené představy o našich marxistických filozofech - Sviták, Kosík, Vydra. Vždyť oni byli marxisti asi jako Sartre. Pokud jde o naši kancelář, komunisté se starali, aby byli vyvěšeny vlajky a lidé chodili na 1.máje, popřípadě byli členy ČSSP, jinak do odborné řemeslné práce se nepletli. I MK chtělo, aby se plnil plán a byly kulturní úspěchy doma i v zahraničí

*I do not know what to write. It's amazing how the English have distorted ideas about our Marxist philosophies - Svitak, Kosik, Vydra. They were Marxists like Sartre. As far as our office is concerned, the Communists took care that the flags were posted and people went to the 1st Mayor, or were members of the CSSP, otherwise they did not confuse the professional craft work. Even MK wanted the plan to be fulfilled and cultural achievements both at home and abroad.*

11/ Velký důraz náš podnik kladl na zachování uměleckého řemesla, dodržování tradičních technologických postupů, dále na vyhledávání zaniklých řemeslných oborů a zejména na výchovu mladých řemeslníků, učňů. Velký podíl práce naší organizace byl v renovaci a v rekonstrukcích společensko-historických objektů jako Národní divadlo, Tylovo (Stavovské) divadlo, Pražský hrad, Anežský klášter, Jiřský klášter, Památník národního písemnictví, Obecní dům, klášter Zlatá Koruna, pražské paláce, hrady a zámky po celých Čechách a Moravě

*Great emphasis was placed on the preservation of artistic craft, the observance of traditional technological procedures, the search for defunct crafts and especially the training of young craftsmen and apprentices. A great part of our organization's work was in the renovation and reconstruction of social-historical buildings such as the National Theater, the Tylovo (Estates Theater), the Prague Castle, the Anežský klášter, the Jiřský klášter, the Memorial of the National Literature, the Municipal House, Zlatá Koruna Monastery, and castles all over Bohemia and Moravia*

12,13/ Konkrétně si rozdělil diplomovou práci na problematiku designu v intencích umělecko-řemeslné práce za období let 1948-1980 s návazností na ÚUŘ a další organizace včetně rozdělení na jednotlivé vývojové fáze a na popis historického vývoje těchto organizací a jejich uměleckého zrání i za komunistického režimu neboli umění, řemeslná dovednost a užité umění je jen dobré nebo špatné. Jiná otázka je, jak je poplatné době, ve kterém vzniká.

*Namely, to divide the diploma thesis on design issues in the sphere of artistic and craft work for the period 1948-1980 with the continuation of the ÚUŘ and other organisations, including the division into individual stages of development and description of the historical development of these organizations and their maturing even under the communist regime or art, craft skill and applied art is just good or bad. Another question is, how much is the art trying to be suitable for the era.*

PhDr. Jaroslav Všetěčka

4/10/2016



## Bibliography

### Books

- Adamson, Glenn, *Thinking through Craft* (London: Berg, 2007)
- Adlerová, Alena, *Sklo Ludviky Smrčkové* [Glass of Ludvika Smrčková] (Prague: Svaz českých výtvarných umělců, 1970)
- Attfield, Judy 'Inside Pram Town: A Case Study of Harlow House Interiors, 1951-61', in *A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design*, ed. by Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham (London: Women's Press, 1989), pp. 215-138
- Barr, Alfred H., *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936)
- Bathrick, David, *The Power of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1995)
- Benson, Timothy O., and Éva Forgács (eds.), *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes 1910-1930* (London: MIT, 2002)
- Benton, Charlotte (ed.), *Figuration/abstraction: Strategies for Public Sculpture in Europe, 1945-1968*, (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2004)
- Betts, Paul, and Katherine Pence (eds.), *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008)
- Boym, Svetlana, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1994)
- Bren, Paulina, *The Greengrocer and his TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010)

- Bren, Paulina, 'Weekend Getaways: The Chata, the Tramp, and the Politics of Private Life in Post-1968 Czechoslovakia', in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by David Crowley & Susan E. Reid (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), pp. 123-140
- Buchar, Robert, *Czech New Wave Filmmakers in Interviews* (London: McFarland, 2004)
- Castillo, Greg, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Mid-century Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010)
- Clybor, Shawn, 'Socialist (Sur)Realism: Karel Teige, Ladislav Štoll and the Politics of Communist Culture in Czechoslovakia', in *History of Communism in Europe: Vol. 2, Avatars of Intellectuals under Communism*, ed. by Corina Palasan & Cristian Vasile (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2011), pp. 143-167
- Coatts, Margot (ed.), *Pioneers of Modern Craft* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)
- Deletant, Dennis, and Harry Hanak (eds.), *Historians as nation-builders: Central and South-East Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, in association with School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1988)
- Denney, Matthew, 'Utility Furniture and the Myth of Utility 1943-1948', in *The Design History Reader*, ed. by Grace Lees-Maffei, Rebecca Houze (London: Berg Publishers, 2010)
- Dlabal, Stanislav and Emanuela Kittrichová, *Nábytek, člověk, bydlení. Základy navrhování nábytku a zařizování bytových interiérů* [Furniture, Man, Housing: Basics of Furniture Design and Furnishing of Residential Interiors] (Prague: Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury, 1971)
- Dormer, Peter (ed.), *The Culture of Craft: Status & Future* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

- Edgar Martin, William, *Children's body measurements for planning & equipping schools: a handbook for school officials and architects* (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, 1955)
- Elman Zareco, Kimberly, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011)
- Experiment 61* (Prague: ÚBOK, 1961)
- Fariello, M. Anna, 'Making and Meaning: The Lexicon of Studio Craft', in *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art*, ed. by Maria Elena Buszek (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 23-42
- Fawn, Rick, and Jiří Hochman, *Historical Dictionary of the Czech State* (Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010)
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, 'Middleclass Values and Soviet Life in the 1930s', in *Soviet Society and Culture: Essays in Honour of Vera S. Dunham*, ed. by Terry L. Thompson and Richard Sheldon (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 20-38
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.), *Stalinism: New Directions, A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000)
- Forrester, Sibelan, Magdalena J. Zaborowska and Elena Gapova (eds.), *Over the Wall/After the Fall: Post-Communist Cultures through an East-West Gaze* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004)
- Greenhalgh, Paul (ed.), *The Persistence of Craft* (London: A&C Black, 2002)
- Gronow, Jukka, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of The Good Life in Stalin's Russia* (Oxford: Berg, 2003)
- Hames, Peter, 'Alienated Heroes: Marxism and the Czechoslovak New Wave', in *Marx at the Movies: Revisiting History, Theory and*

- Practice*, ed. by Ewa Mazierska and Lars Kristensen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 147-179
- Hames, Peter, *The Cinema of Jan Švankmajer: Dark Alchemy* (New York: Wallflower, 2008)
- Hamšík, Dušan, *Writers Against Rules* (London: Hutchinson, 1971)
- Harrod, Tanya, and Helen Clifford (eds.), *Obscure Objects of Desire: Reviewing the Crafts in the Twentieth Century* (London: Crafts Council, 1997)
- Harrod, Tanya, *The Crafts in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999).
- Haythum, Antonín and Charlotta, 'Chapter V: The Industrial Arts,' in *The Enjoyment of the Arts*, ed. by Max Schoen (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), pp. 131–158
- Heisler, Julie, 'Cultured Trade: The Stalinist turn towards Consumerism', in *Stalinism: New Directions*, ed. by Sheila Fitzpatrick (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999), pp. 182-209
- Hetteš, Karel, *Glass in Czechoslovakia*, (Prague: STNL, 1958)
- Hetteš, Karel, and Pravoslav Rada, *Modern ceramics: Pottery and Porcelain of the World* (London: Spring Books, 1965)
- Highmore, Ben, *The Design Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2009)
- Hill, Mark, Robert Bevan Jones and Jindřich Parík (eds.), *Beránek & Škrdlovice: Legends of Czech Glass* (London: Mark Hill Publishing, 2014)
- Hobsbawm, Eric J., and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983)
- Holý, Jiří, *Writers Under Siege: Czech Literature Since 1945*, (Brighton: Sussex University Press, 2008)
- Hooper, John, and Rodney Hooper, *Modern furniture and fittings: a treatise dealing with the design and construction of modern*

- furniture for houses and public buildings* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1948)
- Hruby, Peter, *Fools and Heroes: The Changing Role of Communist Intellectuals in Czechoslovakia* (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1980)
- Hubatová-Vacková, Lada (ed) *Silent Revolutions in Ornament: Studies in Applied Arts and Crafts from 1880–1930* (Prague: Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design, 2011)
- Hubatová-Vacková, Lada, Martina Pachmanová and Pavla Pečinková (eds.), *Věci a slova: umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870-1970* [Things and Words: Art Industry, Applied Arts and Design in Czech Theory and Criticism 1870–1970] (Prague: UMPRUM, 2014)
- Hubatová, Lada, and Iva Knobloch Vacková, *Václav Cigler* (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2014)
- Jančář, Josef, *Lidová kultura na Moravě* [Folk Culture in Moravia] (Brno: Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost, 2000)
- Jančář, Josef (1995) *Strážnická ohlédnutí: 50 let mezinárodního folklorního festivalu ve Strážnici* [Looking back at Strážnice: 50 years of the international folklore festival in Strážnice] (Strážnice: Ústav lidové kultury, 1995)
- Jones, Polly, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012)
- Jusová, Iveta, and Jusová, Iveta, and Jiřina Šiklová (eds.), *Czech Feminisms: Perspectives on Gender in East Central Europe* (Indiana University Press, 2016)
- Kaneff, Deema, *Who Owns the Past? The Politics of Time in a 'Model' Bulgarian Village* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2004)
- Karasová, Daniela, *The History of Modern Furniture Design* (Prague: Museum of Decorative Arts, 2012)

- Karous, Pavel, 'Umění ve veřejném prostoru' [Art in Public Space], in *Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna* [Experimental Estate Invalidovna], ed. by Ladislav Zikmund-Lender (Prague: Národní památkový ústav, 2014), pp. 102-109
- Karous, Pavel (ed.), *Vetřelci a volavky: Atlas výtvarného umění ve veřejném prostoru v Československu v období normalizace (1968–1989)* [Aliens and Herons: A Guide to Fine Art in the Public Space in the Era of Normalisation in Czechoslovakia (1968–1989)], (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2013)
- Keane, John (ed.), *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central Eastern Europe* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1985)
- Kelley, Victoria, 'A superficial guide to the deeper meanings of surface', in *Surface Tensions: Surface, Finish and the Meaning of Objects*, ed. by Victoria Kelley and Glenn Adamson (Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 1-23
- Kittrichová, Emanuela, *Byt* [The Flat] (Prague: Práce, ROH, 1969)
- Kittrichová, Emanuela, *Ideový návrh optimální skladby sortimentu bytového nábytku* [Ideological Design of the Optimal Composition of an Assortment of Home Furniture] (Prague: Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury, 1976)
- Kosík, Karel, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World, Vol LII*, (Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1963)
- Kozlov, Denis, *The readers of Novy Mir: coming to terms with the Stalinist past* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013)
- Kramerová, Daniela, and Vanda Skálová (eds.), *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na Světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu* [Brussels Dream: Czechoslovak Participation at the World Exhibition Expo 58 in Brussels], (Prague: Arbor vitae, 2010)

- Kusin, Vladimír V., *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring: the Development of Reformist Ideas in Czechoslovakia 1956-1967*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971)
- Lahoda, Vojtěch, *Český kubismus* [Czech Cubism] (Prague: Brána, 1996)
- Langhamer, Antonín, *Legend of Bohemian Glass* (Zlín: Tigris, 2003)
- Leach, Bernard, *A Potter's Book* (New York: Transatlantic Arts Inc., 1940)
- Lees-Maffei, Grace, and Rebecca Houze (eds.), *The Design History Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2010)
- Lionis, Chrisoula, *Laughter in Occupied Palestine: Comedy and Identity in Art and Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016)
- Lukes, Igor, *Czechoslovakia between Stalin and Hitler: the Diplomacy of Edvard Beneš in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Machek, Václav, *Etymologický slovník jazyka českého* [Etymological Dictionary of the Czech Language], 3rd edition (Prague: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, [1971] 1997)  
<<http://www.ptejteseknihovny.cz/dotazy/etymologie-slova-remeslo>> [accessed 15 February 2017]
- Maciuka, John V., 'The Globalization of the Deutscher Werkbund: Design Reform, Industrial Policy, and German Foreign Policy, 1907-1914', in *Global Design History*, ed. by Giorgio Riello, Glenn Adamson and Sarah Teasley (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 99-100
- Macura, Vladimír, 'Spartakiad', in *The Mystifications of a Nation: "the Potato Bug" and Other Essays on Czech Culture*, ed. by Hana Píchová and Craig Cravens (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010)
- Makovicky, Nicolette, 'Folk lingerie' and other new traditions: Górale cultural entrepreneurialism on the margins of Poland', in *Re-*

*contextualising East Central European History. Nation, Culture and Minority Groups*, ed. by Robert Pyrah and Marius Turda (Oxford: Legenda, 2010)

Makovicky, Nicolette, 'The Object of Morality: Rethinking Informal Networks in Central Europe', in *Enduring Socialism: Explorations of Revolution and Transformation, Restoration and Continuation*, ed. by Harry West and Parvathi Raman (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 103-124

Mansbach, S.A., *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Margetts, Martina, 'Action not Words', in *The Power of Making*, ed. by Daniel Charny (London: V&A Publishing and the Crafts Council, 2011), pp. 38-43

Margetts, Martina (ed.), *International Crafts* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991)

Margolin, Victor, *World History of Design, Volume 2* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)

Marx, Karl, *Das Kapital* (Washington, D.C: Regnery Publishing, [1867] 2012)

Michl, Jan, *Institutional Framework Around Successful Art Forms in Communist Czechoslovakia* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 1999)

Müller, Herta, *The Land of Green Plums* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Verlag, 1993)

Musil, Jiří, *Housing Needs and Policy in Great Britain and Czechoslovakia* (Edinburgh, London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966)

Naylor, Gillian, *The Bauhaus Reassessed: Sources and Design Theory* (London: The Herbert Press, 1985)

Nosek, Vladimir, *Independent Bohemia: An Account of the Czechoslovak Struggle for Liberty*, (London: JM Den and Sons Ltd, 1918)



- Nový, Petr, *Jablonecká bižuterie* [Jablonec Jewellery] (Prague: Grada, 2008)
- Ozkirimli, Umut, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 2000)
- Pargeter, Edith, *The Coast of Bohemia* (New York: The Akadine Press, 1950)
- Pech, Milan, 'Umění a kýč' [Art and Kitsch], in *Konec avantgardy? od mnichovské dohody ke komunistickému převratu* [The End of the Avant-Garde? From the Munich Agreement to the Communist Coup], ed. by Hana Rousová, Lenka Bydžovská, Vojtěch Lahoda et al (Řevnice: Arbor vitae, 2011), pp. 317-330
- Pečírka, Jaromír, *Pravoslav a Jindřiška Radovi* [Pravoslav a Jindřiška Rada] (Prague: Nakladatelství československých výtvarných umělců, 1959)
- Péteri, György, *Nylon Curtain – Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East Central Europe, Vol. 18* (Trondheim: Program on East European Cultures and Societies, 2006)
- Pine, Frances, Deema Kaneff and Haldis Haukanes (eds.), *Memory, Politics and Religion: The Past Meets the Present in Europe* (Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia) (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004)
- Polanyi, Michael, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1958).
- Pye, David, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* (London: Herbert Press, 1968)
- Raban, Josef, *Czechoslovak Form. Arts, Crafts & Industrial Design* (Prague: Orbis, 1971)
- Raban, Josef, *Modern Bohemian Glass* (Prague: Artia, 1963)
- Rada, Pravoslav, Jindřiška Radová, and Josef Soukup, *Jarmila Glazarová* (Prague: Český fond výtvarných umění, 1961)

- Read, Herbert, *Art and Industry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934)
- Reid, Susan E., "'Our Kitchen is Just as Good': Soviet Responses to the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959", in *Cold War Modern*, ed. by David Crowley and Jane Pavitt (London: V&A Publications, 2008), pp. 141-146
- Reid, Susan E., 'Happy Housewarming,' in *Happiness, Soviet Style* ed. by Marina Balina and Dobrenko, Evgeny (London: Anthem Press, 2009), pp. 133-60
- Reid, Susan E., 'Soviet Responses to the American Kitchen,' in *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users*, ed. by Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 83-112
- Riello, Giorgio and Peter McNeill, *The Fashion Reader: Global Perspectives* (Abington: Routledge, 2010)
- Rychlíková, Marie, *Marie Rychlíková: Keramika, architektura* [Marie Rychlíková: Ceramics, Architecture] (Prague: Carter/Reproplus s.r.o, 2016)
- Salmon, Geoffrey, *Storage. Suiting the system to the requirements.* (London: Macdonald & Co. in association with the Council of Industrial Design, 1967)
- Sandino, Linda, 'Introduction: Oral History in and about Art, Craft and Design', in *Oral history in the Visual Arts*, ed. by Linda Sandino and Matthew Partington (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 1-15
- Sayer, Derek, *The Coasts of Bohemia: a Czech History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press)
- Schwartz, Frederic J., *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996)
- Seton-Watson, Hugh, 'On Trying to be a Historian of Eastern Europe', in *Historians as Nation Builders: Central and South-East Europe*,

- ed. by Harry Hanak & Denis Deletant (London: Palgrave Macmillan Publisher, 1988), pp. 1-14
- Seton-Watson, Hugh, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (London: Methuen, 1981)
- Skilling, H. Gordon, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976)
- Jan Spurný, *Modern textile designer: Antonín Kybal* (Prague: Artia, 1960)
- Škvorecký, Josef, *The Miracle Game* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990)
- Švoma, Martin, *Karel Vachek Etc.* (Prague: Academy of Performing Arts, 2008)
- Tborsky, Edward, *Communism in Czechoslovakia 1948-1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961)
- Taylor, Lou, 'The Search for a Polish National Identity 1945-68: An Analysis of the Textile Design Work of Prof. Wanda Telakowska, Director of the Institute of Industrial Design, Warsaw,' in *Culture and Identity: Selected Aspects and Approaches*, ed. by Suzanne Stern-Gillet et al (Katowice: Wldawnictwo Uniwersytetu Slaskiego, 1996), pp. 396-414
- Teige, Karel, *Painting and Poetry* (Prague: Musaion, 1920)
- Veblen, Thorstein, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, London: Random House [1899] 2001)
- Vlček, Tomáš (ed.), *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art 1890-2010 / Part Two* (Prague: National Gallery, 2010)
- Vlčková, Lucie, *Družstevní práce - Sutnar, Sudek* (Revnice: Arbor vitae, 2007)
- Volf, Miloš Bohuslav, *Jaroslav Brychta: Živé sklo*, [Jaroslav Brychta: Live Glass] (Prague: SNTL, 1977)
- Vydra, Josef, *Lidový modrotisk na Slovensku* [Folk Blueprint in Slovakia] (Prague: Artia, 1954)

- Walker, John, *Design History and the History of Design* (London: Pluto Press, 1989)
- Woodham, Jonathan M., *Twentieth-Century Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Zarecor, Kimberly E. and Vladimir Kulić, 'Socialism on Display: The Czechoslovak and Yugoslavian Pavilions at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair', in *Architecture Publications (Iowa State University Digital Repository, 2014)*, pp. 226-239  
<<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/38934213.pdf>> [accessed 8 March 2019]
- Ždanov, A. A., *O umění* [About Art] (Prague: Orbis, 1950)

### **Journals, Magazines and Periodicals**

- Bell, Rebecca, 'Review: *Věci a slova: Umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870–1970* / Things and Words: Art Industry, Applied Arts and Design in Czech Theory and Criticism 1870–1970,' *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 23:2 (2016), 333-337
- Benešová, Marie, 'Nové byty v experimentálních domech na Invalidovně' [New Flats in the Experimental Housing of Invalidovna], *Architektura ČSSR*, 9 (1961), 601-605
- Benda, Jiří, 'Od diskuse k praxi' [From Discussion to Practice], *Domov*, 1 (1963), 21-26
- Bouček, Vladimír, 'Výzkum a vývoj ÚLUV' [The Research and Development of ÚLUV], *Tvar*, 9:10 (1958), 304-315
- Boym, Svetlana, 'The Archeology of Banality: The Soviet Home', *Public Culture*, 6:2 (1994), 263-292
- Chalupecký, Jindřich, 'Sochařství strojů a nástrojů' [Sculpture of machines and tools], *Tvar*, 6 (1953), 170-177

- Crowley, David, 'Stalinism and Modernist Craft in Poland', *Journal of Design History*, 11:1 (1998), 71-83
- Czechoslovak Glass Review*, Czechoslovak Glass Works National Corporation (Prague: RAPID, 1946-1967)
- David-Fox, Katherine, 'Prague-Vienna, Prague-Berlin: The Hidden Geography of Czech Modernism', *Slavic Review*, 59:4 (2000), 735-760
- Digrin, Ivo, 'A Universal Assortment', *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 2 (1958), 7-9
- Editorial Introduction, *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 1:1 (2008), 5-11
- Elkins, James, '[A Closer Look at Eastern European Modernism]: Response', *The Art Bulletin*, 84:3 (2002), 539 DOI: 10.2307/3177319
- Elkins, James, 'How is it Possible to Write about World's Art', *ARS 2* (2003), 75-81
- Fuchs, Bohuslav, 'Industrialismus, urbanismus, architektura' [Industrialism, urbanism, architecture], *Blok: časopis pro umění* [Blok: A Journal for the Arts], 2:3-4 (1947-8), 71
- Hackney, Fiona, 'Quiet Activism and the New Amateur', *Design and Culture*, 5:2 (2013), 169-193
- Hannington, Joy, 'Pictures for Presents,' *Homes and Gardens*, 19 January 1973 [pages and further details not available on clippings], Blythe House Archive Ref: AAD/1994/16/2787
- Harrod, Tanya 'Visionary rather than practical': craft, art and material efficiency', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 371: 1986 (2013), 1-12
- Harrod, Tanya, *Review: Out There: Our Post-War Public Art*, East Wing Galleries, Somerset House, London, *Sculpture Journal*, 25:2 (2016), 288-290

- Hendrych, Jaroslav, 'Nová právní norma' [A New Legal Norm], *Tvar*, 9: 10 (1958), 290-290
- Hetteš, Karel, 'Brussels Reporting', *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 2 (1958), n. pag.
- Hetteš, Karel, 'Reflections on the Aesthetics of Glass', *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 8 (1958), 2-16
- Heythum, Antonín and Charlotta, 'Něco o novém bytě' [Something about the new apartment], *Tvar*, 2:5-6 (1949), 137-143
- 'HR' [sic], 'Nový tvar kapesní svítilny' [The New Pocket Torch], *Tvar*, 5-6 (1949), 185
- Janák, Pavel, 'Z počátku naší umělecké výroby' [From the beginnings of our artistic production], *Tvar*, 1:4, (1948) 87-94
- Jančář, Josef, 'Zvelebování řemesel. Tradice lidové a umělecké výroby v českých zemích' [Improvement of crafts. Traditional Folk and Artistic Production in the Czech Lands]', *Dějiny a současnost*, C:9 (2005), 22-23
- Kanef, Deema, 'Owning Culture' (Special Section Editor), *Focaal, European Journal of Anthropology*, 44 (2004), 72 pages [sic]
- Karasová, Daniela, 'Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury v Praze, řečený ÚBOK' [Institute of Interior and Fashion Design in Prague, known as ÚBOK], *Revue Umění a řemesla* [Arts and Crafts Review], 1 (2010), 7-13
- Karasová, Daniela, 'Victor Papanek – sociální a ekologický design' [Victor Papanek – Social and Ecological Design], *Domov*, 31:9 (1990), 6-9
- Kilburn, Michael, 'Velvet Revolutions: An Oral History of Czech Society by Miroslav Vaněk and Pavel Mücke (review)', *Oral History Review*, 44:2 (2017), 410-412
- Kinchin, Juliet, 'Hungarian Pottery, Politics and Identity: Representing the Ceramic Art of Margit Kovacs', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 2:2 (2009), 161-182.

- Kosík, Karel, 'Hašek and Kafka' (trans. Karel Kovanda), *Telos*, 23 (1975), 84–88
- Kotíková, P. 'Herbert Read, O umelecké vyrobe v Anglii' [On Industrial Arts in England], *Tvar*, 1:1 (1948), 50
- Kovárna, František, 'Painting and Sculpture in Czechoslovakia', *The Studio*, 115:542 (1938), 236-249
- Koželka, Karel, 'O nový tvar průmyslových výrobků' [A new form of industrial products], *Tvar*, 1:9 (1948), 216–217
- Krauss, Rosalind, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', *October*, 8 (Spring, 1979), 30–44
- Langhamer, Antonín, 'The Past and Present of Glass Figurines and Chamber Sculptures', *Czechoslovak Glass Review*, 30:3 (1975), 14-19
- 'Láska musí mít střechu nad hlavou' [Love Must Have a Roof Over its Head], *Domov*, 6 (1960), 33; 1 (1961), 49; 2 (1961), 40; 3 (1961) 65; 4 (1961), 45
- Lees-Maffei, Grace and Linda Sandino 'Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships Between Design, Craft and Art', *Journal of Design History*, 17:3 (2004), 207-219
- Lichtág, Jan, 'Škrdlovické sklo do světa' [Škrdlovice glass goes into the world], *Tvar* (1948), 111-113
- Liehm, Antonin J., 'Franz Kafka in Eastern Europe', *Telos*, 23 (1975), 53-83
- Makovicky, Nicolette, 'Traditional with Contemporary Form: Craft and discourses of modernity in Slovakia today', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 2:1 (2004), 43-58
- Makovicky, Nicolette, 'Something to talk about': Notation and knowledge making amongst lace makers in Central Slovakia', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 16:1 (2010), 80-99

- Marco Stamenkovic, 'Curating the Invisible: Contemporary Art Practice and the Production of Meaning in Eastern Europe', *Inferno*, 9 (2004), 53-61
- Marková, Libuše, 'Očima návštěvníků' [The Eyes of Visitors], *Domov*, 5 (1961), 14-18
- Masák, Jar., 'Co se nelíbilo Angličanům na výstavě "Britain Can Make It"' ['What the English did not like at exhibition Britain Can Make It'], *Tvar*, 1:1, (1948), 26
- Mrkvička, Otakar, 'Výtvarná kultura v národě' [Art Culture in the Nation], *Brázda* [Wake], 21:3 (1940), 511-512
- Mrkvička, Otakar, 'Vytvárný hlas o veletrhu' [Artistic Voice on Fair Trade], *Tvar*, 1:1 (1948), 7
- Oates-Indruchová, Libora, 'The Limits of Thought?: The Regulatory Framework of Social Sciences and Humanities in Czechoslovakia (1968–1989)', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60:10 (2008), 1767-1782
- 'Odmítáme!' [We Reject!], *Tvar*, 1:2-3 (1948), 64
- Péteri, György, 'Intellectual Life and the First Crisis of State Socialism in East Central Europe, 1953-1956', *Contemporary European History*, 6:3 (1997), 259-262
- Pichová, Hana, 'The Lineup for Meat: The Stalin Statue in Prague', *PMLA*, 123:3 (2008), 614–631
- Piroch, Sigrid, 'Slovak Folk Art – Indigo Folk Printing', *Ars Textrina*, 9 (1988), 63–124
- Polt, Harriet R., 'The Czechoslovak Animated Film', *Film Quarterly*, 17:3 (1964), 31-40
- Raban, J. 'Moderní nebo módní?' ['Fashionable or Modern?'], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 34-38
- Raban, Josef, 'Pro museum či pro život?' [For the Museum or for Life], *Tvar*, 9:10 (1958), 291-303



- Reid, Susan E., 'Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev', *Slavic Review*, 61:2 (2002), 223-224
- Reid, Susan E., 'Communist Comfort: Socialist Modernism and the Making of Cosy Homes in the Khrushchev-Era Soviet Union', *Gender and History* 21, 3 (2009), 465-98
- Reid, Susan E., 'In the Name of the People: The Manege Affair Revisited,' *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, 4 (2005), 673-716
- Reid, Susan E., 'Khrushchev Modern: Agency and Modernization in the Soviet Home', *Cahiers du Monde russe* 47:1-2 (2006), 227-68
- Reid, Susan E., 'The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, 2 (2005), 289-316
- Reid, Susan E., 'The Soviet Art World in the Early Thaw', *Third Text* 20, 2 (2006), 161-175
- Roubal, Petr, 'Politics of Gymnastics: Mass Gymnastic Displays under Communism in Central and Eastern Europe', *Body & Society*, 9:2 (2003), 1-25
- Rubin, Eli, 'The Form of Socialism without Ornament Consumption: Ideology, and the Fall and Rise of Modernist Design in the German Democratic Republic', *Journal of Design History*, 19:2 (2006), 155-168
- Šif, J., 'Architekti experimentují' (Architects experimenting), *Domov*, 1:7 (1961), 5-8
- Šindelař, Duřan, 'Proti izolaci věcí' [Against the Isolation of Things], *Domov*, 4 (1962), 4
- 'Srovnávejtesnámi' [Compare with Us], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 38-39
- Štefunko, Fr., 'Potreba umenia v remesle dnesnych čias' [The Need for Art in the Craft of Today], *Tvar*, 1 (1948), 97-98

- Svašek, Maruška, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity. The Czech Art World in the 1950s and 1960s', *Journal of Contemporary European History*, 6:3 (1997), 383-403.
- Švec, Jindřich, 'Upomínkové předměty pro I. celostátní spartakiádu' [Souvenirs for the First National Spartakiad], *Tvar* 7:5 (1955), 134-137
- Teichmanová, Jana, 'Odras secese v keramice Celdy Kloučeka' [Reflections of Art Nouveau in the Ceramics of Celda Klouček], *Umění a řemesla* [Arts and Crafts], 1:10 (2011), 22-25
- 'Udělejte si sami' [Do it Yourself], *Domov*, 1 (1961), 47-49
- Varga-Harris, Christine, 'Homemaking and the Aesthetic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet Home during the Khrushchev Era', *Journal of Social History*, 41:3 (2008), 561-589
- Venera, František, 'Nové formy výstavnictví' [New Forms of Exhibiting], *Blok*, 3 (1948-1949), 48
- Veselý, Dalibor 'Plastická architektura' [Sculpture in Architecture], *Domov*, 1 (1969), 71
- Veselý, Ludvík, 'Do prvního ročníku' [In the First Year] [Opening statement, English summary], *Domov*, 1 (1960), n. pag.
- Viney, Deryck E., 'Czech Culture and the New Spirit, 1948-52', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 31:77 (1953), 466-494
- Vlček, Tomáš, 'Art between Social Crisis and Utopia: The Czech Contribution to the development of the Avant-garde Movement in East-Central Europe 1910-1930', *Art Journal*, 49:1 (1990), 28
- Vybíral, Jindřich, 'The Beacons of Revolutionary Ideas: Sorela as Historicism and Rhetoric', *Centropa*, 1:2 (2001), 95-100
- Vydra, Josef, 'Návrat k tvarům' [Return to Form], *Tvar*, 1:5-6 (1948), 129-136
- Vydra, Josef, 'Distinctiveness, Temperament and Non-Distinctiveness, Three Periods and Three Kinds of Distinctiveness', *Věci a lidé* [Things and People], IV (1952-1953), 404-454

Vydra, Josef, 'O sloh v lidové tvorbě' [On Style in Folk Art], *Tvar*, 2 (1949), 206-214

### **Exhibition Catalogues**

Anděl, Jaroslav (ed.), *Czech Modernism: 1900-1945* (Houston, TX: The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1989)

*Art Protis* (London and Prague: Heal's and Středočeské tiskárny, 1973)

Bartlová, Milena; Vybíral, Jindřich et al (eds.), *Budování státu: reprezentace Československa v umění, architektuře a designu* [The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design] (Prague: UMPRUM, 2015)

Brabcová-Orlíková, Jana, *Jiří Trnka, 1912-1969* (Prague: Národní galerie v Praze, 1992)

Bydžovská, Lenka, Vojtěch Lahoda, Karel Srp and Václav Erben, *Czech Modern Art 1900-1960: the National Gallery in Prague, Modern Art Collection* (Prague: Národní muzeum v Praze, 1995).

Cannon-Brookes, Peter (ed.), *Czech sculpture 1800-1938* (London: National Museum of Wales, 1986)

Crowley, David and Jane Pavitt (eds.) *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970*, London: V&A Publishing, 2008)

Hlaváčková, Konstantina, *Czech Fashion 1940-1970: Mirror of the Times* (Prague: UPM and Olympia, 2000)

Havlík, Vlastimil, and Ludmila Kybalová, *Antonín Kybal* (Nové Město nad Metují: Městský úřad a Městská knihovna, 1993)

Hubatová-Vacková, Lada (ed.) *Modfolk. Modernita v lidovém: Ateliér designu oděvu a obuvi Liběny Rochové na UMPRUM* [Modfolk. Modernity in Folkness: The Studio of Fashion and Footwear Design of Liběna Rochová at UMPRUM], (Prague: UMPRUM, 2015)

- Hetteš, Karel, *Bilance 66 (V. členská výstava Skupiny průmyslových výtvarníků U.B.)* [5<sup>th</sup> Member Exhibition for the Group of Industrial Artists Umělecká Beseda] (Prague: [s. n.], 1966)
- Jiří Pelcl: *design 1995-1998* (Prague: Konsepti, 1998)
- Lamarová, Milena, *50 léta - užitě umění a design [1950s - Applied Art and Design]* (Prague: Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum v Praze, 1988)
- Medková, Jiřina, *Z přírůstků užitého umění 20. století: keramika, sklo, šperk, textil* [From the Acquisitions of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Applied Art: Ceramics, Glass, Jewellery, Textiles] (Brno: Moravská galerie v Brně, 1969).
- Palata, Oldřich, *Skleněný Svět Jaroslava Brychty* [The Glass World of Jaroslav Brychta] (Liberec: Severočeské muzeum, 1995)
- Ševčík, Oldřich and Ondřej Beneš, *Architektura 60. let, „Zlatá šedesátá léta v české architektuře 20. století*, [Architecture of the 1960s. The 'Golden Sixties' in 20th Century Czech Architecture], (Prague: Grada Publishing, 2009).
- Šlapeta, Vladimír, *Czech Functionalism 1918-1938* (London: Architectural Association, 1987)
- Srp, Karel, *Toyen: City Gallery Prague, House of the Stone Bell* (Prague: City House Gallery, 2000)
- Štěpán, Petr, *Echoes of Cubism: Returns and Inspirations of Cubism in Czech Art, 1920-2000* (Prague: České muzeum výtvarných umění, 2000)
- Švácha, Rostislav, František Šmejkal et al (eds.) *Devětsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and '30s* (Oxford: Museum Of Modern Art Oxford, 1990)
- Tučná, Dagmar, *Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, Návrhy a Realizace 1969-1973* [Hladíková, Mírová, Rychlíková, Designs and Realisation 1969-1973] (Prague: Galerii Vincence Kramáře and

Svaz českých výtvarných umělců [Union of Czech Fine Artists],  
1973)

Venera, František, *Umění a kýč* (Brno: Dům umění města Brna,  
1948)

Vingerlová, Markéta, *When Textiles Become Form* (Prague: Hunt  
Kastner Gallery, 2016)

von Vegesack, Alexander, Milena Lamarová et al., *Czech cubism:  
architecture, furniture, and decorative arts, 1910-1925* (New  
York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992)

### Online sources

'A Spectre over Central Europe', *The Economist*, 15 August 2002  
<<http://www.economist.com/node/1284252>> [accessed 21  
December 2015)

Bren, Paulina, 'Envisioning a "Socialist Way of Life": Ideology and  
Contradiction in Czechoslovakia, 1969-1989', in *A Decade of  
Transformation, IWM, Junior Visiting Fellows Conferences*, ed. by  
Roseanne Gerin and Petra Jedlicková, 8 (Vienna: Institute for  
Human Sciences, 1999 [published on the Web][sic])  
<[https://www.iwm.at/publications/visiting-fellows-  
conferences/vol-08/](https://www.iwm.at/publications/visiting-fellows-conferences/vol-08/)> [accessed 26 March 2017]

*Brno – moravský Manchester. 250 let metropole textilního průmyslu*  
[Brno - Moravian Manchester, 250 years of the Metropolis of  
Textile Industry] (2014) <[http://www.moravska-  
galerie.cz/moravska-galerie/vystavy-a-program/aktualni-  
vystavy/2014/brno.aspx](http://www.moravska-galerie.cz/moravska-galerie/vystavy-a-program/aktualni-vystavy/2014/brno.aspx)> (accessed 30 October 2016)

Decree 110: *Dekret presidenta republiky o organizaci lidové a  
umělecké výroby* [Decree of the President of the Republic for the  
Organization of Folk and Artistic Production], (27 October 1945),

- 257-261 <<http://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/ViewFile.aspx?type=c&id=49>> [accessed 26 July 2014]
- Decree 56: *Zákon o umělecké řemeslné práci a o lidové umělecké výrobě* [Law on artistic handcraft work and folk art production], (31 October 1957) 276-279, <<http://www.jurilogie.cz/sbirka/SB/1957>> [accessed 26 July 2014]
- Hlaváková, Konstantina, 'Czech Urban Dress, 1948 to the Twenty-First Century', *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion Volume 9 – East Europe, Russia, and the Caucasus, Part 3 : East Central Europe and the Baltics, Berg Fashion Library* <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/BEWDF/EDch9026>> [accessed 17 March 2013]
- Masaryk, T.G, 'A Socialist State in Being: President Masaryk's Ideals', *The Times* (6 November 1919) <[http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/781/298/95607240w5/purl=rcl\\_TTDA](http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/781/298/95607240w5/purl=rcl_TTDA)> [accessed 04 October 2006].
- Mertová, Petra, *Art protis 45 / Netkaný textil v minulosti a dnes* (16. 6. - 6. 12. 2009) [Art Protis 45 / Unwoven textiles in the past and today (16. 6. - 6. 12. 2009)] <<http://www.technicalmuseum.cz/2009-menuvpravoarchiv-247/art-protis-45-16-6-6-12-2009>> [accessed 01 April 2016]
- Nohejlová, Lucie, 'Two-day showroom', *CZECHDESIGN*, 2015 <<http://www.czechdesign.cz/kalendar-akci/dvoudenni-showroom>> [Accessed 03 November 2017]
- Pospiszyl, Tomas, 'Toward a Brighter Yesterday', *TOL* (14 February 2003) <<http://www.tol.org/client/article/8797-toward-a-brighter-yesterday.html>> [accessed 28 December 2015]
- The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* (1975 text published in 1979 edition) <<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/socialist+realism>> [accessed 27 December 2015]
- Žižková, Lenka, 'Krásná jizba a vše

kolem' [Beautiful Parlour and Everything Around], *CZECHDESIGN* (11 April 2008) <<http://www.czechdesign.cz/temata-a-rubriky/krasna-jizba-vse-kolem>> [accessed 25 February 2013]

### **Unpublished Theses, Manuscripts and Interviews**

Bell, Rebecca, 'The Twentieth-Century Reception and Representation of Czech Modernist Art with the UK and Anglo-American Writings' (unpublished thesis, University of Glasgow, 2007)

Clarkson, Verity, 'The Organisation and Reception of Eastern Bloc Exhibitions on the British Cold War 'Home Front' c.1956-1979' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Brighton, 2010)

Dekret presidenta republiky o organisaci lidové a umělecké výroby (Decree of the President of the Republic for the Organization of Folk and Artistic Production), Decree 110, 27 October 1945

Hames, Peter, *The Image Speaks: Miloš Forman and the Free Cinema Movement* [Guide and talk to accompany Close-Up Cinema, London], 29 April 2017

Jelínek, Vladimír, Conversation with Rebecca Bell (7 March 2014)

Karasová, Daniela, Experimentální sídliště Invalidovna, (unpublished version of manuscript, provided courtesy of Daniela Karasová, DK 2014)

Karasová, Daniela, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016)

Pech, Milan, *Výtvarná kultura Protektorátu Čechy a Morava* [The Art and Culture of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia] (unpublished PhD thesis, Charles University, Prague, 2012)

Rychlíková, Marie, Interview with Rebecca Bell (21 October 2016)

Šuhájek, Jiří, Conversation with Rebecca Bell (25 February 2014)

Vachek, Karel, Interview with Rebecca Bell (24 October 2016)

Všetečka, Jaroslav, Email correspondence with Rebecca Bell, via Daniela Karasová (5 November 2016)

**DVD/Film**

*Inspirace*, dir. and made by Karel Zeman and Jaroslav Brychta (Zlín studios, 1948)

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSWIxG89eAkm>>

[accessed 11 January 2012]

*Moravská Hellas*, dir. by Karel Vachek (Second Run DVD, 1963) [on DVD]