

Modern Art in Czech Lands
19th – 21st Century

Syllabus Spring 2011

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Course description: **Modern Art in Czech Lands, 19th – 21st century** course will present a development of visual arts (paintings, sculpture, photography, architecture, design, etc.) in the Czech lands from the end of the 18th century until the present (The Czech lands were part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until 1918). In the 19th century, Bohemian culture was influenced by a nationalist movement i.e. the National Revival, which was inspired by wider socio-political tendencies at this time. Relations to Austrian and German art were very important during that time. Since the 19th century we can see a profound shift to French literature (Symbolism, Decadence, Cubism, etc.). These connections endured until the period between World War I and World War II (Surrealism, Abstract art). The period after the Second World War (until 1989) was characterized by a totalitarian political system that negatively deformed the standard art scene. Czech art acquired new dimensions after the political regime change. The course will introduce the history of Czech visual arts in a wider Central European context with references to other art fields (film, literature, theatre).

Class sessions will be composed of lectures, excursions to sights related to the course (museums, galleries, studios etc.) and discussions on weekly readings as well as on other sources such as film, theatre, music etc.

Class attendance is required. Students are also required to attend all seminar sessions and museum visits. All exams must be taken on the dates scheduled. Students will be permitted to take make-up exams in the case of medical or family emergencies, or if they are away on official university business. Late papers will not be accepted. Helpful suggestion: This course covers a large amount of material in a very short period of time. Many places, events, and terms will likely be unfamiliar to you. The best way to ensure that you will do well in the course is to participate actively. Review your notes regularly (at least every week or two) and be sure to correct misspelling or misinformation. **Oral presentation:** Each student is required to give one oral presentation (analyses of one painting, sculpture or building). Specific dates for the presentations will be determined in class. Your presentation should be approximately 15 minutes in length.

Final paper: Papers should be approximately 15 pages in length, excluding notes. You may include photographs, drawings and other forms of documentation, but these should not be counted in total number of pages. Papers should include a bibliography of all of the works you have consulted as well as footnotes. Please use a standard format for footnotes and bibliographical citation.

Grading policy

Class participation/attendance:	20 %
Paper or other assignment:	20 %
Mid-term:	20 %
Final:	40 %

Schedule of classes

Week 1

25 January - Overview of course

27 January - **Czech Art or Art in Czech Lands** - Introduction I.
Romanesque and Gothic Art
(Master Theodoricus, Petr Parler)

Week 2

1 February - **Czech Art or Art in Czech Lands** – Introduction II.
Renaissance and Baroque Art
(Giuseppe Archimboldo, Jan Blažej Santini)

3 February - Excursion - **National Gallery, St Agnes Monastery**

Week 3

8 February - **National revival: Looking for Lost Paradise**
(National Theatre, Josef Mánes)

Lit.: Robert B. Pynsent, Introduction: Varieties of national self-definition. in: Questions of Identity. Czech and Slovak ideas of Nationality and Personality. Budapest, London, New York 1994, pp. 148 – 189.

10 February – Excursion - TBA

Week 4

15 February - **Realism and the Birth of Modern Art**
(Josef Navrátil, Karel Purkyně)

17 February – Excursion - **National Gallery, Fair Trade Palace**

Week 5

22 February - - **Art Nouveau and Impressionism: New Shapes in New Light**
(Alfons Mucha, Municipal House)

Lit.: Petr Wittlich, Alfons Mucha. In: Art Nouveau Drawings. Praha 1974, pp. 15 – 20.

24 February - Excursion – **Alfons Mucha Museum, Prague**

Week 6

1 March - **Decadent Symbolism or Great Decline of Spirituality**

(František Bílek, Karel Hlaváček)

Lit.: Otto M. Urban, František Bílek and the Idea of Deacadence. In: František Bílek, 1872 – 1941. Praha 2000.

3 March - Excursion – **František Bílek Museum, Gallery of the City of Prague**

Week 7

8 March - **Midterm Oral Presentation**

10 March - **Midterm Oral Presentation**

Week 8

15 March - - **The Occult in Art**

(Josef Váchal, Jaroslav Panuška)

Lit.: Otto M. Urban, Satanic Hallucinations. in: In Morbid Colours. Art and Idea of Decadence in the Bohemian Lands 1880 – 1914. Prague 2006, pp. 257 – 326.

17 March - Excursion - TBA

Week 9 – Spring Break – no classes

Week 10

29 March - **Cubism: Fragments and Facets and Neurosis**

(Bohumil Kubišta, Josef Chochol)

Lit.: Alena Pomajzlová, The violation of a dream. Post-Art Nouveau and Post-Symbolism. in: Prague 1900, Poetry and Ecstasy. Amsterdam 1999, pp. 179 – 191.

31 March - Excursion – **Museum of Czech Cubism, Prague**

Week 11

5 April - **Abstraction: Metamorphosis and/or Cosmic Spring**

(František Kupka)

Lit.: Pierre Brullé, Markéta Theinhardt, Painting Despite Everything. František Kupka on Creation in the plastic Arts. in: Painting the Universe. František Kupka, Pioneer in Abstraction. Dallas 1997, pp.151 – 164.

7 April - Excursion – **National Gallery, Fair Trade Palace**

Week 12

12 April - - **Surrealist Dream against Totality**

(Jindřich Štyrský, Karel Teige)

Miroslav Petříček Jr., Karel Teige: Art Theory between Phenomenology and Structuralism. in: Karel Teige/ 1900 – 1951. L'Enfant terrible of the Czech Modernist Avant-garde. Cambridge, London.1999, pp. 324 – 338

14 April - Excursion - **National Gallery, Fair Trade Palace**

Week 13

19 April - **Wounded Culture: Socialist Realism and Myth of Underground**

(Stalin Monument, Alén Diviš)

Lit.: Ivan Martin Jirous, A Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival. in: Primary Documents. A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s. New York 2002, pp. 56 – 65.

21 April – **Excursion – TBA**

Week 14

26 April - **After 1989: Back to the (Ab)normality I.**

(David Černý)

Lit: Tomáš Pospiszyl, David Černý, Promrdané roky/ The Fucking years. Praha 2002

28 April - **Excursion – TBA**

Week 15

3 May - **After 1989: Back to the (Ab)normality II.**

(Jan Hisek)

5 May - **Excursion – TBA**

Week 16 –

Exam week

PAPERS ARE DUE THIS WEEK, EITHER May 10th OR 12th.

Literature (selection):

- Petr Wittlich, *Prague. Fin-de-Siecle*. Paris 1992
- Petr Wittlich, *Sculpture od Czech Art Nouveau*. Praha 2002
- Petr Wittlich, *Art Nouveau Drawings*. Praha 1974
- Edwin Becker, Roman Prah, Petr Wittlich (ed.) *Prague 1900. Poetry and Ecstasy*. Amsterdam 1999
- Otto M. Urban, *In Morbid Colours. Art and Idea of Decadence in the Bohemian Lands 1880 – 1914*. Prague 2006
- Jaroslav Anděl (ed.), *Czech Modernism. 1900 - 1945*. Houston 1989
- Jaroslav Anděl, Dorothy Kosinski (ed.), *František Kupka*. Dallas 1997
- Jiří Šetlík (ed.), *Otto Gutfreund*. Praha 1996
- Hana Larvová (ed.), *Sculptor František Bílek*. Praha 2000
- Hana Larvová (ed.) *Umělecké sdružení Sursum/ Sursum Art Association*. Praha 1996
- Robert B. Pynsent (ed.), *Decadence and Innovation. Austro-Hungarian life and Art at the turn of the Century*. London 1989
- Robert B. Pynsent, *Questions of Identity. Czech and Slovak ideas of Nationality and Personality*. Budapest, London, New York 1994
- S. A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe. From Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890 – 1939*. Cambridge 1999
- Naděžda Blažíčková (ed.), *19 th Century Czech Painting*. Praha 1998
- Primary Documents. A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s*. New York 2002, pp. 56 – 65.
- Karel Teige/ 1900 – 1951. L'Enfant terrible of the Czech Modernist Avant-garde. Cambridge, London.1999
- Robert Rosenblum (ed.), 1900 Art at the Crossroads. London – New York, 2000
- Debora L. Silverman, Art-Nouveau in Fin-de-Siecle France. Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford 1989