

EVA KMENTOVÁ ART WORK DIARY

5. 12. 2006 – 27. 1. 2007

MÁNES EXHIBITION HALL

The press conference will take place on the 4th of December, 2006, at 4, 00 p.m. in the Mánes Exhibition Hall. The exhibition itself will be opened on the 4th of December at 6.00 p.m. by Ludmila Vachtová, who conceived and planned the exhibition.

The sculptor Eva Kmentová (1928–1980), a graduate of the Prague Higher School of Decorative Arts and a member of the former Trasa (Track) Group, was one of the key protagonists of Czech art in the latter half of the 20th century. With her use of a wide range of unconventional materials she advanced the frontiers of the classical concept of sculpture into new areas, transcending the rules of formal aesthetics. Her spatial realisations in concrete and plaster and her work on paper remain bewitchingly urgent and immediate in their appeal to life even after more than a quarter of a century. The publishing house Arbor vitae is marking the occasion of the retrospective exhibition by publishing a monograph entitled *Now: the Work of Eva Kmentová* by Ludmila Vachtová and Polana Bregantová.

The exhibition is being held under the aegis of the Mayor of Prague, Pavel Bém, and is organised by the Czech Fund for the Arts and the Arbor Vitae publishing house in co-operation with Eva Kmentová's family.

Exhibition Concept: Ludmila Vachtová

Curator of the Exhibition: Dušan Brozman

Architect: Pavel Kolíbal

Graphic Design: Helena Šantavá

English Translation: Anna Bryson

Production: Klára Vomáčková, Mánes; Martin Souček, Arbor vitae

Media Partners: A 2 Cultural Weekly, Respekt, Art & Antiques

The following galleries have loaned work to the exhibition:

The National Gallery in Prague, the Moravian Gallery in Brno, the Kampa Museum – Jan and Meda Mládek Foundation, the Czech Museum of Fine Art, Prague, the North Bohemian Gallery of Fine Art in Litoměřice, The Museum of Art in Olomouc, the Benedikt Rejt Gallery in Louny, the Aleš South Bohemian Gallery in Hluboká nad Vltavou. The East Bohemian Gallery in Pardubice. These loans have been augmented by works owned by the family and other private collections.

NOW. The Work of Eva Kmentová

The publishing house Arbor vitae has published a book entitled *NOW. The Work of Eva Kmentová* to go with the present exhibition. Eva Kmentová was entirely absorbed in the present and reacted with immediacy to the stimuli of the contemporary, which is why the book is entitled NOW. From her adolescence to her death she wrote a diary in which she commented on her work, which is why the catalogue of her art in the book and the exhibition at Mánes is entitled Art Work Diary.

The work of Eva Kmentová is structured biographically and with topographical reference to the three studios in which she worked: Židovské pece, later the "Den" in Kalininova Street in Žižkov, and finally the Stodola (Barn) in Smíchov.

The book includes the Biographical Album with commentary, Olbram Zoubek's memoir on the atelier he shared with his wife, and a three-art essay by Ludmila Vachtová. The thematic core and centre of gravity of the publication is the Art Work Diary, a complete, illustrated catalogue of 612 accessible works from the years 1951–1979, drawn up by Polana Bregantová. Selected texts by Eva Kmentová – among them several not previously unpublished – form a natural transition to the documentary section.

The individual themes are arranged in three major, chronologically structured blocks of illustrations. The graphic design of the book, the work of Helena Šantavá, enhances this conception and enables readers to appreciate it on three different levels according to taste and interest:

1. Academically and with an eye to professional usefulness for bibliographically orientated scholars, exhibition curators, art history publicists, museum staff and collectors,
2. Associatively for those who want to develop or create their own idea of the intensity of Czech art in the latter half of the 20th century, and of one of its key protagonists,
3. Purely visually for those who just like unconventional art works.

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