**PR**

**Antonín Kratochvíl**

**FACES**

**March 20 - 29, 2024**

**Curator: Edmund Čučka**

**DSC Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of David Bowie photographs, captured by the renowned Czech-American photographer Antonín Kratochvíl. Visitors can expect to see photos of one of the twentieth century's most significant artists recorded by one of the world's most prominent modern photographers. The photographs represent a limited edition of bromo-silver prints produced in Vienna.**

Antonín Kratochvíl (\*1947) lives a life of peril and adventure, similar to the epic hero Odysseus'. After fleeing Soviet Czechoslovakia in 1967, he spent time in a refugee camp in Austria, was imprisoned in Sweden, and sustained significant injuries while serving in the French Foreign Legion before settling in the Netherlands and studying photography at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. When he married an American woman in 1972 and relocated to the United States, he began working as a photographer for prominent magazines such as Vogue, Rolling Stone, New York Times Magazine, Los Angeles Times Magazine, and Detour. During this cooperation, he created legendary photographs of David Bowie, Keith Richards, William Defoe, and Liv Tyler.

Despite moving overseas in quest of freedom, he frequently returned to totalitarian countries as a documentary photographer. He documented the genocide in Rwanda, the life of Bosnian refugees, the AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe, and drug cartel operations in Guatemala. He was imprisoned in Ethiopia, illegally entered into Iraq in a rented van, and in Afghanistan, an illiterate soldier threatened to shoot him because he couldn't read his American passport. Kratochvíl's renowned documentary images earned him a spot on American Photo magazine's list of the world's top 100 photographers in 1999. Kratochvíl has received three World Press Photo prizes and presented his work in the National Gallery and leading galleries worldwide.

David Bowie was timeless not only in his music, but also in the challenging social topics he passionately advocated for. Bowie's album "Earthling" (1997), which Kratochvíl photographed for the cover of Detour magazine, pushed the frontiers of industrial rock in terms of harmony and lyrics. Bowie's liberal views on sexuality and gender, religious pluralism, and racial equality may have appeared odd and rebellious in his day, but they are now a fundamental part of political discourse. The social unrest of the second half of the 20th century, like that experienced by Kratochvíl, didn't leave Bowie indifferent; he openly criticised the insufficient representation of African American artists on MTV, expressed his disdain for fascism in the album "Tin Machine," and in the song "Black Tie White Noise" (1993), he drew attention racial tensions in Los Angeles.

When Kratochvíl photographed Bowie, both men had much in common—both in their fifties, both at the top of their fields, both deeply creative individuals. Perhaps because of this closeness, Kratochvíl managed to gain Bowie's trust and lure him out of the controlled conditions of studio photography, organized by his assistants and managers, into the streets of New York's Meatpacking District. There, amidst the narrow alleyways between former meatpacking factories, both men thrived - Bowie due to the absence of his uptight entourage, Kratochvíl because the cobblestones in the Meatpacking District reminded him of the pavements of Karlín, where he grew up. From their six-hour session emerged both serious and smiling portraits, which you can see in all their beauty at this exhibition.

Curator Edmund Čučka describes the exhibition as fulfilling his personal dream. "Antonín Kratochvíl is my personal hero," adds Čučka. "I had the opportunity to encounter his photographs during the Communist era when I came across a foreign magazine featuring his reportage."

**Selected exhibitions:**

* **2021** Antonín Kratochvíl, *Svědectví*, Czech Centre’s Window Gallery & Czech Embassy London, United Kingdom
* **2020**–**2021** Antonín Kratochvíl, Photoessays, National Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic
* **2019** *400 ASA: Fotography* (group exhibition), National Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic
* **2006** Antonín Kratochvíl, *Persona*, Leica Gallery Prague, Czech Republic

**Awards**

* **2016** Man of the Year, Esquire magazine
* **2015** Nominated for Oscar in the category Best Documentary, film Operation Homecoming
* **2015** Zlata pecka award for the video spot Inspiration is Everywhere for the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra
* **2015** Czech Photography Person of the Year 2014, awarded for long-term contribution to photography by the Association of Professional Photographers of the Czech Republic
* **2014** Fotosfera Award
* **2012** Emmy Awards, nominated in the category News & Documentary for the film Starved for Attention (Jeremiah Zahar, 2011)
* **2010** Czech Lion film award, Nominated for best supporting actor, film Kawasaki’s Rose (Jan Hrebejk, 2009)
* **2008** Emmy Award, Nominated in News & Documentary for best documentary, film Operation film
* Operation Homecoming (2007)
* **2005** Golden Light Award for Best Documentary Book for the book Vanishing
* **2005** Lucie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Photojournalism
* **2003** Medal from the City of Prague for Photography awarded by the Mayor of Prague
* **2003** First Prize World Press Photo Amsterdam (2 awards in the same year)
* **2000** Gold ARC Award for Best Annual Report, NGO Category, for Rockefeller Foundation 1999 Annual Report
* **1997** (Eissie) Alfred Eisenstadt Award for 3Eyewitness Essay2 Life Magazine.
* **1997** Gold Medal for Photography from Society of Publishing Designers, New York.
* **1997** First Prize, World Press Photo Portrait Series, Amsterdam.
* **1995** Ernst Haas Award, Maine Photographic workshops.
* **1994** Leica Medal of Excellence for outstanding achievement in documentary photography.
* **1994** Dorothy Lange Prize, Duke University Center of documentary Studies
* **1991** Infinity Award: Photojournalist of the Year, International Center of Photography, New York.