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Richard Štipl & Rony Plesl

**INCARNATION**

**Probing the relationship between body and consciousness**

**Duration: 23. 11. 2021 – 4. 2. 2022**

**Curator: Petr Vaňous**

**Conceptual design: Josef Pleskot**

**DSC Gallery, Dlouhá 5, Prague 1**

Our newest exhibition features works of two of the most distinctive Czech contemporary creators: glass artist **Rony Plesl** and sculptor **Richard Štipl**. Curator Petr Vaňous has hand-picked works which hint at the problematic relationship of contemporary society to quintessential questions of human ephemerality and mortality. The two artists showcase here only their newest work in which they consider such themes as humanity, faith, transience and corporeality. One can admire the technological sophistication of their individual craftsmanship and the ways the two sets of works interact: a dialogue for which **Josef Pleskot** developed a customised exhibition design.

‘‘Both authors propose that art is generated by a certain creative expression which is not devised but rather recognised in matter itself and only then animated by human effort. A work of art must be ‘conceived’. This is precisely the moment of ‘incarnation’ which connects the two otherwise distinct sculpting methods presented here. The artisanal techniques through which past masterpieces were created necessarily uncover for the modern spectator a definite sense of what is possible. This is why the connection of both artists to their historical predecessors is crucial. But it is not merely the technological methods and solutions which fascinate both artists but also their capacity to incarnate into matter a certain transcendental confession. INCARNATION is a complex, transformative process trapped in the totality of the final shape,’’ relates the premise of the exhibition curator Petr Vaňous.

Rony Plesl works with the most challenging forms and shapes due to his profound knowledge of the glassmaking craft and the most recent techniques of glass melting. These not only give means to his personal expression but also create a spectacle for the viewer, one which showcases this fragile material in all its glory. The contradictory properties of glass motivate Plesl to develop innovative methods of expression. His aim is to liberate glass from its historical ‘artisanal’ associations and establish it as a distinctive medium. Plesl creates visually striking ‘sacred’ objects from the characteristically amorphous glass the same way a sculptor chisels out a sculpture. The objects here formally and conceptually build upon his exhibition in London’s Victoria & Albert Museum from 2019 but they also anticipate his work created for the upcoming La Biennale di Venezia 2022, an event which itself represents an apex of any artistic career. Here, Plesl will also exhibit two Venetian mirrors which were created in collaboration with the Murano maestro of mirror manufacturing, Giuliano Fuga.

Richard Štipl is regarded by many as one of the most innovative sculptors to emerge on the international contemporary art scene of late. He impresses with his expressively cut hyperrealistic sculptures through which he locates and examines his artistic identity. The sculptures betray a hint of aesthetic irritation and are deeply concerned with both their artistic predecessors and underlying sculptural techniques. The time-consuming artisanal difficulty of Štipl’s sculptures is apparent at first sight: as the artist himself admits, it took him more than a year to invent his now hallmark technique of polychromy. At the forefront of Štipl’s oeuvre lies his affinity with classical forms and techniques fused with postmodern signs and symbols which allow him to examine a wide spectrum of psychological states of mind. Inhabiting parallel worlds, underscored by the desire to profoundly examine the act of artistic creation can be seen as Štipl’s forte. The exhibition offers a look at monumental polychromatic sculptures of wood, objects of cast metal and for the first time anywhere also sculptures of stone. Some works will be accompanied by Alan Crocetti’s jewellery, with whom Štipl collaborated on a project for the world-famous designer Dries Van Noten. Crocetti designs jewellery for such famous celebrities as Lady Gaga and Billie Eilish.

‘‘An aspect of the upcoming exhibition about which we are truly excited is the possibility of dialogue between the sculptures of the two artists. The fact that this interaction will be devised by Josef Pleskot, one of the most celebrated Czech architects, only adds to its importance,’’ add gallerists Edmund Čučka and Karolína Juřicová.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue raisonné which includes a summative curatorial text and complete photographic documentation.

**Rony Plesl** (born 1965)

An eminent Czech artist, sculptor, designer and professor, Plesl displays his formidable originality both in fine arts and design. In his work he examines the possibilities of glass sculpture, which he approaches as a distinctive medium, and for the history of which he has utmost respect. He builds upon the work of his predecessors, namely Stanislav Libenský. In 2018 he presented to the world a cutting-edge technology of melted glass during the ‘Fire Walk with Me’ exhibition. His career took a definite turn after his ‘Sacred Geometry’ exhibition in the Santa Chiara Chapel in London’s Victoria and Albert Museum in 2019. Plesl’s work is included in many private and public collections both in the CR and abroad. Since 2008 he has been the head of the glasswork atelier at the Academy of Arts, Prague (UMPRUM), where he has also been appointed a professor of design and architecture in 2017. He has worked with renowned clients in CR and abroad, for instance with Cartier, Barovier & Toso, Preciosa, Moser, Bomma, Verreum, Pasabahce or the Sahm group which manufactures drinking glasses for most global brands. In 2017 he became the art director of the Rückl brand for which he created a unified design concept. He has won many accolades for his work: Good Design Award (2019, 2013, 2010), Red Dot Award (2019, 2007), Czech Grand Design Award (2011) and others.

For further information please visit: www.ronyplesl.com

**Richard Štipl** (born 1968)

Richard Štipl is one of the most distinguished Czech sculptors and painters. Though a native of Šternberk, Czech Republic, where he also currently lives, Štipl spent most of his adulthood in Canada, where his family immigrated in 1979. Štipl studied painting at Ontario College of Art (1988-1993), having received the Governor General’s Gold Medal for best dissertation. He returned to Šternberk, Czech Republic, in the 1990s. He has lectured at the Academy of Arts in Prague (UMPRUM) in 2010 and was an assistant professor there until 2017. He has also lectured at the New York Academy in 2011. Štipl’s work is included in some of the most prestigious foreign collections, including those of the Museum der Bildenden Kunste, Leipzig, West Collection, Philadelphia, Richard Nagy Gallery, London, or Hugo Voeten Art Centre, Belgium. Locally he is included in collections of Robert Runták, Colette Prague/Munich or Zdeňek Sklenář. Štipl has successfully presented his work during many solo exhibitions in cultural metropolises such as Zurich, Mexico City, Istanbul, Paris, New York or Prague. The artist has exhibited also in the CR as part of prestigious projects such as *Decadence Now* (together with Damien Hirst, Cindy Sherman, Joel Peter Witkin) and *Inverse Romance* in Rudolfinum, Prague, *Dimensions of Dialogue* in the National Gallery (together with Abramovic, Basquiat, Warhol) or *Dream Within a Dream: Edgar Allan Poe in Czech Countries,* or *Vanitas* in DOX, Prague. Amongst his most famous works are his hyperrealistic polychromic sculptures which are on display at this exhibition.

For further information please visit: http://www.richardstipl.cz/

**Petr Vaňous** (born 1975)

Czech art historian, critic, scholar, publisher and curator. His expertise lies in the confluence of classical art media (notably painting and draughtsmanship) and postmodern, Post-Media Age of mass information. He studied History of Art at Palacký University in Olomouc (1993 - 1999 MA) and holds a doctorate from the Academy of Arts, Prague (UMPRUM) in curatorial, design and intermedia studies (2011 - 2015, Phd). He was associate professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, Prague, between the years 2011 and 2018. He curated a vast number of exhibitions, namely *Resetting/Alternative Roads to Eternity* (GHMP, Prague, 2007-08); *Fundamentals & Sediments* (GHMP, Prague, 2011), *Ivan Pinkava: Remains* (American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Washington, DC, 2012), *Butterfly Effect?* (Rudolfinum Gallery, Praha, 2013); *Czech Dream* (Bohemian Hall, NYC, 2015), The Natural World (Prague House in Brussels, Brusel, 2016), *Inverse Romance* (Kunsthalle Bratislava, 2019), *Vital Collapse* (Kampa Museum, Prague, 2019), *Cache* (Rudolfinum Gallery, Prague, 2021). He is the author and co-author of several books and curatorial catalogue texts about contemporary art: for instance, *Ivan Pinkava: Remains* (Prague, 2012), *Butterfly Effect?* (Praha, 2013), *Czech Painting in the 1990s* (Prague, 2015), *Eberhard Havekost: a Logician* (Prague, 2017), *Inverse Romance* (Praha, 2018), *Retina* (Humpolec, 2019), *Michaël Borremans: The Duck* (Prague, 2020) or *SPECTRUM* (Prague, 2020).

**CONTACT US**

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