

Jiří Georg Dokoupil

Leona's Choice

15. 12. – 6. 2. 2024



With the last exhibition of this year DSC Gallery will present its courtesy artist, one of its longest represented domestic names, Jiří Georg Dokoupil who is appearing in these premises for the fifth time. The exhibition focuses on his most significant artistic expression which has earned him a place in every important collection.

Dokoupil's long-term focus is on inventing new technical approaches. Sometimes he revisits and develops older forgotten techniques, or he combines and alternates different styles. Georg Dokoupil says that most of his inventions start from mistakes. In the last few decades, soap bubble paintings have been one of them. Since the artist has stuck to them the longest out of all the experimental and implemented techniques with which he has enriched and expanded the expressive possibilities of painting over the last forty years, he has turned them into a kind of personal, inherently evocative visual connection.

In classical iconography bubbles were a symbol of the ephemerality of the moment and the transience of life; the soap bubble is a material phenomenon on the verge of immateriality. It refers to the soul, the organic, fluid and continuous core from which the world emerges. Its shape is bounded from its surroundings by a thin membrane, an inseparable space. The inner space is a kind of matter, a living substance, defining its own place and position in the image, carrying an immanent energy. Among its basic features is the fixation in a weightless environment and timelessness. Shimmering translucent surfaces dazzle with metallic pigments, from a different angle they even reach opposite values – the light colour becomes dark and vice versa.

Dokoupil himself refers to bubble paintings as a mystery. It is impossible to predetermine what form the soap bubble will assume, what shade its skin will take. It is a process of controlled chance and the action of painting - where strange organic and dynamic structures are created with the addition of pigment. However, the author is still trying to innovate his technique. He mixes other materials into the paint, trying to create luminous illusions. In the paintings with soap bubbles, the artist has found the source of his light in the constant movement and unrepeatable situation.

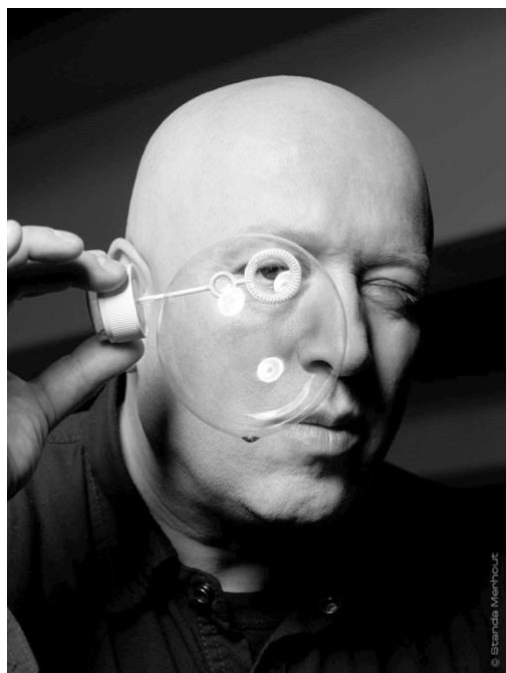
Leona, a long-time assistant of the artist who works with him in the studio, is behind the selection of this exhibition. *"Most of my assistants are women. They are easier to work with, more subtle and help me become more aware of my feminine side. Leona's point of view on what I create is peculiar. I try to understand it and sometimes I succeed,"* says Dokoupil. Leona adds that she always chooses with a feeling that is very much expressed by the English phrase *"to have a crush on somebody"*, like when choosing a lover/partner which is not just about attractiveness but also about how the person radiates to you.

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Jiří Georg Dokoupil is one of the most important contemporary Czech artists. He was one of the few to break into the world market. His work is characterised by experimental techniques such as painting with breast milk, smoke, a whip or soap bubbles. His works are represented in the world's leading museums including the Centre George Pompidou in Paris, the Neue Galerie in Berlin and The National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul. His image and artworks regularly appear on the front pages of international periodicals including The New York Times and The Times of London. A founding member of the *Mülheimer Freiheit* and *Junge Wilde* art movements - and historically a friend of notable figures including Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat - Dokoupil is one of the few Czech artists with a global outreach.

Jiří Georg Dokoupil (Krnov, *1954).

In 1968 his family moved to Cologne in Germany where he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts during the 70s. He went on to attend art studios at the University of Frankfurt in Germany and Cooper Union in New York, where he studied under the German conceptual artist **Hans Haacke**, who had a major influence on his early work. From 1979 Dokoupil was a prominent member of the German neo-expressionist group *Mülheimer Freiheit* which he founded with five other artists. Since his participation in the world-renowned **Documenta 7** exhibition in Kassel in 1982, he has become a world-class star. Since then, he has presented his work in international exhibitions, for example at the **Venice Biennale** (1987, 1993), exhibited at the gallery of the famous Leo Castelli, Ileana Sonnabend and David Zwirner in New York, and at art institutions such as the **Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris**, the **Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig (Mumok)** in Vienna, the **Museo Reina Sofia** in Madrid and the **Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)** in New York. His paintings are represented in the collections of major art institutions and in leading private collections worldwide. Between 1983 and 1984 Dokoupil was a visiting professor at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf, in 1989 at the Circulo de Bellas Artes in Madrid and at the Gesamtschule Kassel in 1994-1995. In 2012 he was awarded the Lovis-Corinth Prize. He currently lives and works in Madrid, Las Palmas or Rio de Janeiro and in his home city of Prague.



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