**PRESS RELEASE**

**2023 AT GASK – A YEAR BRIMMING WITH ART**

*In 2023, the Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region in Kutná Hora will present the art of four leading figures of the Czech art scene in the 20th and 21st centuries. On 1 April, the gallery opens its new season with an exhibition by Ostrava artist Jiří Surůvka titled* Architects of War*. This is followed by the Czech-Polish collaborative project* Uncensored*, which presents independent Polish art from the 1980s. In the second half of the year, GASK will show lesser-known works by František Kupka: Visitors to the exhibition titled* Bibliophile *can see original fine press editions made by this important artist. And finally, the year concludes with the exhibition* Stanislav Podhrázský and Friends*, belatedly marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of this leading representative of Czech post-war art.*

*Architects of War* presents the work of the Ostrava artist, performer, photographer, curator and university teacher Jiří Surůvka, who is also a co-founder of the ‘Předkapela Lozinski’ (Opening Band Lozinski) performance group, the ‘Přirození’ (The Members) art group and the ‘Návrat mistrů zábavy’ (Return of the Masters of Entertainment) cabaret. ‘The exhibition presents the distinctive, authentic and original character of this artist associated with Ostrava’s art scene. Surůvka is determined to fight against mediocrity and ordinariness, ideally through satire,’ says exhibition curator Veronika Marešová. Working with his typical sense for sarcasm and hyperbole, Surůvka creates works critiquing society. His main targets are people’s narrow-mindedness and limitations associated with ideologies and political propaganda. The gallery’s Printmaking Crossovers exhibition space will show not only Surůvka’s prints but also his paintings and object art. The exhibition will be open from 1 April to 17 September 2023.

*Uncensored* is a unique and comprehensive exhibition of independent Polish art from the 1980s. It shows the Polish equivalent of the era’s Czech unofficial art scene, which in Poland responded to the reality of Solidarity and the state of martial law proclaimed in 1981. Though deeply rooted in the historical context, this socially engaged art still feels current today. The Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region will be showing around a hundred works by forty artists who, out of protest against martial law, boycotted the cultural policies of the Communist functionaries of the Polish People’s Republic. ‘The exhibition was first shown last year at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw. Its presentation at GASK will be the only repeat showing of this important exhibition project,’ says curator Tadeusz Boruta. The exhibition’s curator for GASK is Richard Drury. Visitors can see *Uncensored* from 13 May to 17 September 2023.

The title of the exhibition *František Kupka – Bibliophile* is a reference not only to Kupka’s eponymous crypto-self-portrait from the turn of the century, but also to his focused interest in history, philosophy and the sciences, which influenced not only his progressive views of painting but also his informed approach to illustrating historical texts. The title ultimately also refers to the tradition of collecting fine press editions and the relationship between the artist and his friends and benefactors. These three themes form the basic pillars of the František Kupka exhibition, which presents seven sets of fine press editions from the GASK collections. Among others, the exhibition will show Kupka’s famous album of prints *Four Stories in Black and White* and his first fine press work, a 1905 Paris edition of *The Song of Songs*. These sets of prints will be complemented by originals of Kupka’s studies and sketches (drawings, gouaches and watercolours), as well as by examples of his correspondence with his friends and interesting facts and contextual information of an artistic and personal nature. The exhibition, which is curated by Vanda Skálová, runs from 7 October 2023 to January 2024.

Due to the Covid pandemic, in 2020 the 100th anniversary of the birth of one of the most distinctive Czech artists of the post-war generation, Stanislav Podhrázský, passed almost without notice. Podhrázský’s uniquely lyrical work, full of a certain kind of unease, brings together period tendencies such as Surrealism, abstract art and New Figuration while retaining a characteristic originality in its spontaneous expression. Podhrázský tended to work on the margins and preferred moving within a close circle of friends. He didn’t feel the need to show his works, and was banned from exhibiting after the 1968 occupation. However the quality of his work has withstood the test of time. The exhibition at GASK, *Stanislav Podhrázský and Friends*, presents a cross-section of his work within the context of the artistic environment in which they were created, accompanied by the art of his closest friends, including Miloslav Chlupáč, Zdeněk Palcr, Zbyněk Sekal and Mikuláš Medek. The exhibition, curated by Adriana Primusová, takes place from 21 October 2023 to 25 February 2024.

On 26 August, the Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region will host the fifth edition of the festival *A Day of Sound*, which brings experimental and independent music into the gallery under the curatorship of music journalist Pavel Klusák. The unique historical interiors of the Jesuit College will ring with highly original musical performances, culminating with an evening outdoor concert.

In addition to these five key events of the coming year, GASK will also show works by other representatives of the Czech art scene – Olaf Hanel, Vojtěch Hrubant and Vojtěch Trocha, Kateřina Štenclová, Jaroslav Prokeš and Petra Vlachynská, František Štorm, Markéta Varádiová, Rufina Bazlová and the LLEV design studio. GASK is also working with the Roman Catholic parish of Kutná Hora-Sedlec to organise the project *Santini*. The programme at GASK will include an exhibition of photographs of several of Jan Blažej Santini’s buildings taken by Vladimír Uher, a talk by Dr Richard Biegl about the Czech Santini scholar Mojmír Horyna and a photography workshop led by Ondřej Soukup. And, of course, the GASK programme wouldn’t be complete without the annual design markets SPRING-DESIGN-GASK on 22 April 2023 and ADVENT-DESIGN-GASK on 3 December 2023.

Let yourself be guided (and beguiled) by art in 2023 as well!

GASK – Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region is located in the former Jesuit College in Kutná Hora. It is an art institution focused on collecting and exhibiting art from the 20th and 21st centuries.