



Horizons of Modernism – Zdeněk Rossmann (1905–1984)

Moravian Gallery in Brno

Museum of Applied Arts, Husova 14, Brno

www.moravska-galerie.cz

Exhibition duration: 15/5/2015–13/9/2015

Exhibition opening date: 14/5/2015 at 6 p.m.

Location: Museum of Applied Arts, Husova 14, Brno

Exhibition curators: Marta Sylvestrová and Jindřich Toman

Collaborators: Karel Císař, Jitka Ciampi Matulová, Helena Maňasová Hradská, Ľubomír

Longauer, Sonia de Puineuf, Markéta Svobodová and David Valůšek

The monographic exhibition of Zdeněk Rossmann (1905–1984), an important proponent of Czech modernist architecture, stage and exhibition design and graphic design, in the Museum of Applied Arts of the Moravian Gallery in Brno will display works from the interwar period and a selection from his later work after 1945.

Regardless of his international renown Rossmann is currently known mainly to art historians specializing in graphic design. The present exhibition aims to fill in this gap in our knowledge with examples of a wide selection of works which document his outstanding stature in the Czech interwar avant-garde as well as his important position in the international network of modernist graphic designers. The exhibition project presents Rossmann's most remarkable works in the areas of stage design, architecture, typography, poster and book design, and provide the visitor with an erudite insight into the surprisingly broad spectrum of media that this modernist designer worked in.

“With a retrospective of the work of Zdeněk Rossmann the Moravian Gallery continues its endeavour to map out and display to the public important figures of modernism who although working in an environment outside the capital had a strong influence on forming overall social awareness in the inter-war Czechoslovak Republic. The exhibition is not merely the proverbial debt settlement. Although a great part of the life of Zdeněk Rossmann took place in out-of-Prague centres, his work had a wider validity and response in the international network of modernist design. In his work he managed to connect with burning social issues, such as women's emancipation, and to communicate them to the viewer. Through easily understandable and image-wise very attractive printed matter and various promotional material he formulated the fundamental questions which stood at the threshold of modern society. Rossmann was a figure who opened up a number of horizons and with lightness moved across media – between typography, book design, poster design, advertisements, stage design and exhibition architecture,” says Jan Press, director of the Moravian Gallery in Brno.

The exhibition authors Marta Sylvestrová and Jindřich Toman state: “Rossmann's activities in Brno, Zlín and Bratislava testify to the profound changes in approach to visuality, which expands in this period from surface to space. The project entitled *Horizons of Modernism* ranks alongside other exhibitions of the

creative forces behind modern visuality such as Ladislav Sutnar (Prague 2004), Jan Vaněk (Brno 2008), Karel Teige (Prague 2009) or in the context of broadly approached retrospectives – such as the exhibition of modern typography On–Type, Bauhaus Archiv (Berlin 2013), or Changing the Field of View – Modern Printing and the Avant-garde (Museum of Visual Art, Lodž 2014).”

The exhibition authors are Marta Sylvestrová, curator of the Graphic Design Collection of the Moravian Gallery in Brno, and Jindřich Toman, Professor of Slav Studies and Literature at Michigan University, USA.

The exhibition is accompanied by a collective monograph with the same name which brings together the results of the many years of work by researchers from the Czech Republic, France, Slovakia and the United States, alongside J. Toman and M. Sylvestrová, in particular Karel Císař (Prague), Jitka Ciampi Matulová (Brno), Sonia de Puineuf (Brest), Helena Maňasová Hradská (Brno), Lubomír Longauer (Bratislava), Markéta Svobodová (Prague) and David Valůšek (Zlín).

Accompanying programme:

Guided tours with the exhibition curator and author Marta Sylvestrová
Wednesday 10/6/2015 at 5 p.m., second guided tour in September 2015

Lecture: The Dramatic Fate of Zdeněk Rossmann

Tuesday 2/6/2015, 10 a.m.

Marta Sylvestrová and Vlastislav Janík, historian

Zdeněk Rossmann, a prominent figure of Czech modernist architecture and graphic design, was arrested by the Brno Gestapo on 13/4/1943 and from the end of the year held prisoner in the Mauthausen concentration camp. He joined the illegal resistance movement there and survived to see the end of the war. We will learn about his fate and his role in the uprising of the prisoners, as well as the fate of his wife Marie, a photographer imprisoned in the Ravensbrück and Neubrandenburg concentration camps. At the end of the war she undertook an exasperating almost two-month-long journey back home, keeping a detailed diary of its progress.

The event is held within the project The Year of Reconciliation with support from the City of Brno.

Admission fee 50/30 CZK students, seniors, Friends of the Moravian Gallery

RING interactive zone related to the exhibition in the courtyard of the Museum of Applied Arts. Visitors will be provided with a number of hula-hoops (rings 70 cm in diameter), which they will be able to employ in constructing their own flat and spatial installations and/or physical exercises (in the 1920s Zdeněk Rossmann was a member of the University Sports Club in Brno).

Contact for Media

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