**Paintings by Zdenek Sykora and a unique computer from the 60s – computer.art begins in the Moravian Gallery**

**Press Release, 19th April 2018**

**In the 1960s, Brno was highly progressive in the art sphere – Jiri Valoch held a breakthrough exhibition here that was dedicated to a barely-known area, that being computer art. By presenting the 1968:computer.art exhibition, Moravian Gallery wishes to point out that Czechoslovak artists were able to respond with speed and acumen to the new directions in foreign art even when living in the socialistic environment. Valoch’s exhibition is going to be commemorated in the Prazak Palace starting from 20th April, and it is going to be augmented by structural paintings by world-renowned artist Zdenek Sykora as well as the legendary   
LGP-30 computer.**

**1968.computer.art**

**Curators: Ondrej Chrobak, Pavel Kappel, Jana Pisarikova**

**Architect for the exhibition: Tomas Svoboda**

**Graphical design: Lukas Kijonka**

**Prazak Palace, Husova 18  
20th April to 5th August, 2018**

**Preview: 19th April from 6pm, preview for children from 4pm**

In 1968, one of the first world presentations of computer graphics was held in the House of Arts, and Brno thus surpassed the key exhibitions in Zagreb or in London. The exhibition was organized by Jiri Valoch, a key persona who connected Czech and foreign arts and whose collector’s passion is being showcased by a permanent exhibition in the Prazak Palace. It is the Prazak Palace on Husova Street where an exhibition will be opened on 19th April that will commemorate Valoch’s exceptional project and that will focus on the historical reflection of the phenomenon of emergence of computer art in the 1960s. *“Valoch’s exhibition was like a revelation. Computer-generated art became a sort of a new utopian vision for some artists, chilling them and fascinating them at the same time. This phenomenon was all but forgotten after the year 1968. Moravian Gallery is now attempting not only to commemorate this Valoch’s crucial exhibition project, but also to establish it in the field of art history,”* says Jana Pisarikova, co-curator of the exhibition.

For the first time since 1986, paintings by Zdenek Sykora are to be presented in Brno. Sykora used computer processing prior to commencing the painting itself and also applied his combinatoric approach for architectural projects (the air vents at the Letensky Tunnel are a well-known example). Pavel Kappel, an expert on constructive art of the 1960s, comments on Sykora’s process of artistic creation: *“Zdenek Sykora is one of the most remarkable characters of Czech postwar art, not least for his extremely early introduction of the computer in the initial stages of the artistic process. His 1960s structures are based in an original combinatoric process and soon gained renown even in the world art scene. They were preceded by an extensive development of painting that took almost two decades, and by thorough theoretical reflection on the development of modern art. This is why he never considered himself to be a computer artist despite using some new methods in his work. On the contrary, he always stressed that he was focusing on traditional painter’s issues in his art.”*

The exhibition in the Prazak Palace will be split into two parts. The first part commemorates the aforementioned Valoch’s exhibition from 1968 which also presents artistic pieces by foreign artists and scientists who started making art primarily based on their technical skills – e.g. Frieder Nake, a German mathematician and a pioneer of computer art who will participate in the opening of the exhibition in person. Other authors include Georg Nees, Charles Csuri, Leslie Mezei, Michael Noll, Lubomir Sochor and Max Bense. The second part is dedicated to the works of Zdenek Sykora; a special treat here is the model of the LGP-30 computer that was used by Sykora’s collaborator Jaroslav Blazek to perform calculations of Sykora’s tasks. This is the first ever computer that was present in the city of Brno. The socio-political context and the highlight of the courage of Czechoslovak artists who promoted a new direction in the 1960s that was unacceptable for the ruling class back then are an indispensable part of the exhibition.

**We would like to thank the Technical Museum in Brno for loaning the exhibit.**

**ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME FOR THE EXHIBITION PREVIEW**

**3.30pm MINI PANEL DISCUSSION – Café Praha**

This presentation shows the works of Frieder Nake who was also represented in 1968 in Valoch’s exhibition. He will be joined by Lenka Sykorova, widow of the painter Zdenek Sykora, who is to represent in a symbolic manner the second part of the exhibition dedicated to Sykora’s art. Frieder Nake will discuss computer-generated art with Pavel Kappel, curator of the exhibition, and Margit Rosen, a German art theoretician.

**7.30pm AFTERPARTY – Courtyard of Prazak Palace, Café Praha**

DJ´s Josef Sedlon and Martin Kappel

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