

Two Important Czech Institutions, 1938–1948

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In the light of new information gained from archival sources and contemporaneous documents it is becoming ever clearer that the years of the Protectorate were far from a time of cultural vacuum. Credit for this is due to, among other things, the endeavours of many people to maintain at least a partial continuity in public services and to achieve as much as possible within the framework of the rules set by the Nazi occupiers. By looking at the inner workings of two important Czech institutions, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze) and the Mánes Association of Fine Artists (SVU Mánes), we will be able to grasp the essence of those mechanisms that together created the culture of the Protectorate and which hitherto have only been drily described from the outside. Both institutions selected here followed similar aims in their relation to the public, although they used different means to fulfil them. The same is true in their methods of dealing with pressure coming from the occupying power, for here too we find a range of similarities and differences, revealing the true nature of Protectorate realities.

The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

The attempt to find a *modus vivendi* amidst the ever-intensifying demands from the occupying power led the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague to some necessary concessions and compromises. While these may have led to the penetration of Nazi propaganda into the museum's exhibition halls, at the same time they enabled its employees to continue in their professional field, albeit in difficult conditions, and to build on the results of this activity after the war. A number of these employees saw their activity as a form of protest against the occupying power.² Of course this did not remain without response and on 22 August 1944 the Nazis ordered a stop to the activity of museums.³ Several museum activities continued even in spite of this ban. After the war these activities came to fruition over a hopeful two-year period, following which this arduously-defended continuity was violently interrupted by the Communist takeover.

During the war the main priority was the protection of collections, whether from mechanical damage during bombings and military operations, or from the greed of the new administrators.⁴ In September 1938 the employees had already packed up all their exhibition objects and hidden them in the building's cellar, and about a year later they concealed the rarest exhibits from their glass collection. In 1941 several groups of German historians of art from across the Reich came to Prague to look for bases for their future activity, but mainly to divide up the museum collections and prepare their transportation to Germany. The collection most threatened at the Museum of Decorative Arts was the city's pride: the Lanna glass collection. All the participating groups showed an interest in it, and at Karlštejn Castle, where it was stored from 1942 onwards, the collection was supervised by the German leadership of the Heritage Institute



Fig. 21.1. Part of the Czechoslovak exposition for the New York World's Fair, with a model of the pavilion, as displayed at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (1939). Black-and-white photograph. Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague.

(Památkový ústav). In 1942 the necessity arose of building shelters for museum objects both in and outside Prague.⁵ The leadership of the museum left nothing to chance and up until May 1945 relocated the most valuable collections to places about which only a select few people knew.

The museum's scholarly work continued very quietly through the whole of the Protectorate era, resulting in large retrospective exhibitions dedicated to significant Czech and European figures—Jan Koula (1939), Josef Mánes (1940), Jan Štenc (1941), and Zdeněk Ryrk (1941)—as well as thematic exhibitions of miniature portraits and of old Italian book art (both 1941). Long preparations were also demanded by the extensive exhibition *1000 Years of Czech Photography* (*Sto let české fotografie*, 1939), and in 1940 all the museum's halls and even its garden were filled with the exposition *Towards a New Architecture* (*Za novou architekturu*), which mapped out the birth and development of modern architecture and urbanism in the Czech lands.⁶ Exhibitions like *Antonín Dvořák, His Effects and Works* (*Antonín Dvořák, památky a dílo*) or the *Competition for a Monument to Božena Němcová* in Prague (both 1940) were intended to raise national self-esteem. There was, likewise, a political subtext to the exhibition *1000 Years of Norwegian Art* (*1000 let norského výtvarného díla*, 1938), which expressed the support of the Norwegian people for the Czech lands after the Munich Agreement, and in March 1939 the display of that part of the Czechoslovak exposition for the 1939 World's Fair in New York that never reached its intended place, due to intervention by the German occupiers, offered a memento of political events (Fig. 21.1).⁷

The museum also continued its collaboration with the School of Decorative Arts (Uměleckoprůmyslová škola) and in 1941 it organised an exhibition of work by the school's students in all disciplines from the past three years, an event that exceeded the normal scope of end-of-year art shows with its ingenious installation extending over three large exhibition halls (Fig. 21.2). Yet the press of the time was able to turn even this exhibition to propagandistic use: 'This is a revolutionary exhibition, because today's artists are finally, finally attaining reason and are attempting to create things that are comprehensible to the eyes and heart, truly beautiful things—not those insane realisations of wild avant-garde dreams in which a woman's body looked more like a crumpled haystack that is due to give birth'.⁸ The museum connected back to pre-war discussions about new forms of living with its exhibition *Prague Crafts in the Service of New Living* (*Pražská řemesla ve službách nového bydlení*, 1940), which sought to offer a handmade alternative

Fig. 21.1. Part of the Czechoslovak exposition for the New York World's Fair, as displayed at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (1939). Black-and-white photograph. Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague.



to factory-produced, standardised furnishings. This exposition, very interesting from an installation perspective, aroused varying reactions in the press of the time, from enthusiastic acceptance to judgements about how the manufacturers 'are thinking far more about the tastes and satisfactions of individuals than about the needs of people in general', and it made both the professional and lay public engage once again with the question of modes of living.⁹

An invaluable role was played by the museum's public library, which functioned throughout the whole occupation era; in 1944 it attained a record number of visits since the library was founded in 1885, with almost forty thousand readers that year.¹⁰ Visitors were not even discouraged by German inspections at the entrance or the threat of being reported to the Department of Labour, for during the Protectorate the library was such a necessary source of the information, difficult to access elsewhere, that artists and theoreticians were seeking after. Most of the then-students at professional art schools, including the School of Decorative Arts, spent a lot of time here, as did artists of the older generation. Surprising though it is, foreign periodicals and publications about such topics as Italian avant-garde art were available here; of course these were among the materials most in demand.¹¹ The most frequently-borrowed Czech journals were *Volné směry* (*Free Directions*) and the review of the Artists' Forum (*Umělecká beseda*), *Život* (*Life*).¹² Karel Herain alluded to the library's lending practices in his statement that 'banned literature, particularly English and French, was regularly lent out here to trustworthy people'.¹³

The key question is the extent of interference by the Nazi authorities into the museum's activities. The year 1940 saw the appointment of the German curator Karl Maria Swoboda,¹⁴ who for 'cultural-political reasons' would not allow the opening of a display room for a model lighting system, designed by the architect Zdeněk Pešánek in collaboration with the Municipal Power Stations of the City of Prague.¹⁵ It could be assumed that pressures greatly intensified at the time of Reinhard Heydrich's assassination, but it was actually August 1943 that made a mark on the institution's affairs, when the role of museum curator was taken by Sigfried Asche (until September 1944), the new director of the City of Prague Museum (*Muzeum hlavního města Prahy*).¹⁶ What also made this year a negative turning point was the fact that the Central Union of Industry, governed by the Germans from the Czech border, then designated museums as purely peacetime institutions, whose interests had to be sacrificed for the benefit of wartime needs. The attempt to reduce and control exhibition activity was thus propagandistically presented

as the protection of collections, which should wait out the war as safely as possible packed up in boxes. Independent areas of public life were now really surrendered to wartime objectives, and so the Museum of Decorative Arts became, from November 1943 onwards, the seat of the German management of the former Czechoslovak military factory Letov, incorporated into the Junkers firm as Flugzeugwerke Letov A.G., which continually required a larger and larger space.

A look at the balance of Protectorate-era exhibition activities at the museum shows that exhibitions oriented to German propaganda were, up until 1944, in the minority.¹⁷ Then, the new curator Sigfried Asche began to govern the museum's activities by directive and to give them a purely German character; as the museum's director Karel Herain accurately remarked, in this way 'were the real intentions of the Reich within its so-called protectorate best documented'.¹⁸ Writing about three exhibitions of contemporary German handicrafts, which took place first in the borrowed premises of the Municipal House and in the last case at the so-called Braun's Shop (Braunův krám) on Na Příkopě 12, the Protectorate press spoke in superlatives, even though the exhibits were really only of average quality.¹⁹

The outcome of one initiative, in which the museum partook alongside the Institute for Work Science (Institut für Arbeitswissenschaft) during autumn 1942, can be described as an act of inconspicuous sabotage. For the Ministry of Economy and Work these institutions were supposed to design an effective recruitment poster that would increase participation by Protectorate members in work for the Reich. The poster was supposed to be symbolic, but also generally comprehensible.²⁰ 17 artists in total were invited to participate, among them Cyril Bouda, František Muzika, Josef Kaplický, Jaroslav Šváb, Jiří Trnka, and Karel Svolinský. The reward for each design was set at fifteen hundred koruna, and the author of the winning design was supposed to receive five thousand koruna. Considering the tense character of the period after the assassination of Heydrich, one can assume that it would have been very risky to refuse to participate. Given that the design that 'won', by painter Alexander Vladimír Hrska, had to have both its colour scheme and, more crucially, its slogan changed, and given that the artist himself claimed to be ill and incapable of further work on the design for so long that, to avoid complications, museum director Karel Herain finally had to come and speak to him personally, it is clear that the organisers did not receive any high-quality designs.²¹ A similar initiative, this time for the recruitment of women, took place about a year later. Judging by the opinion expressed by senior councillor Heinrich Rieber in a letter to Karel Herain—that 'the majority of the designs submitted do not correspond to the given aims either artistically or intellectually; I hope that the unsuccessful result of this latest prize contest will not hinder our further collaboration'—the boycotting of this Reich initiative was even more effective.²²

The Reich and Protectorate authorities used the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague for various kinds of propagandistic exhibitions. Besides the presentation of works by artists supported by the Nazi regime, such as the neo-Classical sculptor Fritz Klimsch or the painter Ernst Vollbehre, works documenting the wartime successes of the Reich, there was an intensive promotion of tourism and of hospitality and spa culture.²³ In Germany (and, following the Reich's model, in the Protectorate too) these themes were politicised: certainly, according to the Führer, good health should belong to all, not only to the chosen few. In May 1941 the Central Union for [Foreign] Tourism launched the exhibition *Photography for the Promotion of Tourism (Fotografie ve službách propagace cestovního ruchu)*, and on 21 March 1941 it launched *Recreation and Hospitality in Bohemia and Moravia (Erholung und Gastlichkeit in Böhmen und Mähren)*, an exhibition that toured the Protectorate's cities. Within the framework of the New Europe these lands were to be transformed into a recreation centre, and so the priority, following the model of the Reich, was to develop spa culture and increase sports grounds; it was necessary to 'apply all efforts in order that everything within the economy of tourism be prepared for responsible tasks in the future'.²⁴ In the light of this covert propaganda, a fervent inaugural statement by the author of the travelling ethnographic exhibition *Germany in Folk Costumes (Deutschland in Tracht)*, the German Marie Kerkmann, did not seem at all surprising. In it she referred to the unbelievable social and cultural advancement of the German people during the new regime, to the perfect organisation

of domestic industry and to the fact that countryside-dwellers in the Reich now lived, in their own words, in a virtual paradise.²⁵ The display of 150 costumes from all territories of the Greater German Reich recalled the National Socialists' esteem for folk traditions.

After the end of the war one of the museum's priorities was the renewal of disrupted connections with other countries, achieved first through the supply of specialised foreign periodicals and publications back into libraries, and later through the establishment of direct contacts with museum institutions in, particularly, the USA, Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, and France. In 1949 the museum became a member of a British museum organisation.²⁶ Through its choice of theme for its first post-war exhibition, the museum symbolically returned to the war period and its horrors, evoking the memory of painter Vojtěch Pressig, a member of the resistance organisation 'Into the Fight' ('V boj'), who had died in the Dachau concentration camp.²⁷ About a year later, on 9 February 1946, the collections were again made available in a brand new installation, while at the same time the museum set out its aims for its first two-year season: 'There will be a particular concern with preparing for a higher level of mass living, then with implementing the principles and preconditions of quality in production, and finally with mass education of an economic-cultural persuasion'.²⁸ The concrete fulfilment of these ideas was meant to take the form of a permanent exposition of samples of high-quality Czechoslovak and international production.²⁹ It is clear that, alongside its attempt at retaining continuity with the past and contacts with other countries, this institution was intending to focus more on actively helping to shape the form of contemporary applied art.³⁰ However, by the spring of 1948, social developments already began to be reflected in organisational changes at the museum. From 25 February onwards, leadership of the institution was entrusted to the art historian Emanuel Poche, who had worked at the museum since 1933. After his appointment Poche strove to weaken the influence of the Chamber of Commerce and Trade on the working of the museum and authored a proposal for the expansion of the museum's activities. He 'enhanced' the established programming with the exhibition of a representative selection of various kinds of artistic production, graphics, painting, and sculpture. Through the restoration of the unity of art and through steering away 'from the exclusivity of abstract and egocentric creations to a fruitful social function', the museum was supposed to contribute to the construction of the new Socialist Czechoslovakia.³¹ These objectives attest well to a change in the thinking about this institution; indeed things were now only one step away from the nationalisation of the museum and the opening of a new chapter in its history.³²

The Mánes Association of Fine Artists

The political events connected with the Munich crisis also strongly impacted on the functioning of the Mánes Association of Fine Artists. If, during the first half of 1938, its exhibition programme had unfolded as in earlier years, when its priorities had included the confrontation of Czech art with foreign art, in the second half of that year substantial changes took place. Mánes still attempted to arrange an exhibition of its members in New York, and an exhibition of Czech modern art in London, but these were politely declined, no doubt in view of political tensions in Europe.³³ Also unrealised was an exhibition of 'Banned Art', which was supposed to come over from London and which had arisen in reaction to the *Degenerate Art* (*Entartete Kunst*) exhibition in Munich. Mánes had already shown an interest in it at the end of 1937. Negotiations failed over exhibitions of Swedish art, contemporary Italian art, and so on. During the course of the Protectorate there was not a single international exhibition organised by Mánes. The impossibility of making contact with other countries was compensated for after the war, when a continuous series of international exhibitions took place: in 1946 of contemporary French and Spanish (Republican) art; in 1947 of Yugoslav and Dutch art; in 1948 of English and Spanish art; in 1949 of Austrian and Belgian art (Fig. 21.3).

In 1938 the leadership of Mánes resolved the moral dilemma of whether to hold agreed-upon exhibitions of German and Hungarian art when both Germany and Hungary had shared in the annexation of Czechoslovakia's border regions. Finally it was decided that the exhibitions be cancelled and a letter bearing the same message was sent to both the Prague Secession

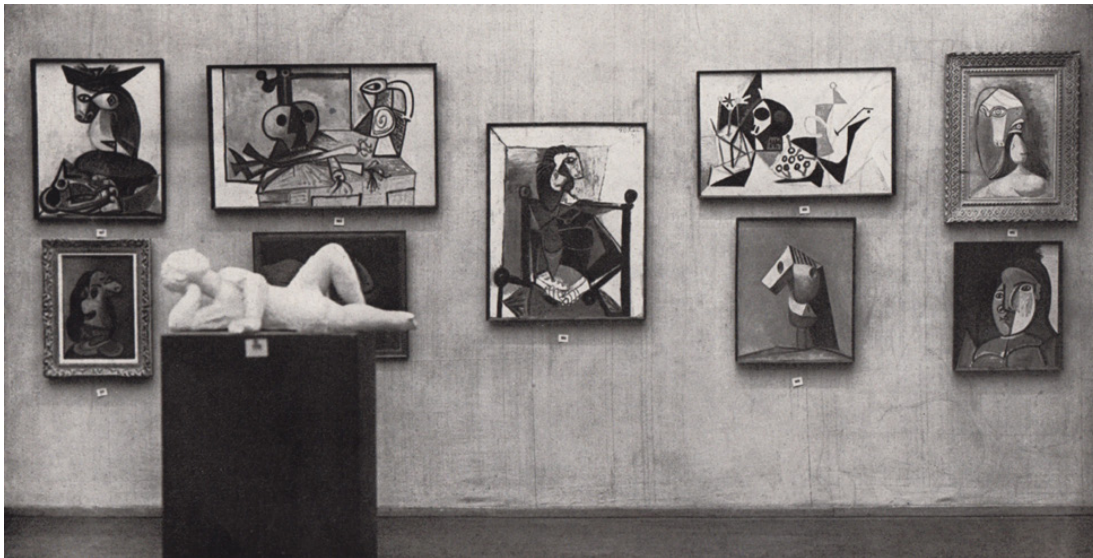


Fig. 21.3. *The Art of Republican Spain (Umění republikánské Španělska)* exhibition (1946). Black-and-white photograph. Reproduced from *Volné směry* 39 (1947): p. 243.

(Prager Sezession) and the artistic division of the Hungarian Society for the Sciences, Literature and Art: ‘Dear Sirs, we must regretfully inform you that the Mánes committee decided at its last meeting that, due to the current situation, we cannot hold your exhibition as we had discussed. You must yourselves recognise, dear sirs, that holding it at Mánes today would not be possible, that this would not be popular. Please accept, dear sirs, this expression of our sincere respect’.³⁴

The following year Mánes had to resist pressure from the nationalist-fascist journal *Vlajka* (*Flag*), which wanted to use its exhibition spaces for the showing of the exhibition *The Jew—the Enemy of Humanity* (*Žid—nepřítel lidstva*). But for the date requested an exhibition of work by members of the Aleš Association of Fine Artists from Brno (SVUM Aleš) had already been prepared. Thanks to the fact that Aleš insisted on holding its exhibition, the anti-Semitic exhibition did not take place at Mánes. *Vlajka* was also evidently dissuaded by the sum it would have to pay to SVUM Aleš to compensate for the lost profits incurred by the cancelled exhibition. The exposition *The Jew—the Enemy of Humanity* was ultimately staged at the Pictura gallery.³⁵ Had it been held at Mánes, this would have seriously harmed the society’s good name. Even after the war the society sought to maintain its clean record. That is why on 23 May 1945 it set up a committee of inquiry composed of Sláva Tonderová, Václav Žalud, Vojtěch Tittelbach, Josef Grus, and Arnošt Paderlík, which, ‘in regard to the purification of national life’, demanded that Mánes’s members sign a virtually unheard-of declaration of moral impeccability. The committee further demanded of members that, by the end of eight days, they should make known the names of anybody from among the society’s members, its employees or based outside it ‘who had, through their dealings, potentially damaged [its] good reputation’.³⁶

From the spring of 1939, the Mánes Association of Fine Artists worked to establish a school for drawing and painting. After this had opened as the Mánes School in the autumn of 1940, its name was changed at the request of the Cultural Council of National Partnership (Kulturní rada národního souručenství) to the Art School of Painter Vladimír Sychra (Umělecká škola malíře Vladimíra Sychry). The council was against this educational institution making use of the society’s name. The existence of the school was defended in the Cultural Council with the claim that this would be a case of private activity by several of the society’s members, and that in its purposes it would be no substitute to any of the other fine art schools. Nevertheless it was perceived as an alternative to the closed universities. The participants in its courses were normally students, laypeople interested in art, or working people from various fields. Besides practical skills (taught by Vladimír Sychra, Vojtěch Tittelbach, František Janoušek, Josef Liesler, Richard Wiesner) part of the tuition consisted of theoretical lectures on aesthetics and anatomy (provided by Václav Nebeský, Jaromír Pečírka, Josef Zrzavý). In 1944 the school’s first graduate show took place. A laudatory report about this exhibition from the pen of a cultural officer at the Ministry of Education and Popular Enlightenment, intended for Emanuel Moravec, is proof

of the chaotic state of artistic criteria that reigned during the time of the Protectorate: 'The exhibition is a pleasing proof of the honourable and serious work being done at the School and of the, generally speaking, good supervision (Bauch, Liesler, Tittelbach, Ježek)'.³⁷ For in this same period, at the very ministry just mentioned, there existed a 'List of Czech Degenerate Painters' on which both Tittelbach and Ježek appeared. After the war two more exhibitions by the students of the Mánes School took place, in the years 1945 and 1947. Many of them later studied at the Academy of Fine Arts or at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. The school's graduates, besides perhaps Karel Teissig, had no further significant presence in the development of Czech art.

The social situation during the Second Republic and then the Protectorate compelled the Mánes Association of Fine Artists to re-evaluate the conceptions it had hitherto held. Within the given situation it was understandable that the group abandoned any intention of organising an exhibition of artistic 'isms' in 1938 and that it preferred to demonstrate its patriotic feelings, with a range of exhibitions that showed the society in a 'better' light, as a grouping of artists who respected national traditions and were aware of their duty towards the nation at this moment. At the same time they were supposed to raise the population's spirits in a time of national tragedy and an uncertain future. Shortly before the Munich crisis, from May until August, Mánes organised the exhibition *Figures from Czech History (Postavy českých dějin)*, recalling famous Czech historical personalities. In the autumn of the same year Mánes prepared an exhibition called *Czech Tradition in the 19th Century (Česká tradice v 19. století)*, consisting of works by artists of the National Revival (Fig. 21.4). This was a plea for the organising group to be seen as the bearer of traditional artistic values, and at the same time it was supposed to lead 'to critical investigation and to further treatment of artistic issues, one of which is the issue of 'Czechness' [českost] and of domestic tradition'.³⁸ The exhibition *The Face of Prague (Tvář Prahy, 1939)* was also in a nationalist spirit, concentrating on Prague motifs in Czech art. Exhibitions of this kind disappeared from the Mánes Association of Fine Artists' programme after the accession of Acting Reich Protector Reinhard Heydrich, who put an end to a former two-track approach in politics and culture that had revolved around the promise of Czech 'autonomy' during the establishment of the Protectorate. This is why, for the remainder of the war, Mánes's further activities focussed predominantly on retrospective, group, or individual exhibitions of its members' work. However, because the work of many of them could not, for ideological reasons, be presented during the occupation, a series of exhibitions occurred after the war that attempted to partially redress these wrongs. For that reason Mánes's first post-war exhibition was an exhibition of drawings and paintings from 1938 to 1939 by an important member, Emil Filla, who had survived being imprisoned in Buchenwald concentration camp. Exhibitions followed of artists who had died in the concentration camps (in 1945 there were exhibitions by Jiří Jelínek, Bedřich Fritta, and Jaroslav Král), and ultimately of those who died during the occupation (there was an exhibition of Jindřich Štyrský in 1946, and exhibitions of Alois Wachsman and František Janoušek about a year later).

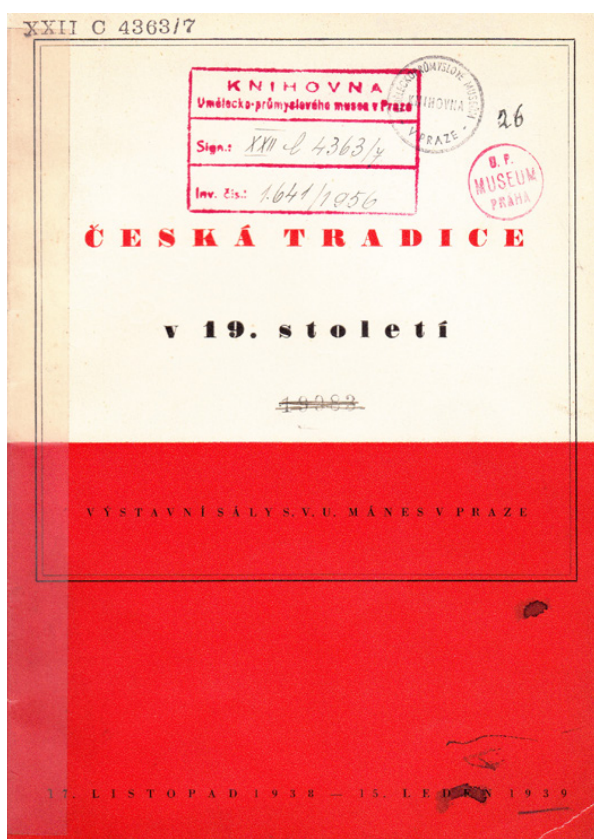


Fig. 21.4. Cover of the exhibition catalogue for *Czech Tradition in the 19th Century (Česká tradice v 19. století)*, held at the Mánes Gallery, Prague, November 17–January 15, 1939.



Fig. 21.5. *Trust Art* (*Důvěřujte umění*) exhibition (1940). Photograph. Reproduced from *Pestrý týden* 15/6 (1 February 1940): p. 3.

When looking at the exhibition activity by the Mánes Association of Fine Artists during the war period, we are drawn to how the society tried to find themes which would, in the eyes of the censors and the public, justify the presence of modern art. The 1941 exhibition *The Face of the Czech Landscape* (*Tvář české krajiny*) belongs to this category, fusing as it did a nationalistically-coloured theme with the members' modernist conception of landscape painting. The society chose a different approach when, at the turn of 1939 and 1940, it organised the exhibition *Trust Art: Examples from the Past—The Work of the Members of Mánes from the Last Two Years* (*Důvěřujte umění. Příklady z minulosti—Práce členů Mánesa za dva roky*) (Fig. 21.5). Works by painters and sculptors from the society here appeared side by side with the work of Josef Mánes, Karel Purkyně, and Mikoláš Aleš. This strange combination of contemporary art with classic Czech works of the nineteenth century was explained by Jaromír Pečírka in his introductory address at the vernissage. According to him, the advanced work of several artists, today considered as essential representatives of national tradition, were in their time vehemently rejected. The distrust of these artists' contemporaries 'towards new art prevented the formation of a beneficial and natural tradition'.³⁹ Because of this, according to Pečírka, Czech artists had had to go and train their skills abroad. Thus, in his conclusion, he addressed those present: 'In one sentence: let's not be scared to trust art'.⁴⁰

From 1939 Mánes lent exhibition spaces to the Cultural Council of National Partnership, which used them to hold the large official exhibitions *The Nation to its Artists* (*Národ svým výtvarným umělcům*, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942) and *Artists to their Nation* (*Umělci národu*, 1943). These were meant to have an educational character, and a similar aim was also pursued by two Mánes exhibitions in 1940: *From the Sketch to the Sculpture* (*Od náčrtku k soše*) and *The Picture and the Sculpture in the Apartment* (*Obráz a socha v bytě*). The first illuminated the process of the emergence of the artwork, while the second gave instruction on how and with what to decorate one's living space. Mánes met the needs of those interested in buying works of art by holding relatively-frequent selling exhibitions of affordable drawings, graphic art, and small sculptures.

The question of financial security for artists and the problem of artistic education for the population could be solved, according to the thinking at the time, through state artistic commissions,

which would bring works of art into the public space: 'That is why we must exclaim: more large public sculptures, more large monumental frescoes, mosaics, pictures composed from glass; ... give important projects to sculptors and painters!'⁴¹ In response to contemporary thoughts on this issue, Mánes organised an exhibition in 1940 called *Monumental Art (Monumentální umění)*. A continuation of such thinking was the 1947 exposition, organised by Mánes, *The Monumental Task of Contemporary Artistic Design (Monumentální úkol současného výtvarnictví)*. Yet during the second half of the 1940s the conviction was strengthened among Communist-inclined artists and critics that it was not possible to combine the artistic individualism of the avant-gardes with the needs of Socialism.⁴² Their expectation was that, under the influence of social changes invoked by a 'unitary will' and the 'common interests of society', fundamental changes would also occur in art. As the future would show, these did occur, though of course under the pressure of the official institutions of the Communist regime, and paradoxically even members of the Mánes Association of Fine Artists would take part in that process. Nevertheless, this artistic association, just like all other artists' societies, was dissolved in 1956.⁴³

Translated by Jonathan Owen

1 Lucie Zdražilová, Milan Pech, 'Dvě významné instituce 1938–1948', in Vojtěch Lahoda, Lenka Bydžovská, Hana Rousová, Anna Pravdová, Milan Pech, Lucie Zdražilová, *Konec avantgardy: Od mnichovské dohody ke komunistickému převratu (České umění 1938–1948)* (Řevnice: Arbor vitae, 2011), pp. 83–98.

2 The Prague Chamber of Commerce and Trade (OŽK) founded the Museum of Decorative Arts in 1885 and until 1948 administered it and shared in decision-making about museum operations. During the Protectorate, the Third Reich's offices made a number of interventions into the functioning of chambers of trade and commerce. They attempted to centralise them through the establishment of compulsory organisations (The Central Union of Industry for Bohemia and Moravia and The Central Union of Commerce). The OŽK continued to subsidise 'its' museum, but the German authorities had a substantial influence on decision-making.

3 Karel Herain, 'Obrázek jeden z mnohých', *Umění 17/3–4* (1945): p. 126.

4 To give an idea of the institution's size we should add that by the end of 1944 the museum had over twenty-nine thousand items in its collections and almost forty thousand volumes in its specialised public library.

5 In Prague, collections were stored in anti-aircraft shelters in the building of the Živnostenská Bank, in a restaurant building in Slavonic Island, and in the monastery of Saint Markéta in Břevnov. Karlštejn Castle and the chateaux of Štířín, Lázně Bělohrad, Miletín, Milíčeves, Konárovice, Kopidlno, and Mníšek pod Brdy served as shelters outside of Prague.

6 Lucie Zdražilová, 'Za novou architekturu', *Prostor Zlín*, 14/3 (2007): pp. 40–47.

7 Immediately after the establishment of the Protectorate the German occupation authorities tried (unsuccessfully) to block participation by the now non-existent Czechoslovakia at the World's Fair. While the Czechoslovak pavilion was opened in May 1939, this was only because of the efforts of emigrants, especially Ladislav Sutnar. They were only able to use those exhibits that they had been able to export out of the country in time.

8 Kuzma, 'Mladí, kteří se jistě dostanou vpřed', *Pražský ilustrovaný zpravodaj 27* (3 July 1941): pp. 12–13.

9 Soňa Kozelková, 'Bydlení na cestě zpátky?', *Lidové noviny 48/14/4* (1940): p. 4. The exhibition had no shortage of positive responses. Compare: *Věčerní České slovo 22/72* (27 March 1940): p. 3.

10 The number of visits in this period never fell below thirty-four thousand readers a year (by comparison, during the late 1920s and early 1930s the number of visitors was fifteen to twenty thousand a year). One contributing factor to this was evidently the fact that the occupying powers interfered less in the activity of specialist libraries than in that of, for instance, the National and University Library, which was from 1941 (until 1945) renamed the Country (*Zemská*) and University Library. We thank Lukáš Babka for this information.

11 Overwhelmingly predominant were periodicals from Germany and Italy; also represented were magazines from Denmark, Finland, Holland, Hungary, Norway, Slovakia, the former Yugoslavia, Sweden, Switzerland, Greece, and the USA. See: 'Reports about Activities in 1941', Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections (uncategorised). About a year later Greece and the USA were missing from the museum summaries, and from 1943 even the former Yugoslavia is missing. The periodicals had been prepaid for or obtained as a gift. As in the later normalisation period, the library comprised the one place in the country where foreign periodicals were available to the public.

12 We thank Jiří Šetlík for this information.

13 Karel Herain, 'Obrázek jeden z mnohých', *Umění 17/3–4* (1945): p. 128.

14 Karl Maria Swoboda served as an art historian at a German university in Prague and during the Protectorate he was also an estimator for the Property Office at the Office of the Reich Protector and for the Centre for Jewish Emigration.

15 In November 1942 an exhibition opened called *Old Lamps (Stará svítidla)*, which formed the historical part of Pešánek's project. In 1943 the permanent display room had to be liquidated completely due to reasons of space. 'Letter from Karel Herain to Zdeněk Pešánek' (15 October 1943). Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections, Collection A, Box 136.

16 In this period only a few kinds of activity were prohibited, such as a cycle of lectures about art. From the beginnings of the occupation the manuscripts of all lectures and their pictorial accompaniment were of course submitted, via the museum, to the Police Directorate for approval. Whoever did not pass through censorship could not lecture. See: 'Letter of the Directorate of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague to Mrs. Marie Tarantová concerning the Lecture Cycle *Božena Němcová and Her Times*' (8 February 1941). Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections, Collection A, Box 142.

17 1939: thirteen exhibitions, one of which was German (*Exhibition of German Architecture and Memorial Buildings in Bohemia and Moravia*); 1940: twenty-three exhibitions, one of which was Japanese (*Japanese Functional Objects*); 1941: a record thirty exhibitions, two of which were German (*Ernst Völlbeh: On the Western Sconce in Poland and in France; Fritz Klimsch: A Complete Exhibition*); 1942: fourteen exhibitions, including three German exhibitions (*Germany in Folk Costumes; Exhibition of National Socialist Care for the Welfare of People in the Sudeten District; German Commodity Science*); 1943: twelve exhibitions, of which two were Japanese and two were German (*The Art and Art Industry of Japan; Japan in Pictures; The Training, Retraining and Incorporation of the Workforce; The Work of Pupils: A Week of Creative Youth*). A total number of 501, 294 people visited the museum in the years 1939–1944. For precision's sake let us add that while at this time there were generally several exhibitions running simultaneously across several museum spaces, from 1970 to the present there has been only a single exhibition hall reserved for the Museum of Decorative Arts' exhibitions, due to insufficiency of space.

- 18 Karel Herain, 'Obrázek jeden z mnohých', *Umění* 17/3–4 (1945): p. 131.
- 19 The curator of these was Karl Maria Swoboda.
- 20 'Letter from Director of the Department of Labour Jan Doležal to Representatives of the Museum of Decorative Arts with Competition Conditions' (16 October 1942). Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections, Collection A, Box 136.
- 21 'Letter from Karel Herain to Alexander Vladimír Hrska' (10 November 1942). Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections, Collection A, Box 136.
- 22 Translated by Lucie Zdražilová. 'Letter from Heinrich Rieber to Karel Herain' (23 March 1954). Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections, Collection A, Box 136.
- 23 See: Lucie Zdražilová, 'Propaganda v protektorát', in Hana Rousová, Lenka Bydžovská, Vojtěch Lahoda, Milan Pech, Anna Pravdová, and Lucie Zdražilová (eds.), *Konec avantgardy? Od Mnichovské dohody ke komunistickému převratu* (Prague: Galerie hlavního města / Arbor Vitae, 2011), pp. 162–181.
- 24 *Věnkov* 37/69 (22 March 1942): p. 7 (no author or title given).
- 25 *Moravská orlice* 80/27 (1 February 1942): unpaginated (no author or title given). The exhibition took place from 26 January to 8 March 1942.
- 26 'Note about the XXII. Meeting of the Advisory Board of the Museum of Decorative Arts of the Chamber of Commerce and Trade in Prague, Held in the Museum Building on Thursday 10th April 1947', pp. 1–2. Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections, Collection A, Box 122.
- 27 The exhibition entitled *V boj*, which opened in November 1946, was dedicated to the activities of the organisation of the same name.
- 28 Karel Herain, 'The Museum of Noble Production', reprint (1946), p. 3. Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections, Collection A, Box 121.
- 29 This idea connected back to pre-war attempts by the museum to present to the public the contemporary arts and crafts production of European countries, as for instance with the successful exhibition *Contemporary Swedish Artistic Industry and Homemade Production*, from 1938.
- 30 In this the museum anticipated one of the big post-war themes, which was 'the artist in manufacturing'.
- 31 'Letter from Emanuel Poche to the Presidium of the Chamber of Commerce and Trade' (2 April 1948). Centre for the Documentation of the Museum of Decorative Arts' Collections, Collection A, Box 123.
- 32 In 1949 the Museum of Decorative Arts was nationalised and incorporated into the department of the Ministry of Education.
- 33 'Exhibition in London, 1938/IV', Mánes Association of Fine Artists (SVU Mánes) Collection, Prague City Archives, Box 81, Sign. 4.1, Inv. no. 4240.
- 34 'Prager Secession exhibition', Mánes Association of Fine Artists (SVU Mánes) Collection, Prague City Archives, Box 81, Sign. 4.1, 1938/IV. This concerns a draft of the letter by the society's president Václav Špála and Emil Filla in his role as secretary.
- 35 'The International Jew – Through the Eyes of the Artist, Concerning the Exhibition of the Master K. Rélink', *Vlajka* 9, 12 December 1939: pp. 1–2. Karel Rélink committed suicide in May 1945.
- 36 'Mánes School 1939–1940', Mánes Association of Fine Artists (SVU Mánes) Collection, Prague City Archives, Box 38, Sign. 3.11.1.
- 37 'Reports of Cultural Officer', Moravec Collection – AMV 39, National Archive of the Czech Republic, Box 74, Sign. 39–19.
- 38 *Czech Tradition in the 19th Century (Česká tradice v 19. století)*, exhibition catalogue, Mánes Association of Fine Artists (Prague, 1939), p. 8.
- 39 'Address of Dr. Jaromír Pečírka at the opening of the exhibition *Trust Art*, 12.12.1939', Mánes Association of Fine Artists (SVU Mánes) Collection, Prague City Archives, Box 85, Sign. 4.1., 1939/II.
- 40 'Address of Dr. Jaromír Pečírka at the opening of the exhibition *Trust Art*'.
- 41 E.V. Mokřý (František Viktor Mokřý), 'O výtvarnou kulturu národa', *Brázda* 21/41, 9 October 1940: pp. 489–490.
- 42 SOL, 'Individualismus a monumentální umění', *Severočeská Mladá fronta* 3 (3 September 2005): p. 4. First published 1947.
- 43 'O S.V.U. Mánes', accessed 30 October 2019, <http://www.svumanes.cz/2017-07-04-11-05-9/napsali-o-nas>.

