

Transitions

An exhibition of works by Uwe Henneken and Zdeněk Sokol

Curator: Tomáš Zapletal Cermak

Organizer: Cermak Eisenkraft_ gallery, cermakeisenkraft.com

Project authors: Uwe Henneken, Zdeněk Sokol, and Tomáš Zapletal Cermak

Location: Cermak Eisenkraft_ gallery, Národní 9 (2nd floor), Prague 1

Opening hours: Tue–Fri 1pm–7pm, Sat–Sun 11am–6pm
(closed on Mondays, public holidays and 31.12.2022)

Duration: 25 November 2022 – 15 January 2023

The exhibition is held under the patronage of Andreas Künne, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Czech Republic. The project has been made possible by financial support from the Czech Ministry of Culture, the State Fund of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Municipal District of Prague 1, and the Czech-German Fund for the Future.

Cermak Eisenkraft_, located in the Topič building at Narodni 9, continues its series of unique projects with *Transitions*, an exhibition of works by two renowned contemporary artists, German painter Uwe Henneken and Czech photographer Zdeněk Sokol. The exhibition offers an interesting look at the context in which the art of two elite artists is created while also comparing the artists' respective works and sources of inspiration. The selected pieces show the scope and intensity of the artists' work while exploring important creative periods in their careers, thus introducing viewers to the rich spiritual transformation that both artists have undergone, each in their own way, and that deeply influences and connects their work.

Uwe Henneken is an internationally recognized artist and a leading painter of his generation in Germany. The spiritual landscapes which he is presenting in Prague act as a balm for the soul. They are images of inner landscapes providing inspiration, solace, and peace. Drawing upon archetypal imagery, they awaken our innermost feelings. Color is very important in Henneken's paintings. His palette places greater emphasis on the insight of the mind, i.e., on how natural effects are mediated into perceived affects through projections of consciousness. The act of observing his paintings begins a play with our own subconscious, offering an extraordinary and colorful glimpse into the mirror of man as a person.

Zdeněk Sokol was one of the most renowned Czech art photographers in the 1990s. In the years 1989 to 1993, he was a member of the *Bratrstvo* (Brotherhood) art group, studied at FAMU in Prague, and was one of the most in-demand Czech advertising photographers. But Sokol could not bear the pressures of the world of commerce, money, and drugs. In 1998, he left his career and went to live in the woods, where he ended up spending fifteen years. In his photographs from this period, he depicts spirituality through mysterious abstract intimations and begins to work with motion blur. He more or less withdrew from the world of photography, experimenting here and there instead. "I had some kind of mental block that prevented me from making a living with the greatest gift I have in me, which is artistic photography. I felt like I was a good kicker but playing for the wrong team. I always had money, I mean quite a lot of it, but somehow I was blocked. It was like: You're not allowed to make a living from it. I guess that was my subconscious at work, probably because I'd abused my gift. That's how things were inside me for a long time. And during that first wave of Covid, it started to open up inside me really intensely, and I felt the urge to do creative work again. But it still wasn't my work. I was still drawn towards doing fine art, I felt need to express myself in some way, to find realize myself through independent photography. So now I'm working for the National Theatre, and that work has opened up the creative potential in me again. I'm back in the 'flow.' I have a lot of new ideas for other creative projects. I'm riding this wave and I'm happy as a clam."

Cermak Eisenkraft

The exhibition will offer a cross-section of Sokol's photographic work from the 1990s to the present.

Keywords: Transitions, Uwe Henneken, Zdeněk Sokol, exhibition, Cermak Eisenkraft_, Prague, November, December, culture, art, spiritual transformation, spirituality, subconscious, journey, color, beauty, love.

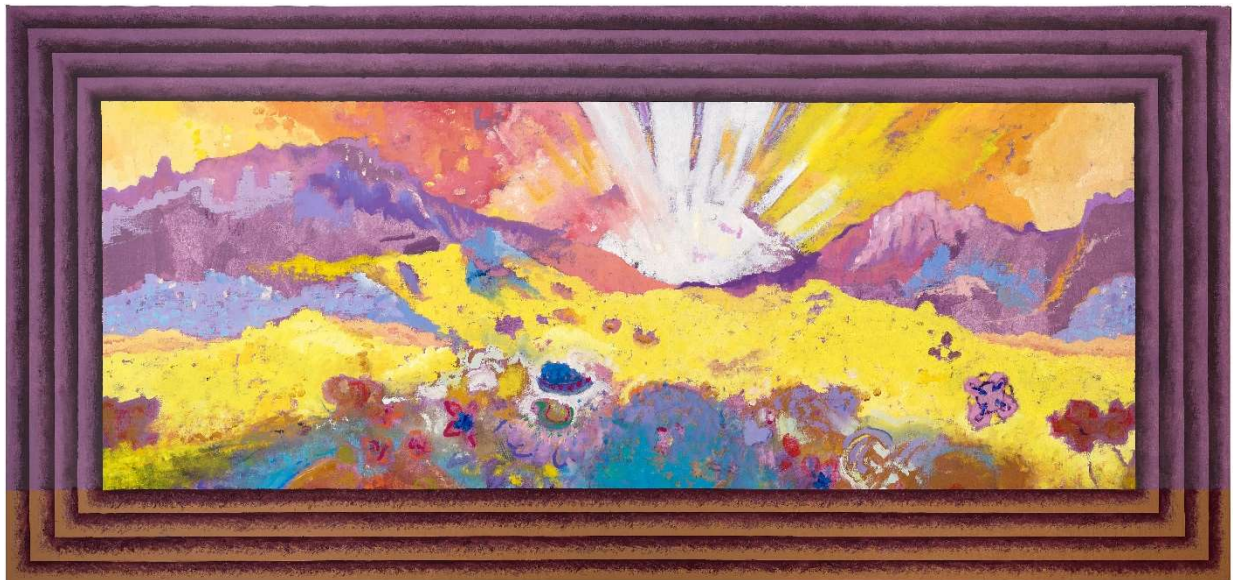
Practically, by consciously allowing love and beauty to fill our lives, we shift into the realm of the spiritual.

Petia Prime

Admission to Cermak Eisenkraft_ is free throughout the duration of the exhibition.

High-resolution photographs on request: office@cermakeisenkraft.com

Uwe Henneken (1974, Paderborn) lives and works in Germany and Denmark. He is a graduate of the Kunstakademie Karlsruhe and UdK in Berlin (1997–2002). In 2009–2011, he was a visiting professor at HfBK in Hamburg. He has held solo exhibitions at many prestigious galleries and institutions, including the Frans-Hals-Museum / Museum de Hallen, Haarlem (2007); Galerie Almine Rech, Paris (2008); Kunstverein Braunschweig (2010); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2011); Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York (2011); Capitain Petzel, Berlin (2012); Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels (2016); Meyer Riegger, Berlin (2017); Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London (2017); Gisela Capitain, Cologne (2010, 2018, 2020); Kunsthalle Giessen, Giessen (2019); and Bark Gallery, Berlin (2021). He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions around the world, among others: Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (2004); Max Wigram Gallery, London (2008); Martin Asbæk Gallery, Copenhagen (2011); The Breeder, Athens (2013); Museum Abtei Liesborn (2018); Germanisches National Museum, Nuremberg (2018); Goethe-Institut Hong Kong, Hong Kong (2018); Vietnam Fine Arts Museum, Hanoi (2018); and Galerie Mezzanin, Geneva (2018). Uwe Henneken's work can be found in a number of public and private collections in Germany and abroad. Thanks to his cooperation with Cermak Eisenkraft_, several of his works are also in private collections in the Czech Republic.



Uwe Henneken, Dawn, 2019, oil on canvas, 155 × 330 cm

Zdeněk Sokol (1965, Prague) is a graduate of the Prague School of Photography and of FAMU's Department of Photography. He currently works as a photographer for the National Theatre. Sokol has held solo exhibitions at many prestigious galleries and institutions, including the project *Paradise* in the lobby of the National Theatre's New Stage in Prague (2022). He has also exhibited at a number of group exhibitions: LA Art Show, Los Angeles (2020); *1989*, National Gallery Prague (2019); *Images of the Ends of History: Czech Visual Culture 1985–1995*, Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague (2019); *Shakespeare in Photography*, Supreme Burgrave's House, Prague Castle (2003); and *Olgoj Chorchoj + Zdeněk Sokol*, Moravian Gallery, Brno (1995); and with the Bratrstvo art group: *Czech and Slovak Photography of the 1980s and 1990s*, Museum of Modern Art, Olomouc (2002); Moravian Gallery, Brno (1996); Czech Center, Berlin (1995); Prague House of Photography, Prague (1993); Galerie mladých, Brno (1991); Semafor Theatre Exhibition Hall, Prague (1989); and Kounicovy koleje, Brno (1989). Zdeněk Sokol's work can be found in a number of public and private collections in the Czech Republic and abroad, including the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, the Moravian Gallery in Brno, and the Museum of Modern Art in Olomouc.



Zdeněk Sokol, untitled, from the PARADISE series, 150 × 150 cm

The exhibition features a trilingual Czech-English-German catalogue with texts by the following authors:

Mark Gisbourne (1948, Stratford-upon-Avon) is an exhibition curator and art historian who between 1987 and 2013 lectured as a visiting professor at seventeen university institutions in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany. He was the president of the British section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) from 1994 to 1997 and has authored more than 250 books and catalogues on modern and contemporary art, along with numerous magazine articles and reviews for print, radio, and various film media (including the BBC in London).

Tomáš Pospiszyl (1967, Prague) is a Czech writer, art theorist, and teacher. He was a member of the *Úchvatní* art group with David Černý and contributed to Černý's work *Entropa*. Pospiszyl has worked, among other places, for the Prague Castle Administration and the National Gallery Prague. He also did a seven-month internship at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. He has worked at FAMU since 2003 and has co-organized the Jindřich Chalupecký Award for Young Artists since 2004. As a writer, Pospiszyl has contributed texts to the magazines *Týden*, *A2*, *Ateliér*, *Cinepur*, *Respekt*, *Umělec*, and *Revolver Revue*.

The exhibition catalogue will include an extensive interview by gallerist Tomáš Zapletal with Uwe Henneken and Zdeněk Sokol on the central themes of both artists' work.

Links

Uwe Henneken is represented by the following galleries:

Cermak Eisenkraft_, Prague
Meyer Riegger, Berlin
Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels
Gisela Capitain Gallery, Cologne

cermakeisenkraft.com
instagram.com/cermak_eisenkraft
uwehenneken.net
prag.diplo.de
fondbudoucnosti.cz

About the gallery

Cermak Eisenkraft_ was established in 2014 with the ambition to become a major player in the field of postwar and contemporary Czech art as well as international art. Founders Tomáš Zapletal and David Železný are independently active on the Czech art market and have as their main goal and ambition the creation of a trustworthy, reputable, and internationally important institution, an institution that engages with creatively demanding artworks while promoting and expanding the art market in the Czech Republic. The gallery is associated with the **CE Foundation**, which is now in its sixth year of supporting the activities of both Czech and foreign artists. The foundation has supported numerous artists, including Magdalena Jetelová, Milan Kunc, Vladimír Škoda, Jiří Černický, Šimon Brejcha, Martin Velíšek, František Matoušek, and Pavel Baňka. It is also a long-term supporter of *Fotograf* magazine, the Czech Republic's best publication about domestic photography.

Cermak Eisenkraft_ currently operates in an exhibition space on the second floor of the Topič building at Národní 9, Prague 1.



About the exhibition venue

After several years at Dlouhá 12 and in the SmetanaQ building at Smetanovo nábřeží 4, in the spring of 2021 Cermak Eisenkraft_ moved into the recently renovated spaces of the Topič building. The exhibition is open to the viewing public in a sensitively restored exhibition venue on the second floor of this registered historic landmark. The genius loci of this place and its abundant light and space ensure that the works are exhibited in the proper conditions and provide viewers with an unforgettable cultural experience.

Constructed in 1894 as a residential rental building in the Empire style, the Topič building later underwent a significant Art Nouveau alteration for the publisher F. Topič. Osvald Polívka's 1905–1906 renovation gave the original Empire building – three wings with courtyard-facing *pawlatsch* galleries – an Art Nouveau look. Later, the building underwent a number of smaller renovations and alterations (including a 1937 Functionalist renovation by F. Zelenka). The façade is decorated with figural reliefs, wreaths, various shields, floral and zoomorphic ornamentation, a mosaic bust of a woman, and mosaics with the word “Topič” in the gables, plus numerous artistic metal elements (a balcony railing with the writing “F. Topič,” flag posts with colored glass elements, etc.). The building is a valuable example of cultural history.

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