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Purity & Decadence: Czech Contemporary Jewellery at London Craft Week

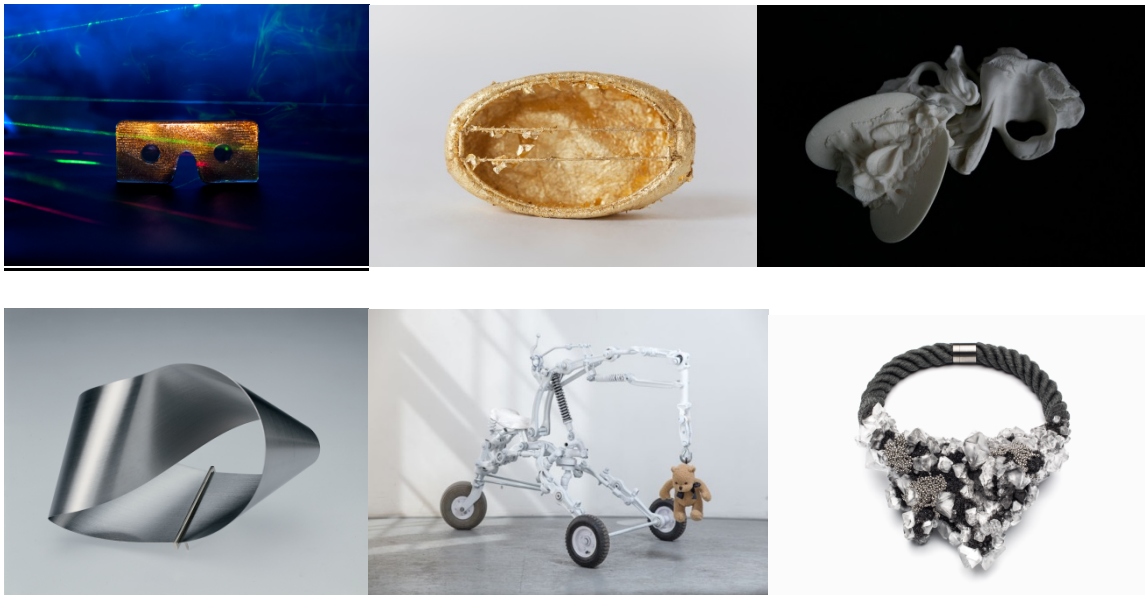
Private View: Thursday May 10 2018, 6 – 9pm, FREE (All designers will be present)

Exhibition Dates: May 9 - 27 2018

GALLERY S O LONDON, 92 Brick Lane, London, E16RL, UK

Opening hours: Wed - Sat: 12 - 6 pm, Sun: 12 - 5 pm

For the first time ever, a selection of the best of Czech contemporary jewellery comes to London. The exhibition commissioned by Czech Centre London will be hosted at the East London Gallery S O. As part of London Craft Week, 'Purity and Decadence: Contemporary Czech Jewellery' is set to celebrate and inspire the design industry throughout May.



While Czech glass and costume jewellery already have a strong reputation in the United Kingdom, Purity and Decadence is the first group exhibition showcasing several generations of contemporary Czech jewellery and metalwork to the British audience. Each of the presented artists are renowned in their field and unique in their style and approach to object. The award-winning collections by **Eva Eisler**, **Nastassia Aleinikava**, **Zorya**, **Markéta Kratochvílová** and students of the **K.O.V. studio** at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, are connected by their original vision pushing the boundaries of what we understand by art, jewellery and exceptional craftsmanship.

All these superb Czech designers will be presenting old and new collections alongside their award-winning signature pieces. "Time" is an impetus for them. It drives to create something more meaningful than oneself, defines purpose and motivates to understand and be understood. "Time", on the other hand, gives also an insight into what makes the artists view unique.

"Time is a creator if it is given a chance, a never-ending transformation of energy into various forms," say the two designers behind **Zorya**, **Daniel Pošta** and **Zdeněk Vacek**. In their VIRUS collection, which has won them the Jewellery Designer of the Year at the CZECH GRAND DESIGN 2011 as well as the highest national design title Grand Designer of the Year 2011, crystals replicate like viruses. "We started with some marine rope and salt, combined with the effects of time, which can change objects beyond recognition. Instead of decomposition, though, in this case there is an almost magical transformation, and ordinary things change to the point they cannot be recognized." This process led to the formation of necklaces hovering on the boundary between a jewel and an artistic concept, transforming fugacious materials into unique impressive objects.

Work with time is also at the centre stage of **K.O.V. studio**, led by **Eva Eisler**, herself one of the most internationally recognized Czech jewellery designers. Her students experiment with different materials and are encouraged to express their vision through thoughtful albeit often very playful concepts. "Each detail plays a highly significant role. Whatever we do, it should have a deeper meaning, even if the result displays a kind of seemingly undefined purpose. It helps us to expand our minds and to understand each other. A piece of jewellery can become a visible symbol, containing a strong message," explains Eisler, whose steel brooches and bracelets are worn by the likes of Zaha Hadid or Norman Foster.

Winner of the 2017 **Czech Grand Designer Award**, **Nastassia Aleinikava**, who graduated from **K.O.V. studio** in 2013, speeds up time and looks into a colourful, electric and cosmopolitan future through her collection of eyewear. "Glasses as a jewel and a jewel as a story – however, not everybody has the courage to write his or her story," so Nastassia helps people write it through her glasses with their bold shapes accentuating and reawakening their owners' character. Nastassia, however, proves to be a true time-traveller, with her latest collection of silver and gold objects inspired by the medieval Voynich manuscript.

Winner of two Czech Grand Design Awards – Jewellery Designer of the Year 2016 and Talent of the Year 2014, **Markéta Kratochvílová**, works with a wide range of materials from silver, to silk inspired by a wide range of references, including the history of fashion, an anthropological interest in jewellery and manner of dress of indigenous groups in India, Africa, and Asia. "In my designs, I strive to support the relationship of a female body with jewellery and explore its capacity to express itself and have impact on its wearer and her life," says Markéta whose pieces — half jewellery, half clothing, always laden with layers of meaning— have already caught the eye of the UK audience in 2016 when her work was part of the International Fashion Showcase. She was since commissioned as a costume designer for Cryptic: "We wanted to collaborate with Markéta as her work is daring, yet sensual and liberating. I adore her attention to detail and the fact her garments create an emotion within us, even more so when we examine her extraordinary craft. They intrigue us whilst also pulling us into another world. She is a great Czech talent to work with - she will leave a mark for sure," points out Cathie Boyd, Artistic Director and Founder of Cryptic and Sonica.

An official part of the **London Craft Week**, the exhibition displayed in the East-London Gallery S O continues throughout May, and will offer accompanying workshops and lectures introducing both the contemporary Czech design scene, but also the magnificent tradition of Czech costume jewellery. The exhibition is organized by the **Czech Centre London** as part of the **Czech Republic 100 anniversary**.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

CZECH JEWELLERY AT GALLERY S O

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Address: **GALLERY S O LONDON**, 92 Brick Lane, London, E16RL, UK
+44 (0)20 7377 8008, info@galleryso.com

Official part of **London Craft Week**

9-13 May 2018 (exhibition opened every day from 12-7pm during London Craft Week)

Press enquiries (including high res images): Tereza Matysova - +44 (0)7768 935 361,
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High res images can be also found here: <https://bit.ly/2HwU4tH>

ABOUT LONDON CRAFT WEEK

London Craft Week returns to the capital for its fourth edition from 9-13 May 2018. Celebrating outstanding British and international creativity, this year the festival brings together over 200 established and emerging makers, designers, brands and galleries from around the world.

<http://www.londoncraftweek.com/>

ABOUT GALLERY S O

Gallery S O was founded in 2003 by Felix Flury in Solothurn, Switzerland, and six years later the gallery opened a second space in Brick Lane, London. The gallery's main focus is exploring the potentialities of the contemporary object and the interplay of function, form and concept. It aims to provide a space for an open and fruitful dialogue between different artistic disciplines. The work of its artists is represented in institutions across the globe.

Felix Flury:

"I was approached by Tereza Porybna with the idea to do a show at Gallery S O with Czech artists in the field of contemporary jewellery. As I know and admire Eva Eisler's work since the 80's I thought that could work well not only for jewellery but also for objects and now that student's work is also involved in the exhibition it will get a good vibe."

<https://www.galleryso.com>

ABOUT CZECH CENTRE

The Czech Centre's mission is to actively promote the Czech Republic by showcasing Czech culture in the UK. Its programme covers visual and performing arts, film, literature, music, architecture, design and fashion. The Czech Centre London opened in 1993. It is a non-political organisation supported by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of a worldwide network of 21 Czech Centres operating in 19 countries and on three continents. The Czech Centre is a member of EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture).

Tereza Porybná, Director:

"Contemporary Czech Jewellery design has a certain dynamic which appeals to the international taste. I believe it's driven by the incomparably rich crafts making tradition combined with a very free-spirited approach to "objects". The contemporary Czech jewellery-makers are, apart from a few exceptions, unknown to the UK audience, which is one of the reasons this exhibition has been an absolute pleasure to work on. We at the Czech Centre feel honoured to be able to present these exceptionally talented individuals to the London audience for the very first time."

<http://london.czechcentres.cz/about-us/>

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

EVA EISLER

Eva Eisler is an internationally recognized sculptor, furniture, product and jewellery designer, whose pieces are being collected by the likes of Norman Foster or Zaha Hadid. Rooted in constructivist theory, her structurally-based objects project a unique spirituality by nature of their investment with "sacred geometry." She received numerous awards including the 2014 Czech Grand Design Award for Best Jewellery Collection. Eisler is also a respected curator and educator. She heads the award-winning K.O.V. (concept-object-meaning) studio at Prague's Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design. Her work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cooper Hewitt Design Museum in New York; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; and Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, among many others.

<http://www.maurer-zilioli.com/en/exhibitions/137-eva-eisler-en.html>

ZORYA

The ZORYA studio was established in 2011, preceded by a long-term collaboration between jeweller Zdeněk Vacek and designer Daniel Pošta. The studio quickly gained renown for its jewellery collections in which experimentation with form and meaning played a major role, fusing technological and creative methods previously absent in classical jewellery making. Together, Vacek and Pošta have pursued the creation of objects bordering art and design. They have jointly received the recognition as Best Jeweller and Grand Designer of the Year (2011) in the Czech Grand Design Awards, and several prizes for Best Presentation and Best Jewellery Collection at the Designblok event in Prague. ZORYA has also been acknowledged by the curators of the SOFA Chicago fair.

www.zorya.eu

ABOUT K.O.V. STUDIO

Class of Eva Eisler at The Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. The aim of the K.O.V. (concept, object, meaning) studio is to not only train students to become goldsmiths or designers, but rather to open their minds towards a wider spectrum of further applications within the environment we live in and to deepen their understanding of the importance of even the smallest details. The goal of the studio is to unleash the students' fantasy, creativity and instil in them a playful, innovative and imaginative approach. Eva Eisler, one of the most internationally recognized Czech designers, strives to lead students towards a deeper understanding of the wide spectrum of art in space through an interdisciplinary approach to material, concept and form, in a close relationship to design, architecture and contemporary art.

<https://www.umprum.cz/web/cs/uzite-umeni/k-o-v-koncept-objekt-vyznam>

NASTASSIA ALEINIKAVA

The work of Nastassia Aleinikava is spread out between luxury jewel of an extra-ordinary quality and unconventional shapes and styles of glasses. She takes inspiration from nature as well as from Eastern European cultural heritage. What makes her works so important is also the usage of top class materials. Glasses by Aleinikava are remarkable for being fully handmade from material of a high quality – Italian cellulose acetate by Mazzucchelli. Nastassia graduated in 2013 from K.O.V. studio (headed by Eva Eisler) at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. She has won several prestigious awards culminating with two Czech Grand Design Awards in 2018 for Designer of the Year and for Best Jewellery Designer.

<http://www.nastassiaaleinikava.com>

ABOUT MARKÉTA KRATOCHVÍLOVÁ

Winner of two Czech Grand Design Awards – Jewellery Designer of the Year 2016 and Talent of the Year 2014, Markéta Kratochvílová draws from a wide range of references, including the history of fashion, an anthropological interest in jewellery and manner of dress of indigenous groups in India, Africa, and Asia. Her mostly wearable pieces— half jewellery, half clothing, always laden with layers of meaning—explore the sculptural possibilities of different materials while making a statements about the complexities of femininity. Markéta graduated from K.O.V. studio in 2014. In 2017 she launched Bold Studio in Prague as a creative laboratory dedicated to jewellery and accessories design.

<http://boldstudio.eu>