



Lukáš Jasanský a Martin Polák, z cyklu Fluxus, 1990, černobílá fotografie, 70x100 cm

# international symposium mutating medium

at 13.30 on Friday 25th March 2011

**Presented by the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, Fotograf Magazine and Galerie Rudolfinum.**

The International symposium about mutating medium is a special one-day event related to the exhibition "Mutating Medium – Photography in Czech Art 1990–2010" which takes place at Galerie Rudolfinum in Prague from 9th February 2011 until 1st May. The exhibition captures the metamorphosis of photography as artistic medium in the dynamic environment of the past two decades influenced by sweeping political changes and technological development aimed at mass digitalization and the democratization of image media.

The symposium gathers specialists in art and photography theory from several European institutions to discuss the key questions about contemporary photography: What happened to the photography within the field of visual art during the past two decades? Does it still exist? What specific forms does it have? The symposium has ambition to have a close look at the occurrence of all new mutations of photography, often going far beyond its existing boundaries. We are not asking what photography is, but in what form it may find itself in a near future.

Venue: **Galerie Rudolfinum, Small Hall, Alšovo nábřeží 12, Prague 1**  
**[www.galerierudolfinum.cz](http://www.galerierudolfinum.cz), join us on facebook**  
Date and time: **Friday 25th March 2011, 13.30–18.30**  
Admission: **Free, all welcome.**  
Language: **English**

**List of Participants:**

**Jan Babnik,**  
a freelance editor, curator, art critic and photographer, Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Xavier Canonne,**  
Director of Musée de la Photographie, Charleroi, Belgium

**Karel Císař,**  
Assistant Professor at Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design, Prague

**Zuzana Flašková,**  
a freelance curator, researcher and writer; London

**Marina Grznic,**  
Research Director at Institute of Philosophy Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia; and Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria

**Tomáš Pospiszyl,**  
Assistant Professor at Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

**Kai Uwe Schierz,**  
Director of Kunsthalle Erfurt, Germany

**Walter Keller**  
curator, writer, gallerist, Switzerland

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Special thanks to: Aleksandra Vajd, Hynek Alt, Pavel Baňka, Zuzana Meisnerová

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# **international symposium**

## **mutating medium programme**

**Friday 25th March 2011**

### **13:30 Symposium Opening**

Welcome speech by *Pavel Vančát*, the curator of Mutating medium exhibition, and *Martina Pachmanová*, the Symposium moderator.

### **13:45 Panel 1**

#### ***Jan Babnik: Becoming Photography***

The expanding field of photography (as well as the expansion of photography into other visual arts) is interwoven with expanding knowledge, criticism, theory on photography – awareness of what is, and what could be photography. In short: with the opening out of the photographic discourse. What we are witnessing is becoming photography. Recent progressions and transformations of photography in the field of visual arts are intrinsically linked with its new privileged and ambiguous position in the contemporary world.

#### ***Marina Grzanic: Where stands photography today in relation to revolutions?***

In her text entitled “Museum, Urban Detritus and Pornography,” Beatriz Preciado argues that demanding a more critical stance from the western art historiography can be a serious problem, as such an institution requires things to be kept in their place, especially as western art historiography has already experienced difficulties dealing with the critical interferences of different sexual, racial and class positions on art. Therefore I want to pose this rhetorical but nevertheless important question: “Where stands photography today in relation to revolutions?” I want to pose this question in order to think about the relation of photography, first and foremost, in relation to social and political revolutions, changes, subversions, interventions and less the technological ones. Though technology and politics of photography are entangled.

#### ***Zuzana Flašková: A room of one's own. Photography against Truth***

In her paper she will explore Wolfgang Tillmans's oeuvre in relation to specific developments within the photographic medium of the last two decades. She will focus on the concept of politics in his art and how it manifests itself through the ‘exhibition as an art work’ methodology. She will discuss his democratic and non-hierarchical approach to subject matter, his ongoing fascination with the visuality and materiality of the photographic processes as well as his treatment of images in today's increasingly ideologised environment.

#### ***Xavier Canonne: Talking about Images***

The paper will reveal the extension of the field of photography, its displacement from the world of photographers towards various and often immaterial forms and media, to conclude that it is more suitable to talk of IMAGES than of PHOTOGRAPHY. At the same time the question of the today's “Museum” of photography will be discussed.

### **15:00 – 16:00 Moderated Discussion**

### **16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break**

## **16:30 Panel 2**

### ***Karel Čisář: Medium Specificity in the Expanded Field of Photography***

The presentation will explore the notion of “medium specificity” how it has been developed since an early debate on the use of photography as an artistic practice in the 1970’s till its recent reappraisal.

### ***Tomáš Pospiszl: Where the photography starts and ends***

Can we still talk about a borderline between photography and fine arts nowadays? Or do both categories merge without any evident differences? The exhibition *Mutating Medium* claims that even though the definition of photography has changed (as its object and forms are mutating) it still remains an independent art discipline. Is the technology or the aesthetics that determinates photography? The above mentioned questions will be discussed in the presentation based on the examples of artists presented at the exhibition.

### ***Kai Uwe Schierz: Is there photography in?***

With reference to the examples of three contemporary art pieces by Michael Reisch, Andreas Gefeller and Gerhard Mantz the problem of interdisciplinary borders between different art genres will be discussed. The presentation will focus mainly on the transition between categories such as painting, photography and computer art in reference to the art practices.

special guest: *Walter Keller*

## **18:00 – 18:30 Moderated Discussion**

### ***Jan Babnik***

is a freelance editor, curator, art critic and photographer based in Ljubljana. He is the founder and leader of The Contemporary Culture and Science Institute (ZSKZ Ljubljana) and he is an editor in chief of Slovenian magazine on photography – Fotografija. Since 2005 he is a member of Slovenian Society for Aesthetics. In 2008 he finished his MPhil degree in Philosophy at University of Ljubljana. His most recent work includes foreword to the Slovenian edition of Geoffrey Batchen's *Burning with Desire* and editing of the Slovenian translation of Vilém Flusser's *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*.

### ***Xavier Canonne***

is a director of Musée de la Photographie. He was awarded a Doctorate in Art History from the Sorbonne University in Paris with a doctoral thesis dedicated to Surrealism in Belgium (from 1950 to 1993). From 1987 to 2000, head of the collection of the Province of Hainaut. From 1999 to 2002, head of the Commission consultative des Arts plastiques de la Communauté française (French Community consulting commission on plastic arts). Lecturer at the École supérieure des Arts plastiques et visuels de Mons (Higher education institute of plastic and visual arts of Mons). He has curated many exhibitions including: the French Community exhibition at the biennial of São Paulo, Brazil (photographs by Christine Felten and Véronique Massinger) and *Le Surréalisme en Belgique* (Surrealism in Belgium) at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Mons – BAM (Museum of fine arts in Mons), 2007. He has edited and written various books, he is the author of *Le Surréalisme en Belgique 1924 – 2000* (Surrealism in Belgium), Fonds Mercator, Brussels, 2006 (French-Dutch-English) and of *Looking at the U.S. – 1957–1986*, Fred Baldwin and Wendy Watriss, Mets & Schilt, Amsterdam, 2009.

### ***Karel Císar***

is an assistant professor of Aesthetics and Art theory at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. He was awarded his Diplôme d'études supérieures from the University of Geneva in 2001 and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the Charles University, Prague in 2006. He is an editor of *Co je to fotografie?* [What is Photography?], Herrmann a synové, 2004, Markéta Othová, Walther König 2010 and a contributor to numerous publications including Ján Mančuška: *Against Interpretation*, Hatje Cantz 2011, MAM Project: *Kateřina Šedá, Mori Art Museum 2010 and Arrivals>Art from the New Europe, Modern Art, Oxford 2007*. His recent curatorial projects include *50% Grey: Contemporary Czech Photography Reconsidered*, (with Karen Irvine), MoCP, Chicago, 2010, *Any-instant-whatever*, Bunkier Sztuki, Krakow 2009 and *Hans-Peter Feldmann, Photo*, Langhans Galerie, Prague 2007

### ***Zuzana Flašková***

is a freelance curator, researcher and writer. She works and lives in London where she also recently completed her Masters in Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths College. Her current research on the regimes of documentation and fiction as modes of representation focuses on the positive exploration of the space where the boundary is uncertain.

### ***Marina Gržinic***

is a researcher director at Institute of Philosophy Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana Slovenia and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria. She is active as a curator and writer. Selected monographies and volumes by Gržinic are *Re-Politicizing art, Theory, Representation and New Media Technology*, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna and Schlebrügge. Editor, Vienna 2008; *Une fiction reconstruite. Europe de l'Est, post-socialisme et rétro-avant-garde* [Fiction Reconstructed. Eastern Europe, Postsocialism and Retro-avantgarde], L'Harmattan, Paris, 2005; *Aesthetics of Cyberspace and the Effects of De-realisation*, Multimedijalni institut mi2 - MaMa Zagreb, Croatia and Kosnica – centar za komunikaciju i kulturu, Sarajevo, BiH, 2005, etc.

***Martina Pachmanová***

is an assistant professor at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. Over the last ten years, she curated more than twenty exhibitions. Her essays and articles on modern and contemporary art, many of them dealing with issues of gender, sexual politics and feminism, have been published in periodicals and exhibition catalogues in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. She is the author of several books: *Mobile Fidelities: Conversations on Feminism, History, and Visuality* (Prague 2001, English version: [www.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa](http://www.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa)), *Invisible Woman: Anthology of Contemporary Texts on Feminism, History, and Visual Culture in the U.S.* (Prague 2002), *Unknown Territories of Czech Modern Art: Through the Looking Glass of Gender* (Prague 2004), and a monograph on a forgotten Czech female modernist Milada Marešová: *Painter of New Objectivity* (Prague, Brno 2008). Last year, she co-edited the book *Artemis and Dr. Faust: Women in Czech and Slovak Art History* (together with Milena Bartlová; Prague 2008).

***Tomáš Pospisyl***

is an assistant professor at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. He worked as a curator at the National Gallery in Prague (1997-2002) and was a research fellow at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 2010, he was a curator of the Young Artist's Biennial in Prague. His publications include an anthology 'Primary Documents; A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s', edited together with Laura Hoptman, (2002), *Octobrianaa ruský underground* (2004), and numerous catalogue essays and magazine articles.

***Kai Uwe Schierz***

is a director of Kunsthalle Erfurt, Germany. He studied German linguistics and Art Education at the Pedagogical University in Erfurt. He pursued doctoral studies of Cultural Science and Aesthetics at the University in Leipzig. In 2004, he started to teach at Bauhaus University in Weimar. His studies are focused on the Modern and Contemporary art including photography.

***Walter Keller***

is a co-founder of Parkett Art Magazine, Fotomuseum Winterthur/Switzerland, and Scalo Publishers (active until 2006). He is a curator, writer, gallerist, and internationally well-known specialist in contemporary photography.