PRESS RELEASE

**The Treasures of Jan Zrzavý**

June 11 – July 9, 2017, Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář, Litomyšl

**Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář in Litomyšl presents a selection of Jan Zrzavý’s (1890 – 1977) representative works. Among the eighteen paintings of one of the most eminent Czech painters of the 20th century, all created between 1908 and 1950, the gallery will exhibit iconic works familiar from post stamps, published reproductions and important personal and institutional art collections.**

Among the eighteen exhibited art works of **Jan Zrzavý**, the eminent artist who significantly formed modern 20th century art, **Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář** in Litomyšl will also show, for example, the famous painting *Žlutý Kristus (Yellow Christ)* created between 1908 and 1918 inspired by the Paul Gaugin painting of the same name (Yellow Christ*)*. This painting was further influenced by the landscape of Bretagne, where Zrzavý liked to occasionally reside. Another important exhibited work will be his seminal 1907 work *Údolí smutku* (Valley of Grief) which the artist himself considered to be his formative piece.

*“The exhibition is a celebration of the work of Jan Zrzavý, and for me, it is a dream come true, as I consider it to be the most beautiful exhibition in all of Czechia. It offers a lesson in a holy form of art in the best sense of the word, and everyone should become acquainted with it,”* says curator Zdeněk Sklenář.

The work *Mládí (Jaro)/Youth (Spring),* made between 1924 and 1929, is another significant item in the overall curatorial selection. It is a work reminiscing about **Zrzavý’s deceased brother** who tragically died at a young age. It also alludes to the figural composition of Zrzavý‘s work *Spící hoch* *(Sleeping boy)* – a work which four years ago was sold in Sotheby’s London for 18 million CZK. It was originally purchased by Adolf Loos in 1918 at one of Zrzavý’s exhibitions at Prague’s Topičův salon.

Another iconic work is *Krajina* (Landscape), painted in 1915, which shows Zrzavý’s typical, pointed mountains. The pastel *Hosté Abrahamovi (Andělská návštěva)/Abraham‘s Guests (Angelic Visit)* painted between 1911 and 1912, depicts the story in Genesis, and is the most pronounced example of an Old-Testament Biblical motif in all of Zrzavý’s work.

The Litomyšl exhibition will also show the artist’s alternate side, which is imbued with a relaxed sense of sexuality and unbridled enjoyment, epitomized in the painting *Milenci (Posedlost)/ Lovers (Obsession)*, from 1915. The less sensuous still life *Zátiší na stolku* represents the culmination of Zrzavý’s painting of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The exhibition is organized on the occasion of the 59th year of the opera festival **Smetanova Litomyšl,** and is an integral part of the festival **Smetanova výtvarná Litomyšl.**

The installation of the exhibition was arranged by painter Jan Merta.

The Treasures of Jan Zrzavý exhibition was prepared by **Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář** in cooperation with **Galerie Zlatá husa** in Prague, the **Západočeská galerie** in Plzeň, **Galerie výtvarného umění** in Ostrava and **Galerie 8SMIČKA** in Humpolec. The rest of art works have been lent from private collections.