**KAREL MALICH**

12 September 2018 to 24 November 2018

Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář

Schönkirch Palace

Mikulandská 7, 110 00 Prague 1, CZ

Tuesday to Saturday from 1 pm to 6 pm

[www.zdeneksklenar.com](http://www.zdeneksklenar.com)

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**In the exhibition *Karel Malich*, Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář presents the sculptures and reliefs the artist created between 1963 to 2016. After the dozens of exhibitions our gallery has organised, the surprising installation designed by Federico Díaz presents the unity of the more than fifty years he has been creating sculptures. Karel Malich (b. 1924), without whom we cannot imagine the development of Czech sculpting in the last few decades,
has continually revised the visual style of his work over the years – from the two-dimensional to the three-dimensional that has made him famous on the international art scene. The exhibition also includes his plexiglass sculptures and visionary architectural designs from the late 1960s and 1970s. An additional surprise consists of several previously unreleased works that are being shown for the first time.**

This exhibition of nothing but sculptures presents a special curatorial selection of Karel Malich’s artwork. The first three-dimensional hanging wire sculpture was created in 1967. This period culminated in 1988 with his sculpture *Human-Cosmic Coitus* (now owned by, or better said, a part of the Prague City’s Gallery’s art collections). Then there was a twenty-two-year pause, after which dozens of wall sculptures and several hanging sculptures were created in a completely new way,
in which his drawing reached its spatial climax. Malich’s work reached its apex in spring 2016.

“*This exhibition was born out of awe. Based on my intimate friendship with Karel Malich and privileged knowledge of how his works of art originated, part of the exhibition deliberately represents the tsunami of energy and light that are the symbol of Malich’s work*,” says gallerist Zdeněk Sklenář, who is also the curator of this exhibition.

The exhibition, focused particularly on the more than five decades of Malich’s sculpture period, includes dozens of sculptures made from metal, wood, and plastic, some of which are internationally known.

Malich’s first plexiglass sculptures from the late 1960s, such as *Broken Box*, are presented here.
The work draws attention to Malich’s contribution towards the dematerialization of the statue.
This was focused on two different positions characterized by the choice of materials: plexiglass and wire. Malich considers plexiglass objects as a means of making the inner space of a sculpture transparent, calling these works “objects of light”. He often works with colour when creating them, for example with his favourite pink or black, which he placed in contrast with white and
the translucent nature of the material.

Some statues with a simple wire construction date back to this same period – Malich’s renowned wire sculptures respond to airflow, capillary action, and other physical phenomena. Later,
in the late 1970s, Malich stepped up the complexity and laboriousness of his wire sculptures,
and the starting point for them became an outline of the artist’s head and a figural composition. He explores and displays the possibilities of a multidimensional view of the human figure.

The exhibition at Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář also includes three of the many sculptures that were affected by the disfavour held by the social establishment of that time against Malich. Scale models waited in the artist's studio for decades before they could be realised. It was not until 2012,
during the preparatory stages for the *Malich* exhibition at the Prague Castle Riding School,
that he revised these dozens of models from the 1960s – after many years, it was finally the time to complete them and these models were transformed into statues. This exhibition premieres some of them, providing a glimpse into a previously unknown part of Malich’s work.
In 2013, he made an interior sculpture modelled on a monumental concrete version of it which had been destroyed in 1993 by the Jihlava Wood Processing Plant.

The exhibition highlights the position of Karel Malich as an avant-garde visionary specifically through his sculptures. It also contains hints of his utopian architectural visions, which will be presented in separate exhibitions: urban studies for a police-free state, designs for underwater cities and cities in space, a design for a city to stand in the surf and one for a city in the desert,
and a project for a museum of modern art built in an undersea tunnel. Malich developed these ideas with the belief that, if science and technology continue to evolve, these projects would be feasible in the future. In 1969, he abandoned these studies after a series of attacks against him by the then-existing regime, which reproached them for the social inappropriateness of his suggestions.

“*This painter and sculptor with a passionate interest in architecture is one of the most prominent figures of the second avant-garde in the former Soviet bloc. His incredible sculptures made of wire and suspended in the air as well his translucent pastel drawings have their roots in his childhood and in a completely original form of spirituality,*” writes the prominent art theorist Hans-Ulrich Obrist about Karel Malich’s artwork in the *Cahiers d’Art* magazine issue devoted to Joan Miró and Karel Malich.

Malich’s latest works, created between 2010 and 2016, are characterized by unprecedented decidedness. They are empowered by the simple geometric shapes he continued to use,
such as a circle or an ellipse, which give the sculptures more intimate contents than ever before. Among the artist’s more recent works, the wall relief *Darkness and Light* (2010), consisting of only two side-by-side circles, each with a diameter of 85 cm, comes across as the most expressive.
“It deals with the basic polarity of black and white. This same theme appears in several of Malich’s interrelated reliefs, such as *Radiant White Light Overlapping the Darkness* (2009) made of two super-imposed circular shapes, and *A Flash* *of* *Light in the Darkness* (2010), in which the bottom black disk converges with white rings,” writes Karel Srp, art theorist and curator, in his new book *Malich 2013-2016*.

Zdeněk Sklenář invited Federico Díaz, who studied under Karel Malich during the time he taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in the early 1990s, to install the exhibition. “*My experience with Karel Malich’s personality is such that when he thinks, it is a smooth flow of thoughts that knows no fragmentation.
When he draws on particular paper formats, it is only so that his flow of thoughts can be stopped, allowing him to communicate with the world beyond his mind. The design for the installation of his latest exhibition is inspired by*

*this stream that is in harmony with Malich's universe and which does not know division, only unity*,” says Federico Díaz about his original installation design.

Guided tours, led by gallerist Zdeněk Sklenář, have been planned to accompany the exhibition, with the first of them taking place on 13 October 2018 at 3 pm. Due to limited capacity, please confirm your participation by sending an email to: galerie@zdeneksklenar.cz

In addition, the book *MALICH 2013-2016*, written by Karl Srp and with graphic design by Studio Najbrt, which includes a complete catalogue of Karl Malich’s sculptures from 2008 to 2016,
is being published on the occasion of this exhibition. The gallery is also publishing two posters with reproductions of Malich’s works, graphically designed by Aleš Najbrt, created just for this exhibition.

Over nearly thirty years of cooperation, Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář has also captured Karel Malich’s personality and artwork in several publications: the extensive monograph *Karel Malich*, with text by Karel Srp and including more than 450 reproductions, the catalogue entitled *Malich* published to accompany the eponymous exhibition at the Prague Castle Riding School, and the book *Wang Yi: A Bold Heart Writes with a Poetic Brush* with illustrations by Karel Malich. The gallery’s special edition book series also includes *LAOZI – Karel Malich* by David Sehnal; a collection of Malich’s reflections and poems published under the title *From That Time Then until That Time Now;* *Malich 2011-*2012, which is the second volume of the publication listing the artist’s wall and hanging sculptures;
the book *Vlček on Malich: Reminiscences, Documentary Information, Interpretations 1969-2014*; and two children’s books illustrated by Kael Malich: *Bořík’s Rhymes I* and *Bořík’s Rhymes II*.

Moreover, Czech Television and Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář have co-produced a film portrait of Karel Malich under the title *It Simply Happens* as well as a documentary entitled *Visionary at the Age of Reason*.

Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář has also collaborated with important art institutions to organize several key exhibitions of Karel Malich’s artwork, including the much-celebrated show at the Prague Castle Riding School, the exhibition *Karel Malich – Cosmic* at the Ludwig Museum in Koblenz, Germany, and a two-man show at the Pori Art Museum in Pori, Finland, where Malich’s artwork was exhibited together with that of Federico Díaz.

An important honour for our country and for Czech art in general is/was Malich’s participation in the prestigious exhibition *Art in Europe 1945-1968*, whose curator was Peter Weibel, the director of ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe.

A new exhibition proving the importance of Malich’s artwork is being planned for China next year, with the aim of demonstrating how the universal quality of his art transcends cultural boundaries.

Download print quality photos [here](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3f6h7c95833l4dp/AAAfFR5yeaMNn-UgeWEkyGcba?dl=0).

For more information about the exhibition, please contact Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář:

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