**Zdeněk Sýkora – My Nature**

5 February – 6 April 2019

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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**Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář is opening the exhibition *My Nature*, presenting a selection of Zdeněk Sýkora’s oeuvre. This is an intimate retrospective, showing some of Sýkora’s artwork in an entirely new context. One surprise is the inclusion of Sýkora’s photos
from the first half of the 1940s, from the very first days of his artistic career, which were not associated with painting but with photography. In addition to the photographs,
the curator’s selection chosen by Lenka Sýkorová, Zdeněk Sýkora’s wife and the co-maker of many of his works, also introduces some less-known Cubist paintings from the 1940s and a few Post-Impressionist landscapes from the 1950s. The show also presents some of the artist’s landscape paintings that he produced in parallel with his famous structures
and lines, which of course cannot be omitted from the exhibition.**

Lenka Sýkorová, the exhibition curator, uses a surprising interpretation to familiarize visitors with the work of one of the most distinctive personalities of the art world. The selection she has made ranges from Sýkora’s first known works from the early 1940s to those the artist made after 2000. Together with the original artworks, there are more than forty documentary photographs
from the Sýkora’s personal archive on display, which capture interesting moments not only from the life of Zdeněk Sýkora but also from the lives of his paintings.

According to Lenka Sýkorová, *“We may, for instance, compare a work as it looked at the time it was first conceived with its final form. Other photos show Sýkora’s two studios over a period of years or his office at
the university, and in many we see the artist at work. At the same time, the photos document how his art developed. The photographs include brief commentaries describing the situation, including anecdotes, information,
and explanations.*”

As the name of the exhibition – *My Nature* – implies, the Zdeněk Sýkora show at Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář focuses on how he was inspired by nature, its changing cycles, and its intrinsic principles during his whole life. In 1990, the artist said, “*I am a part of my art, but not the power that determines it. The more I want my paintings to be only that which they are, the more they are all-encompassing. My painting grew out of my love of nature and the art I saw before me.*”

It is a well-know fact that, in the 1950s, Sýkora painted out in the countryside with his Louny friends over the course of several years. This is why the selection from this period includes his *Landscape*, which Sýkora painted in the valley below Smolnice, a village near Louny, in 1956.
This painting evidences the way the artist gradually shifted from spatial illusion to planar transformation.

This intimate retrospective look at Sýkora’s oeuvre is effectively enhanced by some of his works from the 1960s, which demonstrate his transition from plain air painting to creating his geometric compositions and structures. This particular period is represented at the exhibition by, for example, his paintings *Garden (with a Square)* from 1960 and *Composition – Orange and Blue* from 1961.
The period during which he created his first structures is documented by photographs taken in
the artist’s studio in 1963, where there are two new paintings visible on the wall, both of which are included in this exhibitions, specifically *White Lines* and *Blue and Red Structure*.

The displayed artworks include two of Zdeněk Sýkora’s topological structures from 1969,
which serve as an example of the more than twenty three-dimensional structures the artist created in the 1960s. His first macrostructure from the early 1970s is also on display as well as some of his landscapes from the 1970s and 1980s which were made in parallel with the artist’s famous line paintings. Sýkora’s series *Stains*, which he produced in the 1980s and 1990s, is represented by
a four paintings.

In the words of the gallerist Zdeněk Sklenář, “*The exhibition is revealing not only for those knowledgeable about Sýkora’s revolutionary art but also for those who are just discovering and becoming familiar with his creative work. It provides a clue as to how a discovery may be made after decades of thoroughly exploring nature through painting. Sýkora is a leading Czech painter and one of the first artists in the world who, in the early years of the 1960s, was a pioneer in including a computer in the process of creating a painting. At the same time, and until
the end of his life, he also remained faithful to painting ‘by hand’, something that he greatly enjoyed. For me,
this exhibition is an allegorical alpha and omega of Sýkora’s oeuvre, ranging from realism to his greatest discoveries. Here one will find milestones in the history of painting.*”

Zdeněk Sýkora (1920–2011) is considered to be an important figure of the second half of the twentieth century. Although he became famous mainly for his line paintings based on randomness, even his strictly defined structures from the 1960s are, even within the international context,
a symbol of the revolutionary contribution he made, chiefly by including a computer in the process for creating a work of art in the first half of that decade. Sýkora belongs to that generation of artists who today hold an incontestable position, and who made a unique contribution to Czech and world art – Václav Boštík, Karel Malich, and Milan Grygar. From the time Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář first opened, Zdeněk Sýkora has been one of its key artists. The gallery has organised a number of his shows, produced the film *Letná* *XL*, and published several books and catalogues of his artwork.

Lenka Sýkorová and the architect Josef Pleskot are currently collaborating on a project in Louny entitled “Sýkora’s Piazzetta”.

A catalogue, containing reproductions of the artist’s works, as well as documentary photographs and accompanying texts by Lenka Sýkorová, will be published towards the end of the exhibition. The graphic design for this publication is by Zdeněk Ziegler.

The installation was designed by the architect Josef Pleskot and Lenka Sýkorová. At this time, an exhibition entitled *Zdeněk Sýkora – 2000 + 18/127* is underway at Josef Pleskot’s AP Atelier Gallery.

Two guided tours have been planned to accompany the exhibition. They will be led by
the exhibition’s curator, Lenka Sykorová, and the gallerist Zdeněk Sklenář on **9 March** and
**23 March 2019**, both starting at 3 pm. Due to limited capacity, please confirm your participation by sending an email to galerie@zdeneksklenar.cz

To download print-quality photos, click [here](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gwnhx1u9b79gp6w/AACevSUD6zjYPWrivgSi2zZJa?dl=0).

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