

International Graffiti and Street Art Exhibition

STUCK UNSTUCK

27 January 2013 was the final day of the "Stuck on the City" exhibition in the Municipal Library at the City Gallery Prague

The international exhibition, which hosted twenty-six artists from the Czech Republic and abroad, and which was initiated by the former head curator of the City Gallery Prague, Karel Srp, ended on 27 January 2013, after having been extended by two weeks due to huge public interest.

It was visited by [21 337](#) people.

Stuck on the City is the name for a strange modern and postmodern passion – love for the city, which has surpassed the usual limits and developed into an obsession. An obsession is bipolar – it can be positive and negative, similar to the graffiti and street art which made up the body of this international exhibition with the same name. It is not necessary to analyse the dark side of this visual phenomenon of approximately the past 50 years. The omnipresence of "sprayed art" nevertheless calls for a pause of reflection. The initial reaction is that we damn it as pure vandalism, pointing to the lack of aesthetics and the sacred law of private property. Another approach attempts to answer the question why did such an "obsession" arise in the first place. And finally, some are able to distinguish between the signatures of a toy and a seasoned artist, appreciating their placement, good idea or aesthetic qualities, such as colour, form etc. The surprising outcome of this exhibition was to find out how many people are inclined towards the third reaction.

Stuck on the City entered prime exhibition space in Prague and sensitively coped with the "allocated" walls. The styles were diverse, ranging from classic graffiti by **POET 73, SMASH 137, MASKER** and **BATES** to drawings, paintings (**TRON, HONET, HORFE, ZEDZ, OBIC, BIOR, PASTA ONER, SWOON, REBEL INK, POINT, M-CITY, DELTA, HOW´N´NOSM, XDOG**), 3D objects (**ZEDZ, POINT, H3T, EPOS257, PASTA ONER**) and conceptual projects (**SPINO, AKAY, BRAD DOWNEY**). The existence of all the art works was as fleeting as is the existence of such pieces in the street – they vanished with the closing of the exhibition.

Stuck on the City, understandably, could not have limited itself to the “white box”. Art works were also on display at Tesnov and other sites in Prague, mostly on legal walls painted by **POINT, PASTA ONER, XDOG, TRON, ESCIF, HONET, HOW´N´NOSM** and **ZEDZ**. More information and complete photographic documentation is in the exhibition catalogue which was launched when the winner of the **BEST PIECE** competition, **PASTA ONER**, was announced.

Stuck on the City was accompanied by a series of events and a varied programme that provided an opportunity for the artists and for art enthusiasts from the Czech Republic and abroad to share their views on topics such as ecology and the role of woman in graffiti scene, among others. Detailed information is available in the catalogue and on the websites **mestemposedli.cz** and **taktum.cz**.

Stuck on the City was produced in cooperation with the City Gallery Prague, **Taktum** agency, **Trafacka** civic association and **The Chemistry Gallery**. The exhibition was held under the auspices of the Mayor of the City of Prague, MUDr. Bohuslav Svoboda. The accompanying programme was supported by the Councillor of the City of Prague, Alexandra Udženija.

Stuck on the City was initiated by Karel Srp and created by a small production team:

Radek Wohlmuth, curator

“Apart from the fact that we have managed to uphold our reputation, breaking the local taboo against showing street art and graffiti in galleries, which marked a new milestone for this artistic style, it made me happy to see the unflagging interest the exhibition aroused in people of all generations. Personally, I am glad that our exhibition could host enough pieces from the legends of European and international street art and graffiti, such as **SWOON, HORFE, DELTA, HONET** or **SMASH137** – in the setting to which they belong in the first place – the streets of Prague.”

Jan Kaláb, Klára Voskovcová, co-authors of the exhibition concept

“Making art in situ, i.e. the fact that various artists from different countries of the world met in the Municipal Library and basically improvised, complementing one another, and even set out into the streets, is what makes people coming from the street art and graffiti scene so different. This is the moment, which made **Stuck on the City** such a lively, although slightly risky event. It was risky because improvisation does not usually enter the gallery on such scale and under such concept. The artists who participated in **Stuck on the City** all coped with the challenge presented to them in the form of a white wall in their own way – and I think that with a surprisingly good result.” (KV)

Vladana Rýdlová, producer, Taktum

“The work on the exhibition and accompanying programme was a challenge for all and the hard work on the project itself has toughened me up, both professionally and personally. We have passed a long period of discussions, fought many battles in relevant and irrelevant places and looked for optimal legal sites in the city which has not yet clarified its stance on graffiti. After all, it was a success and we had a record-breaking number of visitors. We have made it. Thanks go to all who were on board with us.”

Blanka Čermáková, co-producer, Trafacka

“Preparing the exhibition with the accompanying programmes and watching the writers during their collective painting act in the Municipal Library gave me, and judged by the results of the exhibition also the visitors, a huge energy boost. After the NAMES festival it was another euphoric experience which I hope to repeat in the future. Thanks go to all artists for having travelled short and long distances, to the visitors for having had good fun in great numbers and to all my colleagues, including those from the City Gallery Prague, without whom this would not have been possible.”

Lucie Haškovcová, author of the workshops for children, City Gallery Prague

“The fact that the exhibition provoked a huge interest among schools and in the young generation is a great signal. Palled by the virtual reality and information overflow, they are slowly starting to prefer the “real” reality – they want to be in contact with the art works, in the terrain, to actively communicate with art, which corresponds to the growing interest in visual arts. This quality study of a representative selection of artists with street art roots had huge educational potential and due to its diversity and visuality was a constant source of inspiration. The impulses from such an exhibition may not only have a positive impact on the creativity of future artists from various fields but the exhibition may also be, due to its experimental character, a subconscious source of creative inspiration for the academia and scholarly fields. **To be productive and meaningful an exhibition should motivate and inspire.**”

Petr Hajek, director of The Chemistry Gallery

“Our collective work on the Stuck on the City project, particularly the accompanying programmes, has shown that it is possible to make large format paintings in the outdoors, even in exposed sites. I believe the fact that the participating artists had

an opportunity to demonstrate their skills in their natural environment, the street, was a great dimension of this exhibition. We will continue to acquire sites for making legal outdoor murals, even though the exhibition has ended, so that Prague can be ranked alongside modern cities where art and street art – wittily fitted to the city context – are visible at every step.”

THE CATALOGUE

The bilingual publication (Czech and English), published by Taktum, is the original and only document of the international exhibition **STUCK ON THE CITY**. On one hundred pages and with fifty-two photographs the reader is not only invited to take a look inside the exhibition but it also offers a guided tour of Prague’s urban sites hosting unique murals. Twenty-six artists from Europe, the US and, of course, the Czech Republic were quite literally confronted with the walls of the Prague Municipal Library, each treating this pure gallery space with their own style. These respected contemporary artists who originated from the graffiti and street art scene have defended their legendary reputation within this genre which still provokes controversial reactions. Their artist aliases known mostly to the contemporary young generation speak for themselves: **AKAY, BRAD DOWNEY, DELTA, EPOS 257, ESCIF, HONET, HORFE, HOW & NOSM, M-CITY, MASKER, OBIC, PASTA ONER, POET 73, POINT, REBEL INK, SMASH137, SPINO, SWOON, TRON, XDOG, ZEDZ.**

The catalogue, designed by Petr Štěpán (Studio Najbrt), presents more than just a photographic document of the art works created during the first week of October 2012. Complete with text from the exhibition curator Radek Wohlmuth and a full list of art works created both in the gallery and in the street it is also a study of the diverse visual world of contemporary urban art.

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