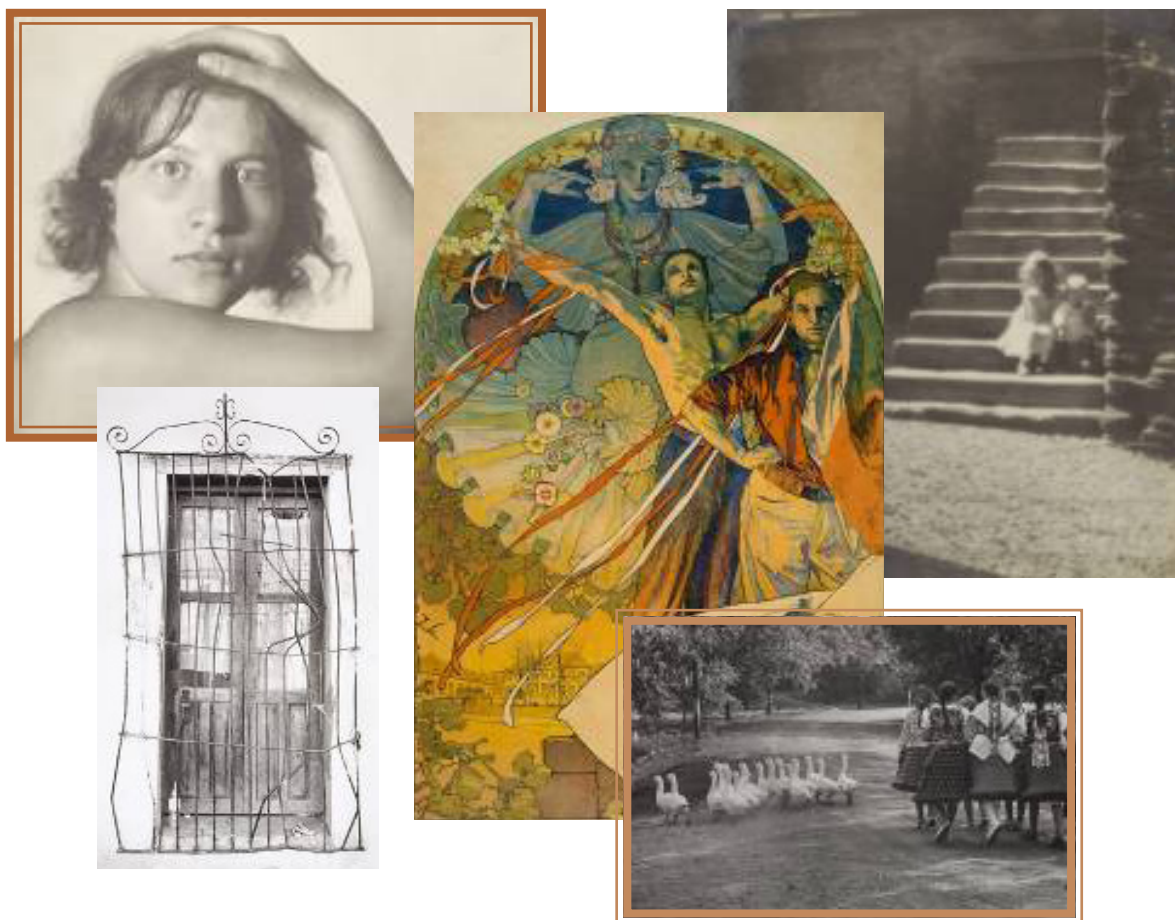


The Spencer Museum of Art

Exhibit

# Imagining Central Europe

October 12 - November 8, 2009



The Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies and European Studies

The University of Kansas

# “Imagining Central Europe”

## Exhibit

October 12-November 8, 2009

Fall 2009 has become known at the University of Kansas as the “Fall of the Wall.” The semester features a series of events, including conferences, films, talks, play readings, and exhibits, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the fall of Communism in East Central Europe. November specifically commemorates the month when the Berlin Wall came down. Across the region Soviet-supported regimes collapsed. In Czechoslovakia, the peaceful nature of this change led to its being named the “Gentle revolution” or the “Velvet Revolution.”

During the “Fall of the Wall” KU’s Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies in collaboration with the Spencer Museum of Art, Watson Library, and the Spencer Research Library explores how we think about Central Europe and its national and regional histories and cultures. In October and early November there will be a three-part exhibit of KU’s art and rare book holdings from East Central Europe. Watson Library will exhibit a collection of science fiction from Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. The Spencer Research Library will exhibit rare examples of the early twentieth-century Polish journal, *Życie*. The Spencer Museum will exhibit a broad array of art from the region, including a large poster by the Czech Art Nouveau artist, Alphonse Mucha.

### Related Events:

**October 16-18** – “Central Europe 1989: Lessons and Legacies”  
Kansas Union, Kansas and Malott Rooms

This conference investigates the question of transition and change in Central European countries and cultures, as it relates to narratives of identity in literature and film, gender, ethnicity, civil and state structures, the environment, and the economy.

**Saturday, November 7** – “Velvet Revolution Party”  
(in collaboration with the Czech and Slovak Club of Kansas City)

8:30 am -1 pm – “Reimagining Central Europe: Transition and Identity,”  
K-16 Teacher’s Workshop  
Spencer Museum of Art  
To register contact Tatyana Wilds: [tw@ku.edu](mailto:tw@ku.edu) or 785-864-4237)

Catered lunch of Central-European-fusion cuisine in downtown Lawrence  
Contact Bart Redfort: [breadford@ku.edu](mailto:breadford@ku.edu) or 785-864-4248

2 pm – staged reading of Karel Capek’s 1921 play,  
“RUR: Rossum’s Universal Robots,”  
Inge Theatre, Murphy Hall  
KU alumni and the community are welcome.

## Alphonse Mucha

The spiraling rhythms, flat decorative patterns, linear outlines, and elongated proportions we associate with Art Nouveau were first described as the “Mucha Style.” Czech artist Alfons Mucha (spelled Alphonse by English audiences today) popularized this style through exposure in France, particularly the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris for which he decorated the Bosnia and Herzegovina Pavilion and assisted with the Austrian Pavilion. Despite the international appeal of the Mucha Style and its adaptation by other artists as Art Nouveau, Mucha maintained that his graceful style developed out of Slavic artistic traditions. He remained devoted to issues of Czech life and culture, and considered his series of paintings depicting the history of the Czech and the Slavic peoples called *The Slav Epic* (*Slovanská epeje*) to be his masterpiece. Mucha is also known for his posters celebrating theatrical events, musical performances, and athletic endeavors.



### Alphonse Mucha

1860-1939

born Ivancice, Austrian Empire (present-day Czech Republic); died Prague, Protectorate of Bohemia and

Moravia (present-day Czech Republic)

poster for 8th Sokol Festival, 1925

color lithograph, gold, linen

Museum purchase: State funds, 1969.0057

Sokol clubs were youth movement and gymnastics organizations that emerged in Prague in 1862. Their emphasis on physical, intellectual and moral discipline relates to the growth of Czech nationalism. In this poster we see a victorious, bare-chested athlete next to a man in official Sokol uniform. An allegorical figure of Slavia, the symbol of the Slav peoples, presides over the participants.

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## Elliott Erwitt

Erwitt, born to Russian immigrant parents, moved to United States as a young child. As a photographer for the Magnum Photos agency, Erwitt traveled the world on assignment. He is known for his black and white candid shots of ironic and bizarre situations within everyday settings – as the master of the “indecisive moment.” In this image, a group of young girls dressed in traditional Hungarian costume compositionally mimic the adjacent gaggle of geese. The linearity of the figures’ braids also echoes the elongated necks of the geese.



### Elliott Erwitt

born 1928, Paris, France

Geese, Hungary, 1964

gelatin silver print, printed 1977

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick M. Myers,  
1979.0140



**Elliott Erwitt**

born 1928, Paris, France  
Confessional, Czestochowa, Poland, 1964  
gelatin silver print, printed 1977  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick M. Myers, 1979.0142



**Elliott Erwitt**

born 1928, Paris, France  
Nixon and Krushchev involved in the Kitchen debates, 1959  
gelatin silver print  
Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Art Acquisition Fund,  
1986.0075

The so-called “Kitchen Debates” were a series of exchanges between then Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev which took place in Moscow during an exhibition in 1959 featuring an affordable American house equipped with new labor-saving consumer devices. Nixon’s approval towards the domestic technology earned approval among American viewers. This debate between capitalist and communist economic systems characterized broader Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union and its satellite states.

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## Wenceslaus Hollar

Wenceslaus Hollar was an etcher from Bohemia, a historical region occupying the current western two thirds of the Czech Republic. He spent his artistic career working and traveling in Stuttgart, Strasbourg, Cologne, Vienna, Prague, Antwerp, and London. Hollar recorded many aspects of seventeenth-century life such as architectural sketches, maps, and depictions of people, fashions, and events. His detailed studies of women’s costume and his depictions of crowds are noteworthy for their virtuosity and specificity. His ability to capture the play of light on shimmering gowns and the exquisite detail of fine lace and rich textiles is evident in these studies of Hungarian women.



**Wenceslaus Hollar**

1607-1677  
born Prague, Bohemia (present-day Czech Republic);  
died London, England  
Matrisana M. (Woman of the Mátra Mountains of  
Hungary), 1648  
Mulier Matrisana (Woman of the Mátra Mountains of  
Hungary), 1649  
etching  
Gift from the John J. Talleur and Ann Talleur Collec-  
tion, 1991.0238.f, g

## Frantisek Drtikol

Female nudes were Drtikol's primary focus throughout his career. Although his subject matter remained constant his style and working methods underwent several transformations. Drtikol began his career producing softly focused figures in decorative tableaux in a style characteristic of Pictorialism, a movement popular from about 1885 through the early twentieth century. Later he developed a cubist approach placing his nudes under strong lights in sharp geometric settings. This photograph belongs to Drtikol's first creative period. Made in 1925, it represents one of the last Drtikol's Pictorialist images. The image demonstrates Drtikol's interest in the realm between model's gaze

and the eyes of the viewer, which represented for Drtikol a void-like space that reveals an ever-changing range of emotions.



### Frantisek Drtikol

1883-1961

born Příbram, Austria-Hungary (present-day Czech Republic); died Prague, Czechoslovakia (present-day Czech Republic)

untitled (portrait of a young woman), circa 1925

gelatin silver print

Museum purchase: R. Charles and Mary Margaret Clevenger Fund, 1994.0036

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## Josef Sudek

Josef Sudek's artistic career spans through a number of decades and artistic styles making him one of the most prominent Czech photographers of the twentieth century. Sudek served in the Austro-Hungarian Army and was wounded in the right arm while fighting on the Italian Front during World War I. Infection set in and eventually surgeons removed his arm at the shoulder. This event resulted in a life of restlessness and solitude. After the war, Sudek turned to photography, first adopting a Pictorialist style to produce dreamy landscapes and interior settings. In the 1920s and 1930s Sudek was instrumental in organizing several photographic societies such as the Prague Photographic Club (Fotoklub Praha) and later Czech Photographic Society which promoted Czech modernist photography.



### Josef Sudek

1896-1976

born Kolín, Austria-Hungary (present-day Czech Republic); died Prague, Czechoslovakia (present-day Czech Republic)

Veteran Hospital and Home at Invalidovna, 1922-1927

gelatin silver print

Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Art Acquisition Fund, 1998.0015

*Veteran Hospital and Home at Invalidovna* is indicative of Sudek's early work with its concentration on the painterly nature of photographic images achieved through soft-focus effects, low tonality, and contrast. Pictorialist photographers strove to be suggestive rather than overtly descriptive, being more concerned with the mood of the work rather than its possible didacticism.



**Josef Sudek**

1896-1976

born Kolín, Austria-Hungary (present-day Czech Republic);

died Prague, Czechoslovakia (present-day Czech Republic)

Prague, 1957

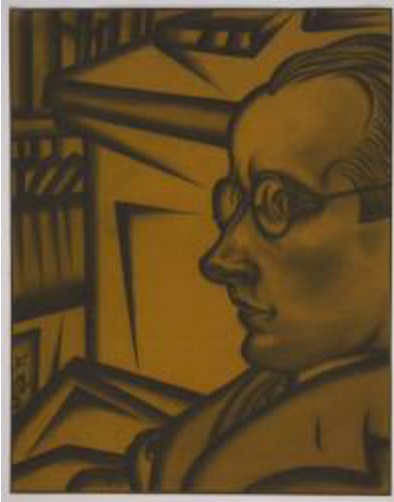
gelatin silver print

Museum purchase: State funds, 2000.0087

Sudek, himself, was devoted to photographing Prague, where he lived most of his life. His characteristic use of light emphasizes not the light itself but the surfaces it defines.

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## Miklos Farkashazy



**Miklos Farkashazy**

1895-1964

born Budapest, Austria-Hungary (present-day Hungary);

died Budapest, Hungary

Portrait of György Bálint, 1926

charcoal on paper

Museum purchase: State funds, 1999.0001

György Bálint (1906-1943) was a Marxist journalist and critic, and one of the members of the literary Left in Hungary. He perished in the Holocaust.

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## Jindrich Stýrský



**Jindrich Stýrský**

1899-1942

born Cermna, Austria-Hungary (present-day Czech Republic); died

Prague, Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (present-day Czech

Republic)

untitled (Fidelio), 1934-1935

published in *Na jelah techto dni* (*On the Needles of these Days*), p. 38

gelatin silver print

Museum purchase: Helen Foresman Spencer Art Acquisition Fund, 1999.0144

## Pieter Coecke van Aelst the Elder

Coecke traveled from Antwerp to Constantinople in 1553, documenting the customs and localities along his route. In this image of Slavonia, an historical region in today's eastern Croatia, we see an encampment of the Ottoman-Turkish soldiers who controlled much of Slavonia during the 1500s, a group of peasants building a campfire, and the artist, who is shown in the foreground pointing to the man carrying a tall staff. A translation of original French inscription for this page reads as follows:



### Pieter Coecke van Aelst the Elder

1502-1550

born Aelst, Hapsburg Netherlands (present-day Belgium);

died Brussels, Hapsburg Netherlands (present-day Belgium)

Les moeurs et fachons de faire de Turcs (Mores and Fashion of the Turk), 1553

woodcut

Museum purchase: State funds, 1999.0196

### *A Military Encampment in Slavonia*

*Here are the mountains of the land of Slavonia, where one finds no provisions save those the wayfarer happens to carry with him. To find or acquire a cup or bowl of milk is an accomplishment. The travelers with their beasts of burden and packs pass the night in the open, exposed to the rain, wind, snow, and hail. They must start a fire to warm themselves, except those who sleep on baggage and packs. So, there is a want of everything.*

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## Cornel Somogyi



### Cornel Somogyi

born 1910, active Hungary

untitled, 1933

gelatin silver print

Museum purchase: Terry and Sam Evans Fund,  
2000.0084

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## Bohumil Šťastný



### Bohumil Šťastný

1905-1991

born Prague, Austria-Hungary (present-day Czech Republic); died Prague, Czechoslovakia (present-day Czech Republic)

Card Players, 1930s

gelatin silver print

Museum purchase: State funds,  
2000.0085

## Jaromír Funke

Although Funke photographed a variety of subjects ranging from still lifes to exteriors, the artist's true preoccupation was often the quality of the light illuminating these spaces. Adhering to the Pictorialist style, Funke's photographs of the 1920s depicted the ephemeral qualities of light. Later, Funke combined this interest with the transient subject matter such as reflections in shop windows to pioneer Surrealism in Czech photography.



### Jaromír Funke

1896-1945

born Skutec, Austria-Hungary (present-day Czech Republic);  
died Prague, Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (present-day Czech Republic)

untitled (2 children on steps), 1920

gelatin silver print

Museum purchase: State funds, 2000.0088

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## Henry Griffin



### Henry Griffin

1916-1992

born Baltimore, Maryland; died Takoma Park,  
Maryland

Warsaw's Ghetto, circa 1940s

from Associated Press Newsphoto Service, New  
York

gelatin silver print

Source unknown, 2003.0096

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## John Gutowski

UMKC professor John Gutowski was an ardent traveler. In the 1980s and 1990s he travelled extensively, visiting Russia, Mexico, Egypt, Morocco, Canada, and Poland. His travel photographs deviate from typical tourist reports: they do not depict famous sights. Instead they often capture the most trivial and seemingly insignificant of subjects. However, it is precisely this



triviality that urges the viewer to realize that each moment of life is transient and thus unique. Gutowski described the importance of these feelings of impermanence, stating of his photo travelogues, "that fleeting feeling is what I want you to feel."



**John Gutowski**

1948-2001

born Schenectady, New York; died Kansas City, Missouri

Untitled, 1995

gelatin silver print

Gifted from the estate John W. Gutowski by Cydney E. Millstein, 2008.0353



**John Gutowski**

1948-2001

born Schenectady, New York; died Kansas City, Missouri

Untitled, 1995

gelatin silver print

Gifted from the estate John W. Gutowski by Cydney E. Millstein, 2008.0356



**John Gutowski**

1948-2001

born Schenectady, New York; died Kansas City, Missouri

Only One Gets Out Alive, 1995

gelatin silver print

Gifted from the estate John W. Gutowski by Cydney E. Millstein, 2008.0357

According to Gutowski's widow, this image depicts a site related to the Wola Massacre, which took place in Warsaw in August, 1944. Many Polish civilians were killed by the Nazis during their suppression of the Warsaw uprising. Trying to avoid massive city combats, the Nazis isolated one city district, the Wola district, and executed everyone who was spotted, not discriminating between insurgents and mere civilians.

"These photographs are, in a very real sense, autobiographical. I made the negatives much as one would take notes to remember specifics, and I made the prints to enhance and embellish what information the negatives provide. The information I garner from the negative is incomplete. It is in fact recorded in a code, which I struggle to accurately decipher. To this data I add my romanticized recollections, my dreams and illusions, and allusions to what has come before. The results, by ordinary standards, must be denied the category of non-fiction; but affairs of the heart are not judged by ordinary standards."

- John Gutowski



**John Gutowski**

1948-2001

born Schenectady, New York; died Kansas City, Missouri

Untitled, 1995

gelatin silver print

Gifted from the estate John W. Gutowski

by Cydney E. Millstein,

2008.0358

Throughout his extensive travels, no matter what the country, Gutowski was especially attracted to one image, that of a door. Flung open or closed, decorated or austere, belonging to rich households or dilapidated ruins, Gutowski's doors mark transitional spaces inviting the viewer to ponder the significance of crossing boundaries and discovering the world on the other side.



**John Gutowski**

1948-2001

born Schenectady, New York; died Kansas City, Missouri

Untitled, 1995

gelatin silver print

Gifted from the estate John W. Gutowski by Cydney E. Millstein,

2008.0365



**John Gutowski**

1948-2001

born Schenectady, New York; died Kansas City, Missouri

Untitled, 1995

gelatin silver print

Gifted from the estate John W. Gutowski by Cydney E. Millstein,

2008.0366

This photograph depicts a veterans' parade in Warsaw, which honored the oldest living WWI veterans in Poland.

# Maps

Map  
Central Europe  
1910



Map  
Central Europe  
1930



Map  
Central Europe  
2000



Maps are reproduced from: Paul Robert Magosci, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2002).



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*[www.crees.ku.edu](http://www.crees.ku.edu)*  
*[www2.ku.edu/~ces](http://www2.ku.edu/~ces)*  
*[www.spencerart.ku.edu](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu)*

