

**ARTISTS SPACE**

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Programs:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Artists Space  
Exhibitions and Events

METAPHYSICAL VISIONS/MIDDLE EUROPE

Artists Grants  
Exhibition Funding

May 25 - July 1, 1989

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 25, 6-8 pm.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 11-6

Artists File  
N.Y.S. Slide Registry

Mrdjan Bajic  
Miroslaw Bałka  
Jiri David  
El Kazovszkij  
Zeljko Kipke  
Jiri Kovanda  
Mariusz Kruk  
Piotr Kurka



Artists Space is pleased to present METAPHYSICAL VISIONS/MIDDLE EUROPE, an exhibition organized by former Artists Space curator Valerie Smith. These artists represent work from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia. Their work deals with particular aspects of the human condition in four quite different countries, whose cultural, social, political and economical situation is rapidly changing in ways that directly effect their production as artists.

The sculpture of Mrdjan Bajic and the paintings of Zeljko Kipke from Yugoslavia represent, in each case, a strong awareness of the historical precedent of their work. Bajic's constructed forms combine human and static wooden and metal forms, which are either hand crafted or industrially formed and carry a wide variety of narrative, historical, and sensory associations.

Zeljko Kipke's painted images are less poetic and more overtly abstract and politically referential. Fragments of words and phrases in Latin and other primarily non-slavic languages frame and label protean forms which are taken from Russian Constructivism and Zenith, a related avant garde artistic movement influential in Yugoslavia in the early twenties.

The work of Polish artists Miroslaw Bałka, Mariusz Kruk and Piotr Kurka is defined by a looser kind of sculptural expression. Bałka's sculpture consists of lonely human figures cast in plaster, manipulated to embody a range of emotions.

Piotr Kurka's strangely hybrid forms are also a mixture of natural and man-made materials but they are less symbolic of human experience than of the phenomenological situation or history of objects in reality, and how the perception of them can be altered. Familiar associations collapse and we are left with imaginative objects which yield a multitude of associations.

Mariusz Kruk and Piotr Kurka founded Koła Klipsa, a group of artists active in Poznan since 1983, who work collectively making objects which are rich in metaphysical associations. Kruk has been exhibiting individually since 1987 but, in a way related to his Polish contemporaries, making sculptures that address the relationship of inanimate objects to real things in the world. Kruk is interested in juxtaposing the

fantastic qualities of his objects and their practical use.

El Kazovszklj's installations are expansive environments which contain a menagerie of painted animal and human characters taken from her paintings. Dogs and bird forms sit quietly among the exaggerated carnival-like environment which often serves as the backdrop for elaborate performances choreographed by the artist. A human comedy is created into which we enter and by which we are overwhelmed.

JYrÍ David's quietly symbolic paintings represent the more spiritual side of Czech painting. David's work belies a fascination with myth and alchemy, in particular the systems of belief of Jewish caballists who were influential in Prague during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Narrative fragments and symbols are reordered to cast new ambiguity on their significance and the outward signs of mysticism give way to a hybrid interpretation of underlying reality.

JYrÍ Kovanda, David's Czech contemporary is involved with a more personal, less historical system of hieroglyphics. The field of his canvases is established by a well orchestrated system of geometric patterns and dots into which a whimsical cast of cartoon-like characters and objects intervene.

Deconstruction, Quotation and Subversion: Video from Yugoslavia, a program of recent Yugoslav videotapes is being presented in conjunction with the exhibition. The program of fourteen tapes, and organized by Kathy Rae Huffman, presents a survey of current Yugoslavian video work from both independent and state sponsored videomakers.

Metaphysics in Middle Europe has been funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation, and the Open Society Fund.

Artists Space activities are made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; Institute of Museum Services; New York State Council on the Arts; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Art Matters, Inc., Cowles Family Charitable Trust, Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, Inc., Joyce Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Jerome Foundation, W. Alton Jones Foundation, Charlottesville, VA., The J.M. Kaplan Fund, Leonhardt Foundation, The Joe and Emily Lowe Foundation, Inc., the Menemsha Foundation, The New York Community Trust, Betty Parsons Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., Mark Rothko Foundation, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, A.T.&T. Foundation, American Express Company, Chase Manhattan Bank N.A., Citibank, N.A., Consolidated Edison, Equitable Real Estate Group, Inc., General Atlantic Corporation, R.H. Macy & Company, Mobil Foundation, Inc., Morgan Guaranty Trust of New York, Philip Morris Companies, Inc., The Artists Space Exhibition Circle, Galleries in Support of Artists Space, as well as numerous Friends.

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