

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Central European Video Art

(from the Czech & Slovak Republics, Poland & Hungary)

**University of Rhode Island
Fine Arts Center Galleries**

Main Gallery guest-curated by Viera Levitt
Jan 24 - Feb 10

Closing Reception with Remarks by the Curator
Sunday, Feb 10, 2 - 4pm

Kingston Train Station Component
Jan 16 - Feb 10

MAIN GALLERY

In **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS**, a special video exhibition, universal themes of human nature (private worlds, vulnerability, and the search beyond the 'visible') combine with the distinctive sensibilities of Central Europe. At multiple monitor stations selected video-loops will be played that emphasize Central Europe's human stories.

Projected on the gallery wall will be a portion of a larger project called *Sixtysomething* by Milena Dopitova, a native Czech artist who lives and works in Prague, with additional video revealing how she and her sister 'aged' for the production. Other artists represented, nearly all still residents of their native countries, share in this show their deeply human video-stories. They include Pavlina Fichta Cierna (Slovakia), Hajnal Nemeth (Hungary) who lives and works in Berlin, Katerina Seda (Czech Republic) and Arthur Zmijewski (Poland).

KINGSTON TRAIN STATION

A component of the exhibition will be mounted in the Historic Kingston Train Station's Amtrak Waiting Room, beginning January 16. Shown in a continuous loop in a bay window, the meditative character of Pavel Mrkus' *Seagull*, 2005 (with music composed and played by Aziza Sadikova) will intrigue and calm travelers. Mrkus, born in the Czech Republic, is an international digital media and glass artist represented by a gallery in Dresden. He has also taught at RISD as a Visiting Professor. This video combines a romanticized historical interior with a 3D animation of a flying golden seagull. The ambience of the video setting, its mirrors and shining chandelier, strangely echoes the décor of the Kingston Station Waiting Room.

Pavel Mrkus: *Seagull*, 2005, videostill © Pavel Mrkus



THE GUEST CURATOR

This special exhibition is guest curated by Independent Curator Viera Levitt (formerly Jancekova). She is a native Slovak who shifted her base to Rhode Island two years ago. From 1997-2005 Levitt was director/curator of the contemporary art showcase, Jan Koniarek Gallery, located in the historic town of Trnava. She was the youngest director ever in a public art museum in the Slovak Republic. Levitt has curated or co-curated more than 30 exhibitions in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and the USA. She is a member of IKT, the International Association of Contemporary Art Curators, and AICA, the International Association of Art Critics.

Milena Dopitova: *Green Plateaus 1*, 2003, videostill © the artist, Courtesy Jiri Svetska Gallery, Prague



STAGED PHOTOGRAPHS

by Pavel Pecha

Jan 28 - Feb 28

Complementing **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS**, the Corridor Gallery showcases engrossing performances for the camera by a prominent photographer from the Slovak Republic. Pavel Pecha is engaged in the creation of an alternative world staged outdoors, in the landscape and "filled with fantasy, absurd situations and play." Like his surrealist exemplars responding to Communism, in a cycle called "My Intuitive Theatre" Pecha chooses to devise and to live in "an alternative world" of subversive creative practice.



Pavel Pecha: From the cycle *My Intuitive Theatre*, 1990-96, photograph © the artist, Courtesy Anne Arden McDonald, NY

Acknowledgments are due to the following:

In New York: Apexart, Czech Center, Hungarian Cultural Institute, Anne Arden McDonald, Polish Institute, and Steven Rand; in Rhode Island: Jo-Ann Conklin, David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, Courthouse Center for the Arts, West Kingston, Friends of Kingston Station, Kingston, and Mini Grant, The Rhode Island Foundation, Providence.



FINE ARTS CENTER GALLERIES
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Corridor Gallery | Jan 28 - Feb 28

THE FINE ARTS CENTER GALLERIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND offer a constantly changing program of contemporary art in all media in three exhibition areas: Main, Photography and Corridor Galleries. Exhibitions are distinguished among university galleries in the northeast for being internally generated, rather than rented from sponsoring institutions elsewhere. Internationally recognized artists are featured as well as artists in the early stages of their careers.

MAIN GALLERY

Tues - Fri 12noon - 4pm, Sat/Sun 1 - 4pm

CORRIDOR GALLERY

Daily 9am - 9pm

The Galleries are closed on federal & state holidays.

KINGSTON TRAIN STATION

Open daily during train service.

All programs of the The Fine Arts Center Galleries are open to the public without charge and all are handicapped accessible. **For further information, telephone 401.874.2775, fax 401.874.2007 or visit www.uri.edu/artgalleries.**

To arrange group tours please contact us at 401.874.9628 or facgalls@etal.uri.edu.