MM

RADKA BODZEWICZ
KRYŠTOF BRŮHA
JAN DAŇHEL
HANA GAROVÁ
JAKUB JANOVSKÝ
ŠÁRKA KOUDELOVÁ
JIŘÍ KOVANDA
LUKÁŠ MACHALICKÝ
JIŘÍ MAREK
JIŘÍ MATĚJŮ
MÍLA PRESLOVÁ
ONDŘEJ PŘIBYL
MAGDALÉNA RAJCHLOVÁ (MAI)
NIKOLA EMMA RYŠAVÁ
DANA SAHÁNKOVÁ
LUKÁŠ SLAVICKÝ
JIŘÍ ŠIGUT
TEREZA ŠTĚTINOVÁ
SOFIE ŠVEJDOVÁ
VLADIMÍR VÉLA
BARBORA VOVSOVÁ

100 + 21

NOT FOR SALE
PLEASE RETURN UPON LEAVING

EN

Radka Bodzewicz (1991)

• Red
2026, oil on canvas, 210 × 160 cm

• The Power of Play
2026, oil on canvas, 130 × 160 cm

In MM's work, I was particularly inspired by his passion for red, which he regarded as one of the absolute colours. Red is likewise one of the fundamental colours in my palette and a personal favourite that I use frequently. It evokes a sense of physicality and, in its rare form, even aggression. We instinctively associate it with the colour of blood, which in turn evokes physical intimacy, rawness, and primitivism – in the sense of Eliade's concept: an early, traditional worldview in which humanity perceives the world as imbued with the sacred. I have simply titled the painting *Red*.

In *The Power of Play*, I drew inspiration from MM's series of plays, in which the motif of children's activity becomes geometric and moves towards abstraction. My primary inspiration was the figure turned away from the viewer. I have long been fascinated by the deeply modelled back, treated as a single abstract surface. My two figures, crouching opposite one another, engage in a quiet dialogue – holding hands, or perhaps arm wrestling. Their bodies gradually dissolve into a vegetal motif, an abstract expanse of colour, and an interplay between the body and the flower, between a specific narrative and a moment that slowly fades and disappears. Here, play becomes a test of one's own strength.

Kryštof Brůha (1990)

• Magna Mutatio – Oculus Terrae
2026, generative print / Sentinel-2 L2A data / giclée print, archival pigments on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper, 100 × 70 cm

The work draws on my *Magna Mutatio* collection, created from Earth remote-sensing data. What I find particularly compelling in MM's work is his engagement with materiality and layering. His images are composed of layers, each distinct in its own right, while the uppermost surface reflects all the states that preceded it. Satellite imagery operates similarly: it records changes to the Earth's surface in temporal layers, revealing processes not perceptible to the human eye alone. Its final form is therefore always an abstract interpretation of reality. Accordingly, I base my new work on the multispectral processing of a specific scene. The result is an abstract image whose layered logic and dramatic use of colour echo MM's painting without imitating it.

Jan Daňhel (1971)

• Breakfast, 2026, two photographs 38 × 48 cm (analogue gelatin-silver black-and-white photograph, negative size 4 × 5 inches), object – feathers, fur, silk, steel, 8 × 12 cm

I first encountered MM's work as a teenager in 1987, during a lecture by Bohumír Mráz at the Prague Municipal Library. My strongest impression was from his late 'Informel and abstract' non-figural period. Nevertheless, having familiarised myself with Emila's work and personality, I interpret the 1952 painting *Imperialist Breakfast (Emila and Flies)* as expressing a strong and inspiring mutual creative tension, or even influence. My interpretation explores time and space across MM's oeuvre, from his surrealist, nature-inspired paintings to his later work, marked by torment and scraping into the paint. I chose to combine photography with an object: seventy-two flies tied using English Renaissance patterns reminiscent of William Shakespeare. I was particularly intrigued by MM's interest in the film adaptation of *Hamlet**. The tied flies draw on the painting's colour scheme and serve as a defining element in the photographs, taken at a site where these stages of mayflies occur. The photographs depict the marshy Materia Prima, which invites one to torment or scrape away at it. Alongside the insects' life cycle, I reinterpret MM's work from end to beginning: the flies' barbed hooks evoke his surrealist period.

* *Hamlet*, 1948, Great Britain, directed by Laurence Olivier

Hana Garová (1986)

• The Creeping Shadows of Illness
2026, egg tempera on canvas board, 45 × 35 cm

• Portrait of a Girl in Flames
2026, egg tempera on canvas board, 45 × 35 cm

• Inside
2026, egg tempera on canvas board, 45 × 35 cm

• Malignant Disease
2026, egg tempera on canvas board, 40 × 50 cm

• Illness
2026, tempera on canvas board, 35 × 45 cm

• A Decaying Drop of Blood
2026, egg tempera on canvas board, 30 × 40 cm

• Hommage à Mikuláš Medek
2026, egg tempera on canvas board, 30 × 40 cm

• Under Pressure
2026, tempera on canvas board, 35 × 45 cm

• Dark Space
2026, egg tempera on canvas board, 40 × 50 cm

• Untitled
2026, tempera on canvas board, 40 × 30 cm

As I prepared the paintings, I gradually chose motifs and techniques, especially those connected to the materials MM used. This naturally led to an open series painted in egg tempera on a solid canvas-board ground. MM used tempera – and later, emulsion tempera – during his early expressive period (juvenilia) and his surrealist period. At the turn of the 1940s and 1950s, he combined tempera with oil. However, he expressed some mistrust of the material's durability, given its fragility and tendency to crack. Thematically, I feel a personal affinity for libidinal motifs veiled by the shadow of something heart-rending, anticipated danger, or existential anxiety, as well as for the physicality of the terminal state in raw paintings depicting the decomposition of the living tissues in the self-image.

Jakub Janovský (1984)

• Tower (Moveable Grave)
2026, wood, plywood,
concrete, paint, h. 300 cm

In MM's last series, I was fascinated by the theme of moveable graves. It is, in fact, a metaphor for the human being and the body: the grave moves with man, and man becomes the grave. This paradox is translated into artistic language.

I created a spatial paraphrase by stacking cubes and blocks – inspired by the central motif throughout MM's series. I changed only the horizontal character, creating an object that towers upward. A kind of vertical grave. Though much less frequent, these also appear throughout history across different cultures. For example, in prehistoric societies or among the peoples of pre-Columbian South America. Incidentally, archaeology has a term for it: standing burials.
The result is a totem-like sculpture.

Šárka Koudelová (1987)

• Dissolution I
2026, acrylic on panel, 120 × 100 cm

• Dissolution II
2026, acrylic on panel, 30 × 20 cm

• Dissolution III
2026, acrylic on panel, 30 × 20 cm

I am especially fascinated by MM's surrealist paintings from the late 1940s and the characteristic red-figure paintings, along with the two blue-figure paintings, from the 1950s. I think that my series lies somewhere at the intersection of these two periods. I am interested in the moment when the human figure dissolves and transforms, almost becoming stylised as it merges with its surroundings. It disintegrates, metamorphoses, intertwines, decays... At the same time, this reflects my growing surrender to events beyond my control, and my sense of connection with nature – the ceaseless cycle of matter continually breaking down and reforming. I am thinking of MM's thorns, elbows, hair, and fingers.

Jiří Kovanda (1953)

• 22 September in Heavy Rain (after MM), 2026, watercolour, crayon, and pastel on handmade paper, 58 × 42 cm

• Mr M. Reflects on His Painting in 1949
2026, a jar of honey, a tin of fish, magnets

I was reading a book of MM's writings that included a black-and-white reproduction of this painting (*22 September in Heavy Rain*, 1958; note by PV). I had never seen it before, and it really caught my attention – not least because of its great title. My favourite period of MM's work is the 1950s and early 1960s. In an interview in the book, I read that MM hated brown and green. As an old, grumpy, peevish man, I decided to create a drawing using precisely those colours, though I did not strictly stick to them. Otherwise, I had no particular reason for choosing this painting.

As a second idea, I wanted to make a human figure out of jars of honey and maybe an apple. My idea was to do it 'subversively' on a honey shelf at the supermarket, but I lacked the courage. Better not add anything – it would be like explaining a joke. A figure made of honey jars – aha, Medek! A round fish tin for a head, magnets for eyes – aha, Magnetic Fish!!!
Have a great day!

Lukáš Machalický (1984)

• White Pudding with Sauerkraut and Potatoes, 2026, 3D print, resin, paint, 200 × 165 × 28 cm

For the exhibition, I chose a lamp as the theme – something that has never appeared in MM's work, at least not as a dominant feature. I knew I would use it as an object within the architectural design, an abstracted version of MM's house in Čejkovice. I also wanted to avoid a literal quotation or reference to a specific work. The object plays with the boundary between the real and the virtual: it is a digitally manipulated model transformed back into reality. By the end of the process, it occupies a peculiar state that cannot be fully interpreted. Something happened, but it remains unclear what. From a distance, it might look like a gnawed-clean bone or an Informel sculpture. The light emitted by the lamp is also remarkable: for a long time, it has not been perceived as material because it lacks the properties of ordinary matter. Only modern physics classified it as a material form of existence.

Jiří Marek (1991)

• Spine
2026, acrylic on canvas, 240 × 180 cm

The painting *Spine* was created for an exhibition project dedicated to MM. In making it, I explored connections between MM's painting and my own contemporary work, in both content and form. I was curious about how naturally our visual languages and symbolic layers could intertwine while still reflecting the themes I pursue over the long term. MM's work opened up a new direction for my own thinking about painting, especially through my engagement with colour and its expressive possibilities. I did not aim to quote directly or pay tribute through imitation, but to create an imaginary dialogue across generations.

Jiří Matějů (1960)

• ARCHÉ (ἀρχή)
2026, triptych, POAP, 61 × 51 cm, 61 × 51 cm and 61 × 51 cm

When I first encountered MM's paintings, set against the enduring reality of communist totalitarianism, they were a revelation: a light amid the gloom and greyness of that time. I realised that this vision of art makes sense even in senseless times because it expresses a unique artistic talent freely. I think MM's art transcends his generation and, of course, the time and place in which he lived. I also see his personal and artistic legacy reflected in this analogy: 'To be free and responsible in that freedom, even when facing life's difficulties or the loneliness that comes from being out of step with the majority's dictates. In this sense, there is also a strong imperative for the artist to resist being beguiled by or succumbing to the ideologies and trends of any era.'

ARCHÉ (ἀρχή) is the title of a triptych of relief paintings, referring to the word's original Greek meaning. Pre-Socratic philosophy used the term for the fundamental principle or matter from which the entire universe, or cosmos (*κόσμος*), arose: Anaximander of Miletus described it as *aperion*: infinite, eternal, unlimited, and indefinite – the source from which all opposites and objects arise. *Arché* also signifies a beginning. Every beginning contains its end – its conclusion and transience – and reflects the reality of time we experience as humans, with which being here and now is associated. In the sense of transience, the content of *Arché* also becomes the foundation of human solidarity, from which an ethics emerges that transcends personal time and being. In my view, the purpose of art lies not in demonstrating craftsmanship or mastery of any aesthetic concept, but in the moment when aesthetics becomes ethics, naturally taking us beyond the individual human story.

As an artist, I want the audience to be free to interpret what they see in the picture, how they perceive it, and the contexts they associate with it. That is why I deliberately avoid making personal comments.

Míla Preslová (1966)

• SHE
2026, colour photograph, photo canvas, wooden frame, 85 × 110 cm

I see the photographic image *SHE* as a revisiting of MM's work. Working with large-format staged photography, I chose to explore this medium through the concept of 'updating the time of an artwork'. The inspiration comes from MM's painting *Sensitive Action I (Eye)*, which, alongside its surrealist conception of reality, visually references the film *Un Chien Andalou* (An Andalusian Dog),* co-directed by the seminal surrealist Salvador Dalí. The almost surreal posture and exaggerated gestures of MM's depicted female nude, set against an empty space with a luminous horizon, are psychologically unsettling yet distinctly eloquent. I have restaged this state – recorded in the past – in the present with a girl from the present. Through this doubling of time, using image and photography, I aim to reveal 'time updating' in the simplest visual form possible. Ultimately, human beings and human identity are always at the forefront, whenever and wherever.

* *Un Chien Andalou*, 1929, France, directed by Luis Buñuel, screenplay by Salvador Dalí, Luis Buñuel

Ondřej Přibyl (1978)

• Stent
2026, ambrotype, photogram, plate dimensions 40 × 23.4 cm, including mount 43.5 × 26.7 cm

When considering how to address the challenge of responding to MM's work, I chose to rely on intuition rather than proceed analytically or conceptually. My aim was to identify an allusion to MM's work within the existing framework of my contemporary practice and then, as effectively and humbly as possible, bring that allusion to the fore in a particular piece, rather than starting entirely from scratch.

Eva Kosáková's comments on MM's paintings were especially important to me, particularly her insights into his use of red and green and her interpretations of his work in light of his declining health and complicated relationship with alcohol. I am fascinated by many things, including the strange elasticity of MM's figures. The series *Tower Designers* has stayed particularly with me, and I am also interested in the structures' vibrancy and the materiality of Informel.

It is somewhat difficult to explain precisely why I chose my ambrotype photogram, *Stent*, in response to the challenge. I would also prefer not to limit its associations with MM's work mainly to formal references. Still, among the more obvious connections, I could point to a particular imperfection in the collodion emulsion on the ambrotype's glass plate; the liveliness and changeability of the moiré photograms of the grid tubes; and the softness they suggest, constrained by the grid's bonding. These can be read as references to the structure and surface of MM's Informel-period paintings, as well as to the elasticity of the figures mentioned earlier, particularly in connection with the subtle red colouring. Given the shape of the grid pattern, one can probably hardly avoid a direct reference to *Tower Designers*, but ultimately also to the darker layer of hidden bodily processes and medical terminology embedded in the title.

Magdaléna Rajchlová (MAI) (2000)

Rise higher and higher, my balloon,
Why do you lie there, staying immune?

• Balloon I
2026, concrete, watercolour, cotton thread, 32 × 15 × 15 cm

• Balloon II
2026, concrete, cotton thread, 32 × 15 × 15 cm

In my work, I mainly sought to highlight the difference between the world of MM and the world that allows us to create. Different regimes, different paces, different amounts of information... We live in a world people may once have only dreamt of. That is exactly why I was looking for a way to express a question I have been shaping for a long time: Are we satisfied in a free world filled with progress, information, and possibilities? Can we cope with this degree of freedom and opportunity? Can we bear it? Or can we not even bear ourselves? Because we carry that past with us, too...

In terms of technical inspiration, I was struck by MM's reflections on colour and his work with the hurting of materials – an approach that directly informs my own work.

Nikola Emma Ryšavá (1990)

• Thorn Between
2026, laminate, concrete,
metal, 199 × 57 × 40 cm

Personally, I most strongly associate MM's work with *Naked in the Thorns*, *Quarrel*, and *Sensitive Action*, which have a profound effect on me. In creating my sculpture, I sought to capture the unsettling atmosphere and tension these works evoke through hand gestures, figure stylisation, and colour.

The motif of the vulnerable body exposed to the world, the tension between inner experience and the surrounding environment, and the psychological and physical traces of injury in MM's work resonate deeply with me. While creating, I felt a close connection between these themes and my own work. For me, the figure is where fragility, anxiety, and the constant tension between inner and outer worlds converge.

Formally, I drew on my usual abstracted figural language while also incorporating symbolic motifs from MM's work, especially the thorns. They appear both in the figure and as hands touching the head and recur in the painting and in the grooves on the sculpture's surface. In terms of colour, I moved closer to the paintings I most strongly associate with MM, using primarily deep red to burgundy in combination with blue.

Lukáš Slavický (1996)

• 21 870 / 3 = 1
2026, oil on canvas, 120 × 182.25 cm

Before beginning, I define format as the starting point that sets the direction for my work. It refers to a series of paintings by MM, each titled after its canvas dimensions. The series is divided into three parts, each corresponding to one key period in his work, as I have defined them. Each piece will refer to a specific stage of thought. Since I see my work as a convergence of several paths and approaches – both conceptual and formal – I will seek a parallel with a selected period in MM's work and apply that specific approach. For this project, I chose the following paintings as inspirational references for each period: 1. *Magnetic Fish*, 2. *Imperialist Breakfast*, and 3. *Celebration of 21 870 Red Centimetres*.

I see this as an experiment in finding harmony or common ground between these approaches, including within my own work. It may be an important personal step towards understanding how these directions – which interest me and which I pursue separately – connect and can ultimately be integrated into a single whole. I find it enriching to gain insight into MM's way of thinking, both practical and conceptual. After reading MM's notes, I initially realised a similarity (as I interpreted it) in the experience of being completely absorbed in one's work. I was also struck by how certain states of mind during the creative process, described in his working notes, remain constant and resonate with me. I then focused on the individual ideas and forms I relate to, and want to build this painting around them, inspired by his approach to work.

The first step will be to determine the format; the second will be to create a 1:1-scale sketch on paper. I will transfer the sketch using the same method MM employed, which I observed during a visit to Eva Kosáková's flat: applying charcoal to the back of the sketch and then transferring it onto the canvas. The third step will involve applying various expressive techniques and combining them on the canvas. So far, the concept is a celebration of existence, with an emphasis on physicality, movement, and faith. Further details will emerge during the painting process.

As for the details, the colour scheme will be modest, using just a few colours. This refers to MM's statement that the only colours are red and blue; the rest are just smudges. I plan to contrast these 'smudges' with the light: glaze blue from the sky at the top of the painting and glaze red from the fire at the bottom. In this way, I want to create a qualitative colour contrast. Composition.

I was drawn to the striking spaces between the objects and figures, and I am considering pareidolia in this context, within a framework of references to MM's early period and surrealism. I am also interested in the luminous aura emanating from the figures. In the existential period, I find a significant motif of action, whether a quarrel, a shared meal, or something else. In this part of the painting, I would also like to create a subtle, subliminal action or a reference to one. SLEEP, EYE, IRONY, and CONTEMPLATION.

Dana Sahánková (1984)

• Echo
2026, white gold, bole on plywood,
21 × 15 cm

• Silence
2026, silver, bole on plywood,
21 × 15 cm

• Singing I
2026, silver, bole on plywood,
21 × 15 cm

• Singing II
2026, silver, bole on plywood,
21 × 15 cm

• Singing III
2026, silver, bole on plywood,
21 × 15 cm

• Singing and Darkness
2026, silver, bole on plywood,
44 × 45 cm

The inspiration for this series of small drawings came from MM's *Great Thirsty Angel* (1973), which left a strong impression on me many years ago with its inner tension, eeriness, and beauty – like a message that unwittingly pushes its way into one's consciousness. The painting – its motif – has remained vivid in my mind all these years. While browsing through dozens of MM's drawings during a meeting with Eva Kosáková, someone literally said, 'And this is some kind of a Golem', and Jan Daňhel added: '... or an Angel'. That was my trigger.

As I developed my own work, engaged with MM's work, and became more familiar with it, I realised it resonates with me more strongly than I expected. This connection is partly formal: I am currently exploring a combination of drawing and sheet metal, using a colour palette similar to MM's work, though I have not chosen the typical gold-and-red combination. I am also exploring the process of reducing the figure to abstraction while retaining its distinct form.

My encounter with MM's work has become a much deeper experience and an unexpected connection for me.

Jiří Šigut (1960)

• Crown (ca 3 904 Old Pink Centimetres)
2026 04 27 15:39:20, acrylic on canvas, 53.3 × 55.4 × 4.07 cm

What intrigued me about MM, among other things and at a certain stage in his prolific creative period, was his fascination with recording and naming an 'exactly' measured area in square centimetres in the subtitles of his paintings, such as *3 604 Cm² of Rustling, 536 Cm² of Silence,* 1961; *162 Cm² of Fragility*, 1964; *Grim Reaper for 21 870 Fragile Cm²*, 1964; and more. I was surprised by MM's pursuit of exactness in his expression, gesture, and chaos.

Furthermore, it was the historical interest in taxidermy – like Cage. All this, as I mentioned above, is in addition to his indisputable qualities. So, quite soon after the challenge, I knew what I could build it on. I chose MM's painting *3 904 Old Pink Centimetres (Prepared Painting)* from 1962, which is part of the collection of the Gallery of Fine Arts in Cheb. I waited until April to photograph a detail of the blossoms in a Japanese cherry crown. Then I compressed it 'in my own way' into a monochromatic image and created an atypical frame measuring exactly 3 904 cm², including the painting's depth in the overall area. This is how I produced *CROWN.*

It was fucking surprising to see how I have stayed true to myself and, in my own way, found myself so closely reflected in MM :–)

Tereza Štětinová (1987)

• Carps – Love
2026, pencil on panel, 125 × 91 cm

• The Crayfish and the Pearl / Day
2026, pencil on panel, 30 × 24 cm

• The Crayfish and the Pearl / Night
2026, pencil on panel, 30 × 24 cm

In my three drawings on wooden panels, I respond to MM's work, particularly to his painting *Magnetic Fish* and the motif of balls which appears in his later works.

While MM's *Magnetic Fish* reflects the existential anguish of a changing political climate and the rise of totalitarianism, my work is rooted in anxiety about the current state of the world. I respond to the environmental crisis and the gradual extinction of animal species, as well as to the current political climate and the resurgence of fascist and authoritarian tendencies in society. This shared sense of threat and uncertainty connects my work to MM's, even though they were created in different historical contexts.

The pair of drawings *The Crayfish and the Pearl* represents day and night, light and darkness. Fragments of crayfish bodies, claws, and antennae form ornamental compositions around the white ball, either embracing it or touching it. Here, the crayfish symbolise the vulnerability of the living world, while the ball motif, inspired by MM's work, represents a bright, steadfast point for me amid uncertainty.

However, despite the underlying anxiety, I bring a sense of hope to my drawings. Light persists even in darkness, alongside the belief that renewal and positive change are possible. I leave surrealist absurdity behind while retaining an ornamental play with fragments of animal bodies and their mutual approach and contact. The drawings thus embody both an awareness of threat and a belief in life's persistence.

Sofie Švejdová (1990)

• Bandage
2025, acrylic and oil on canvas,
150 × 130 cm

Bandage took shape intuitively, without a preconceived image. I painted it with my finger, gradually building up layers of acrylic and oil. I applied, overlapped, scraped away, and disrupted each layer. The title *Bandage* comes from my own experience of pain and long-term tendon inflammation, but it also reflects a certain affinity with MM's work, in which the body, pain, injury, and existential experience became part of his painterly language. I do not intend to quote his work directly; rather, I wish to continue exploring a theme close to my heart.

Vladimír Véla (1980)

• Mantra I (for MM)
2026, acrylic on canvas, 300 × 100 cm

• Mantra II (for MM)
2026, acrylic on canvas, 300 × 100 cm

• Triptych (for MM)
2026, diptych, acrylic on canvas,
270 × 170 cm and 210 × 170 cm

For me, MM is a cross. Its shape reflects his personality and the time that rapidly transformed it. On one side, its arms bear demons, cruelty, pain, and death; on the other, they represent nobility, precision, delicacy, beauty, infinity, and the sacred. In the focal points of MM's paintings, the attributes of his personal iconography are embedded within fields of force. I see 'form' – fundamental and uncompromising, perhaps even a dark foundation on which things take shape – as the link between MM's work and my own. Through a slight shift, a refinement, or the addition of an attribute, a clue, or a shem, things become apparent. The image may fixate a field of strength – the unique configuration. Observation often begins and ends here. The urgency is often unbearable. When looking at MM's paintings, I lose, on a certain level, the desire to express anything through painting. I do not wish to address any theme, to ponder... to think, to say nothing through the painting. But that is not possible, as, after all, everything means something. So, with the feeling MM's work evokes in me, I would actually wish to paint aimlessly, endlessly. So, I have decided to paint this phenomenon again, as though it were a mantra...

Barbora Vovsová (1991)

• Altarpiece
2026, plaster, 90 × 90 cm

Spiritual themes have long been part of my work. I am interested in the spiritual life of the things around us and of nature. I use motifs of temples and objects associated with religious rituals in various forms. In MM's work, I was interested in several aspects: his early biological and surrealist phases and, more generally, his approach to painting (the time he spent on each work and the layering) and to colour (his use of primary colours, mixed from natural pigments, and their symbolism). However, to gain a deeper understanding of his work, I needed to focus on something specific. In his altarpiece for the church in Jedovnice, I appreciate the timeless, abstract concept, which he describes as: 'a static imprint of an event, objectifying the dynamism of this event more authentically than a static depiction of a part of it' (the traces left by Christ's body, rather than a realistic depiction of a part of this event). Similarly, I strive to capture natural processes in static materials. The resulting works often resemble fossils, conveying life through their imprints. I am also intrigued by the symbolism of primary colours: I conceive the altarpiece as an icon. I often use only the RYB model to colour the material. MM's altarpiece celebrates sacrifice, as the church is dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. Mine, by contrast, celebrates all life.

Mikuláš Medek

• Imperialist Breakfast (Emila and Flies), 1952, tempera, oil, canvas, later pasted onto a chipboard, 110 × 82 cm, private collection

• Martin Stejskal, Hands, 1970s, wood, 15 × 50 cm, h. 22 cm

• A printing press formerly owned by Josef Tláskal, metal

• Eva Kosáková, Parents Found, 2017, oil, canvas, 70 × 50 cm

• The photograph by Emila Medková depicts MM with an underdrawing for *Imperialist Breakfast* in Čejkovice in 1952, revealing that the painting's original concept was slightly different.

• Emila Medková, Portrait, 1981, B&W photograph

• Mikuláš Medek, Portrait of Emila, 1951, pencil, paper, 32.5 × 44.5 cm

• Emila Medková, PF 1984, B&W photograph

• Love letters between MM and Emila Medková

A portrait is not a person, an image of someone else, or a reflection of physical appearance; rather, it is a vision. It is my gaze that is directed toward their physiological and psychological reality. It is 'my' gaze. The subject of a portrait is, first and foremost, 'me', and only then 'the others'. Note: A painting whose subject is human reality, and whose path to that reality leads through a 'portrait' (a far cry from a schematised human figure).

(MM, diary entries, 1957)

Each moment is the fruit of forty thousand years. The minute-winning days, like flies, buzz home to death, and every moment is a window on all time.

... and he saw the minute-winning days, like flies, buzz home to death.

(Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward Angel*, New York City, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929)

• Egg (Breakfast), 1949, oil, canvas on plyboard, 55.5 × 39.5 cm, private collection

After a visit from Egon Bondy, who most likely scathingly criticised the painting, MM cut the canvas, tore it from its frame, and crumpled it. Later, Emila Medková pasted it onto plywood and had it restored.

• Emila Medková, Waterfall of Hair, from the Shadow Plays series, 1949–1950, B&W photograph

• Emila Medková, Egg, 1949, B&W photograph

• Emila Medková, Beehive II, 1949, B&W photograph

• Emila Medková, Double, 1949, B&W photograph

• Emila Medková, Untitled (Double Exposure), 1949, B&W photograph

• Mikuláš Medek, illustration for Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One: An Anglo-American Tragedy*, 1957, India ink, paper, 45.5 × 33.5 cm

• Mikuláš Medek, illustration for Alfred Jarry's *Le Surmâle*, 1947, India ink, paper, 46.5 × 35.5 cm

In a soft, fleshy dimple,

a hairy bobbin of a giant sewing machine
stitches its dream.

A geometric, hairy leg

a hymenopterous fly feasting on the nape
of the weaver of leafy carpets

drives the pedal.

The weaver, his head tilted and covered
since time immemorial with cobweb

removed from a girl's left breast

her shadow resembling that of a grille

weaves ginger plaits from his eyelashes,

awaiting execution by a solitary, gourd-
shaped knife

that causes a wound to her left side.

The weaver then places a pigeon's egg
inside it,

its size matching her left breast,
with a small hole at its northern end.

I press my eye to the opening,

and, once my sight has adjusted to the
darkness, I see a distant blast

emitting a fine plume of smoke from the
back of a gorgeous green locust

which, though entirely unlike an ancient wolf,

resembles one.

(MM, 1949)

• Large Moveable Grave, 1973, oil, enamel, canvas, 170 × 120 cm, private collection

MM began working on the *Moveable Graves* series in 1973, when he was already seriously ill. In his diaries, Jan Zábrana recorded on 10 August 1973: 'When Mikuláš was still in good health, he invited me to his studio to view his unfinished series, *Graves*. He said he had started painting and only then realised they were graves. Thinking aloud, he searched for an adjective: 'Plaque Graves'. Or perhaps, better still, 'Infested Graves'?

(Jan Zábrana, *Celý život (1)*, Prague, 2001, p. 238)

After Medek's death, many friends wrote commemorative texts and poems, including the artist and writer Ladislav Novák. His five haiku are dedicated to the *Moveable Graves* series.

• Four Circles, 1974, oil, enamel, canvas, 47 × 30 cm, private collection

MM's final painting was the only one he made in 1974, when he was already seriously ill. He promised it to the head of the Brno Customs Office, who owned a large collection of antiques, in exchange for a tin plate known as a 'cardinal's hat'. After her husband's death, Emila Medková asked him to return the painting to her.

Ladislav Novák
Mikuláš Medek's Moveable Graves,
1975

MOVEABLE GRAVE I
Between the knees,
connected to the sewer,
it breaks, feels dizzy, on alert.

GRAVE AS A TODDLER
Knowing since childhood
that death – the slyboots – grows
within us, emerging from us.

GRAVE SEARCHING FOR ITS PLACE
Crushing blocks
hover above us,
and we are nothing but shards.

LARGE MOVEABLE GRAVE
Is it still swarming?
Laughing at its anxiety?
Petrified, it escapes.

MOVEABLE GRAVE NUMBER 5
A cold stone,
a deceased star within,
a faint, flickering glow.

In the 1976 anthology *Hommage à Mikuláš Medek, 1926–1974*, published by Jan Koblasa, Věra Linhartová titled her text 'Moveable Graves'.

'Let everyone have their own death.' The Moveable Graves slide across uncertain ground in search of their final place. Built from elements whose secrets are known only to the painter, these Graves instinctively find the original form of ancient tombstones: the womb. Through this descent into the grave, the solemn ritual is renewed – a ritual rooted in a time when death was inseparable from life and the universe's regenerative force: the seed, the ripening of the foetus, and rebirth. Mounds, catacombs, and pyramids are built in the same way. A deceptive perspective on these blocks – edgings, slabs, threshold guardians – unfolds the space of agony with sovereign authority and disorienting complexity. Their vanishing points sometimes move closer to the spectator and at other times disappear behind the mirror. The chamber tomb, whether rectangular or circular, is surrounded by black colour or enclosed within its walls. It opens downward through an access passage flanked by two stone blocks and two glaring red spheres. Inside the grave, a grain was placed, one that must die. The painter's career, which began years ago with Miraculous Mothers, concludes with the image of an insatiable goddess kneeling on the bare earth, preparing to give birth.

(*Hommage à Mikuláš Medek, 1926–1974*,
Paris – Tökendorf – Wien, 1976)

• Emila Medková, Demolished House, from the Stage Settings series, 1968, B&W photograph

• Various stages of the origin of *Large Moveable Grave*

• MM's table and palette with paint residue

• Jan Švankmajer, Box for MM's Monograph, wood, B&W photograph, pottery studio

• Jiří Kolář, Hommage,
cardboard, paper, 29.8 × 23.8 cm

• Jiří Kolář, Hommage, cardboard, paper, reproduction of MM's *The Noise of Silence*, 26.8 × 19 cm

• Běla Kolářová, Hommage,
1975, cardboard, Koh-i-Noor metal snap fasteners, 29.8 × 21 cm

• Běla Kolářová, Hommage,
1975, cardboard, razor blades,
29.8 × 21 cm

• Pavel Nešleha, Hommage,
1976, pencil, paper, 29.6 × 21 cm

• Zbyšek Sion, Hommage,
1975, India ink, paper, 29.7 × 21 cm

• Václav Boštík, Hommage,
1975, print, pencil, 29.5 × 20.5 cm

• Josef Wagner, Hommage,
1975, black ink, 27.8 × 21.4 cm

• Emila Medková, photograph from the posthumous exhibition *Moveable Graves* in MM's studio in Letohradská Street at Letná in 1975

• Emila Medková, photographs of friends

• Plan for the construction of a family house in Český Šternberk,
1930s, tracing paper, 109 × 63 cm

• Eva Kosáková, Not an Accidental Encounter Between a Pheasant and a Bowl, 2026, wooden board, glass pheasant, metal bowl, labels

• Original bespoke furniture from the house in Čejkovice, 1930s, larch wood

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