

WINTER AND CHRISTMAS IN PRAGUE

#pragueunlocked

Prague
City Tourism

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IN SEARCH OF ART NOUVEAU PRAGUE

Any mention of Art Nouveau Prague is bound to conjure up the breath-taking Municipal House or the historic building of the Prague Main Railway Station with Fantova kavárna café taking pride of place. Yet our metropolis is dotted with many other buildings in this inspired architectural style, be they houses and villas, churches or technical heritage monuments. Their ornamental façades with often quite playful colours and asymmetrical shapes warm the hearts of many an appreciative onlooker.



Alfons Mucha: from the Four Seasons cycle
commons.wikimedia.org

Encyclopaedias characterize Art Nouveau as an international art movement of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, striving for a new kind of artistic expression, quite different from the then prevailing historicist approach. Its main features include ornate two-dimensionality and a penchant for unusual colours and hues. Its hallmark is curvilinearity, stylized towards natural or symbolized shapes (leaves, flowers, human and animal bodies). Enough of the scholarly digression.

Best of the Best

This modern and for its time free-thinking architecture surged through Europe like an avalanche and the cities of Austria-Hungary were certainly not left out. As for Prague, Art Nouveau made a very marked impression on the architectural visage of the city – we can count some 40 buildings in this style in the metropolis today. And, as we indicated in our introduction, they cover the whole range of building types. The more well-known buildings include the aforementioned **Municipal House** and the **Fantova kavárna** building at the Main Railway Station. The interior of the Municipal House (architects A. Balšánek and O. Polívka; decoration by A. Mucha, M. Švabinský, J. V. Myslbek, M. Aleš, etc.) comprises a restaurant, a café, and several halls, the largest of which is the monumental Sme-



Alois Dryák: The façade of Hotel Meran in Prague
A. Savin, commons.wikimedia.org

tana Hall, serving as a sumptuous concert space for about 1,200 concert-goers (the majority of concerts are hosted by the Prague Symphony Orchestra). There are guided tours of the whole heritage site, fit for true Art Nouveau aficionados. The showy buildings of the Main Station (architect J. Fanta; decoration by S. Sucharda, L. Šaloun, etc.) are currently undergoing a costly renovation to bring back their original lustre. It is not with-

out interest that the historical building and the hall above the train lines amount to what is the most monumental Art Nouveau construction in the Czech Republic. Few people know that Prague has another Art Nouveau **railway station – at Prague-Vyšehrad**. Unfortunately, this valuable cultural monument has been dilapidating for many years, leading to its present sorry state.



Fantova kavárna café at the Main Railway Station



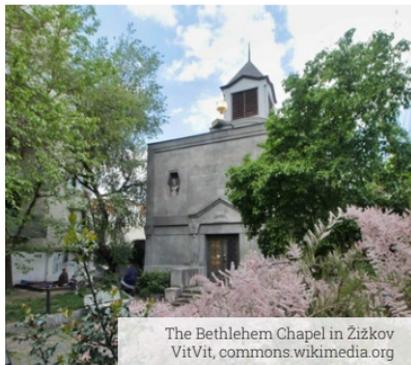
The Smetana Hall of the Municipal House

Hotels and Churches

Hotels are in a distinctive class of their own among Prague's Art Nouveau architecture – most notably the **Hotel Evropa** on Wenceslas Square, **Hotel Paris** (adjacent to the Municipal House) with the beautiful Sarah Bernhardt restaurant, the five-star **Art Nouveau Palace Hotel** on the corner of Jindřišská and Panská streets, **Hotel Union** on Ostrčilova square, **Hotel & Café Imperial**, whose architecture is an extraordinary mix of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, and **Hotel Central** in Hybernská street. All of them are characterized by a wonderfully colourful interior and outer décor with ornate elements, perfectly living up their urban surroundings.

Art Nouveau styled Churches are undoubtedly among its most remarkable examples. They are not plentiful, but they are all worth seeing. Among the most prominent representatives is the three-nave **temple of St Anna in Žižkov** in Ostromečská street, built in the so-called Beuroner Schule, Vienna Secession style. This place of worship has been protected as a cultural heritage monument since 2002, together with its adjacent Carmelite Monastery. It is also worth mentioning the **Church of St Wenceslas** in the grounds of Bohnice psychiatric hospital. It currently serves not only for religious services, but also as an unconventional space

for concerts and other cultural events, not just for the hospital, but also for the general public. The wooden **Church of St Adalbert in Libeň**, built in 1905 to the design of well-known architect Emil Králíček, is exceptional in many ways. With its neighbouring **Libeňská Sokolovna** sports hall (by the same architect), the St Adalbert Church forms a charming 'Art Nouveau cameo'. Prague's quartet of sacral buildings built in the Art Nouveau style is rounded off by the **Bethlehem Chapel in Žižkov** (Prokopova 10), where the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren officiates. This at first glance inconspicuous but elegant structure surrounded by apartment buildings is extraordinary in how it combines elements of late Art Nouveau and Cubism.



The Bethlehem Chapel in Žižkov
VitVit, commons.wikimedia.org



Hotel & Café Imperial



vila Karla Vítězslava Maška

The Flamboyant Beauty of (not only) colourful Villas

Let's take a look at Art Nouveau villas. To list them all would be beyond the scope of this article, so let's focus only on a few of the most highly prized specimens. Firstly, we must mention **Bilkova vila** at Hradčany. There may be no other building in Prague with so many symbolic elements encoded in it – taken to such aesthetic perfection. It was designed by sculptor, painter and graphic designer František Bílek (1872–1941) in 1910 to serve as his own residence and studio. Permeating the whole concept is the artist's inspiration drawn from a field of wheat – the ground plan of the building is like the sweep of a harvesting scythe, the stone columns embody stylized stalks and cobs, and even the flat roof is reminiscent of a field. The villa's distinctiveness is in part down to the fact that Bílek's work includes all interiors, including furniture. Today, this architectural gem is part of the exhibits of The Prague City Gallery.

As for other interesting buildings, it is definitely worth seeing the set of villas in Bubeneč – for example, **Vila Kraus** (Na Zátorce 3), which was designed in the style of late geometric Art Nouveau, the **vila Kar-**

la Vítězslava Maška (Slavičková 7) built in the spirit of Art Nouveau folk art or the villa just opposite, decked with ivy, **Suchardova vila** by the famous architect Jan Kotěra. The picturesque **Vila Helenka** in Na Václavské street 15 is fabulously picturesque with a distinctive stucco floral decor on a yellow façade. One very unusual and architecturally prized example is the **Šalounova vila** (Slovenská 6) in Vinohrady, which served as a studio for the sculptor of the same name, after he had won the competition to sculpt the **Master Jan Hus Monument** on Old Town Square (which, by the way, is also in Art Nouveau style). Back in the day, this soberly conceived building with strong symbolist elements was a popular meeting-place for Prague's artistic elite.

My House, My Castle

Beautiful examples of Art Nouveau buildings, whose artistry stands comparison with the grandeur of the aforementioned villas, can also be found and admired among Prague town houses. Worth noticing is the **Topičův dům** house on Národní třída boulevard with its beautifully decorated façade, or the five-storey **Adamova lékárna** building on Wenceslas Square (No. 8), as well as **Peterkuv dům** (No. 12) nearby. A nice example of an Art Nouveau house can be seen on Senovážné náměstí square (**U Tří Jezdců** / 'At

the Three Riders') or in Vodičkovova street (**U Nováků**). **Štencův dům** in Salvatorská street (Prague 1) built in the very different and unadorned style of modern Art Nouveau attracts passers-by with an austere brick-work façade. By contrast, the **Spolkový dům Hlahol** musical society house in the bloc between the Masarykovo embankment and Vojtěšská street or the nearby **Goethe-Institut in Prag** (Masarykovo nábřeží 32) are strikingly decorative. And there are others – the **Národní dům na Smíchově**, the **Divadlo Na Vinohradech** theatre, the **Vršovická záložna** credit union, the **Nová Strašnická škola** school, the **Palác Koruna** building on Wenceslas Square, etc. – further examples of houses imbued with the unmistakable Art Nouveau form.

Industrial Art Nouveau

It can seem quite unlikely that such a refined and artistically elaborate style has also found its way into Prague's technical infrastructure buildings. One remarkable building from the era of Czech industrial Art Nouveau is the **Old Wastewater Treatment Plant** in Prague-Bubeneč. Thanks to its evocative period mood it has become not only a frequent destination for tourist outings, but also a worthy backdrop for various film productions. Adorning the upstream tip of Štvanice Island is a **small power station building** with

a domed tower. From a distance it seems more like a squat, verdigris-hued church building. Another architecturally impressive building is also the Neo-Renaissance and Art Nouveau complex of the **Braník brewery** and nearby ice-making plant. **The only Art Nouveau bridge** in the Czech Republic – Prague's **Čechův most** – is quite exceptionally ornate. And, of course, let us not forget to mention the **Industrial Palace in the Exhibition Grounds**, an impressive glass and steel structure.

As you can see, the mark left on Prague architecture by Art Nouveau is quite striking and unmissable. We can thank the whole plethora of excellent architects, builders, painters or sculptors for that specific charm; in short, everyone who helped to make Prague one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.



The Industrial Palace in the Exhibition Grounds

5 Romantic Places to go in Winter

KAMPA — a picturesque island, wedged between the main course of the Vltava river and its Čertovka arm; a place where time seems to have stood still. Put on a warm sweater, comfortable shoes and enjoy the quiet poetics of this island, which has been declared by VirtualTourist as the second most pretty urban island in the world. As you browse through this park, be sure to check out the **Museum Kampa**, where you will find an excellent collection of works by abstract art pioneer **František Kupka**.

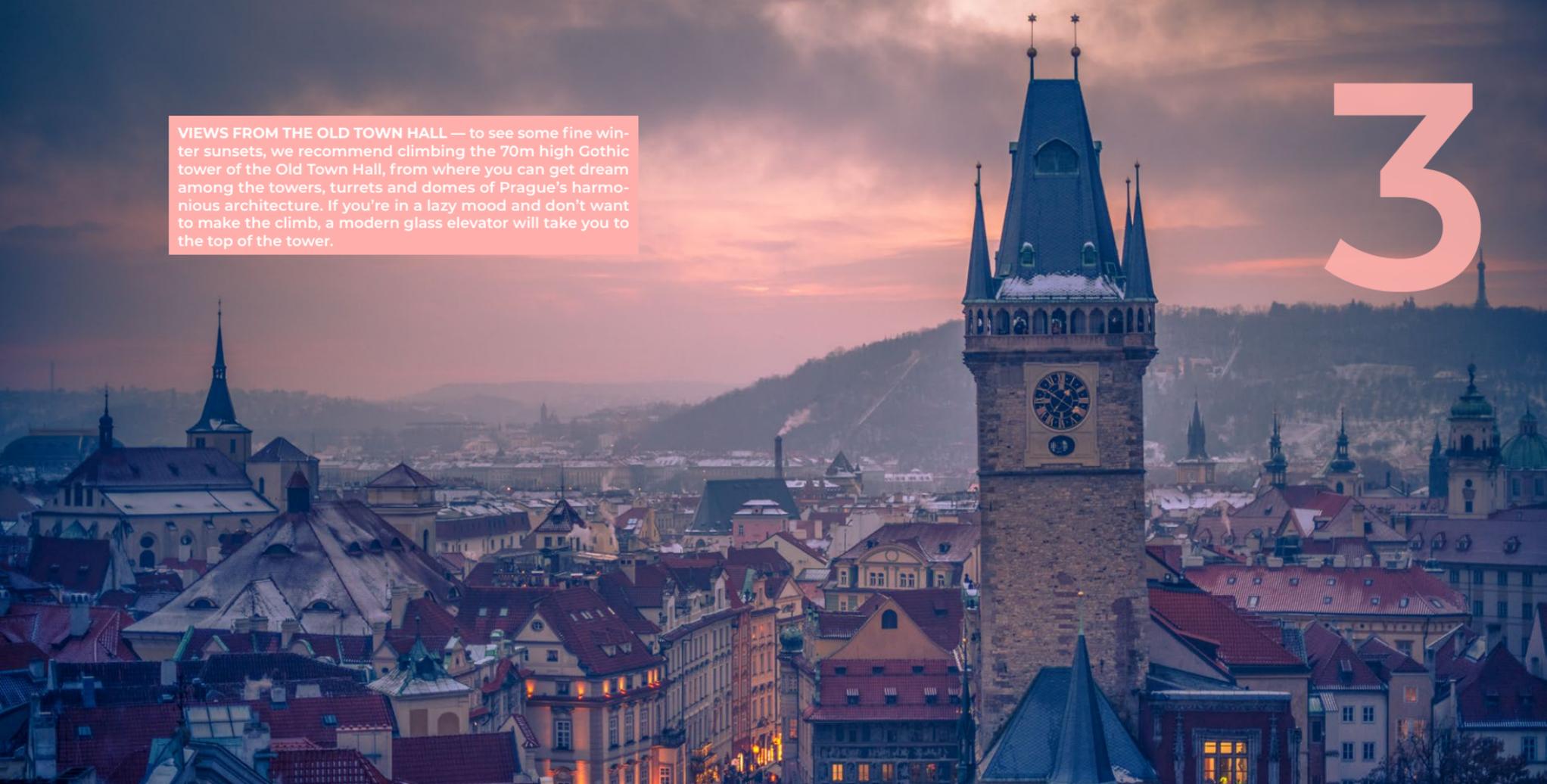
An aerial photograph of a narrow, snow-covered street in Prague. The street is flanked by multi-story buildings with yellow and light-colored facades. The roofs are covered in snow. In the background, the Prague Castle and other historical buildings are visible under a cloudy sky. A large, light blue number '2' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

NOVÝ SVĚT [NEW WORLD] — a seemingly time-forgotten charming urban hamlet within sight of Prague Castle, and somewhat unjustly overlooked by tourist visitors. That's why it's just perfect for a couple, to take a romantic stroll. The close-knit cosiness of this now almost abandoned location inspired many in times gone by, such as the renowned stargazer **Tycho Brahe**, or later, the Czech painter **Jan Zrzavý**. As for accommodation, why not try a sojourn at **U Raka** [At the Crayfish] an adorable thatched timbered cottage converted into a luxury hotel.

2

VIEWS FROM THE OLD TOWN HALL — to see some fine winter sunsets, we recommend climbing the 70m high Gothic tower of the Old Town Hall, from where you can get dream among the towers, turrets and domes of Prague's harmonious architecture. If you're in a lazy mood and don't want to make the climb, a modern glass elevator will take you to the top of the tower.

3



4



CHARLES BRIDGE — this Prague monument probably needs no introduction. Besieged though it used to be, by tourists from all over the world, today it stands magnificently deserted. Its quintessential Genius Loci restored, it is there for you to appreciate, especially in the early evening. Ideally with a cup of “svařák” mulled wine.

5

LIFE ON THE VLTAVA RIVER — have you ever thought of crawling into a hot tub, fanned by the icy breath of the Vltava River while taking in the view of Prague Castle? The creativity of Prague entrepreneurs knows no bounds, so we look forward to more winter season inspirational projects on the Vltava River. Given the current situation, keep up to date by visiting our prague.eu website.

Lázně na Lodi / The Ship Spa



You can buy a voucher granting admission to all seven buildings valid from 1 to 23 December 2020 through our e-shop on eshop.prague.eu.

A TIP FOR THE PRAGUE TOWERS CHRISTMAS GIFT VOUCHER

Enjoy the magic of Prague from a bird's-eye view!

If you enliven your stroll through Prague by going up any of the towers that **Prague City Tourism** now manages, you will certainly not regret it. Every one offers unusual views of the historic squares, the magical mosaic of the roofs, and the bridges and embankments of the Vltava River waterfront. Moreover, the towers themselves are a diverse showcase of architectural styles.

One of Prague's most famous towers is the **Old Town Hall Tower**. On the way to its summit you can make a stop, and peek into the little chamber where the famous astronomical clock's apostles reside; a little higher up is an unforgettable viewpoint, not only of the Old Town Square, but also of Prague's picturesque panorama.

At both ends of Charles Bridge, are the **Old Town** and **Lesser Town** monumental Gothic Gate-towers – from their galleries you get views of Hradčany castle, the surrounding Old Town and Lesser Town and the fabulous

sculptural gallery along Charles Bridge, as though in the palm of your hand

You'll get a waft of magical Lesser-town atmosphere when visiting **St Nicholas Bell-tower**, right by the magnificent Baroque Church of St Nicholas on Malostranské náměstí square.

Close by the Municipal House on Náměstí Republiky square, stands the unmissable late Gothic **Powder Tower**, with its own awesome views of Prague.

In the Petřská district on the right bank of the Vltava River stands the **New Mill Water Tower**, a heritage monument that served its original purpose until the end of the 19th century; it now serves to offer exceptional views of the surroundings.

The tallest and youngest of Prague's towers is the 60-metre **Petřín Lookout Tower**, which stands proudly on top of Petřín hill, at 327 meters above sea level. It was built for the Jubilee Exhibition in 1891 as a loose copy of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. If you want to have the whole of Prague before your eyes, there is no better place!

THE SEASON BEGINS AND SOME LIKE IT COOL

With the arrival of December temperatures comes the best time for Prague's **cold-hardy enthusiasts** to take a dip. Following in the footsteps of Alfred Nikodém, the founder of cold-hardening in Czechoslovakia, is a very sizeable group of enthusiasts of all ages. In his honour, the **Alfred Nikodém Memorial swim** takes place every **December 26th**, when hundreds of hardened swimmers take part in 100, 300 and 750 metre swims in the Vltava River between the Střelecký and Slovanský islands, with a smile on their faces. If the epidemiological situation allows, this will be the 74th year.

As is well known, cold-hardening strengthens not only the body but also the spirit. A dip in icy water can boost your immune system and clear your mind wonderfully. Of course, hardening has to be done progressively and with due regard for your body. It is meant to invigorate, not shock you. There are plenty of methodologies on how to make cold water your friend. Among the most popular ones these days is the **Wim Hof method**. Nicknamed the 'ice man' he links hardening with breathing exercises.

It doesn't take much to set about hardening, just a good supply of enthusiasm and a strong will; most importantly, it is never too late to start. For more information, you can stop in Braník, where the '1st Hardy Swimming Club of Prague' is based.



CULTURAL EVENTS (NOT ONLY) ONLINE

Rembrandt: Portrait of a Man

until 31 January 2021

National Gallery Prague – Kinský Palace,
Old Town Square 12, Prague 1
ngprague.cz

The exhibition itself comprises **more than 110 works** from leading Czech and international institutions and private collections, including the only Rembrandt painting on our territory, '**A Scholar in his Study**'. It has never been possible to view so many of Rembrandt's works together, and an exhibition of its like may not recur for decades. That's why the National Gallery has decided to also make it accessible to all the visitors and art lovers currently unable to see it first-hand. Their well-thought-out concept includes various activities related to the exhibition, namely annotated videos, to present selected works, with the focus on international loans. Also of particular interest are graphics and drawings on paper, which have their own special place within the project. There will also be a series of interactive workshops for children, a 3D and guided

tour, with a special project also planned. Videos featuring the curator Lucie Němečková will be progressively posted on social media.

Mikuláš Medek: Naked in the Thorns

until 31 January 2021

National Gallery Prague – Wallenstein
Riding School, Valdštejnská 3, Prague 1
ngprague.cz

The aim of the exhibition is to present Mikuláš Medek as an artist of **international standing** – and at the same time to show him not only as a painter, but as a person who influenced many important artists of his generation with his life-stance and opinions. The exhibition **Naked in the Thorns** is **one of the most complete** covering the breadth of Medek's work and at the same time presents works not usually seen at exhibitions.

The central motif of Medek's work is the **fateful human condition**, which the artist, through the expression of an intensely felt mystical experience makes into an inherently unified and extremely impressive whole, that speaks to the viewer with quite some insistence. The symbolism of his signs creates specific pictorial metaphors of human existence in its tragic, painful and mysterious aspect. The momentous content



Rembrandt van Rijn, A Scholar in his Study, 1634
National Gallery Prague

and magical power of the painter's signature style and the spiritual energy radiating from Medek's art make him **one of the most influential and original among latter 20th century painters**, not just to Czechs, but worldwide.

Mikuláš Medek, *The Kiss*, 1965, private collection National Gallery Prague



Kings of the Sun

until 7 February 2021

The National Museum complex, Wenceslas Square 68, Prague 1
nm.cz

An exceptional international project documenting the **greatest archaeological discoveries of Czech Egyptologists**, linked to research at Abusir, the ancient royal burial ground with Giza to the north and Sakhara to the south. Visitors will find extensive loans from the world's museums – from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the Great Egyptian Museum in Giza, museums in Berlin, Leipzig, Hanover, etc. On display are treasures from the 3rd to the 1st millennium BC, such as the **unique royal statue of Pharaoh Raneferef/Neferefre**, one of the four pharaohs buried in Abusir, or **numerous statues from the tombs of Princess Sheretneby and the scribe Nefer**. In Egyptian history, the rulers of the 5th Ancient Egyptian Dynasty (c. 2435–2306 BC) who are connected with the locality of Abusir, where a royal burial ground with three pyramids sprang up during their reign, are collectively known as The Kings of the Sun. The exhibition is not limited to the fates of those who ruled the ancient land on the Nile. Visitors can also take a look at the non-royal side of **Abusir**, overshadowed by the pyramids.



Statue of Princess Sheretneby with her son
The National Museum



From the Kings of the Sun exhibition
The National Museum

XVI. Triennial of Czech ex-libris 2020

only online

Museum of Czech Literature,
Strahovské nádvoří 1, Prague 1
pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz

The 'ex libris' ['From the library of...] **bookplate** is a traditional art domain, which has undergone quite interesting historical development before becoming the art collectors' item it is today. Contemporary ex libris, tied with book culture and the genre of freeform graphics has grown into a **specific artistic discipline**, attracting prominent artists.

The nationwide Triennial of Czech ex libris is, for the 16th time, offering the chance to review the development of the bookplate, changes in artistic and iconographic trends and current practices in graphic techniques over the last three years, but this time, unconventionally, also in a virtual setting.

The exhibits include some **126 small graphics from 46 artists**, including art school students. This year, a six-member jury of leading experts awarded prizes to ten artists. The main criteria included emphasis on artistic quality, high level artistic workmanship, as well as the breadth and variety of traditional and modern graphic techniques used.



Coronavirus 9x9

only online

Czech Photo Centre,
Seydlerova 4, Prague 5
czechphoto.org

We're living through a truly peculiar time. The coronavirus epidemic has also impacted the Czech Republic. It is, of course, a big photo opportunity, too. Organizers from the Czech Photo Centre turned to **9 photographers, each of whom put forward a set of 9 photos.**



Photo: © Martin Divišek/EPA

Theater.cz

1-9 December

theater.cz

A prestigious international show of drama productions and **theatre projects from the entire German-language region** is going digital this year. The festival is organized primarily in cooperation with the most renowned ensembles and theatre artists, championing high artistic value.

The current 25th season will present the ensembles Deutsches Theater Berlin, Thalia Theater Hamburg, She Pop and the Münchner Kammerspiele.

From the performance Touch, photo: © Sigrid Reinichs

National Technical Museum online

Kostelní 42, Prague 7
ntmvp.cz

Climb into the **cockpit of a Spitfire**, take a seat in **Masaryk's own Tatra limousine** or in the **salon railcar of Franz Josef I**. The National Technical Museum has launched a virtual tour of its transport exposition, including the opportunity to see many of the normally inaccessible interiors of the exhibits on display. In the comfort of your own home you can also listen to NTM curator Arnošt Nezmeškal giving an insider commentary on your mobile phone or tablet, to guide you through **twenty-five tales to tell about Jawa motorcycles**, as featured in the exhibition of the same name.



Famous Czech Composers

until 30 June 2021

The National Museum complex,
Wenceslas Square 68, Prague 1
nm.cz

Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, Leoš Janáček, Bohuslav Martinů – four great names of Czech music, renowned worldwide. They differ by their generations, styles and distinctive musical signatures. Their works are different, but they have something in common. They share the unmistakable characteristics stemming from Czech roots, that makes for a Czech cultural image familiar all over the world. Our four greatest Czech composers make up an unparalleled installation that emphasizes the music itself, while the exhibits feature, among other things, the highly prized autographs of all four composers, all set in the context of their lives, journeys and inspirations. Entering the exhibition, you will find yourself right inside the music of these four greats. Thanks to the unique synergy of light and music, you will appreciate even the minutest **details of Smetana's Vltava, Dvořák's New World Symphony, Janáček's Sinfonietta** and the **Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano and Timpani** by Bohuslav Martinů.

Vladimír Janoušek

until 31 March 2021

Museum Kampa, U Sovových mlýnů 2,
Prague 1, museumkampa.cz

The sculptor Vladimír Janoušek (1922–1986) graduated from the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague in the studio of Josef Wagner, as did his future wife Věra, as well as names like Miloslav Chlupáč, Olbram Zoubek and Eva Kmentová. He co-founded the **art group UB 12**, whose theorists were Jiří Šetlík and Jaromír Zemina.

This author of monumental works as well as more intimately scaled sculptures represented Czechoslovakia at the World Expo 70 in Osaka, Japan, which he opened jointly with the Japanese artist Tarō Okamoto. During the 'normalization' period after the 1968 invasion, Janoušek's public and exhibition activities were suppressed.

The full extent of his works has never been presented to the public before. The curator, Karel Šrp, has used the theme of time to link the sculptural periods of crystals, growth, pendulums and mutable 'variabils' with Janoušek's favourite poet Vladimír Holan. The exhibition comprises works from national and private collections, mostly from the Czech Republic.



Museum Kampa



The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

Pleiad of Glass 1946–2019

long-term exhibition

The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague,
17. listopadu 2, Prague 1
upm.cz

The exhibition features **works of modern art glass** from the exceptionally highly prized collections of the Museum of Decorative Arts. It is a collection of the best, most famous and most iconic studio glass sculptures, illustrative of the **development of artistic glass-making in the 2nd half of the 20th century** and recalls the leading figures in that field, e.g. Stanislav Libenský, Zdeněk Lhotský, Rony Plesl, Jan Exnar, Vratislav Šotol and others.

The architecture of the exposition takes its inspiration from the edges of cut crystal and the backstreet atmosphere of a city agglomeration. The visitor, passing along the cubist forms of this imaginary city of eight pyramids progressively uncovers and reveals more than one hundred and twenty works and objects on its various levels. The exposition in the second hall is by contrast almost devoid of interventionist elements – buildings that could act as 'obstacles' to perceiving the overall space of the hall or the influx of natural and artificial light. This matter-of-factual concept brings out the most cardinal aspects of art glass: space and light.

Compassion Fatigue is Over

21 January 2020 – 18 April 2021

Galerie Rudolfinum,
Alšovo nábřeží 12, Prague 1
galerierudolfinum.cz

Can we ever find and define the limits of our compassion? There has been quite a revving up of **discourse on the limits of compassion** in recent years. Our attention is constantly being snatched away by the endless stream of news. A person's psychological and mental capacity to take it all in has its limits. The quest to keep informed is so onerous it seems to require superhuman ability. Nevertheless, we feel the need to stay up to date and consider keeping abreast of breaking news a necessity. That is why many people speak of what has been termed compassion fatigue, i.e. the state of mind when we treat each new poignant message with exhausted resignation.

Compassion Fatigue is Over presents a **series of narrative videos and films, alongside architectural interventions**. It focuses its attention on a set of present-day key topics. It deals with issues of racial intolerance, labour exploitation, rethinking historical narratives, sexuality, gender, on utopias lost and rediscovered, or on abstract thinking as the necessary precondition of any ra-

tional judgement. In contrast to the blatant intrusiveness of everyday media reality, the exhibition offers space for some quiet contemplation of the interpretations given to the chosen topics by a group of the following artists: Candice Breitz, Anna Daučíková, Haris Epaminonda, Naeem Mohaiemen, Jeremy Shaw, Hito Steyerl, Aleksandra Vajd & Anetta Mona Chisa.



Jeremy Shaw, I Can See Forever, 2018, film still



Candice Breitz, Sweat, 2018. Single-channel video, colour, sound, loop

Design at Vyšehrad

until 31 December (with possible extension)

artdistrictvysehrad.cz

An outdoor exhibition of Czech design, which aims to acquaint visitors with local creatives, talents in the field and their creations, by way of an urban walk. The exhibi-

tion takes place in three glass-walled Koma modules set along the promenade in front of the Prague Congress Centre. The works can be viewed from a safe distance. In the outdoor gallery are several works in glass, from the glass studio of the **Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague**, as well as fashion-related items, Tititi toys, wooden tables by **Jakub Březina** and **Triant**-brand furniture.



KOMA Design
Modular

www.koma-modular.cz

KOMA Design Modular, koma-modular.cz

Czech Touches of Music

16–27 December

ceskedotekyhudby.cz

The Czech Touches of Music **national classical music festival** is actually international. It belongs among the top ten largest classical music festivals in the Czech Republic. The ceremonial opening concert is always held at Prague Castle on Ludwig van Beethoven's birthday, 16 December. **The December part of the festival will take place online** via Facebook and Youtube.

Film showcase

#FilmDe

10–12 December

edisonline.cz

#FilmDE will present an extraordinary **collection of thirty German films** on the Edisonline.cz platform. You are invited to see documentary films, comedies, dramas, crime dramas and love stories, meet famous directors and outstanding celebrity actors and actresses.



Ema Hornýáková – Czech Touches of Music



Veggie Christmas online

6th, 13th and 20th Dec 12.00–19.00

veggievanoce.cz

This season of Veggie Christmas, **one of the largest vegan and zero waste Christmas markets in Europe**, will also be in online format. It will offer not only annual inspiration in the form of vegan trends in food, cosmetics or fashion, but also interesting ethical and animal and planet-conscience gifts for your loved ones, along with interesting discounts and gifts from retailers.

veggievanoce.cz

LEGO® Model at Prague Main Railway Station

long-term exhibition

The model is located at the upper end of the check-in hall, to delight visitors and passengers alike. It consists of **342,000 LEGO® bricks**, weighs 2,700 kg and took 2,137 man-hours to assemble. The construction draws the attention not only of children, but adults, too. It's a **faithful copy of the station**, as it really looks and functions. **Visitors can drive and control some active elements.** The model is in cross-section, allowing a view of the interior, the tracks and platforms, including passengers, conductors or dispatchers.



Správa železnic (Railway Administration)

CHRISTMAS 2020

Christmas time is one of the most magical periods and in historical Prague comes with a renowned and unique atmosphere. However, this year's holidays will be different and let us dare to hope we won't be seeing any repeats of its kind.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the traditional large markets, Christmas exhibitions and all sorts of accompanying events attracting great gatherings of people will be missing. Nevertheless, Prague has no desire to completely give up on celebrating Christmas and is looking for ways to create a Christmas mood. We trust our tips will inspire you, even though we can't guarantee that the event you are looking forward to will ultimately take place.

This year's Christmas spruce on Old Town Square is 17.5m (57feet) high and comes from Kamenný Přívoz. It's ceremonial lighting-up, in national colours, on the first Advent weekend, took place without the usual throng of awestruck spectators. Neither is it surrounded by market stalls nor is there a stage for topical shows, which the square has hosted in previous years. The Christmas tree will bring joy to admirers until early January.



We can find plenty of **smaller-scale decorated trees and Christmas markets** in other locations, more often in the centres of city districts. If the epidemiological situation allows, any open farmers' markets will be offering Christmas goods as part of their assortment, with more modest stalls in the upper part of **Wenceslas Square (3 Dec–3 Jan)**, and the **Lesser Town markets**, every Thursday including Christmas Eve (**3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th December**) offering produce from Czech growers and a range of products from Lesser Town vendors and cafés. On **Karlín square** under its Christmas tree you will find advent wreaths, angel decorations and Christmas cookies, and on Saturdays you can go to Dejvice to the **Advent markets "na Kulafáku"** (at the Vítězné náměstí circular junction). Up-to-date information on markets and other attractions can be found on prague.eu/christmas.

The **Great Fürstenberg Garden** beneath Prague Castle is not only open in winter, but also dressed in its Advent robes. On display in the Head gardener's house is a Christmas Nativity Scene and the decorated trees and aroma of Christmas confectionery and hot drinks add to the atmosphere.

For non-traditional gifts, head to **Lemarket** on the 4th floor of the May department store, filling the 3rd and 4th advent weekend with novelty goods from the creative realms of fashion, design, cosmetics and even jewellery.



You can also choose some last-minute gifts from a wide range of the most beautiful products by Czech artists and artisans on 18-19 December at **MINT Market Prague** in Pražská tržnice in Holešovice or on the last weekend before Christmas Eve at the **Dyzajn Market** in the Holešovice Exhibition Grounds.



Lemarket > Ami Umi teddybear

A **voucher or admission pass to theatres and concert halls** can also be a lovely gift. You might want to sweeten your wait before once again settling into the comfortable seats of theatre auditoriums by watching the best recordings of theatre productions across theatres and genres via the **Dramox** streaming service.

One interesting outdoor event is the **winter festival of street theatre Za dveřmi** / 'Beyond the Door' Prague street theatre festival whose main programme is scheduled between 7 to 13 December. On Advent Sundays, above-life-sized marionettes of angels will pass through Prague lighting up the city with islets of living art, and a theatrical gallery will spring up in the Prague market complex in Holešovice.

Where to go for Concerts

Concert halls, like theatre halls, are still closed at this time. The **Czech Philharmonic** will not be inviting listeners to the Dvořák Hall before the year end, and yet you need not miss out on the traditional pre-Christmas concerts. They will be broadcast live to your homes through the Czech TV Art channel's **4 Advent concerts**, featuring star performers.

The **Prague Symphony Orchestra** has prepared a festival of varied Activities called **'Advent over the net'**, to make up for not being able to play live right now. Throughout advent time, Prague Symphony players will bring you Christmas atmosphere with their

musical evenings set in the fine settings of St Simon and Judy Church, via their "Pražští symfonikové FOK" channel on Youtube.

Nevertheless, many music organizers remain hopeful of providing the feel of a live performance. Here are some tips:

A special cultural project called **Kostelní slavnosti** / Church Festivals has been prepared by the excellent singer Markéta Fassati. Through a free-form cycle of concerts, where compositions of Czech and world classical music will be presented, music lovers get to see the sacral buildings of Prague 1.

St James' Church has an organ concert scheduled for the afternoon of 26 December, entitled the **St James' Christmas** and a **New Year's Concert** on January 1st.

Carols and Christmas songs performed by the ensemble **Musica Bohemica** are planned at **St Martin's in the Wall** for 22 December.

Where to go for Sports

On 19 December, you can take part in the **Charity Christmas Run** covering 5km through the centre of Prague. There is also a 700-metre course for youngsters.

Outdoor ice rinks have been popular in recent years. With a question mark still hovering over this year's skating season, we can but hope that the traditional ice rink at the

Fruit Market, Na Františku will open, as well as Prague's largest ice rink on Letná plain or the new one in Folimanka park.

If the restrictions allow, participants will surely appreciate your support at the longest-running cold-hardiness swimming event, the **Alfred Nikodém Memorial swim** on the northern tip of Slavonic island on December 26th, the **Three Kings' Hardy Swimming** under Charles Bridge.



Photo: The Alfred Nikodém Memorial swim



Festival Za dveřmi – winter edition

Where to go for Nativity Scenes

The **Church of Our Lady Victorious**, known as the Church of the Infant Jesus of Prague invites you (all day, every day) to make a spiritual stop and take a look at the Nativity Scene set up there since 5 December. There is also a second Nativity manger, complete with animals – a donkey and a sheep – to be seen outside this Lesser Town church.

Also popular is the display of a distinctive **gingerbread Nativity Scene**, with its more than 30-year tradition, in the **Church of St Matthew**. The Nativity Scene is composed of over 300 hand-decorated fresh pieces of gingerbread. It will be on display from 19 December, on public holidays and weekends, until the end of January.

Another interesting Nativity Scene is the **Slavonic Nativity Scene** made by the academic sculptor Václav Cvekl. It can be viewed from 24 December in the **Church of St Anthony of Padua** in Holešovice.

Another Nativity Scene, unparalleled in the Czech Republic, is there to be seen if you take a trip to Prague Castle. It is an impressive set of 48 almost life-size figures. The Nativity Scene at the **Capuchin Monastery Church of Our Lady of Angels** in Hradčany will open for viewing on 25 December.

You can also admire the craftsmanship of our ancestors in the **Basilica of Sts Peter and Paul at Vyšehrad**, in the **St Vitus Cathedral**, in the **Týn Temple**, in the **Church of Our Lady of The Snows** and in other Prague churches. Nativity Scenes are typically on display from December 24 to early January, for longer in places.

The Nativity Scenes exhibition in the **Charles Bridge Museum** traditionally presents its unique Nativity Scenes, e.g. the Straw Nativity or the Vltava Fish Nativity Scene registered in the Czech Book of Records, a Nativity scene carved from African ebony, or one made out of Corn husks.

More information about individual Christmas events can be found on our Christmas special page at prague.eu/christmas.



Nativity Scene in the Church of Our Lady of Angels



Nativity Scene in The Church of St Anthony of Padua

PRAGUE CITY TOURISM IS HERE FOR YOU

Prague
City Tourism

TIC Christmas opening hours

We will be happy to welcome you personally in our Tourist Information Centres at these times.

Old Town Hall

Old Town Square 1, Prague 1

daily 10–19 h

reduced opening hours on these days:

24. Dec. 10–15 h
25. Dec. 11–17 h
31. Dec. 10–15 h
01. Jan. 11–19 h

Václav Havel Airport

Terminal 1 (closed until further notice)

Terminal 2 (arrivals hall)

daily 09–19 h

reduced opening hours on these days:

24. Dec. 09–15 h
25. Dec. 09–17 h
26. Dec. 09–19 h
31. Dec. 09–15 h
01. Jan. 12–19 h

Na Můstku – closed until further
notice

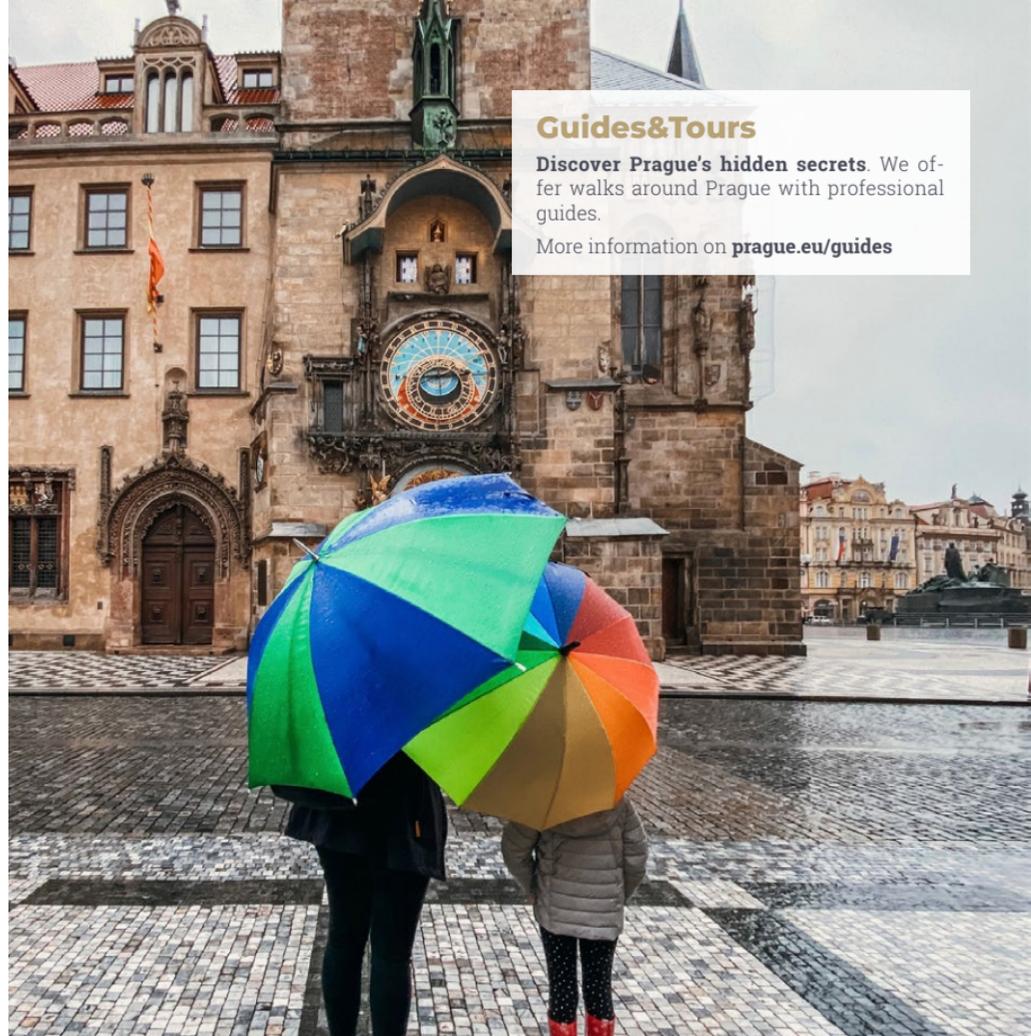
We are also available over the phone
+420 221 714 714 (Wed-Thu 8:00-17:00, Fri
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AND A SWEET NOTE TO FINISH ON...

A Covid 'treat' at the Black Madonna café

Celetná 34, Prague 1 – Old Town
cernamadona.com

This winter's tourist season will inevitably be marred by the SARS-CoV-2 epidemic, but let us lift the gloom. This stylish café and restaurant in the Cubist spirit has come up with a topical culinary hit in the form of their excellent dessert, dubbed the Covid-19 dessert, accompanied by the catchphrase: 'We're shutting down the virus, in a take-away box.' Currently, the confectioners are working on a follow-up dessert to be called 'the Vaccine'. This is the kind of treat(ment) we're happy to have!!



cernamadona.com

Winter and Christmas 2020; online edition

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