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## MEMORIAL ART GALLERY PRESENTS

Modern Czech Photography: A Portfolio  
(December 13, 2018–March 31, 2019)

Rochester, NY, November 15, 2018 – The Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester is pleased to announce the presentation of [\*Modern Czech Photography\*](#), a rare and powerful body of work by some of the most important mid-century Czech artists. Featuring such masters as Jaromír Funke and Josef Sudek, giants in the history of modernism, the portfolio holds special historic importance because it was published in 1943, during World War II and the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. The portfolio is a recent gift to MAG by the museum’s director, Jonathan Binstock, and his wife, Ann, in honor of Dr. Binstock’s father and stepmother, Moreton and Marisol Binn.

Czech photography from the first half of the twentieth century is synonymous with the history of modernism—the concerted effort to use new imagery, materials, and techniques to create works of art reflecting the realities and hopes of modern societies. Associations, courses of study, and journals dedicated to photography began appearing soon after Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918, after World War I. A new generation of art photographers was trained. Among the most influential were Jaromír Funke (Czech, 1896–1945) and Josef Sudek (Czech, 1896–1976), both of whom are featured in this portfolio. Their work, however, remained largely unknown throughout the German occupation and World War II (1938–45), and during the Soviet domination of Czechoslovakia and the Eastern Bloc following the war. The so-called Velvet Revolution of 1989 brought an end to the Communist regime; awareness of the distinctive art traditions of the country now called the Czech Republic quickly flourished.

The portfolio *Modern Czech Photography* was intended to showcase the work of prominent mid-century Czech photographers, as well as to spread and promote the notion of photography as a fine art. It was produced with great attention to detail in the selection of artists, images, materials, design, and construction. Today, institutions such as the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, and the Olomouc Museum of Art, Moravia, Czech Republic house examples of the portfolio in their permanent collections. Of the 50 that were planned, the number of portfolios that were actually completed and that are still extant today is unknown.

MAG’s Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director Jonathan P. Binstock acquired the portfolio as a gift from his father, Moreton Binn, who purchased it while on a business trip to Prague in the early 1990s. At that time the portfolio only had eight of the original 10 photographs. Over the years Dr. Binstock located the remaining prints and added them to the portfolio. “Ann and I are pleased to share this important portfolio with the public,” said Dr. Binstock. “We have only had the opportunity to display one of the pictures in our home over the years. The portfolio deserves a broader audience, and to be cared for in its entirety in perpetuity, as we know MAG will do.”

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## About The Memorial Art Gallery

The Memorial Art Gallery showcases visual art from antiquity to the present day, including an outdoor public Centennial Sculpture Park. In addition to its permanent collection, MAG offers a year-round schedule of special exhibitions, lectures, concerts, tours, after-hours social events, and family activities.

Hours: Wednesday–Sunday 11 am to 5 pm, and until 9 pm on Thursdays and select Fridays. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Admission: \$15; senior citizens, \$12; college students with ID and children 6–18, \$6. Always free to members, University of Rochester faculty/staff and students, and children 5 and under. Half-price general admission Thursdays from 5–9 pm is made possible in part by Monroe County. For more information, call 585.276.8900 or visit [mag.rochester.edu](http://mag.rochester.edu).

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