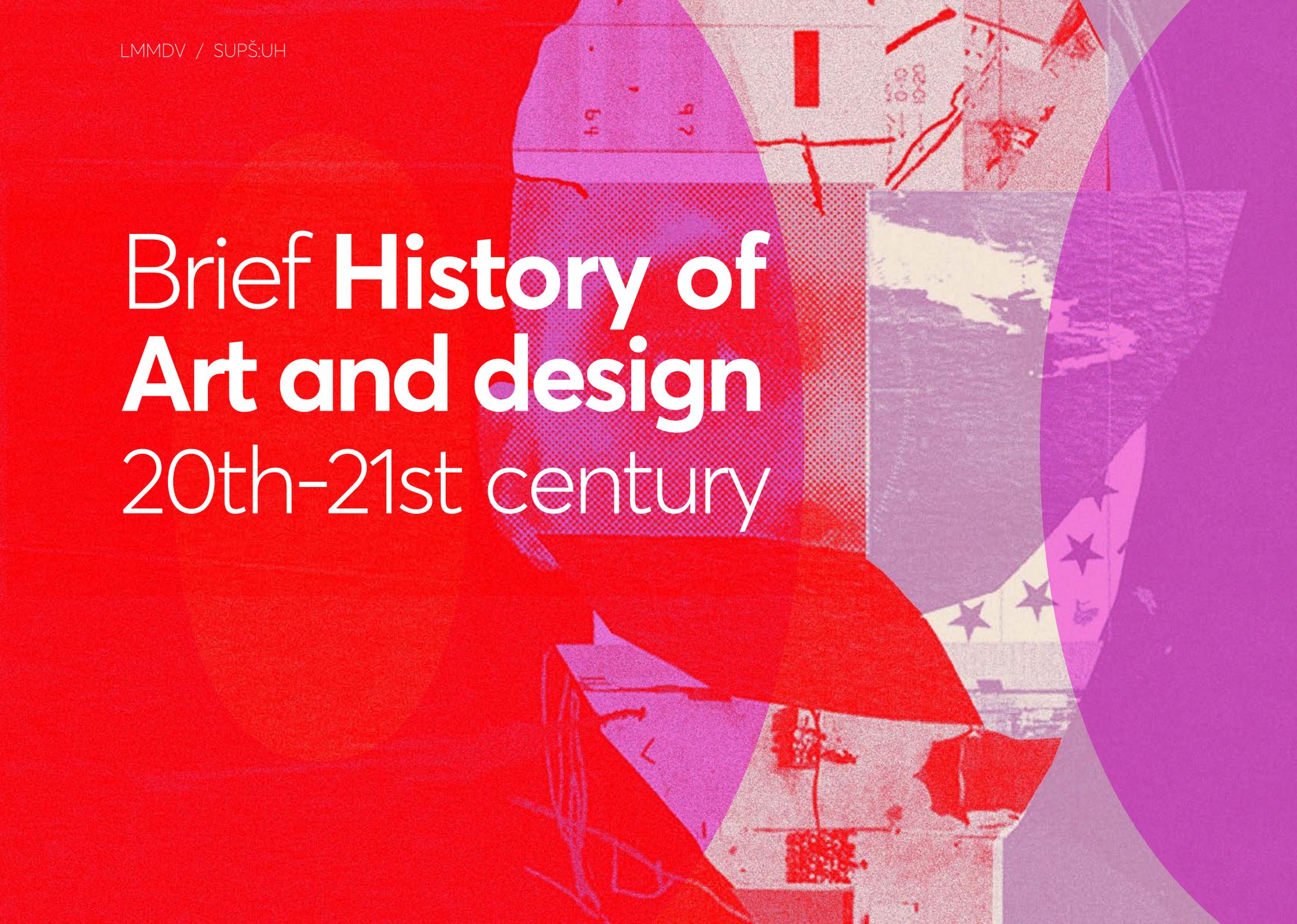


Brief **History of Art and design** 20th-21st century

The background features a complex collage of visual elements. On the left, a large, semi-transparent red shape overlaps a purple shape. The central and right portions are dominated by a halftone pattern. Overlaid on this are several distinct images: a banner with a row of white stars on a dark background, a white rectangular area with a red vertical bar and some faint text, and various abstract, geometric shapes in shades of red and purple. The overall aesthetic is modern and graphic, reflecting the themes of art and design in the 20th and 21st centuries.

- 01** Bauhaus Movement and International Modernism (1919–1960)
- 02** Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism (1930–1960)
- 03** Pop Art and Pop Design in the Space Age (1955–1970)
- 04** Minimalism and Brutalism (1950–1980)
- 05** Conceptual and Radical Design and Art (1965–1980)
- 06** Street Art, Graffiti, and Urban Design, Feminist Art Movement and Social Design (1970–1980)
- 07** Postmodernism in Art and Design (1980–2000)
- 08** Installation, Performance (1990–nowadays)
- 09** New Media Art (1990–nowadays)
- 10** Global Contemporary Art and Design (2000–nowadays)

BRITISH HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN 20TH & 21ST

Installation, Performance

(1990–nowadays)

THE VALUE OF ART IS IN THE OBSERVER.

Agnes Martin

Installation, Performance

(1990–nowadays)



Co-funded by
the European Union



LIEPĀJAS MŪZIKAS,
MĀKSLAS un DIZAINA
VIDUSSKOLA



SUPŠ:UH



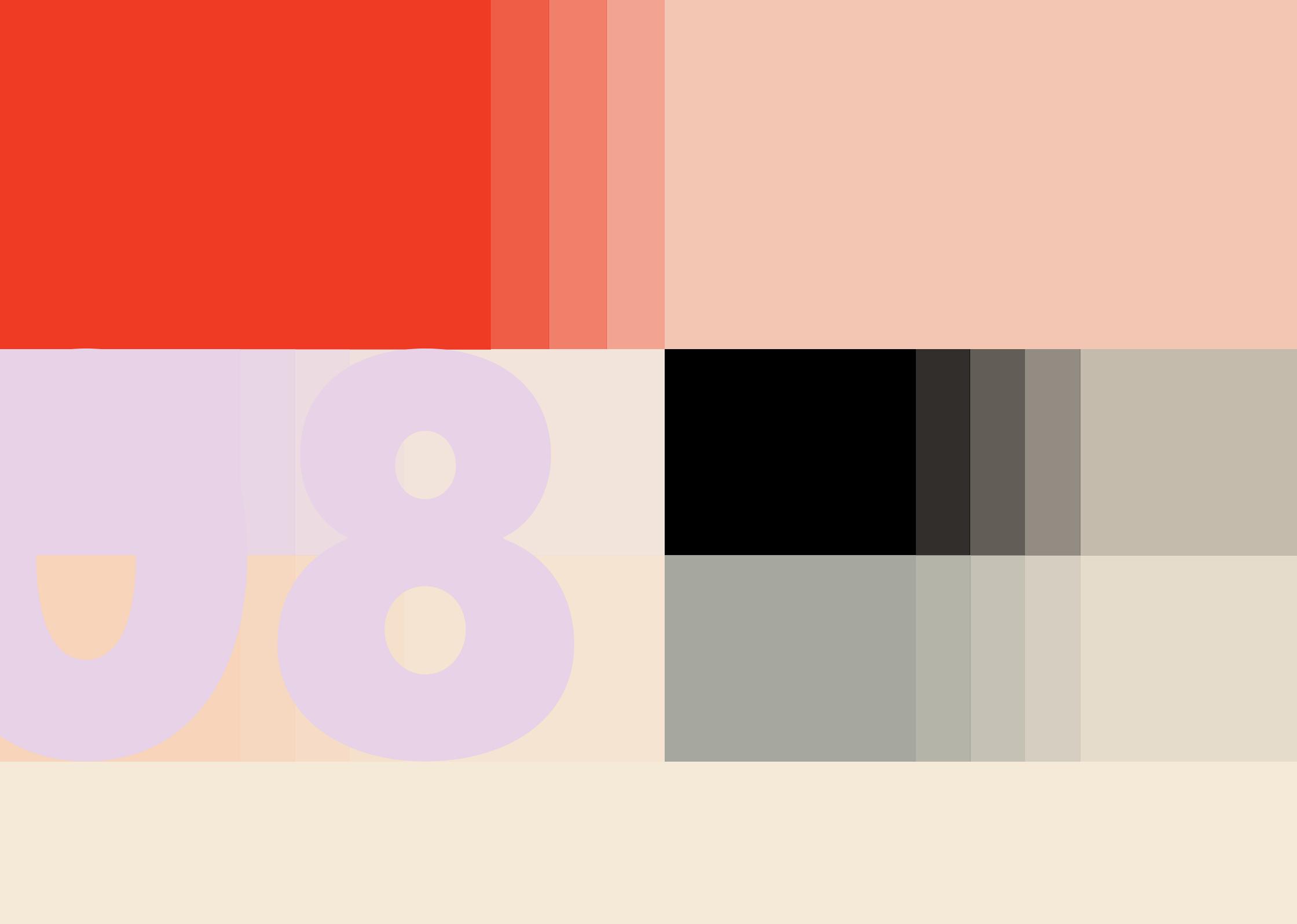
Materials created within Erasmus+ Small-scale partnership project "EmpowerED: Fostering Employability, Cultural Understanding, and Digital Resilience in VET Education" No 2023-2-LV01-KA210-VET-000178458 Implemented from 1.04.2024. till 31.03.2026. by coordinator MIKC "Liepājas Mūzikas, mākslas un dizaina vidusskola" (Latvia) and project partner Střední umělecko průmyslová škola Uherské Hradiště (Czech Republic), total project budget is 60 000 euro.

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Installation, Performance (1900-nowadays)

Installation Art Term

The term **installation art** is used to describe **large-scale, mixed-media constructions**, often designed for a specific place or for a temporary period of time.

Installation artworks (also sometimes described as '**environments**') often occupy an entire room or gallery space that the spectator has to walk through in order to engage fully with the work of art. Some installations, however, are designed simply to be walked around and contemplated, or are so fragile that they can only be viewed from a doorway, or one end of a room. What makes installation art different from sculpture or other traditional art forms is that it is a complete unified experience, rather than a display of separate, individual artworks. The focus on how the viewer experiences the work and the desire to provide an intense experience for them is a dominant theme in installation art.

Installation art emerged out of environments which artists such as **Allan Kaprow**, made from about 1957 onward, though there were important precursors, such as **Kurt Schwitters's Merzbau** 1933, an environment of several rooms created in the artist's own house in Hanover.

From the 1960s the creation of installations has become a major strand in modern art. This was increasingly the case from the early 1990s when the 'crash' of the art market in the late 1980s

led to a reawakening of interest in conceptual art (art focused on ideas rather than objects). Miscellaneous materials (mixed media), light and sound have remained fundamental to installation art.



Themes in Installation Art from 1990 till Nowadays

1990s: Immersive and Conceptual Focus

- / Artists explored **site-specificity** and large-scale immersive environments.
- / Influential artists like Olafur Eliasson and Rachel Whiteread created works.

Olafur Eliasson - Icelandic–Danish artist known for sculptured and large-scaled installation art employing elemental materials such as light, water, and air temperature to enhance the viewer's experience. addressing spatial experience and materiality.

- / Themes often dealt with identity, memory, and social critique, influenced by the end of the Cold War and rising globalization.



Cornelia Parker *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991)

MEDIUM: WOOD, METAL, PLASTIC, CERAMIC, PAPER, TEXTILE AND WIRE



Olafur Eliasson "Moss Wall" 1994. Tate modern.
MEDIUM: REINDEER MOSS, WOOD, WIRE

Moss wall 1994 is an installation that is made anew each time it is displayed. A grid of chicken wire is attached to the wall and the plant *Cladonia rangiferina*, commonly known as Reindeer Moss or Lichen, is stuffed into the holes. This moss is purchased from commercial suppliers who source it from Scandinavia and treat it with saline or glycerine, ensuring it is preserved and inflammable. The dimensions of the work vary according to the site, but the moss must cover an entire wall with a small lip extending about a foot onto the floor of the display space. Where possible, visitors may be allowed to touch the work.

2000s: Technological Integration

- / Digital and interactive media became integral, with artists like Rafael Lozano-Hemmer creating participatory installations.

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (born 1967 in Mexico City) is a Mexican Canadian electronic artist living and working in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He creates platforms for public participation by using robotic lights, digital fountains, computerized surveillance, and telematic networks. Inspired by phantasmagoria, carnival, and animatronics, his interactive works are "anti-monuments for people to self-represent."

- / Themes shifted towards the effects of technology, global networks, and environmental concerns.
- / Major exhibitions like the Venice Biennale and Documenta amplified installation art's global presence.



https://www.lozano-hemmer.com/videos/artwork/subtitledpublic_mexico.mp4#t=0.1 Rafael Lozano-Hemmer " Subtitled Public" 2004. Tate modern

MEDIUM: Software, interactive, colour, computer and video, 4 projections

Installed in a darkened room, the work involves a network of infrared surveillance cameras that detect the presence of visitors when they enter the space. Once identified, the body of a participant is individually and continuously tracked by Lozano-Hemmer's system. As long as a visitor remains within the space in which *Subtitled Public* has been installed, a randomly generated verb, conjugated in the third-person singular (including words such as 'tastes', 'shifts' and 'benefits') is projected in white light in lower-case characters onto his or her torso.

2010s: Political and Ecological Urgency

- / Installations increasingly addressed urgent topics like climate change, migration, and decolonization.
- / Artists like Ai Weiwei used large-scale works to critique sociopolitical issues.
- / Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) installations began to emerge, creating new sensory experiences.

Ai Weiwei (born 28 August 1957) is a Chinese contemporary artist, documentarian, and activist. As an activist, he has been openly critical of the Chinese Government's stance on democracy and human rights. Ai Weiwei emerged as a vital instigator in Chinese cultural development, an architect of Chinese modernism, and one of the nation's most vocal political commentators.

Ai Weiwei encapsulates political conviction and poetry in his many sculptures, photographs, and public works. Since being allowed to leave China in 2015, he has lived in Portugal, Germany, and the United Kingdom.



Ai Weiwei "Tree" 2010. Tate modern. MEDIUM: TREE SECTIONS AND METAL BOLTS

Tree 2010 is a monumental sculpture assembled from the dry, dead branches, roots and trunks of numerous species of tree, such as camphor, cedar and ginkgo, that Ai Weiwei gathered from across the mountainous southern region of his native China. The sculpture mimics the form of a real tree, although the cuts and joins are left visible, highlighting the different types of bark.

Tree also draws attention to the conceptual relationship between material and form in sculpture. Although different trees have been reduced to their essential material and then reassembled by the artist and his assistants in a form that resembles a tree, the intention is not illusionistic. The viewer is not led to believe this is a natural living tree; rather the visible joins and changes in the work's surface reveal its artificiality and the method of its construction.

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Performance Art Term

Artworks that are created through actions performed by the artist or other participants, which may be live or recorded, spontaneous or scripted

While the terms 'performance' and 'performance art' only became widely used in the 1970s, the history of performance in the visual arts is often traced back to futurist productions and dada cabarets of the 1910s.

Throughout the twentieth century performance was often seen as a non-traditional way of making art. Live-ness, physical movement and impermanence offered artists alternatives to the static permanence of painting and sculpture.

In the post-war period performance became aligned with conceptual art, because of its often immaterial nature.¹

1 <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/performance-art>

An Introduction to Performance Art | TateShots

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Z-YZ3A4mdk>



Marina Abramović: What is Performance Art?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcyYynulogY>



1990s: Expansion and Globalization

Focused on identity politics, globalization, feminism, and AIDS activism. Artists like Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco explored cultural and racial identities, while groups like ACT UP used performance as a tool for political activism.

Early experimentation with digital technologies began to appear, with some artists incorporating video, computers, and telecommunication in their performances.



Marina Abramovic "Cleaning the Mirror" 1995

2000s: Integration with Technology and Social Media

Artists began integrating video, internet, and interactive technologies into their performances. Works became more immersive, breaking traditional boundaries between the audience and performer. The themes expanded to include climate change, war, and migration, reflecting the geopolitical landscape.

Notable Artists:

- / Laurie Anderson used multimedia to create layered narratives.
- / Stelarc explored body modification and cyborg art, integrating robotics and biotechnology into his performances.

<https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/243/3133>



Marina Abramović. *The Artist is Present*. 2009

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ: In *The Artist is Present*, I perform every day for three months. The performance is really about presence. You have to be in here and now, 100 per-cent. I have the empty chair, so everybody from the audience can come in his free time and sit in the front of me, and engage in this kind of silence, experience this here and now, the present moment.

2010s: Institutionalization and Social Commentary

Performance art entered museums and galleries more prominently, sometimes losing its transgressive edge.

Movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter inspired a wave of politically charged performance art.

Live-streamed performances became more common, broadening the audience reach.



Tania Bruguera "Tatlin's Whisper #5" 2008
Medium: Performance, 2 people and 2 horses
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7L1s_GWn3o

Performance and Installation Art in Latvia

Since 1990, performance art in Latvia has experienced significant development, reflecting societal and cultural changes.

The 1990s - 2000: the Awakening Period and the Quest for Freedom. Technology and Social Themes

Kristaps Ģelzis (b. 1962)

Kristaps Ģelzi's "The Wall" is considered the first video installation in Latvian art. In the work, the artist addresses environmental and socio-political issues using the powerful suggestive semantics of the image of the wall. Ģelzi's video work "Mūris" (The Wall) is supplemented by his artistic performance in Riga's St. Peter's Church at "Kino dienas 86" (Cinema Days '86).

Kristaps Ģelzis (b. 1962) alongside with other pioneers of conceptual art from his generation—Ojārs Pētersons, Andris Breže, Oļegs Tillbergs, Juris Putrāms, and others—has been actively involved in shaping Latvian contemporary art since the mid-1980s. **These names are strongly associated with the rapid emergence and spread of installations, objects, video installations, events, and performances in Latvia**



<https://www.makslaskolekcija.lv/en/works/the-wall>
Kristaps Ģelzis' "The Wall" is considered the first video installation. 1987.Video, 100:24:17 (15 min.). VHS cassette. LNMA collection

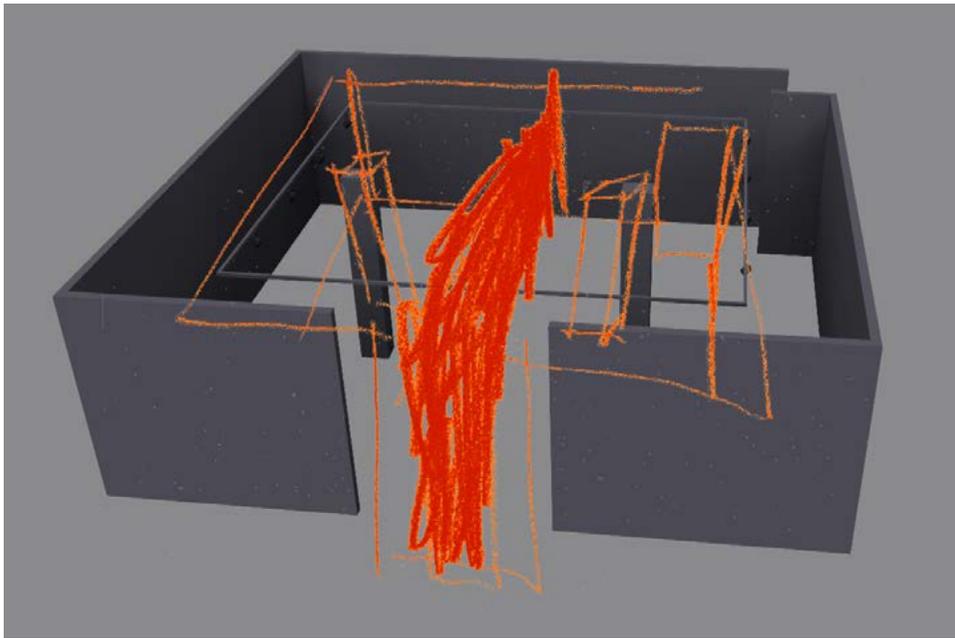
Ojārs Pētersons (b. 1956)

Ojārs Pētersons is one of the so-called "boundary-breaking" generation, which introduced a new, bold form of expression and messages into Latvian art in the 1980s. In his posters, graphics, installations, and video installations, he has used metaphors and symbols to comment on contemporary times.²

Pēterson's works are often characterized by minimalism, witty irony, and the ability to critically comment on society and the role of art within it. He employs various materials and media to create multilayered installations that frequently incorporate interactive and moving elements. His artistic practice has been closely linked to the development of Latvian contemporary art since the 1980s, and his works have significantly influenced future generations of artists.



2 <https://www.makslaskolekcija.lv/autori/ojars-petersons>



Ojārs Pētersons installation "The Orange Side" 2011.

I looked to one side, then to the other. A two-sided view of a single whole, I thought. So, does that mean I am the one dividing the whole into two sides? Do sides even exist without me? But then, where am I in all this? Absolute nothingness? Or do I remain on one of the sides? Or perhaps there is and always remains just one whole, and the sides are merely illusions? If I step onto one side, I can't tell—am I on that side or this side? Can I be on both sides at the same time? Be two-sided? Inside or outside? (For example, what determines the inside and outside of a cup—where its handle is located?) Nothing makes sense. Or maybe things can make sense... halfway? From my side of things.³

3 <https://kim.lv/lv/ojars-petersons-orange-side/>

The 2010s: Institutionalization and Experimentation

Katrīna Neiburga (b. 1978) and Andris Eglītis (b. 1981)

Katrīna Neiburga and Andris Eglītis are prominent Latvian artists actively working in the field of contemporary art, with a particular focus on performances and installations.

Neiburga is known for her interest in social themes, video art, and interactive installations, often reflecting aspects of daily life, cultural habits, and identity exploration. Eglītis, on the other hand, as a painter and installation artist, is dedicated to spatial forms and material experimentation, frequently incorporating both natural and industrially processed materials.

The two artists have collaborated on several significant projects, including the Latvian Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale with the installation "*Armpit*", which combined architectural, natural, and human relationship motifs. Their works stand out for their ability to merge performative elements with spatial solutions, creating immersive and multi-layered artistic experiences.



ARMPIT, (with Andris Eglitis), 2015, 56th Venice art biennale, Venice, Italia

The Latvian pavilion at the 56th International Art Exhibition presented *Armpit*, a multimedia art installation by artists Katrīna Neiburga and Andris Eglītis. Armpit is a sculpted system of building constructions interwoven with video-stories about a peculiar local phenomenon, “garage elves”, who tend to spend their leisure time tinkering with various mechanisms in workshops set up for this hobby.

It was inspired by a sample of vernacular architecture with local character – the Soviet era co-ops of private garages whose owners have adapted them for the hybrid use as workshops-cum-dachas. Today some of the garages have been turned into living spaces. Others house workshops. In some, cars are still kept. It is a closed male commune, a monastic brotherhood that includes retired blue-collar workers of a planned economy and engineers from factories closed in the course of neo-liberal reform. With the enthusiasm of alchemists, they are continuing to occupy themselves with inventing, constructing mechanical devices or re-soldering microcircuits pulled out of second-hand gadgets.

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Czech Installation and Performance Art

Historical Context of Installation and Performance Art in Czech Visual Culture

Installation and performance art in Czechia developed under unique socio-political conditions, particularly influenced by **totalitarianism, political resistance, and the transition to democracy**. These art forms emerged as critical responses to state-imposed restrictions, focusing on themes of **personal freedom, institutional critique, and the limits of artistic expression**.

1960s–1970s: Underground and Conceptual Beginnings

During the Communist regime (1948–1989), official cultural production was dictated by **socialist realism**, leaving little space for experimental or conceptual practices. Nevertheless, artists found ways to develop **alternative art movements** outside state-sponsored exhibitions. Influenced by **Western avant-garde tendencies** (such as Fluxus, minimalism, and conceptualism), Czech artists like **Milan Knížák** and **Jiří Kovanda** began experimenting with **ephemeral, action-based works** that circumvented traditional art forms. These works often took place in **private apartments, abandoned buildings, or unnoticed public spaces**, avoiding direct confrontation with authorities while still challenging societal norms.

1980s: Political and Social Resistance

By the 1980s, performance and installation art became a tool for **subversive critique**. Under the growing pressure of **dissident movements**, artists created interventions that subtly undermined state power. **Happening groups, like Aktual (founded by Knížák)**, staged provocative performances with existential and absurd elements. These works were often **documented in photographs and texts**, as state censorship prevented their open display.

1990s–2000s: Post-Communist Expansion and Institutionalization

Following the **Velvet Revolution (1989)**, Czech performance and installation art flourished in a new democratic landscape. Artists such as **David Černý** embraced direct, often aggressive **public interventions**, reflecting on themes of nationalism, globalization, and Czech identity. Others, like **Eva Koťátková**, explored **social structures, psychology, and control mechanisms**, influenced by growing concerns about institutional power in post-totalitarian societies.

2010s–Present: Globalization and New Media Integration

Today, Czech installation and performance art is increasingly integrated with **new media, digital technology, and participatory elements**. Younger artists incorporate **video installations, interactive environments, and audience-driven performances** to reflect on themes such as **surveillance, migration, climate change, and gender identity**. The Czech Republic has become an important part of the European contemporary art scene, with its artists frequently showcased in **international biennales and museum collections**.

Principles of Installation and Performance Art in Czechia

Installation Art Principles

Installation art in the Czech Republic follows several key conceptual principles:

- / **Site-Specificity:** Many installations respond to **particular spaces and historical contexts**, transforming abandoned sites, city squares, or galleries into immersive environments.
- / **Social and Political Commentary:** Artists frequently **engage with national identity, memory, and institutional critique**, often reflecting on past and present political conditions.
- / **Material Experimentation:** Czech artists use **found objects, unconventional materials, and interactive elements** to create meaning beyond traditional mediums.

Performance Art Principles

- / **Everyday Actions:** Inspired by **minimalist gestures and conceptual art**, Czech performance artists (such as Jiří Kovanda) often use **subtle, almost imperceptible actions** to challenge social norms.
- / **Body as Medium:** Artists utilize their own bodies as both a **subject and an object of artistic exploration**, emphasizing themes of **pain, endurance, vulnerability, and intimacy**.

- / **Interactivity and Participation:** Some performances, particularly post-2000s works, incorporate **audience participation**, blurring the line between performer and observer.
- / **Provocation and Humour:** Many Czech performance artists, such as **David Černý**, use **satirical, absurd, and provocative acts** to expose political hypocrisy and cultural stereotypes.

Notable Czech Installation and Performance Artists

Milan Knížák (b. 1940)

Biography

Milan Knížák was born on **April 19, 1940, in Plzeň, Czechoslovakia**. He studied at the **Academy of Fine Arts in Prague**, but his **radical artistic experiments were largely self-taught**. In the early 1960s, he began organizing **unconventional performances and happenings** in public spaces, often featuring **elements of destruction, absurdity, and provocation**.

In 1965, he was invited to join **Fluxus**, the international avant-garde movement led by **George Maciunas**. His **anti-art philosophy and emphasis on experimental music and performance aligned closely with Fluxus principles**. He spent time in **New York in 1968**, where he collaborated with artists such as **Allan Kaprow and Dick Higgins**. However, his return to Czechoslovakia coincided with the **Warsaw Pact invasion**, which led to increased state surveillance of his activities.

During the 1970s and 1980s, he was **banned from exhibiting publicly**, yet he continued producing underground performances, art objects, and **experimental music**. After the fall of communism, he became a **professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague** and later served as **director of the National Gallery in Prague (1999–2011)**.

He remains a controversial figure, known for his **outspoken political views** and **persistent critique of contemporary art institutions**.

Principles of Art

Destruction as Creation – Knížák deliberately **destroys and modifies** objects (books, records, furniture, clothing) to challenge traditional aesthetics and question **consumer culture and material value**.

Anti-Art and Fluxus Influence – His works embrace **randomness, absurdity, and everyday actions**, rejecting conventional artistic beauty. He sees art as a **process rather than a finished product**.

Performance as Ritual and Protest – His **happenings and performances** often feature **violence, chaos, and spontaneous participation**, critiquing **social and political systems**.

Sound and Music Experiments – He is known for **“Broken Music”**, where he **scratched, melted, and reassembled vinyl records** to produce unpredictable sounds, pioneering **noise and experimental music**.

Notable Artworks

"Destroyed Music" (1963–1979) – A series of altered vinyl records, producing chaotic and **uncontrollable** sound compositions.

"Demonstration for All the Senses" (1964) – A Fluxus happening, where participants performed **absurd actions**, such as **pouring water on themselves or tearing clothes**, rejecting traditional performance structures.



"Happenings and Demonstrations" (1960s–1970s) – Public interventions blending **destruction, body art, and surreal humour**, such as **eating a violin or setting everyday objects on fire**.

Zorka Ságlová (1942–2003)

Biography

Zorka Ságlová was born on **August 14, 1942, in Humpolec, Czechoslovakia**. She studied textile design at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (UMPRUM) under **Antonín Kybal**, where she developed an interest in **minimalist and geometric abstraction**. Although initially known for her **abstract paintings**, she transitioned into **happenings, installations, and land art** in the late 1960s.

Her career was heavily shaped by the **political climate of Czechoslovakia after 1968**, particularly the **Soviet invasion** that led to increased state repression. As a result, her works, often featuring **subtle interventions in landscapes**, were viewed as suspicious by authorities. She was closely associated with the **Czech neo-avant-garde** movement and collaborated with artists from the **Křižovnická škola čistého humoru bez vtipu** (The Crusader School of Pure Humour Without Jokes), a Prague-based conceptual group.

After being **banned from exhibiting publicly in the 1970s**, she continued her work in private and underground settings. She returned to the art scene in the late **1980s and 1990s**, gaining recognition for her **early experimental works**, which had been largely overlooked under the Communist regime. Zorka Ságlová passed away on **March 9, 2003, in Prague**.

Principles of Work

Zorka Ságlová's artistic approach was deeply **experimental, conceptual, and influenced by nature**. Her work can be categorized into three key principles:

Connection Between Art and Landscape (Land Art and Performance)

- / Ságlová was one of the **first Czech artists to introduce land art**, incorporating natural environments as part of her performances.
- / Her **happenings often involved simple, ritualistic actions in open landscapes**, making them **symbolic yet ephemeral**.
- / She sought to highlight the **relationship between human action and nature**, emphasizing the **fragility of the environment**.

Minimalism and Conceptualism

- / Early in her career, Ságlová was influenced by **minimalism**, producing geometric abstract works inspired by textile design.
- / She later embraced **conceptual art**, creating **performances and installations that questioned the boundaries between art and life**.

Historical and Mythological References

- / Many of her works contain references to **Czech history, myths, and folklore**.
- / She often drew from **medieval iconography, agricultural traditions, and alchemical symbols**, reinterpreting them in a modern, artistic context.

Notable Artworks



"Throwing Balls into the Bořín Pond" (Házení míčů do průhonického rybníka Bořín) – 1969

- / One of the earliest examples of **Czech land art and performance art**.
- / Ságlová and her friends **threw white balls into a pond in Průhonice**, transforming an everyday action into a poetic, meditative event.
- / The piece emphasized **the relationship between movement, space, and the natural environment**.
- / Authorities interpreted the work as **subversive and anti-state**, leading to official restrictions on Ságlová's future exhibitions.

“Rabbit Hunt” (Honu na králíky) – 1970

- / A happening held in the fields near Průhonice, where a group of participants released and herded rabbits.
- / Inspired by **medieval hunting practices**, but instead of a violent hunt, the event **celebrated freedom and randomness**.
- / Authorities viewed the event as a **veiled political critique**, suspecting that the **rabbits symbolized dissidents fleeing oppression**.
- / The government **banned Ságlová from public exhibitions after this piece**.

“Homage to the Square” (Pocta čtverci) – 1970s

- / A series of **minimalist textile-based paintings** inspired by **Josef Albers’ colour theory**.
- / These works demonstrated Ságlová’s continued engagement with **geometric abstraction**, even during her period of political marginalization.

“Ploughing the Prague Field” (Orební pole v Praze) – 1991

- / Created after the **Velvet Revolution**, this project **revisited the theme of land and its cultural symbolism**.
- / Ságlová reinterpreted the **medieval tradition of ceremonial plowing**, symbolizing the **renewal of Czech society after communism**.
- / The work was part of her broader investigation into **history, myths, and Czech national identity**.

Eva Koťátková (b. 1982)

Biography

Eva Koťátková was born in **1982 in Prague, Czech Republic**. She studied at the **Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (AVU)**, the **Academy of Applied Arts (UMPRUM)**, and the **San Francisco Art Institute**. From a young age, she was interested in **the relationship between social systems, power structures, and human behaviour**, which became a central theme of her work.

She gained international recognition in her **mid-twenties**, particularly after winning the **Jindřich Chalupecký Award (2007)**—a prestigious Czech art prize for young artists. This led to her inclusion in major exhibitions, including the **Venice Biennale (2013)**, the **Berlin Biennale**, and **MoMA PS1 in New York**.

Koťátková often incorporates **performance, sculpture, collage, and theatrical elements** into her large-scale installations. She explores **how education, psychiatry, and other institutional frameworks discipline individuals** and frequently references **real-life narratives of marginalized people**.

She currently lives and works in **Prague**, where she is active in **socially engaged art projects**.

Principles of Art

- / **Institutional Critique** – Koťátková explores how **schools, hospitals, prisons, and other institutions shape and control individuals**, often using **archival materials, found objects, and personal testimonies**.
- / **Body as a Constrained Object** – Many of her sculptures and performances involve **metal structures, prosthetics, and cages**, symbolizing **social oppression and psychological barriers**.

- / **Surrealism and Theatricality** – Her installations often resemble **fragmented stage sets**, combining **drawings, props, and sound** to create an eerie, unsettling atmosphere.
- / **Collaboration and Collective Work** – She frequently **works with children, mental health patients, and marginalized groups**, using storytelling and **participatory art** as a form of social reflection.

Notable Artworks

“Asylum” (2014) – A large-scale installation with **metal beds, cages, and surreal props**, examining **historical psychiatric care and the voices of institutionalized individuals**.

- / **“Not How People Move but What Moves Them” (2013, Venice Biennale)** – A performance featuring **caged performers and restrictive devices**, referencing **disciplinary structures in education and social systems**.
- / **“The Judicial System for a Garden” (2019)** – A participatory performance about **justice, environmental ethics, and the rights of nature**, merging legal frameworks with artistic storytelling.



E. Kotátková, Interview with a monster

Jiří Kovanda (b. 1953)

Biography

Jiří Kovanda was born in **1953 in Prague**. Unlike many artists of his generation, he did not receive formal training at an art academy. Instead, he **began experimenting with conceptual and performance art in the mid-1970s**, working independently of official artistic structures.

During the communist era, his work remained **low-profile**, as he staged subtle, almost invisible actions in public spaces. Unlike **Milan Knížák’s provocative performances**, Kovanda’s interventions were **quiet, poetic, and seemingly insignificant**. These small gestures were deeply subversive in a society dominated by **strict ideological control**.

In the 1980s, he briefly shifted to **painting and installation art**, but his conceptual works were rediscovered in the 2000s, leading to **international recognition**. Today, his work is included in **Tate Modern (London), Centre Pompidou (Paris), and MoMA (New York)**. He teaches at the **Academy of Fine Arts in Prague**, influencing a younger generation of conceptual artists.

Notable Artworks

- / **"Untitled (I Walked Through Prague and Touched People)" (1976)** – A performance where Kovanda **gently brushed against strangers in the street**, highlighting unconscious social boundaries.
- / **"Kiss Through Glass" (2007)** – A conceptual piece exploring **intimacy and physical barriers**, where Kovanda and another person kissed through a transparent surface.



- / **"On the Escalator" (1977)** – A performance where he **turned around mid-way on an escalator** and looked at people behind him, subtly breaking an expected public behaviour.

Vladimír Havlík (b. 1959)

Biography

Vladimír Havlík was born in **1959 in Olomouc, Czechoslovakia**. He studied **art education and aesthetics at Palacký University in Olomouc**, but he was deeply influenced by **Czech performance art, body art, and conceptual movements of the 1970s and 1980s**.

During the 1980s, he was involved in the **alternative and underground art scene**, producing **action art and performances** that often took place in **natural environments**. His work was **less confrontational than Knížák's** but still subtly **resistant to the totalitarian system**.

After the **Velvet Revolution (1989)**, he continued working in **installation and performance art** while also becoming a **professor of art education**. His later works reflect a **philosophical and poetic approach to human existence**, often incorporating **themes of memory, transience, and the passage of time**.

Principles of Art

- / **Poetic and Existential Action Art** – Havlík's performances often involve **simple but profound gestures**, exploring **time, memory, and human existence**.
- / **Nature and Body Connection** – Many of his performances take place **in forests, rivers, or fields**, emphasizing the **harmony between human presence and the natural environment**.
- / **Non-Confrontational Resistance** – Unlike more aggressive political performance art, Havlík's works subtly challenge power structures by introducing **moments of stillness, contemplation, and gentle subversion**.
- / **Use of Ephemeral Materials** – His installations often involve **paper, fabric, or fragile sculptures**, symbolizing the **transience of human experience**.

Notable Artworks

- / **"Horizon" (1983)** – A performance where Havlík **laid down on a field, aligning his body with the horizon**, blending himself with the landscape to explore **existence and disappearance**.
- / **"Waiting" (1981)** – A durational performance where he stood in a public space, **doing nothing**, questioning the **social function of time and passive resistance**.
- / **"Happy Island" (2012)** – a performance



- / **National Gallery Prague Archives** – Documents on installation and performance artists in Czechia.
- / **Tate Modern & Centre Pompidou Exhibition Catalogues** – Feature Jiří Kovanda, Eva Koťátková, and Milan Knížák.

Conclusion: Czech Installation and Performance Art

Czech installation and performance art have played a **crucial role** in the development of contemporary artistic expression, particularly in response to **political, social, and philosophical questions**. Emerging from a **specific historical and cultural context**, these art forms have reflected **both resistance to authoritarianism and a deep engagement with human experience, social systems, and the body as an artistic medium**.

During the **1960s and 1970s**, artists like **Milan Knížák** and **Jiří Kovanda** used **performance and intervention-based works** as a means of countering the **rigid ideological structures of communist Czechoslovakia**. Knížák's **destructive and provocative actions** challenged both artistic and societal norms, while Kovanda's **subtle, almost imperceptible performances** questioned the **invisible rules of everyday life**.

In the post-communist era, Czech installation and performance art diversified, incorporating **psychological, institutional, and environmental themes**. **Vladimír Havlík's poetic, nature-based actions** explored existential and personal narratives, while **Eva Koťátková's theatrical installations** exposed the ways in which social institutions regulate and control individuals. These artists continued a tradition of **conceptual, body-oriented, and space-based art**, but with a new focus on **collective memory, social critique, and interdisciplinary experimentation**.

A defining characteristic of Czech installation and performance art is its **ability to merge politics, personal experience, and absurdity**, often using **ephemeral, everyday materials and**

intimate gestures rather than grand, spectacular performances. This approach aligns with broader European conceptual art traditions while maintaining a distinctly **Czech poetic sensibility**, rooted in **dark humour, existential reflection, and the legacy of underground art movements**.

Today, Czech installation and performance artists remain **active on the international stage**, engaging in global conversations on **surveillance, migration, ecology, and the limits of freedom**. Their work continues to challenge viewers, inviting them to **question systems of power, human interaction, and the nature of artistic experience itself**.

Future Trends of Czech Installation and Performance Art

Czech installation and performance art is evolving rapidly as it responds to the **global challenges of the 21st century**. Building on the radical foundations laid by earlier generations, contemporary Czech artists are expanding the boundaries of these practices in a variety of directions. Here are some emerging trends that are shaping the future of Czech visual art:

Engagement with Technology and Digital Media

As technology continues to reshape global culture, **Czech installation and performance artists** are increasingly incorporating **new media and digital tools** into their work. **Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), digital projections, and interactive installations** are becoming important elements in art that connects physical and virtual spaces. These technologies enable artists to engage viewers in new ways, creating immersive and **multi-sensory experiences** that go beyond traditional boundaries of space and perception.

Artists such as **Eva Kořátková** have already explored the relationship between **technology and the human body**, and we can expect more artists to explore **cybernetics, artificial intelligence, and bio-art** as ways to investigate human identity and **digital consciousness**. These trends may lead to performances that involve **real-time interaction with AI or hybrid realities**, blurring the line between the **virtual and the corporeal**.

Activism and Social Engagement

Many contemporary Czech artists are shifting toward **direct social and political activism**, using their work to challenge issues such as **climate change, immigration, surveillance, gender equality, and the rights of marginalized groups**. Building on **Eva Kořátková's socially engaged works**, artists are **collaborating with communities**, creating **art that amplifies unheard voices** and raises awareness about **global and local issues**.

Artists are also increasingly using **performance art as a tool for social transformation**, often engaging with audiences through **interactive performances, workshops, and participatory projects**. Performance art's **ephemeral and time-based nature** makes it a particularly powerful tool for artists interested in questioning the **temporalities of activism** and raising **awareness of the urgency of social change**.

Site-Specific and Environmental Art

The growing **environmental crisis** is inspiring more Czech artists to create **site-specific art installations** that directly engage with natural landscapes and public spaces. This trend reflects a larger shift towards **ecology and sustainability** in contemporary art practices. Czech artists like **Vladimír Havlík**, who has previously created work in natural settings, exemplify this approach, where **nature, space, and time** are integral to the artwork itself.

We can expect more **environmental installations** that question **human impact on the environment**, using **natural materials, upcycled objects**, or even the **land itself** as part of the installation. These works may include **public art interventions** in urban areas, offering commentary on the **transience of human-made structures** in relation to the natural world.

Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Practices

The future of Czech performance and installation art is likely to see an **increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration**, where artists **merge performance, visual arts, music, dance, theatre, and literature**. Artists are **teaming up with scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and even architects** to explore the **intersections between different fields**.

This blending of disciplines not only expands the **creative potential of performance and installation art** but also allows artists to address complex **societal challenges** from **multiple angles**. Collaborative art practices could lead to **hybrid forms of performance** that engage a wider array of sensory experiences and invite audiences to take a more active role in the creation and interpretation of the artwork.

Exploration of Identity and Memory

A key concern in contemporary Czech art is the **relationship between memory, identity, and history**—themes that have been central to the nation's cultural development in the wake of **Communism** and the **Velvet Revolution**. In this regard, many younger artists are revisiting questions about **individual and collective memory**, using installation and performance to explore personal **and national identities**.

In particular, the **legacy of totalitarianism** is a recurring

theme, with artists investigating the **psychological effects of state surveillance, censorship, and trauma**. The **performative body**, as an archive of historical and personal memory, will continue to be an essential tool for artists trying to connect **the past to the present**. Future performances might increasingly **incorporate digital tools to archive or revisit historical moments**, blending **old and new media** to create experiences that **reconstruct history** in complex, multi-layered ways.

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Students' Tasks

1. What is Installation Art? – Quick Room Design

Objective: Understand how installation art transforms spaces.

Task:

Classroom Discussion (5 min) – Define installation art and its focus on creating an immersive experience.

Mini-Challenge (10 min) – In pairs or groups of three, students:

Pick a theme (e.g., memory, identity, technology, nature).

Sketch a simple room-sized installation based on their theme.

Choose at least 3 materials they would use (e.g., wood, fabric, mirrors, recycled objects).

Presentation (5 min) – Each group explains their design in 2–3 sentences.

Variation: If space allows, students can use classroom objects to build a miniature 3D model.

2. Performance Art in One Gesture

Objective: Experience performance art through simple body movements.

Task:

Classroom Discussion (5 min) – Define performance art and how it differs from theatre (unscripted, concept-driven, audience involvement).

Solo Challenge (5 min) – Each student chooses one action that could be a performance (e.g., slow clapping, standing motionless, walking backward).

Group Experiment (10 min) –

Each student performs their gesture for 30 seconds in front of the class.

The class guesses the meaning or emotional impact behind each performance.

Variation: Students perform their gestures together to see if a new meaning emerges.

3. Expressing Emotion Through Space – Quick Storytelling

Objective: Learn how installation artists use space to evoke emotions.

Task:

Warm-Up (5 min) – Discuss how spaces can create different feelings (cozy, intimidating, mysterious, chaotic).

Small Group Challenge (10 min) – Each group:

Picks an emotion (e.g., happiness, fear, nostalgia).

Designs an imaginary room that embodies that emotion.

Writes three descriptive sentences about the space.

Gallery Walk (5 min) – Groups present their space, and classmates guess the emotion.

4. Minimal Action, Maximum Meaning – Performance Art Challenge

Objective: Understand how simple actions can become meaningful performances.

Task:

Discussion (5 min) – Show examples of Jiří Kovanda’s subtle performances (e.g., “Touching People on the Street”).

Solo Challenge (5 min) – Each student writes down:

One small action that could be a performance (e.g., whispering a secret, staring at the ceiling, shaking hands with everyone in the room).

Paired Performance (10 min) – In pairs:

One person performs their action.

The other interprets the meaning and shares their thoughts.

5. Body as Art – Performance Mapping

Objective: Explore how the human body can be part of an artwork.

Task:

Discussion (5 min) – Discuss how artists like Marina Abramović and Tania Bruguera use the human body as a medium.

Group Challenge (10 min) – In small groups:

Pick a word or theme (e.g., control, freedom, isolation, power).

Use only body positions (no words or props) to create a frozen tableau that represents the theme.

Classroom Interpretation (5 min) – Other students guess the theme and discuss.

6. Art with Everyday Objects – Quick Installation Challenge

Objective: Use ordinary materials to create meaning, inspired by installation artists.

Task:

Discussion (5 min) – Look at Ai Weiwei’s “Tree” or Cornelia Parker’s “Cold Dark Matter” (installations made from found objects).

Quick Challenge (10 min) – Each student picks:

One everyday object (bag, chair, scarf, book).

Rearranges or places it in a different way to create an installation.

Writes one sentence explaining the meaning.

Gallery Walk (5 min) – Students walk around and interpret the “installations.”

7. Environmental Performance Art – Interactive Action

Objective: Use performance to highlight environmental concerns.

Task:

Discussion (5 min) – Learn about Olafur Eliasson and eco-art.

Small Group Action (10 min) – Each group:

Picks a climate issue (e.g., deforestation, plastic pollution).

Creates a silent performance (e.g., pretending to be melting ice, drowning in plastic).

Reflection (5 min) – Classmates interpret the message behind each performance.

8. Memory in Space – Interactive Installation Idea

Objective: Learn how memory can be visualized in installation art.

Task:

Discussion (5 min) – Look at works like Eva Koťátková's "Asylum" (which uses metal beds and cages to symbolize institutions).

Individual Reflection (5 min) – Students write a personal memory in 1–2 sentences.

Mini-Installation Sketch (10 min) – Each student designs:

A small installation idea that visually represents their memory (e.g., a room filled with paper birds for childhood freedom).

A short title for their piece.

9. Political Art in One Line – Creative Protest Art

Objective: Understand how installation and performance can be forms of activism.

Task:

Discussion (5 min) – Learn how Ai Weiwei and Tania Bruguera use art as protest.

Fast Art Challenge (10 min) – Each student:

Picks a social or political issue.

Writes a one-sentence message they would put in an installation.

Designs a simple layout (e.g., a wall of messages, a pile of books symbolizing censorship).

Group Discussion (5 min) – Share and discuss which messages were most powerful.

