

House of Arts Brno
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We Interrupt the Broadcast and Distort the Image: A New Exhibition at the House of Arts Returns to the Roots of Video Art in Central Europe

Brno, 21 April 2026 – How did video art emerge in Central Europe at a time when both technology and access to information were limited, yet state control was pervasive? Is it even possible today to fully map its beginnings? And what can we carry forward from them into the present? These are among the questions explored by the international exhibition *Distorted Image. Chapters from the Beginnings of Video Art*, which will be opened on Tuesday, 28 April 2026 at 6 pm at the House of Arts Brno. The exhibition *Words of Dalibor Chatrný* will open concurrently.

The title *Distorted Image* refers to experiments with the image which, as curator Lenka Dolanová explains, was “*intentionally and unintentionally deformed and manipulated, calling into question the very ability of the image to convey reality truthfully.*” Artists worked with both analog and digital imagery, television broadcasts, and the television set itself. The exhibition focuses on former Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary from the late 1960s to the mid-1990s. It offers insight into both the differences and the parallels between these contexts, further highlighted by an accompanying programme of thematic evenings—so-called “sessions”—dedicated to individual countries.

The exhibition includes experimental films, documentation of performances and actions, as well as early animations. Independent video magazines and alternative news distributed on videocassettes also play an important role, such as *Originální Videojournal*, *Videomagazín Vokna*, *Videomagazín Karla Kyncla*, and *Infermental*. In addition to single-channel video works, the exhibition also presents video installations and video sculptures, often preserved only in the form of documentation.

From today’s perspective, it is relatively difficult to construct a comprehensive picture of the development of Central European video art—materials are scattered across archives, private collections, and gradually deteriorating media, often in various stages of digitisation.

“When exhibiting historical works, questions arise regarding the appropriate mode of presentation and the extent to which they can be reconstructed or reproduced,” Dolanová adds.

The exhibition also emphasises the local context. Brno played an important role in the early development of video art in what is now the Czech Republic—for example, through the activities of the underground Galerie Drogerie Zlevněné zboží in the 1980s, or thanks to institutions connected with the Brno University of Technology, where the first specialised studios and multimedia facilities were established. A number of prominent figures contributed to their development, including Brno-born artist and one of the pioneers of global video art, Woody Vašulka.

Visitors can also look forward to a special feature in the entrance hall of the House of Arts throughout the duration of the exhibition—a self-service station where they will be able to digitise their own home videocassettes.

Distorted Image: Chapters from the Beginnings of Video Art

House of Arts Brno

29. 4. – 16. 8. 2026

Opening 28. 4. 2026, 6pm

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