House of Arts Brno

Malinovského nám. 2

CZ-602 00 Brno

**Viktor Pivovarov at the House of Arts Brno**

**Brno, 29 March 2022 – The initial dialogue about the form of Viktor Pivovarov’s exhibition at the House of Arts Brno began six years ago. For various reasons, the most significant of which was the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the preparations were considerably prolonged; but it was precisely thanks to the delay that the exhibition, prepared especially for the great exhibition halls of the House of Arts, could be composed mainly of new paintings, cycles and sculptures. It was named *The Gardens of the Monk Rabinovich* and visitors will have the opportunity to wander through these special gardens from 6 April to 3 July. The opening will take place on 5 April at 6 pm and the artist Viktor Pivovarov, the curator Máša Černá Pivovarová and Terezie Petišková, the director of House of Arts Brno, will be in attendance. The programme will include a scenic dialogue *Heaven on Earth,* by Josef Daněk and Blahoslav Rozbořil.**

The work of Viktor Pivovarov is typical with its special, distinctive poetry. He recounts the stories of his friends, fictional persons, animals, plants and other entities with a poetic imagination; and he depicts the fortunes of his parallel alter egos. He works with a variety of cultural and literary contexts, using various modern and historical forms of visual culture of European provenance. In the works that visitors to the House of Arts will see at the exhibition, the elemental characteristics of plants grow into mysterious, ambiguous symbols that co-create the organic structure of the material and spiritual arrangement of the garden.

The figure of the monk Rabinovich, who can be seen as the artist’s alter ego, first appeared in Viktor Pivovarov’s work in 2006 on a ten-metre-long, Torah-like scroll, *The Sutras of Fears and Doubts*, featuring, among many other images, a diagram of the monks’ gardens. The artist revisited this theme between 2012 and 2013, focusing on the connotations of the phenomenon of the garden as an equivalent of paradise. The new series of paintings in this series was created in 2020 and is one of the reasons why *The Gardens of the Monk Rabinovich* became the overarching motif of the exhibition.

As the exhibition will comprise the entire House of Arts including its exterior, the viewers will pass through several different “gardens” consisting mainly of paintings from the new series *A, Duets, Quartets, New Eidoi, Who Is Crying There in the Silence of the Night* and drawings from the album *They Disappeared*. The first, Musical Garden opens itself to visitors right on the ground floor; the following ones are the Garden of the Singing Rose, the June Garden, the Eidetic Garden, the Night Garden, the Garden of the Monk Rabinovich and the Disappeared Garden. Each of them contains a specific theme, variation or atmosphere, which together form a complete experience. *“(...) all that has remained is a sigh, a little sad, a little blissful, and memories. Memories of all the gardens of pleasure and sorrow through which we have passed,”* says curator Máša Černá Pivovarová in her text accompanying the exhibition.

Among the inspiration motifs for the exhibition there was also an actually existing garden – the one adjacent to Viktor Pivovarov’s studio in Prague-Kunratice. It has recently been redesigned according to a plan drawn by the artist himself; in composing it he made sure that all the old trees from the original planting would find a place in it. The Kunratice garden inspired the exhibition authors to use the outdoor space and to place large-scale sculptures (the first ever in Pivovarov’s oeuvre) in the park at Koliště Street next to the House of Arts.

**Viktor Pivovarov** was born on 14 January 1937 in Moscow. He studied at the Kalinin Secondary School of Arts and Industry from 1951–1957. He entered the Polygraphic Institute to study illustration and book graphic design in 1957. After graduation he worked as an illustrator, creating mainly children’s books. He also illustrated several books by F. M. Dostoyevsky, Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* and Baudelaire’s *The Flowers of Evil*.

Since the beginning of the 1970s, Viktor Pivovarov has devoted himself mainly to non-commissioned work. He has worked in coherent painting cycles whose visual forms are very diverse. Together with Ilya Kabakov, he created a distinctive new art form – the album, combining word and image in an original way. That made him one of the founders of the Moscow conceptual school.

In 1978, during a study trip of the prominent Czech art historian Jindřich Chalupecký in the footsteps of Russian avant-garde art, he met the art historian Milena Slavická, and they married in 1981. In the following year, the artist moved to Prague for good; he was friendly welcomed among Czech unofficial artists. Since the 1990s he has exhibited extensively in the Czech Republic and abroad. Let us mention, for example, the exhibitions at the National Gallery Prague in 2021 and the Zimmerli Art Museum in New Jersey in 2019. In addition to many Czech collections, he is represented, e.g., at the Tate Gallery in London.

**Viktor Pivovarov: The Gardens of the Monk Rabinovich**

**House of Arts Brno**

**6 April – 3 July 2022**

**Opening on 5 April 2022 at 6 pm**

**Curator: Máša Černá Pivovarová in collaboration with Terezie Petišková**

**The press conference will take place on 5 April at 2 pm in the lobby of House of Arts Brno.**

**Contact for the media: Anna Kvášová, kvasova@dum-umeni.cz, +420 731 506 376**