

The 25th year of Designblok will take place in the Trade Fair Palace and the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. The theme of the international design festival's 25th anniversary is JOURNEY

The largest design and fashion show in Central Europe will be held from 4 to 8 October 2023 in two magnificent exhibition buildings in Prague. Designblok will take place for the first time in the Trade Fair Palace, the largest exhibition space of the National Gallery Prague, and for the third time in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. This year's theme, always expressing the main concept of the festival, is JOURNEY.

In the past quarter of a century, both Czech society and original design have come a long way. From the questions of what design is and what it actually serves, via the start of cooperation between designers and industry, we have reached a stage where quality design is not only a significant competitive advantage, but also a desired tool for dealing with everyday situations and substantially more complicated social and environmental issues. What was first an event for enthusiasts has become one of the main cultural events of the season, for which leading artists, curators, collectors, and journalists from all over the world come to Prague, looking for fresh inspiration and contacts, but also business opportunities.

*"The first Designblok took place in 1999, and therefore I dare to say that the 21st century is, among other things, the century of Czech design. Just as form should follow function, design and Czech industry are finally following consumer demand for better and higher quality products, which is growing despite all the past crises," says **Jana Zielinski**, founder and Director of the Designblok festival, and continues: "This autumn, two important centres of Czech fine art and design will host the 25th anniversary of Designblok –the Trade Fair Palace for the first time, and the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague for the third time. I very much appreciate the agreement with Alicja Knast, Director of the National Gallery Prague, and Helena Koenigsmarková, Director of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, who complied with our wish to organize Designblok in the premises of these prestigious institutions. I believe that together we will create an unforgettable event for the Czech cultural scene with a strong international influence."*

The exhibition space of the Trade Fair Palace will focus primarily on the presentation of new Czech and international design in the usual **Superstudio** and **Openstudio** formats, i.e., international brands and manufacturers on the one hand, and designers and design studios on the other. The Trade Fair Palace will also host another year of the **Diploma Selection** – an international exhibition and fashion shows, **Designerie** – the heart of the entire festival – and a **stage** offering lectures, expert discussions, and other events on a daily basis.

"The Designblok festival was not created 25 years ago without clear foundations. All its forms have deep roots in European art movements. We are pleased to be able to temporarily return the unique space of the Trade Fair Palace to its original use for fairs. And, at the same time, to enable designers to continue the never-ending dialogue between fine and applied art in the future, this time inspired by Czech art," says **Alicja Knast**, General Director of the National Gallery Prague, about the collaboration.

The Museum of Decorative Arts will follow up on the success of the past years by the curated exhibition **Family Silver**, organized in cooperation with Forbes magazine. The presentation of family businesses tells inspiring stories of entrepreneurial tenacity, "golden Czech hands", the rescue of traditional factories and craft workshops, and the growth of newly established brands that were created in the past decades on green fields. In addition, this year's Openstudio in the Museum of Decorative Arts will present the premiere of a special **High Craft** exhibition, organized in cooperation with Vogue CS magazine. The curator's choice will present the leading Czech designers and design studios who artfully combine traditional crafts, innovative approaches, and the highest aesthetic standards in their work. The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague will also host the Art House exhibition – an exhibition on the border between art and design. The curator's choice will present both Czech and foreign artists; some individually, others in collaboration with galleries.

"We are all always on a journey; the world is in constant motion; the journey is the destination... just a few quotes from Taoism, but isn't that also our Journey with Designblok? I remember its modest beginnings on a ship in Libeň, the gradual growth into the premises of palaces, new architecture and a monastery, and where to next? To our museum. Because here we will also continue to move forward with a vision of good design," says the Director of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, **Helena Koenigsmarková**.

To mark its important anniversary, the Designblok festival is preparing a number of other special projects. For example, the spectacular travelling exhibition called **Designblok Cosmos** prepared in cooperation with the PPF Foundation, and "**Designu neutečeš!**" (You cannot escape from design!), a book mapping a quarter of a century of Czech design and its role in society. The first foreign stars confirmed their participation in the 25th Designblok. The unorthodox Dutch designer **Ineke Hans** will head the international independent jury of the prestigious Designblok Awards. **Benedict Hobson**, one of the executive directors of the **Dezeen** server, also accepted the invitation to Prague. With three million monthly readers worldwide, Dezeen is one of the most read media in the field of design, and for the second time it will accompany the festival as the main foreign media partner. The interest of the international press, as well as world-renowned curators and gallerists such as **Rossana Orlandi**, **Lina Kanafani**, and **Giulio Cappellini**, who regularly return to Prague for Designblok, confirms the importance and exceptionality of the festival in a pan-European context.

The Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, headed by **Minister Martin Baxa**, took patronage of the 25th year of Designblok: *"Every year, the international show Designblok brings an amazing selection of creative, innovative, and often unexpected works in the field of contemporary design, crafts, fashion, and art. Over the years that I have been following Designblok, I am still fascinated by the variety and imaginativeness of the approaches and technologies that appear side by side, which, on the one hand, are based on historical handicraft procedures, and, on the other hand, on state-of-the-art scientific research. During my visit to the festival last year, I once again realized how design in the broadest sense of the word affects us, and the power designers have to influence and transform the lives of wide groups of people. That is also why I am very happy that two contribution organizations of the Ministry of Culture are involved in the preparation of Designblok: the Museum of Decorative Arts, and now also the National Gallery Prague. This confirms how closely the individual institutions are connected to contemporary visual art."*

The 25th Designblok will take place from 4 to 8 October 2023 in the Trade Fair Palace, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, and other locations around Prague. Designers, manufacturers, and other companies can apply to participate in the festival until 31 May 2023 via the application form at designblok.cz.

PRESS CENTRE: https://bit.ly/Designblok2023_PRESS

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If you are interested in an interview with the organizers or last year's exhibitors, do not hesitate to contact me.