

## **The statement of the Committee Members for the selection of the project to the forthcoming 58th Biennale of Art in Venice in the Czech and Slovak pavilion.**

The jury had been impressed by a high quality of all submitted exhibition projects, many of them ambitious and challenging, some revisiting the artists' careers, some responding to the architecture of the pavilion or to the conceptual framework of the forthcoming Biennale. All in all, 23 projects that were submitted for the competition compose a collection of diverse approaches - across generations, media as well as the exhibition formats.

By selecting the project by Stanislav Kolibal, the jury honors the outstanding pioneer of Czech *avant-garde* art and acknowledges his groundbreaking *oeuvre* which, spanning across seven decades, speaks the fundamental language of both the late modern and contemporary times and ceaselessly keeps influencing young generations of artists. Thus organically as if, the art of Kolibal combines the formative past and the ambiguity of the present as well as it anticipates the unknown of the future yet to come. It embodies the maturity of formal and conceptual expression; but it also vigorously performs a unique freshness and relevance for today's turbulent era of confused order and contested truth.

Kolibal's exhibition proposal embraces a site-specificity in regards to the masterful architecture of Otakar Novotny 1926 Czech and Slovak Pavilion as well as it contains a fine conceptual response to the 58th Biennale del Arte 's main curator Ralph Rugoff's understanding of art as a sensitive membrane of the complexity of precarious times we live in. Modesty of Kolibal's vocabulary is an antidote for the poignant wish expressed in Rugoff's main theme, exploring an ironic twist contained in an ancient curse of "may you live in interesting times". So is the humility of Kolibal's art and his artistic position: withdrawn stance, yet passionate and engaged, a belief in art as an active form of liberation and emancipation, simultaneously rebellious, resistant and consensus-seeking, a negotiation of forms and ideas, conversing paradigms, norms and world's perceptions. Kolibal's exhibition proposal offers a journey through an artistic mind, emphasizing the construction of an independent voice where the aesthetic and the political are intertwined in a faithful and uncompromising expression of the "interesting times": the post-war, the post-1989 and the current development of art.

Last but not least, the jury's decision was triggered by a recognition of obvious gaps in the reception of such significant artistic position as Stanislav Kolibal's (born 1925) on the international level. The presentation in the Czech and Slovak Pavilion will certainly guarantee an exposure which Kolibal's work deserves. It will too logically complement the presence of Czech artists of all generations in the Pavilion - following recent projects by Dominik Lang (1980) at 2011 Venice Biennale, Zbynek Baladran (1973) at 2013 Venice Biennale and Jiri David (1956) at 2015 Venice Biennale.