

**“I have pulled the ropes to the belfry; garlands from window to window;
Golden chains star to star, and I dance.”**

Nobleness, elegance, excited sensuousness as well as the tension of a hidden symbol, a light touch of a fervent human feeling with infinity. All this is hidden in one subtle verse of the poem Phrases, as the French poet Jean Arthur Rimbaud included it in his collection, “Illuminations”. The unique rhythm of the verse, succinctly representing a state of mind in a space became also a certain credo for the painter, printmaker, sculptor and spatial designer in infinity, František Kyncl. The verse did not become only a motto, but an important guide on his artistic and human journey.

František Kyncl is a native of Pardubice, a town which in his mind became the lost Arcadia into which he will probably never return due to his failing health. Pardubice is for him a place associated with his youth and the time when he was searching for his viewpoint as an artist, refining his artistic feeling for pure color tone as well as a sense for volume and fragility; nevertheless, he was exactly differentiating and modelling lines of figural compositions in order to transfer them into stylistically pristine spatial drawings, into constructions and into colorfully treated mono-structures.

František Kyncl sets out on his journey as a fine artist at the turn of the nineteen fifties and sixties. Even though promotional work earns him a living, it is taking him away from his domain, free work unburdened by ideological doctrine. But he is lucky, in the early sixties the Marxist-Leninist ideals of socialist realism is on the retreat as well as its means of expression - at least for a while - and the liberated spiritual environment allows art to reflect one's own searching and artistic means from foreign cultural environments. František Kyncl visits Leningrad (Saint Petersburg), where he gets unofficially acquainted with the principles of Russian Constructivism (and at the same time he gets rid of the last sentiments of practical socialism), and later on he even visits Italy. This journey, during which he inhaled a bit of the free world, as well as an accidental encounter with the paintings by Lucio Fontana in Rome, brings meaning for further development of his soul and has a key influence on him. He is astonished and intoxicated by Lucio Fontana's pure color language, unhindered by other means of expression, but above all by his conception of space - by slashing the canvas he extends spatial perception, dimensions in his work are mutually blending. Here it is necessary to accent that encounter with the new creative principles important to František Kyncl's work and it accelerates his formal rebirth, but he himself had been spiritually prepared for such an advancement long before his visit.

Regardless of similar connotations in artwork that can be found in a foreign cultural environment, Kyncl is gradually leaving his early expressively tuned paintings and drawings. While before he used to express the emotional effect in heavy divided paintings, consisting of overlaying color pastes or significant spatial modelling of figurative compositions, now one can observe a reduced and stylized form and symbols in his collages.

A point – divided, combined as well as later connected by bisectors and diagonals into configurations of geometric images – became Kyncl's point of departure in terms of sign and principle. In an unlimited space, the artist let it grow into clearly defined geometric constructions which creates elementary forms of a sphere, cubicle and pyramid, later on organically advancing into forms, which in ecliptic rotation directs to the sacred geometry of the cosmological universe.

The journey of the artist towards purity in terms of expression and unity of style may end up in a perfect, but stiff and sterile matter. Kyncl resists this danger, as he gracefully keeps his inner spiritual tension and excitement from the matter. With the undying eagerness of a traveller in interspace, he searches the appropriate distance, scope, rhythm and order between it, himself and the organic structure of the microcosm. From the connections and relations found in this way, unique compositions and structures are created which are charged with energy and dynamism and the ability to address the viewer as well as touch the heart of extra-sensuous perception. The creative principle acquired in this manner resulted in structured "monostructures", in which recur the repeating performance and the relief of the background (created by various pressures exuded on the matrix) and the compositional order of which, consisting of the connection of three different fundamental points and triangles composed into a quadratic basis, developed for the entire area and magnified by clear pure or divided color tones. Or they are composed spatial objects and drawings made of bamboo or wooden sticks. There comes into being the unique conjunction of three points of the Divine Universe unfolded into more complicated spatial and voluminous relations and connecting the volatile cyclical relations between the organic substance of the existence of the microcosm and its eternal harmonic link to the spiritual infinity and physical dimensions of the macrocosm.

Let us turn our attention to the late nineteen sixties, to the time when the path on which František Kyncl would perseveringly walk with his own stubbornness is being formed. Here it is necessary to remind ourselves of his spatial collages and above all the black monotypes, because here appear the signs of his future creations for the first time – on a low relief of a background which is paper screen or folded ceramic and wooden low relief of geometric images made of intersecting lines onto which color is added. Therefore, they are a certain black-and-white form in the resulting aesthetic effect as well as a sort of a prologue for his later Monostructures, like his solitary sheets or already clearly colorful profiled compositional cycles which appear in his work in the late seventies. The traces of its influence are apparently leading up to the present production.

Parallel to the black screen monotypes, another important cycle of his work includes the artist's interest in how to adequately capture visually, audio sensations which are surrounding him and stirring his imagination and sensibility. The audio sensation received from passing ambulances – the painter had at that time a studio in Pardubice close to a busy highway nearby a hospital and railroad yard – and from the rhythmic hammering of passing trains, gave rise to technique and the heartbeat of human stories... All that is captured with precise accuracy by the artist, who is registering these sensations with the accuracy of a music composer registering them using a specific score, ranked into extensive series or individual sheets. He is transferring the audio impulses and their mechanical transcription onto vellum paper or cardboard, where polyphonic symphonies and chamber fugues are coming into being through inner transcription. The audio coulisse, which surrounded him at that time, thereby ceases to be a mere automatic reflection of the surrounding sensations and in the reflection of the state of his mind, the artist is elevating it into a new aesthetic and artistic value and form. In his own way, even such audio recordings are a search for orientation and order in space.

In the early seventies, František Kyncl leaves the visualization of sound and his interest

focuses rather on the issue of the layering of composed papers (Grand dessin plisse), spatial drawings or pure solitary geometric objects made of diagonally interconnected grates in which he can more easily express and form what he found before in his earlier projects of Traps. By saying that I mean the intermingling of several spatial dimensions, into which he projects both the drawing record made of divided points and interconnected organic composition of spatial constructions. In the synthesis with and emotional effect of the colored detail he gets to the forms and formats, which by virtue of their composition and articulation evoke futuristic and utopian visions of urbane aggregations or the newly discovered constellations of stars and galaxies in the universe. The artist returns to the goal-directed audio recording as late as in the eighties. Now he is using a rotating cylinder onto which he stretches large size canvases in order, on which he transferred into visual form concrete musical compositions using a rhythmic uninterrupted circular motion of the brush: he is recording the emotional grandeur of the audio experience and transforming it from abstract tones using color or a geometrical sign. Thereby, he has widened and multiplied the effect of musical experience by other visual sensations.

When we carefully review František Kyncl's work, we have a chance to realize that in spite of apparent thematic or formal pauses or their bridging, on the whole they form a continuous logical line and compact unity, namely both in their inner and outer opinion, formal expression and artistic quality.

His work is always built on three fundamental axioms which Kyncl chose as a guide on his journey. It is a pure and exact drawing line impressing the rhythm to his steps, the feel for color determining the tension in his mind and finally the sensibility to orientate himself in the sacred geometric space; thereby bringing his soul and mind into context with a higher principle and order. He is relying on three senses, taste, smell and hearing, and three sources of knowledge; the mechanical, philosophical and spiritual. How simple, beautiful, as well as difficult and at the same time perfect, if we are able to incorporate this eternal and true triad, containing the wisdom of past centuries, not only into our work but also into our minds and souls, as does František Kyncl.

To categorize and insert Kyncl's work into the formal and aesthetic formulas and categories, as they have been gradually manifested in the European painterly and sculptural works of the late twentieth century, is very difficult. František Kyncl, who has been living permanently in Düsseldorf since 1969 and has had the opportunity to get to know directly the avant-garde or postmodern aesthetic trends in this rich cultural environment, always kept his inner creative integrity and identity. A contingent agreement with a certain formal artistic opinion in his case never meant its brainless or eclectic acceptance. All that he found in this way and absorbed into his artistic opinion was always recast and reevaluated so that the used form gained its authentic shape and it would be in accordance and symbiosis with his inner opinion and spiritual striving. This attitude, often even irreconcilable and uncompromising, had cost him a lot of energy, and on numerous occasions it took away from him lucrative offers by gallery's purchasers, and thereby the renown of an artist of European scope, which his work would justly deserve. Nevertheless, this work is here, regardless of time and vogue trends, which it surpasses by its quality, and it is work overflowing by its honesty of expression, a work full of energy, wisdom as well as small sarcastic irony of himself as well as ourselves, which brings unmistakable artistic and spiritual experiences.

In spite of the years spent in Düsseldorf, František Kyncl always sought support for his friends who stayed in the then sealed off Czechoslovakia, and he presented their works in the irregular publication "White on Black." Since 1968 until the beginning of the nineties, he created from the correspondence and other documents received, diaries or rather sheets made of cardboard, and in the form of collages, drawings, words and small attributes he composed

personal experiences, capturing the time and scent of the places in which he moved. Illness and the consequent impaired mobility prevented him from a systematical continuation in this endeavor, but in spite of that he managed to create a corpus of several hundred sheets, which is a unique testimony, although hard to exhibit due to high costs, and is about the artist himself, about the passing of time as well as the world and how he perceived it in his heart and experienced during good times as well as unpleasant.

In the introduction to my essay on the artistic work and the journey of the painter, printer, illustrator, sculptor, irregular conceptual artist, but also man of letters and publisher, but above all the charming pilgrim in the infinity – I have used the verse of the French poet Rimbaud. Let me use in the end a quotation again, words of a famous American painter and theoretic of art criticism Barnett Newman:

“These paintings are no Abstractions. They do not even represent any pure idea. They are specific and independent personifications and each painting has to be experienced on its own. They do not contain any descriptive elements; they are full of controlled passion and in the concentrated depiction their urgency is reflected.”

What more to add? Barnett Newman characterized his work in 1950 in this manner, nevertheless I think that should he have the opportunity to get to know the latter works by František Kyncl, a similar evaluation would be valid even for the work of this artist.

Petr Svoboda, 2006