

Press release for ARTWALL 2013 exhibition LUKÁŠ HOUDEK – ART OF KILLING

Where: ARTWALL Gallery, **nábřeží kpt. Jaroše a Edvarda Beneše, Prague / Ground level of the National Technical Library, Technická 6, Prague**

Exhibition opening: **Thursday, February 7, 2013, 6 PM at the ground level of the National Technical Library**

On one black-and-white photograph, Barbie-doll is taking off her clothes. Ken, in a uniform and with a rifle over his shoulder, is smiling at her with his everlasting plastic smile. Next to them, other dolls seem to be playing a raping game. This curious image has a caption which reads: Žatec, June 1945. The other photographs on the outdoor panels of the ARTWALL Gallery show similar disturbing situations. “The exhibition of Lukáš Houdek titled The Art of Killing is dealing with the forced displacement of Czech Germans after the end of World War II. The artist created a series of photographs in which he used dolls to reconstruct particular cases of massacres and torture of German civilians,” explains Markéta Dolejšová, coordinator and co-curator of the project.

Lukáš Houdek based his reconstructions on archival documents, historical analysis, contemporary materials and witness testimonies, which he further developed and visually re-created. His peculiar reconstructions, however, are based on real events. The exhibition is divided into two parts. The ARTWALL Gallery presents details of the photograph series, which is on display in full in the ground level of the National Technical Library.

“The displacement of Czech Germans and recognition of responsibility for the post-war crimes is still a taboo for a considerable part of the Czech society. Strangely this is true even after nearly seventy years since the end of the war and two decades after the demise of the communist regime. The use of this topic in public debates is often goal-directed, lacking deeper reflection or will to come to terms with dark sides of Czech history,” says one of ARTWALL’s curators Petr Motyčka.

Lukáš Houdek explains further: “The project was conceived in the autumn of last year from my own need to deal with this topic, as I myself come from the border and my family inhabited a former German property. My intention is to confront the public that hypocritically conceals these cases of crimes against the Germans and avoids the fact that from the position of victims, we were also aggressors.”

“Unlike the Germany, which has been undergoing a continuous reflection of its past during the last several decades, the Czech environment (and Slovakian as well) is refusing to accept certain unpleasant historical facts,” says Lenka Kukurová, co-curator of ARTWALL Gallery.

Although this artistic project addresses a controversial political issue that has currently polarized the Czech public, it has no intention of supporting either one side of the political spectrum. Art in this sense offers a general perspective that transcends common party politics. The project creates a situation in which the historical topic can be dealt with on a symbolical level, without pointing a finger or evading responsibility.

ARTWALL Gallery

Markéta Dolejšová, Lenka Kukurová, Petr Motyčka and Zuzana Štefková

About the artist:

Lukáš Houdek (1984) studied Roma studies at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Charles University. Since 2005 works with documentary photography and in the last years devotes himself to his own art projects. In his artistic work he is concerned with the theme of identity, i.e. his own (Life of Dreams, Freakshow, All the Panties of My Mother), or trans-gender individuals (Robin, F64.0_online, Lilie). He is a co-curator of the annual exhibition Transgenderme. Recently, his work is concerned with the post-war displacement of the Czech Germans.

More info: www.artwallgallery.cz

Project was initiated by the **Centre for Contemporary Art Prague** o.p.s., currently the exhibitions are organised by **c2c Circle of Curators and Critics** o.s.

The exhibition is held under the patronage of **Prague's Mayor Bohuslav Svoboda** and is supported by the **city of Prague and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic**.

The partner of the exhibition is the **National Technical Library**.

Media partners: **Artist Magazine, A2**.

Contacts:

Curators: **Zuzana Štefková**, z.stefkova@artwallgallery.cz; **Petr Motyčka**, petr@artwallgallery.cz;
Lenka Kukurová, lenka@artwallgallery.cz, **Markéta Dolejšová**, marketa@artwallgallery.cz

Contacts for media:

Adam Ondráček, adam@artwallgallery.cz, tel. +420732957387

Petr Motyčka, petr@artwallgallery.cz, tel. +420603160797

Artist: **Lukáš Houdek**, foto@lukashoudek.cz