

PRESS RELEASE

23 October 2015

You will find a paradise among four rivers in the photographs exhibited at DEPO2015

From 21 October 2015 to 31 January 2016, the hall of the former transport depot will house the exhibition of the shared photo album compiled by Pilsen citizens, creating a colourful image of the city of Pilsen. The second part of the Pilsen Family Photo Album titled 'A Paradise Among Four Rivers' will offer a final selection from the images collected and will be the culmination of this yearlong project, in which we managed to collect roughly 3,000 photographs. The event is part of the European Capital of Culture 2015 project.



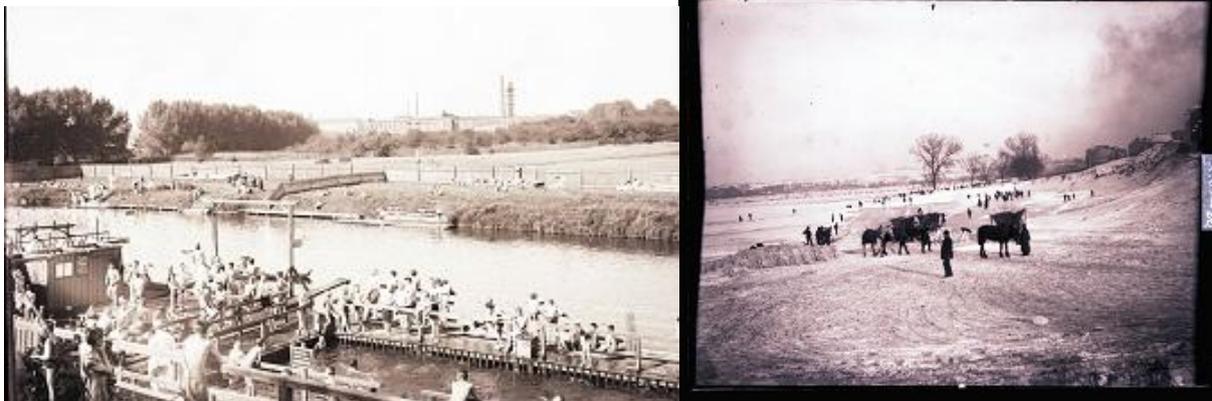
*"This time, the exhibition, consisting of around 350 photos, is more artistic and works more with the details and text. The French curator Jean-Pierre Moulères has helped with the selection; he was the author of a similar exhibition of family photographs in Marseille-Provence European Capital of Culture 2013. The project in Marseille was very successful and, here in Pilsen, we were nicely surprised by the number of visitors and the amount of images people sent to us,"*Kristýna Jiráťová comments from the Pilsen 2015 team.

Selecting images was not easy. Two years ago, an expert for the French European Capital of Culture who developed a number of proposals emphasising people's simple and everyday habits spent several months on the project. He is the author of *Cheurcheurs de midi*, which has inspired the Pilsen

Family Photo Album project. *"We sort, mix and create new families regardless of blood ties or chronological order. And we create one new family from all the people who have sent their photos with those who will come and see them. We will let the secret constellation shine through and connect all the images. That was the step-by-step process of creating a new, totally subjective photo album. It is rather an impressionistic portrait of Pilsen,"* describes Jean-Pierre Moulères.

The first half of the exhibition took part at DEPO2015 this year, between the spring and summer, and presented almost a quarter of the first thousand images. Several thousand visitors visited the exhibition over the course of only three months. *"The success of the first part of the exhibition proves the positive relationship and the sense of belonging of Pilsen's inhabitants to their city at any time. I believe it to be the case with the second part as well. The final selection of artistically processed photographs should introduce us to the 'paradise among four rivers', so let's enjoy it together,"* said Martin Baxa, the First Deputy-Mayor and the Chairman of Pilsen 2015's Managing Board.

The Pilsen Family Photo Album is a part of the Hidden City project. It deals with the stories, history, and daily life of the people of Pilsen by using the medium of photography; its starting point, however, is not art photography or documentary pictures, but rather the kind of pictures that everyone has at home in their desk, in a drawer, on a shelf, or saved in a laptop or a mobile phone.



Work on the Pilsen Family Photo Album started in December 2014, when the first photographs were collected. Since then, a web gallery aimed at introducing the goals of the project to the people of Pilsen has gradually evolved. Many photographs and various interesting stories were then contributed during open workshops, which were organised in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology of the University of West Bohemia. While looking back into the past while also considering our present situation, we began to create an image of Pilsen and its people. As interest in the exhibition grew, new pictures and new stories were gradually added. They will be part of a joint event at the end of 2015, the year of Pilsen as European Capital of Culture.

"You can become part of the unique photo album too! Send us photos with your experience of the culture year 2015. We will create the longest photo album in the world on the 1.3km-long route from

Republic Square to DEPO2015. You can then see the images as part of the farewell to 2015 and when the exhibition closes, you can cut out a photograph that feels close to your heart and take it home with you. Please upload your photographs in a print resolution of at least 1500x1000 pixels at fotoalbum.plzen.eu by 10 November; the record trial will take place on 12 December in the afternoon," adds Pilsen 2015's Programme Director, Jiří Sulženko.



Additional information

Curator of the exhibition and the author of the original project / Jean-Pierre Moulères

Project Director / Christian Potiron

Project Manager, Production / Kristýna Jirátová

Graphic design / Jan Dienstbier

Graphic adjustment of photographs / Josef Horázný

Exhibition realisation / Petr Mlch, advertising company Formum, Rámypasparty s.r.o.

Production Assistants / Klára Jedličková, Jan Ostrolucký

Jean-Pierre Moulères is an author, stage designer and curator. He works primarily on participation projects and engages in theatre, contemporary dance, fine arts and teaching in France. Examples of his work include a project engaging a group of seniors in a contemporary dance show. By combining improvised dance with writing, he created ... *du printemps!* to the composition *Le Sacre du Printemps* by Stravinsky, which was presented at the Avignon Festival in the Municipal Theatre in Paris and the Dance Biennale in Lyon. For Marseille-Provence 2013, he developed a number of participative proposals emphasising people's simple and everyday habits. He is the author of *Cheurcheurs de midi*, which has inspired the Pilsen Family Photo Album project.

Supporting programme:

Workshops 2nd grade and secondary school students: We will offer workshops for students again as part of the second half of the exhibition. This time, we will work with photography as a medium for

creating new stories or objects. We will make photographic collages, visual stories, and fuse photographs together with texts and imaginary family trees.

More information at <http://fotoalbum.plzen.eu>

About the venue: Creative zone DEPO2015

DEPO2015 is an outcome of the Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015 project. It is a live space where business and culture are interestingly combined into innovative solutions. The heart of DEPO2015 is The Centre for Creative Enterprise which connects culture with business and creative industries. The depot is a place where both start-ups and established companies reside, work, create, present and trade.

A community of creative people with great ideas and the ambition to realise them has the opportunity to go through a process of incubation, i.e. to kick-start their business plan with the assistance and mentoring of professionals from the culture and creative industries, they can use a shared working space, an open workshop to make prototypes or rent a studio or an office. DEPO2015 is also the residential premises of the OPEN A.i.R. programme which offers Czech artists and creative people the possibility to travel abroad and at the same time invites foreign artists to Pilsen.

DEPO2015 is also an open cultural space which is needed for the development of new ideas, and it increases the attractiveness of the place for the people who reside, work and create at DEPO2015 as well as the general public. In 2015, we will present the world's top designers, high-quality musical productions, interesting community and interactive exhibitions, and much more at DEPO2015.

And in the following years, we want to enable DEPO2015 users to present their own work, be it an interactive exhibition, design products, fashion, graphic architecture, film, music or visual art. All this with the brand MADE IN DEPO2015!



A few last words from the authors...

Pilsen Family Photo Album is part of the Hidden City project. As such, it deals with the stories, history, and daily life of the people of Pilsen using the medium of photography. Its starting point, however, is not art photography or documentary pictures but rather the kind of pictures that everyone has at home on one's desk, in a drawer, on a shelf, or saved in a laptop or a mobile phone.

We started working on the Pilsen Family Photo Album in December 2014, when we collected the first photographs. A web gallery, whose aim was to introduce the people of Pilsen to the aims of the project, gradually evolved from photographs donated by people close to us, collaborators and partners. Many photographs and various interesting stories were then contributed during open workshops, which were organised in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology of the University of West Bohemia.

While looking at the same time back into the past and all around us at our present times, we started to create an image of Pilsen and its people. From the first thousand photographs, we had selected approximately one quarter and organised an exhibition in this space, which in April 2015 started to come to life and reverberate with the footsteps of the first visitors. As interest in the exhibition grew, new pictures and new stories were gradually added. Thanks to a most encouraging reaction of locals, over the following two months we managed to gather another two thousand photographs.

Already in July, we could thus start preparing a second, final exhibition. It was a difficult but joyous task. After all, the number of donated photographs proves that the project is meaningful and has potential to continue in future... And now you can enter the poetic world which Jean-Pierre Moulères, curator of the exhibition, created from an impressive collection of family pictures of the natives of Pilsen.

Kristýna Jiráťová, Project Manager and Production

It had to invent almost everything for remembering. / Federico Fellini /

When I first visited Pilsen, I was told that the city was called the "Paradise of Pilsen".

I was told about the four rivers that watered the town, and sometimes overflowed.

I was told about the beer that sometimes overflowed, too.

I was shown pictures and whole albums, I was told stories.

And I remembered the words of the Genesis: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads". As described in Quran, therein are rivers of water, and rivers of milk, and rivers of wine and rivers of honey pure and clear...

What are the rivers of Pilsen made of?

Having carefully pondered the first assembled photographs, the name of the exposition I had been proposed to present flew naturally to me: "A Paradise among Four Rivers".

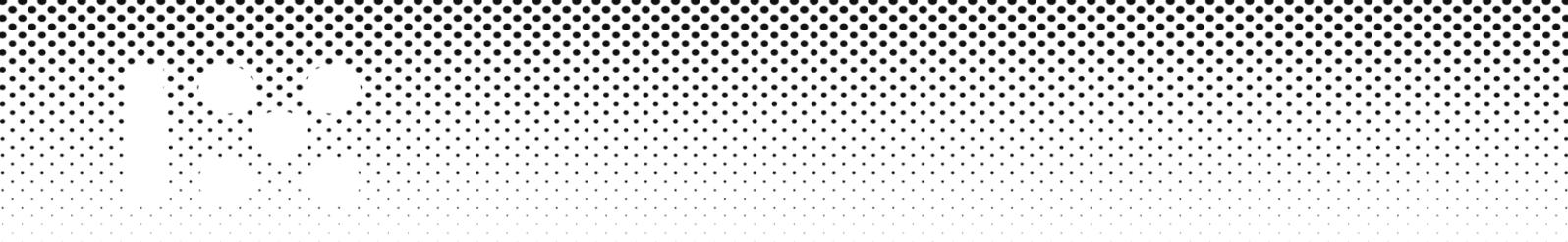
Later, I looked over the remaining 3,000 assembled photographs with the same degree of care. And suddenly, the whole body of pictures, taken out of their albums, drawers, private stories, revealed the source of the Pilsen rivers: bathing, fishing and rowing, naturally, but also dreams, fairy tales, work, tears, snow, mist ...

The rivers' flow shall guide me.

When preparing an exhibition, you have to make choices, as it is impossible to show everything.

And so images are separated and re-joined. Families are re-created regardless of the bloodlines or chronology.

Affinities and intentions emerge. Focus is placed on frictions and perspectives.



You neither order nor disorder, but rather re-draw.

You let sprout secret constellations that link all the pictures together, like the stars of an uncertain dating. The pictures first have to talk to each other before they can tell us stories.

That is how a new album, altogether subjective, gradually emerges.

By forming families out of the pictures, you compose a new one, where those who have left their footprints, the witnesses and the viewers become one, whether or not they have participated in the collection.

This surely is a portrait of Pilsen, a rather impressionist one, cadenced by the seasons, as powerful as they can be sensed here.

But this portrait of Pilsen is likewise a portrait of any and every place, any and every person, regardless of their differences and characteristics.

For the pictures show not only the seasons of the year, but also seasons of desire and of love, seasons of life, and seasons of destiny.

Seasons that are rooted everywhere.

While universal, a family photograph remains modest as it tells us no more than what it shows. And it shows so little. It conceals inner shadows and the denseness of its silence Who is the photographer? Are there any words written on the rear side? Who and what is not in the picture? And why?

It is not a mere archive, a more or less accurate testimony of the past.

It is an imprint of the precise moment of the shot. The photographer has decided to show this particular tree, this particular movement, this particular clothing pattern, this particular little thing that has caught his eye.

Click! It happened.

Since the photographer is not an artist, or a professional, he often shares this moment with serendipity. The photographer and serendipity hand in hand create the picture.

It might end up a bit blurred or unframed. Nonetheless, thanks to the lucky event, the picture escapes its narrative context and is surely bestowed with grace and poetry.

Art is often present in the tandem, its random alchemy.

A family photograph talks. It speaks in a low voice.

It speaks in views, views on the world, where everybody can attribute their own view without excluding any other.

A family photograph speaks in a low voice and, most of all, it speaks about love.

We take pictures of the moments we love, the people we love, the landscapes we love.

That is what we want to collect in an album. To testify, to relay, to reassure ourselves in less pleasant times. As a confidential chamber of secrets where the tangible the plausible, the oblivion and tales become entangled to create veritable memories which we relate to those who were not there. All the colours concealed in the black and white photographs only enhance the enchantment.

By taking clandestine paths, a family photograph triumphs over the strict rules of the official history. It is like a good wine, it laughs at the passing of time and speaks in the present.

Because what happens here is the present.

It is the present between the picture and us.

A present. The author himself is the time.

But what way do the rivers flow? What way does time pass?

Jean-Pierre Moulères, Curator of the exhibition and the author of the original project