

What was the past year like at the NGP, and what is in store for 2025?

Prague, 4 February 2025 — Last year, over 530,000 visitors came to the National Gallery Prague, which presented nine new exhibitions. It also opened a new permanent collection exhibition and participated in two successful international collaborations. More than 48,000 people attended NGP's educational and public programmes. Compared to 2023, spending on art acquisitions more than tripled.

"I am very pleased that in 2024, NGP attendance increased by 22 percent compared to the previous year, surpassing the half-million mark. I am also thrilled with the growing sums spent on new acquisitions; last year, we acquired new works worth more than CZK 10.5 million for our collections. With the support of the Ministry of Culture, which amounted to CZK 6.5 million, we purchased, for example, Jan Zrzavý's painting Portrait of Miss Tydlitátová and Toyen's series Shards of Dreams," says Alicja Knast, Director General of the National Gallery Prague, adding, *"I am also proud of our significant international presence: the presentation of Czech surrealism in Tartu, Estonia, and the success of our participation at the Venice Biennale of Art with Eva Koťátková's project."*

Plans for 2025: Three Major Exhibitions, an Asian Art Exhibit, and a Cooperation with the Louvre

On 14 February, the Prague Castle Administration will launch the exhibition **Franta**, a collaboration with the National Gallery curated by Rado Ištok from the NGP Collection of Art after 1945. Thirty years after the first Prague retrospective at the Karolinum, the Prague Castle Riding School will now showcase seven decades of the artist's work, including large-scale ink drawings and bronze sculptures.

From 19 March to 30 June, the Louvre Museum, in collaboration with the National Gallery Prague, will present the exhibition **The Experience of Nature: The Arts in Prague at the Court of Rudolf II**. This exhibition expands upon last year's collaboration, **From Michelangelo to Callot: The Art of Mannerist Printmaking** at the Waldstein Riding School. This year's exhibition in Paris will highlight the court of Emperor Rudolf II in Prague as a vibrant hub of artistic and intellectual activity, focusing primarily on the relationships between the arts and the study of nature and the natural sciences.

Two exhibitions will be unveiled at the **NGP's Spring Opening on 27 March**. **Silent Spring: Art and Nature 1930–1970** focuses on the relationship between humans and nature from the 1930s to the early years of the so-called Normalisation period. It will present organic abstraction in sculpture and connect the themes of environmental crisis and artistic reflection on nature.

The exhibition will feature over one hundred works from the NGP's collections, including pieces by František Kupka, Toyen, Jindřich Štyrský, and František Muzika, with a particular focus on the strong generation of 1960s sculptors led by Eva Kmentová, as well as the then newly rediscovered work of Hana Wichterlová. It will also showcase works by artists from Poland and Slovakia, including Karol Hiller, Adam Procký, Erna Rosenstein, and Maria Bartuszová. Additionally, the exhibition will present pieces by the contemporary artists Anna Hulačová, Eliška Konečná, Jimena Mendoza, Maria Tučková, and Kristýna Bukovčáková.

The exhibition will highlight the fact that concerns about environmental fragility are not unique to our generation. It will also show how art can help us renew our connection to and care for all living things. *“Curator Eva Skopalová has prepared an exhibition that explores the shifts in human relationships with nature that preceded today’s ecological crisis, as well as how artists began noticing these changes sixty or even eighty years ago,”* says Michal Novotný, Director of the Collection of Art after 1945 at the NGP.

The parallel exhibition, ***Echoes of the Venice Biennale: Eva Kotátková – The Heart of a Giraffe in Captivity is Twelve Kilos Lighter***, will feature the project that the NGP presented as the Czech Republic’s entry at last year’s 60th Venice Biennale. It addresses humanistic themes such as animal rights and ecology through a multidisciplinary approach.

A month later, on 25 April, the **new collection exhibition *The Art of Asia Across Space and Time*** will open at Salm Palace. Featuring more than 520 artefacts from Asian and Islamic art cultures spanning five thousand years, it will introduce the history of Asian art collections in the Czech Republic alongside the stories of individual collectors. It will also shed light on the provenance of these works, including how they were acquired for the NGP collections.

From the end of May to the beginning of November, the NGP once again invites you to the Waldstein Riding School for an extraordinary project – ***Women Artists: 1300–1900***. Olga Kotková, curator of the exhibition and director of the NGP Collection of Old Masters, will explore a second, lesser-known narrative within art history — the artistic production of women from the Middle Ages to the late 19th century. This will highlight the unique qualities of women’s artistic expression, especially in painting, sculpture, drawing, and graphic arts, as well as in the field of applied arts. Visitors will also discover the distinct environments in which women artists worked, including the themes they explored in their works.

“The exhibition is a groundbreaking tribute to the creativity, tenacity, and mastery of women artists who, despite centuries of marginalisation, have shaped the history of art. By putting their remarkable works in the spotlight, we not only celebrate their achievements but also challenge traditional narratives and promote a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of artistic heritage,” says Alicja Knast.

Autumn Programme: Aleš Veselý Retrospective and Jindřich Chalupecký Prize Laureates Exhibition

The Autumn Opening, scheduled for 26 September, will bring the first major retrospective of sculptor Aleš Veselý and an exhibition of the laureates of the 2025 Jindřich Chalupecký Prize to the Trade Fair Palace. The exhibition ***Aleš Veselý: Retrospective – Alešville*** will offer a comprehensive view of the artist’s work and will focus not only on his renowned monumental projects, but will also uncover the lesser-known aspects of his production, such as drawings, smaller works, and previously unseen projects. Most of the works on display will come from the artist’s personal archive and will first undergo restoration by NGP experts. Michal Novotný, Director of the Collection of Art after 1945, adds, *“The exhibition fulfills a long-standing need to comprehensively present this seminal sculptor’s work to the public. Veselý’s work also formally resonates with contemporary art, particularly due to his lifelong sense of alienation, a sentiment shared by today’s generation.*

The retrospective aims not only to summarise his oeuvre, but also to guide younger audiences towards his work.”

The **Jindřich Chalupecký Prize**, awarded annually, recognises outstanding contributions to the visual arts. It will present artists who are part of the emerging generation and have the potential to enrich both the Czech and international art scenes.

Throughout the year, several **short-term, smaller exhibitions from the NGP's Collection of Prints and Drawings** will also be on display in the Graphic Arts Cabinets in the Schwarzenberg Palace and the Trade Fair Palace. For example, from 28 March to 26 June, in the Graphic Arts Cabinet on the 2nd floor of the Trade Fair Palace, the artists of the **UB 12** creative group will present their work as part of the collection exhibition entitled *The End of the Black-and-White Era*. Among the works on display will be pieces by both prominent and lesser-known artists who emphasise the individuality and authenticity of artistic expression – Adriena Šimotová, Alena Kučerová, Věra Janoušková, Daisy Mrázková, and Vlasta Prachatická.

Closer Regional Cooperations: A Focus on Kroměříž, Telč, and Vltava

The year-long **Vltava project** (*Vltava slavná a splavná*) was developed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first performance of Bedřich Smetana's symphonic poem *Vltava*. It brings together institutions and municipalities across the Czech Republic. The NGP is participating through extensive loans of artworks and curatorial work for the exhibition of the same name, which will take place from September to December in the Prague Castle Riding School. A member of the curatorial team, Veronika Hulíková, Director of the NGP's Collection of Modern Art, together with colleagues from other collections, has selected approximately fifty works for the project.

The NGP's new permanent exhibition, entitled ***Dream of Reality: Paintings by Jan Zrzavý from the Collections of the National Gallery Prague***, will open at the end of June at Telč Castle. It will provide a unique insight into the work of this prominent Czech painter. Returning to Telč after several years, the exhibition will focus on Zrzavý's landscape paintings and his connections with the regions of Vysočina and Brittany. One of the highlights will be *Portrait of Miss Tydlitátová*, which has until now remained hidden from the public in a private collection and will once again be exhibited after eighty-five years.

The exhibition ***Mánes Again in Moravia*** will present the work of one of the most important Czech painters of the 19th century and his ties to the Moravian region. Running from the end of May to the end of August, the exhibition, organised in cooperation with the Administration of the Archbishop's Castle, will be on display in Kroměříž. It will feature ninety works showcasing Mánes' landscape studies and folklore motifs.

Investment Plans

Three key investments include a new depository in Jinonice, for which the NGP is expected to obtain a building permit in the first half of this year. Construction is expected to be carried out by 2028. The relocation of the depositories, restoration workshops, laboratories, and the NGP's digitisation facilities, along with a subsequent test run, is tentatively scheduled for 2029. A feasibility study is

underway to assess the requirements for the gradual renovation of the Trade Fair Palace. The next steps will be determined in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture. A year-long renovation of Kinský Palace is also planned, beginning this June. The project will include the restoration of floors, heating systems, and windows, as well as the creation of a wheelchair-accessible entrance.

In addition to organising exhibitions and investment activities, the National Gallery Prague will also continue its stewardship of the heritage entrusted to it – more than four hundred thousand collection items and six historical buildings under its management.

The National Gallery Prague in 2024 – A Brief Summary

- **530,449 people visited the NGP in 2024.**
- Visitor Comparison:

2022: 391,304

2023: 433,737

2024: 530,449

- **Throughout the year, the NGP presented 14 exhibitions to the public, 9 of which were new.**

Exhibitions Continued from 2023:

Watercolour between Prague and Vienna

Petr Brandl: The Story of a Bohemian

Fotograf Festival

Milena Dopitová: Even Odd

Launched in 2024:

No Feeling is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection

Filomena Borecká: Breath of Silent Thoughts

Get on the Ice! Ice Hockey and Skating in Art

From Michelangelo to Callot: The Art of Mannerist Printmaking

Jiří Příhoda

1924 – 1974 – 2024: Prague Fair Palace

Libuše Jarcovjáčková

École de Paris: Artists from Bohemia and Interwar Paris

Prague 7 in the NGP collections

+ Biennale Matter of Art (NGP hosted the project organised by the Tranzit.cz initiative.)

- **A new permanent exhibition:** *The Ballad of a Miner: One Hundred Years of Mining in Art* (at the Fryštát Chateau in Karviná)
- **Participation in two international exhibitions:**
 - Surrealism 100. Prague, Tartu and Other Stories...
 - Venice Biennale entry: Eva Koťátková's *The Heart of a Giraffe in Captivity is Twelve Kilos Lighter*

- The exhibition *Petr Brandl: The Story of a Bohemian* became the **Museum Exhibition of the Year** in the **Gloria Musaealis competition** organised by the Association of Museums and Galleries.
- With the Ministry of Culture's support, the NGP launched the programme **To Admire Again**, which increases the capacity of the NGP's restoration department, enabling it to provide conservation services on a much larger scale for institutions requesting loans of artworks from across the country.
- More than 600 new members joined the Club of Friends (bringing the total membership to over 5,000).
- The NGP organised **over 2,000 educational and public programmes**, attended by **more than 48,000 people**. Of these, over 1,000 programmes were designed for schools, attracting more than 21,000 pupils, students, and teachers.

Comparison for Public Programmes

Total Number of Programmes:

2022: 1,725

2023: 1,934

2024: 2,271

Total Number of Participants:

2022: 37,627

2023: 45,941

2024: 48,480

- The NGP Editorial Department published 22 books, including exhibition catalogues in Czech and English for *From Michelangelo to Callot: The Art of Mannerist Graphic Art*, Eva Kotátková's project *The Heart of a Giraffe in Captivity is 12 Kilos Lighter*, and *Pocket Paintings – Jan Zrzavý* (which won 2nd place in the "Textbook for Schools" category in the Most Beautiful Czech Books of the Year competition).
- Acquisition: 9 purchases worth CZK 10,787,660, including *Portrait of Miss Tydlitátová* by Jan Zrzavý and the print series *Shards of Dreams* by Toyen, both acquired with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.
- Comparison of Acquisitions
 - 2022: 27 purchases worth CZK 7.2 million
 - 2023: 23 purchases worth CZK 3.4 million
 - 2024: 9 purchases worth CZK 10.8 million
- 567 Objects Restored by NGP Experts
 - Comparison:
 - r. 2022: 278
 - r. 2023: 420
 - r. 2024: 567
- 196 works loaned to institutions and galleries in the Czech Republic, 62 works loaned abroad.

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