

# SWISS PAINTER WHO IS GETTING HERSELF INSPIRED BY THE ISLAND OF IBIZA

## ONDŘEJ PETRLÍK

The rays of the setting sun reflected sharply off the sea surface and its disc slowly disappeared behind the distinct outline of the islet of Es Vedra. She had to put down her brush and take off her glasses. Her eyes were already tired of the intensity of the sun's orange, the sky blue, the whiteness of the rocks and the richness of the green. She had painted this scene many times, in fact at least every year since she had settled permanently in Ibiza in her simple house just up the hill from the coast. She was intimately familiar with it, no longer even noticing the occasional disturbing figures of tourists who dropped by to enjoy this popular scene. The main thing for her were the colours and their sensitive articulation with expressive brushstrokes.

It was over 50 years ago when she was seeing him. Well, mostly his archaically bizarre outline, consisting of a tall hat and a classic overcoat. He roamed the countryside near her father's luxurious villa where they stayed every summer in Ibiza. She was young and foolish then. In the company of her peers, she enjoyed all the fruits of life in the relaxed atmosphere of the 1970s. The exotic southern landscape became the scene of many escapades.

She remembered the smell of hash smoke as they laid undressed under the shadows of the bushes in the hot summer landscape. Suddenly he appeared among the branches. He wore a hat that even diplomats had stopped wearing, and in that summer heat he was all in black. He was thin and tall and held himself upright despite his advanced age. For the first time she saw his calm, deep eyes, with which he gazed, as if utterly unmoved, at her naked body and loose long hair. His face, framed by a rich crown of now completely white curly hair, bore no trace of any surprise, but neither did it show any excitement or indignation. For a few seconds he just stared steadily, then turned on his heels and walked calmly away in time with the beats of his cane.

She might have thought, and had thought for most of her youth, that it might have been an illusion in her intoxication or a dream projected back into her memory of the situation. It wasn't until much later, when she returned to Ibiza permanently at a more advanced age, that she learned from the locals that this man actually existed. She eventually saw him for the first time in many years at an exhibition in Düsseldorf. It was in a photograph that accompanied a curatorial attempt to revive the memory of this forgotten German modernist who spent the autumn of his life in Ibiza. In that photograph he was exactly as she remembered him. Neither the antique hat nor his calm eyes were missing. He painted mainly landscapes, but a whole series of his late paintings, painted with a brisk brush strokes close to the Paris School, was also devoted to bucolically picturesque scenes of female nudes lounging with long hair loose among the bushes and rocks of the familiar Ibiza landscape of her childhood.

She awoke from her daydreaming. The sun had almost completely sunk behind the horizon of the Mediterranean Sea. The darkened surroundings were tinted by the sound of cicadas chirping. It was one of her favourite times of the day. This southern nocturne lacked any of the heaviness and despair she knew from the north. It was also reflected in her landscapes. Unlike the early ones, painted near their family residence on the shores of Lake Zurich with its melancholy mist, from which only the domestic hearth of her rich industrialist father provided shelter, she now felt no need for any psychological descriptiveness. Expression was replaced by immersion in the aesthetic order of pictorial space and the pleasure of painting as a compositional game. She no longer asked anything else from life.

Slowly she packed up her painting equipment and carefully made her way up the path up the hill to her house. Her legs were no longer the same as before, each time her return trip seemed a little longer.

*Ondřej Petrlík is a Czech painter. He was born in 1989 in Šternberk and currently lives and works in Pardubice and Prague. From 2009 to 2015 he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague in the studio of Vladimír Skrepl and Jiří Kovanda. Petrlík's immersion in the enjoyment of painting, which is accompanied by a deep understanding of its context, is entirely appropriate to that.*

*In his work, which consists of a whole spectrum of mutually interpenetrating positions, painting looks at itself and becomes a completely actual reflection of its modernist roots. The past and the present are not opposites. Ondřej Petrlík, who grew up in their in-between space, formed by the world of antiques and the inevitable contemporary reality surrounding him, is aware of this even with his hand leading the brush.*

*The often left-untold stories that frame many of his exhibitions are an integral part of his work. But the points and answers here are not in words and sentences; they are the paintings themselves.*

*In his current exhibition, he presents a new series of paintings in which he addresses the question of colour and, above all, balances between a strong formal narrative of self-contained stories and his interest in landscape and figuration.*

Viktor Čech

Ondřej Petrlík (\*1989, Šternberk)

*solo exhibitions*

- 2020 Vanitas, Galerie Ferdinanda Baumanna, Praha  
Uvnitř jsou zvířata, Galerie Fons, Pardubice
- 2019 Acqua Alta, Vnitroblok, Praha  
Fantastické příběhy, Galerie CHOVI, Barchov
- 2018 Černý lev / Black Lion, Svit, Praha  
Snídaně, Rainbow Gallery, Prostějov
- 2017 Portréty / Portraits, Galerie Ibis, Pardubice  
Nepřítel v bytě, Galerie I. patro, Praha
- 2016 Brigita Bardotova, Jedna dva tři Gallery, Praha
- 2014 Já a ty / Me and you, 35M2, Praha  
123, Kulturní dom Lipsk, Leipzig, Německo  
Portrét kněžny X, Galerie Luxfer, Česká Skalice
- 2013 Sochy, které jste neviděli, Galerie M.odla, Praha
- 2012 Mädchen sitzen auf dem Baum und masturbieren, Dresden, Německo
- 2011 Mám tě pod kůží, Galerie Fons, Pardubice  
Prostředek úsměvů – Means Smile, galerie 20 metrů pod zemí, Pardubice
- 2009 Čerstvě zhotovené bytůstky, Pardubice, Klub 29

*group exhibitions (selection)*

- 2023 Mnoho podob citlivosti, A.1 HYB4 Galerie, Praha
- 2019 Portréty, Moravská galerie v Brně
- 2018 Garage Gallery Karlin Opening, Garage Gallery Karlin, Praha
- 2016 Česko-Rakouské hvězdy, Galerie Miroslava Kubíka, Litomyšl  
Against Nature: Mladá česká umělecká scéna / Young Czech Art Scene, Veletržní palác,  
Národní galerie v Praze
- 2015 Absolventi AVU, Národní galerie v Praze  
Black horses, Adam Gallery, Brno
- 2014 Sale, Atelier, Burgweg 8, Basel, Švýcarsko
- 2013 6. ročník ceny kritiky za mladou malbu, Galerie kritiků, Praha  
WHYRWEHERE, Ateliér Ladislava Šalouna, Praha  
Pán much, Wannieck Gallery, Brno
- 2011 Ondřej Petrlík, Hana Garová, Viktorie Valocká: Síla tří, Galerie AVU, Praha

**Nau Gallery**

Nau Gallery, Kubelíkova 22, Prague, Czech Republic, [www.naugallery.cz](http://www.naugallery.cz)