

**EMANCIPATION: THE PAINTINGS OF  
EVA ŠVANKMAJEROVÁ**  
**AT FRIEZE MASTERS**  
9TH TO 13TH OCTOBER 2024 | SPOTLIGHT S4 |



EVA ŠVANKMAJEROVÁ, c. 1970

*What interests us more than the art is creativity, that secret boiling and bubbling of the soul. Our task is to take the lid off*

**Eva Švankmajerová**

**SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)**

- Disegno Interno*, GASK, (Kutná Hora), 2024  
*Move Little Hands, Move!*, Kunsthalle im Lipsiusbau (Dresden), 2019/20  
*Everything in Vain*, Museum of Pottery (Prague), 2018  
*Painting and Drawings*, Old Town Hall (Prague), 2015  
*Portrait Paintings from 1964 - 2004*, Exhibition Hall (Ostrava), 2004  
*Anima Animus Animae*, Chabot Museum (Rotterdam), 2001  
*Eva Švankmajerová & Jan Švankmajer, Sixty-One Pieces* (London), 1997  
*Cesarean Section*, Galerie Václava Špály (Prague), 1991  
*Cesarienne. Peintures*, Galerie Le Triskèle (Paris), 1979  
*Eva Švankmajerová*, Ladengalerie (Berlin), 1973  
*Paintings, Music Theatre*, Titanic Gallery (Olomouc), 1971  
*Eva Švankmajerová*, Regional Museum (Písek), 1969  
*Painting from the Years 1964 - 1966*, Galerie Mladých (Prague), 1967

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)**

- Surrealism 100*, Estonian National Museum (Tartu); Tartu Art Museum; National Gallery (Prague), 2024  
*Godly Tomorrow: The Art of Seeing*, North Bohemian Gallery of Fine Arts (Litoměřice), 2023  
*Vanitas*, DOX, Center for Contemporary Art (Prague), 2021  
*L'Art Brut Tchèque*, Halle Saint-Pierre (Paris), 2002  
*Touch, Arcimboldo, Vanitas, Etiuda & Anima* (Krakow), 1996  
*Jitro Kouzelníků*, National Gallery (Prague), 1997  
*Infantile Lüste*, Sonnenring Galerie (Rotemburg), 1977

**COLLECTIONS**

- The National Gallery (Prague)  
Museum of Art (Olomouc)

# THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING



**Eva Švankmajerová** (née Dvořáková) (1940 - 2005) was a painter, scenographer, designer, puppeteer, poet and writer. Known primarily for her collaborations with her husband – the award-winning filmmaker and artist Jan Švankmajer - it is **Švankmajerová's** lifetime painting practice which deserves urgent re-appraisal.

**Švankmajerová** studied carving at the Industrial School of Interior Design and scenography at the Department of Puppets of the Academy of Performing Arts. She started painting in the 1960s and evolved a distinctive graphic style, absurdist and erotic in nature, and often challenging the role of women in Czech society.

Heavily influenced by popular and folkloric imagery, **Švankmajerová's** initial subject-matter was provocative. Her infamous *Emancipačním Cyklem* (*Emancipation Cycle*) (1967/69) satirised male-gaze masterpieces by Sandro Botticelli, Édouard Manet and Peter Paul Rubens, replacing idealised female figures with emasculated men.

**Švankmajerová** joined the Prague Surrealist Group in 1970 and became its *de facto* leader. The association stimulated her to develop a visual language which was as individuated as it was unpredictable.

Continuing to work in series, **Švankmajerová** focussed on mythology and mortality, daily rituals, and her own role as wife, mother, lover and artist. In *Rébuzy* (*Puzzles*) (1965/68), fragmented letters were incorporated into paintings, creating anagrams for the viewer to solve. In *Pilné dívky Cyklem* (*Housework Cycle*) (1970/73), symbolic imagery was presented in protest against the daily chores of the female home-maker.

Throughout her life, **Švankmajerová** worked alongside her husband on his films and animations, designing sets, posters, puppets and more. The pair collaborated relentlessly, most permanently on their second home in the Czech countryside: a crumbling chateau turned *wunderkammer*, decorated by **Švankmajerová**, and curated with their work - alongside objects of wonder, African sculptures and Czech mediumistic paintings.

It was through writing that **Švankmajerová** found her international audience. *Jeskyně Baradla* (*Baradla Cave*) (1981) was a *samidzat* which ridiculed the absurdity of post-communism from a uniquely female perspective.

In 1996 **Švankmajerová** was diagnosed with cancer. Her final visual projects included *Za Horizontem* (*Beyond the Horizon*) (2000) and *Horem Dolem* (*Upside Down*) (2004), a series of mediumistic drawings and paintings created following her own mastectomy. After years of ill health, she passed away in 2005.

At Frieze Masters 2024, The Gallery of **Everything** will present selected works from **Švankmajerová's** breakthrough series, *Emancipačním Cyklem* (*Emancipation Cycle*) (1967/69).