



Original article

Works of art associated with architecture of mining complexes in the Ostrava-Karviná Coalfield (Czech Republic)

Jakub Ivánek

University of Ostrava, Faculty of Arts, Centre for Regional Studies, Čs. legií 150/9, Ostrava, 70103, Czech Republic
E-mail address: jakub.ivanek@osu.cz
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6856-0675>

ABSTRACT

This article maps works of art in mine complexes in the Czech part of the Upper Silesian Coal Basin (in the northeastern part of the country bordering Poland). In the territory of the former Czechoslovakia, it was customary between ca. 1945-1989 to accompany architecture of the newly constructed buildings with so-called monumental artworks, which included sculptures, a wide range of wall artworks, but also design objects. Government Resolution No. 355/1965 even established a mandatory percentage of the whole budget for the application of art in all state-funded construction activities. As a result of this custom, even newly constructed, or rebuilt, mine sites were accompanied by several works of art. This article documents them, deals with their themes, motifs, and the involvement of the investor in their realisation. During the transformation of the mining region and the demolition of mining areas, these artistic elements have disappeared and are still disappearing. Nonetheless, their motifs still recall the region's industrial past and help maintain its collective identity within the mining tradition. The study is supplemented with a map which catalogues all the recorded works.

KEY WORDS: works of art in the architecture of mine complexes, Ostrava-Karviná Coalfield, monumental artworks, Czech art of the 2nd half of the 20th century, regional identity

ARTICLE HISTORY: received 24 July 2025; received in revised form 25 November 2025; accepted 1 December 2025

1. Introduction: Monumental artworks in Czechoslovakia

In the 2nd half of the 20th century, Czech society developed the practice of allocating part of the budget for state-funded buildings to supplement architecture with works of art. These included sculptures, reliefs, decorative grilles and dividing walls, murals, graffiti, mosaics, stained glass, tapestries, as well as artistically designed banners, playgrounds, lighting fixtures and design elements such as signs. These works of art, designed by artists in collaboration with architects, were called *monumentální realizace* (monumental implementations), but in this study, we call them monumental artworks.

Supplementing architecture of new buildings with works of art was already an idea of pre-war functionalism. As early as 1938, architect Bohuslav Fuchs advocated the allocation of a mandatory amount of 5% of the total budget for buildings financed with public money in the Moravian-Silesian Land (part of Czechoslovakia) to be spent on accompanying works of art. However, not many such artistic projects were realized due to the war. The theorists of socialist realism later glossed over both this generous approach to public art by the interwar authorities and Fuchs' support for the 1947 memorandum of the Central Block of Artists of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, which also supported this practise (KOŘÍNKOVÁ, 2017; KOŘÍNKOVÁ ET AL.,

2020). Nevertheless, it had not been enacted until 1965, the time of the development of modernist architecture and art in Czechoslovakia. Government Resolution No. 355/1965 set a compulsory percentage of the whole construction budget for the arts in the range of 1–5%. Somewhat incorrectly, according to the prevailing percentage, this is often referred to as "four percent art" (KOŘÍNKOVÁ, 2013).

Investors, during new construction or reconstruction, turned to the Czechoslovak Fine Art Fund's company called "Dílo" (Work), which had a monopoly on the acquisition of artworks for architecture. The matter of creating a work of art was directed by art committees, which approved orders, communicated with the investor and the architect, distributed the commissions among the artists (by agreeing to the desired artist, by direct commission to a specific artist or by various forms of competitions), assessed the designs in terms of ideas and art, approved the work for realisation and then carried out the final inspection, while also approving its invoicing. These art committees were composed mainly of members of the Union of Czechoslovak/Czech Artists, and were supplemented by architects. From 1962 onwards they were also representatives of the people (i.e. officials of the Communist party or another organisation that was to oversee the process with respect to ideological correctness).

The investor was also to play a major role in the decision-making process for the art decoration. The investor's role was reinforced by government resolutions from the second half of the 1970s (KOŘÍNKOVÁ, 2017: 42–43). Representatives of the investor were to attend all meetings of the art committee on a given work, to which they were invited, although they did not always attend. Their attendance was especially necessary at the first meeting, where they and the architect were to inform the committee about the plan and ideas, and then at the end, when the work was approved and officially accepted by the investor.

Similar procedures for acquiring works of art for architecture are known in Western countries (USA: *Percent for Art* 1934–1943; *Art in Architecture Program* since 1949; West Germany: *Kunst am Bau* since 1950, on older basis from the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich; France: *1% artistique* since 1951). Among Central European countries, this system has been described in more detail in East Germany (e.g. KAISER & REHBERG, 1999; SIMPSON, 2008; JENKINS, 2021). In the Polish environment,

the processes of acquiring works of art for architecture have recently been summarized as part of research into what is probably the most popular type of Polish artworks – ceramic mosaics (KOSTUCH, 2015: 105–111). Currently, this heritage is documented in Slovenia (*Umetnost za skupnost*), where the establishment of a mandatory percentage for art has not been set (KAČ, 2025: online).

After the Velvet Revolution this practice of completing architecture with art was seen as a relic of socialism and, in the process of privatisation, state-funded building commissions experienced a significant decline. The activities of art committees were gradually curtailed and in the mid-1990s the "Dílo" company was closed down. In the following two decades Czech society became uninterested in the creation of new artworks for architecture, and also showed indifference to existing works from the past, which, regardless of their diverse content and specific artists, bore the mark of a socialist heritage (ŘÍHOVÁ & KŘENKOVÁ, 2016).

The renewed interest in artworks for architecture and public space in Czech society is associated with the appearance of Pavel Karous, who initiated a project called *Vetřelci a volavky* (Aliens and Herons). In 2011 he began mapping visual art from the period of the so-called Normalisation (1970s and 1980s) in Prague and continued on a larger scale throughout Czechoslovakia. In 2013 he published a voluminous text-and-image publication, *Aliens and Herons. A Guide to Fine Art in the Public Space in the Era of Normalisation in Czechoslovakia (1968–1989)* (KAROUS ET AL., 2013). An eponymous web catalogue was created in parallel. However, a truly productive platform for expanding the interest and activating a wide range of citizens was the Facebook group *Vetřelci a volavky*, with new and historical photographs of artworks in Czechoslovakia from the period 1945–1989 added daily.

Following the example of *Aliens and Herons*, several local projects were born, which led to the creation of a printed, or web map, or a publication about artworks for architecture and public space in Czech and Slovak cities. Their nature varies from mainly documentary and photographic projects to more specialist works that use archival sources. Some web databases allow the public to insert their own entries and photographs, others are managed by an authorised person. The desire for a professional approach combining the art historical aspect with the technological one has resulted in a series of joint projects with the University of Chemistry and

Technology, Prague and the Faculty of Art Restoration of the University of Pardubice. The oldest is a website documenting exterior glass mosaics in the Czech Republic (*Topografický výzkum...*; KŘENKOVÁ ET AL., 2022). The web database *Sochy a města* (Sculptures and Cities) has become better known. It aims to capture, on the basis of archival sources and literature, but also by field documentation, all the wealth of monumental artworks in the territory of the Czech Republic today. A professional text and photographic publication documenting selected artworks throughout Moravia was also created (KŘENKOVÁ ET AL., 2020).

The documentation of art for architecture in Ostrava, a city with a strong mining tradition, was ahead of its time. In 2008, Marie Šťastná published the book *Socha ve městě* (Sculpture in the City), which focussed on the overall development of art for architecture in Ostrava in the 20th century (ŠŤASTNÁ, 2008). This work was followed up in 2014/15 by the author of this study who (within the cultural club Fiducia) established a web database of *Ostravské sochy* (Ostrava Sculptures), which was probably the first local project after Karous' project. A book on the collection of art for architecture of the Technical University of Ostrava was also published (ŠPAČKOVÁ ET AL., 2017). Information from the *Ostrava Sculptures* website was then transferred to the database *Sculptures and Cities* and the research was extended to the entire region, where coal mining affected the former districts of Ostrava, Karviná, Frýdek-Místek and, marginally, Nový Jičín.

2. Methodology: How to study works of art for architecture

During, and essentially by virtue of, the creation of the web database *Ostrava sculptures*, the Provincial Archives in Opava began to organize the previously unsorted collection of the Ostrava branch of the "Dílo" company, which was one of the best preserved in the country, and thus enabled a comparison of the artworks with the documents about their creation. The author of this study undertook both, the fieldwork and the research into archival sources and literature (in particular catalogues of various authors' exhibitions). Most of the information came from archival sources arising from the activities of the Ostrava office of the "Dílo" company (especially records of the artistic committees and the folders of documents regarding particular commissions). This material does not yet have inventory numbers,

however, the collection is available for viewing in the Provincial Archives in Opava by arrangement with its administrator Veronika Matroszová. Nevertheless, some artistic realizations in the region of Ostrava, especially from the earlier period of 1950s and 1960s, were commissioned through other regional centres of the "Dílo" company, e.g. Prague and Brno (the reason could be the place of the architect's or investor's residence). Thus, the archival sources of the Prague and Brno branches of the "Dílo" company were also studied. These have not been catalogued yet and the research in this material is possible only with the help of the workers from the National Archive in Prague and the Moravian Archive in Brno. Finally, information provided by the authors themselves or taken from their inheritance, usually held by their heirs, was of much help in some cases. One exceptional case was the long-term collaboration with artist Lumír Čmerda, which began with an interview for a local periodical and ended with an extensive monograph (IVÁNEK & URBANOVÁ, 2017).

A similar process of collecting information was undertaken within the work on the project resulting in this article. The sources from the "Dílo" company archives held in Opava, Brno and Prague had been collected previously. The fieldwork in the former, or functioning mining complexes was implemented mainly during 2024. Given the fact that many of the works under study have already disappeared, research into their photographic documentation was also important. Although artists were supposed to supply the "Dílo" company with photos of their works after their completion, these are rarely present in the archive files. It was not until the end of the 1970s that the Ostrava centre of the "Dílo" company had a professional photographer, Petr Sikula, who produced photo documentation of the works at its own expense. These photos, including works from 1973–85, can be found on documentation cards in the Provincial Archives in Opava. Some works are present in catalogues of art exhibitions or in promotional brochures of the mining plants. The artists themselves usually collected photos of their works, but it is not easy to gain access to their inheritance. Photos from the estates of Antonín Kalvoda and Otakar Schindler and photo documentation of the interiors of the Paskov mine cultural centre which were in the possession of architect Josef Barták were important for this study. Contemporary and historical photographs of the exterior artworks are included in the web database *Sochy a města*. Only a selection of the images can be presented within this study.

3. Discussion: Art and mining

Art with mining themes is a well-known topic throughout the world. We can find it especially in the collections of the National Coal Mining Museum of England in Overton, Wakefield, England, or the Mining Art Gallery in Bishop Auckland, England. The wider public can visit the Facebook group called *Industrial Heritage and Art* where artworks with a mining theme are relatively frequent. Nevertheless, artworks for architecture of mines have not been closely followed anywhere else. If you search databases for literature on art and mines, you will find a number of articles on the topic of “mining in art”, but the opposite perspective – “art in mines” – is completely missing (except for current artistic interventions into the landscape of closed mines and quarries). However, the Czech environment was certainly not the only one where mining complexes were supplemented with artworks. We also have evidence from the Polish part of the Upper Silesian Coal Basin, where the topic was touched on, for example, in a book dedicated to ceramic mosaics. These were perceived as an ideal type of artwork for the architecture of industrial complexes due to their durability and resistance to dirt. At the same time, they supported the targeted “humanization of the workplace”, which included the interior design of factories, holiday resorts for the workers, but also the patronage of the plants that organized art workshops, competitions and exhibitions, since the 1950s (KOSTUCH, 2015: 16–20).

The processes described above of supplementing architecture with artworks also concerned technical premises. Of course, it was not customary for art to enter technical plants where it could be damaged. The artworks were concentrated in administrative and social buildings, canteens, forecourts and courtyards, health centres and houses of culture. In the case of the region under study, the art for mining complexes was financed by the Ostrava-Karviná Mines Company.

It is necessary for the following study to determine what is the object of interest. In the mining regions we usually encounter artworks on the mining theme scattered through the cities and towns. This illustrates how culture, or art, helped to create a distinctive collective identity for these areas. But it is not the scope of interest in this article. Art in the study region related to the mining tradition in general will be the subject of another study being prepared as part of the ongoing project. This article

will only deal with artworks for the mines and associated objects in their immediate vicinity, i.e. the art which was intended to accompany the working environment, irrespective of their topic and motifs. Another group, beyond our attention, is represented by buildings financed by the mining companies and serving their employees, but located at a greater distance from the mines themselves, e.g. holiday resorts. Anyway, these premises did not include artworks on mining themes at all. The workers went there to spend their holidays, so the decoration was devoted to leisure themes. It was different in the case of houses of culture, which were most often built right next to the plant. They served not only for leisure and cultural activities of the employees, but also for the plant’s image promotion. The images of work had their place here.

4. Monumental artworks for mining complexes: genres, themes, motifs

The current state of monumental artworks for mining complexes in the Ostrava-Karviná coalfield is poor. The gradual dismantling of mining activities since the 1990s has also involved the demolition of complexes that were unused and difficult to maintain. Although some valuable buildings have been listed since the 1990s (MATĚJ, 2022), artworks from the socialist era were created for objects that were not of interest to the preservationists. Thus, no one carried out even a coherent documentation of these works. Only this study attempts to do so. In the course of this research it was found that many works have already ceased to exist or disappeared during demolitions and reconstructions. Of the 70 works identified, only 27 survived until the end of 2024, and it can be assumed that many of them will continue to disappear in the years to come (the last operating mine, the Czechoslovak Youth in Stonava, is due to close in March 2026). Whether some artworks can be preserved by transferring them to another location is uncertain. The search for a subject which would adopt these monumental artworks and find a new place for them is not an easy matter, although their motifs suit the nostalgic recollection of the region’s industrial past.

In what follows, we will be interested in particular artworks. Our primary goal is to document this heritage by means of the attached map catalogue. This approach is connected with artistic topography and especially map databases, which have recently become popular and also supported (cf. ŘÍHOVÁ &

MÍČALOVÁ, 2024). We also try to record characteristic phenomena related to this kind of art. The individual subchapters will therefore be defined by genre, theme, motif, or type of these artworks, taking into account the mining environment and the investor's participation in the creation of these works. Due to the author's different professional focus, the following lines do not claim to be a thorough art-historical description.

4.1. The miner

Probably the first significant evidence of an effort to supplement the architecture of mining complexes in the Ostrava region with works of art dates to 1938/39, when architect Karel Kotas proposed a modification of the entrance area of the František mine in Ostrava-Přívoz in the form of a square with a gate flanked by two sculptures on pylons representing a miner and a steelworker. Antonín Ivanský, a young sculptor from Ostrava, was commissioned to design them. However, the realisation was interrupted by the war and even in the post-war period, when Ostrava-Karviná Mines tried to follow up these plans in August 1945 and add a memorial to the fallen employees of the plant, they were not fulfilled (Archiv OKD, coll. I/2). In 1938/39 Ivanský was also to artistically complete the entrance area of the Doubrava mine. However, even this effort did not meet with success (SIVĚK, 1967). A bronze cast of Ivanský's sculpture of a miner was finally installed in 1946 in front of the mine headquarters building in the centre of Ostrava (Archiv OKD, coll. II/1), where it completed the artistic effect of Jan Lauda's horizontal relief *Creation of Coal* (1941, Fig. 1, see later). The realistic statue of a miner with a lamp but in a casual posture has almost a classical feel, but also draws a line to the social art of the interwar period. It represents one of the most impressive realistic figures of a miner in the area (ŠŤASTNÁ, 2008: 71); according to some experts, the work bears witness to collaboration with the most renowned Ostrava sculptor of the interwar period, Augustin Handzel, known for his statues of working and resting miners (HOLÝ, 2003: 484). The regional identity is enhanced by verses on the plinth written by the cult poet of the region Petr Bezruč: "I am a miner of the Ostrava region / born above Lucina. / Looking from the stone at you, / I work for you under the earth". These are probably occasional verses that Bezruč wrote directly for the sculpture which became almost iconic in the past, both for the

company and for the miners themselves, who in 2013 joined the strike against the closure of the mines by decorating it with a sash bearing a slogan attacking the company's main owner. In October 2025, the most important miner statue in the city became the target of a guerrilla art intervention by the contemporary artist Libor Novotný. He placed a glowing neon halo above the statue, which the artist borrowed from the European Union flag. Anyway, the Union flag took it from the head of the Virgin Mary in the 1950s, and Novotný is now putting it back to the head of a miner, whose work was heroized at the same time (NOVOTNÝ, 2025: online).



Fig. 1. The forecourt of the mine headquarters building in Moravská Ostrava with the Miner's sculpture by Antonín Ivanský (1939, installed 1946) and the relief titled *Creation of Coal* by Jan Lauda (1940) (archive of the Ostrava Museum, late 1940s)

The positioning of the miner in the role of a saint appears as a bold metaphor referring, among other things, to the death of mining in the region and fitting the miner into the role of a martyr. However, the statues, reliefs and other depictions of miners themselves are close in character to religious sculpture, the basic type of which is also a standing figure carrying typical attributes. Statues of miners with torches and jackhammers were, like folk saints in traditional society, scattered across the landscape of the industrial city, where they helped to collectively identify the region with the mining tradition. We also encounter them at the mining complexes, most often at the entrance to the plant, where they also had a self-identifying role within the work group. The elevation of a representative from the mining community to the role of a hero, immortalized by an artist, was intended to strengthen pride in one's own work. In addition to the standing figure, which is evidenced, for example, by the relief at the gate of the Heřmanice mine (Jiří Myszak, 1957), depiction of

them working was also common. A popular type was the miner in a lying position, i.e. a miner who extracts coal in a low seam. Although this type is common in the towns of the Ostrava-Karviná region (plaster statuettes with this theme were also given to retired miners as a souvenir), in the mining complexes it is only evidenced by the statues for the so-called Heritage Room of the Jan Šverma mine in Ostrava by Vladislav Gajda (which seems to be more an exhibit than a monumental artwork). However, the granite Miner by Oldřich Fidrich in the forecourt of the 1st May mine in Stonava (1980–84) approximates to it, showing a closeness to the figures of flying cosmonauts, other heroes of the socialist era. Fidrich's miner is composed in the shape of a St. Andrew's cross – he lies wedged crosswise in a boulder, with which he in fact grows together. We do not know whether he is holding on to it firmly or trying to free himself from its grip (Fig. 2).

As already indicated, investors could (had to) participate in decision-making processes concerning the artwork. In addition to the choice of the artist and the theme of the work, they often supervised the correctness of its content. The role of their representatives may have been crucial in approving designs for artworks depicting specific technical elements. The discussed sculpture documents the close monitoring of the realisation by the plant organisations. The All-Plant Committee of the Communist Party was to judge and comment on the work, which the art committee and the artist had to respect. They may have approved an attribute identifying the mining profession, which in this case is a helmet with a lamp, as used by miners in the 1980s. This detail was also subject to approval in the case of the ceramic relief *Miner at the Machine* for the Entrance Hall of the Wind Pit of the Paskov Mine in Řepiště (Čestmír Hlavinka, 1973–75). Its investor demanded that the old-style lamp in the miner's right hand be omitted and replaced by a helmet with a head lamp, about whose type the artist was informed.

In some cases, we also encounter a historical image of mining, which referred to the long tradition of this work. However, it could also indicate the progress of the present in an inverse way, i.e. show what miners are now exempt from. In the mining environment, such a case was recorded in the entrance hall of the 9th May mine in Stonava, where a decorative wall made of terrazzo was made by the Havířov artist Rudolf Prokop in 1961. He depicted mediaeval miners as if taken from the humanistic

writings by Georgius Agricola, but he treated them as black silhouettes on a simple white background with dynamic grey spots (Fig. 3). The result was a witty composition created with the unusual artistic technique (HOLÝ, 1962). Fortunately, this work was saved in 2024 (after decades of being concealed by secondary panelling), just before the demolition of the building, by transporting it to the VŠB – Technical University in Ostrava, where it will be reinstalled after restoration. The regional Technical University is known for its artworks on industrial themes in architecture, the collection of which has also recently been expanded, as the institution still adheres to its mining tradition despite numerous structural changes (see *University Museum*).



Fig. 2. Oldřich Fidrich: *Miner*, 1980–84, The 1st May Mine, Stonava (photo: Granat Splitter, 2016)

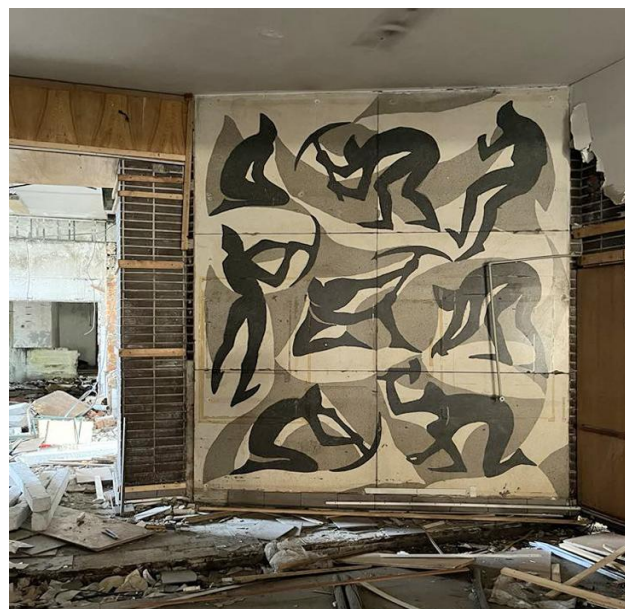


Fig. 3. Rudolf Prokop: *Agricola's Miners*, 1961, The 9th May Mine, Stonava, the artwork after its rediscovery in 2024 (photo: Martin Kubica)

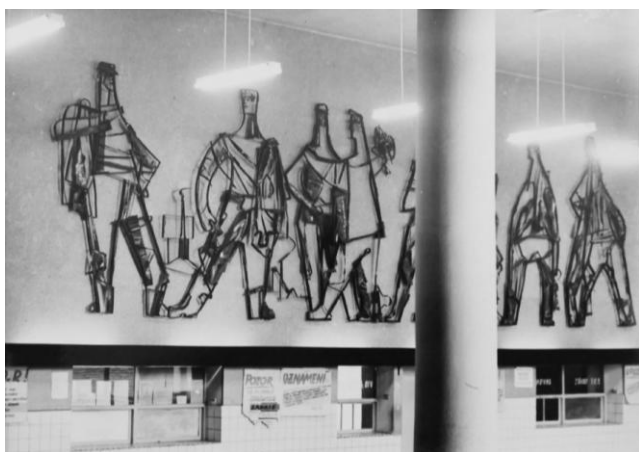


Fig. 4. Franciszek Świder: *The Victorious Socialist Brigade*, 1963, the Czechoslovak Army mine, Karviná (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. ČFVU – Dílo, documentation folder)



Fig. 5. Vladislav Oslizlok: *The Last Miner*, late 1960s, originally in front of the Jindřich mine in Karviná, now at the Michal mine, Ostrava-Michálkovice (photo: Jakub Ivánek, 2021)

In the entrance hall of the Czechoslovak Army Mine in Karviná, the miners were welcomed since 1963 by a monumental wall sculpture made on the theme *The Victorious Socialist Brigade*. The local artist Franciszek Świder conceived it as a crew of awarded miners with lamps receiving a bouquet. Their success was, of course, supposed to be a motivation for others.

The artwork is skilfully and wittily transformed from a stylised charcoal drawing into the final material – a welded steel sheet, which is connected to industrial regions. Despite the condensed artistic expression, the author managed to capture the various personality types of the miners, their pride but also their fatigue, the civil attitudes, and the expressions of brotherly togetherness in the work group (Fig. 4). This impressive artwork, which was highly appreciated by the art committee, was scrapped in the 1990s.

The fibreglass *Miner* by the Karviná artist Vladislav Oslizlok, who stood in front of the Jindřich mine in Karviná, is also worthy of attention. During the gradual demolition of the mine, it was moved in front of the inoperative Alexander mine in Ostrava-Kunčičky sometime in the 1990s. Since 2021, the sculpture has been installed in the premises of the former Michal mine in Ostrava-Michálkovice, which functions as an industrial museum (see Fig. 5). The black figure with the lamp seems like a modern golem with its robustness. Its wanderings through former mining sites have earned it the nickname *The Last Miner*.

4.2. The miner and his family

A special type of art is presented by the depiction of a miner with his family. A mother with a child was one of the most common subjects of figurative sculptures in the art of the second half of the 20th century. Explaining this phenomenon through the connection to the Christian depiction of the Madonna, which has become a “universal humanist theme” (KAROUS, 2013: 81) is certainly not an exhaustive answer. It was not only a fascination with the intimate dimension of motherhood, but also an emphasis on the reproductive mission of women ensuring future generations. J.R. Jenkins also explains the popularity of the theme by saying that the procreative function of the family was integral to socialist values (JENKINS, 2019). In the case of a miner’s family, the theme tends to be even more gender-escalated. The man’s role is hard work underground, while the woman’s job is to raise a child, whereby they both contribute to the socialist state.

The placement of the artwork within a mine can also evoke special connotations. This is the case with the large painting by an unidentified artist (perhaps the plant’s graphic designer?) at the Antonín Zápotocký mine in Orlová. The painting was hung on the wall above the staircase leading from the administrative building to the mining facility, where

miners passed daily before going down the pit. It thus came into contact, for example, with the panels of the Miner's Ten Commandments, which instructed miners on the basic rules of how to behave in the mine. The painting itself is divided into two plans. The lower part depicts a miner working underground at a mining combine, the upper half represents a landscape with a city illuminated by the rays of the sun, in the foreground of which a woman with a child is sitting under a tree. Her gaze fixed downwards may belong to the child who is stretching its hands to her, but also to the man in the mine below her (Fig. 6). The sight of this scene could not only confirm the miner in the above-mentioned general mission, but also remind him, on his journey to dangerous work, of his loved ones who were waiting for him and were existentially dependent on his work.



Fig. 6. Unknown: *The Miner's Family*, late 1950s (?), the Antonín Zápotocký mine, Orlová (photo: Jakub Ivánek, 2024)

In two cases, the motif of a miner's family was present in the artistic decoration of the plant's house of culture: beside the Hlubina mine in Ostrava (1952–55) and the Dukla mine in Dolní Suchá (1957–59). Both were made by Šenov artist Vilém Wünsche and depicted miners' entertainment. The time gap of about five years shows a certain shift in the impression of the theme. The common features of both works are

prehistoric fossils and other symbols of mining work, the motif of traditional music (an accordionist) and a dancing couple with a miner in a traditional costume (uniform). The central element of the later work (interior painting combined with sgraffito) is more informal – a miner is reuniting with his family in a natural environment after work. The scene resembles the idyllic image of the *locus amoenus* (pleasant place), and even the silhouette of the mine in the background surprisingly gives an cosy impression (Fig. 7). The older work (exterior sgraffito) has a miner's wife with a child in conversation with a policeman and a union member who is handing her a flower. This ideologically motivated scene in the centre of the composition even draws attention away from the glorified figure of the heroic miner placed at the very top of the scene. It seems as if the woman is being honoured for being a miner's wife. Neither of these works exist anymore.



Fig. 7. Vilém Wünsche: *The Miners' Entertainment*, 1957–59, the Dukla mine, Havířov – Dolní Suchá (photo: Jakub Ivánek, 2016)

Finally, we can talk about the glass mosaic designed by Vladimír Neuwirt, which has been welcoming miners at the gate of the Czechoslovak Youth mine in Stonava since 1979. It is surprising that it lacks a woman. A miner in work clothes kneels before a child and, together with him, stretches his hand to the rays of the sun, which fills the entire background of the scene. As we read in the minutes from the committee meetings, the idea worked with the contrast of light and darkness. However, there is no darkness in the picture, only an exaggerated yellow-orange light. It is possible that the depiction was inspired by the then current research on the influence of colours on the psyche of industrial workers, which left a strong imprint in the neighbouring

Polish environment. The decoration of mining facilities with colourful mosaics, which were supposed to please the eyes of miners accustomed to the dark was the norm at that time (BOROWIK, 2019: 176). We do not know whether the child in the scene from Neuwirt's mosaic is intended to be the child of a miner. The scene is perhaps conceived more generally and suggests the importance of work for future generations. Interestingly, the hands of both figures resemble the popular scene of people releasing the dove of peace, but here the dove has been replaced by light as an opposed to the darkness of the underground (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Vladimír Neuwirt: *Miner with Child*, 1979, the Czechoslovak Youth mine, Stonava (photo: Vladislava Říhová, 2014)

4.3. Memorials

Memorials to the victims of war and Nazism began to appear on Czech territory almost immediately after the end of World War II. They did not avoid mines, where they commemorated the victims among the mine workers. Some took the simple form of a small memorial or plaque without artistic ambitions, others were created by an artist. The oldest documented object of this nature is the Memorial to miners martyred by the Nazis at the entrance area of the coking plant of the Jan Šverma mine in Ostrava, created in 1951/52 by the Ostrava sculptor Karel Vávra. The sandstone sculpture of a miner with a jackhammer and a bouquet symbolises the “Šverma pit crew” honouring the memory of comrades who gave their lives in the fight for freedom. Compared to the discussed pre-war statue of a *Miner* by Ivanský, Vávra's figure is more static, reminiscent of Egyptian art in its stiffness, which may be a consequence of suggesting a reverent attitude. However, its robust form leans more toward the art of socialist realism (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. Karel Vávra: Memorial to the victims of World War II, 1952, the coking plant of the Jan Šverma mine, Ostrava – Mariánské Hory (photo: Jakub Ivánek, 2015)

A memorial plaque created by Karel Vávra for the Czechoslovak Army mine in Karviná in 1961 contains only three names. The inscription “For Communism they fell undefeated...” points to the fact that they were party members who died as communist resistance fighters. Indeed, the artistic element of the relief (five-pointed star, crossed hammer and sickle) referred to this ideological aspect. A plaque to the martyred and fallen at the entrance to the Hlubina (Depth) mine in Ostrava, created by sculptor Jiří Myszak in 1970–1972, represents a very late implementation of this type of memorial.

A special kind of memorial object connected with mining are memorials to the victims of mining strikes in Ostrava – such as the strike at the Hlubina mine in 1872, during which two miners died, and the bloody strike at the Trojice (Trinity) mine in 1894, during which miners from several Silesian-Ostrava mines joined forces (in total, around 10,000 miners took part in the strike, 12 were shot and dozens injured; JIŘÍK, 2004).

A monument to the victims of the shooting at the Trojice pit was built in the Slezská Ostrava cemetery in 1895. For a long time, there was a small memorial at the mine itself. Its replacement with an artistically rendered monument was considered in the early 1950s. At that time, the event in question was depicted in a dramatic, vivid scene of three striking miners by the Ostrava sculptor Vladislav Gajda, whose sculpture never appeared there. He later used the design, adapted in the stylized forms of 1960s art, for the Memorial to Revolutionary Struggles in the city centre. The bust of one of the miners from the group was used in 1965 as a memorial at the Hlubina mine.

It was not until the mid-1960s that the will to carry out a dignified commemoration of the event reappeared. The long delay may have been due to ideological difficulties, as the strike was initiated by the Social Democrats, a rival political faction to the then ruling Communist Party. The commissioning of the artwork in 1965 led the art committee to a shortlisted nomination competition, which the representatives of the Petr Bezruč mine (under which the Trojice pit fell) agreed to. Initially, however, there was talk of a “smaller memorial”. The sculptor Gajda was also nominated, but he could not apply his original design because the competition excluded the form of a figurative sculpture. Surprisingly, the Havířov sculptor Otto Cienciala, who was not originally nominated, won the competition. In the words of the committee, he combined “monumental design with emotional evocativeness”. At the invitation of the committee, he finally chose architect Blažej Heiser as his co-author. The truly monumental memorial also required landscaping, including the design of the entrance and assembly area. This seems to imitate the ancient pattern of ceremonial sites in the landscape, which includes not only the vertical element of the memorial, but also the horizontally placed plaques with the names of the slain miners, which evoke a sacrificial altar. The monument is an outstanding example of modernist sculpture of the 1960s and abounds in obvious symbolism. The three columns from Vratsa limestone and the three memorial plaques recall the name of the mine, which was originally the Holy Trinity Mine. The main motif of the memorial also carries religious connotations – the hanging cluster of welded steel thorns resembles a crown of thorns (Fig. 10). Such an overtly religious symbol is unique in Czech public art of the time (STRAKOŠ, 2014: 174–176).



Fig. 10. Otto Cienciala and Blažej Heiser: Memorial to the victims of the strike at the Trinity Mine in 1894, 1966, Slezská Ostrava (photo: Roman Polášek, 2019)

Plaques providing information about the founding of plants have become a very specific type of memorial. At the Darkov mine, located in Stonava, near Karviná, such a memorial plaque was created during its completion in the early 1980s. It consisted of two separate elements placed on the sides of a small staircase leading to an area designated for so-called political decoration and serving as a small stage for speeches or group photographs. A plaque on the left side informed about the years of the construction, the investor, the general designer and the contractors. It was complemented on the right column by a relief of the plant with the mining symbol and the inscription “Honour the miner's work”. The creation of the realisation has an interesting history, connected with the emigration of the young sculptor Ctibor Havelka, who was originally commissioned to work on both elements. In the end, the inscription plate was created by the Ostrava artist Karel Štětkář, while the relief was commissioned (apparently at the request of the investor) to the young Brno artist Roman Wenzel, who allegedly sketched the above-ground part of the plant in Havelka's presence, while still a student at the Academy of Fine Arts.

4.3. Portraits

The naming of the mines changed during their development according to the customs of the time. In the socialist period, the plants were often named after political leaders and ideological icons. The Viktoria mine in Ostrava-Heřmanice was named after the Soviet leader Stalin in 1946–1962. In 1946, the František mine in Horní Suchá was renamed the Klement Gottwald mine (from 1948, President

Gottwald). The Ignát Mine in Ostrava – Mariánské Hory took the name of the communist journalist and politician Jan Šverma in 1947. The New Pit in Orlová-Lazy was named after the then Prime Minister, later President Antonín Zápotocký, in 1950. The Pokrok mine in Petřvald was renamed the Julius Fučík mine in 1953 after a communist journalist murdered by the Nazis. In such cases, we encounter artistic decoration responding to the “dedication” of the plant to a particular personality.

In 1959–1961, the first bust of Antonín Zápotocký was created for the mine in Orlová by the sculptor Antonín Kalvoda. We know more about the bust by the sculptor Václav Fidrich from Havířov for the park area near the mine's house of culture from 1974/75. The landscaping and architecture of the assembly and entrance area was designed by architect Alfréd Návrat. Originally, the work was to have been created by Karel Vávra, the creator of the bust of Klement Gottwald for Karviná – Nové Město, but according to the art committee, he could not handle the work on the bust of Zápotocký and so the commission was withdrawn. We know from the negotiations that the work was to express the “human character of the workers' president”.

The available sources do not inform us about the assessment of the Zápotocký's bust by the Committee for the portrayal of constitutional officials and other important personalities at the Ministry of Culture or by the ideological council of a regional or district organisation (*Komise pro oficiální zpodobňování...*). The aforementioned Vávra bust of Gottwald for Karviná, which was created in 1967/68, was assessed and approved in this way on 18 April 1968. At the moment when the President Gottwald Mine in Horní Suchá (probably as an expression of ideological orthodoxy after the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968) commissioned a bust for the plant in March 1971, it was easiest and quickest to commission a second cast of this bronze bust and to deal only with the architectural integration of the work, which was entrusted to architect Návrat.

A special case is the acquisition of a bust of Julius Fučík for the mine of the same name in Petřvald in 1972–1974. The commission was first awarded to Kurt Gebauer, a young sculptor from the Opava region, known for his original and provocative approach, and an architect Sopour (the surname is uncertain, as it is illegible in the sources). The committee surprisingly appreciated the “unconventional approach of the artists”, although it recommended working with the traditional

vertical concept of the bust on the plinth (Gebauer allegedly designed a large bust to be installed directly on the lawn in front of the administrative building). As for the portrait itself, the artist should have discussed his idea with the representatives of the plant. By the early 1970s, it seems to be possible (in connection with the gradual growth of the investor's powers) to submit portraits for approval only to the Company Committee of the Communist Party or the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. As the plant had imagined that the work would be delivered in February 1973 (on the occasion of Fučík's 70th birthday), Gebauer abandoned the commission in December and the committee, as in the case of Horní Suchá, decided (albeit unwillingly) to use the older work. It was a bust of Julius Fučík created by Karel Vašut in 1959 for the forecourt of the Nová huť apprenticeship school in Ostrava. Similarly to other cases, only the architecture was finished on time, for which a temporary plaster model of the bust was delivered. The bronze cast was not installed on the site until February 1974.

In 1973/74, a bust of Jan Šverma was also created for the mine of the same name in Mariánské Hory. Its author Vladislav Gajda decided to create it as a portrait emerging out of a stone block. The committee repeatedly demanded a greater release of the head from the stone, which also formed its plinth. In the end, they were satisfied with the work, as was the investor. Nevertheless, the bust is not one of Gajda's more successful works precisely because of the obscurity of form in some views.

4.4. Mythology of the underground

Previously, we touched on the existence of Jan Lauda's relief *Creation of Coal* on the building of the later headquarters of the mines in Ostrava, which, although not directly related to the decoration of mining complexes, represents a theme that was later strongly followed in the artworks for mines, including the adoption of the horizontal composition of the mural. Lauda's relief depicts an allegorical representation of Mother Earth as a nude woman handing prehistoric plants to the depths, from which a miner in a low seam extracts them after they have been transformed into coal (see Fig. 1). A similar pattern (a nude woman lifting a coal boulder from the depths of the earth, depicted as a coal forest, to a miner) can be found in Vilém Wünsche's stained glass window in the administrative building of the Dukla mine in Dolní Suchá (1957–59). The glass

wall of its staircase required a change to a vertical design, thus a shift from chronological composition to a more realistic contrast between the depths and the Earth's surface, which allowed the author to incorporate the silhouette of the mining plant.

Other reliefs and mosaics from the late 1950s and early 1960s omit the figure of the miner and focus instead on a female figure. Despite the allegorical nature of the scenes, it is impossible not to notice certain voyeurism of the artists of the time, inherited from the tradition of European art (cf. JENKINS, 2019). The relief above the entrance to the house of culture of the same mine by Antonín Kalvoda (1957–58) depicts a nude woman (Mother Earth) waking up, around which Carboniferous fossils unfolded like rays of the sun. Except for the figure, the relief was conceived as an almost abstract, geometrized surface resembling bursting ice floes with impressions of prehistoric plants (Fig. 11).

The most significant artwork on this mine was a ceramic mosaic by the Ostrava artist and stage designer Otakar Schindler for the entrance hall of the administrative building (1957–58). Third, we are dealing here with a nude figure of a reclining woman playing with two tamed horses. The theme of harnessing energy was conceived in an inventive

and playful way. A photograph with a 1:1 sketch has survived in the artist's archive, in which the scene is conceived in a realistic manner (see HOLÝ ET AL., 2002: 18). Yet, the realisation seems to have been created by fragmenting this image into hundreds of tiny shards, which dynamized the scene and moved it to an almost abstract plane. The uniform, blue-turquoise colour of the glaze (perhaps inspired by František Kupka's paintings) reinforced this impression (Fig. 12). It is an irrecoverable pity that all these works were de facto lost when they were unprofessionally removed during the demolition of the site in 2017/18 (all of them were discussed by HOLÝ, 1962).

The allegorical scene with a nude woman as a symbol of the Earth is also depicted on the monumental relief by a pair of Prague sculptors Jindřich Wielgus (the Karviná native) and Jan Hána for the administrative building of the Julius Fučík mine in Petřvald. Although the Petřvald version of the theme was not completed until 1962, its realistic form and conception are more in keeping with the art of the 1950s. The choice of the motif of the specific trestle winding tower is surprising, which was not present in Petřvald,



Fig. 11. Antonín Kalvoda: *The Earth Awakening*, 1958, the Dukla mine, house of culture, Havířov – Dolní Suchá (photo: Jakub Ivánek, 2015)



Fig. 12 . Otakar Schindler: *The Harnessing of Energy*, mosaic in the entrance hall, 1958, the Dukla mine, Havířov – Dolní Suchá (photo: Jakub Ivánek, 2015)

Allegorical scenes with naked women disappear later from the mine setting altogether. When authors wanted to depict underground wealth, or the myth of the creation of coal, they resorted to abstract, non-figurative forms, as is evidenced primarily by tapestries from the 1980s. The 1970s and 1980s were a time of considerable production of tapestries, which were less demanding to produce, but a very effective option for the interior design. The classic tapestries were woven most often in workshops in Valašské Meziříčí or Jindřichův Hradec, but some textile artists were able to produce works of a certain size themselves. This is probably the case of two tapestries by the artist couple Alexander and Alice Ulma for the administrative building of the Darkov mine (1983). The extant tapestry, in shades of sand and blue, depicts layers of sediment, with shells of prehistoric aquatic animals and petrified tree trunks scattered randomly among them. The concept of the work is reminiscent of the surrealist paintings by the famous Czech painter Toyen from the 1930s (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. Alexander and Alice Ulma: Tapestry for the Darkov mine, 1983, today at the Czechoslovak Youth mine, Stonava (photo: Jakub Ivánek, 2024)

Since the late 1960s, non-woven textiles (Art-Protis, Ara-Dekor, Artaig) became a more frequent type of interior textile decoration. The most widespread was Art-Protis, which is a Czech invention from 1964, patented in Czechoslovakia in 1968. They were produced on the basis of artists' designs (often in their presence) at the Vlněna factory in Brno. Their production consisted of laying wool on the fibre, which was then ironed and machine stitched (VINGLEROVÁ, 2020: online). This technique was used in 1980–1984 by the artists Jiří Jaromír Drozd, Vlastislav Holub, Věra Tošenovská and Josef Treuchel to decorate the house of culture and the

administrative building of the Paskov mine. The Holub's tapestries, according to their titles, concerned the natural character of the mining wealth (*Natural Resources, Coal Forest*). The former is known at least from photographic documentation of the meeting room. However, this does not allow for any more detailed conclusions about its motives. Only the central motif of fire is evident in the purely abstract plan.

4.5. Non-mining themes

Works not related to mining themes were also implemented in mining complexes, especially in the buildings of cultural centres, polyclinic and canteens. The house of culture at the Antonín Zápotocký mine in Orlová is particularly interesting in terms of artistic decoration. Two works for its interior were created by the already discussed Antonín Kalvoda. The openwork relief with the theme of *Art and Culture* (1962) depicted the classical theme of two reclining (allegorical) figures (one with a lyre, the other with a book, Fig. 15), but it was conceived in a modernist form. Since the design for the work has also been preserved, we can state that a similar phenomenon occurred here as with the previously described relief by Otakar Schindler. While the drawing could be implemented without much difficulty as a sgraffito into the architecture of late socialist realism or modern classicism (see Fig. 14), the resulting artwork seems like a play with welded steel bars, whose technical form is softened only by the beaten copper sheets, scattered randomly over the relief. The work is also interesting because the same motif, in an even more abstract form, with incorporated industrial-looking metal parts, was used by Kalvoda for the facade of the house of culture in Ústí nad Labem. The sculptor Arnošt Košík, who worked more often with metal, is listed as a co-author of the latter.

The other Kalvoda relief for the house of culture in Orlová, rendered in the same style, presented a theatre mask, into which he even incorporated pincers and parts of a machine (Fig. 16). The presence of the hammer and sickle symbol in the composition suggests that the ideals of socialist culture were not to be denied in these works, but rather that belief in them was to be in line with a tendency towards experimentation and a modern concept of art. After all, as already mentioned, the technical expression and the use of raw iron as a material went hand in hand with the industrial

character of the region, where metallurgy played a primary role alongside mining (One of the photographs shows that the *Theatre mask* was surprisingly installed rotated 90 degrees to the right. This made

the communist symbol more visible, while the effect of the mask was in fact lost). Both Kalvoda's works apparently perished during demolition of the building in 2001.

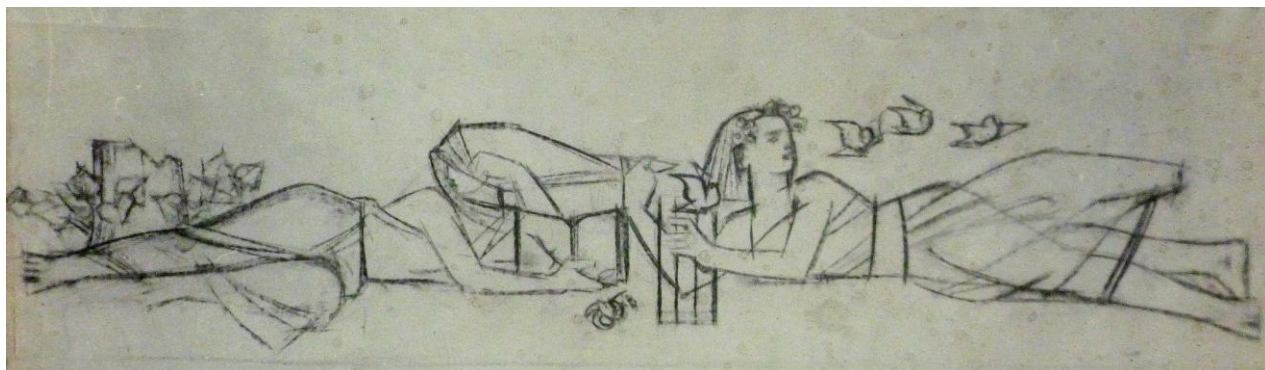


Fig. 14. Antonín Kalvoda: *Art and Culture*, design for the relief in Orlová (author's archive in the possession of his son Ivan Kalvoda)

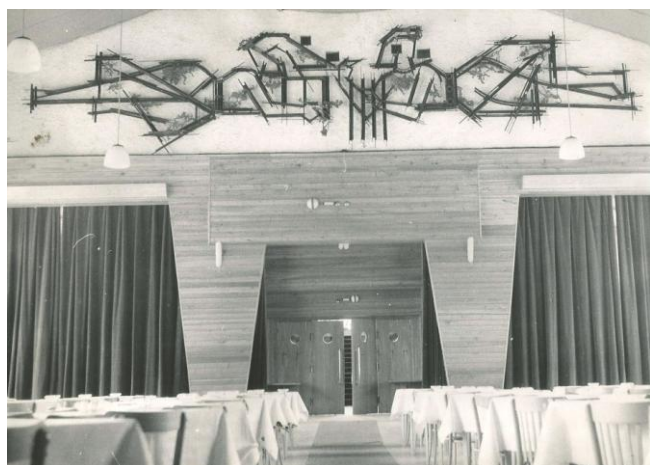


Fig. 15. Antonín Kalvoda: *Art and Culture*, 1962, the Antonín Zápotocký mine, house of culture, Orlová (author's archive in the possession of his son Ivan Kalvoda)

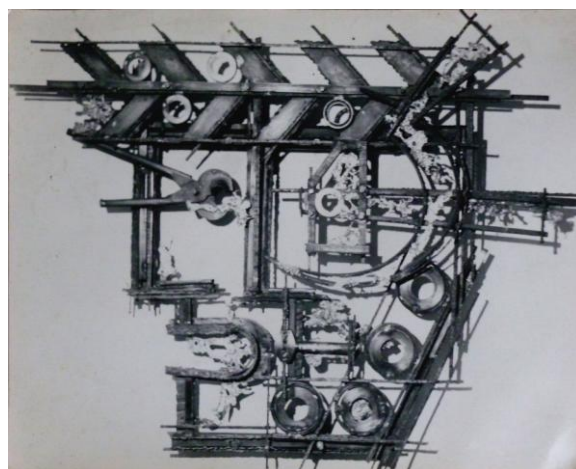


Fig. 16. Antonín Kalvoda: *Theatre mask*, 1962(?), the Antonín Zápotocký mine, house of culture, Orlová (author's archive in the possession of his son Ivan Kalvoda)

As a representative of the artwork for miners' clinics, I would like to mention a wooden relief for the hall of the new health centre of the Czechoslovak Army Mine in Karviná (1981), authored by the prominent Czech lettrist Eduard Ovčáček. He gained fame in the late 1960s and during the "Normalisation" period, his art was not understood and therefore not supported by the officials of the Art Union. However, he may be an example of an artist, who, despite this fact, was able to win commissions for monumental artworks thanks to architects and investors, whose voices were heard by art committees (cf. SVAŠEK, 2002). The discussed relief was, according to the assignment to "examine the motif of human strength, or health, the cell as a basic compositional motif". The work consisted of five separate parts, with the central (largest and lightest) part depicting the sun – a popular theme in the health sector – with

astrological signs and a heart in the middle, while the side parts were tinted in darker shades. In the spirit of Lettrism, the surface was dotted with symbolic inscriptions (*blood, earth, fire, sinus, Venus, sun, heart, etc.*) in English, Latin and Czech (Fig. 17). This relief also disappeared. In 2017, it was stolen from a freely accessible building.

5. Conclusion

If we sum up the previous observations in chronological order, we can find that most artwork for the architecture of mines were created in two periods. The first was in the late 1950s and early 1960s when mining-related themes predominated. Initially, there were general depictions of the miner

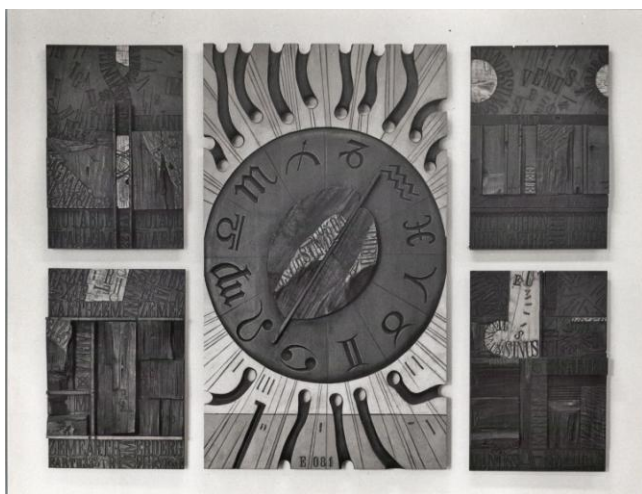


Fig. 17. Eduard Ovčáček: *The Sun*, 1981, the Czechoslovak Army mine, polyclinic, Karviná (photo: Petr Sikula, 1988)

and his family, sometimes with a strong ideological background. Soon an allegorical approach prevailed, depicting the wealth of the earth and its exploitation in an eroticised way (the earth as a seductive nude woman, the object of the miner's desire). This theme was inspired by the art of the interwar period, although it became more stylized or abstract in form. The early 1960s are also characterised by explosive experiments with material, culminating in the welded metal sculptures of 1962/63. The second significant phase of the construction of the mining complexes, and thus also their artistic completion falls in the period of political "normalisation", especially in the late 1970s and the first half of the 1980s. It partly returns to the general image of the miner and his work, but the investors demanded the depiction of a miner to correspond to his present image – old miner's lamps disappeared, mining machines are the subject of interest.). We also meet a depiction of wealth in the depths of the earth, but in a non-figurative, non-allegorical, more abstract form.

Paradoxically, the art of pure socialist realism of the 1950s does not appear to a greater extent in mining complexes (the exception is presented by two houses of culture at Ostrava mines), neither does the peak phase of modern art of the second half of the 1960s, characterised by a predominant inclination towards abstraction. It is represented especially by one memorial from the mid-1960s. Most of the documented artworks can be classified as part of the effort towards *realist modernism*, as described by J.R. Jenkins (JENKINS, 2021: 48). In the art of the "Normalisation" period, we find signs of *exhausted modernism*, as defined in the Czech environment by

Pavel Karous (KAROUS, 2013: 13–16). Memorials and plaques appear from the mid-1940s to the mid-1970s. Busts related to the naming of mines after communist figures are encountered both at the turn of the 1950s/1960s and in the early 1970s, perhaps following the hardening of political conditions.

The field documentation of monumental artworks in the mine complexes of the Ostrava-Karviná coalfield was an important step, as the architecture of mining complexes in the area under study has been disappearing since the end of the 20th century, and this is accelerating in connection with the complete cessation of mining activities today. Along with the buildings, a large part of the artworks intended for their architecture is disappearing. The research will soon be supplemented by documentation of the artwork with mining and metallurgical themes in the so-called "black cities" of the Upper Silesian Coal Basin as part of another ongoing project of the author. Other possibilities for the future could be comparisons with a set of artwork for mines in other parts of the Czech Republic, or with works in the architecture of mining complexes in the Polish part of the Upper Silesian Coal Basin.

Founding

The publication is an outcome of the Czech Science Foundation project, grant no. 25-14527L: Mapping the culture of the last coalfield in Europe, implemented at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ostrava.

Attachment: Map catalogue

Sorted alphabetically by districts and towns, within towns by mine name, within mines according to place and chronologically by origin.

FRÝDEK-MÍSTEK DISTRICT

PASKOV

The Paskov Mine

- 1-5 House of Culture (49.7436264N, 18.2868658E, demolished 2013–15, fate of the works unknown)
- Josef Treichel: *Black Butterfly* and *Ostrava Motif*. Two Art-Protis tapestries for clubroom and foyer, 1980, wool, stored at the former Darkov mine
 - Vlastislav Holub: *Coal Forest*. Art-protis tapestry for clubroom, 1980, wool
 - Aleš Květoň: Lighting fixtures for staircase and the director's lounge, 1982, chrome, glass/plexiglass, 1) ca. 200 x 300 x 150 cm, 2) diameter 200 cm
 - Věra Tošenovská: *Beskydy Flowers*. Two Art-Protis tapestries on rounded panels for the director's lounge, 1982, wool, 210 x 550 and 210 x 350 cm
 - Vlastislav Holub: *Natural Resources*. A set of composite Art-Protis tapestries for the meeting room, 1982, wool, 460 x 270 cm
- 6-7 Administrative building (49.7447244N, 18.2879197E, demolished 2013–15, fate of the works unknown)

- Jiří Jaromír Drozd: Art-Protis tapestry for the All-Plant Committee of the Communist Party meeting room, 1984, wool
- Věra Tošenovská: Art-Protis tapestry for the All-Plant Committee of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement meeting room, 1984, wool

ŘEPIŠTĚ

The Paskov Mine – Wind pit in Řepiště

- 8 Administrative building (49.7467428N, 18.3110286E)
 - Čestmír Hlavinka: *Miner at the Machine*. Relief in the entrance hall, 1973–75, glazed ceramics, 217 x 266 x 20 cm

KARVINÁ DISTRICT

DOUBRAVA

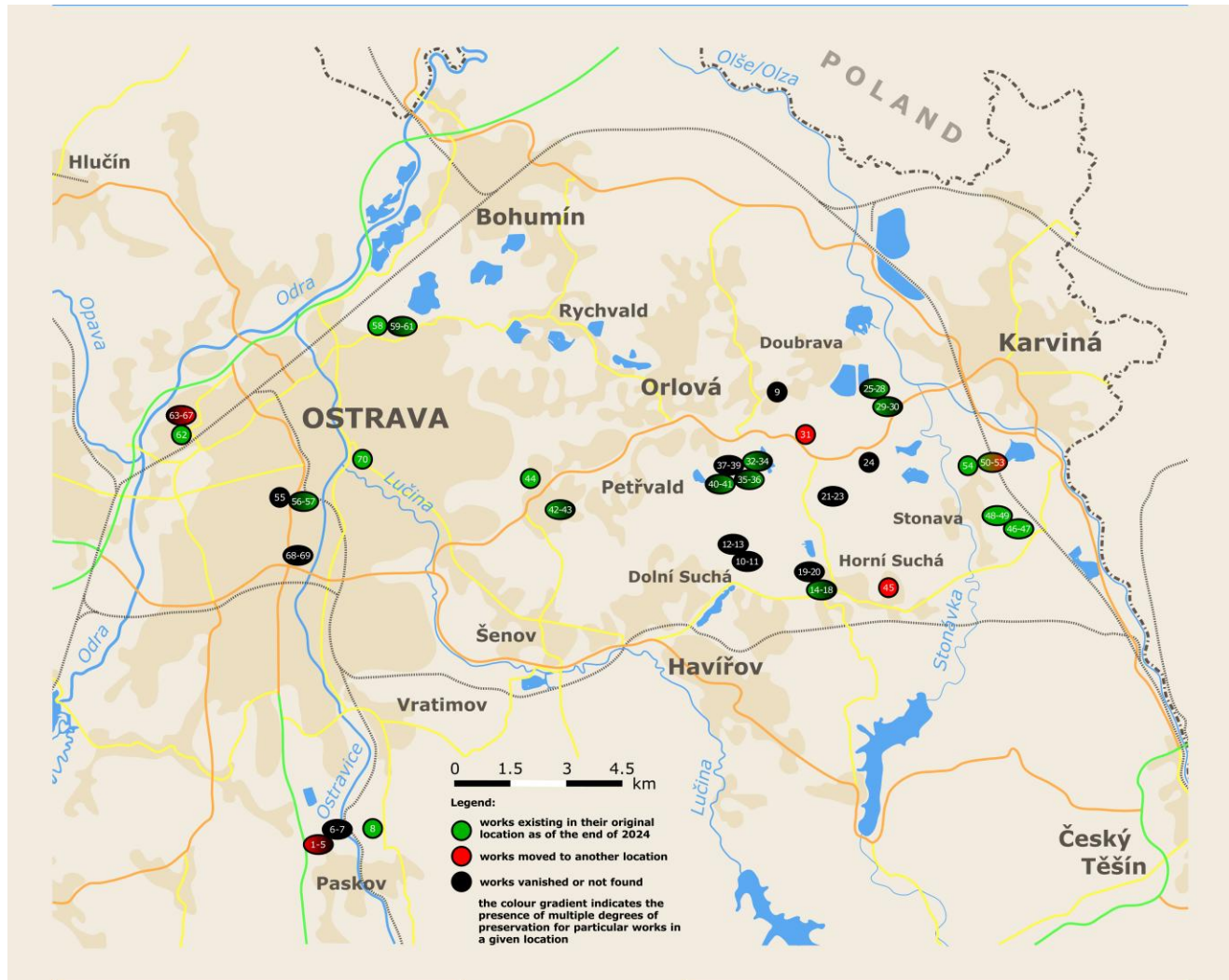
The Doubrava Mine

- 9 Administrative building (perhaps in the Hall of Revolutionary Traditions, 49.8494183N, 18.4587708E, the mine demolished 2011)
 - Karel Vávra: State emblems of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and USSR, 1972, patinated plaster, apparently removed after 1989

HAVÍŘOV – DOLNÍ SUCHÁ

The Dukla Mine

- 10–11 House of Culture (49.8092742N, 18.4409192E, demolished 2017)
 - Antonín Kalvoda: *The Earth Awakening*. Relief above the entrance, 1957–58, glazed ceramics, unprofessionally removed and damaged 2017, fate unknown
 - Vilém Wünsche: *Miners' Party*. Figural sgraffito in the foyer, 1957–59, sgraffito combined with fresco, 330 x 400 cm, destroyed 2017
 12–13 Administrative building (49.8103678N, 18.4407828E, demolished 2018)
 - Vilém Wünsche: *The Myth of the Coal*. Figural stained glass for staircase, 1957–1959, lead, clear relief cut glass, 600 x 200 cm; unprofessionally removed and damaged 2018, fate unknown
 - Otakar Schindler: *The Harnessing of Energy*. Mosaic in the entrance hall, 1958, glazed ceramic, 180 x 510 cm; unprofessionally removed and destroyed 2018



HORNÍ SUCHÁ

The President Gottwald Mine

- 14–18 House of culture (49.8022971N, 18.4779196E)
 - Jan Provazník – Václav Uruba: *Reclining Woman with the Sun*. Relief in the entrance hall, 1962, ceramics (Poštorná granule), 95 x 260 cm
 - Jiří Matýšek: Fountain, 1961–62, painted steel, removed
 - Otakar Čičátka: *Culture and Industry*. Two reliefs in the hall, early 1960s, copper, 170 x 50 cm
 - Unknown: Vegetable relief in the foyer, early 1960s, painted copper(?), removed
 - Unknown: Relief in the private room, early 1960s, copper(?), removed
 19–20 Canteen and access avenue (49.8051317N, 18.4766731E)
 - Karel Vávra – arch. Alfréd Návrát: Bust of Klement Gottwald, 1971, second cast of the bust from 1966, bronze, removed after 1989

- Otto Cienciala – Vratislav Varmuža: *Miner*. Relief in the interior, 1985–86, ceramics, 90 x 260 x 22 cm, destroyed during the reconstruction of the building around 2005

KARVINÁ

The 1st May Mine, plant 1 (Barbora)

- 21–23 Canteen and its forecourt (49.8244372N, 18.4748975E, demolished 2011)
 - Otto Cienciala: Four ceramic vases, 1963, not found
 - Otto Cienciala – Jiří Babíček: Two metal grilles, 1963
 - Karel Říhovský – Květuše and Miroslav Kubátkovi (realization): Three wall compositions, 1979–81, glazed ceramics

The 1st May Mine, plant 3 (Gabriela/Mír)

- 24 Forecourt (49.8321747N, 18.4928308E)
 - Miloš Jančar – Oldřich Bijok: Memorial to the Liberation by the Soviet Army, 1970, stone, copper(?), removed before 2006

The Czechoslovak Army Mine (ČSA), plant 1

- 25–28** Administrative building (49.8443722N, 18.4930425E)
- Karel Vávra: Memorial plaque to fallen Communist Party members from the mine employees, 1961, sandstone, 140 x 120 cm, not found
- Oldřich Kodeš: *Man and Woman*. Etched glass in the ground floor corridor, 1964, 123 x 226 cm
- Franciszek Świder: *The Victorious Socialist Brigade*. Pendant sculpture, 1963, welded steel sheet, 300 x 1150 cm, scrapped in 1990s
- Otto Cienciala: *Miner*. Relief in the first floor corridor, 1991, epoxy resin, 85 x 255 x 20 cm
- 29–30** Health centre (49.8420153N, 18.4997528E)
- Čestmír Hlavinka – Maria Szemeš Hlavinková: *Health Protection and the Environment*. Exterior wall design, 1980–83, glazed ceramics, 220 x 1200 cm
- Eduard Ovčáček: *The Sun*. Wall design in the entrance hall, 1981–82, maple wood, stolen 2017

The Czechoslovak Army Mine, plant 3 (Jindřich)

- 31** Forecourt (49.8384242N, 18.4667831E, the mine demolished after 2000)
- Vladislav Oslizlok: *Miner*, late 1960s, fibreglass, height 300 cm, around 2000 moved to Ostrava, now in private ownership, displayed in the Michal mine in Ostrava-Michálkovice

ORLOVÁ

The Antonín Zápotocký Mine

- 32–34** Administrative building (49.8283661N, 18.4450183E)
- Unknown: *Miner and his family*. Painting in the corridor to the mining area, late 1950s, acrylic(?) on canvas, ca. 330 x 260 cm
- Unknown: *Miner*. Decorative wall grille above the staircase, late 1950s, steel, copper sheet, ca. 220 x 170 cm
- Antonín Kalvoda: The bust of Antonín Zápotocký, 1959–61, plaster/bronze, bust 100 cm, plinth 40 cm, not found
Canteen (49.8278328N, 18.4445100E)
- Jan Obšil: Wall painting, 1958–59, destroyed
- Karel Vašut: *Mother and Miner*. Two reliefs on the sides of the entrance, 1958–59, every relief 230 x 185 cm
- 37–39** House of Culture (49.8302411N, 18.4398964E, demolished 2001, fate of the works unknown)
- Antonín Kalvoda: *Art and Culture*. Interior relief, 1962, welded metal sheet
- Antonín Kalvoda: *Theatre Mask*. Interior relief, 1962(?), welded metal sheet
- Václav Fidrich: The bust of Antonín Zápotocký, 1974–75, bronze
- 40–41** Health centre (49.8276667N, 18.4383086E)
- Karla Palátová: *Sheep by the River*. Tapestry in the hall, 1985–86, wool, 180 x 250 cm, not found
- Marie Fidrichová: *Dove with olive branch*. Relief at the entrance, 1986, glazed ceramics, 140 x 80 cm

PETŘVALD

The Julius Fučík Mine, plant 1 (Pokrok)

- 42–43** Administrative building (49.8190975N, 18.3777872E)
- Jindřich Wielgus – Jan Hána: *The Birth of Coal*. Relief on the facade, 1960–62, epoxy resin, 150 x 700 cm
- Karel Vašut – arch. Sopour (?): The bust of Julius Fučík in the forecourt, 1972–74 (second cast of the bust from 1959), bronze, limestone, removed

The Julius Fučík Mine, plant 3 (Hedvika)

- 44** Health centre (49.8263447N, 18.3669833E)
- Karel Vávra: Medical emblem on the facade and entrance lining, 1957, artificial stone, 1) 120 x 120 cm, 2) 360 x 270 x 30 cm

STONAVA

The 9th May Mine (Suchá-Stonava)

- 45** Administrative building (49.8010547N, 18.5013297E, demolished 2024)
- Rudolf Prokop: *Agricola's Miners*. Wall composition for the entrance hall, 1961, terrazzo, 360 x 300 cm, 2024 transferred to the VSB – Technical University of Ostrava

The Czechoslovak Youth Mine (ČSM)

- 46–47** House of culture (49.8163228N, 18.5483706E)
- Otto Cienciala: Relief on the facade, 1971–73, aluminium, slate, 295 x 652 cm (the slate wall), diameter 92 (the central circle motif)
- Unknown: Relief in the "rustic den", 1978(?), wood, 170 x 230 x 10 cm
- 49–49** Entrance area (49.8167872N, 18.5478206E)
- Vladimír Neuwirt: *Miner with Child*. Mosaic wall on the facade, 1977–79, prefabricated glass cubes, 400 x 720 cm
- Unknown: *Banks of Coal*. Relief in the entrance hall, 1978(?), wood, 110 x 230 x 20 cm

The Darkov Mine

- 50–53** Administrative building (49.8299206N, 18.5235519)
- Dalibor Kyzlink: *Miner with Combine*. Relief in the meeting room, 1980–81, glazed ceramics, 138 x 238 x 20 cm
- Karel Štětkář: Memorial plaque with inscriptions about the founding of the mine in the entrance hall, 1980–82, marble, bronze, ca. 120 x 140 cm, removed or overlaid

- Roman Wenzel: Relief of the plant in the entrance hall, 1980–82, fibreglass, ca. 109 x 152 x 10 cm
- Alexander Ulma – Alice Ulmová: Two Art-Protis tapestries and two woven tapestries, 1983, wool, a–b) not found, c) 195 x 300 cm, moved to the Czechoslovak Youth Mine, d) not found
- 54** Forecourt (49.8296681N, 18.5226828E)
- Oldřich Fidrich: *Miner*, 1980–84, installed around 1993, Silesian granite, ca. 150 x 250 x 50 cm

OSTRAVA DISTRICT

MORAVSKÁ OSTRAVA

The Hlubina Mine

- 55** House of culture (49.823061, 18.275113)
- Vilém Wünsche: *Miners' Party*. Figural sgraffito on the facade, 1952–55, 600 x 250 cm, destroyed during renovation at the beginning of the 21st century
- 56–57** Entrance area (49.8225133N, 18.2785489E)
- Vladislav Gajda: Monument to the strike at the Hlubina mine from 1872, 1965, sandstone (bust), granite (base), bust stolen
- Jiří Myszak: Memorial plaque to the martyred and fallen, 1970–72, bronze, ca. 175 x 115 cm

OSTRAVA-HERMANICE

The Stalin Mine

- 58** Health centre (49.8621844N, 18.3154808E)
- Jiří Myszak: Three reliefs on the facade, 1956, artificial stone
- 59–61** Entrance area (49.8622536N, 18.3160603E)
- Jiří Myszak: *Miner*. Relief beside the gateway, 1957, artificial stone, ca. 200 x 100 cm, removed around 2004
- Jiří Myszak: Decorative miner's lamp on the gateway pillar, 1957, artificial stone, 130 x 70 cm, stolen 2019
- Jiří Myszak: Decorative ornament with mining motif, 1957, artificial stone, 30 x 194 cm

OSTRAVA – MARIÁNSKÉ HORY

The Jan Šverma Mine

- 62** Forecourt of the coking plant (49.8390206N, 18.2394497E)
- Karel Vávra: Memorial to the miners tortured to death by the Nazis, 1951–52, sandstone
- 63–67** Administrative building (49.8428467N, 18.2368064E, rebuilt, fate of the works unknown)
- Rudolf Kouba: Dividing grille in the hall, 1969
- Zita Čapková: Art design of the walls in the meeting room, 1969
- Otto Cienciala: Sculpture in the water reservoir, 1969
- arch. Leopold Kolarz: Illustrative promotion of the results of the miners' work, 1974
- Vladislav Gajda – arch. Miloš Bartoň –Josef Skalík (realization): Jan Šverma Memorial, 1973–74, Vratsa limestone, height 285 cm; moved to the "Corner of discarded sculptures" in the Mining Museum Lanek Park

OSTRAVA-VÍTKOVICE

The General Jeremenko Mine

- 68–69** House of culture (49.808022, 18.274364)
- Jiřina Fišerová: *Miner with a flag*. Ceramic statue on the gable wall, 1955(?), removed
- Jan Komárek: Relief on the entrance portico, 1955(?), artificial stone(?), overlaid

SLEZSKÁ OSTRAVA

The Trojice Mine

- 70** Park area opposite the mine (49.8331939N, 18.3021772E)
- Otto Cienciala – arch. Blažej Heiser: Memorial to the victims of the miners' strike of 1894 at the Trojice mine, 1965–66, welded steel (sculpture), Vratsa limestone (pylons and memorial plaques), marble (base of memorial plaques), height of the monument 550 cm, memorial plaques 150 x 120 x 10 cm; restored 2018

Archival sources

Archiv OKD, collection I/2, Severní dráha Ferdinandova Moravská Ostrava, box 143.

Archiv OKD, collection II/1, OKD, koncern Ostrava, box 82.

Zemský archiv v Opavě, coll. Dílo, podnik Českého fondu výtvarných umění – oblastní středisko Ostrava (1957–1996).

References

Borowik A. 2019. Architektura śląskich kopalń lat 60. i 70. XX wieku. [in:] M.J. Sołtysik, R. Hirsch (ed.) *Architektura XX wieku, jej badania i popularyzacja w Gdyni i w Europie*. Politechnika Gdańska, Gdynia: 171–178.

- Holý P. 1962. Konvence a potřeba. *Červený květ*, 7, 2: 48–49.
- Holý P. 2003. Hornické Ostravsko a výtvarné umění. [in:] I. Černý (ed.) *Uhelné hornictví v ostravsko-karvinském revíru*. Anagram, Ostrava: 477–484.
- Holý P., Kačer J., Kodl M. 2002. *Otakar Schindler* (the exhibition catalogue). Gallery Antikva Nova Kodl, Praha.
- Ivánek J., Urbanová S. 2017. *Lumír Čmerda – (nejen) reliéfy a ilustrace*. Ostravská univerzita, Ostrava.
- Jenkins J.R. 2019. Tractor Drivers, Mothers and Nudes. Decoding the Feminine in East German Public Sculptures. [in:] T. Hyunhak Yoon (ed.) *Decoing Dictatorial Statues*. Onomatopoe, Eindhoven: 170–192.
- Jenkins J.R. 2021. *Picturing Socialism. Public Art and Design in East Germany*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Jiřík K. 2004. *Trojice 1894. K stodesátému výročí hornického krveprolití ve Slezské Ostravě*. Tilia, Šenov u Ostravy.
- Kaiser P., Rehberg K.-S. (eds). 1999. *Enge und Vielfalt – Auftragskunst und Kunstförderung in der DDR. Analysen und Meinungen*. Junius, Hamburg.
- Karous P. (ed.). 2013. *Aliens and Herons. A Guide to Fine Art in the Public Space in the Era of Normalisation in Czechoslovakia (1968–1989)*. Arbor Vitae, Praha.
- Kořínková J. 2013. Four Per Cent Art? [in:] P. Karous (ed.) *Aliens and Herons...* Arbor Vitae, Praha:452–459.
- Kořínková J. 2017. *Výtvarné umění v prostoru brněnských sídlišť (1945–1989)*. Doctoral thesis. Brno University of Technology.
- Kořínková J., Ivánek J., Říhová V. 2020. Umění v architektuře na Moravě (1938–1989): proč a jak? [in:] Z. Křenková, V. Říhová, M. Čadilová (eds) *Sochy a města – Morava. Výtvarné umění ve veřejném prostoru 1945–1989*. Univerzita Pardubice, Litomyšl: 27–38.
- Kostuch B. 2015. *Kolor i blask. Ceramika architektoniczna oraz mozaiki w Krakowie i Małopolsce po 1945 roku*. Kraków.
- Křenková Z. et al. 2022. *Czech Glass Mosaic. History, technology, catalogue of exterior works*. VŠCHT, Praha.
- Křenková Z., Říhová V., Čadilová M. (eds). 2020. *Sochy a města – Morava. Výtvarné umění ve veřejném prostoru 1945–1989*. Univerzita Pardubice, Litomyšl.
- Matěj M. 2022. *Ostrava's Industrial Heritage*. Národní památkový ústav, Ostrava.
- Říhová V., Křenková Z. 2016. Archivní fondy podniku Českého fondu výtvarných umění Dílo. *Opuscula historiae artium* 65, 2: 104–119.
- Říhová V., Míchalová Z. 2024. Stucco monuments that originated in the Czech Republic's territory before 1620 – catalogue. [in:] Z. Míchalová, R. Tišlová, V. Říhová (eds) *Renaissance and Mannerist Stucco North of the Alps: Interdisciplinary Research*. University of Pardubice: 237–241.
- Simpson S. 2008. *Zwischen Kulturauftrag und künstlerischer Autonomie. Dresdner Plastik der 1950er und 1960er Jahre*. Böhlau Verlag, Köln.
- Sivek A. 1967. *Antonín Ivanský. Výstava plastik. Válcovny plechu, Frýdek-Místek*.
- Strakoš M. 2014. *Po sorele brusel, kov, sklo, struktury a beton*. Národní památkový ústav, Ostrava.
- Svašek M. 2002. Social Dynamics in the Czechoslovak State-Socialist Art World. *Contemporary European History*, 11, 1: 67–86.
- Špačková E., Šťastná M., Ivánek J. 2017. *Art on Campus. The Public Art Collection at VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava*. VŠB – Technical University, Ostrava.
- Šťastná M. 2008. *Socha ve městě. Vztah architektury a plastiky v Ostravě ve 20. století*. Ostravská univerzita, Ostrava.

Web sources

- Kač M. 2025. *Vsakega namiga bomo veseli. Iščejo se umetnine, ki so med 1945 in 1991 nastale za javne ustanove*. RTV SLO, Ljubljana, 2.5.2025. Available at <https://www.rtvsl.si/kultura/dediscina/vsakega-namiga-bomo-veseli-iscejo-se-umetnine-ki-so-med-1945-in-1991-nastale-za-javne-ustanove/744210> (Access on 7 November 2025).
- Komise pro oficiální zpodobňování ústavních činitelů... *Dictionary of the Museum of the Labour Movement*. Available at <https://www.mdh21.cz/slovník/komise-pro-oficiální-zpodobnovani-ustavnich-cinitelu-a-jinych-vyznacnych-osobnosti/> (Access on 7 November 2025).
- Mining Art Gallery: www.aucklandproject.org/attraction/mining-art-gallery
- National Coal Mining Museum: www.ncm.org.uk
- Novotný L. 2025. Stolen Light. *Uncomissioned*: <https://uncommissioned.art/artists/libor-novotny> (Access on 7 November 2025).
- Ostravské sochy. Databáze uměleckých děl v architektuře a veřejném prostoru města Ostravy*: www.ostravskesochoy.cz.
- Sochy a města. České umění 50.–80. let 20. století ve veřejném prostoru. Evidence, průzkumy a restaurování*: www.sochyamesta.cz.
- Topografický výzkum exteriérových skleněných mozaik v ČR – odborná mapa se zaměřením na jejich výskyt a poškození*: www.mozaika.vscht.cz.
- Umetnost za skupnost*: <https://umetnostzaskupnost.si>.
- University Museum, VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava: <https://www.vsb.cz/muzeum/en>.
- Vetřelci a volavky – veřejné umění doby socialismu*: www.facebook.com/groups/372485406179.
- Vetřelci a volavky*: www.vetrelciavolavky.cz.
- Vinglerová M. 2020. *A Thousand Needles. A Rediscovered Innovation in Textiles*. Muzeum dekorativních umění Praha. Available at costume.mini.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/08/Marketa-Vinglerova-A-Thousand-Needles-.pdf (Access on 7 November 2025).