

## Chaos, Mess and Uncertainty: Josef Sudek and Surrealism

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### Abstract

The aim of this essay is to emphasize Sudek's links with surrealism. Between 1924 and 1928 Sudek produced photographs of the interior of St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague, where he was fascinated by the 'atmosphere of things' and their 'disorganisation,' as the cathedral was still under restoration. When Sudek's friend, the photographer Jaromír Funke, reviewed these photographs, he stressed the terms 'chaos' and 'vertigo.' Chaos was a crucial notion for Sudek's apprehension of reality: in chaos, it is possible to find secrets, because it is an endless source of imaginative investigation. Sudek came to the idea of secrets hidden in chaos through his understanding of surrealism in the 1930s. He photographed the surrealist exhibition *Poesie 32 (Poetry 32)* in Prague in 1932. His close friend, the painter Bedřich Vaníček, participated in the translation of a number of surrealist texts from French into Czech. Another of Sudek's friends, the Czech painter Emil Filla, could also easily have introduced him to the surrealist movement in Czechoslovakia. This essay also goes on to discuss a selection of surrealist motifs in Sudek's photographs.

### Disorder in the studio

When the Czech poet Jaroslav Seifert, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1984, recalled the studio of Josef Sudek, he wrote the following:

Putting it briefly, it was fantastically disorganised. Breton's surrealism would have come into its own there. A drawing by Jan Zrzavý lay rolled up by a bottle of nitric acid, which stood on a plate where there was a crust of bread and a piece of smoked meat with a bite taken out of it. And above this hung the wing of a Baroque angel with Sudek's beret hanging from it ... Sudek knew where he was ... in this unique disorder, amongst all these bits and pieces ... This disorder was so picturesque, so immensely rich, that it almost came close to being a strange but highly subtle work of art.<sup>1</sup>

In his memoir Seifert picks up on two things: surrealism and Sudek's typical 'messiness,' which he perceived to be almost a work of art, and which also became a theme of his photographs. I am not sure whether 'disorder' in the studio is the prerogative of surrealism. Frida Kahlo would probably accept such an interpretation. After her visit to André Breton in 1939 she got colitis. She wrote to a friend: 'I would bet anything that I caught these lousy bacteria at Breton's studio. You can hardly imagine what a mess these people live in and what kind of food they eat. It is quite unbelievable. I have never seen anything like it in my damned life.'<sup>2</sup> Whether Sudek's disorderliness is linked with surrealism or not, I am convinced that Sudek's work is unthinkable without the reality of surrealism.



### **Sudek and surrealism?**

So far, of course, not very much has been written on this theme. Antonín Dufek devotes a few lines to Sudek in his article on surrealist photography in the book entitled *Česká fotografická avantgarda 1918 – 1948*, edited by Vladimír Birgus.<sup>3</sup> In this text, Dufek reproduces Sudek's photograph *Detail* from 1930 and at the same time he mentions his series of photographs of arranged heads, to which Anna Fárová drew attention in 1995.<sup>4</sup> These were reproduced earlier in the magazine *Blok* in 1947.

What is the nature, then, of the relationship between Sudek and surrealism, which was at first completely ignored in Czech scholarship and then, as indicated, only recently mentioned here and there in the context of surrealism?<sup>5</sup> Sudek's photographs, even those that originated in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, were from time to time seen in a surrealist context, especially abroad.<sup>6</sup> In 2002 Sudek's photographs from the collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario, which the gallery acquired as an anonymous gift, were exhibited within the framework of a wider presentation of surrealist collections, represented by the dada and surrealist collections of Arturo Schwarz and the graphic work and illustrated books of André Masson from the Artur Gottlieb Collection.

The aim of this essay is to emphasise Sudek's links with surrealism and to indicate that, in my opinion, Sudek could scarcely have been Sudek, 'the poet of Prague,' if it were not for his encounter with surrealism and also for his peculiar understanding (or misunderstanding) of this movement.

Josef Sudek was born in Kolín nad Labem on 17 March 1896. He trained as a bookbinder and he began taking photographs as early as around 1910. In 1915 he joined the army and on the Italian front in 1917 he lost his right hand, wounded by splinters from an Austrian grenade. After returning to Bohemia he once again began to take photographs. From pictorialist 'mood' photographs of landscapes, urban corners (of Prague) and images of the Invalidovna ('War Veterans' Hospital'), he made his way to advertising photography, which sustained him at the end of the 1920s and especially in the 1930s. During the years 1928-1936 Sudek worked for the 'Družstevní práce' ('Cooperative Work') publishing house, which in the course of time added to its publishing activity the sale of applied art and furniture in a chain of shops with the name 'Krásná jizba' ('The Fair Chamber').



### **The disorder of things**

At the time when André Breton's first *Manifesto of Surrealism* appeared in Paris, Josef Sudek was grappling with his period of pictorialist photography, which is still evident from the cycle based on the War Veterans' Hospital (1922-1927). But already from 1924 until 1928 he was going ever more frequently to photograph the interiors of St Vitus' Cathedral, one of the holiest places in Czech history, a splendid Gothic structure that rises up on Hradčany above the Vltava River. The Gothic building of Matyáš of Arras and Petr Parléř harmonises with its neo-Gothic completion by Josef Mocker dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But of course even in the 1920s there was completion work going on in the cathedral. At that time one could also find inside the cathedral, alongside its many historical details, the 'still-life' created by builders working there – scaffolding, planks, heaps of sand, ropes, blocks and pulleys. In the photographs from St Vitus' Cathedral are preserved all the elements of Sudek's supreme photographic work: monumentality, a sense of the intimacy and fragility of the unrepeatably moment, the secret contained in every detail, and the strange, chaotic and unforeseeable grouping of objects, naturally arranged by life itself. Particularly attractive is the touching spirituality of these pictures, the chief instrument of which was the photographer's sensitive, and almost alchemically mysterious, capturing of the light in the interior of the cathedral. In this sense Sudek's photographs are still the heritage of pictorialism.

In a completely new spirit, however, are the shots in which the emphasis is on the internal chaos of the space, the uncanniness of ordinary things, and the prominence of objects, whose utilitarian and functional nature is suppressed so that some scenes look like chaotic still-lives installed for their own sake. In the interior of the completed cathedral Sudek was fascinated by the 'atmosphere of things' and their 'disorganisation.'<sup>7</sup> Here Sudek drew close to the poetry of disorganisation and the aesthetics of the raw fragment of reality, which has in its un-naturalism a surreal nature, as was the case in the photographs of Brassai, whose pictures were enthusiastically received by the surrealists. Of course, Brassai was of the opinion that to classify his work as surrealist was a misunderstanding. The surreality in his photographs – the mistiness of Paris at night, but also the phantom-like figures of lovers in cafes and finally also the illuminated torsos of girls in twilight rooms – was something that he considered to be the consequence of a kind of 'ghostliness,' which was caused by his way of seeing things. He never tried for anything other than the expression of reality itself, beside which there is nothing more surreal.<sup>8</sup> This also, in his way, was Sudek's approach, even though he made far greater



use of presentational refinement in his photographs. I am convinced that with Sudek this strategy has its roots in surrealism.

### **Chaos and uncertainty**

To Sudek's supreme photographic activity of 1932, his independent exhibition in 'Cooperative Work's 'Fair Chamber' in Prague, where the photographs from St Vitus' Cathedral were predominant, Sudek's friend, the photographer Jaromír Funke, reacted with an article in *Panorama*.<sup>9</sup> From his review it would be valuable to recall the following passage:

Although photography is the most perfect reproduction process, nevertheless the focal distance and the given format are insufficient for the direct expression of the given object. There is nothing else for it than to use all the possible views afforded by the photographic lens. This strangeness of the human vision through the lens is, then, in a certain sense also desirable, because the human eye has a similarly strange impression of large objects, in a vertigo-like effect. And before the mightiness of a stone building the lens also comes close to human vertigo and depicts only a view of chaos. Not without purpose and for its own sake, but only in order to depict its grandeur. This is also the case here. Sudek's photograph shows a disciplined, carefully executed and splendid view. The Gothic culture of the past cannot be more strongly depicted than from all aspects with delicate views from above or below. We do not wish for photographic montages, which are actually an emergency solution, rather for strangeness newly seen and executed ... Josef Sudek waited with the patience of the Japanese for the sun and the shadows to bestow on his subjects the magic of his ideas. He waited long hours, he came back again and again – over weeks and months. This man without an arm climbed the scaffolding and the towers and broke plate after plate, only to return with a fresh supply to observe and to record.<sup>10</sup>

Funke's reaction is fundamental from several points of view. First and foremost it is a defence of pure photography and adopts a negative attitude to the avant-garde celebration of the photographic montage, which was unacceptable both to Funke and to Sudek. More fundamental to our theme is the understanding of the basic essence of Sudek's photography. This is implicit in Funke's concept of 'chaos,' which for him the lens reveals, together with 'vertigo.'





Fig. 1: Josef Sudek, *Labyrinth*, 1960s/1970s, photograph © Anna Fárová.

'Chaos' also became a favoured concept in Sudek's consideration of his own photography. At times he used the term 'photographic chaos.' This is undoubtedly linked with the 'principle of uncertainty,' which Anna Fárová has identified as the basic denominator in all of Sudek's work.<sup>11</sup> The concept of 'chaos,' which was most evident in Sudek's *Labyrinths*, cycles of strange and mysterious photographic still-lives which appear in Fárová's words 'mysterious, irritating and Baroque, perhaps also to a certain extent provocative in their dark uncertainty,' is perhaps another expression of the principle of uncertainty, inconstancy, internal change, transmutation, or entropy (fig. 1).<sup>12</sup> The photographer himself admitted that later on he deliberately evoked 'chaos.' Chaos is another way of expressing the lack of organisation that attracted Sudek so greatly in his photographs of St Vitus' Cathedral. In chaos it is possible to find secrets, because it is an endless source of investigation. As James Gleick has noted: 'Some physicists see chaos rather as a science of the process than of the state, as a science rather of changes than of being.'<sup>13</sup> These categories suited Sudek both in art and in life.

It is, of course, important to realise that Sudek's 'chaos' had a special structure. This has already been alluded to by Fárová at the end of her extensive monograph on Sudek, when she described her experience of working with his photographic archive: 'What I have been going through for twelve years was chaotic, but within it was firmly structured order.'<sup>14</sup> As evidence of this order 'of a



different kind,' paradoxically corresponding to theories of chaos from the middle of the twentieth century ('order masked as chance'),<sup>15</sup> she quoted from a 1966 interview with Sudek:

I began with a mess and I'm also ending with a mess. What's the point of seeking order? Half of life is over. I know there is something in this heap. Perhaps this is what there is. I look, but I can't find it. But I do find something else. You always find something. It was pink and now it's green and you must think what to do with the green. The seeking is the main thing.<sup>16</sup>

We could compare this statement by Sudek to the credo of Salvador Dalí in his biography published in 1942. Dalí writes that when he went to school as a boy he could:

... easily conjure up again 'anything I wanted' in the large patches on the vaulting, and because I could also later do the same in the shapes of the billowing clouds during a summer storm ... the magic force of the reincarnation of the world beyond the bounds of the 'perceptions of sight' penetrated the emotional domain of my life right at the beginning of my adolescence, so that I became a true magician in the ability to see something different at any time and everywhere ...<sup>17</sup>

If Dalí, in the words of Dawn Ades, 'saw rising from this chaos which was as formless as clouds progressively concrete images,' then Sudek also achieved in his photographs unexpected and mysterious pictures in which new configurations and meanings emerge from the chaos.<sup>18</sup> In 1942 Sudek took photographs of randomly occurring patches on a wall, in the series *Omítka (Plaster)*.

### **Vertigo and surrealism**

An important concept in Funke's review of Sudek's St Vitus photographs is his notion of 'vertigo.' It is decidedly not far removed from the surrealist aesthetics of the time. Giddiness caused by desire, by the irrational, but also by the 'pitfalls' and unforeseeability of reality comes close to the surrealist sense of 'wonder.'<sup>19</sup> It indicates the affinity not only of Funke's work and approach, but also of Sudek's photographs with surrealism. Although Sudek, however, did not suffer the same 'vertigo' of isolation and exclusivity that Dalí claimed to have experienced with satisfaction and narcissism when he climbed onto the roof of the family washhouse as a boy.<sup>20</sup> Sudek's vertigo is the vertigo of the impenetrable nature of the world, of the chaos that the artist should be capable of perceiving.

Sudek never inclined towards surrealism in a programmed manner; to do so was against his individualism. He would probably have felt no affinity with the elitist and narcissistic Dalí. Nevertheless,



he himself emphasised that he was more attracted by surrealism than by socially-oriented photography – after the 1920s there were practically no human figures in his photographs, if we do not take into account the urban motifs, shots of parks and so on, where people are a kind of staffage and scarcely more important than trees. ‘Surrealism? That is still around. Sometimes I even trip over it,’ he once claimed.<sup>21</sup> Sudek recalled that he was lured towards surrealism through paintings, especially the work of Jindřich Štyrský, who also created photographs, and Toyen. He even stated that at one time he had considered acquiring surrealist works on show in Prague: ‘Salvador Dalí had some pictures here then, I even wanted to buy one of them, but because I had no money I missed it. Tanguy had some good things; Magritte and Ernst had some too ... this had an influence on me very early on. How? I don't know. Why? I don't know.’<sup>22</sup> Sudek also recalled the exhibition entitled *Poesie 32*, organised by the Mánes Association of Artists in Prague in 1932, and which he photographed. Apart from the painters already mentioned there were Czech artists represented, including Jindřich Štyrský, Toyen, Emil Filla and Josef Šíma, and also a number of foreign artists, among them Alberto Giacometti, Giorgio de Chirico, Paul Klee, André Masson and Joan Miró.



## Between branches and roots

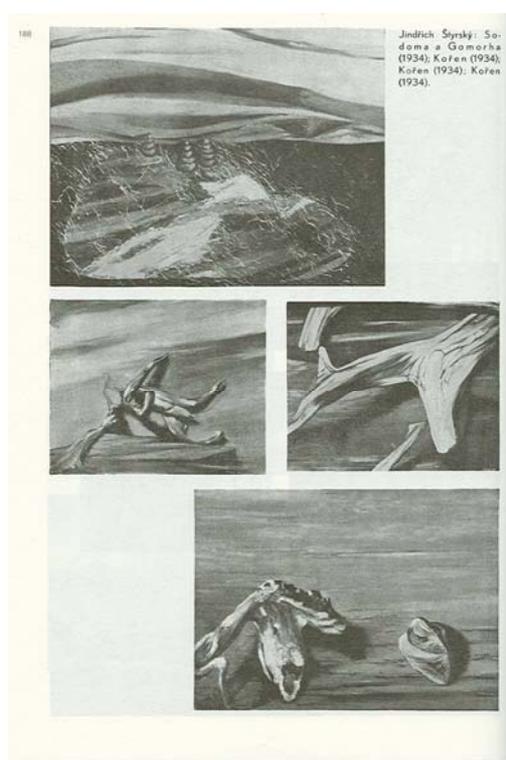


Fig. 2: Jindřich Štyrský, *Roots*, 1934, in Nezval (ed.), *Surrealismus*, Prague 1935.

In the case of Štyrský, Sudek was attracted far more by his painting than by his photography:

I would have liked his photographs, but I said to myself that they were too much in the painting style. He needed them for his painting; he didn't even enlarge them. For him the important thing was the subject, from the craft viewpoint he was not really interested. It obviously helped him with his painting.<sup>23</sup>



Sudek's favourite motif of the chaos of branches, roots and uprooted or destroyed trees has its model in Štyrský's *Roots* paintings, as has already been pointed out by Antonín Dufek. Also in the Czech revue entitled *Zvěrokruh (Zodiac)* of 1930, a poem by the Belgian poet E.L.T. Mesens was published which suggested a 'surrealist' preoccupation with roots and branches: 'I am quite alone / In the bandstand / Enclosed in the garden / ... One is lost among the roots / One is among the branches / Young shoots / Lines on the hands.'<sup>24</sup> While reading this poem we can easily call to mind Sudek's photographs from the cycle *The Magic Garden*, but also his obsessive theme of the chaos of trees and ancient forests.



Fig. 3: Josef Sudek, *Lost Statues*, 1970, © Anna Fárová.

From the 1950s onwards Sudek created a number of photographs of the ancient forest on the Beskydy Hills in the northeast of Moravia. He called the cycle *Lost Statues – A Walk through Mionší* (1952-70, fig. 3). The trunks of the old trees reminded him of shadowy 'lost' statues. This was the strategy of seeing in an object what the creator wants to see, a means of defamiliarisation, which was introduced into the surrealist periodical *Minotaure* by Brassai (in co-operation with Salvador Dalí) in



his series *Involuntary Sculptures* (1933). Brassai called them 'automatic objects.' These were photographed details of various materials and objects, which created a ghostly and unreal impression.

In the Czech milieu Josef Sudek had the reputation of being a simple photographer who not only did not theorise much about artistic problems, but did not even deal with them: he stood before his camera, focused it and set the aperture with one hand and then pressed the release like a genius. At the same time he walked around in worn-out coats and looked like a tramp. For many people he was more of a strange character than an authentic artist, even though hardly anyone would deny him to be a considerable genius. Quite simply he 'just' took photographs and was lucky in having a talent gifted to him by God. In her monograph on Sudek in 1995, however, Anna Fárová demonstrated that this 'idyllic' image of the innocent Sudek is a myth. Under the mask of the 'ignorant' simple artist, Sudek was a person who in the depths of his soul dealt fundamentally and radically with artistic problems, often through friendship with certain artists. In general he cultivated and nourished these relationships greatly. They often became the source of a spiritual dialogue that frequently influenced both parties. To assume, then, that Sudek did not read about or interest himself in artistic questions is incorrect.

But in spite of all his interest in ascertaining and seeking out the roots of artistic creativity Sudek remained supremely sceptical of the ability of a theory to 'explain' the secrets and mystery of a work of art. He believed in instinct, in the impossibility of knowing the hidden creative process, which, in the words of the surrealists, cannot be regulated by reason. 'I have no sense of organisation,' stated Sudek in an interview in 1971, 'only a theoretical sense of it. In practice it always turns out differently. In me theory and practice are always at odds with one another. I know that one and one make two, but sometimes I think that it is not even true.'<sup>25</sup> On the basis of his creativity he said: '...why this is ... I do not know.' Once he asked the painter Emil Filla, in front of his painting, why had he done it. Filla replied: 'If only I knew.' 'And I felt relieved,' added Sudek.<sup>26</sup>

He often took the photographs from the *Magic Garden* cycle at night. Antonín Dufek states that the name of the cycle is actually misleading, because the 'model for these photographs is evidently a dream to which the author drew attention also by the fact that he mainly took the photographs at night.'<sup>27</sup> And what comes to us in dreams and why, is something we find difficult to ascertain.



### Bedřich Vaníček and translations of surrealist texts

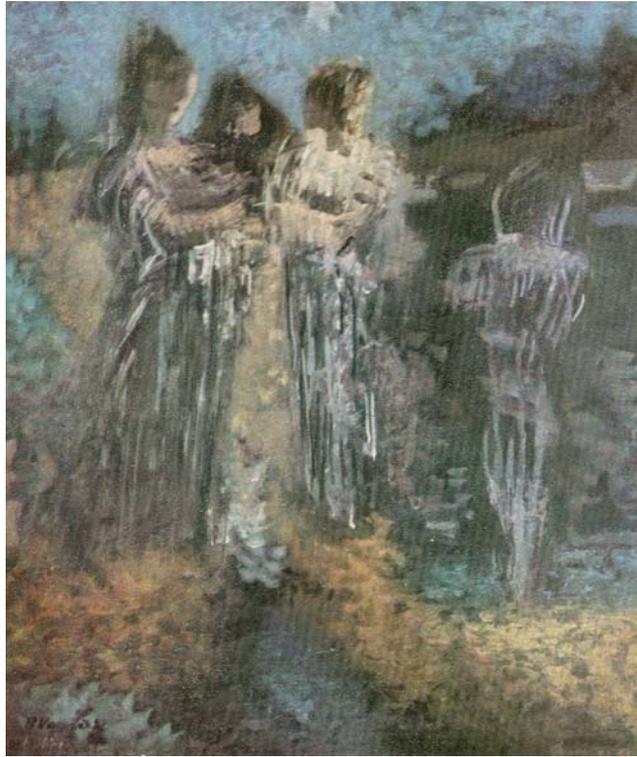


Fig. 4: Bedřich Vaníček, *Reader*, 1939, gouache on paper, 20.5 x 15.5 cm, photograph Josef Sudek, photograph © Anna Fárová.

Already in the 1930s Sudek was well informed about surrealist activity because his close friend, the painter Bedřich Vaníček, participated in the translation of a number of surrealist texts from French into Czech, especially Breton's *Nadja*. Vaníček, a private and reclusive painter, was strangely enough also one of the fellow-workers of the Surrealist Group in the Czechoslovak Republic. I say strangely, because Vaníček's style of painting was completely opposed to surrealist procedures. Vaníček created in the course of his short life mainly small, intimate and sometimes miniature gouache paintings of an impressionist nature in which the dominant feature was, rather than the painted dot, the painted line (fig. 4). His work, which became known only very gradually and remained rather on the fringe of the main current of modernism in Czechoslovakia, was, however, greatly admired by Sudek. It was no coincidence that in the catalogue of Vaníček's exhibition in Prague in 1948 it was written that the basis of his painting was a 'dream-like vision,' which could naturally be transformed into a 'radiant idyll.'<sup>28</sup>



Perhaps Sudek was attracted to Vaníček because his work was in its way that of an outsider, and he was attracted by personalities excluded from the mainstream. Perhaps he was also close to him because Vaníček saw his painting as a kind of analogy to music: he had an extensive knowledge of classical music and loved it as much as Sudek did, for whom it was an important element of his life.



Fig. 5: Bedřich Vaníček, *Drawing*, in Nezval (ed.), *Zvěrokruh (Zodiac)*, Prague, November 1930.

Vaníček also translated writings by Paul Eluard and Louis Aragon into Czech.<sup>29</sup> His non-surrealist and indeed traditional practice of intimate drawing and painting is completely incompatible, however, with the radicalism of surrealist language. It is therefore extremely strange that the works of Vaníček also appeared in a surrealist revue (fig. 5).<sup>30</sup> Most probably it was because the painter was a close friend of Vítězslav Nezval and had translated Breton's *Nadja* into Czech. Undoubtedly it was he who could keep Sudek in contact with the secrets of the surrealist movement in Prague without Sudek having to participate in the hermetism of the surrealist group, which Vaníček himself did not in any case want to penetrate.



### **Emil Filla and surrealism**

Another friend who could very easily have introduced Sudek to the surrealist movement in Czechoslovakia was the painter Emil Filla, a striking representative of cubism and, from the end of the 1920s, also of the surrealist version of curvilinear cubism. Sudek was friendly with Filla from the end of the 1920s.<sup>31</sup> From 1930 onwards Sudek created a number of portraits of Filla, the most notable of which is the photograph of Filla in his studio in Prague in 1933, sitting in the pose of Rodin's *Thinker*, contemplating a shapeless lump of matter: the sculptor's clay in the stage of embryonic chaos from which the work of art emerges.

Emil Filla was known in the Czech *milieu* as an orthodox supporter of cubism, but nevertheless from the middle of the 1920s he considered the work of Štyrský and Toyen to be the most outstanding of the younger generation of modern artists. It was also he who strongly supported them in the Mánes Artists' Association. It is probable that without his consent and support, knowing Filla's strong influence in the association, the texts of the French surrealists André Breton or Paul Eluard would have been unlikely to have been published in the SVU Mánes publishing house. Thanks to his contacts with the young future surrealists, Filla got his erotic illustrations into the *Erotické revue* (1932) and also into the periodical *Surrealismus* (1936), which was edited by Vítězslav Nezval.<sup>32</sup> It is also quite interesting that Filla's exhibition of 1935, where he exhibited his works in conjunction with non-western (in particular Oceanic) works from the collection of the ethnographer and writer Joe Hloucha, took place in the same building and at the same time as the first exhibition of the *Group of Surrealists* in the Czechoslovak Republic.

### **Mask in the night**

In the collective miscellany entitled *Surrealismus* (1936) the poet Konstantin Biebl published the poem *The Mirror of the Night*, dedicated to Vítězslav Nezval. This poem's theme was highly reminiscent of Sudek's work: a night shorter than a dream, than any memory, a night like the 'chasm of the briefly seen universes / which painters try to reach, where poets go / Thirsty hunters of those fragments of seconds / Full of wings and light.'<sup>33</sup> The poet knows that after every night comes the dawn, the time when we are startled by our own face before the mirror:

But who would have enough courage not to start / Even at oneself when dawn finally comes /  
Through the drawn corner of your mouth / Before the mirror which in time lures your face to



take on the appearance of the negro statue/ Which then grimaces into the night / For which no developing fluid is available.

An illustration that would correspond to these verses, if verses can indeed be illustrated, is Sudek's photograph of a negro mask, generally dated to 1935. Recently it was ascertained that the mask was reproduced earlier in the *Prager Presse*, in 1933, and it has been surmised that this was one of the artefacts lent for the exhibition *Poesie 32* by the French poet and collector Paul Guillaume. In any case the nocturnal character of the mask, intentionally emphasising its terrifying 'ghostly' expression, is in keeping with Biebl's poetic description. One should take note of the detail concerning developer, i.e. an allusion to the photographic process. Biebl may well have known Sudek's photograph of the mask, and it may have been the stimulus for his verses, not only because it was published in *Prager Presse*, but because he also knew it from the exhibition *Poesie 32*.

### **The irrationality of reality**

In Sudek's work we can find many photographs that are in certain respects very close to the surrealist viewpoint. *The Sparrow's Relief* (1946) documents Sudek's weakness for death and destruction, which so fascinated some surrealists and especially Georges Bataille. We can compare it with the photograph by Jacques-André Boiffard, *Sticking Paper and Flies*, published in *Documents* (2, 1930, 48). The motif of demise, ruin, and time which permanently inscribes itself in matter and slowly destroys it, all this attracted Sudek in photographs of works of art and their fragments, especially of statues and reliefs, which were sometimes significant works, and at other times completely second-rate. Here there are similarities with some of the photographs of the Mexican photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo, whom Breton liked (for instance with the photograph *Untitled*, 1938, which Breton had in his collection).





Fig. 6: Josef Sudek, *Dew-Covered Statue*, 1972, photograph © Anna Fárová.

Just as Atget fascinated the surrealists with his photographs of banal and deserted urban corners and streets, and as Jindřich Štyrský concentrated on shots of shop windows and hanging signs which, taken out of context and put in inverted commas, breathed an independent and irrational reality, so Sudek also tended towards similar procedures. Alongside the banality of the everyday we can also find in Sudek's work conceptually staged photographs. Linked with the surrealist image of the covered head or object, abandoned to the unconscious or the unknown forces of the universe, are Sudek's photographs *Veiled Woman* (1942) and *Dew-Covered Statue* (1972, fig. 6). Sudek's play with artificial glass eyes and fragments of heads belongs to a similar source of staged 'surrealist' photography (fig. 7).





Fig. 7: Josef Sudek, *Mannequin*, 1960s, photograph © Anna Fárová.

Josef Sudek did not try to join the mainstream of Czech surrealism. Rather he observed it from afar, was well informed about it and quite intuitively selected for himself certain procedures or motifs which concerned him more strongly. As a consequence it is certainly difficult to analyse the contribution of surrealism to Sudek's work. I am convinced that it was Sudek's openness to this direction that enabled him to find an original and individual language where reality became transformed into an irrational, subjective photographic space. Sudek saw photography as one endless adventure of discovery, but also as the conserving of the mystery in chaos. He had a favourite saying: 'Brother never knows how it will turn out.' 'Brother' was Sudek's virtual double, Sudek's other Self. He did not approach things as a sovereign who knows all. Photography was for him always a new and never to be repeated act.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jaroslav Seifert, 'Josef Sudek – Pan fotograf,' in Jan Řezáč and Jan Mlčoch, *Růže pro Josefa Sudka 1896-1976 (A Rose for Josef Sudek)*, Správa Pražského hradu a Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum v Praze (Prague Castle Administration and Museum of Applied Arts) Prague 1996, 204.

<sup>2</sup> Frida Kahlo, *Intimní autoportrét. Výběr z korespondence, deníků a dalších textů (Intimate Selfportrait: Selected Letters, Dairies and Other Texts)*, Prague 2003, 97.

<sup>3</sup> Antonín Dufek, 'Surrealistická fotografie' (Surrealist photography), in Vladimír Birgus, ed., *Česká fotografická avantgarda (The Czech Photographic Avant-Garde)*, Prague 2002, 220.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Fárová, *Josef Sudek*, Prague 1995, 102-103.

<sup>5</sup> See for example the indirect reference in Antonín Dufek, 'Tichý heretik Josef Sudek' ('Josef Sudek, quiet heretic'), in *Josef Sudek. Fotografie 1940-1970*, Moravian Gallery, Brno 2001, 9, where he compares Sudek's fondness for photographing roots with Štyrský's paintings of roots.



<sup>6</sup> For example, five of Sudek's photographs from 1951-59 were on show in the exhibition *La peinture surréaliste et imaginative en Tchécoslovaquie 1930-1960*, Galerie 1900-2000, Paris 1983, catalogue preface by Edouard Jaguer. See Sudek's photographs in the exhibition catalogue, nos. 103-107.

<sup>7</sup> Jaroslav Anděl, ed., *Josef Sudek. O sobě (Josef Sudek on himself)*, Prague 2001, 92. The publication is a transcript of tape-recorded interviews by the editor with the photographer from 1976.

<sup>8</sup> See Alain Sayag, 'The expression of authenticity,' in Alain Sayag and Annick Lionel-Marie, eds, *Brassaï, No Ordinary Eyes*, Hayward Gallery, London 2001, 14.

<sup>9</sup> J. Funke, 'Sudkovy fotografie' ('Sudek's photographs'), *Panorama*, VI: 1-2, 1928, 56-9. See also Funke, 'Josef Sudek,' *Kmen* II (1928-29), 130.

<sup>10</sup> Funke, 'Sudkovy fotografie' ('Sudek's photographs'), *Panorama* VI: 1-2, 1928, 58-9.

<sup>11</sup> Fárová, *Josef Sudek*, Museum of Applied Arts, Prague 1976, np.

<sup>12</sup> Fárová, *Josef Sudek* (1976), np.

<sup>13</sup> James Gleick, *Chaos*, Brno 1996, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Fárová, *Josef Sudek*, Prague 1995, 155.

<sup>15</sup> Gleick, *Chaos*, 27. Or to put it otherwise: 'On the one side order, in which there were elements of the random and a step further was chance, in the foundations of which was order,' 255.

<sup>16</sup> Olga Hníková, 'Co vypadlo z podivného fotografa' (interview with Josef Sudek), *Mladá fronta* (14 March 1966), quoted in Fárová, *Josef Sudek*, Prague 1995, 155, note 10.

<sup>17</sup> Salvador Dalí, *Tajný život Salvadora Dalího (The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí)*, Prague, 1994, 130.

<sup>18</sup> Dawn Ades, *Dalí and Surrealism*, New York 1982, 133.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. André Breton, *Nadía*, Prague 1996, 86. Breton's famous book was published in the Czech translation by Vítězslav Nezval, Miloš Hlávka and Bedřich Vaníček in 1935 by F. J. Müller in Prague.

<sup>20</sup> See Dalí, *Tajný život Salvadora Dalího*, 84.

<sup>21</sup> Anděl, *Josef Sudek o sobě*, 72.

<sup>22</sup> Anděl, *Josef Sudek o sobě*, 73. On the *Poesie 32* exhibition, see Françoise Caille, 'Výstava Poesie 1932,' in Lenka Bydžovská and Karel Šrp, eds, *Český surrealismus 1929-1953*, City Gallery, Prague: 1996, 48-53.

<sup>23</sup> Anděl, *Josef Sudek o sobě*, 74.

<sup>24</sup> E. L.T. Mesens, 'Surrealistické texty' ('Surrealist texts'), trans. B. Vaníček and V. Nikodem, *Zvěrokruh*, 1, 1930, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Dufek, 'Tichý heretik Josef Sudek,' 22.

<sup>26</sup> DvK (Karel Dvořák), 'Dialog (Miloně Novotného s Josefem Sudkem)' ('A Dialogue between Miloň Novotný and Josef Sudek'), *Československá fotografie*, 17: 2, 1966, 66.

<sup>27</sup> Dufek, 'Tichý heretik Josef Sudek,' 14.

<sup>28</sup> Viktor Nikodem, *Bedřich Vaníček*, Prague, 13, 1948, 8.

<sup>29</sup> In *Zvěrokruh* 1 (1930), edited by Nezval, he is mentioned with Viktor Nikodém as the translator of surrealist texts by Paul Eluard, Louis Aragon, Frederico Megret and E.L.T. Mesens, but also of Stéphane Mallarmé, and in *Zvěrokruh* 2 (1930) of texts by K. Marx, Tristan Tzara, André Breton ('Druhý manifest surrealismu', 'The Second manifesto of surrealism,' 60-74), and Stéphane Mallarmé on Richard Wagner, 88-90).

<sup>30</sup> These works were *Drawing (Study of Seated Woman)* and *Drawing (Landscape Study)*, *Zvěrokruh*, 1, 1930, 18 and 23.

<sup>31</sup> See Vojtěch Lahoda, 'Alchymista a kouzelník. Josef Sudek a Emil Filla' ('Alchemist and Magician. Josef Sudek and Emil Filla'), *Umění* 52, 2004, 518-536.



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<sup>32</sup> Right at the beginning of the second year of *Erotické revue*, which was edited by Jindřich Štyrský and published in May 1932, there is a reproduction of a still-life drawing in the spirit of organic cubism. On a depicted tray, a typical and frequent requisite of cubist still-lives, the fruits of the land become female sexual organs, whilst the shape beside the tray bears clear traits of a male penis. The drawing is initialled L.L. See V. Lahoda, 'Emil Filla. Stesk po pohodě' ('Nostalgia for Cosiness'), *Art and Antiques*, September 2003, 56-57. *Surrealismus v ČSR, Mezinárodní bulletin surrealismu*, together with *Zvěrokruh 1* and *2*, has been issued in a reprint, Prague 2004. In *Surrealismus*, Filla reproduced *Painting* from 1934, photographed like the majority of Filla's work by Josef Sudek.

<sup>33</sup> Konstantin Biebl, 'Zrcadlo noci' ('The Mirror of Night'), in *Surrealismus* 9-10.

<sup>34</sup> See 'Šest otázek Jiřímu Tomanovi aneb vyptávání se na Josefa Sudka' ('Six questions for Jiří Toman, or asking about J.S.'), *Československá fotografie XVII*, 1966, 64.

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