

Women 80+ : The Age of Possibilities

MIRELLA BENTIVOGLIO (AT/IT)

ESTHER FERRER (ES/FR)

MARIE FILIPPOVÁ (CZ)

DOROTHY IANNONE (US)

FRANÇOISE JANICOT (FR)

OLGA KARLÍKOVÁ (CZ)

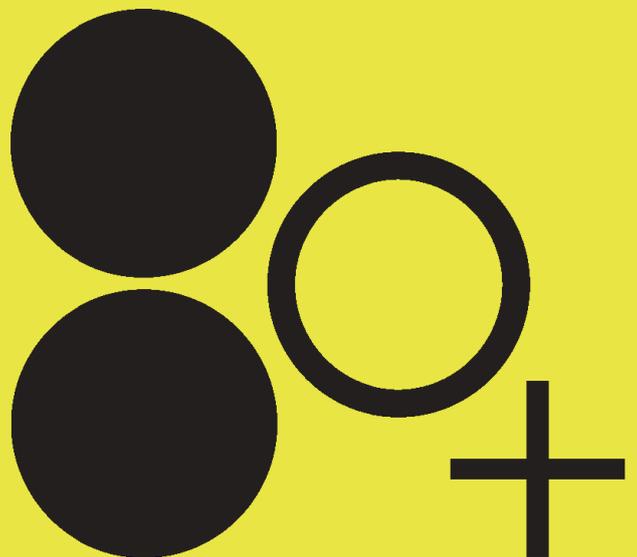
ALENA KUČEROVÁ (CZ)

EMANUELA MARASSI (IT)

ADRIENA ŠIMOTOVÁ (CZ)

ALŽBETA ŠTEFUNKOVÁ-SZABÓ (SK/CZ)

JANA ŽELIBSKÁ (SK)



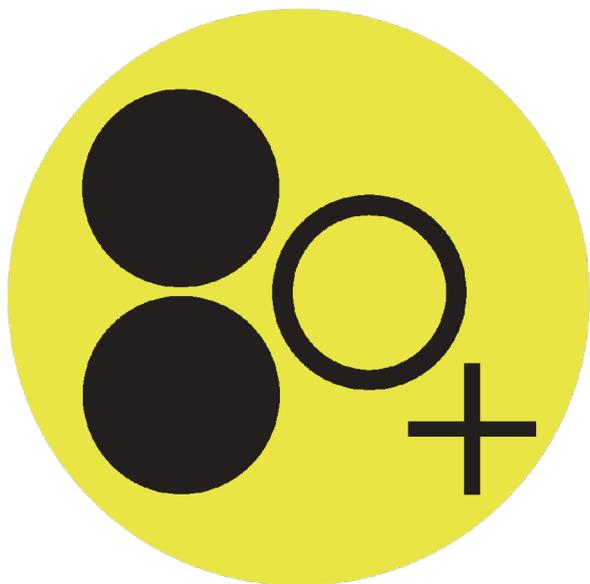
Opening 7. 3. 2026

Exhibition 8.3. - 18. 4. 2026

CITY GALLERY IN BLANSKO (CZ)

Gandy
Gallery

Women 80+ : The Age of Possibilities



Curated by Nadine Gandy and Jana Písaříková

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Dvorská 2, 678 01 Blansko

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Women 80+: The Age of Possibilities

The leitmotif of our exhibition is the provocative question of whether creating art in mature age can bring about a new kind of radicalism in artistic expression and thinking. The desire to experiment, discover, and act freely is usually attributed primarily to youth—but let's try to search for the unconventionality, radicalism, and freedom that we can preserve and further develop when we are over 80 years old.

Are we nearing the end or infinity?

What can we afford to risk, what else do we want to communicate, and what secrets do we want to uncover?

The exhibition Age of Possibilities brings together a generation of female artists born in the 1930s and 1940s, whose geographically, politically, and formally diverse artistic paths share a common feature: a bold search for new sensibilities. The aim of the exhibition is to highlight the urgent challenges and questions that this sensitivity raises. The exhibition also brings together artists from the former socialist bloc with artists from Western countries, exploring the terrain of different experiences and how much these different conditions for creation are vitally important.

We would like to thank the following people for their help and trust:

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CITY GALLERY IN BLANSKO (CZ)

The City Gallery in Blansko is a regional gallery presenting contemporary art in two exhibition spaces. Its year-round program is not defined by theme, but rather follows a cross-section of media and generations, artists connected to the region as well as those established on the art scene.



MIRELLA BENTIVOGLIO

Mirella Bentivoglio (1922-2017) was a poet and verbo-visual artist. Early on she expressed her interest in the joint use of verbal language and image by joining the verbo-visual movements of the international artistic neo-avantgardes of the second half of the twentieth century, becoming a leading figure in them. She achieved eligibility to teach Aesthetics and Art History in the Italian Academies in 1968. She held fellowships and research grants at the Salzburg Seminar for American Studies (1958) and the Getty Institute in Los Angeles (1997). From the practice of Concrete Poetry, Visual Poetry and Visual Writing, which marked her entry into the field of new experimentation, she shifted, from the 1960s onward, to a personal form of poetry-object. Gradually, in the 1970s and beyond, she explored the languages of performance, action-poetry and poetry-environment, setting up large symbolic linguistic structures in public places (including the famous "Ovo" in Gubbio). Her work on object-books has been central and longstanding. She also played a decisive and enlightening role in the field of contemporary art as the animator and curator of exhibitions devoted to women's art. In particular, she curated and realized, for the 38th Venice Biennale (1978), the exhibition "Materializzazione del linguaggio" at the Magazzini del Sale, which exclusively hosted works by women artists, and which represents to this day an emblematic unicum of the work of women artists of those years, intent on claiming their own well-defined "female" creative space in the second half of the twentieth century.

Mirella Bentivoglio has had numerous solo exhibitions all over the world. These include the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome (1996) and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington (1999); and more recently at the Oculus Gallery in Tokyo (2010), Pomona College in Claremont (2003 and 2015), the Gubbio Biennale (2016-2017), the Museo Laboratorio di Arte Contemporanea of La Sapienza University in Rome (2019), and the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome.

Bentivoglio exhibited nine times at the Venice Biennale (1969, 1972, 1978 in two different exhibitions, 1980, 1986, 1995, 2001, 2009), before being included in the 59th edition of the Biennale (2022). She took part in the 11th National Quadriennale in Rome in 1986. She participated three times in the São Paulo Biennale in Brazil, between 1973 and 1994, and she was exhibited three times at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (between 1978 and 1982). Her works have further been on view at Documenta Kassel in 1982, and at MoMA in New York in 1992.

Collections include the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, the Getty Institute in Los Angeles, the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome, MAC in São Paulo, as well as the Uffizi Gallery amongst others.



ESTHER FERRER

Born in San Sebastián (Spain, 1937). Esther Ferrer is best known for her performances, which have been her principal form of artistic expression since 1965, both as a soloist and as a member of the group ZAJ, until its dissolution in 1996. Her work has always been oriented to ephemeral artistic action rather than to permanent artistic production. She created, in collaboration with the painter José Antonio Sistiaga the first "Workshop for Free Expression," in the 60s, an activity that was to inspire other similar groups in Spain.

Beginning in the 70s, she has also been quite active in the plastic arts: reworked photographs, installations, canvases and constructions based on the prime number series, Pi and so forth. Her work is a very particular kind of minimalism, which she sometimes terms "rigorous absurdity".

Esther Ferrer has performed throughout Europe (Yugoslavia, Poland, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Hungary, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Spain etc.), as well as in Cuba, México, the United States, Mexico, Japan, Thailand and Korea, Palestine ...

In 1999 she was one of the two artists representing Spain in the Venice Biennale, in 2008 she received the Spanish National prize for the Arts and in 2012 the Gure Artea Prize of Basque Government in 2013 MAV Prize (Mujeres en las Artes Visuales) and in 2014 the Price Marie Claire et the Velazquez Prize (International prize in Spain)....



MARIE FILIPPOVÁ

Marie Filippová (1938) is a Czech and Moravian academic painter, graphic artist, and art teacher. She studied free and applied graphics, design, and book culture at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague in Antonín Strnad's studio. She taught for more than twenty years at the Secondary School of Applied Arts in Brno (1968–1969, 1974–1997). She is a member of SČUG Hollar and Umělecká beseda, and for ten years she headed the art department of the Brno association Q.

In her graphic works from the 1960s, Filippová worked with references to Group 42. Later, typography appeared in her graphics, and she also worked with painting using plant extracts. Since the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, she has focused primarily on topics related to the human being, its position in society, and its traumas. In 2008, she received the Brno City Award for her life's work and in 2023, she became the winner of the 12th annual Michal Ranný Award for 2022. She lives and works in Brno-Židenice.



DOROTHY IANNONE

Dorothy Iannone (1933-2022) studied law and literature before beginning to paint. In 1958 she married the painter James Upham and they moved to New York. In 1961 she successfully sued the American government for banning the sale of Henry Miller's novel *Tropic of Cancer* (1934), which was then reauthorized for importation in the whole country. Her early works were influenced by abstract expressionism and consisted of free-hand non-figurative paintings. She then shifted from these all-over abstract paintings to canvases fully covered in ornamental figurative elements, among which is the explicitly titled *All* (1963-1964).

The couple spent time travelling through Europe and Asia, where Indian iconography would make a lasting impression on D. Iannone. During a journey to Iceland in 1967 she met Dieter Roth (1930-1998), who became her lover and muse until 1974. During this time, she associated with members of the Fluxus group, including Robert Filliou (1926-1987) and Emmett Williams (1925-2007).



FRANÇOISE JANICOT

Françoise Janicot (1929 – 2017), french multimedia and performance artist.

She made a name for herself in the early 1960s with her hidden, informal paintings, in grey hues, covered with sticking plaster strips, which had the effect of making the painting into the equivalent of a wounded body. Between 1959 and 1967, she exhibited monochrome canvases in a solo show at Paul Facchetti's in Paris, then in 1966, at the Sala del Prado del Ateneo in Madrid. She took part in group exhibitions, in which abstraction was favoured. The year 1968 was an important one for her: she set aside her traditional working tool, the paintbrush, in favour of the camera, which allowed for greater mobility and spontaneity. Her black-and-white photos of stopped clocks, "forbidden" signs, and stairways with eroded steps evoke indiscretion, erosion, and misfortune. She was during this period close to poets and writers such as William S. Burroughs, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Brion Gysin, Allen Ginsberg, and John Giorno. In 1972, she accomplished her first performance, entitled Encoconnage, in which she twisted a thick rope around herself from head to toe, to the point that she could no longer breathe. She used a recording by her husband, Bernard Heidsieck, as ambient sound. The photos of the performance and particularly that of the head, presented as though cut off, emerged as an incitement to raise awareness of the gagging of women, both literally and figuratively, with respect to their cultural invisibility.



OLGA KARLÍKOVÁ

Olga Karlíková (1923 - 2004) was a Czech painter and a textile artist. She graduated from the Studio of Textile Creation of Antonín Kybal at the Academy of Arts, Architecture, and Design in Prague in 1948. After graduation, she worked at the Institute of Housing and Clothing Culture, where she designed tapestries, carpets, decorative textiles, and fabrics. From the 1960s, she devoted herself to her own independent artistic practice. At first her work was inspired by the circle surrounding Václav Bartovský, in whose atelier she encountered artists who in the fifties formed the UB 12 group, an offshoot of the Umělecká beseda group, V. Boštík, S. Kolíbal, A. Šimotová, J. John, Věra and Vladimír Janoušek, and many others.

Olga Karlíková was also interested by structural abstraction and art informel, which allowed her to commence an examination of her life-long themes of space, land and sea, later joined by the song of birds, whales and recordings of their movement. Her early work with the structure of colour transformed symbols of land or water and opened them up to an endless space, which became her dominant theme. However, this space had a deceptive form – in pictures of friends' ateliers, chapels, houses in Segurète, as well as in pictures of the sea, which the artist encountered in France in the middle of the sixties. In these pictures space is multiplied by light and its reflections, creating subtle abstract constructions. Her pictures of the sea, space and light represent the search for a pictorial expression and the symbolisation thereof, similarly to Václav Boštík who linked symbols of the cosmos and its sacral foundation in his pictures.



ALENA KUČEROVÁ

Alena Kučerová (1935-2026) studied at the School of Applied Arts in Prague under Professor Rudolf Beneš from 1950 to 1954. She continued her education at the Academy of Arts and Crafts in Prague in Professor Antonín Strnadel's studio from 1955 to 1959. Despite having to end her studies prematurely for political reasons, she received her diploma. Her work is characterized by the technique of perforating points into material surfaces, particularly sheet metal, through which she created abstract patterns, landscapes, and portraits. In 1967, she designed a glass stained window for the Czechoslovak pavilion at the Expo exhibition in Montreal.



EMANUELA MARASSI

Emanuela Marassi (born in 1937, Muggia IT) developed her artistic skills under the guidance of August Cernigoj, an important figure in Slovenian Constructivism. She has been holding exhibitions in Italy and abroad since the end of the '60s, first working with applied arts (Vienna Marquetry School) then with painting, collage and with the contemporary experimentation of unusual materials such as copper and embroidery. She has also dedicated herself to big installations and video art.

Marassi founded the female artist groups Marebagroup (1974) with the Australian artist Barbara Strathdee and the Austrian artist Renate Bertlmann.

Detecting the language of symbols, she has developed various thematic series that she has elaborated and integrated again over the years. Among these, one of the most important is *The Knight*, shown at the Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara in 1998, then exhibited in 1999 in Perugia at the Rocca Paolina, and later re-composed in 2009 at the Meštrovic Temple in Zagreb. Another great thematic theme dealt with by the artist with works, performances and videos concerns the rite of marriage and its fragility. See for example the series *Fragile!*, where Marassi has also recollected her guiding theme of her 70's performances. This period was devoted by the artist to the feminist protest (*La donna è un S- Oggetto kitsch?*, 1978). The project *Beauty*, central in the exhibition at the Revoltella Museum of Trieste in 2007, curated by Gillo Dorfles, and in the exhibition *Echo and Narcissus* at the Studio Tommaseo, again in Trieste in the same year, centred with irony on the old theme of *Vanitas*, already mentioned by Marassi in the work *Casanova*, shown at the Ludwig Museum in Budapest, 1999.



ADRIENA ŠIMOTOVÁ

Adriena Šimotová (Praha, 1926-2014) studied at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. As a member of the UB 12 group alongside Václav Boštík, Stanislav Kolibal, Věra Janoušková, and her husband Jiří John, she worked to maintain humanistic and spiritual traditions in art. Following the deaths of her husband (1972) and son, she shifted from abstraction to figurative work, focusing on the human body as her primary subject. In the late 1960s, she abandoned traditional painting for wall collages and "spatial drawings," working with diverse materials including canvas, fabric, glass, lead, and paper. Her work is held in major collections including the Centre Georges Pompidou. She received numerous awards including the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (1991), Czech Medal of Merit (1997), and the Herder Prize (2000).



ALŽBETA ŠTEFUNKOVÁ-SZABÓ

Alžbeta Štefunková – Szabó was born on March 27, 1941, in Trnovec nad Váhom, SK. From 1955 to 1959, she studied at the Secondary School of Applied Arts in Bratislava. From 1960 to 1966, she studied at the Department of Book Illustration and Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava under Professor Vincent Hložník. Solo exhibitions: 1972 Cyprián Majerník Gallery, Bratislava; 1973 Foyer of the SNP Theater, Martin; 1980 Slovak National Museum, Martin; 1981 Danube Museum, Komárno; 1982 Foyer of the SNP Theater, Martin; 1987 Regional Gallery, Banská Bystrica; 1988 Orava Gallery, Dolný Kubín; Považská Gallery, Žilina; Turčianska Gallery, Martin; 1989 Czechoslovak Cultural Center, Berlin (with Ján Kudlička and Mikuláš Palko); 1991 Turčianska Gallery, Martin; 1996 Hungarian Cultural Center, Prague; 2000 Gallery D, Uherské Hradiště; 2001 Hungarian Cultural Center, Prague; 2002 ART-MA Gallery, Dunajská Streda; 2004 Turčianska Gallery, Martin; 2005 Novohradská Gallery, Lučenec; Museum of Hungarian Culture, Bratislava; Central Slovak Gallery, Banská Bystrica.



JANA ŽELIBSKÁ

Born in 1941 in Olomouc, Czechoslovakia. Lives and works in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Jana Želibská studied at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava and graduated in graphic design and book illustration in 1965. Želibská belongs to the progressive generation of action and conceptual authors of the late 1960s in Czechoslovakia, specifically re-evaluated the impulses of neo avant-garde tendencies, French New Realism and post-Moderna. She was present at the birth of environment art in the 1960s, object and installation at the end of the 1980s and video-art in the 1990s. She openly thematizes the female body through a feminist approach which in her work blended with the characteristic period themes of the alternative scene and unofficial art in Slovakia. In 2012, a monographic exhibition was dedicated to her at the Slovak National Gallery, and in 2017 Jana Želibská participated in the 57th Venice Biennale, where she presented the installation Swan Song Now in the Czechoslovak Pavilion

GANDY GALLERY

Gandy Gallery's programme was developed in the context of the early 90s, when Europe was determining itself by confronting different histories, ideologies and hopes, and the opening of the gallery in 1992 in Prague, marked the beginning of this history...

Based in Prague in 1992 and then in Bratislava in 2005, Nadine Gandy focuses on contemporary and historical scenes in Central and Eastern Europe.

Over the years, her gallery has established itself as a place for dialogue between the West and post-Soviet countries. She brings together artists concerned with the essential issues of our time, whether it be the relationship to the body, memory, immigration or anything else that touches on the notion of identity.

Women occupy an important place among the artists represented by the Gandy Gallery.

JANA PÍSAŘÍKOVÁ

Since 2014, she has been working as a curator of contemporary art at the Moravian Gallery in Brno, where she is responsible, among other things, for the archive and collection of Jiří Valoch. In 2015, she participated in the preparation of a new permanent exhibition at this institution, ART IS HERE: New Art after 1945 (together with Ondřej Chrobák and Petr Ingerl). She has been collaborating with the Blansko City Gallery for a long time.

In her theoretical and curatorial practice, she focuses on conceptual art from the 1970s to the present, as well as on the documentation and exhibition presentation of action art.

She studied Interactive Arts Theory at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University.