

CECILIE MARKOVÁ

b. 1911, d. 1998

Mojí touhou je namalovat takové věci, aby se nad nimi musel každý zamyslet a poznat, že existuje i něco víc, než hmota. Že jenom pro hmotu nežijeme, že jsou daleko lepší věci, které člověka povznášejí nad všednosti dne....“

My desire is to paint such things to reflect and recognize that there is something more than matter. That we do not live only for material... that are far better things to elevate man above their ordinariness...”

- Cecilie Marková

Cecilie Marková was born on 20th September 1911 in a Slovak family in Kyjov, Czech Republic. Although they lived in reduced circumstances, her childhood was happy. She studied millinery as an apprentice to a hat-maker and later had a job as a shop assistant in a clothes shop in Brno.

Her first medium drawings started under a strong influence of spiritist sessions she had attended with her husband. She began to draw at 10 o'clock in the morning October 18, 1938, but it was the premature death of her husband in 1940 that turned this original impulse to an irresistible urge. In her loneliness, drawing became her means of communication with the physically absent being she loved; for her it became the only meaningful purpose in her life. “I put all my emotions into drawing. Without drawing my life would be too empty.”

At first her work is inspired by local tradition and ornamental designs of psychic spiritualists, often drawing spontaneously and automatically after a brief meditation. She first drew with a pencil, later she began to add color to her flowers and floral ornaments with crayons. The anxious mazes and muscular inflorescences are real and yet ambiguous in meaning. She drew fantastic flowers, flowers of souls, the souls of flowers, and landscapes that are not firmly anchored in space. Roots sink into the ground as if floating, natural motifs painted each from the upper left corner downwards, i.e. from the sky. She wrote about her work: “I am attracted to the worlds with no real forms. Cecilie Marková firmly believed that the ritual of drawing was in the ethereal lands, and therefore close to her beloved husband. She was aware of her own magical abilities to agree with the energies of this world, and even dreamed about it, said art historian Arsen Pohribný, who personally met with her and contributed to the exhibition of her work in an international context.

In the 1960s she also began to paint in tempera and oil - medium portraits, astral landscapes and cosmic eruptions. Her free style is balanced by precision and the binding character of her drawings. Portraits often repeat a type - oval face, narrow eyes and lips, as if she wanted them to capture the very essence of humanity. Her drawings and paintings are often handed out, spreading positive thoughts, faith in the goodness, interconnectedness in different worlds and terrestrial worlds beyond the sensory.

Cecilie Markova developed her work quite independently and during her life she produced a large number of imaginative works, most of which she gave out for free. Her first exhibition was in 1950, in Kyjov at an exhibition of folk art. Since then her impressive works have been presented at many solo or joint exhibitions in the Czech Republic and abroad. Her works are found in the Collection de L'art Brut Lausanne in Switzerland, the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava, the North Bohemian Gallery of Fine Arts in Litoměřice, the Nová Paka Municipal Museum, the Folklore Museum in Prague, and the Art Museum Olomouc. The Ostrava Television made a documentary film about her in 1971,

to commemorate her sixtieth birthday, and in 1995 another documentary film was made by the Poetic Gallery Prague, entitled *Other Worlds of Cecilie Marková*.

Cecilie Markova died 21st September 1998 in Kyjov.

Exhibitions:

- 2022: Dreaming the Dark, Galerie Christian Berst, Paris, France
- 2021: More 20th Century Women, The Gallery of Everything, London, England
- 2019: ALMA. Mediums and Visionaries, Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art, Palma de Mallorca, Spain
Beyond: On the Edge of the Visible and the Invisible, Galerie Christian Berst, Paris, France
- 2018: In and Out of Africa, Oliva Creative Factory, São João da Madeira, Portugal
Duende: Artists Translating Spirits, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 2017: Médiumnique tchèque: Cecilie Marková. Galerie Jean-Pierre Ritsch-Fisch, Strasbourg, France
Art Brut: A Story of Individual Mythologies, Treger Saint Silvestre Collection, Oliva Creative Factory, São João da Madeira, Portugal
- 2008: Cecilie Marková: Parable of Souls, Museum of Modern Art Olomouc, Olomouc, Czechia
Art Brut in the Czech Lands. Museum of Modern Art, Olomouc, Czech Republic
- 2005: L'Art Spirite. Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne, Switzerland
- 2004: Tsjechische Art Brut. Musée d'Art Spontané and Centre Tchèque, Brussels, Belgium
- 2002: L'Art Brut Tchèque. Halle Saint Pierre, Paris, France
- 2000: Tschechischer Surrealismus und Art Brut zum Ende des Jahrtausends. Prager Kulturtag in Wien, Palais Palfy, Vienna, Austria
- 1998: Stone Bell House, Prague, Czech Republic

Publications:

Konečného, Sbíрка (2001). Artists of pure heart: Naivist and folk art, art brut. Olomouc Museum of Art – Pavel Konečný Collection.