



CZECH CENTRE

ČESKÉ CENTRUM

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

Mini Wonders - Czech Toys Past and Present

Exhibition dates: 15 Sep – 14 Oct 2018

Opening hours:

Mon – Sun: 10 am – 6pm (15 – 23 Sep)

Mon – Fri: 10 am – 6 pm (24 Sep – 14 Oct)

Private View: Fri 14 Sep, 6.30 pm (free, all welcome)

Venue: Vitrínka - Czech Centre Gallery,
30 Kensington Palace Gardens, W84QY, London

Free entry

More info: <https://bit.ly/2N9Omk0>



*Václav Špála, Little Devil Toy box (1920),
Produced by: Modernista Hand-made
and hand-painted wooden replicas
(originals deposited in the collections of
the Museum of Decorative Arts in
Prague)*

From Fatra to Merkur, Czech toys have a long and successful history both in their homeland and abroad. Drawing attention to the unique Czech craftsmanship, the 'Mini Wonders' exhibition presents contemporary toy design as well as designs dating back almost a hundred years. As such it is one of the highlights of Czech Centre's programme celebrating the 100th anniversary of Czechoslovakia. The exhibition is also part of London Design Festival.

Golden times of the toy industry are dated from the late 19th and early 20th century. Since the first iconic design was born in 1920s, Czech toys have made a name for themselves internationally. They saw an unprecedented success at the Expo 1958 in Brussels, where Czechoslovakia showcased an exhibition focused on children's world created by artist **Jiří Trnka** and toy makers **Viktor Fixl** and **Václav Kubát**. In more recent years, the interest in Czech toys was renewed thanks to **Libuše Niklová's** 2011 retrospective 'Plastique ludique' at the Musée des arts décoratifs in Paris, followed by the 2012 Museum of Modern Art exhibition 'Century of the Child: Growing by Design 1900–2000' in New York, which also featured toys by renowned Czech designers.

Libuše Niklová, Buffalo (1970s), Produced by Fatra - One of the toy-seat shaped animals which was patented and became known as one of Czech ground-breaking toy designs



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Směr (Direction) Cooperativ, Ocean Steamboat (1971)

At present, a young generation of designers and illustrators keeps the tradition of Czech toys alive while giving them a fresh look. In return, toys present an opportunity for the



designers to freely develop their imagination, exceed their own creative borders and fulfil their potential. The exhibition presents, among others, acclaimed traditional metal construction sets by **Merkur**, a wooden balance bike by **Re Pello**, inflatable plastic toys by **Fatra** (featuring award-winning designers Libuše Niklová, Zuzana Lednická, Anna Kozová and Jerry Koza), and magnetic wooden puzzles

by **Detoa**.

*Metal construction set - Merkur Classic C04, (1930s),
Produced by: Merkur*

Curated by Czech art historian and writer Tereza Bruthansová, Mini Wonders takes this

tradition on a journey around the world, through this travelling exhibition beautifully presented from the iconic Kazeto suitcases, which have been part of children's world, and which have already stickers from the places and cities they have been (Milan, Tokyo and Paris).

Works of the young generation of toy designers are displayed next to modern icons of the industry that have become part of the Czech cultural heritage during the past hundred years and are still manufactured. They have been very well-received by children and adults alike, the latter ones seeking them as decorative collector's objects. The oldest toy showcased here dates back to 1920, while the most recent one was designed in 2018. All exhibited items can also be purchased at the exhibition.

"Based on my curated retrospective exhibition of Libuše Niklová in Paris more than seven years ago Paul Smith, the acclaimed British fashion designer, started selling the monography of the author and her toy-seat shaped animals Buffalo, Giraffe and Elephant, which were also patented and became known as one of Czech ground-breaking toy designs. I am extremely proud to bring them to British public thanks to the 'Mini Wonders' exhibition."

Tereza Bruthansová, Exhibition Curator



Zdeněk Miler - Mole and Bunny, Stuffed toys based on characters from The Mole cartoon (first episode made in 1957), Produced by: Moravská ústředna Brno

As part of London Design Festival 'Mini Wonders - Czech Toys Past and Present' offers also two days of family workshops on 15th & 16th September with award-winning Czech

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designer and graduate of the Academy of Art, Architecture and Design in Prague, Michal Strach. During this workshop Michal will help create adorable toy sports cars from soap bars. The workshop is suitable for all ages, especially 3-10, but adults are also welcome. A wonderful experience indeed!

Exhibition curator: Tereza Bruthansová

Installation design: Anna Kozová + Jerry Koza / atelier SAD

Graphic design: Zuzana Lednická / Studio Najbrt

Project manager: Sandra Karácsony

Part of **1918 100 2018** CZECH AND SLOVAK CENTURY

- ENDS -

NOTE TO EDITORS

More information: www.czechcentre.org.uk

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#miniwonders

ABOUT CZECH CENTRE

The Czech Centre's mission is to actively promote the Czech Republic by showcasing Czech culture in the UK. Its programme covers visual and performing arts, film, literature, music, architecture, design and fashion. As well as hosting its own events, the Czech Centre offers support for other groups organising Czech related initiatives in the UK. It is a non-political organisation supported by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of a worldwide network of 21 Czech Centres. The Czech Centre is a member of EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture).

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