

NATIONAL
CZECH &
SLOVAK
MUSEUM &
LIBRARY

MOST

[The Bridge]

Fall 2019

Community Conversation

30 years after the fall of
Communism, we celebrate
freedom of expression

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Thank you for your support of the
National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

NATIONAL CZECH & SLOVAK MUSEUM & LIBRARY

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The NCSML is funded in part by a grant from the Cultural Enrichment Partnership Program administered by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Upcoming Events and Exhibits

Please be sure to review your *Kalendar* and NCSML.org for all future programs and exhibits.

• 2019 •

September 8: *Revolution 1989* Exhibit Closes
September 10: Jan Kalab Lecture and Book Signing
September 20: BrewNost, an International Beer Festival; NCSML Closed
October 4: *Medieval to Metal: The Art & Evolution of the GUITAR* Member Opening (Opens to the public on Oct. 5)
October 9: *Lullaby: Babies in Slovak Folk Dress* Exhibit Closes
October 16: Velvet Revolution Lecture with Dr. Josef Jařab of Palacky University Olomouc
October 19: Music @ the Museum: FunkDaddies Concert
November 19–20: 100th Anniversary Commemoration for Milan Rastislav Štefánik
November 2: *Bethlehem and Beyond: Nativity Scenes* Exhibit Opens
November 28: NCSML Closed for Thanksgiving
December 7–8: 10th Annual Old World Christmas Market
December 24: NCSML Closed at 1 p.m.
December 25: NCSML Closed for Christmas

• 2020 •

January 1: NCSML Closed for New Year's Day
January 26: *Medieval to Metal: The Art & Evolution of the GUITAR* Exhibit Closes
February 2: *Bethlehem and Beyond: Nativity Scenes* Exhibit Closes

THE MUSEUM STORE

Shop for a cause in the Museum Store!

■ **FOR HER** Inspired by our upcoming 'Medieval to Metal' guitar exhibit, jewelry designer Kelly Jones of Wraptillion Modern Industrial Jewelry has created these custom pieces just for the NCSML featuring stainless steel guitar picks and the beauty of Czech glass beads.



Earrings.
\$69.95

Necklace.
\$69.95



■ **FOR THE KIDS** Alphonse Mucha Coloring Book. **\$7.95**

■ FOR HIM

Our custom designed 'Revolution 1989' Exhibition T-shirt available in adult sizes Sm – 3XL.
\$20.00



■ FOR THE FAMILY

Explore a dangerous sector of the Galaxy in this cooperative survival game. Players scramble to defend their ship from threats announced by a soundtrack (in mp3 format included on CD). **\$59.95**

Shop in-store and online at NCSML.org/store

FROM OUR PRESIDENT/CEO



In this revised issue of *MOST*, you'll find current events that reflect the mission and values of our cherished national museum and library. I can honestly say now, only being on the job for nine months, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) is the hub of activity for the preservation, celebration, and education of our rich Czech and Slovak cultures. It is our responsibility to help maintain the Czech and Slovak footprints in the United States, and to help provide leadership in the creation and cultivation of future imprints to assure our freedoms and infinite memories and stories remain for all to remember and learn from.

I would like to highlight some of the significant happenings of 2019. Celebrating our Smithsonian Affiliation in February will go into NCSML's history books. I am so grateful to the wonderful staff, Board of Trustees, and YOU, our members and donors, who enabled us to achieve this recognition of excellence. I am also pleased to announce that our first annual President's Society Preciosa Gala (named after the shining chandelier in our Rozek Grand Hall) was a huge success. The theme was "Radiating Our Future", and we celebrated families and the legacies that we must preserve for all generations to help assure our cultures are never forgotten.

Our cover photo highlights a major educational initiative for the NCSML, *Revolution Starts in the Streets*, an impactful experience for the students who worked on the project and visitors alike. For individuals born after 1990, many of them have never learned about the enduring symbols of the Cold War, such as the Berlin Wall and the non-violent but powerful protests of 1989 that lead to the fall of Communism in Prague and Bratislava.

Our main exhibit, *Revolution 1989*, continues to draw many visitors and will be up until September 8. Our incredibly beautiful and heartwarming *Lullaby* exhibit showcases Slovak photographer Monica Klučiarová's photography of 10-day-old infants in handmade kroj from regions throughout the Slovak Republic. Helene Cincebeaux, international kroj collector and expert, provided unique infant and child kroj to add to this colorful exhibit.

As we begin to work on the NCSML's Strategic 2020-2024 Plan, we look forward to sharing future developments. I am happy to report that we have signed an affiliation with Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic for student and faculty internships at the NCSML. This will increase our opportunities for research and other scholarly activity with all of our programs.

I am wishing you all a lovely fall; take time to enjoy and celebrate your culture!

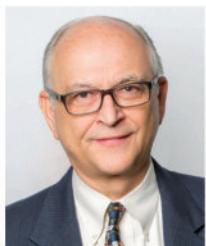
"Přejo vám všem krásné léto; čas si vychutnejte a oslaute svou kulturu!"

"Želám vám všetkým pekné leto; urobte si čas a vžite si svoju kultúru!"

All my best,


Dr. Cecilia Rokusek

FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



Each year, America's Independence Day is a wonderful celebration and lesson to share with the world. Many of us, from inside and out of our country, take note on how the USA conducts itself as the leader in democracy. I know we hope to be a good example as we continue to build on our institutions and traditions, not just with the ancillary hoopla of food and fireworks, but to celebrate our freedom that shapes the character of our nation. That character continues to evolve in our values that translate through our institutions and communities.

I can't help but to think that the aspirations of our founding fathers in some part influenced what occurred 30 years ago with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the stirrings of freedom in Europe, Asia, and in particular, the Czechlands with the Velvet Revolution. The freedom subsequently lead to the realization of the responsibility to govern in places where vacuums occurred. It is an ongoing process of "figuring it out" in a civil way. Please join us at the NCSML as we recount the history of 30 years ago through events and programs about 1989: The Year that Shook the World.

A final personal note. I wish to again give thanks to our fine staff and friends that made the Inaugural President's Society Preciosa Gala a splendid evening and success. We have a great team at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and we need your support to continue our innovative efforts well into the future.

Best,


George T. Drost

EDUCATION



Ambassador Korčok with K-12 Learning Specialist, Sarah Henderson and high school students from Alburnett High School, IowaBIG, and Metro STEAM Academy.

Revolutionizing education partnerships through the NCSML

In 1989, the Velvet Revolution that brought an end to communism in Central Europe began with student protests in the streets of then-Czechoslovakia. This spring and summer, the voices of a new generation of students rang loudly as a central part of our *Revolution Starts in the Streets* temporary public art installation marking 30 years since the Velvet Revolution.



Dr. Cecilia Rokusek, NCSML President and CEO and Ivan Korčok, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic to the United States.

The temporary art installation, a replica of the Berlin Wall, is the culmination of a year-long partnership with students from Metro STEAM Academy, Iowa BIG, Alburnett High School, and numerous local businesses. To honor the role of street artists and the right to freedom of expression, this wall serves as a collaborative, public art space — and will be torn down on Nov. 9, 2019 to commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989.

To celebrate the opening of this installation in April, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic to the United States Ivan Korčok, 11 U.S. Slovak

Your membership and ongoing support helps us create these



“It’s a powerful rethinking of what a museum can provide as an educational partner in the community,” explained Henderson.



Ambassador Ivan Korčok speaking to students.

Honorary Consuls, Mayor Brad Hart of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and representatives from the Smithsonian joined us, along with the students and their families — many of whom had never been to the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library before.



Cedar Rapids Mayor, Brad Hart speaks with Myriam Springuel of the Smithsonian.

Before the public event, Ambassador Korčok met with the students and shared his personal experience living under communism and witnessing the historical events that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall. He challenged students to consider the fact that millions of people never saw the colorful side of the Berlin Wall. He ended by asking them all to work toward a world without walls.

According to Sarah Henderson, K-12 Learning Specialist, who envisioned this immersive educational partnership nearly two years ago, a common theme in revolutions throughout history is the presence of art as a form of peaceful protest.

“The mission of the project is to promote a community conversation, started by students, about how what happened in 1989 connects to issues they find important today,” explained Henderson. “It’s a powerful rethinking of what a museum can provide as an educational partner in the community.”

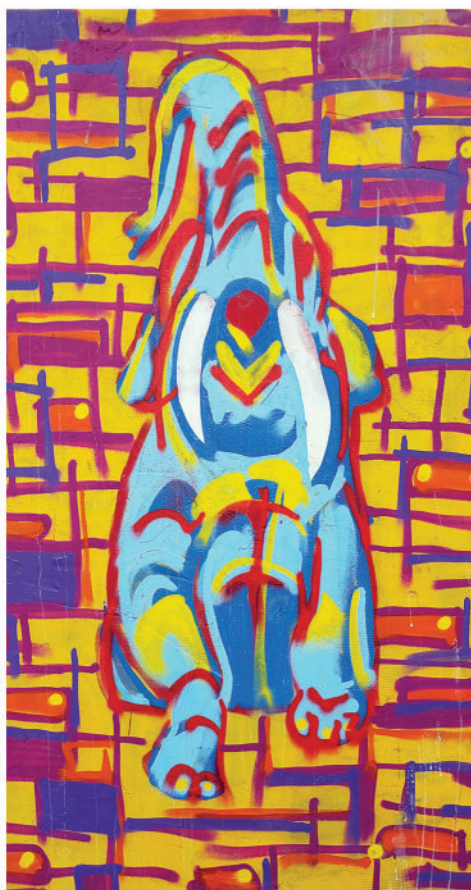


NCSML President & CEO Dr. Cecilia Rokusek with K-12 Learning Specialist, Sarah Henderson.

partnerships. Learn how you can help at ncsml.org/support.



Why did a Czech and Slovak heritage museum build a replica Berlin Wall?



It's a valid question — and one that's started rich conversations within our community and with visitors throughout the summer. This temporary public art installation came to be through a collaborative educational partnership that involved our wider community in a hands-on series of events with internationally known visiting artists.

That series began in June with an Egyptian artist known as "Ganzeer". Active as a street artist in Egypt during the 2011 revolution, Ganzeer's free public lecture and two-day art workshop opened up dialogue about the importance of each individual — whether they are an artist or not — speaking up for issues they find important.

"At the end of the day, artists are using the tools they have to address what matters most to them," Ganzeer said. "Whatever your tools are, use those."

Throughout the project, we also hosted muralist Paco Rosic, muralist Thomas



Agran, and textile artist Rose Couch. Czech artist, Jan Kalab, will close out the series September 10 & 12.

These events also brought a diverse audience to the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, with attendees at Ganzeer's lecture ranging from high school students to local artists to long-time members.

"I looked around at Ganzeer's event, and saw so many new faces," said Teresa Stenstrup, Director of Programs. "This is what rich programming can do — it brings more people into this critical conversation about freedom of expression, it makes our organization more relevant in this global context."

For the first time, we're also able to expand participation in these special events, with podcast recordings of Ganzeer and Jan Kalab's lectures, as well as behind-the-scenes interviews.





A forum to remember: *Revolution 1989*

When National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Curator Stefanie Kohn led a group of 11 Slovak Honorary Consuls through our *Revolution 1989* exhibit, one member of the group paused at a display case with Communist-era school uniforms.

"I wore that uniform," said Martin Valko, a Slovak Honorary Consul from Texas and member of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Board of Trustees. Valko grew up in Communist Czechoslovakia, the son of diplomats. "My mother would make me iron it, and I would burn little holes in it."

At age 14, Valko secretly participated in the 1989 student protest activities. As he walked through our exhibit, he shared his memories – and his reflections on what might have happened to his family if the revolution had failed.

In May, mother-daughter pair Blanka Kudej of Palm Beach, Florida and Blanka Roberts of Pelham, New York, who emigrated to the U.S. from Prague in 1968, shared their reflections on life during that time, specifically what it was like to answer a child's tough questions about the world.

"It was very dangerous to tell a child that it is not true what the teacher is telling you," said Kudej. "And the child would think, 'Is my mother lying? Is my teacher lying? If they are lying, why can't I?'"

Since its opening in March, *Revolution 1989* has provided a forum for visitors who experienced oppression first-hand, whether in Czechoslovakia, China or other countries, to share their stories. To help us remember the words of Václav Havel: "An attack on the freedom of individuals threatens the freedom of all."

Revolution 1989
closes September 8.
Join us November
9 for our Fall of the
Wall party.





RADIATE *our* FUTURE

INAUGURAL
PRESIDENT'S SOCIETY

Preciosa Gala



Cherish the past. Celebrate the present. Create the future.

The dazzling light of our Preciosa Chandelier, made of strong, Czech crystal, symbolizes this vision, and the almost 200 attendees of our inaugural President's Society Preciosa Gala brought it to life.

This special event at the end of May brought in friends of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library from as far away as New York, Florida, Montana, and Washington D.C. — several to experience this treasured place for the first time. It also provided us a moment to recognize and thank the dedicated students, teachers, administrators, and community partners who came together for the *Revolution Starts in the Streets* project.



On this special night, we honored our Board of Trustees Chair, George Drost, with the first President's Award for outstanding contributions to cultural preservation and leadership in the promotion of democratic and free societies.



With the success from our inaugural Gala, we are looking forward to making this an annual tradition focused on building a strong foundation for the future. We would love for you to join us for next year's Gala on Friday, May 1, 2020. If you are one of our many visionary donors looking to help us create a strong legacy, we invite you to join our President's Society, which includes your invite to this special event.



Learn more at ncsml.org/support.

IN THE GALLERIES



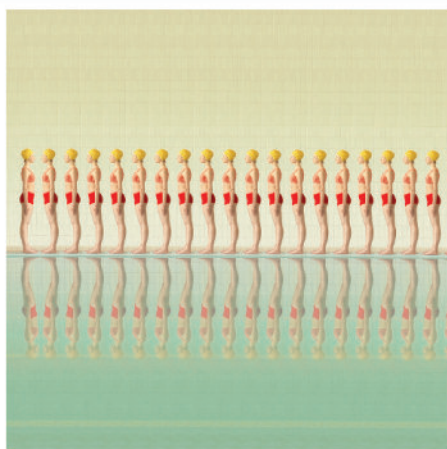
Member openings

Did you know that the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library rotates exhibits in our four temporary exhibit spaces at least twice per year? That means each year, you can see up to eight different exhibits celebrating Czech and Slovak history, culture, and art.

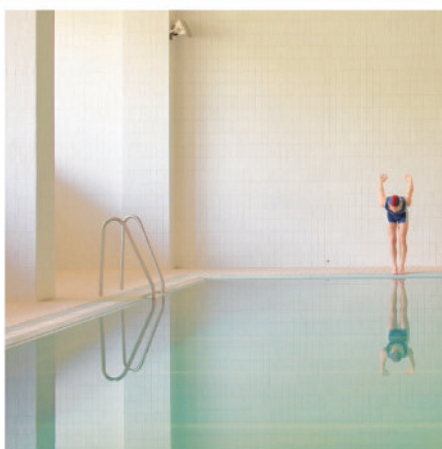
It also gives us plenty of opportunities to gather for member openings! We hope you can join us at our next member exhibit opening, *Medieval to Metal* on October 4.

As a member, these events give you the chance to see exhibits before they open to the general public. More importantly, they give us a chance to connect as a community of members and supporters of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

We're a museum that celebrates life. So be sure to join us! [Learn more at ncsml.org/membership](https://ncsml.org/membership).



Origins 2017, Greta



In Swimming pool 2014–2017, Balance

Swimming Pool makes a splash

Except, when you view this series of photographs by Slovak photographer Maria Svarbova, you'll hardly see a ripple in the water. Each photograph features a different pool, usually built in the communist era, in various locations in Slovakia.

We sought out this display for the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library after Dr. Cecilia Rokusek, President and CEO of the NCSML, experienced it in Florida.

"I saw such enthusiasm for it among people in Florida, and wanted us to share it with our members and visitors here," said Rokusek. "It provides a very different kind of reflection than what visitors experienced in our other exhibits this summer, showing the curatorial diversity a heritage museum can bring."

See *Swimming Pool* through September 22.

Sponsored by



IN THE GALLERIES

Ink and Oil

In our mission, we promise to tell stories of family and community. Our Skala Bartizal Library provides a living space to discover your story.

Vaclav Vane, a Czech immigrant to Cedar Rapids in the late 19th century, was known among family, friends, and colleagues for his meticulous handwriting. As the City Auditor, he was often asked to pen special certificates and letters. As a hobby, he copied many quotes from early American political and cultural writings.

Vane's great-grand-niece, Susi Bazelides, recently worked with us to donate an exhibit of Vane's work, along with paintings by Vane's brother-in-law, Vaclav Janda. Displayed in our Skala Bartizal Library this summer, the exhibit allowed us to tell one family's story, and the opening morning reception showed the critical role of our library in reconnecting people with their personal histories.



Next time you visit the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, make time to explore our Library. Our Library staff members, Dave Muhlena and Leroy Bradway, are here to assist you with scholarly and genealogical research — or to talk shop about our collection of books, periodicals, archives, phonograph records, and oral histories. *Learn more at ncsml.org/library.*

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is now a Smithsonian Affiliate!

This distinction enables us to work closely with the Smithsonian in securing additional programs, exhibits and professional collaboration, and elevates the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library to a truly national level. For a \$25 upgrade to your membership, you receive a national membership to the Smithsonian.

Visit ncsml.org/membership to learn more.



Smithsonian
Affiliate

Join us September 20 for an International Beer Festival!

Supporting the educational mission of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library



Presented by



BasepointWealth

From here you can go anywhere.

Sept. 20 | 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

For tickets and more information visit NCSML.org/BrewNost



Smithsonian
Affiliates

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