PRESS RELEASE

Exhibition of Works by Slovak Artists from a Prestigious Private Collection

Exhibition title:	Works by Action, Conceptual and Post-Conceptual Artists (from the Collection of the First Slovak Investment Group)
Venue:	Záhorie Gallery of Ján Mudroch in Senica, Sadová 619/3
Curator:	Zuzana Bartošová
Opening:	**30 October 2026 at 6:00 p.m.**
Musical guest at the opening:	Iva Bittová
Duration of the exhibition:	Friday, 30 October 2026 – Sunday, 17 January 2027

The exhibition will present a selection of works by Slovak action, conceptual and post-conceptual artists from a prestigious private collection. These distinctive artistic movements, which have been present on the Slovak art scene since the mid-1960s, are represented by compelling works by prominent artists from the collection of the First Slovak Investment Group.

Action and conceptual art attracted an emerging generation of artists in the mid-20th century. Alongside object art and installation art, these movements became integral to the artistic expression of their generation. The most prominent figures among them remained committed to these approaches even after the onset of the so-called *normalisation* of Slovak cultural life following the Second Congress of the Union of Slovak Visual Artists in the autumn of 1972. Although they lost their membership in the organisation and were prohibited from exhibiting, they maintained their artistic independence. Together, they established an unofficial art scene.

A distinctive feature of the Slovak artistic environment is that, unlike most of their counterparts in the Euro-American context, Slovak conceptual and action artists were professionally trained visual artists who had graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design. They never entirely abandoned painting, sculpture or drawing. The exhibition highlights this characteristic: in addition to providing intellectual stimulation, it offers a rich aesthetic experience.

Compositions by Stanislav Filko, Július Koller, Peter Bartoš, Rudolf Sikora, Dezider Tóth, Juraj Meliš and Michal Kern, together with objects by Juraj Bartusz and Jana Želibská and musical scores by Milan Adamčiak, will showcase the clearly articulated character of Slovak conceptual art, as well as object and installation art. Like several of the artists mentioned above, Ľubomír Ďurček worked at the intersection of action and conceptual art, another distinctive feature of the Slovak art scene.

Alex Mlynárčik, a leading figure in Slovak action art, is represented by works associated with his imaginary country of Argillia. During the early stages of his career, Vladimír Popovič worked briefly but intensively within the framework of action art. He is better known to the public for the painted compositions to which he devoted much of his subsequent career, and these will also be represented in the exhibition.

Among the artists who emerged on the art scene somewhat later, the exhibition will feature works by members of Group A-R (Avance Retard), which was formed after the Velvet Revolution on the basis of longstanding personal friendships and creative relationships. Its members, including Marián Mudroch, Milan Bočkay, Daniel Fischer, Igor Minárik and Ladislav Čarný, each incorporated the intellectual legacy of conceptual art into their work in their own distinctive way. Otis Laubert drew inspiration from the Arte Povera movement,

while Vladimír Kordoš's staged photographs were preceded by group performances. Klára Bočkayová creates her paintings through an action-based approach. This approach also characterises the work of the younger Igor Kalný, who, like Vladimír Havrilla and Viktor Oravec, was not a member of Group A-R. Havrilla, a multimedia artist, works within a post-conceptual framework. Viktor Oravec is a key representative of one of the high points of Slovak action art in the 1980s.

Following the wave of postmodern painting that culminated in the 1990s, a new generation of artists returned to action and conceptual art, as well as object and installation art, as sources of inspiration. Ilona Németh, a leading figure of her generation, had already consciously embraced these approaches while the postmodern movement was still flourishing. Slightly younger artists, Milan Tittel, Patrik Kovačovský and Dušan Zahoranský, consciously draw on conceptual art in their work. Their sophisticated objects, installations, paintings and photographs are informed by an understanding of the expressive possibilities of conceptual art.

The exhibition will draw attention to the consistently high quality and carefully conceived nature of the private collection of the First Slovak Investment Group. The collection focuses specifically on works by artists who resisted ideological pressure during the period of so-called *normalisation* and continued to create freely, despite often living in modest circumstances, as well as works by younger artists who drew inspiration from their predecessors.

Beyond the aesthetic experience it offers, the exhibition will also pay tribute to the personal courage of many of the artists whose works are on display.

Mgr. Zuzana Bartošová, Ph.D.
Curator of the Exhibition and of the First Slovak Investment Group Collection

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