

## News Release from Milton Keynes Gallery

Fri 13 Sept – Sun 3 Nov 2002

### **Jiri Georg Dokoupil**

Admission free

Press View: Thurs 12 Sept 17.00 – 18.00

Private View: 18.00-20.00

Bubbles, breast milk, fruit juice, rust, tyre prints and candle soot are just some of the media used in the work of Jiri Georg Dokoupil, whose work will be presented at Milton Keynes Gallery this autumn. It will be his first solo show in a UK public gallery.

Dokoupil (b.1954) is an established contemporary artist who has built up an illustrious international career in Europe and the USA. His work radiates a playful inventiveness and creative pleasure. Using a diverse range of styles, he has demonstrated through his exhibitions of the 1980s and 1990s that his ongoing preoccupation is with painting - and an exploration of the processes involved.

A sizeable retrospective of Dokoupil's work, co-organised by MK G, has just opened at the Centraal Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands. MK G's autumn exhibition will draw from this retrospective, but rather than including everything, MK G has decided to focus on several series of paintings which can be shown to best advantage in its three distinctive gallery spaces.

Dokoupil is prepared to state that pleasure is perhaps the main driving force behind his activities as an artist. This will be fully evident to visitors to MK G in the Long Gallery which will be used to display the series of Soap Bubble Paintings – made using ink and soapsuds on canvas. Their free floating shapes, colour and scale are bound to delight and inspire pleasure in the viewer. With titles such as *Friday – In Front of You*, *Saturday – Simmer and Glide* and *Sunday – Back from Switzerland* they may also induce a certain reverie.

The Middle Gallery will contain the Tyre Paintings, formed from tyre prints on canvas. Some are very dark and dense, such as *Black Wall*, 1991, whilst others are more spare and colourful, such as *The Wedding*, 1991. The Cube Gallery will be used to display the Soot Paintings. To make these, Dokoupil suspends canvases on his studio ceiling, projects images onto them, and then working above his head with a candle flame rather like a paintbrush, traces the image using the soot rising from the flame. The subjects of these works tend to be rather more sombre and reflective, such as *Train Accident in Siberia*, 1989, *Illegal Immigrant – Coming to Germany*, 1993, *Self-portrait with Skull (Arrugadic)*, 2000 and *Napoleon [Arrugadic]*, 2000.

The Foyer and Link areas of the Gallery will also be used to display paintings whose prints or marks have been made using such substances as fruit juice, breast milk, water and fire, for example 170 Apples, 1992.

Whilst fully aware of modernist concepts and contemporary art theory, Dokoupil prefers to take a lighter rather than a weightier approach to such issues. The experimentation with styles, techniques, themes and symbols represents a flowering of his artistic curiosity and inventiveness.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue co-published by the Centraal Museum, Utrecht.

### **Brief Biography**

Jiri Georg Dokoupil born in Bruntal, Czechoslovakia, 1954.

Fled from Czechoslovakia with his parents in 1968 when the Russians put an end to the Prague Spring. Arrived in Germany age 14, uprooted from his language, culture and carefree childhood. Drawing became his means of discovering the 'new world' and as a foreigner a way of developing a relationship with it.

Attended art schools in Cologne, Frankfurt and New York (Cooper Union, class of Hans Haacke).

Taught at Dusseldorf Art Academy 1983-84 and in 1989 guest teacher at the Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid.

Solo and group exhibitions held throughout the 1980s and '90s in Antwerp, Brussels, Cologne, Copenhagen, Geneva, Paris, Prague, New York, Milan, Munich, Vienna and Zurich.

Currently lives and works by turns in Madrid, Berlin and Prague.

### **Press Information and Images**

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