**Award winning Czech Contemporary Jewellery artists take centre stage at London Craft Week**

#### **First time ever, a selection of the best of Czech contemporary jewellery comes to London. The exhibition commissioned by Czech Centre London presents unique works by four innovative designers from Prague and will be hosted at the East London Gallery S O. As part of London Craft Week, 'Purity and Decadence: Contemporary Czech Jewellery' is set to celebrate and inspire the design industry throughout May.**

This group exhibition is the first of its kind showcasing several generations of contemporary Czech jewellery and metalwork in the United Kingdom. Each of the presented artists is unique in their style and approach to object, but they all belong to the most renowned in their field of practice. The award-winning collections by **Eva Eisler**, **Nastassia Aleinikava**, **Zorya**, **Markéta Kratochvílová** and students of the **K.O.V. studio** at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, are connected by their original vision pushing the boundaries of what we understand by jewellery and exceptional craftsmanship.

All these superb Czech designers will be presenting old and new collections alongside their award-winning signature pieces they have created so far. “Time” is an impetus for them. It drives to create something more meaningful than oneself, defines purpose and motivates to understand and be understood. "Time", on the other hand, gives also an insight into what makes the artists view unique.

*"Time is a creator if it is given a chance, a never-ending transformation of energy into various forms,"* say the two designers behind **Zorya**, **Daniel Pošta** and **Zdeněk Vacek**. In their VIRUS collection, which has won them the Jewellery Designer of the Year at the CZECH GRAND DESIGN 2011 as well as the highest national design title Grand Designer of the Year 2011, crystals replicate like viruses. *“We started with some marine rope and salt, combined with the effects of time, which can change objects beyond recognition. Instead of decomposition, though, in this case there is an almost magical transformation, and ordinary things change to the point they cannot be recognized.”*

This process led to the formation of necklaces hovering on the boundary between a jewel and an artistic concept, transforming fugacious materials into impressive objects; making them unique pieces, one at a time.

Work with time is also at the centre stage of **K.O.V studio**, led by **Eva Eisler**, who aims to stimulate students' individual skills and creativity and teaches them how to cultivate their artistic feeling through experiments with different materials and expressing their creative potential in visionary concepts. *"If we are to believe the old saying that everything is related to everything else, then it is not possible to separate out the individual creative fields and perceive them in isolation. At the end, everything becomes part of the environment that we participate in creating,"* explains Eisler. *"Each detail plays a highly significant role. Whatever we do, it should have a deeper meaning, even if the result displays a kind of seemingly undefined purpose. It is helping us to expand our minds and to understand each other. A piece of jewellery can become a visible symbol, containing a strong message."*

**Nastassia Aleinikava** who graduated from **K.O.V. studio** in 2013, speeds up the time and looks into the future that is colourful, electric and cosmopolitan through her collection of glasses. *"The glasses as a jewel and a jewel as a story – however, not everybody has the courage to write his or her story,"* so Nastassia helps people write it through her glasses which fill each little part of owners' breath, each swing of a movement, every moment 'now' with a new dimension. Her conspiratively provocative unseen shapes accentuate the character of its owner and pour new feelings into them. The details of the accessories bear exactly the story that is unnoticeable for many and so important and fulfilling for others.

Winner of two Czech Grand Design Awards – Jewellery Designer of the Year 2016 and Talent of the Year 2014, **Markéta Kratochvílová**, who is recognised as a truly dateless artist, will be showcasing not just her new collection of silver jewellery. She also draws from a wide range of references, including the history of fashion, an anthropological interest in jewellery and manner of dress of indigenous groups in India, Africa, and Asia. *"In my designs, I strive to support the relationship of a female body with jewellery and explore its capacity to express itself and have impact on its wearer and her life,"*says Markéta whose mostly wearable pieces— half jewellery, half clothing, always laden with layers of meaning—explore the sculptural possibilities of different materials while making statements about the complexities of femininity. *"We wanted to collaborate with Markéta Kratochvílová as her work is daring, yet sensual and liberating. I adore her attention to detail and the fact her garments create an emotion within us, even more so when we examine her extraordinary craft. They intrigue us whilst also pulling us into another world. She is a great Czech talent to work with - she will leave a mark for sure,”* points out Cathie Boyd, Artistic Director and Founder of *Cryptic and Sonica*.

An official part of the **London Craft Week**, the exhibition displayed in the East-London Gallery S O continues throughout May, and will offer accompanying workshops and lectures introducing both the contemporary Czech design scene, but also the magnificent tradition of Czech costume jewellery. Don’t miss this one-off opportunity of watching jewellery grow in front of your own eyes and trying the exceptional design pieces on! Let the experience immerse you…

The exhibition is organized by the **Czech Centre London** as part of the Czech Republic 100 anniversary.

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**CZECH JEWELLERY AT GALLERY S O**

Exhibitions: May 9 2018 – June 1 2018

Private View: May 10 2018, 6 – 9pm, FREE (All designers will be present)

Opening hours: Wed - Sat: 12 - 6 pm, Sun: 12 - 5 pm

Address: **GALLERY S O LONDON,** 92 Brick Lane, London, E16RL, UK
+44 (0)20 7377 8008, info@galleryso.com

Official part of **London Craft Week**

9-13 May 2018 (exhibition opened every day from 12-7pm during London Craft Week)

**Press enquiries, including high res images:** Tereza Matysova - 07768 935 361, tereza@mpaoflondon.com

**ABOUT LONDON CRAFT WEEK**

## London Craft Week returns to the capital for its fourth edition from 9-13 May 2018. Celebrating outstanding British and international creativity, this year the festival brings together over 200 established and emerging makers, designers, brands and galleries from around the world.

## Authenticity is at the heart of London Craft Week. A curated programme of events across London allows visitors to create their own itinerary, meet the makers and gain access to exclusive exhibitions, demonstrations and workshops. It bridges iconic heritage and contemporary brands as well as independent makers and allows them to tell their stories.

<http://www.londoncraftweek.com/>

**ABOUT GALLERY S O**

Gallery S O was founded in 2003 by Felix Flury in Solothurn, Switzerland, and six years later the gallery opened a second space in Brick Lane, London. The gallery's main focus is exploring the potentialities of the contemporary object and the interplay of function, form and concept. It aims to provide a space for an open and fruitful dialogue between different artistic disciplines. Alongside representing internationally renewed jewellery and metalwork artists, Gallery S O organizes temporary art and design exhibitions in its unique project space and publishes monographs, catalogues and books.

The work of it's artists is represented in institutions across the whole UK, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, Australia, Canada and US.

Felix Flury:

*"I was approached by Tereza Porybna with the idea to do a show at Gallery S O with Czech artists in the field of contemporary jewellery. As I know and admire Eva Eisler’s work since the 80’s I thought that could work well not only for jewellery but also for objects and now that student’s work is also involved in the exhibition it will*

*get a good vibe. It is quite a spontaneous project but very well matched with the context of the London Craft Week."*

https://www.galleryso.com

**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.

The centre also seeks to further enhance cultural relationships between the UK and the Czech Republic through curatorial visits, media tours and artistic residencies; helping to generate creative dialogue among artists, scholars and cultural activists from both countries.

The Czech Centre London opened in 1993. It is a non-political organisation supported by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of a worldwide network of 21 [Czech Centres](http://www.czechcentres.cz/en/) operating in 19 countries and on three continents. The Czech Centre is a member of [EUNIC](http://www.eunic-online.eu/)(European Union National Institutes for Culture).

Tereza Porybná:

*"Contemporary Czech Jewellery design has a certain dynamic which appeals to the international taste. I believe it’s driven by the incomparably rich crafts making tradition combined with a very free-spirited approach to “objects”. The contemporary Czech jewellery-makers are, apart from a few exceptions, unknown to the UK audience, which is one of the reasons this exhibition has been an absolute pleasure to work on. We at the Czech Centre feel honoured to be able to present these exceptionally talented individuals to the London audience for the very first time."*

http://london.czechcentres.cz/about-us/

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**ABOUT EVA EISLER**

Eva Eisler is an internationally recognized sculptor, furniture, product and jewellery designer, whose pieces are being collected by the likes of Norman Foster or Zaha Hadid. Rooted in constructivist theory, her structurally-based objects project a unique spirituality by nature of their investment with “sacred geometry.” She received numerous awards including the 2014 Czech Grand Design Award for Best Jewellery Collection.

Eisler is also a respected curator and educator. She heads the award-winning K.O.V. (concept-object-meaning) studio at Prague's Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design. Her work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cooper Hewitt Design Museum in New York; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; and Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, among many others.

http://www.maurer-zilioli.com/en/exhibitions/137-eva-eisler-en.html

**ABOUT ZORYA**

The ZORYA studio was established in 2011, preceded by a long-term collaboration between jeweller Zdeněk Vacek and designer Daniel Pošta. The studio quickly gained renown for its jewellery collections in which experimentation with form and meaning played a major role, fusing technological and creative methods previously absent in classical jewellery making. Together, Vacek and Pošta have pursued the creation of objects bordering art and design. They have jointly received the recognition as Best Jeweller and Grand Designer of the Year (2011) in the Czech Grand Design Awards, and several prizes for Best Presentation and Best Jewellery Collection at the Designblok event in Prague. ZORYA has also been acknowledged by the curators of the SOFA Chicago fair.

www.zorya.eu

**ABOUT K.O.V. STUDIO**

Class of Eva Eisler at The Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague

The aim of the K.O.V. (concept, object, meaning) studio is to not only train students to become goldsmiths or designers, but rather to open their minds towards a wider spectrum of further applications within the environment we live in and to deepen their understanding of the importance of even the smallest details. The goal of the studio is to unleash the students‘ fantasy, creativity and instil in them a playful, innovative and imaginative approach.

Eva Eisler, one of the most internationally recognized Czech designers, strives to lead students towards a deeper understanding of the wide spectrum of art in space through an interdisciplinary approach to material, concept and form, in a close relationship to design, architecture and contemporary art.

https://www.umprum.cz/web/cs/uzite-umeni/k-o-v-koncept-objekt-vyznam

**ABOUT NASTASSIA ALEINIKAVA**

The work of Nastassia Aleinikava is spread out between luxury jewel of an extra-ordinary quality and unconventional shapes and styles of glasses. She takes inspiration from nature as wells as from Eastern European cultural heritage. What

makes her works so important is also the usage of top class materials. Glasses by Aleinikava are remarkable for being fully handmade from material of a high quality – Italian cellulose acetate by Mazzucchelli.

Nastassia graduated in 2013 from K.O.V. studio (headed by Eva Eisler) at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. She has won several prestigious awards culminating with two Czech Grand Design Awards in 2018 for Designer of the Year and for Best Jewellery Designer.

http://www.nastassiaaleinikava.com

**ABOUT MARKÉTA KRATOCHVÍLOVÁ**

Winner of two Czech Grand Design Awards – Jewellery Designer of the Year 2016 and Talent of the Year 2014, Markéta Kratochvílová draws from a wide range of references, including the history of fashion, an anthropological interest in jewellery and manner of dress of indigenous groups in India, Africa, and Asia. Her mostly wearable pieces— half jewellery, half clothing, always laden with layers of meaning—explore the sculptural possibilities of different materials while making a statements about the complexities of femininity.

Markéta graduated from K.O.V. studio in 2014. In 2017 she launched Bold Studio in Prague as a creative laboratory dedicated to jewellery and accessories design.

<http://boldstudio.eu/>