

Otto Gutfreund

(1889-1927)

Czech Cubist

Sculpture and drawings

First One-Man Exhibition
outside Czechoslovakia

1-24 June 1966

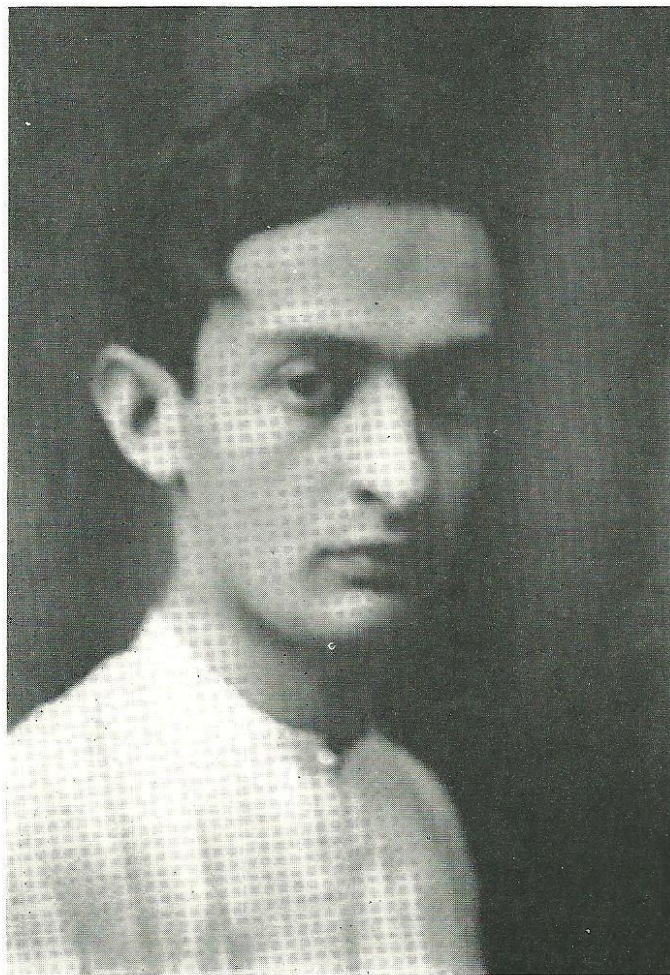
Monday - Friday 10-6

Saturdays 10-1

Grosvenor Gallery

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OTTO GUTFREUND (1889-1927)



The artist in 1910

Sculpture & Drawings 1911-1927

OTTO GUTFREUND

- 1889 Born 3rd August at Dvůr Kralové nad Labem, Bohemia.
- 1895-1903 Attended school at Dvůr Kralové nad Labem.
- 1903-6 Studied at the School of Ceramics at Bechyně.
- 1906-9 Studied at the School of Industrial Design in Prague.
- 1909 Met Emile-Antoine Bourdelle in Prague during the sculptor's exhibition there.
- 1909-10 Studied at Grande Chaumière, Paris, where Bourdelle was Head of the Department of Sculpture.
- 1910 Began to work in a small studio in Montparnasse; the same year he returned home, making a detour by way of Rouen, Dieppe, London, Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, The Hague, Leiden, Haarlem, Amsterdam, Cologne and Berlin.
- 1911 Joined the Artists' Group in Prague.
- 1912 January-February: the first exhibition of the Artists' Group at the Prague Town Hall.
- 1912 September-November: second exhibition of the Artists' Group: Gutfreund contributed *Don Quixote Hamlet*, etc.
- 1913 May-June: third exhibition of the Artists' Group included Gutfreund's *Viki*.
- 1913 September: fourth and last exhibition by the Artists' Group.
- 1914 Second visit to Paris; at the outbreak of the First World War he joined the Czech Voluntary Corps of the French Foreign Legion and saw action in Alsace.
- 1915-18 Interned in a camp in Provence on suspicion of incitement to mutiny.
- 1918 Returned to Paris; casual employment as an interpreter and designed scent bottles; started regular modelling.
- 1919 30th July, first post-war visit to Prague.
- 1920 Returned permanently to Prague.
- 1921 Joined the Manes Artists' Society.
- 1924 Acquired a separate studio; created designs for the decoration of the facade of the insurance building, Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà, in Prague.
- 1925 Designed the Czechoslovak five-crown piece.
- 1926 Appointed Professor of Structural Plastics at the Prague School of Industrial Design.
- 1927 A series of nude sketches indicate a change in Gutfreund's outlook in art.
Drowned on 2nd June in the Vltava.
- 1965 24th June: a commemorative plaque unveiled on the wall of the house at No. 112/55 Spalena ulice, Prague 2, where he had his last studio.

Posthumous Exhibitions of Gutfreund's works

- 1927 Arranged by Manes Artists' Society at Prague Town Hall; Ales Artists' Club, Brno.
- 1934 Drawings and sculpture, Manes Gallery, Prague.
- 1946 Drawings and sculpture, Manes Gallery, Prague.
- 1948 Collective exhibition, Manes Gallery, Prague.
- 1958 Drawings and sculpture, Ales Gallery, Prague.
- 1963 The Drawings of Otto Gutfreund, Central Bohemia Gallery, Velvary.
- 1965 Retrospective, Narodni Gallery, Prague.
- 1966 March: *Paris-Prague*, Museum of Modern Art, Paris.
June: Drawings and Sculpture, Grosvenor Gallery, London.

The formation of a distinct creative personality in Otto Gutfreund is first observed in 1911 after his return to Prague from Paris, where he had been a pupil of Emile-Antoine Bourdelle. Gutfreund's departure from Paris in 1910 represented a rejection of Bourdelle's influence. The effect of an exhibition of Cezanne in Prague and his contact in Paris with Picasso, Braque and Derain, and especially the influence of the Picasso *Head of a Woman* of 1909, changed the course of his career. With his figures *Don Quixote** and *Anguish* of 1911 and the early reliefs* dated 1911/12 he can be said to have found his own solution. At that time only Picasso had made Cubist sculpture.

In the same year a 'Group of Creative Artists' was founded in Prague, which Gutfreund joined, and his association with other young painters, architects, musicians and critics played a decisive part in his career. Expressionism, the work of Cezanne, and analytical cubism can be regarded as the basis of the artistic views of this group. This synthesis of Cezanne's conception of form and expressionism can be found in Gutfreund's early sculptures, such as *Hamlet**, *The Cellist**, *Viki** and *Embracing Figures** of 1912/13, a development from the reliefs of 1911/12.

The full flowering of Gutfreund's style, however, only took place after the long interval in Gutfreund's output caused by the First World War. He arrived in Paris in 1914 and at the outbreak of war volunteered for the Czech

Voluntary Corps. After a year of action in Alsace he was somewhat mysteriously interned on the grounds of incitement to mutiny and on his release in 1918 returned to Paris. The sculptures he produced in 1919 indicate Gutfreund's struggle with abstracted form. The series of heads, three-dimensional as well as in relief such as *Cubist Head** and *Relief Head**, which have some similarity with the work of Lipschitz, Archipenko and Laurens, contrast sharply defined volumes with more realistic details. This period places him among the initiators of Cubism in sculpture.

By the time Gutfreund returned to Prague, in 1920, there was a Constructivist element in such works as a *Sailor and Girl** and *Self-Portrait* of 1919, of which one critic has said 'It is not a rejection of Cubism but a consequence of it'. A concern for more intimate, realistic subjects coincided with the use of terracotta and a new serenity which links his figures with folk art. At the same time in *Girl with Necklet** and *Girl with Rose** a new monumental style, fusing abstraction and classicism, began to emerge.

Before the end of his life, which ended so tragically in 1927, Gutfreund can be seen to be concentrating his efforts on the solution of different problems. His last works such as *Fighters**, *Lovers** and the nude studies*, reveal a concern for human values rather than a concentration on the solution of purely formal problems.

*Included in the present exhibition.



No. 4 Hamlet



No. 2 Don Quixote



No. 3 Relief with Two Figures



No. 7 Viki

No. 1 Harmony – relief





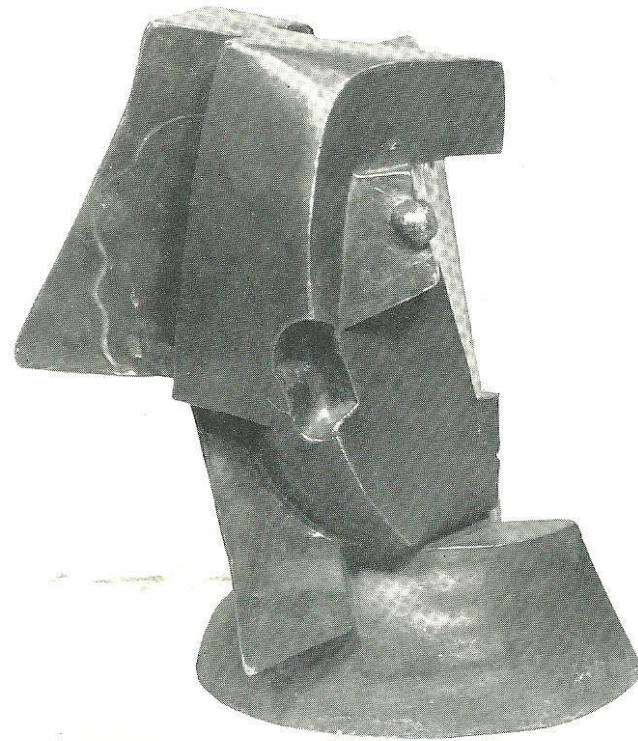
No. 6 The Cellist



No. 5 Embracing Figures



No. 8 Sailor and Girl



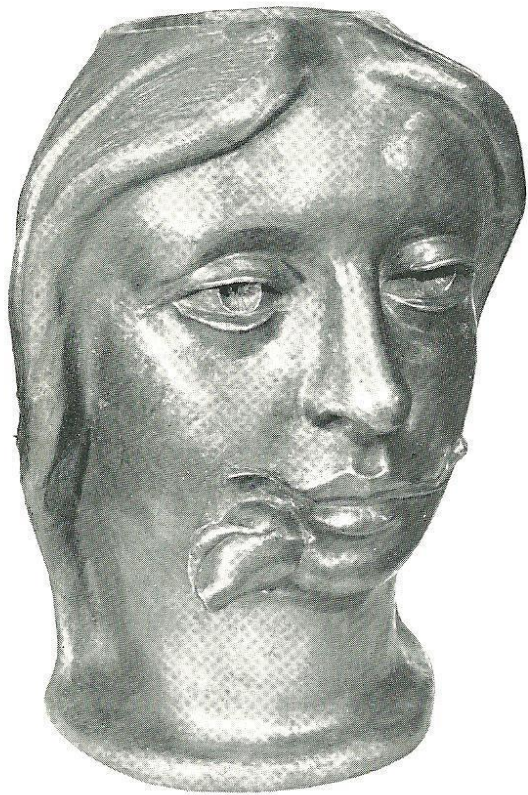
No. 10 Cubist Head



No. 9 Relief Head



No. 11 Girl with Necklet



No. 15 Girl with Rose



No. 14 Fighters

No. 18 Lovers



No. 17 Lovers



BRONZES

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1	Harmony – relief	1911	13 h. × 12½ w.
2	Don Quixote	1911	15 h.
3	Relief with Two Figures	1912	10¾ h. × 14½ w.
4	Hamlet	1911/12	26¾ h.
5	Embracing Figures	1912/13	24¾ h.
6	The Cellist	1912/13	18½ h.
7	Viki	1912/13	13 h.
8	Sailor and Girl	1919	13¾ h.
9	Relief Head	1919	10¾ h.
10	Cubist Head	1919	10½ h.
11	Girl with Necklet	1920	11¼ h.
12	Sewing Women	1922	12¼ h.
13	Dreaming Girl	1924	14¼ h.
14	Fighters	1924	5½ h. × 11 l.
15	Girl with Rose	1924	15¼ h.
16	Girl's Head	1925	9½ h.
17	Lovers	1925	5¼ h. × 9¼ l.
18	Lovers	1925	5 h. × 13 l.
19	The Rivals	1926	11½ h.
20	Seated Nude	1927	6¾ h.
21	Reclining Nude	1927	5½ h. × 11 l.
22	Portrait of Dr. R. Jedlicky	1927	14½ h.

A Group of drawings will also be shown. Cover: *Female-Nude*, before 1913

Numbers 12, 13, 16, 19 and 22 have been loaned by Art Centrum, Prague. The Grosvenor Gallery greatly acknowledge the assistance of Art Centrum, Prague, in organising this exhibition and also the help of the Moravian Gallery, Brno, The Gallery of Plastic Arts, Olomouc, The Prague City Gallery, and private collectors in Czechoslovakia.

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27 June - 9 July JASON MONET paintings and drawings
5 July - 30 July EXPERIMENT IN FORM group sculpture show

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Campigli	Kandinsky	Rabin
Cascella	Kennet	Brian Robins
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Chi Pai-shih	Konfar	Silvestri
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Dolenec	Lies	Jack Smith
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