

Eastern European Abstract Expressionism from the Cold War Era Opens at Pollock-Krasner House & Study Center

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

The Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center opens its second exhibition of the season with a group show examining the rise of Eastern European Abstract Expressionism during the Cold War Era. “Abstract Expression: Behind the Iron Curtain” opens on August 3 and continues through October 28, 2017. An Opening Reception and Gallery Talk takes place on Sunday, August 6, 2017 from 5 to 7 p.m. and features Charlotta Kotík, former Brooklyn Museum curator and daughter-in-law of exhibiting artist Jan Kotík (1916-2002). She also is one of the essay contributors to the exhibition catalogue.

“Abstract Expression: Behind the Iron Curtain” centers on the work of four artists who were working in Soviet Bloc countries during the Cold War, creating art that wasn’t sanctioned by Communist Party doctrine. Exhibiting artists are [Andrej Jemec](#) (b. 1934, Slovenia), [Tadeusz Kantor](#) (1915-1990, Poland), [Jan Kotík](#) (1916-2002, Czechoslovakia), [Edo Murtić](#) (1921-2005, Croatia) and [Romul Nuțiu](#) (1932-2012, Romania).

Their paintings demonstrate each artist’s adaptation of an Abstract Expressionist approach—spontaneous gesture, subjective imagery, and emotional content—seen in relation to American precedents and contemporaneous European trends such as l’art informel and Spatialism.



“In the Forest” by Andre Jemec, 1960. Oil on canvas, 110 x 116 cm.
Moderna galerija, Ljubljana. Courtesy Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center.

The exhibition is a highly unusual one in that it centers on this little-known aspect of artistic expression in eastern Europe during the Cold War period, according to the Pollock-Krasner House. During this time, official art in Soviet Bloc countries was strictly regulated and required to adhere to Communist Party doctrine. Despite this, there were artists who were aware of developments in contemporary abstract art, either through personal travel and contact with artists in the west or via international exhibitions, and who responded to those trends.

Some of these artists immigrated to western Europe to practice their art while others remained in their home countries and created bodies of work that was not officially sanctioned and was very personal which a selection is presented in “Behind the Iron Curtain.” Works in the show are on loan from the [Moderna galerija](#) (Ljubljana, Slovenia); [Muzeum Sztuki](#) (Łódź , Poland); [Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti](#) (Zagreb, Croatia); [Fumaria Joana Graver](#) (Bucharest, Romania); and from private collectors. A fully illustrated catalog includes essays by Charlotta Kotík and Philip Rylands, director emeritus of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

After closing at the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, the exhibition travels to Long Island University’s C.W. Post campus in Brookville, Long Island to be exhibited at its Steinberg Museum of

Art.

While in East Hampton, a full slate of programming will be presented to enhance the experience of viewing the art including Talks and Film Screenings. Upcoming Talks are held on Sundays, August 13, 20 & 27, 2017. "Inside the Abstract Expressionist Studio" will be led by Helen A. Harrison, director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center; August 20 features curator and professor Gail Levin "Syd Solomon: Abstract Expressionism and World War II." On August 27, 2017, film and art critic Marion Wolberg Weiss leads a talk on "Art and Film in the Communist Era."

This year's Fall Film Series, held at the Pollock-Krasner House & Study Center will tie to the exhibition in the series "Cinema Behind the Iron Curtain." Presented on Fridays at 7 p.m. in September, films will feature Eastern European filmmakers and their works during the 1950s and 1960s. Click [here](#) for details.

BASIC FACTS: "Abstract Expression: Behind the Iron Curtain" is on view from August 3 to October 28, 2017 at the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, 830 Springs-Fireplace Road, East Hampton, NY 11937. For the full list of programming presented in conjunction with the exhibition, click [here](http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/pkhouse/).

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