

## **Ceija Stojka (1933 – 2013)**

### **Even Death is Terrified of Auschwitz**

#### **An exhibition in three parts**

21.6. – 26.7.2014: Kunstverein Tiergarten | Galerie Nord, Berlin

02.7. – 31.8.2014: Galerie Schwartzsche Villa, Kulturamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf, Berlin

13.7. – 12.9.2014: Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp, Fürstenberg/Havel

#### **Press previews:**

**Friday, June 20, 2014, 11 am**, Kunstverein Tiergarten | Galerie Nord, Turmstrasse 75 EG, 10551 Berlin

**Tuesday, July 1, 2014, 11 am**, Galerie Schwartzsche Villa, Grunewaldstrasse 55, 12165 Berlin

#### **Press release**

With her cycle *Even Death is Terrified of Auschwitz*, Romani artist Ceija Stojka, who was born in Steiermark/Austria in 1933 and died in Vienna in January 2013, created an impressive artistic narrative about the persecution and genocide of the Roma and Sinti peoples during the Nazi era.

Ceija Stojka, a Lovari (from the Hungarian Lo = horse, horse dealer) – a subgroup of the Romani people settled in Austria – was deported to Auschwitz at the age of ten along with most of her family. Her father had already been gassed before that at the Hartheim "Euthanasia" institute. Ceija Stojka not only survived the extermination camp Auschwitz, but also the concentration camps Ravensbrück and Bergen-Belsen, from where she was freed on April 15, 1945 by the British Army. Together with her brother Karl Stojka, she was the first person in Austria to break the victims' silence in the 1980s and, from then on, she presented herself publicly as a Romani and an artist. She talked about her experiences at events and dealt with it in her art work, writings and music. In addition to Ceija and Karl Stojka, the virtuoso guitarists Harri Stojka and Karl Ratzer from the following generation achieved worldwide fame. At the end of the 1980s, Ceija Stojka began teaching herself drawing and painting. Her works attracted a great deal of attention internationally and were exhibited in many European countries, as well as in Japan and the USA.

The cycle of ink and gouache drawings, *Even Death is Terrified of Auschwitz*, which consists of approximately 180 sheets and took several years to complete, is being shown at the exhibition conceptualised for the Kunstverein Tiergarten | Galerie Nord by Lith Bahlmann and Matthias Reichelt in a previously unseen entirety and printed in an accompanying publication.

A selection of Ceija Stojka's acrylic paintings can be seen in a parallel exhibition at Galerie Schwartzsche Villa. Here, another part of Stojka's work will be shown that, in contrast to the mainly black and white ink and gouache drawings, portrays the persecution and terror in an array of colours. Galerie Schwartzsche Villa will also be presenting an interview with Ceija Stojka by journalist Magdalena Kemper at an audio station.

The exhibitions will be accompanied by film evenings and a bus tour to Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp guided by historian Barbara Danckwortt. This memorial site will also be presenting the works of Ceija Stojka from its own collection in a special exhibition to be opened on the day of the excursion.

#### **Publication**

The extensive (approx. 450 pages) and trilingual (German, English, Romanes) monograph contains the entire cycle *Even Death is Terrified of Auschwitz* (including the texts by Ceija Stojka on the back of the drawings) as well as a selection of Ceija Stojka's acrylic paintings dealing with the genocide of the Sinti and Romani peoples. Essays by Barbara Danckwortt (historian) and Tímea Junghaus (art historian and Romani activist from Hungary who designed the concept for the 1<sup>st</sup> Romani pavilion at the Biennale di Venezia in 2007) are dedicated to Ceija Stojka's traumatic experiences in concentration camps as well as her artistic works, which reflect and are a reflection

on these. Film director Karin Berger tells about her close working relationship with Ceija Stojka while she filmed her documentary about the artist. The editors Lith Bahlmann and Matthias Reichelt introduce the reader to the subject matter and outline the context within which Ceija Stojka's artistic work emerged. A DVD with Karin Berger's two film portraits of Ceija Stojka accompanies the book and is an integral part of it.

The book is published by Verlag für Moderne Kunst Nürnberg.

## **Funding**

Both Berlin exhibitions and the publication are possible thanks to funding received by the Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Capital Cultural Funds), the Bundeskanzleramt: Österreich (Austrian Federal Chancellery) as well as the Hamburger Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kultur (Hamburg Foundation for the Advancement of Research and Culture).

With the kind support of Kunstverein Tiergarten | Galerie Nord; Galerie Schwartzsche Villa, Kulturamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf; Navigatorfilm Vienna and the Dr. Hansche Foundation as well as Berlin radio broadcaster kulturradio (rbb).

## **Accompanying programme**

21.6.2014, 5 pm: screening of *Ceija Stojka – Portrait einer Romni / Unter Brettern Hellgrünes Gras* with Dr. Karin Berger and Nuna and Hojda Stojka (Kunstverein Tiergarten | Galerie Nord)

12.7.2014, 9 am – 7 pm: Bus tour to Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp to the opening of the special exhibition with a guided tour and lecture by Barbara Danckwortt (historian).

Please register by 10.7.2014 at: lithbahlmann@gmx.de

Cost: 10 euro, concession: 6 euros

31.8.2014, 5 pm: screening of *Ceija Stojka – Portrait einer Romni / Unter Brettern Hellgrünes Gras* with Dr. Karin Berger (Galerie Schwartzsche Villa)

## **Exhibition locations**

### **Kunstverein Tiergarten | Galerie Nord**

Turmstrasse 75 EG, 10551 Berlin

21.6. – 26.7.2014

Opening: 20.6.2014, 7 pm

Opening times: Tue. – Sat. 1 – 7 pm, admission free

[www.kunstverein-tiergarten.de](http://www.kunstverein-tiergarten.de)

### **Galerie Schwartzsche Villa, Kulturamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf**

Grunewaldstrasse 55, 12165 Berlin

2.7. – 31.8.2014

Opening: 1.7.2014, 7 pm

Music: Dejan Jovanovic, accordion

Opening times: Tue. – Sun. 10 am – 18 pm, admission free

[www.kultur-steglitz-zehlendorf.de](http://www.kultur-steglitz-zehlendorf.de)

### **Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp**

Strasse der Nationen, 16798 Fürstenberg/Havel

13.7. – 12.9.2014

Opening 12.7.2014, 2 pm

Opening times: Tue. – Sun. 9 am – 6 pm (grounds open until 8 pm), admission free

[www.ravensbrueck.de](http://www.ravensbrueck.de)

## **Press contact**

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