
The life story of a photographer born in Prague, in 1942

- + Introduction - Jan Reich became interested in photography during his childhood, when he followed his grandparent's life through photos sent to him from overseas (from the family photo archive)
- + By the late 1950s, Reich created his first photographs of Prague, ushering in the photographer's future interest in the history and architecture of the city (*cycles 'Beginnings' and 'Prague'*).
- + The change which came to the family after the Communist coup in 1948 meant that the family lost their estate. His father was then moved to the Sudetenland where, after some time, Reich photographed the abandoned remains of civilization (*cycles 'Countryside features' and 'Doubice'*).
- + After graduating from high school and completing military service, Reich joined, in 1963, a cooperative of bespoke photographers, where he learned to work with large format cameras. He then worked in various menial jobs and in his leisure time, took photographs using photographic film.
- + In 1964, he took employment as a labourer in a circus and travelled for two seasons around Moravia and Slovakia. During these travels, Reich took intimate portraits of artists and animal tamers in their environment (*cycles 'Circus' and 'Slovakia'*).
- + After three previous failed attempts Reich was admitted to FAMU (Film and TV School) in 1965. During his studies, he created cycles of photographs motivated by memories of his youth in the Sudetenland, still lifes and portraits.
- + In August 1968 there came the end of uncensored photography for magazines. Due to the deteriorating situation, Reich decided to leave the country at the end of 1969, and for nine months tried to live in Paris. Using his Leica, he photographed extensively on photographic film everyday, capturing the real atmosphere of the city of Paris' various neighborhoods (*'Paris' cycle*).
- + After normalisation, he returned to Prague and graduated from college and in the grim 1970s relentlessly photographed the world of his childhood - the outlying districts of Prague; Holešovice, Libeň, Vysočany, with their abandoned factories, yards, fences and ports. Step-by-step he created the collection 'Disappearing Prague', initially captured on photographic film and finished in the format 13x18 cm on a wooden camera, given to him by the estate of Josef Sudek (*cycle 'Disappearing Prague'*).
- + By the end of the 1970s, the photographer's work had changed dramatically. Reich got married, bought a house in the country, and his attention altered to focus on the systematic documentation of the traditional values of the Czech countryside. Using the original, large-format, wooden cameras he captured, over the following thirty years, the landscape of Sedlčany county, which bore traces of centuries past. The Czech countryside with its historical sites make up the original photo files with rural interiors, including still life studies, portraits of local people and his family (*cycle 'A House in the Country'*).
- + During the 1980s, Reich used his large-format cameras to create a large photo file of Prague. He photographed historical places without people in the shots and captured the contemporary look of the City, created by many generations (*cycles 'Prague' and 'Vltava & Prague'*).
- + After 1989, Reich decided to record historic and religious places throughout the land of Bohemia. For ten years the photographer captured - using the large-format wooden camera - shots of famous landmarks such as Kuks and Karlštejn and places almost unknown to us. The selection of 150 photos was published in book form in 2005 and was awarded the main prize Magnesia Litera (*cycle 'Bohemia'*).
- + Over the following years, Reich mostly devoted himself to capturing the Sedlčany countryside and creating his still life work, full of contrasts of light and mystery, taking shots using the largest possible format, the 30x40 cm setup (*cycles 'Landscape' and 'Still Life'*).
- + In November 2009, sixty seven year-old Jan Reich died.