

## Couldn't that hysteric just shut up?!

Translation: Vladimir Mindek

Who is that hysterical cow? Must be some psychopath-to show off like that! Look – another commercial. This is probably art, mother we cannot understand, ha ha ha. – Go and stand somewhere else then.

This is a cut from a loud street discussion reflecting the fine art at the beginning of the millennium. It was caused by the 27 year old, Iwona Majdan, who sat in the window display of Prague's gallery, Valcava Spaly, Tuesday evening this week, bound herself to a chair with wide tape, smeared herself and the gallery window with cake and for an hour, shouted hysterically at passers-by. One would have thought that the assembled crowd, loaded with goods from a nearby supermarket, accustomed to this type of exhibit would rather go home quietly and watch TV sitcoms layered with commercials. Surprisingly, Iwona Majdan has shown, with a very simple scene, how to attract a mass to the window display. Pedestrians stared at the bound body, someone laughed, and someone cursed. Public attention though, is not everlasting, in the store as in the gallery. The crowds' conduct was indicative of this, when the Canadian did not move for an extended period, the interest of the public diminished and they walked away. On the contrary, when the artist once again became physically active, the gallery was instantly swarmed by a large audience that outnumbered a regular week of 'visitors' to 'Spalovka'.

Art as well, to arouse our attention, must be action-like, colourful (the smeared cake was a strawberry one) and mainly, it should not last very long. The Canadian took no notice of the last one. Originally, she wanted to prolong the performance for a few more hours. No wonder, her other performances in Montreal lasted a week or more. In Prague, one of the spectators shortened this one. He could not watch her hysteria any longer and threw a brick against the window. The performer was liberated. In our faded part of the world, where nothing excites us, this is called success. The crowd rewarded the unknown hero with applause and dispersed to the families. What was left was some broken glass, a wounded hand of the man, and a happy artist.

The galleries will continue to be visited by a small number of art lovers and others will devote themselves to more interesting and useful assortment, like for example, the latest models of spring shoes. But maybe Iwona Majdan puzzled people to such an extent that when window displays of their favourite stores will be arranged next time, they will think that it is art. The cultural level of the Czech nation will then rise with each new seasonal sale.