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| **Artificialism** |
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| Artificialism was an artistic approach formulated in Paris in 1926 by two avant-garde Czech artists, Jindřich Štýrský and Toyen (Marie Čermínová). The manifesto of artificialism published in ReD (1927-28) calls for the “identification of a painter with a poet.” The key principle of artificialim is the use memories and feelings productively; associations and evocations are structured and stylised into color compositions that shares some characteristics with contemporary surrealism. |
| Artificialism was an artistic approach formulated in Paris in 1926 by two avant-garde Czech artists, Jindřich Štýrský and Toyen (Marie Čermínová), as a visual parallel to the new literary approach, poetism. The manifesto of artificialism published in ReD (1927-28) in Prague one year later calls for the “identification of a painter with a poet.” The key principle of artificialim is the use memories and feelings productively, in opposition to the claim that the role of memory is limiting and negative. Associations and evocations are structured and stylised into color compositions that share some characteristics with contemporary surrealism (such as inspiration sourced from automatic writing and the aim to connect with the subconscious). The creative process pursued by artificialist artists and poets can be interpreted as a journey in pursuit of the sensual, poetic, and imagined landscapes, as well as the space between the conscious and the subconscious realms. As such, artificialism is sometimes seen as a bridge between abstraction and surrealism.  Jindřich Štýrský (1899-1942) conceived of artificialism together with his artistic ally Toyen in Paris in 1926. As a Devětsil member, poet, painter, and art theorist, he used the pages of the well-known avant-garde group publication ReD to publish the prinicples of the concept. His early work was inspired by cubism and primitivisim. After returning to Prague after many years in Paris, he became a founding member of the Surrealist Group of Czechoslovakia. Štyrský is considered a leading Czech surrealist artist and a pioneer in collage and photomontage in the European context. This progressive expression in collage was developed and elaborated on by his successor Jiří Kolář.  Toyen (1902-1980) was a young revolutionary individual who stirred the Czech avant-garde scene with her provocative imagination, erotic art, male dress, and sexually ambiguous behaviour. Born Marie Čermínová, Toyen was a member of Devětsil and worked as a surrealist and progressive artificialist. Her contact with Paris intensified upon the foundation of the Surrealist Group of Czechoslovakia in 1934, and her introduction to leading French figures André Breton and Paul Eluard in Prague one year later. Toyen continued her practice secretly during WWII and, in 1947, immigrated to Paris. Her work re-appeared on the Prague exhibition scene in 1966. When the Surrealist Group of Czechoslovakia dismantled in 1969, Toyen retired to solitude and died alone in Paris in 1980. |
| Further reading:  (Bydžovská)  (Devětsil) (Huebner)  (L. S. Bydžovská)  (Pachmanová)  (Srp) |