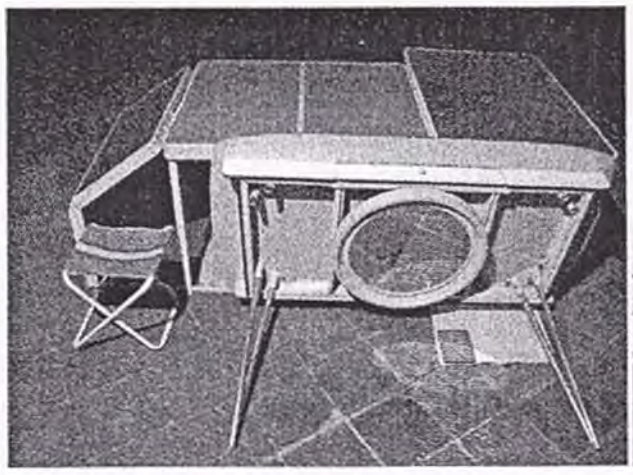
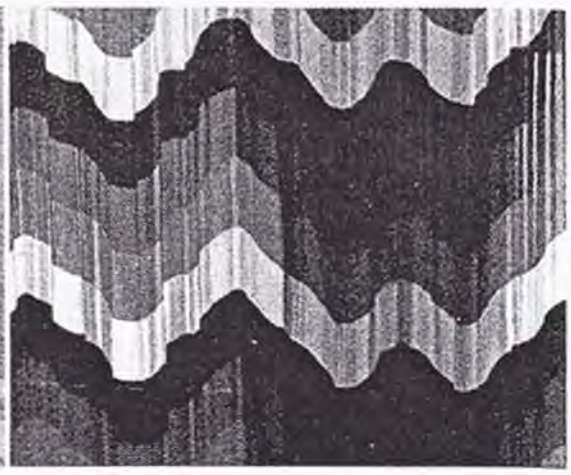
"It all happens in Prague." *Flash Art* XXXVIII, No. 242 (May/June 2005): 80.

It all happens in Prague

Political art in Latin America and painting drive the program of Prague Biennale 2





Just a few years ago, Prague may have seemed an unlikely place to hold a biennial of international contemporary art, but the first Prague Biennale, which took place in 2003, brought artists, curators and critics to the city in droves. The second edition, again organized by *Flash Art* publisher Giancarlo Politi and editor Helena Kontova, begins on May 26/27/28 and runs through September 15. One major change this time around is the new venue, Karlin Hall, a spacious post-industral building adapted expressly for the exhibition.

With its dual focus on painting and on art as political action, the Biennale comes with a host of themed exhibitions organized by a diverse group of curators. The members of the curatorial team behind "Expanded Painting" — headed up by Politi and Kontova — are, Andrea Bellini, Patricia Ellis, Power Ekroth, Jacob Fabricius, Anda Klavina, Pablo Lafuente, Francesco Manacorda, Chus Martinez, Neil Mulholland and Eva Wittocx. The curators are bringing together work by over 100 artists, illustrating the relationship between painting and other mediums such as photography and video.

Today painting can be called an expanded field not only in terms of how the medium interacts with other mediums, but also in terms of its geographical breadth. Intriguing new painters hail from cities the world over, but two points of greatest interest recently have been the former East Germany and China. At the Prague Biennale 2, Johannes Schmidt curates "New German Painting — The Leipzig and Dresden 'schools,'" featuring more than 20 artists from the new generation of German painters. Milan-based gallerist Primo Marella and Francesca Jordan present "CHINA — New Perspectives in Chinese Painting." Curator Luca Beatrice lends a historical (and locally relevant) angle with a show dedicated to the Normal Group, founded in the 1980s by Czech painters Milan Kunc and Jan Knap with the German Peter Angermann. There will also be a tribute to the Italian painter Gian Marco Montesano.

Besides painting, the Biennale's other major focus is the relationship between art production and political action in Latin America. "Acción Directa," curated by Marco Scotini, presents interventions and political actions by artists and "dissidents" from countries including Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and Nicaragua.

Hanna Wróblewska and Anna Jagiello take an in-depth look at the current Polish art scene in "Poland Overview" and Jiří David and Juraj Čarný bring the Prague Biennale closer to home with the Czech and Slovak sections.

Other exhibitions filling out the Biennale's packed roster are "Definition of Everyday" curated by Vit Havránek, Karel Císař and Jan Mančuška; "Street Art," a project by Christian Schmidt-Rasmussen; "Playstation," which includes Eric Doeringer's "bootlegs" of well-known artists' works; "Outsider Art," a gathering of British aritsts curated by James Colman; and "Kinetic Art," a historical show curated by Getulio Alviani.

From left: ALEXANDRE DA CUNHA, Modulare, 2004. Installation view. Courtesy Prometeo, Lucca, Italy. (Acción Directa); MILENA DOPITOVÁ, Sixtysomething, 2003. Photography, 200 x 150 cm. Courtesy Jiří Svestka, Prague. (Czech and Slovak New Scene); JANICE McNAB, Morning, 2004. Oil on MDF, 110 x 140 cm. Courtesy Doggerfisher, Edinburgh. (Expanded Painting.)

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McQuaid, Cate. "Czech Mate: Milena Dopitova and Boston: The Art of Collaboration." *The Boston Phoenix*, January 28, 1994.

ART

Czech mate

Milena Dopitová and Boston: The art of collaboration

by Cate McQuaid

"MILENA DOPITOVÁ IN CONTEXT" and "THOMAS STRUTH: STREETS, HOUSES, PEOPLE: PHOTOGRAPHS 1987-1992." At the ICA through March 27.

Institute of Contemporary Art director Milena Kalinovska has a point to make. The Boston arts community writes off its place in the world too easily, and it underestimates its artists. For an artist from Prague, she says, Boston is international exposure.

Czech artist Milena Dopitová has stepped right into the thick of things in "Milena Dopitová in Context," the show Kalinovska opened at the ICA last week. The director, all charged up about the 30-year-old Dopitová, made studio visits around town last year and came up with six Boston artists whose work complements that of the Czech artist's. The result is a spare but strong exhibition of seven distinct but overlapping voices. There's no doubt that these artists are up to international collaborations.

All the work in this exhibit is intimate, exploring identity, conflict, and societal roles. Dopitová has the largest piece: *Four Masks* makes use of large-scale black and white photographs of the artist's own passive face and a great square of concrete bricks laid on the floor that she equates with a swimming pool. In each image Dopitová wears a different mask: a stocking pulled over her head, a cosmetic facial mask, a surgical mask, and one covered with sequins to wear to a masquerade. These represent the different, professional, and social roles that women can, and often do, play. Tall bricks beneath each photo suggest a diving board from which each woman can leap into the competitive fray.

Dopitová uses her own image again in *Twins: My Sister and Me*, mug-shot photographs of her identical twin and herself, the hairstyles that would distinguish them pulled back beneath bathing caps. The artist forces us to look closely, to note minute differences between the two women; she challenges us to not jump to conclusions about either.

Marnie Cardozo and Denise Marika also use themselves as models in their work. Cardozo has photographed details of her own nude, aging body through the fuzzy, wall-eyed perspective of a pinhole camera, printed her negatives twice, and mounted mirror images of sagging, curving flesh side by side. She's made the nude abstract, without robbing it of its essential humanity or lying about its disintegration. *The Battle*, Marika's video projection on a tall, dark-steel beam, shows a heated battle going on between a nude couple. It's alarming to watch them strike out and fall away from each other within the narrow scope of the beam; I felt like a child spying through a door crack on her parents making love. Fighting has the same intense charge as sex, and the same focus on the participants that leaves the witness out in the cold and yet strangely moved.

In *The Essence*, Ellen Rothenberg bears witness to young Anne Frank, taking passages that her father removed from her diary before publication and celebrating them. Rothenberg has bound a white foam pad around a beam with plain leather belts and scored Frank's words reflecting on her sexual organs into the leather. They are eloquent, earnest, and innocent, as Frank was in the rest of her diary. Frank's clarity, in a continuing, questioning narrative, holds the piece together, maintaining sanity in the face of horror.

Annette Lemieux takes up a similar dialogue with history in *Coincidence*, positioning a photograph of herself as a child, fresh-faced with a cowlick standing straight up on her head in the shape of a question mark, next to an image of Marcel Duchamp, old and gray with his hair done up in two tall question marks. The parallel drawn between a young girl and an old dada wipes away the barriers of years; gender, culture, and status between the two and makes them appropriately equal. Duchamp would applaud.

Lillian Hsu-Flanders has stitched together a big *Hopscotch Dress*, the color of blacktop and marked up for a rousing game. The work combines the joy of child's play with the punishment of the rules of the game: stay within the lines. Hsu-Flanders at once celebrates girlhood and questions the strictures of feminine acculturation. Ellen Gallagher's haunting paintings are like a body count: images of the eyes and mouths of tarbabies crowd over the blue lines of a child's penmanship paper, blinking and murmuring like an anonymous Greek chorus, punctuated by the occasional smiling face of a pink-cheeked blonde — the face most revered by society. It's the two poles of oppression in one sad picture.

The ICA has mounted a fine counterpoint to the Dopitová exhibit upstairs with a show of documentary images by German photographer Thomas Struth. Where the artists in the Dopitová show plunge into the rough and tumble of their own identities within society, Struth looks at things with a cooler eye, photographing the structures that define and illustrate our relationships to society. He shoots buildings, families, and the interiors of museums to understand the skeletal systems of urban civilizations; the show itself feels clean and precisely put together. His family portraits give the exhibit a little flesh, but even they convey structure first and foremost. They say, "This is who we are," just as Dopitová and her colleagues ask, "Who are we?"

■

Kalinovska has done more than simply put Dopitová in context. Now that she's got the artist here in Boston, she wants to see what Dopitová will do. The ICA director is undertaking an unprecedented project: now that she's put up her show, she is using additional funding from the National Endowment for the Arts to support a collaboration among the seven artists involved in the exhibit.

"It's a risk. We don't know what's going to happen," she admits. "But artmaking is about process, which is meeting and talking, and even if nothing physical happens, they will have exchanged ideas."

Dopitová is in residence at the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts at Harvard University, where she and her colleagues have the run of the printing facilities. She met in the ICA offices last Friday with Cardozo, Gallagher, Hsu-Flanders and Marika for the second time to brainstorm about the nature of the collaboration. Rothenberg and Lemieux couldn't make the meeting. Others on hand were Kalinovska and a handful of ICA staff and Ron Rizzi — an artist who will lead a panel discussion on the nature of local and international art at the ICA next Sunday, February 6. Semina Quraeshi of the Carpenter Center arrived in the middle of the meeting, after an hour-long rush-hour drive from Newton.

The collaboration is still in its nascent stages, though Dopitová completes her residency at the end of February, and a sense of urgency to get on with it fueled the discussion.

"Maybe we can think about the theme, the first step," Dopitová suggested in careful English. "The second step, it's important to know which format we need. The theme, for example, I liked Denise Marika's problem between private and public. Where is the boundary?"

Marika spoke up. "I'm intimidated by thinking about the product. I thought about process, thought of physically interacting and combining things, to see whether that creates a theme. I am afraid that if we think in terms of a print, say, it's a wonderful thing to have, but I'm not sure that process is so fruitful."

The artists agreed that working with a common link, such as a theme or material, was important. The question of whether they would work as a team or as several teams or as individuals was up in the air. So was the question of the final product, and whether there would be one at all.

"It may not become a product. We may do something as an activity together," suggested Gallagher.

"Let's throw out the end product," Hsu-Flanders agreed.

"What material occurs to you?" Quraeshi asked, getting down to brass tacks.

"Silk. It can be printed on very easily," said Cardozo.

"Gauze. It has that potential for transparency," Marika put in. "I think of the people in the show, and the unusual material they gravitated to. Opposites, like gauze and brick."

Gallagher jumped in. "Brick is found, it has a certain meaning. Gauze and silk are amorphous, still two-dimensional. We need to think about it more. It should be something in our face that we can't turn into paper."

Time was running out, and the discussion was only just starting to gel. The artists agreed to meet the next Monday in the printmaking studio at the Carpenter Center, leaving ICA staff and the press behind.

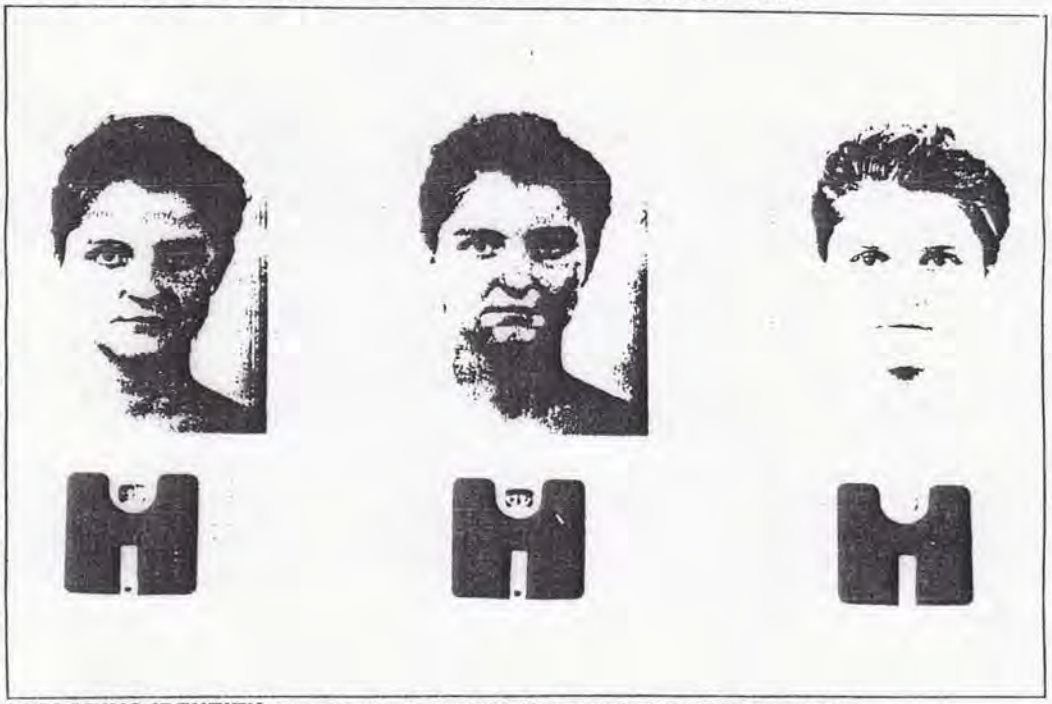
"We haven't had a chance just as artists to be together," Marika pointed out. "That's what we need next."

The focus of the collaboration was still hazy, but according to Kalinovska, that's the nature of the beast.

"We know these people have a lot in common," she avows. "We're using the artists to let the public and students know what is involved in the artistic process. Usually, the door is locked. It's like going into the bakery and seeing how the bread and pastries are made."

With bread, though, you've got dough and an oven and a pretty good idea of what's going to come out that oven door after an hour. Artmaking is more mysterious and much riskier.

"The ICA's contribution to contemporary art is validated by what we can bring to the table," Kalinovska says, pointing out that the ICA is, at 58, the oldest cutting-edge institution in the Western world. "It's expected of us to take great risks. But," she adds with a wry smile, "we don't take stupid risks."

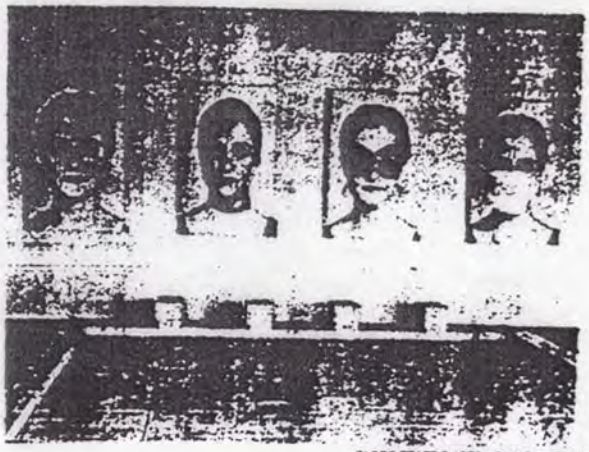


EXPLORING IDENTITY: Milena Dopitová's *Egg Mask*, three photographs with bathroom scales.

Temin, Christine. "Exploring Identity, Internationally." *The Boston Globe*, January 19, 1994.

Living | Arts

THE BOSTON GLOBE • WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1994



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / DAVID L. RYAN

Milena Dopitova's "Four Masks," at the ICA.

Art Review

Exploring identity, internationally

By Christine Temin
GLOBE STAFF

It would have been simple for Institute of Contemporary Art director Milena Kalinovska to present a solo show of works by the young Czech conceptual artist Milena Dopitova. Instead, Kalinovska took a less direct and more creative path, exhibiting Dopitova's work alongside that of six American artists who also examine identity – often through their own bodies. With this strategy Kalinovska has created one of the most compelling shows the ICA has hosted in years.

"Milena Dopitova in Context" demonstrates the internationalism of the current art scene, how artists' concerns transcend geography and politics. In post-communist Prague, Dopitova is exploring the same themes that interest artists in democratic America. All the artists in the show happen to be women, and all except Dopitova happen to be from Boston. "Happen" is the operative word here. This isn't

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Artists' common ground at ICA

■ ART

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a local show or a women's show, but one where strong artists make strong points.

The installation at the ICA is extremely spare, but the air is thick with ideas. This is a show for lingering looks. Dopitova's "Four Masks" is a good place to start. She has photographed her own face four times, wearing different masks that invite interpretation: a surgical mask, a stocking mask, a beautifying mask, a masked ball mask. Women are always being categorized, Dopitova tells you, and their individuality concealed. In front of the photographs is a shallow pool made of cement blocks, with four cement pedestals at one end – the kind of pedestals you'd stand on before diving into the water for a race. Here Dopitova addresses the competitive aspect of life – and its danger. There isn't any water in this pool. Dive and you're dead.

Annette Lemieux's "Torso After Trockel" also treats women's multiple lives. Rosemarie Trockel's "Schizophrenic Sweater" – a sweater with two neck openings – inspired Lemieux's mannequin with two necks, one for each hat the modern woman must wear. Woman as mother is the theme of Lillian Hsu-Flanders' "Hopscotch," a gargantuan dress pinned to the wall. The dress is pregnant and bloated – reminiscent of the frazzled Mother Ginger character in "The Nutcracker," whose children scamper out from beneath her skirts, as energetic as she is exhausted. On the front of the dress is a giant hopscotch court. The inescapable message is: Give birth and get trampled. Adding to the discomfort is an extremely high, buttoned, strangulating collar.

There's more constriction in Ellen Rothenberg's "Das Wesentliche (The Essence)," which consists of 44 leather belts cinching some foam rubber padding around a column in the middle of the room. The belts form a corset that binds physically but also suggests psychological restriction. On them Rothenberg has stamped texts from the unexpurgated version of "The Diary of Anne Frank," in which Frank describes her own sex organs in detail. Rothenberg has fragmented the text, which only adds to the power of lines like "And inside it looks very red and ugly and fleshy."

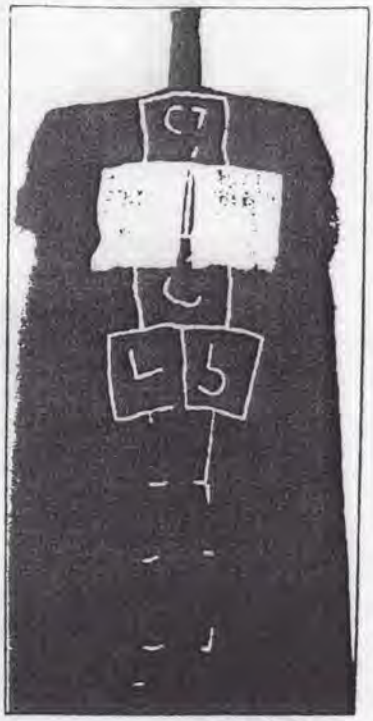

PHOTO / DAVID CARAS

Lillian Hsu-Flanders' "Hopscotch": Give birth and get trampled.

MILENA DOPITOVA IN CONTEXT
At: *The Institute of Contemporary Art*
through March 27

Even in an age of sexual liberation, lines like that make us squirm. So do the doctored photographs of Marnie Cardozo, who trains a pinhole camera on her own naked, 62-year-old body and then distorts and repeats the results to come up with mirror or kaleidoscopic images – patterns that look almost abstract from afar. A closer look reveals flab, spider veins, the chicken-like skin of Cardozo's breasts. Hands claw at flesh, disappear into a pillow of skin that covers an unrecognizable body part, and distortions are more horrifying than Diane Arbus' photos of freaks. These suggest not one malformed body but a body reduced to [illegible] pulp.

The eyes in Ellen Gallagher's paintings look like eggs sunny side up; the mouths like hot dog buns. The disembodied eyes and mouths were inspired by minstrel shows and tar babies, stereotypes of African Americans. But Gallagher is too sophisticated an artist to clobber us with a simple political point and leave it at that. Her parades of eyes and mouths march across the wide lined paper on which schoolchildren practice penmanship, suggesting stereotypes as a learned response. Gallagher is also the only artist in the show whose work is actually beautiful: These are paintings with buoyant rhythms and luscious surfaces.

Denise Marika's people are also confined by lines. In her "Battle," a video of a nude man and woman wrestling is projected onto a steel I beam, a terrifying, floor-to-ceiling presence. The wrangling couple move back and forth, left and right, on and off their extremely narrow screen. Marika contrasts the cold, rigid steel with warm, naked, vulnerable flesh, and the stillness of the steel with the relentless – and hopeless – movement of the bickering pair, who look like Adam and Eve about to be cast out of the Garden. "Battle" makes you think about the containment and editing of emotion, how the photograph and the TV screen present a neat slice of a much larger and ragged-edged reality.

The most evocative work in the show is Dopitova's "Twins: My Sister and Me," in which the artist photographs herself and her twin sister, their hair hidden by bathing caps. Dopitova makes you realize how much the way you wear your hair reveals about age, education and social status. The photos also make the point that even an identical twin is an individual: The shapes of the twins' heads are slightly different, as is the expression in their eyes. There is a tender, vulnerable, girlish quality about the straightforward photos, reinforced by the table and chair in front of them: Completely covered with pink knitting that removes them from the realm of reality, they look made of spun sugar.

Temin, Christine. "Kalinovska's Pilgrimage to Prague." *The Boston Globe*, January 16, 1994.

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THE BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE • JANUARY 16, 1994

A pilgrimage to Prague

An exile no longer, the ICA's director takes a business trip that is also a journey home

Kalinovska and Dopitova at the Jan Hus monument in the Old Town Square.

Milena Kalinovska: Prague helps explain her.

Milena Dopitova with her husband, Pavel Humhal.

Kalinovska's pilgrimage to Prague

By Christine Temin
GLOBE STAFF

PRAGUE – Milena Kalinovska, the Czech-born director of Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art, returned last month to the homeland whose communist government sentenced her to a three-year jail term and stripped her of her citizenship after she left for London, in 1970.

The communists don't rule the Czech Republic anymore, but the scars of their regime are still here. "There used to be a giant statue of Stalin up there, 40 meters tall," Kalinovska remembers, pointing toward the great Prague Castle on a hill that dominates the city. She tells the story of the competition that determined which Czech artist would design the Stalin statue. All artists were strongly "encouraged" to apply. The winner, Otakar Svec, was so distraught at being chosen that he committed suicide. The statue went up anyway. It was pulled down decades ago, but its ghost remains, says Kalinovska. It's not only the 20-degree weather that makes her shiver as she gazes up from Prague's Old Town Square to the spot where that menacing Stalin loomed.

Kalinovska's mission in Prague was to meet with curators and artists, including Milena Dopitova, a young woman whose work will be shown for the first time in the United States in "Milena Dopitova in Context," which opens at Boston's ICA on Wednesday. In a two-day whirlwind of morning-to-midnight appointments, Kalinovska visited with young artists of a generation reveling in – and bewildered by – the freedom brought by the Velvet Revolution of 1989. She also met with older artists whose careers were effectively – and capriciously – killed by the communists.

While the weight of the past confronted Kalinovska, the weight of the ICA – the layoffs, the money problems, her bewilderment over what seems to her the public's insufficient appreciation of the institute – did not. She said she felt blissfully "irresponsible" during the trip, and managed to squeeze in pleasures-including a visit to her favorite craft shop and a bakery where she gorged – there's no other word for it – on Prague's famous pastries.

Prague explains aspects of Kalinovska. When she came to the ICA in late 1991, everyone remarked on her extraordinary empathy with artists. Her nurturing attitude dates from her childhood: She loved to draw, but she loved even more to organize other children's drawings into little exhibitions at the end of the school year. To make friends, she made art shows. Knowing what happened to artists in her native country under communism has only reinforced her protective instinct toward them.

Seeing her in Prague was also to see where her politically charged ICA programming comes from. In America, political art is trendy but optional. To Kalinovska – whose family suffered under communism, as all Czechs did – politics is an essential, inescapable part of art. The communists took over Prague the year Kalinovska was born, 1948, and the Russian army arrived in force in 1968. "The occupation completely formed my generation," she says. "It's like it happened yesterday."

The sudden loosening of the shackles has complicated life – and art – in the Czech Republic. Under communism, says Kalinovska, "Life was clear: There was just one enemy. Now it's much more confusing." For example: In a country reinventing itself, the law doesn't yet allow tax benefits to nonprofits like museums; art schools can't even afford to accept gifts of books, because they'd have to pay a 45 percent tax on them.

PHOTO / PAVEL HOREJSI

Kalinovska and Dopitova pass a 500-year-old astronomical clock (at left) and a church begun in 1365 (background): The art and politics of the past live side-by-side with the present.

Then there's the gallery scene: Prague has only two good commercial galleries devoted to presenting contemporary art, both born since the revolution, and artists compete fiercely to be represented by them. Some older artists think the young ones may be driven by the new market forces to produce work that sells, rather than work from the soul.

As for the museum situation, the government has allocated a vast constructivist building with two miles of wall space for contemporary art (the communists used it for tractor shows), but there's no money for programming. The director of the museum, Jiri Seveik, jokingly laments the divorce that meant that Ivana Trump, a Czech-in-exile, no longer has enough money to become a major patron.

Prague's beauty is almost unreal. Kalinovska says that beauty was heightened for her generation. The theaters that were closed by the communists, the books that couldn't be read, these deprivations only made people more aware of the gorgeousness of Prague. A thousand years of fabulous architecture crowds together in the old parts of the city, everything from the austere Romanesque stone Rotunda of the Holy Cross to the soaring Gothic of St. Vitus Cathedral, the flamboyant High Baroque of the Church of St. Nicholas and the angular, unsettled-looking Cubist architecture that exists virtually nowhere else. "In Prague, you can go back to the ninth century and then be instantly in the present," says Kalinovska, gazing at a banner announcing a contemporary art show in an ancient building in the Old Town Square. In the historic heart of Prague there are, thank goodness, few examples of the bleak gray concrete atrocities the communists erected in the Czech countryside. Prague was simply too built up to accommodate them.

The basement apartment where Kalinovska grew up was not beautiful. It had a concrete yard and wall, but the play of shadows on the cement fueled the child's imagination. While her father worked as a cameraman for filmmaker Milos Forman and her mother, trained as an economist, was forced to work the night-shift in a factory, Kalinovska was raised by her maternal grandmother, the cleaning lady for the building where they lived. It was the only job the communists permitted her. Her crime was having had two husbands who were intellectuals: The first, Kalinovska's grandfather, was co-founder of the Slavonic Library at Charles University.

Her grandmother, says Kalinovska, taught her three things. One, that the most important thing in life is education, which no one can take away from you. Two, to eat good food for good health. And three, you can tell the person by the shoes. Kalinovska always wears flat, mannish shoes, but says, "I'm trying to retrain." Walking – in flats – through Prague, spying a bedraggled, ancient woman dragging her shopping cart across a square, Kalinovska says, "That's what my grandmother looked like when I left. I never saw her again."

Her grandmother's second husband regularly took the young Kalinovska on the tram to the center of the city. They would walk across the 14th-century Charles Bridge, a quarter-mile-long stone carpet presided over by Baroque statues of saints, and drop into the Church of St. Nicholas, where more outsize Baroque statues writhe in the half light, as if they wanted to jump off their pedestals and use physical force to keep the worshiper in line.

Kalinovska remembers her childhood as happy, although to survive the communist regime, "My father taught me to pretend I was an idiot, to be very, very stupid when in contact with the authorities," the better to fool the secret police who routinely harassed anyone – even a young girl – who showed any evidence of independent thought.

"Everyone here had a double life," she says. "This was why people so enjoyed Kafka and Kundera, with their absurdity. The situation was perceived not as tragic, but as humorous. That was how people survived."

When Kalinovska was old enough to attend Charles University, she wanted to study philosophy but settled for law because the curriculum of the former focused on theory of communism. She knew there was such a thing as art history and was fascinated by it, but because only five students a year were accepted to study that field, she didn't even try. Not that art would have been a quiet refuge: Even art historians weren't left alone under communism. The communists tried to persuade Eliska Fucikova, now the curator of Prague Castle, to switch from her specialty in 16th-century art to another period about which she knew next to nothing. They prevented Fucikova and other experts – including Jiri Setlik, the country's most prominent art historian – from traveling, even with exhibitions they'd organized for museums in other countries. "I lost 20 years," says Setlik, who was finally given back his passport in 1989, when he was 60.

In 1970, at age 21, Kalinovska left Prague for London with one suitcase, 10 English pounds and her parents' blessing. She went on an officially sanctioned trip to study English. The trip was supposed to last for two weeks; she stayed away for two decades. After she left, her father was never allowed to work in movies again. She was able to absolve herself of some of the guilt because Milos Forman left around the same time she did: The communists punished her father not just because of her, she reasoned, but because of the far more noteworthy departure of the outspoken filmmaker. Guilt was a fact of life for Czechs. "People who stayed here felt guilty because they couldn't change things," Kalinovska says. "People like me felt guilty because we left."

She went to school in England and Canada and wound up working as exhibitions organizer at the avant-garde Riverside Studios in London. She traveled, but "my constant nightmare was that I'd be flying in Europe and the plane would have to make an emergency landing in Czechoslovakia and I'd be arrested and put in prison."

In 1990, she did land in Prague, but it was a carefully plotted homecoming rather than an emergency. Last month's trip was her fourth there since the revolution, and she has grown so comfortable that she even fantasizes about returning to the "City of a Hundred Spires" to live with her children and husband, the economist Jan Vanous, whose consulting business already has an office in the Czech capital.

Still, some places in Prague make her anxious. Visiting Prague Castle to pay a courtesy call on a curator, she checks in at the visitors' reception area, an unthreatening lobby whose security consists only of a pleasant-looking teen-age guard and a primitive metal detector. "This is unthinkable," says Kalinovska, gasping as a small laughing child runs out of the hall leading to President Vaclav Havel's office. "It used to be the only reason you'd come here would be to beg that your husband wouldn't be executed or something," she recalls. Now she peeks into Havel's suite, which looks like a set for "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood." Around the door of the Czech Re-