

## Abstract

### Coincidence as the animator of the independent Czech art of the 1960s

We are currently progressing to viewing coincidence as a phenomenon. While coincidence cannot be explained, it needs to be understood. It may be an important program principle of the universe, where coincidence may give life and matters a different direction, and it is undoubtedly part of all of our creative and resourceful efforts. Therefore, we treasure coincidence and in art, we even intentionally call for it frequently. Naturally, the history of art gives us many examples, where coincidence helped an artist to revive their imagination and strengthened their ability to improvise. Dealing with coincidence and activating coincidence intentionally or unintentionally have always been one of the most tantalising moments of many creative endeavours. It is interesting to observe how the role of coincidence and its impact in art, as well as in a human life intermittently diminishes only to resurface again as if in connection with measuring the powers of the acting individual and the current being. It is exciting to follow the complex movement of coincidence in the wide field of potential meanings and understanding, somewhere between Freedom, Necessity, Fate, Fortune, Higher Power or perhaps Providence, and examine the complexity of these and other relations and shifts in its perception throughout the history. For our purposes, the notion of the “natural world” and the necessity of the “natural experience” returning, which was reiterated to the public by the phenomenologist Jan Patočka in the eased atmosphere of the 1960s, provides crucial food for thought. While examining this and additional options for interpreting coincidence, we will also focus more closely on its current articulation within the serendipity theory, which originally traces the ratio between coincidence and intention, imagination and reason, spontaneity and regulation. Coincidence with its vagueness is our lens for viewing the visual arts of the chosen decade in their wider spectrum of expression: through informal expression and specificity of assemblage to neo-constructivist directions and conceptual expression. At the same time, this allows us to apply a greater span in the conception of coincidence: from an existential “event” and perception of reality as coincidental development, instinctiveness and transpersonal experience, through the topic of searching for thus far hidden analogies, provoking moments of unexpected encounters and putting reality into unusual context, to the attractive ambivalence of coincidence and necessity, determinist chaos and order, or the topic of overlap, which is offered by the very nature coincidence and which is inherent for every integrative way of thinking. This perspective offers the creation of

essentially all artists who made a significant impact on the Czech visual arts of the 1960s with their individual approach connected with an emphasis on processuality, experience, material and medial permeability, observance of the mechanism of chaos and its identification with order, principle of play, experimenter's approach and verification of permeability of boundaries for closer and differently structured examination.

Key words: coincidence – ambiguity – serendipity – structure – event – order – chaos – openness – intentionality – unintentionality – possibility – improvisation – kairos – unpredictability