

Abstract

The thesis focuses on Emil Filla and aims to depict his moral opinion in the context of his work, with an emphasis on the 1930s, when his liberal values are confronted with the threat of totalitarian regimes. I start with a description of Filla's work and social activities before the First World War: I mention his connection with the artistic groups Osma and Skupina výtvarných umělců. Then I describe his life in the Netherlands, where he was forced to exile after the outbreak of the First World War: I pay attention mainly to his resistance activities, to the publication of the magazine *Michel im Stumpf*, but also to his interest in Dutch art, which can be associated with Filla's admiration of the free spirit of the Dutch nation. I also analyze the text *Cesta tvořivosti* (The Path of Creativity), which he wrote during the exile and in which he formulates his artist's aesthetic and philosophical attitude. Subsequently, I focus on the interwar period, describing Filla's involvement in the activities of the Mánes Fine Artists Society (Spolek výtvarných umělců Mánes). Main part of the thesis is dedicated to the analysis of the articles featured in the magazine *Volné směry* which was published by the Mánes, which Filla led as the chief editor between 1933-1939. I go over articles on the Soviet Union, German art, the Spanish Civil War, but also with those concerning the phenomenon of a political and cultural oppression in general. Furthermore, I describe two of Filla's speeches from 1937, in which he calls for the defense of the Czech national art against the threat of fanatical nationalism, Nazism and fascism. In the context of the theme of this thesis, I focus mainly on works from the second half of the 1930s, specifically on his paintings with motifs of ancient mythology, of animal fights, and those inspired by national folklore. These motifs share a common theme, which is fight for freedom, and I see them as a culmination of Filla's lifetime defense of freedom of artistic expression and freedom of a human being.