

**The Landscape painting in Prague 1840-1890:  
Presentation and reflection of landscape painting at the Art Union  
exhibitions.**

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**ABSTRACT:**

The present thesis summarizes the results of the research project focused on the history of landscape painting and its presentation at the annual exhibitions of the Art Union in Bohemia („Krasoumná jednota“) from 1840 to 1890, the period of a critical significance for evolution of the genre and establishing the aesthetical and ideological schemes characteristic for the Czech landscape painting of the 19th Century. The landscape painting was a respectful and popular branch already from the beginning of the respective period, yet since then it grew into a leading source of aesthetic innovations and dominant component of the exhibitions and art trade. The 1840-1890 period begun with the establishing Max Hushofer's landscape class at the Prague Academy of Arts and terminates with close contacts with impressionists. For local landscape painting it brought not only the dramatic rearrangements of aesthetical frameworks but also the subsequent establishment of the standard clichés and themes which further accompanied Czech landscape painting until present. Although the history of the Czech landscape painting of the second half of the 19th Century was many times reported and interpreted, as yet it was not analyzed as a complex phenomenon, including e.g. the effects of foreign influences, amount and specificities of the works beyond mainstream trends, effects of public preferences and critical reflexions. Hence, the detailed reexamination of the primary evidence (catalogues, critical scripture, etc.) was the first aim of the study. The detailed database of the landscape paintings exhibited from 1840 to 1890, which covers more than 7000 items, became analyzed with aid of several methodical approaches (statistical analyses of sources, themes, sale dynamics, in particular years, and in substages of the covered period). The trends revealed by these analyses were confronted with the history of Czech art scene, events in history of academic education and contemporary critical references on all these subjects. The corresponding information was retrieved also for the main foreign centers of the landscape

painting which contributed the Prague exhibitions in an essential way (Munich, Düsseldorf, Vienna, Paris).

The thesis assembled the reliable data (including the catalogue) which enabled a critical revision of traditional stereotypes in the historiography of the Czech landscape painting, and identification of real trends and shifts revealed then with a sufficient complexity. The thesis is expected to provide a reliable platform for further study of the art history of the respective period and of a role of Prague as an important art trade place for the works of foreign artists.