

Kurt Kotouc At An Opening At The National Gallery



This picture was taken in Prague in the 1970s. It is from some opening at the National Gallery.

The last twenty years I've worked in the National Gallery in Prague preparing art catalogues and posters.

I was expelled from the communist party after the Prague Spring. At that time, I was working at the National Gallery in Prague, where I worked in uncertainty because I wasn't a member of the Party. I was the director of the print section, which bothered one director who constantly emphasized that I shouldn't be allowed to continue in my function. In the end, I managed to hang in there, in part because the National Gallery was directed by Jiri Kotalik. Many people reproach him for cooperating with the regime because he remained diplomatic with party and state representatives. Otherwise, they wouldn't have kept him there but at the same time, he allowed the National Gallery to work with certain people who would otherwise have been politically unacceptable. That in itself is notable because at that time, it was difficult to employ someone who had been expelled or written off by the party to a position that was not manual labor. I managed to stay in my job but I was constantly living in doubt.

Because of my work at the National Gallery, I didn't have a great deal of free time. I liked to travel and I was one of the lucky people who because of various exhibits got to go abroad. I retired in 1987.