

Zuzana Minacova's Book 'Reconstruction Of A Family Album'



In 1996, at the age of 65, I decided to renew my old family album. In the chaos of World War II, I had lost most of my family photographs, and so I came upon the idea of reconstructing the album with the help of my friends and relatives, who became my models. Thus the publication 'Rekonstrukce rodinného alba' [The Reconstruction of a Family Album] came about. Most of my relatives died in concentration camps during the war, not leaving behind even one photograph or memento; they were perpetuated only in my memories, and so it occurred to me to bring them to life through photography.

Thanks to the art of photography, to which I've devoted myself my whole life, one can stop time for a while and conjure up something that has faded over time. My family helped me: my son Matej played my father, Dezider Silberstein, and Matej's wife Karin played my mother, Pavlina Silbersteinova. My friends, actors and directors, posed as my uncles, aunts and cousins.

While taking the photographs, I actually for the first time told my son Matej various family anecdotes, funny stories as well as personal tragedies. Matej decided to make a movie about our family - and so in 1999 he made a movie entitled "Vsichni moji blízcí" ["All My Loved Ones"]. The theme was based on my childhood memories, but as the story of my childhood seemed to him to be too sad, he incorporated Winton's rescue operation into the plot. Winton, who came to Prague for the film's premiere, very much liked the picture. The movie was shown at sixty prestigious international festivals, and received a number of awards; among others, it was also submitted to the Academy Awards for the Slovak Republic in the foreign film category.