



Press release
Prague 10th September 2008

Petr Nikl presents ORBIS PICTUS in Canada

ORBIS PICTUS or Gate to the World of Creative Human Imagination

An interactive exhibition designed by the Czech artist Petr Nikl

On 5 October 2008, the interactive exhibition *ORBIS PICTUS or Gate to the World of Creative Human Imagination*, which was designed by the artist Petr Nikl, will be shown for the first time in North America in the Science World BC at the TELUS World of Science in the Canadian city of Vancouver. The exhibition is being held under the auspices of the Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic, Václav Jehlička, the Audabiac civic association, Jiří and Radana Wald. It will run until 23 February 2009. After that it will then be presented at the Czech Centre in Brussels and in the European Commission's Madou Tower building as an official accompanying cultural event for the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union under the patronage of European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth Ján Figel'. He has declared 2009 to be the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation*, and the ORBIS PICTUS exhibition symbolises this. The event will also be held in both Brussels and Prague under the auspices of Prague City Mayor Pavel Bém.

This legendary exhibition had its world premiere in Paris in 2006. In 2007 it was subsequently presented in Prague and other Czech cities before visiting the Italian city of Florence. The ORBIS PICTUS exhibition is inspired by the work of the great Czech humanist John Amos Comenius and is a central feature of the PAMPAEDIA project set up by Jiří and Radana Wald. The number of people in Vancouver who are expected to attend this exhibition conceived by Petr Nikl should help ensure that more than a total of two million people will have visited the event.

The book *“The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart”* by J. A. Comenius has been the main inspiration for the visual artist Petr Nikl, the author of the artistic concept of the exhibition. The scenario of the exhibition is based on his experience acquired from interactive exhibitions *Nests of Games*, Rudolfinum Gallery, 2000 (30 000 visitors), and *Garden of Imagination and Music*, Czech exhibition at EXPO 2005 in Aichi in Japan (1,7 million visitors).

The authors of interactive instruments and installations include thirteen Czech and foreign artists: Milan Cais, Michael Delia /USA/, Luboš Fidler, Martin Janíček, Jiří Konvrzek, Jaroslav Kořán, Petr Lorenc, Jiří Melzer, Petr Nikl, Quido Sen /Switzerland/, Ondřej Smeykal, Václav Smolka, Čestmír Suška.

Information about the exhibition:

The centrepiece of the exhibition is *The Labyrinth of the Heart* – an organic playing assembly mounted in an inflated heart-shaped structure, which makes possible, like all the other exhibits, the visitors’ active and creative participation. In the huge inflatable heart, in front of Petr Nikl’s imaginary landscape, visitors can play a three-octave *bubbling water organ* with its flue pipes immersed in water, designed by Václav Smolka, or a *hurdy-gurdy* created by Martin Janíček, or they can use sticks to sound Jaroslav Kořán’s *Dreamers’ Horologes* and peek into periscope tunnels devised by Petr Lorenc. The visitors of the exhibition will also find *The Ear*, Ondřej Smeykal’s sound tent, and *The Eye*, Petr Nikl’s massive object designed on the principle of the *camera obscura*. They will also have an opportunity to chime Milan Cais’s anthropomorphic *Kalimbas*, Luboš Fidler’s *Songster Butterfly*, a huge keyboard instrument with aluminium rods instead of strings, Ondřej Smeykal’s *Rattling Tube*, Petr Nikl’s *Cither*, Martin Janíček’s *Music Drum*, Čestmír Suška’s metallic *Sphere* and Jiří Melzer’s sound instrument the *Hat*. Visitors can also visually play Petr Lorenc’s giant kaleidoscope *The Labyrinth of Light* and the *Fountain of Delight*.

The exhibition forms the core of the PAMPAEDIA international project, and it draws inspiration from Comenius’s work. Visitors of the interactive exhibition will have an opportunity to buy the book *Orbis pictus or...* by Petr Nikl which presents the development of interactive projects – play-related collective exhibitions that have been conceived since 2000 by Petr Nikl with the participation of many other various artists and Comenius’s book *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* in different languages, the English version will be published in occasion of the presentation of the exhibition in Vancouver with illustrations of Petr Nikl.

Since 2000, the exhibition concept, which was created by Petr Nikl, has been seen by around 1.9 million visitors, both in the Czech Republic and abroad.

The exhibition will be held in Vancouver in Science World at TELUS World of Science from 5 October 2008 to 23 February 2009.

TELUS World of Science, Vancouver

1455 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6A 3Z7

www.scienceworld.ca

The exhibition is organised by Czech civic association Audabiac with cooperation with WALD Press publisher under the auspices of the minister of Culture of Czech Republic Václav Jehlička. The exhibition is being held by with the considerable support of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Canada, Prague City Hall and the Unie Comenius organisation. The exhibition is sponsored by the Canadian Company Atrium Innovations Inc., the partner is Science World BC and the media partner of the exhibition is Czech magazine Sanquis.

Official website of the project:

www.orbis-pictus.com

www.tv.pampaedia.cz

Contact: Jiří and Radana Wald, jwald@telecom.cz