

PRESS RELEASE

The Incredible Lightness of Being: Jiří Pelcl – Czech Design

Exhibition premiered at the University of Brighton Gallery, Grand Parade, Brighton 7 January – 20 February 2012, Monday - Saturday 10am – 5 pm

Jiří Pelcl's innovative designs and central role in educating designers for industry in the changing political, economic and cultural landscape of the Czech Republic have been recognized internationally for more than two decades. Educated at the Prague Academy of Art, Architecture and Design (1972-78) and the Royal College of Art, London, he first attracted widespread attention in 1987 as a founder member of *Atika*, an independent Czechoslovakian radical design group formed in defiance of the Communist Party ban on associations working outside officially approved structures and galleries. *Atika* designs offered artists and designers an imaginative alternative to designs that reflected the repression of individual creativity in a marketplace dominated by the conformist formalism of mass-products within the state system where quantity, rather than aesthetic quality, prevailed. He founded the influential ATELIER PELCL in 1990.

The enduring significance for Pelcl of the individual creative personality is evident in the opening section of the Brighton show. Entitled Visions, the designs displayed are a series of one-off objects, ranging from the sculptural elegance of the Daniela chair (1995) and Pebble bookcase (1998) through to the Luxury sofa (2011) and Mystery lamp (2011), elements of the Luxury Dwelling collection first premiered at the Gallery Grosseti at Milano Design Week 2011. In the Reality section Pelcl's designs may be seen to have breathed fresh life into the output of Czech companies, as in the Bohemia White and the Bohemia Cobalt dining sets (2001) for Český Porcelán, the Alva collection of accessories for commercial interiors (2007) manufactured by Techo, as well as a range of glassware for Crystalex, formerly the largest corporation within the state-controlled glass industry.

Pelcl has received many highly prestigious national and international design awards, including the *World Best Design – Legacy for the Future* Design Award at Seoul (2007) and the National Design Prize of the Slovak Design Centre (2011). He has had more than 20 solo and 110 group exhibitions globally and has written a number of books including *Czech Design 1995-2000: furniture, lighting, tableware, textiles, products* (2001).

The Incredible Lightness of Being: Jiří Pelcl – Czech Design exhibition receives its premiere at Brighton. It was designed by Jiří Pelcl and co-curated by Sylva Petrova and Jonathan M Woodham. An illustrated catalogue will be available in January 2012.

Czech Design – Independent, Free and Democratic? The Pelcl Symposium will be held on Friday 20 January 2012 in the Sallis Benney Theatre, University of Brighton, Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 0JY.

For further information about the exhibition, symposium and contact with Jiří Pelcl, please contact Madeleine Dutton (01273 643720/m.j.dutton@brighton.ac.uk)

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High resolution images available on request

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