

## VIKTOR KOLÁŘ

(b. 1941, Ostrava, Czech Republic)

Viktor Kolář was born in Ostrava, Moravia, on September 7, 1941. His father came from Sviadnov near Frýdek-Místek and was, from the age of three, brought up by his mother; he attended a parish secondary school, from which he ran away, and then, at the age of fourteen, worked in steel mills; he later became a self-taught photographer and filmmaker, then owned a shop with photography supplies and a studio; he passed his interest in photography to his son. Kolář's mother was from the village of Dolni Dubňany (not far from the town of Dukovany where a nuclear energy plant now stands); she was one of seven siblings; in the early 1930s she went to live at her brother's in Ostrava, where she remained. Viktor Kolář grew up with five siblings in a small apartment. He especially enjoyed his vacations in Dolni Dubňany; his impressions of this "paradise" and the world of Ostrava became the basis for his later photography.

1954

Under his father's tutelage, he began to make his first photographs. His father's library, particularly the books on photography, encouraged him to develop this interest.

1956-57

Became acquainted with the photographs of Henri Cartier-Bresson.

1957

Almost died when his appendix burst on the summit of Gruň Mountain.

1959

Began to go to the Vitkovice photography club, where he became friends with Rudolf Janda and Karel Kania. Worked in the Vitkovice Ironworks.

1960-64

Studied at the School of Education, Ostrava, and was involved in theater and photography.

1961

His first work published in the journal *Československá fotografie*.

1964

First solo exhibition, where he showed sixty photographs.

1964-68

Taught at an elementary school; did his compulsory military service; became a librarian, and decided to devote himself fully to photography.

1967

Met regularly with the photography historian Anna Fárová and her artist husband Libor Fára.

1968

Took photographs during the Prague Spring, the period of political liberalization in Communist Czechoslovakia. Left for Canada by way of Vienna.

1968-73

Spent five years in Canada, where he did manual labour and worked as a technician in a photo lab; also worked on projects taking photographs of a shopping center in Montreal (1971-73), for which he received several arts grants, and which led to an exhibition in the Optica Gallery, Montreal. A feeling of inner freedom led him to consider returning to Ostrava. In Canada and the USA, he met with Michael Semak, William Ewing, and Cornell Capa.

1973

On 18 December he returned to Ostrava via Paris and London. Back in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic he was repeatedly interrogated by the secret police, and his passport was confiscated.

1974-75

Worked three shifts in the Nová Hut' foundries loading rolled steel; took photographs of Ostrava.

1975-84

Worked as a stagehand in the Petr Bezruč Theater, Ostrava. Married Marta Roszkopfová, a designer in the theater, and became a father.

1984-94

After becoming a member of the Czech Artists' Fund (Český fond výtvarných umění) he left the theater and worked free-lance, taking photographs of theater and making postcards, among other things.

1991

Received the International Documentary Photography Award from the Mother Jones Foundation; traveled to the USA and gave several lectures.

1993-94

Taught photography as a visiting lecturer at the School of Education, University of Ostrava.

1994

Accepted an offer to teach documentary photography at the Department of Photography at the Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU), Prague.

2000

Became an assistant professor at FAMU, Prague; a Czech-English version of his *Sylaby o fatografickém dokumentu* (Syllabi on Documentary Photography) was published by the school.

2006

Became a professor at FAMU, Prague.

2014

Finished teaching at FAMU, Prague, 1994-2014