

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Reopens Bigger, Stronger, Better

World-Class Art Exhibits Add Excitement To Grand Reopening



“Princess Hyacinth” by Alphonse Mucha is on display as part of “Alphonse Mucha: Inspirations of Art Nouveau” exhibit July 14–December 31, 2012 at the revitalized National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA. Visit www.NCSML.org for more details.

(NAPSA)—The revitalized National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) opens in Cedar Rapids, IA, in July 2012 with three world-class art exhibits that will draw and captivate visitors from around the world.

Now enlarged to 50,000 square feet, the museum and library celebrates its grand reopening with “Alphonse Mucha: Inspirations of Art Nouveau.” Featuring paintings, jewelry, sculptures and lithographs, the exhibition comes directly from the Mucha Foundation in Prague and London. An exhibit of this size and caliber has not appeared in the United States since 1999 and is the first of its type to appear in the Midwest.

From 1995 to 2008, the NCSML definitively stood on the banks of the Cedar River as an icon of the strength of Czechs and Slovaks everywhere. In 2008, the world watched the river reach a record-breaking flood level.

“We were just days from launching a museum expansion project when the flood occurred,” said Gail Naughton, president and CEO of NCSML. “So in keeping with our Czech and Slovak heritage, we moved forward instead of retreating.” The 1,500-ton (3 million-pounds) museum building, dedicated in 1995 by Presidents Michal Kováč (Slovakia), Bill Clinton (U.S.) and Václav Havel (Czech Republic), was moved 100 yards to an area several feet above the record flood level.

While much of the NCSML’s fine art and folklore artifacts were saved from the devastating waters, a great deal had to be refurbished and cleaned.

These refurbished NCSML artifacts can be seen in the “It All Comes Out in the Wash” display featuring beautifully embellished textiles, including the beloved kroje (folk costumes), painstakingly restored at the Chicago Conservation Center. This unique exhibition shows the vibrant colors and quality of the pieces, the largest collection of kroje outside Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The oldest pieces date to the 16th century.

“We will continue to feature our collection of kroje, Royal Dux porcelain, Egermann glassware, Bohemian crystal, folk art and political posters,” Naughton said. “Our commitment to our visitors from around the world is to keep our exhibits fresh. Czech and Slovak histories are vast and rich so we will tell these stories through revolving, captivating exhibits.”

The third grand reopening exhibit, “Weird & Wonderful: Award Winning Art for Children’s Books,” includes 76 award-winning illustrations that were honored at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB), an international competitive exhibition of children’s book illustrations that has been held in Bratislava since 1967.

“With these three awe-inspiring exhibits, we celebrate our return from a natural disaster in 2008,” Naughton said. “There is no better way to celebrate the completion of a project of this magnitude than with these art exhibits. People who come to see them won’t want to leave.

“With the generous contributions of individuals, businesses and foundations—the Czech Republic, the state of Iowa, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the city of Cedar Rapids—we have a dream come true,” Naughton added.

The relocated NCSML (the only professional museum dedicated to Czech and Slovak history and culture in the world) is now three times larger, which lends itself to more exhibition galleries, an expanded research library, additional educational programming space, a new museum store and more collection storage.

The revitalized museum and library opens July 14, 2012. Go to www.NCSML.org for more details about grand reopening events and specific exhibit timelines.

