

Vendula Chalánková * 1981

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Humour is said to cause catharsis and many believe that it can heal. Through humour it is possible to come to terms with everyday life and with situations that go beyond its scope. When tears dry they can be followed by releasing laughter. Humour is often the last resort in embarrassing and tragic moments. It is not by chance that satire and the sarcastic quip are a powerful tool against a foolish individual or power ideology, or that laughter is the herald of hope. When we immerse ourselves in texts about Vendula Chalánková, all of them more or less agree that it is humour and wit that constitute the basic constant of her work. It is best visible in the example of the artist's tragi-comic strips that made her famous with the general public.

However, **The Mercury Hotel** to which this cut-out sheet is dedicated undermines the traditional classification of Vendula Chalánková as the wittiest artist on the Czech art scene and brings to the fore her subtle artistic qualities. At first sight we see a picture/collage where only after taking a second look do we realise that it depicts an ambivalent interior space from an unusual perspective. It is a space that the artist discovered through the TV series *The Fourth Star*. On the internet she found a virtual tour of the hotel where the series takes place and she used it as the basis for creating her collage. It was followed by others, together forming a series of interiors with which she came physically or virtually in contact.

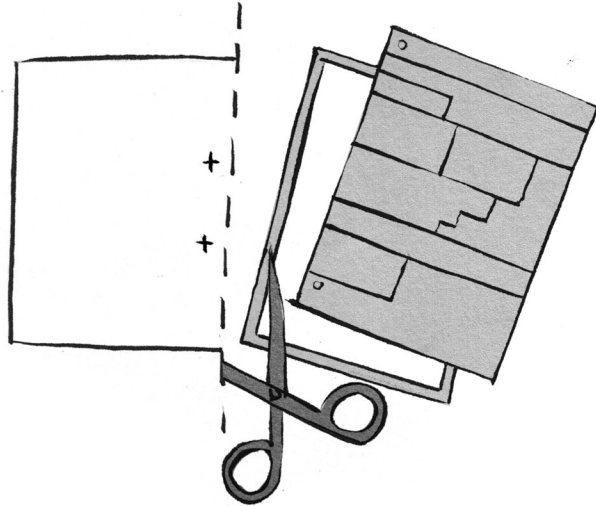
In her work Vendula Chalánková often lets herself be inspired by themes which many an intellectual artist would reject with scorn. She observes the world of consumerism and trashy entertainment or the phenomena that we commonly associate with socially disadvantaged or socially invisible and overlooked groups. But she does not approach them from the position of a socially-engaged artist. On the contrary, she transforms these themes through her personal experience of an artist into a work of art which may give an abstract impression at first sight, but always hides a concrete, often sore subject under its veil.

This applies, for example, on a series of her paintings: **We Never Give Up On Recovering Your Debt** (2015). Under the cloak of an innocent colour spectrum the individual abstract works hide a reference to the colours of envelopes from official authorities – from the harmless blue to the distressing violet on white background signifying restraint. The works by Vendula Chalánková have won the hearts of many viewers. What may be the cause of her success? We can think about that when looking at the collage of the Mercury Hotel. Undoubtedly, a role in that may be played by the artist's ability to stay authentically true to herself and not abandon her sources of inspiration.

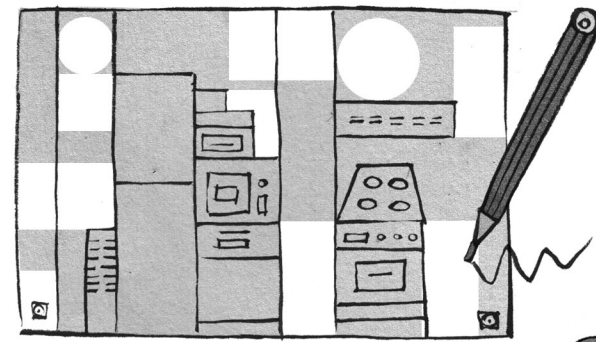
Vendula Chalánková made her work called **The Mercury Hotel** using the technique of **collage** which is derived from the French word, meaning to paste. It encompasses a number of artistic expressions in a two-dimensional or three-dimensional space. The material used most frequently includes reproductions, photographs, textile or found objects. The term "**collage**" has spread to other disciplines which involve cutting/editing and assembling different parts into a new whole and we speak of a collage in music, literature, photography (photomontage), film, videoart, advertising, graphic design of books and other formats of applied arts. The term for collage in sculpture is assemblage. The most prominent Czech artist using the technique of collage was the poet and visual artist **Jiří Kolář**, who enriched the collage technique with new approaches such as muchlage, rollage, chiasmage and prolage.



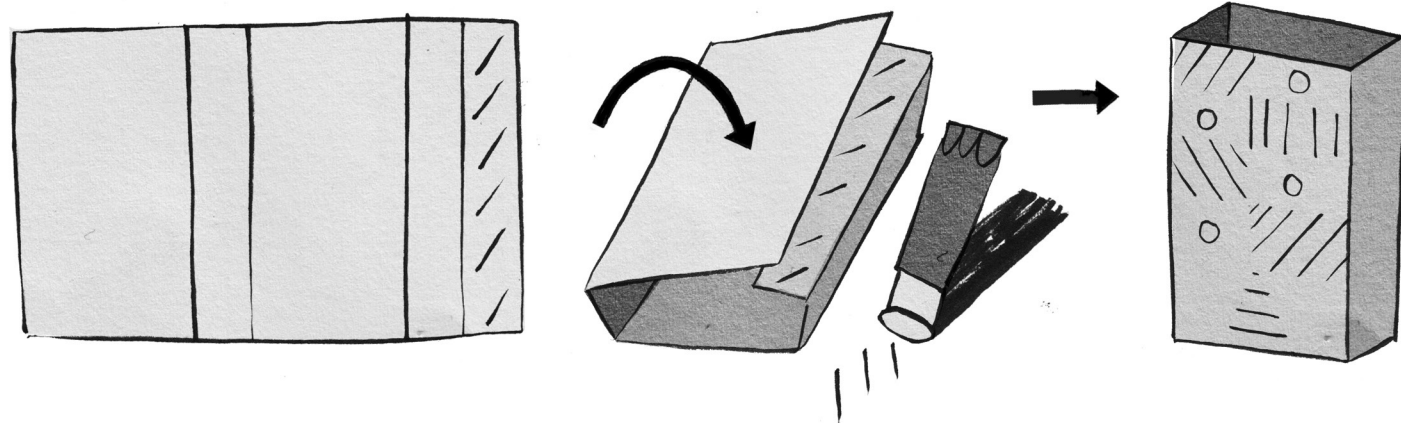
- 1 Cut the A3 sheet in half and then cut out the illustration of a kitchen interior from the A4 format. Now is the right time to colour in the illustration!



- 2 Draw other household appliances which you did not find in the illustration into the empty fields or draw what you would like to have in the kitchen instead of those appliances and what you are missing there.



- 3 Turn the cut out illustration around and fold it to get the shape in the picture. Apply glue to the surfaces with indicated slanted lines. After gluing everything together you will have a cuboid in the shape of a building.



- 4 In her works Vendula Chalánková often uses the technique of collage. Do you know this technique? Collect different types of paper that you will find around you. It can be coloured paper, newspaper clippings or parts of cardboard boxes. See the different textures and the variety of materials surrounding you. Before cutting you can add a drawing to them. In the end paste them onto the building in the indicated spots.

