

## PRESS RELEASE

### Ceremonial Handover of Painting by Stan Young to Lidice Collection And Closing of the Exhibition "Den Lismono ... The Image is Worth Thousands of Words"

**21<sup>st</sup> September 2017 at 11 a.m.**  
**Lidice Gallery and exhibition hall "Pod Tribunou"**  
**Lidice Memorial, Tokajická 152, 273 54 Lidice**



On Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017 at 11 a.m., the permanent art exhibition premises in Lidice will see the painting by Stan Young, created for Lidice in 1957, handed over to the Lidice Memorial. The Lidice Memorial is connecting this special ceremony with the closing of the Greek photo exhibition "Den Lismono ... The Image is Worth Thousands of Words".

After sixty years, thanks to the cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the painting will finally arrive at its intended home. Why after so many decades? That is what two women who will come to Lidice will tell us:

Ms Anna Lowenstein, the daughter of the original owners of the painting, and Ms Angela Wright, the artist's daughter. In March 2017, Ms. Lowenstein contacted the Embassy of the Czech Republic in London about her family owning an oil painting on the theme of Lidice, painted by Stan Young in 1957, after he visited the village. His visit to Lidice, or rather the empty memorial site, impressed him so deeply that he wanted to depict the tragic event in a picture. However, the finished painting remained in Britain and the painter gave it to the Lowensteins who already owned its preparatory sketch. In the year marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the destruction of Lidice, the family decided that the time had come for the painting to reach the place it was originally meant for. Before joining the collection, the painting has been restored by Mr. Mario Král in Brno. The restoration was kindly financed by the Czech benefactor Mr. Karel Jelínek.

The painting is several years older than the art collection itself, which was established officially at Lidice in 1967, primarily thanks to Sir Barnett Stross (1899–1967), a British doctor and politician from Stoke-on-Trent. Shocked by the news of the obliteration of Lidice on 10 June 1942, he launched a campaign already in September that year called Lidice Shall Live, primarily to collect money to support the building of a new Lidice. Sir Barnett Stross, however, did not stop at that very important action. Within the campaign, he initiated the founding of the world's largest rose garden, connecting the site of the burnt-down Lidice with the new Lidice village under construction (1954-1955). The third initiative by Sir Barnett Stross in 1967 was an appeal to establish a Lidice art collection. He was inspired by spontaneous acts of artists from all over the world who, during the war, created and after the war donated their works of art to Lidice to express their solidarity with the tragic fate of the village.

The most famous artists represented in the collection are Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell KP Brehmer, Konrad Lueg, Sigmar Polke, Dagmar Demming, Rosemarie Trockel and Thomas Ruff and Imi Knoebel. This year, they are joined by Lawrence Weiner, Rosa Barba, Sunah Choi, VALIE EXPORT, Alfredo Jaar, Sarkis and many others.

The exhibition of photographs "Den Lismono ... The Image is Worth Thousands of Words" shows the occupation, hunger, mass executions and the destruction and suffering of the Greek people under Nazi occupation during the Second World War. This is an exhibition devoted not only to the memory of the victims but also to those who survived the occupation. It aims to pay respect to the memory of our ancestors who have suffered so that we can live freely today.

### **Programme**

**11 a.m., The event will be launched** in the presence of (in order of speakers):

Mr. Jan Hamáček, Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

PhDr. Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

H. E. Libor Sečka, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in London

Mgr. Martina Lehmannová, Director of the Lidice Memorial

Ms. Anna Lowenstein, daughter of the painting's owners

Ms. Angela Wright, daughter of the artist Stan Young

H. E. Jan Thompson, Ambassador of the United Kingdom in the Czech Republic

Ms. Glykeira Gournopanou, President of the non-profit organization "Den Lismono"

Mgr. Lubomíra Hédlová, Lidice Collection Curator.

*Mr. Karel Jelínek, benefactor*

*PhDr. Miroslav Ambroz, delegate of the restorer Mr. Mario Král*

**11:50 a.m. The minister's reflection for the media**

**12 – 12:30 p.m. A small reception**

12:30 p.m. The guests will be directed to the exhibition hall "Pod Tribunou" for a presentation of the exhibition "Den Lismono ... The Image is Worth Thousands of Words".

1 p.m. End of the event

### **Additional information:**

**H. E. Libor Sečka**, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in London

*"I was truly delighted by the generous offer of the Lowenstein family to dedicate the painting "Lidice" to the Czech Republic. The artist Stan Young made the painting originally for Lidice in the 1950s and it is wonderful that on the occasion of this year's 75th anniversary of the annihilation of Lidice, his work will finally reach its rightful home after several decades. I am very pleased that the Embassy of the Czech Republic in London was able to arrange the restoration of the canvas and frame of the painting as they were no longer in the best condition, and to mediate the painting's ceremonial handover to the Art collection of the Lidice Memorial, where it belongs by right. I would like to thank all our partners, especially Mr. Karel Jelínek, for his significant help and support in the implementation of this project."*

**Angela Wright**, daughter of the artist Stan Young

*"In 1953 Stan Young was part of a Labour Party delegation to Czechoslovakia, which included a tour of Lidice. The horror of the annihilation of the village and its people moved Stan to try to make a painting of the massacre. He later came back to Lidice and spent a week making sketches and talking to survivors. Back home Stan worked on the painting for six months, struggling to depict the enormity of what had happened. His friends the Lowensteins were moved by the work and bought the preparatory sketch, later accepting the painting as a gift."*

**Anna Lowenstein**, daughter of the painting's owners Nettie Lowenstein and Heinz Bernard

*"Everyone in my family is very excited that Stan Young's painting is at last going to the place where it belongs, the Lidice Memorial. We are also delighted that the artist is going to see his painting get the recognition it deserves. For the last 40 years it has been on an upstairs wall in my parents' house - not the ideal spot for viewing it, but the only wall large enough to hold this monumental work, which was intended for a large public space, not for a private house. I am very proud that my family and I have been the custodians of this painting for all these years, before it finally reached its proper home."*

**Veronika Kelerová**, Mayor of Lidice

*"As the mayor of the village, and above all, as a granddaughter to a Lidice woman, I much appreciate the gesture of the members of the Lowenstein family who decided to hand the picture, which is in their possession for more than sixty years, over to Lidice so that it could become a part of the Lidice collection of modern art. The origin of the Lidice collection is closely related to the post-war rebuilding of our village, symbolising the solidarity of artists from all over the world with the Lidice tragedy. Some of the works of art decorate the meeting room and the ceremonial hall of the municipal office, justly winning praise from visitors."*

**Mario Král**, conservator

*"The greatest damage to the picture was of technical nature. The wooden supporting frame was distorted, causing further degradation of the work. Therefore, it was necessary to replace it. Originally, the supporting frame was glued to the hardboard on the back and fixed to it by tacks on the front. To remove it step by step was the most difficult part of the job. After an evened hardboard support of the painting was glued to a new supporting frame, a layer of superficial deposits and degraded varnish was removed from the painting. The holes left by the tacks and some small defects in the painting were filled and retouched. Finally, the painting was covered with semi matte varnish and framed."*

**Stan Young** (\*1920, London)

In WWII, he served in the Middle East and in Italy. After the war, the army enabled him to study at Formation College in Florence (civil education for members of the army), later he studied also at Ealing College of Art. Stan Young was a left-wing artist and in 1953, as a member of parliamentary delegation, he came to Czechoslovakia and visited Lidice, where he was probably commissioned to make an oil painting on the theme of the Lidice tragedy. The picture shows the artist's formal and thematic inspiration by the Italian artist Renato Guttuso and his "new realism", which impressed Young very much when he viewed Guttuso's London exhibition in the early 1950s. (Based on the article by John Green, Stan Young, <http://grahamstevenson.me.uk/index.php/biographies/v-x/y/1141-young-stan>)



**Den Lismono** is a Greek nonprofit organization based in Athens, dealing with various topics related to the natural, cultural and historical heritage of their country.

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