

Petrkov 2024

Exhibition

The Publishing house Romarin

Dear Sylvie, Annick, Mr. Ambassador,
and friends of Petrkov,

After the lovely moments we have just spent with Sylvie and her book on Petrkov and the concert by the students of the Deyl Conservatory, it is my pleasure and honour to briefly introduce the Grenoble-based Romarin association. Annick Auzimour has led Les Amis de Suzanne Renaud et Bohuslav Reynek since its founding in France in 1993.

The Petrkov Czech-French Cultural Centre and Veronika Reynková have brought together some of Romarin's publications here, but they account for only part of its activities. Let's try to sum up in a few words, if such a thing is possible, what this treasure trove that has been collected, expanded, commented on and presented to the public means today. As someone who has been involved with Romarin and its achievements for over thirty years, please allow me to take a slightly more personal look.

Romarin keeps watch over the spirit of Petrkov. It respects and ensures respect for the message of Reynek's and his wife Suzanne Renaud's art in all its humility and sincerity. This would not be possible without Annick Auzimour, her modest personality and her stern but kindly look at the sober, authentic character of every document and piece of information presented to the public.

The story of Bohuslav Reynek and Suzanne Renaud is intertwined with that of a community of friends from the Dauphiné region who forged unflinching bonds of friendship with the two artists. This friendship began between the wars, when the Reyneks made regular visits to France. During the ten winters he spent in the Dauphiné, Bohuslav created precious pastels and charcoals of the churches around Grenoble, where he showed and sold his work. While the war and the Communist regime made travel between Petrkov and Grenoble impossible, letters continued, although at a slower pace. Suzanne's poems were scattered in letters sent to France, while Reynek's prints were slipped into the envelopes, crossed borders and found life on the walls of their friends' homes.

In 1960, Suzanne Roy, Annick's mother, gave her daughter a copy of *Don Quixote*, a set of prints Reynek created in Petrkov. Purchased at a Grenoble bookshop, the gift marked the start of a long story. Annick, a mathematics student, came to Petrkov in autumn 1963. She was one of the last people from France to meet Suzanne, shortly before her death. Annick spent a month here in this house and remained close to its inhabitants for the rest of their lives. During the bleak Communist years, the Reyneks' sons, Michel and Daniel, continued corresponding with their friends in France after their parents' death. In a 1980 letter to Michel, the Dauphiné writer Pierre Dalloz, known as the founder of the Resistance in the Vercors, wrote that he wanted to reintroduce Suzanne's work to France, where it had been forgotten for so long. In two years, he collected the handwritten poems scattered among families in the Dauphiné and, in 1983, gave a talk to the Académie Delphinale on Suzanne's life and work. This was the first step towards everything that happened shortly afterwards: a 1985 Renaud-Reynek exhibition at the Maison Stendhal in Grenoble followed by the publication of three collections of Suzanne's poems by Cahiers de l'Alpe. Dalloz then found a helping hand in Annick, who has tirelessly pursued this work.

When my companion gave me Suzanne's collection *Victimae laudes* in 1991 to start work on my dissertation at Charles University, Pierrot and I had no idea that I was about to make a rare friend in France. Thirty-three years later, we are as close as ever.

Books began coming out at a fast and furious pace as soon as Romarin was founded in 1993. A year later, Suzanne's *Complete Works* were published. The poems I collected and transcribed for my thesis were published in a two-volume critical edition. Other books followed, carefully prepared by Romarin: twenty-eight in all, nearly every one in a bilingual French-Czech edition.

The books' publication and their authors' birth anniversaries have been opportunities to organise literary talks, lectures and symposia, such as the one in 1997 at the Musée de Grenoble with the participation of Sylvie Germain, Daniel Reynek, Václav Jamek, Jan Vladislav, Xavier Galmiche, Josef Mlejnek, Věra Jirousová and Jiří Šerých. In all, Romarin has already held thirty-eight events, including sixteen lectures.

Romarin's goal of raising awareness of Bohuslav's graphic work has led to forty-one exhibitions in Meylan, Paris, Grenoble, Voreppe, Nîmes, Rome and... the French Institute in Prague.

In 1985, Annick began collecting photographs of the pastels, prints, charcoals, etc. that she was going to study in public and private collections and put them in lovely notebooks of different colours. With Michel and Daniel's help, dimensions, dates, titles, media and historical details were recorded, supplemented, checked and double-checked. Meanwhile, in Czechoslovakia, a similar endeavour was being undertaken by Jiří Šerých, Věra Jirousová and, later, Renata Bernardi, who published an inventory of Bohuslav's graphic work listing 776 paintings, drawings and prints for an exhibition. The inventory allowed certain data to be completed and verified. The authors passed the information on to each other and the work continued in France. Annick abandoned her colour-coded notebooks and set up a database that now includes over 3,500 works by Bohuslav Reynek. The special feature of this new inventory, illustrated with a visual for each work, is the inclusion of variants of engravings, listed as works in their own right and documented with detailed information. Romarin's website has hosted this continuously updated catalogue raisonné, the only one of its kind to date, since 2001. We will present it to you at the end of the evening.

I will also mention the Fonds de Dotation Renaud Reynek, which was set up in France in 2014. The collection comprises original works and books Suzanne and Bohuslav donated during their lifetimes, bequests from close friends and acquisitions over the years. A clause stipulates that the collection, located in France and under the Auzimour family's management, is inseparable, inalienable and entirely protected from speculation.

I will end with a quote from Yves Farge in *La Dépêche dauphinoise* in 1935: "Will we ever know how much intellectual exchanges between France and Czechoslovakia owe to Bohuslav Reynek and Suzanne Renaud? The general public does not, nor have they been told."

Romarin has tried to answer this question, to introduce the public to the life and work of Suzanne Renaud and Bohuslav Reynek and to ensure that they are not forgotten.

Thanks to Annick Auzimour and all the "Romarins" in France and the Czech Republic.

Barbora Bukovinská,
Petrkov, 28 September 2024

Acknowledgements

Dear friends,

It is a truly moving experience for me to be back with you and see a patch of Petrkov devoted to Romarin here in the quiet, timeless spot where I first set foot sixty years ago. I would like to warmly thank Lucie Tučková for her initiative in organising this small exhibition.

I never could have imagined that meeting Petrkov's two poets in 1963 would plant a small seed that would sprout into such important work on their œuvre thirty years later. I was little prepared for this responsibility but the time was ripe, for nothing had really been done to bring their work to light. Many gardeners have accompanied me on this adventure with their expertise and friendship: museum and gallery curators, art historians, lecturers at Grenoble's Stendhal University, students at Charles University in Prague, collectors and of course, first and foremost, Michel and Daniel Reynek from the outset. Books, a website, a digital catalogue raisonné and the Renaud-Reynek endowment fund have grown out of decades of hard, fascinating work deepening the French roots of a cultural heritage shared by two countries.

This heritage is barely visible in Suzanne's homeland, where its long-term survival hangs by a thread. That is why the Czech state's acquisition of the Reynek home three years ago was a reassuring event, a tangible bridge for exchanges between Grenoble and Petrkov. I would also like to thank the Petrkov Czech-French Cultural Centre, the vibrant institution that has brought us together with Sylvie Germain today.

Annick Auzimour,
Petrkov, 28 September 2024



Near Paris or Grenoble some years ago