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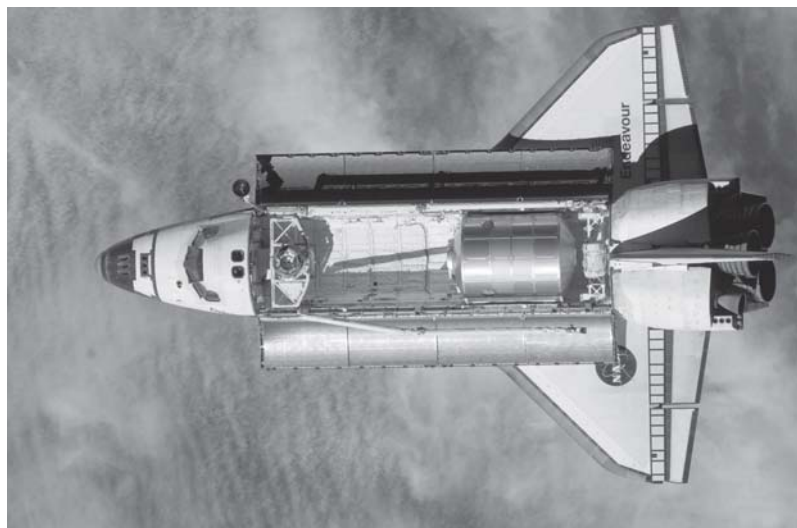
THE NEW HOMELAND



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A DREAM THAT CAME TRUE

In The New Homeland's issue No. 21 we posted a little article on the page 3. The article was informing you about the launch of the NASA Space Shuttle "Endeavour" and its mission tasks. Today we are proudly introducing you to someone who was right there. His name is: JUSTIN POUZAR. It was 11 a.m. and we were knocking on the Pouzar family's house door. Justin came to welcome us. I have never met the family before, but soon I was feeling pretty comfortable though. I could smell Christmas all around. Everyone was smiling, enjoying the holidays. We took seats in the dining room where Mrs. Nofi - the Lady of the House - and Justin's sister Rosie, were serving many delicious treats.... Bon appétit! There were the Czech Christmas candies! And Czech-style sandwiches! Yes, and Mom also baked traditional Czech Christmas Bread. Dad likes Czech cuisine, so she learned to cook Czech meals for him. But she doesn't only serve Czech dishes, she comes from Malaysia, so she offers a very broad range of food. And how do you digest it? Oh, very well! Both my parents come from the totally different parts of the world. I have gotten a chance to see the world from a wider angle, and it has been a pretty fascinating view. *Do you just watch it or do you also explore the world? Do you travel Justin?* What was the last time you visited your Father's homeland? I would love to travel! I'm interested in so many things! Rosie, Mom and Dad were in the Czech Republic just a few years ago. I was there twice when I was younger. Once during communism, once after the revolution. Prague is such a beautiful city. I definitely want to go back soon, maybe next year when I finish my Degree. Besides, traveling through Europe might be easy now



since I kept my dual citizenship. *Do you speak Czech?* Just a few words. I actually took Czech lessons a few years ago. I was hoping that maybe after university I might go to the Czech Republic to find a job there in engineering. So I was trying to learn the Czech language at Masaryktown. Unfortunately, it didn't really work well for me. (...laugh...) But I was thinking about living in the Czech Republic to experience the culture and arts, get to know the land... My Dad always went to the Czech events here in Toronto. We saw the Sokol Parade and Slet. How did you like it? It was very... It is pride I guess - for Sokol to overcome communism, overcome Depression. *Have you ever experienced any advantage from Czech citizenship?* I am proud of my ancestry and of being Czech. I'm proud of the art and culture, but to be honest, this citizenship has been complicating my life, except for when we were traveling through Europe.

How do you mean? Why would the Czech citizenship be a complication? It has been slightly complicating my career. I work for a company that designs and manufactures equipment for NASA. In November 2008, when the space shuttle Endeavor launched, I worked in the Command Center in Houston, Texas. The US Government was really cracking down on terrorism and they wanted to get additional clearance because of my dual citizenship. There are many restrictions on people who work with US military and aerospace companies. To get security clearance, I was forced to fill out many forms that wanted to know everything about my family, relatives, relationships an so on, and I had to get fingerprinted. It was a very complicated procedure. The Czech background didn't really help... Well, no.... It was the opposite in this case. (...laugh...) The clearance of your dual citizenship reminds me of the immigration process to Canada...

I can't really compare, but I never suspected it could be so difficult. You have people there who are from England and they keep dual citizenship and they have the exact same problem - they can not look in to certain files, they can not work on certain projects because of their duality. On the other hand any body who does not have dual citizenship is usually fully integrated. It is ironic. My dual citizenship slightly hindered me in this case. Hopefully they will realize that it is quite ridiculous and maybe they will switch to some different system. *I'm sorry for that! So what did you do in Houston?* Well, let me start at the very beginning.... I went to the University of Waterloo where I studied mechanical engineering. Following university, I was looking for a job for about 6 months until a friend referred me to MDA (MacDonald, Dettweiler and Associates Ltd., note of the Author) Space Missions in Brampton. He was working for MDA and I was wondering how

to get into the company. It is the type of company I always wanted to work for. MDA manufactures the Canadarm and Canadarm2 - the robotic system and equipment installed on the Space Shuttle and International Space Station. So he helped me get me a position there and it was such a great surprise! I felt so lucky to get a job there and everything has been amazing since. The first day that you are there, they take you to the "task area" which is a large room for assembling hardware, where the temperature and humidity are tightly controlled. Once you enter the room, you are surrounded by things that have been to space and things that are going to space and it is such a weird feeling! Just to imagine that all this equipment in front of you is going up there and experiencing the space environment! I started working in the production department which specifically works on the Canadarm. Projects include upgrading certain parts, or repairing those that are damaged etc... Canadarm and Canadarm2 play key roles in the space station assembly and maintenance. Tasks can include moving equipment and supplies around the station, servicing instruments and the other payloads attached to the station, or supporting astronauts working in space. The Canadarms are capable of handling large payloads with fine precision and control. *So what tasks were you given there?* The component I have been working on is at the very end of the robotic arm. It's like the hand of the Arm and called the End Effector. It can grab things and hold on with very high forces. It is situated just past the wrist joint of the Arm. I was responsible for upgrading one of the End Effectors and performing several tests on the component, to make sure that everything works properly and that there is no

See next page - Dream

A dream that came true

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issue in vacuum, at high or low temperatures and during vibration. This was the first step of my career at MDA, after which, I became somewhat of a Specialist of the End Effector. *You were actually preparing the component for the space mission, right?* Yes, that's right. When the End Effector was complete, my boss and the other managers suggested that I go down to Houston during the first shuttle flight of the upgraded End Effector to make sure that it works O.K. So that is the story of how I had the opportunity to go to NASA's Command Center. I was surprised and happy to have been chosen to go down because only a few people go down from MDA - maybe three, four for each shuttle flight. *And what were you working on there?* We always have our MDA support people there for each shuttle flight, just to make sure that everything is working well, or in case of emergencies. Sometimes the people at the Command Center need to react quickly to avoid damage to the shuttle or crew. It is all very critical. The main purpose for MDA to go to Houston was to make sure that the Canadarm was working properly during the mission. While the Shuttle is in space, we have three screens to monitor all of the parameters of the Arm, e.g. temperatures, joint angles, and speed. We also have laptops with specialized software to perform analysis on the Canadarm parameters to verify they are similar to the performance from previous Shuttle flights and Arm testing. *What would you do if something happens? I can not imagine how you could repair something from your position...* We wouldn't necessarily repair things from



our station, but because we have headphones and small microphones, we would tell our managers and the NASA robotics people that there is an issue we are looking at. There are a lot of minor issues that we keep following, but it doesn't cause any problem with the operation of the Arm. When there is anything more serious, we usually get analysis done by other MDA and NASA specialists. But likely, we don't have any major problem because the Arm has been in operation for so long that most of the issues that came up have been solved. We are also monitoring messages coming from the Shuttle computer that is attached to the Canadarm. If there would be anything very wrong or different, then we would tell the NASA managers what the problem is and we would suggest

a solution. *Did you like the Command Center environment?* Yes, I did. There are several control rooms in the Center and the room we were in is actually right beside the old Apollo mission control room! (laugh...) They kept it exactly the way it was! So there are all the old instrument panels, all the old screens, and chairs... And they allow tourists to come to see it. This was also really strange because... You are walking around the halls and you see tourists looking through the window and taking pictures of the interior. *Wow, such a great opportunity you have gotten! Congratulations! Do you like it at MDA?* Thanks. (...laugh...) People are extremely smart and skillful there, but they are also very friendly and supportive. It is inspiring. We have all the great technicians that work on the

hardware, the quality control people,... and we have great senior engineers with lots of experience. There are some people who have been there for thirty, thirty five years, and they know the whole history of Canadarm. The Arm is maybe twenty five, almost thirty years old and it has gotten many upgrades and refurbishment over the years so it is really amazing to have someone in the company who knows the reason for everything! You can ask them for

example: why was something made from this material? And they know exactly why. They would say "...oh, we had a problem with that, we tried this material and it worked, so that is why...". *This is actually a great place to work! Are you amazed?* Yes, actually, I am often amazed... I touch and work on things which operate in space... It is a truly amazing experience. *What do you see and feel and think about when you look at the sky? When you see the stars? Isn't it a weird feeling?* Yes, it is weird. It is very weird! However, like other jobs, you kind of get used to it over time. You get used to working on the same thing over several years, but once in a while, you stop and think of what a really great job you have, working on things which fly in space. *Have you experienced any pressure at work?* There is some pressure at work, which you get used to, but when I was working in Houston, I was worried most of the time. I wanted to make sure the part that I was working on, the End Effector, was working well. I was doing a lot of analysis to make sure everything was performing well, all the limits were not exceeded, that nothing bad happened... It is stressful. Yes, sometimes, but it's good to know the past circumstances. It's good to have the history and background to fall back on. *Sona H. Metcalfe, Photo: J. Pouzar*

JUSTIN POUZAR was born May 10, 1980 in Toronto. After a few co-op experiences during his University studies, he has gotten his dream job, and has been entrusted with Robotics Mission Support at NASA Command Center in Houston, Texas, at the launch of Space Shuttle "Endeavour" on November 14. His stay in the Center lasted 14 days. He is still studying to get his Master's Degree part-time.

Playing Around

by Paul Fabry

You look across the playing area at your opponent. You catch the hint of a smile on her face as you prepare to make your move. What could that be about? You try to look into her eyes to see if there is some clue to her thoughts, some emotion you can decipher, but she is too far away. You shrug mentally and prepare to act. This will all be over soon, one way or another.

You wipe the sweat off your forehead so that none of it gets in your eyes. Perspiration clings to you, drips down the front and back of your white shirt, making you uncomfortable. Your hands are slippery and clammy with the sweat. Not a good thing for the sport you are playing. You quickly wipe them on your skirt, noting with distaste that it too is

fairly damp. Nothing you can do about that now. You turn your attention back to the playing area, dissected by painted lines. You look at your opponent again. She's not the only one who can play mind games. You grasp the felt-covered ball and to dribble it in one spot six, seven times. Hopefully that'll unnerve her. You look again. She's still waiting, still with the same stupid smirk on her face. Ah well. It was a nice try. She's probably faced that tactic hundreds of times before anyway. Nothing to do now but go for it.

Grasping the ball in your left hand, you throw it straight up, arching your back at the same time. From the corner of your eye, you see your opponent quickly shuffle forward. So that's what she was grinning

about. She plans to get close up and deliver the knockout blow. Well. Your right arm flashes forward, and just at the last second, you quickly change your grip and smack the ball, watching with satisfaction as it sails away from your opponent on a completely different trajectory than she was expecting. She lunges at it wildly, but is unable to return it. She looks on in stunned disbelief. That'll teach her to be so arrogant. You are taken aback by the fierce scowl on her face. Congratulations. You won this point, but she won't be so easily fooled the next time. You sigh and get ready to do it all over again, ignoring the noise from the cheering fans all around. You'll need to concentrate if you want to move on to the next round at Wimbledon.

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The culture of our land: visual art part 2

by Ernie Zucker

Continued from a previous issue

The modern era – from 1870

A talented young group of artists participated in decorating the newly constructed Czech National Theater on the banks of the Vltava in Prague, a highly patriotic enterprise. Its architect, Josef Zíték, included painters and sculptors in decorating this impressive Neo-Renaissance building. Bohuslav Schnirch became the chief sculptor. Antonín Wagner obtained a smaller share of the work, while the greatest sculptor of the time, Josef Václav Myslbek produced the allegories of Drama and Opera on the roof of the structure. He also sculpted the St. Wenceslav statue on the top of Prague's main square, created sculptures for the Palacký bridge (now placed at the city's original castle – the Vyšehrad park) and trained dozens of Czech sculptors at the Prague Academy of Art. The team of painters included: Josef Tulka who painted on the theme of song cycles, František Ženíšek who decorated the main curtain and ceiling of the theater and the principal foyer, Mikuláš Aleš provided 14 panels on the patriotic theme Homeland while Vojtěch Hynais, Václav Brožík and Julius Mařák decorated the staircase walls and the royal box. After a dispute with the architect, Aleš was dismissed from the project. However, he became one of the most prolific painters of his generation. He thrived in competition with his contemporaries, stressing the need for nationalist Czech expression against Ženíšek's promotion of allegories, Brožík's stress on historic realism and Hynais' basing his work on live models and mother nature. While the others learned from travelling to Munich, Vienna and Paris to enrich their muse, Aleš drew on his childhood experiences.

Symbolism in painting and sculpture

The principal concern of the Symbolist artist was to invent his or hers own world or depict that described in myths and poems. The painter Jan Preisler introduces fantastical figures into his landscapes. In his most important work, the Black Lake cycle, we encounter a compelling poetic synthesis embracing man-woman and landscape. Antonín Hudeček started as a painter of figures but soon realized that landscape alone could be used to convey even the most subtle of moods. In his Landscape with Full Moon, he draws on the poetic and symbolic resonance of the mirroring surface of rivers and lakes. This painting features his use of the pointillist technique (applying paint in a consistent pattern of



Czech National Theater on the banks of the Vltava in Prague, architect Josef Zíték



Josef Václav Myslbek, St. Wenceslav statue on the top of Prague's main square (top -closeup)



Title page for a calendar; Alphonse Mucha, Art Nouveau,



Emil Filla, Expressionism, Absynthe



Jan Zrzavý, Kleopatra,

small dots and dabs). Antonín Slaviček's landscapes exhibit impressionist characteristics but he approaches his subjects

with deep emotion, in place of truly impressionist objectivity. Most of his turbulent, panoramic views of Prague date from later years when he felt that a more

urgent sense of life was to be found in urban settings. The strength of Symbolism in Czech sculpture can be expressed by the need to challenge the patriotic optimism of the late 19th century. František Bílek's Parable of the Great Decline of the Czech Nation stresses his view that the tragic destiny of one nation becomes a symbol of humanity as a whole. Just as in poetry, the Symbolist sought to rediscover the genuine, original meaning of language, Bílek explored his own creative medium and strived to capture and communicate the "soul and spirit" of wood, his favourite work material. Villa Bílek, on Prague's Letná, which he designed and built, is now open to the public and houses some of his

work. Well worth a visit.

The first *Art Nouveau* generation, appearing on the artistic scene at the end of the 19th century, included a number of highly talented artists not too well-known outside the country. My favourite artist of the time, Alphonse Mucha, made his mark in Paris with highly decorative advertising posters, mainly for the acclaimed actress of the time, Sarah Bernhart. His monumental work, when returning home in 1910, consists of 24 huge canvasses depicting the history of the Slavs, now awaiting the enlargement of the Mucha museum for public display. Note that the Mucha museum in Prague is well-worth a visit. Now we list an artist who did get a good amount of exposure in the world. František Kupka, commuting between Prague and Paris, was known as a first class abstract painter in the class with Kandinski and Modriani. Although born in the early eighteen-seventies, recognition came late (1951 – one-man-show in New York; 1956 – appointed honorary president of Salon des Réalités Nouvelles; 1957 – Kupka dies in Puteau, France; 1958 – First retrospective at the Musée national d'art moderne in Paris In 1902 there was a major August Rodin exhibition in Prague. The show inspired an influential group of sculptors working in the country at the time: Stanislav Sucharda, Josef Mařatka, Ladislav Šaloun, Bohumil Kafka and Jan Šturza.

Expressionism

Expressionist artists generally wanted to create images that were a direct response to deep feeling (love, terror, sorrow) or were an attempt to explore the subconscious. Expressionist paintings often feature intense colours and deformed shapes in in dynamic compositions. The principal group of Czech expressionists, the Osma (the Eight), exhibited in Prague in 1907 and 1908.

They were strongly influenced by the work of Edvard Munch, which were shown in the city in 1905. His influence is very evident in the paintings of Emil Filla. The psychological intensity of Munch's self-portraits is reflected in many canvasses of Osma artists, especially Bohumil Kubišta (the Triple Portrait, for example).

There were also important Expressionist artists who were not members of Osma. One was Jan Zrzavý, whose oil on canvas Meditation is reproduced on this page. The work of sculptor Otto Gutfreund displays a distinctive combination of Expressionism and Cubism marking the end of the classic phase of this art form in the Czech lands. □

Art and controversy

A new art installation going on display at the European Council building in Brussels has angered EU members with its lampoons of national stereotypes. Entropa portrays Bulgaria as a toilet, Romania as a Dracula theme-park and France as a country on strike.

The Czech Republic, which holds the EU presidency, thought it had commissioned work from 27 European artists. But it turned out to have been entirely completed by Czech artist David Cerny and two associates.

The eight-tonne mosaic is held together by snap-out plastic parts similar to those used in modelling kits. The Netherlands is shown as series of minarets submerged by a flood - a possible reference to the nation's simmering religious tensions. Germany is shown as a network of motorways vaguely resembling a swastika, while the UK - criticised by some for being one of EU's most eurosceptic members - is absent from Europe altogether. The 16-square-metre (172-square-foot) work was installed



Controversial art installation in Brussels by David Cerny, Bulgaria (top), Romania (bottom), Italy (left)

at the weekend to mark the start of the six-month Czech presidency of the EU. There has already been an angry reaction to the piece from Bulgaria, which has summoned the Czech ambassador to Sofia to explain. The three artists responsible for Entropa were led by David Cerny who, says the BBC's Rob

Cameron in Prague, is the enfant terrible of the Czech art world. When his government commissioned David Cerny to create the installation, several eyebrows were raised, and they were not raised in vain. Czech Deputy Prime Minister Alexandr Vondra said he was only informed on Monday that

the installation was not the work of 27 European artists, but David Cerny and two colleagues. Mr Vondra condemned Mr Cerny and said the Czech EU presidency was considering what steps to take before Thursday's official launch. "An agreement of the office of

the government with the artist clearly stated that this will be a common work of artists from 27 EU states," he said.

"The full responsibility for violating this assignment and this promise lies with David Cerny," Mr Cerny, who presented Entropa to his government with a brochure describing each of the artwork's 27 supposed contributors from each member state, has apologised for misleading ministers, but not for the installation itself.

"We knew the truth would come out," said Mr Cerny. "But before that we wanted to find out if Europe is able to laugh at itself." He added that Entropa "lampoons the socially activist art that balances on the verge between would-be controversial attacks on national character and undisturbing decoration of an official space".

Mr Cerny first created a splash in the early 1990s when he painted a Soviet tank, a Second World War memorial in a Prague square, bright pink.

Source: BBC News, The Prague Post

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