

Jan Jakub Kotik (1972 – 2007)



It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Jan Jakub Kotik. Jan passed away shortly after midnight on December 13th after a long and brave battle with cancer. He was a gifted artist and a valued friend and we greatly mourn his loss.

He is survived by his wife Gabriela Bukovinská Kotik and their two young sons, Armand (2 1/2 years) and Taber (1 1/2 years), his mother, Charlotta Kotik, his father, Petr Kotik and his brother Tomas. Our hearts go out to them.

Jan J. Kotik is from a prominent artistic family. His parents are the curator and art historian Charlotta Kotik and the composer and conductor Petr Kotik. His brother Tom Kotik is a New York sculptor, who also realized several large-scale sculpture-environments in Prague. Other artists in the family include the painters Herbert Masaryk, Jan Slavíček and Mikuláš Medek from his mother's side, and on his father's side the painters Pravoslav Kotik and Jan Kotik. His wife Gabriela Bukovinská is a Prague curator and has run Jeleni Galerie of the Center for Contemporary Art in Prague since its inception.

Jan was born in 1972 in Buffalo, New York, where his parents moved from Prague in 1970. The active participation of his parents on the local and international arts scene introduced Jan to wide range of ideas and personalities. His frequent encounters with a close circle of artists working at that time in Buffalo, among them Robert Longo, Cindy Sherman and Charlie Clough gave him the inspiration that surely laid the groundwork for his decision to become an artist. Jan became a resident of New York City in 1983, when his family relocated there from Buffalo. He graduated from LaGuardia High School of Music and Art in Manhattan and continued his studies at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York from 1990-1995 (BA in Fine Arts), where his teachers included Hans Haacke and Jack Griesly.

Upon moving to the Czech Republic on 2000, Jan's talent was quickly appreciated by curators who recognized in his work a unique voice on the Czech art scene. Through the use of unexpected and incongruous materials, Jan spoke to issues of state and corporate power as exercised in his homeland but also increasingly in his new "old world" home. He did not, however, presume to prescribe political alternatives. Rather, what he pointed out through his work and, it can be said, criticized, is the masking of connections and, above all, our ignorance or indifference to these, whether willful or not.

His work has been shown in a number of exhibitions highlighting the work of the most promising young artists, including his solo show this year *Patina* at the Brno House of Arts, the *Chalupecky Award Finalists* exhibition (2006), *Prague Biennale 2* (2005), his solo exhibition *III Gotten Gains*, Futura Center for Contemporary Arts, Prague, *Breakthrough - Perspectives on Art from 10 New EU States*, Grote Kerk Den Haag, the Hague, NL (2004), *The Presidency*, Exit Art, NY (2004), *The Youngest*, Prague National Gallery (2003), *Zvon - the Fourth Biennale of Young Artists*, Prague City Gallery (2002), and earlier this month his work was featured with great success at the NADA art fair in Miami, FL with hunt kastner artworks.

We will always remember Jan through our shared memories of our time together and the richness of the work that he left behind.

