A 107,700-Piece Jigsaw Puzzle

"I hereby call the attention of experts and visitors to the Jubilee Centennial Exhibition to the colossal glazing of the main palace with cathedral glass set into lead, particularly the figurative windows in both wings."

Prague glazier Josef Syvalter had plenty to brag about in his 1891 advertisements. His company cut, shaped, and painted thousands of glass pieces, assembling them into massive ornamental fields as well as two allegorical stained-glass windows based on designs by painter Mikoláš Aleš.

Artisan glassmaker Zdeněk Kudláček, head of the Nový Bor studio Kolektiv Ateliers, has now built upon master Syvalter's legacy alongside his team.

The stained-glass windows of the Industrial Palace comprise 5,023 individual panels made up of 107,700 separate pieces of glass set into a lead framework. The area they cover reaches an impressive 2,256 square meters, an area equivalent to two ice rinks. Every single piece had to be carefully removed, cleaned, and reset into new metal profiles.

Since the last major overhaul of the stained glass took place over half a century ago, it is no surprise that glassmakers had to recreate many panes from scratch. This was particularly true for the west wall of the Central Hall, where the delicate material was irrevocably damaged by extreme heat during the 2008 fire.

How did the stained-glass restoration unfold at Kolektiv Ateliers?

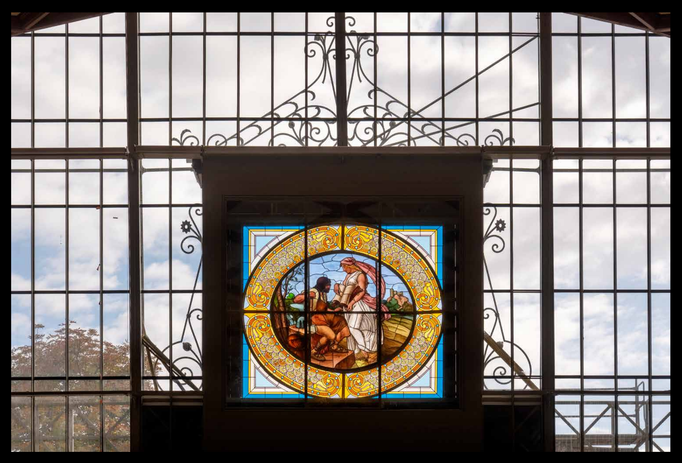
Zdeněk Kudláček, Kolektiv Ateliers.

Assembling the oval stained-glass window based on a design by Mikoláš Aleš.

Did you know...?

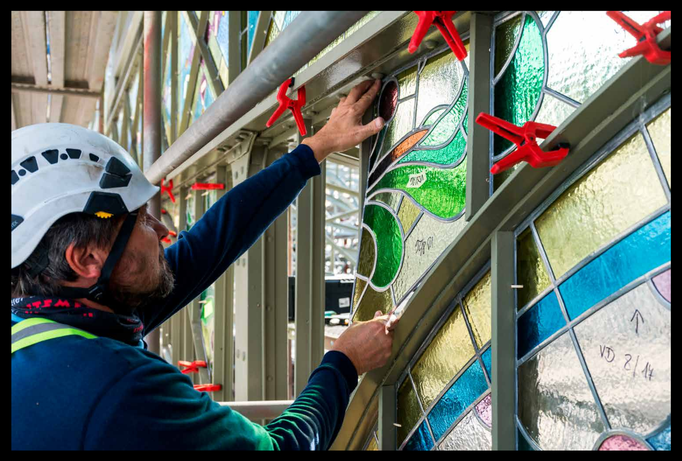
- To uncover the original colors of Mikoláš Aleš's stained-glass window Plowing and Hunting from the facade of the burned-down Left Wing, we had to launch a search right out of a detective novel. Thanks to this effort, a single color photograph was successfully retrieved allowing the technologically demanding production of the replica to begin.
- Restorer Zdeněk Henych, who was just twenty years old during that previous major restoration, returned to work on the palace once again, more than fifty years later.
- Most of the original materials used 135 years ago came from the now-defunct Count Buquoy glassworks in the Novohradské Mountains.

Detail of the stained-glass window on the façade of the Central Hall



Industry and Science, the façade of the Right Wing.

The side façade windows of the Central Hall.



The return of the restored stained-glass windows.

Photo Jiří Sedek

Industrial Palace Na Výstavišti Architecture Na Výstavišti Reconstruction Na Výstavišti I ❤ Na Výstavišti