

Ikon shows the first UK exhibition of work by renowned Czech artist Vladimír Kokolia. A combination of new and recent paintings, plus drawings and installations, the show exemplifies an intensely experimental attitude that distils abstraction from everyday experience.

Central to Ikon's exhibition is a selection of Kokolia's paintings, produced in the small Moravian village Veverské Knínice where the artist lives and works, inspired by his rural surroundings. Paintings such as *Looking at Ash Tree* (2016) and *Silhouette of the Tree Top* (2014) reflect his fascination with trees, in particular their constantly changing shapes and the way light travels through leaves. Key to understanding Kokolia's artistic practice is his awareness of the possibility of epiphanies, seemingly unremarkable events that give rise to a kind of weaving of wonder.

A large number of fragile figurative ink drawings by Kokolia are on display for the first time after more than thirty years in storage. Produced in an atmosphere of suppression and depicting grotesque stories of cruelty, weakness and the wretchedness of human endeavour, these early works acquired a sense of political commentary. *Big Cycle* (1983–1989) show human figures struggling for a glimpse of meaning in absurd circumstances.

Kokolia regards ordinary life as a source of astonishment. To this end, he wants the attention for his exhibition to be on the visitor rather than the artist and hopes to produce a new moment of understanding for each person.

In the new installation *Light Agent* (2018) the artist uses flashing lights to leave the visitor with an 'after image' of what they have just seen. Lastly his experiments in the visual field are further revealed in another new work in Ikon's Tower Room, where multiple camera obscura projections blend the outside world with the picture plane.

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