

PRESS RELEASE

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Galerie

Paris

7, rue de Thorigny

F-75003 Paris

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mardi > samedi 11h > 19h

[galerie@orbispictus.art](mailto:galerie@orbispictus.art)

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# Jan Saudek

La vérité se situe quelque part au milieu  
(The Truth Lies Somewhere in the Middle)

Exposition

**3 November / 23 December. 22**

Opening reception 5 November 2022 at 5<sup>pm</sup>



© Jan Saudek. Larmes noires, 1973



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For the 2022 edition of Paris Photo, Galerie Orbis pictus is exhibiting the iconic work of Jean Saudek, one of the greatest living Czech photographers. Following the exhibition *Prague-Paris, l'avant-garde tchèque à Paris* Prague-Paris, the Saudek retrospective will close the Czech cycle decided by the gallery's directors in Prague, in line with the Paris events of last spring, notably the major Toyen exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

**Beauty. Ugliness. Beauty in ugliness. Grace. Despondency. Love. Eroticism. Brilliance. Misery. Hope. Disappointment. Joy. Sadness. The strength of women and the weakness of men. The weakness of women and the strength of men. The Eternal struggle. Bitterness. Evolution. Time. Life... these are all words that apply to the photography of Jan Saudek, this man who is adored and hated, acclaimed and controversial, an octogenarian still young, redefining and reinventing his life at will.**

For Pavlina Hodkova, his current partner, with whom the exhibition was conceived, Saudek has methodically documented his life through his photographs. As he puts it bluntly, he has coveted and loved women all his life. His life has been filled with dreams, passion, desire, pleasure... Creating freely in Prague in a difficult political context, Saudek at first celebrated the human family (fatherhood, motherhood, childhood and adolescence) up until the 1970s. Then, in the 1980s, treated the more provocative oppositions of love-hate, truth-lies, youth-old age and beauty-ugliness, not without irony and cynicism. Sweeping aside criticisms of perversity, he maintains his creative freedom with all the nuances of emotion, but with the vices, dark desires, obsessions and violence of the human soul.

Sitor Senghor  
director



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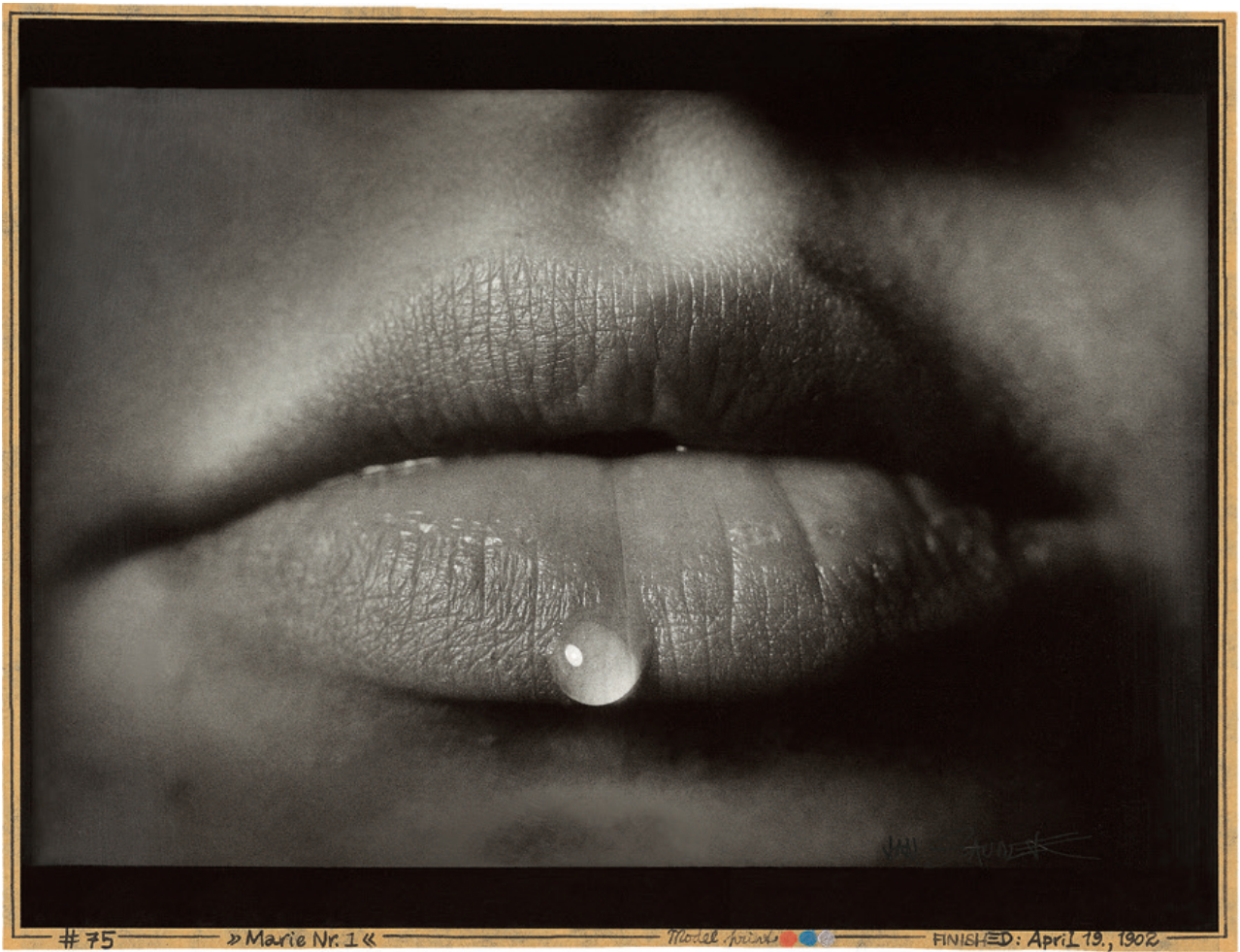
*“Saudek [...] is terribly modern and provocative. He loves the burlesque and American comics. [...] He avoids what is pretty, what is sweet, what is conventionally beautiful. He always returns to the body, accepting it and celebrating its triviality, its obscenity, in short, its reality”*, wrote Jean-François Chevrier in 1983. This is what we invite you to discover or rediscover at Galerie Orbis pictus, with an important selection of works, pure silver gelatin prints often enhanced with ink in distinctive colors by the hand of the artist-photographer. All works are from the artist’s personal collection, hand-signed and certified.

This is a unique opportunity for the public and the Paris art market to rediscover a photographer who belongs to the same artistic realm as Alphonse Mucha, Lewis Carroll, Hans Bellmer, Duane Michals, Robert Mapplethorpe...



© Jan Saudek. Destinée descend à la rivière, emmenant deux enfants innocents, 1970





© Jan Saudek. ????



© Jan Saudek. Oh les magnifiques sœurs B., 1989



© Jan Saudek. Au revoir Jan (I), 1994



# Biography

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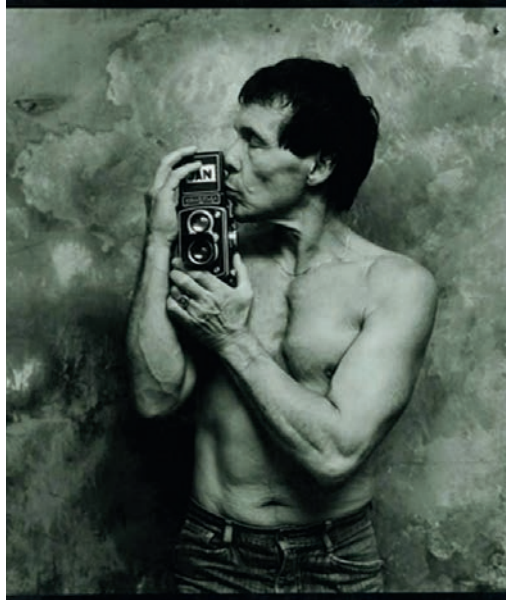
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© Jan Saudek, Self-portrait

Born into a Jewish family in Prague in 1935, Jan Saudek quickly learned to conceal his identity and “*hide his yellow star*”, carrying the weight of a painful sense of shame. What followed for this child, as for so many others, was the traumatic memory of death and human barbarity, which he has carried and still carries like an open wound, a very real existential anxiety.

He began taking photographs in 1950 and began heightening his work in 1951. But it wasn't until 1958 that he began using a Flexaret 6 × 6 camera, which he never abandoned. For a long time, his favorite subject in photography was his family: this work was sporadic and done in parallel with his day job working in a print shop.

After 1948, he found himself confronted by the restrictions of the Communist regime. He has described himself as a Jew living a hermit's life “*in isolation*”.

**Sometimes I can't sleep at night for fear that I won't be able to take another picture, {one that is} deeply human, that people will look at and say: yes, that's exactly what it's about. I'm afraid I may not be able to do it again, or have what it takes to**

do it. Or that I won't be able to do this when and where I want to. Because I can't go off and say: tonight, I'm going to create art.

SANDEK Jan, dans MRÁZKOVÁ, Daniela: Jan Saudek, Prague, Slovart, 2016, p. 15

A series of events led to his discovering the work of Edward Steichen, thanks to the 1955 Moma exhibition catalog of *The Family of Man*, a veritable artistic and cultural link between the United States and Europe. Discovering this work, which revealed a profound crisis of civilization and humanism on the other side of the Atlantic, had a profound impact on him and led to his radically rethinking his artistic practice. It was then that the ideas of the Beat Generation found their way into his work: such as «not taking pretty pictures, but understanding life, the relationships that are inherent to human beings»<sup>2</sup>. This revolt against hypocrisy and bourgeois conformity led to his undertaking a long trip to the United States in 1969. It was here that he met Hugh Edwards, director of the photography department at the Art Institute of Chicago, who became a valuable ally in launching his career. Since then, he has exhibited in the United States almost continuously.

Back in his native country, he worked in «semi-legality» until the «Velvet Revolution» of autumn 1989, which put an end to the Communist regime. His 1980s were marked by the theme of the «Wall», which provided the backdrop for erotic and provocative photos, a direction that became more pronounced in the 1990s. Strongly criticized for work that broke free from moralizing taboos and accused of pornography, he faced puritanical opposition for many years. Controversial, he constantly plays on eroticism in his compositions and never ceases to represent the human body, playing the card of unreality between fantasy and caricature. His photographs are heightened with colors that he applies by hand, sometimes in pastel and sometimes in colored ink, to emphasize particular anatomical features such as the veins and make-up of his models.

As early as the 1970s, he was gaining widespread international recognition, particularly in the USA.

His work can be found in the most prestigious institutions: the Art Institute of Chicago (1976), the Centre Georges Pompidou (1984), the Venice Biennale (2003) and they also feature in major museum collections (Getty, MoMA, MAMVP).

Jan Saudek is a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (1990), and holder of the Artis Bohemiae Amicis Medal (2006) and the Czech Republic Medal of Merit (ČR) (2019).



## Principal recent exhibitions

### 2022

Fondation Boleslaw Biegas, Varsovie (Pologne) *Jan Saudek, Photographies*  
Cooperativa Sáenz Peña (Pérou)  
Bilina (ČR)

### 2021

Fusionism centrum, Hostka *Jan Saudek*  
Muzeum a galerie Spalicek, Prostejov, *Fenomen Saudek*

### 2020

Galerie David Guiraud, Paris *Jan Saudek, Un retour aux sources*

### 2018

Femmes et Photographie, Eglise Saint François, Udine (Italie) 2017 Krisal Gallery, Genève (Suisse)  
Liberarti, Trieste (Italie)  
Galerie fotografie, Cheb, (ČR) 2016 Muzeum Semily, Semily (ČR)  
Synagoga Břeclav, Břeclav (ČR)

### 2015

Brick Lane Gallery, Londres (Royaume-Uni)  
Městská galerie Goethův dům, Mariánské Lázně (ČR)  
Galerie Dolní brána, Prachatice (ČR)

### 2014

Staroměstská radnice (kolektivní výstava), Praha (ČR)  
Český dům (kolektivní výstava), Brussels, Belgium  
Galerie Machoňova pasáž, Pardubice (ČR)  
Galartis, Lausanne (Suisse)  
Museum of Modern Art, International Photo Exhibition, Pärnu (Estonie)

### 2013

Zámek Plumlov, Plumlov (ČR)  
Krisal Gallery, Genève (Suisse)  
Melbourne Fine Art Gallery, Melbourne (Australie)  
Chodovská tvrz, Prague (ČR)  
Liberarti Gallery, Trieste (Italie)

### 2012

Maxgallery, (Synagoga), Trnava (Slovaquie) *Levinne Art&Design Gallery, Bratislav (Slovaquie)* *Muzeum Vysočiny, Jihlava (ČR)*  
*Spilimbergo Fotografia 2012 - Palazzo Tadea (Italie)*  
2011 Ballarat International Photo Biennale (Australie)  
Mondo Bizarro Gallery, Rome (Italie)  
Komorní galerie U Schelů, Ceske Budejovice (ČR) *Visio Art Gallery, Plzeň (ČR)*

### 2010

Flemmichova vila (ČR)  
Gallery municipale U Zlatého slunce, Týn nad Vltavou (ČR) *Art Centre Chagall, Ostrava (ČR)*  
*Muzeum of Vysočina, Jihlava (ČR)*

### 2009

Gallery municipale, Frenštát p. R. (ČR) *Museum Rýmařov (ČR)*  
*Velvet Kelly Gallery, Žilina (Slovaquie)*  
*Vltavotýnské výtvarné dvorky, Týn nad Vltavou (ČR)*  
*Photogallery NOVA, Košice (Slovaquie)*  
*Cathedrale, Prague (ČR)*

### 2008

Palais de Tokyo, Paris

### 2007

Staroměstská radnice (Old Town Hall), Prague (ČR)  
Musée municipal, Pilsen (ČR)  
Musée de Vysočina, Jihlava (ČR)  
Château de Josef Barton-Dobenin, Nove Město nad Metují (ČR) *Gallery Špalíček Palaice Hybernia, Praha (ČR)*  
*Castle Gallery, Kladno (ČR)*

### 2006

Stará galerie - Svaz polských fotografů, Varsovie (Pologne) *Mezinárodní fotobienále, Brescia (Italie)*  
*IN FOCUS, Cologne (Allemagne)*  
*Fotomuseum, Leipzig, (Allemagne)*  
*Salle d'exposition Vilém Wünsch, Havířov (ČR)*  
*Dům fotografie, Český Krumlov (ČR)*

### 2005

FOTO ART FESTIVAL Bielsko-Biala (Pologne)  
Gallery A3, Moscou (Russie)  
Výtvarné centrum Chagall, Karviná (ČR) 2004 *Manes Art Prague, Prague (ČR)*  
*Výtvarné centrum CHAGALL Ostrava (ČR)*  
*Výstavní síň FOMA BOHEMIA, Hradec Králové (ČR)* 2003 *Chateau galery Chagall, Karviná (ČR)*  
*Maison de la Photographie, Prague (ČR)* 2002 *Gallery Mona Lisa, Olomouc (ČR)*  
*Východoslovenská galéria, Košice (Slovaquie)*  
*Gallery Pyramida, Prague (ČR)*

### 2001

*Photographic Galery G 4, Cheb (ČR)*  
*Gallery Michalský dvor, Bratislava (Slovaquie)* 2000  
*Gallery Krisal, Genève (Suisse)*  
*Gallery Masson, Zlín (ČR)*





## Main projects

### 2016

Půlnoční pohádky (contes de minuit), Albatros 2016, Praha, ČR 2015 audiokniha Nabíječ, Mladá fronta 2015, Praha, ČR

román Zpocená záda, Euromedia 2017, Praha, ČR  
Couverture CD - rock band Alkohol

### 2012

Couverture CD - Hit za hitem

### 2011

Calendrier RAVAK 2011 (20<sup>ème</sup> anniversaire)

### 2010

Affiche de cinéma - Román pro muže (Un roman pour hommes)

### 2010

Calendrier de 12 personnalités tchèques de la culture et du sport pour D.I.C.

### 2010

Calendrier Dr. Martens (50<sup>ème</sup> anniversaire de la marque)

### 2008

Fashion-portfolio for french BC magazine of design and art, issue Nr. 2 2006 Portraits de l'Orchestre de chambre philharmonique de Prague

### 2003

Absolut Sarah pour la collection d'Art de la vodka  
Absolut

## Bibliography

### 2012

*Jan & Sarah Saudek - Le allegorie dell Umanità*, Walter Liva, CRAF, Italie 2011 *The Mammoth Book of Gorgeous Guys* - Robinson Publ., Royaume-Uni

Příběhy ve znamení touhy (Histoires sur le désir), Mladá fronta, Prague, ČR

### 2009

Catalogue *Vltavotýnské výtvarné dvorky*, Týn nad Vltavou (ČR)

Fotografos - photomagazine, Athènes (Grèce)

### 2008

Be Contemporary Nr. 2, Paris

### 2007

Catalogue *Múzy fotí múzu* (les muses photographient la muse), Josef Louda, Prague (ČR)

*Sára Saudková-photographs* - catalogue, Hybernia, Prague (ČR)

AKT (Nu), Zoner Press, Brno (ČR)

*Veery s fotografem* (Les nuits avec le photographe), IDIF, Prague

Calendrier 2008 - BB ART, Prague (ČR)

Calendrier 2008 - Saudek.com, Prague (ČR)

Podoba lásky (le visage de l'amour) - monographie, Saudek.com Ltd., Prague (ČR)

### 2006

*Postcardbook*, Saudek.com. Ltd., Prague (ČR)

### 2005

*Sara Saudkova*, catalogue, Kant, Prague (ČR)

### 2003

*Black and White* - Edition SEX (Magazine for Fine Art Photography), Sydney (Australie)

*Sára Saudková* - Monographie (2. Version longue), BB ART Prague (ČR)

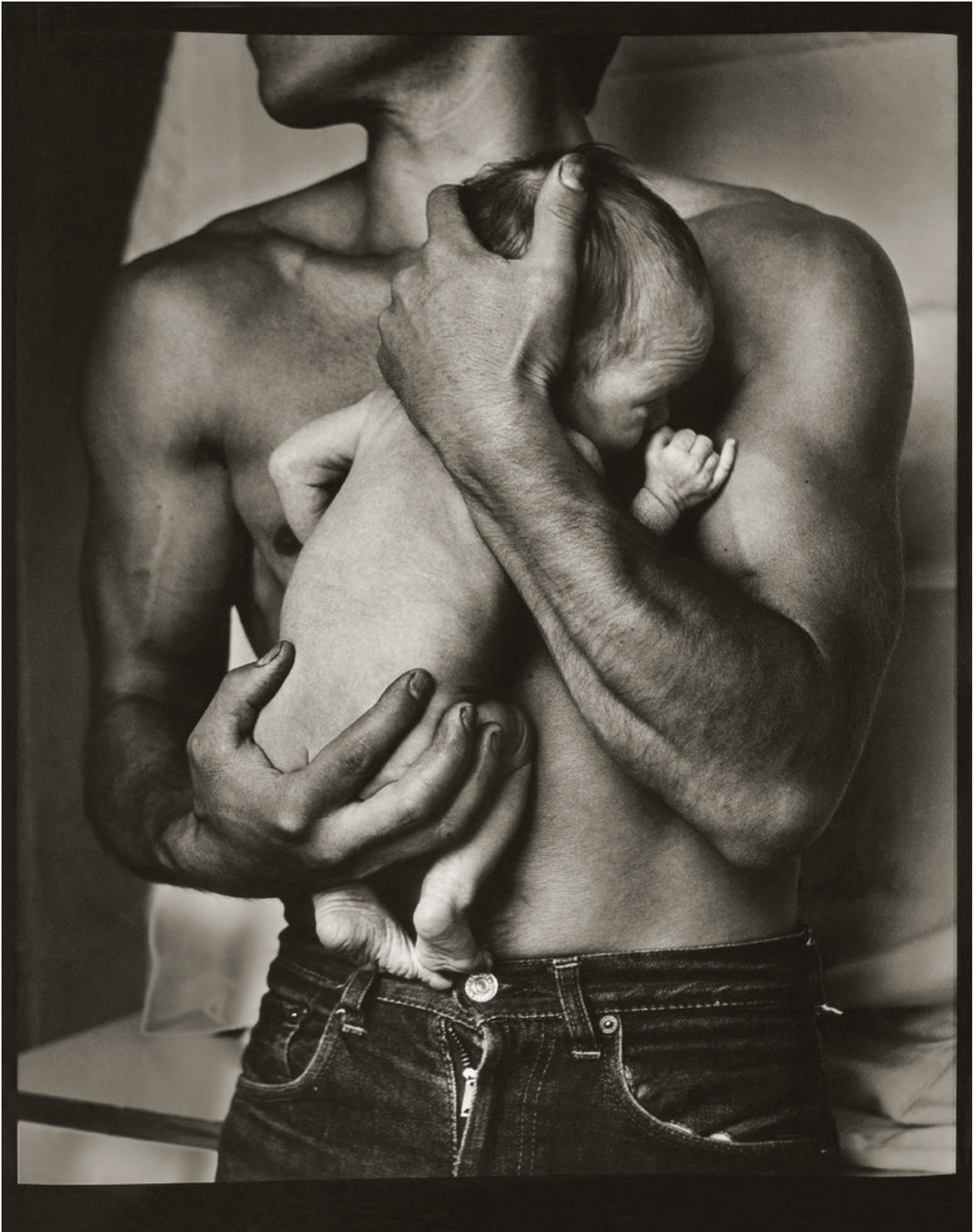
### 2002

*Sára Saudková* - Monographie, BB ART Prague (ČR)

### 2000

*Masterpieces of Erotic Photography*, Carlton books, Londres (Royaume-Uni)





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