

**CZECH  
AVANT-GARDE  
THEATRE**

**ELITISTIC  
OR  
POPULAR?**



## Avantgarde styles

Kubism

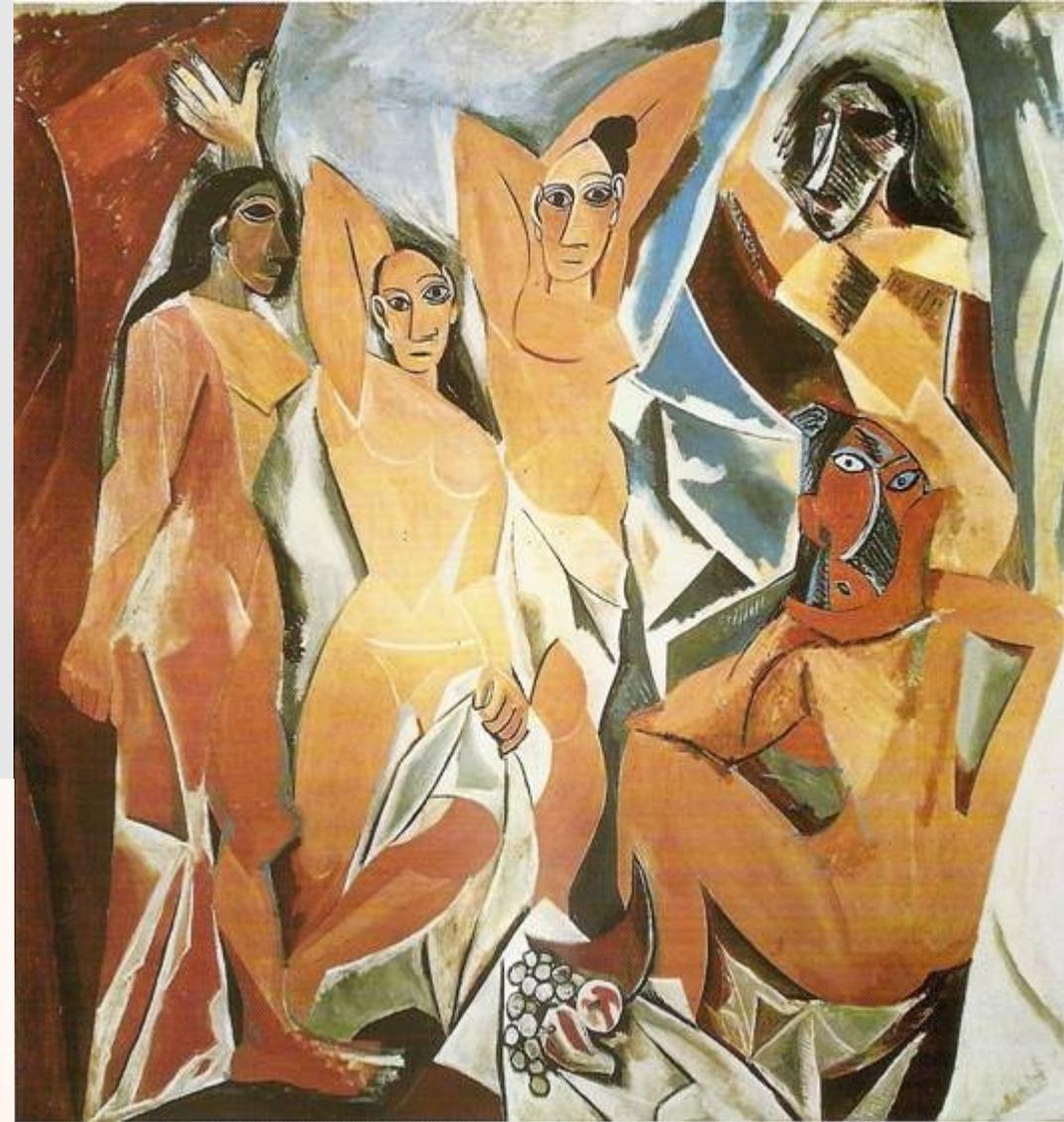
Dadaism

Surrealism

Futurism

Abstraction

Suprematism....



**Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.) 1911-12**

**Still Life With Chair Caning 1912**

# Guillaume Apollinaire (1880–1918)

Collection of poems **Alcools / Alcohols 1913**

The first poem in the collection, Zone, has been called "the great poem of early Modernism" (English version <https://poets.org/poem/zone>)

**At last you're tired of this elderly world**

**Shepherdess O Eiffel Tower this morning the bridges  
are bleating**

**You're fed up living with antiquity**

**Even the automobiles are antiques  
Religion alone remains entirely new religion  
Remains as simple as an airport hangar**

**In all Europe only you O Christianity are not old  
The most modern European Pope Pius X it's you  
The windows watch and shame has sealed  
The confessionals against you this morning  
Flyers catalogs hoardings sing aloud  
Here's poetry this morning and for prose you're reading  
the tabloids  
Disposable paperbacks filled with crimes and police  
Biographies of great men a thousand various titles**



**Jean Metzinger 1911  
Étude pour le portrait de  
Guillaume Apollinaire,**

# PAYSAGE

V  
OI LA ?  
CI MAISON  
Où NAISSENT  
LES É  
TOI LES  
ET LES DIVINITÉS

CET  
ARBRISSEAU  
QUI SE PRÉPARE  
A FRUCTIFIER  
TE  
RES  
SEM  
BLE

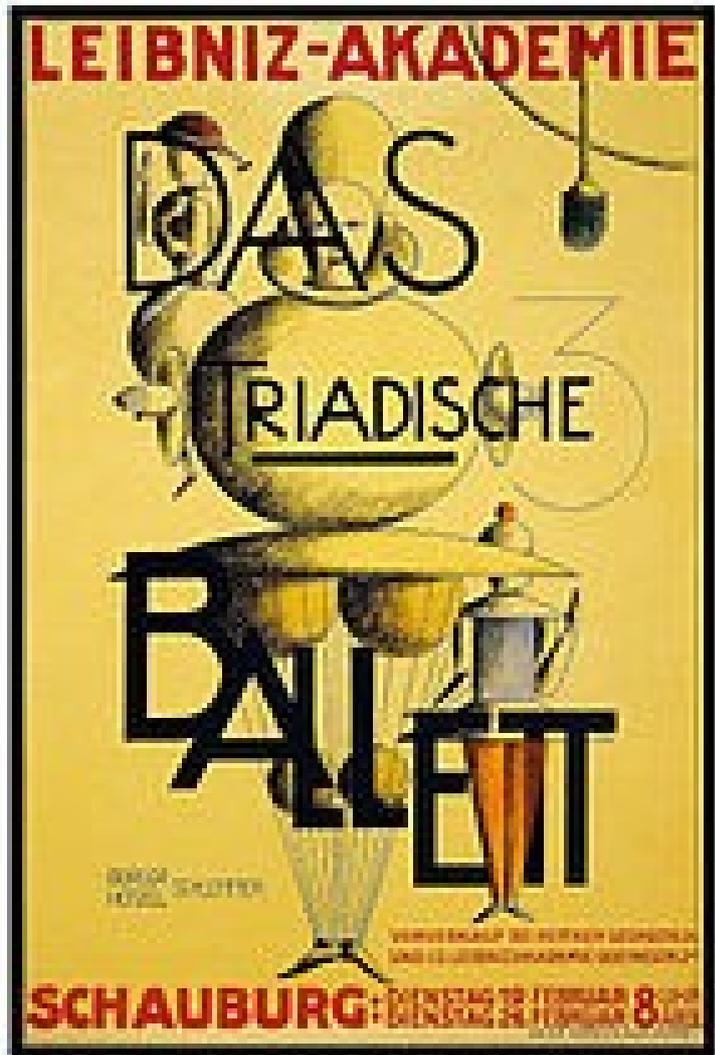
C O U C H É a S MANTS N  
E B L E M S  
VOUS  
VOUS  
SÉ  
PA MES  
RE MEM  
R BRES  
E  
Z

UN CIGARETTE  
i u q c  
u m  
m

Calligram  
by Guillaume Apollinaire  
"Landscape"

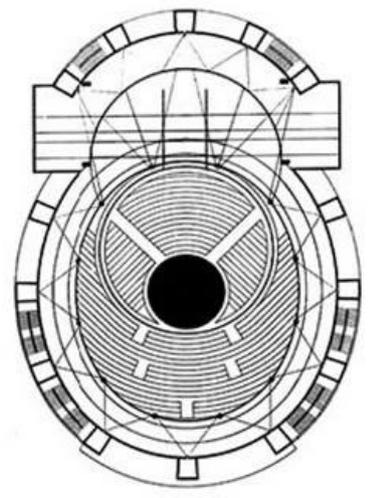
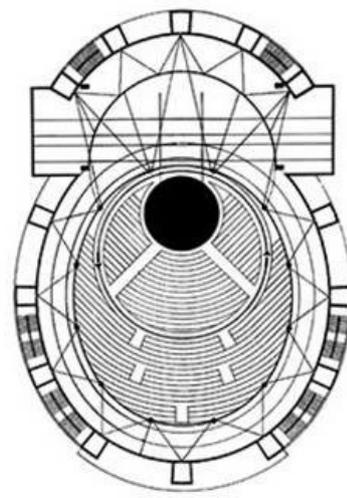
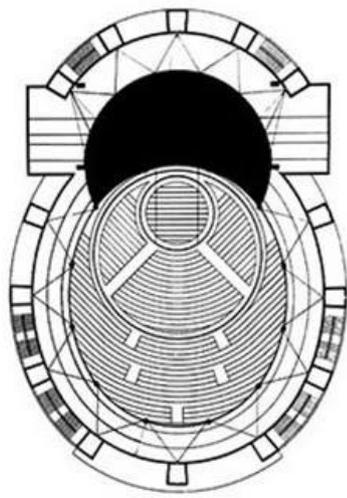
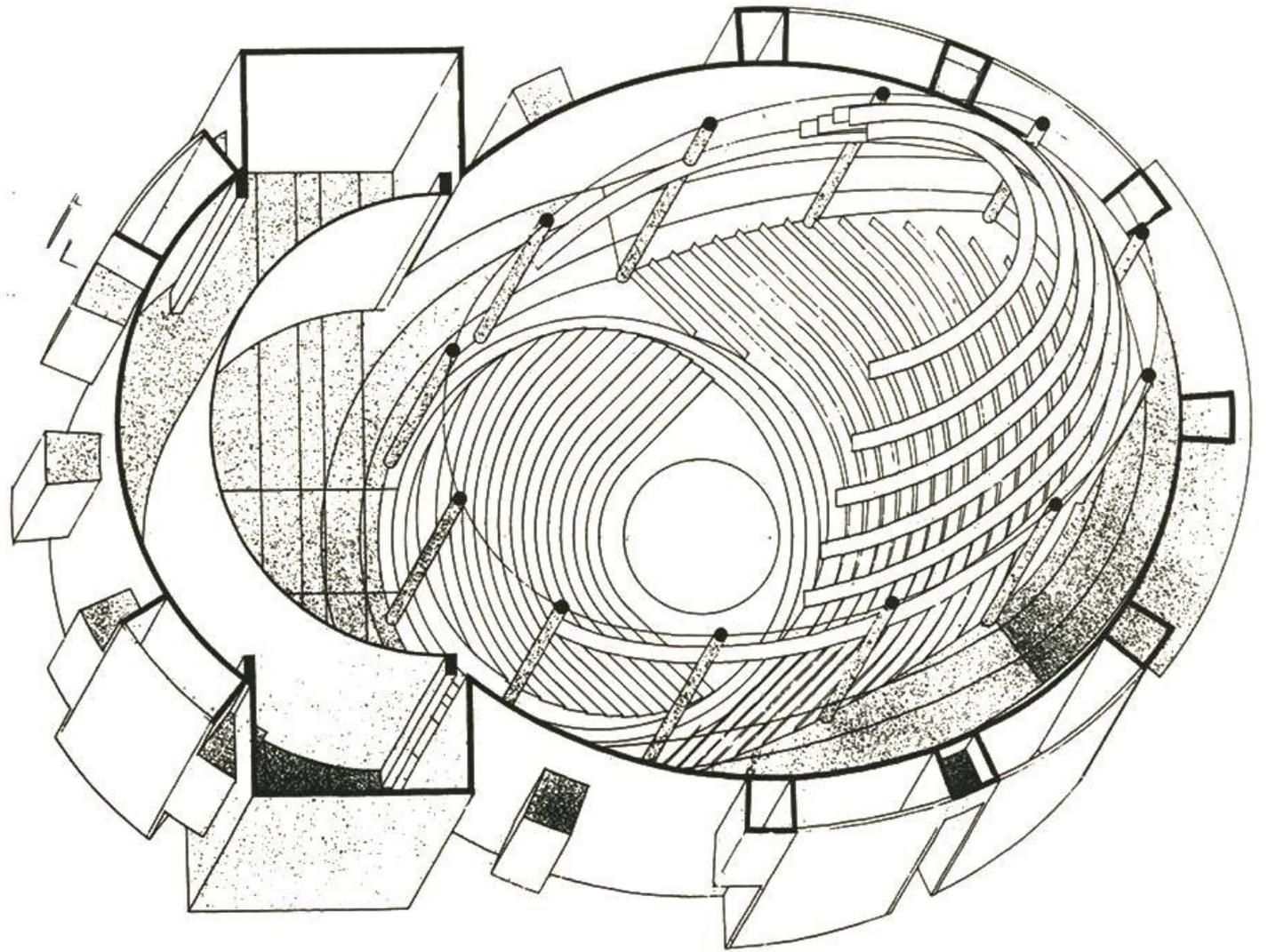


**Weimar  
1919-1933**



The Triadisches Ballett was conceived in 1912 in Stuttgart in a cooperation between the dance troupe of Albert Burger and his wife Elsa Hötzel and Oskar Schlemmer. It premiered in the Stuttgart landestheater on 30 September 1922, with music composed by Paul Hindemith. It was also performed in 1923 during the Bauhaus Week at the Nationaltheater, Weimar, and at the Annual Exhibition of German Crafts, Dresden.

**WALTER  
GROPIUS  
PROJECT  
OF  
TOTAL  
THEATRE**



# SOME GENERAL FEATURES OF CZECH THEATRE AVANTGARDE

*French* (Apollinaire, Breton)  
and *Russian* (constructivism,  
Tairov, Meyerhold)  
inspirations

Fascinated with modern pop-  
culture (film, cabaret, music-  
hall, jazz)

Montage – Synthetism

Director as key element

Search for new acting



**Osvobozené divadlo /Liberated Theatre** was  
founded in 1925 as theatre section of Děvětsil  
group

First performance in April 1926 – Circus  
Dandin (based of Molière) directed by Jiří  
Frejka



**Alfred Jarry:  
King Ubu**

**Apollinaire:  
Les Mamelles  
de Tirésias**



# EMIL FRANTIŠEK BURIAN

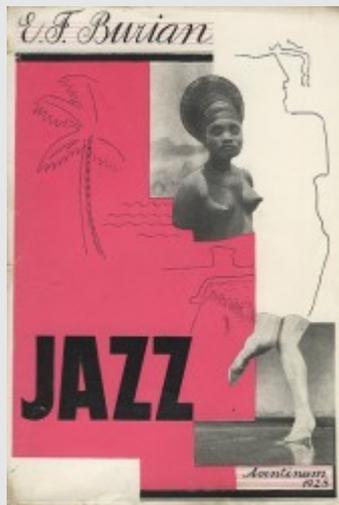
## (1904-1959)

Educated as musician / composer  
Founder of **VOICEBAND** group

Jazz singer, theatre performer and  
finally

Theatre director

In 1933 establishes his **theatre D 34**





**DIVADLO D 34 / THEATRE D 34**

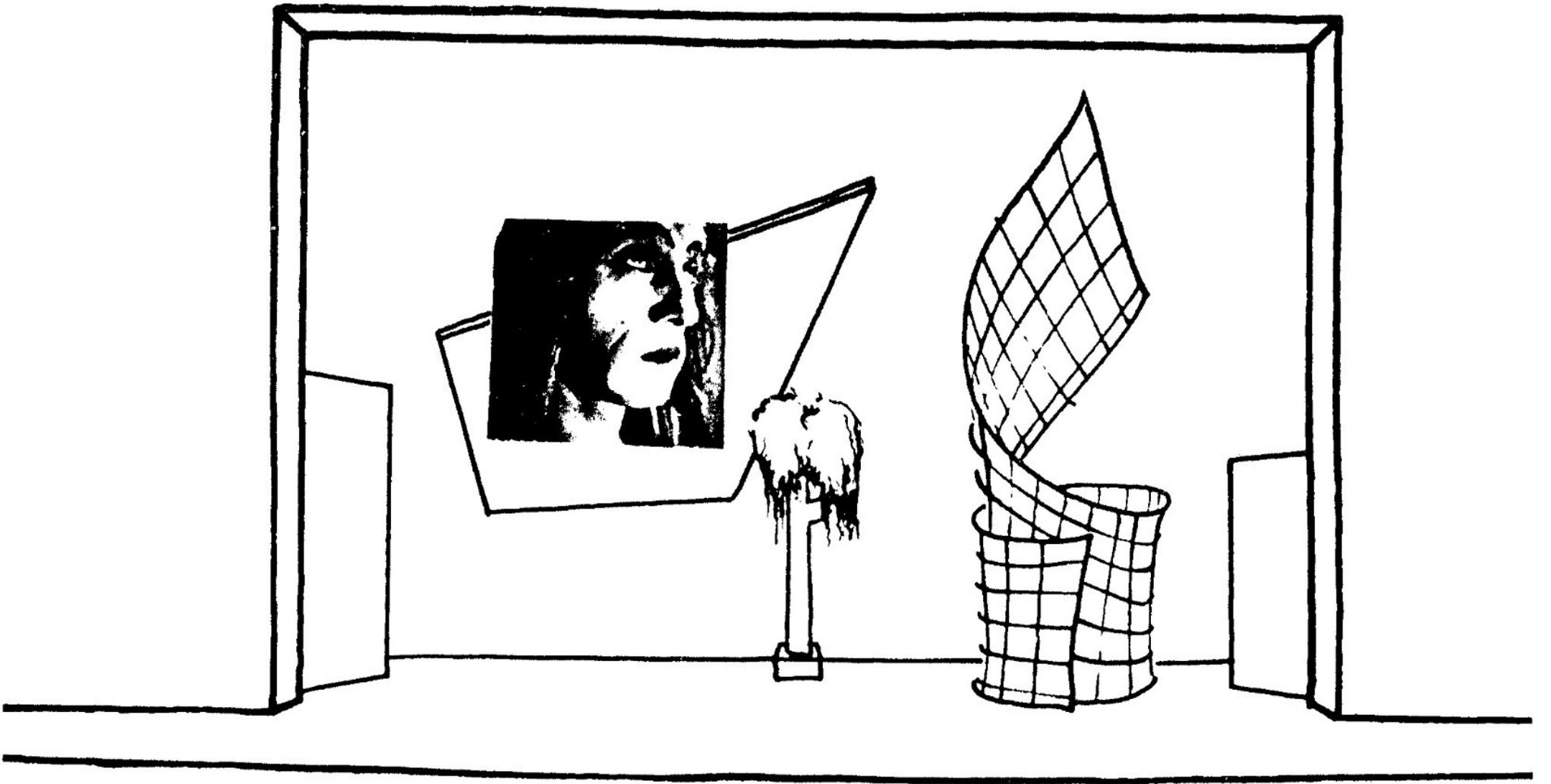
**AND**

**THEATHERGRAPH**

The old opera composers composed chromatic stage storms for the strings, lightning for the piccolo and thunder for tympani. (...) An **obvious metaphor** would emerge from this example if the orchestra was playing from the speakers in the auditorium and there were several projection screens placed on stage, showing enlarged rain drops falling towards the audience. The stage would be covered in silver mesh, reflected by the mirrors into the audience. **The rhythm** of the whole stage picture would have to correspond with the rhythm and the colour of the orchestra. **The audience would probably run away in fear that they will get wet or stricken by lightning.**

**1936 – stage adaptation of Czech romantic poem  
Máj / The May by Karel Hynek Mácha**

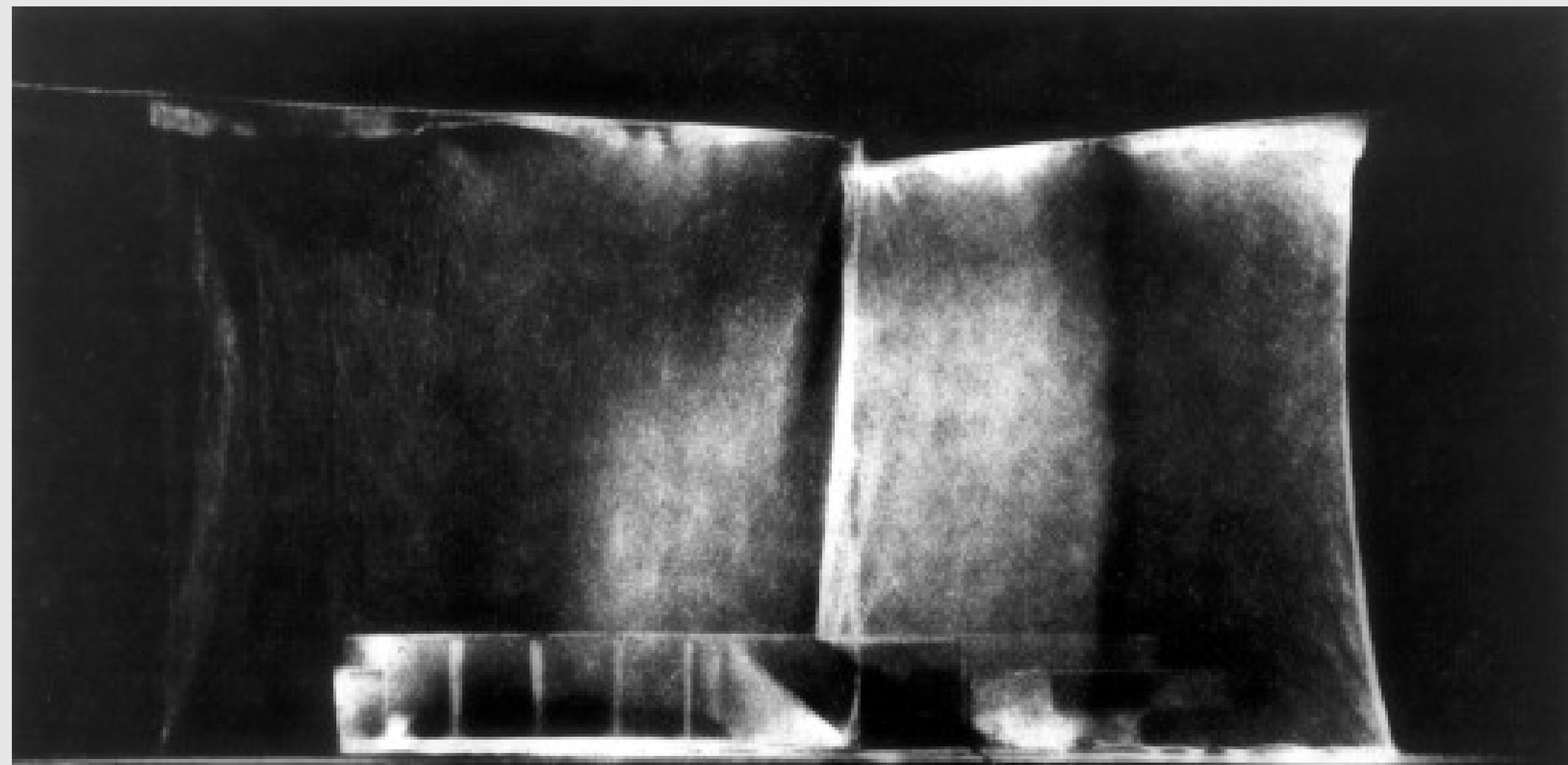




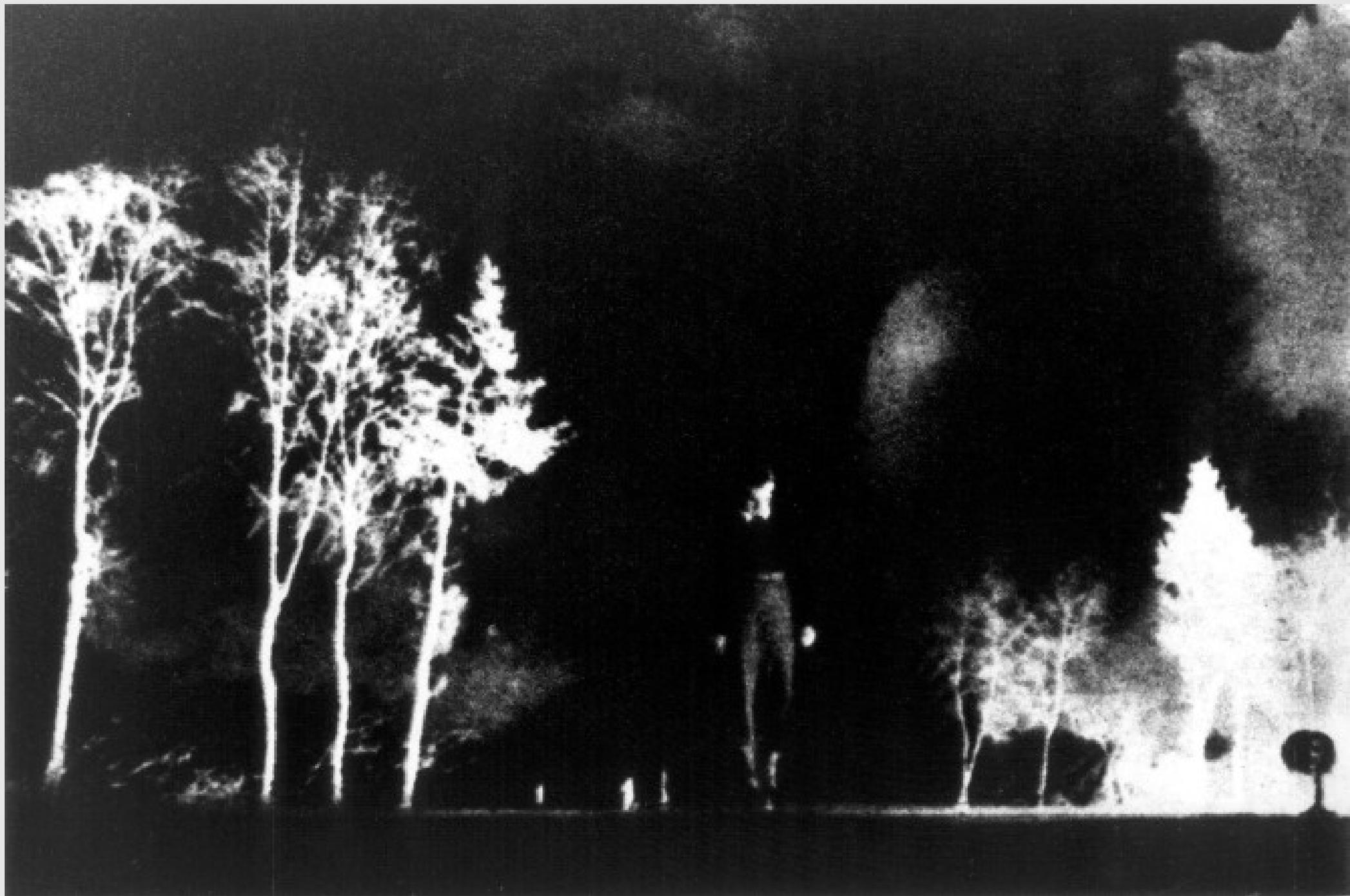








**1938 – Goethe The Sorrows of Young Werther**





**1935 - Frank Wedeking Spring Awakening**











**The WAR / Vojna**  
**1935 – script based on folk poetry**



**Vest Pocket Revue – 1927 (245 performances)**



**Jan Werich (1905-1980)**  
**Jiří Voskovec (1905-1981)**





# Voskovec and Werich in cinema

Pudr a benzin / Make-up and  
Petrol 1931

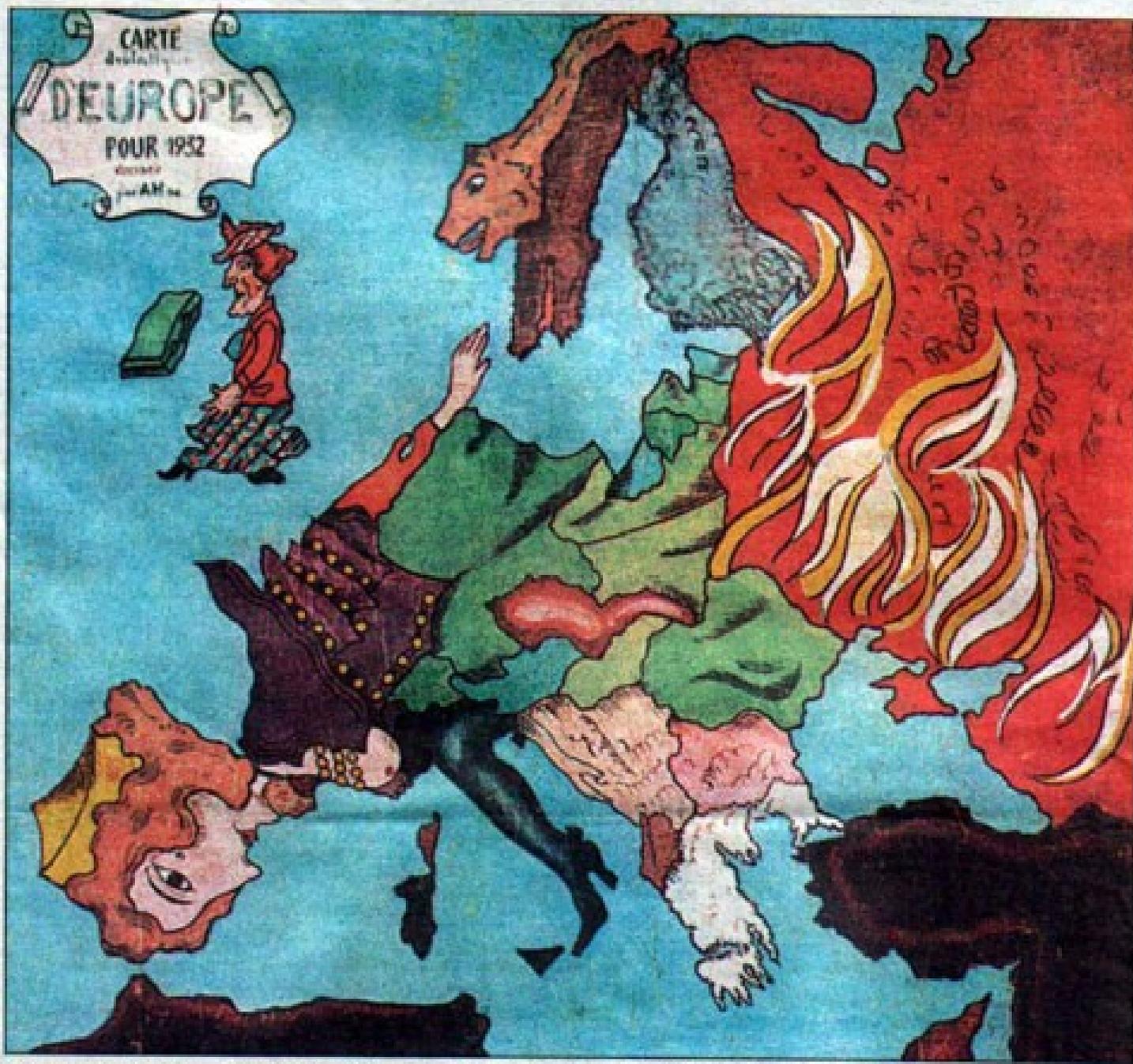
Peníze nebo život / Life or Money  
1932



Hej-Rup! 1934

Svět patří nám / The  
World belongs to Us 1937





Adolf Hoffmeister: Mapa Evropy, 1932. Pro Osvobozené divadlo do hry V+W Caesar.

## Further reading

Jarka M. Burian

## Leading Creators of Twentieth-Century Czech Theatre

Bílke, Vojvodík, Wiendl (eds).

## A Glossary of Catchwords of the Czech Avant-Garde

