

PAVEL BRUNCLIK

DIVERSE

Four Circles Pavel Brunclík concentrates on several basic themes in his photographs. He returns to certain of these after breaks, and focuses on others only during certain periods of time. The most important circles of his creative work include landscape, women and portraits. Each of these demands a different approach, a distinct method of depiction. Brunclík's most consistent preoccupation is with landscapes in their infinite transformations. These landscapes are spread around the world, a fact which also to a certain extent influences their character. Certain photographs capture the landscape as a whole, while others explore details. They reveal the artist's ability to express space and evoke atmosphere. He sometimes deliberately depicts nature in such a way that scale is deceptive. He has created an unbelievable number of landscapes. While preparing an exhibition he often selects completely different photographs than in the past, and his view of these naturally changes over time. Brunclík has devoted himself to landscape from the very start, though most intensively since 1996 to the present day. He attempts to capture nature in its unfettered form, unaffected by civilisation. He is not interested in mere reportage, but in a minimalist depiction of structures. Sometimes these themes are interwoven, such as when nudes become an integral part of the landscape. Brunclík's landscapes are often imbued with a romantic tone. We sense the endless expanses of seas and oceans, the inaccessibility and monumentality of mountain ranges, the unceasing variability of deserts, where the wind creates dunes reminiscent of a billowing sea. He captures unrepeatable moments, moments which he has to wait patiently for before they disappear forever. The immutable contours of cliffs have a completely different effect when the light changes, when they are sharply lit or shrouded in mist or curtains of rain. Pavel Brunclík is able to capture moments in which the relationship between individual elements and the whole is perfectly balanced. Sometimes it is the diversity of colours which is crucial, while other times the range of hues within subtle tones of grey is far more expressive. Man is not present in the landscapes, which seem free of any trace of civilisation. Some pictures are reminiscent of sculptural reliefs, while others depict natural "sculptures" freely scattered around the landscape. These records of

nature are either calm and still, or create a dramatic effect, such as shortly before a storm. They harbour within them a gathered energy, which can be released at any moment. They also induce a feeling of solitude and insignificance in relation to the infinite space of the universe.

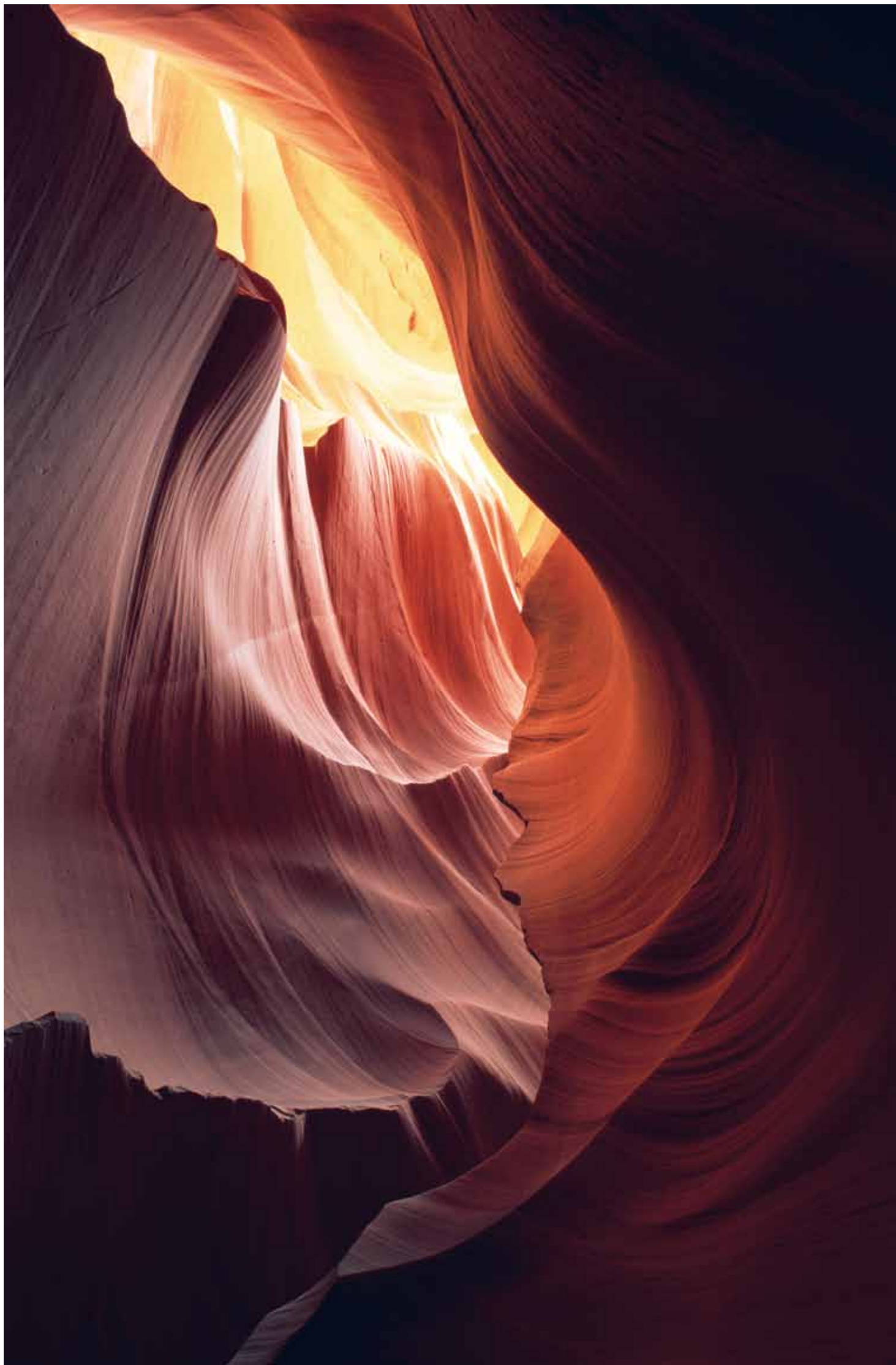
The nude is another basic theme in Brnclík's oeuvre. The cycle *Other Women* dates from the mid-80s to the mid-90s. It has a fascinating atmosphere, one driven by the women Brnclík photographed and the precisely chosen situations linked with a certain environment. Some photos form sequences recounting stories, while others stand alone and convincingly evoke a certain mood. It was often difficult to choose the right moment to press the shutter in the case of photographs taken in public places. These involved very intimate situations, though always depicted with exquisite taste. The theme of other women comes across as romantic, though in a completely different way to the landscapes. The photographs of this cycle encapsulate a special secret within, which fortunately we can never completely decipher and which is open to infinite interpretation. The artist handles the transformation of light sensitively, not as an end in itself but as the expression of a certain content or mood. He selects various environments, often exclusive and mysterious, marked by the traces of historical events and sundry narratives. In one of the series of photographs taken in carefully selected urban exteriors the nudes forge unexpected situations, which in turn create unsettling tensions. In others the focus is on the elegance of female bodies in an indifferent or imaginary space bereft of any specific memories. The viewer is thus offered a greater opportunity to draw on their own imagination. However, in certain specific interiors choreographed situations stand in direct opposition to the original purpose of the space. At first sight the action photographed is sometimes difficult to decipher unambiguously. We can interpret it in various different ways, and this in itself increases our curiosity.

The geometry of nudity is already present in Brnclík's early works, when he was studying at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague. At this time he was captivated by ballet. He returned to the theme between 2005 and 2007. His original intention was to create moments in time, though he then deliberately aestheticised the

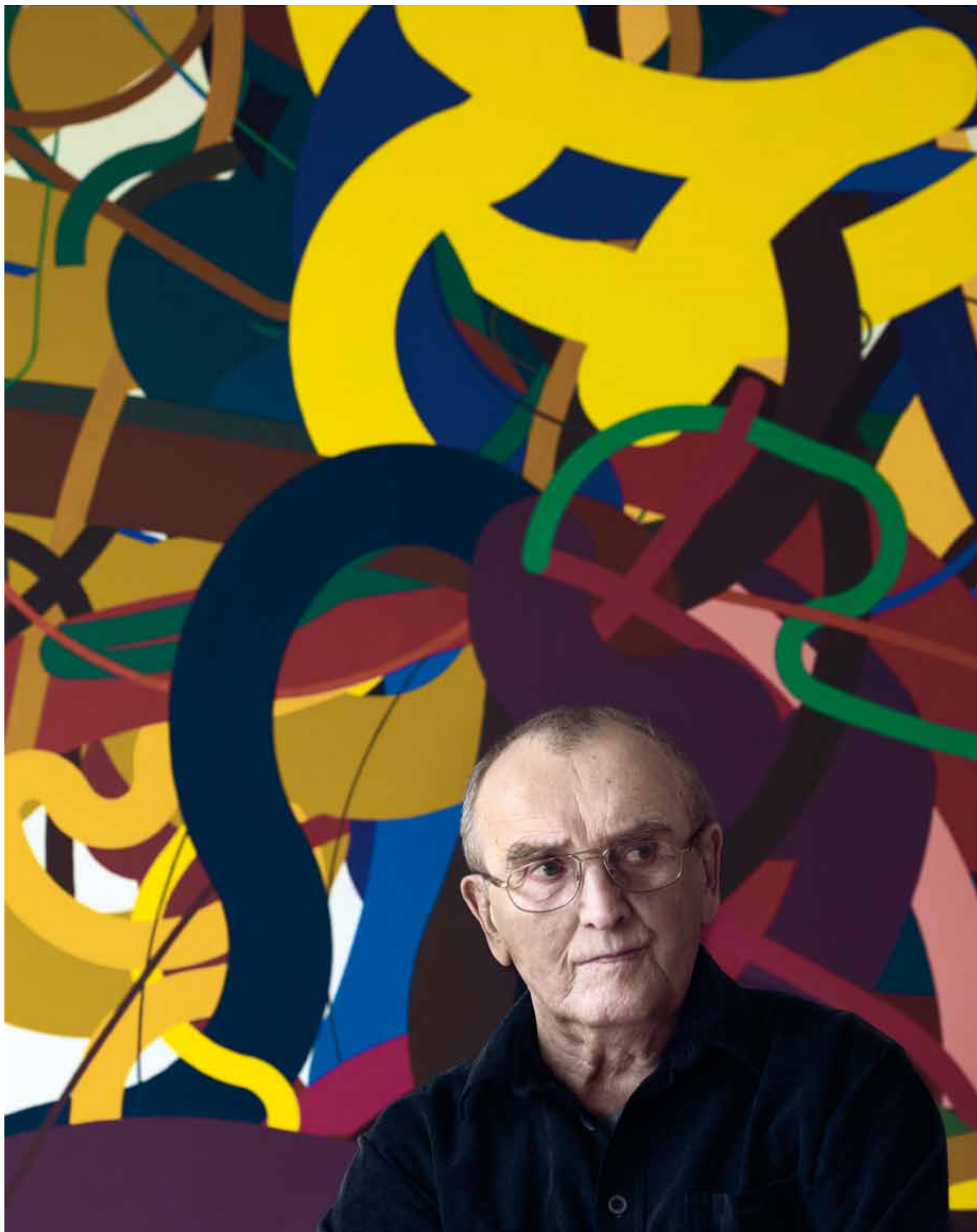
photographs, realising that the composition of the dancers' bodies must be fixed precisely, so that the light could be regulated correctly and the relationship between the whole and its parts be brought out most effectively. However, the composition of the photographs was naturally the result of balletic elements, the ideas of both the dancers and the photographer. Even though positions often had to be repeated for the desired effect to be achieved, the photos give the impression of having been created in movement. Though *The Geometry of Nudity* contains within itself a clear order, life is breathed into this order by the randomness which necessarily results despite the precision of the dancers' movements. Each newly formed position must necessarily differ from the previous one. What is being expressed is not the beauty of machines, but of female and male bodies.

The last of the basic themes is portraiture. Brunclík has been working in this field since the 70s. However, from 2009 to 2011 he focused on this form and created a collection entitled *46 Czechs*. He photographed well known personalities ranging from natural scientists and doctors, to philosophers, actors, musicians and artists. He managed to catch his subjects in their everyday surroundings wearing their characteristic expressions. Sometimes a photo would be the result of happy coincidence, at other times Brunclík would plan a sophisticated *mise-en-scène*. In some cases a gesture is important. In others it is the relationship between the subject and the space in which they are moving, the effect they have on that space or, on the contrary, the way that space moulds them in a certain way. The publication and exhibition concentrate on a limited selection of this relatively extensive collection, which is characterised by the variety of the subjects having their portraits taken. Pavel Brunclík has been exhibited many times, both in the Czech Republic and abroad. His publications on individual themes have many times been awarded the prize for photographic publication of the year. In all he has released five such publications, each devoted to a single circle of interest. This is the first book and exhibition which include a representative selection from the artist's entire oeuvre.









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