

Press Release

## A shop with Czech protective equipment, against Covid-19, opens in the Kotva Department store.

It is the first opportunity to present Czech companies in a comprehensive way on the market, so far there are only two stores of this kind in the world, namely in Los Angeles and Tokyo.

The exposition in Kotva is complemented by the touring *“Helpful Art in Covid”* exhibition.

Prague - A unique “anti-Covid-19” shop opens on the 4th floor of the Kotva Department store in Prague 1 - a place where it is possible to find cutting-edge technologies used by Czech companies and designers to protect citizens against Covid-19 in the last year. The 800 m<sup>2</sup> exposition was realised with the support of Generali, one of the largest global insurance and asset management providers, and the Kotva Department store.

The space was established thanks to a joint call from Pavel Šťastný, author of the project and *“Helpful Art in Covid”* exhibition, Tomáš Vrbík, Secretary of the Czech Chamber of Commerce Office and Marek Svoboda, Head of the Department of Economic Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### A space to showcase Czech Republic cutting-edge technologies

In spring 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic caused an acute shortage of vital products for front-line healthcare professionals and for the entire population in the Czech Republic. Almost overnight, Czech companies, together with scientists and engineers, began to develop new types of facemasks, respirators, shields, disinfectants and other protective aids using cutting-edge technologies such as nanotechnologies and 3D printers.

Marek Svoboda, Head of the Economic Diplomacy Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, says: *“You could see information about innovative Czech products here and there in the media, but they were never presented in one place “live”. Here is a unique opportunity to see what our companies have accomplished in just one year. The exhibition also has an important international dimension. We want to present to foreign partners what great things we can produce in our country.”*

Luciano Cirinà, CEO of Generali CEE Holding, based in Prague, stated: *“We are proud to support this space and the “Helpful Art in Covid” project. Through this initiative we can express our gratitude to the health workers and all those who have been standing in the front line during the Covid-19 pandemic. We, Generali, and the authors of this project have a common goal – to mitigate the devastating effects of the Coronavirus pandemic and together contribute to a recovery of our society.”*

Pavel Šťastný, Author and curator of the Czech “Anti-Covid” Industry project - Helpful Art in Covid, says: *“I am glad that many Czech companies responded to our call so quickly. The store will be gradually supplemented with products from other Czech companies and we want to equip it with a comprehensive range as soon as possible. We also invite Czech designers to provide us with their facemasks and other products for the store. Our Helpful Art in Covid project is a platform for the creation and presentation of new ideas and innovations that help in the fight against Covid-19.”*

Czech companies from the Association of the Nanotechnology Industry of the Czech Republic and others, such as Pardam Nano4fibers, Good mask, Palmapure, Royax, Kříž, Kubiček, Janka Radotín, as well as Ego Zlín and Linet, responded to the call. Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing (ÚNMZ) and Czech Agency for Standardization (ČAS) also took part. You can also choose facemasks from Czech designers - Ester Geislerová and Josefína Bakošová, Pavel Beneš, Martina Nevařilová - Navarila and others.

Students from the specialisation Innovative Business / Tiimiakatemia Prague at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague are actively involved in the store operations.

Under the Auspices

In cooperation with

Organisers

## “Helpful Art in Covid”, an exhibition to prove that art is part of the therapy

Součástí prodejny je i výstava Helpful Art in Covid, mapující nové umění, tzv. „Covid Art“.

The cultural project “Helpful Art in Covid” represents a new type of art that arose spontaneously during the Covid-19 pandemic. Artists from all over the world created masterpieces with one theme and mission - a tribute to health professionals and all those who helped around the world during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The touring exhibition contains 2,000 works of art created by 500 artists from 90 countries and includes paintings, graffiti, illustrations, posters, photographs, sculptures, design, videos, various initiatives and campaigns. The aim of the project is to present this exhibition in many other cities and countries, to establish contacts with local artists and to further map other pieces of art that are still being created.

This international touring project should be presented to the world for the first time in June 2021, travelling through the United Arab Emirates. A project tour is also being prepared in countries such as the Sultanate of Oman, India, Serbia, Germany and others. So far, the exposition has been presented at the multicultural festival “Praha Záhř”, it has travelled to the Motol Hospital, the Central Military Hospital in Prague, and is now in the Kotva Department store.

**Author and curator Pavel Šťastný**, explains: *“We all had to put on a facemask. So we symbolically placed it on a large portrait of John Lennon on the wall, which has been a symbol of freedom and love for our country for decades. Photographs of Lennon's veiled wall have travelled around the world and have already been published by hundreds of media. It has become the most famous and largest Czech facemask. The visual became part of online groups of artists whose works focused on Covid -19. I started to receive dozens of works a day from many countries through social media, supporting millions of people around the world in difficult times and helping everyone to survive mentally. So I decided to start mapping, collecting and sorting this new Covid Art and I created an exhibition out of it. It was based on the first online selection by the French collector Blaise Runart, who also added our facemask from Lennon's wall in Prague. Runart from the island of Reunion supported me and provided me with his collection. We are pleased to have found another partner in Generali who will continue in our mission.”*

The “Helpful Art in Covid” project was created under the auspices of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic, in cooperation with the Department of Economic Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The patronage was also provided by the Capital City of Prague and Prague 1.

### Generali helping local communities in the fight against Covid-19

To mitigate the economic hardship of Covid-19 pandemic, Generali Group established a €100 million Extraordinary International Fund. In the Austria, CEE and Russia Region, Generali was able to support [several initiatives](#) using a total amount of € 11 million. In addition, to mark this year's 190th anniversary of Generali, the Group launched “Fenice 190”, a €3.5 billion investment plan to support the recovery of European economies impacted by Covid-19. In the Czech Republic, under the auspices of the Czech Association of Nurses, Generali Česká pojišťovna, which is part of the Generali Group, is running the project “Helping Nurses”, through which it provides moral and material support to medical staff in hospitals across the Czech Republic.

#### ABOUT GENERALI

Generali is one of the largest global insurance and asset management providers. Established in 1831, it is present in 50 countries throughout the world, with a total premium income of € 70.7 billion in 2020. With more than 72,000 employees serving 65.9 million customers, the Group has a leading position in Europe and a growing presence in Asia and Latin America. Commitment to sustainability is one of the enablers of Generali's strategy, inspired by the ambition to be the Lifetime Partner to its customers, offering innovative and personalised solutions thanks to an unmatched distribution network. In Austria, Central and Eastern Europe and Russia the Group operates through its Austria, CEE & Russia Regional Office (Prague) in 13 countries as one of the top three insurers in the Region.

#### ABOUT KOTVA

The Kotva Department Store is a 28,000 sqm, 7 storey building ideally positioned in Náměstí Republiky (Republic Square) in Prague, Czech Republic. Designed in the '70s by the renowned Czech architects Věra Machoninová and Vladimír Machonin, it is well recognisable for its still innovative architecture, characterised by a honeycomb design. The building has recently been listed among Czech cultural monuments for its architectural and historic value. Opened in 1975, Kotva was for a long time among the largest department stores in Europe, and one of the most popular buildings in the Czech capital. Today, the department store requires a complete renovation to restore its original splendour and architectural footprint, enriched with efficiency and top-quality modern functionalities, and to fully express its inherent value. In 2020, Generali Real Estate acquired the Kotva Department Store on behalf of the pan-European fund “Generali Real Estate Asset Repositioning S.A.” (GREAR) - a fund dedicated to value-add strategies in all the major European countries - from the real estate company PSN.

[www.artincovid.com](http://www.artincovid.com)

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