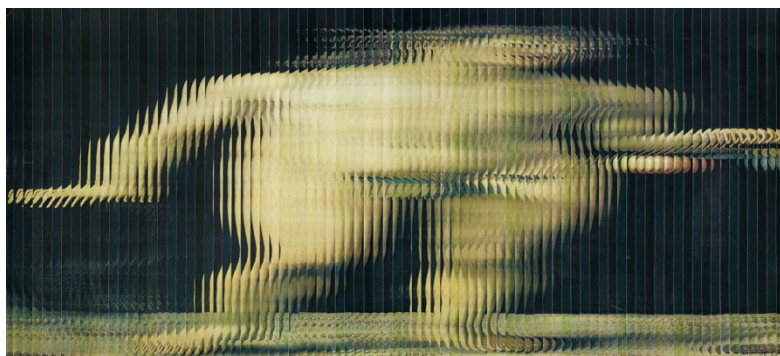


Jiří Kolář: Revolutionizing Collage

On View: September 24 – October 23, 2026

Fuller Building
595 Madison Avenue, 6 Floor
New York, NY 10022



Untitled, 1975, rollage, 11 3/4 x 25 3/4 inches, 30 x 65.5 cm

Galerie Gmurzynska will present *Revolutionizing Collage*, an exhibition of works by Jiří Kolář, at its 595 Madison Avenue gallery from September 24 – October 23, 2026.

Jiří Kolář (1914–2002), the Czech poet and artist whose radical approach transformed the possibilities of collage, is being recognized for his lasting contribution to twentieth-century art and his influence on generations of artists.

By the 1970s, Kolář had established an international reputation for reinventing collage through an extraordinary range of techniques. Thomas M. Messer, then director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, described Kolář's transformation of the medium as "highly personal, very unique, and very much his own." Kolář's path to international recognition was unconventional. Trained initially as a carpenter, he first became known as a poet and was a founding member of Group 42. He translated modern literature and participated in Prague's avant-garde circles before political repression profoundly shaped his life and work. After his writing led to imprisonment in 1953, and later after signing Charter 77, Kolář increasingly turned away from language. Around 1959, poetry began moving off the page and into visual form.

Books, letters, reproductions and canonical works of art became raw material. Kolář cut, folded, perforated, crumpled, interlaced and reconstructed images, developing an expansive vocabulary of techniques including rollage, chiasmage, crumplage, prollage, intercollage and stratification. These experiments ultimately became the basis for his *Dictionary of Methods*. Alfred Frankenstein captured the spirit of this practice as Kolář's "endless inventiveness in making new works of art out of old ones."

Kolář's international recognition accelerated after he began exhibiting outside Czechoslovakia. He was given an entire room at Documenta in 1968, followed by major exhibitions at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in 1969, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1971, the Guggenheim Museum in 1975 and 1978, and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in 1978. His work was subsequently presented by institutions including the ICA in London, the Reina Sofía in Madrid, the Centre Pompidou and National Gallery Prague.

A distinguished group of critics, curators, artists and collectors championed Kolář throughout his career. Among them were Surrealist writer Louis Aragon, gallerist and historian Arturo Schwarz, writer Michel Butor and Nouveau Réalisme theorist Pierre Restany. Czech-American collectors Meda and Jan Mládek assembled more than 240 works by Kolář, creating one of the most extensive collections of his art; that collection now forms a cornerstone of Museum Kampa.

Kolář's practice was deeply informed by sustained encounters with art history, ranging from Bosch, Bruegel and Duchamp to Picasso and Twombly. Rather than simply reproducing familiar cultural imagery, he dismantled and reconstructed it, revealing new relationships among texts, pictures and objects. Milena Kalinovska wrote that Kolář "built a whole new understanding of reality" by bringing these elements together to disclose multiple realities. His importance to twentieth-century collage lies not only in his technical virtuosity but also in the way he expanded the medium's fundamental grammar. Decades before appropriation and the recycling of cultural imagery became commonplace in contemporary art, Kolář approached inherited images as material to be read, disassembled and made to speak anew.

Jiří Kolář (1914-2002, Czechoslovakia) emerged from the Prague avant-garde as a important poet before developing one of the most inventive and influential approaches to collage in modern art. His practice encompassed numerous cutting, folding, layering and reconstruction techniques and drew extensively on literature and the history of art. His work has been exhibited extensively, including three solo exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and other retrospectives at the Centre George Pompidou, Paris; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; and at international exhibitions such as documenta 4 & 6 (1968, 1977) and the Venice Biennale (1968, 1970, 1986, 1990). He features in major international collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; and Tate Britain, London.

Galerie Gmurzynska is an international art gallery with locations in Zurich and New York. The gallery was founded in 1965 in Cologne, Germany by the Polish born Antonina Gmurzynska and specialises in 20th century Modern and Contemporary Classics. Forty years after its establishment, Krystyna Gmurzynska and Mathias Rastorfer relocated the gallery from Cologne to its new flagship location in Zurich. From the beginning, the gallery was interested in organizing exhibitions that had a documentary character both through the choice of themes and through its publications.

Known for its museum quality and uniquely curated exhibitions, Galerie Gmurzynska has hosted well over 200 shows in its various premises and published over 300 art historical catalogues and catalogue raisonné in close collaboration with experts worldwide. Moreover, the gallery has represented the estates of some of the world's greatest artists such as Yves Klein, Louise Nevelson, Wifredo Lam and Roberto Matta, in some cases for several generations. Furthermore, the gallery represents contemporary artists Robert Indiana, Christo and Ronnie Cutrone among many others.