**PRESS RELEASE**

**11 January 2021**

**Prague to gain free space for installing the Slav Epic in the Savarin project**

**Prague, 11 January 2021 - Today, the developer and investment group Crestyl presented to the public an offer to the Capital of Prague for the installation of Alfons Mucha’s Slav Epic in the Savarin project for an estimated period of 25 years. This is being created under the leadership of Thomas Heatherwick, an icon of contemporary world architecture and design, and his studio near Prague’s Wenceslas Square and Na Příkopě Street. Savarin has been chosen by the Prague Institute of Planning and Development as one of the most suitable places where the canvases could be installed, which would finally fulfil the wish of Alfons Mucha. Moreover, the Mucha Foundation, which works to preserve and promote Alfons Mucha’s art, would incorporate a selection from a family collection of the lifelong work of one of the most famous Czech artists into the permanent exhibition. Crestyl offers the construction of all the spaces for the exhibit and their equipment free of charge within five years.**

*“We really appreciate the possibility of participating in the tender for the placement of the Slav Epic within our Savarin project. We are delighted that the Savarin project is supported by all political parties in the Prague City Council, for which we thank them. We have been negotiating for the past several months with the Mucha family on the placement of a fitting selection of Mucha's lifelong work in these spaces, so we see considerable synergies in connection with the Slav Epic display. Therefore, our offer to the city is co-signed by the Mucha Foundation as well,”* says Simon Johnson, Crestyl Group executive director. *“We are offering a solution that would finally end the entire drama of the Slav Epic installation to make the painter’s wish come true.* *We are ready to cover all the costs related to the construction of exhibition spaces, including all the interior furnishings according to the requirements for the presentation of such a work. Prague would, thus, bear no initial expense for the creation of the exhibit, and would then enjoy a yearly income from the revenue.”*

*“The twenty canvases of the Slav Epic are, undoubtedly, my grandfather’s masterpiece, but the uniqueness of their presentation in Savarin consists in the connection with our private collection. This collection is the largest and most comprehensive worldwide; it contains many studies, pastels, drawings, oil paintings, photographs and written documents that accompanied the creation of the epic. All this could make the story of the creation of the work and a testimony of one historical period. This would result in the establishment of a unique museum of international importance comparable, from a conceptual point of view, perhaps only with the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. The Slav Epic would, thus, be exhibited as a whole,”* says John Mucha, grandson of Alfons Mucha and chairman of the governing board of the Mucha Foundation. This foundation administers the collection of the painter’s lifelong work and, by selecting works and studies matching in time and theme, it would make, in connection with the Slav Epic, a unique permanent exhibit in the Savarin Palace.

*“Over the years, we have heard many ideas about where to install the Slav Epic. Prague has been looking for its home for almost 100 years now and we are convinced that the Savarin Palace fulfils my grandfather’s wish, on which he conditioned his gift to Prague. Thomas Heatherwick presented to us and also consulted the vision of exhibiting the twenty canvases of the Slav Epic, and I am convinced that my grandfather would be proud of such a presentation of his masterpiece. As I have already said several times, the moment the issue of the Slav Epic’s home in Prague is clarified, I will withdraw the lawsuit with the city, because the will of my grandfather will be fulfilled,”* says John Mucha, grandson of painter Alfons Mucha.

The new exhibit tailored to the Slav Epic in the Savarin project would offer an exceptional and globally unique exhibition space in the city centre. At the same time, it will not burden its surroundings with a greater movement of people, as the exhibit would be entered from the inner courtyard and accessibility for visitors will be also made easier by the newly created interconnection to the underground station with a direct entry into the spaces of the Savarin project. The exhibit over an area of 3,500 m2 would be entered through the newly created gardens and the listed building of the historical riding school, which will be the centrepiece of the whole Savarin project.

The exhibition space of the epic and of the life’s work of Alfons Mucha will be 10 metres high, which will enable the presentation of the Slav Epic in a uniform visual view according to the original intention of Alfons Mucha. Then it will all be enhanced by the entry hall into the gallery, technical facilities, a shop with souvenirs related to Alfons Mucha and a space for the gathering of groups for guided tours. The whole area of the exhibit shall be conceived as the life path of Alfons Mucha and how this path led to the creation of the Slav Epic. The aim is to create a unique space in the heart of Prague, in which the appreciated architectural studio of Thomas Heatherwick directly participates. This studio also has rich experience with the design of exhibition spaces – for example, the conversion of an old silo in Cape Town into the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art, Zeitz MOCAA, under which the Heatherwick studio is signed, was awarded as the best building of the year. The opening of the exhibit in the Savarin project is planned within five years.

*“I’m thrilled to hear that the amazing paintings by the Czech artist Alfons Mucha could potentially have a home in a new gallery space within our Savarin project. My studio is proud to be working with the property developer Crestyl to regenerate this prominent landmark quarter in the heart of historic Prague. This already important site could now have even greater significance for the city by becoming home to this internationally recognised collection of paintings that celebrate the history and culture of the Slavic people,”* concludes Thomas Heatherwick, founder of the Heatherwick studio.

**About the Savarin project:**

*The Savarin project was designed by contemporary architecture and design icon Thomas Heatherwick and his studio. One of the most successful world architecture and design studios today, it stands behind unique projects worldwide and, moreover, is often recognized for the revitalization of abandoned spaces. This is also the case of the Savarin project in Prague. The Czech metropolis will thus become home to world-class architecture.*

*The Savarin project is situated right in the neighbourhood of Prague’s Wenceslas Square, interconnecting with the streets Na Příkopě, Jindřišská and Panská in the tradition of Wenceslas passages. It comprises a careful restoration of the current historical buildings and the establishment of an entirely new public space with greenery, an open area in the inner courtyard and commercial areas. Savarin consists of four linked individual parts, each of which will have its own character and specific use. Thus, it honours the traditional Prague urban layout, where streets of different sizes, squares, courtyards and parks are connected to each other to form a harmonious unit.*

*The building facing Jindřišská Street will offer its own green inner courtyard and several restaurants. The second part with the entry from Panská Street will feature the Time Out Market with approximately fifteen different food services – unique culinary experiences will, thus, be accessible also to Prague citizens at an affordable price, as no other restaurants just for tourists will appear. A passage with shops and services will be situated in the block of three buildings facing Wenceslas Square. These three parts will lead the visitors to the very heart of the project – the new public space with a park and the carefully restored building of the historical riding school, so far totally unknown to the public, and the Savarin Palace by Kilian Ignaz Dientzenhofer. It is this Baroque jewel that will regain its original concept after such a long time, with the palace with courtyards being connected to the park and the riding school.*

*The entire historical buildings facing the street will naturally be preserved and comprehensively restored, not only their facades. The whole inner courtyard will be opened to the public – in addition to the Franciscan Garden, another space suitable for relaxation and leisure time with newly planted greenery, benches, fountains and drinking fountains will appear near Wenceslas Square. Publicly accessible roof gardens and terraces will offer views of the Prague panorama. The newly accessible passages will enable easy and free passage through the previously inaccessible centre of the city. They will be joined to the current passageways and interconnect the streets around the whole block. The passages will have no doors – everything will be accessible barrier-free and even a new direct barrier-free entry into the Můstek underground station will be established here. The Savarin project offers a unique connection of art, inspiration, fashion, culture, architecture and culinary experiences. Its aim is to also improve the offer of services, entertainment, public spaces and shops for Prague residents; it should be an ideal place for everyday shopping of ordinary citizens.*

**About the Heatherwick studio:**

[*Heatherwick Studio*](http://www.heatherwick.com) *is currently one of the most successful international architecture and design studios. It stands behind unique projects worldwide, for example, the new* [*headquarters of the global giant Google in London*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/buildings/google-kings-cross/) *and* [*in California (in cooperation with BIG)*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/buildings/google-mountainview/)*, the organically conceived* [*study centre in Singapore*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/buildings/learning-hub-the-hive/)*, the new futuristic* [*park Pier 55,*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/spaces/pier55/) *the unique*  [*Vessel public space*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/spaces/vessel/)  *in New York and the iconic* [*British pavilion at Expo 2010*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/buildings/uk-pavilion/)*. However, the studio also became famous for the design of* [*the cauldron for the Olympic games in London*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/objects/olympic-cauldron/) *in 2012 and the new design of* [*London double-decker buses*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/infrastructure/new-routemaster/)*.*

*The studio’s latest projects include the innovative reconstruction of* [*Tokyo’s Toranomon-Azabudai District*](http://www.heatherwick.com/studio/news/heatherwick-studio-launches-toranomon-azabudai-heart-tokyo/)  *and the renovation of the 130-year-old Olympia London*  [*exhibition ground*](http://www.heatherwick.com/studio/news/olympia-london-plans-revealed/)*. It is the revitalization of abandoned spaces for which the Heatherwick Studio is appreciated – the conversion of an old silo in Cape Town into* [*the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art, Zeitz MOCAA,*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/buildings/zeitz-mocaa/) *received the Cultural Architecture Award in ArchDaily’s 2018 Building of the Year Awards. The London* [*Coal Drops Yard project*](http://www.heatherwick.com/projects/buildings/coal-drops-yard/) *, thanks to which unused coal warehouses were transformed into a multifunctional public space, was acknowledged with the prestigious RIBA National Award, and at the end of the year it also received an award as the world building of the year. The Savarin project in Prague thus has the possibility to join other world icons of architecture originating under the leadership of the Heatherwick Studio.*

**About the CRESTYL group:**

*The CRESTYL group has been operating on the Czech real estate market for more than twenty years now and is one of the leading developers, with a wide portfolio of residential and commercial projects. Currently, it actively deals with the development of more than fifteen sites all over the Czech Republic with a total investment value exceeding EUR 1.2 billion. This also includes the largest renovation project in the Prague centre called Savarin, which interconnects Wenceslas Square and Na Příkopě, Jindřišská and Panská streets, the growing DOCK quarter in the Prague district of Libeň and the newly emerging Hagibor quarter near the Želivského underground station. In all of its projects, the CRESTYL group pays attention in the long- term to quality, design, premium construction, use of first-rate materials and overall convenience for inhabitants as well as visitors.*

**About the Mucha Foundation**

*The Mucha Foundation is an independent, public benefit company with an international scope of activity founded in 1992 by the painter’s grandson John Mucha and Alfons Mucha's daughter-in-law, Geraldine Thomson Mucha. The aim of the Mucha Foundation is to protect and preserve the family collection, which is the largest and most comprehensive collection of Alfons Mucha’s works worldwide, and to promote Alfons Mucha's work. Over the years, the Mucha Foundation has held more than 50 exhibitions across the world, at which more than 6,500,000 visitors have become acquainted not only with the work of Alfons Mucha, but also with Czech culture. The Mucha Foundation is internationally recognized as an authority on the life and work of Alfons Mucha. The chairman of the governing body of the foundation is John Mucha.*

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