

The Portal of Time

Created by: academic sculptor Marian Karel, Prague

This work of art was created as part of the project to reconstruct the Cheb pedestrian zone. 2009 - 2010

The artwork is 9 meters high, 2 meters wide and 3.5 tonnes in weight.

The Portal of Time represents the door of a house that used to stand on this spot. Here, medieval Cheb opens to the industrial period and its future.

The artefact rotates quietly on its axis - 180 degrees in 24 hours.

At midnight, it is in the 'closed' position. At high noon, when it is in the 'open' position, its side shows the number 1061, representing the first year of the city timeline presenting the most important dates in the history of Cheb. The timeline runs through the entire pedestrian zone – up to the year 2011, covering 950 years of the documented existence of Cheb.



Technical innovation in Cheb

In the mid-nineteenth century, Cheb's citizens were motivated to connect the heart of medieval Cheb with the main technical novelty of that time, the railroad, and decided to take resolute action. They tore down two houses on the south side of the square and built a new avenue leading to the train station.

This straight new avenue opened into the square from the south. However, a small problem arose: the square was sloped downward to the north and all that could be seen from a certain point along the new boulevard was not the houses of the Špalíček block, but their roofs. It was as if someone had cut a beautiful photo in half.

This was not acceptable to the city builders. They knew exactly what to do and so adopted an ancient solution, known in urban composition as point de vue, a visual closure or an accent. In brief, a statue of Emperor Franz Josef was placed in the square to attract people's attention and offer something to look at while they walked along the new avenue. Everyone approaching the town centre from the train station first headed towards Emperor's statue. It was not until after they passed the statue that they could feast their eyes on Cheb's square in all its glory.

However, time was not kind to Franz Josef's likeness. For political reasons, his statue was attacked, besmirched and so had to be guarded. Eventually, after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the statue was completely removed, since it was a symbol of the Habsburg monarchy.

When our studio, A69 – architects, presented a winning proposal for improvements in the entire pedestrian zone during 1999, we called attention to a long forgotten fact.

After the removal of pointless concrete planters and poster pillars from the axis of the pedestrian zone, and the restoration of the original view from the avenue, an old problem was bound to re-emerge: the sunken horizon of the square.

We assumed that the visual closure effect would be restored here and, as the Emperor's statue had done, would create point de vue. At the same time, the beginning of Cheb's historical timeline would be placed here. Our project initiated a sculpture competition in which professor Marian Karel took part with his design for the Portal of Time.

It was exactly what our concept of the pedestrian zone needed, both compositionally and symbolically.

Despite the simplicity of its form, Marian Karel's sculpture possesses incredible richness of content and makes numerous connections. Not only is it a monumental abstract kinetic sculpture made by an internationally acclaimed artist; it also represents a modern astronomical clock. It abstractly symbolizes the doors of no longer existing houses; it represents a town gate. Notice that the one visible window of St Nicholas Church at the square's north end is larger than many houses. It is a symbol of church and faith. Another door, just as big, stands at the square's south end, where the industrial era pushed its way through, and symbolizes a new direction: an era of reason.

Sometimes, we hear complaints about contemporary, modern architecture not cooperating with artists working in other directions; this is unlike the situation in classical architecture, where there was no difference between an architect, a sculptor and a painter. In the case of the Cheb pedestrian zone, the artistic ambitions of architects, sculptors, designers, and graphic designers, including advocates of new artistic movements such as pixel art, have complemented each other perfectly. JWA69

Timeline 1061 - 1296

- 1061 ...que procedit de Egire... first written mention of Cheb
- 1135 Cheb region becomes administrative unit
- 1140 First mention of Cheb parish
- 1146 Cheb becomes possession of Hohenstaufen dynasty after death of Diepold III
- 1149 Cheb called fortified marketplace
- 1167 Cheb Region acquired by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa
- 1179 Construction of Imperial Castle begins
- 1203 Cheb called town for first time
- 1213 First mention of castle chapel
- 1220 Construction of town church of St Nicholas
- 1241 First known town seal
- 1256 First structure of Franciscan monastery completed
- 1258 Order of German Knights settled in Cheb
- 1264 First mention of Order of Poor Clares in Cheb
- 1266 Cheb becomes possession of Ottokar II of Bohemia
- 1270 Old town destroyed in fire
- 1271 Town hospital entrusted to Knights of Cross by Ottokar II of Bohemia
- 1277 Cheb called imperial city for first time
- 1279 Cheb's rights and privileges acknowledged by Rudolph of Habsburg
- 1285 New Franciscan church consecrated
- 1289 Negotiations between King Wenceslas II of Bohemia and Rudolph of Habsburg in Cheb
- 1291 Cheb asks King Wenceslas II of Bohemia for protection
- 1296 Construction of Dominican monastery approved by Wenceslas II of Bohemia



1304 - 1458

- 1304 Cheb region becomes possession of Albert I of Germany
- 1310 Oldest judicial book of Cheb appears
- 1315 Cheb pledged to Czech king by King Louis the Bavarian
- 1318 John the Blind and Louis the Bavarian negotiate at Cheb Castle
- 1322 Incorporation of Cheb region into Lands of Bohemian Crown
- 1330 Cheb exempted from paying duty in entire empire by Emperor Louis's Golden Bull
- 1349 Right to mint own coins granted by Charles IV
- 1350 First major Jewish pogrom in Cheb
- 1352 Municipal code is written
- 1355 Cheb exempted from duty in entire empire by Emperor Charles's IV Golden Bull
- 1375 New synagogue completed
- 1376 Cheb's privileges and freedoms confirmed by Wenceslas IV, Holy Roman Emperor
- 1389 Peace negotiated by King Wenceslas IV at Reichstag in Cheb
- 1390 Keeping of municipal tax records started
- 1414 Construction of St Bartholomew's Church completed
- 1430 Cheb besieged by Hussite army
- 1432 Agreement on common judge reached by Utraquists and Council during negotiations in Cheb
- 1437 Cheb's privileges confirmed by Golden Bull of Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg
- 1440 Consecration of St Yodok's Church outside Lodní Gate
- 1458 Cheb's privileges and freedoms acknowledged by George of Poděbrady



1459 - 1589

- 1459 George of Poděbrady negotiates recognition of his government in Cheb
- 1461 Reichstag called to Cheb by George of Poděbrady
- 1467 George of Poděbrady as last ruler to stay at Cheb Castle
- 1469 Interdict extended over town for its loyalty to King George of Poděbrady
- 1470 First print shop established in Cheb's Špalíček block of houses
- 1471 First surviving picture of square with Špalíček
- 1472 111 houses destroyed in large fire in immediate vicinity of Jánské Square
- 1475 Gothic reconstruction of St Nicholas Church
- 1489 Addition (+) and the subtraction (-) signs invented by Johannes Widmann, native of Cheb
- 1495 Cheb's privileges and freedoms confirmed by Emperor Maximilian I
- 1525 Dismissal of two burgomasters due to revolt of Cheb's citizens
- 1528 First wooden statue placed on fountain in square
- 1531 First reference to Oldest pub, U červeného koníčka
- 1540 Town's first paper mill founded in village of Stein
- 1542 Cheb described as charming Renaissance town by humanist Caspar Bruchsius
- 1547 Emperor Charles V and King Ferdinand in town during Schmalkaldic War
- 1552 New town armoury built
- 1560 Oldest urban chronicle finished by scribe Pankraz Engelhart
- 1563 Textbook of surgery published by Georg Zechendorff, Cheb physician
- 1564 First evangelical mass celebrated in Cheb
- 1570 Professional literature published by Hans Burger's print shop
- 1589 Cheb adulterers' revolt severely punished



1604 - 1705

- 1604 New Gregorian calendar introduced in Cheb
- 1608 Town of Cheb in charge of Cheb parish
- 1619 Frederick V, Elector Palatine, so called the Winter King, welcomed in Cheb by Bohemian Estates
- 1625 Albrecht von Wallenstein in Cheb for first time to recruit new army
- 1627 Recatholicization of Cheb commences; gracious decree for Cheb issued
- 1631 Cheb occupied by Saxon Army; Protestants back in town
- 1632 Cheb conquered by Albrecht von Wallenstein's army again
- 1634 Albrecht von Wallenstein assassinated in Cheb
- 1644 Cheb marquetry workshop opened by artisanal woodcarver Adam Eck
- 1645 82 town houses destroyed in large fire
- 1647 Cheb besieged and conquered by Swedish army
- 1649 Swedish army leaves Cheb
- 1652 Cheb ordered to complete its recatholicization by Emperor Ferdinand III
- 1655 Plans to build Cheb fortress approved
- 1662 Baroque facade of Gabler House in square finished
- 1665 New poorhouse built next to St Yodok's Church
- 1669 Second most important craftsman of Cheb marquetry, Hans Georg Fischer, dies
- 1674 Foundation stone for new Dominican church laid
- 1687 Great Baroque architect Balthasar Neumann born in Cheb
- 1693 J. Michael Widmann appointed first postmaster of Cheb
- 1694 St Vincent's remains laid to rest in St Nicholas Church
- 1703 Egerer Ordinari Zeitung founded - first newspaper published in print
- 1705 Construction of Jesuit convent completed



Timeline 1712 - 1874

- 1712 Consecration of new church of St Clare, designed by Christoph Dientzenhofer
- 1715 First separate map of Cheb region published, based on cartographic measurements
- 1720 Construction of new Dominican monastery completed
- 1721 Pragmatic Sanction accepted during last meeting of Land assembly in Cheb
- 1723 Cheb's population reaches 6483
- 1728 New town hall, designed by Giovanni Battista Alliprandi, completed
- 1740 Construction of Cheb fortress completed
- 1742 Cheb besieged and conquered by French army; St Nicholas Church damaged by fire
- 1747 Plans for renewal of St Nicholas Church's towers finished by Architect Balthasar Neumann
- 1782 Convent of Poor Clares closed down
- 1787 Cheb attached to Prague archbishopric
- 1793 99 houses in castle's vicinity destroyed by large fire
- 1800 Cheb becomes fortified town with permanent military garrison
- 1808 Demolition of Cheb fortress' ordered by official patent
- 1809 North side of old town devastated by destructive fire
- 1810 New south tower of St Nicholas Church fitted with neo-Gothic spire
- 1817 New bridge over Ohře (Eger) River built
- 1826 Pedestrian bridge built at Kachní kámen to make Ohře region accessible
- 1828 Siechenhausen becomes popular travel destination because of its new inn called Myslivna
- 1829 New shooting range built below castle
- 1830 New high school building consecrated
- 1845 Royal town of Cheb has 10,459 inhabitants and 802 houses
- 1850 Cheb becomes seat of District Executive Office
- 1857 District Revenue Headquarters built
- 1862 Project for new avenue leading to future train station prepared
- 1863 Construction of 378 metres long railway viaduct started
- 1864 Gasworks built in Lodní suburbs
- 1865 Cheb connected to Bavarian and Saxon railways thanks to its new train station
- 1865 Construction of new Evangelical school and vicarage
- 1866 Demolition of Mlýnská Gate below castle
- 1869 Foundation stone laid for construction of Evangelical church
- 1871 Demolition of Horní Gate on Březinova Street
- 1872 Construction of municipal joint-stock brewery finished
- 1873 One of first city museums in Bohemia founded
- 1874 New theatre building opened

1875 - 1896

- 1875 New central school building, Rudolfinum, constructed
- 1880 Office building of St Florian Insurance Association completed
- 1881 Construction of new iron pedestrian bridge at Pisečná Gate below castle
- 1883 Fire in U zlatého slunce Hotel in square
- 1885 Construction of Savings Bank's new building
- 1886 Inauguration of first building of new town military quarters
- 1887 Monument to Emperor Joseph II unveiled in square
- 1891 New factory producing Premier bicycles established
- 1892 New school at Horní Gate opened
- 1893 New synagogue consecrated
- 1896 Construction of new town slaughterhouse



1898 - 1951

- 1898 Construction of first chorus and exhibition hall in Poohří region
- 1899 Construction of new iron bridge over Ohře River
- 1900 Czech genius Jára Cimrman has a beer in Spalíček while visiting Cheb
- 1900 Construction of Discount House building on Svobody Avenue
- 1901 Lookout into Poohří region opened
- 1902 Construction of school on Karlova Street
- 1904 Construction of orphanage
- 1905 Completion of new courthouse and jail buildings
- 1907 Construction of new building for Austro-Hungarian Bank
- 1909 School in Komenského Park opened
- 1910 Construction of town's power plant; new town hospital opened
- 1911 New municipal library opened; ESKA factory founded
- 1912 New memorial to fallen unveiled in municipal park
- 1913 Turner Memorial unveiled on Špitálský Hill
- 1914 Construction of new military quarters outside Mostní Gate
- 1916 Prison camp with capacity of 10,000 prisoners of war built in Cheb
- 1917 First military airport in Bohemia built in Cheb
- 1918 On 27 October, Cheb Region becomes part of Deutschböhmen; its independence declared
- 1918 On 16 December, Cheb under control of Czech Army upon agreement with town's officials
- 1922 National Day celebrations in Cheb turn into demonstration for special position of Cheb Region
- 1925 Construction of new Czech school building
- 1927 Club house, called „Freedom“, opened
- 1931 Construction of new chorus and exhibition hall in Poohří region
- 1933 Sudeten German Home Front in Cheb established
- 1934 First post-war Wallenstein Games take place
- 1935 Sudeten German Party becomes borderlands' strongest political party
- 1938 On 1 October, Cheb under control of Freikorps troops after signing of Munich Agreement
- 1939 Cheb becomes part of Reichsgau Sudetenland
- 1944 First major bombings of city
- 1945 On 26 April Cheb liberated by United States Army
- 1945 First Czech municipal council established
- 1946 Expulsion of German citizens completed
- 1947 Monument commemorating United States Army unveiled in municipal Park
- 1948 Power abruptly assumed by Communists leading action committees
- 1951 Monument to American soldiers removed from municipal park

1956 - 1979

- 1956 Reconstruction of city's historical heart
- 1958 Youth Brass Band founded
- 1960 Construction of Spáleníště Housing Estate started
- 1961 Permanent Czech theatre established
- 1962 Construction of the new train station completed
- 1965 Construction of Hradčany Housing Estate started
- 1968 Soviet Army occupies Cheb
- 1969 So-called normalization started by Cheb's communists
- 1970 FIJO Festival takes place for first time, its tradition begins
- 1971 Construction of Skalka Housing Estate started
- 1979 Cheb becomes premier football league city



1981 - 2011

- 1981 Centre of Cheb declared urban conservation area
- 1985 Dozens of buildings damaged by earthquake
- 1985 Construction of Zlatý vrch Housing Estate started
- 1989 Square fills with people called for free elections and end of totalitarian regime
- 1990 First democratic municipal council after 1948 elected
- 1990 Faculty of Economics founded
- 1991 Euregio Egrensis Associations of Bohemia, Bavaria and Saxonia/Thuringia established
- 1992 Society for restoring Maria Loreto pilgrimage site in Hrozňatov established
- 1993 Construction of city's bypass begins
- 1994 New high school building opened; school on Zlatý Hill opened
- 1995 Brewery stops brewing beer after 123 years
- 1997 City switches to environmentally friendly method of heating
- 1998 Theatre reopened, one year after it was damaged in fire
- 2001 Wallenstein Festival revived
- 2002 Construction of Industrial Estate begins
- 2004 New winter stadium opened
- 2005 Bismarck Observation Tower reopened to public
- 2006 Revitalization of right bank of Ohře River culminates in Garden Exhibition
- 2007 Former military quarters replaced by shopping centre
- 2008 Restoration of towers of St Nicholas Church completed
- 2009 Reconstruction of pedestrian zone begins
- 2010 Work on war graves in municipal cemetery completed
- 2011 950 years have passed since first written mention of Cheb



Tourist Information Centre in Cheb

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PEDESTRIAN ZONE
IN CHEB