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“When Paris Met Bohemia: Discovering the Czech Nation Through its Art, 1900-1938”



This thesis explores how a small group of French artists and intellectuals based in Paris ‘discovered’ the Czech nation through its modern art and history in the years leading to World War I through the interwar period. I argue that these Frenchmen at first praised the ‘Frenchness’ of Czech modernism and history to celebrate their own civilization and liberal values. Soon after World War I had begun, these Frenchmen advocated for an independent state not only because the Czechs’ refined art and history demonstrated its own European value, but also to ensure that a representative of Western European values was firmly situated in the heart of East-Central Europe.