

British Stage Designers bring home the Golden Triga

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This summer seventeen British theatre designers went to Prague and came home with the Golden Triga! So baffling is this simple statement that it is no wonder that the British press failed to broadcast the good news—for good news it was!

The Golden Triga—or Troika, if one speaks Russian, not Czech—is a golden reproduction on a fairly, but not very, small scale, of a group of statuary on the roof of the National Theatre in Prague. It is awarded every four years as the top prize to the best national team exhibiting at the Prague Quadrennial of Theatre Design. The Prague Quadrennial is again not an occasion which causes much excitement for the average inhabitant of the British Isles, but for the theatre designer it is the tops. There is a Biennale in Sao Paolo, but that's too far away; there is a triennale in Novy Said, Yugoslavia, but that's linked to the tourist industry. The Prague Quadrennial, however, is a most serious and representative exhibition of theatre design. Every four years designers from 20-30 countries,

state-aided or impoverished, converge on Prague and there, in the large exhibition halls of the Brussels Pavilion, exhibit their best work from the last four years. (The Brussels Pavilion is so called as it was brought back to Prague after housing the Czech Exhibition at the Brussels World Fair). After the Exhibition the generous Czechs, guided by an international jury, distribute gold and silver medals in all categories, and, last but not least, the coveted Gold Triga.

It's not just an East European affair, with all that that entails. The West Europeans: France, Italy, West Germany, Holland and Belgium play a large role—the USA, Canada and Mexico turn up in force. Japan appears, wonderfully in 1975 when they won the costume gold, and slightly disappointing this year. The third world is represented with a sprinkling of talent. Finally, there are the USSR and the East Europeans in their subsidised ranks, which include East Germany and Czechoslovakia, two countries who had it all their own way



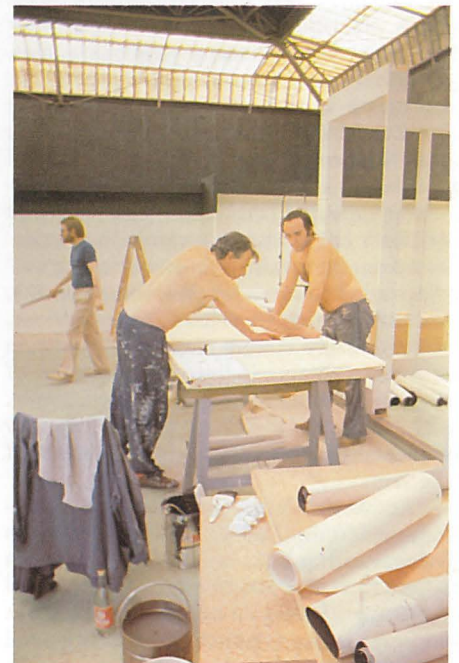
Setting up the exhibition in Prague's Brussels Pavilion.



Mary Moore and Ralph Koltai getting their levels right.



Some practical help with a screwdriver by John Bury, assisted by Nick Darke and Colin Chambers.



Czech workers busy with the decorations.