

Outline Brief

Art intervention in the Most
City Hall: Rediscovering
and redefining a late 20th-
century architectural
artwork

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Request for participation
and professional approach
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Call for Participation

Dear colleagues,

We invite you to take part in a competitive dialogue initiated by the Statutory City of Most – SuperRadnice.

SuperRadnice is the second chapter of the SuperMost project, launched in early 2025 in collaboration with CCEA MOBA. The project aims to rethink the structure and function of Most's central urban area through a series of thematically linked competitive dialogues. The first, SuperPrior, focuses on finding new, meaningful uses for a former department store in the city centre. The third and most ambitious, SuperCentrum, will address the broader regeneration of the city centre with active public involvement.

This second stage focuses on the Most City Hall building – specifically on the contemporary interpretation, restoration or addition of artistic expression on and around the building, which dates from the second half of the 20th century. The original brief, formulated before the first meeting of the selection panel, called for “a new entrance design for City Hall and an artistic intervention on its façade” – as a way to replace the former mosaic of the attic and restore not only a visual identity to this public building, but also symbolic significance.

However, after the jury's encounter with existing artworks – both original and relocated from the old city of Most – the scope of the assignment evolved. The question is no longer simply about adding another layer of art, but about reinterpreting the broader phenomenon of art in public buildings, particularly those from the latter half of the 20th century.

Artists are invited to apply by submitting a request to participate, along with a professional statement outlining their approach – ideally supported by previous realisations, or otherwise by comparable work. The jury will then select five artistic teams (individuals or collectives), who will be invited to visit the City Hall building and its surroundings to become familiar with the current state of existing artworks. On site, they will receive a detailed project briefing. This first visit, Workshop 1, will also provide an opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion with the contracting authority and members of the jury.

In Workshop 2, participants will present their concepts, including budget estimates and projected costs, and discuss their ideas with the jury. The aim of this workshop is to gain the best possible mutual understanding. Each team will present separately so that participants are not influenced by each other.

After Workshop 2, participants will be invited to submit a final offer, including a detailed proposal for the design, production and delivery of the artistic intervention(s) – whether modifying existing artworks or introducing new ones on the City Hall building.

A contract will then be signed with the winner of the dialogue for the full realisation and installation of the artwork.

When setting the price, participants shall include all costs necessary for the creation of the work: author fees, production, installation (including any construction work), activation of the work, permissions, and other related expenses.

Each participant who submits a final proposal with a price offer and design will receive a fee, as specified in the tender documentation.

We look forward to working with those who view a public building not merely as an administrative facility, but as an important part of city life – a place that expresses values through both architecture and art in a way that is both comprehensible and contemporary.



Opening remarks

The city of Most stands at the threshold of a new era – one of renewed confidence and fresh investment in the city and its public spaces.

After more than four decades marked by stagnation and minimal investment in both the physical and cultural fabric of the city, the current leadership has chosen to change direction. The turning point came with the reconstruction of Střed Park – a project many locals initially viewed with scepticism. Today, it stands as proof that well-designed public space has the power to enrich its users and uplift the community.

Following this experience – and the long, often contested preparations for the renovation of the Repré building – we are convinced that Most is entering a new chapter. One in which the city deserves the very best, in architecture, urbanism and contemporary art alike.

It is in this spirit that we invite artists to take part in the competition for a new artwork to be created for the City Hall building. This is not simply about a single artistic gesture – it is about a symbol of transformation, a new relationship between the city, its people, and its public realm.

We want to give space to talented individuals who feel a sense of responsibility for the environment we share, and who are not afraid to create with vision, courage and sensitivity to place.

That Most is managing to attract outstanding architects and creators is evident from the strong response to the SuperPrior competition launched this June – 42 teams from across the Czech Republic and abroad submitted entries. For the first time in many years, Most has seen this level of interest – clear proof that our new direction is gaining traction.

We are well aware of the challenges involved in bringing these projects to life. Architectural and artistic competitions are no easy undertaking – they demand time, patience and a willingness to listen.

Even so, we promise both the public and the professional community that we, as city leadership, will do everything in our power to turn these visions into reality.

We look forward to seeing your work – and thank you for being part of this new chapter in the story of Most.

Marek Hrvol, mayor of Most



Centre of Most, 1992, photo Petr Toman

The City of Most

The story of Most is a unique example of radical urban transformation, one that has had a profound and lasting impact on the city's architecture, planning, and social structure. The city's history reaches back to the 10th century, when the area was settled in a marshy landscape criss-crossed by wooden bridges. A trade route passed through this terrain, and it was these bridges ("most" being the Czech word for bridge) that gave the city its name.

In the 18th century, vast deposits of lignite were discovered in the surrounding area. These reserves enabled the region's industrial growth in the 19th century – a period that saw the arrival of the railway, the construction of a sugar refinery, a porcelain factory, a steel mill, and a brewery. There was even a saying that locals could go down to their basements and scoop up coal – a simplification, of course, but one that illustrates how deeply coal was embedded in the everyday lives of the people of Most.

In 1964, the Czechoslovak government decided to liquidate the historic city of Most to allow for extensive surface mining of the coal beneath it. The demolition of the city began in 1965 and continued for nearly twenty years. One of the most remarkable moments of this process came in 1975, when the Gothic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary – weighing 12,000 tonnes – was moved a distance of 841.1 metres using hydraulic jacks and rails. The relocation took a total of 646 hours.



The population of the old city – around 15,000 people at the time – was relocated in several stages to the newly planned city of Most. This new city was conceived as a modern urban centre capable of accommodating up to 100,000 inhabitants. The project's chief architect, Václav Krejčí (*1928), was appointed after winning a competition for the design of the new city centre in 1959. Krejčí's vision was rooted in the ideals of modernism and socialism – he sought to build a rationally organised, functionally separated city aligned with the utopian aspirations of the era's urban planning. The concept was based on the separation of residential, industrial, and recreational zones, and it featured wide boulevards, a central square, and large-scale housing estates intended to offer quality living conditions for those displaced from the original city. The new Most was designed as a symbol of progress and modernity, and this ideal was reflected in both its planning and its architecture.

The first building to be completed was the District Committee headquarters of the Communist Party in 1971, followed by department stores and residential blocks. The construction of the National Committee building (now the City Hall) began in 1972 and was completed in 1978. Many buildings were not finished until the 1980s. Cultural life was also an important part of the city's development. The connection between theatre and the wider cultural context played a key role in shaping Most's identity. For instance, the Karel Hynek Mácha Theatre became a cultural landmark in the 1980s, serving as a focal point for theatre productions, concerts, exhibitions, and a broad range of cultural events. Today, the city continues this tradition with a lively theatre scene and numerous festivals and events that contribute to its dynamic cultural landscape.

At present, Most has around 61,000 inhabitants. The planned capacity of 100,000 was never reached – the city's population peaked at around 70,000 in 1980. While the original vision reflected socialist ideals of a centralised and efficiently organised industrial hub, it ultimately proved overly ambitious. The result is a city with a relatively low density, abundant open space, and a lack of compact urban structure. The demolition of the original city and the displacement of its residents had a lasting impact on the city's social fabric. Community ties and a sense of shared identity were weakened. In the large housing estates built for former residents of old Most, lower population levels have often led to a reduced sense of community cohesion.

Nonetheless, today's Most has not only the ambition, but also the potential to transform itself into a distinctive regional city. In recent years, significant investment has been directed toward the revitalisation of public spaces. A key example is the renovation of Střed Park, which – along with the rehabilitation of the post-mining landscape and the development of lakes Most and Milada – offers new leisure opportunities for both residents and visitors. This environmentally focused renewal also brings with it new economic prospects and pathways for the city's future.

As a post-industrial city, Most is well connected to the wider region via rail and motorway links. Travel to the capital, Prague, takes less than two hours by car or train. The city is now focused on reviving its centre, enriching its cultural and social life, and strengthening sustainable infrastructure. The aim is to improve the quality of life for current residents while also attracting new people to the city. The broader ambition is to create new jobs, reinforce local identity, and foster a stronger sense of community.



Aerial map from 1975, ČÚZK

City Hall building

The former National Committee building – today serving as the City Hall of Most – was constructed in the 1970s as part of the comprehensive development of the city's new centre. Designed by architects Míša Hejduk, Jan Kouba and Jiří Páč of the Regional Design Institute in Ústí nad Labem, the project was developed between 1968 and 1972. Construction took place from 1972 to 1978, with total costs amounting to 63.5 million Czechoslovak crowns.

The building's massing, height and spatial composition were based on a square floor plan with an internal atrium. Its position marked a raised transitional point between two key areas of the new city centre, adjacent to the cultural centre, hotel and theatre. The architectural concept focused on creating a light, open structure: slender pillars support deeply profiled horizontal bands alternating with glazed window strips. The top of the structure is finished with a cantilevered and chamfered attic, which originally featured a symbolic mosaic. From this top horizontal band emerges the volume of the council chamber, which projects above the uppermost floors. At ground level, the colonnade provides access to a public atrium with a small ornamental pool.

The building's societal importance and prominent location are reflected in the use of high-quality materials – most notably in the exterior façade, where the architects employed trachyte cladding and incorporated works of art, including mosaics and a sculptural lion positioned at the northern entrance. The inner walls of the atrium are smooth and framed by a grid of sunshades. On three sides, the atrium opens toward the square, while also aiming to create a more intimate, sheltered atmosphere. The space is further animated by planted greenery and a circular pool with sculptural decorations. From the outset, the design integrated numerous artworks – including a large mosaic on the attic symbolising coal mining, the lion sculpture, and allegorical statues representing the classical elements.

Due to the sloping terrain, the northern terrace was built over a series of commercial spaces and service units, contributing to the public character of the area around the adjacent cultural centre “Repre”. In the 1990s, the “U Lva” passage was added above these retail units. This enclosed the previously open northern wing of the atrium and compromised some of the building's original openness. Like many similar additions to modernist buildings in the city centre, this passage responded to the need for more retail space at street level. It also addressed technical issues, such as water leakage into the shops below. Today, the passage houses facilities that operate at the intersection of public administration and civic service – such as coworking spaces and offices requiring direct interaction with the public.

The City Hall is a significant example of modernist architecture from the 1960s and 1970s. It possesses strong architectural merit and plays a key role in shaping the structure and identity of Most's central zone. Despite a few later alterations, the building has been preserved with a high degree of authenticity. Several representative interiors still house original artworks by major Czech artists. The overall impression of the building is enhanced by period-appropriate landscaping within the atrium. Since 2022, the structure has been under consideration for designation as a cultural monument.



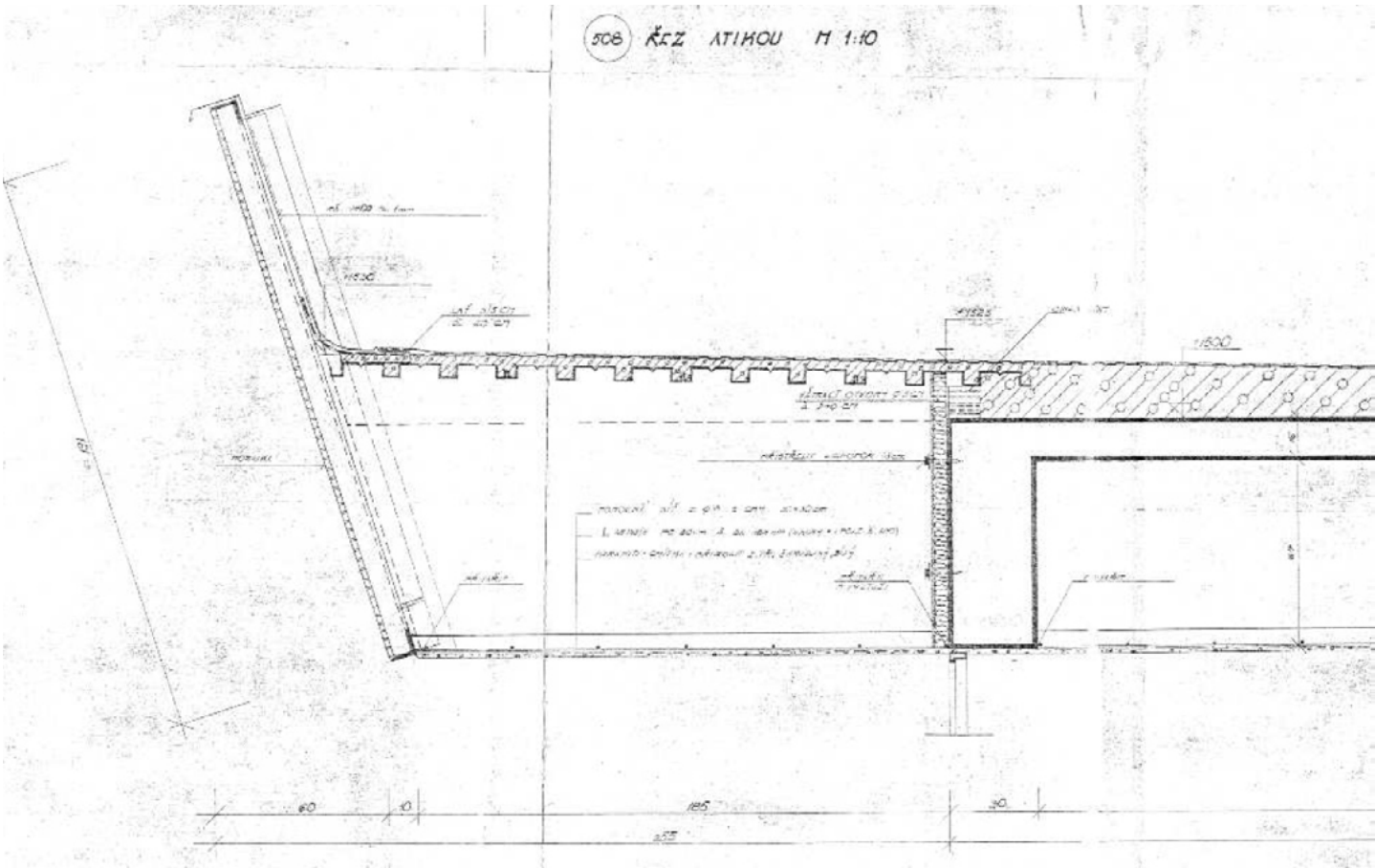
City Hall building in the 80's, archive of the district cultural centre

Structural and Technical Description of the City Hall Building
The City Hall in Most is a four-storey atrium building with flat roofs and a rooftop extension. It was built in the 1970s using a reinforced concrete frame with slender columns (500×500 mm) spaced 7.2 metres apart. The floors are made of 150 mm thick mushroom-shaped concrete slabs, and the roof extension is supported by steel trusses. The building stands on shallow concrete foundations. The architectural design is based on simple, repeating horizontal lines. Brick parapet bands alternate with rows of windows, supported by a light ground-floor colonnade. A striking feature of the building is its angled cantilevered attic, tilted 17° from vertical. Originally, it was decorated with a colourful glass mosaic symbolising the city's mining heritage. A 2024 structural survey confirmed that the attic is in good condition and can support the same surface load (25 kg/m²) as the original mosaic. However, the underside of the attic is damaged in places and needs minor plaster repairs.

Atika / Mozaika
The decorative mosaic once affixed to the attic façade was symbolically linked to the mining heritage of the city of Most. Its gradual deterioration and eventual removal – coinciding with the historical shift away from coal mining in the region – carries strong symbolic significance. The total surface area of the attic is approximately 520 m², composed of four planes each 2 metres in height and measuring 2 × 60 metres and 2 × 70 metres in length. The soffit (underside) of the attic covers an area of approximately 500 m², matching the slanted surface in size. According to the structural survey, the current attic structure can support a comparable surface load to that of the original glass mosaic – namely 25 kg/m² – assuming uniform anchoring to the underlying concrete panels. However, the soffit shows signs of significant damage in several areas and requires at minimum a repair of its plaster finish.



Technical details of the attic



construction details of the attic



mosaic "Earth" – in detail

Atrium

The atrium is an integral part of the building's architectural concept. Originally named The Sun, it was designed as a circular outdoor extension of the interior foyer, featuring water and planting elements.

Originally it was directly connected to the interior by two entrances: from the foyer on the ground floor and via a spiral staircase from the second floor. For safety reasons, both access points have since been closed.

The northern part of the atrium was later enclosed by the addition of the U Lva passage, whose shop units face this space.

These changes have transformed the atrium into a space viewed mostly from windows or used as a passage, with no real functional use. Surface finishes are beyond their lifespan – the stone paving, edges, finishes and the pool's waterproofing all require repair, as does the stair access to the balcony.

Entrances to the Town Hall

The building has two main entrance portals, both forming distinct architectural elements that relate to the overall massing. They are flat roofs supported by steel structures recessed under the upper floors.

Due to changes in the surrounding public spaces – particularly the redesign of 1st Square – movement patterns have shifted and no longer align with the original entrances.

The south entrance, equipped with a revolving door, now serves as the main access point and connects directly to the reception. However, its relation to the square is disrupted by parked municipal vehicles using the canopy as carport.

The western portal serves as the entrance to the ceremonial hall. It is roofed and faces away from the parking lot. However, it is currently closed and unused most of the time.



atrium



preserved parts of the mosaic



West entrance



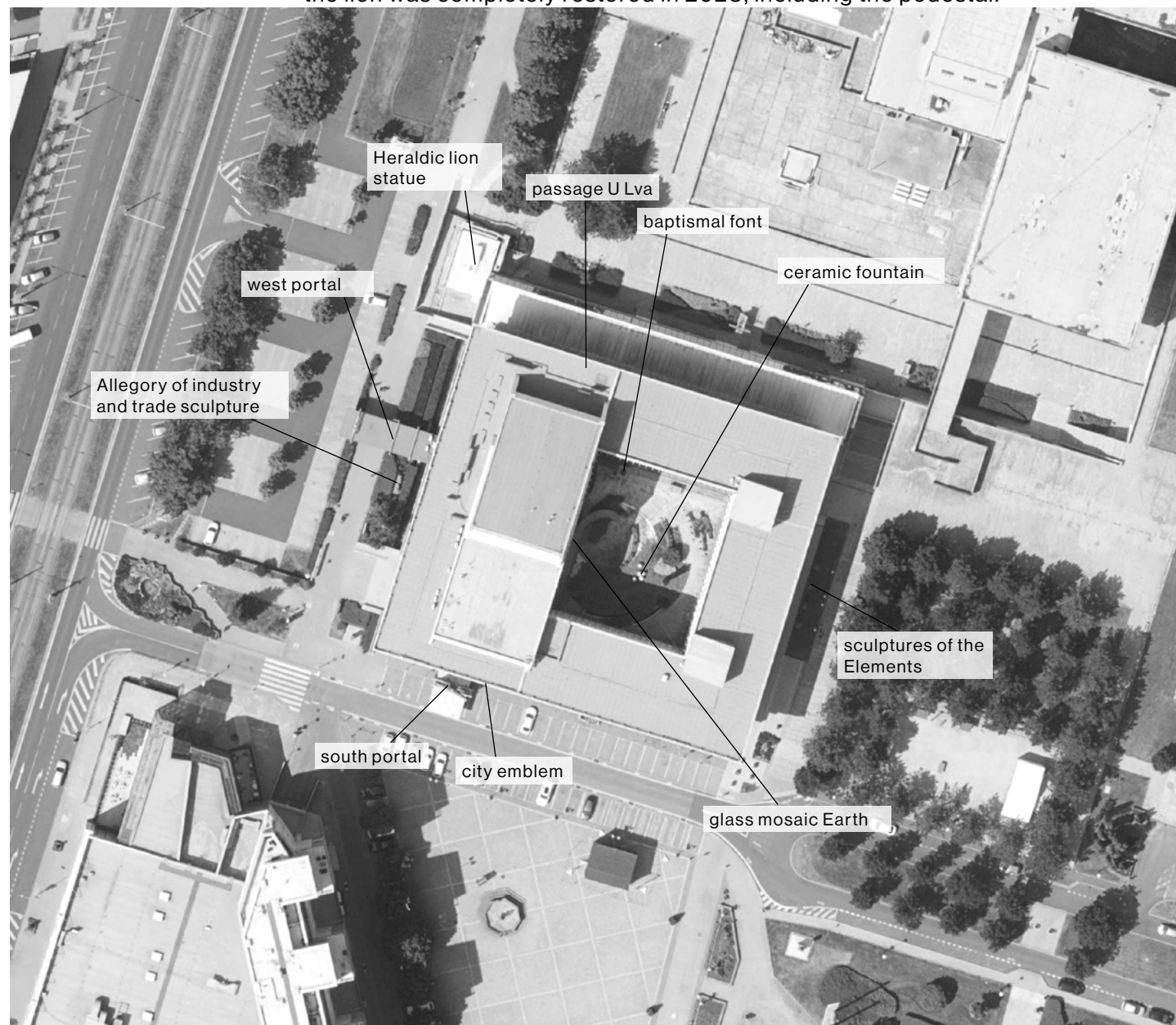
south entrance

Baroque Sculptures of the Elements (J. M. Brokoff)

The eastern side of today's town hall is lined with four allegorical statues of the Elements by J. M. Brokoff (1715). This listed set of Baroque statues has been moved several times. They were originally part of the cornice of the Renaissance town hall in Most. When this magnificent building was demolished in the early 1880s, the statues were removed from its pillars. Until 1937, they adorned the corner of the second floor of the bell tower of the deanery church. After the war, the statues were stored in the lapidarium of the Most Museum until 1979, when conservationists placed them on concrete pedestals on the eastern facade of the national committee building in the new Most. The statues are made of fine-grained siliceous sandstone from the Elbe River.

Heraldic lion (Stanislav Hanzík)

In the northwest corner of the building is a sandstone statue of a lion by Stanislav Hanzík – a symbol of state power and an addition to the building's composition. The statue of the lion is placed on an imposing limestone-clad pedestal. The statue of the lion was completely restored in 2023, including the pedestal.



ceramic fountain, author Milan Chlíbec, c. 1980, restored 11/2014



stone Baptismal font from Albrechtice, cultural monument



baroque sculptures of the Elements, J.M. Brokoff



Heraldic lion statue, Stanislav Hanzík



Allegory of industry and trade sculpture



city emblem

Brief

A New Era

The subject of the competition is the rediscovery and contemporary reinterpretation of an artwork integrated into the architecture of the second half of the 20th century. The aim is to create a present-day artistic intervention that complements or reimagines the original artistic layer of the Most's City Hall building. This is not merely an aesthetic gesture – the intention is to initiate a dialogue between architecture and art, grounded in a specific place and moment in time. Unlike classical European cities, Most is not a place where historical epochs have accumulated naturally over centuries. It is a city conceived and constructed as a single, large-scale project, shaped within a short period by a radical modernist vision. It took decades for residents to form an emotional bond with the new city. The process of integration – of people and place growing together – remains ongoing and unfinished.

Today, Most is entering a new phase of transformation. The end of brown coal mining, the shift towards alternative energy sources, and the redefinition of public space are all key challenges that are shaping the city's future. Alongside these changes, the identity of the city is evolving – from an industrial past towards a more open image of a city of sport, movement and leisure. The city's leadership has moved beyond outdated narratives of "extraction" and now places greater emphasis on care – for the urban environment as a whole. Most is becoming a destination in its own right, not only due to long-standing projects such as the Autodrome and the Hippodrome, but also thanks to new attractions like Lake Most, which draws visitors from across the Czech Republic and Europe.

We believe that once legal and ownership issues are resolved between the state and the city – particularly in relation to the lakeside – the city's recreational and sporting potential will gain further energy and significance. Another crucial aspect of Most is its late modernist architecture. Despite the many high-quality buildings it produced, the era was still defined by the functionalist division of urban life into zones for work, housing and leisure. This rigid separation led to excessive transport demands and a lack of meaningful public space.

The Artistic Layer

This competitive dialogue introduces a new dimension – an artistic intervention within the City Hall building. However, the aim is not simply to restore the original state or replace the former mosaic.

We invite participants to engage with the deeper context of Most – to understand the city as a project, its cultural heritage, and the unique story of public art within its spaces.

The artistic layers of the city follow two principal lines:

- 1/ Relocated artefacts from the old city of Most,,
- 2/ High-quality contemporary works from the second half of the 20th century, created specifically for the new Most.

These artworks – set in open spaces, inside public buildings, alongside fountains, rose beds and elements of landscape design – helped define the image of the ideal modernist city.



City hall building, 1997, photo Luboš Dvořák

Today, however, both the environment and its norms are shifting. Operating water features, for example, has become unsustainable. Even the water once present within the City Hall has disappeared – from both the physical space and the collective memory of the city. Reintroducing such features would mean reconstructing the past, rather than reinterpreting it.

It is not about merely repairing a mosaic.

We are seeking a new work of art – one that reflects the present moment, the lived experience of the past fifty years, and the shape of our current society. The artistic intervention should not replicate the past, but rather serve as a document of the present, realised through art, within the architectural space of the City Hall.

Scope and Expectations

This competitive dialogue is not limited to a redesign of the attic feature, improvements to the entrances, or the revitalisation of the atrium. Such elements may form part of the proposal – but only if they emerge naturally from a broader artistic concept.

We do not wish participants to focus solely on isolated architectural tasks. What is required is a cohesive artistic vision for the enhancement of this exceptional building – especially its exterior and central atrium.

Only within the framework of such a unified concept should the attic, entrances, or atrium be addressed – and only where they support the internal logic of the proposal.

In the early stages of preparation, the phrase was heard: “Let’s repair the mosaic.” Today, we understand that the real challenge is to redefine what an artwork means within the architecture of the second half of the 20th century.

The artistic proposal should speak clearly and openly to the public, while retaining its depth and quality. We acknowledge the complexity of the brief, but we believe that through workshops and dialogue with the jury, we can arrive at strong, thoughtful proposals for the Most of the 21st century.



City hall building, 1995, photo Luboš Dvořák

