

# FLOATING MONSTERS AND FIGHTING SKELETONS

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## Weird sculptures around Europe



"Bon appetit!" Some of the sculptures that form the Marriage Carousel fountain in Nuremberg.

Sculptures are all around us, from traditional monuments commemorating important people and events to funny creations livening up public spaces. To see some truly weird ones, you can travel abroad or just explore the Czech Republic.

## HANGING OUT

David Černý has created many **eye-catching**<sup>2</sup> and often controversial sculptures. One of his famous creations is a man hanging by one hand from a **pole**<sup>3</sup> high in the air. The sculpture, **supposedly**<sup>4</sup> depicting psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, can be found on Husova street in Prague, but it has been exhibited in the USA, Germany and other countries as well. When it first appeared, people in some places thought it was a real man and called firefighters, trying to save him!



## THE HORRORS OF MARRIAGE

The German town of Nürnberg (Nuremberg in English) is a popular tourist destination thanks to its historical centre and famous Christmas markets. But in Ludwigsplatz, not far from the main tourist routes, you can find a truly weird sight – the Marriage **Carousel**<sup>5</sup> fountain. It was built in 1984 as a **tribute**<sup>6</sup> to the poem "The Bittersweet Married Life" by 16<sup>th</sup>-century German poet Hans Sachs. It is supposed to show various stages of marriage – from the romance in the beginning (represented by two lovers on the back of a **swan**<sup>7</sup>), through later years (a fat woman **stuffing herself with**<sup>8</sup> cakes and ignoring her husband; a cruel man holding his wife on a **chain**<sup>9</sup>) to death at the end (two **skeletons**<sup>10</sup> **strangling**<sup>11</sup> each other on the back of a giant **lizard**<sup>12</sup>). **Judging by**<sup>13</sup> these scenes, marriage can be a true horror...





## THE NAVIGATORS

On the **bank**<sup>14</sup> of the River Thames in London, not far from the Tower Bridge, you can find Hay's Galleria, a popular place with shops and restaurants. But what catches your eye more than anything else are The Navigators. An almost 20-metre tall ship with a strange creature's head **floats**<sup>15</sup> in a pool of water and **onboard**<sup>16</sup> is a **pile**<sup>17</sup> of weird machinery and human figures. The **oars**<sup>18</sup> and wheels move and water periodically flows from all kinds of places. The sculpture commemorates the time when the place was a **wharf**<sup>19</sup> and big sailing ships bringing tea to London **unloaded their cargo**<sup>20</sup> there. According to the artist, British sculptor David Kemp, it is supposed to represent "the ships, the monsters and the men that drove them". All right, "monsters" for sure.



## NOBODY INSIDE

What do Prague, Salzburg, Athens and the Royal Palace in Monaco have in common? The **Cloak**<sup>25</sup> of **Conscience**<sup>26</sup>. This strange figure – or rather a cloak with no person inside – is the most famous creation of Czech-born sculptor Anna Chromy. Inspired by Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, the sculpture is supposed to symbolize the human conscience. The author has recently used white **marble**<sup>27</sup> to sculpt a 4.7-metre high version of the Cloak, which can fit two people inside and be used as a place for meditation. When asked about her sculpture, she used the words of Albert Einstein: "The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious." Mysterious her Cloak surely is.



## DWARF INVASION

Wrocław, in Poland, is a city of colourful old houses, magnificent churches... and **dwarfs**<sup>28</sup>. One dwarf rides a motorbike, one holds a flower, another is a prisoner. Why was the city centre invaded by these tiny guys? The inspiration goes back to the 1980s, to an underground movement opposing the communist regime. Among their peaceful means of protest was painting pictures of dwarfs on city walls, in the spots where the police covered anti-communist slogans. The current dwarfs are a tribute to that movement, as well as a new attraction livening up the city streets. There are already **dozens**<sup>29</sup> of them and new ones keep appearing. So if you travel to Wrocław, look carefully where you step!



## DROWNING HORSES?

When walking down Gogol Boulevard in central Moscow, don't be surprised to find a **herd**<sup>21</sup> of horse heads coming right out of the ground, **battling**<sup>22</sup> with streams of water rushing around. A monument to **drowning**<sup>23</sup> animals? No, to Nobel Prize-winning Russian writer Mikhail Sholokhov. A statue of the writer himself sits in a boat above the horses. According to the monument's creator, the horses symbolize the opposing pro-Communist and pro-**Tsar**<sup>24</sup> armies of the Russian Civil War (1917–23). Well, imagination knows no limits...

## GIANT MATCHES

Many of the outdoor sculptures in Barcelona were built before the 1992 Summer Olympics. For example, the Matches. Five 20-metre matches tower over an **intersection**<sup>30</sup> near the Montbau underground station. Four of them are **bent**<sup>31</sup>; only one is still standing straight and burning with a blue flame. Five more giant matches **are scattered**<sup>32</sup> around, some of them burnt and black. Their creators say that "the symbolic subject of fire **is concealed**<sup>33</sup> within a simple, everyday object". Maybe. Or the standing match symbolizes an Olympic winner and the broken ones unsuccessful losers?



## VOCABULARY

<sup>1</sup> to **liven up** [ˈlaɪvŋ] – oživit

<sup>2</sup> **eye-catching** – poutavý

<sup>3</sup> **pole** [pəʊl] – tyč

<sup>4</sup> **supposedly** [səˈpəʊzədlɪ] – údajně

<sup>5</sup> **carousel** [kærəˈseɪl, -ˈzeɪl] – kolotoč

<sup>6</sup> **tribute** [ˈtrɪbjʊ:t] – pocta

<sup>7</sup> **swan** [swɒn] – labuť

<sup>8</sup> to **stuff oneself with** – cpát se něčím

<sup>9</sup> **chain** [tʃeɪn] – řetěz

<sup>10</sup> **skeleton** [ˈskelɪt(ə)n] – kostra

<sup>11</sup> to **strangle** [ˈstreɪŋɡ(ə)l] – škrtit

<sup>12</sup> **lizard** [ˈlɪzəd] – ještěrka

<sup>13</sup> **judging by** [ˈdʒʌdʒɪŋ] – soudě podle

<sup>14</sup> **bank** [bæŋk] – břeh

<sup>15</sup> to **float** [fləʊt] – plout

<sup>16</sup> **onboard** [ɒnˈbɔ:d] – na palubě

<sup>17</sup> **pile** [paɪl] – hromada

<sup>18</sup> **oar** [ɔ:] – veslo

<sup>19</sup> **wharf** [wɔ:f] – přístaviště

<sup>20</sup> **unloaded their cargo** [ˈka:ɡəʊ] – vykládaly náklad

<sup>21</sup> **herd** [hɜ:d] – stádo

<sup>22</sup> to **battle** [ˈbæt(ə)l] – zápolit

<sup>23</sup> **drowning** [draʊnɪŋ] – topící se

<sup>24</sup> **tsar** [zɑ:, tsɑ:] – car

<sup>25</sup> **cloak** [klaʊk] – plášť

<sup>26</sup> **conscience** [ˈkɒŋʃ(ə)ns] – svědomí

<sup>27</sup> **marble** [ˈmɑ:b(ə)l] – mramor

<sup>28</sup> **dwarf** [dwo:f] – trpaslík

<sup>29</sup> **dozen** [ˈdɒzn] – tucet

<sup>30</sup> **intersection** [ɪntəˈsekʃ(ə)n] – křižovatka

<sup>31</sup> **bent** – ohnutý

<sup>32</sup> to **scatter** [ˈskætə] – rozházet

<sup>33</sup> to **conceal** [kənˈsi:əl] – skrývat se