

**ARTFORUM** S.297 **Roman Ondák**  
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**IN SLOVAKIA, WHERE I LIVE**, our society is as yet unable to pursue the question of the art institution. Though home to a small but vibrant art community and several nonprofit and artist-run spaces, the capital, Bratislava, to this day lacks a state- or city-run museum capable of exhibiting internationally recognized contemporary art—an institution that could act as a bridge between the discourse on art locally and that of the rest of the world. So the main question besetting our community is still a very basic one: How might we one day acquire such a “real institution”? The Slovak National Gallery could possibly play such a role. But its main exhibition space—a radical architectural intervention from 1969–77 by Vladimír Dedeček, itself literally a bridge between two buildings—is vacant, closed since 2001 because funds for planned renovations keep disappearing. Only a small historical wing of the museum is currently in operation, and it lacks the space and potential of Dedeček’s neglected structure. When looking westward, one sees a vast network of fully functioning museums and galleries, while Bratislava still hopes for its first institution relevant to the showing of contemporary art. □

Exterior and interior views of Vladimír Dedeček’s 1969–78 expansion of the Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2010. Photos: Roman Ondák.

