



sinfo

January-February

The Best from Slovenia

IN FOCUS

Tracking Slovenia's diversity

**I FEEL
SLOVENIA**



**I FEEL
SLOVENIA**

Sinfo

SLOVENIAN INFORMATION

January-February 2019

www.slovenia.si
www.ukom.gov.si

Published by
Government Communication Office

Editor-in-Chief
Petra Ložar

Executive Editor
Tanja Glogovčan

Editorial Board
Polona Prešeren, Vesna Žarkovič, Ana Kraševc,
Irena Kogoj, Livija Kovač Kostantinovič, Uroš
Mahkovec

Design
Irena Kogoj

Photo Editor
Foto format d.o.o.

Photo on the front page
Kurents, Tamino Petelinšek/STA

Translation
Secretariat-General of the Government of
the Republic of Slovenia, Translation and
Interpretation Division, DZTPS

Language editing
Amidas

Copy writer editing
Paul Steed

Print
Schwarz Print d.o.o.

Number of copies
3000

ISSN
1854-0805



Photo: Bruno Toič

TRACKING SLOVENIA'S DIVERSITY

A new calendar year has begun, there are new challenges ahead of us, and we are looking forward to meeting them. The content of this issue is focused on culture. It reveals the history of elegance in Slovenian ballet and celebrates the beauty of movement in contemporary dance. History should always be treated with respect, highlighting in particular family stories. One such story about the city of Piran is included in this issue. Slovenia also boasts countless personalities and projects that bring diversity into our lives, fill us with inspiration and contribute to the recognition of our culture abroad. The same applies to our economy, science and sports.

This year, particular focus will be given to the following topics: cooking, given that the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism supported Slovenia's candidacy for the title of 'European Region of Gastronomy 2021'; membership and coexistence within the European Union in light of Slovenia's upcoming presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2021 and within NATO, of which Slovenia has been a member for the past 15 years; cultural tourism due to Slovenia's rich culture and booming tourism industry; literature, as Slovenia will be guest of honour of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2022; science, as this year marks the centenary of the foundation of the University of Ljubljana and Slovenian scientists have made such exceptional achievements; the economy, since the country is green, creative and smart; diplomacy to describe our country's increasingly effective diplomatic network; sport, as Slovenian athletes rank among the best in the world. All these highlights will be dealt with under the umbrella of the national brand I FEEL SLOVENIA.

We are entering the new year with the determination to make our stories even more interesting and to further increase Slovenia's visibility through the creative skills of all our writers. We are also looking forward to your responses and suggestions.

Tanja Glogovčan, Executive Editor

8 EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE 2018
Successful presentation of Slovenian cultural heritage



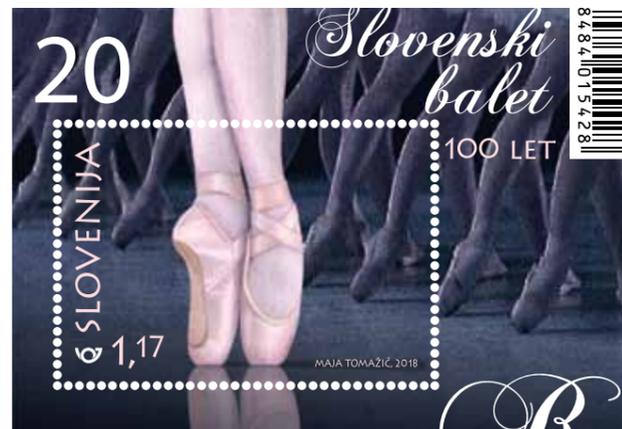
12 SLOVENIA'S NATIONAL BRAND
The story of I feel Slovenia



16 EXHIBITION I FEEL SLOVENIA. I FEEL CULTURE.
A presentation of Slovenia at the Moscow metro station Vystavochnaya



20 SLOVENIAN BALLET
A bow to the figures of Slovenian ballet



26 CONTEMPORARY DANCE
Excellence, distinctiveness, uniqueness ...



40 BUILDING TRADITIONS IN POSOČJE
The beauty of traditional architecture using natural materials



52 SLOVENIAN MUSEUM OF PUPPETRY AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD
At the intersection of the past and future

68 INVEST SLOVENIA FDI AWARD
Awards to the best foreign investors in 2018 conferred



50 3S DESIGN - STUDIO OF INNOVATIVE IDEAS
Don't change your habits, change your furniture!



80 BEST TRADITIONAL CUISINE CHEF IS META REPOVŽ
A mother's - and not grandmother's - interpretation of Slovenian cuisine



88 ATHLETES OF THE YEAR 2018
The world relies on young people



CULTURAL CHALLENGES

Heritage is an infinite source of knowledge, achievements and know-how. It express the power of human creativity and innovation throughout the ages. Now is your turn.

EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE 2018

Successful presentation of Slovenian cultural heritage

LAVRA ČERNIGOJ BLAŽKO, THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Ksenija Kovačec Naglič, MSc., Cultural Heritage Directorate, at the closing ceremony of the European Year of Cultural Heritage in in Slovenian National Gallery.
Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



The European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH) in 2018 was marked by a great variety of events, projects and tributes to heritage across Europe. The EYCH highlighted cultural heritage as a central component of cultural identity, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

Throughout the year 2018 the Ministry of Culture fostered our awareness of remarkable common cultural heritage, the values it represents, its social and development potential and the rights and obligations associated with cultural heritage. The EYCH encouraged the Ministry of Culture to discover and explore Europe's cultural heritage and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European family.

OUR HERITAGE: WHERE THE PAST MEETS THE FUTURE

In the context of the EYCH, the European Commission identified ten priority areas of action, with a view to ensuring sustainable effects of the promotion of heritage.

Slovenia endeavoured to increase citizens' interest in cultural heritage, particularly among young people.

Ambassadors of the EYCH Rok Terkaj (a stage name Trkaj) and Igor Saksida and Ambassadors of Cultural and Arts Education in the EYCH Anja Štefan, Ivan Mitrevski and Žiga X Gombač, the creative duo Mižavingavski, Karin Lavin, Igor Cvetko, the Center for Architecture Slovenia, and members of the music group Katalena, inspired young people to explore cultural heritage and to realise that there is more to cultural heritage than meets the eye: it is not just crumbling walls but it is a part of the environment and society in which we live, and above all, it is part of us. The spirit of the EYCH was promoted at various performances and workshops, in kindergartens, schools and libraries.

MORE THAN 1,000 EVENTS ATTRACTING 100,000 VISITORS

The organisers of national events, such as the Cultural Bazaar, Europe in School, European Cultural Heritage Days and Cultural Heritage Week, dedicated their events to the theme of the European Year. The Ministry of Culture succeeded in establishing partnerships with public institutions and other institutions promoting culture and education, private organisations and individuals that held over 1,000 different events, which together attracted around 100,000 visitors. The Ministry of Culture also organised a meeting of experts on Intangible Cultural Heritage in South East Europe, the national expert panel on cultural and arts education in cultural heritage, and the hackathon *Cultural adventure at your fingertips*.

All initiatives presented at the hackathon offered concrete solutions to improve the promotion and provide an experience of cultural heritage in tourism.

The event is an exemplary case of inter-sectoral cooperation among the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of Culture and the Slovenian Tourist Board and of forming technological partnerships with Microsoft, IBM and other institutions. The Ministry of Culture also joined other common European initiatives, such as the initiative to sign the *Berlin Call to Action* and the invitation to join the ringing of bells across Europe, thus marking the International Day of Peace.

The EYCH saw the development of a document that will also remain applicable after the end of the EYCH; this is namely the draft Cultural



Dry stone walling.
Photo: Karst research institute archives

Heritage Strategy, which will, once adopted, be the first independent strategic document dealing with heritage issues. The strategy aims, with the help of cultural heritage, to improve the quality of life and contribute to a more cohesive society, promote sustainable development of Slovenia and improve the attitude of society towards our heritage.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SLOVENIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

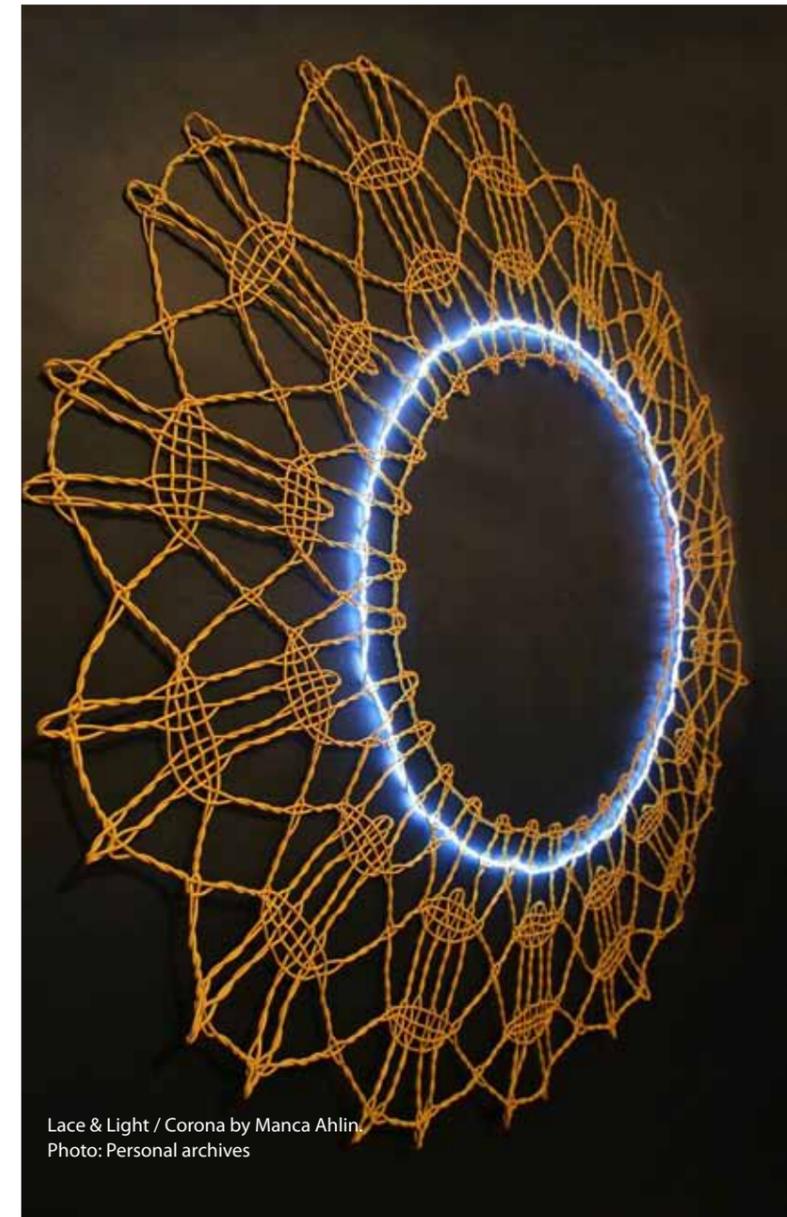
The EYCH further increased the international visibility of the Slovenian cultural heritage.

The EYCH started with inscribing the *wandering kurents* tradition onto the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and continued with the award of European Heritage Label for the Javorca Memorial Church.

The list of achievements goes on with the Europa Nostra Award for the renovated Plečnik house and two new inscriptions on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, namely lace-making in Slovenia and the art of dry stone walling, with which the Ministry of Culture concluded the EYCH.

At the end of the EYCH, the Ministry of Culture found that the initiative undoubtedly spurred great interest in cultural heritage and triggered actions that in many ways contribute to the discovery and exploration of Europe's cultural heritage and reinforce awareness of our exceptional common cultural heritage and its values. There is more discussion about heritage in Europe than before; heritage is often on the table in political debates and discussions about future policies.

The Ministry of Culture therefore invite you to learn more about our common – local and European – heritage and be aware of the need to preserve it, because as such, cultural heritage is an important and unique part of the social and economic potential of Europe, which in close cooperation with many other areas can make a significant contribution to economic growth and social cohesion throughout Europe.



Lace & Light / Corona by Manca Ahlin.
Photo: Personal archives

SLOVENIA'S NATIONAL BRAND

The story of I feel Slovenia

POLONA PREŠEREN
 PHOTO: GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION OFFICE ARCHIVES



Slovenian athletes at the PyongChang 2018 Winter Olympics.

A strong country brand affects attitudes towards a country's products and services and strengthens its ability to attract investment, businesses and tourists, the latter in a sense that a particular country is not just a destination point. A little over 10 years ago, Slovenia recognised the need for a country brand and so a journey of our brand began.



In spite of all diversity and richness Slovenia has to offer, the Slovenian government noticed a lack of international recognition of the country beyond neighboring regions. Starting in the early 1990s, several efforts in promotion with various logos, slogans and campaigns were made but failed to achieve significant changes in that direction. What is more, Slovenia continued to face challenges, including a certain amount of ignorance and stereotypes due to its location in the Balkans, a tendency to confuse Slovenia with Slovakia, and a lack of recognition of national symbols.

try - keeping in mind that people define a place's image as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that they have of a certain place.

The brand was developed with a goal to increase Slovenia's competitiveness in different fields, not just tourism and destination branding, but also other industries, business, export, culture, sports and so on. We were aware that this is a long-term process in which you have to follow the steps strategically. It is no coincidence that the brand's slogan is I feel Slovenia: one cannot get to know Slovenia by simply viewing its image – one must feel and experience it – through words, sounds, colours, touch, action, and experience. Besides, we wanted to share the crucial message: Slovenia is a young, proactive in innovative country that is rich with untouched nature, fresh air, and pure water.

Believing that a strong trademark was the best marketing tool for modern countries who are faced with increased competition, the Slovenian government then decided to step out of the box and adopt a more holistic strategy for promoting the coun-

What were our motives to start building a new brand of Slovenia?

- There was a poor recognisability of Slovenia as a country beyond the neighbouring regions.
- There was low acceptability of our country due to ignorance and stereotypes stemming from Slovenia's location in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.
- There was an everlasting present tendency to confuse Slovenia with Slovakia.
- Slovenian national insignia (flag and coat of arms) were not very recognizable abroad.



HOW WE DID IT

If we take a strategic point of view for any business, there is no doubt that behind every rational decision there are also strong emotions. To be honest, the I feel Slovenia slogan was first developed without the purpose of becoming a country brand. We did not go exactly by the book - we took a three step branding process, including enormous amounts of spontaneous feedback of Slovenian citizens in order to develop the brand identity that we then received in the final stage.

In 2006, the Slovenian government launched a pitch for a slogan and logo that would represent Slovenia in the best possible way, every citizen of Slovenia had a possibility to propose an idea. I feel Slovenia was the winning slogan. Since Slovenia is the only country with *love* in its name, we somehow decided to build a brand out of this slogan - going the other way around.

After that, in 2007, despite a relatively small budget we managed to build the county brand with a help of a communication agency and experts from different fields. The small working group undertook a bottom-up approach to nation branding by following the Delphi method.

In the case of Slovenia's brand building process, the first open-ended questionnaire was first sent out to 30 high-ranked representatives, including experts in the fields of economy, tourism, culture, heritage, sports, and so on. The second questionnaire included 700 other representatives from the same key areas. Finally, a web questionnaire was deployed in order to collect data directly from the public and each citizen could send a proposal for a slogan and a logo. The idea of a new country brand was well-received and we obtained enormous amounts of spontaneous feedback that helped us develop the brand identity. Moreover, what we did and what we consider to be a unique approach in branding is that we incorporated a slogan into a logo.

The brand was designed by people from all walks of life: business, tourism, cul-

ture, science, sports, political and public spheres. In this way, the brand captures the very essence of Slovenia.

This wide-ranging approach to the brand's design guaranteed that Slovenians became really familiar with the content of their country brand, reflecting their identity, way of life, advantages and national potential.

COMMUNICATING THE BRAND

We are constantly working on our internal implementation, which is crucial. Especially if you are a governmental institution and your governments are changing. We put a lot of effort in connecting different stakeholders - this goes from government institutions, companies, and local communities to sports associations. In the flow of our work we like to believe that our branding is actually a learning process. Moreover, of course, it offers possibilities for a value added to everything we do.

Our brand book clearly defines brand identity, its vision, and visuals and ways to use the brand. What is important is that no adjustments can be made to neither the content nor the visual parts of the brand.

In addition, translations of the slogan are not allowed. This consistency is also visible in the style of the brochures and promotional giveaways in fields like tourism and sports.

The brand values are constantly considered and used in communication messages. This is not only done by logo in advertising, but also in other areas as well as in the field of public relations. The use of the logo is free of charge and is always welcome. However, it is never demanded, except if activities are co-financed by the state.

WHAT CAN OTHERS LEARN FROM OUR EXPERIENCE?

What we have learned is that internal implementation is very important. We put a lot of effort in connecting the different stakeholders - this goes from government institutions, companies, and local communities to sports associations. At the Government Communication Office, we manage the I feel Slovenia brand on behalf of the Republic of Slovenia. We run a coordination group of different stakeholders - we started with government offices and then included others. We try to work on the brand in terms of its organic growth.

However, the main challenge is how to maintain control, yet leave the natural flow of the brand and be open to different types of usage of the brand. We follow the soft but persistent approach: never push or demand anything but rather go with organic flow

and just steer the brand so that it gains more and more awareness over time.

Keeping it simple worked well for Slovenia, this means using a slogan that is a logo at the same time.

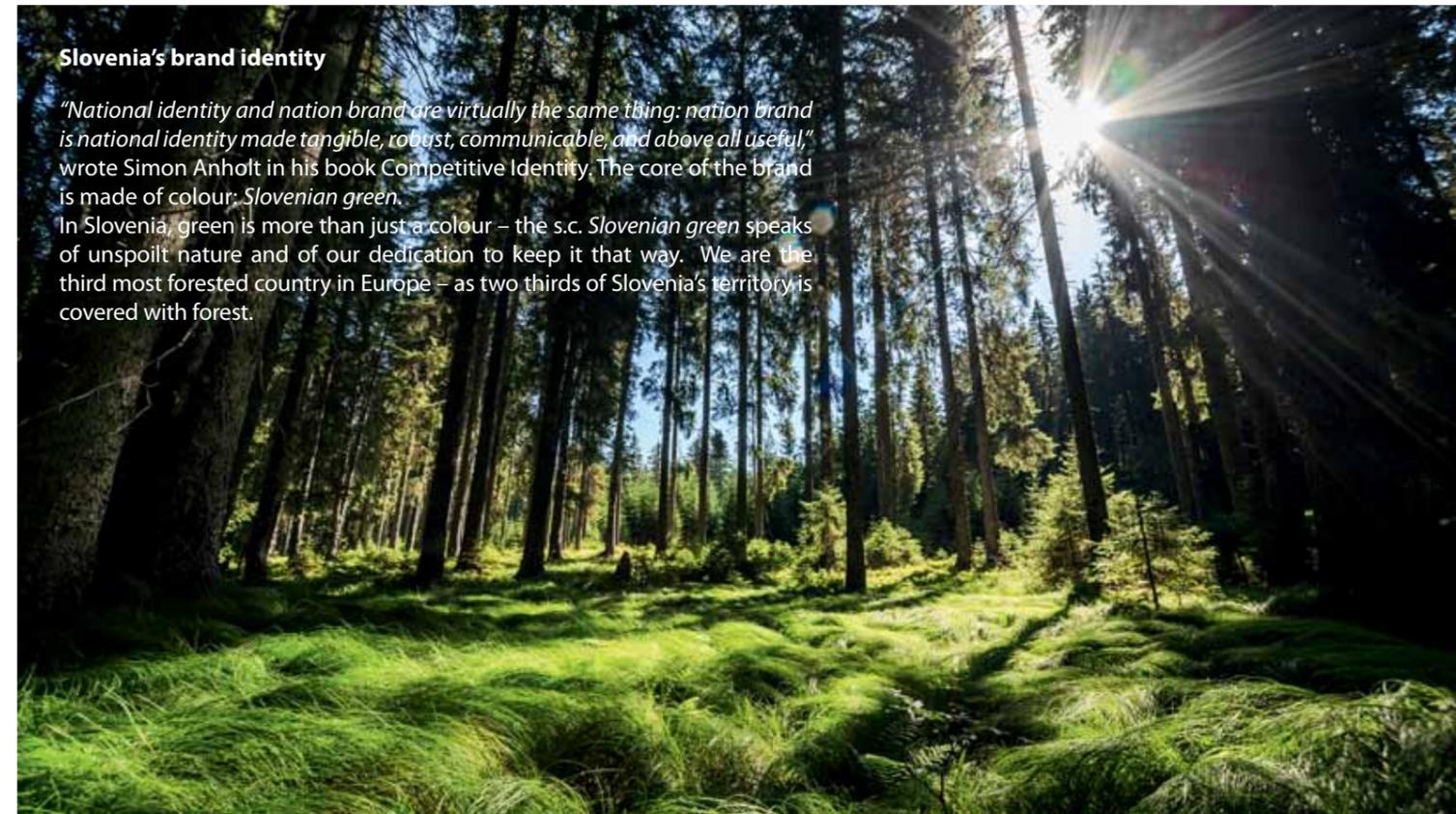
To build a brand identity around a colour perspective - in our case it was green - is an innovative and effective approach.

If there is the willingness of key stakeholders to cooperate and the fundamentals (on which the brand is build) are solid, there is no reason why the brand could not become a success. I feel Slovenia has remained unchanged for 10 years. Not just that, after a decade the brand is even more up-to-date and this is what we call a success.

Slovenia's brand identity

"National identity and nation brand are virtually the same thing: nation brand is national identity made tangible, robust, communicable, and above all useful," wrote Simon Anholt in his book Competitive Identity. The core of the brand is made of colour: Slovenian green.

In Slovenia, green is more than just a colour - the s.c. *Slovenian green* speaks of unspoilt nature and of our dedication to keep it that way. We are the third most forested country in Europe - as two thirds of Slovenia's territory is covered with forest.

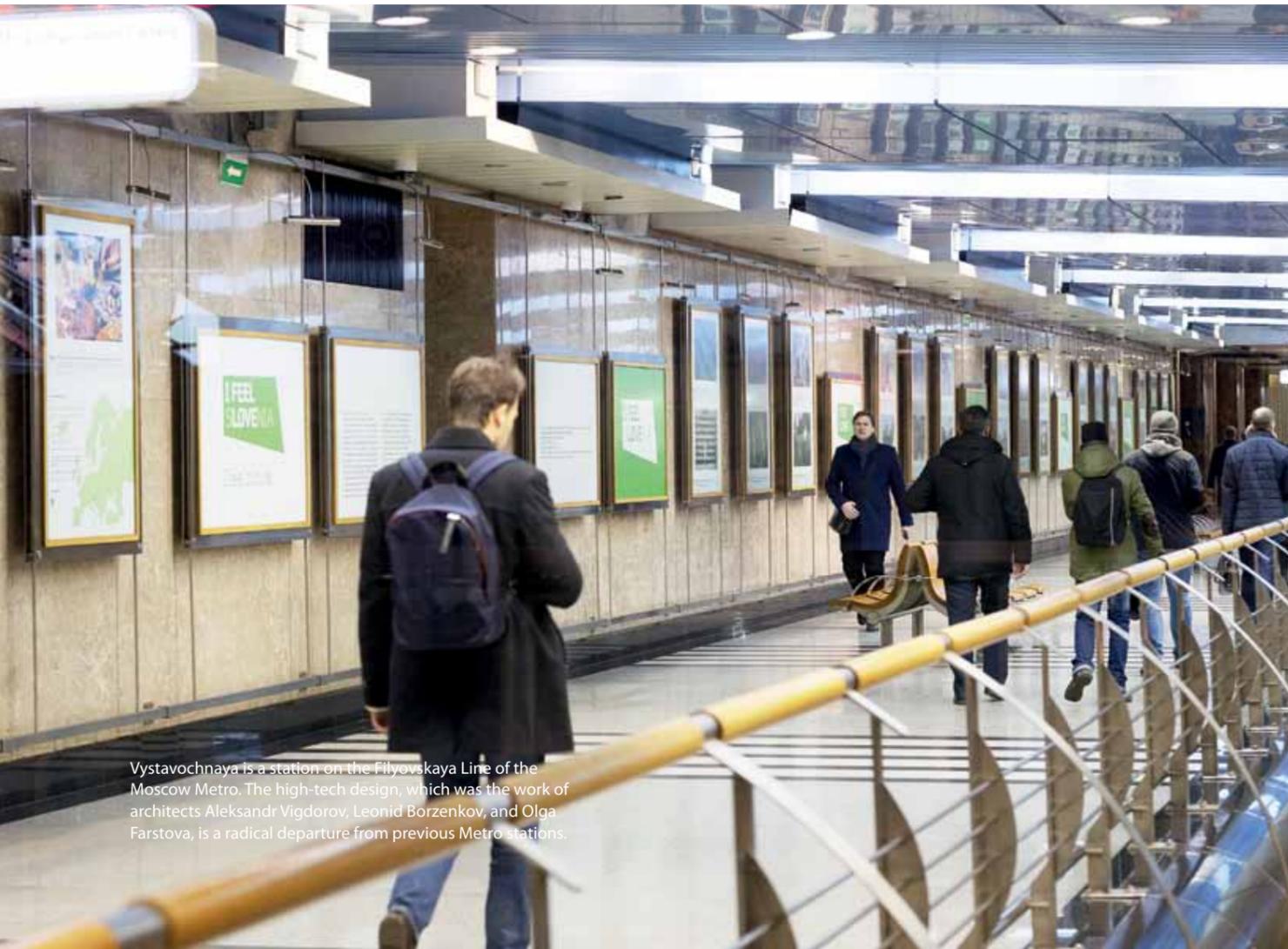


EXHIBITION I FEEL SLOVENIA. I FEEL CULTURE.

A presentation of Slovenia at the Moscow metro station Vystavochnaya

TANJA GLOGOVČAN

PHOTO: EMBASSY OF SLOVENIA IN MOSCOW ARCHIVES



Vystavochnaya is a station on the Filiyovskaya Line of the Moscow Metro. The high-tech design, which was the work of architects Aleksandr Vigdorov, Leonid Borzenkov, and Olga Farstova, is a radical departure from previous Metro stations.

The Moscow Metro is one of the liveliest parts of the Russian capital. This is the bustling and dynamic heart of the city. It is also known as the world's biggest museum. This is what made it an ideal spot for the I Feel Slovenia. I Feel Culture. exhibition.

On 13 November 2018, the exhibition I feel Slovenia. I feel Culture. was staged at the so-called Metro gallery at the Moscow metro station Vystavochnaya. It was opened by Branko Rakovec, the Slovenian ambassador in Moscow, and Yulia Temnikova, deputy head of the Moscow Metro.

In 2018 the gallery already hosted the following four exhibitions from foreign artists: a photo exhibition of weapons *Royal Games*, portraits of artists and managers of the State Academic Theatre in Moscow, a History of the Exhibition Poster, and a photographic exhibition of the best works of *The Most Beautiful Country* competition.

The station has a daily flow of 30,000 passengers. This is much higher than the average daily turnout at any exhibition in Slovenia.

Therefore, the best advice for commuters on the Moscow metro from 13 November to 7 December 2018 was: *"If you want to know Slovenia, enter or exit at the Vystavochnaya station."*

A MUSEUM SPACE WITH CHARM

Built in 1935, the Moscow metro is the biggest in Europe. It is also an important element of culture. An interesting fact is that some stations of the Moscow metro have been included in the register of regional cultural heritage sites. The most beautiful metro stations include Komsomolskaya, Park kultury, Taganskaya, Novoslobodskaya and Kievskaya. An impression of entering a palace, a ballroom or royal chambers and witnessing a moment in Russia's

history is conjured up by marble of different colours, marble reliefs and chandeliers in imperial style, cross vaults, monumental mosaics and stained glass windows, as well as drawings and statues.

WINDOWS OF A SPEEDING TRAIN REFLECTING IMAGES OF SLOVENIA

An impression of a random passer-by: *"Trains come and go, people enter and exit. And in this rhythm of coming and going, the gazes of passengers – a secondary school student, a housewife, a pensioner, a postman, an Olympic champion, a little boy holding his mother's hand – stop at the photographs of the I Feel Slovenia. I Feel Culture. exhibition."*

The exhibition addressed the visitors of the Metro gallery at the Vystavochnaya station through images and an introduction including a description of elements of Slovenia's cultural heritage.

It included many photographs – from folk songs and dances, colourful ethnic costumes and customs, rich cuisine and world-class wines, to a wide variety of technical and artistic creations and, last but not least, an amazing and diverse cultural landscape.

TIME LEAVES INDELIBLE TRACES

Slovenian society and culture were shaped by many cultural influences not native to this land, e.g. the Italian Baroque, Vienna Secession and pan-Slavism.

Some parts of Slovenia's cultural heritage surprise and thrill observers with their peculiarity: discovered in Slovenian lands was the oldest preserved wooden axle wheel in the world, over 5,000 years old, as well as a bone whistle considered the oldest preserved musical instrument in the world.

Ever since the Roman times, viticulture has marked a large part of the Slovenian cultural landscape; high in the mountains, sustainable pastoralism has shaped a special type of wooden alpine architecture for centuries. Slovenia is home to the biggest stone arch bridge in the world – the Solkan Bridge. Ljubljana, which is one of the smallest European capitals, is a part of a network of 20 Secession or Art Nouveau cities in the world. Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik gave the capital of Slovenia a distinguished architectural character, the Triple Bridge at the heart of the city being a typical

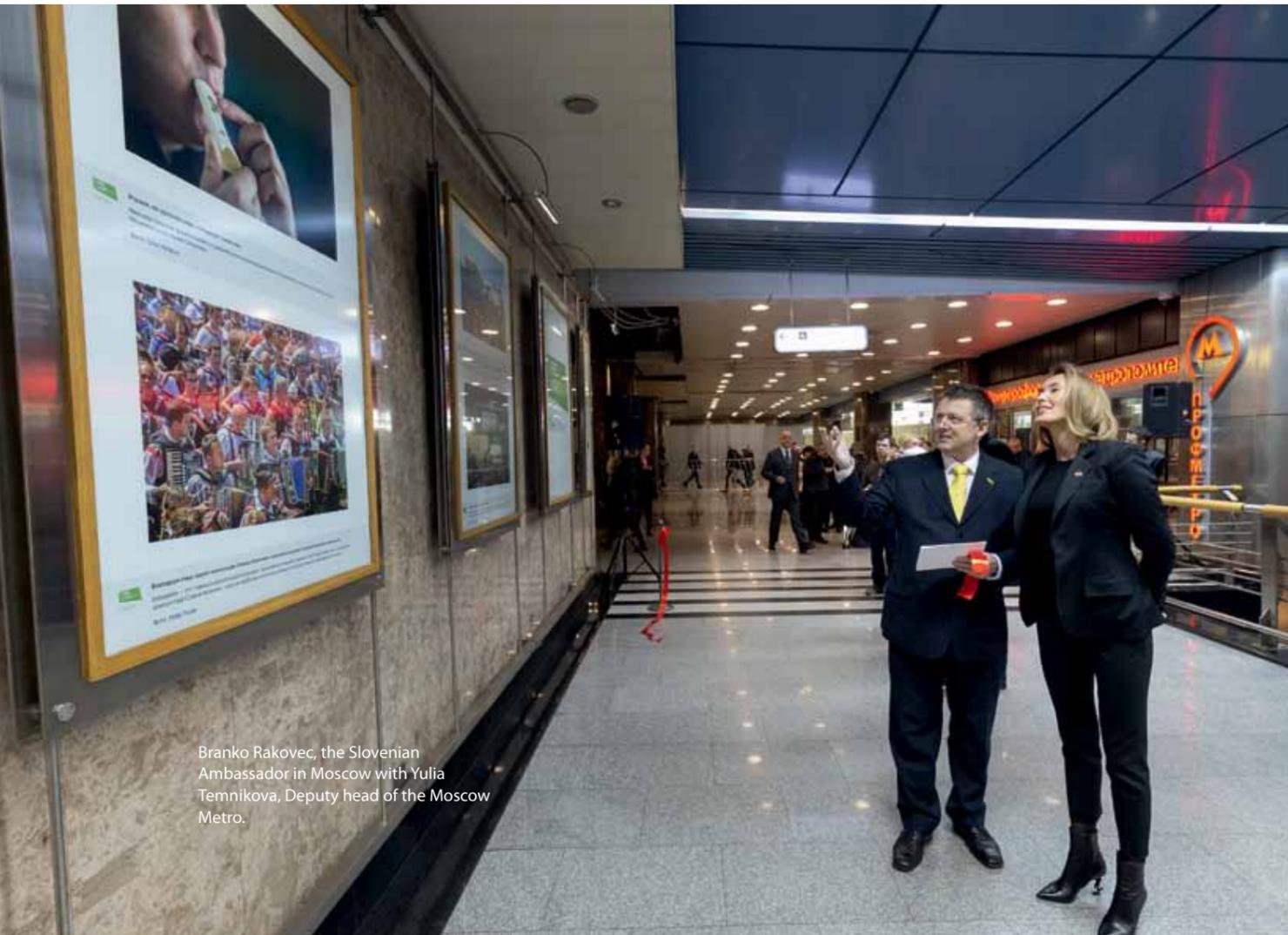
example. The mercury mine in Idrija, which opened at the end of the 15th century is today a museum and listed as Unesco World Heritage. The Shrovetide rounds of the traditional *kurenti*, clothed in sheepskin and wearing typical face masks, are also included on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

THE END OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Moscow exhibition also marks the end of the cooperation

of the Slovenian Government Communication Office and other departments in the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH). Earlier in 2018, the exhibition was showcased in Germany, Switzerland, Czech Republic and Poland. The decision to stage the last such event in the *underground gallery* was bold and original – and turned out to be a success.

For more on the exhibition I feel Slovenia. I feel culture. go to www.slovenia.si



Branko Rakovec, the Slovenian Ambassador in Moscow with Yulia Temnikova, Deputy head of the Moscow Metro.



The exhibition attracted a lot of interest. Many people stopped to admire the photos.

SLOVENIAN BALLET

A bow to the figures of Slovenian ballet

TANJA GLOGOVČAN



Internationally acclaimed choreographer at The Slovenian National Theatre Drama, Opera and Ballet Maribor, and the Prešeren Foundation Award winner, Valentina Turcu, envisioned her new drama ballet *Smrt v Benetkah (Death in Venice)* as an intense dialogue with Mahler's delicate, yet passionate symphonic oeuvre. Photo: Tiberiu Marta

Slovenian ballet includes the history of the ballet in the Slovenian National Theatre Opera and Ballet Ljubljana, the Slovene National Theatre Drama Opera Ballet Maribor and ballet institutions in other, smaller towns.

"The profession of a ballet dancer is definitely something special, as it combines a great physical skill and artistic expression without words. A dancer's tool of expression is their body. Constant training, the perfect control of muscles, the search for a beautiful line and harmony of gestures, and finally, constant control over oneself," says Dr Henrik Neubauer of the art of ballet.

BALLETS OF SLOVENIAN COMPOSERS

When referring to Slovenian ballet we usually have in mind Slovenian dance creators and re-creators, but the country also has a rich legacy of ballet music composed by Slovenian composers. It seems almost unbelievable that 93 full-length and short ballet scores have been written by 40 different Slovenian composers since the beginning of the 20th century. The scripts were written by 58 authors.

The most notable among the scripts is the ballet *Možiček (Little Man)* composed by Slovenian composer Josip Ipavec (1873-1921) in 1900, which has seen 32 debuts with more than 300 repeat performances in Slovenia and abroad.

Možiček (Little Man) is considered the first Slovenian ballet although its undertitle is pantomime in three acts set to music by composer Josip Ipavec.

BEGINNINGS OF SLOVENIAN BALLET

The first real dance performances in Slovenia started when the Dramatic Society was established in Ljubljana in 1867, in Trieste in 1902 and in Maribor in 1909. At first, the ballet troupe only participated in opera performances, the first of which to be staged was *Prodana nevesta (The Bartered Bride)* by composer Bedřich Smetana (1824 – 1884). The professional ballet ensemble performed its first independent ballet *Ugrabljena Evelina (The Abduction of Evelyne)* by composer Jaromir Weinberger (1896 – 1967), in 1919, performed together with opera *Glumači (Clowns)* by composer Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857-1919).

History records roughly 600 ballet dancers who have made important contributions to the history and development of Slovenian ballet. About 100 of these are particularly notable and performed or are still performing on Slovenian stages as soloists, strengthening the reputation of Slovenian ballet and contributing to its continued development.

It is interesting that the number of Slovenian dancers in both theatres is decreasing, as nearly half of them are now foreigners. This was different in the past: in the period after 2nd World War there were only a handful non-Slovenian dancers.

The most notable dancers in the first period of Slovenian ballet (1918–1928) were Lidija Wisiak (1906–1993), Rut Vavpotič (1908–1996), Erna Mohar (1907–1972), Silva Japelj (1905–1978), and later Marta Jakše – Remškar (1907–1984), Slavko Eržen (1907–1981), Štefan Suhi (1915–2001), Maks Kirbos (1914–1972) and Boris Pilato (1914–1997). Lidija Wisiak deserves a special mention as the first Slovenian ballet dancer. She was also the first to become established abroad, already in the period between World War I and II, taking Slovenian ballet and culture outside Slovenia's borders. Wisiak began ballet lessons in 1918 upon the establishment of the ballet ensemble and the Opera and Ballet School in Ljubljana with *Vaclav Vlček*, dancer and choreographer of Czech decent. As a soloist she performed in Slovenia, as well as abroad, in the Opera Comique and Théâtre Châlet. She was also a guest performer in Prague, Strasbourg, Marseille and Belgium. As a teacher she made a great contribution to the education of generations of Slovenian dancers.

While the first period of the history of Slovenian ballet was predominantly shaped by female dancers, the period from 1928

to 1946 was marked by Russian dancer Peter Golovin (1894–1981), who led the Ljubljana ballet ensemble for some time and later also the one in Maribor.

Even in the most difficult period, when ballet dancers had no suitable place to work and the ensemble was very small, he did not lose faith in Slovenian ballet. He shaped the entire first generation of ballet dancers, but above all he carved a place for ballet in Slovenian theatre and culture. Despite being Russian, in his soul Peter Golovin was always a Slovenian ballet dancer, and he made a home for ballet in the country. Peter Golovin first performed in Slovenia in 1924 in the opera *Majska noč* (*May night*) in the gopak dance. He wrote his memoirs about his life in the country with the heartfelt title *Moja ljuba Slovenija* (*My Dear Slovenia*). Thanks to Peter Golovin more male dancers were drawn to ballet, such as Maks Kirbos (1914–1972), Drago Pogačar (1920–unknown), Stane Polik (1919–2011) and Stanislav Hiti (1922–1975). In 1971 he was awarded the Order of Merits for the People with Silver Rays for his work in Slovenian ballet.



Možiček (*Little Man*) is considered the first Slovenian ballet.
Photo: Dr Henrik Neubauer archives

A special place in Slovenian ballet history certainly belongs to Pia (1908–2000) and Pino Mlakar (1907–2006), who were dedicated to the art with their bodies and souls.

This is the story of pas de deux, which filled concert halls with a special inner glow. Their example on stage and in personal life embodied dedication, modesty, hard work, discipline, determination and bravery. In 1997 MEG Studio made a film entitled *Lepa Vida – veliki življenjski pas de deux* Pie in Pina Mlakarja (*Beautiful Vida – the great pas de deux of the life of Pia and Pino Mlakar*). They worked a lot abroad, as dancers and choreographers. A prominent project in their joint artistic path was *Lok* (*Arch*), a full-length duet in three parts – Youth, Love and Maturity. They staged it for the first time in Munich in 1939, then performed it in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Beograd and elsewhere.

Pia and Pino Mlakar also made a great contribution to Slovenian ballet as educators. In 1946 Pino took a job as professor of rhythmic gymnastics and dance at the newly-established Acting Academy in Ljubljana.

He and Pia participated in the management of the Ljubljana Ballet, where they choreographed and danced together until 1952. They wrote a historical overview of dance in Munich in the period from 1650 to 1992 *Unsterblicher Theateranz* (*Immortal Theatrical Dance*). Pino also wrote the books *Ples kot umetnost in gledališče* (*Dance as an Art and Theatre*) in 1999 and *Srečne zgodbe bolečine* (*Happy Stories of Pain*) in 2005. Pia and Pino Mlakar received many awards in Slovenia and abroad. In 1984 the Slovenian Ballet Artists Society made Pia its honorary member, and Pino its honorary president.

Slovenian ballet reached its peak at the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s, with such heights also due to famous foreign choreographers such as Anton Dolin (1904–1983), Aleksandra Balašovaeva (1887–1979) and Sergej Lifar (1905–1986).

Among other important historical figures are Iko Otrin (1931–2011), Marin Turcu (1945–) and Vojko Vidmar (1948–).



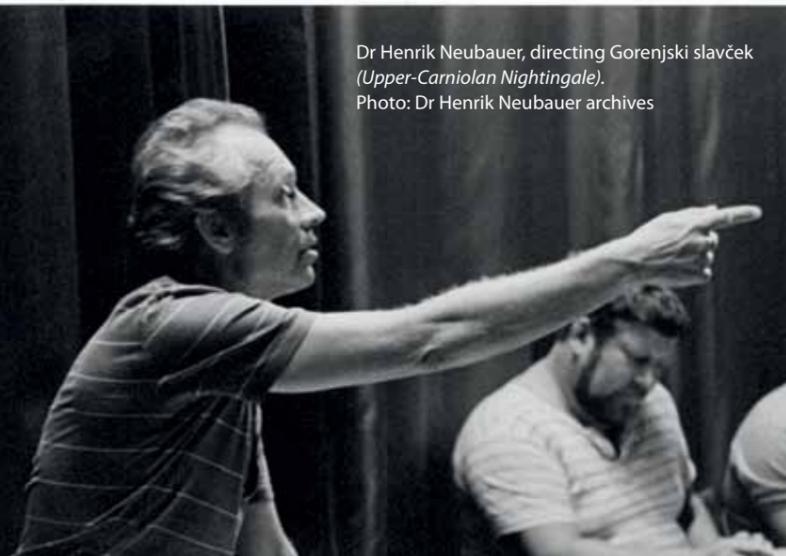
Žica (*The Wire*)
Photo: Dr Henrik Neubauer archives

TRAINING OF SLOVENIAN BALLET DANCERS

The training of Slovenian ballet dancers started in 1918, when the Opera and Ballet School was established. The credit for its establishment goes to Vaclav Vlček (1895-1968), who also led the school and the professional ensemble within the Slovenian Provincial Theatre. In addition to Lidija Wisiak, Rut Vavpotič was another dancer produced by the school who also built a career abroad. The school programme was four years long. In 1948 the national ballet schools in Ljubljana and Maribor were established. At first, the programme lasted four years. In 1951 it was extended to six years and in 1958 to eight, as is still the case today. After finishing the school, dancers now have the opportunity to continue their studies at the Ballet College of the Conservatory of Music and Ballet Ljubljana. In terms of education the Slovenian ballet is related to the Russian ballet, as its teaching follows the technique of Agrippina Jakovlevna Vaganova (1879-1951). In its beginnings in 1918 it was also connected to Czech ballet.

Dr Henrik Neubauer (1929–), with nearly 40 books to his name, certainly deserves a special mention for his contribution to ballet art education. He worked as a solo

Dr Henrik Neubauer, directing Gorenjski slavček (*Upper-Carniolan Nightingale*).
Photo: Dr Henrik Neubauer archives



ballet dancer, choreographer, opera director and university professor.

The Slovenian ballet dancer Lidija Sotlar (1929-2018) expressed her great respect for him by writing: "As a former ballerina of the SNT Opera and Ballet Ljubljana and being familiar with the artistic activity of Dr Henrik Neubauer I can only gaze in admiration and ask myself 'Is this true?' and it is true. He wrote and published 36 books, the majority of which are invaluable to ballet art and young ballet artists. He practiced a myriad of professions: dancer, educator, choreographer, critic, poet, writer, translator, doctor, director of the Ballet of the SNT Opera and Ballet Ljubljana, artistic director of the SNT Drama Opera Ballet Maribor, general and artistic director of the Ljubljana Festival, professor at the Ljubljana Academy of Music, secretary of the Permanent Dance Committee of the International Theatre Institute and president of the Slovenian Cycling Association."

BALLET OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Slovenian ballet has, of course, never been limited to Ljubljana and Maribor. Immediately after World War II ballet teaching was introduced throughout the country. The same applies to ballet performances. Koper ballet, which started to develop in 1949 at the initiative of Stanislav Hiti (1922-1975) definitely deserves a special place in Slovenian ballet outside the biggest cities. In 1954 a former ballet soloist of the Ljubljana Ballet, Silva Japelj, started a ballet school with twice-weekly lessons in Kranj. The Ljubljana Ballet also had an influence in Novo Mesto, Celje and Piran. By 1970 other smaller towns also had ballet schools. An important contribution to the spread of ballet in Slovenia was made by Lidija Sotlar and the group she established in 1975. Some ballet dancers from the Ljubljana ensemble occasionally performed at ballet concerts across Slovenia, but mostly with works from the Ljubljana ballet repertoire.

BALLET STAGES IN LJUBLJANA AND MARIBOR

Today Slovenian professional ballet is presented on the stages of the SNT Opera and Ballet Ljubljana and SNT Drama Opera Ballet Maribor. The programme, of course, includes ballets from the classical repertoire, but the number of classical ballet debuts is declining. However Slovenian dancers still shine in modern times. Notable ballerinas are Sanja Neškovič Peršin (1968–), Ana Klašnja (1980–), Regina Križaj (1971–) and Tijuana Križman Hudernik (1983–), while male dancers include Anton Bogov (1975–) in Maribor, and Petar Đorčevski (1986–) and Lukas Zuschlag (1985–) in Ljubljana.

Edward Clug (1973–) and Valentina Turcu (1974–) create incredible things on the Maribor stage. They are both solo ballet dancers, as well as choreographers and directors.

Last year the ballet *Smrt v Benetkah (Death in Venice)* by the SNT Drama Opera Ballet Maribor, directed by Valentina Turcu and co-produced by the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, was nominated Best Production 2018 in the *Critic's Choice of Dance Europe* magazine.

The ballet *Tango (Tango)*, choreographed by Edward Clug, has been the most popular production on the Maribor stage for 20 years.

The current programme of the SNT Opera and Ballet Ljubljana includes two ballets by Slovenian composers – *Moški z nožem (A man with a knife)* and *Kompozicija v baletnem večeru (Composition in a ballet evening)* – dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Ljubljana ballet ensemble.

BOW

The Slovenian audience is different to the Russian one, which throws flowers at the feet of ballet dancers, but it nevertheless does value the art, and has good reason to. Every one of us should bow respectfully to ballet dancers and other artists working in this field. There has been much blood spilt in ballet shoes, many bruises and blisters all over dancers' bodies, and many tears shed from the eyes of the artists who created and are still creating the history of Slovenian ballet. A bow to them all. The named and unnamed. Paper has limits, art does not.

Sources:

Dr. Henrik Neubauer: *Razvoj baletne umetnosti v Sloveniji (1999), (The Development of Ballet Art in Slovenia)*,
Dr. Henrik Neubauer: *Obrazi slovenskega baleta (2013), (The Figures of Slovenian Ballet)*,
Dr. Henrik Neubauer: *Baleti slovenskih skladateljev (2018), (Ballets by Slovenian Composers)*,
SNT Opera in balet Ljubljana, *Balet 100 – Stoletnica poklicnega ljubljanskega baleta (Ballet 100 – A Hundred Years of Professional Slovenian Ballet)*



Labodje jezero (*Swan Lake*) at the Ljubljana stage.
Photo: Darja Štravs Tisu /SNT Opera and Ballet Ljubljana

CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Excellence, distinctiveness, uniqueness ...

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

Not only does Slovenia have a well-developed classical ballet scene, but it also has a rich contemporary dance scene. By definition, contemporary dance does not only communicate the beauty of movement but is also recognisable by its ability to influence a spectator.

Using provocative, disputable, sometimes even inadmissible approaches, dancers from diverse environments try to provoke spectators' inner world, testify to the present moment, provide a metaphor for being, or even just offer the formation of a new attitude or emotion towards what a spectator saw. The criteria now shaping contemporary dance in Slovenia are, in the opinion of its authors, excellence, distinctiveness, uniqueness and innovation of expression or form.

ORIGINAL PROJECT AT THE LJUBLJANA OPERA – A MAN WITH A KNIFE

Such distinctiveness or uniqueness is certainly epitomised by the dance show *Moški z nožem (A Man with a Knife)*, which was first staged last November at the SNT Opera and Ballet Ljubljana. It is distinguished by original music, choreography, set design, costume design and live orchestra made up of numerous musicians.

On her home stage, Sanja Neškovič-Peršin, artistic director of the Ljubljana ballet ensemble, again demonstrated her choreographic skills, joining forces with another prominent choreographer, Matjaž Farič.

Their work was focused on uniting all elements of the show, all its autonomous languages – from the visual image, set design and costume design, to music and dance – into a whole. *“Music and dance do not have their usual function, i.e. that of dance*

being performed to music and that of music being played for the sake of dancing, but are autonomous while sharing the same focus, our central topic. All of us who are in a position to educate our spectators acquaint them with awakening content, which also involves risks. All too often do we accept the circumstances we find ourselves in. This is why the show's dancers persistently seek their place under the sun, a space in which they can express themselves, in which they will not simply accept life,” stresses Neškovič-Peršin. *“To get a better understanding of some things, we need to step out of this world – for a while. We have to elevate ourselves a bit, as if trying to see what surrounds us. We get to know ourselves when we observe ourselves from outside. The intuitive and lyrical experience of life has completely disappeared, but, after all, human power is not in human rationality,”* wrote the show's authors. They added: *“Art is a transcendental thing; it should address us so that it shifts us, stimulating a different way of thinking and feeling.”*

EN-KNAP GROUP DANCE COMPANY

In the 1990s, choreographer, teacher and dancer Iztok Kovač established, virtually out of nothing, the notion of Slovenian contemporary dance in European culture and beyond. In 1993 he established the international dance company En-Knap in Leuven, Belgium, under the auspices of Klapstuk Festival; a year later the group moved its headquarters to Ljubljana, where Kovač established EN-KNAP Productions.

After 14 years of project work, in 2007 he founded the international dance compa-

ny EnKnapGroup, the first permanent ensemble for contemporary dance in Slovenia, and began working on a repertoire basis.

Two years later, EN-KNAP Productions was entrusted the management of the Španski Borci Cultural Centre in Ljubljana, where Iztok Kovač is the artistic director and programmer of the domestic and international programme.

In 25 years, EN-KNAP has introduced and established its own aesthetics in European culture and formed its trademark, whose quality has been promoted from the very beginning by many acclaimed co-producers. Iztok Kovač is a recipient of several prominent domestic and international awards. A company of remarkable dancers under the artistic direction of Kovač works with internationally acclaimed choreographers and directors of highly diverse aesthetic backgrounds, developing into an A-class international ensemble. Since its establishment, EnKnapGroup has worked with over 30 Slovenian and international choreographers

The criteria now shaping ballet and contemporary dance in Slovenia are excellence, distinctiveness, uniqueness and innovation of expression or form.
Photo: Darja Štravs Tisu/SNT Opera and Ballet Ljubljana



and theatre directors, and created 26 full-length stage works and a dance film. The company has over 50 annual performances on domestic stages and regularly tours abroad.

The Španski Borci Cultural Centre is a place where dance from the East and West meets the dance from the South. It is the largest venue in Slovenia (a 2200-m² piece of public infrastructure) dedi-

cated to the promotion of contemporary dance.

Managed by EN-KNAP Productions since 2009, it has become a performance venue, production centre, research and training centre, and a meeting point for domestic and international dance. EN-KNAP Productions offers two international programmes in the centre: Import-Export, featuring acclaimed international dance and performing authors and companies, and Plesna Vesna, a

EN-KNAP has introduced and established its own aesthetics in European culture.
Photo: Andrej Lamut



year-round festival that hosts young European dancers selected on the basis of the Aerowaves network applications (in 2015, the festival was awarded EFFE, a label honouring Europe's finest festivals). The centre's diverse domestic programme is co-created by nearly 30 Slovenian programme partners from the NGO and public sectors. Španski Borci is a new meeting point for local, regional and international contemporary dance, performing arts as well as music.

SELECTED SHOWS FOR THE NINTH EDITION OF GIBANICA

Another event important for Slovenian contemporary dance is Gibanica, the biennial of Slovenian contemporary dance. The jury selected the shows for its ninth edition. The shows reflect an intense creativity of the contemporary dance scene in Slovenia. According to the jury, there is no dominant topic or conceptual approach in this selection – each author has demonstrated their own voice and choreographic language, further proof of the maturity of the scene as a whole.

The only selection criteria that we followed were excellence, distinctiveness, uniqueness, and innovation in a particular expression or form.

The members of the jury noticed and rewarded the fact that there were more ensemble works produced than in the past. Gibanica – the 9th Biennial of Slovenian Contemporary Dance Art will take place in Ljubljana between 27th February and 2nd March 2019.



Contemporary dance has the strong ability to influence the spectator.
Photo: Darja Štravs Tisu/SNT Opera and Ballet Ljubljana



THE VODNIK HOMESTEAD: A BOUTIQUE CULTURAL CENTRE WHERE LITERATURE LIVES

Sometimes we need an anniversary to
remember a giant

TINA POPOVIČ, DIVJA MISEL INSTITUTE
PHOTO: THE VODNIK HOMESTEAD ARCHIVES

This year will focus on Valentin Vodnik: 8 January 2019 marked the two hundredth anniversary of his death.

We were taught that Vodnik was the first Slovenian poet, although this is not entirely true – as is also suggested by the permanent exhibition at the Vodnik Homestead, which invites us to discover and explore his life and work cabinet by cabinet, uncovering his most interesting stories and ventures and helping us understand his life and work and the beginnings of the contemporary world that we now live in. A different kind of introduction to Vodnik is the theatre show staged by Andrej Rozman Roza and performed once a month.

Vodnik's legacy is extraordinary: he was a pioneer and an important figure in many fields. He was a linguist, a journalist and a poet.

He wrote the first grammar book in Slovenian and ensured that the French introduced Slovenian as a language of education in the schools of the Illyrian Provinces. He wrote one of the first Slovenian poetry books and worked as a journalist and an editor of the first Slovenian paper *Lublanske novice* (*Ljubljana News*). He was the author of the first cookbook and midwifery manual in Slovenian, and much more.

Many events will mark Vodnik's year: in January, a professional symposium will take place at the Vodnik Homestead, followed by a series of lectures, guided bicycle tours around Ljubljana, and special programmes for children and school groups over the year. The annual *Vodnikovanje*, celebration of Vodnik's birthday, will take place on 3 February.

A VIBRANT LITERARY CENTRE INSTEAD OF DUST-COVERED MUSEUM

Vodnik's broad-mindedness and curiosity were also an inspiration to the team of the Divja misel institute, which took over the programme management of the Vodnik Homestead and changed it from a neglected location to a vibrant literary centre, which now constitutes the urban cultural quarter together with other cultural institutions in Ljubljana.



Vodnik's portrait by Teja Ideja and Milanka Fabjančič
Valentin Vodnik (3 February 1758 – 8 January 1819)

On the ground floor of the homestead, divided into a number of small spaces, visitors can enjoy themselves in the reading room with freshly released books and magazines and the smallest bookshop in this part of Ljubljana.

It includes a distinguished selection of books and a rich comic book department. The ground floor is also home to the covered unit of the *Library under the Treetops*, another of our team's projects, which entices passers-by to read in the shade of the trees at more than 20 locations in the capital and elsewhere in Slovenia.

The homestead's attic has a hall where literary and narrative events are held during the week. They are organised in interesting monthly series that promote reading and successfully address numerous and diverse audiences. The homestead occasionally hosts concerts

involving music based on interesting lyrics. In good weather, the concerts are held on the outdoor stage, under the mighty chestnut trees. Every Sunday at eleven in the morning, the homestead's focus is on children who are immersed in the world of reading by storytelling, authors' visits and intriguing events where books are staged with the help of narration, animated illustrations and live music.

The homestead also hosts the *Writing Room*, a common space offering a free table, chair and computer to authors of various texts (writers, translators, journalists). Here, numerous workshops on writing different genres, from travelogues to song lyrics regularly take place.

In addition, the homestead hosts two festivals that take place every year. June is the time of the Children's Book Festival, a full-day celebration of books that encourages visitors to buy books at the end of the school year and before the summer holidays, while in spring, young people are invited to participate at the *Itn.* festival, a four-day youth festival of committed writing.



One of the many events

A PART OF THE HOMESTEAD IS A GALLERY SPECIALISED IN ILLUSTRATION

Slovenia has an exceptional tradition in illustration.

In addition to regular exhibitions presenting authors and various areas of illustration, the Vodnik Homestead gallery has become recognisable by the *Illustrator's Corner*, which is organised as part of the Slovenian Book Fair.

It is also known for the December Illustration Fair, which annually displays the illustrations of the most prominent Slovenian illustrators from the oldest and youngest generations, along with framed and unframed originals and prints.

LJUBLJANA, CITY OF LITERATURE

The Vodnik Homestead, whose programme is created by different individuals and organisations in the field of literature, is also the headquarters of Ljubljana – UNESCO City of Literature: in 2015 Ljubljana received the permanent title of City of Literature, awarded by UNESCO, and thus joined a network of twenty-eight cities that understand the significance of culture and books for the sustainable development of the city.

Books are therefore the common thread of the programmes and spaces at the Vodnik Homestead, a cultural centre with a markedly personal approach that proves that birth places of literary authors can also be vibrant literary venues. In the modern day and age, which does not favour long formats, depth and reading, it shows that socialising with and around books is one of the most sensible pastimes.

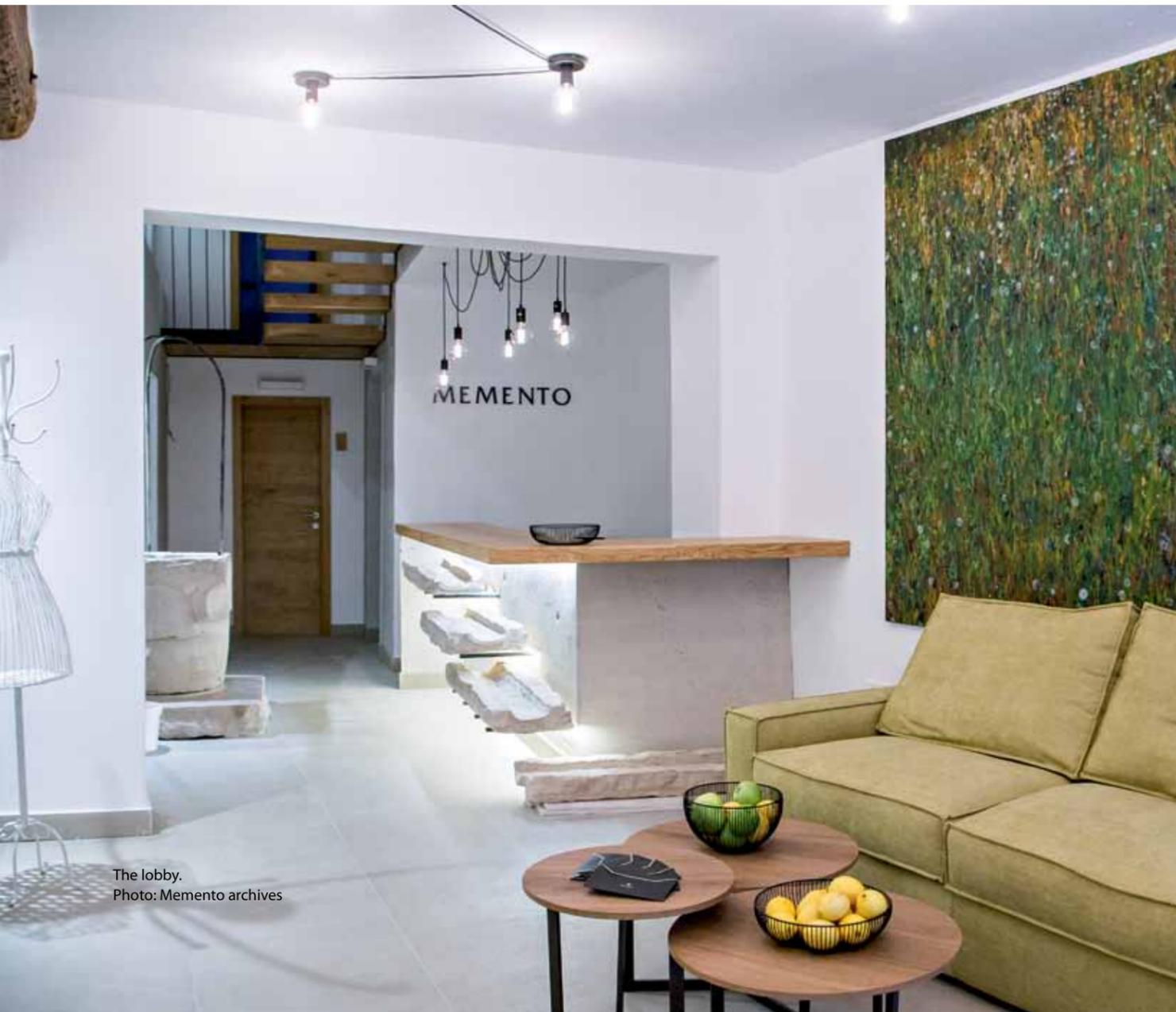


December's illustration fair

THE STORY OF RETURNING TO ONE'S ROOTS

Family moments captured in a building again brought to life at Memento B&B Piran

PETRA LOŽAR



The lobby.
Photo: Memento archives

The Municipality of Piran, one of the spots most popular among tourists, has seen a significant increase in tourist visits. However, due to its natural spatial limitations and priceless cultural heritage, the town of Piran cannot afford to be a mass tourism destination. The few locals that have remained in the town are well-aware of this.

In fact, no one exactly knows how many descendants of the original settlers, who were mostly Italians, still live in Piran. Many of them moved from Piran after World War II, when Piran became part of Yugoslavia. The question of who is supposed to be a true citizen of Piran (*Pirančan* or, as some would say, *Piranež* – from the Italian *Piranese*) has become rather beside the point. Perhaps this is because this town grows on you and makes you believe that you have become *Piranež* in all respects. According to Natalija Planinc, the president of the *Anbot* society of lovers of cultural and natural heritage, Piran has never been a town that one visits or moves to just to vegetate; quite the contrary, the town encourages you to be active and enjoy life to the fullest.

THE STORY OF A FAMILY IN THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF PIRAN

Life in the medieval town of Piran has never been easy and everyone who has moved to Piran has had to live and survive there somehow or other.

This is where the story of the Tomšič family, who made their home in Piran at the end of the previous century, begins.

The spouses Pavla and Ivan and their three children, Pavla, Marjan and Ivan, moved from Lucan to Piran. The oldest son, Marjan, soon started a family and began to work as a photography assistant in a studio that was at that time situated in the picturesque *Benečanka*, Piran's most famous house. Anamarija and Marjan had a son, Marjan, and a daughter, Klavdija. To earn a better living and because of their father's zeal for football, the family

temporarily moved to Velenje. But they did not stay there long because of their strong love for Piran and so they returned to the Slovenian coast. Marjan again found work as a photographer in a photography studio located in the Trevisini Palace. After several years of diligent work and gaining experience, he and his wife decided to open their own studio: Foto Piran. The studio was the only photography studio in Piran for a long time. Anamarija and Marjan captured many of Piran's citizens' stories and moments on camera. Their house, which was only a few streets away from the studio, was always full of cheerful visitors who shared their extraordinary stories. Anamarija and Marjan passed on their love for photography to their daughter, Klavdija, who, together with her husband and their two sons, Jaka and Anže, stayed in Piran. In the family house's basement they opened a video rental shop called Šterna, which was quite a brave thing to do in those times. The shop got its name after a water well – *šterna* – which stood in the inner yard of the family house. The stone well still embellishes the renovated house. These same premises were later also used as a gallery to show the works of artist Marko Jezeršek. In 1993, the Tomšič spouses sold their house and the new owner also bought the neighbours' house. And this was the start of the several-year-long agony of the Tomšič homestead. Due to careless renovation work and dwindling resources, the two houses were in decline until 2014, when Tomšič descendants decided to buy back their homestead, together with the neighbours' house. Daughter Klavdija and grandsons Jaka and Anže Šoba were determined to save the two houses from the grasp of decline and make their own tourist story. They and their family members have again breathed life into the house by turning it into a tourist accommodation, where visitors can feel the authenticity of Piran and the homey atmosphere of the Tomšič house. Thus



Memento is situated in two interconnected buildings in the central part of Piran.
Photo: Petra Ložar

began the story of the family bed and breakfast Memento B&B.

RENOVATION THAT PRESERVES THE PAST

The renovation of houses in a medieval town is an exceptional task and a challenge for architects and in terms of protection of cultural heritage. The family invited architect Matjaž Suhadolc, who has demonstrated an extraordinary understanding of the complexity of such renovations in his previous work, to take on this project.

His belief, namely that the best architecture is that which combines the charm of the past with the modern dynamics of life, while remaining open for future upgrading, can be felt at every step in today's Memento.

The renovation was carried out under the watchful eye of Dr Mojca Marjana Kovač, a conservation adviser for the regional unit of Piran from the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. A preliminary design for the renovation of the buildings on Bolniška ulica was drawn up in 2015 with the aim of turning the two interconnected buildings into a small family hotel. The two houses are situated in the central part of the medieval town centre, right behind the Tartini Square, along the street that connects the square with the Minorite Monastery. The concept features the two medieval buildings with a yard, connected by staircases; the renovation did not affect the buildings' original height. The diversity of the buildings' floor levels has also been preserved, reflecting the original

gothic style, as architectural fragments have been found within the wall structure and these fragments are now visible. This is an excellent example of preserved authenticity in each of the buildings, which have been interconnected in a modern way. The modern building elements that have been added are minimalist and aesthetic. The architecture is complemented by a display of interesting photo cameras, giving a snapshot of the once-family business.

A GENUINE EXPERIENCE

Memento B&B is a long-needed addition for Piran. The eleven stylishly decorated rooms at an exceptional location offer their guests the genuine Piran experience and treat them to a piece of history through the personal story of the Tomšič family.

Tourism as that offered by Memento always pays off, and not only in financial terms. Such tourism products are of immense value to the town, as they have a multiplicative effect on both tourism and locals' employment and engagement.

Modern tourism leaves guests with a feeling that they have been taken special care of and provided with an experience tailored specifically to their needs. They are very interested in learning about the stories of local people and their way of life. At Memento, all this is captured in the beautiful story and the renovated family home, where love was and still can be felt in every corner.

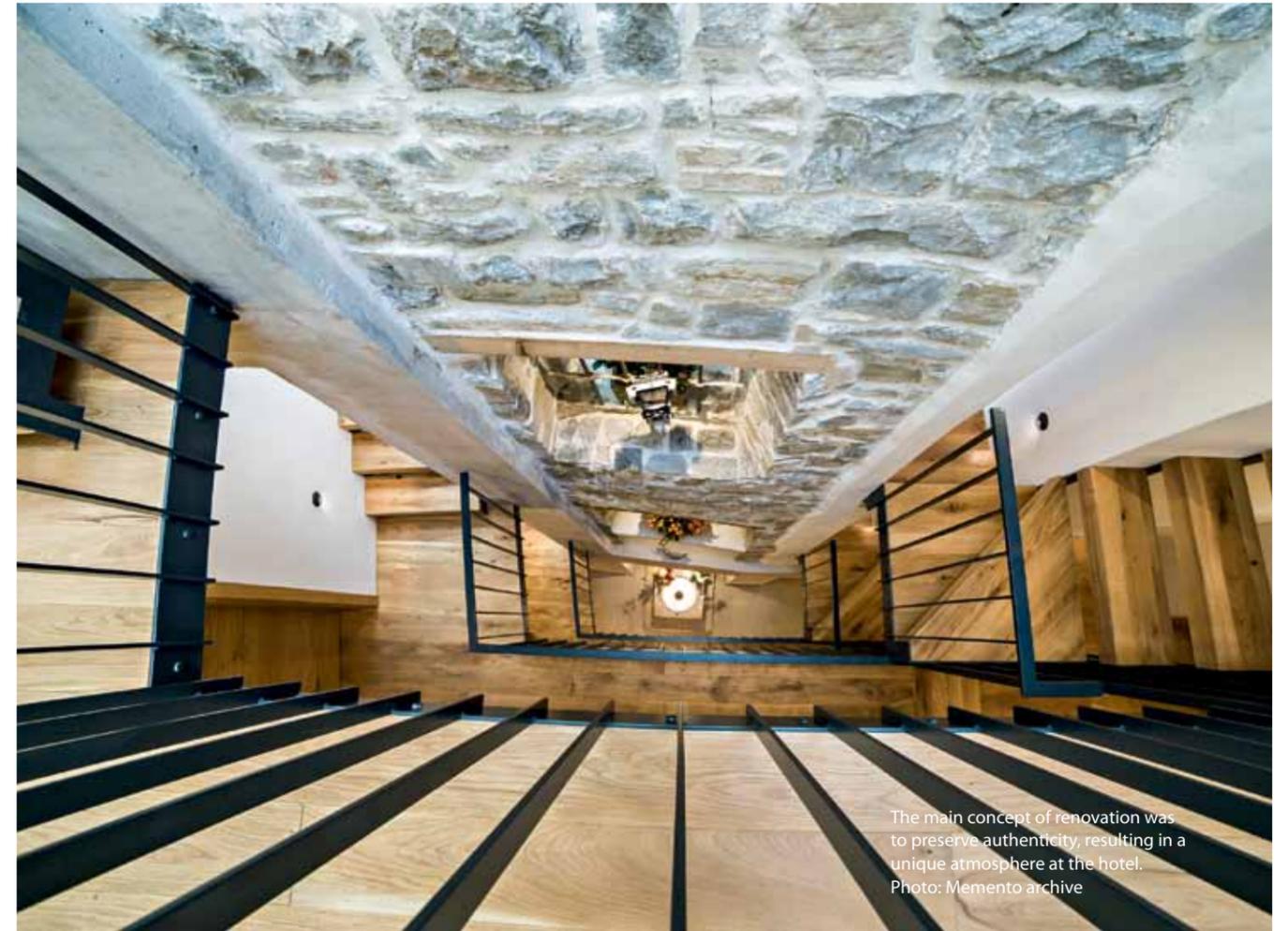


The older and the younger generation (photo below) of the Tomšič family.
Photo: Tomšič family archives





The modern elements that have been added are minimalist and aesthetic.
Photo: Memento archives



The main concept of renovation was to preserve authenticity, resulting in a unique atmosphere at the hotel.
Photo: Memento archive

"The best architecture is that which combines the charm of the past with the modern dynamics of life, while remaining open for future upgrading. Its content, internal structure and organisation may go beyond the realm of known possibilities and may surprise and impress visitors. Traditional architecture, with its calm presence, brings us down to earth and slows down the pace of modern life. On the other hand, due to its simplicity, it is a perfect environment for adding fresh ideas. An environment that combines a pleasant visual experience with a rich experience for all other senses." Architect Matjaž Suhadolc, u. d. i. a., Arhitekturna kolumna, 50. MOS

BUILDING TRADITIONS IN POSOČJE

The beauty of traditional architecture using natural materials

ANA HAWLINA



Building material under the stog (hayrack) in Kneške Ravne.
Photo: Ana Hawlina

The building history of Posočje is well-documented. Many conserved and restored buildings and remains from different historic periods are on public display. Some are nearly intact and are still serving their original purpose.

In addition to secular and devotional architecture, one should not overlook historic roadbuilding, the main and auxiliary structures along the Bohinj railway track, and dam facilities with hydropower plants on the Soča river. The traditional local construction materials and building techniques discussed in this article became established in Posočje over the centuries.

CREATIVITY IN WOOD

Most na Soči is a rich archaeological site providing information on the layout of settlements and typical construction techniques used in Posočje in the Bronze and Iron Ages, as well as Roman times. On the basis of the remains the archaeologists concluded that a typical Bronze Age dwelling had one room and was made of a wooden framework with a pillar in the centre. Walls were made of woven branches; the roof was a high pyramid roof and probably covered with straw. In the Iron Age, tools were more sophisticated and harder, making it possible to build wood houses on stone foundations. They had two or more rooms and a monopitched or gable roof covered with wood shingles or straw.

Timber structures were characteristic of Posočje until the 18th century, when they were at first complemented and later replaced by stone. However, thanks to its abundant local supply and versatility, wood remained a popular material.

Larch and fir wood was used at higher elevations, while ash, hornbeam, oak, lime, wild cherry, chestnut, hazel and laburnum were used at lower elevations.

The development of carpentry went in the direction of timber studwork construction, complex roof frames, barns and hayracks. The rise of sawmilling also saw an increase in the use of planks for outside and inside panelling, wind girders and ceilings in houses and outbuildings. Wood was also used for doors, windows, shutters, galleries, fences, trellises and other construction elements. In the Trenta valley and the area around Bovec, wood split into shingles or sawn into planks is still used as roofing.

There are no more examples of houses constructed from timber in Posočje. However, wooden granaries from the 18th century, and in the Cerklje hills region even from the 17th century, bear witness to the great carpentry skills of the past.

THE BUILDING STONE HERITAGE OF POSOČJE

In Posočje, stone was used as a building material as early as prehistoric times. On the hill of St. Volar above Robič there are traces of a fortification wall built using the dry stone technique, which is believed to have protected the settlement it surrounded in the Bronze Age. The building method using stone and lime mortar was introduced in Posočje by the Romans. This method was used to build Roman lowland bases and settlements, and Late Antiquity high-altitude settlements. The most preserved is the settlement with the remains of an early Christian shrine at Tonovc Castle. In the Middle Ages stone was only used for the most important buildings, while rural settlements were built mostly of wood. Stone became more widely used in the last few centuries, when it began to be applied for bearing and wing walls, flooring, roofing and carved architectural elements, such as corner elements, pillars, lintels, window frames and stairs.



Front of wooden granary, Logaršče.
Photo: Ana Hawlina

In areas near riverbeds, cobblestones were used, either alone or in combination with rocks obtained during the excavation of construction pits. On the slopes of the Stol mountain there is a layer of cobblestones of glacial origin, which, due to their large size, are ideal for stone architectural elements of visual or structural importance.

Many areas in Posočje are rich in layers of high-quality and conveniently brittle limestone, which barely needs any processing to be used in construction. In Banjščice it was also used for roof covering. If a rock was of inferior quality but could be broken up easily, such as marl or feldspar, it was still used, but such walls were then protected with a plaster finish.

Roofs covered with dark grey and black slate were characteristic of the Pobrško and Cerkljansko region at the end of the 19th century. One-centimetre thick tiles were produced from the slate deposits in the surrounding area and in the quarries of the Selca valley. Slate roofing is durable and resists wind quite well. It is also suitable for steep and multi-pitch roofs.

Waters saturated with calcium bicarbonate tend to form tufa, a light, porous, yellowish stone, which is easy to shape and saw into pieces of various sizes. When dry, it is strong enough to bear weight and its surface is wear resistant. It is suitable for window framing, arches and bearing walls on the upper levels of buildings. Village tufa quarries were still active in the 20th century, particularly in the ravines of the Idrija river tributaries, Bača Trebuša and Kanomlja.

Conglomerates were used in much the same way as tufa. In the Idrija and Cerkno region the conglomerates of Stopnik with a green matrix and the reddish carbonate conglomerates of Idrija were also used for decorative purposes.

TRADITIONAL PLASTER FINISHES

The architectural landscape of Posočje is largely characterised by the traditional plaster of lime and sand from community sand pits. Sand obtained in the local environment was also used in road construction (dolomite sand), and the making of flooring and lime and cement screeds.

As cement gained popularity, cement shingles and cement building blocks were occasionally produced at large sand pits.



Tufa window frames, Police.
Photo: Špela Subić

Lime was a popular mortar binder. Lime plaster protected the wall from surface erosion and moisture. It was also used as a basis for pigment paintings and frescoes, as well as a bleaching agent to freshen up and disinfect premises.

BUILDING TRADITION'S IMPRESSIONS IN CLAY

The inhabitants of Posočje were familiar with clay deposits and the useful properties of clay as early as prehistoric times. The inner sides of the first wooden houses were, as a rule, covered with clay plaster. The reconstruction of an Iron Age building arranged *in situ* in the archaeological collection in Most na Soči shows that at that time people made durable flooring by pressing clay into the gravel foundation, and that they decorated buildings with ornamental clay tiles.

In Posočje, building elements made from baked clay were first used in Roman times. People used kilns to make pavers, bricks for various purposes, and roof shingles, and they usually also burned lime.

The remains of Roman construction can be found on many ancient sites in Posočje. Brick products were produced in local brick factories (*called frnaže*) in Posočje as late as in the middle of the 20th century. The large clay deposits in the Kobarid and Tolmin areas are the result of the gradual retreat of the Soča glacier and the related lake formation. Small patches of clay can be found on high-elevation penneplains and along the riverbeds of all large tributaries of the Soča river. Small amounts of high-quality clay can also be found in the karstified ground due to the deposits of red soil and insoluble limestone residues in dolines and collapsed dolines.

STRAW AS CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL

In Posočje, in areas with sufficient arable land where wheat or rye could be grown, thatching was a common practice until the end of the 19th century. Straw was also used for thatched gable ends of buildings and as insulation in wooden ceilings.

NATURAL MATERIALS AS AN ARCHITECTURAL REFLECTION OF THE POSOČJE AREA

Since building materials were always obtained locally, traditional buildings reflect the diverse geographical and morpho-

logical features of the Posočje area, attesting to the resistance and resourcefulness of the local people, who have been adapting to this land throughout the centuries. This is why applying traditional knowledge and building techniques would be useful in the design of new buildings and the restoration of heritage ones.

The article is based on Building for Tomorrow, a manual published by the Soča Valley Development Centre as one of the activities related to the preservation of cultural heritage.



Example of traditional plaster, Klavže.
Photo: Ana Hawlina



Remains of a decorative plate made of baked clay among the remains of an Iron Age settlement in Most na Soči.
Photo: Archives of the Tolmin Museum

SLOVENJ GRADEC

Creative leisure time

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ
PHOTO: SPOTUR ARCHIVES

The youth cultural centre offers creative leisure activities for young people.



As an ancient city, Slovenj Gradec is known in Slovenia as a cultural centre where a rich heritage is intertwined with a modern vibe. The old town centre, which dates back to the 13th century, is still the focal point of cultural life. And in recent years in particular, the city has been trying to entice people to come to the old centre instead of to the big commercial complexes on the outskirts. One of the downtown attractions is also its unspoiled image of the past.

Here, the rapid development of economic and service opportunities in recent times meets the old spiritual tradition and riches of nature in the surrounding areas. Slovenj Gradec still has many active makers of handicraft products, which are particularly fascinating to foreign visitors. There are many international events and exhibitions held in the city. The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Koroška (KGLU) is particularly well-known.

Its planned and clearly defined exhibition policy takes note of important artists in various art movements as well as offering topical elements in international exhibitions based on various anniversaries marked by the United Nations.

It also facilitates the promotion of local fine artists and those from the central Koroška region in general. Special attention is given to modern artists who live or lived here – such as the painters Bogdan Borčič and Franc Berhtold, sculptor Naca Rojnik, and the late sculptor Rade Nikolić, among others. Since the very beginnings of his artistic career, the museum followed the rise of painter Jože Tisnikar, whose extraordinary originality and authentic declarative painting language opened the doors to world galleries and art encyclopaedias. His uniqueness has become a trademark of the town and its culture, much like the endless undulating hills of Uršlja Gora in Karel Pečko's pastels. The museum also performs the important task of collecting, recording, studying and protecting artistic heritage. By granting it the title of UN Messenger of Peace in 1989, the then Secretary General of the UN forever marked Slovenj Gradec as a city of peace and international communication.

YOUTH CULTURAL CENTRE

Slovenj Gradec is also a youth-friendly city. A few years ago the youth cultural centre (MKC Slovenj Gradec) was established, which offers creative leisure activities for young people, under the auspices of Youth Network MaMa, an organisation connecting and representing activities of youth centres in Slovenia aimed at supporting young people and promoting their quality leisure time and thus achieving better lives in society.

Youth Network MaMa is an inclusive national network organisation of actors working with young people in Slovenia which supports and advocates the interests and needs of youth centres in Slovenia.

With its professional approach to work, social responsibility and proactive operation focused on content, this constantly improving organisation contributes to the development of the entire community, but particularly young people. Its values are youth, expert knowledge, trust and integrity. In MKC Slovenj Gradec this vision is spread by Mitja Javornik and Uroš Pajenk, who invite young people to participate in active socialising at daily events. In particular, the centre collects in one place all kinds of information useful to young people, organises events within the National Youth Programme, provides various services and technical, professional and consultation assistance, and obtains resources for these programmes.

COMPUTER COURSES

Among the technical programmes, the computer courses stand out the most. They are primarily intended for the unemployed, mostly young people, but also older residents who would like to acquire various computer skills. The centre offers free advertising space on its website www.mkc-sg.si to institutions carrying out socially beneficial activities in culture, education, public events and sports in the Koroška region. For the past six years the municipality has enjoyed a common portal, namely [Moja občina.si](http://Moja.obcina.si). MKC Slovenj Gradec is also a member of the M3CX network which connects regional multimedia centres in Slovenia.

Rooms at MKC Slovenj Gradec can be rented for various activities. It has two halls and a recording studio for professional music recording and production, as well as demo recordings and radio commercials.

The centre also maintains the Virtual Gallery portal www.virtual-nagalerija.com intended for the promotion of artists and amateur creators. The portal has many visitors and was well received both by creators and the public. The computer classroom has free WiFi and computer equipment available to visitors. Organisations, societies, associations and groups carrying out similar activities can use the centre's rooms for meetings and office hours free of charge.

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO YOUNG UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

The professional and consultation assistance provided by the centre in cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia to young unemployed persons has also been returning good results. These include various workshops on writing job applications and preparing for job interviews, assistance in seeking first employment, consulting and assistance in seeking a job abroad, organisation of information and motivation seminars, computer literacy courses and German courses. Young people are kept informed of various projects and programmes in the form of electives at regional secondary schools. This is the fourth year the centre has been promoting youth tourism. It has designed a tourist guide for

young travellers and visitors to the city entitled Slovenj GUIDEc. It presents the region and its people to young visitors in an original way and with more adrenaline.

Important programmes of the centre also include the development of voluntary youth work and active citizenship.

MKC Slovenj Gradec provides training for people volunteering for homework and study help, for the Red Cross, social work centres and care homes, and for assisting people in distress. This is an opportunity for young people to acquire skills, knowledge and experience.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

One of MKC Slovenj Gradec's goals is to promote active citizenship and participation in national forums discussing EU policies and elections. In this way the centre aims to foster social cohesion, cultural diversity, solidarity, equality between men and women, mutual respect and a sense of common European identity. This year it will organise a set of debate evenings on the subject of active citizenship, which are also for the promotion of greater employment of young people within the context of social entrepreneurship. Informal education will include learning other social competencies like tolerance and a peaceful culture, and learning about other cultures in general.

A lot of attention will be given to the social inclusion of young people and vulnerable groups with fewer opportunities. The emphasis will be on equal opportunities in the labour market. In cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia, the centre will include youth in programmes that will contribute to greater flexibility in the labour market.

Young unemployed persons will be included in projects where they will gain experience, learn a foreign language, meet new people, socialise and overcome various barriers on the path to an independent life.

In April the centre will organise the 7th Multimedia Days, presenting local multimedia production and that of other multimedia centres in Slovenia to the public. The aim is to teach young people how to use the equipment and make creative and original music products that will perform well on the market.

Last but not least, MKC Slovenj Gradec has also designed projects for health and well-being, particularly during summer holidays. The centre will hold five different sports tournaments within the project Exercise with Us. It also actively participates in the programme of the *Project Human Association*, an organisation active in the prevention of drug addiction.

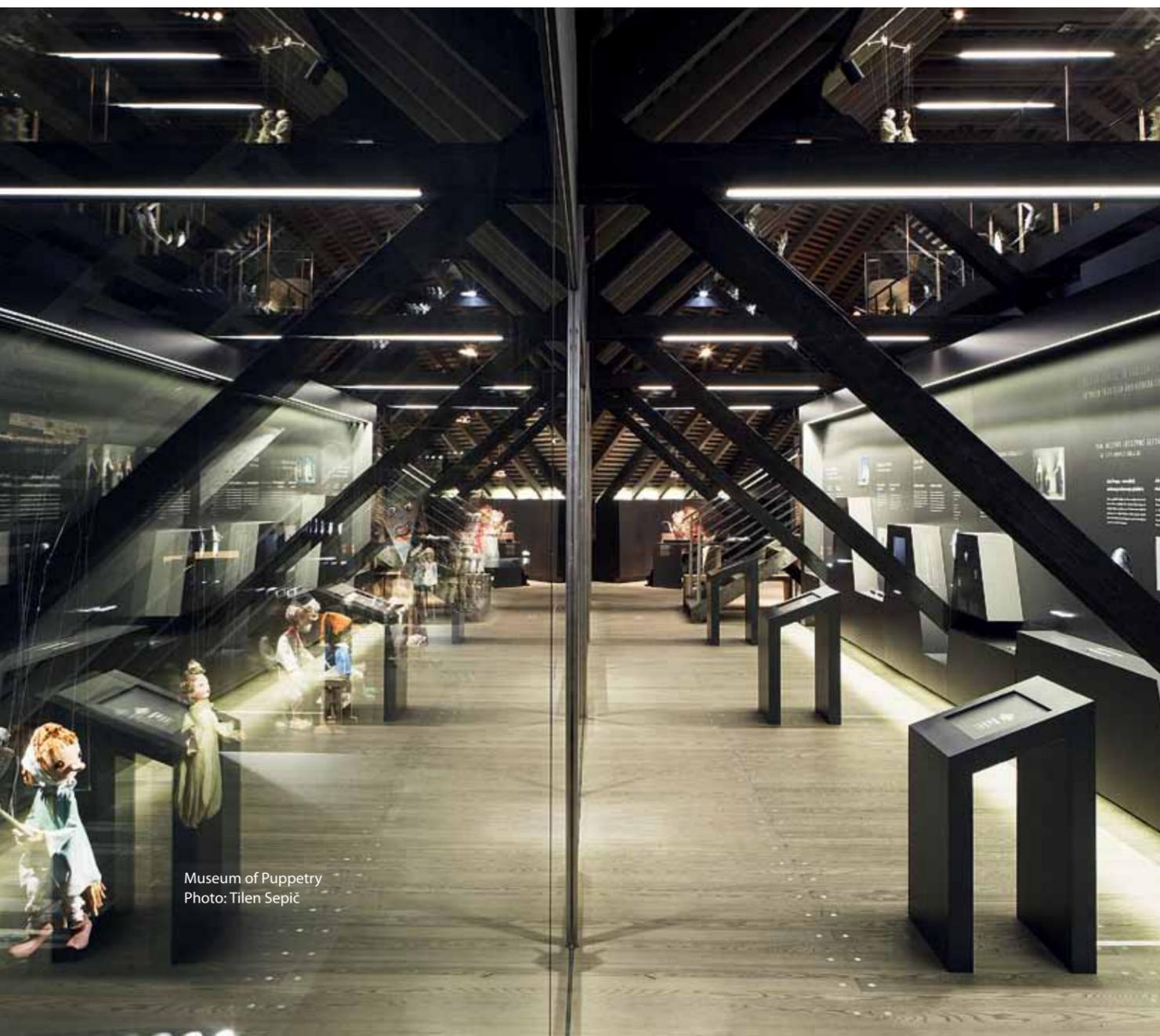


There are many traditional events held in the city.

SLOVENIAN MUSEUM OF PUPPETRY AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD

At the intersection of the past and future

PETRA ŠKOFIC



Museum of Puppetry
Photo: Tilen Sepič

Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, one of the most well-known Slovenian theatres, celebrated its 70th birthday in 2018. The theatre's repertoire consists of puppet and theatre shows for children, young people and adults, where traditional forms of puppetry are combined with different contemporary performance practices. At the Annual Conference of the Network of European Museum Organisations held in November 2018 in Valletta, Malta, the Slovenian Museum of Puppetry received a special award from the jury of Children in Museums Award.

The shortlist for the award was made up of 12 museums from Australia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Great Britain, Slovenia and Singapore.

The Museum of Puppetry was established in 2015 under the auspices of the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre and the Ljubljana Castle.

It is a complex project that, in addition to staging Slovenian puppet shows at Ljubljana Castle, introduced systematic preservation of Slovenia's puppet heritage.

FIRST CREATIVE IMPULSES

The theatre drew from different traditions characterising Slovenian puppetry since its beginnings in the second decade of the twentieth century. The founding father of Slovenian puppetry was a painter, Milan Klemenčič, who received an education in the romantic tradition of Italian and especially German string-puppet theatres. In 1910, he introduced his own private Tiny String-Puppet Theatre to the public.

It was Klemenčič's miniature puppets that inspired French director Renaud Herbin: his show *Open the Owl* placed Slovenian puppetry tradition in the context of contemporary performance practices.

The French-Slovenian coproduction had its world premiere at last year's puppetry

festival in Charleville-Mézières, France, which is the biggest gathering of puppeteers in the world, and has since toured several European cities.

The premiere was marked by some fascinating reviews in France and Slovenia that highlighted the amusing and inventive direction, the artists' precision and concentration, the range of beautifully intertwined and ingenious ideas, the attractiveness of the performance with several layers of interpretation and, last but not least, the outstanding work of puppetmasters Maja Kunšič and Iztok Lužar and their incredibly energetic personifications of the protagonists. The French newspaper *Le Monde* wrote the following: *"The combination of the puppets made after originals from the Slovenian puppeteer, video projections unveiling the work of puppetmasters and actors, as well as the contemporary version of the story rewritten by the novelist Célia Houdart, were a genuine success both in terms of aesthetics and dramaturgy."*

INTERNATIONAL TOURS

Ljubljana Puppet Theatre is making its way to the international scene through co-productions and collaborations with established artists from all over Europe. Notable guest performances include the award-winning children's show *Goose the Bear*, where the theatre collaborated with the renowned British designer Donna Willson, and the shadowplay *Duck, Death and the Tulip* by the Italian master of shadow puppets Fabrizio Montecchi, which has continued to play at festivals since its premiere four years ago. The



Misterij sove (*Open the Owl*)
Photo: Jaka Varmuz

show's creators have so far won twelve awards from different festivals and tours.

The theatre also proves its integration in international puppetry trends by organising the Biennial Festival of the Contemporary Puppetry Art, LUTKE.

This is presents a cross-section of diverse puppet visions and quests reflective of modern times; it is a satirical, absurd, poetic and impressive comment on current social issues. The latest edition took place in September, and featured puppeteers from France, Israel, Finland, Spain, Iran, Russia, Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

The theatre also devotes particular attention to cooperation with the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television. One result of this is *Crime and Punishment* directed by Mirjana Medojevič. The Association of Theatre Critics and Researchers of Slovenia declared it the best performance of the 2016/2017 season, and audiences in Russia, where the show toured a few months ago, were so thrilled that the media wrote about *a mad Slovenian spectacle*.

CELEBRATING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE THEATRE

The anniversary season brings a selection from the seven decades of Ljubljana Puppet Theatre. Some shows from the theatre's beginnings have thus made their way back to the repertoire. One of the most popular shows is *Spotty the Ball* by Czech author Jan Malík, left almost unchanged since 1951, now returning with a new cast after a few years' break. In a different vein, one of the peaks of the anniversary celebration was spectacular contemporary staging of Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, featuring more than a hundred actors, singers and musicians.

In the recent years, the theatre has consolidated its position in Slovenia's performing scene, enjoying a favourable response from the professional public as well as countless audience members.

The Ljubljana Puppet Theatre is visited by about 130,000 people per year. Its programme, with 13 premieres and 30 reprises from past seasons, is also diverse in terms of its media of expression.

The shows combine the features of puppet theatre, new performance forms, the theatre of objects, shadow theatre, live performance, and more. The focus is on the audience, who bring ever new challenges to the theatre. Sometimes audience members move freely through theatrical spaces, free of stage conventions, at other times they can even directly affect the action on stage, turn it upside down, and change it completely. The performance thus becomes an increasingly live form of theatre that opens different horizons for audiences, provides them with an insight beyond everyday life through an aesthetic experience, and calls for a more engaging relationship, new sensibility, cooperation and reflection.

The Ljubljana Puppet Theatre is now a modern theatre whose rich productions impress both domestic and foreign audiences.

While it is not afraid to introduce new performance practices, its meticulous care for the heritage of Slovenian puppetry ensures that Slovenian puppet legends do not disappear from the memories of its many generations of visitors.



Žogica Marogica (*Spotty the Ball*)
Photo: Ljubljana Puppet Theatre archives

JANEZ ŠKOF

An actor with a warm heart and profound mind

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ



Janez Škof.
Photo: Peter Uhan/SNT Drama Ljubljana

Janez Škof is an actor with a great sense of improvisation. He says that his approach to acting is through play. For him, the mystery of theatre is happening now, at this very moment. It is perhaps this attitude that helped Škof win last year's Borštnik Ring award for lifetime achievement.

"When watching Janez Škof on stage, he appears to be acting with incredible lightness and ease, while at the same time he seems to fill up the entire space with his energy and presence. Sometimes he impresses us with minimalism in expression, sometimes with playfulness, sometimes with astounding comic acting, and with simple, but original and extremely witty ideas. His acting is enormously meticulous and analytical, and yet it seems to be derived from an internal impulse, or a highly refined instinct," was given as part of the jury's reason for conferring the highest Slovenian award for acting. After graduating from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana, Škof honed his skills in almost all Slovenian theatres; he also performed in experimental and non-institutional groups, and staged solo performances.

His last stop was the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana (SNT Drama Ljubljana), where he has worked since 2003. This is where he created several memorable title roles with different directors, and developed his acting techniques down to the smallest detail. He has no special recipe for acting, as there are many ways to approach it: *"You can draw from other people, you can dream about something, see something in the street ... from a certain point on, you mull over the text ceaselessly, even when you drive your car or talk to someone; you work all the time, not only at morning and evening rehearsals. The most important, however, is what goes on in your subconscious, for you cannot rely only on your brain and the text."*

THEATRE – A KIND OF MAGIC

Škof sees theatre as a kind of magic, where a viewer can observe the processes experienced by an actor; it is way of condensing space and time. He experiences each role as something special, the same as each person is special.

"As an actor, you surely have some basic tools to approach a role, but on the other hand, each show is about finding something new, unique, unpredictable. This is why not one single role is routine, not even when the show is already made and well-formed," he says.

Acting is in Janez Škof's blood. This is why it is hardly surprising that he has, in the course of his career, created many characters that are still considered classics and are vividly remembered even after twenty, thirty or more years. He has nevertheless preserved and is constantly elevating the vivacity of his acting, and remains as curious, probing and playful as ever. His answer to the question of whether he still finds magic and artistic fulfilment at the theatre is as follows: *"I am not an artist. Ivan Cankar called himself an artist. Director Dragan Živadinov says the same, and I agree with both, but I wouldn't say it for myself. I sometimes try to do things that could be called art. But what is art? The greatest art is to live and love one's life."*

The work of acting brings Škof spiritual enrichment, his magic being the theatre itself. Performance is very important, too.

"I think - and this is also my primary interest in the theatre - that you can reach the maximum depth not by devotion but by making an impression of running away from devotion, because this is when a viewer is at their most relaxed and attentive, so you can take them deepest into the devotion, into the approximation of the truth. Our perception of the truth can never be literal; it cannot be put into words: a word corresponds to our rational human criteria concerning the dualism of good and evil, which is the base of our morals. But



He was the winner of the last year's Borštnik Ring award.
Photo: Anže Malovrh/STA

dualism will not get you any closer to the truth. If you play with it, if you play this kind of ping-pong, you can chase the truth in the very breakdown of such wandering."

THEATRE AND MUSIC – GREATEST PASSIONS

The improvisation Škof is so familiar with in the theatre strongly marks another area of his activity – music. He is a member of music group Čompe. He and his friends from the theatre, with whom he founded the group, named it after a dialect expression for potatoes from the Upper Soča Valley. The band plays Slovenian poetry put to music. Their work is slow, and the music strictly original, which people seem to like.

Škof has had many performances with the poet Dane Zajc, and they recorded an album *Ogenj v ustih (Fire in Mouth)*. He was attracted by Zajc's early poetry that rhymes well, and which inspired him to learn the accordion.

After Dane Zajc, the band added musical interpretations of poetry by other Slovenian poets – Milan Jesih, Edvard Kocbek and Andrej Rozman Roza. Škof finds theatre and music, his two principal preoccupations, inseparable, because they imbue him with the same energy and passion. He is a self-taught musician distinguished by the diatonic accordion. He has been intrigued by this instrument from a young age.

When asked whether there are directors at the SNT Drama Ljubljana who are daring and who dismantle or at least question the conventions of classical dramaturgy, his answer is strongly affirmative. *"These are Diego de Brea, Sebastian Horvat, and other younger ones. But talent is one thing; the other is the process of work that allows or prevents originality and courage. There is no recipe for a good show; if there is enough energy and creative freedom, it will be good, if not, it will be poor. Andrej Rozman Roza and Emil Filipčič are outstanding authors, and we tackle their works with utmost pleasure. Their approach to the theatre is very non-academic."*

Škof is particularly grateful for the award for actor of the year, with this being a great honour and recognition.



A scene from the play *V imenu matere (In the Mother's name)*.
Photo: Peter Uhan/SNT Drama Ljubljana

In his early career, Janez Škof attracted attention with three major roles for which he received several awards: Klement Jug in *Klementov padec (Klement's Downfall)* by Drago Jančar directed by Janez Pipan (Ljubljana City Theatre, 1988), Sultan Shahryar in *Scheherazade* by Ivo Svetina directed by Tomaž Pandur (The Mladinsko Theatre, 1989) and Doctor Faust in Goethe's *Faust*, also directed by Pandur (Slovene National Theatre Drama Opera Ballet Maribor, 1990). A particularly outstanding performance in his later career was the title role in Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* directed by Diego de Brea (Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana, 2005), which brought Škof the Borštnik Prize for acting.

VISUAL ARTS

The Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies marks its 120th anniversary

ANA KRAŠEVEC
PHOTO: ZDSLUI ARCHIVES



The May Salon 2018 prize: Zora Stančič, Sejalec (*The Sower*), 2018, screen printing, 102 x 72 cm.

The Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies (ZDSLUI) is the oldest professional association of Slovenian fine artists. In its 120 years of existence, the Association has had a strong impact on the entire Slovenian fine arts scene and has also taken the initiative in establishing the National Gallery of Slovenia, the Museum of Modern Art and the Academy of Fine Arts and Design.

The association brings together a wide base of Slovenian artists, which is essential for fostering world-class artistic growth and creating outstanding artistic achievements of which we are particularly proud at home and abroad. It organises or participates in over thirty exhibition projects every year. Exhibitions are often accompanied by lectures, workshops and presentations of related projects.

The ZDSLUI is a national, professional organisation and association of fine artists who work and create in Slovenia's cultural scene.

Since it was founded in 1972, the ZDSLUI has been located in the building that it inherited in 1943 from a patron of the arts, art lover and distinguished photographer from the beginning of the 20th century, Fran Vesel. Since then, the gallery, head office and ZDSLUI leadership operate under the same roof. The ZDSLUI coordinates the work of societies and assists in the successful presentations of regional societies and individuals in Slovenia and abroad, organises national and international fine-art exhibitions, various performances in the fine and visual arts, seminars, training programmes and meetings. Today, it comprises nine regional societies counting 750 members – professional and active fine artists of all generations. Many of these hold academic titles, with over 30% having a master's degree in art or being certified university professors. There are

individual sections operating within the ZDSLUI, namely the section of illustrators, the ceramics section, the section of sculptors and artists operating in public spaces, the fine art pedagogical section and the video and new media section.

BEGINNINGS

At the beginning of its existence, the ZDSLUI engaged in the construction and establishment of the Jakopič Pavilion, which was created in 1909 by the renowned Slovenian painter Rihard Jakopič – the then secretary of the association – at his own expense and with the support of professional colleagues. The pavilion was designed by architect and urban planner Maks Fabiani.

This was the first fine arts gallery in Ljubljana, and until World War II the main exhibition venue for Slovenian fine arts.

In 1961, the pavilion was, despite protests, demolished due to the relocation of a railway line. As early as in 1909, the arts society organised a retrospective exhibition of Slovenian fine arts, named the *Third Exhibition of Art*, which was later renamed the *May Salon*. The exhibition is still on display, and is also considered the largest and most important one for ZDSLUI members. The ZDSLUI also took the initiative to establish the National Gallery of Slovenia, the Museum of Modern Art and the Academy of Fine Arts and Design.

SUCCESSFUL FUNCTIONING AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The society, and later the association, was the initiator, co-founder and organiser of numerous projects, such as *Intart*, which from 1967 to 2004 and within the framework of contemporary art projects brought together artists from Friuli Venezia Giulia, Carinthia (Austria) and Slovenia; the Slovenian Biennial of Illustration, established in cooperation with the Cankarjev Dom Gallery in 1991; and the International Ceramics Triennial UNICUM since 2009 (since 2014 under the auspices of the National Museum of Slovenia). For the sixth year running, the ZDSLJ has been in charge of the programme, which features presentations from high-quality painters and sculptors, which are hosted by the Gallery of the Consulate General of the Republic of Slovenia in Klagenfurt. It also participates in an exchange programme with BV-Galerie in Klagenfurt. The ZDSLJ takes part in projects undertaken by the national societies of Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and

receives invitations from Munich, Krakow, Budapest, Vienna and other European cities to exchange exhibitions and creators. It regularly organises international conferences and meetings of artists and art educators from all over Europe.

The annual exhibition program is staged at the ZDSLJ Gallery, the Jožef Stefan Institute Gallery and at the galleries run by regional societies.

Since 1909, the ZDSLJ has been organising the *May Salon* exhibition – the oldest and most important retrospective exhibition of Slovenia's fine art creators, the ZDSLJ members – which also bestows the *May Salon Awards*. The ZDSLJ also confers the Rihard Jakopič Award and recognitions, given for the greatest achievements in fine and visual arts produced by Slovenian fine artists, including non-members.

Eva Petrič, a multimedia artist during the performance *Eden transplanted*, which was part of the project *Hidden Vesel's garden ZDSLJ*, a site of art and culture.



EXHIBITION WITH THE LONGEST TRADITION IN SLOVENIA

The *May Salon* – the fine arts exhibition of Slovenian authors – has been running continuously since 1909 and has the longest tradition of all such shows in Slovenia.

These days, when galleries tend to focus on modern programmes, and thus the finest classical paintings and sculptures are more rarely viewed, the *May Salon* exhibition is indeed welcome since it is a reflection and display of contemporary artistic creation, and at the same time a cross-section of modern Slovenian fine arts. Every year the exhibition provides an opportunity for domestic authors to exhibit their work.

The *May Salon* exhibition used to announce specific themes or impose limitations on dimensions, but most of the time the artists could freely decide which exhibits they will enter.

The exhibition certainly presents a cross-section of excellent contemporary Slovenian fine art, produced by all generations that create in various artistic directions, which is of great importance for our cultural identity in the field of visual art and its recognition in the world.

LIKOVNE BESEDE MAGAZINE

The magazine *Likovne Besede* (*Art Words*) is published twice per year by the ZDSLJ. It is the primary (and currently only) national art periodical dealing with fine and visual arts in Slovenia, and it has been continuously published since 1985. The magazine features an average of 120 pages of colourful images. It is intended as a resource for all lovers and collectors of art, as well as visual artists, art theoreticians, art historians and art educators. The magazine is also an important source of professional literature for students of art, art pedagogy, art history and others, and is often used as a reference.

A number of articles originally presented in *Art words* were later reprinted in monographic publications.

The magazine publishes articles written by authors with the highest professional references in art, authors holding a PhD in art history, art theory, art pedagogy, theories of new media and humanities. In addition to rich pictorial material, the magazine features interviews with all the key fine and visual artists, critics of current exhibitions, debates, artists' copyright pages, their personal records, and more. In this way, it further deepens the attitude towards art, broadens behaviour and develops the Slovenian language and citizens' reflections on the fine arts.



Likovne besede (*Art Words*), the cover of the summer 2018 issue.

EUROPEAN MEETING OF THE TRILATERAL COMMISSION

In the middle of November, Ljubljana hosted the annual European meeting

DENIS OŠTIR
PHOTO: NEBOJŠA TEJIĆ/STA



A Slovenian member of the group,
Gorenje CEO Franjo Bobinac.

On the third weekend in November last year, Ljubljana hosted the annual European meeting of the Trilateral Commission, at which, for three days, over 200 of the most influential people from business, politics and public life discussed the challenges facing our society in the future.

Ever since its establishment in 1973, the Trilateral Commission has provided a platform for open dialogue to global political, business and civil society leaders. The meeting was hosted by the European Chairman of the Trilateral Commission, Jean-Claude Trichet, and the Slovenian member of the Trilateral Commission, Franjo Bobinac.

THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF EUROPE

The central topic of this year's meeting was the economic future of Europe in the light of the tenth anniversary of the collapse of the global financial company Lehman Brothers, which caused one of the worst economic crises in the last 100 years. The meeting was attended by a former President of the European Commission, a former President of the European Council, three former heads of state, six former prime ministers, and many prominent thinkers and businessmen from around the world, who presented their views.

They agreed that Europe is facing serious challenges, to which it will not be able to respond on its own, but will have to turn outwards to find answers to them. The role of Turkey was highlighted in this respect, as Turkey is today one of the key powers in ensuring the future of the old continent.

"We have prepared a truly exceptional three-day programme that has been an excellent basis for a high-quality and open discussion among members," said Jean-Claude Trichet, the European Chairman of the Trilateral Commission. *"We talked about the key issues for the future of Europe, from the migrant crisis to cross-border cooperation, which has stalled due to the fear of potential global trade wars. As always, debate was heated and constructive and will provide the basis for steering the economic and social policies of the future to the benefit of all,"* he added.

"We are very pleased and honoured that this year's meeting took place in Slovenia," said Franjo Bobinac, the representative of the host country, Slovenia, at the Trilateral Commission and the President of the Management Board of Gorenje. *"This meeting was an extraordinary opportunity for Slovenia to strengthen its role as the leading country in the region and an important player in the global economy. This was an excellent event not only for the 200 extraordinary individuals, members of the Trilateral Commission, who attended the meeting, but also for our guests, who were able to access some of the most influential and best-informed individuals in the world,"* Bobinac added.

OPPORTUNITY FOR DIALOGUE WITH EXTRAORDINARY GUESTS

In addition to a number of panels, there were two high-profile guest appearances.



Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia Marjan Šarec (left), President of the European Trilateral Commission Jean-Claude Trichet (centre) and Slovenian member of the group and a Gorehje CEO Franjo Bobinac (right).



Prior to the official meeting, Dana Zohar, a distinguished American-born physicist and philosopher, addressed young David Rockefeller Fellows at a special event, and on Saturday guests and conference participants had an opportunity to listen to the influential psychologist and lecturer, Jordan Peterson.

Organisers have prepared a special programme for spouses of members of the Trilateral Commission in which guests learned, among other things, how to bake traditional Slovenian cake *Potica*.

STATE-LEVEL RECEPTIONS

Receptions at the highest level were also held as part of the annual meeting of the Trilateral Commission. At the reception at the Presidential Palace, the guests were received by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, and, at the opening of the high-profile event, addressed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Marjan Šarec.

Slovenia has been a member of the Trilateral Commission since 1998, when Marko Voljč, then the president of the board of NLB, the biggest Slovenian bank, was appointed as the country's representative. Voljč remained a Trilateral Commission member until 2017, when the Trilateral Commission leadership chose as his successor Franjo Bobinac, who at the same time also became a member of the Commission's Executive Committee. In 2014, Slovenia reached another milestone when Žiga Vavpotič, now the president of the Management Board of Outfit7, became a member of the first European group in the framework of the David Rockefeller fellowship programme within the Trilateral Commission. Three years later, he was joined by another member from Slovenia, Mark Boris Andrijanič from Uber. Slovenia thus became one of the best represented and most active Trilateral Commission countries per capita. The organisation of the annual meeting in Slovenia thus represents the next step in the positioning of the country in this globally important organisation.

INVEST SLOVENIA FDI AWARD

Awards to the best foreign investors in 2018 conferred

LIDIJA VINKOVIČ
PHOTO: NEBOJŠA TEJIĆ/STA



The winners

Once again the Invest Slovenia FDI Awards were presented in a festive ceremony to foreign investors who produced exceptional results and contributed to the development of the Slovenian economy. The investors who received the Invest Slovenia FDI Award are RLS, d.o.o., Fraport Slovenija, d.o.o., BOSCH REXROTH, d.o.o. and cargo-partner, d.o.o.

The expert committee of the SPIRIT Slovenia public agency, which selected the Invest Slovenia FDI Award recipients, shortlisted only those companies with at least 50 employees that had not cut their workforce since the end of the previous year, and whose value added per employee was not less than EUR 35,000. The companies must operate at a profit, have a high credit rating and must not have a history of non-payment of taxes. Companies with minority foreign ownership and companies that have recently been subject to a merger or acquisition were not included in the short-list. The selection committee also used the Bisnode Failure model, that predicts the probability of failure within the next 12 months, in choosing the winners.

THE BEST EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The award-winning company in the category of research and development activity and excellent business results is RLS, d.o.o. from Komenda.

The company's activities include manufacturing automation and development, manufacturing and marketing of sensors, modules, generators and measurement systems for various manufacturers and distributors across the world.

Janez Novak, the company's Director: *"This award is recognition for our company and our UK partner with which we have been successfully cooperating for almost 19 years. We have proved that long-term col-*

laboration and progress can also be achieved through this type of co-operation, mutual understanding and the pursuit of common goals."

In the category of the region's best employer, the winner of the award is Fraport Slovenija, d.o.o., Zgornji Brnik.

The company is part of the international Fraport Group from Germany and manages Ljubljana's Jože Pučnik Airport.

Špela Uršič, Head of Personnel Department: *"Fraport Slovenia has had an exceptional year of record achievements that could not have been possible without our staff. The award is a recognition of our good work and a recognition of our efforts by the wider environment."*

In the category of long-term presence in the region, the winner of the award is BOSCH REXROTH, d.o.o., Škofja Loka.

The company develops innovative solutions that complement new mobile hydraulics services, individual solutions for home users, industry and trade workers.

Gregor Černivec, Head of Development Department and Deputy Director: *"The award is a significant recognition for the company's staff and our owner; our owner, the Bosch Group, highly values any award received at a local level."*

A special award for a new greenfield investment in a logistics centre was bestowed upon the company cargo-partner, d.o.o., Ljubljana.

The company provides logistics services for shipping, air and road transport,

contract logistics services, integrated logistics services and customs services by using the most advanced information technology.

Viktor Kastelic, Director General: *“Any award we receive is wel-*



Gorazd Mihelič, MSc, Director SPIRIT Slovenia

come and we are proud of it. We believe that we are doing our job well and we will strive to continue being the best logistics company in the country.”

The awards have been conferred by SPIRIT Slovenia since 2006. They complement the wider Slovenian strategy of attracting foreign direct investments – which is one of the priorities of

the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and of the government as a whole. Last year’s winners of the Invest Slovenia FDI Award: Titus, Dekani, as the region’s best employer, Isokon, Slovenske Konjice, for long-term presence in the region, LPKF for its research and development orientation and excellent business results, and Kuehne + Nagel for its logistics centre.



Chatting with Sara Isakovič, Olympic medalist. She was also a speaker at the conference.

3S DESIGN - STUDIO OF INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Don't change your habits, change your furniture!

TANJA GLOGOVČAN
PHOTO: 3S DESIGN ARCHIVES



Awarded 3S • Magnet

At the 29th Ambient and Home Plus fair held in Ljubljana last November, the design award for *Top of the Top* went to 3S Design. The winning product was the 3S • Magnet Oblique created by designers Lana Strle, Kaja Strle and Maca Strle from the family-owned company 3S Design.

The company deals with architecture, outdoor and interior design, product design, and manufactures designer furniture. It is run by a mother and two daughters working in synergy with their father's mechanical workshop and manufacturing plant. The combination of craft knowledge, architectural understanding of the process of living, and creativity helped them to come up with the perfect recipe for designing and manufacturing functional, high-quality designer furniture. Furthermore, all their products are made in Slovenia – from their ideas and design to actual production. A great deal of attention is also paid to environmental protection. Their manufacturing process is environmentally-friendly, and the products are made from recyclable materials.

3S • MAGNET

3S • magnet is a universal system of wall coverings and various magnetic accessories. It can be used in all types of spaces and a user can choose its function according to their needs.

The system was primarily developed for kitchen purposes.

3S • magnet wall coverings are ideal for kitchens, since they can be used creatively, and are practical and simple for cleaning.

They can be mounted as an independent kitchen backsplash or you can order a smaller plate and fix it onto your existing kitchen wall covering. The system of magnetic accessories is a flexible storage solution for the kitchen items that need to be always at hand (spices, knives, towels, cloths, etc.).

The system also works wonderfully in living rooms, anterooms, children's rooms or offices. A base plate can be a decorative panel you can use to change a room's appearance. In offices and children's rooms a base plate can be used as a chalkboard or even a coat-hanging wall.

You can change the position of separate elements from one place on the base plate to the other, without using any kind of tools. The utensils are neatly stored in such a way that they look like decorations, which according to the creators is the purpose of this approach. Their comprehensive catalogue provides combinations of accessories from which the users can choose the one tailored to their needs.

The load capacity of individual elements varies and goes up to five kilograms. Steel elements are powder coated with a special, durable paint. Serial production uses three basic colours: white, black and graphite. Steel elements are complemented with wooden accessories made of oak timber and oiled by hand.

A RANGE OF PRODUCTS FOR MODERN HOMES

3S Design is a company where young and older generations work in harmony, combining their experiences and the fresh ideas of two young women. Their products are innovative and functional – every piece is a solution for problems associated with the modern home. The inspiration for their products comes from designing interiors and responding to their clients' real-life needs.

They pay special attention to detail and final production, to make sure their prod-

ucts are top quality. They use natural and durable materials, treated so that they are pleasant to touch as well as simple and easy to maintain.

In 2011, they launched their first product. It was a clothing stand called Plutoo, whose elegant form follows its function. Its design is practical, and the clothes on it stay wrinkle-free until the next use.

Their Steelline metal furniture has also captured great attention on the market. It comprises various types of shelves, racks, hangers and holders that are easy to mount, but the fixing system is hidden, so the products give the impression that they float.

For all modern foodies and lovers of outdoor living they created the modular Garden Gourmet kitchen.

They continuously improve their lines and complement them with new products.



Lana Strle (left), Maca Strle (centre) and Kaja Strle (right).



Awarded 3S Design - 3S • Magnet Oblique at International fair Ambient, Ljubljana

THE POWER OF PLANICA'S BEAUTY

50 years of the Gorišek brothers' ski flying hill

MATEVŽ PERŠIN

Since the first international ski jumping competition in Planica in 1934, we have seen countless unforgettable sports stories. However, a whole new story began with the construction of the Gorišek brothers' ski flying hill, which marked a turning point in the development of one of the most popular winter sports – ski flying.

A long and innovative tradition of ski jumping in Planica called for the development of new infrastructure, and at the beginning of the 1960s a decision was made to build a ski flying hill. At that time, the largest ski flying hills were the Vikersund ski flying hill in Norway, the Oberstdorf ski flying hill in Germany and the Kulm sky flying hill in Austria. The Planica Organising Committee entrusted brothers Janez and Lado Gorišek, both of them engineers and former ski jumpers, with the task of drawing up plans for the construction of the ski flying hill. Their project has left a lasting mark on ski jumping.

THE OPENING IN 1969

The construction of the ski flying hill, at that time named Velikanka (*the Giant Hill*), began in 1967 and was completed in November of the following year. Practically all of Slovenia collected funds for the construction. The Organising Committee staged a big lottery, to collect funds for the construction. To that end, a series of concerts entitled *Za našo Planico (For Our Planica)* was also organised, at which the legendary and world-famous Avsenik Brothers Ensemble performed.

The ski flying hill made its debut between 21 and 23 March 1969 with a competition in which top athletes in this sport took part, representing fifteen countries. The competition proved to be very successful and, most of all, attractive.

The nearly 90,000 visitors who gathered on that occasion in the valley beneath the Ponce mountains would have confirmed this. The athletes showed off their skills, which they had obtained as a result of new and advanced ski jumping techniques. The International Ski Federation (FIS) finally realised that the future lied in ski flying, thus bringing to an end the lengthy process that led to ski flying's recognition as an independent sport discipline.

WORLD CHAMPIONS INSTEAD OF WORLD RECORD HOLDERS

In 1971 in Opatija in Croatia, the FIS Congress decided to introduce ski flying world championships and selected Planica as the

venue for the first ski flying world championship, which was to be held there the following year. Experts and officials agreed that there was enough experience to develop this discipline with an emphasis on safety, which had often been an issue in ski flying. Many were concerned about the dimensions of the ski flying hills and, in particular, the speed of the descending ski jumpers.

So when ski flying was confirmed as a discipline, limitations were introduced to reduce the possibilities for setting records. Records still have not been officially recognised by FIS, and the reason for this is the excessive impact of weather conditions and the differences between individual jumping hills or flying hills. To limit the setting of records, FIS defined the height difference between the take-off and the lowest point in the outrun. This difference, which has to be taken into account in all ski flying hills, is today 135 m.

DANGEROUS SKI FLIGHT AND ATTEMPTS AT GREATER SAFETY

In 1977, Slovenian Bogdan Norčič performed an extremely dangerous ski flight in Planica. He flew very high over the ski flying since the weather conditions were favourable and the fact that ski jumping equipment – suits, skies, shoes and bindings – was already well developed at that time. Everyone feared that the flight would end very badly. Bogdan Norčič began to 'brake' in the air and somehow managed to land at 181 metres, touching the snow with his hands during landing.

The landing angle was too big, and there was too much pressure at the landing point. The ski flying hill was simply too steep. Swiss ski jumper Walter Steiner found a solution, suggesting that the angle of the landing slope be reduced. The Gorišek brothers then used their engineering knowledge and put this idea into practice; other ski jumping and ski flying hills followed suit. This has now become the standard in all constructions and renovations.

JUMPING IN DISTANCE, NOT INTO DEPTH

To date, the ski flying hill has been renovated eight times; all renovations were under the supervision of Janez Gorišek and at the latest Sebastjan Gorišek, his son.

From the very beginning, Gorišek senior and his brother had in mind a ski flying hill whose size could be increased.

More than fifty years ago, they were already thinking about how to jump over 200 metres. The expertise of the engineers was reflected in the fact that, for longer flights, one did not increase the size of the ski flying hill by digging into the ground at the bottom of the structure to deepen it, but rather by increasing its height.

Or, as Janez Gradišek said: *"Everyone thinks that we dig in Planica, but we have always just added snow on the slope. Ski jumping is about length, not depth. If the landing slope is inclined at a smaller angle, it allows for longer and safer flights; since the 1990s, this has gone hand in hand with ski jumping techniques, which has resulted in reduced speeds for jumpers. The mentioned height difference is a limitation, but only if one also fails to think in 'horizontal' terms."*

INSPIRATION FOR THE FUTURE

In 2020 Planica will host the FIS Ski Flying World Championship, and in 2023 the FIS Nordic World Ski Championship.

These competitions will stand on the shoulders of the rich sporting tradition in the valley beneath the Ponce mountains. They will also stand on the shoulders of those individuals whose work and moving boundaries have helped put Planica on the world map and changed the world of sport.

The Gorišek brothers' ski flying hill is Planica's icon. All who have had the opportunity to see it with their own eyes say it's a beauty, a beauty that has been moving the boundaries and taking our breath away for over 50 years. It provides inspiration for what lies ahead.



One of the Slovenian champions.

BEST TRADITIONAL CUISINE CHEF IS META REPOVŽ

A mother's - and not grandmother's - interpretation of Slovenian cuisine

TANJA GLOGOVČAN



Sataraš (*Satarash*) with cottage cheese and eggs
Photo: Dean Duboković

Slovenia will be a European Region of Gastronomy for 2021. No doubt Slovenia is a land of rich culinary tradition, even more so thanks to all the gastronomic artists who combine tradition with innovation.

The end of November last year saw the presentation of the Gault & Millau restaurant guide in Ljubljana, a book that rates restaurants on a system of points. Meta Repovž from the Repovž family restaurant was selected as the Traditional Cuisine Chef of 2018.

She is a mother who has been strengthening Slovenia's culinary image with her innovative interpretations of recipes from the country's cuisine, and whose culinary endeavours are supported by the whole family.

Because of this mutual support, the food from their mother's kitchen is seasoned with love.

META REPOVŽ'S CUISINE FOR KIND SOULS AND CURIOUS STOMACHS

At the entrance, you will be greeted by the inscription: *For kind souls and curious stomachs*. This is Repovž's slogan and it fully embraces their culinary philosophy. The local inn with its solid rustic walls does not only reveal youthful ambitions, but also a contemporary outlook backed with three hundred years of experience and tradition, making Repovž a textbook example of the vast culinary potential of the Slovenian countryside.

One of the most interesting restaurants in Slovenia offers food that is organic, grown on its owners' lands or on neighbouring farms (pigs from Krško polje, rabbits, lambs, spelt, apples, elderflower, the local Isabella grape variety, and more). On rare occa-

sions, and only when there is a great need, does the family look elsewhere for ingredients that are not locally grown, such as chocolate, vanilla and the like, but they always combine these with local ingredients.

The menus do not carry standard names. Although traditional in substance, they are nevertheless written so as to put a smile on your face, first with their name and then with their structure, and then they will fascinate you with their flavours.

For example, *Having a splendid time on the farm* is a dish that includes beef soup with noodles and succulent pieces of choice meat. For dessert, there is hasty pudding with a variety of flavours. The *City Slicker's* menu features lamb and cottage cheese dumplings with rhubarb. *Vegetarian Zmina* is a dish including green beans green beans, sour cream, courgettes, and porcini mushrooms. These are the autumn/winter menus, but of course the Repovž family also offer some dishes from the restaurant's permanent menu. So you can taste local dried meat products and various cheeses, and also spread homemade rabbit pate, steak tartare or marmalade made from the local Modra Frankinja grape variety on your bread. The soups include beef soup and seasonal vegetable soup. Among the warm appetizers are spelt risotto, beans with cracklings and sour cream, or ravioli with goat whey cheese, aged cheese and swiss chard. For the main dish you can choose pork, lamb or beef, as well as fish. Every dish will be served with original side dishes, such as porcini mushrooms or cottage cheese balls. And although you will be stuffed, you will definitely



Meta Repovž
Photo: Nika Kink, Gregor Vavtar

still want to taste the elderflower mousse, red currant jelly, iced tea granita, and tarragon ice cream. No doubt the inspiration plus the tradition and playfulness of flavours make these culinary delights irresistible, thanks to the golden hands of Meta Repovž. Before leaving, guests can enjoy a sip or two of spirits such as homemade honey brandy, fruit brandy, and blueberry or apple liqueur for better digestion, as is the long-standing tradition in Slovenia.

“My cooking philosophy is very simple and is intertwined with tradition and my memories from childhood, and then closely connected with products from our farm and the neighbouring ones,” says Meta Repovž.

In her opinion, their place is one of those typical Slovenian inns that are full of warmth and memories, with a strongly rooted tradition and a constant search for new flavours. The interpretation of tradition is precisely the goal they follow in successfully bringing Slovenian cuisine to the world. *“When you put your heart and your love for Slovenian soil in your work, you cannot fail,”* she says. According to Meta Repovž, the most important thing is the satisfaction of her guests.

THE WEALTH OF SLOVENIAN NATURE AND CULTURE

“We strive to grow as many ingredients as possible on our land, in our home garden. When this is not possible, we buy ingredients that are organic and grown on the neighbouring farms. That is also why our menus change with the seasons, while also reflecting different living environments, habits and contents,” says the best traditional chef about her work methods, which create a rainbow of Slovenian flavours.

The taste is certainly different when homemade noodles are served with beef soup or when homemade bread or salami, buckwheat kasha with cracklings, or some other well-crafted dish beckons guests to the table with their irresistible aromas.

“We are also demanding in our choice of other suppliers, either of wine or art products,” explains Meta Repovž, pointing to the table that has been laid for the guests.

They have long been serving their dishes on handmade plates produced by Hana Karim. *“We are not only looking for quality, but also for the positive characteristics, personal energy and the character of farmers, craftsmen or winemakers. We must first be pleased*

with the choice ourselves, and because we really want our guests to be satisfied, our choice is always the right one,” says Meta Repovž.

Repovž serves not only the wines typical of the Dolenjska region, but also those produced in other Slovenian regions by the best domestic winemakers. The list thus includes wines and sparkling wines produced by well-known Slovenian winemakers such as Istenič, Movia, Simčič, and others. Some Italian, French and Croatian wines are also on offer. *“This is to make our guest realise that Slovenian wines are also ranked among top-quality wines,”* explains Meta Repovž.



Anže Repovž, Urša Oven, Sabina Repovž,
Meta Repovž, Sonja Tori, Anka Tominc,
Grego Repovž.
Photo: Nika Kink, Gregor Vavtar

CULTURAL FUND

An ambassador of particular importance

UROŠ MAHKOVEC



Since 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture, following the rules on co-funding cultural projects with the collaboration of diplomatic missions and consulates of the Republic of Slovenia, have been jointly deciding on the co-financing of cultural projects, which are then implemented under the organisation of various diplomatic missions around the world.

The cultural fund is an instrument that facilitates the implementation of numerous quality cultural projects with the assistance of diplomatic and consular missions. The main co-financing guideline is to encourage more sustainable forms of cooperation between authors/producers.

In strengthening the international cooperation and visibility of Slovenian art and culture abroad, the two ministries cooperate with the Slovenian Film Centre, the Government Communication Office, the Slovenian Book Agency, the Centre for Slovenian as a Second and Foreign Language, the Museum of Architecture and Design, RTV Slovenia, the Ljudmila Society and many other stakeholders.

In this manner, they aim to cover all the relevant segments of Slovenian cultural production. In the past year, over 160 cultural projects from various artistic fields were co-financed by the cultural fund.

Days of Slovenian Film in Belgrade, Serbia
Photo: Ivan Zupanc

VARIOUS PROJECTS

Special attention has also been paid to the presentation of domestic film production abroad. The *Days of Slovenian Film* project was organised by the Ministry of Culture, together with the Slovenian Film Centre and various Slovenian embassies. Selected films were also featured at film festivals in several countries around the world: from Latin America and Europe to Asia, the Caribbean and the United States.

The photographic exhibition *I Feel Slovenia. I Feel Culture*, featuring a selection of 38 photographs by well-known Slovenian photographers. It was set up by the Government Communica-

tion Office and the Ministry of Culture. The exhibition presents Slovenia's cultural diversity, its culture in the broadest sense of the word, as the foundation of national identity. This exhibition has also marked the joint activities of the Government Communication Office and other ministries on the occasion of the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

As part of the nation's cultural identity, the 145th anniversary of the birth and the 60th anniversary of the death of the architect Jožef Plečnik was also celebrated. The exhibition *Plečnik's Ljubljana* was dedicated to the international presentation of the ar-

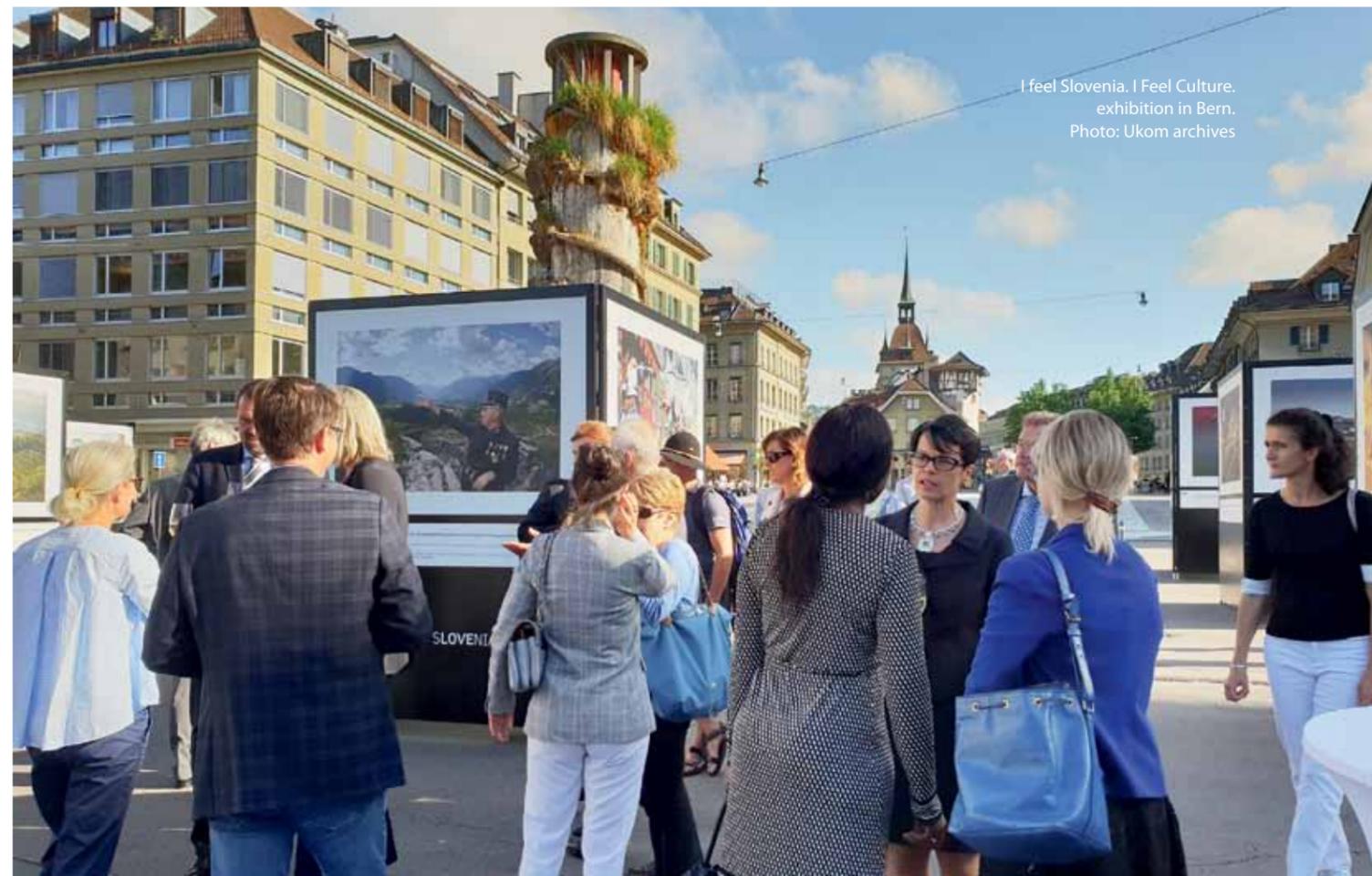
chitect's artistic production and to the support of his works being nominated for inclusion on the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List. The exhibition was set up for the network of Slovenian diplomatic and consular missions by the Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO) and MGML (The Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana).

For the purpose of increasing the visibility of Slovenian art and culture abroad, the Ministry of Culture, together with diplomatic and consular missions, provides for regular publication of information on international cultural cooperation on websites, social

networks (Facebook and Twitter) and the web portal www.culture.si. On this the editorial board has set up a section called *Embassies*, containing information on all the cultural projects that have been supported or co-financed by diplomatic and consular missions from the cultural fund. The interactive map of the world, <http://worldmap.culture.si>, featuring a comprehensive overview of the activities and involvement of Slovenian culture and art in the co-creation of the global cultural landscape, offers the possibility of accessing all the events that have taken place in this context since 2010.



Slovenian pianist Dubravka Tomšič Srebotnjak,
Concert in Buenos Aires (Teatro Colón).
Photo: Marko Vombergar



I feel Slovenia. I Feel Culture.
exhibition in Bern.
Photo: Ukom archives



ATHLETES OF THE YEAR 2018

The world relies on young people

POLONA PREŠEREN
PHOTO: ANŽE MALOVRH/STA

The Slovenian Association of Sports Journalists has organised this award ceremony for the 28th consecutive time since Slovenia became independent.

... are the words that sum up in a nutshell Slovenian sports in 2018, which was also demonstrated at the award ceremony ***Athletes of the Year 2018***, traditionally organised by the Slovenian Association of Sports Journalists..

It is an event celebrating those who create the fairytale of Slovenian sports a - the athletes themselves. This article does not discuss the reasons for the athlete's exceptional results but would like to draw your attention to the fact that Slovenians are most probably one of the smallest nations to have qualified for major sporting competitions and achieved excellent results in nearly all team events – football, hockey, basketball, volleyball and handball. Although there are, for example, only around 150 professional hockey players in Slovenia, they excelled at their second Olympic games. Even the year before, in 2017, our national basketball team won the EuroBasket championships and volleyball players came in second place in Europe, to mention but a few. Slovenians' true identity, however, comes to the forefront in individual sports, where we are at our very best.

THE STARS OF SLOVENIAN SPORTS

Last year was the year of young athletes. The members of the Slovenian Association of Sports Journalists cast their votes to select the best names in Slovenian sports.

The 2018 award for the Best Sportsman went to Luka Dončić, a young basketball player for the Dallas Mavericks; Best Sportswoman to Janja Garnbret, a sport climber; and Best Team to Tina Mrak and Veronika Macarol, the 470 sailing team. Cyclist Tadej Pogačar won the award for the Most Outstanding Young Personality of the Year.

Among the nominated sportsmen, Dončić, winning a comfortable victory, was followed by cyclist Primož Roglič and biathlon competitor Jakov Fak. For Dončić this is not a first, as in 2017 he was voted the Most Outstanding Young Personality and the third Best Sportsman in Slovenia. In 2018 Dončić continued to excel at basketball games around the world. With Real Madrid he won the EuroLeague title and was named the finals' MVP, after which he moved to Dallas and the world's strongest league, the NBA, as its third pick in the 2018 draft. He went on to become the Western Conference Rookie of the Month at the start of the NBA season. Many experts on the other side of the Atlantic doubted that he had what it takes to succeed in the NBA but he has proven them wrong. What is more, he is not yet 20 years old.

The Best Sportswoman of 2018, Janja Garnbret, is a climber. Judoist Tina Trstenjak and 18-year-old tennis player Kaja Juvan followed suit as second and third. Aged only 19, Garnbret is the first and only climber in the world to hold the world title in three different disciplines. She is also the winner of a new event, the Olympic combination. In 2018 she surpassed all her previous achievements. For the third consecutive time she holds the overall World Cup climbing victory in the women's lead discipline and combined. As she put her studies first in her final year of secondary school, she had to limit her participation in bouldering competitions this season, which has placed her fourth in the overall World Cup in bouldering.

The winners of the team award, Tina Mrak and Veronika Macarol, attained practically all their objectives when they secured the world cup title in Miami in January and the European title. Despite Macarol's injury, after which she quickly recovered, the sailing team's performance at the world championship race earned them a ticket to Tokyo 2020.

Young outstanding cyclist Tadej Pogačar was the crucial member in the Slovenian national team of young riders in the Nations' Cup, as well as the winner of the most prestigious stage race, the Tour de l'Avenir, in this category. Pogačar also won the Peace Race.

AN EVENT WITH A LONG TRADITION

The Slovenian Association of Sports Journalists has organised this award ceremony for the 28th consecutive time since Slovenia became independent, or for the 51st time since the introduction of the awards. At the very first event in 1968, gymnast Miroslav Cerar and sprinter Marijana Lubej won the titles of best athletes.



Best Sportsman 2018 awards winners: Mirjam Poterbin, mother of Luka Dončić, Janja Garnbret and Tina Mrak and Veronika Macarol.



Luka Dončić

