

# Sinfo

November-December

The Best from Slovenia

**IN FOCUS**  
Creative capital united

**I FEEL  
SLOVENIA**



**I FEEL  
SLOVENIA**

# Sinfo

**SLOVENIAN INFORMATION**  
November-December 2019

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**Editor-in-Chief**  
Mateja Malnar Štembal

**Executive Editor**  
Tanja Glogovčan

**Editorial Board**  
Polona Prešeren, Vesna Žarkovič, Danila Golob,  
Irena Kogoj, Tea Knaflič, Uroš Mahkovec

**Design**  
Irena Kogoj

**Photo Editor**  
Foto format d.o.o.

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**Translation**  
Secretariat-General of the Government of  
the Republic of Slovenia, Translation and  
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**Language editing**  
Amidas

**Copy writer editing**  
Paul Steed

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Photo: Bruno Toič

## BECOME SOMEONE YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN

There is room for personal expression in everyone's life. We all have creative potential, and the moment we start to express it the world begins to change. A bounce, a jump, an instant all-embracing view from above followed by a plunge into a moment of creativity. Just like a bounce on a trampoline. The creativity that lies within each and every one of us makes the world better and better.

Creativity and talent. Uncertainty and existence. A lack of interest and a sparkle in the eyes. Creativity does not stop with one idea, it is an ongoing process. An idea might emerge at any time. Inspiration can be found anywhere, when eyes are kept wide open and curious. Be the person you never had the courage to be before.

Reflection on creativity should also give thought to creative people and thus hold them up as an example and give them recognition. For ten, thirty, fifty or a hundred years of creativity, innovation and success stories.

No two days are ever the same, and each day brings a miracle of its own. Your star may be born today.

May you have a happy and joyful Christmas and a prosperous New Year ahead!

*Tanja Glogovčan*

Tanja Glogovčan, Executive Editor

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*"New dreams, new hopes, new experiences and new joys:  
wishing you a very Merry Christmas and New Year 2020."*

## DO YOU DARE BE CREATIVE?

# How would Martin Krpan correspond today on the internet with the Emperor in Vienna?

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ  
PHOTO: TINA DEU



Dr Eva Boštjančič

Dr Eva Boštjančič, Chair of the Psychology of Work and Organisation at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, talked to us about creativity, how to nurture it and how to live it.

**Your research focuses on the area of emotional intelligence in the business world, the unconscious motives and behaviours of managers and their effects on employees, on studying the role of female employees and researching the sense of belonging among students at the Faculty. All of this is strongly influenced by creativity. Where and when does this begin?**

By nature people are creative beings, but the modern way of life and family life do not always have a good effect on creativity, which is the sole driver of progress. It is only when we think outside the box that we will be different from others and development can take a new direction that is different from that the majority follows. We therefore need to seek new ideas and possibilities for new connections.

**The key to success lies in finding what is essential in a mass of information, synthesising and transforming it into something useful, which then makes it easier to take the right decisions.**

Unfortunately the education system here forces us towards uniformity, and school tests are designed to require precisely such and such a response. The education system – from kindergarten through primary and secondary school to university – insufficiently encourages creative and critical thinking, and this is the vital thing that cripples success.

**But some do succeed in developing holistically as people, and in seeking their greatest potential.**

Yes, that is true. You need to identify what a person is really good at, and then you can start thinking differently. In our thinking there is a predominant trend where you need to go to university at any price,

but I'm not convinced that this is right for everyone. Many people are creative in their own way, they can choose another path that is not so socially expected and recognised, one where there are still many obstacles, but if you are able to put your idea into practice, there is a high chance of success.

**In your work you are involved a lot in studying stress, burnout and positive psychology in organisations. What conclusion have you made?**

That it's hard to be creative in the workplace if you have too many tasks and deadlines. Creativity develops in environments where employees are given the best chances of connecting with colleagues, where they are able to refresh their professional skills and have enough time to research. In this way it's easier to build on new ideas. For creativity you need time, since ideas need to be born. You can't do any of this to a set plan, at a precise time.

**Creativity is a process. Ideas are born in entirely unexpected ways, and a good working environment fosters the kind of space where this happens.**

It is also important not to criticise every idea, but to properly evaluate and build on them. It seems to me that in every job being done today in Slovenia you can follow your routine or you can show creativity. This is usually generated in a creative process that happens to you, and if there is no such process then there are no new ideas. We don't need hairdresser number 120 and baker number 200, we need someone who will do things differently, better, in an interesting way that is attractive to consumers. Education should be what prepares individuals for opportunities – so they can at least identify them – and then they can be able to turn these into business ideas.

**Recently there has been a lot of talk about promoting creativity in primary schools and doing away with excessive amounts of information.**

Yes, even in primary schools teachers sadly prefer to find mistakes and more rarely reward achievements or promote innovation. If, for instance, a child paints Ljubljana Castle red he doesn't get a good mark, because the castle itself isn't red. But come on, why do we all need to paint things the same way and according to some prescribed rules? The essence of creativity lies in not everyone having to draw an apple the same way. Society in general does not sufficiently value creative ideas or difference, and those who are different are often criticised.

**Creativity is apparent in all areas, even in food preparation, in the way someone combines ingredients – this can be in a very unusual but still delicious way.**

Educating a person doesn't just mean giving them as much information as possible, but also teaching them how to connect all the information together creatively. For instance, how could you apply knowledge of mathematics in the Amazon rainforest, how could you use new knowledge to advance astronomy, or introduce knowledge in chemistry into the search for a better skin cream? The education system should be able to grasp that a creative approach to learning represents great added value, and also answer the question of why it is important to know history – so that we don't repeat the same mistakes people made before us, or that we can be warned that global conflicts can lead to terrible consequences.

**How would you describe a work environment that's conducive to creativity?**

In that kind of environment the employees are committed and motivated to work. For the most part they plan their workday themselves, and know how to and are capable of spicing up their day so they feel good.

**Creativity in the workplace depends to a large extent on the organisational climate, which takes a few years to form, and it is**

**indeed hard to turn a sleeping dinosaur into an agile gazelle.**

And this very transformation from a traditional environment into an agile organisation requires a lot of work on the part of management. They have to change their way of thinking, promote new ideas and seek new business opportunities. The remnants of socialism still hobble us too much in Slovenia, and we don't allow young people to breathe fully. In this area there is still a lot of scope for development! Moreover, the old Austro-Hungarian values of being diligent, hard-working, obedient and agreeable at any price are also not very conducive to creativity.

**What can parents do about this when bringing up their children?**

Uncreative parents have a difficult time raising creative children. First you have to have an awareness of what a creative approach actually offers you, and where its added value lies. As a parent you can show most easily by example how you can be creative, how, for instance, you can make lunch a different way, how you can make the route from home to school more exciting and richer in numerous interesting ways. When I walk my dogs on Rožnik I take a completely different path every day, I don't always follow the same route. Creativity is right around the corner for everyone, you just need to be able to see it and experience it. Just link together existing things in a new way. With children this means that when you give them traditional toys, try to play with them in a different way. The tale of Martin Krpan, for example, can be set in a creative way for children in the modern world of today.

**What would Martin Krpan do for instance, if he had a mobile phone and a computer, and he could communicate with the Emperor in Vienna online or by Skype?**

This kind of different and fresh approach can be interwoven everywhere into our everyday activities. It is also important not to criticise, since that kills creativity. Rather, we should evaluate the idea properly, provide feedback, and find what is interesting and different in it. In this way we provide the most encouragement for the creation of new ideas.

**Are young people today mostly in favour of new ideas?**

As an educator I have found that their creativity is repressed. I am constantly seeking ways to encourage them to express themselves in a different way. To this end at the faculty we have a website [www.psihologijadela.com](http://www.psihologijadela.com), where students can express their opinions in a scientific way. Nowadays we rarely ask young people what they think about certain problems, how do they view this and that issue... we don't encourage them enough to share their opinions, to be able to clearly express their views and to have an attitude towards things. As part of my educational work I encourage them when they are making short professional film clips about the psychology of work to express, for example, their artistic talent. During their studies, sadly, there are not many opportunities for developing creativity (with the exception of the arts academies, of course). I also miss their self-initiative. If the professors and students had more connection, together they could do things differently, more creatively and strikingly. As they say: together we are stronger.

**Today the psychologists you are educating are much sought-after in the workplace. How do you explain this increased demand for such professionals?**

As a society we are increasingly aware that it is very important for people to feel good, both personally and in their work. Psychology offers a kind of added value to life. Our field of study knows how individuals think, how they develop, what needs adjusting in the work environment in order to avoid crisis situations, and for a person in it to feel and work well. Moreover, a lot of people today live alone, which sometimes leads to loneliness. At those times it is invaluable to have someone who listens to you and understands, who helps you to feel better. Today there is also a great lack of a sense of belonging to some environment, which is especially needed for healthy development. And here too, psychologists can be of help.

**What advice would you give someone who is fed up with everything, and struggles to go to work every day?**

I would tell them to find some additional activity in their spare time, where they can be independent and find relaxation. This encourages greater motivation, and also that we monitor work from start to finish, so the individual is not just a piece in the mosaic, and sees the big picture. The worker who makes the headlight needs to know that this is part of a final product, and that without the headlight the car would not be complete.

**It is also important that your surroundings provide feedback on how you did something. All this brings variety to the work environment and a greater degree of responsibility.**

If a person is not happy in their job, they should at least find some small things to enhance their private life. The individual is also constantly drawn to balance, but it is important to realise that we must create this ourselves, as society will not provide it. So I would also say to someone who is fed up, don't be afraid of change, even if you don't know what will follow. When we make a change we separate ourselves from what is known, from where we function in one way or another. This kind of step forward requires courage to leave the things that do not serve us well and to make some new decisions. You need to be bold, you need to have a certain energy and be prepared for temporary failure.

**Which is extremely important in entrepreneurship, yes?**

Being an entrepreneur does not necessarily mean you were born under a lucky star and with the right genetic material, but that you have the right personality characteristics. You know how to fight, you're prepared to wait for success, and, on the other hand, you recognise the needs of the market, you know how to sell your service or product, you're persevering, flexible and, of course, creative.

Eva Boštjančič is an associate professor of the psychology of work and organisation at the Psychology Department of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. Her research work is involved in the area of talent, cultural intelligence and management in an organisational environment, returning to work after burnout or after a long illness and so forth. She also advises, conducts workshops, gives talks to employees in the private and public sectors and manages the website [www.psihologijadela.com](http://www.psihologijadela.com).

## COMPLEXITY

## The rough and smooth edges of creativity

IVANA LJUBANOVIĆ

PHOTO: MONTH OF DESIGN ARCHIVES



Month of Design

The Month of Design festival, with Complexity as this year's main theme, as described in the foreword, took place in Ljubljana from 8th October to 8th November. Under the auspices of Zavod Big, the Month of Design festival staged 60 events and hosted 300 lecturers.

The festival was dedicated to South-East Europe, which Zavod Big (BigSEE's affiliate centre) for creative economy of the South-East Europe—sees as a cradle of creativity, timeless and boundless.

**In light of recent sports events, reports on the differences between the nations of the south-eastern circle have spread in the media. BigSEE, however, shines a spotlight on culture and creativity as the primary link between them. It seeks to bring together similar but barely compatible nations by emphasising creativity as an economic start-up tool.**

As part of the Month of Design festival, the BigSEE exhibition exhibited projects relating to architecture, interior design, product and fashion design, innovative wood technology and creative tourism from 19 countries of the Adriatic-Ionian, the Balkan-Mediterranean and the Danube regions. The exhibition was set in the central area of the Month of Design festival at the former Mladinska knjiga printing house at Dunajska cesta 123 in Ljubljana, which was conceived in 1963–1966 by the famous architect Savin Sever. Zavod Big repurposed the building, transforming it into a centre of cultural events under the name of City of Design. The renovation of the abandoned building—the former printing house—represents an effort to preserve architectural heritage, as well as an effort to move cultural events beyond the confines of the city centre and enrich the cultural and social vibe of Ljubljana. The renovation was carried out with minimum financial resources, initially only using cardboard cubes as dividing elements to create

a respectful distance from the architectural shell surrounding it, so to speak.

#### A MERRY-GO-ROUND OF CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS

The Month of Design festival hosted an exhibition of the *Mixer* team from Belgrade entitled *Young Balkan Designers: Circular Design* with the aim to identify and develop the creative potential of the Balkan region in the field of product design. The exhibition showcased the results of the Circular Design competition that challenged young designers to create products and concepts that can bring a much-needed paradigm shift in design, production and consumption, by implementing principles of circular economy and employing local knowledge, skills and resources.

The underlying theme was further mirrored throughout another interesting exhibition entitled *Is Coral Really a Colour?* that visitors could view during the Month of Design. The exhibition was named after the famous Polish tongue-twister coral-red corals (in the Polish original: *korale koloru koralowego*).

**Curator Agnieszka Jacobson-Cielecka examines the question of whether it is possible to determine a country's or a region's colour palette.**

The exhibition undertakes to establish the colour of the Polish identity as well as the identity of its neighbouring countries and to analyse the colours of some similar items such as vases and fabric designs.



Sustainable constructions.

The visiting exhibition of the Wood Industry Cluster Triple Wood – Sustainable Building Culture in the Alpine Region was also on display. The exhibition promotes the culture of sustainable timber constructions in the Alpine macro-region.

The festival was kicked off by Design Conference that was followed by a Big Architecture Conference, Wood Icon Conference and Creative Tourism Conference. The programme was accompanied by presentations, educational events and events promoting fashion, cuisine and multimedia. The festival also featured exhibitions at other venues in the city. It held open days for architectural and design studios and various workshops. A string of awards were presented for design, including interior design, tourism and wood design. This year's BigSEE Visionary awards were won by Alan Hranitelj, Maja and Ivan Lalić and Salih Teskeredžić.

Alan Hranitelj is an internationally renowned costume designer and artist whose life is just as interesting as his creations.

**His world of imagination has inspired many Slovenian and international creators, among them also the well-known Cirque du Soleil, which resulted in their long-standing cooperation.**

His creations appear in theatres, operas and films. We are all truly fascinated by his creative accomplishments showcased at independent exhibitions and this year we had the opportunity to visit one held at Ljubljana Castle.



There was a lot of chances to exchange the best practices experiences.

Maja Lalić and Ivan Lalić are the founder and creative director of a multidisciplinary creative platform called Mixer. Their work, as well as the work of the entire Mixer team, navigates through the obstacles of financial self-restraint, political controversy and forced relocation of premises. Even though they had no understanding or support from the city or state authorities, the team still managed to retain their indestructible energy and proletarian enthusiasm that have significantly marked urban space, the spheres of art and society and the notion of understanding future trends by means of a dialogue extending far beyond the borders of a statehood, nationality or politics.

Salih Teskeredžić is a designer, a professor at the Sarajevo Academy of Fine Arts and the founder of the Vienna design studio. His attitude to design, his respect for tradition and his knowledge of new production technologies is well illustrated in his masterly work, commitment to detail, execution itself and the finalisation

of the product. With his work and dedication, Salih Teskeredžić has undoubtedly put Bosnia and Herzegovina on a map of big design achievements.

Zavod Big also had a reason to celebrate this year.

**This year marks 25 years since the establishment of the Lesarski utrip magazine and 20 years of Hiše, a magazine dedicated to architecture, designing, culture of living highlighting the modern concepts of living.**

Last year, the creative director of Zavod Big, Zmago Novak received the Honorary Member Award of the Chamber of Archi-



Experience exceptional Slovene architecture!

ecture and Spatial Planning of Slovenia for his contribution to the development and promotion of the profession. Zavod Big is supported by the entire staff which is responsible for publications and the organisation of cultural events.

**FROM THE CITY TO THE MONTH OF DESIGN**

Years ago it might have excited some surprise when Zavod Big, with insufficient funds, made its home in the abandoned printing house at 123 Dunajska Street in Ljubljana, and named it the City of Design, and when it named its festival the Month of Design even when they did not even have a program to last the entire month. Today we can ask ourselves whether the titles of City or Month are too small or too short for the team of Zavod Big since their vision goes beyond these borders and is particularly important in a world in which borders are becoming increasingly widespread and in which countries are closing their doors.

*“In South-East Europe, life is good. It is sometimes really hard, too. There are more nations and languages and religions than in any similarly-sized region. People here don't have much in common. Everything happened too fast. These complexities are as frustrating now as they were life threatening throughout history. With countless rulers and artists and philosophers all being born across this region, being creative often meant just managing to stay alive.”*

(Abstract from the text of the Month of Design 2019 catalogue).



The award giving ceremony.

# 'NARAVA – DESIGNED IN SLOVENIA'

## Slovenian designers thrill the Danes

LIDIJA VINKOVIČ



Team of the best Slovenian designers.  
Photo: SPIRIT Slovenia archives

Slovenia is a country with an outstanding history of design, being famed from the outset for its impressive achievements, even on a global scale. Numerous names in Slovenian design have received a prestigious Red Dot Award for design, along with other honours.

In May this year, as part of the 3daysofdesign event, the Danish public was given a taste of nine Slovenian designers, who were selected based on a public call from the Slovenian SPIRIT agency. The selection was made by Danish curator Brigitta Nellemann, who brought together the latest achievements of Slovenian design in a coherent whole in the exhibition "NARAVA – designed in Slovenia". The guiding focus for the exhibition was sustainability, with emphasis on Slovenia as a green destination rich in timber.

### REPRESENTATIVE SLOVENIAN DESIGNERS

The following brands were on display: KUBUS, Kobeiagi Kilims, LesnaVesna, LLEESS, Noordung, OLI, Ooh-noo, PIKKA and VULGARIS woodcut. They are all distinguished by outstanding design, high functionality and a sustainable dimension in their design and manufacture. One common point for the designers is drawing inspiration from traditional products that have been in use for decades.

**Their attractiveness is enhanced by the introduction of clear lines and a minimalist appearance, and their usefulness is boosted by innovations and the use of modern, mainly natural materials, for the most part of Slovenian origin.**

Under the brand name Kubus, the company KUBUS - INTERIER d.o.o. has developed a range of designer lamps made of thin sheets of wood that add a pleasant colour to the light. The basic model of the cone with six side sheets was designed back at the beginning of the 1960s, and won several awards. A number

of years ago the company revived and perfected some models of the old collection, gave them a new form, ways of using them and materials and expanded the selection of wood types used.

The brand name Kobeiagi Kilims brings together designers who wish to revive the craft of making wool rugs or kilims. Each item is unique and is the fruit of lengthy manual work. In making kilims they use exclusively local wool, which is prized for its high quality. Using patterns that keep up with the latest design trends, they are opening a new chapter in popularising hand-woven rugs, whose quality and fresh design are an antidote to cheap mass production.

The basic idea pursued by the design studio Lesna Vesna d.o.o. is to preserve tradition in modern guise using today's technology. The studio's design and production process also serves this idea. The basic raw material for this brand is Slovenian wood. In this way they support natural resources, local people and nature. In Copenhagen they presented wooden lamps or *young ladies*, as they are called. Standing or hanging, these ladies provide a pleasant, directed light that gently emanates through the many small holes.

Simplicity and functionality are the main focus of the brand LLEESS, which has been developed by the company Svetlomodro, Jan Petrič s.p. The company's designers swear by authenticity and minimalism. The more luxurious a thing is, the less it brings joy, they say. They draw inspiration from the simplicity of nature and the awareness that many precious moments in life are associated with relaxation. At the exhibition they presented their Poono Barcelona hanger of solid walnut, which awakens in the user a child-like playfulness, since the ball-shaped hanger extensions can be placed in any way you like.

### In many fields Slovenians are at the very peak of innovation in the world.

This is borne out by the innovative electric superbike from the company Noordung d.o.o. The universal designer bike has built-in speakers and even a sensor to measure harmful solid particles in the air, allowing the rider to check for air pollution as they travel. The majority of the components are made in Slovenia, even the carbon used to make the frame and which gives the bike its lightness, making this currently the lightest electric bike in the world.

The company LEVČEK d.o.o. presented to the Danish public for the first time a multi-functional children's tent in the shape of a whale, called OLI. It offers a safe and creative shelter, a little space of happiness, which at the same time enables children to strengthen their motor skills. Oli is made of natural canvas without colouring. It can be converted into a comfortable sleeping bag or blanket. Children can put their toys into the whale's fins, while the internal walls are made of a special material that can be used as a canvas for drawing and writing.

Multifunctional children's tent in a shape of whale, called Oli.  
Photo: Levček d.o.o.



When talented designers make products for their own children, only good things can come of it, something that the people of Wilsonic design d.o.o. are convinced of. Under their brand name Ooh-Noo they are developing lines of wooden toys, bedding, decorative cushions and products for children's rooms. They are distinguished by minimalist design, environment-friendly materials and an attractive appearance. At the exhibition they presented their charming wooden cart, a cute and indispensable accessory for kids wanting to cart around their cuddly toys and other precious items.

Using PIKKA brand products makes life more complete and richer, says the company PIKKA DESIGN d.o.o. They produce items with a minimalist appearance and high functionality, made of traditional materials. They manufacture wonderful functional objects that bring beauty and simple utility to your home. All the items are made of high-quality materials combined in a playful way. Their studio produced the Circulum, a superlatively designed flying saucer or a receptacle for keys, phones and glasses.

Vulgaris woodcut, an artistic collection of cabinets and drawers from designer Nina Koželj, has emerged at the intersection of art and design. Each product is handmade and unique in at least three respects: the selection of the highest quality Slovenian wood, the carpentry design and the artistic woodworking. The Vulgaris XIII chest of drawers is made of cherry wood, and its pattern has been printed in only five copies. The modern and clean lines of the drawers show how pure design and art can be combined into a completely new feeling.

#### SUPPORT FOR SLOVENIAN DESIGNERS FROM THE GOVERNMENTS

The public agency SPIRIT Slovenija facilitated the presentation of Slovenian companies at the 3daysofdesign exhibition in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Slovenian Embassy in Copenhagen. Judging by the responses of the exhibitors and visitors, the aim of the activity – promoting and building the recognition of Slovenian design in Denmark and the wider international marketplace – was more than achieved.



Photo: Personal archives

Creativity is more than just coming up with new ideas. It means living life with eyes open to the world around you. It is a thought-based approach to everything that you do. However, in order to become creative, you first need to lose the fear of being wrong, awaken the creative child within yourself and prove that it is possible to bend the line that most people only believe to be straight.

**Veronika Rožmanc, Levček**



Photo: Personal archives

Creativity cannot only be a means to an end. It is a way of thinking, a state of mind, you could say, that allows the designer to come up with new, different and original solutions. Creativity is the answer when you are faced with a challenge, and it represents your own perspective on the task at hand. It always involves concrete interaction with the environment, a response to the environment with your activity. This is why it is important to have a critical attitude to the things around you that encourage you to do your job better. As a result, there is no creativity in an environment that is devoid of critical thought and where everyone is happy with the status quo. It is therefore extremely important to encourage young people to think of alternative possibilities instead of merely following pre-existing patterns. That way, they will look for new, creative solutions.

**Jan Petrič, LLEESS**



Photo: Personal archives

There do not seem to be any instructions for stimulating creativity. Creativity is a kind of need to build something new from existing, seemingly incompatible knowledge, memories and thoughts. At the same time, it corresponds to space, time and needs. But it is even better if this new thing is a little ahead of its time. It may, however, be misunderstood. Creativity is a way to live – or rather, a way to survive.

In the early stages of the teaching, the seeds of creativity are planted in students by establishing well-thought-out frameworks that still offer enough space for simple problems with multiple solutions. Later on, these frameworks are narrowed and widened until the students themselves remove them. I think we could say that, out of the three key factors that shape us – genes, the environment and our own activity – the last plays the most important part. When we get rid of someone else's frameworks, we create our own, stronger frameworks. And finally, creativity seems to be about breaking down one's own frameworks with each new project.

**Nina Koželj, Vulgaris woodcut**

# PETER FLORJANČIČ

## A century of dreams

TANJA GLOGOVČAN



Peter Florjančič is an inventor who left a strong imprint on Slovenian science and helped shape the technological heritage of the nation.  
Photo: Sabina Mišmaš

Without doubt one of the most successful Slovenian inventors is Peter Florjančič. Although he turned 100 this year, he is still full of life. There is not a moment when he is not thinking about some new challenge, some new invention.

He was a sportsman, composer of melodies and an actor. He has lived in Switzerland, Monte Carlo, Austria, Italy and Germany, and in recent years in Bled and Radovljica.

**To be a successful innovator he believes you need three things: to take joy in discovering obstacles, to believe in yourself and to have people around you that trust you.**

Of course you also need to have luck. *"I lived all my life under a lucky star,"* says the great innovator, of times, sprinkled with the stardust of Charlie Chaplin, Audrey Hepburn, Coco Chanel, Elizabeth Arden, Edith Piaf, Marlene Dietrich, Elizabeth Taylor, the Karađorđevićs and many others. He laughed, danced, drank and conversed with them. Probably quarrelled with one or two as well.

Perhaps those times had greater charm, but Peter Florjančič sees a challenge in the near future. *"The age that is coming will be based on vision and imagination."* He has himself earned millions in various currencies, not just once but several times. He also spent it several times, since, as he says, money means nothing to him. His carefree nature, even though he has no pension, stems from his thinking that money is just lying there in the street.

**It is true, you need courage, but in his opinion in the mass of people there are many more inventors than would appear at first glance.**

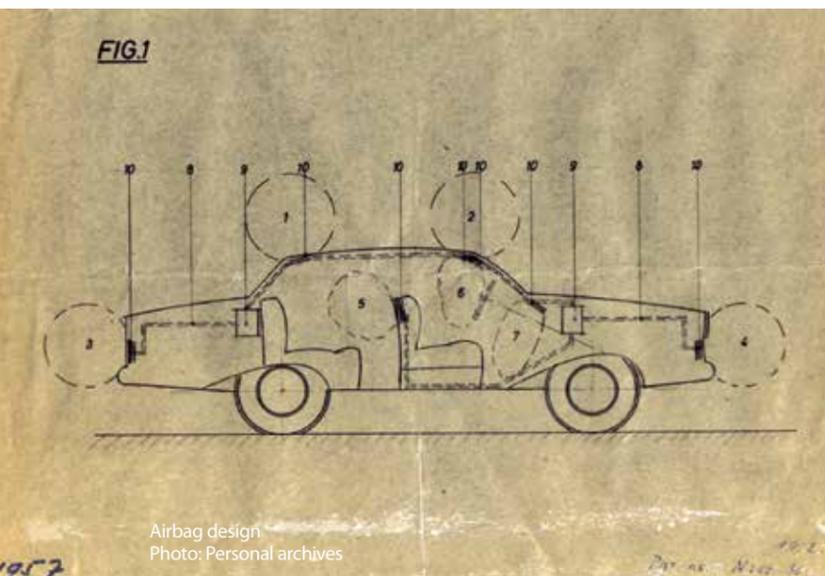
*"It's a problem, because we can't recognise it in ourselves. Routine kills creativity and also courage,"* says the Slovenian inventor.

And perhaps this creativity is in his blood. Peter Florjančič's grandfather, Jakob Peternel, was very resourceful, and was mayor of Bled from 1895 to 1906. He was aware that Bled needed not just hotels, but also municipal facilities, a school, a home for the elderly, electricity, a railway station, public baths and well-kept surroundings. During his time numerous villas were built on the shores of Lake Bled and in the surroundings. His son Francelj founded the Bizjak factory, today's Kraš enterprise, and he also held the highest military distinctions. Peter Florjančič's uncle was also mayor and a large landowner. By arranging hotels, the public baths and footpaths Kenda contributed greatly to Bled developing into a modern tourist destination.

### FATEFUL PERIOD

At school Florjančič performed very badly, at least at grammar school – later at technical school he showed his mettle. But that fateful moment coincided with a terrible period in his life. He was called up to the German army. What saved him was his invention – a weaving machine. Indeed the Germans saw the potential in him. But his struggle to survive demanded even more cunning. He had to fake his own death, and his parents even paid for a requiem mass. Then he could start a new life in Switzerland.

There, together with some Jewish friends he patented the weaving machine and sold the invention. He went from destitution to riches and the very cream of society. But his life was not just on the dance floor, at abundant dinner tables, in evening dress, and elegant car and luxurious house. *"When we worked, we really slaved. We worked night and day. I lived by being a musician. When a*



Airbag design  
Photo: Personal archives



The sleepfit bed combines sleeping, exercise of the whole body and relaxation by means of reflexology of hands and feet.  
Photo: Personal archives

company or person I was working for called me, I got in a plane and was there where I needed to be." And he adds: "The team spirit was always important for me. I was lucky to be working in the best teams of that time. With people of genius and visionaries."

**But this certainly made it hard for his family, and he was aware of this, although this way of life also offered many advantages to them. Mainly because they travelled a lot, his two daughters got to experience a first-class education and learned several languages.**

Peter Florjančič married a Swiss woman and has two daughters from the marriage. "The moment I saw Verena, who was an actress and model, I was drawn to her. I was infinitely in love with her, I wanted to get to know her all my life. We lived as a couple and also as individuals, and we were blessed with two wonderful daughters. I was married to her for 70 years."

**BIGGEST BREAKTHROUGHS**

"I also worked for Elizabeth Arden. I made a perfume atomiser for her, and later on it was bought by all the famous brands, including Coco Chanel and Dior. When I sent Arden the atomiser, which was already patented, I received in the return mail an air ticket to the USA. And I went."

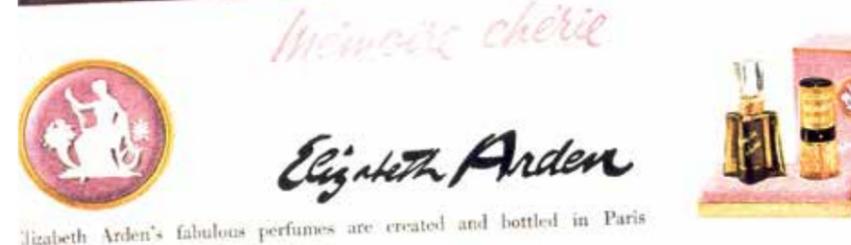
The most he earned was from a spraying machine which he sold for 1.5 million Swiss francs. Among his favourite inventions is a frame for photographic slides.

**TODAY**

Even though his eyesight is failing, he is still working away. Mainly on simple products for which he knows there is a



Elizabeth Arden ad.  
Photo: Personal archives



market. When he learned that 200 million people in Europe are overweight and cannot bend over to put on their shoes, he invented a special kind of shoe horn. He also learned that more than 100 million people have dentures, and he made a special vessel for to make cleaning them simpler.

His most recent inventions include a birdhouse made of corrugated plastic under the principle reduce, reuse, recycle in cooperation with Valter Krmar's company K.M.K Box. The house is light, can be assembled and disassembled, and is resistant to the weather. The songs of the birds it attracts will also have a therapeutic effect on people's feelings, especially those with dementia.

**IT IS NOT IMPORTANT HOW OLD YOU ARE, BUT WHAT KIND OF OLD YOU ARE**

This is just one of his inspiring thoughts. A servant of his Uncle Kenda predicted that he would live to at least 99 years, or as many steps as there are up to the church on Lake Bled island.

**Peter Florjančič was indeed several times a millionaire; he had more than 40 cars and more than ten luxurious houses. But there is no doubt that in his life his greatest wealth has been his imagination, drive and love of life.**

Perhaps it was not just good fortune, since good fortune is on the side of the brave. In truth in those gleaming eyes, almost entirely smooth face, chivalrous posture and dignity there is quite a lot more.

And yes, I admit it, I will remember him when I hold a bottle of perfume. And in the elegant bottle I will recognise the face of someone who was around when King Farouk won 15 million Swiss francs at the Casino in San Remo, when his friend Ilhami Hussein Pasha lost everything, when the Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis and Sir Winston Churchill played roulette, and who chatted to Pablo Picasso, Cary Grant and Salvador Dali. And I will recognise a person with whom I also chatted.

I hope that on Lake Bled island there are still many more undiscovered steps up to the church below the surface of the lake. And indeed, Peter Florjančič himself says he is lucky. I believe him.

In his book *My century 1919-2019* Peter Florjančič wrote: *"Despite my advanced age and failing eyesight, I have remained fully active. I have many more projects planned, and I hope to live and see them come to life. At the end of my book My Century, let me thank you for your attention and wish you just as an exciting, full and happy life as I myself have had. May you too find your luck and put it on a leash, and then live to see such a century of dreams as I have had the chance of doing."*



Peter Florjančič sitting at the head of the table at a dinner with Otto von Hasburg, the son of the Austrian Emperor Charles I, after the presentation of the pocket perfume atomiser. The blonde woman looking at the camera in the first chair is his wife, Verena.  
Photo: Personal archives



Dancing belt, lock, airbag, snow express, sport ballpoint pens, kurt kamper, pocket perfume atomiser, one-hand lipstick application, slide frame, bodyfit, etc. are just some of the Peter Florjančič inventions.  
Photo: Sabina Mišmaš

## ACTIVE AGING

# It doesn't matter how old you are – old age is what you make of it

HELGA LUKAČ  
PHOTO: PERSONAL ARCHIVES



The Active Aging movement was created in 2003 on the initiative of the International Council on Active Aging. Each autumn, a week-long series of events is organised to explore the positive aspects of modern aging. By highlighting individual cases, these events indicate the ways in which senior citizens can act as responsible members of their communities and fully participate in them.

The events taking place during this week are also intended to form model examples to guide further development.

**According to demographic projections, Slovenia stands out in the EU as a country in which the share of elderly citizens will increase the fastest – today, around 19.8% of people in Slovenia are over the age of 65, and in a decade this group will constitute as much as a quarter of the population.**

On 10 October 2019, the Švicarija Creative Centre in Ljubljana featured a presentation of prototypes for active aging, which were developed by applicants from all over the world on the invitation of RogLab, a maker lab, within a pilot project of Ljubljana's Center Rog, in collaboration with the Centre for Creativity operating under the auspices of the Museum of Architecture and Design, and with the partnership of the International Centre for Graphic Arts and the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering. Four of the most promising projects according to the selection committee were granted support and mentorship, and will now be available to anyone who might like to do them at home.

**All photographs on exhibit, which were created by studying Miško Kranjec's literary works, literature of a certain time and space; it is our memory and our connection with the past, intended for the future.**

In the Expano regional promotion centre, the permanent interactive exhibition at the experience park is, therefore, complemented with exciting temporary exhibitions by artists, who live and work in the local area, providing visitors with new perspectives of comprehending and experiencing Pomurje.

#### ORIGINAL DESIGN SOLUTIONS

**Four prototypes were created from among thirty competition entries: classically tailored clothes for seniors, with clever adaptations to enable easier dressing, were created together with mentor Alenka More by first-year students of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering, Ina Nathalie Bölsing, Kaja Čufer, Tajda Dražič and Katarina Ekart.**

Retired designer Dušan Uršič developed his idea for negotiating stairs into adaptable steps featuring anti-slip strips for added safety. With all the retired gardeners in mind, who are no longer capable of hard physical labour, Eamon Durey of Northern Ireland developed a hydroponic garden that is easy to use and accessible to people in wheelchairs. André Vanzolin created the winning prototype, an interactive game for one or more players, which helps train one's coordination and concentration, thus keeping any user highly occupied even if they are movement-impaired. The game features several levels of difficulty, and is even more fun when played in pairs.

**Intergenerational playground toy (1st prize winner)**

Creator: André Vanzolin

Co-creator: Staš Vrenko, RogLab

Partner laboratory: FEB360, Barretos, Brazil



The intergenerational playground toy by André Vanzolin is an interactive game that helps improve coordination and concentration. The upright play board is made of sturdy plywood in which holes that determine the playing route have been drilled with a CNC milling machine. The openings are filled with thin, laser-cut plexiglass. The purpose of the game is to steer the ball, which is attached to two strings in the upper corners of the play board, to the

point indicated by LED lights; the point is randomly generated by the Arduino open-source microcontroller, which includes a button for setting the difficulty level. The game can be played standing or sitting, and is also suitable for the movement-impaired. To make it even more interesting, pass one of the strings to your partner and trace the path indicated by the LED lights together.

**Grow for it!**, a hydroponic garden for the movement-impaired

Creator: Eamon Durey

Co-creator: Zelim Suleymanov, RogLab

Partner laboratory: Nerve Centre FabLab, Derry, Northern Ireland, UK

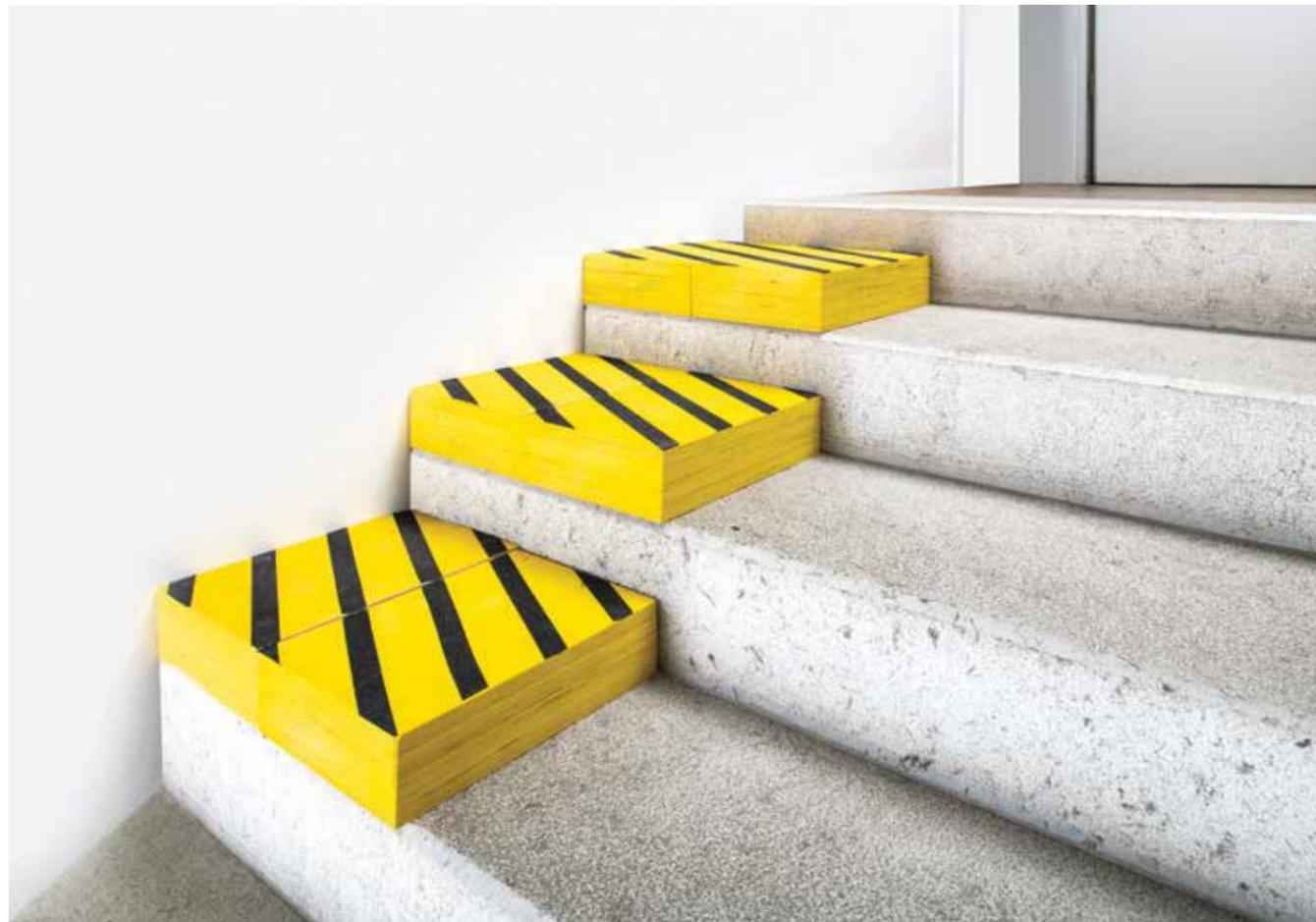


Hydroponic gardens are not just for younger, technically proficient enthusiasts, as Eamon Durey believes that a few adjustments can turn them into a great reason to socialise and chat while exercising one's gardening skills, for people who can no longer garden due to a health condition or inadequate space. The frame of the hydroponic garden is made from CNC-cut plywood and sewage pipes, i.e. materials that can be found in any building material store. To

make maintenance as simple as possible, the water in the pipe runs full circle due to gravity and a single submersible pump. The water can be poured into the garden from a regular pipe, and should be removed from the tank bottom once a week. Thanks to its well thought-out design, the garden is accessible to people who are movement-impaired and use a wheelchair, while its lowered surface means that no complicated movements are needed.

**Adaptable steps**

Creator: Dušan Uršič



The retired industrial designer Dušan Uršič developed his prototype on reading about the RogLab Open competition, in which the interviewees observed that seniors and movement-impaired people have great difficulties negotiating stairs. The creator's solution is to place an additional step on an existing staircase, raising it by the height of a half-step and enabling one to make alternate steps. Although the steps are made of plywood, the prototype

makes it possible to use other materials, depending on where the adaptable steps will be used. To make them clearly distinguishable from regular steps, they are brightly coloured and feature anti-slip strips. The creator will run additional tests of the prototype at retirement homes, where users with decreased muscle mass will be able to try it out.

**A(ge)daptive**, classic clothing patterns for fashion-conscious seniors

Creators: Ina Nathalie Bölsing, Kaja Čufer, Tajda Dražič and Katarina Ekart

Mentor: Alenka More (Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering)

Technical assistance: Jaka Podgoršek and Rebeka Pajek



The creators, first-year students of Textile and Fashion Design at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering, became aware of the challenges brought by aging when taking a course called Development of Clothing Patterns with Prof. Karin Košak, as part of which they conducted a survey among the residents of the Trnovo retirement home. RogLab's competition seemed to be the next logical step in the process of developing the business idea, which they regard as an excellent opportunity in light of the aging population. The survey respondents revealed that they missed quality materials and cuts that would flatter their figures, and also

had difficulty with tiny buttons. Upon entering the competition, the creators made detailed sketches, which, aided by two volunteers, they proceeded to develop into practical, classically tailored clothes that can also be worn on formal and evening occasions. As a result, their women's and men's shirts and trousers are distinguished by their quality materials that are pleasant to the touch, shorter sleeves and ample space in the elbow and knee areas for greater comfort, along with magnetic buttons that can close by themselves and are strong enough to remain safely fastened throughout the day.

## SLOVENIAN CREATIVITY AT NIKE

**Just do it**

TEA KNAFLIČ  
PHOTO: PERSONAL ARCHIVES



David Pivk

David Pivk is Marketing Director Nike Direct EMEA. He currently lives and works in Amsterdam. He began his career abroad in Austria, where he worked for BMW. After a few years he decided to seek out a new challenge, and found work at Nike, one of the best-known manufacturers of sports equipment and clothing in the world.

David Pivk is extremely well-versed in the world of professional sports, and his work has brought him into contact with a large number of global names in sports, where he works with them in Nike advertising campaigns. David is in fact an expert in digital networks and marketing. His work requires him to be continually creative, to do things differently, to constantly develop and grow. He kindly shared some of his thoughts on creativity with us.

Wilhelm Rein wrote about creativity back in 1892:  
*"You cannot become creative merely by reading books on creativity. However, simply daubing some paint on canvas or jotting a bunch of notes does not make you creative, either. To become creative, you need above all two things: on the one hand you have to have creative potential, and on the other hand you have to be offered the kind of education that takes creativity seriously."*

**Would you agree with that statement?**

I believe that creativity is not something you are born with or something you need to go to school for. I believe that everyone is born creative, but its expression varies from person to person.

**Creativity is our ability to tap into the inner toolbox of knowledge, insight, information, ideas and experiences that we have accumulated over the years by being present in the world.**

We often think only artists are creative. Artists are only creatives that managed to turn their expression of creativity into a full-time job. Accountants, finance managers, doctors, engineers, creative

directors or athletes can all be creative, but they will each express it in their own unique way. I believe everyone is born creative, the question is are you able to keep expressing it throughout your life.

**How can creativity be encouraged? How do they do this at Nike?**

The most important thing that allows people to express their creativity is to be in tune with themselves and be in a culture that accepts creative thinking and encourages trying to do things differently. That's why we have some companies that are more creative than others, and also cultures and nations that are more creative than others. At Nike creativity is at the very centre of the corporate culture. You can feel this from the moment you walk into the office.

**As a creative leader I am trying to create an environment for my team that gives people a lot of creative freedom. It starts with giving them trust.**

Only if they know they are in the safe space will they be able to express their ideas, thoughts and concepts. Of course, not all of them are useful, but having trust also allows us to have honest conversations about the good and not so good. Another thing is being inspired. Inspiration is usually a good trigger for us to tap into our inner black box of creative magic. Every individual has different triggers for inspiration, so it's important to encourage people to find these, and then support them so they can they find inspiration regularly. Some go to art galleries, others travel, and there are many things that can work. It's always an evolving process.



David is passionate about sport and new technologies and is pushing himself every day to find new innovative ways to connect with the consumer.

**Where or when do you find inspiration, and do you know why these things work for you?**

My biggest sources of inspiration are going into nature and travelling. I think it's because these are two activities that connect me with myself, and when I am in tune with myself I can really express my thoughts and ideas clearly.

**Do you ever use music in the creative process?**

I am a very visual person, so I prefer visual stimulation. Music can enhance my visual experience, but is very rarely my sole source of inspiration.

**How do you know when an idea is the right one?**

A good creative can never please everybody, so when you have a very polarising reaction to your work you know you are on to something. I often say to my team make me uncomfortable, and I think the sweet spot of a good idea is when I am pleasantly uncomfortable.

**Do you ever think about where all these ideas come from?**

I do, and I think they are the result of all the experiences I've had from the moment I was born. I feel we sometimes forget how much our childhood and the way we were raised influence how creative we will be at a later stage. I am lucky that my family supported all my crazy ambitions, hobbies and adventures from early on, and I guess this is paying off today.

**The right team or group of people, bound together by creative energy, can be very successful. Do you remember any experience when you were part of such a team?**

I could not agree more. Bringing people together from different backgrounds and cultures can create magic. I like to surround myself with teams that consist of people different to me. A brainstorming session with a data scientist, developer and marketer all from different cultures, speaking different languages, can take you to places you never thought you could get to. Especially not on your own. It's important to have different perspectives and collaborate.

**How do you cope when you know you have a great idea but the others are not convinced?**

It's good to work in creative teams, but once the core team has the right idea you need to protect it at any cost.

**As I said before, a great creative idea will never be liked by everybody, so it's important to protect the idea and not give in to every piece of feedback.**

Of course adjustments can be made, but if the creative integrity of the idea is jeopardised then it's better to walk away.

**Creativity is an amazing energy that makes us feel alive. Why do you think that is so?**

I think creativity gives us similar feelings that we had as children. When we were innocent, curious and exploring the uncharted territories of life. These are exciting moments for anyone. When you grow up it's harder to maintain these feelings, because certain life experiences teach us that a pragmatic approach to things works better, and it's also safer. So when as adults we are able to tap into this earlier feeling of exploration, of freedom, it triggers positive feelings.

**Given that you have a wide range of international experience, and you work with a great variety of people, do you think Slovenians are naturally creative?**

As a small nation we had to be creative, otherwise we would never have formed our own country, produced some of the best athletes in the world, or have developed such strong entrepreneurial culture.

**I believe we have amazing creative talent, especially in the younger generations. However, I don't think our culture values creativity in the same way as it's valued in some other western countries.**

I don't think the economy truly understands the added value creativity can bring to business, and is therefore not willing to invest in this area. So I believe there is an opportunity for Slovenia to really accelerate its economic growth by investing in creativity in the future.

**I love this idea from Albert Einstein: Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we know and understand, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand. Would you like to share your personal motto with us?**

*'Every child is an artist, the problem is staying an artist when you grow up.'* – Pablo Picasso



At the advertising festival in Bratislava, giving a speech about the brand Nike together with Evgeny Primachenko.

## SLOVENIA AS A WONDERFUL FILM LOCATION

# With everything you need close at hand

POLONA PREŠEREN



Shooting of I am a Frank, director Metod Pevec on the right.  
Photo: Željko Stevanić

It is beyond doubt that Slovenia is a popular tourist destination, but its natural beauty, diverse landscape in a relatively small area and highly qualified workforce mean it is becoming increasingly favoured as a film location.

Slovenia is an attractive option for various foreign production companies due to its local specifics and the proximity of diverse scenes of natural beauty.

**Outstanding filming locations are accessible in short distances, since it takes less than two hours to get from Ljubljana to Gorenjska, Štajerska, Kras and coastal Primorska, which is very important for the logistics of shooting a film or some other kind of production.**

Add to this the fact that the locations are supremely photogenic, and the landscape changes from high mountains to vineyard-covered hills and on to the eastern plains. Moreover, the majority of Slovenians speak at least one other language and this makes being understood that much easier, and Slovenian productions are recognised as being of high quality.

Slovenia is being promoted as a film destination by the Slovenian Film Centre, a government agency, particularly as part of the functioning of the Slovenian Film Commission, which is intended for the promotion of the country as a film location and offering support to foreign productions in organising their shoots here. *"We offer support to foreign producers and directors through information, seeking out appropriate locations for shooting and in making contact with Slovenian companies and individuals. In this way we also indirectly promote other branches of the economy, especially tourism,"* says Nataša Bučar, director of the agency. *"In cooperation with the Slovenian Tourist Board, we are actively promoting Slovenian film locations at international film exchanges as part of the Cannes and Berlin film festivals, and last year for the first time we participated at the biggest, internationally recognised fair to promote film locations, held in London – FOCUS 2018."*

### ATTRACTIVE UNIQUE LOCATIONS

Foreign producers are also able to get cash back through the Slovenian Film Centre. This measure has led foreign producers in the past year to shoot in Piran, Bled, Nova Gorica, Ljubljana, Ljubelj, Vilenica, Goriška brda and other locations.

**We have noticed a lot of interest among foreign producers in Alpine locations, karstic caves and the Soča river area, where the protection of these areas means that access is often restricted. In the history of Slovenian and at one time Yugoslav cinema, a lot of films were shot in Piran and around the Soča valley.**

It has been noticed that producers are drawn to the attractive and unique locations that cannot be found elsewhere in the world, and one such location is Velika planina. Very often foreign production companies are searching for locations that are similar to those in some other country or region. They are looking in Slovenia for urban settings or historical cities, idyllic villages, mountains, meadows and forests, the sea, lakes, rivers, valleys, attractive roads, and Mediterranean and European architecture.

### FILM TOURISM

*"The production companies that shot films in the past year in Slovenia came from the following countries: Italy, the Philippines, Croatia, Serbia, South Korea, the USA and the UK. In 2018, the second year of the measure to promote Slovenian film production, the Slovenian Film Centre approved a reimbursement to eight production companies, for three full-length feature films, two feature-length documen-*



The scene from in the film  
No longer a loser.  
Photo: Željko Stevanić

taries and three television series. Based on the reimbursements received, in Slovenia a total of 3.1 million euros of production costs were generated by the entire range of Slovenian film makers and companies," explains Nataša Bučar.

Meanwhile, the presence of foreign film production companies has long-term positive effects for any country in terms of its economy, and especially for cultural or film tourism. Film productions create new jobs, both within the film industry and in other, related sectors, it enables expansion of infrastructure, increases investment in specific film sectors, it consolidates a country's recognisability and location/film tourism – and all this has major cultural and economic value for a country. Foreign production companies in Slovenia hire local producers, local catering and hotel services, they employ and hire an entire range of film workers and makers – ranging from make-up artists, translators, hairdressers, carpenters and drivers to lighting technicians and local extras. In the long-term this reduces unemployment in various sectors of the country.

**When The Chronicles of Narnia was filmed a few years ago in Slovenia, there was a major increase in visits to the River Soča area.**

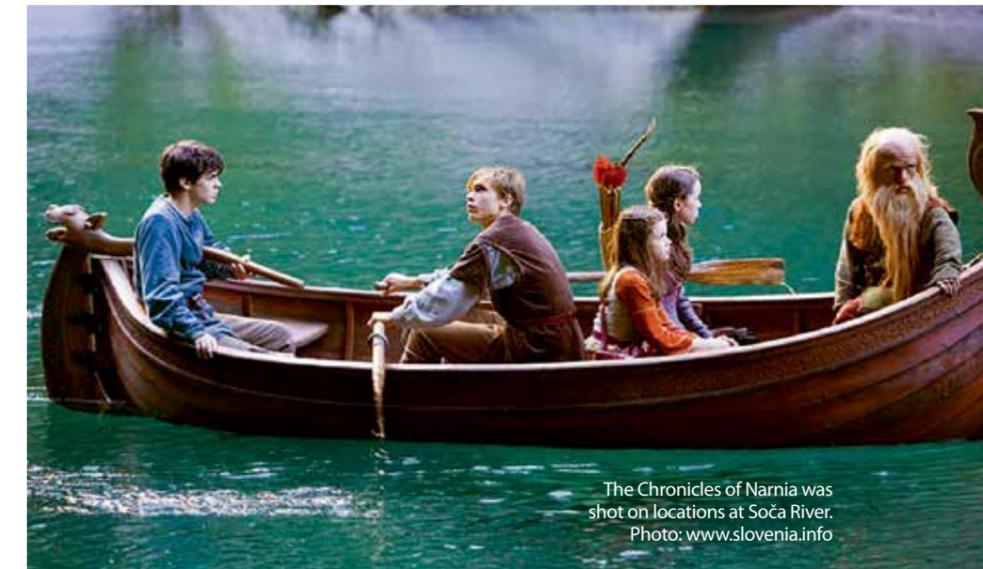
Based on stories portrayed in a certain film or TV series, and filmed on location in Slovenia, there has been an increased marketing presence of the country in international markets. "The ideal outcome of film tourism and the presence of foreign film producers is investment in new film studios and the employment of people working in them," adds Bučar.

At this year's 22nd Slovenian Film Festival, which has just been held, a presentation was given on a study of the effects of the audiovisual/film industry on the Slovenian economy. The study was conducted by Deloitte in cooperation with the AIPA institute, the Society

of Audiovisual Producers of Slovenia, the Society of Film Producers of Slovenia and with the support of the Slovenian Film Centre. A key finding of the study is that the Slovenian audiovisual industry is in good shape and represents an important branch of the economy. A review of key economic indicators clearly shows that the audiovisual industry is not merely a cultural and artistic pursuit, but an industry with numerous effects on the economy and society as a whole.

As the Slovenian Film Centre points out, an important fact is that it has a 1.8 times multiplication effect, meaning that the scope of the entire economic or fiscal effect is 1.8 times higher than the direct effect. This means in practice that for every 100 persons directly employed in the sector, the audiovisual industry indirectly creates work for an additional 80 employees in the Slovenian economy.

Slovenia is without doubt an exceptional film location, everything is close at hand, the environment is well cared for, human resources are highly qualified, and all this is reflected in the major interest among foreign production companies in working in Slovenia. So next time your eye is drawn to a scene of exceptional natural beauty in some advertisement, just think: that might have been filmed in Slovenia.



The Chronicles of Narnia was shot on locations at Soča River.  
Photo: www.slovenia.info

Back in 1965, when Ljubljana was used as the location for the shooting of the Italian film – originally a French story – Madamigella di Maupin, the façades of the old buildings brought to life the 17th Century. Some scenes for the Austrian historical drama Wir sind am Leben, which is based on true events and deals with the rescue of 150 Jewish children from a camp during the Second World War, were filmed in Ljubljana instead of in Austria. The coproduction film Bičemo prvaci sveta, which covers Yugoslav basketball and its peak in 1970, when the Yugoslav national team won the title of world champions in Ljubljana, was filmed in the city itself. Slovenia has even been used as a location by film makers from the Philippines. The director Bradley Liew shot the horror film Motel Acacia at Pokljuka and Tržič in Slovenia.

**Slovenian and foreign film producers can obtain most of the information they need about Slovenia as a country of film on the website FilminSlovenia.si. (<http://filminslovenia.si>).**



Slovenia is interesting also for Bollywood production.  
Photo: Katarina Karlovšek archives

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF FRANCE ŠTIGLIC

# Celebrating the centenary of the birth of one of the pioneers of Slovenian film

NERINA T. KOCJANČIČ

On the centenary of the birth of France Štiglic (1919–1993), the Slovenian Film Centre (SFC), the Slovenian Film Archives of the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (SFA) and Slovenska Kinoteka (SK) have joined forces to deliver a project celebrating the life of this giant of Slovenian Cinema.

This extensive project encompassing a wide variety of activities and events around Slovenia and abroad is dedicated to the life and work of one of the country's most prominent filmmakers, who, in his role as a cultural policymaker, was instrumental in establishing professional Slovenian filmmaking.

**The centennial of his birth opens up a unique opportunity for rediscovering and studying in greater detail his film oeuvre, the time and space he worked in and his influence on the Slovenian film landscape.**

The celebration aims to draw attention to two important elements: the necessity of adopting a comprehensive approach to the digital restoration of the Slovenian film legacy, thus making it more accessible to the public, and the need to foster and develop film culture in Slovenia.

Štiglic, who directed fifteen feature films – including the first Slovenian sound feature *Na svoji zemlji* (*On Our Own Land*, 1948), a series of short and documentary works and five successful television series – is a giant of Slovenian cinematography based on his creative drive alone. And this is not only on account of his extensive filmography. Beyond being the most prolific Slovenian filmmaker and a pioneer responsible for introducing certain genres and sub-genres into Slovenian cinema, his creative energy is of central importance. Boundless creativity was one of Štiglic's main qualities; he explored many genres (such as Partisan films, war films, children's and young adult films, comedies, psychological dramas and

historical films) and tried his hand at a variety of styles and techniques (e.g., classical, lyrical, expressionist and modernist films).

### THE DIRECTOR WHO SHAPED THE SLOVENIAN FILM LANDSCAPE

No less important is his role in defining and developing professional standards and the system of national cinematography. As member of the Presidium of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, president of the Association of Slovenian Filmmakers, director of the Viba Film Studio, Minister of Culture, and a professor and dean at the Ljubljana Academy of Theatre, Film, Radio and Television, he had a profound influence on the broad process of setting up and developing Slovenian film production.

At the very beginning of his forty-year career, Štiglic asserted himself as one of the most talented Slovenian film directors: his short documentary *Mladina gradi* (*The Youth Build*, 1946) won him the Lion of Venice award, and his debut feature *On Our Own Land* earned him a spot at the Cannes Film Festival. That was followed by a number of nominations and awards: *Dolina miru* (*The Valley of Peace*, 1965) put him in the running for the Cannes Palme d'Or for best director (John Kitzmiller received the Palme d'Or for best actor for his role in the film, the first black actor to do so), and *Deveti krog* (*The Ninth Circle*, 1960) won him an Oscar nomination for Best International Feature Film at the 33rd Academy Awards, but he lost the golden statuette to Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*. Back home, he received the 1962 Prešeren Prize for *The Valley of Peace*, *The Ninth Circle* and *Balada o trobenti in oblaku* (*The Ballad of the Trumpet and the Cloud*, 1961). Upon receiving the highest national recognition in the field of culture, France Štiglic said: *"I am happy that, after*



The Valley Of Peace  
Screening at Cannes Classics, 2016  
Photo: Slovenian Film Centre

*a long time, our turn in film has finally come. We did work really hard,"* he said.

He won the Golden Arena at the Yugoslav Film Festival in Pula in 1960, 1961 and 1964. In December 1976, he travelled to Belgrade to receive the Avnoj Prize, the highest award in Yugoslavia, and he was awarded the Badjur Prize in 1978.

**A FOUR-TIME CANNES CONTENDER**

France Štiglic secured his first nomination for the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival in 1949 with his debut feature *On Our Own Land*. He returned to Cannes two more times, in 1956 with *The Valley of Peace* and in 1960 with *The Ninth Circle*.

His fourth, posthumous appearance was in 2016, when *The Valley of Peace* celebrated its sixtieth anniversary.

The plot revolves around two war orphans who lost their parents during the bombing of their town – ten-year-old Marko (Tugo Štiglic) and Lotti (Evelyne Wohlfeiler), a German girl a few years

younger. The pair fled the orphanage in the occupied town and disappeared into the woods to find the valley of peace that Lotti's grandmother used to talk about.

The digitally restored version of the film was featured in the Cannes Classics programme.

**The film was introduced by the two leads, who had been child actors, Tugo Štiglic (the director's son, himself a director) and Evelyne Wohlfeiler.**

It was their first time in Cannes because they had not been brought along to the original screening. Not having seen each other since the filming and premiere, their meeting after all those years was all the more touching.

On the occasion, Tugo Štiglic said: *"When we were making the film, as a child I did not realise its timeless message that people are*

*defined by only one thing: their humanity. The restored version will allow the artwork and this important message to be preserved."*

Like her co-star, Evelyne Wohlfeiler still works in the film industry and is a film editor in Germany. *"I was very surprised when I heard the news and received the invitation. At first, I wasn't going to go, but I changed my mind because of my late mother, who introduced me to film. She really would have been let down if I hadn't gone."*

**DIGITAL RESTORATION OF ŠTIGLIC'S FILMS**

In the past few years, two more Štiglic films have been digitally restored and shown at public screenings: *The Valley of Peace* and *On Our Own Land*.

**This year will also see the public screening of digitally restored versions of *Tistega lepega dne (One Fine Day, 1962)* and *Ne joči, Peter (Don't Cry, Peter, 1964)*.**

The debut screening of the digitally restored version of *Don't Cry, Peter* will be on 9 November at the Cankar Centre as part of the Our Films Back Home project. The honorary patron of the ceremony will be the Slovenian President Borut Pahor. On France Štiglic's birthday on 12 November, his hometown of Kranj will host a screening of the restored version of *One Fine Day*. Both films will soon be available on Blu-Ray as part of the Slovenian Film Centre's SI-FI Klasika collection.

*The generation of filmmakers I belong to did not have the time or the opportunity to study their métier on a systematic basis. For a long time we were self-taught, which is probably reflected in our work. We don't belong to any school. We had no master to copy; I mean that in a positive way. From time to time, our work was comparable to foreign films. When I work, I never think about how someone else said this or that. I search inside myself.*

France Štiglic



The Valley of Peace  
Photo: Lado Sazonov, the Slovenian Cinematheque archives



On Our Own Land  
Photo: The Slovenian Cinematheque archives

## THE CHRISTMAS TREES OF CREATIVES

**Christmas would not be complete without a festive tree to bring magic to every home**

TANJA GLOGOVČAN

Make it a December to remember.  
Photo: Noel Hendrickson-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

December is a festive time when the streets come alive with colourful lights, shop windows are full of decorations and people start to think about how they will be creating a joyful holiday atmosphere in their homes.

The Christmas tree is the one decoration no home can be without.

**It is usually placed in the centre of a room and decorated with ornaments that hold special meaning for the family, or they might be new additions or even homemade creations.**

We spoke to three well-known designers and design companies about creating a festive atmosphere at home, ways of decorating and about the habits of Slovenians when it comes to Christmas.

### **SURROUNDED BY COLOUR AND THE WARMTH OF A FESTIVE HOME**

**Maja Ferme**, one of the most acclaimed Slovenian fashion designers, loved by the Italian actress and model Monica Bellucci and Russian operatic soprano Anna Netrebko, above all associates Christmas with a family setting.

*"For me, the winter holiday season is a time when families get together. The Christmas tree usually stands by the fireplace, as ours does each year. Last year, we made a special occasion out of decorating the tree, as it was the first time my one-year-old daughter Paris Noa took part in this fun activity. She took each decoration out of its box ever so carefully and placed it on the tree. We made sure to choose really colourful ones just for her. The funny thing is that she didn't break a single one, although I did. But we didn't let that get in the way of a great time. Being a mother is simply wonderful!"*



Maja Ferme  
Photo: Personal archives



The wooden tree with birds.  
Photo: IKA archives

### A CHRISTMAS TREE WITH A MESSAGE

Apart from wooden trees, another wonderful way to decorate is to use decorations made from recycled materials. At **IKA**, they have created a stunning wreath made from woollen balls. The shop also sells wooden Christmas trees.

Last year, they held a very simple but creative Christmas campaign. They decorated their wooden tree with birds, more specifically corn crakes, that were sewn together from fabric scraps and filled with lavender. These birds are endangered in nature with only a small number remaining – the exact number was replicated and hung on the tree. The tree bore a powerful message about how we must respect and protect nature, not destroy it. As this message is in line with the spirit of Christmas – a time of peace, love and respect – this year's decorations will most likely be the same. The song of the corn crake.

### XMAS3

Traditionally, Slovenians have always bought green pines or firs. But more recently, this has begun to change as people have become more aware of the need to conserve nature. If you want to have a living tree, one way is to buy it in a pot that keeps it alive so then later it can be planted outside. Another option is to get an alternative tree made out of wood or another natural material.

Xmas3, a wooden Christmas tree, is the brainchild of the Slovenian designer **Rada Kos**, who has been inspired by natural materials and a love of nature all her life. It is a hand-crafted Christmas tree made from premium wood originating in Slovenian forests. Its design is simple, elegant, and clever design, and it can be decorated in any way you want, following your own inspiration. Initially, it has quite a minimal appearance, but can be decorated in a way that transforms it into a lavish and majestic focal point. It looks at home in any setting and space, and complements a variety of interior designs and furnishings.

### MAKE IT A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER

Above all, Christmas should be about feeling happy and spending time with the people that warm your heart throughout the year.

**Let your Christmas lights shine, decorations sparkle and tree stand tall in the spirit of the season.**



XMAS3  
Photo: Rada Kos

SLOVENIAN CHEF ANA ROŠ

## You are splendid, limpid daughter of the heights

MATEJA MALNAR ŠTEMBAL

Ana Roš became chef without culinary training. She is convinced that for success is the most important passion, motivation, talent and dedication.  
Photo: Suzan Gabrijan

These are the words from a patriotic masterpiece by the great Slovenian poet, Simon Gregorčič, who came from the region where Ana Roš, a Slovenian chef of international renown, creates her masterpieces. The poem and Ana are both unique and simply beyond comparison.

Like the Soča river, Ana is a woman of many depths, colours and shades, pleasantly calm and pensive, at times wild and unstoppable, yet always in touch with nature and the people who help her create gourmet dishes in one of the most beautiful and unspoilt corners of Slovenia.

### ORIGINAL APPROACH TO CREATIVITY

Her close relationship with nature, the local environment and the farmers that produce the ingredients she uses all shine through in her kitchen and creations. Her restaurant, Hiša Franko, gives guests a taste of the seasons and local traditions, to which Ana adds her feminine touch.

**The plates from her kitchen will never feature meat shipped over thousands of kilometres or fruit ripened in containers.**

Instead, you will be served lamb and beef from nearby mountain pastures, homemade dairy products, and vegetables, herbs and flowers from her garden, seasoned with honey and nuts.

### THE FIRST IN THE VILLAGE, THE FIRST IN THE WORLD

It looks like Ana would be the best at whatever profession she chose. Since she has a degree in diplomatic studies, Slovenia may regret losing an excellent diplomat. She might have even become a champion skier or dancer.

Ana did not receive any formal training, but is a self-taught chef. With ingredients at her fingertips, on her taste buds and in her eyes she is simply the best Slovenia has to offer the culinary scene, and her work has earned international acclaim.

In August 2012 she was the first female chef in Cook It Raw, in 2015 she was proclaimed JRE Talent of the Year, and in September 2015 she appeared on the Netflix series *Chef's Table*.

**Her greatest achievement is being awarded the title of The World's Best Female Chef 2017, conferred on her in January 2017.**

In 2019, Hiša Franko ranks 38th on the list of the World's 50 Best Restaurants, improving on last year's position by ten places.

### IN THE COMPANY OF THE BEST

The first among the World's 50 Best Restaurants in 2019 is Mirazur on the French Riviera, with the amazing chef Mauro Colagreco, who did a three-week pop-up in Madrid last year for his Spanish culinary fans.

Now it is Ana's turn to relocate Hiša Franko and her team to Madrid for three weeks.

**Hiša Franko's pop-up restaurant will welcome diners in the NH Collection Madrid Eurobuilding between 18 November and 7 December 2019. In this period, Ana and her team will make 15 dinners for 45 guests.**

The architects will do their utmost to make the dining room look like her restaurant in Kobarid, Slovenia. This is a unique opportunity for Ana to present her culinary art to Spanish foodies and put Slovenia on Europe's gastronomic map.

**What does this project mean to you professionally?**

I see it as an opportunity to learn about a new market, communicate with the media there, and as something that opens up new possibilities. This is very important to me, especially when I think about long-term development plans. Spain as a food market has proved to be an attractive investment option, and worth paying special attention to. Every event held in Spain, every interview for the Spanish media – and believe me, there have been many – so far has resulted in a significant increase in the number of excellent, interesting and sophisticated guests.

All the members of my team are travelling to Madrid, even Duan, our golden hands, who washes dishes at our restaurant. Hiša Franko will be closed during that period, so that we can fully devote ourselves to our guests in Madrid.

**Your team is a mosaic of nationalities, ages and experience. Do you think that this diversity boosts your team's creativity, promotes brainstorming and generates new ideas?**

The creative dimension of Hiša Franko is entirely my domain, but it is my team members' golden hands that help my ideas, aspira-

tions and dreams come true. Different ethnic backgrounds and age groups, together with a gender balanced composition, definitely help us stay fresh and come up with new ideas every day.

**You never run out of ideas. What about creativity in your dishes – how much is craftsmanship and how much creativity?**

I would say it always starts with creativity and ends in craftsmanship. It requires thinking out of the box and a healthy dose of creative inspiration along with knowledge of the local environment, or the foods and traditions that are in practice a source of creativity, and, of course, hard work.

**Slovenia has been, alongside Portugal, proclaimed European Region of Gastronomy 2021. Food waste prevention will be one of its priorities. You are well known for your efforts on this issue.**

Hiša Franko tackled the no waste issue when it autocratically, and not at all democratically, decided to offer only one menu.

**As we know exactly how many guests will be coming on a particular day and their special dietary requirements, including allergies, we can practically reduce waste to zero by ordering the exact amounts of food needed.**

In our restaurant, trimmings, fish heads and bones are used to make fish dishes for between 30 and 40 staff members. From parts that are not considered high quality ingredients we make excellent and interesting fermented fish sauces. They come in very handy in winter or during periods with a more limited selection of produce.

**Do you have any suggestions on how to raise awareness or teach people what to do with the food that they normally discard?**

Her team is very diverse.  
Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik



Her food is fresh and local.  
Photo: Benjamin Schmuck

I can give you two examples of what to do with left-over bread and cheese rinds to reduce the food waste generated in households. Every day families throw away a lot of bread, although bread – the older the better – makes a wonderful ingredient. You can use it in a bread soufflé. Soak bread in milk, add beaten eggs and, for example, dried porcini mushrooms or fresh herbs, and bake it in an oven. It is best served with meat. Another suggestion would be fried slices of bread or crispy bread chips. Boil bread for about an hour, then spread it to dry before you finally fry it. All food, including cheese, can be reprocessed. Cheese rinds normally end up in bins but they are an excellent source of protein in minestrone soups. Italians put parmesan rinds in vegetable soups. Last year, we cooked delicious soups with roasted onion and cheese rinds. As a matter of fact the soups were such a success that we used up more rinds than cheese. Ideas and solutions abound. You just need to apply common sense and a proper measure of creativity.

**What do Slovenians forget to present to the world – on the table or in general?**

We Slovenians keep stressing what a big nation we are but we suffer from the syndrome of a small nation dreaming of grandeur. Nevertheless, Slovenians have on a number of occasions demonstrated their greatness. I truly believe that beauty in small doses is one of the greatest values of the contemporary world, and not only in tourism but in other fields too.

**Treasures are hidden in small things, and exploring small things is less time consuming and hence more interesting and pleasant.**

If we succeed in delivering exceptional results in this small area with a small number of people – I am setting success against

size – Slovenia will enjoy a considerable advantage in all fields. It seems we tend to forget that these amazing achievements and excellence come from a very small country with a small population.

**You are definitely among the greatest in your profession, but it probably is not easy to continuously find so much inspiration and creativity?**

You are born creative; it is a well-known fact that one half of the brain is more rational and the other more creative. It all depends on which half of your brain is more developed. However, creativity needs to be nurtured. There are times when you are more reflective, when your thoughts travel at a breathless pace. I think really fast when I look at the world on my runs, when I see a meadow or enjoy a meal in someone else's restaurant. Another trigger for me is ingredients that I have completely forgotten. When I see them, I start conjuring images about that particular food. I believe we must seize such moments of creativity, as they do not come every day. There are days and months when we find ourselves in a creative vacuum, which is not unusual. A writer also cannot write or a painter paint continuously without ever experiencing a creative block.

**Stress and fatigue are the biggest enemies of creative processes. In my opinion, when our tired and stressed brains are looking for some quick solution to what is sometimes an exaggerated problem from everyday life, we are in no state to deal properly with something creative.**

Peace and quiet are needed to come up with creative solutions. I know how to find peace and quiet.



In 2017 she received the 2017 World's Best Female Chef award from the influential World's 50 Best Restaurants. Photo: Dean Dubokovič

## NATIVITY MUSEUM BREZJE

# All kinds of Nativity scenes from all over the world

TEA KNAFLIČ  
PHOTO: BREZJE NATIVITY MUSEUM



Egyptian Nativity scene  
Sculptor: Mohamed Aam  
Landscape crafted: Jože Toenig

Nativity scenes can be viewed throughout the year at the Nativity Museum Brezje, which this year welcomed more than 20,000 visitors. It is a member of the Community of Museums of Slovenia, and boasts a rich collection of Nativity scenes from all over the world. The collection numbers more than 450 scenes from 60 different countries. The museum offers a true geographical stroll through the regions of the world, as reflected in seasonal displays.

Christmas time is something special. We become more introverted, focused on ourselves and our families and friends, enjoying their company at the end of the year. The hectic pace of life we constantly face is halted, or at least it seems so. This is a time of peace. During these days in Slovenia people put up Christmas trees and Nativity scenes, and the aromas of seasonal home cooking waft out of kitchens. Nativity scenes or Christmas cribs, which are very common in Slovenian homes, are set out relatively early, and many people devote great attention to them.

**The most typical Slovenian Nativity scene was at one time the corner crib, frequently placed in the holy corner.**

Nowadays the most widespread scenes are made of plastic, which people still place in a corner, on a table or under the Christmas tree. Modern Slovenian Nativity scenes can also be made of cloth, stone or clay.

### CREATION OF THE MUSEUM

The collection of Nativity scenes at Brezje has been expanding ever since 1990, when Father Leopold Grčar started it. The renovation of the space now occupied by the museum began in 2014, and the collection is spread through rooms in a former work building, the monastery barn. The Nativity Museum Brezje opened in December 2016, but the collection is continuously expanding. People who found out about the museum started bring-

ing Nativity scenes to Brezje from all over Slovenia and world. The collection was also supplemented by missionaries who brought Nativity scenes from all parts of the world. In the time that the museum has been open, the collection has been enhanced by some incredible finds in Slovenia. Many of them have been painstakingly restored and thus saved from destruction. The museum and Nativity scene collection are carefully watched over by Father Dr Robert Bahčič, rector of the Basilica Mary Help of Christians.

**In June of last year the Ethnographic Museum entered the Nativity scenes in the register of cultural heritage. These are therefore not just important as a representation of Jesus's birth, but also as works of folk art from individual regions.**

The method of creation and the materials used in the Nativity scenes indicate the characteristics of the areas they come from.

### IN THE MUSEUM

Arriving in front of the museum, you are greeted by the words of St Francis of Assisi, who first set up a Nativity scene in 1223, *Good day, good people*, the greeting welcoming you into the museum. The museum, which has been superlatively thought out, reminds you right from the outset of the greatest values – freedom and peace among nations. Seventy three-dimensional doves, made of lace by

seventy lacemakers from seventy Slovenian towns, represent the seventy years of peace since the end of the Second World War.

On the walls you can view the tools that were used at one time to make Nativity scenes, and you can learn something of the history of these scenes in general and of their history in Slovenia in particular.

**Nativity scenes of various sizes are set out attractively in display cases and placed by the geographical region from which they came.**

The first section of the museum shows Slovenian Nativity scenes. The museum even includes a Nativity scene designed by Jože Plečnik (1872-1957), the most outstanding Slovenian architect. The Nativity scene of Maksim Gaspari (1883-1980), who was a Slovenian painter, is very significant for the preservation of Slovenia's cultural heritage. Also of note is the Nativity scene of Leopold Layer (1752-1828), another Slovenian painter, whose scene was created in 1828 and represents his last work. The museum also houses one of the oldest preserved Nativity scenes. This is the convent Nativity scene from Velesovo, which dates back to the middle of the 18th century.

Moving on, you can then marvel at Nativity scenes from Eastern and Central Europe, Latin America, the Mediterranean, Africa and Egypt. The Nativity scenes on display were made in different periods and are of a variety of materials. The scenes are made of wood, paper, stone, clay, shells, cloth, straw – and even dried banana leaves. It is this diversity and the creativity of the makers that is so inspiring.

The Egyptian Nativity scene presents an interesting symbiosis: the figures were made by a Muslim, and the landscape by a Slovenian.

The Egyptian Nativity scene was made between 1982 and 1984 by the sculptor Mohamed Alam. The scene is set in a desert by the Nile, in the Valley of the Pharaohs, a land of sand and rock. But it was sculptor Jože Toenig of Domžale who crafted the landscape, after photographs of the River Nile. The valley by the Nile is green for three harvests, and then becomes a desert.

At the end of the museum you return to the beginning, where there is a copy of the Nativity cave fresco of 1223 created by St Francis of Assisi.

The museum is truly something special. It brings together in one place an assemblage of different cultures and different nationalities of Nativity scene makers. And all these people shared a love of the Nativity scene. Museum visitors, both Slovenian and foreign guests, are inspired by the museum, as can be seen from the visitors book. There are many entries in the book, quite a few in children's handwriting and many in foreign languages, including Korean, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. You can read about their gratitude at being able to view the collection of Nativity scenes that is gathered here.

The company Romar storitve, trgovina in založništvo d.o.o., which manages the museum, and its friendly representative Dr Andreja Eržen Firšt, are already planning an expansion. They want to add a floor to the museum, and in this way offer displays of Nativity scenes from various regions of different countries.

The highest visitor numbers are naturally in December, but the museum has a steady stream of visitors all year, being open every day except Mondays. In December we recommend visiting the museum on weekdays. Large groups need to give prior notice to be sure of a guided tour, which is recommended given the rich content related to the scenes on display. On the weekend the museum can often be too full, and you may even have to wait for entry.



Nativity scene designed by Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik.

## HARD-WORKING LAUNDRESSES

# Washing, wringing, hanging, ironing all day long

TANJA GLOGOVČAN  
PHOTO: SEM ARCHIVES



Laundry washing at Bizovik.

Many occupations that were once common and taken for granted are now lost, surviving only in folk tales and folk songs. The story of laundresses is one of those, and is today shrouded in mystery. Washing laundry as an occupation emerged at least 300 years ago and lasted until the 1950s, when the first washing machines appeared.

Laundresses were very important in Ljubljana and its surroundings in the days when the city had no plumbing or sewage systems, and thus most of the people who lived there did not have laundry rooms or bathrooms in their homes, nor – of course – washing machines. Still, people had to keep clean, and so laundresses became sought after, especially since they provided a complete service to their customers.

**They collected the laundry at the customer's home, washed it thoroughly (boiled, bleached and rinsed), then dried, ironed, folded and delivered it back to the customer's door.**

One can still understand the appeal of such a service today when we're complaining about mounds of laundry waiting to be washed or ironed.

### FROM BIZOVIK THEY COME TO LJUBLJANA...

...with their big bags and empty hands, begging for bread. Women took up the occupation mostly for economic reasons because, a man's income was sometimes not sufficient to provide for an entire family. Small farmers (in Slovene *kajžarji*) did not have enough land, and their occupations (e.g. carpentry and construction) were seasonal, from early spring to late autumn (from Saint Joseph's Day to All Saint's Day).

**The majority of laundresses lived in the vicinity of Ljubljana, especially in the suburb of Bizovik, where the conditions for this type of work were most favourable.**

The streams there never ran dry, not even during summer, and the neighbouring city never lacked wealthy customers. The land along the streams was communal, so the laundresses did not have to pay for the use of laundry spots.

Dirty laundry was collected all around Ljubljana on Mondays, marked, and then separated by colour, size and how dirty it was. On Monday evenings, it was soaked in a tub. Bedsheets were placed on the bottom, women's underskirts on top of those, then women's and men's trousers, on top of those were placed shirts, pillowcases, table cloths, towels and handkerchiefs, and on top of all that well-washed kitchen towels. When the tub was full cold water was poured into it, and the laundry was left to soak overnight.

The next day, the tub was covered with an old bedsheet, sieved beech-wood ashes were strewn on top, and hot water was poured in, forming lye, which slowly seeped into the laundry. This process, called *žehtanje*, lasted three to five hours. It was gradually abandoned when the laundresses began to boil laundry. After *žehtanje*, laundry was rubbed and soaped and (in the summer) spread on the floor to be bleached. Only then followed washing in the stream, a process that could not be avoided even during win-

ter or rain. On cold winter mornings, the laundresses sometimes had first to use the axe to break the ice so that they could start washing. They used both hands to dip each piece of laundry in the stream and then banged it against a wooden plate until clear water was draining from it. They were freezing in winter and used to carry pots of hot water to warm their hands.

When the weather was nice, washed laundry dried on a lawn or garden; when it was raining, it dried on hayracks or in the attic. On Friday evenings the laundry process was completed. Laundresses took the laundry indoors, stretched it out and flattened it between two rollers, folded it and starched it if necessary. The following Monday, they would put on their good clothes and head back into town with their big bags of fresh laundry. In later years, they began using handcarts.

The laundresses used special marks or crosses in order not to mix up the pieces of laundry and return them to the right owners, while wealthier customers had monograms embroidered on their laundry.

At first, laundresses did not use any means of transportation and carried all the laundry on their heads. Later on, they began using a wheelbarrow-like cart called *sodba*, and at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century handcarts with two wheels and suspension called *kula* or *ciza*, which became their trademark. Later, when the demand for the service further increased, laundry was moved by men called *furman* using horse-drawn carriages.

**Laundresses often had very personal relationships with their customers; it was not uncommon for several generations of laundresses to do laundry for a particular family. Wealthier customers sometimes gave them small gifts on holidays, often a typical Slovenian walnut rolled cake (*orehova potica*).**

Nevertheless, laundresses lived a hard life, risking infections, working very hard and carrying heavy loads. Only with the emergence of plumbing were they able to do the laundry in their own laundry rooms at homes. In this hard work they were often assisted by very small children, some of them as young as seven.

#### PRESERVED FOLK SONGS, HOLIDAYS AND CUSTOMS

Laundresses had no free days except Christmas. However, they did observe certain saint's days and the corresponding rules. Laundry was not allowed to hang on Christmas, because the day was too holy; on Saint Florian's Day every kind of work connected with fire was forbidden, preventing them from doing the *žehta* or ironing.

**Laundresses were most wary of Saint Florian's Day falling on a Tuesday, when *žehta* was at its most intense. However, they also turned to the saints in times of trouble. Laundress from Bizovik chose Saint Nicholas as their patron.**

Customers also had important days of the year. For example, they wanted all their laundry returned before New Year's Day.

Women and girls, who washed laundry, also sang a lot. Some of their songs became folk songs: *Mati zakliče, pridne dekličice: Hitro vstanite, prat se mudi!* (A mother calls to her good girls: 'Get up, get up, it's laundry time!') or *Bezovci so velik možje, pa majhne ženičke, pa vse so peričke*. (Men from Bizovik are big, their women are small, and they're all laundresses).

#### WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE WASHING MACHINE, THE LAUNDRESSES' SONG DIED DOWN...

*...no more womanly or girly chatter by the stream.* The first changes were introduced even before the arrival of the washing machine, during the mayoral term of Ivan Hribar (1851–1941), when plumbing and sewage systems were brought to the city in 1890 and 1898, respectively. Citizens were then able to devote special rooms in their homes to washing laundry. At the same time, various washing agents became available to make the process easier. However, the occupation finally died out with the arrival of the washing machine, after 300 long years of blistered and reddened hands, broken backs and aching knees, but also after 300 years of laughter and singing. Today, the song *Pridne peričice* (Good laundresses) is sung by children in kindergartens, when they're learning about work.

*Poglejte ročice, pogledite roke,  
poglejte kak' pridne peričice smo me.  
Pa peremo, pa peremo po celi ljubi dan.  
Pa peremo, pa peremo po celi ljubi dan.  
Pa užemamo...  
Pa obešamo...  
Pa likamo...*

*(Look at our hands, big and small,  
see how hard-working laundresses we are.  
We keep washing all day long,  
we keep washing all day long,  
wringing, hanging, ironing...)*

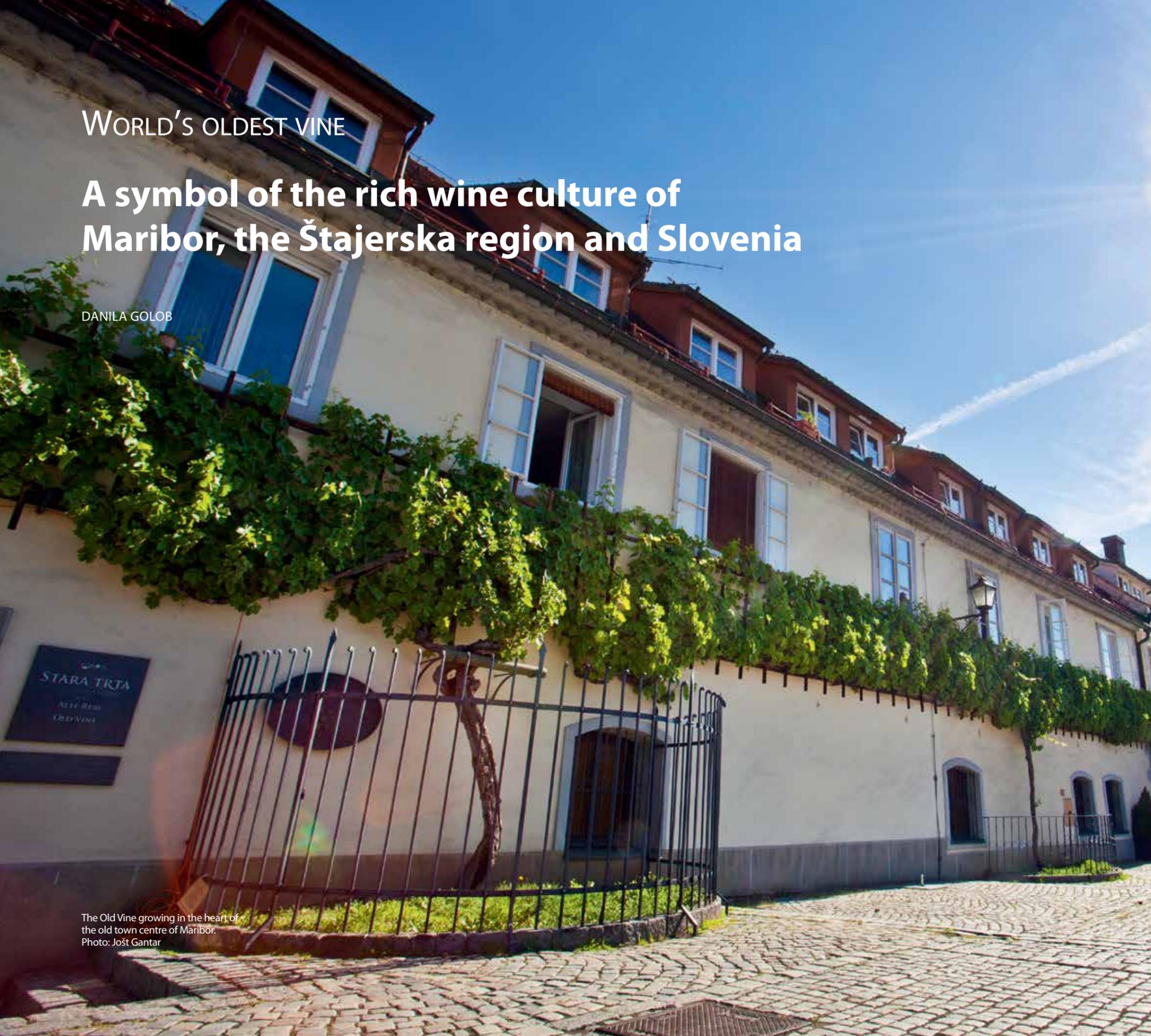


At first laundresses carried all the laundry on their heads.

## WORLD'S OLDEST VINE

# A symbol of the rich wine culture of Maribor, the Štajerska region and Slovenia

DANILO GOLOB



The Old Vine growing in the heart of the old town centre of Maribor.  
Photo: Jošt Gantar

The confirmed age of the Old Vine, which grows in Maribor, is over 400 years and it is entered in the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest noble vine in the world. It still bears grapes from which a very special wine is made.

The Old Vine bears grapes of the *Žametovka* or *Modra kavčina* variety, and is ranked among the oldest domesticated noble vines in Slovenia. The wine made from its grapes is considered to be one of the most special and rare beverages in the world. The wine is soft pink in colour, mild and drinkable and has a low alcohol content. It is a reflection of the conditions in which the Old Vine grows – by a river, on the south-facing side of an old house.

### THE CITY VINEDRESSER

Stane Kocutar took over as the city's vinedresser in 2010; he takes pleasure working with "the old lady" and describes it as pleasant and interesting. "Tending this vine means nurturing and preserving a magnificent living monument of our culture and the outstanding natural characteristics of this region. I have never regretted the time I spent on the vine," says Kocutar, and adds, "The payment I receive is like no other. Every year, *Žametovka* bursts into leaf, grows, bears grapes and turns purple in the autumn, its transformation winning worldwide admiration. Can a city vinedresser aspire for more?"

**On average, the Old Vine yields 35 to 55 kilogrammes of grapes that make 15 to 35 litres of wine. Wine is cultivated by the winemaker mag. Janez Valdhuber in the cellar of the Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences of the University of Maribor.**

It is fermented in stainless steel barrels to highlight the interesting and specific characteristics of the variety. The wine is matured for approximately a year and a half and then conserved in 0.25 litre bottles specially designed for this wine by the internationally renowned artist Oskar Kogoj. The spiral that runs down the bottle's long neck represents the infinite longevity of the Old Vine.

The bottle comes with a document bearing the city seal and the signature of the Mayor of Maribor, who is also the master of the Old Vine. Among the many distinguished recipients of this exclusive protocol gift are Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, former Japanese Emperor Akihito, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, former Czech President Vaclav Havel, former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mayor of Vienna Michael Häupl, chess grandmaster Garry Kimovich Kasparov, Matevž Lenarčič, who flew around the globe in an ultralight plane, film star Brad Pitt and French footballer Michel François Platini, and many others. Every so often, the President of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor presents bottles as a protocol gift. Vinedresser Kocutar remembers the words of President Pahor on the occasion

of presenting one such bottle to Czech President Milos Zeman: *“Mr President, I give you one of the most valuable things made in Slovenia”.*

**Wine made from the grapes of the Old Vine’s graft was also presented to the Queen Elizabeth II in 2008 on her visit to the Slovenian capital.**

Staff of the Municipality of Maribor explain: *“The wine presented to the Royal couple was made from a graft of the Old Vine that was donated to the City of Ljubljana in 1990 and is now growing on Ljubljana Castle hill. So, the gift was the wine made from a descendant of the oldest vine in the world”.*

**DESCENDANTS OF THE OLD VINE GROW THROUGHOUT THE WORLD**

The Old Vine is a symbol of cooperation and friendship. Every year, the city of Maribor presents grafts of the oldest vine in the world to its partner cities and institutions in Slovenia and abroad.

The ceremonial gifts of the grafts are presented at the Old Vine Pruning. Pruning is the most important task in viticulture carried out by the city vinedresser, as proper pruning enhances growth and yield. The event is attended by many invited guests, citizens, representatives of wine orders and fraternities, and wine queens.

**Official offspring of the oldest vine in the world, authenticated with an official certificate, grow on 130 sites in Slovenia and 84 elsewhere in the world.**

Among the most interesting are sites in Melbourne, Berlin, Vienna, North Korea (Pyongyang), South Korea (Seoul), as well as in front of the Wine Museum in Paris and the ancient Benedictine monastery of Saint Paul in Carinthia, to name only a few. *“One of the most symbolic sites is in Hradčany Castle, Prague, where in 2014 the*



The wine made of the Old Vine’s grapes is kept in bottles designed by the internationally renowned artist Oskar Kogoj. Photo: Domen Grögl/ Maribor-Pohorje Tourist Board

*presidents of the two countries attended the planting of four vines in front of the statue of architect Jože Plečnik. A less known fact is that architect Plečnik, when redesigning Hradčany in 1920s, planned a vineyard on the southern slope,”* says the city vinedresser Kocutar, who also mentions a point of particular interest, namely the first and the only vineyard planted solely with the grafts of the oldest vine in the world. *“As many as 500 grafts were planted in 2015 on the estate of the Maribor Biotechnical School, which is about 20 minutes’ walk from Lent, where the Old Vine grows, and the first yield was produced in 2018,”* notes Kocutar.

**EVENTS RELATED TO THE OLD VINE**

Many events are held in Maribor to honour the Old Vine.

**The spring pruning, the summer erection of the wind rattle in front of the Old Vine and the Old Vine Festival – a wine, culinary and cultural tribute to the oldest vine in the world.**

The events culminate in the ceremonial harvest of the Old Vine. To honour the rich vine-growing tradition and culture and to acknowledge the winemakers from the Štajerska region, every November sees the St Martin’s Day Celebration in Maribor – the largest one-day public St Martin’s Day Celebration in Slovenia.



Old Vine Festival. Photo: Dejan Bulut/Maribor-Pohorje Tourist Board

## SECRET ROOMS AT HOTEL JAMA

# A world isolated for decades, just waiting to reveal its mysteries

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ  
PHOTO: POSTOJNA CAVE ARCHIVES

A communication centre which brings up more questions than answers.

Since its construction in 1971 and up to the present day, the Hotel Jama has offered overnight accommodation to many visitors of the famous Postojna Cave. Over the years its corridors were passed through by some great names of Yugoslav and international politics, pop culture, art and science. The UDBA secret police also operated here, and military intelligence used it as a meeting place.

Indeed, the legendary Hotel Jama occupies a very well thought-out strategic position. It served as a gathering place for influential and important figures in the political sphere, it was right next to a major motorway, and the former state had a military base in Postojna, so it is no wonder that a secret communication centre was set up right here too.

In 2009 the old hotel closed its door, and its stories remained carefully under lock and key. One of these was that until 1991 it had a double life, which was only revealed during the renovation of the hotel in 2016.

**The Secret Rooms found in the hotel bear witness to the activities of the secret services operated by the former political system.**

Hidden away deep in the core of the building was a communication centre of a special kind, which brings up more questions than answers. The stories that unfolded behind the closed doors of the Secret Rooms fire the imagination and stir up some dust.

### DISCOVERED BY CHANCE

On the technical handover of the renovated hotel, the managing director of the company that runs Postojna Cave, Marjan Batagelj, noticed straight away that one of the doors in the inner courtyard

had not been changed, which as a perfectionist he found bothersome even at first glance. "This was not the kind of renovation I was looking for." And since they couldn't find the key to open the door, they cut through the lock and entered a secret known only to very few people. After the discovery by the new owner of Hotel Jama, the Secret Rooms were first entered by police officers, followed by employees of the Slovenian intelligence and security service (SOVA) and of the Slovenian National Archive, and only then did the hotel employees get to look around. Large pieces of furniture, special apparatus and some basic notebooks and ash trays were left untouched. The objects that were fixed in place and the furniture were left as they were. The material that was found was taken by the competent authorities to the Slovenian Archive, while copies were made for the purpose of displaying them at Hotel Jama. In the Secret Rooms it is as though time has stood still. The cupboard still holds polystyrene boxes with recorded tapes, on the tables there are old newspapers and old paper forms, and even the dust on the old apparatus, conduits, tables and floor is from the time when the secret space was closed and forgotten.

**Visitors can listen in to some selected old recordings – surveillance and encrypted conversations which given an authentic taste of the space and for the purpose of a documented experience were specially offered by the Slovenian National Archive.**

While walking through these hidden corridors and spaces of Hotel Jama, visitors are accompanied by a voice explaining what they can see, along with the stories of people testifying about the space.

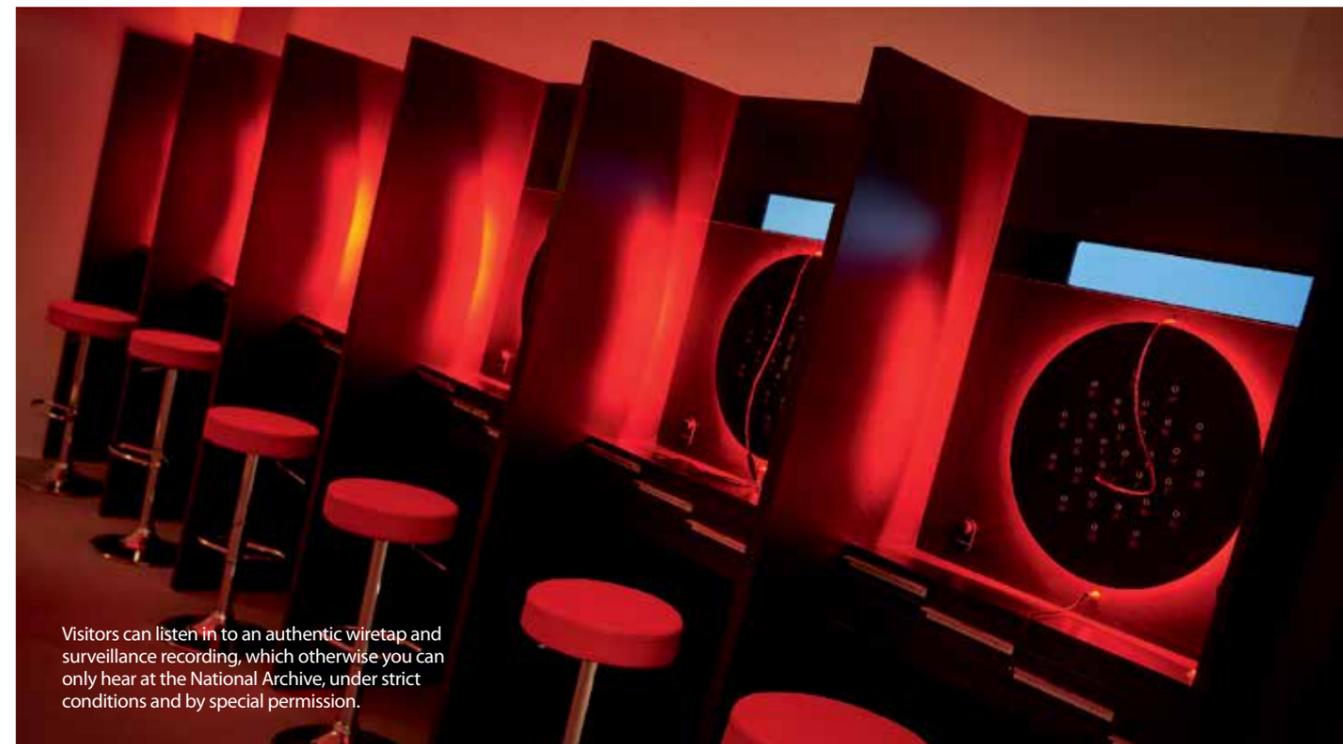
*“Unfortunately we discovered the rooms a little too late, when the renovation works had probably already destroyed part of the secret communication conduits and other installations. This is true especially of the renovation of the presidential suite, where we might have pulled down a cable that was perhaps used to record the sounds or events in the room,”* said the managing director of Postojna Cave, Marjan Batagelj.

*“It is not for us to seek out the truth, we opted instead to take a professional approach to what we discovered and bring in the experts*

*to explain what all the apparatus did. At the same time we were thinking of our guests, since we wanted to offer visitors a documentary, instructive experience. We wanted to leave them to their own curiosity and to have our new attraction lure them into this secret world,”* explained Batagelj, adding that he will leave any judgement around the uncovered and now publicly accessible space to the visitors.

#### SECRET ROOMS

The special new experience offered at Postojna Cave Park is called the Secret Rooms. Guests can now step into this incredible world of intrigue and secrets. After being inspected by the Slovenian National Archive, the police and all other official institutions, the Hotel Jama’s Secret Rooms remain fully authentic, complete



Visitors can listen in to an authentic wiretap and surveillance recording, which otherwise you can only hear at the National Archive, under strict conditions and by special permission.

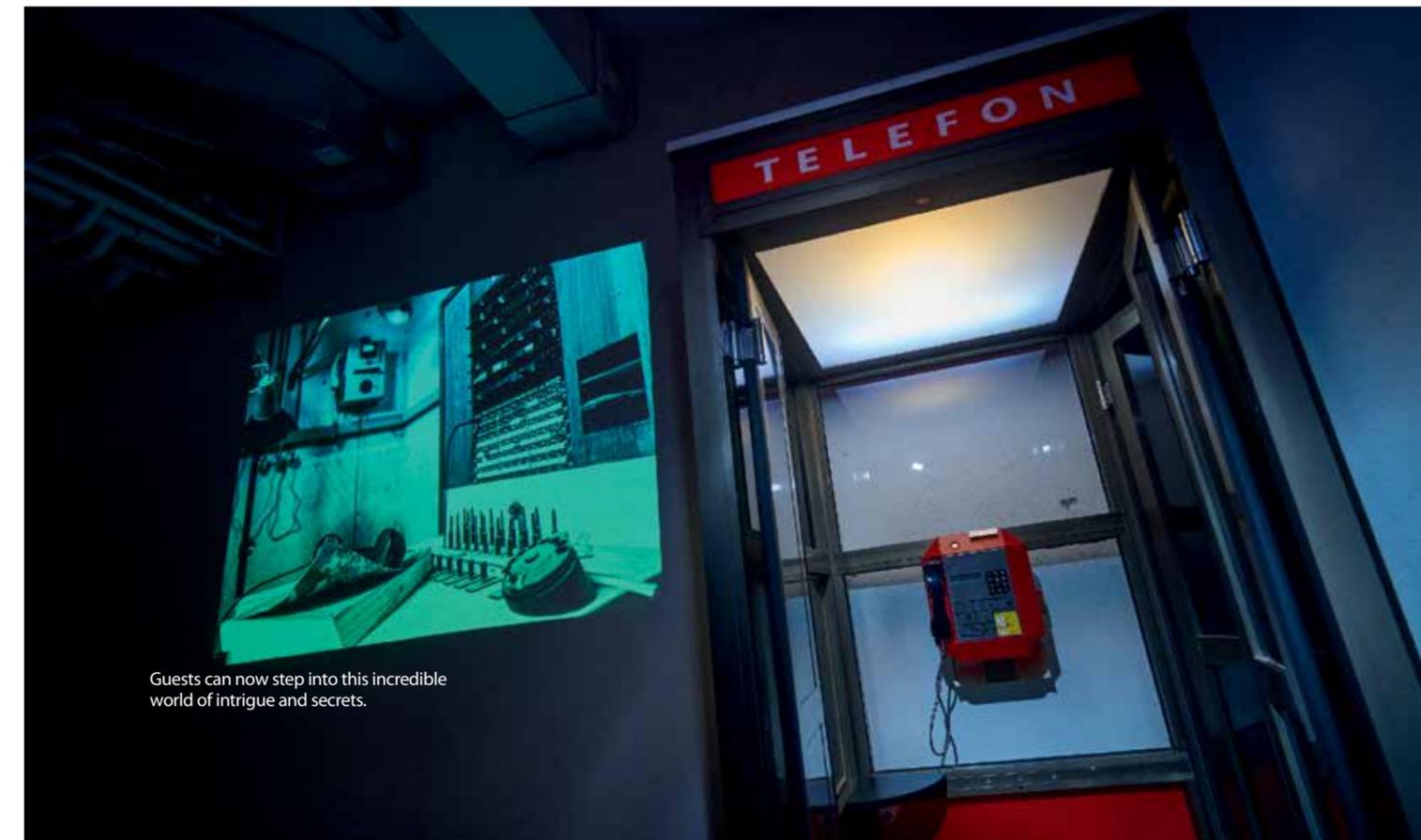
with all the communication and surveillance apparatus and impressions of a parallel life that unfolded behind the façade of the popular Hotel Jama. Some questions are still hanging in the air, but in the hour and a half tour visitors can form an impression of the events that took place in this secret underworld. Visitors to the Secret Rooms at Hotel Jama have an exceptional opportunity to listen in to an authentic wiretap and surveillance recording, which otherwise you can only hear at the National Archive, under strict conditions and by special permission.

**The interactive experience of the tour guided by a secret agent draws visitors into a hidden world, reveals cunning**

**strategies, an incredible location and some of the tricks used to ensure that these operations remained secret.**

It offers a look into the period from the 1970s up until independence, when such surveillance was still permitted. Unconsciously it draws attention to the present day, when the world has been voluntarily caught up in a web of publicly accessible personal data, while at the same time it waters down the power of secret institutions and operations.

For more information about tours, visit: <https://www.postojnska-jama.eu/en/attractions-in-the-park/the-secret-rooms-of-hotel-jama/>



Guests can now step into this incredible world of intrigue and secrets.

## TREETOP WALK

## A stroll among birds and the Pohorje forests

TEA KNAFLIČ

PHOTO: POT MED KROŠNJAMI POHORJE ARCHIVES



The walkway

The Treetop Walk Pohorje (*Pot med krošnjami*) is an innovative example of an experience offered in Slovenia that merges education, environmental awareness and fun for everyone. It is adapted for both children and wheelchair access.

The Pohorje Treetop Walk is just over a kilometre long, and offers enjoyment of the fantastic views from a rare perspective. It gives visitors the feeling of being part of forest life. Along the way there are information stations, where you can learn about the features of the Pohorje environment. The geological characteristics of Pohorje and the flora and fauna that occupy this area are presented in several languages. For the more daring the adrenaline stations, a virtual abyss, offer added fun. Each year new content will be added to the Treetop Walk, and in the spring of 2020 a toboggan run around 40 metres long will be in place, offering a slide down from a tower back to the walkway.

#### IN CLEAR WEATHER THE VIEW OPENS UP TO MULTIPLE SLOVENIAN LOCATIONS

The walkway leads to a 37-metre high viewing tower. From there you can see all the way to Olševa, Peca, Raduha and on to the Kamnik-Savinja Alps and Triglav. In the southern section you can see the entire slopes of Haloze and Boč, Donačka gora, Gorjanci, to the west Kum, the Posavje hills, Snežnik mountains including Učka, and all the way to the Adriatic Sea.

**The path to the tower climbs up gently, enabling easy access for families with small children and wheelchairs. The amenities for disabled persons are especially nice.**



Adrenaline stops



The entire treetop walk including the viewing tower is wheelchair and pram-friendly and offers a 360-degree view over the mountain peaks and valleys of the Pohorje Mountains.

They have the option of using a wheelchair if they are not up to hiking the walkway, and can obtain a one for free at the ticket office. Dogs are not permitted, and during your walk your pet will need to wait for you in the kennel by the entrance.

**GREEN TOURISM**

In setting up the Pohorje Treetop Walk, the contractors were especially careful not to damage any of the big, beautiful trees. The desire was to intrude as little as possible into the actual forest. Next year they will plant seedlings of native tree species that grow on the Pohorje.

The Pohorje mountain area is working hard to develop its green tourism, and offers unique experiences, tranquillity and a connection to nature. On Mount Rogla, children will be fascinated by the Škrat (Dwarf) interpretive trail, the Jezernik trail and Jezernik water park. The unique Energy Park, with its healing stones and sensory trail will recharge you with zest for life, and reawaken a youthful energy and desire to discover and observe nature.

The forest is a highly complex ecosystem that provides a habitat for numerous plant and animal species. The forest is in effect its own world, which you can experience if you are quiet and walk through it.

**Walking through the forest brings you into close contact with nature, and for that reason with yourself. So a stroll along the walkway through the tree tops is therapeutic.**

A trip to the forest will calm you and fill you with vital energy. And when you walk alone, that contact is even more intense. Anyone who can appreciate the beauty of the forests will experience a new dimension of feelings on Rogla. You can also go on a walk with your family. In

this way you can encourage your children to tune in to the forest. Together with them you can observe nature and the trees, and seek out the variety of living beings in the forest. The treetops are full of life, and will reward your close attention.

The Pohorje Treetop Walk is suitable for a visit at any time of year. It is lovely up on Rogla in the summer, when the temperatures are pleasant and a little lower than in the valley, and in the autumn when nature starts to wind down, as do we. Winter conjures up its fairy tale white covering, and the view of the snowy trees is magical. Spring comes a little later on Rogla than in the valley,

but it heralds a new beginning and brings optimism. The Pohorje Treetop Walk will be open throughout the year, closed only at Christmas and for one day in November reserved for walkway maintenance. The opening hours of the walkway will be adjusted to the daylight hours. We recommend finding a time to visit when the walkway will not be so busy, so you can sense the tranquillity and fully experience the Pohorje Treetop Walk as it was intended.

Our family enjoyed it, both the children and adults, and will certainly be making the trip again. Perhaps next time we'll see you there.

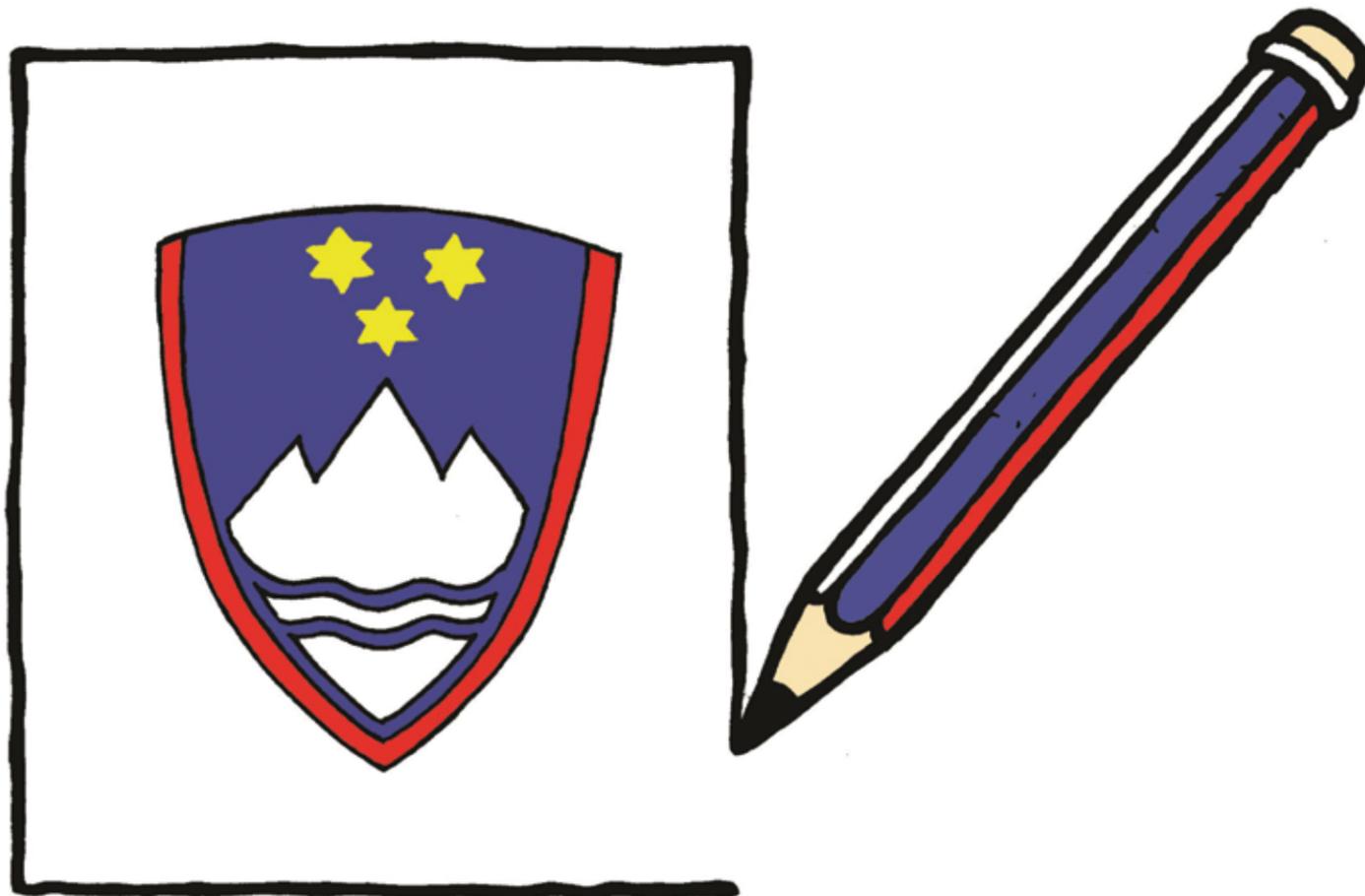


Educational stops

## ILLUSTRATED CONSTITUTION

**For young people – but not only for them**

URŠA VIDRIH  
ILLUSTRATIONS: ZORAN SMILJANIČ



**AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE  
TO THE CONSTITUTION**

This year marks the twenty-eighth anniversary of the adoption by a two-thirds majority of new democratic rules for Slovenians: the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. We often refer to this fundamental document, but few people know it very well.

To mark its twentieth anniversary, in 2011 the National Assembly designed some projects to make the constitution more familiar to the general public. It decided to first make the constitution available to vulnerable groups.

**To present it in a format accessible to these, on its online portal the National Assembly made available an audio recording of the constitution as well as a video showing it in Slovenian sign language, and it presented every blind and partially sighted resident with a copy of the constitution in Braille.**

Another challenge was how to make the complicated legal language of the text understandable to a young audience. A comic seemed to be the right format, because it is a medium based on a narrative and pictorial simplification. The National Assembly and the Constitutional Court invited the renowned comic artist Zoran Smiljanič to participate in the project. He designed the Illustrated Constitution as an inviting cartoon land where the main characters, Maja and Miha, take an entertaining and informative walk through about sixty selected articles of the document. Its content is presented as a kind of guide offering readers playful insights into the functioning of a democratic state and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP PROJECT**

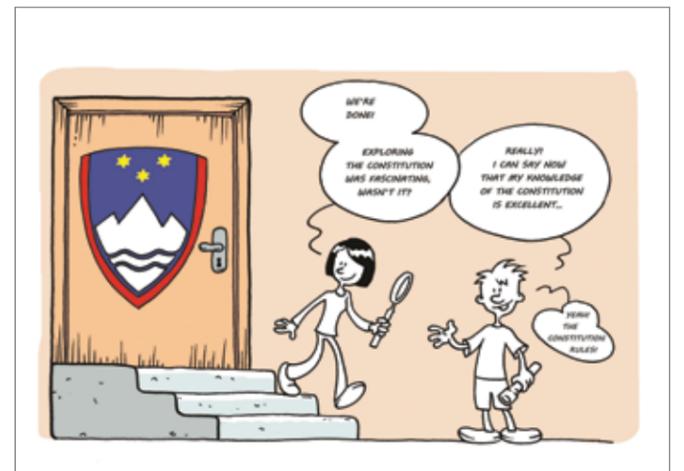
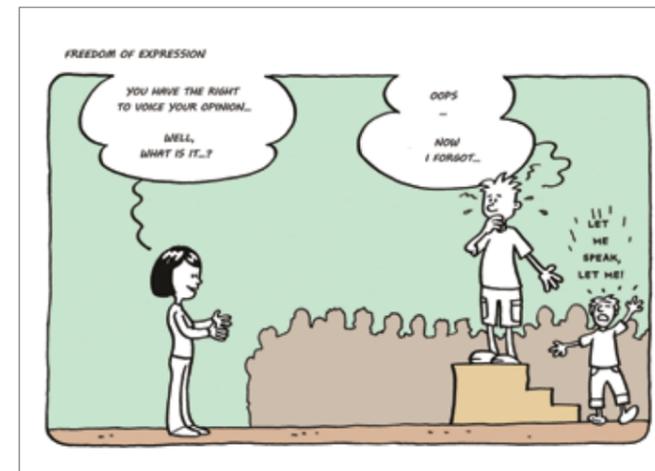
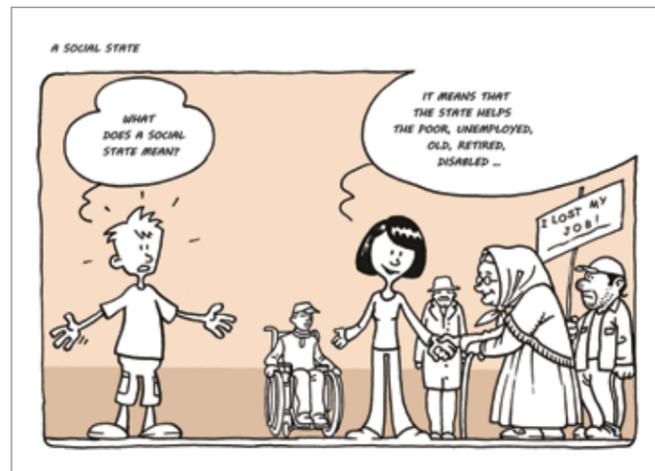
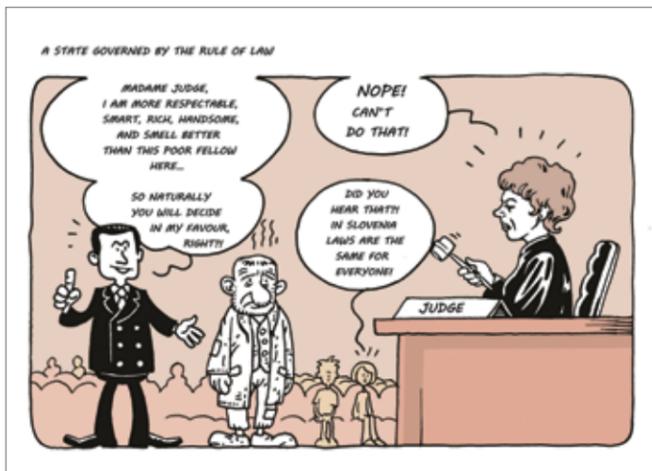
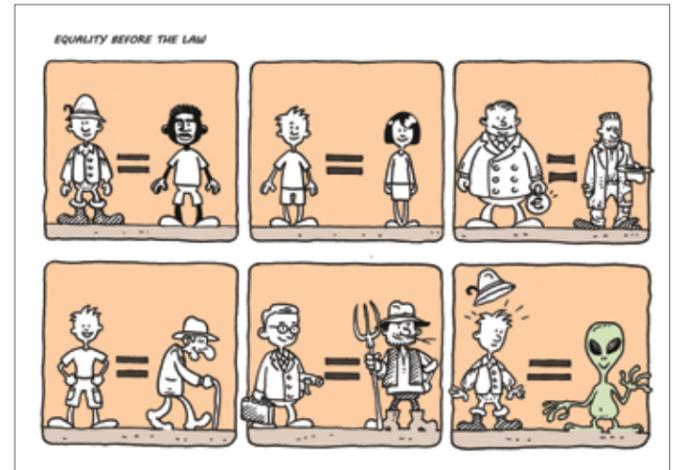
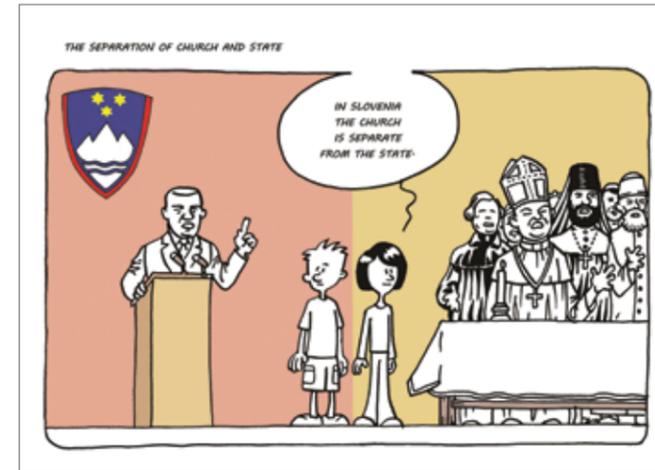
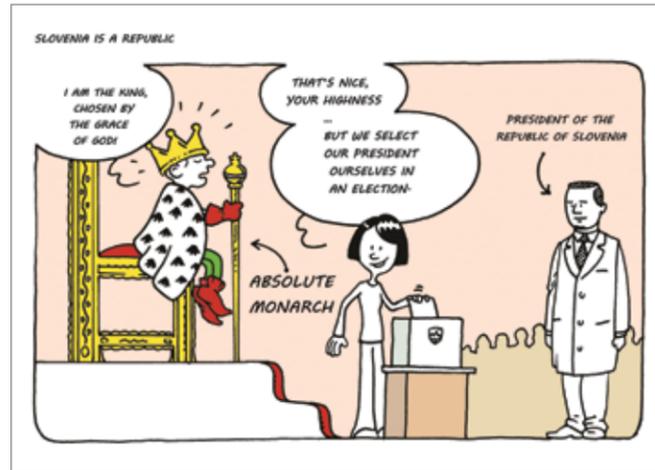
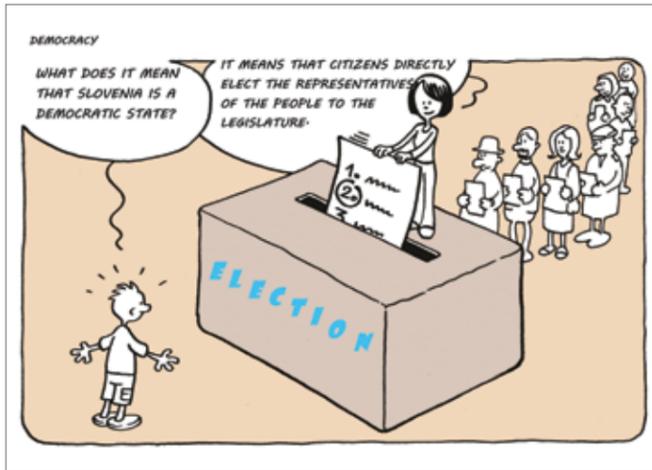
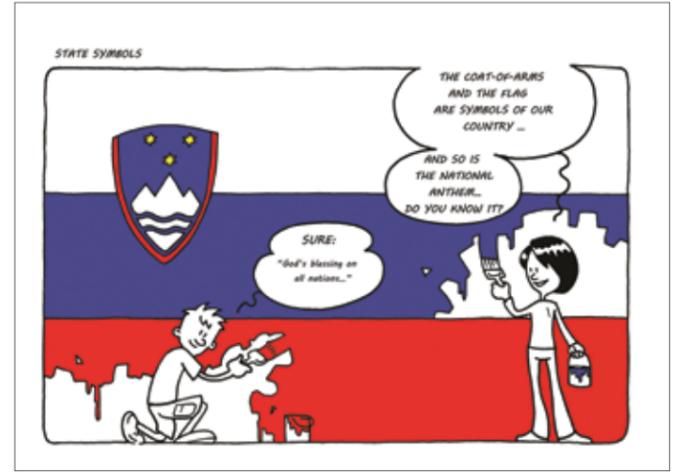
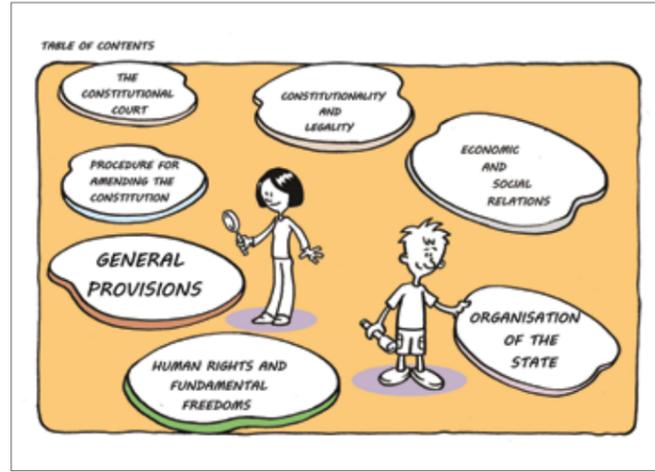
At its very outset, the project received a good public response, and this has grown over the years and reached a new dimension.

At first, the Illustrated Constitution was only available in an online version (with amendments added in 2014, 2016 and 2017), which primary schools quickly adopted as a useful educational tool for teaching civic education and ethics. In 2017 a printed edition of the Illustrated Constitution was published in 4,500 copies, and the National Assembly, together with the Constitutional Court and the Ministry of Justice, donated copies to all primary school libraries in Slovenia. At the beginning of this year, 22,150 copies of the Illustrated Constitution were reprinted, and every Slovenian seventh-grader received a copy at school as part of the Active Citizenship Project.

**Because of its visual attractiveness, the Illustrated Constitution is often used in promotional material, such as book-marks, a memory game, and colouring books for children who visit the National Assembly.**

The National Assembly also offers an English edition of the Illustrated Constitution as a protocol gift, and it has been translated into Italian and Hungarian.

To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Assembly in 2017, an exhibition on the Illustrated Constitution was opened, which later became the National Assembly's permanent exhibition in the lobby of the Great Hall's balcony. The exhibition is currently on display until 3 December 2019 in Ljubljana Castle's Pentagonal Tower, where it is more accessible to visitors from abroad.





## SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES

# Contribution to joint peace efforts

From 13 to 15 September 2019, the Slovenian Armed Forces hosted the NATO Military Committee conference in Ljubljana, gathering the Chiefs of Defence of all allied armed forces and NATO's top military representatives.

MAJOR NINA RADUHA  
Photo: SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES ARCHIVES

The conference hosted by Chief of the General Staff, Major General Alenka Ermenc was chaired by Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, supported by his strategic commanders.

The conference, which officially opened on Friday, 13 September at the National Gallery in Ljubljana, was attended by more than 400 participants, including 150 distinguished guests. The guests were addressed by the President of the Republic of Slovenia and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, Borut Pahor, who emphasised his and the nation's pride in the Slovenian Armed Forces.

**He noted that Slovenians have defended their independence many times, and that Slovenia was no longer alone as of 2004, when it joined NATO.**

On Saturday, 14 September, the Chiefs of Defence and the strategic commanders of NATO member states met at the Hotel Union

in Ljubljana to discuss the current defence and security topics of relevance to the Alliance in the context of ensuring peace and security. The main topics of their discussion were operations, missions and activities, the maintaining of readiness and the Alliance's deterrence posture, as well as the development of a concept of warfare in a modern security environment that will be capable of facing and meeting today's security challenges. At the end of the session, Air Chief Marshal Stuart Peach expressed his highest appreciation for Slovenia's 15-year-long contribution to supporting the common values and mission of the Alliance, which remains in the service of freedom, rights, democracy, the rule of law and legality. Participants at the conference agreed that the Alliance will continue to endorse the open door policy and that they soon expect a new member, North Macedonia. In the conclusions of the conference, Air Chief Marshal Peach stressed the need to maintain the strong deterrence posture of the Alliance, although its greatest responsibility is to protect the inhabitants of the allied countries from any kind of threat. He concluded by pointing out the need for higher investments in the right capabilities, especially for raising the levels of readiness and responsiveness with



Chief of the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces Major General Alenka Ermenc hosted the NATO Military Committee Conference in Chiefs of Defence Session in Ljubljana and its chairman Air Chief Marshal Stuart Peach.

regard to contemporary forms of security and hybrid challenges. He stressed that NATO is a flexible organisation that constantly adapts to changing security challenges.

#### **SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ALLIANCE**

Major General Alenka Ermenc, Chief of the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces, said that the Alliance's collective defence was a strong support to Slovenia's security and that therefore the Slovenian Armed Forces also proudly contribute to the joint efforts of ensuring international peace in operations and missions, which include as many as 6% of service members, and where the Slovenian Armed Forces have been present for over 22 years.

For the Slovenian Armed Forces, the conference's organisation and execution proved an extremely challenging project, involving more than 600 service members, as well as personnel from other state authorities.

**As stressed by the Minister of Defence, Karl Erjavec, Slovenia and the Slovenian Armed Forces hosted the conference in a year of significant milestones – the 15th anniversary of the accession of the Republic of Slovenia to Euro-Atlantic structures, and the 70th anniversary of the founding of NATO.**

By hosting the conference, the Slovenian Armed Forces also proved to be a credible partner in organising the most demanding events, and Slovenia established itself as an equal partner. We used the opportunity offered by the conference and sent a message of unity and determination from the North Atlantic Alliance for a secure and prosperous future for all!



# JANJA GARNBRET

## First climber with five gold medals

POLONA PREŠEREN



Janja Garnbret  
Photo: Daniel Novaković/STA

Janja Garnbret is a climber. She is an exceptionally talented and successful young sports woman. It looks like in her chosen pursuit – sport climbing – she has already won everything. But her path is still leading upward, and next year Janja will compete for the first time in the Olympics, in Tokyo.

For Janja there is no longer any doubt, next year she will be competing at the Tokyo Olympics, since she convincingly met the requirements in her last world championship at Hachioji in Japan, where she became three-fold world champion – in bouldering, lead and combination.

**She is the first sport climber to win three different golds, but her history-making is not confined to climbing. She is also the first climber to defend the title of world champion in bouldering.**

Janja has high goals, but in this year's season it seems that she has surpassed herself. "After every season I said to myself, I couldn't have a better season than that. But this year came a season when I truly couldn't do any better. I won't ever repeat a season like this. I just hope that the next one will be at least half as good," said the very likeable Janja.

She won her first title of world champion as a 17-year-old secondary school student. She knows very well that only hard work pays off, as she has learned. She never lets up, training six times a week for around three hours. It wasn't easy, but she was able to coordinate sports, other activities and school. She took some time out from competing to take her matura school leaving exam, but now she is back at her sport with a vengeance.

### FOCUSED ON CLIMBING

"In the beginning of the season I set myself goals and trained all year for this. I didn't count on having so many wins, especially in boulder-

ing, but I really enjoy it. You have to enjoy what you do. Also, if you want to achieve something in this, everything flows much more easily," says Janja, who carefully sets herself goals before each season. Although the rhythm is arduous, she never runs out of energy or skips anything. She focuses on her climbing.

"This year I didn't know I could expect anything in lead climbing, since the competition is very tough and a lot of new, younger competitors arrived," said Janja, who also holds the Slovenian speed record, of the various climbing categories.

**Then there is combination, a discipline where it is very important to be able to switch quickly between individual categories.**

"You have to be ready and warmed up for everything, and this doesn't pose any major problem for me anymore," says Janja, who is well aware that the competition never ends until it is truly over. Climbing is an individual sport, but Janja has an outstanding team behind her, helping and supporting her.

At the beginning of her career could she imagine being so successful? "No. I started climbing for one reason – I really did enjoy it. It was my hobby, my passion. The results are just the icing on the cake. If you don't enjoy it, you haven't done anything. I never thought that one day I would do sports professionally," adds Janja, who recommends climbing to everyone, from the youngest to the oldest. "There is always something for everyone that is just the right kind of difficulty and that they will enjoy," says Janja. "Apart from that, there will never be any shortage of challenges, and that's such a draw that you'll never want to stop."

After winning three titles, the most common question put to her by the media was: what goals can she set herself now? But Janja does not explain her goals out loud, she keeps them to herself. Usually in December, when the season is over, she takes a brief break from climbing and more time for herself. It is then that she sets her goals and simply pursues them.

**She is characterised by exceptional climbing technique and outstanding psychological preparation, focus and calm.**

Next year she will be climbing for the first time in the Olympic Games. And what does it mean to Janja that she will be representing her country in front of the world? *"It's the dream of every sports person to take part in the Olympics. That was my dream as well, and I am already looking forward to returning to Japan next year. The fans there are wonderful, they cheer for everyone, not just their own competitors."* Janja has just a few more climbing challenges ahead, then she will have a well-earned rest at the end of the season and time to prepare for the Olympics.



Janja Garnbret truly enjoys climbing.  
Photo: Stanko Gruden/STA

## EUROVOLLEY 2019

## Slovenia is a volleyball success story

POLONA PREŠEREN



Slovenia and Serbia played the grand finale.  
Photo: Polona Prešeren

In September, Slovenia co-organised the CEV EuroVolley Championship, which was also held in three other countries: in France, the Netherlands and Belgium. All of Slovenia lived and breathed volleyball between 13 and 29 September. The games in Stožice Arena were very well attended, and the national team's outstanding performance created a state of volleyball euphoria.

The championship was for the first time organised by four countries. A total of 24 national teams competed in the event. The competition organisation system assigned 19 matches to Slovenia, including one of the semi-finals, while the other semi-final match and the grand final were held in Paris. Ljubljana's Stožice Arena hosted one of the preliminary rounds in which Slovenia faced off against five national teams: Russia, Finland, Turkey, Belarus and North Macedonia.

**The Slovenian players did an excellent job, raised on the wings of cheering fans. The packed Stožice Arena was alive with cheers of encouragement in an amazing atmosphere. The venue had never seen such spirit before.**

Alberto Giuliani's players inspired a true volleyball frenzy among Slovenians, and it just kept on growing to the final match.

But it all started well before the championship. The organisers made sure that Slovenians genuinely connected with the sport. In the summer, for instance, they organised a beach volleyball tournament in Congress Square, Ljubljana's main square.

Right before the championship the events reached their peak with a spectacular volleyball tournament that was held on water for the first time ever. Ambassadors of EuroVolley 2019 challenged each other on the River Ljubljanica, right in the centre of the capital. The court was a type of raft marked with glowing lines to delineate the

actual playing surface. The embankment served as the stands, and it was completely packed! The unique design of the court attracted plenty of visitors, and convinced many that attending the championship was an essential next step in their enjoyment of the sport.

Several former professional volleyball players had a go on the water: Bas Van de Goor (Netherlands), Guillaume Samica (France), Frank Depestele (Belgium) and Slovenian championship ambassador Tomi Šmuc. The match between volleyball superstars was followed by an enthralling duel between the best Slovenian bi-athletes and ski jumpers.

#### CHAMPIONSHIP

And then the serious business began. In all honesty, our team did an amazing job. After the preliminary rounds the Slovenian team beat Bulgaria in the Round of 16, then outplayed Russia in the quarter-finals and defeated Poland, the current world champions, in the semi-final in Ljubljana. Unfortunately, the Serbian team was too tough for the Slovenians in the finals, and they returned to their homeland with silver medals in their hands, repeating their success from the EuroVolley 2015 Championship.

**In Paris, the volleyball heroes enjoyed the support of thousands of Slovenian fans, many of whom travelled there by car. Over 3,000 of them cheered for the team in the Accor Hotels Arena, and their singing of *Zdravljica*, Slovenia's national anthem, was a truly emotional experience.**



The Trocadero in front of Eiffel Tower was crowded with Slovenian fans who came to Paris to support the national team.  
Photo: Polona Prešeren

Although everything did not go according to plan, it seemed that the players were much more disappointed than the fans who had travelled thousands of kilometres to see the event. Indeed, while the fans swelled with pride, Tine Urnaut, the captain of the Slovenian team, could not mask his disappointment. *“This is a bitter disappointment, but we have to look at the bright side, we did a lot to popularise volleyball. To have so many people travel to Paris to show support... is such a positive surprise,”* he said after the match. *“The whole of Slovenia is proud of the medals, but we were aiming for the top. In 2015 the silver shone as bright as gold, but this time it’s just silver,”* added Dejan Vinčič.

#### OLYMPIC VOLLEYBALL QUALIFICATION IN JANUARY

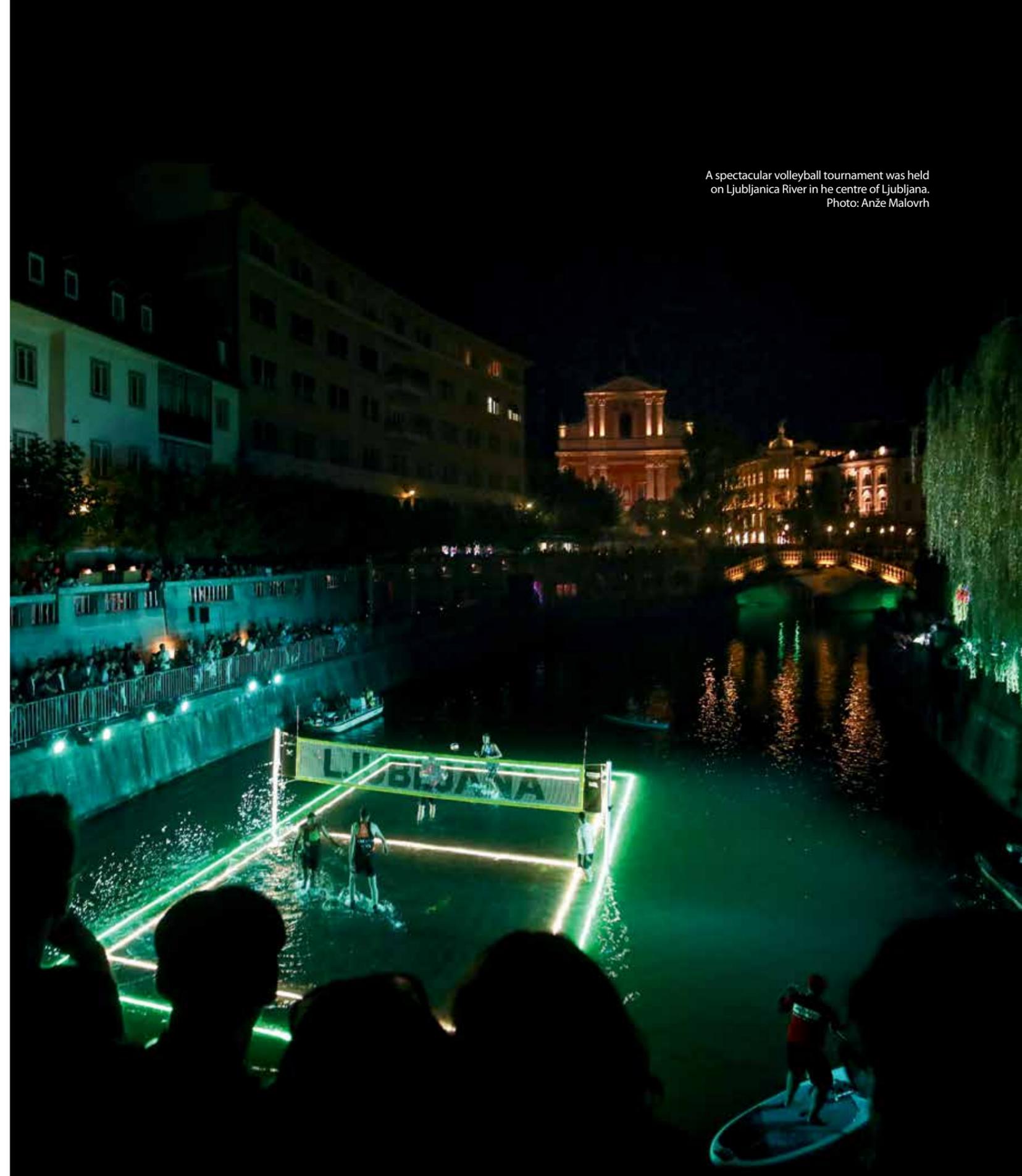
The players, who spent quite some time together before the championship, will join forces once again at the beginning of next year to secure qualification for the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. The tournament, which will be held in Berlin, will feature seven European national teams divided into two pools. Slovenia will compete against Germany, the Czech Republic and Belgium, while the second pool will see Serbia, France, Bulgaria and the Netherlands fight for one of the two spots in the semi-finals. However, only the winner of the tournament in Berlin will get to compete in the Tokyo Olympics.

*“Another long tournament is ahead of us, and we will have to do our absolute best. I hope that we’ll be able to heal all the injuries we have, there are more than just a few, and that we’ll be in great physical shape. If that is the case, we’ll have enough energy to qualify for the Olympics,”* said captain Tine Urnaut, with a bit more confidence.

**After all, our silver team was welcomed in the centre of Ljubljana by thousands of fans from all over Slovenia who showed that the colour of the medal is not important. What counts is the players’ effort, fighting spirit and enthusiasm while wearing the national team’s colours.**

We will most certainly support and cheer for them during next year’s Olympic qualification matches.

A spectacular volleyball tournament was held on Ljubljanica River in the centre of Ljubljana.  
Photo: Anže Malovrh





Dear readers, we would like to make Sinfo Magazine even better, so your opinion is invaluable to us. Please answer the survey questions. Your responses will be of great help to us in our work. With your help, in the future we will be able to improve the content of the magazine according to your wishes and needs. The survey is anonymous, and will take just 3 minutes of your time. Thank you.

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