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July-August

The Best from Slovenia

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SLOVENIA**



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SLOVENIAN INFORMATION

July-August 2018

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Editor-in-Chief
Petra Ložar

Executive Editor
Tanja Glogovčan

Editorial Board
Polona Prešeren, Vesna Žarkovič, Irena Kogoj,
Livija Kovač Kostantinovič, Uroš Mahkovec,
Janja Klasinc

Design
Irena Kogoj

Photo Editor
Foto format d.o.o.

Photo on the front page
Festival Ana Desetnica, Andrej Tarfila

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

Language editing
Amidas

Copy writer editing
Paul Steed

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BREATH-TAKING IMPRESSIONS

Slovenia is a country with inspiring cultural heritage. The increasing number of tourists proves that as well. Tourists who come to Slovenia absolutely love it and are excited to come back. Despite its size, Slovenia's main feature is diversity, be it natural, culinary or cultural. Boutique establishments only add to this with their intimate and unique selection of experiences.

Diversity has always been Slovenia's strong point, and respecting it makes the Slovenian nation better. It is the core of the Slovenian identity.

In modern times Slovenians have successfully revitalized and presented their cultural masterpieces, and made efforts to develop old artisanal techniques. Slovenians pride themselves on their long tradition of ballet and folk dances, great literature and exhibitions at the National Gallery of Slovenia, their treasure trove of national art and culture. Tourists of all generations, including young family members, can choose from a wide selection of services in the summer months.

You'll have no problem finding beauty and attractions in Slovenia, as natural and cultural landmarks are around every corner. And when you get tired of having your breath taken away, the culinary selection will knock your socks off.

There is no doubt – Slovenia is a must-see. As soon as possible!

Tanja Glogovčan, Executive Editor

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ALL THIS IS SLOVENIA

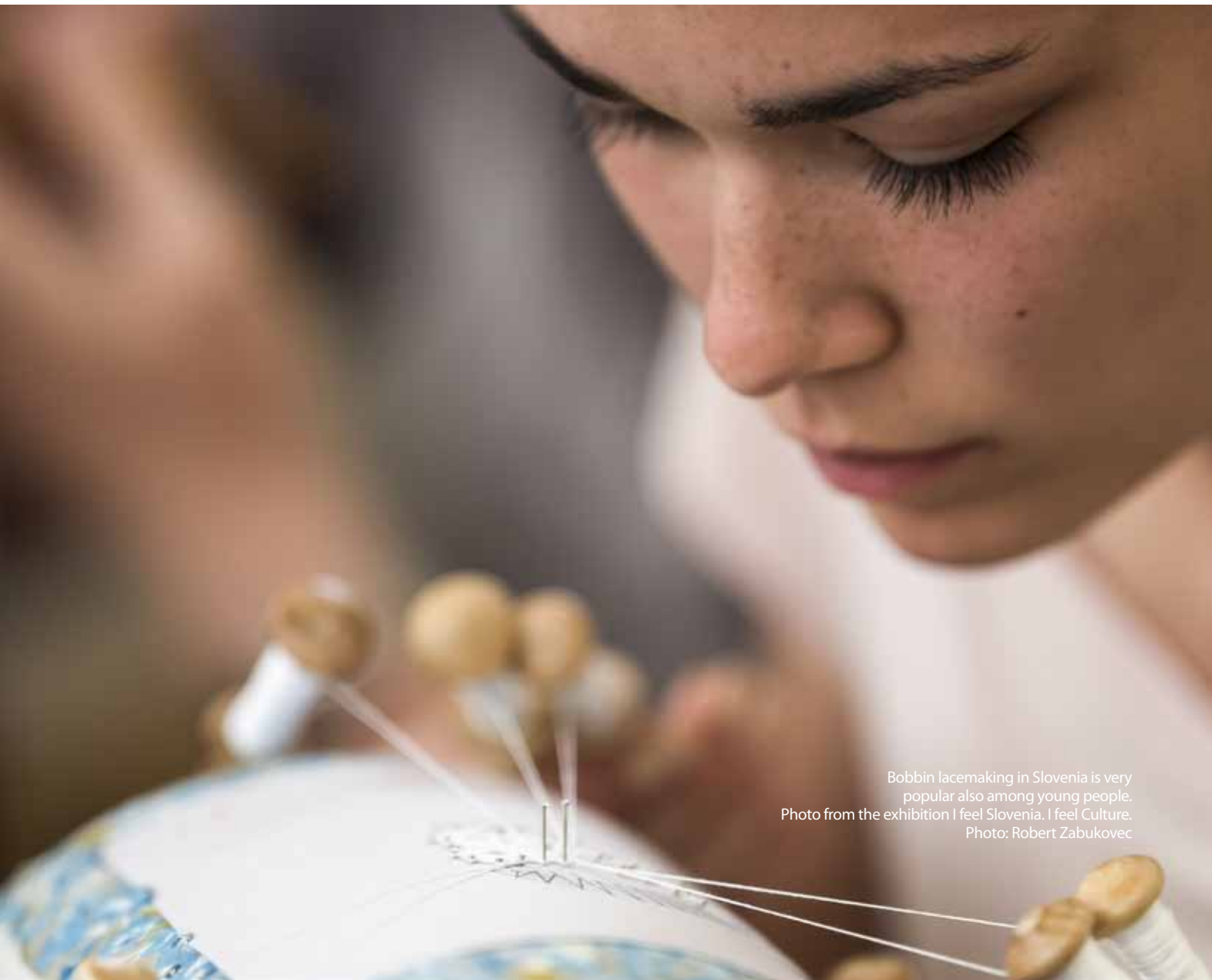
A diverse wealth of folk songs and dances, colourful ethnic costumes and customs, rich cuisine and noble wines, a wide variety of technical and artistic creations and an amazing cultural landscape – all this is Slovenia. Since its earliest times, Slovenian culture has been the foundation of Slovenia's uniqueness, its pride, and the heart of its national identity.

A UNIQUE SLOVENIAN HANDICRAFT

The Art of Dry Stone and Bobbin Lacemaking in Slovenia are nominated for the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list

EDA BELINGAR, UNIV. DIPL. ETN. AND PROF. SOCIOL., THE COORDINATOR OF THE SERIAL NOMINATION OF DRY STONE TECHNIQUES TO THE UNESCO LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY FOR THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

AFRODITA HEBAR KLJUN, VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGNER AND LACE ARTIST, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOBBIN AND NEEDLE LACE ORGANISATION OIDFA



Bobbin lacemaking in Slovenia is very popular also among young people.
Photo from the exhibition I feel Slovenia. I feel Culture.
Photo: Robert Zabukovec

The UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is one of the most important methods of protecting intangible cultural heritage internationally, and is based on the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2003.

The UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee decides on new additions to the Representative List every year. The Ministry of Culture nominated bobbin lacemaking in Slovenia after the successful registry of the door-to-door rounds of Kurenti, and following the Republic of Cyprus' initiative, eight countries, including Slovenia, nominated the art of dry stone knowledge and techniques. Both nominations will be discussed this year.

DRY STONE – THE KARST REGION'S TRADEMARK

People had to adapt the environment if they wanted to survive. Deforestation and earthmoving, along with removing excess stones, are techniques that have been used for centuries to increase the area of farmland. As the pastures did not yield sufficient feed, other areas were designated and maintained as meadows in order to collect hay for storage and feed during the winter. "All hay meadows were maintained in the spring. The rocks were removed and put it in a pile," says a Naklo local.

People living in rocky terrain have always used dry stone techniques to shape their environment.

No exception were the Karst region, "in the midst of the storm, the sea hardened into stone", and Istria, Slovenian regions with an abundance of stones, and the place where dry stone techniques were mostly spread building practices in the country. People in these regions didn't remove stones for aesthetic purposes, it was

necessary for survival. The rocks that were removed from the meadows were placed of and stacked; one of the stacking methods was a dry stone technique which was used to build walls and other facilities. "Old men dug out rocks and used them for building," tell locals at Sveto village.

Just like chess, the rules of stacking dry stones are incredibly simple, but it is very important to follow them consistently. The main structure is a dry-stone wall, stable due to the careful selection of stones and their correct placement.

The stones overlap one another both horizontally and vertically, and this, along with the pressure they exert on each other, contributes to a wall's structural integrity.

Dry stone walls are the simplest structures and the easiest to build. They were created by moving stones that were removed and dug out from areas intended for farmland or meadows, and stacking them in a pile. When building outside of villages, the stones were not treated in any way. The builder thus had to adapt to the available, always different material and create a practical construction without using anything to bind the stones together.

The cultures of the Karst and Istrian regions are the results of human habitation and the use of the environment from prehistoric times to the present day. Dry stone techniques and dry stone walls

helped shape these regions. The knowledge of dry stone techniques was one of the basic conditions for survival in this part of the world. The dry wall in all its shapes is a result of people's efforts to improve the land, and it has thus affected the lives of generations. At the same time, dry walls turned out to be firm and aesthetic solutions that would outlive many modern structures built according to modern engineering regulations.

While the original practical value of dry-stone walls is being lost today, the awareness of their aesthetic and sustainable values – which contribute to the appeal of the Karst and Istrian regions – is growing.

The knowledge of dry stone techniques enables the maintenance and restoration of existing dry stone walls, which is one of the conditions to preserve the landscape and revive the original use of the environment in the future.

The awakened interest and activities for preservation and popularisation of dry stone techniques as an intangible cultural heritage of the Karst and Istrian regions occurred simultaneously with Cyprus's initiative to register the art of dry stone on the UNESCO Representative list of intangible cultural heritage in 2016.

The art of dry stone was registered in the National Registry on 20 May 2016.

Following intense activities, the nomination of The Art of Dry Stone: Knowledge and Techniques was submitted in March 2017 to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and is now waiting to be evaluated.

BOBBIN LACEMAKING IN SLOVENIA – WEAVING TIES BETWEEN PEOPLE

The mystery about the origins and first attempts of lacemaking in Slovenia still remains hidden in the threads of history. The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola from 1689 is considered the oldest written re-

cord about lacemaking in Slovenia, and it states: "Here in Ljubljana, different Dutch and Venetian lace is made and sent to many lands, and peddlers take them to faraway places."

In addition to Ljubljana, bobbin lace was also made in the 17th and 18th centuries in Idrija, Logatec, Radovljica and Kamnik and their surroundings.

In the 19th century bobbin lacemaking spread to Idrija's surroundings, Cerkno, the Trnovo Forest Plateau, part of the Slovene Littoral and to Poljane and Selca Valleys. As many as 159 Slovenian towns were making bobbin lace by the end of the 1920s.

Vocational training significantly affected the development of lacemaking. The first lace school was founded in 1763 in Ljubljana. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries lace schools were also established in the following towns: Idrija (1876), Izola (1883), Soča (1884), Otlica (1885), Bovec (1887), Čepovan (1891), Cerkno and Horjul (1900), Žiri and Polhov Gradec (1906), Železniki (1907), Gorenja vas, Sovodnje ob Soči and Veliki Dol (1909). The knowledge of bobbin lacemaking was also spread by oral tradition from generation to generation. In addition to women, men and children also made bobbin lace at the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th. Bobbin lacemaking was an important source of income for many families in those times.

Lacemaking today is one of the most widespread crafts in Slovenia, practised in 129 locations across the country.

There are as many as 119 active bobbin lacemaking societies, sections and groups. Lace schools in Idrija, Žiri and Železniki and their branches educate more than 700 students aged between six and 15 every year. Bobbin lacemaking is an elective subject at 12 primary schools in eight other towns, and is chosen by more than 300 students aged 13 to 15. In addition to this, more than 400 students take up bobbin lacemaking as part of their extra-curricular activities at 34 primary schools, or even as an after-school activity in 28 towns across the country.



Within the second set of practical training in Carstic dry walling for adults, that was implemented within the Living Landscape project, participants reconstructed the roof of Marinča House in Kosovelje. Photo: E. Belingar, 2014.



Architect Manca Ahlin created a lace screen for a Mediterranean restaurant in New York City. The traditional bobbin lace technique is translated from fine thread to the larger dimension (eleven by three meters) of thick hemp rope. Photo: Manca Ahlin Archive

Lacemaking is losing its historical role as a source of (additional) income, and is becoming more of a leisure activity that inspires people to engage in handicrafts, socialise and relax. The intertwining of threads is also a creative challenge and means of expression for Slovenia's fashion designers, designers, architects and other artists. Lace also inspires artists in music, literature, and dance.

The Idrija bobbin lacemaking was added to Slovenia's List of Registered Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013, while Slovenian bobbin lacemaking followed in 2015. Both elements were declared a cultural monument of national importance in 2016.

The widespread practice of lacemaking in Slovenia, both geographically as well as in the form of lacemaking language, is a foundation for the nomination of bobbin lacemaking in Slovenia to the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

By adding lace to the list, Slovenia hopes for better visibility and more appropriate evaluation of the work done by lacemakers, and the improved preservation and development of bobbin lacemaking and its creative practices.

Contemporary lacemaking is not only a new means of expressing for contemporary lace artists, it also spreads awareness of the importance of preserving traditional craft skills and offer new possibilities of using lace, what is a guaranty for survival of lacemaking in modern time.

Urh Sobočan, a visual communication designer, introduced the demanding theme of war in the former Yugoslavia to Slovenian lace. The soft threads of his lace illustrations do not just carry an artistic message, they represent the ties of the designer who lives and works abroad with his homeland and family (his grandmother used his sketches to make bobbin lace). Such a connection with the local artisanal tradition also proved to be an advantage in New York, where Slovenian architect Manca Ahlin lives and works. She created large lace structures in architectural scale that now decorate certain public places in the Big Apple. Her works adorn restaurant Mykonos Blue in Chelsea, Etsy Headquarters and Starbucks cafes among others. Manca Ahlin and Urh Sobočan are two among many Slovene artist who expands the horizons of bobbin lacemaking not only in Slovenia, but their activity leaves traces also on the international level.

BALLET 100

Ljubljana's professional Ballet Ensemble was one of the first in Europe

DR HENRIK NEUBAUER, TANJA GLOGOVČAN

PHOTO: SLOVENIAN NATIONAL OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF LJUBLJANA ARCHIVES



Swan lake

This autumn will mark a hundred years of the first Slovenian ballet ensemble in Ljubljana. Considering how ballet around the world developed, Slovenians should be proud of their 100-year tradition, as Ljubljana's Ballet Ensemble was established before those in Belgrade and other former Yugoslavian republics, except Zagreb, and before those in most European countries and beyond.

The first Slovenian professional ballet ensemble was established in 1918 (and lasted until 1928), when the Slovenian theatre that had been closed during the war opened its doors again. At that time, with the help of the first Ljubljana Theatre post-war intendant Fran Govekar, a ballet ensemble with Director Vaclav Vlček from the Czech Republic joined the Ljubljana Opera Theatre. The first female dancers were Czech, not Slovenian, but they were soon joined by Slovenian female ballet dancers Lidija Wisiak, Rut Vavpotič, Erna Mohar, Silva Japelj, Marta Jakše-Remškar, Gizela Pavšič-Bravničar and, a little later on, by Slovenian male ballet dancers Slavko Eržen, Štefan Suhi, Maks Kirbos and Boris Pilato. From 1924 Peter Gresserov, also known as Golovin, who had emigrated from Russia and studied Electrical Engineering in Ljubljana, collaborated with the ensemble as a guest.

The first decade of the Slovenian professional ballet ensemble in Ljubljana was marked by frequent changing of ballet masters, namely Vaclav Vlček, Vaclav Pohan, Grega Poggiolesi, Aleksander Trobiš, Maria Tulyakova and then Vaclav Vlček again. One of the choreographers was a former soloist from the Saint Petersburg Ballet Theatre, Yelena Polyakova. During this first successful period (especially with Pohan as the ballet master) there were 20 performances staged in Ljubljana, among them several masterpieces such as Coppélia, Die Puppenfee, Les Sylphides, Scheherazade, Swan Lake, and Capriccio Espagnol. Two ballets were performed to the music written by Slovenian composers – Plesna Legendica by Risto Savin and Možiček by Josip Ipavec.

THE PETER GOLOVIN ERA (1928-1946)

The Director of the Slovenian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, Mirko Polič, interviewed in 1928 Peter Golovin, who had collaborated on several ballet performances for four years and who graduated as an electrical engineer that same year. Polič talked Golovin into taking over the Ljubljana ballet rather than finding a job in his field. The result of this interview was Golovin's eighteen-year-long leadership of the ensemble. The Ljubljana Ensemble became stronger due to his persistent choreographic and educational work, and gained much recognition from critics and audiences.

Golovin directed more than 30 operas and operettas, and choreographed 130 operas and operettas as well as 50 short and long ballets, including an evening that was entirely dedicated to Slovenian ballet.

His choreographies included premieres of The Masque of the Red Death by Slavko Osterc, Mařenka by Lucijan Marija Škerjanc, Le Fou de la Dame by Marcel Delannoy, The Enchanted Bird from A Magical Russian Fairytale by Tcherpnin and the first staging of Petrushka by Igor Stravinsky in Slovenia. Other well-known

ballets in his choreographic opus include Chopiniana, Polovtsian Dances, Bolero, Peer Gynt, Scheherazade and The Slavonic Dances.

Ljubljana was occupied by Italian forces on 6 April 1941, and again in 1943 by Germans; however, this did not affect the theatre much. In the wartime seasons the female ensemble was joined by a male ensemble. Together with Golovin and the two soloists Maks Kirbos and Drago Pogačar, Stane Polik, Stanislav Hiti, Slavko Laznik, Srečko Šeme, Boris Pilato and Franc Čarman also became members of the ensemble.

THE PIA AND PINO MLAKAR ERA (1946–1952 AND 1954–1960)

After World War II, Golovin's time, during which he raised the first generation of Slovenian ballet dancers, came to an end.

In 1946 Pino and Pia Mlakar came from Germany to take over the leadership of the Ljubljana ballet.

They danced the lead roles until 1950, and then due to Pia's hip problems they only choreographed performances. From 1952 to 1954 they temporarily returned to Munich, and the ensemble was under the interim leadership of the soloist Silva Japelj. Until 1960 the Mlakars organised a ballet evening nearly every season, some of which were reruns of their German and Swiss performances, and some were newly choreographed in Ljubljana, for example The Legend of Ohrid, Diptihon and Triptihon by Marjan Kozina, Naše ljubljeno mesto by Bojan Adamič, Beautiful Vida by Vilko Ukmar and Cinderella by Prokofiev. An important turning point in the professional development of Ljubljana's Ballet En-

semble was in 1956, with a performance of Swan Lake, choreographed by Mile Jovanović.

The ballet ensemble slowly but surely expanded, and in the season of 1954/55 for the first time included more than thirty dancers.

Apart from the soloists from the Golovin era the following dancers took on more prominent roles: Tatjana Remškar, Stane Polik, Breda Šmid, Jaka Hafner, and dancers from the ballet school: Lidija Sotlar, Majna Sevnik, Janez Miklič, Henrik Neubauer, Metod Jeras, Gorazd Vospernik, and others. The professional development of Ljubljana's Ballet was greatly influenced by the establishment of the national ballet school in 1948, with teachers Lidija Wisiak, Gizela Bravničar, Slavko Eržen and Nada Murašova. The ballet ensemble often had guest performances across Slovenia and in Klagenfurt and Graz in Austria, although more rarely across Yugoslavia, and just once in Trieste.

THE HENRIK NEUBAUER ERA (1960-1972)

At the end of the 1959/60 season Pia Mlakar retired due to illness. Pino Mlakar had already been relieved of his duties in September 1958, at his own request. The manager, Smiljan Samec, asked Henrik Neubauer, one of the first graduates from the Secondary Ballet School, to take over the position of the choreographer and ballet director. The following great ballet performances were then staged: The Sleeping Beauty, The Firebird, The Tale of the Stone Flower, Giselle, Romeo and Juliet, The Fountain of Bakhchisarai, Othello, The Venetian Moor, Petrushka, The Afternoon of a Faun, Suite en Blanc, The Miraculous Mandarin, La Fille Mal Gardée, Joan von Zarissa, and Spartacus, among others. The famous choreographers Anton Dolin, Serge Lifar, Alexandra Balashova and Dmitri Parlic were guests in Ljubljana, and ballet evenings were also organised by other foreign and Slovenian choreographers. Slovenian works were not neglected, however, as a quarter of the 32 staged ballets were Slovenian, such as Pomladno srečanje, Iluzije, Nina, Festival, Godec, Obrežje plesalk, Serenada, and Gazele.

Ballet was also prominently included in most of the operatic stagings of the time (Faust, Gioconda, Prince Igor, Orpheus and Eurydice, Aida, Carmen, The Queen of Spades, The Bartered Bride, and others).

This was a time of foreign recognition, as the ensemble made many tours across Italy, Austria, France, the Soviet Union and the Netherlands.

Important newspapers and ballet magazines from the UK, Germany, France, South Africa and Morocco published articles about the success of Ljubljana's Ballet Ensemble.

In 1972 the principal dancers of the post-war period were replaced by Mojmir Lasan, Mijo Basailović, Janez Mejač, Lane Stranič, Maruša and Vojko Vidmar, Magda Vrhovec, and others. The ensemble was also strengthened in terms of numbers, technical knowledge, and versatility, all due to the ballet school and its teachers.

In 1957 a new medium emerged in the form of television, which began broadcasting ballet shows recorded in studios as well as live performances from the Ljubljana and Maribor theatres.

This period bore the most fruits of collaboration, as nearly 80 ballet performances were shown on television.

THE LAST FORTY-FIVE YEARS (1972-)

After Henrik Neubauer left to pursue a job at the Ljubljana Festival, the Slovak choreographer Karol Tóth took over as the ballet director and choreographer, and after that, former soloists Breda Šmid, Metod Jeras, Janez Mejač, Vlasto Dedović, then Zvone Penko, Nikša Župa from Split, Croatia, then again Metod Jeras, Edi Dežman, again Janez Mejač, Tomaž Rode, Leo Stipaničič from Zagreb, Darinka Lavrič Simčič, Jaš Otrin, Irek Muhamedov and Sanja Nešković Peršin all took over as the ballet director for a time, but not choreographer. The theatre had fourteen different ballet directors, two of them twice, meaning the average period in office was less than three years.

In the 1970s and 1980s Ljubljana's Ballet regularly staged high-quality performances, and then quite a few lapses followed. The following foreign and local guest choreographers deserve mentioning in this era: Ronald Hynd, Birgit Cullberg, Oleg Danovski,



Pastoral Symphony by Choreographer Milko Šparemblek. Ballet dancers are Mateja Pučko and Vojko Vidmar.



The Wire (performance for the 100th anniversary)

Youri Vamós, Milko Šparemblek and Vlasto Dedović, Metod Jeras, Ivo Kosi and Henrik Neubauer.

The past forty-five years have seen 85 different stagings of ballet organised, 43 of them full-length. During this time, Giselle was staged seven times and Swan Lake six times by several choreographers.

Some of more prominent events were the premieres of Hamlet, Rosalinda, Miss Julie, Peer Gynt, Don Quixote, Don Quixote's Dreams, Midsummer Night's Dream, Anna Karenina, Coppélia at Montmartre, The Firebird restaging, The Taming of the Shrew, La Fille Mal Gardée, La Bayadère, Doctor Zhivago, among many others. Until the end of the 20th century many short ballets were staged with music written by Slovenian composers, but only two since the turn of the millennium.

Apart from Nena Vrhovec and Andreja Hriberšek, several young dancers have recently established themselves, such as the Slo-

venian dancers Regina Križaj, Sanja Nešković Peršin, Dejan Srhoj, Damjan Mohorko, Ana Klačnjša, Tjaša Kmetec and foreign dancers Olga Andreeva, Viktor Isaytchev, Georgeta Radasan, Iulian Ermalai, Stefan and Georgeta Capraroiu, Rita Pollacchi, Lukas Zuschlag and Petar Đorčevski, to name only a few.

SLOVENIAN BALLET GREW INTO ONE OF THE BEST

A hundred years is a very respectable age for a person, and certainly for Slovenia to have enjoyed the art of ballet. Since the establishment of Ljubljana's Ballet Ensemble in 1918 and Maribor's in 1945, both groups have proved that Slovenian ballet has earned its place in this land.

Despite some initial issues the development happened relatively fast, and the ensembles are now on par with those around the world.

A new century will surely see new accomplishments.



Ljubljana's professional Ballet Ensemble



Artistic Director Sanja Nešković Peršin

Are foreign theatres becoming interested in Ljubljana's Ballet Ensemble?

Yes. This year we performed Swan Lake in Klagenfurt City Theatre and Tomaž Pandur's ballet Symphony of Sorrowful Songs in Mexico, Colombia and Germany. We performed both the Symphony of Sorrowful Songs and Cacti by Alexander Ekman in Theater Bonn in Germany. In May we performed Doctor Zhivago in Brno, the Czech Republic for the 100th anniversary of Czechoslovakia. In June we staged guest performances at the ballet festival in Astana, Kazakhstan. We performed the ballet evening 5 Tangos and Pastoral Symphony.

What's your programme vision?

My programme vision is to keep the classical ballet repertoire and stage projects that reflect the time in which we live. It is important

Ljubljana's professional ballet ensemble's one hundredth anniversary will be celebrated with a ballet triptych by choreographers who have artistically enriched Slovenian ballet. These are The Bow, a dance suite by Pia Mlakar (1910-2000) and Pino Mlakar (1907-2006); The Wire, a three-act ballet by Vlasto Dedović (1934-2013); and Pastoral Symphony by choreographer Milko Šparemblek (1928).

Sanja Nešković Peršin, the artistic director of the Slovenian National Opera and Ballet Theatre ensemble in Ljubljana, talked about the vision and achievements of the professional ballet ensemble.

to give an opportunity to new, promising choreographers, and not to solely rely on the tried and tested, which is risk-free. We follow new concepts of work and aspire to high quality.

I have no desire to repeat the established patterns; I'm interested in moving mountains.

I want to give Ljubljana's ensemble a special and specific note with my programme vision that will distinguish it from other comparable ensembles. I believe progress in ballet means exploring and discovering new paths in ballet – history teaches us that only with new attitudes and methods, a future tradition can be formed.

WEEK OF AMATEUR CULTURE

Mass participation, diversity and exceptional quality Week of Amateur Culture

JAN PIRNAT, PUBLIC FUND OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



A scene from the performance "Everything Goes into Three Cankars".
Photo: Janez Eržen

Week of Amateur Culture is a presentation of creativity in modern society. In Slovenia the amateur scene is a mix of the traditional activities of various societies and active participation in culture, which is the latest trend in European cultural policy.

More than 100,000 adults spend their free time being active in amateur culture in Slovenia. It should be noted here that in societies and in the context of nursery schools and schools, children and young people are also actively creative, and the numbers do not even include Slovenians in neighbouring countries who are active in societies and associations there.

This Slovenia-wide action is intended to support creative people and the common promotion of amateur culture. The project is based on the model from other European countries which draw attention each year to the importance, quality and mass participation of amateur culture.

PURPOSE OF WEEK OF AMATEUR CULTURE

Amateur culture in Slovenia involves mass participation, diversity and exceptional quality. Owing to the diversity of the forms, content and the differing levels of complexity seen in this culture, it enables the participation of all social groups and individuals, regardless of age, geographical, ethnic or other affiliation.

Week of Amateur Culture seeks to create greater accessibility and mobility of cultural assets. The openness of the creative space can be seen in the interaction of amateurs and professionals, who make significant contributions to the creation of amateur culture.

Through Week of Amateur Culture we wish to draw the attention of the general public in Slovenia to just how diverse the cultural events are in all parts of the country. And all year, too.

WHO IS BEHIND ACW

The Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Cultural Activities, through its network of regional branches in the all-encompassing development of creativity in amateur culture, in the context of *Week of Amateur Culture*, collaborates with the Association of Cultural Societies of Slovenia.

Week of Amateur Culture promotes the mutual cooperation of different cultural institutions both within Slovenia and outside the national borders, which is of crucial importance for the development of the whole of society and its cultural consciousness. In a joint action with Lifelong Learning Week called *Learning and Culture Hand in Hand*, educational events also take place during Week of Amateur Culture.

The key actors that join in with the events of Week of Amateur Culture are cultural societies and local communities, which are also joined by institutes, schools, nursery schools, museums, studios, libraries and countless individuals.

WEEK OF AMATEUR CULTURE 2018

Each year, *Week of Amateur Culture* is devoted to a specific theme. The main themes of this year's Week of Amateur Culture were folklore activity and intangible cultural heritage, through which we joined in with the celebration of European Cultural Heritage Year.

Various events served to highlight that folklore activity is very popular in Slovenia, bringing together more than 10,000 members of folklore groups (including groups for children, students, adults and veterans). It also showcased the numerous challenges in folklore and the fact that such activities are played out between modern performance art and selected elements of the past.

The national opening of this year's Week of Amateur Culture took place in the Prešeren Theatre in Kranj, with a multimedia show entitled *Everything Goes into Three Cankars*. The staging of three iconic works by Cankar involved a fusion of folklore, theatre and music. Many other events that were part of Week of Amateur Culture 2018 also reflected this anniversary year of Ivan Cankar.

One of the main events of Week of Amateur Culture 2018 was the dance performance *Nikrmana*, which was staged in Cankarjev dom by the France Marolt Academic Folk Dance Group to mark its 70th anniversary.

Week of Amateur Culture was also accompanied by promotional actions to reach a new target audience. As part of the Open Galleries project, along the Gallusovo nabrežje embankment there was a joint exhibition of Slovenian painters and school pupils, who under mentorship in the international Collages scheme created artistic works in the style of Srečko Kosovel.

Week of Amateur Culture concluded in Nova Gorica with a festival of youth creativity called Visions, in which around 150 creative people aged 15 to 30 participated. Nova Gorica also hosted eight theatre shows, three rock bands, one puppetry and one dance performance, along with an exhibition of 12 photographers.

This year *Week of Amateur Culture* was represented publicly for the first time by two Week of Amateur Culture ambassadors.

Raising public awareness about the positive influence of amateur culture were Maja Zupan, Miss Slovenia 2017, and the actor Klemen Janežič, who said as president of the Visions jury: "Young people are often accused of apathy, and a lack of interest in politics and current social issues."

But Visions 2018 showed that the world in which we live does indeed interest them, and that they wish to grapple with difficulties and deal with them. The performers on stage showed a lot of courage. In both the original projects and performances based on existing texts, they offered an engaged approach to the world and showed a concern for a time when we are witnessing an end to intimacy. They offered this through very different genres of theatre and affirmed their own creativity and involvement in modern theatre production."



A scene from the performance "The Tribe", Visions 2018.
Foto: Matej Maček

THE FRANCE MAROLT ACADEMIC FOLK DANCE GROUP

Seventy years of inspiration, dance and folklore

PETER KOŠENINA



One of traditional dances.
Photo: Peter Košenina

The France Marolt Academic Folk Dance Group is the leading Slovenian folkloric art group. The members of France Marolt demonstrate this with annual dance performances in Cankarjev dom that thrill audiences, and the group also earns outstanding results at meetings of Slovenian folklore groups.

In Slovenia there are around 500 children's and adult amateur folklore groups, with a total of 10,000 dancers, which is a large number for such a small country. Much of the credit for the start of this activity can be given to the musician, choirmaster and pioneering ethnomusicologist France Marolt, who was also the founder of the Ethnomusicology Institute at the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1934 he was entrusted with the job of heading what was then the 'Institute for Researching Slovenian Musical Folklore', which was later renamed the Ethnomusicology Institute. This provided Slovenians with their first institution that focused on collecting both resources and written records in the field, and thereby ensured the preservation of traces of the past on paper, audio and film media.

France Marolt was thus 'to blame' for the founding of many Slovenian folklore groups. In the field, alongside noting down dances, folk songs, customs and habits, he often also lit a spark among local inhabitants, and suggested they start up folklore groups that would preserve the dances, songs, costumes and customs of that area.

He himself is noted as the founder of our France Marolt Academic Folk Dance Group, which he started in 1948. What he researched in the field he also wanted to show. He started with just three couples, then the group gradually grew and grew. As such the group was very closely connected to the Institute and researchers, who were pioneers in this field. Compared to other groups they had a lot of luck, since the inflow of new knowledge was broad, and today it is still regarded as one of the rare groups that

covers almost all the Slovenian regions, including those communities over the borders with neighbouring countries. You can therefore find in the group's repertoire dances from Istria to the Raba region, and from Bela Krajina to the Zilja Valley.

After France Marolt's death, artistic leadership of the group was taken over by his wife, Tončka Marolt, who led the group together with her sister Marija Šuštar. A recent article in MMC RTV SLO noted about her: "But Tončka was driven further. She set out on the roads through Slovenia. On foot, with no car or bus lines, she wandered from village to village. She brought with her just a little suitcase, in which she kept a bunch of sheet music papers on which she recorded the melodies of folk songs or dance moves." (source: MMC RTV SLO, 25 January 2015)

Without that drive, the group would not be what it is today, the leading Slovenian folklore group, which recently celebrated its 70th anniversary.

The high point of its celebrations was a dance production entitled *Nikrmana*, which was performed on 12 May in the Gallus Hall of Cankarjev dom.

In many people's opinion the performance broke the boundaries of existing ideas about such dances, and entered into the wide expanses of artistic freedom.

The members of the group, who are for the most part school pupils and students, are linked together by a love of dance, singing and preserving cultural heritage, and of course as part of this comes socialising, connections and friendship beyond the society's bounds. Together they create numerous stories which serve

to spice up events in their society, and there are certainly plenty of stories. Sometimes they are quite funny, as in the following example: “Summer 1959 - festival - France. Open-air performance, improvised stage in the middle of a meadow, mid-stage a simple curtain that separates it into a space for the performers and the ‘wings’. Audience all over the place, in front those with tickets, in the back those without. The programme starts. First come dances from the Banat. Some good-looking lads dance onto the stage in a costume with baggy white trousers tied up with just one cord. The tempo gathers pace, one cord comes undone and reveals lovely striped underpants. The dancer flees backstage, but there are even more audience members there, those without tickets, greeting him with enthusiastic applause.”

A whole collection of such and similar stories has been created at Marolt. And there have been love stories, too. Sometimes people

call us a matchmaking service, and we can’t really object to that, since in the past four years at least two Marolt couples a year have got married.

SETTING NEW GUIDELINES

Being the leading group in the field also means setting new guidelines, breaking out of the established framework and trying new ideas. In recent years the Marolt group has done just this – shifting the boundaries of folklore. The folkloric art scene in Slovenia is actually quite complex, especially if you are aware of the huge number of people involved in it and the fact that in this field there is indeed only one person employed in the whole country – the professional staff member for the field of folklore at the JSKD, the national Public Fund for Cultural Activities. Unfortunately, folklore “in public discourse is still held to the stereo-



France Marolt Academic Folklore Group
Photo: Jan Kocjan

types of being ‘outmoded, rustic and backward’, of being something that shows the past and is associated with authenticity and providing historical testament”. But with their energy, drive and ideas the Marolt group likes to demonstrate quite the opposite! In the 1970s, the group’s constant activity earned it plenty of awards and prizes. Its proudest achievement is earning the Gold Medal of Freedom of the Republic of Slovenia and its status as a society in the public interest in the field of culture.

The group, which is part of the Student Organisation at the University of Ljubljana, currently has around 100 members, divided into three dance groups and two orchestras.

The artistic director of the group is Anže Kerč, who took over as head from Dr Tomaž Simetinger. In the course of the year the group performs more than 60 concerts, short performances and workshops, along with numerous independent projects such as the Couples Competition, which is gaining more enthusiasts each year. Touring is also a part of their life, and they have so far travelled almost all over the world. In the past three years alone they have been in the Netherlands, Hungary and Macedonia, and this year they are heading off to visit Argentinian Slovenians in Buenos Aires.

Would you like to know more about the Marolt group? Follow them on Facebook and Instagram!



The group performs traditional dances from all the regions inhabited by Slovenians.
Photo: Jan Kocjan

BOUTIQUE FESTIVALS

Vibrant summer festivals season

ALENKA ŠTRUKELJ, MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Sevica Brežice
Photo: Andrej Tarfila

Not only is Slovenia known for its natural beauty, it also hosts numerous festivals that attract many visitors from near and far. Nearly every Slovenian city holds at least one inspirational festival that caters to a variety of tastes and budgets, and which is sure to provide the experience of a lifetime. "A festival for every taste in every Slovenian village" could even be Slovenia's motto.

Whether it is a multi-day music or theatre event, or whether it is about wine, beer, cuisine, shopping, lace, Pippi Longstocking's mischief, pan-fried potatoes, tolerance or dressing up in scary costumes, these events always attract a diverse audience from near and far. Despite this varied palette of events, the main features of most festivals still remain in close collaboration with the cultural sector on the one hand, and the potential for tourism and general development of the festival's location on the other. The enthusiasm for festivals is surely a reflection of Slovenian hospitality and social life.

Slovenia is home to several large, world-renowned festivals; however, sometimes what you need is an authentic, fun, and relaxed event in a truly unique and intimate location; an event that will pique your curiosity and adventurous spirit.

Here you will find a few suggestions that will arouse your curiosity and take you on an unconventional adventure.

THE GROSSMANN FANTASTIC FILM AND WINE FESTIVAL

In mid-July the sleepy capital of the Prlekija region transforms into New York from Michael Jackson's *Thriller*. The town is overrun with zombies and everybody knows that the Grossmann Fantastic Film and Wine Festival is about to begin. The festival was launched in 2005 and was one of the first international and genre film festivals in Slovenia.

The selected film programme boasts excellent fantasy, horror, and cult films, and

you can meet most of the directors of the movies screened.

You will get to see fantastic unconventional films and at the same time enjoy wine tastings, art exhibitions, concerts, workshops and roundtable discussions. The festival's website says that the "Grossmann festival is dedicated to this relatively unknown, but much more dangerous and funny side of cinema, that pulls no punches, wallows in excess and political incorrectness, and goes all the way and beyond. But, in order to fully understand it, one must take time, enjoy the adrenaline-filled ride and bring your most extreme sense of humour. And this is much easier with a glass of good wine."

10 to 14 July 2018
www.grossmann.si

SEVIQ BREŽICE

The name of the festival is the abbreviation of the Latin phrase *Semper Viva Quam Creata* (Always Alive As Created). The name calls to mind the most incredible concerts of old music with some of the most respected artists from around the world. They skilfully present European and global musical heritage from the Middle Ages until the beginning of the 20th century in varied programmes, and the festival pays special attention to Slovenian music.

The music is played with period instruments and in an authentic way. Concerts are held in a special atmosphere created by Slovenia's greatest cultural monuments.

This year concerts will be held in the Slovenska Bistrica Castle, Brežice Castle, Cultural and Congress Centre Dolenjske Toplice and Hudičev Turn in Soteska.

20 June to 25 August 2018
<http://www.seviqc-brezice.si/?lang=en>

SPECULUM ARTIUM IN TRBOVLJE

If you are into art and new technologies, the post-industrial and mining town of Trbovlje and its Speculum Artium festival will be perfect for you. Speculum Artium is one of the most prominent new media events in Europe.

World-renowned scientists and artists from around the globe present their most notable projects from intermedia and new media art.

The premise “the Humanisation of Technology” allows for local and foreign artists, producers from around the world, scientists and

new media artists who upgrade their creations with innovative technologies to use the development of the many technological and new media applications in order to surpass the frame of the normal and show various ways to humanise new technologies.

13 to 15 September 2018
<http://speculummartium.si/>

ART STAYS, FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART

This festival is one of the most prominent presentations of modern (visual) art in Slovenia and Central Europe. Since 2003 the festival has been bringing the most in-demand productions of local and foreign artists, both aspiring and already famous, with the works of the latter displayed in museums and art biennials around the world. The squares and buildings of Ptuj, the oldest Slovenian town, transform into venues for diverse exhibitions, performances, workshops, concerts, cinema screenings and other events, displaying the most current international production of modern art.

Every year approximately a hundred local and foreign artists from all fields of

modern art participate in the festival, presenting painting, sculpture, music, photography, video, installations, performances and intermedia projects. The 16th festival is entitled FRAGILE.

6 to 13 July 2018, exhibitions until 9 September 2018
<http://www.artstays.si/festival/>

SAJETA ART & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Summer temperatures can tire even the most determined festival goer. Tolmin offers a fantastic solution: one of the most breath-taking festival locations in Europe is situated on the confluence of two crystal clear and cool rivers – the Soča and Tolminka. All summer Tolmin hosts aficionados of metal, rock, reggae, pop, alternative, dance and folk music, while providing a gorgeous setting for outdoor activities.

Apart from large festivals such as Overjam Reggae Festival, Metal-Days and Punk Rock Holiday, which have earned their spot among the well-established music festivals in Europe, this location has for several years now also hosted the Sajeta Art & Music Festival.

This is a boutique festival that every year manages to connect different creative practices and experiences with its carefully selected programme in one location: film, multimedia, poetry, sculpture, performances, dance, graphics, and other art forms.

The main attraction is the presence of various music genres, such as electronica, jazz, rock, ethno music, classical music, experimental music, and more. The festival is popular with a varied and curious audience willing to immerse itself in lesser-known music worlds – not a difficult task in the beautiful surroundings of the Soča river.

3 to 8 July 2018
www.sajeta.org

As you can see from the offerings outlined above, summer in Slovenia is not only a time to lie on the beach and do nothing. Au contraire: the summer is when you can give yourself completely to culture in all its forms by visiting one of the mainstream or alternative festivals. We hope the events listed here provide some inspiration for you to set off on a journey and visit Slovenia.



A REFLECTION OF THE FUTURE

Rich Cultural Heritage

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

By artist Hana Zadnikar
A scarf with a stylish drip-stone silhouette
intertwined with lace. Wet felting.
Photo: Darko Repenšek

The year 2018 will highlight cultural heritage as the central component of cultural identity, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Returning to heritage and craftsmanship is a sign of reconnecting with the natural and cultural environment, and it should not happen only in museums, but in the modern modes of daily life.

The Secondary School for Design and Photography Ljubljana took part in the events of the European Year of Cultural Heritage by creating and developing a project as part of The Heritage Protection Basics and the Culture of Living curriculum and creative workshops. At the same time, photographic cultural heritage was created since the students from the Photography Department also joined the project. They put seven Slovenian masterpieces in the foreground; the seven qualities that enable Slovenians and Slovenia – and anyone else – to exist and develop, and that provide a visible and permanent identity in the globalised world.

SEVEN SLOVENIAN MASTERPIECES

Despite its small territory and population, Slovenia has a very rich and diverse heritage. Slovenian beekeeping isn't just an industry with a venerable history, it helped co-create European history.

The first teacher in this regard was Anton Janša from Breznica na Gorenjskem, Slovenia, who taught at the beekeeping school in Vienna. Hop growing is one of the most important agricultural practices, and certainly an important part of the Slovenian cultural heritage.

Each type of wood recounts an incredible life story. Wood co-creates our lives and accompanies us on our journeys. There is no better harmony with nature than when cutting twigs by a stream and later weaving them into beautiful wickerwork. Lace. Bobbin lace is a unique phenomenon in Slovenia. Kurent. Slovenia is known for the traditional carnival figure of the kurent, who enriches and preserves the cultural heritage of the Ptuj area and all of Slovenia. Karst. The first open air museum in Slovenia was the Škocjan underground system, which stands out with its unique characteristics and is one of the most beautiful natural wonders in Europe. Ivan Cankar. Since this year is Cankar's Year, Slovenians can rediscover their patriotic feelings towards their country through the works of the author Ivan Cankar.

DEVELOPING OLD ARTISANAL TECHNIQUES

As part of The Heritage Protection Basics curriculum, students created a useful product from seven different starting points – a scarf made using the oldest artisanal technique of felting. The students used the wet felting technique, which requires combed or carded wool, warm water and soap. Wetting and soaping the wool causes the fibre scales from the wool to open, and with rubbing and kneading the fibres unite into a compact material – felt. The students also tried a very creative form of felting, nuno felting, in which felting wool is combined with silk scarves.



By artist Nina Sevšek
A scarf depicting the Škocjan underground cave system that comes alive within a very sensitive colour scheme. The artist used the wet felting technique.
Photo: Luka Kirm

The students tackled the task by researching the contextual heritage of this practice and brought its message to life in a practical clothing product. The message was mainly shown in the stylish patterns that the students created by including them into the fabric with several compositional methods.

They connected them into a harmonious whole and presented a singular motif – a pattern. In their work the students demonstrated expanded knowledge in classifying, sorting, combining, and evaluating certain colours and colour sets. They also showed how their own expressive sensibility was developing. Felting allows for technological research, so the students paid special attention to the design of the edges of the scarves. The edges can be straight, wavy, or perhaps frayed or even fringed. Handmade scarves come to life in a beauty that clearly shows the link between practicality and aesthetic value. The scarves are a result of artisanal achievements and unique designs.

THE CULTURE OF LIVING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The Culture of Living is a subject at the Secondary Art School – Fine Arts, where students learn about people’s way of life and culture. They learn about the way of life from an individual’s point of view, after being placed into relationships with extensive social forms such as family, the local or municipal community, and even broader contexts. All this leads towards understanding a nation within the time, geographical and cultural environment that the students themselves belong in.

The topics in the chapter on ethnology are not only research-oriented, they are based on working with resources and in the field. The creative work is continued with fine art and design suggestions, which are reflected in the future, thus creating intriguing and creative solutions.

This year’s students chose lace as their identity element and they interwove the core of culture – a letter – into the lace’s pattern.

New technologies helped create patterns that, in addition to demonstrating certain aspects of identity, can also be understood as reflections of the past. They reflect the ambitions of people from a certain time and place in an interesting way and shape the view of the future.

Photography accompanies our every step. It is an integral part of our ideas and is a necessary part of nearly every project. Photographic cultural heritage was created in a studio and in the field. Students from the Photography Department chose all seven Slovenian masterpieces as their starting points, and artistically interpreted them through the lens of a camera. There are as many interpretations as there are photographers. Through their own visions, photographers show time and place and thus preserve passing moments that would otherwise be lost.



By artist Andraž Vončina
An artistic perspective of lace through a camera lens. Studio photography.
Photo: Andraž Vončina

APITOURISM IS AN IMPORTANT BRANCH OF TOURISM

Slovenian bees have flown around the world

MAŠA PUKLAVEC
PHOTO: BOR SLANA/STA

Tourism ranks among the most dynamic sectors and a key driver of socio-economic development. Each year more than a billion people around the world seek something new and different. Trends point to a growth in their demand for experiences in unspoilt nature, where they seek to replenish their energy and find inner peace.



A study trip for ten participants from globally influential media, such as BBC Wildlife, National Geographic Russia, The Independent, Air Canada enRoute, TRAVELBOOK Magazine and the Reuters news agency.

Slovenia is the first certified green country in the world, according to the international standards of Green Destinations, and is a recipient of prestigious awards in the area of sustainable development, the National Geographic World Legacy Destination Leadership prize and the prize for the most sustainable destination in Europe from Sustainable Destinations 2018. The global success that Slovenia achieved with its initiative for the declaration of World Bee Day, which was celebrated for the first time on 20 May in Slovenia, is therefore no coincidence.

At the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB), which has placed a commitment to sustainability at the very core of its activities, the theme of bees and bee tourism (apitourism) has for a number of years been included in the market communication for both domestic and international audiences.

Activities and projects linked to such tourism have been stepped up in the past two years. Indeed, we are aware that World Bee Day has given Slovenia a permanent position as a sustainable destination for five-star experiences.

BE(E) RESPONSIBLE

We have highlighted the topic of beekeeping at our business events and on social media, on the website www.slovenia.info, in media notices and in various publications. Under the slogan "Be(e) responsible", through the story of the bee we placed this topic at the centre of attention at last year's WTM global tourism fair in London, and garnered a lot of interest from the media and professionals.

Another important part of promoting Slovenian tourism is working with foreign media and influential figures on social networks. Slovenia has been written about as a destination for outstanding apitourism experiences by almost all the major world media, including The Guardian, The Telegraph, National Geographic and The Washington Post.

On the recent first World Bee Day, images of our green country and stories of the tireless Carniolan Grey bee and Slovenian efforts to maintain this vital pollinator have spread around the globe. On World Bee Day the STB, with the expert support of the Ministry of

Agriculture, Forestry and Food and the Government Communication Office, organised a study trip for ten participants from globally influential media, such as BBC Wildlife, National Geographic Russia, The Independent, Air Canada enRoute, TRAVELBOOK Magazine and the Reuters news agency.

On this occasion Reuters carried out various interviews and filmed the procedures for making honey, the colourful bee houses, the landscape and what bee tourism offers for a piece in which they emphasised our efforts to preserve bees and other pollinators, our commitment to sustainable development and our rich beekeeping tradition. In this way they highlighted that Slovenia is the only EU Member State to have protected a bee species, the Carniolan Grey. Reuters presented Slovenia as an attractive and unique green destination in which it is possible to enjoy boutique experiences. This message was taken up by 33 TV networks broadcasting on different continents as well as on online media.

Monitoring of online postings using Mediatoolkit showed that between 22 April and 22 May almost 10,000 items of online content were related to World Bee Day, and they reached more than 49 million people around the world.

Publications on STB social media on the topic of the first celebration of World Bee Day in Slovenia and the highlighting of the country as its initiator and as a green, active, healthy tourist destination reached at least 500,000 followers.

"All the media attention for World Bee Day has made an invaluable contribution to the recognisability of Slovenia as the initiator of this celebration and as a unique green, active and healthy destination with an outstanding range of bee-related tourism. At the same time we are aware that tourism presents us with a great responsibility, since we will have to find an appropriate balance between attractive features and active enactment of the principles of sustainable development to which we are committed. Yet we are fortunate here, since we can take as our inspiration the tiny yet hard-working Carniolan bee, a symbol of unspoilt nature and of our efforts for sustainable development. Only projects that include a consideration of its survival will contribute both to the high-quality development of tourism and of society as a whole," says Maja Pak, director of STB.

SLOVENIA BECOMING A EUROPEAN REGION OF GASTRONOMY

The Republic of Slovenia has drafted a bid book in the hopes of securing the official title of a European Region of Gastronomy

PROF. DR JANEZ BOGATAJ

Slovenian restaurant (Jeunes Restaurateurs d'Europe) Hiša Franko from Kobarid has made it among the world's top 50 restaurants on a list compiled by British trade magazine Restaurant, taking the 48th place. Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik

A new movement and brand The European Region of Gastronomy (ERG) was established in the EU in 2011. The platform was established at the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Art and Tourism (IGCAT) in Barcelona. The Executive Director and the network coordinator is Dr Diane Dodd. The proposal that Slovenia join the network was put forward at the annual meeting of the Institute's experts in 2015.

Two or three new regions per year become members of the network after having been thoroughly vetted by the international executive board of experts and after implementing gastronomic projects. Current regions that have been accepted into the network and awarded the ERG title are Minho, Catalonia, Riga – Gauja, Eastern Lombard, Aarhus – Central Denmark, Galway – Western Ireland, North – Brabant, South Aegean, Sibiu and Kuopio. The network and the brand aim to increase the integration of food, culture, creativity and tourism, which are all connected to cultural diversity and are important in the shaping of sustainable development.

In the future, the platform plans to closely connect all the regions that have been awarded the ERG title. In addition to culinary, cultural and tourism appreciation, a new international initiative and challenge is providing more opportunities for all regions.

In 2014 a new platform of regions was established that provides these with opportunities to collaborate on joint projects. The network is listed on all websites which promote individual gastronomic regions. Slovenia is entering this network as an ERG candidate for 2021.

A LAND OF DIVERSE FLAVOURS

Slovenia is a green, healthy, and active land, situated at the juncture of the Alps, Mediterranean and Pannonian Plain, and it also neighbours the Balkans. These geographical features define its incredible landscape diversity, as well as its excellent and varied cuisine. It has everything necessary for a high quality of life: high mountains and hills, valleys, the Pannonian Plain, crystal clear rivers and streams, lakes and the sea with plenty of fish, meadows, fields, and forests. Indeed, Slovenia is one of the most forested countries in Europe.

Additionally, it is home to vineyards, delicious fruit is grown in orchards, and salt and fleur de sel are produced at its salt pans. Cattle graze in pastures while roosters crow and hens stroll around farmyards.

For centuries the Slovenian people have been kind to bees, the hard-working insects collecting honey in beehives.

Notable features of Slovenia's gastronomic image stem from its unique cultural and developmental history at the crossroads of Europe, which over the centuries dictated the development and shaping of the specific culture and lifestyle as well as diet. The

population's mixed social composition contributed its share to this diverse image; for centuries the central part of society was made up of peasants. Their customs and habits, economic efforts, relationships and spiritual creativity all resulted in a diverse palette of food, as was also the case among town and city residents, lords, miners in mining centres, monastery residents, and others. Dietary changes in earlier periods were less intense, and it is important to take these changes into account in order to understand cultural heritage and modern culinary creativity, as they are often subjected to stereotypes and amateur simplifications.

At the turn of the 21st century Slovenia's cuisine and gastronomy were relatively unknown to the world, and were not very often included in tourist services. As the world's interest in these two fields increased along with the publishing of culinary literature and the organization of a number of culinary events, so have cuisine and gastronomy also become an important part of tourism and development. Slovenia's gastronomy was still an undiscovered gem of food diversity, which required a systematic approach for it to be appreciated and promoted on an international scale.

The Development Strategy of Slovenia's Gastronomy (Maribor 2006) was thus formulated in 2006, becoming the fundamental and instructional blueprint for the promotion and development of Slovenia's gastronomy.



Its core purpose was to set up a model for the development and promotion of gastronomy that would meet the needs of Slovenian tourism. It soon became clear that this transcended mere tourism. The mission and importance of gastronomy have a much broader context, as they are important for promoting Slovenia. Gastronomy is important at the entrepreneurial, local, regional and international levels. The more specific purpose of the Strategy is to help achieve comprehensive visibility of Slovenia as a gastronomic tourist destination. It lists the measures that are essential for the development of gastronomy and that pertain to the economy, culture, education, and so on. The gastronomic pyramid was determined as the foundation of gastronomic visibility. In addition to the complete national gastronomic wealth (heritage) and its modern forms, the pyramid comprises as many as 24 gastronomic regions. These are self-contained cultural and geographic areas where the concentration of a certain number of dishes is highest and makes clear demarcation possible. After some amendments, these 24 regions now feature more than 360 typical and flagship dishes and drinks. The Strategy set forward a distinct top of the gastronomic pyramid, which serves as the essential starting point of Slovenia's gastronomic visibility.

THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS CANDIDACY

The candidacy of the Republic of Slovenia for an ERG title is an example of a juncture of different culinary cultures, and it will contribute to a better quality of life in Slovenia and consequently around the world.

The ERG is an opportunity to educate people about a healthy and natural life, an opportunity for sustainable development, and an opportunity to encourage gastronomic innovation.

The ERG title will strengthen the national promotion of cuisine and gastronomy, as well as create synergies with local environments and cultures. Apart from promoting the protected agricul-



Photo: STB Archives

tural products and food, the title would be an excellent opportunity to introduce several regional and local brands from the Slovenian food industry that have already become successful, such as From Bohinj, The Heart of Slovenia, Dolenjska Delights, Tastes of Rogla, and Idrija Geopark. This also applies to non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages. The latter include mainly (boutique and natural) wines, which have already garnered deserved international success, although the promotional investments are rather modest. Since 2006 Slovenia has endeavoured to develop and promote gastronomic tourism. Although certain success has been achieved in this area, further work is still necessary, especially in terms of connecting culture and health. The ERG will be a great platform for Slovenia to contribute valuable experience and an educational culinary model for young people, especially about local and regional dishes and a healthy diet. Slovenia's dietary efforts are also reflected in World Bee Day, which was introduced by the UN on Slovenia's initiative, and celebrated for the first time this year.

This article describes only a few starting points and reasons why Slovenia should be a member of the ERG.

Through to 2021, the year of confirmation and acceptance, many projects are planned that are also supported by various ministries and cultural, educational and tourism institutions.

With the right international collaboration and exchange of experience, these projects will solidify various positive experiences and address certain shortcomings of Slovenian cuisine and gastronomy, bringing both to a higher level.



Potica cake (nut roll).
Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik



Istrian cuisine
Photo: Matevž Kostanjšek

THE KRVAVEC GOBLIN ADVENTURE

A sensational adventure for the whole family high in the Alps

DR UROŠ GRILC
PHOTO: IZTOK MEDJA



A mere half hour's drive from the capital, Mount Krvavec invites families to take part in an authentic goblin adventure. Last year saw the birth of the Krvavec Goblin Adventure – a fairy-tale and adventurous path like no other.

Brunarica Sonček, the developer of the project, in collaboration with RTC Krvavec and Zavod Škratelj, created an integral tourism product that focuses on family tourism and is very appealing to schools, kindergartens and organised groups of hikers, scouts and anyone eager to experience the great outdoors in a new way.

The project was considered an innovative tourism product by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

THE KRVAVEC GOBLIN ADVENTURE: CHILDREN SIMPLY LOVE IT!

Why is the Krvavec Goblin Adventure so special that it attracted several thousand new visitors in its first year of operation? What's in the foreground is the experience; children not only learn on this adventure, they experience, feel, enjoy and co-create a story. Children are the ones who help the shepherds break the goblin's curse and save the mountain from the evil goblins. The concept of the trail is based on the original picture book *On the Shepherds and Goblins of Krvavec* by Uroš Grilc and illustrated by Gorazd Vahen. It connects Krvavec's key identity elements: grassland farming, medicinal herbs and mountain life.

With their Goblin's Notebook and educational boards visitors solve the problems on the trail and seek a mysterious

spell that will help the shepherds break the goblin's curse on the mountain. Various emotions are aroused on the way, and the experience is additionally broadened on the trail with 16 large wooden sculptures representing the animals from Krvavec along with goblins, all master works by five local artists working with chainsaws.

Guests will also enjoy the goblins' herb garden, shepherd's cottage, a mountain of sounds, and more. The trail also encompasses several skill-testing elements for the children to strengthen not only their senses, but their mobility too. The trail hides countless surprises, but we can't reveal everything online and spoil the fun – we want children to experience it on the mountain, and create magical memories that will last a lifetime.

The Krvavec Goblin Adventure is also perfectly tailored for foreign visitors. As the target audience is families, the adventure was translated into four languages so that more parents and children can follow the story. The Krvavec Goblin Adventure is available in English, German, Italian and Czech.

TOP ARTISTS ALONG WITH AN INNOVATIVE PRESENTATION OF NATURE AND CULTURE

Only the best artists and greatest creators came together for this project: illustrator Gorazd Vahen, musicians Peter Kus, Sam Kutin and Ana Kravanja, story-teller and author Nina Peče Grilc, designer Dr Petra Černe Oven, and the amazing chainsaw sculptors and other artists who put their hearts and souls into this project. The author of the concept and the project's content coordinator is Dr Uroš Grilc, who developed the innovative, adventurous models that present the natural and cultural heritage in collaboration with Zavod Škratelj.

KRVAVEC: THE GATE TO THE HEIGHTS

Krvavec is located in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps, and in the winter it is one of the leading Slovenian ski resorts. In recent years it has also been developing summer mountain tourism. Krvavec is still very much active as a mountain pasture; every summer more than 400 cows graze here, so the local food selection does not disappoint. Krvavec is also a paradise for mountain bikers in summer, with a high-adrenaline park that has many activities to enjoy, while it is a great starting point for both difficult and not so difficult hikes, with the cable car making it possible to start hiking at about 1,500 metres above sea level. Krvavec is



an ideal destination for families and hikers who aren't interested in difficult hikes, but want to walk along easy and well-marked mountain trails, with amazing views and diverse wildlife. A new product was launched in 2018, the "Krvavec Adventure", which offers visitors three easy or medium-difficulty hikes, choosing from Kriška planina, Zvoh, or the gorgeous valley of Dolge Njive.

HOW TO GET TO THE KRVAVEC GOBLIN ADVENTURE

A cable car operates every day from 9 am to 7 pm during the summer season (23 June – 2 September), and the Krvavec Goblin Adventure begins and ends at Brunarica Sonček right next

to the cable car's upper station. The path is 3.6 km long, and together with ascents and descents you will go through 286 metres of height difference. The path is located high in the mountains, with the highest point being 1638 metres above sea level, so we recommend light hiking gear and appropriate clothing, as the weather at this height can change fast. Note that on average the temperature is about 10 degrees Celsius lower than in the valley.

<https://www.facebook.com/PotPastirskihSkratovnaKrvavcu/>
www.rtc-krvavec.si/si/aktivnosti/poleti/pot-pastirskih-skratov-na-krvavcu



BOJAN GANTAR, ALPINA'S MANAGING DIRECTOR

Working in the firm is a match made in Heaven

POLONA PREŠEREN
PHOTO: ALPINA ARCHIVES



Bojan Gantar

Bojan Gantar and Alpina, the former footwear giant from Žiri, go a long way back. In recent years he has been the company's Managing Director, and it was he who resurrected the company, despite predictions of its grim fate. The interview was conducted on a nice summer day, although Alpina's main product is winter footwear.

Mr Gantar, summer isn't Alpina's primary season. The company focuses on winter, is that not so? What is your key approach?

That is true, winter has been the main season for selling Alpina's products for years now. Our flagship products are cross-country ski boots, and we have been investing in the development of downhill ski boots. We have achieved good sales results in both segments, including this past winter.

Alpina cross-country ski boots are in the foreground thanks to their strong presence at the Cross-Country World Cup and Olympic Games.

However, we mustn't forget that Alpina ski boots also combine modern and innovative solutions, a great added value for users. The innovative Intemp heating technology has exceeded all first users' expectations, and we have successfully applied this same technology to the hunting footwear segment.

However, we want to lower our dependency on the winter sports line and strengthen our outdoor footwear segment. In addition to the wide range of available products, we are also developing new lines of outdoor footwear. We are getting ready to enter the lightweight trekking and urban sports-wear segments, as we want to strengthen our position in our key markets. At the same time, as I've already mentioned, this should lower the dependency on the winter sports line. This is also why we are developing new product segments for footwear that will be launched onto the market in the near future.

I must stress that Alpina doesn't only produce sportswear; every year we design two fashion lines. Alpina fashion footwear boasts comfort, natural materials and practical solutions.

When developing fashion footwear, our objective is to create items that optimally fits the user, thus providing functional solutions. Years of laser foot measurements led to the design of the BINOM footwear concept, and, due to its specific features and adaptability to the foot's contours, it has acquired a wide circle of loyal users. At the moment we are developing a revamped line of BINOM men's and women's footwear. We are also developing a footwear line for sensitive feet.

We often say that athletes are the best promoters, and Alpina has many ties with athletes. But how important is the country of origin?

Alpina has been providing cross-country ski boots to the world's best athletes for ages. Approximately a quarter of the athletes in the Cross-Country and Biathlon World Cups wear Alpina's famous red boots and achieve excellent results.

Athletes acknowledge the boot's technical perfection at the highest level of professional sport.

At the same time, Alpina is flexible enough to offer athletes individual solutions and adjustments, as needed.

This winter was especially successful for Alpina, partly because of the Olympic Games, with 14 Olympic medals to

prove that. Has this affected business results and processes?

This year's Olympics in PyeongChang were Alpina's tenth consecutive games. The first Olympic Games that Alpina participated in, with a very small group of skiers, was in Sarajevo 1984. This year, we provided footwear for about seventy Olympians in three disciplines. Competitors won 14 medals altogether while wearing our boots, nine of them in cross-country skiing, four in biathlon and one in Nordic combined. These were athletes from Norway, Sweden, Austria and Belarus.

The Olympics have been very important for the development of our brand and great products.

By continuously investing into the development and design of a competitive boot, Alpina successfully maintains the position of the best manufacturer of cross-country ski boots in the world.

Right now, Alpina provides boots for approximately a quarter of all the athletes in the World Cup. The fantastic achievements of our athletes at the Olympic Games and other sports competitions help strengthen Alpina's visibility; they thus strengthen our position in the market and contribute to an even more successful business.

You have resurrected Alpina. You have good results, and you have also purchased what was left of another Slovenian footwear giant, Peko, from Tržič. What do you think was the key turning point?

True, Alpina has improved business operations significantly in the last two years. We are still facing many challenges and opportunities to significantly improve the company's position in the market and our business situation itself. Based on our restructuring in December 2017, Alpina has increasingly focused on growth and development. As a result of the objective to strengthen fashion footwear's position in the market a decision was made to purchase the Peko brand – one of the aforementioned opportunities we did not want to miss out on. But all stakeholders, owners, creditor banks, buyers, suppliers and, first and foremost, employees, are those who also contributed to the change in business trends.

We managed to prove to all of them that we have the necessary knowledge and that we can work differently than we used to.

We proved to them that the strong Alpina brand and employees' knowledge won't just enable the company to exist, but to effectively and successfully develop the demanding footwear industry. In short, I say that the recipe for positive change is very simple: we kept shoes and people in mind.

Are we talking mainly foreign markets? What are your key markets?

It is true that we are mainly an export company, as we sell about 85% of all our fashion and sports footwear abroad. However, to improve business our activities have focused on all divisions, both retail in Slovenia and the former Yugoslav markets, as well as the export markets for fashion and sports footwear. Lately we have been working on improving business in more than a hundred shops across Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. By carrying out major changes, taking the necessary measures and putting a greater input into marketing we have successfully achieved positive sales in these countries. In recent years we have opened several new shops in Slovenia, Serbia and Croatia; however, the process of developing and expanding retail outlets is not finished yet.

In exports we still focus on our key markets. The cross-country ski footwear segment is mainly comprised of Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic and Russia, and for ski footwear mainly the USA and Canada. The sales of fashion footwear are directed to the markets in which the BZ Alpina brand is already established: Germany, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, the UK and the Baltic countries. We are also trying to expand to the new markets of the USA, China and Australia.

You've been working on development strategies for your brands. What is your key approach?

Seeing as new opportunities have arisen recently to develop and market niche products, footwear for sensitive feet and the Peko fashion footwear as well as opportunities for new

sales channels, Alpina aims to define the brand architecture, strategically define its sales channels and design a more effective communication plan before entering new markets.

How important is the domestic market? The local buyers have chosen Alpina as one of the Trusted Brands.

Despite being an export company, Alpina considers the domestic market and those of the former Yugoslav markets to be very important. The brand is well-established in these countries, especially as a sports footwear provider, due to its 70-year-long and rich tradition.

Slovenians trust Slovenian brands and Slovenian products, as proven by the Trusted Brand Award Alpina has received for two years in a row.

Alpina is developing online sales in the domestic market. The first quarter of this year has marked a dramatic growth in online sales. The online shop has received the Online Retailer of the Year award in the Footwear category for two years in a row.

Alpina has always been a synonym for high-quality footwear. Hiking boots are especially highly valued, and Slovenia is a nation of hikers. So the hiking boots will stay central to the brand?

Yes, the Alpina hiking boots celebrated their 70th anniversary last year. The first boot Alpina ever made was a hiking boot. It is legendary and it has a rich history. Many people probably don't know that Alpina's hiking boots have helped write some big stories, including in the world of mountain climbing. One such story is the first Yugoslavian ascent of Mount Everest in 1979 – Alpina produced the hiking boots for all five members of the mountain-climbing expedition that was led by Viki Grošelj and helped them climb to the top of the world.

Viki Grošelj decided to climb the highest peaks of all continents, and he did so in his Alpina hiking boots. The trend for the development of outdoor footwear is changing, and Alpina is still following it, but the legendary hiking boots will for now still be available to purchase.

You yourself are an athlete. Is this the reason why working in Alpina is such a good fit? Does sport help you regain the energy demanded by the job?

Sports and movement have always been a part of me. When I was younger, sports were a fun way of spending time with my friends, and today it is my time to relax and think. Every day I spend an hour running, and this hour means my time to relax and to strengthen my psychophysical state; at the same time it is some form of overtime. During this hour small problems disappear, big problems are solved, and the best ideas are born. I cannot imagine a single work day without the stress relief that running gives me.

And working in Alpina is indeed a match made in Heaven because of the experience I have gained in similar business situations.

Moreover, it is easier to understand the sports line and products by being a sport aficionado, or as my colleagues say, if you want to work on a sports line, you have to be able to do a somersault.



NATIONAL GALLERY'S POSTERS – 100 YEARS OF EXHIBITIONS

This is a special anniversary year – the centenary of the National Gallery of Slovenia

MOJCA JENKO, MUSEUM ADVISER, NATIONAL GALLERY OF SLOVENIA

PHOTO: BOJAN SALAJ



Baroque is one of the three pinnacles of old Slovenian art. No wonder the **Baroque in Slovenia** exhibition was the first complex thematic exhibition; all Slovenian experts of Baroque visual art of the time came together to work on it. The exhibition was open to the public from July to September 1961. The exhibition was thoughtfully planned and financially well-supported. It was greatly promoted considering the time - two architects were hired to design posters, namely Janez Valentincič (1904–1994) and Vlasto Kopač (1913–2006), both students of the renowned Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik (1872–1957).

The National Gallery of Slovenia has been marking this centenary with a carefully designed programme since September last year, when 18 September 2017 marked the start of the celebration year. One of the events marking this anniversary of Slovenia's main fine art museum is the exhibition **National Gallery of Slovenia Posters – 100 Years of Exhibitions**, which can be viewed this summer at the exhibition space of the National Gallery of Slovenia.

Of all the special events, this exhibition is the only one that focuses on the history of the institution, and using the images of posters for exhibitions it takes you through the rich hundred-year history of National Gallery of Slovenia exhibition activities.

The National Gallery of Slovenia had humble beginnings: the founders, full of enthusiasm, started without any art-works, without gallery premises and without any money.

It was only thanks to their resourcefulness, perseverance and pragmatism that works from all over the Slovenian lands started flowing in to the ownership or care of the National Gallery of Slovenia.

FROM THE FIRST EXHIBITION TO THE LATEST

The National Gallery of Slovenia opened its first permanent exhibition to the public on 7 March 1920, in five residential spaces of Ljubljana's Kresija quarter, and on 2 September 1922 as part of the Ljubljana Trade Fair it invited the public to its first occasional exhibition – a **Historical Exhibition of Slovenian Painting**, which was the fruit of the institution's own research work.

In its very first decade of operation the gallery established an international connection: the first foreign exhibition, the **Exhibition of Czech Modern Art** of the 'Mánes' Society of Figural Artists of

Prague was hosted in August and September 1924, and in September and October 1927 the National Gallery of Slovenia made its first appearance abroad, in the Obecní dům (Municipal House) in Prague with an **Exhibition of Slovenian Modern Painting**.

The rich diversity of exhibitions pursued in the first years of the National Gallery of Slovenia has been continued cultivated to the present day. It has constantly worked to upgrade the permanent exhibition, which serves to present art created in the Slovenian lands since the High Middle Ages to the middle of the 20th century. Alone or in cooperation with other institutions, experts and artists it has put together a range of occasional monographic, group and thematic exhibitions; some in adapted form have toured throughout Slovenia, and often also in the cultural centres of the former Yugoslav republics, over the border (in Carinthia, Gorizia and Trieste) and in major European cities (from Lisbon to Weimer, and from Cambridge to Milan). The National Gallery of Slovenia has long been (and is also increasingly frequently) hosting what are for Slovenian audiences very attractive fine art exhibitions from abroad (from Beijing to Madrid and Berlin to Venice).

GALLERY POSTER COLLECTION

The majority of National Gallery of Slovenia exhibitions are accompanied by an exhibition catalogue, and major exhibitions feature a poster. The Gallery poster collection, which numbers over 3,600 sheets, has to date preserved 161 different posters designed to promote the permanent Gallery exhibitions, occasional Slovenian exhibitions, exhibitions it hosted and those that have toured



around Slovenia and abroad. Through the posters the exhibition reflects the professional interests of the National Gallery of Slovenia and its exhibition policy, as well as its involvement in the international exhibition scene.

Posters were the visual message which in the first few decades of the National Gallery of Slovenia existence served alongside periodical printed publications as the sole medium appealing to the public to visit exhibitions. Despite the development and establishment of new media, posters have remained an important means of communication right up to the present day. Recent research on city posters in Slovenia and abroad has shown that posters still reach out to interested passers-by, both city residents and tourists.

The posters for National Gallery of Slovenia exhibitions have generally followed the development trend of posters in Slovenia; they were and still are intended not just for the general public, but also for those with visual and aesthetic discernment. The communicative dimensions of the exhibition posters are generally composed of fine art and textual elements. The proportions of these elements have generally favoured the art, especially because the original exhibition posters were aimed at pedestrians and slow traffic. Communication was ensured because passers-by were only a few steps away from the poster, and such a distance offers readability of the visually subordinated text used in a poster's message.

Exhibition posters fall into the group of posters for events, and more specifically the cultural events sub-group; and their

In 1926, fifteen years after Slovenia's most prominent impressionist Ivan Grohar (1867–1911) passed away, the National Gallery of Slovenia held an exhibition of his works at the Jakopič Pavillion in Ljubljana. An unknown designer of the visually effective poster used the image of *The Sower*, one of the painter's most distinctive motifs. Grohar painted *The Sower* (1907) during a time of wilful political love for anything Slovenian: the painting depicts a proud Slovenian farmer in the midst of the distinctive Slovenian landscape, sowing seeds for the future. The painter fulfilled the demand by Slovenian artists of the time for 'creating Slovenian art for the Slovenian nation'. The painting depicts a Slovenian man on his soil and symbolises patriotic feelings. Grohar's *The Sower* has been a national icon since it was painted.

Ten years ago the National Gallery of Slovenia celebrated its 90th anniversary with the extensive exhibition entitled *Slovene Impressionists and Their Time 1890-1920* (23 April 2008-15 February 2009). The goals of the exhibition were to introduce Slovenian impressionists and their contemporaries, their achievements in contemporary sculpture, photography and architecture, and Ljubljana's restoration in the secession style after the 1895 earthquake, as the city played an important role as Slovenia's national centre. An extensive selection from the 2008 exhibition was also displayed five years later in Paris. The National Gallery of Slovenia was hosted by the Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris from Petit Palais between 18 April and 13 July 2013. The exhibition was promoted with a poster of *Rakers* (1902) by Ivan Grohar (1867-1911). This was a first large city poster (175 x 119 cm), informing visual art aficionados about the National Gallery of Slovenia exhibition.

organisers have known since the earliest times that the promotion of these activities requires high-quality designs.

The tasks of the first Slovenian graphic designers were performed by painters, and a little later they were also joined by architects. They created mock-ups of posters for printing, and the image became an increasingly important element.

FINE ART POSTERS

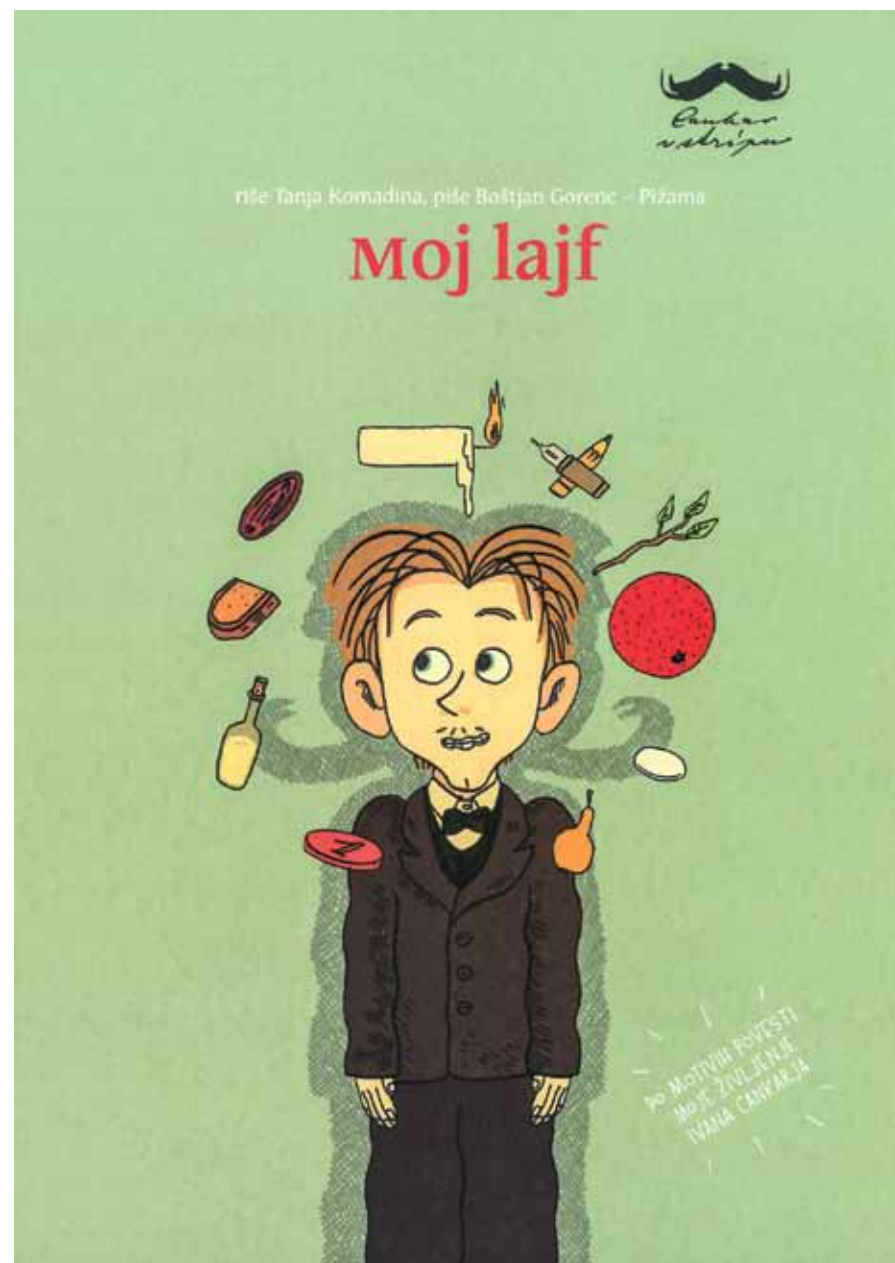
The first fine art posters for the National Gallery of Slovenia were created by the painters Matej Sternen (1925), Veno Pilon (1927) and Gojmir Anton Kos (1929). The majority of other posters produced between the World Wars were more modest, merely textual, and print craftsmen provided the images. This practice continued in part after 1945. A turning point in the history of National Gallery of Slovenia exhibition posters came in 1961: for the exhibition *The Baroque in Slovenia* the poster design was entrusted to two students of Plečnik - Vlasto Kopač and Janez Valentinčič. Up until Slovenia's independence, National Gallery of Slovenia posters were designed by the architects and designers Jože Brumen, Milan Pogačnik, Sergej Pavlin and Ranko Novak, the painters Štefan Hauko and Kemal Selmanović, and the illustrator Matjaž Schmidt, as well as by other non-professional designers. In independent Slovenia, National Gallery of Slovenia posters have thus far been created exclusively by professional designers - Miljenko Licul, Radovan Jenko, Julija Zornik, Matjaž Jamnik, Zmago Rus, Dane Petek, Ranko Novak, Maja Licul, Jani Bavčer, Peter Skalar and Mojca Višnar.



MY LIFE

The life of his life

TANJA GLOGOVČAN



This is the second time that an extract has been published from the comic book “My Life”, written by Boštjan Gorenc and illustrated by Tanja Komadina. Comics are often wonderful, humorously ironic interpretations of an original book or story. The last issue introduced both artists and their attitudes towards Ivan Cankar. This issue will present the background and inspiration of the author himself.

Ivan was a child born to a poor farming and industrial family in Vrhnika. He was such a hungry child that he stole dried pears from his mother; he bought plump dates with the money he unexpectedly came across (instead of bringing it home to his parents) and later vomited; he was a child who hated school and loved the lessons from the school of life. He suffered many social and other injustices. He had a constant feeling of eternal guilt towards his mother. Cankar is the reason why the phrase “a cup of coffee” today has a very special meaning for Slovenian audiences. It is no longer just the coffee that his mother made for him, while he was ungrateful for her kind gesture; it is now a symbol of guilt and sin. It has also become a metaphor, that is now a part of folklore.

Cankar’s image was that of an artist with a hat and a moustache who constantly battled money issues and liked his drink, and who at the same time irrationally spent the money he did have.

Cankar’s story “My Life” was published in instalments in the first Slovenian liberal newspaper Slovenski Narod. It was published as a book after the author’s death, in 1920.

Several of Cankar’s works include many autobiographical motifs and depict true events.

This is especially true of those works where the author’s youth and his memories of it are the main focus of the narrative. It is certainly true of My Life. This work is in fact considered Cankar’s rawest autobiographical work.

It is a first-person narrative and refers to specific, true events and individuals who had an impact on Cankar’s childhood and early life. In this work, Cankar describes his life from his first memory of the burning house in which he was born until he left Vrhnika for Ljubljana in 1888, at the age of twelve.

FIRST STORY OF HIS LIFE

The special feature and quality of My Life is that the depiction of the child’s experience makes it possible for the reader to grasp those moments from Cankar’s early childhood that left a deep mark on the author. These moments narrated the “first story of his life”. The work brings us descriptions of the relaxed lessons from the school of life during which he spent time playing in the river under a bridge in Vrhnika, the author’s first time at an institutional school, as well as his sheer disappointment with it, the feelings of loneliness and the comfort he found in nature, his relationship with his parents, the attitude he had towards religion, and his breakthrough into the literary world.

Although Cankar was affected by his low social position his entire life, he managed to rise above it in his writing. He became one of the first Slovenian authors to make a living by his work.

Last but not least, Ivan Cankar is an author that presents a challenge for primary school students; however, when they get older, they identify with many of his experiences, sins, mistakes and realisations in his works.

In fact, this is not true only for students; it goes for all of us.

IMAGES FROM DREAMS

IVAN DISOWNS HIS MOTHER



OH OUR MOTHER
WILL ALSO RUN
THIS!

REALLY?

WOMAN'S RUN
Sponsored by
MAKE UP
LTD.

YES, WHEN SHE
WAS YOUNG
A CART ONCE
RAN AWAY FROM
HER AND SINCE
THAT TIME SHE
HAS TRAINED FOR
LONG-DISTANCE
RUNNING.



YooHoo! IVAN! IVAN! SEE
HOW WELL I'M DOING!



COME ON, LET'S GO. I NEED TO FINISH
MY HOMEWORK. I'M IN A HURRY.

ISN'T THAT YOUR
MOTHER?

HEY-HO,
IIIIIIIVAAAAN!

THAT'S NOT MY MOTHER!
MY MOTHER WOULD NEVER
WEAR THOSE DISGUSTING
BAREFOOT SHOES.



THE FINISH LINE



IVAN...



THE MOUSTACHE TOUR

A story about three giants who styled Ljubljana

PETRA GONELI, NEA CULPA TOURISM MARKETING AGENCY

PHOTO: ALJOŠA REBOLJ/NEA CULPA



Jože Plečnik, Ivan Cankar and Rihard Jakopič were daring and moustached men in their own way. They left their mark on Ljubljana and Slovenia as great artists.

Why do Slovenians long for what is hard to obtain, why does it feel good to be up in the mountains – Slovenia is a nation of hikers – achieve Slovenians swear by order and discipline, two characteristics they value tremendously, and how do they get sucked into Bohemian pleasures, with which they are very familiar; these are all questions whose answers the visitors to the new, exciting Moustache Tour in Ljubljana will be searching for.

The innovative guided tour by Ljubljana Tourism presents the three greatest Slovenian men and a tour guide who offers a key that unlocks the city's secrets and gives answers to understanding of the Slovene character.

A bike tour of the most beautiful streets, parks and even the hills of Ljubljana is a story about three great artists, all of whom donned a moustache and all of whom were daring, each in his own way.

Jože Plečnik, Ivan Cankar and Rihard Jakopič - the Architect, the Writer and the Painter, had very different personalities and moustache styles. A century ago they shaped the unique character of Ljubljana as we love and enjoy it today.

THE THREE SLOVENIAN MOUSTACHED GREATS

The disciplined Plečnik gave up everything and worked night and day to design the centre of Ljubljana as a total work of art with timeless elegance and an antique feel. The bohemian Cankar resided at more than 60 addresses in Ljubljana and accepted visitors at his table in the Rožnik Inn. He paved the way for creative hedonism as the first professional Slovenian writer. The charismatic Jakopič was a pioneer of modernist painting, and loved foggy Ljubljana and his work, which he

knew how to market with skill. The different characters of the three Slovenian giants go hand in hand with their moustache styles.

Petra Stušek, Director of Ljubljana Tourism: *"Ljubljana Tourism is aware that a modern tourist wants to experience the multidimensional cultural atmosphere of a city as well as its local charms. By developing new attractive and innovative tourism experiences, which the Moustache Tour undoubtedly is, we are giving visitors another reason to extend their stay in the capital. We have particularly focused on the guides of the Moustache Tour. There are six at the moment, and they underwent very special training."*

The tour begins with some of the architect Plečnik's masterpieces in the centre of the city, and stops in at his library. Then in the cultural quarter of Križevniška the group of up seven visitors together with the guide knock on the door of a barber's shop to learn about the history and art of moustache styling in Ljubljana. Only a stone's throw from the city centre is a different Ljubljana, with houses and gardens. Krakovo, or solatendorf, the "lettuce village", as it was called in the past, was the birthplace of the painter Jakopič. In the Plečnik House here you can better understand the inspiration and vision of Jože Plečnik. Passing the wall from ancient Roman times, the Moustache Tour arrives at Cankarjev dom, which honours the Writer, while the Painter's works are on view in the National Gallery of Slovenia, also visited on the tour. Finally, with one foot in town, the other in the forest, the visi-

tors and guide take a moustached photo in the International Center of Graphic Arts.

A STORY ABOUT SLOVENIAN LONGING

The Moustache Tour is a story about Slovenian aspirations, so it must take you up a hill. But not just any hill, the one the Architect used as the axis of his plan for a complete renovation of Ljubljana, and the one where the Writer spent the best years of his life. On the iconic green hill of Rožnik a debate continues about the various Slovenian characteristics. Here the Writer's spirit will be awaiting the moustache expedition at the top, and reward you for your efforts with his favourite tea or a cup of coffee (the one from Cankar's famous short story) and a piece of potica cake. This unusual and innovative Ljubljana experience was designed by Ljubljana Tourism in collaboration with cultural tourism experts – Nea Culpa Tourism Marketing Agency, theatre director Jaša Koceli and screenwriter Simon HERNÄUS.

EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM

While tour guides used to be encyclopaedias on two feet who gave tourists tons of information, in recent years guiding has changed into providing experiences – tourists are more interested in becoming an active part of the city cultural experience as well as tasting the local cuisine.

This tour takes it even further as the participants co-create it. The tour thus follows the latest trends of European and global tourism.

Neja Petek, Director of Nea Culpa: *"The tour was created with foreign and local guests in mind. Today's tourists are seeking authentic local experiences. The Moustache Tour presents various secrets of Ljubljana through the story of moustaches, which have been an indispensable part of the style and character of three giants of Slovenia. On the tour, moustaches become a broader symbol of creativity for visitors to the city. Right at the beginning the guests themselves identify with the disciplined Architect, the bohemian Writer or the inventive Painter, so they are randomly assigned one of the three characters and styles of moustache of the three giants, who a century ago brought to Ljubljana the cosmopolitan spirit of modernism that has ever since marked the capital of Slovenia."*

The organisers invite you to join this special tour – it is scheduled every Friday at 15:00 and starts at the Slovenian Tourist Information Centre at Krekov trg 10 in the city centre. You will go by bike and be accompanied by a trained Moustache Tour guide who has the key to unlock the secrets of Ljubljana and Slovenian character and lifestyle. The Moustache Tour lasts three and a half hours and the price of €45 includes the guide, a Ljubljana Tourism bicycle rental, short visits to the Križanke Open Air Theatre, the barber's shop, Plečnik House, the National Gallery of Slovenia, Ivan Cankar Memorial Room at Rožnik and the International Centre of Graphic Arts, a slice of potica, writer's coffee or tea and a moustachioed surprise. The tour is offered in English, German, Spanish and Slovenian.

The Moustache Tour is the only experiential tour in Slovenia that reveals in an interactive way the creative power and secrets of Ljubljana, and the special features of the Slovenian character. This is an important tour for Ljubljana's Tourism, as it pursues many of the city's main goals, attracts tourists and at the same time takes them outside of the city centre and helps manage tourism flows in an inspirational and innovative way.

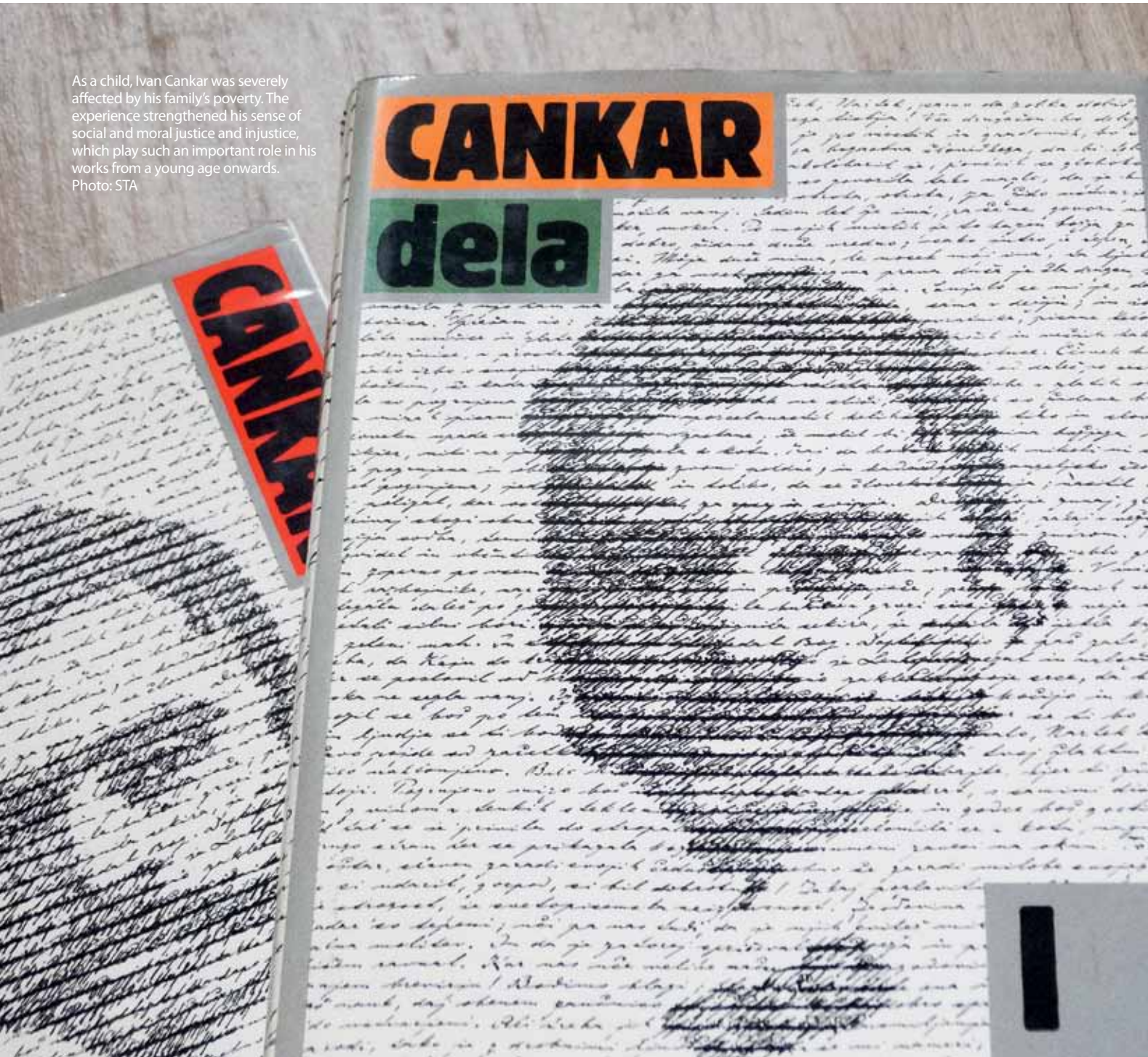


Coffee experience and great styling are essential for the Moustache Tour. The heirs of the three giants wear Sens clothes, namely collection 5017, designed by Zlata Zavašnik, and connecting a century of Ljubljana lifestyle.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF IVAN CANKAR

The 100th anniversary of his death

PROF. DR. IRENA AVSENIK NABERGOJ



As a child, Ivan Cankar was severely affected by his family's poverty. The experience strengthened his sense of social and moral justice and injustice, which play such an important role in his works from a young age onwards. Photo: STA

Talented artists have played important roles in all nations and cultures. Slovenia is no exception, as the great poet, author, playwright, and the master of the artistry of the Slovenian language Ivan Cankar (1876 Vrhnika–1918 Ljubljana) left a particularly notable mark on his country's literature. Cankar is justly considered the greatest Slovenian writer. As he grew up in severe poverty, he developed an incredibly good sense of social and moral justice. This was reflected in his thoughts and works from a young age on.

Not only his literature, but he himself was the role model of a nationally conscious figure who inspired the Slovenian people during his lifetime, and continues to do so today. Poet Srečko Kosovel recognized that Cankar's works had incredible ethical and inspirational power, saying: "Cankar's works are so great and powerful that they have the ability to transform people. Cankar's works inspire people to change and regenerate and, if they are strong enough, to become capable of suffering and sacrificing everything in order to defend the truth and fight for Justice."

The author's works boast artistic expression, genuine emotions, piercing psychology and social analysis. He fought against fatality, obsequiousness and hypocrisy in Slovenian people while encouraging confidence, honesty, truthfulness, freedom and faith in a better future.

His depiction of the character of the beautiful Vida shows the desperate human yearning for beauty, freedom and personal fulfilment.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF IVAN CANKAR'S LIFE AND WORKS

The symbols of such longing for freedom and a better life that Cankar reveals, among others, with the depiction of the beautiful Vida, are interlaced with many personal and common stories that

unravel in Slovenian lands, in towns that were significant to Cankar's life. His works bring to life many Slovenian regions where the author lived and worked from childhood until old age, especially his birthplace of Vrhnika, the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana, the town of Bled and Bled Island, and the hill of Rožnik above Ljubljana. The poor Vienna suburbs of Ottakring also played an important role in Cankar's life – he lived there for nearly eleven years – as did Sarajevo where he stayed for two months while visiting his brother Karl, and where he finished his iconic play The Serfs. However, Slovenia and its people awakened a special melody and mood full of yearning and love in his memory and works.

Slovenia, and especially Vrhnika, boasts several cultural and tourism trails where visitors can follow the author's footsteps and personal experiences, as well as those of his mother, Neža, and a few others who played such important roles in the author's life that he included them into his novels, plays, short stories, novellas, tales, and poems, and kept up correspondence with them or, mainly in his youth, depicted them in his drawings.

EVENTS THAT HONOUR CANKAR'S YEAR IN SLOVENIA AND AROUND THE WORLD

Many Slovenian scientific and cultural institutions will mark the 100th anniversary of Cankar's passing by celebrating his life and work with diverse cultural and artistic events, such as the Ljubljana City Theatre, Cankar Centre in Ljubljana, the Ivan Cankar Institute in Vrhnika, the Ivan Cankar Library in Vrhnika, the Municipality of Vrhnika, the National and University Library in Ljubljana, Ljubljana City Library, the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana, the

Academy of Fine Arts and Design, the Slovenian Theatre Institute, the Slovenian Permanent Theatre in Trieste, Slovenian universities, the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Art, the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Culture and Arts Programme of RTV Slovenia, the Ivan Cankar Society in Sarajevo, the Ruma Society in Serbia, the Slovenian Society Kredarica in Novi Sad, Korotan in Vienna, Charles University in Prague, and many other institutions. Many primary and secondary schools will also focus on Ivan Cankar and his works this year. A number of prominent scientific symposia at various universities in Slovenia and abroad, as well as at Slovenian language departments here and outside the country, have been organised to shed light on and revise the different aspects of Cankar's works. The Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Art's initiative to symbolically connect all academics that specialize in Cankar's works on its premises is also very important.

The calendar of the many cultural events that will honour Cankar's year is published on the website of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia.

Organisers can add information about events, and thus inform the interested public. New events are being added all the time, so only a few are listed here.

THE MANY CULTURAL EVENTS IN VRHNIKA

Vrhnika will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Ivan Cankar's death with many cultural events by local and other institutes,

societies and individuals. The slogan of the organisational board is "Cankar for Every Day" – meaning that the greatest Slovenian author will be honoured every day in one way or another. Vrhnika will publish booklets with translated extracts from Cankar's works in several languages, along with a reprint of Cankar's Eroticism. It will additionally host many exhibitions, concerts, a fine arts workshop, author meetings, competitions, and more. Among other things, the Choral Society Ivan Cankar in Vrhnika is organising an International Choral Festival, and eponymous societies from Sweden, Australia, Serbia, Bosnia and Slovenia have been invited. The Ivan Cankar Institute has prepared many cultural, tourism and sporting events, as well as new souvenirs in Ivan Cankar's memory. In December Vrhnika will host the main national ceremony in honour of Cankar's Year.

Upon President Pahor's initiative the government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the decision to establish a work group and an honorary board to honour the 100th anniversary of Ivan Cankar's death.

This demonstrates that all the events for the 100th anniversary of Ivan Cankar's death will be first-class symbolic gestures – they will bring together many cultural, artistic, scientific and social activities for the citizens of Slovenia and Slovenians abroad in celebration of this very important anniversary that will show the true image of Ivan Cankar, which is very relevant for today's world.



Cankar first attempted to write poetry at about the age of 15. Love was the theme of his first poems, alongside the patriotic and Slavic themes that he came across in the works of Prešeren, Gregorčič, Levstik and Jenko. Through these same poets, he became familiar with certain poetic forms. At first, Cankar wrote several sonnets, among them an 1891 wreath of sonnets, inspired by Prešeren's work, with an acrostic dedicated to Olgica Gruden, who was the writer's first love. Photo: Bor Slana/STA



Cankar used several depictions of Vrhnika and its surroundings in his works – the churches, gorges, hills, grassland, fields, basins, dirt roads and remote farms. The beauty of his homeland was close to Cankar's heart all his life, and he depicted it in his works. He was inspired by imaginative folktales that were set in this same land and by his childhood experiences, which would forever remain vivid memories. Photo: Bor Slana/STA

PARAGLIDING

The sport for adrenalin junkies

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ
PHOTO: DEAN LOZEJ



More and more people in Slovenia are taking up paragliding, and the percentage free-flying sports enthusiasts per capita puts the country at the very top of Europe in this regard. Slovenia's geographical features contribute to this statistic, as they are perfect for free flying. The ridges of the Karavanke mountains and the Soča and Vipava Valleys are excellent paragliding launch sites.

In addition, Central Slovenia has several launch sites for different wind conditions. Currently, over 40 such sites are registered, and most of them are equipped with automatic weather stations. The diversity of the Slovenian hills and mountains further makes for other great flying sites and terrains.

In recent years, Slovenian competitors have achieved many excellent results in several paragliding disciplines, and are consistently among the best in the world. They have been named European and World champions, both individually and in team competitions.

They are also among the best in the Paragliding World Cup. Recently, the paragliders Primož Suša, Tilen Ceglar, Jošt Napret and Dušan Orož set a new world record for an out-and-return flight, with a distance of 302.11 km.

Paragliding is the most accessible aviation sport, and is often mistaken for traditional parachuting, or skydiving, which involves jumping out of a plane and landing on the ground within a few minutes. Paragliding, however, entails first climbing a hill, launching from it and then gliding for a distance ten times more than the height of the hill, depending primarily on the weather. A paraglider's basic equipment is a parachute, a helmet, a reserve parachute and a harness. The harnesses can be a standard upright, pod or cocoon model.

GET BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Paragliding can be done individually or in tandem. The more time spent paragliding, the more options open up. Several paragliders participate in competitions – similar to sailboats in regattas.

Paragliders have turn points in the hills for a 3D course, and the goal is to go around them as fast as possible.

Bivouac flying is a method that includes travelling; it involves paragliding on the first day, landing on a hill and then continuing the next day. The highest paragliding speeds (in fact not very high) and the heights attained depend very much on the weather. The heights a paraglider reaches are directly related to the weather conditions and on the surface, sun, and air; a paraglider must pay attention to inversions, meaning that the air higher up is warmer than on the ground, making it more difficult to ascend. Evaluating weather conditions that require extreme caution is the most demanding aspect of paragliding. In the event of an accident it is always the paraglider's fault, wherever it happens and for every flight.

There are several paragliding schools in Slovenia, a few in nearly every region. The Slovenian Free Flight Association (ZPLS) is an association of clubs for free flying sports. It brings together paraglid-

ers and hang gliders, more than forty clubs, and some 1,200 pilots from across the country.

The association was founded in the autumn of 1997. It is a member of the EHPU (European Hang Gliding and Paragliding Union), which is comprised of around 100,000 paragliders from 19 European countries, and a member of the EAS (Europe Air Sports). It represents the interests of paragliders and hang gliders both in Slovenia and the EU.

Many foreign paragliders come to Slovenia to do some flying, especially to the west of the country, and they contribute significantly to the development of tourism in these parts.

The possibilities for such development are still great, however, especially in tandem paragliding and organised group paragliding for foreign paragliders. The Association helps clubs with the management and maintenance of launch and landing sites, and they believe that a little help from the local communities would go a long way. Every year, launch sites are the locations of several national and international competitions, and the Association organises many activities related to safe paragliding, especially among foreigners.

Kobariški stol take off



A dream come true Three house, Chateau Ramšak.
Photo: Chateau Ramšak Archives

GLAMPING

A guaranteed five-star experience

POLONA PREŠEREN

What's nicer than spending your holidays peacefully in a stress-free environment, surrounded by pristine nature, without any crowds, but still in the luxury of a five-star experience? If you like the idea, glamping will be the perfect holiday for you.

Glamping is camping taken to the next level. The name itself is a combination of the words glamorous and camping. Why glamorous?

Glamping provides comforts that regular camps do not, and you don't have to set up a tent either. It is a great way of spending time outdoors without having to sacrifice comfort.

So no tent stakes and heavy loads to worry about, no equipment to set up, no sleeping bags, but ample luxury as you relax in a private hot tub. Glamping enables guests to experience all the good aspects of camping without having to go through the bad, uncomfortable ones. It offers a high standard of hotel services based on comfort, well-being and spending time outdoors. It is thus perhaps no surprise that this new form of accommodation is becoming increasingly popular in Slovenia, which is now aiming to appeal to travellers in search of more boutique experiences.

VINEYARD GLAMPING

Chateau Ramšak in Maribor is located in the breath-taking Styrian vineyards and it is one of the newest glamping resorts in Slovenia; it is preparing for its second season.

Špela Dolinar, Glamping Ramšak Director and the owner of the online portal www.glamping.si, which lists all Slovenian glamping providers, says that

“because of its natural beauty Slovenia is unsurprisingly becoming a glamping destination. Glamping has been developing at an incredibly fast pace.”

“In our experience glamping is most popular with couples for a romantic getaway, as it really is perfect for that. It is glamping's purpose and it is all adjusted accordingly – a private hot tub, a terrace, and guaranteed privacy. The guests come here to retreat, and they have their time alone,” says Špela Dolinar. Why has glamping become a trend? “That's simple. People want to spend time outdoors; they want to forget their everyday struggles and spend their free time in natural environments.”

She also says that in the summer months, that is July and August, quite a few families come to the resort as they see glamping as huge a number of advantages, as well as being a luxury experience. Children are safe, and everything is within reach; glamping really is a hotel room outdoors. “It is charming to wake up to the birds singing and to fall asleep to the crickets chirping,” says Špela.

And what separates Chateaux Ramšek from other resorts? “Chateaux Ramšek is a vineyard glamping resort, the only one in Slovenia. The estate covers 15 hectares of vineyards where the Ramšeks produce white wines. Our guests can enjoy wine tastings, they have their own terraces, hot tubs, and breakfast is delivered every morning in front of their glamping tent or even to bed if that's what they want. We offer wine massages and grape peelings, which are some of our guests' favourites. And the resort is one of only two in Slovenia that are open in the winter as well. In order to be ecological, the glamping tents are additionally insulated and their energy



Terme Olimje
Photo: Lili Pušnik/STA



Glamping Chateaux Ramšak
Photo: Glamping Chateaux Ramšak Archives

The Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) has recently introduced a new addition to the global tourism industry - the new World of Glamping brand. The brand is the first of its kind in the world and it ranks all glamping service providers, which helps regulate this segment of the tourism industry. The first glamping resorts to gain the right to use this brand were Glamping Olimia Adria Village from Terme Olimia and Garden Village Bled.

use is as efficient as possible while keeping guests warm. Last year we had a snow storm, and it was a true winter wonderland."

They also boast a tree house at top of a mighty linden tree, four metres above ground, which also has a terrace and a hot tub. The tree house is a dream come true for both adults and children.

And what is the secret to great glamping? "The staff. This is only our second season, but we already see the guests coming back. The key is the staff, who make sure that the guests can relax and that they have everything they need. The guests have to feel the right energy, and know that the staff does the job with pleasure."

Most Slovenian glamping resorts are available on the portal www.glamping.si. The website confirms that Slovenia truly is a destination for this five-star type of tourism.

You can book your stay anywhere in Slovenia through the website, and it combines most resorts with similar features and one thing in common – luxury in the great outdoors.



Glamping Bled
Photo: Glamping Bled Archives

Glamping experts and the Slovenian Tourist Board have ambitious plans for a global quality certification scheme in glamping. The new project, "World of Glamping", introduces rules and criteria which will enable glamping properties worldwide to position themselves on the market, while improving order and transparency for users.

Experience and knowledge of the trend has prompted the World of Glamping experts to tackle this problem. They have divided glamping into three main segments: Lodging, Glamping and Scouting, based on the quality, luxury, level of services and type of accommodation. In each segment, a maximum of seven stars can be obtained, based on an in-depth site visit and criteria including uniqueness, landscape, architecture, sustainability, luxury and more.

The involvement of the Slovenian Tourist Board in the World of Glamping project is a step forward in the story of Green Slovenia. In the last few years, Slovenia has developed into the world's first green destination (as decided by globally recognised Green Destinations Standard), and one of the best in sustainable tourism. The Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism has become an essential part of the I Feel SLOVEnia brand, and contributes significantly to the vision of a green, boutique Slovenia.

EUROPEAN UNION SCIENCE OLYMPIAD 2018

If young people want to achieve something, they must work together

TANJA GLOGOVČAN
PHOTO: NEBOJŠA TEJIĆ/STA



Gašper Košir, Tevž Lotrič and Luka Hadl

At the European Union Science Olympiad for young scientists up to 16 years of age, the Slovenian team - Gašper Košir and Tevž Lotrič from the Kranj Grammar School, and Luka Hadl from the Novo Mesto Grammar School - won a gold medal and were placed third. This is Slovenia's second gold medal after winning its first two years ago. Other Slovenian competitors were also successful.

This year's European Natural Science Olympiad (EUSO) began on 28 April and finished on 5 May. This was the 16th Olympiad and it was Slovenia's first time hosting. Fifty-two teams from 25 EU countries participated in the competition. The Czech team won, and the Estonian team came in second. All together six gold, 19 silver and 27 bronze medals were awarded to the competitors.

The objective of this competition and social event is to encourage talented young secondary school students to develop their scientific capabilities and pursue a career in the natural sciences.

Science is not abstract and unattainable. Science is a part of us. EUSO also plays an important role in raising awareness among the participants and their mentors about the importance of the European Union.

CONNECTING SCIENCE

Every year the interdisciplinary tasks integrate biology, chemistry and physics in a balanced manner, and the host country provides a theme or common thread to all the tasks. This year's theme was wine. The organisers chose wine because it represents Slovenia, and because it was possible to conduct experiments with vine leaves, grapes and wine in all three disciplines.

The main organiser of this competition in Slovenia was the Association for Technical Culture of Slovenia (ZOTKS), a non-governmental and non-profit organisation with more than 65 years of experience working with children and young people in the fields of science, natural science and technical science. The competition was financially supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, as well as several other sponsors. The slogan for this year's science Olympiad was "Connecting Science".

There were three students on each of the two official Slovenian teams competing at this year's Olympiad: Team A featured Gašper Košir and Tevž Lotrič from the Kranj Grammar School and Luka Hadl from the Novo Mesto Grammar School. Team B featured Ana Meta Dolinar, Gregor Gajič and Vladimir Smrkolj from the Bežigrad Grammar School. The organisation of the Olympiad was financially supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

The competition took place over the span of two days for approximately five hours per day.

The first competition day was dedicated to colours. The chemistry task required the competitors to analyse leaf pigments.

Using a special technique and the right solvents, they separated the pigments in the leaves. The task in physics required them to measure light permeability in different wine samples from all the

regions of Slovenia. They had to determine which wine was from which region. The task in biology required them to study what effects enzymes have on the oxidation of grapes.

During the second day of the competition, the young scientists studied the characteristics of fluids.

This time, the task in physics involved viscosity and the surface tension of wines. To solve the chemistry task they had to use potentiometric titration to determine a wine's acid content, and for the task in biology they had to determine unknown organisms which had adapted to life in vineyards and orchards.

The Olympiad and the accompanying programme lasted seven days. Every year the members of the expert council committee from the host country prepare a scientific debate discussing the tasks. The mentors exchanged views about natural sciences and their experience with curricula in different countries.

Various other activities were organised in addition to the two competition days, such as field trips, social events and visits to natural monuments.

The Olympiad participants visited the Škocjan Caves and went to Piran and the Sečovlje Saltworks; they tried their skills in an Escape Room, saw the City Museum of Ljubljana and the Museum of Illusions, and strolled around Ljubljana.

The founder of the EUSO Olympiad was Michael A. Cotter, from Ireland. The first competition was held in 2003 in Dublin and since then in a different EU city every year.



To date, Slovenian teams have won one gold, seven silver and 12 bronze medals. Slovenian students won the gold in 2016 in Estonia. Last year, in Denmark, the two Slovenian teams won a silver and bronze medal.

“I FEEL SLOVENIA. I FEEL CULTURE.”

A photography exhibition with Slovenian soul

TANJA GLOGOVČAN



Bled
Photo: Government Communication Office Archives

Slovenia is building its identity on its extraordinarily rich cultural heritage. The Italian Baroque, the Vienna Secession, pan-Slavism and many other cultural influences not native to this land have rendered Slovenian society and culture much richer than they would otherwise have been.

And it is for this very reason that Slovenians as a nation are brought together and enriched precisely by their assimilation and respect for cultural diversity, which they understand, nurture and develop as their own.

The diverse wealth of folk songs and dances, the colourful ethnic costumes and customs, the rich cuisine and noble wines, the wide variety of technical and artistic creations and the amazing cultural landscape – all this is Slovenia.

Since its earliest times, Slovenian culture has been founded on its uniqueness, pride and position at the heart of the national identity.

CULTURAL HERITAGE CAPTURED IN PHOTOGRAPHS

The exhibition “I Feel Slovenia, I Feel Culture” visited several European cities over the last year. It was first hosted in Warsaw, Poland, and Prague, the Czech Republic, and this year, it was also hosted in Zagreb, Croatia, Bern, Switzerland and Dresden, Germany. Locally, the exhibition was on display in Bled, one of the most appealing Slovenian cities on tourists’ lists. Slovenia’s story was warmly welcomed with interest in all these locations.

CULTURE AS THE FOUNDATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

A selection of 38 photographs by well-known Slovenian photographers, chosen by the Slovenian Government Communica-

tion Office and Ministry of Culture, presents the cultural diversity of Slovenia.

Even more – it presents culture in the broadest sense of the word – as the foundation of national identity.

This year is significant as it is the European Year of Cultural Heritage, and Slovenia is part of that Europe.

Cultural heritage helps us understand the past and create a better future. This is also reflected in the slogan: “Our heritage: where the past meets the future”. This photography exhibition is thus a great reflection of this year’s events, and visitors will leave it excited to see more.

**I FEEL
SLOVENIA**

I feel culture.

BENJAMIN SAVŠEK

World's best wildwater canoeists return to Ljubljana

NINA JELENC
PHOTO: NINA JELENC



Benjamin Savšek

Canoeing is one of the most successful Slovenian sports, with two Olympic medals (both in canoe slalom: Andraž Vehovar in Atlanta 1996, Peter Kauzer in Rio de Janeiro 2016), numerous medals from World and European Championships as well as World Cup races having been won by the nation's wildwater and flatwater paddlers. Among the most decorated Slovenian sportsmen is canoeist Benjamin Savšek, reigning World Champion, who will be one of the main favourites for the win at the upcoming Canoe Slalom World Cup race in Ljubljana, which will be held between August 31st and 2nd September on the rapids of Sava River in the capital's suburb of Tacen.

Thirty-one-year-old Benjamin Savšek is one of the best Slovenian sportsmen and holder of a Bloudek award, the highest national award for sporting achievements. He won the World Champion title in men's canoe event at last year's World Championships in France, while he also won two silver and a bronze medal at world championships in individual events and two bronze medals from world championships in team events. The athlete, who started paddling at a very young age to join his family and older brothers on the Slovenian rivers, is also 2015 European Champion and 2012 bronze medallist at European Championships.

Last year you won a medal at a fourth consecutive World Championships, this time a gold. This is something a very few managed in the past. What is behind this success?

In this success there are hidden many years of hard work, discipline and persistence.

There was much hard training, when I was very tired and fed up with everything. But the wish for success at World Championships motivated me not to surrender, even if it was just a regular training.

My experience from major canoeing competitions is also hidden in this success. Everything then gathered in those 92,81 seconds

of my final run (with an additional two penalty seconds) at last year's world championships. All the previous efforts converted into much joy. As the winners say, "Pain is temporary but victory lasts forever".

You've already won two silver medals and a bronze at World Championships in previous years, but now you've finally won gold medal. What was the first thing you thought when you saw that you were the new World Champion?

I waited first to how long it would last, and then I really celebrated. It was hard to believe I managed to win the World champion title. I thought that my lifelong wish came true and that now I can stop dreaming so big. But that did not take long.

One interesting thing is that you are a competitor who wins at courses with different specifications. Can you adapt quickly to such varied courses?

Honestly I really do not know what the main reason for this is, but it looks like I can adapt quickly. Maybe it's because we have many rivers in Slovenia that are very different. I paddled a lot on those even when I was young, so I built a good foundation. Since I entered the senior category I also paddled a lot in different countries around the world. I enjoy paddling on all the courses with wildwater. I don't like paddling on flat water, but this part of training is very important too.

Your role model since your early paddling days was Slovakian canoeist Michal Martikan, holder of two gold, two silver

and one bronze Olympic medal. You shared a podium with him at last year's world championships. Was this an extra award for you?

With all the respect I have for Michal Martikan, the greatest legend of our sport, this was a big thing for me. Michal Martikan was the person who lent me his boat for testing ten years ago. I was immediately impressed with it, and I still use the same model today. He developed two models of the boat in between, and I think it was not easy for him to see that the old one still wins.

Last June Ljubljana hosted the Canoe Slalom European Championships. For a few minutes you already celebrated a medal, but then after video analysis you received two penalty seconds and dropped to fourth place. You were fourth also at world cup in Prague, but returned to podium position in the second half of the season.

I was focused on every race and 100 percent determined for excellent results. I still remember the European Championships on my home course with bitter feelings. I had some ups and downs, but I am happy that I came back stronger and finished the season, when it mattered the most, on top with the World Champion title.

So, you still have some unfinished business when we talk about the races in Tacen. Will this be a special motivation before this year's event?

Not only because of unfinished business, I always have strong

motivation on my home course to win in front of our fans. I will focus 100 percent on the World Cup in Tacen.

The venue in Tacen is one of the traditional ones, and well known in the canoeing world because of the drop. Are races there special?

Yes. The crowds in Tacen always make a special atmosphere. Maybe the reason lies in the tribunes, which are semicircular and oriented towards the course, so it looks like an arena.

But the main reason for great atmosphere are our fans who are so loud you don't even think for a second while paddling down the course to lower your guard.

Tacen's drop is still the most attractive start in all the courses around the world, because the rapids under the drop are huge, which is a real challenge for all the athletes.

This is your home course. Have you ever counted how many kilometres you've paddled here?

With some effort I guess I could add them all up. Maybe my result would come close to Chuck Norris, who already paddled all the kilometres on the course [laughs]. I know my home course very well, but it is difficult to produce a perfect run. Sometimes you manage to have one with a bit of luck, because we paddle close to the gates and every hundredth of a second counts, and water stops you quickly at every wrong lean or stroke. But I do have an advantage here, because I've come close to a perfect run on this course several times, and it suits my style.

Could you already paddle down the course with your eyes shut?

This would be a good challenge – to paddle down the course with my eyes closed. I might try it someday at training. Without gates, of course.



Ljubljana will host the 2018 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup on the Sava River between 31st August and 2nd September. This will be the 17th Canoe Slalom World Cup event organised in Ljubljana since 1988, when the World Cup series was introduced.

Slovenian paddlers have had much success in past editions of World Cup in Tacen. Local winners of such events held in Slovenia include Andraž Vehovar (1995), Dejan Kralj (2001), Miha Terdič (2002), Andrej Nolimal (2003), Jure Meglič (2007), Peter Kauzer (2008, 2011, 2013, 2016), Anže Berčič (2013) and Benjamin Savšek (2014, 2016); silver medals were won by Andraž Vehovar (1998), Fedja Marušič (2x 1999), Simon Hočvar (2003), Dejan Stevanovič (2007), Jure Meglič (2011), Luka Božič – Sašo Taljat (2014), while third place went to Fedja Marušič (1995), Miha Štrigelj (1999), Simon Hočvar (2001), Urša Kragelj (2011), Eva Terčelj (2013), Luka Božič – Sašo Taljat (2013) and Luka Božič (2014). Besides World Cup events this venue has hosted two World Championships (1991, 2010) and two European Championships (2005, 2017). On Friday, 31st August, we will see heats in all categories, on Saturday men's canoe, women's kayak and mixed Canadian doubles semi-finals and finals, while on Sunday we will follow men's kayak and women's canoe semi-finals and finals, as well as extreme canoe slalom races. More information: www.slalomtacen.com



TOUR OF SLOVENIA

The silver jubilee of an international competition that presents the diversity of Slovenia for active holidays

MAŠA PUKLAVEC



Photo: Vid Ponikvar, SPORTIDA

In 2018 the Slovenian Tourist Board continues with its innovative and efficient campaigns to support the promotion of Slovenia as a perfect tourist destination for active holidays. An advertising campaign will again be launched on Eurosport to support the Tour of Slovenia, and the race will be broadcast live.

It is estimated that advertising and live broadcast will reach at least 110 million viewers in 54 countries. For the second year in a row the Cycling Ambassadors of Slovenia competition was held in the digital media segment, which included five travel influencers with a wide reach and significant influence on social media, who explored Slovenia's cycling routes and shared their authentic experiences with followers. Their exploration of all parts of Slovenia was also portrayed in an online series with the same title.

SPORT AND ACTIVE HOLIDAYS

An advertising campaign to promote Slovenia as a tourist destination for active holidays was launched on Eurosport at the end of April, and will end on 20 June. During this time Eurosport 1 and 2 will show 170 30-second advertisements presenting Slovenia and the tourist destinations where all the stages of this year's tour will start and finish: Maribor, Trebnje, Kamnik, Pomurje, Ljubljana, Novo mesto, Slovenske Konjice and Rogaška Slatina.

Advertising on the Eurosport network also includes 1.75 million display banners on the www.eurosport.com website and posts on Facebook page with 9.6 million followers and Twitter profile.

"Sport and active holidays are among the key tourist products of Slovenian tourism, and they are given particular emphasis by the

Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) as part of our marketing and promotional activities. Live coverage of the tour and advertising in Eurosport media are once again excellent opportunities to reach and present ourselves to millions of sports fans. As many as 70 million regular viewers of Eurosport are active tourists, while 28.3 million spend their holidays actively and are interested in what the culture has to offer," says Maja Pak, director of the Slovenian Tourist Board, adding that STB also arranges coordination meetings and prepares promotional materials to mobilise municipalities where the Tour will pass through to give them the opportunity to present themselves as best they can during the live broadcast.

Eurosport is the leading global multi-media platform addressing sports fans all over the world in 21 languages. Their digital platforms attract more than five million visitors a day, who follow the content in 10 different languages.

Covering cycling races is one of Eurosport's specialities, and it provides a live broadcast of all three "Grand Tour" cycling competitions and traditional races. By innovatively broadcasting cycling competitions, Eurosport has established itself as the leading media platform for major elite cycling competitions.

TRAVEL INFLUENCERS EXPLORE SLOVENIA'S CYCLING ROUTES

To provide an additional promotion of cycling tourism and the Tour of Slovenia, STB has also implemented a support project entitled Cycling Ambassadors of Slovenia.

This project includes a selected group of cycling enthusiasts with great viral reach, coming from key markets for Slovenian tourism, who are invited to Slovenia before the start of the Tour Slovenia to cycle through select Slovenian destinations, where they discover tourism

products and services, natural and cultural sights and culinary delights.

They share their experiences through social networks and invite people to watch the race.

As Maja Pak notes of the Cycling Ambassadors of Slovenia project: "Every year STB hosts hundreds of journalists and social network influencers on study trips. To support the Tour we have launched the Cycling Ambassadors of Slovenia project, which allowed travel influencers with exceptional digital footprints from Italy, Belgium, Spain, France and USA to discover our natural and cultural sights, culinary delights, spa tourism and boutique accommodations, such as glamping, from a cyclist's perspective. The first numbers indicating the reach of their posts that social networks are currently an exceptional communication channel."

25 YEARS OF THE TOUR OF SLOVENIA

55 Slovenian towns and peaks have been part of the Tour Slovenia over the last 25 years

In addition to Slovenian towns, the Tour of Slovenia also visited five towns outside Slovenia in all neighbouring countries – Austria, Italy, Croatia and Hungary.

14 times around Slovenia

Over the past 25 years cyclists competing in the Tour of Slovenia have covered more than 18 thousand kilometres. This is the same distance as cycling along Slovenia's national border fourteen times.

Nearly 3 thousand professional cyclists from 6 continents

45 countries from 6 continents – Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, South America, North America – only Antarctica is missing.

Slovenians "Kings of the Mountains"

Slovenians claimed 8 wins in 21 mountain stages.

The shortest race was in 2013 (503 km) and the longest in 1999 (1,121 km).

Slovenians winning the most stages are Boštjan Mervar (7 stages), Robert Pintarič (4 stages), Borut Božič (4 stages) and Tomaž Nose (3 stages).



