

# Sinfo

September-October

The Best from Slovenia

**IN FOCUS**  
Bridges of Creativity

**I FEEL  
SLOVENIA**





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SLOVENIA**

# Sinfo

**SLOVENIAN INFORMATION**

*September-October 2018*

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## CHALLENGES FOR A MYRIAD OF OPPORTUNITIES

The autumn issue of Sinfo magazine is traditionally connected to language. In the last two years it revolved around Slovenian literature in cooperation with the Slovenian Book Agency. Now this is even more important, because in 2022 Slovenia will be Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, an incredible opportunity for our country. And not only for our literature, but also for our economy, sports, art and Slovenian history in general.

Words have power and can build bridges. This year's Bled Strategic Forum is entitled "Bridging the Divide". We are living in a time of changes in information, globalisation and other areas. The dynamics of change give rise to new issues at both social and more personal levels alike. The key questions are: what can bring us closer together, and what are the challenges ahead?

Music begins where the possibilities of language end. It is a bridge between our spiritual and emotional lives. It gives spirit to the universe, wings to the intellect, a jolt to the imagination, and charm and zest to life. The 66th Ljubljana Festival is behind us and it once again brought joy to the city, its residents and visitors, with a full programme of amazing artists and events.

We get that extra something in life from challenges, whether in business, sports, tourism or cuisine. An abundance of challenges gives rise to a myriad of opportunities, and life truly is a challenge to be met by creativity in all areas. This issue of our magazine presents some of these creative stories.

**Tanja Glogovčan**, Executive Editor



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## BRIDGES OF CREATIVITY

Success comes from good decisions based on experience and knowledge. But creativity requires courage, just like crossing a bridge from a familiar riverbank to one that is unknown.



## SLOVENIA – GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE 2022 FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR

# A Unique Challenge and Opportunity

ANJA KOVAČ



Frankfurt Book Fair  
Photo: Alexander Heimann

An agreement was signed in February 2018 that officially confirmed Slovenia would be the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair (19 – 23 October 2022). The Government of the Republic of Slovenia entrusted the preparation and implementation of this world-renowned event to the Slovenian Book Agency. Before the agreement was signed, intensive preparations had already been under way for an occasion deemed by industry professionals as a once-in-a-lifetime event.

Why is the Frankfurt Book Fair so important? It attracts nearly 300,000 visitors, 7,000 exhibitors, and 10,000 journalists, and has around 4,000 events, making it the largest book fair in the world. Unlike many others that function as trade fairs, this one is intended mainly for professional visitors. As a result, thousands of deals are concluded during the five days of the fair. Many a publisher, agent or printer can feel the impact of a visit fair throughout the year, which is why it's no surprise that every meeting at the fair concludes with the heartfelt wish "Have a good fair!"

And how can one stand out from such a diverse crowd and direct attention towards literature, culture and a country that very few visitors associate with anything at all? A country that does not (really) fit in with certain stereotypes about the former Yugoslav countries, and for whom membership in the EU since 2004 has failed to bring much recognition? Although Slovenia has managed to raise its profile as a tourism destination, a great deal can be attributed to its breathtaking natural and cultural landscapes that serve as excellent (self)promotional materials in the age of social media. However, the country's literary potential is more of a hidden gem or a treat for connoisseurs than a visible and internationally renowned body of work. There lies the potential of Slovenia's role as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, an occasion that could change the country's status in the world of letters.

### SLOVENIA'S PUBLISHING IN NUMBERS

According to figures from the National and University Library, which is responsible for collecting data about the books and publications produced in Slovenia, a total of 1,104 publishers (of which 199 were

author-publishers) brought out around 4,000 books in 2017, of which 809 were classified as Slovenian literary works. These figures are nothing short of impressive for such a small literary market, and Slovenia is in fact one of the top countries in the world in terms of the number of works published per capita.

**It comes as no surprise then that ten years ago Slovenia was presented at the Leipzig Book Fair, the second largest book fair in Germany, with the slogan *Die dichteste Dichtung pro m²* – a play on words alluding to the physical density of poetry in Slovenia.**

Does this incredible creativity go beyond Slovenia's borders? Here the figures are also high, but perhaps they paint the wrong picture. For instance: if the Slovenian Book Agency's Database of Translations lists 345 translations into all varieties of English and 567 translations into German (only former Yugoslav languages outnumber these two), it should be noted that many of these are old translations that are no longer available and which would have to be revised and republished. One of the goals of the organisers of Slovenia's presentation in Frankfurt is thus to ensure at least 100 new publications in German by 2022, while encouraging publications in other world languages (English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian), as well as promoting translations into smaller languages.

Incentives for foreign publishers are available in the form of tenders and calls of the Slovenian Book Agency encouraging translations



and publications in other languages. Slovenian publishers can benefit from a support system in the form of national presentations at international book fairs, B2B meetings, training for literary agents and translation seminars.

**WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE ROLE OF GUEST OF HONOUR?**

Judging from the experience of previous guests of honour, the role dramatically improves the visibility of the country, its authors and their works. A diverse and carefully planned programme sparks interest, and what better way to satisfy greater curiosity about a nation, its life and what it has to offer to the world than through its literature? Stories are crucial in this context, and there are plenty available in Slovenian literature. Publishers and agents thus establish international contacts and their own networks more easily both before and after the presentation. Consequently, copyright trading grows along with the number of publications of the presented authors in German-speaking countries, as well as on other literary markets. Figures start to rise in the years before the presentation, and even when the initial euphoria fades in the year or two following the fair, figures remain much higher than before.

However, the long-term effects go far beyond the publishing sector, because the role of guest of honour helps unlock the cultural and tourism potential of a country. In turn, with carefully planned activities this can even improve the economy, boost the development of culture and help create new jobs.

**The 2022 programme will follow on the heels of Slovenia's EU presidency in 2021, the country's participation in the Bologna Children's Book Fair in the same year, and many other internationally visible roles for Slovenia that may not produce immediate effects, but will certainly have long-term ones.**

Previous guests of honour have for the most part seen their investments pay off, and the added value has proved to be the highest in previously less visible countries. Participation in Frankfurt is thus both an opportunity as well as a responsibility.

**The Frankfurt Book Fair in numbers**

300,000 visitors  
7,000 exhibitors  
4,000 events  
10,000 journalists

*Source: Frankfurt Book Fair*

**Slovenia's publishing in 2017**

1,104 publishers  
4,323 books and brochures  
809 literary works

*Source: National and University Library*

**Slovenian literature abroad**

3,871 translations into 67 foreign languages

*Source: Frankfurt Book Fair*



The renovated Slovenian book stand for the Frankfurt Book Fair was designed by architect and poet Lucija Stupica. Photo: Slovenian Book Agency Archives



BLED

# A Cultural Image of Paradise

TJAŠA GERDEJ

Festival Okarina Bled  
Photo: Joc Razinger



Even before the arrival of Christianity, Bled was a must-see destination for every foreign traveller visiting the territory of present-day Slovenia. It was an important centre because Bled Island was home to the temple of Živa, the Slavic goddess of love. Bled boasts a fairy-tale image with its lake, island and magnificent mountains that surround it, which undoubtedly contributed to its importance throughout history – as a religious, cultural and tourist centre.

Tourism development in Bled began with the arrival of the Swiss doctor Arnold Rikli.

**He was a natural healer whose motto was “sun, water, air, freedom”. He was looking for the perfect place to put his motto into practice, and found it in Bled.**

After his first visit in 1852, he developed a type of healing we now know as wellness. At that time Bled was still a part of the Austrian Empire, and news of this development travelled fast across these lands, attracting guests from near and far. Ever since then, Bled has been a tourism and sports centre that has also developed into a renowned destination with a number of international cultural events, and below we present four of the more prominent ones.

## INTERNATIONAL WRITERS’ MEETING – SLOVENIAN PEN

This April, Bled hosted the special 50th International Writers’ Meeting PEN, which was attended by a record 90 guests and representatives of 35 PEN centres. Bled meetings have always served as an intermediary between the East and West.

**In addition to their cultural function, they have a strong diplomatic role owing to the various social and political issues that are discussed. This year’s event centred around the slogan “Wall, Fence, Border”.**

PEN meetings are open to the public in order to bring literature to the wider community. The programme of this year’s PEN meeting was held in eight additional locations across Slovenia.

## OKARINA FESTIVAL

Of course, the international PEN meeting is not the only cultural event hosted in Bled every year. Bled is also a town of music. The Okarina Festival has been held every year at the end of July and beginning of August since it was established in 1991 by Leo Ličof, its conceptual father.

**The festival has become the largest world music festival in Slovenia, and one of the biggest in Europe.**

It has come a long way from a one-day event in 1991 to an 11-day festival in 2017, and it continues to grow. Many people find it a great reason to visit Bled.

## BLED FESTIVAL

For over 20 years, Bled has been hosting the summer Bled Festival of classical music, which has recently been broadening its repertoire with other genres.

**Bled Castle, St Martin’s Church, Bled’s Festival Hall and a few other venues are filled each year with beautiful and outstanding classical music.**

The diverse programme of various genres is always accompanied by numerous masterclasses and workshops, where masters from all over the world share their knowledge with aspiring young musicians. In the past twenty years the festival has seen over two thousand young musicians take the classes, some of whom are now internationally acclaimed musicians.



**AS MUSIC FESTIVAL BLED**

Traditional Bled festivals are an inspiration for other events and different festivals that have yet to find their place in the festival world. A less visible but equally superb and interesting one is AS Music Festival, which was launched in 2014. Why AS? AS are the initials of Adolphe Sax, the inventor of the instrument we now know as the saxophone. AS Festival features concerts, workshops, masterclasses and teacher seminars in order to bring

this magnificent instrument closer to those who have only just started to explore it, or others who have made it a part of their professional or private lives. The fourth festival, which took place in February 2018, presented ten saxophonists from Europe and the USA, as well as five saxophone ensembles from various parts of Europe.

Although cultural festivals predominate in Bled, they are far from the only ones.



Okarina Festival  
Photo: Joc Razinger

**There's the Bled Bike Festival, the Chess Festival and the Water Festival, to name but a few. A myriad of meetings, festivals, symposiums and other cultural events place Bled on the cultural map of both Slovenia and Europe as a whole.**

Such events are increasingly valued for the ability to bring pure joy to both audiences and participants, and thus it's no wonder guests and performers keep returning.

Bled is so much more than a lake and "an island in the middle of the lake", as is described in a song by Slavko Avsenik, a legend of Slovenian popular folk music. Bled is an image of paradise enriched by art and culture. Nature bestowed everything upon Bled. But art and culture have played their part in turning this paradise into a place where many are drawn to return again and again.



International Writers' Meeting – Slovenian PEN  
Photo: Tinkara Zupan/STA



## TOP 5 INTERNATIONAL LITERARY EVENTS IN SLOVENIA

# From Poetry on the Streets of Ptuj to Literary Greats in the Capital's Cultural Centre

LARA PAUKOVIČ



International literary star Taiye Selasi at Fabula - World Literature Festival.  
Photo: Matej Pušnik

Slovenia hosts several literary events and Ljubljana, its capital, is especially dynamic – everyone can choose their preferred event among the many readings, book releases and intermedial events.

Local authors and poets can be seen giving readings in bookstores in the city centre or at poetry evenings in boutique galleries – but what about foreign writers in Slovenia? Here are five international literary festivals with high-quality and comprehensive programmes that bring the greats of world literature to the country on the sunny side of the Alps.

### FABULA

The Fabula – Literatures of the World festival was first organised in Ljubljana in 2004, and has since become the largest international literary festival in Slovenia.

**It is also the only festival that has brought greats such as Jonathan Franzen, Hanif Kureishi, Herta Müller, Michel Houellebecq and Terry Eagleton to Slovenia.**

The latter, the legendary English theorist, was a guest at this year's festival along with top French author Maylis de Kerangal and global literature star Taiye Selasi. Intriguing guests, professional organisation and the media's coverage of the festival (the Fabula supplement is published every year in the Delo newspaper, and interviews with visiting writers are covered by most media) are to thank for the fact that in recent years nearly all festival events have been sold out, while tickets for the most anticipated literary evenings are no longer available weeks in advance. Every year, Fabula places different topics in the foreground; this year it was hope, last year immortality, while previous issues include newcomers, Islam and socially committed literature. Five pocket books by the featured authors are also published during the festival.

### DAYS OF POETRY AND WINE

Imagine a warm August evening, the air filled with the aroma of summer and good food, and you're sitting in the centre of a lovely medieval town, sipping on fine wine and listening to poetry interpreted by a poet you revere. You can experience this every year at the Days of Poetry and Wine festival, held at the end of August on the streets of Ptuj. The festival, which is being organised for the twenty-second time this year, has brought more than 450 poets from all over the world to Slovenia since it was established. The festival's visitors say that when Ptuj changes into a capital of poetry it offers events that are simply magical. You can also find your own little piece of poetry in other cities in Slovenia and abroad while the festival is taking place.

**The accompanying programme occurs in several locations; last year, events took place in fourteen cities in Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary.**

The many poetry readings, concerts, intimate private readings, wine tastings, workshops, exhibitions, round tables and children's workshops are sure to provide something for every visitor. Last year's biggest hit was a poetry promenade that transformed the central streets of Ptuj into poetry, music and dance venues on the last day of the festival.

### VILENICA

The Vilenica International Literary Festival is organised by the Slovene Writers' Association and the KUD Vilenica Art Society from Sežana. Poets, authors, playwrights and essayists from Central Europe and other



parts of the world gather in the idyllic Karst region. The festival takes place here at the beginning of September, while events also occur in several other towns across Slovenia.

**Included among the many events are round tables, literary readings, a literary fair, debates and presentations of literary works and new publications.**

Since it was established in 1986, the main event of the Vilenica festival has been the award ceremony for the Vilenica International Literary Prize, taking place at the Vilenica cave, which also gave the festival its name. The recipient of the award for outstanding achievement in literature or essay writing - a Central European author - is the main name of the festival alongside one selected Slovenian author. Last year it was Yurii Andrukhovych, one of Ukraine's leading authors, alongside the chosen Slovenian author Maja Vidmar. The Vilenica prize is not the only one awarded during the festival. One of the international authors, introduced in the Vilenica Almanac and appearing at one of the festival's literary readings, is awarded the Vilenica Crystal. The winner is then given the oppor-

tunity to appear at the Cúirt International Festival of Literature in Galway, Ireland.

**SLOVENIAN BOOK FAIR**

The Slovenian Book Fair is a much larger and more popular event than the Slovenian Book Days. It takes place every year at the end of November in Cankarjev Dom, Cultural and Congress Centre, Ljubljana's cultural centre, and it has been more and more receptive to international influences in recent years. For the past three years, its organisers have focused on one (or more) foreign country and invited authors from there to participate at the festival in addition to translating some of their works.

**This year's focus is Hungary, while Austria, Germany and Switzerland – three German-speaking countries – were in the foreground last year.**

The programme was designed in cooperation with the Goethe Institute, the Austrian Cultural Forum and the Swiss Embassy. As part

of this, the authors Peter Stamm, Lukas Bärfuss, Axel Scheffler, Tamara Bach, Wolf Biermann and Katharina Winkler visited Ljubljana. Foreign guests are also invited by the Association of Book Publishers to participate in the fair's professional debates about the current state of publishing and the book trade. Last year, one of the guests was the esteemed German publisher Gerhard Steidl.

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CRITICISM: THE ART OF CRITICISM**

Last but not least, the International Symposium on Criticism is a professional and international event entitled the Art of Criticism, organised this year for the fourth time by LUD Literatura and The Slovenian Literary Critics' Association in Ljubljana with the help of their partners and supporters.

**The purpose of the symposium is to address the state of social criticism in a broader social and cultural context. The last symposium took place in December 2017, and**

**discussed the inclusion and exclusion practices of criticism in connection with minority and overlooked literary works, as well as the question of what responsibility criticism bears in relation to such works.**

In addition to local literary critics, guests from Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Croatia, Hungary and the United States have participated in the symposium so far. They introduced their essays written especially for the symposium and participated in debates on criticism during the event. As literary criticism in public discourse is often marginalised, it is very important to reflect on why it exists and how it can influence literature as well as society, which The Art of Criticism symposium has successfully done. The international event offers a great opportunity for sharing knowledge, as criticism practices often vary in different countries and the environments where they are used. Experienced foreign guests and the dilemmas they are faced with provide a wider picture of the issues being discussed. At the same time, the symposium is an opportunity to build new collaborations and bridges between local and foreign critics and editors.



Days of Poetry and Wine Festival  
Photo: Gregor Mlakar/STA



Vilenica - International Literary Festival  
Photo: Ivo Štefanič



## LITERATURE WITHOUT BORDERS

# On the Novel *Angel of Oblivion* by Maja Haderlap, Which Has Changed Slovenian and Other Literature for Good

MANCA G. RENKO



Maja Haderlap  
Photo: Arnold Poeschl

When something resonates with you, you might feel it for years to come as if it had just happened yesterday. This is especially the case with works of art; when a book speaks to you, the feeling you get when you read the last page may remain with you for a long time. This happened to me when I read *Angel of Oblivion* by Maja Haderlap when it was originally published in German in 2011. Seven years is a decent time, and yet I still remember how I asked a friend who had travelled to Munich to bring me a copy of the novel, which I then read on a beach in Dalmatia in late summer. In a way, the book was published a long time ago, in a time when ordering any book in the world and having it delivered to your mailbox wasn't just a mouse-click away; but at the same time, I still feel I remember each page of this novel.

## POETIC BRILLIANCE AND THE SHATTERING OF POLITICS

This novel is a masterpiece that impressed me as the best contemporary Slovenian novel I have ever read.

**Even though it wasn't written in Slovenian - this is the first dilemma posed by Maja Haderlap, and it has changed the basic understanding of what constitutes Slovenian literature. Is it literature in Slovenian? Literature that takes place in Slovenia? Literature written by Slovenian citizens?**

All these questions seemed self-evident once upon a time, but after Haderlap's first novel, they have become obsolete. Art, true art, is too complicated to fit into a concept as simple as nationality. This is even more significant today with the renewed construction of barbed wire fences on European borders and the rise in popularity of political parties that want to eliminate from society whatever they consider to be "foreign". Haderlap received the prestigious Max Frisch Prize from the city of Zürich this year, which attests to the

fact that her poetry and prose are wonderful examples of poetic brilliance and the shattering of politics. The jury of experts emphasised that "in times when identity politics is taking over Europe and wants to separate people, cultures and languages, Maja Haderlap's work is an example of literature that knows no borders".

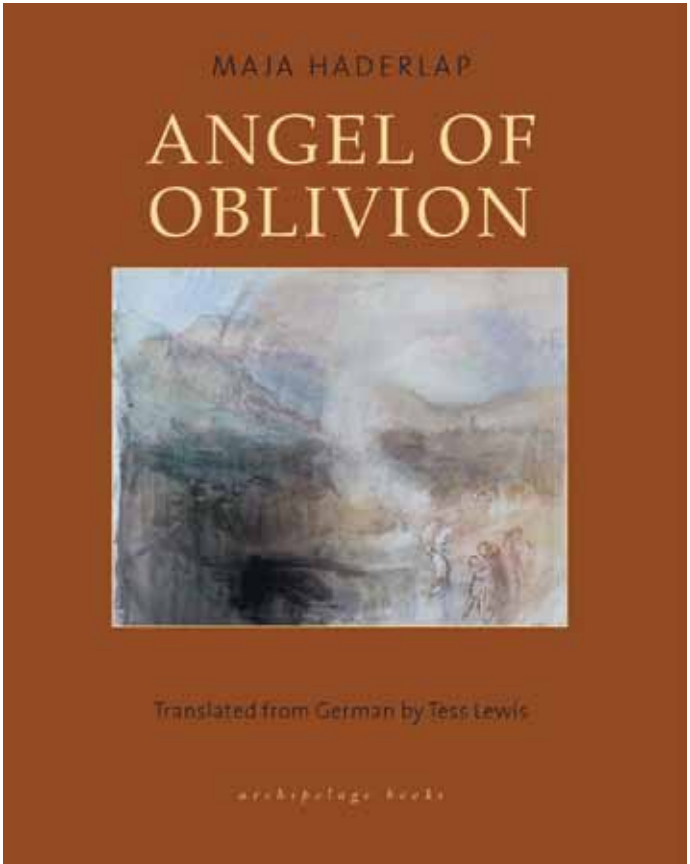
*Angel of Oblivion* is a novel about a border, a frontier that always constrains Others. Haderlap's novel is autobiographical and talks about her experience living by the border where the differences between both sides burdened the minds of children as well as older people, men and women, the guilty as well as the innocent. The book can be considered a historical novel as it discusses World War II in the forests of Carinthia and how those who resided there were forced to take sides. It is a family novel depicting in detail the fate of a family confronted by uncertain times which, despite the change in historical circumstances, they are unable to withstand. It is an intimate novel about a woman growing up. It is a political novel that condemns those who chose opportunism rather than the truth. From all points of view, *Angel of Oblivion* is a comprehensive work of art, a first-person narrative – at first of a young girl, later of a woman – about issues too complicated to be addressed by any other language than the language of literature.

## A EUROPEAN NOVEL

Maja Haderlap's first novel proved that literature is still capable of surprising readers: her narrative about Carinthian Slovenians, about partisans in Austria who rebelled against Nazism – Austria still uses their rebellion as an example of its anti-fascist actions – is the most read book of a contemporary Slovenian author in Germany. Haderlap received mostly positive critiques from all the prominent newspapers, and the story was staged in Vienna's Burgtheater. The story might seem marginal, archaic and even mythological at first, but it puts the periphery in the foreground and shows that true struggles for one's homeland and one's right to have a home don't happen in the centre, but are hidden behind mountains and in the forests where they can easily, perhaps on purpose, be overlooked by the government.



In the next school year, *Angel of Oblivion* will be listed as required reading for all Slovenian high school students in their final years. The novel has thus entered the Slovenian literary canon and will at the same time leave a mark in the consciousness of teenagers born in the new millennium.



It will be interesting to see how these young people experience this novel, since they grew up in a world of disappearing borders that are now, at the beginning of their adulthood, beginning to re-appear. Will they find *Angel of Oblivion* to be a historical novel, a memory of the far-away past, or will it serve as a warning against the borders and exclusions happening at the moment? Due to this, *Angel of Oblivion* is now more than ever a European novel; not only does it take place in the heart of Europe (while realising that regarding somewhere or someone as the heart makes Others peripheral), not only does it question European history, but it also poses questions to which Europe still has no answers.

It is art's job to attempt to answer the unanswerable questions, and even the most difficult question of all: what if putting up borders won't save anyone, what if it will destroy many more people instead?

Maja Haderlap is a poet and an author who writes in Slovenian and German. *Angel of Oblivion*, her first novel, was written entirely in German. It was published in 2011 by Wallstein Publishing, and became the most read contemporary Slovenian literary work in German-speaking Europe. The novel has received several Slovenian and foreign literary awards, among them the Prešeren Foundation Award, the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize, the Bruno Kreisky Prize for the Political Book of the year, the Vinzenz-Rizzi-Preis and the Max Frisch Prize from the city of Zürich.



Maja Haderlap at the presentation of her book at Konzorcij bookshop.  
Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



## THE FOUR GRANDES DAMES OF SLOVENIAN ILLUSTRATION

# Marlenka Stupica, Marjanca Jemec Božič, Jelka Reichman and Ančka Gošnik Godec

NIKA KOVAČ



Marlenka Stupica  
Photo: Jane Štravs



Marjanca Jemec Božič  
Photo: Bogdan Renko



Jelka Reichman  
Photo: Personal Archives



Ančka Godec Gošnik  
Photo: Nada Zgank

Bologna hosts the traditional Children's Book Fair every April, which introduces the latest publications for children and young people from around the world. This year, the Slovenian exhibition stand attracted visitors with four portraits of Marlenka Stupica, Marjanca Jemec Božič, Jelka Reichman and Ančka Gošnik Godec, Slovenian illustrators, academic painters and important parts of childhood for several generations of Slovenians. Despite some illustrations being more than half a century old, they are still considered modern and have received attention from several publishers.

Slovenian illustration has a rich tradition that is deeply embedded in Slovenian cultural space. Its beginnings go back to 1917 – year of the publishing of Martin Krpan, the first Slovenian picture book with 12 illustrations by Hinko Smrekar, which paved the way for numerous other picture books.

### NOTHING IS DONE BY ITSELF

About four decades later, in 1953, the first book collection for children was published. It was designed by Kristina Brenk, whose goal was to offer families high-quality and accessible books. The name she chose for the collection, Čebelica (Little Bee), is still the same today. Kristina Brenk was an editor who selected great authors and illustrators. Her work and editorial skills proved that high-quality books and illustrations are not produced by themselves. It takes good editors, copy-editors, proof-readers and art editors. This is especially important in a time of budget cuts and cost optimisation.

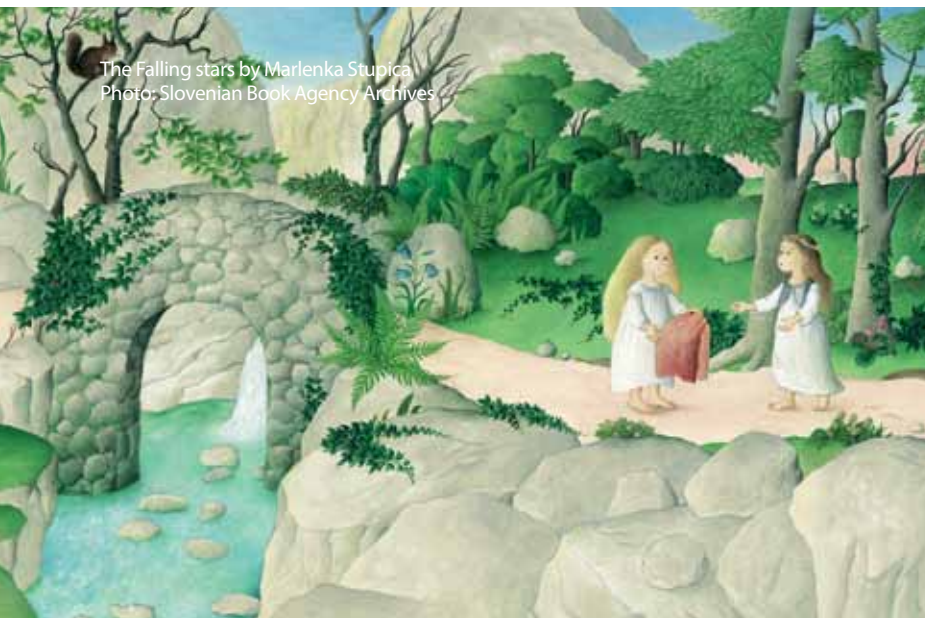
**In other words: Marlenka Stupica, Marjanca Jemec Božič, Jelka Reichman and Ančka Gošnik Godec would not have been able to create such high-quality books if it hadn't been for the existence of high-quality publishing houses.**

### THE MAGICAL WORLD OF FAIRY-TALE IMAGES

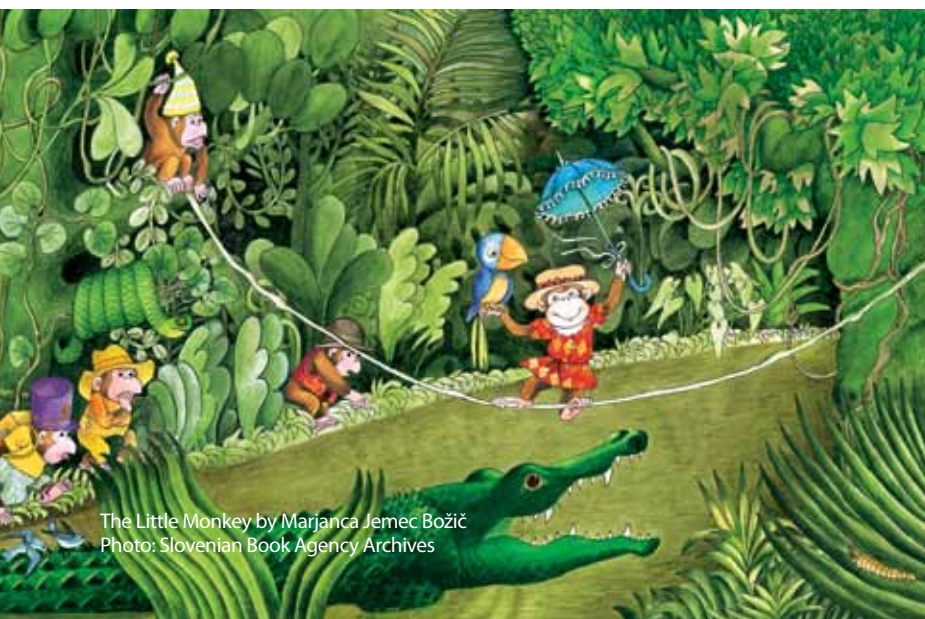
Marlenka Stupica is the artist behind the images of Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Pippi Longstocking and The Ugly Duckling, known to every Slovenian child. She has illustrated more than a hundred children's books. Even as a young girl she enjoyed drawing and being artistic – if paper wasn't available, then window glass and her fingers were just fine. She continued to follow her passion when she enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. She has collaborated with numerous authors, and one of her most fruitful collaborations was with Ela Peroci. Marlenka Stupica emphasises the need for empathy in order to do good work – one must notice the small things and be amazed by them; it is important to find the best in everything. Her illustrations reflect this ideal.

Children's characters such as *Piko Dinozaver* (*Piko the Dinosaur*), *Juri Muri v Afriki* (*Georgie Porgie in Africa*) and *Nana, mala opica* (*Nana the Little Monkey*) were illustrated by Marjanca Jemec Božič, who as a child loved to read stories in the *Mladi Rod* magazine and marvelled at its illustrations. She decided early on that she would dedicate her life to fairy tales. Like Marlenka Stupica, Božič also attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. She has illustrated more than two hundred books throughout her career and collaborated with several authors, creating beautiful and unforgettable stories.





The Falling stars by Marlenka Stupica  
Photo: Slovenian Book Agency Archives



The Little Monkey by Marjanca Jemec Božič  
Photo: Slovenian Book Agency Archives

*Maček Muri* (*Magic Muri*) is Slovenia's most famous cat. He is a friendly and kind black cat that generations of children have adored, and still do. Kajetan Kovič's poetry was put to music by Jerko Novak and interpreted by the singer Neca Falk. Muri was drawn by Jelka Reichman, one of the most prominent Slovenian illustrators. She has received three greater honours for life achievements, the Levstik, Župančič and Hinko Smrekar Awards. Her illustrations were first featured in *Šivilja in škarijce* (*The Tale of the Dressmaker and the Scissors*), published in 1968 and edited by Kristina Brenk. Reichman has since retired, but not a day goes by without her artistic skills being put to use. She still regularly works with the *Ciciban* and *Cicido* Children's magazines, and with the Mladinska Knjiga editorial staff.

*Muca Copatarica* (*Slipper Keeper Kitty*) celebrated its 60th anniversary this year. The brave kitty who puts slippers away when the children go to bed was illustrated by Ančka Gošnik Godec, who also illustrated *Tri botre lisičice* (*Three Vixen*) and many other picture books. Godec finds inspiration in the great outdoors, and has loved hiking since she was a child. She says she is most inspired by simply opening the window and looking outside.

#### ORIGINAL SLOVENIAN ILLUSTRATIONS APPRECIATED ABROAD

The work of these four great women of Slovenian illustration has been successfully continued by younger artists who are also establishing themselves abroad.

**Books illustrated by Slovenian illustrators are being published in several countries, among them Argentina, the United States of America, Japan, France, Germany, Australia and China. One of**

**the most successful contemporary illustrators and writers is Lila Prap, whose books have been translated into more than 38 languages.**

Children around the world can also enjoy picture books by Manica Musil and Maja Kastelic, and it can be said with confidence that Slovenian illustration is getting more prominent each year.

The Vodnik Homestead in Ljubljana organises an illustration fair every December, where more than twenty illustrators exhibit and sell their work. The number of visitors to the fair attests to the fact that illustrations are also a great gift. In addition to the works of young illustrators, this year's fair featured the works of the four grandes dames in this story.

**If new illustrators are to have such an impact on young children's lives as these four grandes dames have, then not only will readers learn to appreciate their artistry, but also understand the values of mutual support, solidarity and friendship.**

Ančka Gošnik Godec, Jelka Reichman, Marjanca Jemec Božič and Marlenka Stupica say they have never fought or been jealous of each other. They have always respected each other tremendously and encouraged each other in their work, as they still do. It seems that only people with big hearts can create the most enchanting fairy-tale worlds.



Twelve Elephants by Jelka Reichman  
Photo: Slovenian Book Agency Archives



Three Vixen Godmothers by Ančka Gošnik Godec  
Photo: Slovenian Book Agency Archives



# ATTENTION, MILLENNIALS ARE COMING!

## A Bold New Literary Generations

MANCA G. RENKO



Millennials grew up in an electronics-filled and increasingly online and socially-networked world. They are the generation that has received the most marketing attention. As the most ethnically diverse generation, millennials tend to be tolerant of difference.  
Photo: Mostphotos

Millennials were born in the 1980s and 90s, upon their entering adulthood the world was affected by the financial crisis, followed by general uncertainty. A hundred years after the lost generation was born and represented by the likes of Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, the global literary scene is being shaped by millennials.

Last year, Leila Slimani (born 1981) received the Goncourt prize, the most prestigious French literary award, for her novel Chanson douce (Lullaby). The same year, English author Fiona Mozley's (born 1988) novel Elmet was in the top five shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. These are just two examples of millennial

authors entering the literary elite, and the sharp new millennial voice isn't only heard in international literature; it is also loud and clear in contemporary Slovenian literature. Here are five millennials whose works have already left a mark on Slovenian literature and changed it forever.

A black and white portrait of Goran Vojnović, a man with short hair, wearing a striped sweater, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

**GORAN VOJNOVIĆ (born 1980)**

Goran Vojnović's debut novel *Southern Scum Go Home!* (2008) was a true literary sensation and has been translated into eight languages. It tells the story of growing up in Fužine, a neighbourhood in Ljubljana where many immigrants from former Yugoslav republics spent their childhoods. The novel is a time and language capsule of a generation and feeling that brought the language and stories of immigrants into the Slovenian cultural space. This is one of the most popular Slovenian novels and it has won all the biggest Slovenian literary awards. Goran Vojnović has since published two more novels: *Yugoslavia, My Fatherland* (2012), which has been translated into 17 languages, and *The Fig Tree* (2016), which has been translated into six. In the foreground of both are millennials in the political and emotional whirlwind of quasi-history inextricably linked the break-up of former Yugoslavia. Both novels have also won a Kresnik, the most prominent Slovenian literary award for the best novel, and both have been very well received by readers and critics.

Photo: Tanja Draskič Savić





Photo: Iztok Hvala

**DAVORIN LENKO (born 1984)**

Davorin Lenko won the Kresnik Award for the best Slovenian novel for his debut *Bodies in the Dark* (2013, translated into German). The protagonist of the novel is an author who finds out he has testicular cancer and is forced to give up his sex life. He is faced with the issues of a low libido and changes to his body and attitude towards the world. The novel pays attention not only to the story that explores the meaning and role of sexuality, but also to post-modernism, as the protagonist is obsessed with this as well as sex. Lenko thus masterfully intertwines the theme of post-modernism into this work. Lenko's second novel, *White Dwarf Star*, was published in 2017. This questions the sexuality, love and relations of two young people trying to escape the world, their families and themselves, and trying to hide in a whirlwind of sex and drug addiction.



Photo: Maj Pavček

**JASMIN B. FRELIH (born 1986)**

Jasmin B. Frelj's debut novel *In/Half* (2013) has been translated into 13 languages and received the Best Debut Award at the Slovenian Book Fair and the EU Prize for Literature (EUPL). The novel is set in the future and narrates the stories of three protagonists who are unable to communicate with each other. In the first, Evan is staging a play, in the second, Kras is trying to save his family in a walled-in Europe, and in the third story the poet Zoya decides to once again participate in a poetry festival after some time out of the scene. Jasmin B. Frelj analyses human fate and the environments in which they are trapped. His dense style of narration and intelligent intertwining of stories opens up more questions than it answers, which is especially noticeable in the novel's final chapter, as it masterfully flirts with post-modernism.

**ANA SCHNABL (born 1985)**

Ana Schnabl first established herself in the Slovenian public space as a prominent and candid publicist, commentator and columnist, and later as a writer of short fiction. When her debut short story collection *Disentangling* (2017) came out, it seemed like a work by a more mature writer due to her already decade-long career in writing. What distinguishes the collection is its sophisticated psychological and physical portrayal of the protagonists who struggle through life, each in their own way. The collection portrays in detail a mother who feels no affection towards her child, a boy whose life revolves around his marijuana addiction, a woman who suffers from depression, a girl who is falling apart on the inside while keeping up appearances, and many others. The psychology is accurate and sharp, and all the characters are portrayed as real people, as flesh and blood. The collection received the Best Debut Award at the 2017 Slovenian Book Fair.



Photo: Matej Pušnik

**KATJA PERAT (born 1988)**

Katja Perat first received attention as the poet behind the cult collection of her generation, *The Best Have Fallen* (2011), which has been translated into English and Swedish. She received the Best Debut Award at the Slovenian Book Fair and critics regard her as the new writer of the decade for her use of irony and disappointment to analyse herself, her emotions and the world she is entering. In 2014, her second collection, entitled *Value-Added Tax*, came out. This was a farewell for a generation's youth. Three years later, Katja Perat wrote her debut novel, *The Masochist*, which takes the reader back to the start of the 20th century and puts Nadezhda Moser, a personification of all overlooked women from the past, in the foreground of this (pseudo-)historical novel. The work at the same time teaches history, and is an easy-to-read and thrilling narrative about a woman and her desires.



Photo: Boris B. Voglar



RAVI CHAUDHRY,  
CHAIRMAN, CENEXT CONSULTING GROUP, NEW DELHI

## A Responsible Dialogue for Harmony and Progress



Mr Ravi Chaudhry, business thinker, leadership expert, friend of Bled Strategic Forum.  
Photo: BSF Archives

Thomas Jefferson, one of the founders of the United States, once remarked: *“When a republic comes to birth, it is the leaders who produce the institutions. Later, it is the institutions who produce the leaders”*. It is most commendable that within a decade of its launch, the Bled Strategic Forum has established itself as an institution that fosters earnest dialogue and meaningful debate on a varied range of issues, and provides a credible platform to promote regional harmony and progress, as well as facilitate better connectivity with Europe and beyond.

The carving out of new nations during the last two decades in the region that stretches up to Western Balkans was a momentous event. The outcome set the framework for a historic transformation for peoples of all new nations.

**All of them had to start afresh the process of rebuilding their economies and societies within, as well as create new structures of alliances and partnerships with not only neighbours, but also with other new nations in Central and Eastern Europe and the other countries in the EU and elsewhere.**

This process had its ups and downs, but on the whole the entire region is now imbued with a sense of confidence in its people and hope for the future, and is looking forward to stability and prosperity.

While there are still many issues of discord, the good news is that there is increasing optimism that with better collaboration and more responsible leadership, pleasant, agreeable outcomes could will be on the horizon. The recent thaw in the relationship between Greece and Macedonia is a cause for cheer. The reiteration by the leaders of all the six Western Balkans economies to boost

cross-border cooperation and regional stability, at their meeting in Sofia in May 2018, was another momentous occasion.

### OPEN DISCUSSION IS A QUALITY OF BSF

Having attended the Bled Strategic Forum for the last few years, I have seen how so many ostensibly difficult bilateral and multilateral issues are discussed and debated in an atmosphere of complete openness. Political and societal leaders candidly express their divergent views and do not hide issues under the carpet. The sheer process of exchanging perspectives in a widely attended forum of policymakers and opinion leaders from business, civil society, academics and media, tends to create a catalytic dialogue to bridge differences.

**If I was to choose four words to describe the singular contribution of Bled dialogue in this domain, these would be: “Responsible Dialogue to Build Bridges”.**

Another promising feature of the Bled Strategic Forum is that along with the focus on converting ‘discord to accord’ on political issues, there is an equal emphasis on reinforcing the foundations of collaboration in industry, trade, commerce and culture. The simultaneous hosting of Business BSF is a great unifying force that compellingly underlines the enormous potential in gather-



ing so many low-hanging ripe fruits that can rapidly and tangibly generate better lives and livelihoods for all. It is always a joy to hear the awe-inspiring regional stories of remarkable innovations and scores of start-ups that are now attracting worldwide attention.

The concurrent hosting of a global meeting on tourism is also an adroit move to further bring the region on to the radar of the global tourist circuit.

As an added incentive, the placid waters of the Bled Lake and the majestic peaks of the Julian Alps provide an awesome backdrop that keeps the participants coolly grounded in calm waters while letting the collective vision soar to new heights.

As a non-European participant, what I found particularly admirable was the inclusion of several diverse and contemporary subjects on the agenda, such as trust and ethics (on which I had the privilege to speak), Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things and the impact of other cutting-edge technologies, the relative scarcity of truth in media today, and many more topics to excite the imagination and delight the intellect.

**I was pleasantly surprised when I discovered that lest the youth should feel alienated or ignored, they too have special sessions to ensure they have a voice in the future course of policy-making, particularly on issues that would concern them – education, jobs, security and mobility.**

It is amazing how the organizers manage to get so many Heads of State, senior ministers and leaders of Institutes of Excellence, not only from Europe, but every continent. In terms of what needs to be done to make the Forum even better, it may be necessary in the coming years to include more diversity in every panel, on every subject, so that the “Quest for Harmony” can be intensified, by leveraging on “What Unites us”. The Forum is also well-positioned to be a crucible for ideas to promote governance, inclusiveness and equity. In such a manner, the Bled Strategic Forum will gain even more recognition as the most meaningful “Dialogue for Regional Harmony and Progress”.

I also hope the organizers of the future Bled Forums will not lower their aspirations, as they recall the famous words of Michelangelo:

*“The greater danger is not that our aim is too high and we miss it,  
but that it is too low and we reach it.”*



At the Round Table at BSF  
Photo: BSF Archives





SUSTAINABLE SECURITY AND ROLE OF  
YOUTH IN BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

## **Young BSF is One of the Three Pillars of the Bled Strategic Forum Conference**

MELIHA MUHERINA, YOUNG BSF PROGRAMME DIRECTOR  
PHOTO: BSF ARCHIVES

Sustainable security concept, constituting the basis of Young Bled Strategic Forum 2018 (Young BSF), proposes the resolution of the interconnected underlying drivers of insecurity and conflict, with an emphasis on preventive rather than reactive strategies.



Sustainable security concept, constituting the basis of Young Bled Strategic Forum 2018 (Young BSF), proposes the resolution of the interconnected underlying drivers of insecurity and conflict, with an emphasis on preventive rather than reactive strategies.

The central premise of the sustainable security approach is that we cannot control all the consequences of insecurity successfully, but have to work to deal with the root causes of instability. Oxford Research Group, leading establisher of the concept, identifies four interconnected trends that are most likely to lead to substantial global and regional instability, namely climate change, competition of resources, marginalization and global militarization.

<b>Climate change</b> Loss of infrastructure, resource scarcity and the mass displacement of peoples, leading to civil unrest, inter-communal violence and international instability.
<b>Competition over resources</b> Competition for increasingly scarce resources – including food, water and energy – especially in already unstable parts of the world.
<b>Marginalization of the majority world</b> Increasing socio-economic divisions and the political, economic and cultural marginalization of the vast majority of the world's population.
<b>Global militarization</b> The increased use of military force as a security measure and the further spread of military technologies (including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons).

YOUTH IN MODERN SOCIETY

Nowadays, youth as active, energetic, creative and enthusiastic part of modern society plays an important role in solving global problems, as it has proven easier for young people to communicate, to share their ideas openly and to accept new things. The global youth population is the highest it has ever been, representing great potential for global innovation and economic growth. With UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth Peace and Security, the international community has begun to recognize the potential of young men and women as important actors in change and bringing everlasting peace and security.

Never before has humanity faced a world as interconnected yet so socio-economically divided, where environmental limits are so apparent and where traditional approaches to war-fighting and the use of force are so counter-productive. Therefore, Young BSF will place special emphasis on cross-regional cooperation; exploring the role of youth in bridging the gap created by those differences. A new generation of leaders will demonstrate that such cooperation is an inevitable next step to be taken in democratization, fighting corruption, terrorism and climate change, and fostering social, economic, and cross-cultural sustainable development. Through workshops and interactive debates, Young BSF will analyse and propose solutions for bridging the gap in many spheres of our everyday lives.

We have asked our participants where they see the importance of regional cooperation and conferences such as Young BSF.

*In this political momentum of my country and our region, there is a need to exchange thoughts and experiences with our colleagues and peers, look for partners who are willing to work with us based on the similar values, and have a stronger voice together. We need to address high-level decision makers and stakeholders who support our way towards EU and work to ensure a European and democratic environment.*

Dafina Peci, National Youth Congress of Albania/Regional Youth Cooperation Office

*Only by engaging in honest discussions of the current regional issues and critically assessing thereof, the youth of the region can offer lasting, dynamic and sustainable solutions that stem cooperation and economic prosperity - and thus, deconstruct the prerogative of the 1990s.*

Mak Selimović, Bosnia and Herzegovina Association for United Nations

*I consider the Young BSF an invaluable opportunity to meet and exchange with fellow participants from various sectors of neighbouring countries, which still lack appropriate local platforms for expert dialogue and strategic foresight on regional and global issues. The Young BSF bridges this gap by enabling shortlisted regional young leaders to reflect on the values that shape our societies in the light of ground-breaking topics to be discussed. Thus, I see the added value of Young BSF in stepping on the well-known in the region and beyond and in linking fundamental knowledge with contemporary leadership challenges, whilst bringing together young leaders making already the leap from success to significance in both their personal development and professional career.*

Yasen Georgiev, Economic Policy Institute, Bulgaria

*I wish to engage with like-minded proactive aspiring leaders to discuss the opportunities and challenges that we face in connection to the current Fourth Industrial Revolution. Technology is rapidly redefining the pillars of society, and as the next generation of leaders, we need to connect and build bridges if we are to secure a prosperous society in the future.*

Jakob Hjørsthoj, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

WHAT DID YOUTH HAVE TO SAY?

We can conclude that regional cooperation built through meeting, discussing and sharing common challenges is of immense value for sustainable security, raising voice of youth and countries' development. Young generations, governments, communities and civil society all benefit from innovative and

courageous approaches that youth tends to take. Essentially, common threats, decisions and advancement of youth ideas can be effectively achieved through collaboration and exchange of data, information, and knowledge between various networks and initiatives that are making mindful efforts to warrant well-organized and productive role of youth in the sustainable security and regional cooperation.



PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
MIROSLAV LAJČÁK OF SLOVAKIA

## There Is a Lot of Attention Devoted to What Separates Us, Let's Focus on What Brings Us Together

SABINA CARLI, MIHA ILC  
PHOTO: BSF ARCHIVES



President of the United Nations General Assembly Miroslav Lajčák

Recent technological advances have helped deepen our understanding of the world and, in certain areas, bring us closer together than ever, but the world remains rife with tensions. The predictions and indeed hope of many political thinkers at the end of the 20th century that access to information would result in greater homogeneity has not materialised. In human interactions, distinguishing between facts and perceptions is harder than it seems. The reality is very personal, depending on our cultural experience, traditions and values. Bled Strategic Forum 2018, a leading strategic conference in

**South-Eastern Europe and one of the most successful Slovenian foreign policy incentives, will build on the conclusions from the conference in 2017, which addressed the “New Reality” and will under the title “Bridging the Divide” seek to overcome divides among us.**

Ahead of the conference, we discussed the topic with the President of the United Nations General Assembly Miroslav Lajčák of Slovakia, the recipient of a special accolade of the “BSF distinguished partner” at the 2017 Bled Strategic Forum and an established supporter and active participant of the conference.

**How does your vision, set as the President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, correlate with this year's topic of Bled Strategic forum – “Bridging the Divide”?** There is a lot of attention in the world right now on the factors that separate us – including nationality, ethnicity and religion. But I'd rather focus on what brings us together. And there is more that unites us than we think. There are things that all people across the globe need: clean water, a healthy environment, a sustainable plan-

et. In addition, there are the things that a great majority of us want: peace, decent lives, the ability to care for our loved ones. That is why I chose “Focusing on People” as the theme of my presidency. I wanted delegates at the United Nations to remember that our work has to improve the lives of people – and we are not as different from each other as some would have us believe.

Right now, we are hearing more voices attacking multilateralism, more calls for isolationism. This is a dangerous trend. After all, our biggest challenges today are all global. Phenomena like climate change and terrorism are not limited by national borders.

**Therefore, we need to work together more than ever. In short, bridging divides is not just a nice project. It is essential for our survival.**

**Having received a special accolade of the “BSF distinguished partner” at the 2017 Bled Strategic Forum for enduring support of the purposes and principles of the forum, where do you see the importance of a strong regional strategic conference in the South-Eastern Europe?**

As the world is getting more interdependent and interconnected, it is clear that no country can stand alone. When it comes to overcoming common obstacles, strategic regional partnerships can only help. In that regard, regional conferences, platforms and organizations, whether in South-Eastern Europe or beyond, are extremely useful. They bring together the expertise and experience that is most relevant to the countries involved. Multilateral platforms and regional initiatives in South-Eastern Europe help to further institutional integration and infrastructure improvements. That creates the conditions for long-term stability, economic development and a greater quality of life.



In addition to conferences, one relevant example of cooperation in the region was the European Union-Western Balkan Summit, which was held in Sofia last May. It sent a positive signal that Bulgaria, as a regional player and member of the European Union, has taken an active interest in promoting the accession of its neighbors to the European Union. The Summit injected new energy into the European Union-Western Balkans relationship by strengthening links in the areas of infrastructure, digital and human connectivity, security and migration.

**In February, European Commission adopted a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans countries. How do you see its effect in the region and the new motivation and commitment to enlargement that emerged since then?**

The enlargement strategy has confirmed that the European Union is open to further integration of the Western Balkans. However, this is a two-way process which requires effort from both sides. The current strategy confirms the credibility of the enlargement process for the countries of the Western Balkans, as well as the European

Union's renewed interest in the region. At the same time, it makes clear the expectation that the Western Balkan countries must show strong political will and be truly committed to implementing reforms. Furthermore, it calls upon countries of the region to resolve any outstanding issues bilaterally.

**The strategy highlights the need to strengthen the rule of law, as well as regional partnership, trust, reconciliation and economic development.**

Governments of the region must take advantage of this positive momentum and engage with all segments of society if they wish to fulfill the obligations and duties related to the European agenda.

**Technology, with digitisation at the forefront, is developing at an extreme pace and it seems that society cannot process**

**it in time to prevent misuse of it. New challenges are emerging almost on a daily basis. How should we use technologies to ensure sustainable development, sustainable growth and improvement of peoples' lives?**

Science and technology are fundamental to ensuring that sustainable development becomes a universal reality. Making the benefits of science, technology and innovation more widely available is both an enabler and product of sustainable development.

**Science, technology and innovation can be forces towards good. At the same time, advances can present challenges.**

Therefore, I want to emphasise the importance of addressing the

challenges that arise from the rapid development of technology. While benefiting from breakthroughs and discoveries, or comforts and efficiencies, we cannot afford to overlook potentially negative effects: increasing automation in the production workplace; the speed of the spread of information – whether accurate or not; questions surrounding data protection and privacy; and the use of drones in commerce, recreation or military activities. These are among the issues, which though not naturally problematic, require adequate consideration.

As innovation and technology spread, we must avoid perpetuating the digital divide. Instead, we must work to ensure their widest possible enjoyment by people everywhere. We should also ensure that women and girls are empowered to fully benefit from and contribute to science and technology.





## TOURISM AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION AND CONNECTING PEOPLE

### How Will New Technologies Affect Cultural Tourism?

NATAŠA HOČEVAR, ANA BOŽIČNIK

Goriška Brda  
Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik

The interaction of tourism and culture has in recent years become a major driving force behind alluring and competitive tourist destinations. Tourism is an important industry, and it has an effect not only on the economy, but also on the social and cultural relationships that form between visitors and local residents. Tourism is thus an excellent means of meeting and connecting with people, and furthers the acceptance of cultural diversity.

Culture is one of the most important factors that adds authenticity to a visitor's experience at their chosen destination. With all this in mind, and to encourage the mutual experience of the continent's rich culture and heritage, the European Commission declared 2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The aim is to encourage people to discover different European cultures and to appreciate how valuable, diverse and special they are.

#### CULTURAL TOURISM IN SLOVENIA

Slovenian heritage is one of key elements of the nation's popularity and identity as a European tourist destination, complete with its unique history and culture. The latter bears great significance for a comprehensive tourism experience.

**Cultural tourism and cultural products have considerable potential not only for a high-quality and competitive range of tourism services and products, but also from a broader socio-economic and cultural point of view, and for the further development of individual destinations.**

Cultural tourism is included in the Strategy for Sustainable Growth of Slovenian Tourism 2017–2021, as adopted by the Ministry of Economic Development, and is listed as one of key facets of the country's offering to foreign visitors. Culture is also the main theme of tourist promotion efforts in 2018 and 2019, as seen in the work of the Slovenian Tourist Board. Great emphasis has



thus been put on strengthening Slovenia's popularity as a cultural tourism destination, which at the same time presents a great opportunity to strengthen the cooperation and relations between the cultural and tourist sectors. Slovenia's remarkable culture and its significant role in the country's history will be further developed and enriched by new tourism products with higher added value. New technologies will be introduced that will help create intriguing and interactive experiences of cultural history and contemporary culture in Slovenia, ones that are sure to fascinate visitors from near and far.

**TOURISM PANEL AT BLED STRATEGIC FORUM**

On September 11 2018, and for the fifth consecutive year, the tourism industry will participate at the Bled Strategic Forum, one of the most important annual conventions for politicians, economists and academics in the region. This year's tourism panel will be organised by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the Slovenian Tourist Board, and will focus on tourism as an instrument for developing further collaborations and affiliations in the cultural sector.

The representative of the World Tourism Association (UNWTO) will address the international public and Slovenia's tourism industry, while Tomi Ilijaš and Dr. Urška Starc Peceny, representatives of Arctur, the leading service provider of supercomputing in Central Eastern Europe, will introduce the concept of tourism 4.0. The round table will focus on a number of issues, such as how new technologies could influence cultural tourism, and whether they remain science fiction or are already becoming a reality.

**Experts on tourism, technology and culture will discuss cultural tourism's potential, the use of new technologies for the promotion of culture and tourism, and the possibilities for international cooperation in both fields.**

The aim of the tourism panel at the Bled Strategic Forum is to emphasise the importance of culture and present the opportunity

to use new technologies which will enable the preservation and a better representation of the existing cultural resources and the better engagement of tourists in a destination's events. The panel will be followed by a tasting of culinary delicacies prepared by chef Simon Bertoneclj in honour of Slovenia becoming a European Region of Gastronomy 2021.

**NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN TOURISM**

Why are new technologies so important when it comes to tourism? Tourism is experiencing a considerable restructuring due to technological advances, and the industry must keep up with these in order to remain competitive. Tourism 4.0 creates new partnerships and new forms of cooperation, while also restructuring operating models into new digital ones. New business and organisational models enable innovative methods for the creating and sharing of values, which then trigger comprehensive systematic changes.

**Several successful tourism companies already employ augmented and virtual reality technologies. These enable users to visit an ancient city that has been restructured in a VR environment, while other new technologies allow personalised experiences that make tourists' stays in their chosen destinations easier and more enjoyable.**

New technologies and digital tools can also help preserve and present a place's cultural heritage, history, way of life, art and knowledge to the general public. They make facts more intriguing and interactive, and in this way provide new experiences. New technologies can enrich the range of tourism services on offer and provide better and faster access to a wide range of cultural services and products at individual destinations. Such collaborations among technology, culture and tourism can provide tourists with more intense experiences and enable destinations to preserve their natural, social and cultural environments in the long run, thus making them even more attractive.



European Space Technologies  
Cultural Centre, Vitanje  
Photo: Tomaž Maček

A good example of this is the Noordung Centre and its display of Herman Potočnik Noordung's life and work. Virtual Noordung is a tourist attraction in Vitanje that uses the newest technologies to show the technological heritage of a pioneer of global cosmonautics, and introduce a great visionary of human space exploration. Visitors to the European Space Technologies Cultural Centre can travel through the solar system and to the space station Noordung designed. They can also appreciate his design of rocket engines, all thanks to virtual reality. They can also use this technology to travel among the planets and see Noordung's 3d model of the Wohnrad ("living wheel") solar power plant and observatory, as well as experience a recreation of the nature of space and what happens there.



# TOWARD A CONCRETE UTOPIA: ARCHITECTURE IN YUGOSLAVIA

## Slovenians Among Those Honoured

TANJA GLOGOVČAN



Exhibition at MoMA  
Photo: Museum of Architecture and Design (Slovenia) Archives

The New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) opened an exhibition in July featuring an overview of Yugoslav architecture, with a prominent role assigned to a number of Slovenians. The exhibition is based on the assumption that architecture in the now dissolved country was a vehicle for avant-garde ideas, a tangible image of the future that left a strong mark on the then residents of a socialist country.

It explores themes of large-scale urbanisation, technology in everyday life, consumerism, monuments and memorialisation, and the global reach of Yugoslav architecture, which sought inspiration in both the East and in West, and thus the exhibition steps beyond the narrow frame of architectural art.

**The show includes more than 400 drawings, models, photographs, and film reels from an array of municipal archives, family-held collections, and museums across the region.**

It was organised by Martino Stierli, the Chief Curator of Architecture and Design, MoMA, and Vladimir Kulić, guest curator, with Anna Kats, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Architecture and Design, MoMA.

### EDVARD RAVNIKAR AND THE ICONIC REPUBLIC SQUARE

The biggest square in Ljubljana is located between the Slovenian Parliament building and the Ursuline Monastery. Architect Edvard Ravnikar won the contest for the construction of the new administrative centre in 1960. This extensive complex, whose construction took over twenty years, includes the central platform, two tall, triangular, twelve-storey skyscrapers with their signature caps (now the Nova Ljubljanska Banka tower with an extension, and the TR3 business tower), completed in 1976, and the elongated building of the Maximarket department store. The architect, who aspired to design a representative metropolitan square, gradually supplemented the original design

with new elements, including the building of the cultural and congress centre at the southern edge of the square – Cankarjev dom Cultural and Congress Centre. The building was initially intended especially for various events and social and political meetings, but gradually evolved into the biggest cultural and congress establishment in the Republic of Slovenia. The square is bordered to the north by the Slovenian Parliament.

**Some experts place Ravnikar alongside Jože Plečnik, who was his teacher, and describe him as the most important town planner and architect, who essentially remodelled the urban landscape of Ljubljana.**

Initially called Trg revolucije (Revolution Square), the square was later renamed Trg republike (Republic Square). Its political role in the former Yugoslavia is indicated by various monuments: standing in the vicinity are the Monument of Revolution (1975) and the Edvard Kardelj Monument (1981), both made by the sculptor Drago Tršar. Located next to Cankarjev dom, Cultural and Congress Centre are also the Boris Kidrič Monument (1960) by Zdenko Kalin, and that to Ivan Cankar (1982) by Slavko Tihec.

This square was where the independence of the Republic of Slovenia was declared on 26 June 1991, and it remains the venue for the annual ceremony marking this most important event for the people of Slovenia. Otherwise, it is most often and most actively used by skateboarders, as its varied stairways and slopes offer them room to express their style; they simply call it “Cankar”.



**JOŽE PLEČNIK'S CATHEDRAL OF FREEDOM**

The exhibition also features an iconic object from architect Plečnik's collection: a wooden model of the (unrealised) Slovenian Parliament, the Cathedral of Freedom. Displayed alongside the model are two original plans for the project from 1947, a cross-section and floor plan of the second floor.

Jože Plečnik originally proposed that the building be located on top of Castle Hill, where he intended to place a large octagonal structure and connect it to the city by means of a monumental



Cathedral of Freedom by Jože Plečnik  
Photo: Andrej Peunik

arcaded stairway. The government, however, decided it should be in Tivoli Park, at the location of what was at the time a trade fair area.

**The Presidency of the then People's Assembly decided to assign the task of designing the new building to five selected architects: Jože Plečnik, Edvard Ravnikar, Vinko Glanz, Nikolaj Bežek and Marko Zupančič.**

We do not know what happened after these architects let their imagination run wild – possibly too far outside the limits of the ideology of the day, and why Plečnik's idea remained unrealised. It was his student Vinko Glanz who designed the Slovenian Parliament building you can see today, which was completed in 1958.

**MONUMENTS AND OTHER ICONOGRAPHY**

The exhibition also features photographs of Yugoslav war monuments as well as some objects known by all who lived in the country before its dissolution.

**This includes items such as the Rex folding chair by designer Niko Kralj, the Iskra telephone set once found in every office, the red kiosk where we used to buy newspapers, and the famous MD9 dynamic table microphone by designer Marko Turk.**

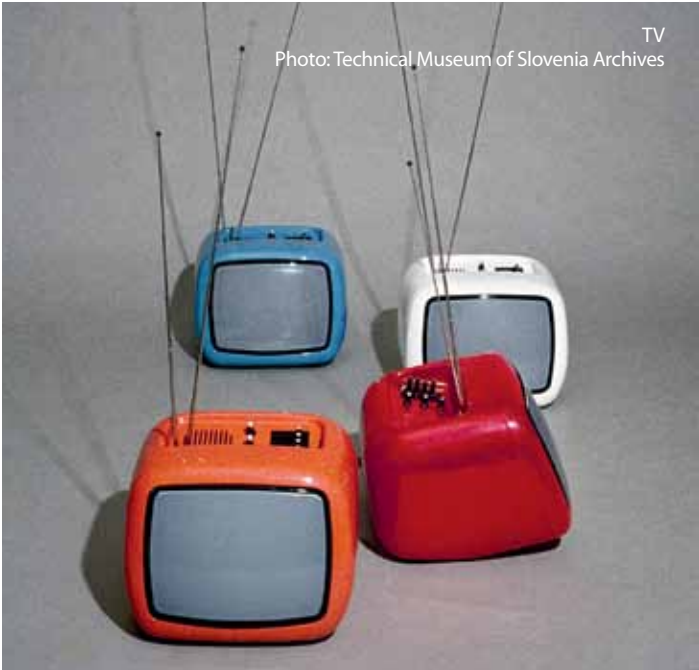
The introductory text to the exhibition adequately explains that "Yugoslavia's architects responded to contradictory demands and influences, developing a post-war architecture both in line with and distinct from the design approaches seen elsewhere in Europe and beyond. The architecture that emerged – from International Style skyscrapers to Brutalist 'social condensers' – is a manifestation of the radical diversity, hybridity, and idealism that characterised the Yugoslav state itself."



Iskra phone  
Photo: Davorin Savnik



Red kiosk  
Photo: Museum of Architecture and Design (Slovenia) Archives



TV  
Photo: Technical Museum of Slovenia Archives



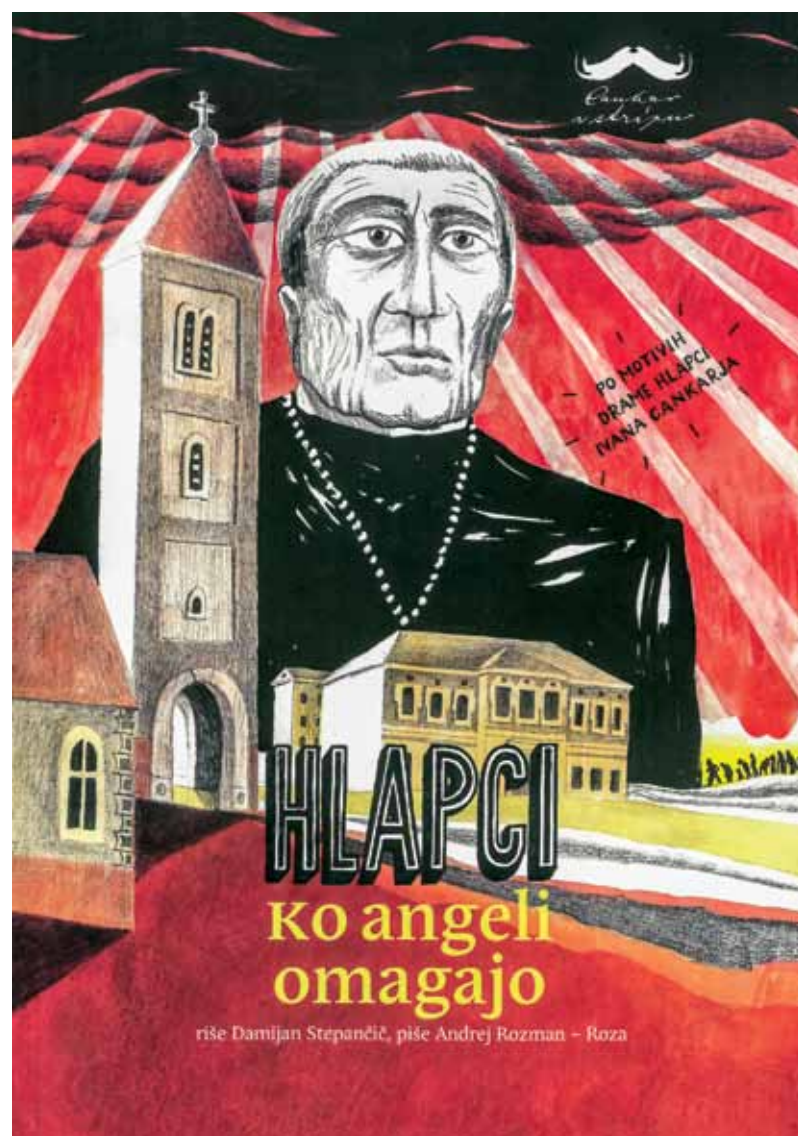
Rex folding chair  
Photo: Domen Pal



## CLEAR ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION WITHOUT CAMOUFLAGE

# The Serfs – When Angels Surrender by Andrej Rozman – Roza and Damijan Stepančič

TANJA GLOGOVČAN



**Andrej Rozman – Roza** was born on 25 May 1955 in Ljubljana. He is the author of literature for both adults and children, and works as a playwright, translator, poet and actor. Rozman founded the *Predrazpadom* (Pre-collapse) street theatre group and for a long time led the Ana Monro alternative theatre. He is also one of the originators of improvisational theatre competitions in Slovenia.

He writes parody and comic poems, fairy-tales and theatrical comedies for children and adults, reworks classic texts that he shifts to a modern-day setting or simply translates. In March 2003 he established Rozinteaater as the tiniest possible theatre. His works are included in many textbooks and anthologies (*Nasmeh pod solzami*, *Slovenski smeh*, *Cvetnik slovenske parodije*, *Komadi*, *Drugi komadi*, *Zlata čebelica*, among many others). In June 2017 he even announced his candidacy to become the President of the Republic of Slovenia.

He has received numerous awards for his work, including: the *Golden Bird Award* in 1984 (for activity in theatre), the *Sever Award* in 1986 (also for his work in theatre), the *Levstik Award* in 1999 (for children's poems), the *Ježek Award* in 2005, the *Župačnik Award* in 2009 and the *Prešeren Foundation Award* for literature in 2010.

When he re-interpreted the work of Ivan Cankar in the comic book *Hlapci – Ko angeli omagajo* (*The Serfs – When Angels Surrender*), he said that he saw Cankar as a symptom of an era and of Slovenians' self-perception. "I sent an angel to help Jerman, but that still couldn't prevent him from destroying himself," Rozman added in his witty and ironic style.



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

**Damijan Stepančič** is a Slovenian illustrator and painter who was born on 22 May 1969 in Ljubljana. After attending the Secondary School of Design and Photography in Ljubljana, he continued his education at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in the same city. His first attempts at comic art for youth magazines date back to his high school years, and more recently he has been working as an illustrator for books aimed at both young people and adults. Stepančič is also involved in comics and animation, textbook and guide illustration and puppet design, and has published his own picture books. In 2010 he was included in the Honour List of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

One of his more demanding endeavours was the illustration of the comic *Zdravljica* (A Toast, and note that the inspiration for this work, the poem by France Prešeren, is also the Slovenian national anthem). To avoid stereotypes while describing concepts such as friendship, manliness, homeland, and so on, he included some famous historical and cultural elements in *Zdravljica* (like the Vače Situla, Ivan Grohar's painting *The Sower*, among others) and historically important people. These include Primož Trubar, the father of the Slovenian language, the architect Jože Plečnik, the missionary and grammarian Friderik Irenej Baraga, General Rudolf Maister, and others.

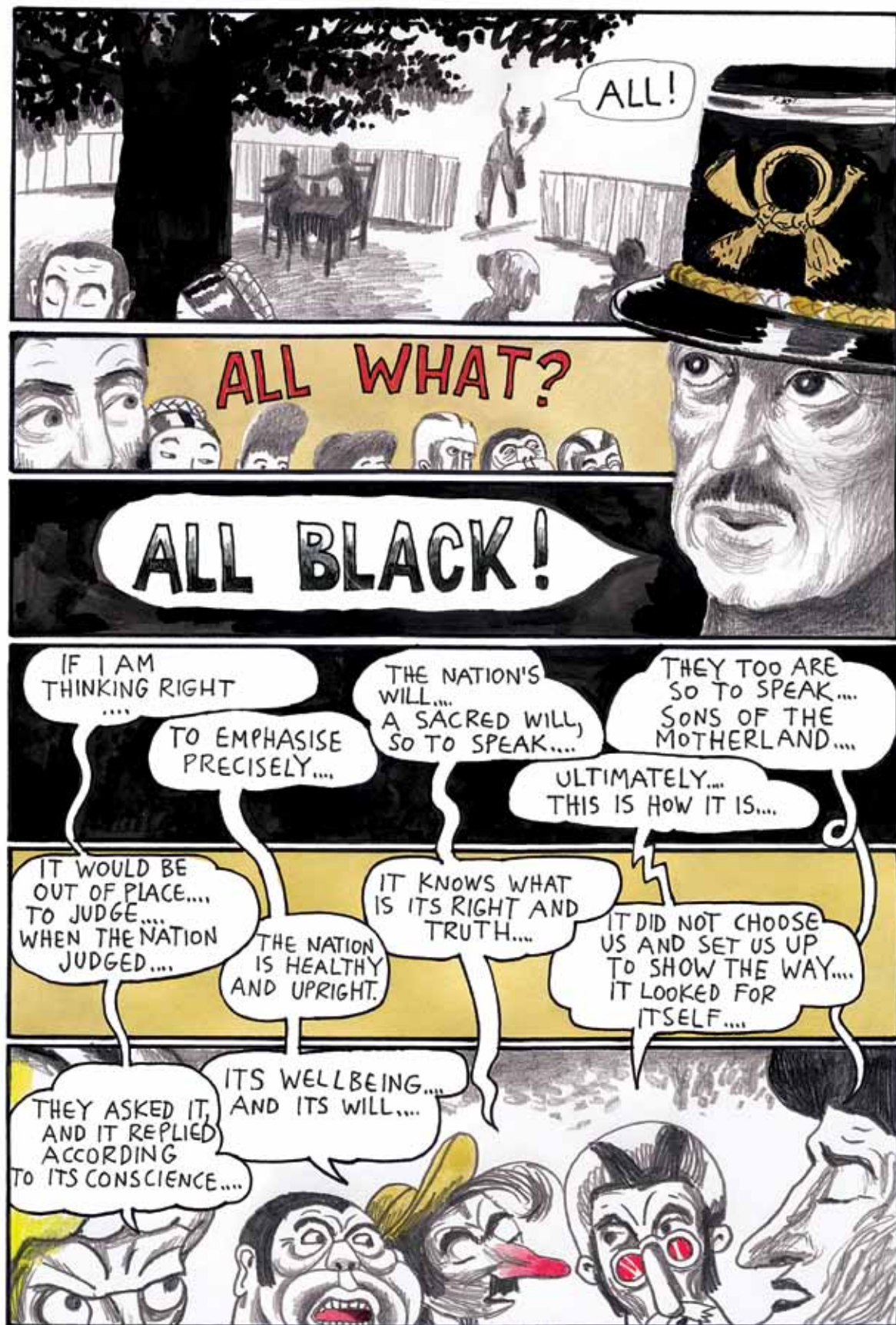
Stepančič has also received a number of awards: the Award for Original Ideas at the Slovenian Biennial of Illustration in Ljubljana (1999), the Smrekar Plaque (2000 and 2002), the Levstik Award (2003, 2011), inclusion on the IBBY Honour List (2010), the Hinko Smrekar Award (2011), the Golden Pear for best original Slovenian young adult book (2011), the Golden Pear for best original Slovenian educational book (2011), the Kristina Brenk Prize for best original Slovenian picture book (2012, 2013), a nomination for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (2014), and the Golden Pear for the best original Slovenian young adult literary work (2014).

He certainly left his mark on the comic book project based on the works of Ivan Cankar with his typical elements – wide academic knowledge, fine craftsmanship and childlike playfulness. He believes that the comic *Hlapci – Ko angeli omagajo* could also work on stage. "Cankar wrote an excellent script for a comic, which is a medium that can portray things the way they are, without camouflaging anything."



Photo: STA







# THE 66<sup>ST</sup> LJUBLJANA FESTIVAL

## Great Art Surrounded by Plečnik's Scenography

TANJA GLOGOVČAN

PHOTO: LJUBLJANA FESTIVAL ARCHIVES

For several years now, the opening of the Ljubljana Festival has been held in Kongresni trg, one of Ljubljana's central squares.



The Ljubljana Festival attracts and enchants the capital's local and foreign visitors every year from June to September. It is both the scene and the framework of diverse sounds and images, as well as the narrator of new stories on city streets, squares, halls and other spots of Ljubljana city.

The Ljubljana Festival has been a member of the European Festivals Association (EFA) since 1977, and is one of the most prominent festivals in Europe. In its rich history, the Festival has hosted world-renowned artists and attracted audiences with sophisticated taste. It also provides opportunities for talented, but lesser-known artists from various fields, including music and fine art.

Free events invite a wide range of visitors, and the Festival also provides fun experiences for the youngest audiences. Every year it fills Ljubljana with culture and helps develop people's cultural taste.

### ARCHITECT JOŽE PLEČNIK, THE DESIGNER OF THE MAIN STAGE

Well, perhaps not the main stage per se, but the combination of architecture and artistry of the Križanke Open Air Theatre, a former monastery of the German Order of Teutonic Knights, makes this venue with several event sites worth visiting. In 1952, the representatives of the City of Ljubljana asked architect Jože Plečnik (1872-1957) to redesign Križanke into a site for the Ljubljana Festival.

Plečnik decided to remodel Križanke in line with the principles of set out by Alberti, Palladi and other Renaissance architects.

**He paid special attention to designing the central atrium - the Križanke entrance hall - which he envisioned as the central stage of the festival.**

The main characteristic of Plečnik's renovation of the monastery complex is its unity of diversity. The great architect included in

his renovation a Renaissance technique, Sgraffito decoration, and adorned the walls with bas-relief figurines that originate from Czech medieval art. He used elements from his own repertoire that he had already employed when designing the Prague Castle (*Pražský hrad, uradna rezidenca predsednika Češke Republike in Czech*). Plečnik also designed a special venue to be used for receptions after events. The monastery garden was completed following the same architectural style after Plečnik's death, and it is now the main festival setting – the open air theatre. Križanke is perhaps Plečnik's greatest, and certainly final, work of art.

The Ljubljana Festival takes place in many locations, but due to the great architect's influence on Slovenia's capital it can truly be said that the Festival takes place on Plečnik's stages.

### CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM NEAR AND FAR

Ljubljana has hosted a Summer Festival every year since 1953, with performances from local and foreign artists from the fields of music, drama, dance, and fine art, as well as exhibitions.

**The Festival has seen many prominent guests, among others the Slovenian pianist Dubravka Tomšič Srebotnjak, concert and opera singer Marjana Lipovšek, Italian soprano Katja Ricciarelli, American opera singer Grace Bumbry, American violinist Lord Yehudi Menuhin, Spanish tenor José Carreras, and Russian conductor Valery Gergiev, who is also the general and ar-**



tistic director of the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg.

The Festival has also hosted world-renowned symphony orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra from Saint Petersburg, and performers from several opera houses, among them the famous Academic Bolshoi Theatre from Moscow and La Scala from Milan.

THIS YEAR'S CHOICE OF GREAT ART FOR ALL TASTES AND GENERATIONS

This year's Festival was no exception in having events to satisfy all tastes, and its visitors enjoyed music, fine art, performances and other events.

For example, the Festival featured the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra from Amsterdam, which is considered one of the finest orchestras in the world, with a sound that critics describe as unique and extremely balanced.

Its string section has been called "velvety", the sound of its brass "golden", and the timbre of the woodwinds "distinctly personal", while the percussion section has an international reputation. The Festival also featured several performances by the St. Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre, and the La Scala philharmonic orchestra from Milan impressed the crowd with works from its repertoire. The Voca People, an Israel-based vocal ensemble, also performed at the Festival. The eight singers appear with covered faces and a theatrical approach, combining a cappella and beat box vocals to recreate well-known songs, with their performances having more than 80 million views on YouTube. The German soprano Diana Damrau and French bass-baritone Nicolas Teste also performed an evening of opera arias as part of their tour dedicated to Giuseppe Verdi. In addition to well-known arias, they sung some rarely performed duets, and were accompanied by the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra led by Ivan Repušić. Slovenian dancers, among them Andrej Škufca and Jurij and Jagoda Batagelj, wowed the audience with a performance of Dance Amore, as conceived

by the director, choreographer and script writer Jurij Batagelj. This presents a story of love, murder and misunderstandings that takes place in New York and includes moves from Latin-American and standard dances, such as hot Argentinian tango, salsa, hip hop, contemporary dance and jazz. Other artists who are not just Slovenian, but have lived here a long time, delighted all who saw their fine art, with names such as Huiqin Wang from China, Keiko Miyazaki from Japan, Paride di Stefano from Italy, Bagrat Arazyan from Armenia, Vianney Lefebvre from France, Balsky Eduard from the Ukraine, Elisabetta Bacci from Italy and Jasmina Rojc from Slovenia. The 100th anniversary of World War I was commemorated with a symphonic concert entitled Generation 99. The concert included works by Slavko Osterc, Alfredo Casella, Maurice Ravel, Luciano Berio and Peter Eotvos, and was performed by the Ljubljana International Orchestra in cooperation with the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra, with the soloist being the young Italian pianist Viviana Lasaracina. It was conducted by Živa Ploj Peršuh. The Chinese Dance Theatre Lanzhou impressed with a ballet love performance titled *Tales of the Silk Road – Dunhuang My Dreamland*, and presented some of the cultural heritage of Western China in Ljubljana. Audiences also had the chance to enjoy both the popular Slovenian musicals Blossoms in Autumn and Vesna, and the foreign musicals Grease and Mamma Mia! Performed in Slovene.

Some events organised by the Ljubljana Festival have now become traditions in their own right.

These include Slovene Musical Days (a four-day festival of contemporary music in early spring), Young Virtuosi (the introduction of lesser-known, but talented musicians), the December Festival (with events such as primary school concerts), the International Fine Arts Colony (local and foreign fine artists gather and draw from the architectural tradition of Jože Plečnik), as well as several events held at Ljubljana Castle.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM

Overall, the Ljubljana Festival has become an indispensable part of summer in Slovenia's capital, attracting both residents and visitors alike. The Festival thus places Slovenia among the countries with a future not only in green tourism, but also in cultural tourism.

In what way is the 66th Ljubljana Festival different from others? Here's what the organisers had to say: "Each festival is unique, and this year's, the 66th consecutive festival, is no different. This year's Festival opened with Sfera Mundi – Voyage Around the World, a co-production of the acclaimed theatre company La Fura dels Baus and the Ljubljana Festival. Congress Square in Ljubljana was the venue of the show's world premiere, kicking off a 4-year run at various other world festivals. Other performers and performances that should also be mentioned are the Munich Philharmonics, cellist Natalie Clein, pianist Peter Bence, the guest performance of the Chinese dance theatre Lanzhou with the Tales of the Silk Road, the ballet triptych Left Right, Left Right, soprano Diana Damrau, violinists Dmitry Sitkovetsky and Lana Trotošek, pianist Alexander Gadjiev, the St. Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre of Boris Eifman, tenor Alvarez, baritone Leo Nucci as the lead singer of Rigoletto, La Scala Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Laibach, to list but a few."





# ELAN ALPINE SKI MUSEUM

## Slovenian Skiing Identity

POLONA PREŠEREN

PHOTO: ELAN ALPINE SKI MUSEUM ARCHIVES



Recently, a special museum opened its doors - the Alpine Ski Museum Elan, which is located in Elan factory in Begunje. Elan is justifiably proud of its rich history of making skis, boats, gym equipment and other sports products.

A few historical facts will help reveal the importance of Elan in Slovenia. Slovenians have never considered Elan as merely a ski producer. Skiing has always been considered a national sport, therefore skis are nearly a cult object with strong social significance and great influence on nation's identity.

**Elan skis are something special, one-of-a-kind, unique, and they continue the rich Slovenian skiing tradition that goes back centuries.**

### A LOVE AND PASSION FOR SKIING

The first Elan skis were produced before World War II, and they were a product of love and passion. Rudi Finžgar, their inventor, was an excellent skier and ski jumper and made the skis for himself and his close friends. During the war Elan skis were literally on the front lines, as Finžgar produced them for Slovenian partisans. And then one September day in 1945, only a few months after liberation, the company that would manufacture Elan sports equipment was established.

Elan gradually became a Slovenian national symbol in the former Yugoslavia – Slovenians are almost prouder of Elan skis than they are of their flag. Skiing was also what boosted Slovenian confidence in the former Yugoslavia. Slovenians might not have been the best footballers, but they certainly were excellent skiers. At that time, even though Elan skis said 'Made in Yugoslavia', everyone knew what it really meant was 'Made in Slovenia'. Never before or since has Slovenia known a brand that Slovenians would identify with as much as they do with Elan.

Elan skis' best feature was that they weren't merely a source of a local pride or the result of extremely specific regional characteristics, as very quickly their fame crossed international borders. Elan products were simply too good, too innovative and too technologically advanced to stay unnoticed, despite the fact they were produced on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain. The town of Begunje was home to the best kind of ski smarts that

outperformed the competition from larger Alpine countries, the bold and innovative spirit of Rudi Finžgar has never left Elan.

The Begunje Development Institute earned its reputation as a ski trendsetter. The list of innovations Elan has used to change and improve skiing is endless.

**One invention by Elan especially stands out: carving skis that dramatically changed the sport.**

As luck goes hand in hand with courage, Elan struck it lucky many times. For example, the legendary Swede Ingemar Stenmark, the best skier of all time, achieved all 86 World Cup wins with Elan skis. Many other great skiers also used Elan skis for their performance, including Slovenian champions Bojan Križaj and Mateja Svet. Today, the rich tradition is continued by competitors in the ski cross discipline, who won four out of six medals, including both gold medals, at the Olympics Games in PyeongChang.

### HISTORICAL MEMORY IS VALUABLE

All this tradition and history now has a tangible form, voice and image.

**The Elan Museum is opening its doors at its factory in Begunje na Gorenjskem. Elan is also a trendsetter in this respect, as it is the first ski manufacturer with its own museum.**

"The museum idea has been on the table for quite a few years. We were looking for a way to present Elan's story, tradition and innovation in one location as the company has been changing skiing for more than seventy years. And now the museum has finally been opened, and we are extremely proud of it," says Reberka Lah Notar, project manager in Elan's marketing department and the director of the museum.



## UNCOVERING HISTORY

# The 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Historical Archives Ljubljana

ANA KRAŠEVEC

PHOTO: HISTORICAL ARCHIVES LJUBLJANA



Archive depots

The beginnings of the Historical Archives Ljubljana date back to 15 July 1898, when Ljubljana Mayor Ivan Hribar opened a new position of city archivist and entrusted the role to Anton Aškerc, a famous Slovenian poet and priest. This year the Archives have prepared numerous events marking their 120th anniversary - on 16 July they celebrated their birthday by opening an exhibition tracing the history of the Archives, their activities, work, locations, employees and important events.

Many people associate the word “archives” with something boring – endless stacks of documents in plain boxes that are being kept only to meet legal obligations related to the storage of records. However, if we look at archives from a different point of view, they turn into an unexpected treasure trove: they provide a direct insight into our own histories and the history of our nation and environment.

**The Historical Archives Ljubljana have always given historians and researchers access to materials and provided individuals and institutions with copies of various supporting documents in order to ensure legal certainty. This is why archives in general can be considered one of the pillars of Slovenian democracy.**

The Historical Archives Ljubljana also present their materials to the public in other ways, such as with regular independent exhibitions, lectures, professional publications and workshops for people of all ages, as well as through social media accounts and a captivating website. In addition to their regular work, the employees still find the time to acquaint the public with the Archives in many innovative ways, for instance with a series of educational films and a picture book series about Mica the Mouse. The two archivists who brought the idea of picture books to life also wrote the stories. The aim was to bring the secret world of archives closer to the younger public which otherwise rarely gets to see it and knows little about it. The series of lively illustrated picture books explains the purpose of the archives and simplifies some of the important concepts from archival contexts, which are

gathered at the end of each book and explained in more detail. The response has been excellent and other archives have started using the books in their presentations to younger audiences. Mica the Mouse has also inspired a puppet show, story-time events and various promotional materials. This year the first book of the series has also been translated to German.

## IN THE PAST AND PRESENT

Anton Aškerc, who worked at the Archives from 1898 until his death in 1912, is considered the first professional archivist in Slovenia. He took his job very seriously, and it only took him five days to report the main issues of the Archives to his superiors: dust, clutter, stale and humid air and time-consuming work.

**His professional decisions were ahead of his time – he was the first to start making file cards for all archive material, ensured the regular inflow or archivalia, and introduced the practice of accepting and storing the minutes of Ljubljana City Council meetings.**

He is therefore credited with the exemplary regulation of the city's archives and with the development of archival theory and practice in Slovenia.

In 1951, the Archives became an independent cultural institution that started expanding its competencies, especially after the 1960s, and over time outgrew its original confines. Ever since then, it has ac-



cepted archive materials from other public institutions, first in Ljubljana and later on the territory of former Carniola, expanding between Jesenice in the north and Metlika in the south. After some time, the name of the institution no longer befitted its wider ranging competencies, and in 1973 the City Archives Ljubljana was renamed the Historical Archives Ljubljana.

**Today, they are the largest regional archives in Slovenia - its repositories and collections hold no less than 16 linear kilometres of archive materials.**

These include historically significant documents, various files, postcards, photographs, plans, audio-visual and electronic materials, and more. The oldest documents date as far back as the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

**EVENTS IN THE JUBILEE YEAR**

The Historical Archives Ljubljana will hold a number of events throughout the year to mark the anniversary. The celebration started in Slovenska Kinoteka with a screening of three short educational films: a 2010 presentational video of the Archives and their activities and two educational films - created last year - on Slovenian culinary through history of and the arrival and use of the first cars in Slovenia. In March, the Archives published the digitalised minutes of meetings of the Ljubljana City Council for the period 1520 –1671 on their website. A month later, the activities of the Archives were presented at the Cultural Bazaar, and in May the third Mica the Mouse picture book, entitled *Mica the Mouse and Her Egyptian Ancestors from Fužine Castle (Miška Mica in njeni egipčanski predniki z gradu Fužine)* was presented. On the International Archives Day, 9 June, the Archives organised an open house event and invited visi-

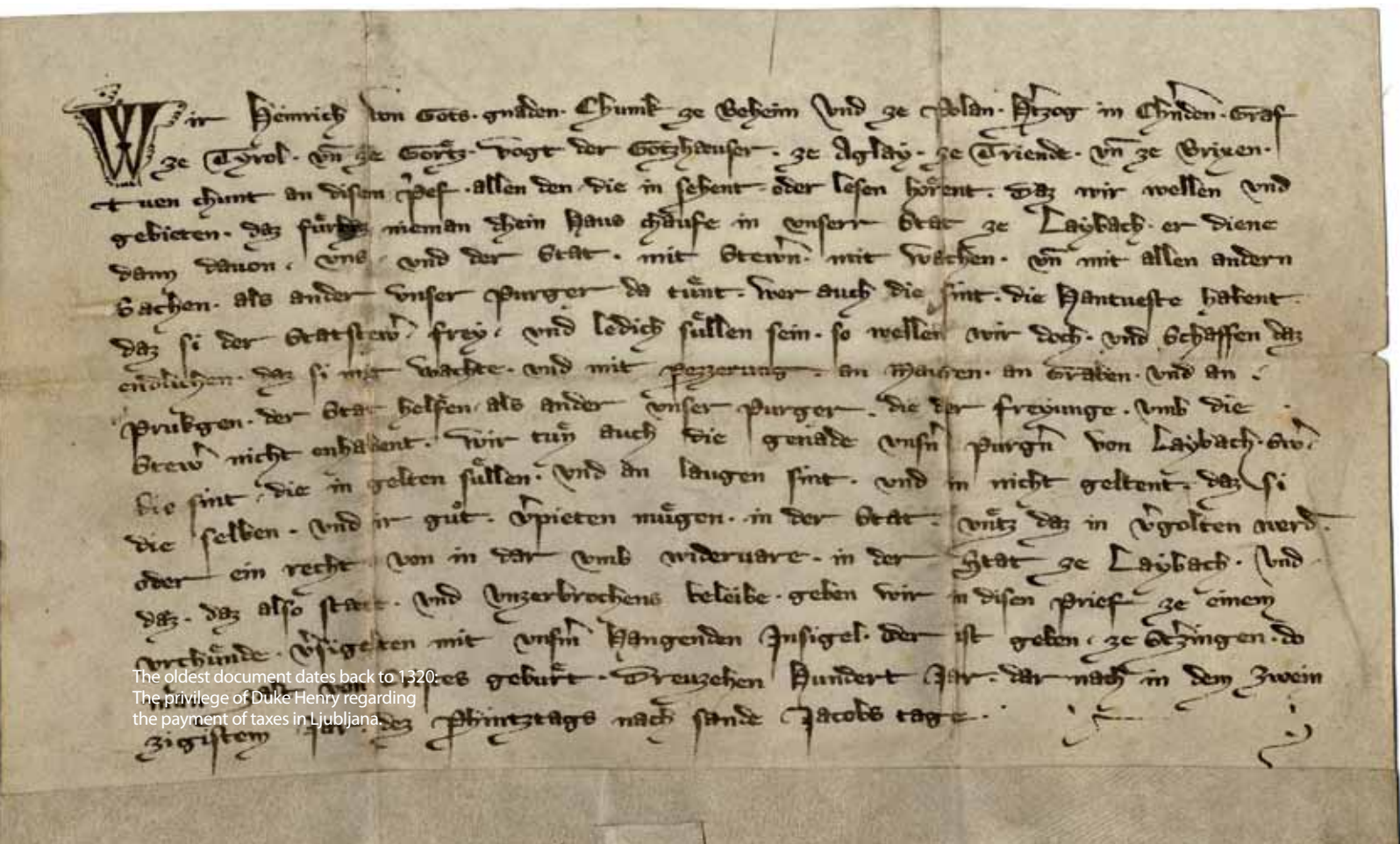
tors to attend a presentation of archive materials and a calligraphy workshop.

The Archivalia of the Month series, which features the most interesting archival documents once a month, was also dedicated to the jubilee. Each month this year representative and interesting materials are taken from each decade of the Archives' history, thus covering 120 years of tradition with regard to protecting archival heritage.

**To mark the 120th anniversary of their establishment, the Ljubljana unit opened an exhibition on the history of the Archives at their exhibition site. The exhibition takes a structured and innovative approach to**

**tracing the history of the Archives, along with some important events, their various locations and interesting statistical data.**

However, the most important event of the year will take place in October in the Historical Atrium of Ljubljana's Town Hall, with the launch of the exhibition on the Archive's breakthrough year of 1918. It will focus on the stories of some of the common people who found themselves caught up in a whirlwind of fateful events at the end of World War I, which also saw the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the creation of two new Yugoslav states. The exhibition will be based on the materials kept by the Ljubljana Historical Archives. This will be the third (and last) of the World War I series which was organised by the Archives over the last five years (2014, 2015, 2018).



The oldest document dates back to 1320. The privilege of Duke Henry regarding the payment of taxes in Ljubljana.



The making of educational film on the arrival and use of the first cars in Slovenia. From left: Martin Smrtnik, car owner; Marjana Kos, screenwriter; Mitja Sadek, director of Historical Archives Ljubljana.



## THE #IFEELSLOVENIA NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

# #ifeelsLOVEnia, or Two Million Reasons Why We Feel Slovenia

ANA SAVŠEK, STB  
PHOTO: STB ARCHIVES



*“Two million reasons that describe Slovenia’s beauty, its trees and crystal clear rivers, lakes and sea. Home is where your breath is taken away, where you become one with nature, where you are inspired by the greenery...”*

This is the intro to Zlatko’s (Zlatan Čordić, a Slovenian rap artist) adaptation of his own song, making it about Slovenia, which he first performed at the beginning of June when the national campaign named “Two Million Reasons Why We Feel Slovenia” began. With this, the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) wants to contribute to the country’s popularity abroad and encourage its residents to become active promoters of their country’s beauty.

### HOME COUNTRY AMBASSADORS

Any country can have no better ambassadors than its people. Slovenia proved this more than 30 years ago with the exceptional slogans “Slovenia, My Country”, “People are Tourism” and “Slovenia: The Sunny Side of the Alps”, which inspired a widespread emotional response and which still evoke fond memories in Slovenian people. While the methods of promotion have since changed, recommendations by friends and acquaintances are still the most appreciated when people choose their holiday destinations, along with targeted marketing and promotional activities in the digital environment.

“The opportunity to represent Slovenia abroad and to be its ambassador of Slovenian tourism is an honour and a privilege. I’m proud to be able to introduce foreign visitors to this green, active and healthy country, whose goal is to become a global, sustainability-oriented and five-star destination,” said Zdravko Počivalšek, Minister of Economic Development and Technology, at the campaign’s launch on 6 June at Tivoli Castle in Ljubljana. “By discovering the lesser-known gems of Slovenia, we are encouraging both local and foreign guests to visit these spots, enjoy them, and then share their experiences. This kind of a promotion is priceless, as it is genuine and sincere, and at the same time all those who share their experiences on social media instantly become ambassadors of Slovenian tourism. I believe that with the help of our partners

and by using the most modern platforms, this campaign has incredible potential,” said Maja Pak, STB’s director.

### A CHALLENGE FOR THOSE WHO LOVE SLOVENIA

The national promotional campaign “Two Million Reasons Why We Feel Slovenia” is present on today’s key communication channels: the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, and on the main Slovenian tourist information website, [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info).

**As part of the campaign, STB is inviting the public to share photos, videos and their reasons why they “feel Slovenia” on social media using the hashtag #ifeelsLOVEnia. This way, they can instantly become ambassadors of Slovenian tourism and promoters of the country’s beauty.**

STB then shares selected posts on its social media pages for everyone who loves or is interested in Slovenia, has visited the country or wants to in the future.

The “Make new memories in Slovenia & share them with us” global digital campaign is how STB connects with foreign visitors. They are also invited to share their impressions, experiences and fond memories from their time in Slovenia. STB has also invited the Slovenian tourist sector and tourist destinations to actively participate by encouraging their guests to use the hashtag #ifeelsLOVEnia. STB has prepared green, heart-shaped stickers with the hashtag for this purpose, which can be handed out to the guests or placed in visible spots.



**BEST POSTS AWARDED**

The [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info) site has an integrated counter which counts users' posts with the hashtag #ifeelsLOVEnia on social media. The posts are also shown on the website.

In just one month from the beginning of the campaign, on 6 June, as many as 37,820 posts using the hashtag #ifeelsLOVEnia were recorded, which means that its use increased by 50% in comparison to the previous month. Moreover, these posts were seen by more than 19 million users in June alone. There were many posts made during the cycling competition the 25th Tour of Slovenia, when,

thanks to the participation of all the Tour's destinations, the nation's beauty was successfully shared with the world. One of the destinations with the best responses from those who saw the posts was Laško, as 500 students spelled out the hashtags #ifeellaško and #ifeelsLOVEnia at the Laško Castle with their bodies.

**STB selects the top three posts each week and awards them special prizes.**

At the beginning of September all the users selected in weekly



giveaways will have the chance to win an additional prize, as the person who posts the most attractive summer shot of Slovenia will win a five-day holiday at the Glamping Olimia Adria Village in Terme Olimia.

**REVEALING HIDDEN CORNERS**

The campaign also promotes lesser-known destinations and products, with the aim of preventing most popular destinations being overrun with tourists and creating a more balanced geographical distribution of visitors. STB publishes Slovenia's Hidden Corners each week on its website ([www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info)), in order to encour-

age visitors to opt for Slovenia's lesser-known locations that are well worth exploring. STB has also invited the local media to participate - with the goal of achieving additional promotion and greater online exposure.

STB wants to use the incredible potential of the digital environment and the networking capabilities of the internet in this campaign, since a vast number of users can be reached quickly and messages can easily be shared. The goal is to collect two million recommendations, posts about tours and destinations, and the genuine and original experiences of visitors to our diverse and beautiful country that offers so much to explore.





## THE HIDDEN GEMS OF SLOVENIAN TUSCANY

# Deserted Villages are Being Revived

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ  
PHOTO: PETRA LOŽAR

Abitanti

Traditionally built stone houses used to be full of life, but today they are hidden behind bushes and covered with ivy, quietly awaiting their new owners. The picturesque villages of the Gradin local community - Abitanti, Belvedur, Brezovica pri Gradinu, Gradin, Koromači, Boškini, Močunigi, Pregara, Sirči and Topolovec, near Koper on the Slovenia-Croatia border – quietly whisper their stories. Stories about people forced to leave their home villages in search of a better life and head inland, to the coast, to Trieste and even further away to Australia, Argentina and the USA.

The last resident of the Abitanti village died in 2003. The village was then empty until 2010 when the Perič family, the descendants of the first resident of Abitanti, began to revive it. Some other former residents have also come back to their homesteads and are trying to restore their previous charm.

**Their goal is to bring new life to the village, making it vibrant once again, and to preserve its rich folk tradition. Gracijan Perič has recently built a genuine Istrian wine cellar in his birth house, and thus planted a seed for the revival of Abitanti.**

His life story is quite similar to those of other people from these villages. The village had 150 residents at its peak. It was later very much affected by World War II, and the last villagers left during the demarcation of the border in the Free Territory of Trieste. The demarcation was the reason the villagers were unable to sell hay, firewood and produce, as they sold most of this in Trieste. Today, eleven people are officially registered as residents of the village, including one baby, and they are hoping that Abitanti might attract more “abitanti” (Italian word for “residents”). When that happens, the village will again justifiably bear the name the Venetians gave it centuries ago. In 1987, the entire village was declared a cultural monument of local importance and is now registered in Slovenia’s Register of Immovable Cultural Heritage.

### TOURISM IN ISTRIAN VILLAGES

The locals believe that environmentally friendly tourism, farm tourism and ecotourism are the future. Their wish is to develop a boutique tourism offer in facilities built and restored in traditional Istrian style. A stylish stone house with a swimming pool and sauna should satisfy even the most demanding guests.





Abitanti refosco grapes

**Deserted schools and dilapidated parsonages are also planned to be renovated as hostels and given new life. Villagers are not interested in mass tourism, as they believe it produces merely a short-term financial gain.**

Instead, tourists will be able to enjoy the great outdoors, spend their holidays on tourist farms where children can learn about ecological farming and help feed farm animals, spend time cycling or strolling while surrounded by unspoilt and peaceful nature, and last but not least, taste excellent local wines and delicious food. Local associations and workers from the hospitality industry will be invited to join the project.

**FINE REFOSCO WINE**

Gracijan Perič from Abitanti remembers his childhood very well. The villagers would gather in the village square, play accordions, violins and improvised drums and enjoy each other's company. Today, only a crossroads remains where the square used to be. Up to 120 head of cattle used to live in the village, and the villagers' lives mainly depended on them. Every year, 500 hectolitres of wine were produced, mainly Refosco, which was and still is known as one of the best Littoral wines.

**Grape vines and trees producing olives, cherries, figs, nectarines and peaches still grow here today. In addition, five wine cellars have been built in recent years.**

The Refosco wine grape that grows in this region gives the wine a strong colour and a sweet taste that is otherwise not a feature of this variety. The residents are now trying to plant a lot more grape vines, fruit trees, olive trees as well as garlic, onions and other vegetables. Abitanti prides

itself on two protected 150-year-old vines of the indigenous Abitanti Refosco grape. These two vines have been recognised as peculiarities worth preserving by oenologists, as they differ from regular Refosco grape vines in a few features. Their leaves are smaller and more notched; the grape cluster is more triangular in shape and has a red stem.

**STONE HOUSES - RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Another important feature of tourism in the area is the original Istrian architecture. These Karst villages are adorned with stone houses with outdoor corridors and arches. Courtyards are paved with stone and the chimneys recall the times when open fireplaces were the only sources of heat. White mulberries grow on every corner, and have become the village's trademark. These trees are the only remaining proof that earlier villagers once bred silkworms. Istrian architecture is known for its dry stone building method, meaning that people built their houses with their own hands and without the use of binding materials.

**Today, these houses serve as examples of the region's rich cultural heritage. A magnificent 500-year-old oak, mjav as the locals used to call it, grows in Abitanti. The village also has no less than 14 wells that used to be water sources for the locals.**

The Pregara village has special architecture: its old stone houses used to be covered with slates, which have since been replaced by special Istrian roof tiles, weighed down with stones for protection against strong bora wind. The only architectural idiosyncrasy is the village parsonage built in 1901. This is a lavish mansion, and as such stands out from the rest of Pregara's houses. The old parts of Pregara are Staro Mesto, Geto and Rena. Traditions and culture in Pregara are still very much observed despite the small number of residents. People love to join in the celebrations of joyous holidays, such as the carnival.



Traditional stone house in Abitanti.



TYPICAL ISTRIAN DISHES

It is impossible not to mention the diverse cuisine still found in these villages. Some typical Istrian dishes include *nadeva* (bread dumplings boiled in chicken soup), *kuhani štrukji* (boiled rolls of filo pastry with filling) and *bobiči* (bean and corn stew). Special occasions inspire special dishes: Easter is the time for *pinca* and *titule* (Easter bread), the carnival is the time for *fritule* (deep fried sweet dumplings), at weddings you will enjoy *kolač* (cake), women who have given birth eat *rogjač* (carob cake), while *hroštule* (deep fried dough) and *štruklji* (rolls with filling) can be eaten on any occasion. The Belvedur village is home to the Belvedur restaurant owned by Aleksander Tripar, which is renowned for its *fusi* pasta with truffles, the highly esteemed fungi that grow in the area. Their Malvasia liqueur is also well-known and can only be obtained from the mistress of the house along with other delicacies such as truffle honey, truffle cheese, fig jam and homemade wine, to list but a few. One of the three Perič family sons has begun farming livestock and hopes to develop a centre for breeding boscarin cattle. Boscarin is an Istrian

breed - a very strong, obedient and hard-working animal with delicious meat. The region is also a perfect location for vineyards, olive groves, fig groves, cherry orchards, and nectarine and peach orchards, attentively taken care of by the locals. They also want to bring more attention to the well-known and delicious Pavliči cherries that grow in and around the Pavliči village, and that used to be known as far off as Ljubljana. They claim they are just as sweet as the Goriška Brda cherries. The Poli Kapele restaurant is situated in the Brezovica village and offers venison dishes. The Korone Inn in Brezovica offers accommodation, as do two private providers in Topolovec.

DIALECT EVENINGS

New people and new events have found their place here in the region's revival of recent years. Dialect evenings are among the events worth mentioning that take place at Grondala, the Perič homestead. Fine art camps are also organised, along with the Feast of Saint Martin and a traditional farmer's market with local produce in August.

TRAILS THAT WILL AMAZE HIKERS, EQUESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

The locals are happy to show visitors the region's breath-taking spots: the Štrpanje spring, the Jarek spring with its gorge near Gradin, where the village women used to wash clothes and collect water, the Kubik spring and gorge near Brezovica, and the view of nearby villages from the Church of the Holy Cross in Gradin and in clear weather also all the way from the Adriatic to Triglav and the Dolomites. Forest trails are suitable for hiking and cycling, and a few other interesting destinations also include the Stara Mandrija cave, the Kubik cave near Brezovica (the second longest cave in Slovenian Istria), the magnificent oak you'll see just before you enter Abitanti (23 metres tall and 4.1 metres in circumference), the natural bunker in Topolovec that was a shelter for the Partisans in World War II, the Starci fort near Brezovica (the two circular towers, 6 and 10 metres tall, were part of the fortification on the border between Venice and Austria), Saint Simon's Church from the 17th century near Pregara, the abandoned old Gothic church of Saint Jerome near Topolovec, a church dedicated to the memory of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the right-side bell tower in Pregara, the one-apse church of Saint Jerome with a Gothic window in Topolovec, and the 37-metre-tall restored bell tower in Hrvoji that the locals call the bean tower, as it was built in the 19th century with the money made from selling beans. The old town square in Topolovec, the stunning Denič courtyard in Brezovica, the centuries-old, unique and restored fireplace in the Bitanc house in Brezovica, the old chapel with a brick roof shaped like a pyramid near Koromači – Boškini, the old Čelo water mill in the Malinska valley near Koromači and Hrvoji, wells in Sirči, Abitanti and Pregara, a monument for the fallen soldiers in Brezovica and old schools in Gradin, Topolovec and Pregara. The most breath-taking waterfall of Slovenian Istria is Veli, and it is situated near the Sokoliči village. The highest waterfall of Slovenian Istria is the Stranice pod Trebešami waterfall, and the Pesjak waterfall is near Topolovec, on the border between Slovenia and Croatia.

All these villages are surrounded by pristine nature, wilderness, peace and quiet, and clean, fresh air. The hidden gems of Slovenian Tuscany await those travellers happy to explore off the beaten track.

You are welcome to enjoy them!



Water well



Starci fort near Gradin (circular tower)



## MOUNTAIN KINGDOM

## The Most Beautiful Mountain Trail in Slovenia

ANA KRAŠEVEC



Planina Ovčarija  
Photo: Jošt Gantar

As part of the Slovenia-wide environmental protection campaign Let's Clean Up Our Mountains (Očistimo naše gore), which took place for the ninth time this year, Slovenians voted for the most beautiful mountain trail. The circular route *Planina Blato – Planina pri Jezeru – Planina Dedno polje – Vrata (za Kopico) – Prehodavci – Dvojno jezero – Štapce – Planina Ovčarija – Planina pri Jezeru – Planina Blato* emerged the clear winner in this category, beating over sixty other competing trails. The winning trail, which lies at the very heart of the Julian Alps and Triglav National Park, received almost twice as many votes as the second ranked one. The trail takes an average hiker up to 11 hours to walk, without accounting for stops.

The fact that the trail won the most votes not only confirms that it is very popular with hikers, but also offers recognition and praise to the trail markers who make sure that it is well-maintained, safe and well-marked.

**Few people know that Slovenian mountain trails are among the best marked and most secure trails in Europe, and indeed the world, a fact confirmed by foreign hikers and experts.**

Most of the credit for this goes to trail markers. In Slovenia, mountain trails are maintained by volunteers, members of trail marking sections within alpine clubs. According to the latest data, 1.7 million people visit the Slovenian mountains each year and the number is expected to increase. This means more work for trail markers, who in 2017 did as many as 32,000 hours of volunteer work.

#### THE MAGNIFICENT WORLD OF THE JULIAN ALPS

The most beautiful mountain trail runs through the stunning world of the Julian Alps, which in 2003 were included in UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme and declared a biosphere reserve - an area of special protection for its natural resources and biodiversity. The Julian Alps are the highest mountain range in Slovenia.

Most of the area is covered by Triglav National Park, whose purpose is to conserve the exceptional natural and cultural value of the Alps and to protect native plant and animal species, ecosystems and features of inanimate nature.

**The diverse flora and fauna have a high and well-deserved reputation: here you can find towering rocky peaks that offer spectacular views, crystal waters shimmering in the sun, green landscapes with colourful alpine flowers. In higher areas, it is not unusual to cross paths with an ibex or chamois.**

The landscape, which due to its beauty, uniqueness and serenity seems and feels like a fairy tale land, will certainly not leave anyone indifferent.

#### TRAIL OF BREATHTAKING VIEWS AND ADVENTURES

More experienced and faster hikers can cover the trail in one day provided they start in the very early hours of the morning, finish near the starting point late in the evening and spend the night at the mountain hut at Planina pri Jezeru. As a little extra treat, the



next day they can then hike to the nearby Pršivec (1761 m), which is known as “the Balcony over Bohinj” as it offers a beautiful view of Lake Bohinj beneath. Those less experienced or those who would like to hike the trail at a leisurely pace can cover the trail in two days and spend the night either at the mountain hut Zasavska koča na Prehodavcih or at the hut at the Triglav Lakes (Koča pri Triglavskih jezerih). Keep in mind that it is wise to book a bed at any of the huts in advance, as there are many visitors in the summer, especially on sunny weekends.

**Our adventure begins at Planina Blato, which lies above Lake Bohinj at an altitude of 1100 metres. You can access the starting point by car or go for the cheaper and**

**simpler option and use public transport from Bohinj, which has been introduced this year to reduce the number of cars in Triglav National Park.**

First, the trail ascends moderately across the forested landscape, which provides pleasant, cool shade and prevents exhaustion from kicking in too soon. After less than an hour of walking, you arrive at the first stop: the hut at Planina pri jezeru. The hut is well known for its extremely friendly and helpful staff, and holds a “Family-friendly mountain hut” certificate. This is why you should definitely stop there and treat yourself to a delicious alpine breakfast, perhaps a homemade apple strudel and alpine tea made from local herbs, to prepare yourself for the long journey ahead.



Beautiful serenity at the Planina pri Jezeru hut.  
Photo: Tomaž Rusimovič



Amazing views at Prehodavci.  
Photo: Jošt Gantar



From the hut at Planina pri Jezeru you make a short ascent to Planina Dedno Polje and take a path to the right; the landscape gradually becomes more open, resembling a wonderland of green bursting with colourful flowers. Continuing along the Za Kopico Valley, you follow a slightly ascending white path, enjoying the beautiful sight of the peaks surrounding the first part of the valley. After just over two hours you arrive at the Vrata (Slovenian word for “door”) saddle, the very name of which implies that you are about to enter the world of high mountains – you are now well above the tree line and with a bit of luck you might see an ibex up close. From Vrata to the hut on the Prehodavci Pass it takes less than an hour of walking along the rocky landscape, which may still be covered with patches of snow, and extra caution should be taken when crossing these.



Crossing paths with the king of the mountains is a magical experience.  
Photo: Tomaž Rusimovič

The hut at Prehodavci is always buzzing with life. If the weather is good, you will be rewarded with truly magnificent views of many mighty peaks of the Julian Alps, making your long hike very worthwhile. After having rested and refreshed, you should head off to complete the second half of this circular route. From the hut, it takes two hours to get to the next one at the Triglav Lakes, the path leading past the seven Triglav Lakes, including Ledvica, which is the largest and, many believe, most beautiful of all the lakes. Unfortunately, it is being slowly but insistently filled with sediment from the surrounding scree slopes.

**The hut at the Triglav Lakes is located at the Double Lake (Dvojno jezero). There you will be able to see algae in the lake, which is also an issue in some of the other lakes here. The algae are a consequence of people bringing fish into the lake years before strict environmental rules were imposed.**

From here, you embark on the last quarter of the journey; the path, which leads over the Štapce pass, is a bit more demanding, but well secured. After an hour or more of hiking, you are back at Planina Dedno Polje, from where you follow the now already familiar path leading back to the starting point.

All who decide to hike this trail will surely not regret having experienced the primal essence and breathtaking beauty of the pristine nature on display. The varied impressions and memories you will collect on this day or two will undoubtedly stay with you forever, making you want to return again and again.



The Valley of the Triglav Lakes  
Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik



## TAP WATER IN SLOVENIA

# The Best Quality Water in the World

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

Slovenia has Amended its constitution to made access to drinkable water a fundamental right for all citizens and stop it being commercialised.  
Photo: Mostphotos

Wine tasting is quite popular, so why not water tasting? Especially when the water is of the best quality. Slovenian water has been confirmed to be the best quality water in the world. Water tasting was the “common blue thread” of the Bled Water Festival that takes place every June and attracts numerous visitors. The theme of all festival events was water, including competitions, round tables and films raising awareness about the importance of this essential liquid.

Tasting tap water from different Slovenian regions was organised for the second time during this year's international festival, similar to how sommeliers taste wine. Water tasting from ten influential and highly-appraised Slovenian restaurants from several Slovenian regions was included. All festival guests were invited to join in the tasting, which was quite a success, and they agreed that the taste of water differs from one source to another.

**The idea of water tasting was also successful among public utility companies, experts and the general public. The water from Bohinj Public Utility, which is also served in Hotel Kristal in Ribčev Laz, obtained the highest ratings.**

In cooperation with all the public utility companies that provide the participating restaurants with drinking water, all the main features of the various water samples were recorded and labelled on the bottles (produced in Slovenia). When guests in these restaurants order tap water, it is served in custom-made bottles bearing the water's name, which is based on its source. Other information on the bottle include temperature, the distance from the source to the tap and details of all drinking water parameters. The consumers thereby know exactly which water they are drinking and it is easier to tell good- from poor-quality water.

### A NATURAL RESOURCE THAT SHOULD BE TREATED WITH RESPECT

The organiser plans to further enhance the water tasting project next year. Slovenia was the first country to include the right to drinking water in its Constitution, and thus water is now protected at the highest level. It is important that natural water resources remain national assets - water is not a commodity, but the inheritance of all people and should therefore be respected and protected, since water resources are limited. Water must be treated with utmost care in a comprehensive and sustainable way if we wish to preserve a sufficient quantity and quality for future generations.

**The organiser, the Bled Water Festival (a non-profit and non-governmental organisation) certainly took a step forward with this project. It is setting the trend for drinking water in the region and offering technological and other solutions on several levels.**

Awards for best products, projects and services are given every year with the support of the ministries of the environment and spatial planning from several countries, experts and the private sector. “We act in a revolutionary and innovative way, water is our mission. Every individual should be aware of how important it is to take care of water resources and the good quality of water, as well as the importance of water for life. Water should not be taken for granted, it should be protected, and poor-quality water should be improved,” they emphasise.



## IRONMAN IN SLOVENIA

# Slovenian Istria with Its Rolling Hills, the Adriatic Sea, and Excellent Infrastructure Is a Perfect Location for a Triathlon Competition

MAŠA PUKLAVEC, STB



On 23 September, Koper will host a sporting treat - the Ironman competition.  
Photo: Joern Pollex/Ironman Getty Images

Ironman, the world-renowned licensed triathlon, was first organised 40 years ago in Hawaii, and this year is finally coming to Slovenia. The *I Feel Slovenia Ironman 70.3 Slovenian Istria* will take place on 23 September 2018, in the breath-taking environment of Slovenian Istria.

Slovenia is a land of top athletes. At the same time, it is also a land which appeals to top athletes, sports aficionados and active retreat lovers.

**Slovenia fascinates visitors with its unspoiled nature, sport-friendly climate and great infrastructure. The country is also becoming a destination for athletic training and a great host of prominent sporting events.**

Such occasions are a great opportunity to spread Slovenia's reputation and popularity as a tourist destination for active holidays, and at the same time position the country as a very capable host of the most demanding sporting events. Those that take place in the breathtaking natural environment of Slovenia are also an opportunity to show the beauty of the country to millions of people who are seeking active vacations. The *I Feel Slovenia Ironman 70.3* triathlon is therefore a significant opportunity with great potential to present the nation and its status as a boutique, green and healthy destination, which is the key reason why the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) is participating in this project.

## AN EXCLUSIVE EVENT

The *I Feel Slovenia Ironman 70.3 Slovenian Istria* triathlon is especially popular with extreme sports fans, which gives this event an extra exclusivity.

**The competitors are both professional and recreational athletes, many of whom are successful businesspeople and well-off world travellers, who represent the target group of STB's current efforts to inspire such visitors to return in the future.**

With the help of this prestigious event, both the participants and spectators will see Slovenia as a sustainability-oriented land of extraordinary natural beauty and five-star experiences, satisfying even the most demanding guests. The international popularity of the Ironman brand is an excellent opportunity to build Slovenia's reputation as a tourist destination for those individuals in the most demanding target groups, and especially those from the Gulf States, where people are searching for new destinations and new experiences.

## A SWIMMING, CYCLING AND RUNNING CHALLENGE

The competition starts with a swim (1.9 km) in Koper, where the competitors will dive into the Adriatic Sea. An extraordinary bicycle ride (90 km) will then take the athletes through the stunning Istrian landscape and two different countries, as they will cross the border and cycle along the Italian coast. The half-marathon (21 km) will start in Koper and then continue along the picturesque coastal trail to Izola and back. In short, a race with unforgettable views!



**AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ECONOMIC AND TOURIST PROMOTION**

The so-called half-Ironman that will take place in Slovenia and already has more than 1,200 registered participants from 45 countries is important not only for the athletes, but also as it provides a unique chance for the tourist and economic promotion of the country. The honorary patron of the event, Mr Borut Pahor, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, has shown personal support for the competition.

Along with the main Sunday competition, Koper will also host several accompanying programmes. A regional business conference will be organised and more than 100 relevant companies from the region and abroad, including the Gulf States, have been invited to participate.

**The day before the main race will be dedicated to young sports enthusiasts, with the Ironkids competition. This has a long tradition in several countries where Ironman is present, and also promotes a healthy way of life, which is the event's central philosophy.**

The four coastal municipalities of Koper, Izola, Piran and Ankaran have greatly contributed to the realisation of the project, and these are also the towns that will host the athletes and their teams from all over the world. The Slovenian Tourist Board has also contributed to the organisation of the events as the key promotional partner. The legendary competition will show the world the I FEEL SLOVENIA brand in a new context, and thus contribute to the international recognition of Slovenia and its natural beauty.



Slovenia's President Borut Pahor handed the organisers of the Ironman competition an honorary patronage document.  
Photo: STA



The *I Feel Slovenia Ironman 70.3 Slovenian Istria* sporting event invites local and foreign participants with the I Feel Slovenia Ironman slogan. While running, cycling and swimming through the country's pristine nature, the competitors will see for themselves why Slovenia is becoming a more and more popular and desirable destination, even for the most demanding of guests.

**I FEEL SLOVENIA**  
**IRONMAN 70.3 SLOVENIAN ISTRIA**



An Ironman is the hardest one-day endurance race in the entire world.  
Photo: Mostphotos





## SLOVENIAN ICE HOCKEY SUPERSTARS ANŽE KOPITAR AND TOMAŽ RAZINGAR

# Ice Hockey Academy for Young Ice Hockey Players

POLONA PREŠEREN



Participants and coaches of the Hockey Academy 2018.  
Photo: Ice Hockey Academy Archives

When combining the ice hockey knowledge and experience of two Slovenian ice hockey greats, Anže Kopitar, currently a team captain of the LA Kings, and Tomaž Razingar, former captain of the Slovenian national team, the result is the Bled-based Ice Hockey Academy. For the last few years, the Ice Hockey Academy has been the platform which Kopitar and Razingar, with the help of their professional team, use to share their knowledge and experience with younger generations.

All ice hockey fans surely know Anže Kopitar, who's been playing for many years now in the most competitive ice hockey league in the world, the NHL, where for the past two years he's also been the captain of the LA Kings. He excited his Slovenian followers in 2012 and then again in 2014 when he brought the prestigious Stanley Cup home. Both times his team won the cup Kopitar led the scoring in the playoffs, and was one of the most valuable players on his side.

Tomaž Razingar, the long-standing captain of the Slovenian national ice hockey team, also left his mark on Slovenian hockey. He is now retired, but during his career he played in 212 games with the national team, among them those at the Sochi Olympics in 2014 when the Slovenia squad qualified for the tournament for the first time.

**Kopitar and Razingar are both from Gorenjska, a region in Slovenia where ice hockey is without a doubt the number one sport. This is why three years ago the Ice Hockey Academy for young ice hockey players was organised there for the first time. Kopitar and Razingar are the masterminds behind the Academy, whose team also includes other experts.**

Matjaž Kopitar, Anže's father, is the man who taught the Slovenian champion how to skate and do his first tricks on the ice, being a top ice hockey coach and the man behind the Slovenian national team's biggest success. Therefore, he is in charge of the coaches at the Academy.

### ICE HOCKEY ACADEMY

Children aged 7-15 are invited to register for the Ice Hockey Academy and older players can join the amateur group of ice hockey players. This year a girls' group of ice hockey players has been invited to participate in the Academy for the first time. Last year, promising ice hockey players in Slovenia aged 16-20 were also invited to participate. The Ice Hockey Academy employs 16 coaches, mainly from Slovenia, in cooperation with experts from the USA, Canada, Finland and Austria.

**The choice of location, Bled, was not a random one. The ice hockey rink there offers the perfect conditions for practice.**

And when ice hockey practice is over, there are other possibilities for spending quality free time – swimming in Lake Bled, summer sledding, or perhaps visiting an adrenalin sports park. The Academy's motto is "Work hard, play hard", and under the



watchful eyes of Matjaž Kopitar and Gorazd Rekelj the players can only have fun after their practice on ice is over. By taking part in world-class training, the young players are also learning responsibility along with the importance of relaxing their minds and bodies during their free time. The key to success is in balancing these two things.

**A SUCCESSFUL NHL SEASON FOR KOPITAR...**

...with a slightly bitter aftertaste, as he says. Statistically, this season was the best of Kopitar's career, but his team was nonetheless unable to achieve their desired objective. "The season was great, the stats were my best so far, I probably played best as well. I can say it was my best season of the past twelve years, but things didn't turn out as planned," he said. He added that he was honoured to have been chosen for the second time for the Frank J. Selke Trophy, awarded by the NHL.

**Even though Kopitar's mind is already set on the next season, he and Razingar re-**

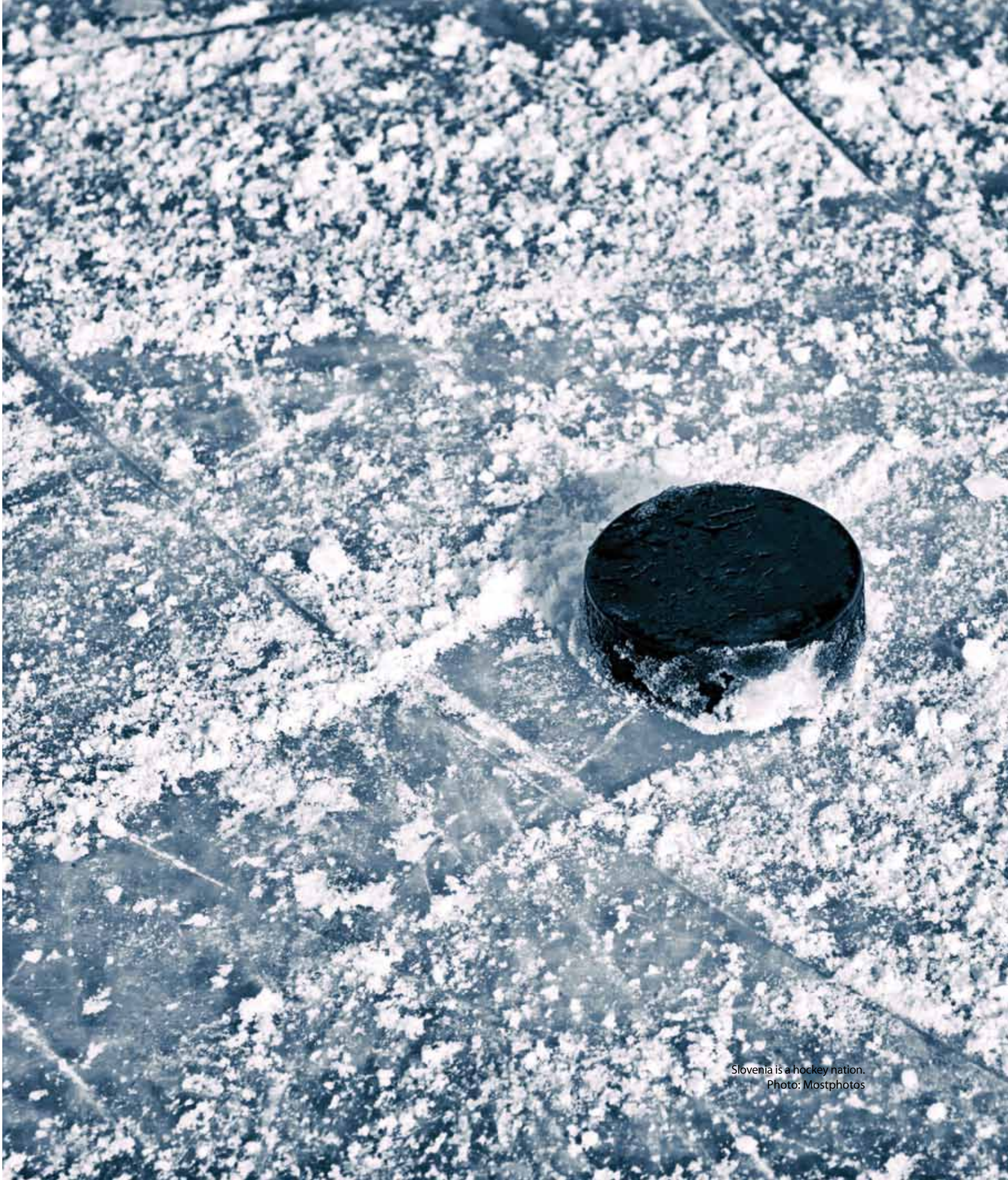
**ally enjoyed the company of the young players.**

"The fact that in just 14 days, 130 kids from 10 countries came to the Academy is proof that it is growing, and I'm sure it will become even more successful. The Academy is a platform for transferring knowledge, and hanging out with the kids before I start a new season fills me with energy. At the same time, it reminds me of the fun I had at the start of my own career," said Kopitar.

"It is a privilege for young players to be able to learn from a superstar like Kopitar, and not many parents and children realise that. Something like this wasn't possible when I was a kid. I am very pleased to see these youngsters soaking in the knowledge, and at the same time they brighten up our every day with their playfulness. And in case of a minor mishap, candy usually does the trick and helps them forget the pain," added Tomaž Razingar, who carried the Slovenian flag at the opening ceremony of the 2014 Sochi Olympics.



Slovenian hockey players Tomaž Razingar and Anže Kopitar have joined their forces in a joint project – a Hockey Academy for young players.  
Photo: Ice Hockey Academy Archives



Slovenia is a hockey nation.  
Photo: Mostphotos



