



ART·EX

#CULTURALDIPLOMACYFORSLOVAKIA

30

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 FOREWORD 4 MISSION SLOVAKIA 6 LÚČNICA 10 THROUGH THE EYES
OF A CULTURAL DIPLOMAT 14 A NEW ERA OF SLOVAK MUSIC IN AMERICA
18 YURI DOJC 20 OPERA SINGERS IN THE SERVICE OF DIPLOMACY
21 EDITA GRUBEROVÁ 22 ANDY WARHOL 26 TRIBUTE TO BJORNSTJERNE
MARTINIUS BJORNSON 28 LADISLAV BIELIK 30 SLOVAK NATIONAL
GALLERY 34 MATÚŠ MAŽÁTKO - A SLOVAK EPIC 38 KOŠICE - EUROPEAN
CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2013 40 JÚLIUS KOLLER 42 EMBASSY IN ROME BY
MILUČKÝ AND CHOVANEC 44 PETER BREINER AND HIS SLOVAK DANCES
46 BIBIANA, INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF ART FOR CHILDREN
48 L. E. HUDEC AND HIS SHANGHAI 50 GOODWILL ENVOY
54 PAVOL ORSZÁGH HVIEZDOSLAV - BLOODY SONNETS
56 IMAGES OF SLOVAKIA AT THE EXPO 58 ORCHESTRA IN A LEADING ROLE

FOREWORD

We would like to introduce you to a special issue of the Art.Ex magazine that is being published in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Slovak Republic.

By way of introduction, we would like to emphasize that we have not become isolated, nor have we shut ourselves off from the rest of the world after gaining independence. On the contrary, after decades of forced communistic isolation the last three decades have connected us with the outer world, artistic creation in the capital cities of art as well as with our own cultural identity, reaching deep into the past.

Along with freedom we have also gained responsibility for the development of Slovak art including promoting it at international competitions. The special Art.Ex 30 edition charts our success in this mission.

The success of Slovak art throughout the world is the best evidence of its attractiveness. However, at the same time, we are convinced that the many cultural diplomacy projects that our Ministry has implemented or supported over the past three decades have contributed to its establishment.

By presenting artists with Slovak origins as well as showcasing our music and traditions, we have presented Slovakia in the best light as a country of culture, with huge creative potential. We have tried to select projects for this publication, which have resonated the most throughout the world over the last thirty years as a result of their quality and public response.

Now you can judge for yourself.

The Communication Department of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

MISSION SLOVAKIA

THE “MISSION SLOVAKIA” SLOGAN SHINES A LIGHT ON THE SLOVAKIA SUCCESS STORY.

The word mission is closely related to diplomacy, in the general public it is commonly used in the phrase diplomatic mission. It symbolizes a mission, a journey toward a goal, or achieving a vision.

The founding of an independent Slovakia was also accompanied by the establishment of Slovak diplomacy. The objective of Mission Slovakia is not only to commemorate this significant anniversary and the historic events that led to the founding of the independent Slovak Republic, but also to support the perception of Slovakia as a modern, cultural and perspective country or destination, thus encouraging the development of interactions in all spheres, in which the Foreign Ministry is active. In relation to the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic prepared a series of events all around the world in 2023.

The concept of projects that were carried out or prepared also originated through communication with Slovak diplomatic missions so that in the given locality or region, it effectively addressed the target community, whether the professional or lay public.

During the Slovak Republic's thirty years of independence, a countless number of cultural events, which were organized or co-participated in by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, have been held all over the world. These activities have given rise to many partnerships abroad at both cultural and diplomatic levels, which continue to bear fruit even now. Through culture as a universal language that is understood by the entire world, the Slovak Republic is presenting itself as a dynamic, modern and a cultural country of capable and talented people, artists, artistic groups and last, but not least, cultural diplomats, who adeptly manage this excellent presentation.

To commemorate this anniversary, a special edition of the Art.Ex magazine was created – Art.Ex 30.

In this issue the magazine presents partners and artists who, through various events organized by the Foreign Ministry, have promoted the cultural representation of Slovakia the most during its period of independence on the highest artistic level. Their names stood out the most in the archives and still today they form a great part of the rich cultural history of Slovakia. Slovak culture has significantly strengthened our international relations. Over thirty years, it too has gone through a certain development, much like independent Slovakia. During periods when – as the long-time cultural diplomat Viera Polakovičová says in her interview for Art.Ex 30 – the political situation in Slovakia was becoming complicated, it was culture and art that created or rectified the country's image. The Art.Ex 30 magazine has no ambition to grade or set criteria for the success of art. It brings a mosaic of stories linked to institutions and the artists themselves, which are complemented by expert opinions, all helping to shine a better light on Mission Slovakia in cultural diplomacy, how it started, progressed, and influenced the perception of Slovakia throughout the world.

MISIA SLOVENSKO 30



TRADITIONS

LÚČNICA



Photo: Performance of the Lúčnica Folklore Dance Ensemble on the Premises of the United Nations in New York © United Nations.

FOREVER YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL, THIS IS HOW THE SPECTATORS WILL REMEMBER LÚČNICA. THE LIFETIME'S WORK OF ŠTEFAN NOSÁL' – THE MOST CELEBRATED SLOVAK FOLKLORE ENSEMBLE – STILL HAS SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE EVEN NOWADAYS. PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE IN AWE OF THEIR BEAUTY AND EXPLOSIVENESS.

Lúčnica is a Slovak artistic ensemble, an awardee of the highest domestic and international awards, symbolizing the original culture of the nation through its authentic dance and instrumental and vocal expressions. Slovak folk art has found an honest representative in Lúčnica, abundantly spreading its unique and irreplicable heritage of rich traditions to enthusiastic audiences both at home and abroad. It is an artistic and generational connection between the traditions of the past and the dynamic yet unique present.

“Lúčnica is epitomized by two major characteristics. Lúčnica is constantly “changing”. Its core consists mainly of young people, students, who come to Bratislava to study at universities and then start working in their areas of expertise. This constant cycle also makes Lúčnica different, new, but always young, full of energy and beautiful as well. Naturally, new faces, dancers, singers, musicians also bring the desire to create, and since Lúčnica first began to

actively perform in 1948, there have been more than 2,000 members, who have been part of the ensemble,” details Pavol Pilař, the general director of Lúčnica. The second characteristic is the artistic direction of the ensemble, which draws on traditional folklore and is uniquely and professionally adapted to the stage by its artistic leader and main choreographer Prof. Štefan Nosál'. With its high quality art, beauty, youth and passionate temperament, Lúčnica has thrilled spectators not only at home but also in more than 60 states throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia. Many foreign trips, for instance to the USA, Russia, Japan, China, Italy, Austria, France, Indonesia, Turkey, Ukraine and other countries, were made possible as a result of the cultural diplomacy of the Slovak Republic. Lúčnica has become a cultural phenomenon and an ambassador for its own country, representing Slovakia using the most universal language – its original national culture that needs no interpreter.



Photo on the left: Performance of Lúčnica on the Premises of the United Nations in New York © Pavol Harum and United Nations. Photo on the right: Performance of Lúčnica in Riga. © Representation Office Riga.



WWW



ŠTEFAN NOSÁL'

Almost the entire history of Lúčnica is closely connected to Prof. Štefan Nosál', who was a dancer, soloist, artistic director and a choreographer for Lúčnica between 1949–2017. His artistic genius, unique invention and vitality formed Lúčnica into a top-notch ensemble. He created more than 100 choreographies and full evening programs. "Prof. Nosál' was a man we held in very high esteem. He was very uncompromising within his art. He had our admiration as well as respect. During rehearsals, he always tried to explain to us, in particular, the essence, the characteristics—the expression of our folk dances so that emotion and atmosphere did not disappear, but rather multiplied within our performance. I believe that, also thanks to our pedagogues, my generation succeeded and so will those to come," recalls Pavol Pilař.

PAVOL PILAŘ

The current general director of Lúčnica is Ing. Mgr. art. Pavol Pilař, ArtD., who also used to be an ensemble member, and he details Lúčnica's internal processes from his own experience. "The time that each of us spends in Lúčnica is quite short, but very intense. You get on what is basically a runaway train, you often spend there more time than with your family and create very strong friendships. You train, perform and travel—and not just around the world. Travelling is also quite intensive in Slovakia as Lúčnica visits more than 30 Slovak cities and towns every year; but, of course, travelling abroad is very special for each of us. It is a big responsibility to represent Slovakia around the world with

Lúčnica. Performing a hundred percent on stage is always first and foremost and free time comes only with whatever time is left over. For instance, when we went on a 6-week tour of Japan, where we had dozens of performances across the country, we had such an excellent and well-rehearsed routine that, in addition to doing what we enjoy, we also managed to travel and get to know the country, which, of course, is an ideal combination," says Pilař adding: "To be a part of Lúčnica and experience its success, whether in Slovakia or abroad, is a moment that fills every dancer or singer with pride about where we come from and what we have at home. For each of us it is an honour and maybe a prestige as well, but each performance needs months and years of hard work, which, for many, starts early in childhood, long before they come to Lúčnica. The beginning of every successful Lúčnica member is the audition that is held in September. If you succeed here then you can expect the first months to be quite demanding—full of trainings and rehearsals, and if everything goes well, you move on to performances."

LÚČNICA'S PLANS

"As for upcoming plans, we have a year of creative work ahead of us, as we would like to premiere an entirely new full-evening program in May, which is being prepared by the choreographer and former soloist of Lúčnica Michal Dudáš. At the end of the year there is a jubilee celebration, and we are preparing a Gala Program for our 75th anniversary. In addition to this, we believe that we will manage to travel throughout the world again," Mr. Pilař wraps up with the prospects for the future.



THROUGH THE EYES OF A CULTURAL DIPLOMAT

VIERA POLAKOVIČOVÁ IS A MUSICOLOGIST, A CRITIC AND A PROMINENT CULTURAL DIPLOMAT, A FORMER DEPUTY PERMANENT DELEGATE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO UNESCO, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SLOVAK COMMISSION FOR UNESCO AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE SLOVAK INSTITUTES IN BERLIN, PARIS, AND VIENNA. SHE HAS SERVED IN FOREIGN REPRESENTATION FOR ALMOST FOUR DECADES. SHE HAS PROMOTED MANY SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS PRESENTING SLOVAK CULTURE ABROAD.

YOU HAVE WORKED AT PRESENTING SLOVAK CULTURE AND ART SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE INDEPENDENT SLOVAK REPUBLIC. WHAT MARK HAS SLOVAK CULTURAL DIPLOMACY LEFT DURING THIS PERIOD?

I highly appreciate the fact that I had the opportunity to serve in the countries that belong to the centres of global art and culture

France, Germany and Austria. I have seen a genuine interest by figures, institutions, and top political representatives, and by some partners, who we even became more closely acquainted with. In the 1990s, when the political situation in Slovakia became complicated, it was culture and art that created the image of the country. In this context an important milestone was a year-round showcase of Slovak art and culture “Présences slovaques en France/ Slovakia’s Presence in France “. It was held, after a three year preparation, during 1996, all over France. It consisted of a presentation of history, literature, art, film and music, including concerts by the Slovak Philharmonic and a series of performances by the Slovak National Theatre Opera in Paris.

Significant achievements of cultural diplomacy include the fact that after several years of efforts, starting with a visit by the Minister of Culture Milan Kňažko, the Slovak National Gallery, and my predecessors, who were serving in Paris, we managed to include an exhibition of Slovak gothics into the plans of the Musée de Cluny in the heart of Paris. The Slovak National Gallery together with its French partner guaranteed the high professionalism of the exhibition “Gold and Fire The Art of Slovakia at the End of the Middle Ages” as well as the establishment of long lasting relations.

The Slovak concerts were very well received in the Les Invalides building in Paris by the French and international audiences, which queued in front of the building, despite or perhaps also due to the fact that the program also included unknown contemporary Slovak music. The hunger of the French, Germans and Austrians was unquenchable and granted us not only the

opportunity to present within art festivals but also to manage and design them. After all, one of them was “Montmartre en Europe”, and another one was a festival in Museums quartier in Vienna, where we presented the world premieres of contemporary composers from nine countries as part of “The Long Night of Contemporary Music”. Vienna was also home to the exhibition “Treasures of Slovak Modernism. She is the Madonna” in the Porcia Palais not far from the Kunstforum. Berlin welcomed a series of discussions on historical topics, clarifying the past of two totalitarian regimes, thus opening other German cities to Slovak films as well. These were clear signals about the level of the country, its intellectuals, and artists. We invited to these discussions on politics and history those who had actively taken part in the overthrow of the political regime and were at that time also serving in important political functions, for example Minister Markus Meckel and František Mikloško.

HOW WAS THE PRESENTATION CARRIED OUT?

The main idea behind the presentation events was to design them in cooperation with partners in the host country where we had diplomats serving, and many times also with partners from Europe and around the world. Symposiums on dissent and lectures on figures such as Alexander Dubček and M. R. Štefánik were highly

acclaimed, as was the treatment of the subject of totalitarianism in the form of a commemoration to its victims, there was also a concelebrated mass marking the 60th anniversary of “Operation K”, in Vienna. To commemorate this crackdown on convents, also called the Day of the Barbarian Night, this mass was conducted by thirteen Slovak and Austrian priests and bishops and attended by political and diplomatic elites from both countries on 13 April 2010. The “Religion und Wende” symposium in Vienna as well as the “Symposium on Dominik Tātarka” in Paris and the “A Tribute to the Victims – Military Cemeteries of Architect Dušan Jurkovič” exhibition in the Museum for Sepulchral Culture in Kassel, the “Royal Glamour and Fame” exhibition about the coronations of Hungarian kings in Pressburg in the context of coronations of East Franconian and Roman German kings in Center Charlemagne in Aachen, as well as top notch artistic glass and designs by Palo Mach, Jana Hojstřičová, Alexandra Štencel and Patrik Illo in the Glassmuseum Hentrich in Düsseldorf – all these truly highlighted Slovakia and created awareness about the country – the “Tatra tiger”, the former disobedient student who had not been invited into the European family. Cultural diplomacy can do wonders. It will glue guests to their chairs and take their mobile phones from their hands. It opens eyes and hearts.

Photo below: Milan Sládek – The Stations of the Cross in the St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin. © The Archive of Viera Polakovičová.



INTERVIEW

CULTURE IS A KEY TO THE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF NATIONS AND BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH COMMON VALUES. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW WAS SLOVAKIA AND ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE RECEIVED AT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT DEALT WITH CULTURE? WHAT WERE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF THIS PROCESS?

Slovak artists were part of various professional networks even during the totalitarian regime, but the overthrow of the regime enabled the formation of natural contacts and thus increased the opportunities of getting to know each other better. In music it was, for instance, The International Music Council (IMC) that was founded by UNESCO as one of twelve non-governmental cultural organizations in 1949. The long-term director of the Slovak Philharmonic, the musicologist Ladislav Mokry, became its President and Secretary-General after 1968. In theatre it was, for example, the International Theatre Institute (ITI). The Slovak theatrologists Soňa Šimková and Zuzana Bakošová Hlavčenková left their mark here.

After the Velvet Revolution we established ourselves in other prominent musical networks such as the International Association of Music and Information Centers (IAMIC) and the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). The music theorist Olga Smetanová was the President in the first and has been Secretary-General of the second up to the present day. In the past we gained UNESCO support for two key cultural projects – the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) and the International Rostrum of Young Interpreters (Tribune internationale des jeunes interprètes, TIJI), which was a unique project involving world radio companies within the Bratislava Music Festival. UNESCO was proud that it was present in a closed country and that, after the overthrow of the regime and the division of Czechoslovakia, there was almost an explosion of Slovak presence in this organization. Illustrations by world and Slovak BIB award holders were exhibited at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, while a part of the social activities and political gestures vis-à-vis the exhibition also included presenting UNESCO Secretary-General Federico Mayor with a gift of a prize-winning illustration by Jana Kiselová Sitková. Later on, there was also a presentation of fujaras, which was prepared in a highly professional manner by the Music Museum of the Slovak National Museum.

HOW HAS SLOVAKIA BEEN DOING WITH REGARDS TO ENTRIES ON THE UNESCO LIST?

During the Slovak Republic's 30 years of existence, it was in UNESCO where Slovak experts made their most significant mark. World heritage serves as a good example. We made our way onto the world heritage list as soon as 1993 – Spišský hrad, Banská Štiavnica and Vlkolínec, and natural monuments, biosphere reserves were also very quickly added to the list; and soon, after the intangible cultural heritage list was formed, the fujara and its music was added along with the music of Terchová, blaudruck, wire craft and art and falconry. We also welcomed official visits by UNESCO directors in the UNESCO center and the University Library in Bratislava, who then, in white gloves, turned pages of the unique Bašagić collection of Islamic manuscripts, inscribed in the Memory of the World Register. The guests were impressed. UNESCO is an organization, whose main focus is on activities that help to achieve and maintain world peace, which is carried out through various activities and the collaboration of countries

WWW



Photos from the top left: Military Cemeteries of Architect Dušan Jurkovič in Kassel. The Discussion of Slovak and German Dissidents in the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship with Ján Budaj. Co-produced staging of Bludický/Land der ersten Dinge (Will o' Wisp) in Deutsches Theater Berlin with Emília Vášáryová and Dušan Jamrich © The archive of Viera Polakovičová.

in education, culture in a broad sense of the word, information and science. It promotes universal education, human rights, freedom of word and media, ethics in science, protection of ecosystems, inclusion and strengthening the position of women. In all these areas we have highly professional experts, we are active and visible. In political and diplomatic areas, Slovakia has also repeatedly played a key role in leading negotiations of regional groups, intergovernmental committees and commissions as well as on the Executive Board and at the General Conference. Diplomatic achievements, such as submitting and defending the important resolution leading to the adoption of 26 new member states in the organization (1995), boosted Slovakia's image and the results of active cultural diplomacy.

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE ROLE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND HOW DOES IT HELP BUILD A COUNTRY'S IMAGE ABROAD?

Cultural diplomacy is the most visible part of diplomatic work. It helps create an image of the country and establish lasting relations between opinion making intellectuals, thinkers, creators and scientists, which is of key importance for the further development of humankind. Slovak cultural diplomacy is in the hands of the headquarters and all representative offices – embassies, permanent representations, general consulates, and Slovak institutes abroad, while only some offices have diplomats especially designated to provide for the presentation of Slovakia in a given territory or in several ones. The importance of cultural diplomacy was understood by developed western countries decades ago. A good example is France where cultural diplomacy and the spread of the language and literature form a pillar of foreign policy. A country's influence via language, culture, art and literature as well as an offer of scholarships and internships at schools of various types, including diplomatic, is crucial. In the case of Austria, we can see, apart from an emphasis on language, which is similar for Germans, Spaniards and the British, there is also a focus on modern presentation content – contemporary art and architecture and a deviation from traditional culture. Slovakia has a huge chance to inspire confidence in its partners specifically by using cultural diplomacy. This was also the case during the critical 1990s when, due to the Mečiar regime, we were not invited to European and transatlantic organizations. And it was France that hosted the all year presentation of our culture, art and literature and historic connections. The key to our successful thirty year journey has often involved charismatic individuals, who we managed to recruit for diplomacy and whose profiles strengthened confidence among our partners. It was great luck for post- November

Czechoslovakia and later on Slovak cultural diplomacy to send Slovak intellectuals to serve in positions such as ambassadors and cultural counsellors. I will state at least three examples of such people who embarked on a mission after the Velvet Revolution – writers Ján Viliakovský, Anton Hykisch and fiction translator and literary theorist Michaela Jurovská, a great lady with unusual intelligence and rich artistic works, a translator of, among others, Péric, Duras, Claudel, Vian and Rougemont. Her portfolio was a showcase of our young state.

Based on my personal experience I can attest to Europe's sincere interest in our lifestyle and culture, especially art – after November we managed to export operas by the contemporary composer Juraj Beneš to London and Cologne. The halls where the Slovak Philharmonic, the Slovak Philharmonic Choir; the Bohdan Warchal Slovak Chamber Orchestra and Musica Aeterna ensemble performed were crowded in Paris, Vienna and Berlin. The quality of our philosophers, historians, artists of all genres has evoked respect over the entire thirty years and is evidence of Slovakia's energy and esprit.

WHAT FUTURE CHALLENGES DOES OUR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY FACE IN YOUR VIEW?

For over 30 years we have managed to systematically set up ministries of foreign affairs and culture, financing for special activities on major anniversaries and support for the culture ministry regarding sub-activities carried out by representation offices. The Slovak Institutes have a wide cultural scope and work well in advance. There are only nine of them, but together with embassies, general consulates, and a range of culture devoted individuals in foreign service as well as beyond it, they manage to send good signals. There is a great challenge and a need to identify countries that are of key importance for the presentation of Slovakia and to select important projects that will strengthen the existing ties of institutions and establish new relations. Cultural diplomacy is a long distance run, therefore the early preparation of projects with the objective of forming permanent ties with foreign partners is of importance. The key is to continue cooperation and create synergies with prominent cultural institutions and important regional Slovak stakeholders. Another challenge is to access the grant system for diplomatic missions as well (currently, it is not possible). And an important step should be the professionalization of cultural diplomats, directors of Slovak Institutes as well as other workers serving in foreign countries, where we consider the creation of presentation events to be of key importance, even to the extent that these workers are selected from outside the field of diplomacy.



Photo from the left: The exhibition "Treasures of Slovak Modernism. She Is the Madonna" in Palais Porcia in Vienna, Viera Polakovičová with a curator Katarína Bajcurová. Fashion Show in Berlin. © The Archive of Viera Polakovičová.

MUSIC

A NEW ERA OF SLOVAK MUSIC IN AMERICA





TCHAIKOVSKY, MAHLER, BÉLA BARTÓK, LED ZEPPELIN, U2, PAUL YOUNG, STING, THE BEATLES AND JAY-Z, ALONG WITH TENS OF THOUSANDS OF OTHER INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED ARTISTS HAVE ALREADY PERFORMED IN THE PRESTIGIOUS CARNEGIE HALL. INCLUDING SLOVAK ARTISTS.

Carnegie Hall is a magnificent structure. Situated on 7th Avenue in New York, it is one of the most famous concert halls in the United States and the world. The building, designed by architect William Tuthill, dates back to 1891. It houses the Isaac Stern Auditorium, Zankel Hall and Weill Recital Hall. Every year, Carnegie Hall hosts hundreds of cultural events, mainly of a musical nature, with the world's best known artists performing here for over a century. It is the very Carnegie Hall that hosted the "Slovaks in Concert" events in 2020 and 2022; featuring talented Slovak and international artists performing for audiences in a sold out Zankel Hall. In cooperation with Slovak cultural diplomacy, the piano virtuoso, composer and conductor Peter Breiner and the composer Juraj Filas performed here in 2016 and 2020, respectively, as well as in 2015.

SLOVAKS IN CONCERT 2020

The concert held on 26 January 2020, featured the fusion of jazz with elements of folklore, popular and classical music. Martin Valihora – a Slovak musician who took over the dramaturgy of the event, introduced jazz arrangements of Slovak folk songs, including the well known Red Apple by Radovan Turiška (SK), who played it for the first time together with Markus Strickland and Ron Affif (US); and Slovak dances by Petr Breiner and his composition Manhattan sung by Petr Lipa. Ján Berky Mrenica Jr. interpreted various Romani motifs and his quartet, in cooperation with other artists, also presented classical jazz standards.

The event aimed at offering the New York audience high quality Slovak art and spreading the good name of Slovakia in this important area of politics and business. "It is a very bold and important step for the future of our music scene to present itself abroad, hand in hand with international artists and on such a prestigious platform. It is a unique approach to present our culture through events attracting broad American audiences, and not only offering it to a handful of enthusiasts," says musician Martin Valihora adding, "the concert was dedicated to Slovaks and to the wonderful city of New York, which has created a background and a platform for a cosmopolitan and creative community of artists, becoming a base for global culture." Valihora perceives connections established through the shared experiences of musical collaborations between the countries the musicians represent as a powerful act of shaking hands with the world on the most subtle level.

WWW
WWW
WWW

Photo on the top: Slovaks in Concert 2022. Street in front of Carnegie Hall. Slovaks in Concert 2020. ©Paul Martinka.
 Photo top right: Juraj Filas and his Requiem at Carnegie Hall. ©JurajFilas.com. Dress rehearsal before Slovaks in Concert 2022. ©Diana Čermáková. Photo bottom right: Dress rehearsal before Slovaks in Concert 2022. ©Diana Čermáková.





SLOVAKS IN CONCERT 2022

On November 3, 2022, Slovak musicians played in front of a sold out auditorium at the prestigious Carnegie Hall in downtown New York City. This event symbolizes the mutual inspiration of American and Slovak culture by combining jazz with classical music, soul, R&B and pop. It was dedicated not only to the Slovak community in the USA, but also to music lovers from New York.

The unique concert in Zankel Hall featured the young talented Slovak duo Lash & Gray, Kristína Mihaľová vocals, Jakub Šedivý guitar, accompanied by iconic trumpeter Keyon Harrold and double bassist Harish Raghavan. The duo, being probably one of the greatest discoveries of the Slovak music scene in recent years, won the award for the best performance at the Bratislava Jazz Days

in 2019. Their debut album *Sleepin' With The Lights On* won the Best Debut Album of the Year 2020 at the Slovak Radio Head Awards, their second studio recording *Blossoms Of Your World* was awarded the Best Slovak Album of the Year 2021 at the Czech Music Academy Anděl Awards and their single *After War* received Song of the Year at the Radio Head Awards 2021.

The second part of the program featured the Janoska Ensemble: Ondrej Janoska violin, Roman Janoska violin, František Janoska piano and Julius Darvas double bass, together with the phenomenal French guitarist Biréli Lagrene. "Just as with the Lash & Gray duo, the aim was to combine the best Slovak musical exports with renowned soloists from abroad," says Martin Valihora, musician and founder of the One Day Jazz Festival, who collaborated on the event's dramaturgy.

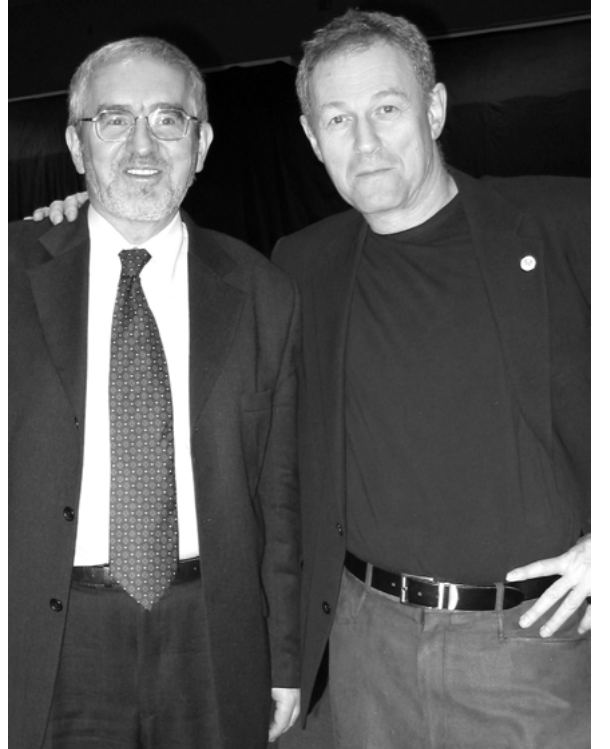


YURI DOJC



IN 1968, AS RUSSIAN TANKS ROLLED INTO HIS NATIVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA, A YOUNG STUDENT IN LONDON SUDDENLY BECAME A 'REFUGEE'. WHEN HE THEN WENT TO LIVE IN CANADA, HIS STATUS CHANGED TO "IMMIGRANT". IN THE DECADES THAT FOLLOWED, THE CANADIAN-BASED PHOTOGRAPHER MADE TORONTO HIS HOME.

Through the expansive work of photographer, artist and observer Yuri Dojc embraces many different perspectives. In his own words, he is inspired by pulsating life, but also open to what chance has to offer to him. "I want my work to reach beyond mere sight, to sink deeper into the one who is looking at it," says Yuri Dojc about his art. Throughout his career he specialized in various areas of commercial photography and over time, he has internalized his current perspective – an observer of what those historically most vulnerable have left behind.



Above: Yuri Dojc – portrait. Yuri Dojc and Martin Bútora. ©Archive of Yuri Dojc.

LAST FOLIO

Dojc is best known for offering subjective, empathetic and intimate observations of the past. Since the late 1990s, he has been documenting the last survivors of the Holocaust in Slovakia, abandoned synagogues, schools and cemeteries throughout the country for his Last Folio series.

Coincidence brought Yuri Dojc, the photographer, Katya Kraus, the producer and their team of documentary filmmakers to an abandoned Jewish school in eastern Slovakia. Time stopped there in 1942, on a day when everyone present was deported to concentration camps. School books, notebooks, report cards, birth certificates, all left behind, decaying on dusty shelves. Yuri Dojc treats these abandoned, crumbling books as if they were survivors – each one captured as a portrait, preserved in its terminal beauty. From amongst the hundreds of books and fragments he has photographed; one is particularly precious to him – a book owned by his grandfather Jakab. Through his Last Folio series, Yuri traces a personal journey that forms a part of the European cultural memory and remembrance.

In 2015, the Last Folio project was part of the global commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. The exhibition was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the National Library of Germany in Berlin, the Mark Rothko Museum in Latvia, the New Museum of Tolerance in Moscow, and the Art Gallery of Tufts University in the United States. To this day, the project travels, as an art installation combining an exhibition of selected photographs, a documentary by Katya Kraus and a book, across many countries on both sides of the Atlantic. Twelve images from the series are part of the permanent collection of the Library of Congress in Washington DC.

The exhibition's popularity and success can also be attributed to Slovak cultural diplomacy. "Almost all of my exhibitions have been opened with the presence and cooperation of Slovak and sometimes Canadian diplomats. We have also exhibited in Lithuania, Austria, Italy, Russia, Georgia, Belgium, Germany, Brazil, Panama, Portugal, Denmark and the Czech Republic as well as multiple times in Canada and in the USA, in places like New York, Washington, Boston, Indiana. I have also had many exhibitions in Slovakia. Slovak diplomats are great, professional, human, friendly, creative people. I already consider all of them as my friends. Culture links people of the world much more than anything else, so I am happy to be one of the representatives of Slovakia in this area," says Yuri Dojc about cultural diplomacy. "On the occasion of the 30th anniversary, I wish all those who are somehow involved in the presentation of Slovak culture and art all the best and that this part of diplomacy continues to grow. Culture is an important part of society and reflects the quality of its maturity," concluded Yuri Dojc.

WWW

Photo top left: Four book portraits from the Last Folio series. Four exhibitions of the Last Folio project Vienna, Rome, Sao Paulo and Jerusalem. ©Archive Yuri Dojc.



OPERA SINGERS IN THE SERVICE OF DIPLOMACY

OPERA, AS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS AND IMPORTANT BRANCHES OF HIGH ART, IT ATTRACTS THROUGH ITS DRAMA, COMPOSITIVITY, RICHNESS, POWER AND THE CLEARLY DEFINED AND SPECIFIC TALENT OF ITS PERFORMERS. RANKED AMONG THE MUSICAL CLASSICS, OPERAS ARE KNOWN AND APPRECIATED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Opera has always been strongly linked to diplomacy, not least because Slovak opera performers have been among the world's top notch artists for several decades. Edita Gruberová and Peter Dvorský have had the most notable success abroad, attracting attention and standing ovations in sold out opera halls. Slovakia is represented by a broad array of prominent soloists, including Slávka Zámečníková, Eva Hornýáková, Pavel Bršlík, Ondrej Šaling, Pavel Remenár, Daniel Čapkovič and Štefan Kocán. The Bratislava Boys Choir led by Magdalena Rovňáková also ranks among important singing ensembles. These exceptional performers often meet on stages, serving cultural diplomacy. The cultural diplomacy of the Slovak Republic puts opera on a pedestal, ranking it among the most important ways of presenting Slovak culture abroad. Events in this area are organized thanks to cooperation with the Slovak National Theatre Opera and the State Opera in Banská Bystrica.

PETER DVORSKÝ

Dvorský is one of the world's finest tenors of his generation. Exceptional for his lyrical, expressive voice and his powerful and moving stage presence, he ranks among the top four tenors globally, along with Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti and José Carreras. The King of Opera, Luciano Pavarotti, named him as his successor. Peter Dvorský has performed in more than 25 countries and has starred on more than 60 theatre and concert stages. His acclaimed international career has spanned the world's major opera houses, including the Vienna State Opera, Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, La Scala in Milan, Covent Garden in London, the Florence Opera House and the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and the Arena in Verona. Dvorský has won great acclaim with his stunning interpretations of operas by Giuseppe Verdi, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Giacomo Puccini. His interpretation of Figaro's Non Più Andrai from Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro is particularly popular.

The Slovak tenor, nominated for a Grammy, an award given by The Recording Academy in the United States, which recognises significant musical achievements in the music industry, is also an educator, who inspires the next generation of singers. In addition to representing Slovakia abroad in cooperation with the department of diplomacy, from 2013 to 2018, he served as Director of the Slovak Institute in Rome where he deepened the excellent diplomatic relations between our countries through culture.

Photo from the top: Slávka Zámečníková, Štefan Kocán, Bratislava Boys Choir and Magdalena Rovňáková. ©Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.



EDITA GRUBEROVÁ

A UNIQUE COLORATURA SOPRANO, ALSO KNOWN AS THE SLOVAK NIGHTINGALE, WITH AN ASTONISHING 52-YEAR TOP-NOTCH CAREER ON OPERA AND CONCERT STAGES AROUND THE WORLD. IN 2021, EDITA GRUBEROVÁ WAS AWARDED THE TITLE OF GOODWILL AMBASSADOR BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. EDITA GRUBEROVÁ - PRIMADONNA ASSOLUTA DI BELCANTO.

During her career she sang in 2,357 performances, made history with the triple F and Donizetti's unforgettable Aria of Madness of Lucia di Lammermoor. Her tireless attitude and hard work were reflected in her exquisite professional performances all over the world, from La Scala in Milan, Teatro Liceu in Barcelona, Covent Garden in London, Paris Opera, Zurich Opera, Salzburg Festival and Glyndebourne Festival to the Metropolitan Opera in New York and opera houses in Japan. A native of Rača, a burrow of Bratislava, she studied at the Bratislava Conservatory under the guidance of Professor Mária Medvecká.

Her first stage performances were at the Slovak National Theatre Opera in Bratislava and at the State Opera in Banská Bystrica. Her audition at the State Opera in Vienna brought her an immediate engagement, where she made her debut with Queen of the Night and Olympia in February 1970. The onset of normalisation in 1971 forced her to leave Czechoslovakia. The artist contributed greatly to the revival of the pre-Verdian bel canto operas of Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti, excelling as Norma, the Tudor queen in Donizetti's trilogy Anna Bolena, Maria Stuarda, Roberto Devereux and Lucrezia Borgia. The critics considered her style of singing to be unique, praising the depth and strength she invested into her psychological portrayal of characters. Edita Gruberová received state honours from Austria and Slovakia, she was an honorary member and chamber singer of the Vienna State Opera, the Bavarian State Opera and other awards, including an honorary doctorate from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava.

She performed in numerous countries, including Japan, Germany, Poland, Austria, Czech Republic, and Hungary. A concert at the Berlin Dome on December 12, 2016, was another major milestone. Together with other talented opera singers – Zuzana Šveda, Richard Šveda, Pavel Bršík and pianist Peter Valentovič they enjoyed great success and their art contributed to reconfirming the already excellent diplomatic relations with the German Republic. The President of the Federal Republic of Germany Joachim Gauck and the President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska, along with representatives of the diplomatic corps and more than a thousand guests enjoyed this unique performance.

Photo from the top: Edita Gruberová portrait. ©Posztós János Műpa. Edita Gruberová performing at the Palace of Arts – Budapest. ©Hrotkó Bálint/Műpa. Bottom from the left: Eva Hornýáková, Edita Gruberová, Pavol Remenár and Miriam Rodriguez Brüllová. ©Bokor Tomáš MFEA SR.





ANDY WARHOL

HIS PARENTS CAME FROM A SMALL VILLAGE NEAR MEDZILABORCE. HE SPOKE RUTHENIAN WITH HIS MOTHER UNTIL HER LAST DAYS. ANDY HAS BEEN ON THE TOP OF THE GLOBAL CHART OF VISUAL ARTISTS FOR TEN YEARS ALREADY. HE NEVER MADE IT TO SLOVAKIA, SINCE HE PROBABLY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO GO BACK TO THE USA UNDER THE THAT REGIME.



"Andy Warhol was an American painter, filmmaker, author, producer of Ruthenian origin, an important representative in the Pop Art movement. His parents emigrated to the USA from the village of Miková in northeast Slovakia, 15 kilometres from Medzilaborce. Andy was born in Pittsburgh, USA in 1928. His roots are directly connected to Slovakia through his parents," describes Martin Čubjak, the director of the Andy Warhol Museum in Medzilaborce. Even during his lifetime, Andy was one of the most commercially successful artists in the world, a celebrity of the cultural and art scene. In the pre internet era, he was easily recognisable even on the streets of Europe. The world renowned artist database art-facts.net, which lists almost 850 thousand artists has ranked Andy Warhol as number one for the past ten years. The database uses algorithms to measure an artist's standing based on diverse criteria.

Warhol attended Holmes Elementary School and took art classes at the Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh. In 1942, Andy suffered a family tragedy when his father died of hepatitis. Recognizing his son's artistic talent, Warhol's father bequeathed his savings to Andy for his college education. After finishing secondary school studies in 1945, Andy enrolled at the Carnegie Institute of Technology to study painting and design. After graduation, he moved to New York City in 1949 to pursue a career in advertising as a magazine illustrator. Back then he also changed his name, dropping the last letter "a" in his surname. He got a job at Glamour magazine and became one of the most successful commercial artists of the 1950s. In the late 1950s, Warhol began to pay more attention to painting, and in 1961 he came up with the concept of "Pop Art" paintings focusing on commercial merchandise. In 1962, he exhibited his now iconic paintings of Campbell's Soup Cans. In the 1970s and 1980s, he created prints of famous people such as Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley. His acclaimed collaborations with artists Jean Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring are also worth mentioning.

"In May 2022, Warhol's Marilyn Monroe was auctioned at Christies Art Auction House in New York for \$195 million. It became the second most expensive work sold in the history of auctions after Leonardo da Vinci. Thus, we can easily claim Andy Warhol to be one of the most famous artists in the history of art," continues Martin Čubjak. He adds that Andy never visited Slovakia. In that time, in communist Czechoslovakia, which was mainly pursuing socialistic realism, Pop Art was never considered an artistic movement, but rather as something bourgeois and capitalist, so much so that it was not even officially taught in schools. Andy died in February 1987 after a routine gall bladder operation at the age of 58.

Photo top left: Andy Warhol – Campbell's Soup Cans. Andy Warhol – Marilyn Monroe. ©Andy Warhol Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce.

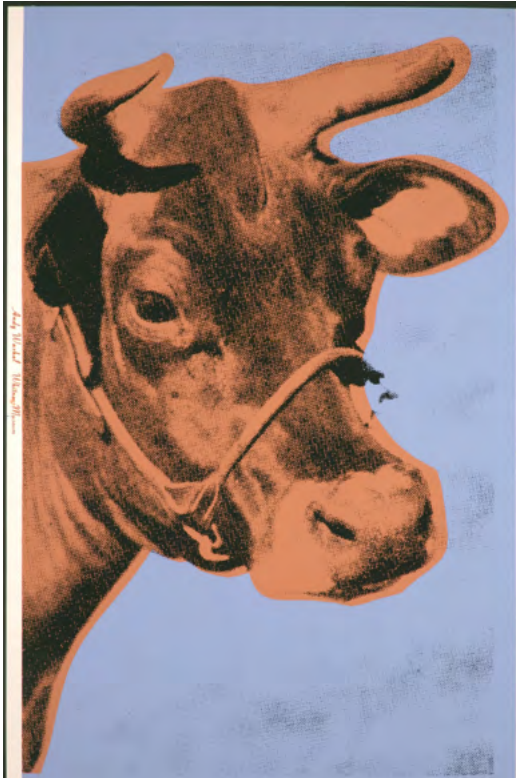
ANDY WARHOL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN ME-DZILABORCE

The museum has been in operation since 1991 and was the first one in the world to be dedicated to this important figure of Pop Art. Today this institution, a combination of a museum and a gallery, is more than just regionally significant. It primarily focuses on the current trends in contemporary art and primarily, on the life and work of Andy Warhol. "The museum receives between 20 and 30 thousand visitors a year, with foreign visitors accounting for 60 to 70% of the total. Most of them come from neighbouring countries, but also Germany, France and other European countries. We also welcome a few hundred visitors a year from outside Europe, including Japan, the USA, Vietnam, the Philippines and others," explains the museum director.

During its 31 years of existence, the museum has prepared 48 international exhibitions, often in cooperation with Slovak institutes abroad. Andy's works have been exhibited in, among other countries, China, Ireland, Poland, Turkey, Belgium, Romania, Switzerland, and Hungary. "Cultural diplomacy is important. Collaborations of this kind are useful for both sides. Museums and galleries can prepare high quality exhibitions and educational projects, but on the other hand, they do not have the capacity to establish new foreign partnerships, analyse them and set strategies within the framework of their regular agenda – that is where the cultural diplomacy is of great assistance," concludes Martin Čubjak.

[WWW](http://www.andywarholmuseum.com)

Photo from the left: Andy Warhol – Cow. Andy Warhol's statue in Me-dzilaborce. Andy Warhol – Kimiko. Andy Warhol – Flowers. Exposition of Andy Warhol's artwork. Exposition of Keith Haring's and Andy Warhol's artworks. ©The Andy Warhol Museum of Modern Art



TRIBUTE TO BJORNSTJERNE MARTINIUS BJORNSON

"MY FIGHT FOR SLOVAKS CONSUMES A LOT OF MY TIME, WHICH I MOSTLY NEED FOR WRITING. BUT I'M NOT COMPLAINING SINCE IT BRINGS ME JOY. I HAVE NEVER RECEIVED SO MUCH GRATITUDE IN MY LIFE, AND THAT IS ALSO PRECIOUS."... FROM A LETTER OF BJORNSTJERNE BJORNSON IN 1907.

Bjornstjerne Martinius Bjornson was a Norwegian born poet, playwright, and Nobel Prize laureate in literature. Norwegians see Bjornson as an ardent fighter for Norwegian independence, author of the national anthem and creator of modern Norwegian theatre and literature. However, Bjornson fought for the social, cultural and political rights not only of Norwegians, but also of Slovaks and many other small nations across Europe. Articles by this outstanding advocate for the rights of Slovaks and small nations were published in the most influential European newspapers and magazines of the time, and he made a significant contribution to the visibility of Slovaks and their struggle for the right to self-determination.

Slovakia appreciates and commemorates the impact of Bjornson's activities. The excellent diplomatic relations between Slovakia and

Norway gave way to an exceptional event organized in cooperation with the Norwegian National Theatre in Oslo. The Slovak National Theatre, performing for the first time in the Kingdom of Norway, performed Bjornson's play *Beyond Human Power* on 5 June 2018. The plot of the play also leaves a stirring message for today's audience and society. The production took place on the occasion of the first official visit of the President of the Slovak Republic, Andrej Kiska, who enjoyed it in the company of the Norwegian royal couple, King Harald and Queen Sonja. Many distinguished guests along with school students came to see the play in the packed hall. The piece was directed by Ján Luterán and featured top Slovak actors, including Ivan Vojtek, Jana Olhová, Jozef Vajda, Dominika Žiaranová, Ján Gallovič, František Kovár and Daniel Fischer.





Audiences and critics alike shared an appreciation for this presentation of Bjornson's drama by the Slovak National Theatre on Norwegian stage. According to Vigdis Ystad, literary critic and professor at the University of Oslo, the message in Bjornson's work addresses dangerous trends still relevant today. "A Gift from Slovakia, a production by the visiting Slovak National Theatre, was a powerful experience. The play *Beyond Human Power* presents important dramatic material that confirms what a great theatre poet Bjornson really was," Ystad concluded.

As Denisa Frelichová, the then Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Kingdom of Norway, said: "It was about Slovakia's homage to Norway. We chose Bjornson because he was the first foreigner, who stood up for the rights of Slovaks in political journalism. Simultaneously, he was a poet, writer and playwright whose works still have something to say to contemporary audiences. *Beyond Human Power* the production we chose, is a reference to how difficult it is to organize relations in a society – and it is still relevant after a hundred years. It expresses the values we are still striving for: freedom, democracy, morality, tolerance, compromise, and the fight against all forms of fanaticism and extremism."



Photo top left: *Beyond Human Power* Alexander Bárta. ©Robert Tappert. *Beyond Human Power* production ending. *Beyond Human Power* Monika Hilmerová and Alexander Bárta. ©photo Robert Tappert. King Harald and Queen Sonja after the performance, meeting actors. *Beyond Human Power* Vladimír Obšil, Luboš Kostelný, Tomáš Maštalič, Dominika Žiaranová, Jozef Vajda. ©Robert Tappert.



Photo from the left: A man with a bare chest – the shot is from Šafárik Square in Bratislava. An officer aiming at the crowd at Šafárik Square. Soviet tanks on Štúrova Street. View from the scaffolding of the building of the Faculty of Law at Comenius University. ©Ladislav Bielik. Photos right: Exhibition of Ladislav Bielik's photographs in a public space in Sofia. ©Stefan Zefirov.

LADISLAV BIELIK

THE PHOTOGRAPH A MAN WITH A BARE CHEST TRAVELLED THE WORLD IN 1968 WITHOUT THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR. THE NEGATIVES BELONGING TO LADISLAV BIELIK WERE FOUND DECADES LATER AT THE BOTTOM OF AN OLD SUITCASE IN A CELLAR. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN HIDDEN AWAY TO PRESERVE THEM TO THIS DAY.

Ladislav Bielik came to the attention of the general public by documenting the intervention of the Warsaw Pact armies in Bratislava, in 1968. A man with his chest exposed in front of an occupation tank – the most famous image from a set of documentary photographs about the first days after 21 August made the front pages of the world press shortly after it was taken without the name of its real author. It was only in publications issued after 1989 that Ladislav Bielik's name appeared as the name of the picture's author. It became the most famous Slovak photograph. It was also included in the World Press Photo exhibition collection, and later, this image was repeatedly selected for recognized sets of the best photographs of the 20th century.

"Bielik's images reflect the situation in the streets of Bratislava, especially in the square in front of the Faculty of Philosophy and the Law School of Comenius University, some of them showing a strange mixture of despair and the prevalence of demonstrators. The images are the most important photographic collection in Slovakia devoted to these events. That is why Bielik could not admit authorship of them and was later forced to exclusively do sports photography," curator Aurel Hrabušický wrote about Bielik.

Ladislav Bielik was born on May 28, 1939, in the town of Levice. After graduating from the chemical vocational school, he worked at the Virological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. At that time, he also started taking photographs. In 1965, he joined the then sports weekly Štart. A year later, he became a photojournalist for the daily Smeňa. In 1968, he married the journalist Alica Malá. He was 29 years old.

Photojournalist Ladislav Bielik died on March 24, 1984, in an unfortunate accident, at the age of 44, in Budapest, during a car race while on the job. Public recognition of Bielik's work came years later; after the discovery of the original negatives in 1989, in an old suitcase in the cellar.

OUTDOOR EXHIBITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of civil resistance to the occupation of August 1968, a series of external photographic exhibitions of Ladislav Bielik's work were held with the support of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. It was an impressive monumental exhibition format with a five-pointed star layout, commemorating the important moments of 21 August 1968. "The first of the exhibitions was opened on Tuesday 12 June 2018, in Budapest, in the square in front of the Keleti railway station. The second stop was Prague. The exhibitions were then also held in Sofia, Bucharest and Bremen. In addition to the exhibitions of Ladislav Bielik's photographs, a postage stamp, a collector's coin and a souvenir banknote were issued to commemorate the 50th anniversary. All of them depict the motif from the photograph A Man with a Bare Chest. To celebrate this occasion, a conference was held in Bratislava, with international representation," said Miriam Špániková, director of the non-profit organization Camera Obscura, which was responsible for the organisation of the events.



www



THE SLOVAK NATIONAL GALLERY

THE COMPREHENSIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SLOVAK NATIONAL GALLERY. AT THE END OF 2022, WE LIVED TO SEE THE GALLERY'S DOORS REOPENED. OUR CULTURE CAN NOW BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF

The need for the reconstruction of the Slovak National Gallery arose 21 years ago, when the then director Katarína Bajcurová had to close the iconic "SNG Bridge" by architect Vladimír Dedeček for emergency reasons. The winning design for the reconstruction, extension and modernisation of the SNG premises by architects Martin Kusý and Pavel Paňák from the BKPS studio was implemented between 2016 and 26 October 2022, when the reconstructed premises were successfully handed over to the gallery. "The reconstruction of the National Gallery has been with us for so long that it is strangely and unexpectedly difficult for me to grasp its end. At the risk of big words, I still think this is a historic moment, not just for the gallery but also for our country. It is the biggest cultural construction that we have started and completed since the Velvet Revolution. This is our face to the world, how we present ourselves, which is the result of the hard work of many, including people from the cultural community and the ministry, colleagues from the SNG, architects and designers, contractors, the builders themselves and many others," says Alexandra Kusá, Director General of the SNG.

The Slovak National Gallery decided not to wait for a fully equipped interior or permanent exhibitions and has been opening the new building gradually. "Most of the premises were closed for 21 years, and when the finished building is finally in our hands, we want to share it with the whole public, to whom the gallery rightfully belongs. The gallery will gradually open its permanent exhibitions, cinema, modern library, café and gallery bookstore during 2023. "We will do our best to operate in a standard mode during full opening hours as soon as possible. All the updated information will be communicated in due time," stated Kusá.

"From my position as a curator of the Slovak National Gallery, I can only hope that our institution will start to operate on a much more professional basis than it has been during the construction period. The successful start could clearly be measured by the huge public interest, primarily in this new architectural structure in the centre of Bratislava. It is quite possible that the reconstruction of the gallery will gradually be perceived as a new standard in the care of cultural institutions as well as cultural heritage and diverse architectural structures, including the so called late modernism. If only it is! If this interest persists after the Slovak National Gallery's collections are made available as part of exhibitions, it will be possible to talk about a long term trend, not just a temporary sensation," says Dušan Buran, curator of old collections of the Slovak National Gallery.

[WWW](http://www.sng.sk)

Photo top left: The Slovak National Gallery after reconstruction
©Martin Deko.

Photo bottom right: SNG open to the public. © Matej Kautman.



SNG'S COOPERATION WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

"Even during its reconstruction, the Slovak National Gallery did not stop cooperating with foreign institutions or publishers. Stanislav Filko's monograph is being published these days as part of our co-production with the prestigious Scala publishing house in London and, together with the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK – IRPA) in Brussels, we continue to work on our international research project on the use of pigments based on copper minerals from the Central Slovakia mining area in European painting around 1500. We wish to organise an exhibition "Music of the Future" in cooperation with the Prague City Gallery and in 2024 we would like to present an exhibition and editorial project on the Ottoman wars in Central Europe with an international team incorporating borrowed collections. However, on a smaller scale, we have many more collaborations on research and book projects, especially in Great Britain, France, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic," continues Dušan Buran.



A JOINT PUBLICATION

The cooperation between the Slovak National Gallery and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic has resulted in many successful projects, exhibitions and events abroad. One of them is the publication Slovakia in the Artworks of the Slovak National Gallery, which is available to the public and serves as a representative gift for the Slovak Republic's foreign partners.



Photo left: The publication Slovakia in the Artworks of the Slovak National Gallery ©Martin Deko. Opening of the exhibition "Gold and Fire" in Musée de Cluny, Paris. ©Dušan Buran – SNG.



GOLD AND FIRE IN PARIS

The Slovak National Gallery has already carried out several important projects abroad in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry. One of them was a project implemented in cooperation with the Musée de Cluny in Paris where, on 16 September 2010, an exhibition entitled *Gold and Fire. Art at the end of the Middle Ages in Slovakia* was opened. The co-organisers were the Musée de Cluny and the Association of National Museums in Paris.

The exhibition was the first large scale panorama of art from the medieval period in Slovakia charting the artistic centre of excellence in Central Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. At the same time, the exhibition *France 1500, between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* was being held in the Grand Palais space, and, thus, visitors could learn about an unknown region abroad, where overlapping influences made it possible for an original artistic expression to emerge.

Visitors could become better acquainted with this art through the sculptural and painterly elements of the altars, which were at the centre of the exhibition. These pieces, which can mostly still be found in Slovak churches, surprise with their complex architectural structures, the richness of their decoration and their exceptional dimensions. The exhibition delved deeper into the work of Master Paul of Levoča. As the daily *Le Figaro* wrote, "The Crucified of Kežmarok, the work of Master Paul of Levoča, is a masterpiece that deserves to appear in every handbook of art history." The exhibition was curated by Dušan Buran from the Slovak National Gallery, and Xavier Decot and Jean-Christophe Ton that from the Musée de Cluny. The exhibition brought together more than 60 sculptures, paintings, illuminations (Gothic manuscripts) and goldsmith works.

WWW



MATÚŠ MAŇÁTKO – A SLOVAK EPIC

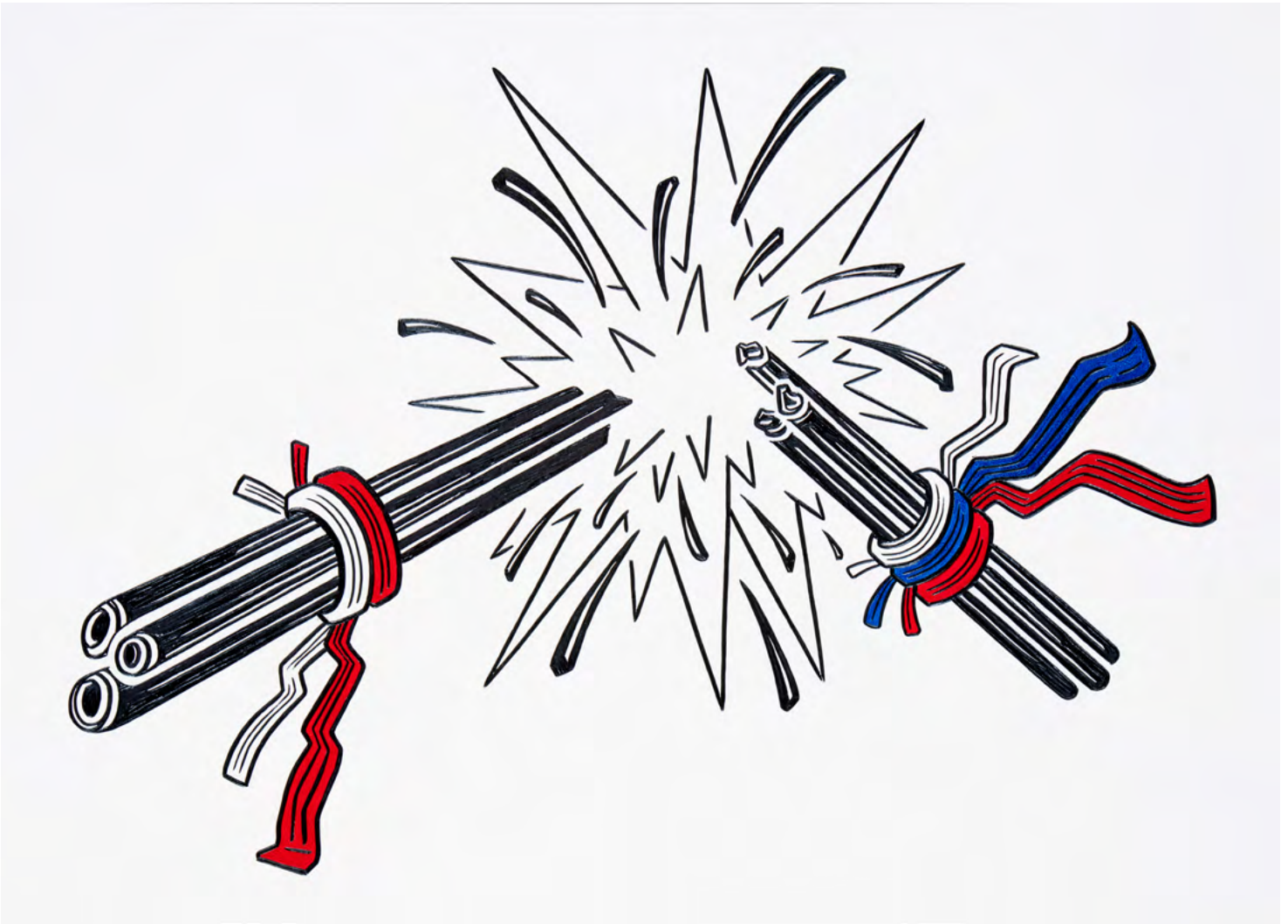
MATÚŠ MAŇÁTKO IS ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING YOUNG SLOVAK ARTISTS, WHO ALSO FOCUSES ON SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART. IN A SERIES OF ARTWORKS CALLED SLOVAK EPIC, HE RAISES QUESTIONS OF SLOVAK IDENTITY AND STATEHOOD. THERE'S A VERY SPECIFIC SIGNATURE TO HIS WORK AND HE ALSO INTEGRATES CRITICISM AND HUMOUR INTO HIS CREATIONS.

COULD YOU BRIEFLY INTRODUCE US TO YOUR WORK? WHAT DO YOU FOCUS ON? HOW DID YOU ARRIVE AT THIS ART FORM? WHAT INSPIRES YOU? WHY SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART?

I am primarily a graphic designer, but I also do painting, illustration and occasionally sculpture. I've basically been creating since I was a kid when I realized that this is the only thing I enjoy and am good at. Pretty early on I decided that I didn't want to do anything else and, without any compromise, I became a free lance artist. It was a no brainer.

I have a specific graphic style that spills over into painting, illustrations and other forms. I am inspired by the world, its events, especially those already retold in history. I have been influenced by the culture of the city, its streets, as well as rap music, of which I am a big fan.

Both history and rap are stories of people, their struggles, their ambitions to achieve something, to change something. If we look at it this way, then my work is also dominated by social motifs and messages. Basically, I've never dealt with any private, intimate themes. My theme is society. That's why I also collaborate with organizations that work with public affairs. For many years, I have illustrated the magazine Stories of the 20th Century from the civic association Post Bellum, and I have also done graphics for Čierne diery (Black Holes), the civic association Punkt and the Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava.



DO YOU THINK CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IS IMPORTANT? WHY? CAN IT ALSO IMPROVE THE CULTURE OF THE COUNTRY ITSELF? HOW?

Cultural diplomacy is the velvet fabric of a country's relations. We know that countries interact economically, politically, militarily, and these are hard tools. Even Cardinal Richelieu talked about the importance of underlining the significance of language, food and art when receiving visits from abroad. Art was one of the first tools of cultural diplomacy. Great palaces decorated with works of art were meant to convey a message about the grandiosity and power of the host. Today, cultural diplomacy has moved into new themes and means. In addition to the presentation of art and culture as we understand it, these are issues of democracy, society, ecology, urban life, and more.

Cultural diplomacy is an important part of diplomacy that creates relationships that bring countries closer together. With every exhibition abroad that involves the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or any of the Slovak Republic's organisations, I am aware that I am representing Slovakia. That I am part of a legacy and my task is to expand the circle of relations, opportunities not only for myself, but also for Slovakia. This is cultural diplomacy in practice for me.

Photo left: Matúš Maňátko portrait. ©Dorota Holubová.
 Photo top right: Czechoslovakia Rods 1992. Living Torch The Detail and the Whole 1968 1969. Ján Francisci as a captain of Slovak volunteers or Sparks from Windswept Embers 1848. We promised ourselves love 1989. Gorilla A Detail 2005 2006. ©Matúš Maňátko.

IN YOUR OPINION, WAS THE SPLIT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA A BIG CULTURAL SHOCK? IN WHAT WAYS, FOR EXAMPLE?

This is a complicated topic. We know that the Slovaks and Czechs perceived the division as artificial. At the same time, we are told from abroad that it was one of the few splits of countries that took place without bloodshed. It was more like a divorce. A bit unnatural, that is.

But there were differences in the social and economic level of development. When I was working on the White Blue Red Epic, I was dealing with the relations between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as with moments that we may not be proud of. On this occasion, I had the opportunity to work with several political scientists such as Tomáš Jahelka and Tomáš Zálešák. Both of them argue that internal and external conflicts would have eventually prevailed and a nationalist narrative would have divided Czechoslovakia. But I myself am Czechoslovak, my grandfather is Czech, for me personally, it is still one space and part of my identity.

Photo from the top right: The Revolutionary III (2020). Brother, these are no ghosts! 1968. In the mountains, a fire is burning. 1944. ©Matúš Maňátko.



COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES, HOW DO YOU SEE SLOVAKIA IN THE FIELD OF ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT?

I wish Slovakia had a bigger market, more opportunities, more appreciation, because it is not about the artistic creation of individuals. It's about the whole sector of professions, it's an economic field. But at the same time, it's about creating something that will contribute to statehood. We need a certain volume of artworks, literature, theatre, paintings, sculptures, architecture. And this all – not only the economy itself – shapes the identity of a country, its people and the nation. There is much room for improvement.





WHAT COULD, ACCORDING TO YOU, HELP IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS OF THE SLOVAK ARTISTS?

On the one hand, conditions have been improving since the end of my studies. Since the 1990s, the range of presentation spaces has improved but mostly in private, small galleries. How many public cultural buildings were built in Slovakia over the last thirty years? The barracks in Košice from the funds of the European Capital of Culture scheme? The Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava? Even these are only repairs. With regards to this, we have huge deficits, there is nowhere to go, nowhere to present. If this is not a social topic, how do we expect ordinary people to start experiencing it?

Now, let's be specific. The Slovak art market is small, a person can only break through by going abroad. A confident and financially responsible presentation of Slovakia should support our talents via institutions such as the Slovak Houses, the revitalisation of the Slovak institutes, exhibition pavilions. Let us imagine that every EXPO, every exhibition is our face to the world. And for the artistic scene it is a springboard to the world.

Last but not least, I think it is important that even with the construction of new buildings, artists are given the opportunity to create works related to architecture and public space. I think this is the ultimate expression of the fact that as a society we count on art as part of public, everyday life. I know that a new Building Law has been passed that dedicates 0.5 percent of the building budget to art. However, this applies only to publicly funded buildings. I would like to see every building above a certain budget apply this rule. Also, in the private sector:

DO YOU HAVE A FEELING, OPINION OR STORY THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IN RELATION TO THE PAST OR PRESENT CULTURE IN SLOVAKIA AND THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC? COULD YOU DESCRIBE IT?

With hindsight, I can see that it's been good that Slovakia was given the opportunity for a new identity and independence as a country, but this decision should have been made by the people, not by a few politicians. In the cultural field, I find the efforts of artists and visual artists for creation and presentation growing. I see it as part and parcel of life to express oneself in this way. Therefore, the more places and opportunities there are for such a way of fulfilment the better.

Photo from the top: If you baked me, eat me! 2022. Monster Processes 1948–1989. ©Matúš Maťaťko.

WWW





KOŠICE – EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

2013

The European Capital of Culture is an initiative of the European Union to promote arts and culture. It was established in 1985 and so far more than sixty cities in the European Union and beyond have been awarded the title of European Capital of Culture. In nearly four decades, it has become one of the most ambitious and publicly acclaimed cultural initiatives in Europe. Its aim is to protect and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, to highlight their common features and to increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space. The initiative also aims to strengthen the contribution of culture to the long term development of cities, increase the scope, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, widen access to culture, and to increase the international visibility of cities through culture.

Košice became the first Slovak holder of the European Capital of Culture title, sharing it with Marseille in 2013. The project Košice Interface 2013 focused on the transformation of Košice from a post industrial city to a creative one. Experts evaluated the project as very innovative, with a strong representation of experimental art forms and creativity in a broader sense. It has contributed to many of the objectives set by the European Capital of Culture initiative at the European Union level, particularly in terms of promoting cultural and creative industries, as well as access to culture by a broad spectrum of the population. The awarding of the prestigious title has given Košice a unique opportunity to revitalise the cultural industry and offer a wide range of cultural experiences, not only during the year 2013. The title enabled the city to create a new cultural infrastructure which was enriched by buildings rebuilt and adapted to their new functions. The project's dominant sites were the Kulturpark, the former barracks of the Austro-Hungarian army from the 19th century, which became a multi purpose cultural space after the reconstruction completed in 2012, and the Kunsthalle, originally the old municipal swimming pool built between 1957 and 1962 and converted into an exhibition space. However, the title has also brought culture to the outskirts of the city where, under the SPOTs programme, former heat exchange stations have become community centres with different focuses. The implementation of the activities has brought about a significant development of culture and creative industries and changed their perception

they have become important tools for the sustainable development of the city. Thanks to the title of European Capital of Culture, a new generation of young people working in the creative industries has grown up in Košice. The title has brought young people new prospects and the city potential for further development.

In 2012 and 2013, a number of cultural events took place abroad as part of the Travelling City 2013 programme, which was intended to link the national and European dimensions of the project Košice

European Capital of Culture 2013 and raise the profile of the city and the region. Concerts, exhibitions, theatre performances and film screenings were held at Slovak institutes and galleries across Europe. Brussels, as the seat of the European institutions, held a special place in the itinerary of the programme, where events featuring Košice European Capital of Culture 2013 were presented to diplomats and the general public. In January 2013, Košice as the European Capital of Culture took part in the organisation of the New Year's Concert in Brussels, which took place on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Slovak Republic, featuring leading Slovak artists such as Adriana Kučerová, Eva Hornyaková, Miroslav Dvorský and Otokar Klein, accompanied by the Gustav Brom Radio Big Band and the conductor Vlado Valovič. The 2013 Travelling City project brought an exhibition of Ján Mathé's sculptures to London for the first time. The project was also presented at the Náplavka Gallery in Prague through an exhibition of four Košice artists, sculptor Eva Moflárová, painter Martin Moflár, sculptor Marian Straka and new media representative Beata Kolbašovská, in conjunction with a concert of alternative music presented by the Quasars Ensemble. The Slovak Institute in Moscow also hosted an exhibition of four photographers – Viktor Frešo, Marek Kvetan, Šymon Kliman and Illah van Oijens, entitled the Code of the City.

In 2026, Trenčín will be the second Slovak city with the title of European Capital of Culture.

Photo top left: Kunsthalle Košice – before and after reconstruction. ©košice.sk. Photo bottom left and right: Public in the streets and lighting of the buildings in Košice during the ECoC celebrations. ©European Union 2023.



[WWW](http://www.kosice.sk)



JÚLIUS KOLLER

JÚLIUS KOLLER IS A PIONEER OF NEO-AVANTGARDE, THE FOUNDER OF SLOVAK CONCEPTUAL ART. A RED QUESTION MARK HAS BECOME THE SYMBOL OF HIS WORK, WHICH EXPRESSES THE CONSTANT QUESTIONING – WHETHER OF ART, LIFE, OR THE WORLD. IN HIS WORK, HE SEARCHED FOR THE MEANING OF SOCIAL REALITY AND THE PLACE OF HUMAN BEINGS IN NATURE AND THE COSMOS. HE REFERRED TO HIS ACTIVITIES AS UNIVERSAL CULTURAL FUTUROLOGICAL OPERATIONS (UFO), CREATING HIS ALTER EGO OF THE UFO-NAUT.



Július Koller (1939 Piešťany – 2007 Bratislava) is today perceived not only as an important representative of Slovak but also international conceptual art. As a representative of neo avantgarde, he brought original work with language, new materials and media to his multi-layered work. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava, Koller developed several parallel directions in his work, especially his unique way of communicating with the public and collaboration with other authors of the alternative contemporary art scene. The social dimension of art is also noticeable in his work. In his works and in the artistic archive, which he kept purposefully throughout his life, he recorded a precious testimony not only about himself as an artist and the way he thought and worked, but also about the times in which he did his work. He was an important source of inspiration for artists and intellectuals around the world. Julius Koller worked with radical artistic methods, thus defining his work against artistic formalism and all kinds of aestheticism; instead, he undertook to create "new cultural situations". The goal of his art became "new life, new creativity, and a new cosmo-humanist culture." Julius Koller's works have been exhibited in prestigious galleries in Cologne, Paris and Vienna, and have been purchased by the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and the Tate Gallery in London, for example.

JÚLIUS KOLLER IN MUMOK

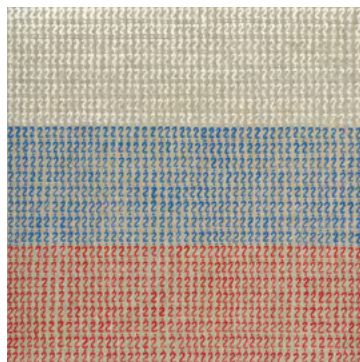
On 25 november 2016, the museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig in vienna (mumok) hosted an exhibition of the prominent slovak conceptualist július koller. Three floors of the modern art gallery were filled with his works, sketches, canvases and photographs. The exhibition "július koller – one man anti show" was the largest retrospective exhibition to date of the artist whose work is of key international importance in the art of the 1960s. Covering an area of 4,500 square metres, it offered almost 1,200 pieces created by the artist. The main partner of the exhibition was the slovak national gallery.

A significant part of the exhibition consists of works from the collections of Slovak galleries, primarily from the Slovak National Gallery, which has long been researching the work of Július Koller and, in addition to the exhibition, has also prepared a professional interpretation of it. The Slovak National Gallery also contributed to the exhibition catalogue with the expert processing of digital reproductions and databases, as well as with a study by curator Aurel Hrabušický. The exhibition curators were Daniel Grůň, Kathrin Rhomberg and Georg Schöllhammer.

This extensive solo retrospective exhibition was the result of several years of communication with foreign partners. It was one of the milestones for Slovak art and its presentation abroad, and we can also say a significant success for Slovak cultural diplomacy. The exhibition was presented in the same form in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, on 25 September 2015.



Photo from the top right: Archive JK/J+K Illusionist (1970). Universal futurological orientation U.F.O. (1970). Ideal folk popular format. Subject Object The Rocket (1968). Untitled (1968). The Current Cultural Situation II (1990). High Flying Words, Shameful Deeds (1970-1975). ©Slovak National Gallery.



EMBASSY IN ROME BY MILUČKÝ AND CHOVANEC

THE EMBASSY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN ROME IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS OF MODERN SLOVAK ARCHITECTURE. THE ARCHITECTS MILUČKÝ AND CHOVANEC DESIGNED A BUILDING THAT EVEN TODAY HAS NOT LOST ITS VALUE AND, DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE TIME IN WHICH THEY WORKED, THEY WERE EQUAL PARTNERS TO THEIR FOREIGN COLLEAGUES. THE ICONIC BUILDING HAS ALSO RECENTLY ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF MEMBERS OF THE CIVIC ASSOCIATION ČIERNE DIERY.

The Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Rome is located in a closed space of a condominium of apartment buildings and, at first glance, its architecture stands out among other, mostly typical Italian apartment buildings. The architectural design, which makes the building exceptional, is signed by architects Ferdinand Milučký and Jozef Chovanec, who designed the building between 1967 and 1971.

"This is magnificent architecture, but it has been a long time since anyone in Slovakia has published an article or photographs about it, probably because of the long distance. We didn't know what we were going to discover in Rome," says Martin Lipták from the civic association Čierne diery.

Since 2014, Čierne diery has been focusing on architecture that deserves attention, from centuries old factories to abandoned baths and icons of modern architecture. Their books have found thousands of readers, their prints have become a collector's phenomenon in the Slovak National Gallery's collection, and proceeds from sales have helped communities in the fields of culture and charity work. They are currently working with the Slovak Academy of Sciences on a publication about key Slovak architecture of the 20th century, based on the international list of 101 buildings published by the Docomomo organization. The building of the Slovak Embassy in Rome will be the only project located abroad in the book. The publication is expected to be published in 2023. So far, its electronic version serves as its predecessor and can be found on the website www.register-architektury.sk.

Architects Milučký and Chovanec were among the few Slovaks who could bring their design outside the territory of the Slovak Republic during the former regime. During the Prague Spring, Milučký's interior design at the 1967 Expo in Montreal was highly recognized, and together with Chovanec they designed the building of the Czechoslovak Embassy in Moscow. They were thus a proven choice for the building of the Embassy in Rome. Unlike the building in Moscow, the architects were not so limited by the conditions there. The Czechoslovak leadership even had the opportunity to choose Italian partners who were the engineer Mario Falconi (whose wife was active in the Communist Party) and the architect Luigi Cremona. The contractor was a Communist oriented building co-operative. "We told them that they were comrades in a market system and we were not comrades, but we were living under a communist regime. It was easy





for them to praise communism when they could bid for contracts, which we could not," Martin Lipták quotes Ferdinand Milučký's words.

The building of the Slovak Embassy in Rome is a typical work of Ferdinand Milučký. The project reflects his fascination with parallel lines and sculptural architecture," Martin Lipták begins his description of the building: The building is clad in Italian Botticino limestone which, even after several decades, has perfectly withstood the local weather conditions. The interior features both polished marble and exposed concrete. The architect Milučký arranged the space between the rhythm of the longitudinal walls. "This is Milučký's first large, solitary building in which the architect's favourite principle of flowing longitudinal walls has been consistently applied without denying the building its essential functional values. It is the wall composition that gives the architecture and its interior spaces their distinctive qualities," continues Martin Lipták. Greenery penetrates inside through large loggias and glazing. An important part of the interior are works by Slovak artists. In the large hall there is a lighting fixture inspired by folk straws tied with thread, which was created in collaboration with the academic sculptor Jozef Vachálek. In the projection hall there is a tapestry by Milan Laluha, a prominent artist from the group of legendary representatives of Slovak modernism – the "Galandovci" group. In addition to art and design elements, the project also includes a room for secret negotiations with protection against wiretapping, which was made in Kovosmalt Filakovo in 1989, a few months before the Velvet Revolution. After the split of the federal assets, the embassy in Rome became an asset of the newly established Slovak Republic. Its reconstruction began a few years later.

"Ferdinand Milučký was also one of supervisors of the reconstruction so that the basic concept of the building would be preserved despite the new functional requirements. It was important for the architect to protect his own work. While he was alive, he personally visited them to defend their artistic expression. He called it his eternal crusade," concludes Martin Lipták.



Photo: The exterior and interior of the Slovak Embassy building in Rome by the architects Ferdinand Milučký and Jozef Chovanec. ©Matej Hakar Čierne diery. Page No. 15 bottom left: © www.register-architektury.sk

WWW
WWW
WWW

PETER BREINER AND HIS SLOVAK DANCES



PETER BREINER, ALSO KNOWN AS THE ARTISTIC GREAT-GRANDSON OF COMPOSER ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK, CREATED SYMPHONIC VERSIONS OF THE MOST FAMOUS FOLK SONGS FOR SLOVAKIA. SINCE THEN, SLOVAK DANCES HAVE BEEN PERFORMED IN AN INTERPRETATION THAT THE WHOLE WORLD UNDERSTANDS.

Peter Breiner is a conductor; pianist, composer; arranger; publicist and one of the world's most recorded musicians. He is a graduate of the Košice Conservatory and the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, where he was the last student of Alexander Moyzes. He is known for combining the seemingly most incongruous musical starting points into a coherent whole. He thus pioneered the crossing and hybridization of musical languages, of the new synthesis of academic and oral traditions, and of the fusion of composed and unwritten music.

He has conducted, often while playing the piano, world renowned orchestras, such as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, the Lille National Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, the Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra, the Hungarian National Radio Orchestra, the Polish Radio Orchestra, and many others in Slovakia, Europe, Asia and North America.

Breiner's compositions and arrangements are performed daily at concerts around the world and broadcast on hundreds of radio stations. He has written music for many Slovak, Canadian and American films. His music is often used for the choreography of leading ballet companies and has appeared many times on popular American television shows.

SLOVAK DANCES FOR TRIANGO

"About fifteen years ago, I was commissioned to arrange Brahms' Hungarian Dances for the London Symphony Orchestra. It was an interesting assignment because I was actually continuing what Brahms and Dvořák had started – the instrumentation of a piano piece for orchestra. Antonín Dvořák, who I consider my great grandfather in composing terms, was the first composer to provide orchestral instrumentation for Hungarian Dances, and I finished all the ones that Brahms and Dvořák didn't," says Peter Breiner. "While working on it, it occurred to me that almost all the surrounding and even non-neighbouring nations in Europe and beyond had already had some classical orchestral collection based on folk material. Such as, the Hungarians from Brahms, the Czechs have Dvořák's Slavonic Dances, the Germans have Mozart's German Dances, and so on. When it all came together like that, I began to recall the folk songs I had encountered in my lifetime and began to turn them one by one into symphonic pieces. All of the songs I used have some personal connection to me or are connected to my interesting life experiences. They could even be considered as a map of my life journey – from the town of Humenné through Košice to America," Peter Breiner concludes.

The Slovak Dances had their world premiere at the 2013 Pohoda Festival in Trenčín, Slovakia, and were performed and recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London in autumn 2014. As part of the Slovak Republic's cultural diplomacy events, the author has performed in Washington and the Baltics. He was one of the first Slovaks to perform his Slovak Dances at the Carnegie Hall. He also participated in the project Slovaks in Carnegie in 2020 and 2022.

Photo right: Peter Breiner – portrait. Photo left: Photos from performances.
©Archive of Peter Breiner:

WWW



BIBIANA, INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF ART FOR CHILDREN

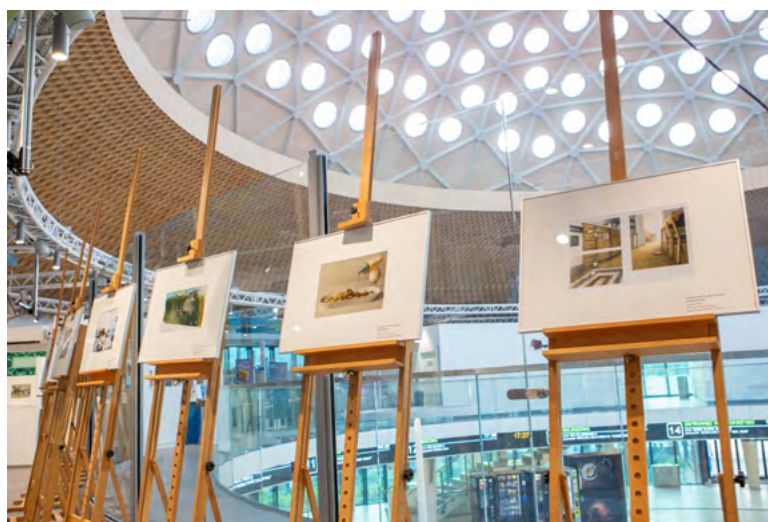
This cultural institution with an international dimension was established in 1987 as a partner of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava – a world famous event with a long tradition. It is the largest non-commercial exhibition of original illustrations of children's books in the world. It focuses on the development and dissemination of artistic creation for children intended for all ages of children and youth at home and abroad. The content of its activities makes BIBIANA the only such institution in the Slovak Republic and one of just a few similar ones in all of Europe. Bratislava's BIBIANA was the inspiration for the creation of a partner organisation, also called BIBIANA, in Denmark – the permanent centre of culture and art for children BIBIANA Denmark was established in 2011. BIBIANA coordinates its activities with domestic and foreign partner organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

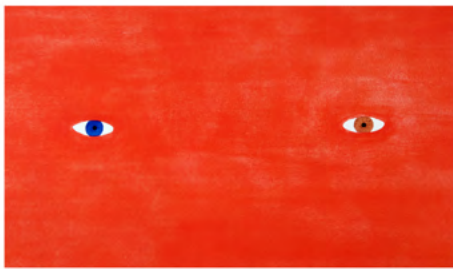
BIBIANA educates children of all ages about art through art, encouraging their perception, imagination and curiosity. The activities of the international house of art for children have a high professional level. As part of its projects, the house cooperates with

artists, stage designers, writers, musicians, theatre artists, as well as with students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava and the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. The importance of this institution goes beyond the borders of the capital city of the Slovak Republic, where it is located, as well as beyond the borders of Slovakia. BIBIANA regularly hosts foreign guests who come here to gain experience and is also a regular participant in international exhibitions and book fairs organised all over the world. Dozens of travelling exhibitions of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava are held annually on all continents, many of them thanks to the cooperation with Slovak institutes and embassies abroad. Audiences in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Germany, France, Italy, as well as in Russia, Iran and Japan have had the opportunity to see the travelling exhibitions of illustrations. The collection of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava also represented our country during the first ever Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The representative exhibition was placed in the LEX building of the Council of the European Union in Brussels and in the cultural centre in the former Benedictine Neumünster Abbey, in Luxembourg.

Photo below: Exhibition of the Biennial of Illustrations in Warsaw. ©Archive of Bibiana.
Photo right: A selection of the award-winning works at the Biennial of Illustrations. ©Archive of Bibiana.

[WWW](http://www.bibiana.sk)





HANNE BARTHOLIN
DÁNSKO / DENMARK

PŘÍBĚH O TEBE / A STORY ABOUT YOU
PŘÍBĚH O VŠETKOD / A STORY ABOUT EVERYTHING

PLAKETA BIB 2017 / BIB PLAQUE 2017



MAKI ARAI

JAPANSKO / JAPAN

PŮPAVA / DANDELION

ZLATÉ JABLKO / GOLDEN APPLE 2017



ANNA & VARVARA KENDEL

RUSKO / RUSSIA

ZLATÉ JABLKO BIB 2021 / BIB GOLDEN APPLE 2021



ИВА
ИВАН ФРАНКО

ROMANA ROMANYSHIN, ANDRIY LESIV
UKRAJINA / UKRAINE

ИВАН ФРАНКО ОД А ДО З / IVAN FRANKO FROM A TO Z

PLAKETA BIB 2017 / BIB PLAQUE 2017



JANA KISELOVÁ - SITEKOVÁ

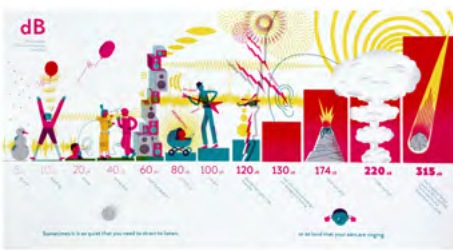
CENA POŠTOVEJ BĀNKY
POŠTOVÁ BANKA AWARD



ANNA & VARVARA KENDEL

RUSKO / RUSSIA

ZLATÉ JABLKO BIB 2021 / BIB GOLDEN APPLE 2021



ROMANA ROMANYSHIN, ANDRIY LESIV
UKRAJINA / UKRAINE

ИВАН ФРАНКО ОД А ДО З / IVAN FRANKO FROM A TO Z

PLAKETA BIB 2017 / BIB PLAQUE 2017



NARGES MOHAMADI

IRÁN / IRAN

BOL SOM JELEŔ / I WAS A DEER

ZLATÉ JABLKO / GOLDEN APPLE 2017



DALE BLANKENAAR

JUŽNÁ AFRIKA / SOUTH AFRICA

PLAKETA BIB 2021 / BIB PLAQUE 2021



CHAO ZHANG

ČĪNA / CHINA

ZLATÉ JABLKO BIB 2021 / BIB GOLDEN APPLE 2021

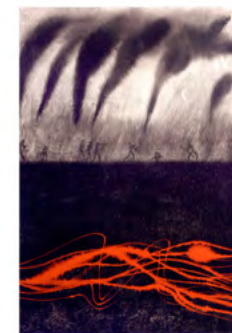


NARGES MOHAMADI

IRÁN / IRAN

BOL SOM JELEŔ / I WAS A DEER

ZLATÉ JABLKO / GOLDEN APPLE 2017



ARMANDO FONSECA
MEXIKO / MEXICO

PLAKETA BIB 2021
BIB PLAQUE 2021



MYUNG AE LEE

KŔREJSKÁ REPUBLIKA / REPUBLIC OF KOREA

ZLATÉ JABLKO BIB 2021 / BIB GOLDEN APPLE 2021



ANA DESNITSKAYA

RUSKO / RUSSIA

STARÝ RUSKÝ DOM / THE OLD RUSSIAN HOME

ZLATÉ JABLKO / GOLDEN APPLE 2017



BOČKAYOVÁ BRUNCKOVÁ ZUZANA

CENA PRĪMĀTORA
HLĀVNĚHO MĚSTA SR BRATISLĀVY

AWARD OF THE LORD MAYOR
OF THE CAPITAL CITY SR BRATISLĀVA



L. E. HUDEC AND HIS SHANGHAI

LADISLAV HUDEC CAME FROM BANSKÁ BYSTRICA, BUT HIS MOST IMPORTANT BUILDINGS WERE BUILT IN SHANGHAI. THE ARCHITECT DESIGNED THE FIRST SKYSCRAPER IN ASIA. THE ICONIC TWENTY-TWO-STORY PARK HOTEL STANDS IN THIS CHINESE METROPOLIS.

Ladislav Eduard Hudec, also known by his Chinese name La s' luo Wu ta kche, designed many buildings during his lifetime. More than sixty of them are located in Shanghai, of which one third is on China's list of protected historical sights.

He was born on 8 January 1893 in Banská Bystrica as the eldest of six children to the businessman and builder Juraj Hudec. He studied architecture at the Hungarian Royal Technical University in Budapest. As a young technical graduate, he designed his only building in Slovakia, the Chapel of the Virgin Mary in Vyhne, in 1914. After the outbreak of World War I, he enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian army. In 1916, he was captured and sent to a prison camp in Russia near the border with China. During the train journey he managed to escape and reached the City of Harbin, China. By the end of 1918, he had settled in Shanghai, where he worked as an architect until 1947.

Hudec designed hospitals, schools, churches, banks, as well as apartment buildings and clubs. In the 1930s, he built the first hospital with air-conditioned operating theatres and the Grand Theatre – a cinema with a capacity of 2,400 seats. The Shanghai Union Brewery, built in 1931, is another of his famous buildings.

In 1934, he completed his most important building, the Park Hotel and the bank as part of the building. Until 1952, the Park Hotel was the tallest building in Asia. It has twenty-two floors and measures 84 meters. The building, with its distinctive vertical façade lines, is built in the Art Deco style.

After the end of the civil war in China, he was imprisoned by the victorious army. However, in 1947 he managed to escape again with his family to Switzerland. He travelled around Italy and Greece, worked as a consultant on a Vatican landscaping project and later moved to the United States. He earned a professorship at the University of California at Berkeley and retired from architecture. Ladislav Hudec died of a heart attack in Berkeley on 26 October 1958 at the age of 65. According to his wishes, since 1970 his remains have been buried at the Evangelical Cemetery in Banská Bystrica.

THE MEMORIAL TO L. E. HUDEC

The Hudec Memorial Hall Museum and the Hudec Cultural Development Centre, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, organise annual events dedicated to the memory and legacy of the architect L. E. Hudec.



Photo left: Detail of the building designed by L.E. Hudec in Shanghai. ©Shutterstock.

Photo top from the left: L.E. Hudec in his study. ©Wikipedia.hu., Green House. ©L. E. Hudec Centre Catholic Church, Mu'en, Park Hotel and a rental house Normandie Apartments designed by L.E. Hudec in Shanghai. ©L. E. Hudec Centre ©Shutterstock.

A documentary film about Hudec was made, entitled "He Changed the Face of Shanghai", by Slovak director Ladislav Kaboš. It premiered during the opening of the Slovak National Pavilion at EXPO Shanghai in 2010. Three siblings Martin from Monaco, Theo from Canada and Alessa from the USA reminisce about their childhood and youth in Shanghai. At the same time, they tell the fascinating life story of their famous father – the architect with Slovak roots, L.E. Hudec, whose architectural work significantly shaped the face of Shanghai, also called the "Paris of the East" during the period between the World Wars.

The Slovak Post issued a commemorative stamp in honour of the architect. In Shanghai, there is a memorial house where the architect's family spent fifteen years of their lives. A bust of Hudec by the academic sculptor Ladislav Sabo is also on display there. In Slovakia, his life's work is the subject of the activities of a civic association, the L. E. Hudec Centre in Banská Bystrica.

Every year, the Hudec Memorial Hall Museum and the Hudec Cultural Development Centre, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, organise events dedicated to the memory and legacy of architect L. E. Hudec.

WWW



GOODWILL ENVOY

THE GOODWILL ENVOY AWARD HAS BEEN GRANTED SINCE 2010 BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO PERSONALITIES WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC, WHETHER THROUGH THEIR WORK, RESULTS, SPORTS, CULTURAL OR SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS. THESE ARE SLOVAK CITIZENS WHO HAVE LIVED ABROAD FOR A LONG TIME AND HAVE MADE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES THROUGH THEIR WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS. MANY OF THEM ARE BETTER KNOWN ABROAD THAN AT HOME.

BARBORA BOBUĽOVÁ

She was born in Martin. While still a secondary grammar school student, she played Juliet in the play Romeo and Juliet at the Slovak National Theatre.



In her third year at the Academy of Performing Arts she went to study at the Circle in The Square Theatre School in New York. After her studies, she settled in Italy. She made her first appearance in a film there in the late 1990s and since then her filmography has included over twenty foreign films. Her gateway to the world of Italian cinema was opened by the role of the Princess of Orange in Marco Bellocchio's feature film The Prince of

Homburg. She has starred in many films alongside celebrities such as Gérard Depardieu, Vanessa Redgrave, Michele Placido. The pieces she has worked on regularly feature in prestigious film festivals around the world. Barbora Bobuľová is the recipient of the Actor's Mission Award, the Blue Angel Award for Best Actress for her performance in The Spectator; the Golden Ribbon Award from the National Association of Italian Film Journalists and the David di Donatello Award for Best Actress for Cuore Sacro. She received the Goodwill Envoy Award in 2015.

JÁN MOJTO

He comes from Nitra; however, he has been living in Germany and Austria since the 1970s. He has been described as one of the best film trade strategists in Europe. After many years in important positions in the Leo Kirch media group, Ján Mojto founded his own production company EOS which focuses on the production of historical films and te-



levision series. Ján Mojto was involved in the production of successful film classics and titles such as The Thousand Year Old Bee, Perinbaba, Les Misérables, The Count of Monte Cristo, Napoleon, The Fall of the Third Reich, War and Peace, and the Oscar winning The Lives of Others. Ján Mojto's fantastic success in the world film industry is also evidenced by the fact that he is the owner of Betafilm, Europe's largest film archive, Kineos, which owns the broadcasting rights to 12,000 film and television titles, including 8,000 feature films, Classica, a music television station, and Unitel, a production company specialising in music production. Ján Mojto is one of the most prominent Slovaks living abroad and has been instrumental in bringing Slovak cinema into an international context. During the years of communist totalitarianism, he facilitated cooperation between Slovak and West German filmmakers and producers, resulting in the creation of cult movies. After 1989, Ján Mojto intensified contacts with Slovakia even further: He still passes on his extensive experience to filmmakers and producers in Slovakia. He received the Goodwill Envoy Award in 2015.

JOZEF KABAŇ

He is a successful Slovak designer who originally comes from Námestovo. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava and at the prestigious Royal Academy in London. He started his professional career at Volkswagen, as a team leader for exterior design. He later worked at Bugatti where he designed the Veyron, which he began working on at the age of 26. His next steps led him to Audi, where he rose to become head of the Exterior Design Centre within three years. Since 2008, he has been chief designer at Skoda, where he has presented numerous car design studies on which the current third generation Skoda models are based. He contributed significantly to the new design of Skoda's most prestigious model – the Skoda Superb, the Skoda Kodiaq, the production versions of the Rapid and Fabia. In 2017, he joined BMW as chief designer, where he worked on the model line of luxury cars. He also worked for Rolls Royce, another of the most prestigious premium brands, which confirms the good reputation of Slovak automotive design throughout the world. He received the Ambassador of Goodwill award in 2019.



ĽUDOVÍT KANTA



Ludovít Kanta is a cellist, based in Japan, born in Bratislava. The son of musician parents, he has always been close to music and started playing the cello at the age of seven. He studied at the Bratislava Conservatory and later at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. He began his professional cello career as concertmaster of cellos at the Slovak Philharmonic in 1982, and since 1990 he has served as cello group leader of the Kanazawa

Orchestra Ensemble in Japan. From 1994 to 2002, he taught at the Aichi University of the Arts in Japan as a visiting professor. He is currently a recording artist with dozens of CD and radio recordings to his credit. He has played not only for the Royal Thai Family in Bangkok, but also for people living in refugee centres after the disastrous earthquake in Tohoku, Japan. During his studies, he received awards in several national and international competitions. He won the Beethoven's Hradec Award and came second at the Prague Spring International Competition in 1980. As a soloist, he has collaborated with many Slovak and foreign orchestras and conductors such as Zdeněk Košler, Libor Pešek, Uri Mayer, Yuzo Toyama and many others. In 2010 he was awarded the Hiroyuki Iwaki Prize, named after the famous Japanese conductor; and in 2012 he was awarded the Gold Plaque of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic. He has worked closely with renowned musicians such as Gidon Kremer, Mstislav Rostropovich, YoYo Ma. He received the Goodwill Envoy Award in 2018.

NINA POLÁKOVÁ

Currently, she is the lead dancer with the Vienna State Ballet under the direction of Manuel Legris. As early as during her studies at the Dance Conservatory she started as a soloist at the Slovak National Theatre, where she performed leading roles in the ballets *La Bayadere*, *Giselle*, *Le Corsaire*, *Swan Lake* and *Spartacus*. In 2005, she was engaged by the Vienna State Ballet and in 2011 she was promoted to the highest position



of a first soloist – prima ballerina. Her repertoire includes leading roles in many full length ballets such as *Don Quixote*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Snow Queen*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle*, *Manon*, *Le Corsaire* and many others. She has also performed in ballets of well known composers, Jiri Kylián, Rudolf Nureyev, Manuel Legris, and others. She has performed her art in many European and overseas countries. Among her most notable awards is the Philip Morris Flower Award for the best dance artist of 2004. In 2003, she was a finalist in the Prix de Lausanne competition and the winner of the International Ballet Competition in Brno. Other recognitions of her art include the Literary Fund Award, the City of Bratislava Award, the Medal of the President of the Trnava Region, as well as the Vienna State Opera Ballet Club Award. In 2017, she successfully performed her first choreography "Daneben" at the Akzent Theatre in Vienna. Since 2008, she has regularly danced in the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Concert, which is broadcast in more than ninety countries around the world, and she regularly performs at the opening of the Vienna Opera Ball. She received the Goodwill Envoy Award in 2018.

ANNA KYPPÖ

She is a lecturer of Slovak language and literature at the University of Jyväskylä institute, which is the only one of its kind in Northern Europe. She has been living and working in Finland for more than 30 years. She studied at Comenius University in Bratislava and in Finland. A talented multi linguist, she speaks 10 foreign languages, but has dedicated her professional career to her native language, our diverse culture and literature. She currently



works at the University of Jyväskylä, where she also coordinates the Erasmus programme with her alma mater, Comenius University in Bratislava. She is an active translator and interpreter and has also interpreted at the highest political meetings and many conferences and professional events. In addition, she is a board member of the Finnish Association of Slavists, member of the Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters, the Association of Applied Languages and the European Association of Computer Assisted Language Learning. Since 2004, she has been extremely active in dozens of linguistic research projects. Thanks to her, a Slovak section has been established within the university library, with publications in Slovak. In addition, she has also published a number of scholarly works and has been the recipient of several prestigious awards. For her lecturing activities and presentation of the Slovak language and culture in Finland, she has received the medal of the Minister of Education of the Slovak Republic, the Golden Plaque of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák, the award for contribution to community building from the University of Jyväskylä, which last year rightly recognized her 30 years of work as an academic. Anna Kyppö was awarded the Goodwill Ambassador in 2019.

PETER BIĽAK



Peter Biľak has also worked as a set designer; script editor; editor in chief of the acclaimed magazine Works That Work. He is the designer

He is a renowned graphic designer; one of Europe's best known typeface designers and founder of typographic studios in the Netherlands and India. He lives in The Hague, the Netherlands, and lectures all over the world. Most of you will have seen the fonts he has created – among others, they are used at the Vienna Airport, the Hilton Hotel chain, the European Parliament, and in print and digital media around the world.

of a series of stamps for the Royal Dutch Post Office. The number of these stamps issued has reached 150 million. He was awarded the Goodwill Envoy Award in 2014.

MAJA POLÁČKOVÁ



She is a renowned artist. She comes from the city of Trnava and lives in Belgium. She has illustrated and translated into French Dominik Tatarka's work The Wicker Chairs and Vladimír Mináč's novel Producer of Happiness. Her work entitled Partir Arriver was included in a selection of 80 contemporary Belgian artists and is permanently installed in the new tract of the Belgian National Airport in Brussels. During the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU, an exhibition of her art collages entitled "Slovakia Mea" was opened in Waterloo, as part of Slovakia's cultural presentation. Maja Poláčková, a member of the Board of Directors of SOFAM, the Belgian Society of Artists, has exhibited her work in Belgium, France, Canada, Spain, the Czech Republic, as well as at home in Slovakia, and is active in contemporary Belgian art projects. She received the Goodwill Ambassador award in 2016.

JÁN ZORIČÁK

A giant of studio glass, one of the most renowned authors of contemporary glass art, he was born in Ždiar and lives in France where he instigated the building of the first French museum of glass and fine art in Sars Poteries and helped organize the glass symposium in Aix en Provence. His works are represented in the world's most prestigious collections and museums, as well as in truly unique places such as the North Pole. He is the recipient of the highest cultural awards in several countries as well as in Slovakia, including the Pribina Cross 1st Class and the Imre Weiner King Society Award for the development of French Slovak cultural relations. He has been an important presenter of Slovak culture and art and has been a great supporter of the presentation of glassmaking, both Slovak and other; throughout France. He received the Goodwill Envoy Award in 2016.

MATEJ KRÉN



He is one of the most distinguished personalities of contemporary Slovak visual art. He attracts the attention of experts and the general public in particular with his distinct approach to traditional genres of visual art, such as sculpture, painting, drawing, graphic art, or classical themes of art in general, such as the theme of reality and illusion, nature and culture, existence and nothingness. By his new conception he has brought about authentic creative means and methods to reflect on the paradigmatic transformation of the contemporary world and man's situation within it. His works have been presented at important exhibitions of contemporary art and are constantly at the centre of spectator and media attention at prestigious cultural events in the capitals of world culture and art, for example in Amsterdam, Berlin, Chicago, Jerusalem, Lisbon, Moscow, Paris, Prague, Sao Paolo, Seoul, Vienna, and others. Matej Krén is the recipient of several important international awards and his work has been constantly reflected upon by influential media all over the world since 1989.

The awards that Matej Krén has received include the Critic's Prize and the Spectator's Prize for his work "Idiom" presented at the Biennial of Contemporary Art in Sao Paolo (1994), as well as the main award in the worldwide art competition Promotion of the Arts organized by UNESCO in Paris (1995). In the same year, the important American Pollock Krasner Foundation awarded him a creative scholarship. For his successful representation of Slovak art abroad he received an award from the Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic. In 2004, he became the recipient of the Slovak annual award for art – the Tatrabanka Award. One of his internationally acclaimed projects in recent years, the Passage, is a dominant feature in the permanent collection of the Bratislava City Gallery. He received the Goodwill Envoy Award in 2013.

Photo from the top left: Matej Krén – portrait. Book Cell – Interior (2006), Centre for Modern Art – Lisbon. Idiom – Interior (2005), The Israel Museum – Jerusalem. ©Archive of Matej Kren.

[WWW](http://www.matejkrén.com)



PAVOL ORSZÁGH
HVIEZDOSLAV

THE BLOODY
SONNETS

Centre for Information on Literature

*Pavol Országh
Hviezdoslav*

PAVOL ORSZÁGH HVIEZDOSLAV – BLOODY SONNETS

AN EXTRAORDINARY EDITION OF THE BLOODY SONNETS FROM A GIANT OF SLOVAK LITERATURE P. O. HVIEZDOSLAV REACHED BRITISH QUEEN ELIZABETH II. THE QUEEN HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THEM IN HER NATIVE TONGUE AND APPRECIATED THE STRONG HUMANE MESSAGE, WHICH IS STILL VALID TODAY.

One of the most important poetry pieces of Slovak literature with an anti-war theme is still relevant today with its sharp condemnation of the moral and social decay and humiliation of humanity that the conflict of war brings. In 32 sonnets, the poet condemns the horrors of war and destruction. In his lyrical work he expressed pain and indignation at the moral decay of humanity that throws itself into the fighting. He asks who is responsible for these horrors, and contemplates the freedom, moral values, and reflections on the upcoming peace that will arrive after the conflict of war.

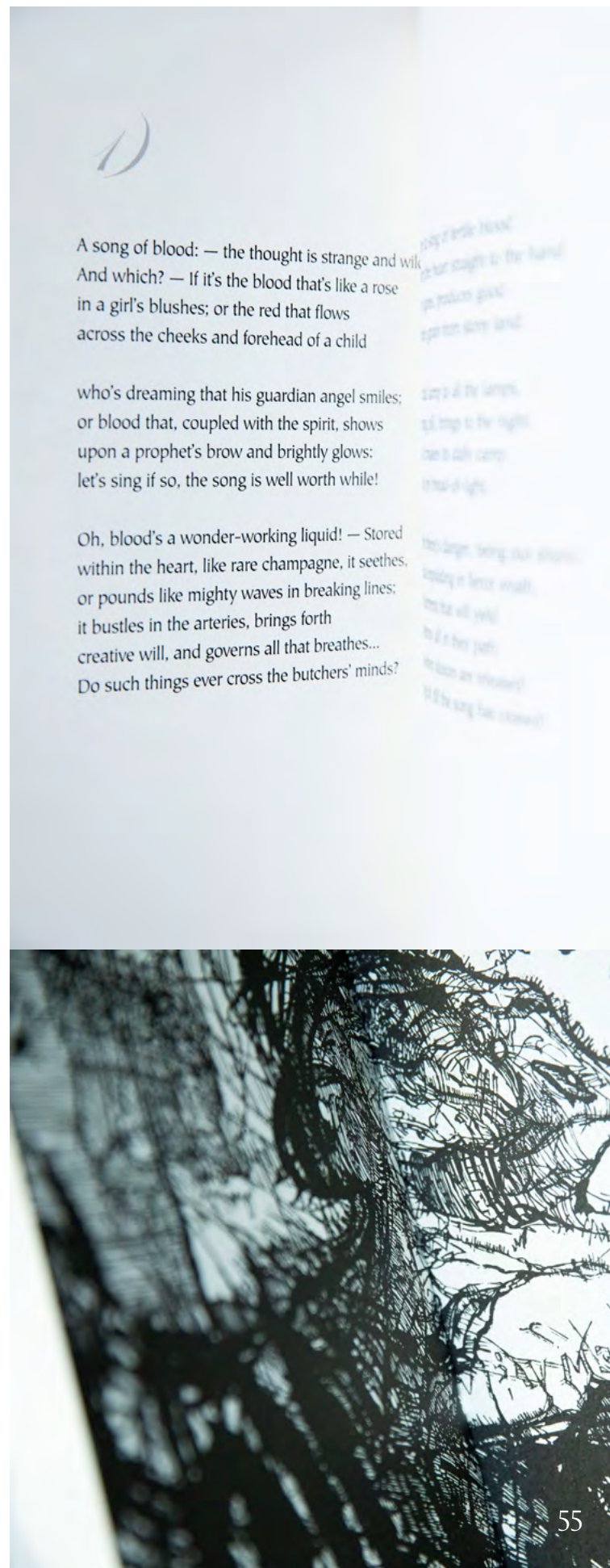
The first ever artistic translation of P.O. Hviezdoslav's *The Bloody Sonnets* into English was presented by the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in London, in 2018, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. The poem was translated into English by the acclaimed Irish poet and novelist John Minahane, who has lived and worked in Slovakia since 1996. He has complemented the collection of sonnets with a comprehensive prologue and a timeline of the artist's life. The book edition of the English translation includes illustrations by the academic painter Dusan Kállay. *The Bloody Sonnets* were published in a separate book edition in 1919, which has since been translated into several foreign languages.

The Bloody Sonnets were added to the collections of *The British Library*, the second largest library in the world, in 2018, and were presented through the Slovak Embassy in London. In collaboration with partner institutions, several events were held in a number of UK cities, including London, Belfast, Cardiff, Stirling, Dublin, Oxford, and Cambridge. The English translation of *The Bloody Sonnets* has also received significant media coverage.

The prestigious British weekly *The Times Literary Supplement* published an article entitled "Woe to the Victors", which introduced the Slovak literary giant P.O. Hviezdoslav to an international readership. The article introduced him not only as a poet, but also as a shrewd political visionary who, at a time when enthusiasm for war was characteristic for all of Europe, was one of the few who unwaveringly stood up against it.

WWW

Photo left: Cover of *Bloody Sonnets* in English translation. Photo Right: The first sonnet of the *Bloody Sonnets*. Illustrations by Dusan Kállay. ©Tomáš Bokor MFEA SR.



IMAGES OF SLOVAKIA AT THE EXPO

[WWW](http://www.expo2020dubai.com)

DAEJEON, LISBON, HANNOVER, NAGOYA, SARAGOSSA, SHANGHAI, JOSU, MILAN, ASTANA AND LASTLY DUBAI. THIS IS THE LIST OF PLACES WHERE THE WORLD EXPO HAS BEEN HELD SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT SLOVAK REPUBLIC. SLOVAKIA HAS BEEN REPRESENTED AT MOST OF THEM.

EXPO is a large international exhibition of the industry and culture of individual countries, which has been held since the middle of the 19th century.

World Expos, officially known as International Registered Exhibitions, are global gatherings of nations dedicated to finding solutions to the pressing challenges of our time by offering a pathway to universal topics through engaging and immersive activities. They welcome tens of millions of visitors, enable countries to build exceptional pavilions and transform the host city for years to come.

The first World Expo – the Great Exhibition – was held in London in 1851, a concept that became popular and was repeated around the world, demonstrating the unique power of attraction and the importance of world heritage. Since 1928, when the Bureau International des Expositions was established to regulate and oversee these huge events, world exhibitions have explicitly focused on topics that attempt to improve humanity's knowledge, considering human and social aspirations while highlighting scientific, technological, economic, cultural and social progress. In the past, for example, the EXPO in Philadelphia introduced the telephone to the public while the one in Paris saw construction of the Eiffel Tower.

In modern times, the EXPO is unrivalled among international events for its size, scope, duration and number of visitors. They act as vast platforms for education and progress, serving as a bridge between governments, companies, international organisations and citizens.

Photo:1. A hydrogen powered car at EXPO Dubai 2022. 2. Ecocapsule at EXPO Dubai 2022. 3. Interior of the Slovak pavilion at EXPO Dubai 2022. 4. Slovak pavilion at EXPO Hannover 2000. 5. Banič's parachute at EXPO Hannover 2000. 6. Slovak pavilion at EXPO Lisbon 1998. 7. Performance of the SLUK dance group at EXPO Dubai 2022 in the presence of President Zuzana Čaputová. 8. Slovak Pavilion at EXPO Hannover 2000. 9. Slovak pavilion at EXPO Milan 2015. 10. Interior of the Slovak pavilion at EXPO Dubai 2022. 11., 12. Interior of the Slovak pavilion at EXPO Milan 2015. 13. Street performance during the Slovak Day ceremony at EXPO Dubai 2022. 14. Reproduction of the bust of FX. Messerschmidt in front of the Slovak Pavilion at EXPO Milan 2015. ©SlovakiaEXPO2022. ©www.expo2020dubai.com. ©Office of the President of the Slovak Republic. © Karol Kállay Archive.







Photo : Slovak Philharmonic Choir in Berlin. ©Archive of the Slovak Philharmonic.

ORCHESTRA IN A LEADING ROLE

THE SLOVAK PHILHARMONIC IN BRATISLAVA AND THE STATE PHILHARMONIC IN KOŠICE ARE MUSICAL ENSEMBLES CONSISTING OF DOZENS OF MUSICIANS WHO PLAY AS ONE. THEY TRAVEL ALL OVER THE WORLD AND PLAY PIECES BY THE WORLD'S BEST COMPOSERS. THE ORCHESTRAS ARE IMPORTANT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY.

The Slovak Philharmonic in Bratislava is the first and main symphony orchestra of the Slovak Republic. It was founded in 1949, and it has been based in the building of Reduta, Bratislava, since the 1950s. It was ranked among the leading orchestras of the Central European region mainly thanks to the leadership of Václav Talich, Ludovít Rajter and later Ladislav Slovák. Thanks to world class visiting conductors such as Sergiu Celibidache and Claudio Abbado, it later gained international respect and recognition.

The Slovak Philharmonic greatly stimulated the development of Slovak symphonism, contributed to a significant rise in the level of Slovak performing arts and became an irreplaceable representative of Slovak musical art abroad. Its three main organisational components are the Great Symphony Orchestra, the Slovak Philharmonic Choir and the Slovak Chamber Orchestra.

The Slovak Philharmonic has made numerous recordings for radio, television and many major music houses. It is a regular guest on major European music stages and festivals, has performed in almost all European countries, Cyprus, Turkey, the USA and regularly tours Japan, South Korea, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. The Slovak Philharmonic also performs abroad through the cultural diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

[WWW](http://www.slovakphilharmonic.com)



Photo: The Košice Philharmonic Orchestra during a rehearsal in the Košice House of Arts. ©Archive of the State Philharmonic in Košice.

THE STATE PHILHARMONIC KOŠICE

The state philharmonic Košice was founded in 1968 as the second professional concert type symphony orchestra in Slovakia. The first concert of the newly founded ensemble took place on 16 April 1969. The first chief conductor of this musical ensemble, which is housed in the city of Košice, the House of Arts, was Bystrík Režucha. Currently, Robert Jindra holds this position and the orchestra has almost 90 professional musicians.

In a short time, the State Philharmonic Košice has garnered the recognition of experts and the public. It has become one of the leading representatives of Slovak performing arts at home and abroad. The orchestra presents its art through concert activities and through recordings for radio, television and record companies. The recordings are often unique premiere recordings of rarely performed works. The orchestra has collaborated with many world renowned artists. The orchestra's repertoire spectrum includes all frequently performed works from the baroque to 21st century music. The orchestra has had considerable success on concert stages abroad. It has given concerts at international music festivals and in important

cultural centres around the world and has performed in Vienna and Salzburg in Austria, Berlin in Germany, Budapest in Hungary, Prague in the Czech Republic, Antwerp in the Netherlands, Lisbon in Portugal, Barcelona in Spain, Athens in Greece, Reims in France, Hong Kong, Luxembourg and many others. Some of these performances, for example the concerts in Hungary, were organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. In 1994, the Philharmonic toured the USA for a month, where it was the first Slovak symphony orchestra to perform on the American continent.

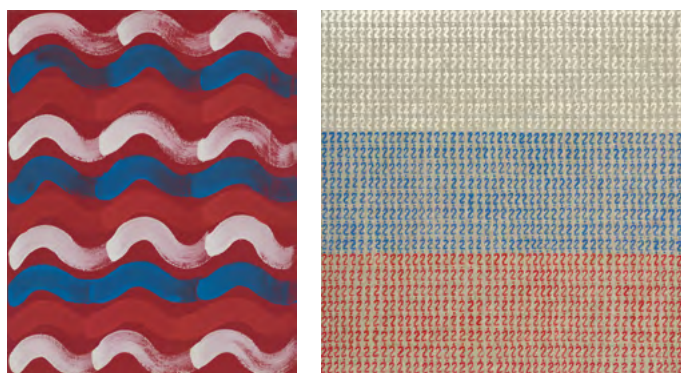
The State Philharmonic Košice is the main organiser of two international festivals – the Košice Music Spring and the Ivan Sokol International Organ Festival. Since 2003, it has also organised the ARS NOVA CASSOVIAE festival of contemporary art.

[WWW](http://www.kosicepho.sk)

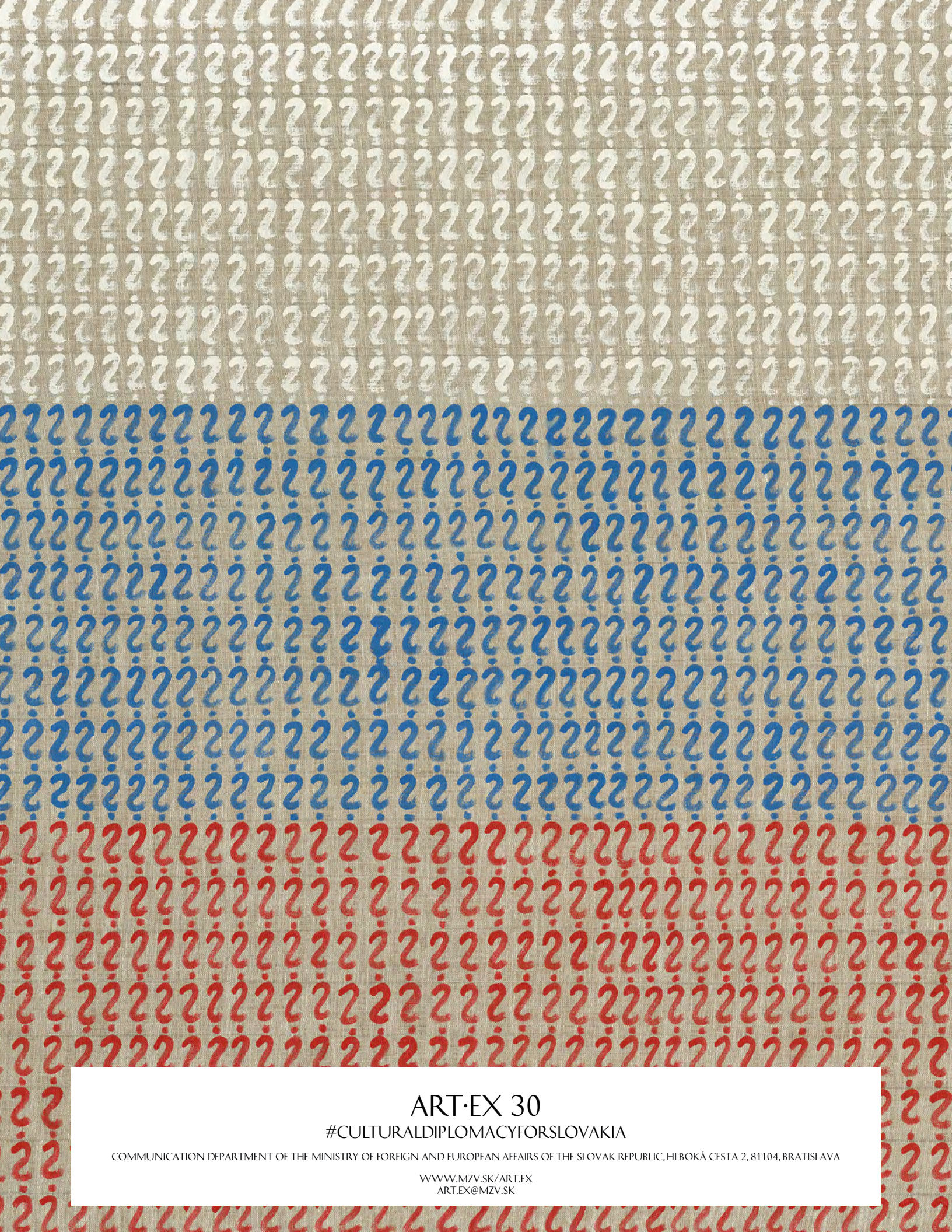


Photo from the top left: The Slovak Philharmonic in South Korea, 2018. The Slovak Philharmonic Choir in London. Daniel Raiskin presents a concert by the Slovak Philharmonic in the courtyard of the Schlosshof in Murten, Switzerland. ©Archive of the Slovak Philharmonic in Bratislava. The State Philharmonic at the House of Arts in Košice. ©State Philharmonic Košice. Photo bottom: Slovak Philharmonic in Japan, 2018 ©Archive of the Slovak Philharmonic in Bratislava.





COVER PHOTO: JÚLIUS KOLLER - CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL SITUATION, 1993. © ERNEST ZMETÁK GALLERY. JÚLIUS KOLLER - CURRENT CULTURAL SITUATION II, 1990. © SLOVAK NATIONAL GALLERY.



ART·EX 30

#CULTURALDIPLOMACYFORSLOVAKIA

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC, HLBOKÁ CESTA 2, 81104, BRATISLAVA

WWW.MZV.SK/ART.EX
ART.EX@MZV.SK