

ART·EX

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY FOR SLOVAKIA

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Cover: Natália Evely Benčičová - Artificial Tears





VLADIMÍR ŠIMÍČEK

Vladimír Šimíček, a photographer of Denník N Daily, arrived back to Slovakia from the besieged Kiev on 4 March 2022, among the last in the convoy of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Ukraine.

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ART TO HELP UKRAINE

On 24 February 2022, Europe woke up to a difficult morning. The troops of the Russian Federation crossed the border of Ukraine and attacked. A war has started, a war in the territory of a neighbouring state. A war that will affect everyone of us. With the wave of refugees from Ukraine, a wave of solidarity, both political and human, has risen around the world. Many began to help selflessly, sending material or financial aid. The Slovak art community also decided to help with their art.



SOUND OF PEACE

Photo: Rudolf Baranovič.

The concert event, aptly entitled Sound of Peace, is a manifesto of jazz musicians against violence committed in the name of humanism and tolerance, condemning violence against people while being accompanied with the sound of musical instruments. The benefit musical evening took place on Thursday, 24 March 2022 at the Astorka Korzo '90 Theatre. The event was sponsored by the promoter group of the Music Gallery Society agency represented by Martin Valihora and the Slovak Institute in Prague, which became the patron of the gala concert. "Slovakia is not at war: The war is in Ukraine, not far from us, but it is also our war. The war is being fought by determined Ukrainians protecting their lives and homes. They open our eyes in many ways, us, the citizens of the Slovak Republic. For example, that we are able to help hundreds of thousands of people. They also open our eyes to where Slovakia belongs. This is a very tragic moment for which we must thank the Ukrainians, and that is why we must help them. For the fact that they open our eyes with their lives and their own tragedy," Ivan Korčok, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, opened the evening with these words. Also thanks to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, the audience had the opportunity to watch the concert online. It was shared via social networks by the Slovak Institutes in Berlin, Budapest, Jerusalem, Moscow, Paris, Prague, Rome, Warsaw, Vienna and many embassies of the Slovak Republic in the world. The stream was also available on the One Day Jazz Festival's website and social networks, as well as at the websites of media partners. Slovak and Czech jazz top musicians such as Ján Berky Mrenica jr., Martin

Valihora, Anita Soul, Matúš Jakabčič, Ľuboš Šrámek, Štefan Pišta Bartuš, Richard Csino, Michal Bugala, Nikolay Nikitin, Štefan Bugala and Marián Robert Balzar played later at the event. They were followed by star foreign guests who came to Slovakia from the USA and Canada with the Matthew Stevens / Walter Smith III In Common project. The band was completed by bass guitarist Harish Raghavan and drummer Jonathan Barber. The money from the entrance fee went into a transparent account and is further distributed to specific organizations and foundations that help war-affected Ukraine. "The music community feels that this issue needs to be addressed and that it is important to respond appropriately. In our musical environment, in jazz, there is a freedom in music. But even freedom has its own concept. Freedom is not anarchy, it has its own laws for us to be able to feel, perceive and live it. It is very similar to life. I have the feeling that this notion is also, unfortunately, showing itself in other colours today. Today marks one month since the troops attacked Ukraine, our neighbour, in a very reckless manner. People are dying who are hostages of this conflict. Children and women are also dying, and at the first moment we processed the situation in our own way. It is very difficult to take a stand on things when we do not know the conclusion. It requires a deeper probe into oneself. We do not use weapons, our instrument is music and we want to fight for our society to be able to communicate in a humane way. We want to join in a targeted and systemic way to help people in need who have been affected by the war conflict in Ukraine," says Martin Valihora, the founder of the One Day Jazz festival, among others. ~TB

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Singer Anita Soul on the left and a group photo of the performers at the Sound of Peace concert on the right.



ART FOR PEACE

A civic initiative called Art for Peace launched a benefit online auction involving more than 100 visual artists, fine artists, photographers, sculptors, graphic designers, digital artists, jewellery and clothing designers. Mária Švarbová, Ašot Haas, Milan Vagač and many others, who have contributed their works to the auction without a fee, successfully cooperate or have cooperated in the past with Slovak cultural diplomacy. With this gesture, they expressed their solidarity with the victims of the war conflict and at the same time took a clear stance against the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops. The online auction peaked after a week on Tuesday night, 8 March 2022. Out of 142 works, 92 artworks found new owners. This initiative was created by artist Tero Abaffy, fashion activist Babsy Jagušák, Zuzana Bobíková from the Slovak Fashion Council, artist Ivana Šáteková, Zuzana Pacáková, director of White Night and curator Katarína Janágová from Blu Gallery. "The idea was conceived on the very first day of the military conflict in Ukraine," says Zuzana Bobíková. "Some of us knew each other from previous projects and collaborations, we have known each other for a long time, and together, in the case of this initiative, it created a beautiful synergy that made it all happen," she adds.



„We cooperated with the auction company SOGA and auctioneer Nina Gažovičová. SOGA immediately offered us full support and thanks to their existing online auction system it was possible to organise the collection in record time,” explains Zuzana Bobíková. “We appreciate every single sale and we are extremely happy that we managed to raise more than 70 thousand euros to help Ukraine. I see the final amount as a collective result of joint efforts,” said Nina Gažovičová. The commitment of the Slovak art community, the organising team of the Art for Peace initiative and the SOGA Auction Company was also appreciated by Kristína Jediná from the non-profit organisation People in Need. “We appreciate it very much. Thank you to all the people who auctioned the artworks and thanks to whom we will be able to allocate the collected amount for huma-

nitarian aid on the Slovak-Ukrainian border, as well as in the territory of Ukraine,” adds Kristína. “It is amazing to see how our whole society is mobilising and helping. Hereby I would like to thank all the participating authors who provided their works for a good cause without hesitation, despite the difficult post-pandemic situation in which the cultural community currently finds itself,” adds Zuzana Pacáková, the director of the White Night. “Today we want to use our voice to help in this extremely tense situation by contributing our auctioned art to the relief effort in Ukraine. Helplessness in society is turning into solidarity, so let us at least keep it,” concludes painter Ivana Šáteková. Support for Ukraine does not end with the benefit auction. Representatives of the Art for Peace initiative have created a platform for long-term and systematic assistance to the victims of the war conflict in Ukraine. ~TB

THIS (TOTO!) IS A BAD DREAM

With a similar and very successful initiative came the small Bratislava-based TOTO! Je Galéria (TOTO! Is Gallery) under the direction of Ida Želinská, Maria Rojko and Miloš Kopták. "On Thursday morning, 24 February, we met at our gallery and we could not believe what was actually happening," recalls Ida Želinská. "So we thought we would help. We sell a few works by Miloš Kopták. We will also try to call other authors who have exhibited with us and a few friends. We had no idea that it would eventually snowball (really) into an event that would raise more than 62 thousand euros in 15 days." But it was no accident. These people at TOTO! Je Galéria do not lack craft. "We have never done a collection directly before, but we have different skills, lots of contacts and we are used to working together," Mária Rojko joins in and adds: "We wanted a clean, fast action. And how to bring together more than 130 artists? Simply. We opened our phones, made some calls and it started to heat up. We soon discovered that even those we did not know knew exactly how to go about providing their work. The raising of public awareness of these activities has been done by actors and actresses, stand-up comedy people, important people from the communities who recorded short videos and helped their spreading. So more and more people found out about the event." The gallery concept looked like this: artists, artists or collectors donate work to people who then donate money for it. The artists Lucia Tallová, Patrícia Koyšová and Natália Šimonová, whose names are associated with Slovak cultural diplomacy, have also joined the collection. "A total of EUR 62,388.08 is already in the account of the organisation People in Need. People did not pay to the gallery, but directly to the account of this organisation, they only brought receipts to the gallery," concludes Maria. "Art alone will not save any life - you cannot bandage wounds with a canvas from a painting, you cannot shoot from a theatrical prop. But it can do other, also important things. Holding up a mirror to powerful people, showing them stripped naked, as Hans Christian Andersen once did his ugly king. Art adds courage and shows that it makes sense to live in cultural and free societies. Not in the crude, violent and censored ones," concludes Miloš Kopták. ~TB

Grafika: Mykola Kovalenko.
Foto: Toto! Je Galéria.

[INSTAGRAM](https://www.instagram.com/toto_je_galeria)
[WWW](http://www.toto-je-galeria.sk)

The grid displays 130 individual art pieces, each accompanied by a small caption. The captions typically include the artist's name, the title of the work, and its price in EUR. Some captions also include a small blue 'KUP!' (BUY!) button. The artists featured include: Neráďová Mária, Jozef Gertli Dengler, Tomáš Klepac, Katarína Hutňáková, Vladimír Eliáš, Vladimír Eliáš, Vladimír Eliáš, Miloš Nejezchleba, Július Koller, Katarína Hutňáková, Daniel Krajčovič ml., Marko Blažek, Olejškoš Daniela, Milen Krajičo, Jana Machatová, Jana Machatová, Kátičky Daxová, Tomáš Čepček, Tomáš Čepček, Tomáš Čepček, Marek Cina, Martin Lubič, Michoška, Radovan Repický, Hans Ašot, Simona Natália, Michal Čížineg, Simona Natália, Simona Natália, Simona Natália, Laco Teves, Alexandru Barbu, Daniela Krajčovič st., and Michoška. The prices range from 40.00 EUR to 2500.00 EUR.

NATÁLIA EVELYN BENČIČOVÁ - ARTIFICIAL TEARS

Natália Evelyn Benčíčová (1992) is a contemporary visual artist coming from Bratislava. She specializes in photography and art direction. She has won prestigious world awards such as Hasselblad Masters, Broncolor Gennext Awards, Prix Picto, Vr Art Prize, Portrait of Britain and Berlin Masters. Her commercial and artistic work has appeared in magazines such as Vogue, Zeit Magazine, Vice, Dazed & Confused, I-D, Guardian, Gup and Hant. She has participated in solo and group exhibitions around the world and collaborated with institutions such as the Royal Opera House, Frieze, National Portrait Gallery, Berghain and Kunsthalle Basel. Evelyn exhibited in February at the Slovak Institute in Prague. In an interview with Art.Ex, she gave us an insight into how her journey in photography and art has evolved.

How did you get into photography? Why did you choose this medium?

Since I was a little girl I have been inclined towards visual art, more precisely towards visual perception. I was aware of the world around me and deeply fascinated by it. I captured it in my imagination, which led to the creation of different scenarios and stories based on observation. I got into photography after I had eye surgery when I was 18 years old. Certainly this fact also contributed to this as well as deepening my fascination through the sudden sharpness of my vision, which drew my attention to the details. I hardly recognized those for many years. The scenes that I started to capture photographically existed in my imagination long before that.

I would answer the question of choice of medium by saying that I have never decided on any particular one, and my attitude on this is still evolving. Although my work is mainly defined by photography, I also work with other means of expression. In recent years I have been experimenting with 3D space in the form of installations, but also with digital techniques such as virtual reality, where visuals, sound and other sensory perceptions are combined in the physical experience of the participant.

Could you briefly describe your study experience?

In 2021 I completed my Master's degree at the Universität Für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna. During my studies I took different classes such as Fine art photography, Applied photography, New media. I have participated in study stays or internships in London and Berlin. At the moment of choosing my studies in 2014, to tell you the truth, I did not know much about how to choose the right school. The decision to study art itself came quite suddenly and unexpectedly. I remember, like many of my friends, I wanted to study in London, but I realised I could not afford it for financial reasons. As well as studying in other European cities that were attractive to me at the time. So I tried more realistic options - Bratislava, Prague and Vienna. The first attempt did not work out at either university, which I completely understand. The second time I was accepted to several schools and I chose Vienna. I cannot judge whether studying there is better than others, as I have only had that experience. It was quite loose, though, and that suited me fine. Alongside my studies I worked in fashion photography, which was necessary and, with the benefit of hindsight, I think also beneficial. In addition to theoretical knowledge, I also gained practical experience. University gave me general knowledge and critical thinking that I lacked before. But I think the study naturally continues on, whether in the premises of the academy or outside of it.

What happened to you after school? How did you manage to catch on abroad? Is it difficult?

Leaving school itself was not a big milestone for me, as I was already in a working environment during my studies. As well as catching on abroad, where I have been working for a long time. Rather, the turning point was the beginning of the pandemic. Then I moved permanently to Berlin, where I had been living temporarily for some time. At that time it was not possible to travel or work commercially, so I turned my attention to the artistic aspect of my work - more specifically, how to make a living and be able to continue doing what fulfils me without the material support of commercial projects. I think that the efforts that have arisen from the aforementioned restrictions have paid off. At least it seems so for now :) Every new challenge is hard - that is why it is a challenge! But that is no reason not to try.

What do you recommend to young people who decide to pursue a creative or artistic career?

I recommend just following how they feel about it. For some, academic study is the way to go and for others it is not. The same with collaborations abroad or collaborations in general. For me personally, these decisions came naturally, following my interests and goals. But it took time, and nothing came overnight. It is a progression of many years full of perseverance. Of course, there are also a lot of disappointments and feelings that something does not go the way one imagined. It is a long haul and one must not be discouraged. Setbacks or rejections are part of the development and shift, as are positive responses or successes. Often it is that experience from which we learn the most. That is why they should not just scare us. Of course it is easy to say, and hard to bear at the given moment. I am still on the road myself, at the beginning of what I hope will be a long journey, and I can never know exactly where it will lead. This is also the magic of creative work.)

Have you ever worked with our cultural diplomacy institutions before? If so, in what way? How do you evaluate the cooperation with the Slovak Institute (SI) in Prague?

I have collaborated with several institutions in Slovakia, namely the Slovak National Theatre and Ballet, the Slovak Radio and the Slovak National Gallery. The exhibition at the Slovak Institute is my first collaboration with an institution of our cultural diplomacy. This exhibition took place at a politically very difficult time (the war in Ukraine). It is hard for me to think about art and exhibitions at the moment, but I rate the collaboration very well. I hope there will be more opportunities like this in the future.

In your opinion, what is the difference between the Slovak and foreign art scene? Can cultural diplomacy also help the domestic art scene?

I do not know if I am expert enough to make such a judgement.) From my personal experience, I feel that in Berlin it is easier for a young artist because the city offers more opportunities for presentation. On the other hand, it also means more "competition" (a word I find inappropriate, as I do not consider my colleagues to be competition). However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we live in an age of global connectivity through the internet. Today, even a young artist who has never travelled beyond the borders of his or her country has the chance to disseminate and present his or her work anywhere in the world. It was the same for me. The initial presentation and contacts made were made online. However, this process has taken several years, and the assistance of various institutions, including cultural diplomacy, can be of great help.

Do you have any exhibitions going on at the moment?

My exhibition entitled SimulacRAUM is held until 28 May at the FOG Gallery in Bratislava, presenting a new shift in my work. If you can, be sure to stop by!



INTERVIEW

The vernissage of the exhibition entitled *Artificial Tears* took place on 10 February 2022 at the Slovak Institute in Prague. In this project, created in 2017, the author addresses the question of the difference between man and machine. More information can be found in the links below. Czech portals play.cz, lifestylenews.cz and mistnikultura.cz were also interested in the vernissage. Lúbia Krénová, Director of the Slovak Institute in Prague, took advice from experts. "On the occasion of the EUNIC Young European Photographer project, I went through research of the best young photographers and Evelyn was the first one," says L. Krénová. Currently, the director of the Prague Institute is working to strengthen cultural relations with the Czech Republic: "I am trying to strengthen the theatrical dialogue, which has an irreplaceable place in the presentation of Slovak art, especially in the Czech Republic. We are preparing a guest appearance of the Slovak National Theatre in Prague's Kolowrat Theatre. The pandemic situation that occurred in 2020 broke many traditions. I feel it is an urgent task to fill this vacuum and to contribute to ensuring that the theatrical dialogue, so important for both our cultures, is not interrupted." The Czech Republic is our closest neighbour; we have excellent relations and even a shared past. "With such a dynamic cultural communication, it is a fundamental task of the Slovak Institute to see the so-called white spots, to strengthen the weaker links in the communication chain and, above all, to

guard quality. Because only the good ones will stay with us," says the director. When asked whether a foreign presentation can also help the Slovak cultural scene, she answers resolutely yes: "It reinforces the confidence of the domestic audience in certain qualities, I even dare to say without pathos that in an indirect way it educates to patriotism, to national pride. If a Slovak, be it an artist, a scientist or an athlete, succeeds abroad, perhaps their own circles will find it harder to bear, because their success will create pressure to raise the benchmarks, to hold up a mirror, to allow confrontation in a wider territorial context. But the ordinary citizen does not begrudge him this success and can quite frankly feel pride. A sense of pride is an investment emotion for the future. I came to Prague over a year ago, and in that time I have been given ample evidence that the Slovak Institute is beginning to have its own credibility. For the first time in history, for example, cooperation with the world-renowned Prague Spring music festival was established. It is a great result and it puts the Slovak Institute or Slovak cultural diplomacy in general in a completely new and different light," says Eubica Krénová of her more than a year-long tenure. The Slovak Institute in Prague is moving to new premises this year; as the building where it is currently located is awaiting reconstruction. "It will be a more challenging couple of months, but I believe there will be a grand opening in the autumn," concludes the director. ~TB

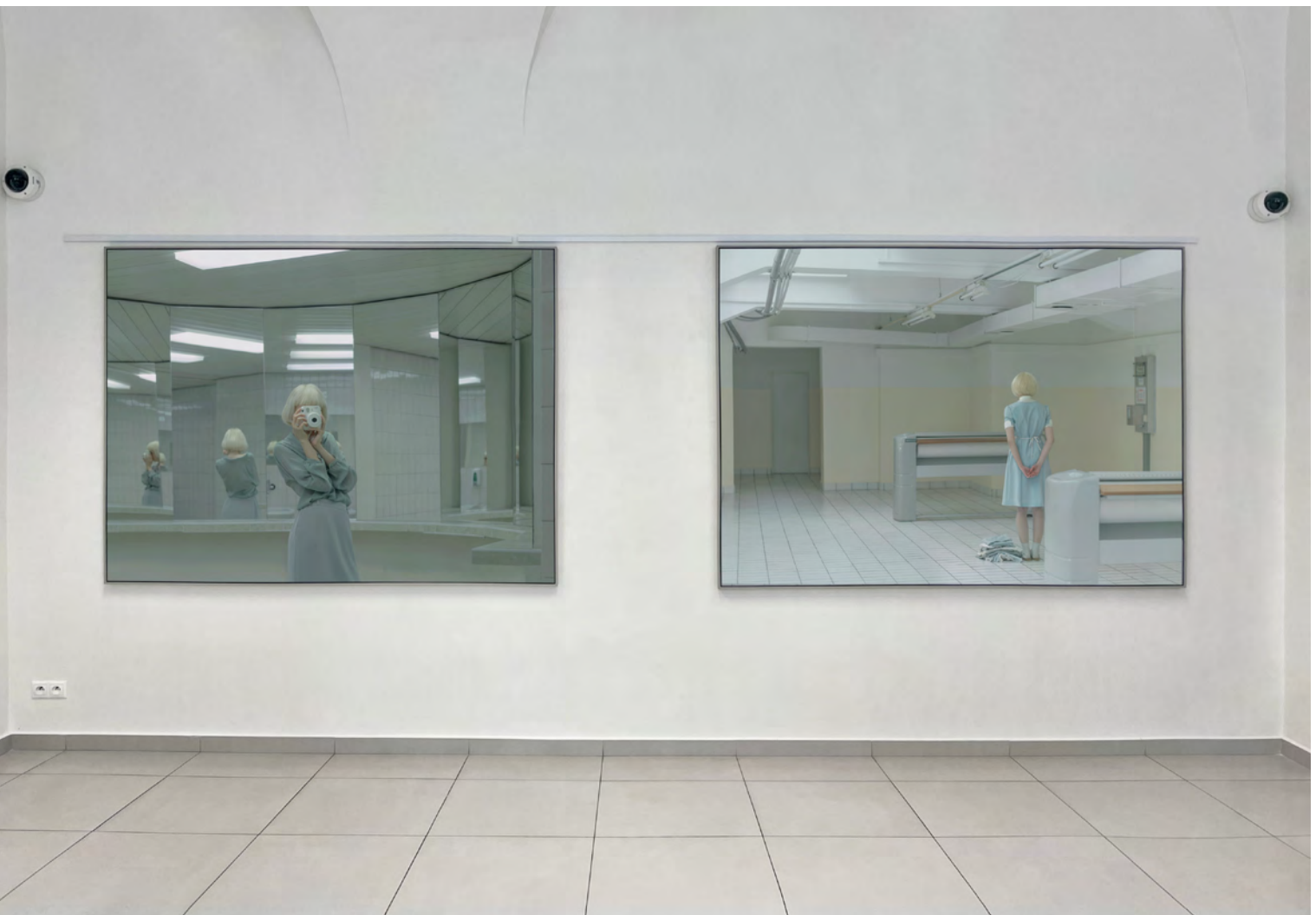




Photo: Natália Evelyn Benčíčová.

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DIPLOMACY AS JAZZ

Diplomacy as Jazz

Jaffa - an ancient port city in Israel, a district in the capital city of Tel Aviv. On the evening of 26 February 2022, one of Hasimta Theatre's smartest "Jazz Alley" clubs. Here a jazz concert kicked off a series of concerts with an international cast, under the joint auspices of the Czech House in Jerusalem, the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Israel and the newly opened Slovak Institute in Jerusalem. Other concerts were held in Ashdod, Carmiel and Rishon LeZion, where jazzmen from Israel, Czech Republic and Slovakia played together mostly in front of sold-out audiences. Great personalities - Shlomi Goldenberg, Miroslav Hloucal, Nikolay Nikitin and Eubomír Šrámek - presented themselves in this line-up for the first time. "I rarely use the term amazing, but these concerts were amazing. Each musician brought two of their original musical arrangements, we had fun. Most of the concerts were sold out

and the music was sexy," recalls Shlomi Goldenberg. Nikolay Nikitin, a Slovak saxophonist, who is a prominent personality of Slovak jazz, has been cooperating with several institutions of Slovak diplomacy abroad since 2004. He has more than ten albums and many international collaborations under his belt. "With Euboš Šrámek, a pianist, composer, producer and Radio_Head Awards winner, we have been playing together for a long time. Miroslav and I have been playing together in several projects in recent years. We were introduced to Shlomi by Miroslav, who had performed with him many times before," says Nikolay about the meeting of the musicians. In December 2022, the quartet will take part in a tour in Bratislava at the Gypsy Jazz Festival on the Slovak Radio and in Prague.

"The collaboration was made possible by contacting the exceptional Israeli jazz player and promoter Shlomi Goldenberg, who is an established musician in Israel. Immediately after listening to the recordings, he suggested that they do not one concert, but four.. Of course, with this type of events it is great to have a colleague you can rely on, the director of the Czech House, Robert Mikoláš, who introduced me to Shlomi. Slovak jazz is not commonplace on the Israeli scene, so the local audience was naturally curious. I think it was a great promo for Slovakia," says Jakub Ůrik, director of SI in Jerusalem.



"I rarely use the term amazing, but these concerts were amazing. Each musician brought two of their originals, we had fun. Most of the concerts were sold out and the music was sexy." (Shlomi Goldenberg)



Nikolaj Nikitin, Ľubomír Šrámek, Shlomi Goldenberg on the left and jazz quartet on the right.

Photo: Dorota Holubová, Inbal Mesika, SI Jeruzalem.

[FACEBOOK](#)

Already the first concert at the Hasimta Theatre was one of the best, according to the reviews. "This theatre has jazz nights every week, on Wednesdays, so there is a lot of competition. We were then pleasantly surprised by the audience in Rishon LeZion or Carmiel in the north of Israel, where children were also among the listeners. Even, as it turned out, among them was a gifted thirteen-year-old boy studying jazz and playing the piano. During a break, our musicians

agreed to play together with him. It was great, they all complemented each other perfectly, for which the audience appreciated them with a long applause. The jazzmen were also applauded for taking the boy among them. Israelis love such spontaneity," says Robert Mikoláš, director of the Czech House, about his experience. And he adds: "Exceptional cooperation must have two main prerequisites. In the first place, it is mutual relations, and these relations between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, between the Czechs and the Slovaks, are the best they can be. But everything is also about people and the first instance of our cooperation was just the Czech-Slovak tour of jazz musicians in Israel. We have even managed to bring in musicians who are among Europe's top musicians."

More and more erudite cultural diplomats are representing our countries. "It helps artists a lot if they are introduced to countries through an official channel, such as a cultural institute or an embassy. It would be much harder without cultural diplomacy. This is how we artists also know that we have people in big cities who have plans and dramaturgy, who can coordinate bigger projects, help with logistics or production. Institute directors and staff have much greater success in reaching out to major cultural institutions abroad. The result of such work of Jakub and Robert is the Czech-Slovak-Israeli cooperation, which we have successfully started together: We are very grateful to the Arts Support Fund and the Music Centre, which are able to support such projects," says Nikolaj Nikitin about cultural diplomacy.

"Diplomacy should strengthen cultural ties between countries. Czech and Slovak diplomacy has a lot to gain by showing what talents are growing up in your countries and how great the culture is," concludes Shlomi Goldenberg. ~TB

KAROL KÁLLAY - CONNECTIONS

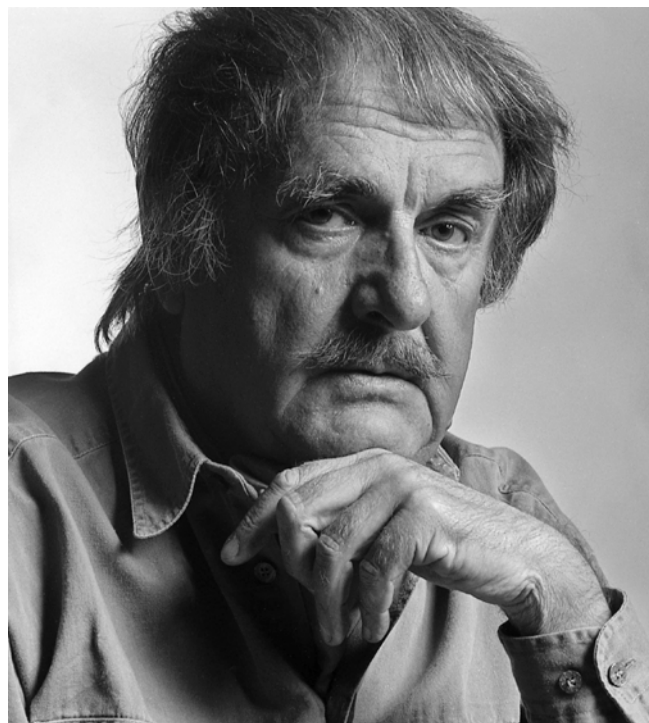
On 3 February 2022, the Slovak Institute (SI) in Berlin presented an exhibition of photographs by the legendary Slovak photographer Karol Kállay under the title Connections.

Karol Kállay was one of the most important Slovak artists of the 20th century. He was a Slovak photographer, documentary filmmaker, author of reportage photographic series from abroad, monothematic publications and photographs of modern clothing for both domestic and foreign magazines. Karol Kállay's distinctive style and special feeling for light bring a unique atmosphere to his photographs that has been admired for decades. The exhibition was opened by Marián Pauer, a long-time friend of Karol Kállay, who was also his curator, and has been writing about the work of this exceptional photographer for more than three decades. He also collaborated in the creation of the book Connections, after which the exhibition was named. "Karol Kállay was an excellent photographer, noble person and reliable friend. A characteristic feature of his photographic handwriting was a sense of the dynamics of life, of immediacy, of the Bressonian right moment. He never went to extremes, he was an excellent observer. He was an eternal seeker and admirer of beauty, with the infallibility of a seismograph he could sense and capture the gusts of the soul of others. He impressed with gracefulness and manners of a gentleman," he recalls in his opening speech.

Karol Kállay has published more than 40 pictorial publications. He has prepared dozens of solo exhibitions both at home and abroad. In 1970, the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) awarded him the FIAP Excellence title. In 1984 he received the UNESCO Prize for his publication Los Angeles and in 1992 he was awarded the title of Photographer of the Year by the editors of GEO magazine in Hamburg and became a member of the Bilderberg Agency. In 1998, the President of the Slovak Republic bestowed on him the state decoration - the Pribina Cross of the First Class, and in the following year he received the Leopold J. Danihels Award. In 2002, he was awarded the Tatra Bank Prize for Art, in 2003 the Crystal Wing and in 2004 he received the Grand Honorary Award of the Decade for Art from the Slovak Gold Foundation. He died in 2012 at the age of 86. ~TB

Photo: Karol Kállay.

[FACEBOOK](#)



Above: Karol Kállay - self-portrait. Right: Karol Kállay - Dubai



FRANTIŠEK VESELÝ - PRETVORÍME KRAJINU NA SVOJ OBRAZ

An exhibition of paintings by František Veselý from the collection of the East Slovak Gallery entitled Let's transform the landscape into our own image was held at the Slovak Institute in Budapest from 16 February to 30 March 2022.

"Academic painter František Veselý was intrinsically connected with his hometown of Stropkov, with its inhabitants and environment. In the early years of his work, in the 1950s, at a time when climate change was not talked about, Veselý makes a striking reference to environmental issues. The early works of the as yet untrained artist are valuable evidence of the insensitive and committed transformation of man's natural and cultivated coexistence with his external environment. In post-war art history, František Veselý has a solitary and defining position in relation to the themes of motifs related to constructive enthusiasm for socialism or celebrations of industrialisation and technical achievements, which most often resonate on the official scene. I think his work is really timeless, it is like his own artistic project, which is based on environmental aesthetics with reference to environmental issues that are relevant also today," says Miroslav Kleban, the curator of the exhibition. In 2019, František Veselý's narrative monograph - Predictions about the landscape was published, which is the first comprehensive monographic covering of the author's work and life. In 2020, the monograph was awarded the White Cube Prize by the Council of Galleries of Slovakia for the best editorial project.

ANTON LACHKÝ: SET YOUR MIND FREE

The Central European Dance Theatre Association in cooperation with the Trafó House of Contemporary Art and the Slovak Institute in Budapest organised a dance performance Set Your Mind Free on 17 February 2022 at Trafó. The choreography by Slovak Anton Lachky was put into creative form by the artists of the Central European Dance Theatre. His latest work is an example of the freedom and creative power of the mind and unbridled imagination. ~TB

Photo: Dusa Gábor.

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WE WILL TRANSFORM THE LANDSCAPE INTO OUR IMAGE - 1979
FRANTIŠEK VESELÝ

MILAN VAGAČ - UNFOLD

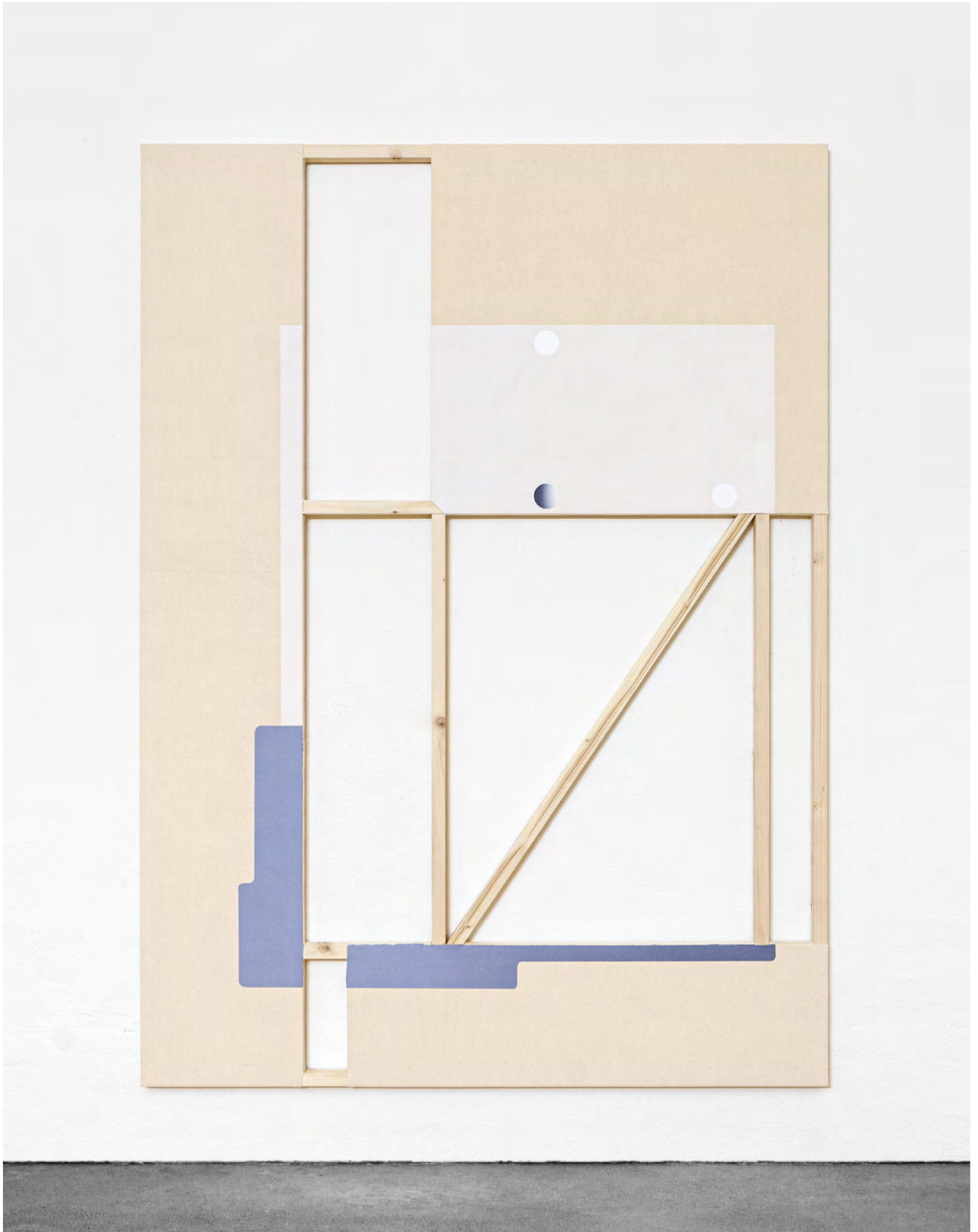
On 8 March 2022, the Slovak artist Milan Vagač opened his solo exhibition entitled *Unfold* at the Galerie du Haut-Pavé in Paris, which has been giving space to young artists and contemporary art since 1953. The exhibition was created in cooperation with the Slovak Institute in Paris.

In the gallery, Vagač presents works from a series called BAU, which he has been working on continuously since 2016. The name BAU, which he borrowed from the world-famous Bauhaus school, can be seen as a reference to the most important foundations of his work. He finds these mainly in the legacy of modern art, modern architecture and design. The artist deliberately suppresses his creativity and emphasizes the very process of painting turning into an act of production. It is a unique author's approach, which is a contribution to the Slovak art scene. Milan Vagač is one of the most outstanding personalities of the contemporary art scene in Slovakia. In 2016, he completed his doctoral studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. He is the co-founder and editor of *X Magazine of Contemporary Drawing*, winner of the Essl Art Award, and the Headlands Artist in Residence programme in California. He has presented his works in galleries in Estonia, Italy, Hungary and Austria. ~SI Paris



Photo: Milan Vagač.

[FACEBOOK](#)



OTO HUDEC - WE ARE THE GARDEN

On 16 March 2022, Album Arte Gallery in Rome and the Slovak artist Oto Hudec, in collaboration and with the financial support of the Slovak Institute in Rome, opened the author's exhibition *We are the garden* focused on the artist's vision of the world affected by climate change and on the impact of the Anthropocene on our planet. In the exhibition, Oto Hudec presents a model of self-sufficient living (or rather surviving) in a near dystopian future, at a time when the Earth will experience the fatal consequences of the climate crisis.

The exhibition is based on a story telling about the life of a man and a little girl in this future environment, about their daily struggle with high temperatures, with unbreathable dusty air; with windstorms without water and with toxic substances in a landscape devastated by human activity. The story also tells how it all started: the changes were inconspicuous at first, almost unnoticed: insects gradually dwindled in the landscape, the weather

changed faster; summers became unbearably hot, winters surprisingly cold, floods and fires became more frequent. Gradually the landscape turned into an inhospitable wasteland. The life of the pair is depicted in an animated video suggesting the everyday life of the protagonists, probably the only survivors so far; moving in protective spacesuits through the arid land. Under the curatorial guidance of Lýdia Pribišová, the selection of works and site-specific objects by the young Slovak artist touches on burning topics that global society is becoming increasingly aware of in relation to the threat to the ecosystem. Oto Hudec is an artist and activist whose work responds not only to the ongoing climate change, but also to the consequences of migration, he covers social situations of marginalised groups of the population in Slovakia. He is one of three Slovaks exhibiting at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the first one whose work has been included in the Musée de l'Homme. ~SI Rome

Photo: Oto Hudec.

[FACEBOOK](#)





MASTERS OF SLOVAK GRAPHIC ARTS

On 24 March 2022, the Slovak Institute in Warsaw hosted the vernissage of the exhibition Masters of Slovak Graphic Arts from the collections of the Tatra Gallery in Poprad.

The development of Slovak graphic arts is connected with the development and personalities of the Department of Graphic Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. Its founder was Vincent Hložník, his successor and pupil was Albín Brunovský, who influenced and educated a strong generation of artists, the so-called Brunovský School. Karol Ondreička and the graphic artists Vladimír Gažovič, Dušan Kállay, Kamila Štanclová, who are still active today, worked alongside these authors. The exhibition includes a selection of works by the aforementioned artists, as well as artists of the middle generation of the Brunovský School of Graphic Arts, such as Katarína Vavrová and Igor Piačka. The Tatra Gallery in Poprad, as a collection-creating institution, was founded in 1960. Since 2009, it has been permanently housed in the unique premises of the former steam power plant (a National Cultural Monument since 2003), which it has gradually renovated. In the musical part of the programme, Urszula Nowakowska-Żwirdowska, a graduate of the F. Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, played the harp. ~SI Warsaw

Photo: SI Varšava, Tatranská galéria v Poprade.

[FACEBOOK](#)





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LINDA A L'UBOMÍR HNÁTOVIČ

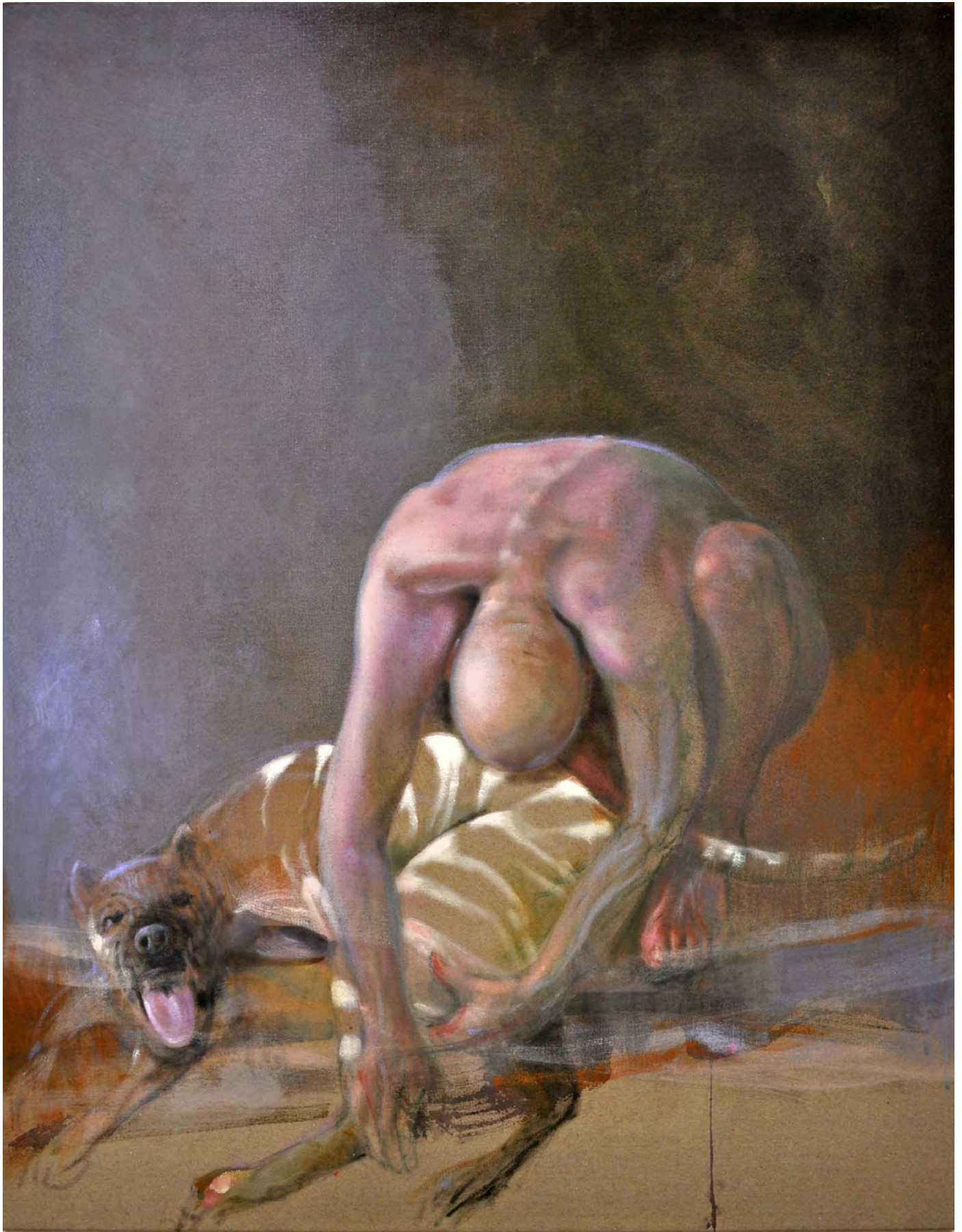
On 8 March 2022, the vernissage of the exhibition of the Vienna-based Slovak artist Lubomír Hnátovič together with his daughter Linda attracted a number of Viennese artists to the Slovak Institute (SI) in Vienna, who are very familiar with Hnátovič's work and previous activities in Austria. In the current exhibition, in addition to his typical and well-known figurative works, he also presented his landscape paintings. After emigrating, Eubomír Hnátovič attended a drawing course with Prof. Willi Kopf at the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna. Above all, however, he continued to educate himself as a self-taught artist, inspired by the great masters Goya, Velasquez, Ribera and, most recently, Francis Bacon. Alongside this, he developed his own distinctive style that transcended all fashion and market-strategic considerations. Each of his portraits is an attempt to capture emotion in its natural expression. Linda Hnátovič studied philosophy and multimedia at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. After a trip around the world, she developed a particular interest in still life painting. In her paintings, Linda tries to show objects of nature and everyday life in their beauty and as oversized objects. Günther

Weiss, the curator of the exhibition, presented the work of both artists in more detail. The opening of the exhibition was further enhanced by a musical concert of Longital, a well-known Slovak musical group, whose artistic performance completely fit into the atmosphere of the exhibition. Longital was founded by Daniel Salontay and Shina, musical globetrotters from Bratislava's Dlhe diely, who have performed in many European countries, as well as in the USA and Canada. At SI Vienna they played together with the pianist and multi-instrumentalist Dan Špiner. The songs and special lyrics of the Longital group create extraordinary emotions and stories against a musical background. Shina's charismatic vocals, deep string-played bass lines and distinctive stage presentation are balanced by Dan's guitar playing - from subtle minimalist tones, jazz elements to unbridled wild chords. Longital is one of the perennial stars of the Slovak independent music scene, with twelve albums and numerous music awards to its credit. ~SIVienna

Photo: Linda Hnátovič, Eubomír Hnátovič.

[FACEBOOK](#)





CREATIVE EUROPE IN FIGURES

CREATIVE EUROPE IN FIGURES

The Creative Europe programme is approved by the European Commission for a period of seven years. The programme's grant scheme co-finances the creation and distribution of projects, facilitates the exchange of experiences and contributes to the mobility of artists from the cultural and creative industries. Between 2014 and 2020, the Creative Europe programme supported the creation of hundreds of European audiovisual, visual, performance and design works. The total budget of the programme for 2021 to 2027 is EUR 2.46 billion, with the original proposal increased by EUR 600 million, which is earmarked for the renewal and strengthening of the cultural and creative industries, as well as the audiovisual and media sectors, and to mitigate any negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Slovakia implements a comparable number of projects as countries of similar size, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary or Portugal. The programme has two sub-programmes, MEDIA and Culture. As Zuzana Duchová, a coordinator from the Slovak office of the Creative Europe programme, says, the Culture sub-programme, which su-

ports organisations and international cooperation, is less visible to people than the MEDIA sub-programme. The latter, on the other hand, is also better known to the general public, as its logo appears in the titles of films screened in our cinemas that are co-financed by the sub-programme. In the last seven-year period, support from the programme was received by e.g. the Pohoda Festival, the Slovak National Gallery and the BRAK publishing house, which implemented a project to promote the European graphic novel in Slovakia. In 2021, in addition to the major schemes, the Culture sub-programme continued with the i-Portunus project, which focuses on individual staff mobility in culture. Slovak entities have received almost 19 thousand euros of support within the i-Portunus project. Successful applicants include Ondrej Veselý (music), Martina Vannayová (literary translation), Andrea Kalinová (architecture), Martin Zaiček (architecture) and Viktória Mravčáková (architecture). Within the MEDIA sub-programme, 6 Slovak distribution companies received automatic support for cinema distribution in the total amount of



more than EUR 440 thousand and 26 Slovak cinemas in the Europa Cinemas network received indirect support in the amount of more than EUR 215 thousand. When evaluating the success of Slovakia within the programme, Zuzana Duchová reminds that not all criteria are measurable, for example, positive experiences that the implemented projects bring cannot be quantified. She stresses the need to think first and foremost about the quality of culture.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES CANNOT BE QUANTIFIED

One of the successful projects that received support from the Creative Europe programme is the Re-imagine Europe project of the association of groups for culture A4. The project brings together ten partners and aims to engage a young, digitally connected generation in the development and discovery of new ideas and artistic creation responding to the current social situation in the world. Its author, Slávo Krekovič, expects from the project the opportunity to implement things that could not be implemented otherwise, exchange of experience, inspiration and advancement to the international level. When asked if he would go to a project funded by the Creative Europe programme again, he answers unequivocally that he definitely would. And what a message would he send to future generations of applicants? To not give up and to have patience.



Kreatívna
Európa



WHO CAN APPLY FOR SUPPORT?

The MEDIA sub-programme aims to increase the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry in an open European market and the circulation of European audiovisual works. The grants are intended for independent producers, distributors, event organisers (trainings, festivals, markets) and other entities in the fields of training professionals, project development, distribution, promotion, working with audiences, as well as for cinema networks and international co-production funds. The Culture sub-programme supports artists and organisations to help them disseminate the cultural content of projects with a European dimension. It enables cultural and creative entities to fund collaborative programmes or publish literary translations. It also helps create networks and platforms that focus on new talents and international content of cultural events.

HOW TO APPLY FOR SUPPORT?

Once the Creative Europe programme is approved, individual calls open to specific applicants are published. Distribution and administrative support for project applicants in Slovakia is provided by the Creative Europe Desk Slovakia office, which is part of the organisational structure of the Slovak Film Institute. It will help applicants with practical questions, including, inter alia, with the completion of the application for support. The call is open to organisations only, it is not open to artists as individuals. Projects funded by the Creative Europe programme work on the principle of subsidiarity, which means that the applicant must also receive support at home.

HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE FROM THE PUBLICATION OF THE CALL TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT?

It takes 1 to 2 months for an experienced project manager to write an application and about 6 months to evaluate it. The project can be carried out over a period of 6 months to 4 years.

Photo: Kreatívna Európa.

[WWW](http://www.kreativnaeuropa.eu)

SELECTION FROM THE APRIL - JUNE 2022 PROGRAM

BERLIN

15 May - 4 September 2022 / Lea Fekete: Visual identity. Textile painting, clothing design, jewellery; musical accompaniment by Marcel Palonder: Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Berlin.

4 June 2022 / Party in the 21st century. Exhibition. Lusatian-Serbian Museum, Budyšin.

23 June - September 2022 / Juraj Čutek. Exhibition of the academic sculptor. Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Berlin.

BUDAPEST

7 April 2022 - 6 May 2022 / Photo Festival 2022. Exhibition of photographs by Andrei Balco. Budapest.

25 May 2022 - 9 June 2022 / Juraj Čutek and Alexej Vojtášek. Exhibition associated with a concert by Peter Lipa. Hybrid Art Gallery, Budapest.

May 2022 / Viktor Hulík, Mária Balážová. Group exhibition. Vasarely Museum, Budapest.

June 2022 / Ilona Németh. Exhibition of the important personality of Slovak contemporary art.

JERUSALEM

29 April 2022 / International Jazz Days. Givon Square.

30 April 2022 / Pianist Drahoslav Banga will perform as part of the Josef Fečo Trio. HaSimta Theatre, Tel Aviv.

May 2022 / First artist residency at the Slovak Institute in Jerusalem. Painter Peter Cvik will work for a month at the Slovak Institute in Jerusalem.

PRAGUE

9 May 2022 / Nature Nature. Vernissage of the photographic exhibition, symbolically on the Day of Europe.

28 May 2022 / Prague Spring - Prague Offspring. Premiere of the Slovak composer Adrián Demoč's composition "Harmony and Trembling" performed by Klangforum Wien, conductor Bas Wieggers, at the music festival.

ROME

12 May 2022 - 30 August 2022 / Martin Augustín - Roman women. Author's exhibition. Representative premises of the Slovak Institute in Rome.

1 June 2022 / Concert of the Visegrád Four countries quartet. Concert of the quartet under the direction of conductor R. Porroni with Slovak pianist Miloš Bihári. Milan.

16 June 2022 / Presentation of Slovak writer Ivana Dobráková. Author's presentation of Slovak writer Ivana Dobráková and her book Mothers and Truckers within the EUNIC project Connected Europe / Europe in Circolo - Rome.

23 June 2022 / Piano recital by Marco Clavorá Braulin. Recital by the artist of Slovak-Italian origin as part of the Summer Festival Filarmonica Romana 2022 - Rome.

VIENNA

5 May 2022 / Ďuriš, Straka, Ťapucha, Bokor. Vernissage of the joint exhibition, musical accompaniment by Error Jam.

7-5 2022 / Europafest 2022. Street festival. Mariahilferstrasse Vienna.

17 May 2022 / Music Festival EUNIC. Slovak cooperation with the Croatian Cultural Institute and the Slovak Institute in Vienna.

29 June 2022 / Barbara Priešinská. Vernissage of the exhibition. Slovak Institute in Vienna.

PARIS

April 2022 - Dana Tomečková's artist residency at the Cité internationale des arts. The artist comes to Paris from the Department of Applied Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava.

May 2022 / Slovakia at Visages d'Europe. The collective Parisian exhibition of European photography on the banks of the Seine, where Slovakia will be represented by the young photographer Zuzana Pustaiová.

9 - 12 June 2022 / Banquet révélations. Presentation of Slovak artists: Viktor Frešo, Zuzana Svatiková, Tomáš Gabzdil Libertíny, Marek Kvetan, Dorota Sadovská, Dávid Demjanovič and Jarmila Mitříková. Grand Palais Ephémère.

WARSAW

4 April - 9 May 2022 / Exhibition Orava Castle, Orava Forest Railway - Uniques of Slovakia. Plenary presentation of the exhibition. Warsaw, historical centre, pedestrian zone.

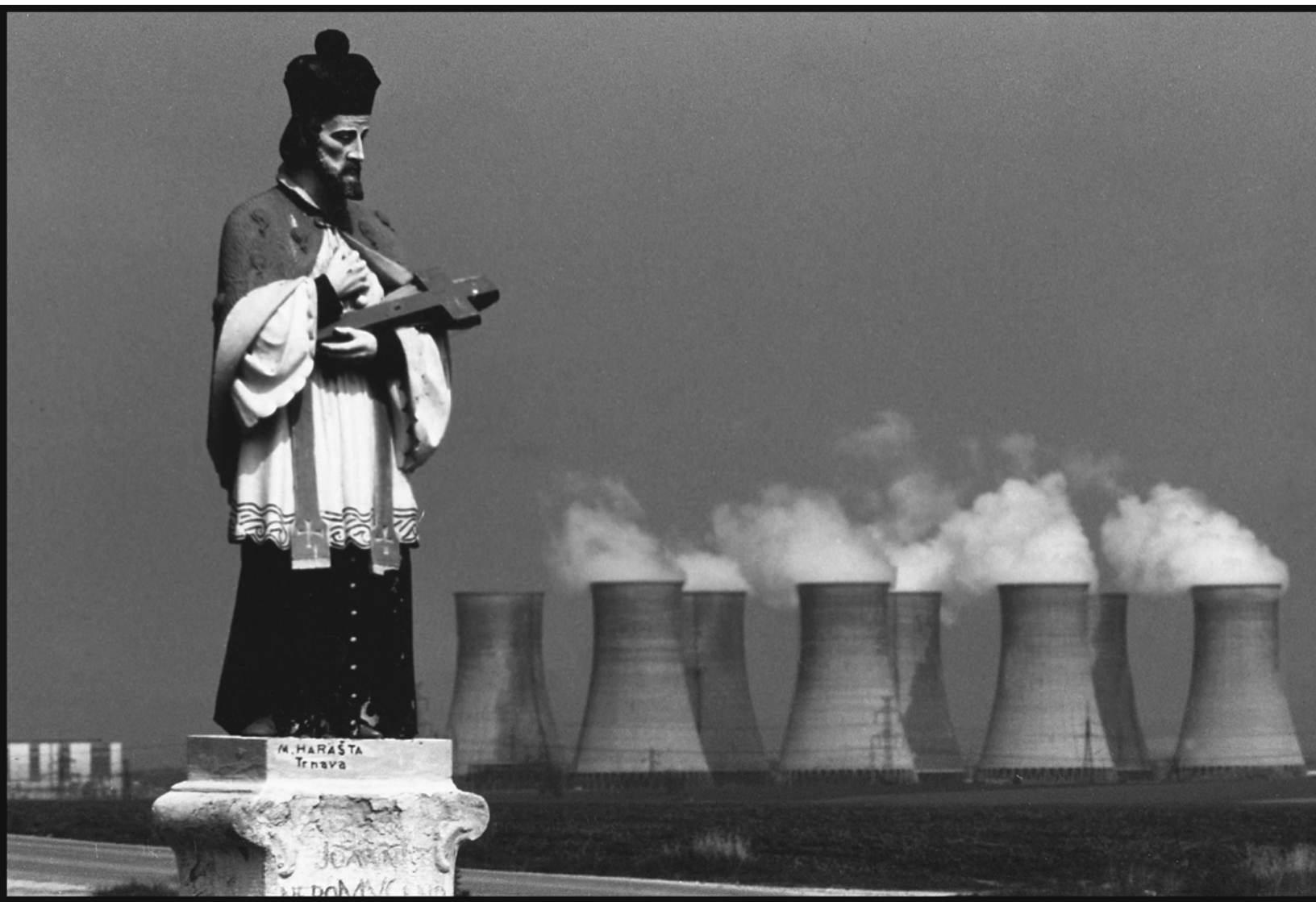
28 April 2022 / Alexander Dubček - symbol of the Czechoslovak Spring. Vernissage of the exhibition. Gallery W-Z.

12 May 2022 / Daniel Brogyányi - Hearts in the heart. Vernissage of the exhibition. Warsaw - Slovak Institute in Warsaw.

29-5 2022 / Slovak Day in Zabrze. Performance of Slovak musicians, presentation of Slovak craftsmen, gastronomy and regions.

June 2022 / Week of Slovak Culture in Warsaw. Exhibition This is Slovakia, screening of a film about Slovakia, lecture, creative workshops, gastronomy.

Programme changes reserved. For more information on the exact location, time and other events, please visit www.mzv.sk or the social platforms of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Slovak embassies abroad and Slovak Institutes.



KAROL KÁLLAY (1926 - 2012)



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