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The latest from Slovenia

ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA: **The Government wins a vote of confidence**

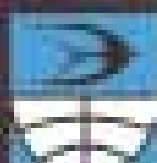
IN FOCUS INTERVIEW: **Miha Klinar** BUSINESS INTERVIEW: **Philippe Starck**

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Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



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Photo: Personal archive

**SINFO – SLOVENIAN INFORMATION**

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Photo: Bruno Toč

Tanja Glogovčan, editor

In the whirlwind of the Month of Design

In November, Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek won a vote of confidence on her leadership of the Government. The budget for the next two years was passed and the Slovenian Government received a positive signal from Brussels that it has been implementing its work well. Read more on these topics inside.

The focus of this month's issue of Sinfo is the Month of Design. We present the best of Slovenian design, the Silent Revolutions exhibition and world-renowned designer Philippe Starck. We also feature an interview with Miha Klinar, director of Gigodesign.

Jurij Dobrila, vice-president of the Designers Society of Slovenia, contributes a column in which he considers the world of design as a global category. Slovenian design is gradually enhancing its ties with the 'I feel Slovenia' national brand and is thus acquiring a special value in proving the excellence of products. The Government Communication Office of the Republic of Slovenia will strive to further support the excellence and innovation of Slovenian entrepreneurs, designers and innovators. We will be happy to feature them in the magazine in the future.

The Borštnik Awards brought variety to the cultural scene in October. This year's slogan of the Borštnik Meeting, 'Pičimo!', has a colloquial meaning: that creators in culture are here to stay. Olga Kacjan, the recipient of the Borštnik Ring, is presented inside.

Slovenians are becoming a nation not only of skiers but also of runners. The number of participants at this year's Ljubljana Marathon reached an all-time record and we could not overlook this event.

The goal of our editorial board is to improve Sinfo and make it even more attractive in the coming year. In addition to your copy of this month's magazine, we also enclose prize questions. In this and previous issues, we wrote about the 'I feel Slovenia' brand, which we are convinced you found interesting, so we prepared a question for you on this topic. The second question refers to your satisfaction with the magazine: which topics deserve more attention and which less? Would you like to become more actively involved? If there are prize questions, of course there must also be prizes. Let us keep them a secret for now, just as we have not mentioned everything featured in this issue.



Photo: GCO

Political stability is crucial

Slovenia is approaching a key period in its mission to overcome the crisis, which has been suffocating its economic growth and social development since 2009. The results of stress tests and reviews of the balance sheets of ten Slovenian banks will be revealed soon, and these will show the extent of the gap in the banking system and, in particular, how much money the country will have to invest to recapitalise the three largest systemic banks, in which the state is the majority shareholder. These results will determine Slovenia's future policy: whether the country will be able to manage on its own, or have to request financial aid and thus surrender a substantial portion of its autonomy and sovereignty. It is a question of planning key policies, particularly fiscal, and for the existence of the social state in its present extent. Although the indicators of this have been worsening in recent years, Slovenia has succeeded in maintaining a high level of social rights and is certainly considered a socially inclusive society. The data of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an elite club of developed countries including Slovenia, prove this. Slovenia has the most equitable per capita distribution of income in Europe.

The so-called Gini coefficient for Slovenia is 0.24, 0.30 for Switzerland, and 0.34 for Italy, while the average for all 34 OECD member states is 0.32. For a comparison, the coefficient for the United States of America is 0.38. One of the key factors making this ratio possible in Slovenia is the undoubtedly strong and well-organised trade unions, which greatly influence decision-making on the social state, which in the opinion of the Slovenian public is still one of the most important values.

This is also expressed in the fierce public discussions on the property tax. So far, Slovenia has not had a regular property tax, unlike most other countries, but only a charge for the use of building land. Several governments anticipated the introduction of this tax, but none wanted to swallow this bitter pill, as they risked the loss of political support. The current Government has approached this project not only in search of additional revenue, but also because a modern tax system

has to be introduced for this field, based on transparency, legality, efficiency and the principle of equal treatment and proportional burdening. Many people who are liable currently avoid paying tax on their property, which is also the result of poor and insufficient records. OECD data show that revenue from property tax in Slovenia currently accounts for 0.6 per cent of GDP, while the OECD average is 1.8 per cent. The proposed act will increase this share to one per cent and will enable a long-term structural change in tax resources, and also a change in attitudes. Property ownership is an important value for Slovenians, who in the former Yugoslavia built houses en masse with the help of loans, hard work, mutual solidarity and ingenuity. Nowadays, it is common for a retired couple, or frequently only one family member, to live in a large house, while the children move out or build their own houses. Maintenance costs are too high, so many people, particularly the elderly, have found themselves on the brink of social distress, although as house or property owners they are not poor in terms of assets. On the other hand, there are many young families who simply cannot afford their own apartment in such severe economic conditions, which also causes increasing social tension and dissatisfaction. In this grave situation, the Government has taken certain measures to gradually introduce new degrees of property tax and arrange them over an extended period. Revenue from the new tax is one of the basic budgetary resources for the next two years, so not much room remains for concessions.

The Prime Minister is aware that political stability is crucial for the implementation of the budget and all the planned reforms, so she made the passage of the budget dependent on a vote of confidence. The vote was successful, and the government won the confidence. The same day, the European Commission assessed the budget proposal as a step in the right direction, which also means new step toward political stability in Slovenia. Soon the Government will be faced with new challenges related to bank recapitalisation and the provision of the financial resources to accomplish it which will require a lot of political stability and wisdom.

Successful round of borrowing

Slovenia has sold the eurobonds with a 4.7% coupon interest to a private international institutional investor. Minister of Finance Uroš Čufer said the new round of borrowing should be seen as facilitating the country's access to financial markets in the first quarter of next year.

Slovenia issued a EUR 1.5bn three-year eurobond. Asked by public broadcaster TV Slovenija how delaying the publication of stress test results for banks affected Slovenia's position on financial markets, Čufer said the government was doing everything in its power to minimize the uncertainty. He believes this has been partly already done when the budget for 2014 and the real estate tax were passed in parliament. An important signal to financial markets was also, according to minister Čufer, the government's winning a vote of confidence in parliament as well as the latest successful round of borrowing.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Minister of Finance Uroš Čufer thinks that the publication of bank stress tests, which is expected in December, would additionally reduce the level of uncertainty.

Slovenian breakfast

On Slovenian Food Day in November, Traditional Slovenian Breakfast was served in Slovenian schools and kindergartens. Children had milk, honey, butter, bread and apples of Slovenian origin. Many Slovenian politicians joined the children at the breakfast.

With this project, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment wishes to highlight the importance of locally produced and processed food and healthy eating habits among children in kindergartens and schools, and to encourage public institutions, parents, educators and other public to purchase local food and eat healthier. The project included almost 273,000 children at 361 kindergartens and 488 elementary schools.

Photo: Archives of MAE



Dejan Židan, the Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, joined the pupils at Murska Sobota Elementary School at their Traditional Slovenian Breakfast. The Minister's perfect breakfast consists of a fresh bun, butter, good jam, yoghurt and coffee.

Slovenia and Croatia in the EU

Issues concerning unemployed youth in both countries were addressed at the round table 'Slovenia and Croatia in the EU', organised by the Information Office of the European Parliament in Novo mesto. Slovenian MEP Tanja Fajon and Croatian MEP Davor Ivo Stier participated in the discussion.

Tanja Fajon stated that young people on both sides of the border were given new opportunities arising from European incentives and regional cooperation following Croatia's accession to the EU. With successful, innovative and creative ideas and cross-border integration, European funds would be accessed more easily, she said. Her Croatian counterpart stressed that a higher political culture and harmonisation of structural reforms are necessary on both sides of the border, for which only one political option will not suffice, but a minimum of political unity is also required in order to produce long-term results.



Photo: Rado Božič/STA

Representatives of young entrepreneurs from both sides of the border pointed out the numerous barriers they encounter in developing their business. Matic Vidic, a representative of StartUP Novo mesto, also spoke about relevant issues.

The Government successful at turning the wheel of fortune

The budget complies with the rules, but not much room remains for concessions

The National Assembly adopted the amendments to the national budget for 2014. The budget was also assessed in Brussels, where it is believed that the Government is taking action to turn the

economy around, although there is little room for manoeuvre. The business sector and the coalition are pleased.

Photo: Archives of STA



“As an empiricist, I am usually quite hesitant to give general assessments, especially assessments of Member States’ Governments. But I can say that when facing three challenges, – the banking sector, structural reforms and fiscal policy – the Slovenian Government is taking very decisive measures to turn the economic wheel of fortune and ensure an economic turnabout,” stated European Commissioner Rehn.

With the budgets for the next two years confirmed by the Parliament, the Government is pursuing the objective of public finance consolidation. The budget deficit of 1.5 billion euros permitted for this year is to be reduced to one billion in 2014, which is equal to 2.9 per cent of GDP. In 2015, it will be additionally reduced to 2.4 per cent of GDP.

When the budget was adopted, Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek said that she believed that economic growth and lower unemployment would be noted already in the second half of 2014. She is certain that citizens would soon feel the positive effects of the Government’s work.

Uroš Čufer, the Minister of Finance, shared her opinion when noting that the budget was a sign that the Governmental coalition was able to agree and follow through, which was a good foundation for the future.

BRUSSELS’ ASSESSMENT IS POSITIVE

In Brussels, it was assessed that the budget complied with the rules, but not much room remained for concessions. “It seems that Slovenia is taking efficient measures in 2013 to eliminate the

excessive general government deficit,” according to the European Commission’s assessment. Olli Rehn, the European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, believes that “the Government is being very decisive in confronting the challenges in the banking sector, structural reforms and fiscal policy in order to turn the wheel of fortune and turn the economy around.” He again called for reform of the management of state-owned companies and structural reforms.

The latter message was highlighted at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, where it was assessed that Slovenia needs a new development agreement, which will remove barriers to change, ensure urgent structural reforms and enable a social state. The Brussels’ assessment was evaluated as largely positive by Slovenian economists. According to economist Jože P. Damjan, the assessment from Brussels was expected and reasonable. Economist Sašo Polanec pointed out that the Government has taken numerous measures which increase taxes, but done little in the area of expenditure on wages and pensions. The Government should also implement an analy-

sis of employment in the public sector and reform the remuneration system. Nevertheless, Polanec thought that the budget was neutral.

Meanwhile, the expected yield of Slovenian bonds fell below six per cent after a long time, and the Government also issued bonds in the Euromarket after some time: three-year bonds worth 1.5 billion euros, with an annual coupon interest rate of 4.7 per cent. In this regard, Prime Minister Bratušek stressed that financial markets were never closed for Slovenia.

SLOVENIA’S ACTIONS ARE DECISIVE AND EFFECTIVE

Relating to the banking sector, European Commissioner Rehn noted that the results of reviewing the quality of assets and stress tests in Slovenian banks would be known at the beginning of December, after which it would be possible to evaluate conditions in the banking sector accurately. He nevertheless assessed that Slovenia is already taking decisive and effective action. According to Rehn, the European Commission and the European Central Bank firmly support Slovenia’s efforts, while the Slovenian Government and its central bank are striving to do as much as they can. Regarding economic reforms, the Commissioner repeated the appeal to reform the management of state-owned companies, and pointed out that Slovenia’s measures relating to the recent budgetary decisions would be closely monitored with regard to fiscal policy. “Slovenia is taking decisive measures, and its draft budget is in accordance with the rules, but not much room for manoeuvre or for any kind of error really exist,” he warned.

The Government wins vote of confidence

Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek is certain that Slovenia will succeed without foreign aid

The National Assembly passed the amendments to the national budget for 2014, giving a vote of confidence to the Government of Alenka Bratušek. The National Assembly also confirmed the budget for 2015 and the property tax. In a

speech thanking deputies for their support, Bratušek said that she had kept the promise she made when taking office, which was that she would do everything in order for Slovenia to solve its own problems without foreign aid.

When the vote of confidence was confirmed, Bratušek thanked her coalition partners for their trust and readiness to find the best solutions for Slovenia in spite of their different political programmes. Bratušek believes that the joint aim of the Government is a social and economically successful Slovenia. On this occasion, the Prime Minister assured that the Government would remain committed to this aim in the future.

WORK FOR THE WELFARE OF SLOVENIA

After the vote of confidence, the Slovenian Prime Minister stressed that the Government would be able to continue its work with thoughtful measures for long-term solutions. Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek is confident in the work of ministers and the good will of the leaders of coalition parties and the entire coalition. She believes that citizens would soon feel the positive effects of the Government's work. In her opinion, the Government has prepared good, realistic budgets for the next two years, everything necessary to rehabilitate the banking system, and ensured funds to settle the government's liabilities in the past eight months. She emphasised that her Government was working exclusively for the welfare of Slovenia and not from fear of measures imposed by EU institutions, which was also reflected in their decisive fight against the grey economy and tax evaders. With the budgets for the next two years, the Government is pursuing the objective of consolidating public finance. The budget for 2014 was passed by the National Assembly in December



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

2012. According to the Government, the amendments were necessary due to forecasts of economic activities.

COALITION PARTIES MAKE A STABLE GOVERNMENT

On behalf of the coalition partners, Igor Lukšič, the President of Social Democrats, thanked the Prime Minister for leading the Government. He commended the Prime Minister's persistence, good intentions and successful leadership of the different parties. He also highlighted that all the coalition parties knew that it was important for the welfare of Slovenia for this Government to endure until the end of its term. Gregor Virant, the Minister of the Interior and the President of the Civic List, stressed that the Government had ensured the successful functioning of the rule of law and striven for order and justice. He also added that the coalition would not raise taxes further

and would try to improve the status of young people. Karl Erjavec, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia, which he leads, was pleased with the social sensitivity of the Government. He was certain that the Government would also be successful in the future. As a minister in the Government, he was aware that questions of bank rehabilitation would have to be addressed, including which markets would be determined as the most economically strategic and how economic growth would be ensured in the future. In conclusion, he also emphasised that eight months ago neither the Slovenian nor the foreign public had expected the Government to survive and be successful, but what happened was exactly what the Government believed from the beginning, "that Slovenia will manage on its own."

"The Government's work so far is a reason for optimism. It was crucial that we closed ranks and ensured stability in the country. I trust my coalition partners," highlighted Bratušek.

Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek is confident in the work of ministers and the good will of the leaders of coalition parties and the entire coalition. She believes that citizens would soon feel the positive effects of the Government's work.

This year's Month of Design revealed New Strengths

Like in previous years, this October was also a time for design. For the tenth year, Ljubljana hosted the Month of Design, which explores, evaluates and resolves issues of living space, connects creators and business environments, and stimulates

interdisciplinary dialogue. It presents interesting design solutions, timeless Slovenian design, and awards prizes for Design of the Year, Timeless Slovenian Design and the Prospects Award for promising young designers.



Photo: Vid Voršič

The Month of Design Awards gradually developed from this basic interest by growing in two directions; the national – Slovenian and the international. The national design awards are currently given out to Slovenian designers in four categories: Design of the Year, Interior of the Year, Timeless Slovenian Design and Prospects.

The slogan of this year's Month of Design was New Strengths. It was chosen despite the fact that it is perhaps too early to speak of new strengths already after ten years of the event.

This year's jubilee Month of Design was bigger than ever. The central events took place at the old print shop of Mladinska knjiga and the former Merkur department store. The buildings are connected, as both were created by architect Savin Sever and are important examples of post-Second World War architecture.

THE MONTH OF DESIGN FEATURED SEVERAL EXHIBITIONS

As usual, Design Expo was this year's central exhibition, and was actually a tailor-made design fair that combined different professions and a unique meeting point for professionals, unlike any oth-

er in the region. Another twelve exhibitions were also on show at the Month of Design, among which the exhibition Product Design must be mentioned, as it showcased a selection of original, innovative and ingeniously designed products from all fields of product design in Southeast Europe. And of course, the Highlights of Slovenian Design, presenting all the products awarded at the Month of Design since 2003, which featured products of timeless design, and is thus gradually becoming a museum of Slovenian design. From the viewpoint of the country, two-thirds of which are covered by forest, the Magic of Wood – Retrospective exhibition

was also interesting.

The Month of Design featured a conference on international design management, Big Architecture Conference 13: Values, Goals and Objectives and the conference Wooden Skyscrapers – Dreams or Reality? Visitors were particularly interested in Robert Lešnik's sketches showing the creation of new designs for Mercedes S-Class models.

A pop-up restaurant and a pop-up shop also emerged up during the Month of Design. Visitors could experience what happens when design and gastronomy are combined at Eat & Drink Design.

Photo: David Lotrič



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Interior of the Year: Svet vmes creative group: project Square – Street – Home

NEW STRENGTHS

The slogan of this year's Month of Design was New Strengths. It was chosen despite the fact that it is perhaps too early to speak of new strengths already after ten years of the event, said Zmago Novak, director and head of the programme at the Month of Design, at the opening ceremony. Due to the recession and economic crisis, it is believed that times are hard today, but Novak drew a parallel with the situation ten years ago. "New strengths can help us today. We can base them on the

optimism of previous years. Creative people always look ahead, and it is not appropriate to wish to defend only the present. The present deserves respect, not defence," said Zmago Novak, concluding that optimism is natural to creative people.

Meanwhile, the vision of the Month of Design is to grow into a leading platform for creative industries and companies in the country and put Ljubljana on the map of creative capitals of the world.

WINNERS OF 2013

Design of the Year: **Martin Šoštarič**, Gigodesign: Seascape 27 Sailing Boat

The jury gave an honorary recognition to designers, **Blaž Medja and Luka Stepan** from Gigodesign, for SLX Fusion Elan skis.

Interior of the Year: **Svet vmes creative group**: project Square – Street – Home

Timeless Slovenian Design: **Biba Bertok** for the Nataša children's bed, manufactured in 1974 at a factory making wooden fancy goods in Rimske Toplice.

Photo: Archives of the Month of Design



Photo: Tilen Sepic



Photo: Archives of the Month of Design



Left up: Prospects: Maja Alibegovič and Blažka Drnovšek - awarded to promising young designers and architects for achievements in their respective fields.

Left down: Design of the year 2013: Detachable wheel well by Musguard - awarded to a project of outstanding achievement in the field of product or communication design within the last year.

Right: In the category of Prospects - awarded to promising young designers and architects for achievements in their respective fields were also Vesna Makarov and Peter Movrin. In the photo: design by Vesna Movrin.



Photo: Vid Vostic

Wooden skyscrapers - dream or reality?



Photo: Vid Vostic

Eat & Drink Design is a one-of-a-kind culinary-designer fantasy that brings together the skills of the chef, the discipline of the designer and the personal touch of the artisan in order to serve up delicious, contemporary high-end gastronomy in an original presentation with a healthy sprinkling of creative thinking.

Timeless Slovenian Design

Design icons

As part of 2013 Month of Design, the greatest works of Slovenian design were showcased at the exhibition Highlights of Slovenian Design. The products awarded between 2003 and 2013 are considered icons of

Slovenian design and are still unique and perfect examples of product design half a century and more since their creation.

Photo: Vid Vršič



CHAIRS WITH SUPREME DESIGN

In the heyday of Slovenian industrial design, furniture factories had their own research departments for developing new products. Three of the chairs that evolved in these departments were awarded the Timeless Design Award.

In 2005, Niko Kralj received this award for his folding Rex chair constructed in 1954, which is still popular today. Over a million of these chairs have been sold so far, which are distinguished by exceptional functionality, ergonomics, innovation, comfort and affordability.

In 2009, Branko Uršič received the award for the Sistem L chair, produced in 1981 by the company Stol Kamnik. The chair is simply constructed from bent plywood lamellas and a padded seat. Two lamellas forming a rectangle serve as the sides of the chair and the seat gives the impression of floating.

The Gondola reclining chair by Oskar Kogoj looks as if it was ahead of its time. In 1969, Oskar Kogoj started cooperating with the research department at Meblo in Nova Gorica and developed a series of plastic Gondola reclining chairs, whose design and material embodied the spirit of the time; its particularity was in the ap-

proach towards the chair and development from the initial idea to the end product, which required a series of anthropometric and psycho-physiological testing.

TIMELESS GLASS PRODUCTS

The series of Konus fitting bowls produced by Ferdo Pak in 1977 and manufactured at Rogaška Glassworks is distinguished by its simple and double-conic design.

The inscription on the bottle was somewhat embossed and the rough glass surface was frozen. The typical logo which is still in use and the first Cockta bottle was designed by architect Sergej Pavlin in 1953. The typeface for

Timeless iconic products of Slovenian designers are industrial products that were noticed, recognised and successful when they were created.

As part of 2013 Month of Design, the greatest works of Slovenian design were showcased at the exhibition Highlights of Slovenian Design.

In 1978-1979, Davorin Savnik designed the iconic ETA telephone for the Iskra company. The telephone became an indispensable device in Slovenian homes and offices and also achieved great success abroad. Over five million ETA telephones were manufactured in Kranj.



Photo: Vid Vorišič

the name of the drink was well-chosen from the font used to print the pre-Second World War newspaper Slovenski narod. As the model for the bottle, Pavlin used a small beer bottle which he adjusted for Cockta according to height and size.

ICONIC MACHINES AND TOOLS

In 2007, the Timeless Design Award went to Albert Kastelec, who produced a series of ergonomic, functional and aesthetic electric hand tools between 1960 and 1970, which also received many awards abroad.

Two products made by the Iskra factory were also awarded. Ljuban Klojčnik designed the street signal post telephone in 1972, which can still be seen on our motorways. In 1973, Klojčnik received a gold medal at the Biennial of Industrial Design.

The awarded Pobi battery charger designed by designer and architect Marijan Gnamuš in 1973 is also exhibited. In 1983, Igor Rose produced the Tomos ATX 50 motorcycle, very popular among Slovenians at a time when cars were not so common.

The Simple & Logical washing machine received the 2011 Timeless Design Award. The machine is based on the concept of simple management and still represents a turning point in household appliance design. The washing machine was made by Janez Smerdelj and Tone Holobar for the Gorenje company in 1995. The washing machine has only four symbols for laundry types and level of dirtiness; everything else is done by the machine.

The elegant microphone designed by Marko Turk in 1963 is also one

of the timeless products. Turk's MD9 microphone was the first product by a Slovenian designer to be included in the collection at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1964.

This year's Timeless Design Award went to designer Biba Bertok for her Nataša children's bed, which was designed in 1973 and manufactured in 1974 at the factory of the wooden fancy goods in Rimske Toplice. Nataša set new standards in furniture designed for children and broke from the traditional colonial style of skillfully decorated children's beds popular at the time. It was designed for small apartments with large families. Bertok found it important that this piece of furniture for children has a sense of warmth and protection. The bed, although no longer in production, is serving a third generation in many homes.

The products awarded between 2003 and 2013 are considered icons of Slovenian design and are still unique and perfect examples of product design half a century and more since their creation.

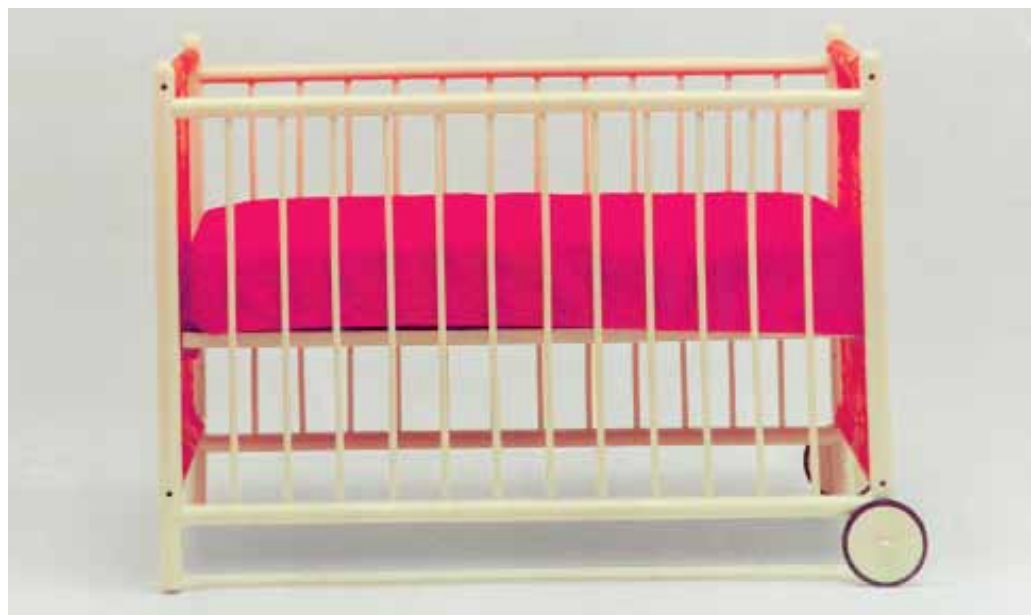


Photo: Archives of Mournth of Design

The Nataša children's bed was a sales success; it won several awards and became mandatory furniture in many children's rooms in Slovenia. The height of the bed could be adjusted and it 'grew' with a child until the child actually grew out of it. The wheels on one side allowed the bed to be easily moved from room to room and the legs on the other side provided stability. Textile was stretched at the head and foot of the bed instead of head- and footboards.

Miha Klinar

Design – an important strategic factor

If we take Steve Jobs' definition of design, 'Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works', and consider the fact that design, alongside innovation and marketing, is a strategic function of a company, the success of a studio which incorporates all of that into its work should not be surprising.

Photo: Jane Straus



Miha Klinar is a director and partner of one of the most recognisable Slovenian design studios Gigodesign. Winners of many awards, including a number of the prestigious Red Dots, he and his studio advocate the importance of design on various levels, from purely economic ones to those beneficial for the broader society.



Photo: Andraž Šapec

Leis: 3-Piece Wooden Kitchen Set, own trademark of Gigodesign (www.leis.si); awards: Jury's commendation for packaging at the 6th Biennial of Slovene Visual Communications, the Brumen Foundation, 2013

We have our own approach to managing projects and consulting in the field of design management. The results are multidisciplinary. The quality of solutions is recognised by a growing number of companies, which after their first experience usually continue their cooperation with us. It means that we work well and that the cooperation has positive economic effects.

Gigodesign is the most well-known design studio in Slovenia; how do you maintain your advantage over the competition?

We are particularly concerned with the quality of a project; all the criteria in the studio are subordinate to that, including the organisation of implementation and staff knowledge. We aim to identify essential problems, which we try to solve comprehensively. And that is why we have several experts from different fields, from product design, communications, web solutions and service design. We have our own approach to managing projects and consulting in the field of design management. The results are multidisciplinary. The quality of solutions is recognised by a growing number of companies, which after their first experience usually continue their cooperation with us. It means that we work well and that the cooperation has positive economic effects.

Which of the products that you have designed are you most proud of?

We do not evaluate results so much in terms of the product

but in terms of its impact on the users' experience or the value of a brand. We are also interested in how a project promotes innovation culture in the company we are working for. These additional factors are more important, and we are mostly proud of projects that have affected and changed business models, promoted innovation culture and established design as a key strategic factor in companies' competitiveness.

Which project is engaging most of your attention at present?

Projects vary, and so does the timeframe for their implementation. We are working simultaneously on several projects, which enter and exit different development phases; some are in the initial concept design phase, others in prototype phase and some are being launched on the market. We also work continuously on our own development, which includes projects such as the management of the Competence Centre for Design Management and the design accelerator project, Design Forward. We have been cooperating with some clients for over a decade, and such cooperation is

naturally different from the clients with whom we are working for the first time.

We are currently finishing a new LED floodlight for Intra Lighting; a ski boot for Alpina is in the second prototype phase, and we are making corrections for Adria Mobil of Novo mesto after this year's first presentation of the collection to distributors. We are in the initial concept design of a project for an Italian client and we have several very interesting projects with very young companies. We have been successful in two tenders recently, so we are focusing our attention on projects for Gorenje and Droga Kolinska.

How important is design for the sales of a product and how frequently should the design change to keep the product competitive?

That is a good question: it defines the issue of understanding the field of design. Regardless of the meaning of the word design, the design of a product is the result of planning the technological, marketing and particularly user factors, both functional and emotional, among which I refer

to the aesthetic side of a product, which is less the result of subjective aesthetic criteria than of our experience as users of a product throughout its lifespan, from distribution, purchase, purpose and use, and frequently also when the product is no longer in use and we wonder about its impact on the environment after it is discarded. That is why the design process addresses not only the appearance of the product, but is included in the initial development phases, and affects the product's interaction with the user to a great extent. Steve Jobs simplified this when he said, "Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works". And that is absolutely true.

From which it can be concluded that, in addition to innovation and marketing, design is a strategic function in a company.

If design does not have a strategic function in a company, the company is not worth investing in. For example, just look at what is happening in traditional industries. All those sectors which did not, or do not, invest in the differentiation of products and services and in the development of their own brand, which also signifies an independent position in the market, are gone or will soon disappear. Slovenian industry is primarily organised for supplying or subcontracting, which is reliant solely on the expectation of new orders, and thus competes only in terms of labour costs, i.e. human and technological factors. This is the role of a follower with low added value. Since much has been said about the wood industry recently, this is a good example. Until the industry develops products that are better and also different, smarter, more practical and responsive to modern needs, it will not overcome the crisis. These products are no longer created by technologists in companies' development departments, but with an analytical approach to the market, the monitoring of social and commercial trends and the creation of new user needs. Those companies that are stripped of everything due to bad business decisions, that lack managerial

knowledge and are incorporated into the mentality of the local market do not recognise this, and the revitalisation of these industries will not be achieved without thoughtful strategies.

What is a good ratio between innovation and promotion; which deserves more investment in your opinion?

That depends on the sectors in which a company is working, of course; however, good innovative products achieve the same level of recognisability in the market with far lower costs than the usual advertising media, which means that investment should be directed particularly towards developing innovative products, and the numerous modern marketing approaches should be exploited as well.

The ratio, which was distinctively on the side of advertising in the 1990s, is gradually moving towards the development of innovative products, also because many companies which did not understand this trend, no longer exist.

How do you get to know the user of the product that you design and how does this affect the design?

Due to very different projects and tasks, we must learn fast. As a rule, we receive basic information in the form of project starting points. We also form our own view on the basis of trends in the industry, which we review, and try to remain equally critical of all incoming information. In the first phases of the concept project, we tend to cooperate with experts and wish to acquire the key competitive factors to make a product successful; if we can, we experiment and test concepts, which means that if something does not work, we start again.

Do you think design can influence the transformation of a company?

Of course. That has happened several times. It is all a matter of the first positive experience, trust and well-informed owners or leading management. The organisation of the company and focus on business goals are thus conditions for includ-

ing design in the company's business processes. Companies undergoing ownership transformation or with interests of a non-business nature do not recognise the strategic role of design. This is understandable, since such strategic directions produce results several years' later and are not useful for resolving the current crisis. Incorporating the design approach is an important strategic factor for increasing the competitiveness of the economy and also for the efficient transformation of public administration (which is an important trend in some developed economies in the EU). We therefore need a 'policy of creativity', as we do not have such a policy yet. A good example of a transformation from a lagging post-socialist country into one of the most quickly advancing countries is Estonia. In 2007, it ventured on the path of transforming its economy into a model of creative economy, with an analysis of the state of its creative potential, the aid of its Scandinavian partners and a strategy. Five years later, it has proven that the national development model was correct.

The lack of information among opinion makers and the lack of successful businesspeople do not provide conditions for the development of strategies (such as in Estonia), which include design among other important development factors for improving economic competitiveness and social stability. I want

I want the role of the country as an accelerator of design development and as a promotional mediator to be enhanced. Strategies and measures used by other countries can serve as examples.

Beatnik, the Sound Station Chair, client: Donar; awards: Red Dot Product Design Honourable Mention, 2013, among Top 10 products at the Ambient 2013 furniture fair



Photo: Jernej Lasic



Seascope 27 sailing boat, client: ISSA; awards: 2013 Month of Design, Design of the Year; Adriatic Product of Year award among motor and sailing boats of Adriatic production (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro) at 2013 Internautica; Nomination for European Yacht of the Year 2012/13

Slovenia has established a basic level, which provides the conditions for the development of good designers.

the role of the country as an accelerator of design development and as a promotional mediator to be enhanced. Strategies and measures used by other countries can serve as examples. Nevertheless, certain movements in individual tenders, grants and initiatives can be noticed at certain ministries.

Comparing foreign products with regard to design, are we being overtaken by foreign trends or are we keeping up with the times, developing strategies, increasing competitiveness, introducing new methodologies and tools?

Two extremes can be noticed: on the one hand, there are

companies which in all design management fields are equal competitors in more developed foreign markets; these include extremely advanced and sensitive young start-up micro companies. The other extreme is represented by a rigid public sector unprepared for restructuring, and companies experiencing increasing problems, including several state-owned companies and local self-government. It is important to start preparing the conditions to develop efficient strategies (particularly for service design) and the application of new methodologies or tools, which would reveal the strategic significance of this field also in the public sector.

(<http://www.dsgn fwd.com>) invests in companies in the early development stages, in so-called start-ups, in order to help in their development and the launching of potential globally successful companies. The accelerator is intended for companies which wish to enter global markets and are prepared to accept and apply the 'lean start-up' development methodology originating in Silicon Valley, combined with integral design as understood by Gigodesign.

The accelerator was established in cooperation with two partners, Robert Antunovič, a serial entrepreneur and investor from Boulder, USA, and RSG Capital, a venture-capital management company. An individual company is offered 10,000 euros in cash, 10,000 euros' worth of design services and 100 days at our premises in return for a 10 per cent share in the company.

The objective of the programme is to enable the development and launching of a product and a brand within 100 days on a professional level to a degree suitable for market validation and for performing the validation. If the product and the brand receive a positive response from the market, we also help in providing further financing and development.

Does Slovenia have enough high-quality designers?

To a certain extent the quality of designers is the result of the environment and conditions for obtaining education and experience in implementing high-quality projects. Slovenia has established a basic level, which provides the conditions for the development of good designers. However, Slovenia is not on the list of countries where this quality can be attained.

The DsgnFwd Design Accelerator has opened in Ljubljana. What is it about?

DsgnFwd Design Accelerator

Elan, Ski Collection 2013/14, client: Elan Ski; awards (together with other collections) in 2013: ISPO, Plus X award, Red Dot for Product Design

Photo: Archives of Elan



Dr Jasna Hrovatin

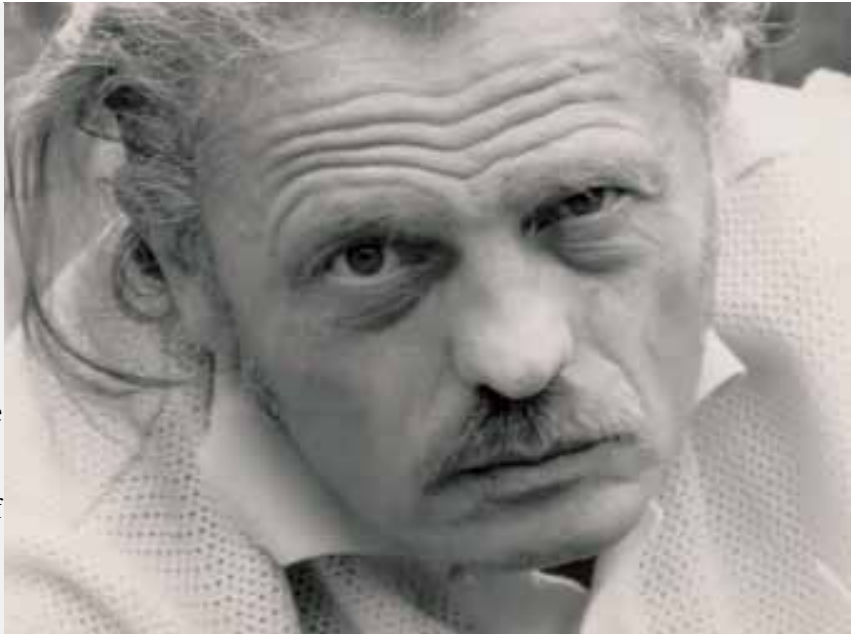
If Yugoslavia had five Niko Kralj, it would become a design superpower

Photo: Marjan Laznik



Dr Jasna Hrovatin graduated from the Faculty of Architecture under the mentorship of professor Niko Kralj, with whom she later took up a position as a junior researcher, in 1987. She took her master's degree in 1990 and completed her doctoral studies in 1993. Since 2009, she has worked at the Academy of Design in Ljubljana as vice dean for research. Since 1999, she has been editor-in-chief of the thematic manuals "Construction and Fittings". She is principally engaged in designing interior furnishing and industrial design; she is also an innovator. She participates in the "D. school" project and is the author of a monograph on her former mentor, Niko Kralj.

Niko Kralj, the 92-year old pioneer and founder of Slovenian industrial design, died in July. In addition to the legendary Rex chair, which is now showcased at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) together with other design icons of the 20th century, Kralj also designed numerous other timeless pieces of furniture. The Rex chair is also part of the collections of Designmuseum Danmark, MuseumsQuartier in Vienna and the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. According to the selection of the Slovenian newspaper *Finance* in 1999, the Rex chair won second place as the best Slovenian product of the 20th century. Kralj's practical solutions found their way into numerous Slovenian homes in the second half of the 20th century, and are now on the wish list of lovers of high-quality design around the world.



Assistant Professor Dr Jasna Hrovatin described his life and design achievements in the scientific monograph *Niko Kralj*. We talked about Kralj's work, knowledge, way of thinking and the mark he left in the Slovenian design.

Why is Niko Kralj considered a phenomenon in the Slovenian design?

Kralj is considered the originator of design in Slovenia, or in the former Yugoslavia. In 1952, he started working in Stol, where he established the first development department and design office in Yugoslavia and became its head. The purpose of the design office was to break through with one's own idea and raise the level of design in the company and broadly at the national level. In 1957, he went on a six-month training course in Stockholm, where he became acquainted with Scandinavian design culture, which had a great influence on his approach to design and as a result on the development of design in Slovenia.

Kralj was at his creative peak at that time. He received numerous awards at international tenders and exhibitions, and he was still very young, aged 35. Swedish professor Erik Berglund wrote in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* in 1960 that Niko Kralj was the best furniture designer in Europe at that time. On

another occasion, he said, "If Yugoslavia had at least five Niko Kralj it would be a design superpower." At this point, it should be mentioned that Kralj cooperated with world-famous designers like Charles and Ray Eames, Richard Buckminster Fuller, Olaf Pira and Ferdinand Kramer. He also received many awards at home. He was particularly honoured to receive the highest Slovenian recognition in the field of culture in 1962, the Prešeren Award, for his achievements in design and architecture.

You also worked with him. In what way does he seem special to you personally?

In my opinion, Niko Kralj was an exceptional designer and I hold him in high regard. I particularly respected his dedication to work, his understanding and democratic attitude to his colleagues and students, his infectious enthusiasm about new ideas, and his ability not to force his opinion on others, but always to motivate us, students and colleagues. It was through motivation that he always excited us with his suggestions and ideas. He helped young designers acquire the confidence to present their design ideas. We agreed on who would do what, and he trusted us. It was very nice working with him. In spite of the fact that he was a great designer, he always advocated teamwork. He was convinced

that one person could not know everything and so he always cooperated with experts from different fields. I enjoyed working with him.

So you decided to write a book about him?

I was his student and he was my mentor for my diploma and Master's thesis. I also began writing my doctorate under his mentorship, which I later concluded under another mentor, since Kralj had retired.

Niko Kralj never wrote about himself, but he wrote many articles, and I thought that it would be a pity if that was lost, because his creative work was very rich and inspiring. Additional motivation also came from his daughter Veronika. Unfortunately, Kralj was already very ill when the book was published; he was 90 years old.

What is emphasised in the book?

As a designer, I find his principles of design the most important, and also the historical aspect.

Which achievements in design should be highlighted in particular?

Niko Kralj was a typical industrial designer. His work could be roughly divided into the period when he worked for Stol, where he mainly focused on designing chairs, and the period when he

Niko Kralj was a typical industrial designer. His work could be roughly divided into the period when he worked for Stol, where he mainly focused on designing chairs, and the period when he dedicated most of his time to developing wardrobe furniture systems.

dedicated most of his time to developing wardrobe furniture systems. Kralj developed his products; his goal was to design his own brand.

From the chairs, I would highlight the Rex chair above all; its development started at Stol in 1952 and, in 1953, the first stacking Rex chair was manufactured. The folding Rex chair as we know it today was made in 1956. The first Shell chair appeared in 1956 and acquired its final shape in 1959. With this chair, Kralj focused on the design challenge of how to use two equally curved boards or the same shape for the seat and the back of the chair. He considered the formation of the base, the shell, and so on. The Mosquito 1953 chair has an originally designed seat made of two curved boards set in the notch of a bent element made of plywood, which also supports the back. All three chairs, including the chair with the cross-connection, are manufactured by the company Impakta, which sells Kralj's products under the brand Kralj Rex.

The most important achievements in the field of furniture systems include the Futura furniture system (1973), which enabled exceptional compatibil-

ity and the composition of an unlimited number of different pieces of furniture and elements of interior furnishing. Systemic furniture was upgraded with modularly dimensioned furnishings, such as glass and ceramic dishes and pillows. The system's elements, i.e. universal edge and corner connections, modular plates and load-bearing connecting elements, allowed the composition of different objects, from furniture, lights, toys, façade elements and even pavilions.

However, the system not only enabled the composition of an unlimited number of different solutions, but also transformations of already used pieces of furniture into new pieces with different functions. The design thus facilitated people's wish to change their living and working space. The purpose of the concept was that furniture would in a way grow with the ever-changing needs of users. The system was also designed to be accessible to those with the lowest incomes, while the more expensive variant with high-quality materials meet the requirements of the most demanding clients. The Savinja system from 1974 is an element system that also avoids the du-

plication of sides.

Who was the greatest influence on Niko Kralj?

It is difficult to speak of people; it is more sensible to talk about styles. The influence of modern design can be seen in Kralj's rational aesthetics and production and the adjustment to technologies and new materials. Kralj also had a special relationship with wood, which was undoubtedly the influence of Scandinavian design and the family joinery tradition. But above all, Kralj was in favour of functionalism in the broadest meaning of the word: not only concerning the functionality of the product; he also pursued aesthetics as a function, in the belief that an aesthetic object affects the psyche of the user and thus their well-being, which he believed was also a certain type of function. It was also very typical of him to strive for the products to be as cost-effective as possible, which was logical, since purchasing power after the war was limited.

What status did Kralj have in the former Yugoslavia?

At home and abroad, Kralj applied for and registered 118 patents and models and produced 39 research essays. He was an

His design principles – seeking problems and functionality, innovativeness, interdisciplinary teamwork, the use of natural materials, especially wood, the use of new materials and new technologies and the adjustment to the needs of society – are still topical today.

Photo: Janez Kalíšnik



Niko Kralj first presented the Futura system (1973) in an anonymous public tender for furnishing a living space, receiving first prize. In 1973, he also received a gold medal for this system at the 15th Triennial Exhibition of Decorative Arts and Modern Architecture in Milan. Futura was a technological novelty in the systemic planning of human dwellings.



REX was the first chair in Slovenia designed for mass production; it was made from a compressed perforated composite panel. It became an ideal of an ergonomically and functionally flawless product and a must-have object for individuals around the world who possessed an in-depth knowledge of furniture design. More than two million chairs have been manufactured so far.

innovator and inventor in various fields, but he particularly specialised in the construction and rationalisation of production. In 1975, he received the Boris Kidrič Fund Award for his inventions.

Where can his influence on young designers be noticed?

His design principles – seeking problems and functionality, inovativeness, interdisciplinary teamwork, the use of natural

materials, especially wood, the use of new materials and new technologies and the adjustment to the needs of society – are still topical today.

Why does Slovenian design no longer have the same status?

Niko Kralj was a designer in a period of large furniture companies, such as Brest, Marles, Meblo, Stol and Alples. These used to employ over 40,000 workers, which was almost one-tenth of the entire Slovenian workforce. Designers at that time could still develop their own brands; today, investments in development are decreasing due to the lack of financial resources. A certain, already developed model is usually further developed. The Rex chair, which is the most well-known, was not developed overnight. Kralj developed that chair over four years; he thus had a lot more time and funds

to develop the most beautiful and suitable model.

The Month of Design and the Furniture Fair took place a while ago. Did you visit them?

The production of furniture in Slovenia reflects the current state; there are no great offers. The Month of Design definitely gives hope that design still has a future in Slovenia.

What guides you when lecturing young designers, your students?

I have to stress again that to me, personally, Niko Kralj and his philosophy are very close and that I consider his way of thinking a paragon. Kralj always emphasised that design cannot exist without innovation. And that is why as a lecturer I also focus on the idea that the young arrive at an idea through innovation and proceed from a problem in creative thinking.

The company Impakta has been presenting Niko Kralj and offering his products worldwide for three years. In the Slovenian market, the company offers Rex chairs, lounge chairs, rocking chairs, club tables and the Rex folding day-beds. The offer was also extended to Kralj's lesser known products and thus the collection was supplemented with the Rex 120 chair, the Mosquito chair, the Shell chair and a stool with cross-connection. Impakta uses beech for the majority of chairs, and American walnut and teak for exclusive series. All products are made in Slovenia. Kralj's chairs are intended for homes, offices, halls and waiting rooms. They are available in about 360 shops around the world.



Shell chairs in all colours by Impakta

Design is a global category



Photo: Franci Virant

Contemplating design within the framework of the national micro-cosmos that is Slovenia is undoubtedly a peculiar form of nonsense, an oxymoron, which does not lead to a clear and straightforward conclusion. Design is a global category, since the needs of people around the world are more or less similar, if not completely identical. Since prehistoric times, the production of objects which successfully met human needs has been related to the environment, defined by the raw material available and distances which conditioned the costs of its transportation and thus also the type of products worth transporting to distant countries. Such was the foundation of the regular exchange of goods. It was clear very early on that a product could be made better, more useful, more comfortable and people-friendly, and its value enhanced and made into something completely new. Furthermore, a product should also have an authentic touch to make it more recognisable and more appreciated.

Slovenia is no different in this regard. Its special feature is probably its geographical position, which throughout history has meant a constant flow of different civilisations and thus also the ability of the local inhabitants to adjust. Very different circumstances obtained without interruption over time and, consequently, also very different forms of ingenuity among the inhabitants. Several decades ago, large businesses in this micro-cosmos were successfully operating in the global environment; they had their own development institutes, designs and designers, who were among the leading international designers. Several products became global successes. Later, these companies – as well as many other things – were no longer fashionable, and ideas had to be readjusted to a completely new reality. The moral norms of the past were suddenly considered heretical, and new ones were not created and are still nowhere to be found. In these rather blurred circumstances, it was possible with ingenuity to make a good profit overnight.

Design is not the kind of bird that lays golden eggs the next morning for a fistful of corn in the evening and it thus quickly became unfashionable. Its value in the local market fell to almost nil. It was generally considered a useless expense that ate into the budgets of greedy owners, unless it was a foreign product about which they could boast during a stroll around the village. The liberal economy is not inclined to development in general, because development requires long-term, uncertain, hard and responsible work, and in particular, a far-reaching idea. Thus most of the production that still preserved its own intellect and exterior image slowly wilted away. New fashions dictated a connection with the world, that is, the kind of connection where others think for us and we only ensure some work for those constantly annoying inhabitants who do not tolerate being inactive and, of course, ensure that we have the most comfortable lives possible.

At some point several decades ago, there were a handful of really good designers here in the micro-cosmos, a number which increased at least tenfold in almost three decades with the introduction of dedicated

systematic education. Meanwhile, the general level of design has fallen far below the lowest point thus far. The desire to make a quick profit is visible everywhere, at every step, and is particularly noticed in external public advertising. Several good designers have found fortune abroad; the majority of those who remained here forgot their professional responsibility and somehow adjusted their expert criteria to the conditions of the domestic market. There are few exceptions; nevertheless, new creations spring time and again from the cramped conditions of this environment which surpass the global average of good design. They show that our environment has exceptional economic potential. There is a small number of superior industrial products, also some exceptional creations, which have unfortunately not found their way into mass production, but are worth considering in the future: top-level illustrations and good designs of new books in limited editions; poster design, mostly for cultural events in national theatres; set and costume design, and excellent useful original items that could be proudly displayed alongside ridiculously expensive items in shop windows on any avenue of global metropolises.

Unfortunately, these creations have not been linked together for decades. They receive no proper promotion and almost always lack the back-up of powerful companies that think long term, which could provide highly productive promotion, production and a permanent presence in various large and small markets, and also lack the support of financial institutions to ensure the operation of the entire process.

When a ship of such a self-sufficient and self-satisfied micro-cosmos hits bottom, awakening from dreams, and disillusionment sets in on the bridge, and screaming can even be heard that something has to be done, for heaven's sake, that the ship has run aground and...Perhaps design can now serve as a lifeboat, since it constitutes completely unexploited wealth and can quickly propel us towards a brighter future. It is encouraging that the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the Ministry of Culture have earmarked financial resources for this field and that the SPIRIT Slovenia public agency has contributed additional stimulus this year.

In the future, we undoubtedly require serious investment; designers expect the drafting of a strategic national plan soon, a design policy, which has been expected for two decades. If one of the ship's commanders really wishes to descend from the reef of the economic crisis, designers will be among the first to discover this. Actual and well-paid work and orders will be in abundance; they will be so numerous that it will be difficult to meet them quickly enough and with due quality.

As before in history, the micro-cosmos will again have to exceed its self-sufficiency, responsibly approach the global competitive struggle and remain standing in it.

Design-driven innovation in Slovenia

Innovation and design as important competitive advantages

Slovenia was especially green in September thanks to EuroBasket 2013. The colour derives from the core of the national brand 'I feel Slovenia', which has been taken up by Slovenian sportspeople and fans. The 'I feel Slovenia' brand is still relatively new and is used mainly in tourism, although it is more than just a brand for a destination. 'I feel Slovenia' is a trademark of the country and represents a unique and innovative

approach to branding, since Slovenia was the first country in the world to use a full clause in its brand or logo. The brand is our 'winning ticket' which we can use to create the image we wish to project. So the power of the brand has to be awakened accordingly for it to work for us. The brand of a country is like a business card representing the country, its people, as well as its achievements.



Photo: Archives of Lumar

Lumar's active house is the result of Slovenian knowledge. When designing this house, the most technologically advanced in Europe, special attention was paid to the quality of life and to energy efficiency.

Innovative technology, experience and knowledge are successfully incorporated into all their passive and low-energy facilities.

Slovenians wish to become established in different fields; we are particularly oriented towards niche development, which is not surprising given our small size. We see innovation and design as two important competitive advantages, which is why companies focus closely on these two fields. We asked several advancing, successful and, above all, innovative Slovenian companies for their views on the role of design in the innovation of products

and services and how they integrate innovation and design into their products and services. We were also interested in the effect that awards for innovation and design have on their business partners and clients.

LUMAR

The Lumar company is aware that every object leaves a permanent stamp on the space in which it is placed. When it comes to architecture, we need

to concentrate not only on the exterior of a building, since architecture is much more. The composite parts of architecture also include suitable lighting of rooms, the siting of the building, and the correct selection of materials to ensure that the house does not overheat or produce excessive moisture. Combining all of the above into the best whole, which adds value to new pre-fabricated buildings, is a great challenge, which Lumar succeeded in resolving

Photo: Archives of Lumar



Lumar - a company of the Green Building Group

with young, innovative and also established architects; while drafting the projects. They incorporate into their drawings and buildings the philosophy and operations of a company whose motto is: live in the best way possible.

The recognitions and awards received so far for energy-efficient and sustainable construction and architecture confirm their leading role in passive and low-energy construction. Innovative technology, experience and knowledge are successfully incorporated into all their passive and low-energy facilities.

One of the major turning points for Lumar was the title of 2009 Golden Gazelle, which con-

tributed to their growing recognisability. They are particularly proud of their recognitions and awards for innovation and technological achievements, especially the certificate from the globally renowned Passive House Institute from Germany, which the company received for passive technology and a passive house design in 2010, being the first Slovenian provider of such designs. Another important recognition of their development came when the Primus 137 house, the most frequently constructed passive house in Slovenia, was declared an example of best practice (the cradle-to-cradle concept) in 2011. The company has also received numerous national recognitions, such as the Green Mission

Award and the best energy-efficient building, which guarantee their clients confirmed quality when they buy a Lumar house. The company is still the only European company providing passive technology certified by the German Passive House Institute and the European Technical Approval (ETA) for its passive system.

The company has also received awards for the architectural design of their standard and individual houses. In 2011, they received the Hiše (Houses) Award for their Avant 169 standard house, and began to challenge the architectural stereotypes applied to standard houses. This year was also successful for the company. Their individual RE

This year was also successful for the company. Their individual RE house was listed among the 50 most beautiful houses in the world constructed in the last three years, according to Hiše magazine. In October 2013, the Slovenian Chamber of Architecture and Spatial Planning awarded Lumar the 2013 Green Pencil Award for sustainable building for their active house.

Photo: Archives of Lumar



Interior of Lumar house



Froc high chair for toddlers and kids: Froc was developed for parents who wish to provide their children with the safest, but also most relaxed and carefree childhood – from the age of 6 months up to 10 years. With three simple adjustments, the chair adjusts to the child’s height and needs. It allows the adjustment of height from the ground, the height of the footrest and the position of the backrest.

Rimarket, a young Slovenian company, develops and sells wooden products, and cooperates with the design company, Gigodesign.

In 2013, the company participated for the first time at the largest children’s fair in Cologne in Germany. The Froc chair was selected as one of the top ten products, which was again an excellent achievement at such a large fair.

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RIMARKET

The role of design is becoming more important, since buyers are also becoming more demanding. Rimarket notes that people are no longer satisfied with merely ‘classic’ products, but find the image of a somewhat different, unique or even unaffordable product more appealing. In the past, a luxurious house or an expensive car were things that people liked to show off with. This no longer applies today, as the market offers an abundance of various affordable gadgets, which are still considered status symbols.

Rimarket, a young Slovenian company, develops and sells wooden products, and cooperates with the design company, Gigodesign. Slovenian wood-ware, which has a history stretching back several hundred years, originating in one of the most wooded areas in Europe,

was redesigned in a combination of modern design and craftsmanship of many years to develop attractive, user-friendly and perfectly shaped products from beech wood of exclusively local origin. The company produced two brands. The products under the Leis brand include kitchen-ware or household products, and an adjustable high chair for toddlers and kids which is being marketed under the Froc brand., It is distinguished for its ingenious solutions, exceptional stability and natural materials.

The first award could not have come at a better time. In 2012, they introduced their first prototype of the Froc chair at the Ambient furniture fair in Ljubljana. The chair was virtually still fresh from the production desk and already received its first award. They were very proud to have

beaten all the competitors at the fair. The product was particularly exposed at the event and thus more visible; awarded products also attract more media attention. The buyers’ response exceeded all expectations.

In 2013, the company participated for the first time at the largest children’s fair in Cologne in Germany. The Froc chair was selected as one of the top ten products, which was again an excellent achievement at such a large fair. The company received their latest award from the Slovenian Ministry of Economic Development and Technology in cooperation with the SPIRIT Slovenia public agency. It was the first national award for the best wooden product. The young company was also happy to receive this award, especially because it was a money prize.

“Naturally, each award we receive means a lot to us. We are a young company, still unknown in the market, and so we must make even greater efforts. Our company is being developed in very difficult times, and we are thus treading a thorny path. But with will and persistence, many things can be achieved. An award is a way of saying that we are good at what we do and gives us further stimulation and motivation. Of course, an award also means that potential investors or partners take us more seriously. It is similar with individual clients: they would like to have the best product that the market offers,” said Maruša Gruden Košir, Sales Director at Rimarket.

ADRIA MOBIL

In the context of the aggravated competitive environment, more demanding buyers and an excess of offers, investing in design is necessary if a company is to meet the purchase criteria of modern buyers, who are ranking the design of products in the process of purchasing decisions increasingly higher. Design can be an important competitive advantage for a brand. Adria Mobil addresses the challenges of design comprehensively. In the designing of products, Adria Mobil also includes the aspects of aesthetics, functionality, applicability, quality of production, selection of materials and naturally economic viability in the suitable context of the market placement of a product or product series.

A good design is one of the foundations of successful marketing and sales, where the recognisability of the brand, expressed particularly through an original and recognisable product design, comes first. If a buyer at first glance does not recognise that a motor-home or a caravan is an aesthetically attractive and functional product that is durable, designed with innovative details, made from high-quality materials, etc. then a second glance or chance in the competition cannot be expected. Thus the company quickly loses the possibility of generating the expected profit from an individual development project.

There are different routes to a good design, but attention to detail, a different way of thinking about current solutions, and the inclusion of different points of view and knowledge are indispensable. As a rule, a good design has a simple basis, but it is unique and also attractive in all markets. It sounds simple, but the path to this result is extremely complex. That is why Adria Mobil decided to integrate its strategic design comprehensively into the company strategy. They joined the consortium



Astella Glam Edition: At its first presentation, Astella Glam Edition, a new generation caravan, won the 2012 European Innovation Award presented by an expert jury of twelve European professional media editorial representatives. Over 200 of the Astella Glam Edition caravans, which are in the top price range, have been sold in Europe so far.

Photo: Archives of Adria Mobil

of Slovenian companies, the Competence Centre for Design Management, to enhance their knowledge and awareness of the importance of design for successful business operations and to exchange best practice with likeminded companies and institutions. In severe marketing conditions, the differentiation strategy and therefore the related power of a brand offers the best possibility for increasing added value and strengthening a position in demanding European and global markets.

CALYPSO CRYSTAL

Two years ago, it was an unknown start-up; today, Calypso Crystal produces prestigious accessories for mobile devices that sell around the world. Each product is equipped with the tag 'Handmade in Slovenia, Europe', with the signature of the person who packed it. Some 40 per cent of buyers who bought their products through their website have responded with a thank-you note. Ideas for novelties are collected from users.

The design and users' experience of a product should always be in the forefront for producers and providers of services. Today, this is a key factor in differentiating between competitive products, according to the Slovenian company, Calypso Crystal. Their products always originate in an idea for a very elegant and simple design. They are made in Slovenia of the best materials, with the help of skilful masters. CalypsoCase and all their products stand out from

the mass of other products with their design and innovative production concept. "Buyers from all around the world discover them with great interest and use them enthusiastically," said Aleš Ruter, Head of Marketing and Customer Experience at Calypso Crystal.

"Awards are always a recognition of our work. A while ago, we received a special award for the packaging design of our CalypsoPad products, which really is something exceptional and different. We try to surprise our buyers at every step; from the web presentation, purchase, super-fast delivery, packaging and the product itself. If the user experience at every point is at the highest level, then we are sure that our clients are happy. And the awards are additional confirmations of our good work."

In the designing of products, Adria Mobil also includes the aspects of aesthetics, functionality, applicability, quality of production, selection of materials and naturally economic viability in the suitable context of the market placement of a product or product series.

Calypso accessories for mobile devices
Photo: Archives of Calypso Crystal



Another of Erika Drobnič's innovations is the wooden multi-purpose cradle that the Republic of Slovenia presented as a gift to Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge on the birth of their first son. The cradle was named Kiara LOVE; Kiara is the trademark of Drobnič's cradle, to which the word LOVE was added, in keeping with the national brand 'I feel Slovenia'.

ERIKA DROBNIČ

Her experience was also shared by innovator Erika Drobnič, who says that innovation and design go hand in hand when developing innovative solutions for multi-purpose children's furniture. In addition to solutions in construction, innovative design solutions are also required. The invention is first developed, that is, the particularities of use which result in patent protection. Further steps are made in the direction of design, which must also be innovative and functional. When both come together, the product is ready to be launched onto the market.

Every recognition or award assists the promotion and sale of a product. "The demand for our products is growing, because the trust of buyers and partners in the quality of the product also

grows with recognitions. When we advertise, we also suitably emphasise the recognitions the product has received," said innovator Erika Drobnič.


Erika Drobnič, who pursued a career as an entrepreneur after losing her job, has received numerous awards for innovation. Drobnič's innovations were first discovered at various innovation fairs abroad. At the KIWIE 2010 innovation fair in Seoul, South Korea, she received a gold and bronze award for her invention of a cradle and bed, which 'grow' together with the child. But that was only the beginning. Also in 2010, she received the award for best women's innovation at the IFIA fair in Ljubljana, a bronze medal at the iENA fair in Nuremberg in Germany and a silver medal in Kuwait. In 2011, Drobnič received a silver medal at the IWIS fair in Warsaw and another silver medal at the IEI fair in China.

Photo: Archives of Erika Drobnič



Photo: Archives of Erika Drobnič





I FEEL SLOVENIA

Sinfo

Dear readers,

Please answer the two questions below. Three readers from among those who send their answers will be rewarded with **I feel Slovenia Christmas gifts.**

1. When was the brand I feel Slovenia created and what is its predominant colour?
2. What do you like the most about Sinfo magazine and what new features would you like to be included?

Please send the answers by **31 December 2013 to tanja.glogovcan@gov.si**

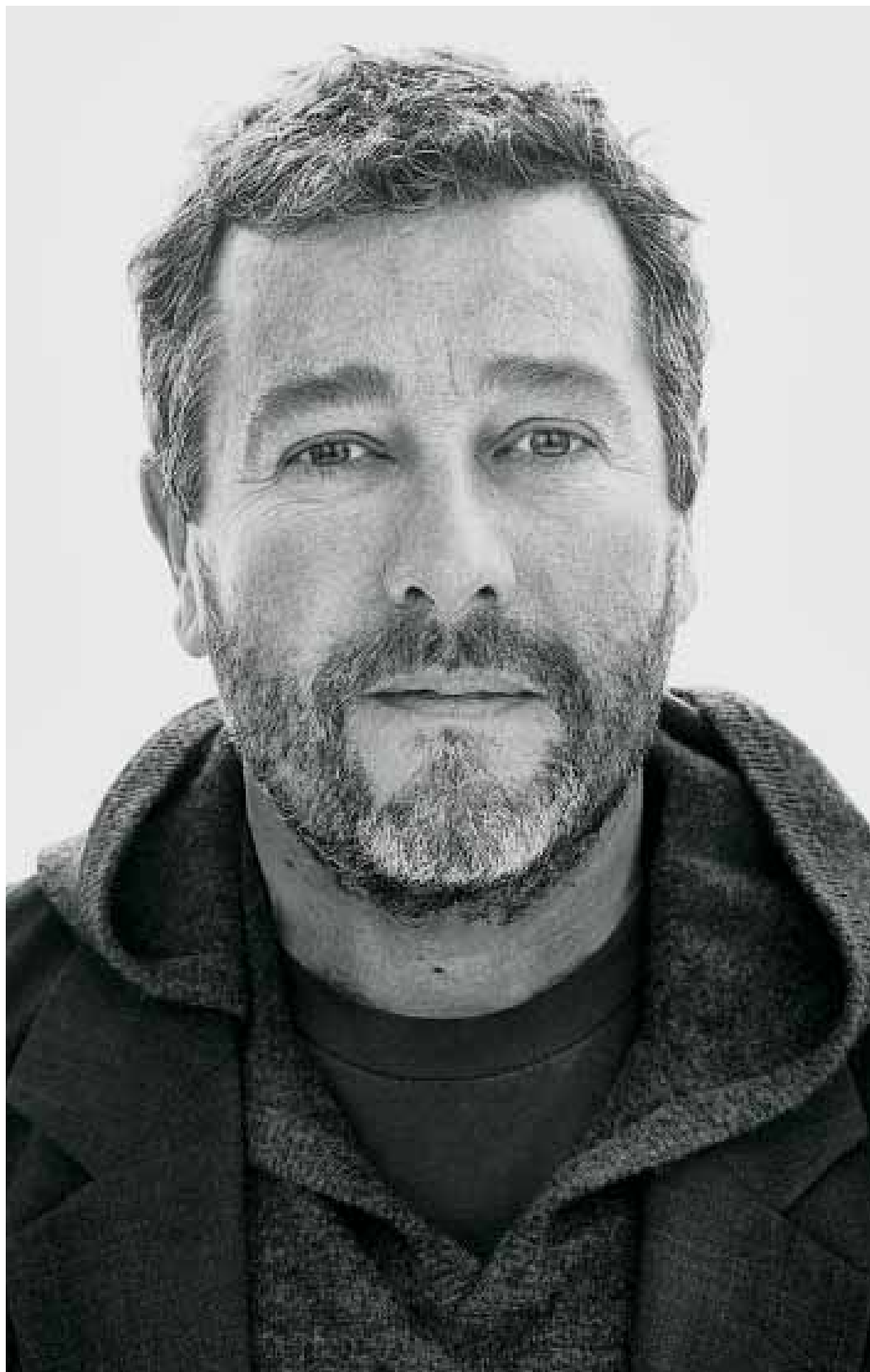
Thank you.

With kind regards,
Sinfo editorial team

Philippe Starck

P.A.T.H. and Moscow Design Week

Photo: Jean Baptiste Mondino



Philippe Starck is one of the most inspiring and influential designers and creator of today who has a mission and a vision: creation, whatever shape it takes, must make life better for the largest number of people possible. His anticipatory concern for environmental implications, his enthusiasm for imagining new lifestyles and his determination to change the world has accompanied one iconic creation after the other. Sharing those same values, along with Riko's expertise in wooden sustainable construction solutions and the wealth of experience in managing large-scale turn-key projects, have brought Philippe Starck and Slovenian engineering company Riko together to develop P. A. T. H. by Starck with Riko – a line of Prefabricated Accessible Technological Homes that combine timeless design, high technology, comfort and the respect for the environment. The collaboration started in October 2009; in July 2013, Starck with Riko officially launched the sales of P.A.T.H. line of homes, which comprises of 34 different homes, each distinguished by Philippe Starck's signature timeless design and Riko's sustainable wooden prefabricated construction system.



Manufactured by the Riko company and distributed by its local partners worldwide, the turn-key P.A.T.H houses are rapidly built and offer a long term full assistance to their owners.

P.A.T.H. is a reliable and intelligent solution for us, our children, and our children's children facing the challenges of ecology, economy and energy.

From everyday products such as furniture and lemon squeezers, to revolutionary mega-yachts, micro wind turbines, electric cars, and hotels, Starck never ceases to push the boundaries and criteria of contemporary design.

Silent Revolutions, an exhibition of modern Slovenian design, was showcased in Moscow between 11 and 17 October. The exhibition, which highlights the distinctiveness, vitality and variety of modern design in Slovenia, was extended for the presentation in Moscow with ten new products and the addition of a lecture by world-renowned designer Philippe Starck, who developed the technologically advanced P.A.T.H. houses in co-operation with the Slovenian company Riko. We wondered how this collaboration came about and what the vision of this famous designer was in his creative work.

What motivated you to collaborate with Riko in carrying out the concept of P.A.T.H.?

I was never interested by design or architecture; they are just

weak weapons to express ideas, concepts. My goal has always been to focus on the effect my creations can have on people. I propose and people decide. After my action on democratic design, intended to lower the price while increasing quality to become accessible to the greatest number, then after democratic ecology I wanted to develop democratic architecture, aimed at developing a collection of houses, with the best plans and the best technological construction, offering quality of design and quality of manufacturing and accessibility. I've scanned all the companies worldwide who are in this field, and after comprehensive studies I discovered Riko, a very serious and industrial house construction company. I was impressed by Janez, his vision and his professionalism. The fun thing is I discovered afterwards that we had already been working together on several projects in the UK.

Who is P.A.T.H. intended for? How do you identify a P.A.T.H. buyer?

PATH will hopefully answer to the demand and needs of what I call the smart tribe, people who question society, who are seeking and opening new values of honesty, integrity and are eco conscious.

What particular feature sets P.A.T.H. apart from other avail-

able living solutions?

P.A.T.H. is a reliable and intelligent solution for us, our children, and our children's children facing the challenges of ecology, economy and energy. I have developed many plans that should cater to any type of lifestyle, and with many options where actually people can custom make their nest with the guarantee of timelessness design"

What would you say are the most distinguishing design features of a P.A.T.H. home? Is it true that you reside in one yourself?

Hi-technology, mass production, honesty, high quality, affordable to everybody, this means useful.

Was it important for you to present this project at the Moscow Design Week?

At the MDW, I didn't present the project in Russia. I presented the project to the Russian part of my cultural tribe. Today, the world is no longer made of countries and frontiers. Every country is made of groups of tribes.

Imagine, I am part of the A tribe and I talk to the A tribe, who share the same values as me, who have the same cultural references and design & architectural tastes. Some people of other tribes will hate it; but if my tribe in Russia loves it, it's enough for me.

Photo: Archives of GCO



Silent Revolutions in Moscow

Cooperation between designers and companies is important

Silent Revolutions is an exhibition illustrating important and frequently also turning points in the history of Slovenian design, since it focuses not only on excellence of individual products, but also on their place in the broader context of

The exhibition features products by Igor Akrapovič, Asobi, Bevk Perović arhitekti, Lara Bohinc, Ivo Boscarol, Gigodesign, Gorenje Design Studio, Jernej and Japec Jakopin, Leonora Jakovljevič, Kabinet 01, Toni Kancilja, Rok Kuhar and Katjuša Kranjc, Franc Kuzma, Studio Miklavc, Rok Oblak, Oloop, Tanja Pak, Marko Pavlinec, Janez Suhadolc, Arne Vehovar, Nika Zupanc, Peter Florjančič, Niko Kralj, Saša J. Mächtig, Davorin Savnik and Marko Turk.

One of the companies featured at the exhibition in Moscow is Studio Miklavc. Its founder, Jure Miklavc, Slovenian industrial designer, spoke to us about participation at the exhibition.

Why did you take part in the exhibition?

The purpose was to present successful projects from the last few years which were the result of good cooperation between designers and companies. This success was not coincidental; it was the result of concrete professional collaboration, experience and, of course, enthusiasm. Several designers have proved successful, acquiring various internationally renowned professional awards; our products are successful and marketed all around the world. Quite a few products at the exhibition were actually iconic in their fields. Mine were Alpina Racing Elite CS and CL Cross-country Ski Boots; our studio has been involved in their development for almost 15 years and this is our fifth generation. The boots are one of the most successful and recognisable Slovenian products abroad. The programme accounts for one

third of the global market share and the boots are used by the best cross-country ski runners in the most important competitions. Recognisability was achieved because of the design.

What are your impressions of the exhibition in Moscow?

Russia is a vast and very interesting market, which is why the presentation in Moscow was an important venue for the Silent Revolutions exhibition. Judging from the response, the interest was great, and I hope that concrete business cooperation come out of it. But we should not expect too much, since the exhibition was the first step towards the more systematic promotion of Slovenian designers abroad, which should expand with time and target different interest groups. Some countries are being promoted through the achievements of their designers, and they use these achievements as one of the main tools for creating a posi-

Slovenian design. The exhibition includes industrial products of large companies with their own brands, as well as products manufactured in limited editions by the designers themselves.



Photo: Archives of Studio Miklavc

Jure Miklavc



Photo: Archives of GCO

Quite a few products at the exhibition were actually iconic in their fields. Mine were Alpina Racing Elite CS and CL Cross-country Ski Boots; our studio has been involved in their development for almost 15 years and this is our fifth generation.

Photo: Archives of Studio Miklavc



Left: Alpiña Promise, 2010/Studio Miklavc: Jure Miklavc, Jože Carli

Right: Alpiña ESK Pro, 2012/Studio Miklavc: Jure Miklavc, Silva Cimperman



Photo: Archives of Studio Miklavc

tive identity and the recognisability of their culture abroad. They have been doing this systematically for several decades.

Do you think that Slovenian companies are sufficiently aware of the value of design as an important development element?

Some companies are aware of the significance of design and incorporate it into their development processes. These are usually companies which are striving to break through internationally, and are well aware of

the importance of incorporating all-round quality in their services and the strategic development of a brand. Naturally, this requires a lot of knowledge and experience for the right kind of management, which is why such companies are still in a relative minority. Nowadays, a well-designed product is only a ticket of admission for a breakthrough in a competitive market.

What is your attitude to Philippe Starck and his work?

With his numerous successful projects, Phillippe Starck is

certainly the first global star of design. He was one of the first to systematically become a designer-brand. Many are trying to emulate that today. It is interesting that in recent years he has started addressing design with more social responsibility than in the past. In Moscow, Starck provided an interesting description of Slovenian designers. He said that we were 'timeless', we think long-term and we avoid ephemeral trends. Our products are intelligent, simple and fair.

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Photo: Archives of GCO

Simbioza

The largest Slovenian intergenerational project sets new records

The all-Slovenian volunteer project, Simbioza, which promotes intergenerational cooperation and the dissemination of e-literacy among the elderly, has been running sustainability projects

which continue the idea of Simbioza throughout the year, and received positive responses from the business sector and abroad.

Photo: Archives of Simbioza



The third Simbioza took place at 326 locations, where 3,529 volunteers passed on their knowledge to 4,819 participants, assisted by 89 local and 12 regional coordinators. A total of 8,348 people were building bridges between generations, among which the number of young people increased significantly in comparison to last year.

SUPPORT FROM OPINION MAKERS

Many Slovenian politicians supported this year's Simbioza, which was also visited by delegations from Germany, Venezuela, China, Ireland, the Netherlands, Austria and the USA. Simbioza also hosted an official visit by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bos-

nia and Herzegovina.

The workshop in Oton Župančič Library in Ljubljana was opened by Janko Veber, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, who said at the opening that Simbioza, in the form of connecting the young and the elderly, gives both generations the knowledge and experience crucial for confidence. "And that is of key importance for Slovenia's success," he concluded.

Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek attended Simbioza in Kranj and stressed that intergenerational cooperation will lead us on the path to a brighter future. "Intergenerational cooperation is a two-way process, so be aware that the young also need your

help," the Prime Minister told the participants.

Karl Erjavec, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, attended the workshop in Ljubljana and highlighted that the project is extending beyond the borders of Slovenia. He said that it is important that computers are now a great part of our modern lives, which is why the elderly must become involved in working with them. "There is the Internet, electronic mail and everything a person needs to be informed in the modern world."

Minister Erjavec attended the workshop accompanied by Zlatko Lagumdžija, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who had already learned

In her address, the Prime Minister stressed: "Overcoming intergenerational differences, in which several generations cooperate actively, is urgent. And it is commendable that the young took the initiative themselves."

Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek attended Simbioza in Kranj and stressed that intergenerational cooperation will lead us on the path to a brighter future.

“The fact that young people are teaching their grandmothers and grandfathers is quite logical for the third millennium. I am excited by the energy and passion of the people managing this project and I wonder who is actually enjoying this more, the students or teachers. When you see the sparkle in the eyes of the elderly and also in the eyes of the young, then you know that this is the right thing,” said Zlatko Lagumdžija, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, during a visit to a workshop.



Photo: Archives of Symbioza

of the project before, and took the opportunity to see first-hand how the project is being implemented. He said that Symbioza exceeded his expectations.

At the end of the project, Dr Jernej Pikalo, the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, joined the volunteers and participants at the workshop on the use of social networks, shared his experience and awarded them certificates. The Minister said he was certain that the participants had lost all their fear of computers after a week of workshops. He nevertheless emphasised that Symbioza was not only about learning to use a computer. “It was about offering assistance by those who are better trained and, above all, prepared to help. Symbioza was never only about learning skills, but about dialogue between generations,” said the Minister.

INTERGENERATIONAL CENTRE

The mission of Symbioza contin-

ues with new intergenerational projects which will maintain connections between the younger and older generations throughout the year. The first intergenerational centre, established at the initiative of the Symbioza team and Zavod Ypsilon, offers the possibility of connecting generations in the Slovenijales building in Ljubljana. The centre will serve as a point of contact and exchange of knowledge between generations throughout the year.

SIMBIOZA MASTERS

The project Symbioza Masters will offer a year-round education of young first-time jobseekers. The syllabus will include social skills, computer science, work with the elderly and entrepreneurship, backed up with practical work. The first training courses for Symbioza Masters begin in November. “The programme, which in the spirit of social entrepreneurship will help young, hard-to-place jobseekers, and the elderly, who

need assistance when entering the world of modern technology, was approved when the workshops ended,” stressed the head of education at this year’s Symbioza, Ana Pleško.

SIMBIOZA IN SCHOOLS

The Symbioza in schools initiative, in which schools open their computer rooms to the elderly twice a year and pupils teach the elderly, is in its final stage. The visits of foreign representatives to Symbioza showed that there is also great interest in this idea abroad. “Our idea received an excellent response, as the generation gap presents many challenges in numerous other countries. The positive experiences recorded in Slovenia can be a starting point for similar projects around the world. We want Symbioza to promote Slovenia in the world and we will strive for that also in the future,” said Žiga Vavpotič, the project’s initiator, summarising the ambitions of spreading the project abroad.

Our idea received an excellent response, as the generation gap presents many challenges in numerous other countries.



Photo: Archives of Symbioza

Dr Jernej Pikalo, the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, joined the volunteers and shared his knowledge.

Slovenian Gazelle

Knauf Insulation from Škofja Loka receives 2013 Golden Gazelle

The title of fastest-growing company in 2013 and thus the Golden Gazelle went to Knauf Insulation of Škofja Loka, which produces rock and glass wool. The committee of the company Dnevnik wrote in

its citation that Knauf Insulation is writing a story that successfully combines Slovenian knowledge and international capital and the intertwining of joint values and market orientation.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



Gazelles are dynamic fast-growing companies which develop swiftly, create new jobs and always stay one step ahead of the competition. The objective of dynamic companies is not to survive, but to succeed.

In the process of expansion in 2006, Termo, the producer of rock wool in Škofja Loka with a 50-year tradition, was taken over by Knauf, a family company, which merged it with its insulation division, Knauf Insulation.

In five years, the company almost quadrupled its sales revenue, i.e. from 26.5 million to 102 million euros. In this period, the number of employees increased by 350 and is now over 410. The

company achieved a breakthrough in 2010, when revenue grew from 65 to 70 million euros. Another breakthrough occurred in 2011, when some 90 million euros were generated from sales, and profit increased by about 60 per cent year-on-year. The company, which independently implements most of its operations in Slovenia, from development, marketing and insulation process optimisation for industrial buyers, exports over 80 per cent of its products. It also generates above-average added value, which amounts to almost 70,000 euros per employee. Knauf Insulation was selected for a Gazelle of Gorenjska, L-Tek Elektronika for a Gazelle of Dolenjska, and Termo-tehnika for a Gazelle of the

Savinja-Zasavje region.

L-Tek Elektronika from Šentjernej received the Silver Gazelle and Termo-tehnika from Braslovče received the Bronze Gazelle.

The Gazelle is an award for successful fast-growing companies in Slovenia made by the company Dnevnik. The Slovenian Gazelle project, which has been running since 1991, was upgraded with six regional and a national selection in 2001. Fast-growing companies cannot apply for selection, but are short-listed on the basis of their balance sheet data and growth in sales revenue over a period of five years.

Company principle is: "It's time to save energy"

Gazelles are dynamic fast-growing companies which develop swiftly, create new jobs and always stay one step ahead of the competition. The objective of dynamic companies is not to survive, but to succeed.

Health and wellness tourism

In the spirit of exclusiveness, uniqueness and health

A new medical centre opened its doors at the end of October in Dvorska vas near Begunje na Gorenjskem in the shelter of the Karavanke and pristine countryside, away from industrial emissions and in complete peace and tranquillity. The renovated building, fashionably complementing the 11th century castle, once owned by the Lambergh Counts and completely renovated in 2011, and the entire complex exemplify nobility and uniqueness. The

centre is surrounded by a park, a garden pavilion, two ponds and ideal surroundings for a holiday, relaxation and maintaining health. The new centre will treat patients with chronic headache and Lyme disease, and is a unique example of a highly specialised boutique medical centre that offers special and widely sought medical programmes for the treatment of chronic headache and Lyme disease.



Photo: Archives of Lambergh Medical Centre

The Lambergh Medical Centre has a total of five offices and service premises measuring 210 m².

With the exception of the clinic in Augsburg, no special medical institutions exist for the treatment of Lyme disease in the EU, so the Centre at the Lambergh Medical Centre will be the first specialised institution of its kind.

“The Slovenian health system is very unfair to these two diseases,” stresses the head of the centre, Dr Andrej Stare, who will be sharing the work at the centre with a team of doctors. He also notes that four per cent of the population suffers from chronic headache, and the number of Lyme disease patients is also growing. The first patients have already been admitted; in addition to Slovenian patients, foreign patients are also expected at the centre. The Lambergh Medical Centre has a total of five offices and service premises measuring 210 m².

The services at the centre will be payable in full, since in the current situation in Slovenian healthcare no possibilities for a concession exist, although it is anticipated in the future. A two-week comprehensive treatment package including accommodation and other hotel services costs a minimum of 1,500 euros.

The medical programmes are connected with the wellness offer and other services of the new hotel and renovated Renaissance castle, which have changed their name several times, but are now

being marketed under the Lambergh trademark, which is based on exclusiveness, uniqueness and health. At the beginning of 2013, the complex was bought by the company Elba Plus, which leased it out to the new Lambergh Company owned by the Novo mesto entrepreneur, Tomaž Hočevar.

In addition to the core specialisations, the centre also offers back pain packages which target the rehabilitation of golf players (Bled, the largest golf course in this part of Europe, is only 8 kilometres away), anti-stress



The Medical centre Lambergh has above all been designed to offer top professionalism, in terms of its staff and also the most modern medical methods used in healing. In keeping with the spirit of the Lambergh, Château and Hotel, the medical center is also boutique style, giving it a clear advantage over other such centers.

packages and an out-patient care centre for family medicine not covered by health insurance. The Medical Centre features high-quality equipment compliant with all legal standards and the Ministry of Health.

HEADACHE IS ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENT SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE IN MODERN TIMES

About 70 per cent of the population of the EU suffers from occasional and chronic headache, which is treated by neurology specialists. Special clinics for treating headache can be found only in Copenhagen and London. Slovenia has no specialist out-patient clinics, and austerity measures in healthcare have delayed

the resolution of the problem of headache indefinitely. According to doctors, the opinion that the only treatment for headache is occasional or permanent medication is incorrect.

Experts in the field of vascular neurology, specialist neurologists participating in the Society for the Prevention of Cerebral and Vascular Diseases, and clinical psychologists will be working at the Lambergh Medical Centre. In addition to Dr Stare, the new centre will have a team of leading Slovenian experts: Dr Branko Šibanc, infectologist, Dr Bojana Žvan, neurologist, Dr Marjan Zaletel, neurologist, Professor Alenka Sever, psychologist, and Marko Roner, therapist.

TMS (transcranial magnetic stimulation) will be used in the treatment of migraines in particular. This revolutionary method has produced exceptional results in the treatment of migraine and depression in the USA in recent years. TMS has not yet been used in Slovenia for the treatment of headache, which makes the Lambergh Medical Centre unique. In addition to all screening tests, the specialists will also take the patients off unnecessary and inefficient therapies and introduce new, efficient medications. An important role in the treatment of headache will be played by the clinical psychologist, with programmes of cognitive and mnemonic exercises, various tests and the like.

The medical programmes are connected with the wellness offer and other services of the new hotel and renovated Renaissance castle, which have changed their name several times, but are now being marketed under the Lambergh trademark, which is based on exclusiveness, uniqueness and health.



The tourist complex includes a castle, fully renovated in the old medieval style, with nine exclusive rooms/suites with a total of twenty beds. The castle provides guests with superb comfort and relaxation.

The newly-constructed hotel features a restaurant, bar, swimming-pool, fitness centre, saunas, conference rooms and 34 rooms/suites, with a total of 68 beds. The Lambergh Medical Centre is located on the first floor of the hotel.



Photo: Archives of Lambergh Medical Centre

Experts in the field of vascular neurology, specialist neurologists participating in the Society for the Prevention of Cerebral and Vascular Diseases, and clinical psychologists will be working at the Lambergh Medical Centre.

TREATMENT OF LYME DISEASE

Slovenia is one of the EU countries with an above-average number of patients suffering from Lyme disease. Areas where infected ticks are endemic are found throughout almost all of Slovenia, so the issue of patients with Lyme disease is very topical. About 4,000 people are infected annually in

Slovenia with this insidious disease, which has a thousand different faces and forms. The treatment is only partially successful and has to be repeated several times, usually throughout the patient's life. The approach to patients with Lyme disease will be comprehensive and unique at the Lambergh Medical Centre and will incorporate treatment with

bee products (apitherapy) and common teasel (*Dipsacus sylvestris*) preparations. With the exception of the clinic in Augsburg, no special medical institutions exist for the treatment of Lyme disease in the EU, so the Centre at the Lambergh Medical Centre will be the first specialised institution of its kind.

The hotel restaurant comfortably accommodates up to 85 guests (and in case of buffet service up to 150 guests), the café holds up to 25 and the castle garden up to 150 guests.



Photo: Archives of Lambergh Medical Centre

Slovenian entrepreneurship has many start-ups with great potential for success



Photo: Archives of MEDT

It was with great pleasure that I attended the opening of the Forum 100% Start-up at Technology Park Ljubljana on 24 October organised for the seventh consecutive time by members of the Initiative Start-up Slovenia in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the Slovene Enterprise Fund. It was encouraging to see the many young people attending the event, which was also the official beginning of the competition for Start-up of the year. The annual results of the competition and interest in it show that the decision to make encouraging the establishment of new innovative companies and companies with the potential of fast growth one of the priority tasks for economic development was correct.

The 2012 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor research provided favourable evidence that Slovenian entrepreneurial activity is on the rise after a three-year decline. This is a good sign, since entrepreneurial ambitions may revitalise the economy. More companies means more innovations, better competitiveness, more jobs. Entrepreneurship is the strongest force behind economic development, so we must ensure the appeal and accessibility of entrepreneurship for all with suitable measures.

We must create the conditions and support environment for entrepreneurship to regain a positive image and to encourage new innovative companies with potential for fast growth, as these contribute most to better employability and increased added value.

Within the Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2011-2020 (RISS), Slovenia already defined the necessary organisation and financial levers to enhance innovativeness in the economy by encouraging newly-established innovative companies, faster growth and the enhancement of innovative skills in companies. Among its objectives, RISS is also providing for an increase in new innovative companies, i.e. by establishing a comprehensive scheme of financial and other initiatives for starting-up and initial operations. The harmonised implementation of activities with RISS 2011-2020 is also defined by the Slovenian Industrial Policy. This document includes the selection of policies to improve the competitiveness of the business environment, enhance entrepreneurship and innovative skills in the economy for efficient responses to social challenges and activities for the sustainable development of the industry. In accordance with this, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology is striving to support newly-formed innovative companies which have great development potential and are in the most delicate developmental phase, since this potential can be soon lost without proper financial resources.

We are aware that companies in their start-up phase require different forms of assistance, from financial incentives to all forms

of counselling, i.e. particularly assistance and support in their initial functioning, which is not only in the form of cost-free, general education. Through the Slovene Enterprise Fund, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology annually provides funds for grants for beginners (Public tender for (co-financing) grants for enterprise start-ups in innovative environment – P2). The tender is also linked with the multi-year project Start-up Slovenia. The participation of companies in this competition or their placement on the list of start-ups is one of the entry and quantity criteria, which affects the amount of points received in the tender or the possibility of acquiring a grant. The Start-up Slovenia competition is intended to comprehensively encourage the development of innovative entrepreneurial activity and business culture in the Republic of Slovenia. Over 350 innovative start-up companies participated in the competition in the past six rounds. The expert committee selected 31 finalists. Over 4,000 participants attended various events connected to the competition.

The tenders for grants for newly-established innovative start-ups have been administered through the Slovene Enterprise Fund since 2006. Between 2006 and 2012, a total of 15.85 million euros of grants to start-up companies were allocated, which were used by 416 companies established for less than 12 months at the time they applied. The survival rate of companies established between 2006 and 2011 is 99 per cent; the added value per employee increased to 33,419 euros in the same period and the companies on average created 2.1 new jobs. In addition to grants for start-ups, risk capital and guarantees of bank loans, the Slovene Enterprise Fund is developing new forms for next year, such as seed capital and first entrepreneurial incentives for young entrepreneurial teams. The aim is to support companies which commercialise their own knowledge, create products and services with a higher added value and have growth potential also if they enter foreign markets. The Slovene Enterprise Fund also organises or participates in other ways at events and workshops intended for start-up companies, where these are introduced to potential investors. The long-term objective is to increase the competence of entrepreneurial teams which manage start-up companies to achieve a more competitive breakthrough to global markets.

Among the measures to promote the support environment for entrepreneurship and the support of start-up companies, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology co-finances programme and activities of entities in the innovative environment. These measures are intended to utilise entrepreneurial potential in Slovenia, restore growth and contribute to new economic dynamics. Slovenians have plenty of creative and innovative potential which must be directed towards development and success.

Čokoljana

Ljubljana dipped in chocolate for a day

At the end of October, a dream event for all chocolate lovers (chocoholics) took place in Ljubljana. Čokoljana, a chocolate fair, was held at the Ljubljana Market. More than 30 chocolatiers presented different chocolate products and the event was variegated with an entertainment programme.

Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



Products from chocolate on Chocolate fair in Ljubljana



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

The last Saturday in October was marked by chocolate goodies. All lovers of this sweet delight were able to taste chocolates with different ingredients and see other interesting products made of chocolate such as pralines, hot chocolates and chocolate beers and wines.

The last Saturday in October was marked by chocolate goodies. All lovers of this sweet delight were able to taste chocolates with different ingredients and see other interesting products made of chocolate such as pralines, hot chocolates and chocolate beers and wines. Who knew that even beauty products could be made with chocolate?

SO MUCH CHOCOLATE, SO LITTLE TIME!

For a symbolic price, the money collected went to charity, the visitors were able to participate in chocolate workshops, and animations intended for children and adults. A fashion show inspired by chocolate and organised by the Faculty of Design took place in the evening. The chocolate lovers were also able to admire chocolate paintings by Gorazd Potočnik. By profession, Potočnik is a chef, but he was so drawn to chocolate that

he became a master of confectionary. The chocolate master says that “high-quality chocolate can be placed among the elite food which our brain likes the most.” And which is your favourite food?

“Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.” (Forrest Gump)

CHOCOLATE

Chocolate is undoubtedly the most popular and wide-spread sweet in the world. It is enjoyed by the young and the old alike and many people can simply not resist it. The word chocolate derives from the language of the Aztecs and means ‘bitter water’. Regardless of its original meaning, chocolate can be associated with happiness and a good mood as it fills us with endorphins and gives us a feeling of comfort.

The most important ingredients of chocolate are cocoa mass and cocoa butter. The three main types of chocolate are dark chocolate which consists of a higher cocoa content, usually more than 50 per cent, and is considered the best and healthiest chocolate. Then there is milk chocolate, which in addition to cocoa mass also consists of cocoa butter, milk, sugar or other sweeteners and flavours. This chocolate variety is the most popular among consumers. The third type is white chocolate, which consists of cocoa butter, but is without non-fat cocoa solids and according to its content should not be placed among actual chocolates.

Moderate consumption of dark chocolate in small quantities is beneficial to the body and has protective effects. The scientists recommend up to 50 g of dark chocolate a day, as this quantity should supposedly have positive effects on the body while avoiding the possible negative ones. Next time you have a craving for something sweet, choose high-quality dark chocolate.

“All I really need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn’t hurt.” (Charles M. Schulz, American cartoonist)

Photo: Archives of GCO



Chocolate pumpkins: which one is sweeter?

Ljubljana International Film Festival or simply LIFFe

One of the most popular festivals in the region

This year's Ljubljana International Film Festival (LIFFe) was opened with the film *Final Cut: Hölgyeim és Uraim* (The Final Cut: Ladies and Gentlemen) by Hungarian director György Pálfi.

The film is a special love story, with a spectacular and breathtaking collage of images from one hundred years of film history, starring actors from over five hundred films.

Photo: Archives of Liffe



It would be fruitless to look or wait for great celebrity names at the Festival, because commercial trends in cinema are not part of the concept of LIFFe, which is considered a specific competitive festival compensating for Slovenia's cinematographic deficit of high-quality film for more demanding audiences, and presents a review of modern global production.

In addition to regular categories, this year's LIFFe focused on new Austrian cinema. The Tribute section was dedicated to director Lordan Zafranović and the Theme Retrospective was entitled *The Young and the Daring*. About 125 films were shown at the Festival, almost all in digital format.

The organisers also devised an interesting accompanying programme, discussions with filmmakers and a seminar by Me-

dia Desk Slovenia with Philipp Hoffmann on Digital Landscape: Video on Demand and New Ways of Distribution. The audio-visual industry faces great changes in film distribution and consumption. Due to the Internet and mobile devices, more audiences can now view the films of their choice anywhere

at any time. Workshops and lectures for secondary school students were also held to discuss transforming literary works into screenplays.

As in previous years, LIFFe attracted a big audience and again proved that it is one of the most prominent and popular festivals in the region.

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AWARDS

Kingfisher, the award for the director of the best film in the Perspectives section according to the international jury: **Miele** by **Valeria Golino**

Dragon, audience award for the best film yet to be screened in Slovenian cinemas: **Call Girl** by **Mikael Marcimain**

FIPRESCI Prize, presented by the international jury of the International Federation of Film Critics: **Salvo** by **Antonio Piazza**

Best Short Film Award: **Terarij/Terrarium** by **Hana Jušič**

Photo: Archives of Liffe



Borštnik Meeting is a festival of theatre

Olga Kacjan receives this year's Borštnik Ring

At the end of October, the 48th Borštnik Meeting ended. The Meeting was a holiday of Slovenian theatre where theatre lovers could attend twenty Slovenian and five foreign performances. The Borštnik Meeting is more than a festival: it is an institution with

special significance in Slovenian dramatic arts as it annually awards theatre performers and creators. The Meeting is a central national theatre festival or a holiday of Slovenian theatre, a place of exploration, beauty, criticism and new perceptions.

Ignacij Borštnik (born in 1858, Cerklje na Gorenjskem) is considered the founder of modern Slovenian theatre. He was the first Slovenian stage director in the contemporary sense of the word and a superb actor, excelling in the most demanding roles, particularly in modern realistic theatre at the turn of the 20th century. In the photograph: The opening ceremony.



Photo: Šošljan Lah

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Slovenian theatre and theatre on all continents, theatre of the glittering or improvised stage, theatre beneath gilded chandeliers or under the open sky, everywhere where there is a performance or a rehearsal – you are there, requiring your whole person on the stage, behind the stage and in the theatre hall. (From the Slovenian message on the occasion of World Theatre Day, by Saša Pavček.)

From the institutional point of view, the awards given by the expert jury for the best performance, directing, acting and other artistic achievements are also important. The greatest festival award is the Borštnik Ring, which the jury presents each year to a deserving actor or actress for their lifetime achievements. According to Alja Predan, Artistic Director of the Festival, women were especially prominent in this year's festival.

The Borštnik Meeting gathers and offers the best Slovenian theatre performances of the past season, along with an exceptional accompanying programme and ac-

tivities. In addition to the competition programme, international performances also contributed to this year's festival offer. All the performances at this year's festival were marked by supreme directing and acting, noted Alja Predan, Artistic Director. What is more, women dominated in almost all performances, and the highest award of the Borštnik Meeting, the Borštnik Ring, also went to an actress – Olga Kacjan.

In the competition programme of the Borštnik Meeting, Primož Jesenko, Competition and Accompanying Programme Director, included four performances by the

Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana, two performances by the Slovene National Theatre Maribor and one performance each by the Ljubljana City Theatre, the Slovene Permanent Theatre in Trieste, the Prešeren Theatre Kranj and the Delak Institute, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova. Visitors and theatre lovers were able to enjoy seven performances in the accompanying programme, and five performances from the Netherlands, Lithuania, Hungary and Croatia in the international section. The focus was on contemporary Dutch dramatic literature and theatre.



Photo: Matej Krstović



OLGA KACJAN – ACTRESS FOR DARING CHALLENGES AND GREAT RISKS

The Borštnik Ring, a lifetime achievement award presented by the expert jury, is the greatest drama award in Slovenia. This year's recipient is Olga Kacjan, a member of Mladinsko Theatre.

“Olga Kacjan is an actress who entered the theatre and stepped on its stage prepared for daring challenges and great risks. Thus she also decided to be involved in the most crucial moments of the Slovenian and former Yugoslavian theatre. She has cooperated with the most breakthrough and visionary directors of the time in atypical working conditions, anticipating risky or unpredictable results. Many actresses would prefer to avoid such challenges, but Kacjan boldly rushed towards the roaring waves,” according to the citation of the jury comprised of actress Silva Čušin, directors Jernej Lorenci and Dušan Mlakar, poet, dramatist, essayist and translator Ivo Svetina, and Alja Predan, the Artistic Director of the Borštnik Meeting.

“I am indescribably honoured. Since I am the first from Mladinsko Theatre to receive this

recognition, I hope that I have broken the ice,” said Olga Kacjan when receiving the award, alluding to the connections between Mladinsko Theatre in Ljubljana and the Borštnik Meeting.

“It is impossible to sum up four decades of acting in a few words. There are ups and downs, just like in life, but I would not change anything. Even if I wanted to, it cannot be done,” said Kacjan who took to the stage in her childhood. She retired in January, but that did not mean an end to her acting career. “What can a retired actress do? It is best I do not start enumerating...I would particularly like to spend more time with my grandchildren, Olja and Borja, and offer them as much spiritual nourishment as possible. But I would be lying if I did not say that this recognition also represents a challenge. And I think: if I am healthy – I still get plenty of joy out of theatre and film – and if I am wanted, I would be glad to participate,” said Kacjan.

Olga Kacjan was also seen on television screens, but she says that theatre was her first love, to which she has dedicated most of her passion. And when I asked her what the ring that she had put on means to her, she replied

in her lively manner. “Let me put it this way: I first recall Ignac Borštnik–Gorazd and the priceless legacy that he left to the Slovenian and also Croatian theatre, since we know that he frequently performed in Zagreb in Slovenian language.” And then she added, “When I was told that I would receive this exceptional recognition this year, I started crying buckets. Then I laughed and rejoiced at the good news together with my loved ones.”

In the course of her rich and important career, Olga Kacjan created many masterly and unforgettable stage and screen roles. She is undoubtedly one of the most innovative stage actresses in Slovenia, committed to her work and high theatrical standards. She says that we are called to a profession and we must thus commit to it even more. “Which is only right. It is indescribably important to do your work to the best of your abilities. Always! Each role must be important to an actor, even the least noticeable. Sometimes it is more difficult to perform such a role than a more important one; there are no second chances. That is the way it is,” she explains. She must not and cannot say which her favourite role is. “The ones I am playing at the moment are now the most important.”

Olga Kacjan is a theatre and film actress. She was born on 30 March 1952 in Zemun in Serbia. She graduated from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana. After being a freelance actress for almost a decade, she worked briefly at the Slovene National Theatre Maribor, and then worked at Mladinsko Theatre from 1991. Already as a student, she worked in professional film and theatre productions, first in 1976 in Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* in the Slovene Permanent Theatre in Trieste. She later made guest appearances in many Slovenian and international theatres. She created numerous television roles and a number of notable film roles (*Povest o dobrih ljudeh* (A Tale of Good People), 1974; *Dekliški most* (Girls' Bridge), 1976; *Železni križ* (Iron Cross), 1980; *Splav meduze* (The Medusa Raft), 1980; *Sava Šumanović*, 1980; *Svetozar Marković*, 1980; *Dediščina* (Heritage), 1980; *Carmen*, 1993).

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The greatest festival award is the Borštnik Ring, which the jury presents each year to a deserving actor or actress for their lifetime achievements. According to Alja Predan, Artistic Director of the Festival, women were especially prominent in this year's festival.

The Borštnik Meeting gathers and offers the best Slovenian theatre performances of the past season, along with an exceptional accompanying programme and activities.

Igor Samobor, last year's recipient of the Borštnik Ring and director of the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana, was also among the winners this year, this time in a double role: as the recipient of the award for acting and as the director of Drama theatre company.

As a last year's recipient of the Ring, what are your impressions of this year's festival?

"I cannot say that I have experienced it much differently than in the previous years. The only difference was that I was in Maribor most of the time and I was able to fully enjoy the rush of the theatre. From dawn until dusk. The atmosphere was pleasantly tense. Perhaps the ring gives me a little bit of distance and peace and thus more pleasure."

The jury's citation for the per-



Photo: Peter Uhan / SNG Drama Ljubljana

formance of *The Crazy Locomotive* performed by the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana states "that it is a serious challenge to stage an experimental, avant-garde play...".

How will this affect the artistic direction of the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana in the future?

"Each performance is a challenge and each has to find its own form. In recent years, many extravagant performances have been staged by Drama. We constantly explore theatrical ex-

pression and we will continue to do so in the future. We are a group of actors who would never walk the same path twice. I think this is our main merit. No one is afraid to test the limits. The message that has to be delivered to the audience is essential. The form is a matter of taste. All our directors are interesting. For the most part, they say that they like working with us because we do not limit them. That is how *The Crazy Locomotive*, *Christmas at the Ivanovs*, *Mystery Bouffe*, *The Mother*, *Hamlet*, etc. can be staged," said Igor Samobor.



Photo: Peter Uhan / SNG Drama Ljubljana

The play *The Maids* is a perfected and subtle study of various emotional states intertwined by the maids Claire and Solange. Brutal pathos is constantly turned into its contradiction with the play within the play. There is laughter opposite tears, grimace opposite pure face, love opposite hate, remorse opposite revenge...

Borštnik Awards

Grand Prix for the Best Performance: The Crazy Locomotive directed by Jernej Lorenci and performed by the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana

Borštnik Award for Directing: Mateja Koležnik for directing John Gabriel Borkman performed by the Slovene National Theatre Maribor

Special Borštnik Jury Award for Collective Creation: Vinko Möderndorfer: Exercises for Anxiety performed by the Slovene Permanent Theatre in Trieste

Four Borštnik Awards for Acting:

- Nataša Barbara Gračner for the role of Mother in the production of The Mother performed by the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana
- Polona Juh for the role of Ophelia in the production of Hamlet performed by the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana
- Nataša Matjašec Rošker for the role of Miss Elle Rentheim in the production of John Gabriel Borkman performed by the Slovene National Theatre Maribor
- Igor Samobor for the role of John Gabriel Borkman in the production of John Gabriel Borkman performed by the Slovene National Theatre Maribor

Borštnik Award for Young Actress: Tina Gunzek for the role of Girl in the production of Exercises for Anxiety performed by the Slovene Permanent Theatre in Trieste

Borštnik Award for Music: Branko Rožman for music in the production of The Crazy Locomotive performed by the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana

Borštnik Award for Set Design: Numen and Ivana Radenović for set design in the productions of Black Beast Sorrow performed by the Ljubljana City Theatre and The Master and Margarita performed by the Slovene National Theatre Maribor

Borštnik Award for Translation: Srečko Fišer for the translation of William Shakespeare's Hamlet performed by the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana

Borštnik Award for Artistic Direction: Marinka Postrak for artistic direction in the production 25.671 performed by the Prešeren Theatre Kranj

From the institutional point of view, the awards given by the expert jury for the best performance, directing, acting and other artistic achievements are also important.

"The staging of The Crazy Locomotive presents a serious challenge: how to stage an experimental and avant-garde play from 1923 based on the hardly definable doctrine of 'pure form', which the author did not finish and which was not staged in his lifetime," wrote the jury in its citation.

Photo: Peter Uhan/SNG Drama Ljubljana



Slovenian Fashion Week

Spring/Summer 2014

The fifth Fashion Week Slovenia took place in Ljubljana between 14 and 16 October. A wind of fresh fashion blew through the Slovenian capital, bringing renowned designers to Kino Šiška. M*faganel, Maja Štamol, Urša Drofenik, Sofia Nogard, Irena Funduk Fashion and Ivan Rocco presented their designs on the first day. On Tuesday, visitors admired creations by Zoran

Garevski, Nina Šušnjara, Akultura, Miro Mišljen, Tanja Zorn SQUAT//Young@Squat and Aleksandra Bršan. On the last day, their latest styles were revealed by Maja Ferme Fashion, Nelizabeta, Mojca Celin, Almira Sadar, Nataša Peršuh, Angela Lukanovich, Draž and a guest from Serbia, INES atelier. Slovenian Fashion Week concluded with the Elle Style Awards for best style.

Photo: Archives of Fashion Week/Elle.si



Left: Marjeta Grošelj; Elle Style Awards – Lifetime Achievement Award

Right: Draž, designer of the year: inspiration from nature knitted from diatoms became a challenge in the world of fashion.

A wind of fresh fashion blew through the Slovenian capital, bringing renowned designers to Kino Šiška.

NITRO CONFERENCE

Fashion Week opened with the NITRO Conference, where ideas, knowledge, experience and opinions were presented by four Slovenians successful abroad: Rok Predin, Nataša Čagalj, Jure Prek and Mitja Okorn.

Designer and animation director Rok Predin looked for new challenges in London. On the day that he had thought of quitting his



Photo: Archives of Fashion Week/Elle.si

search for work and opportunities, Predin was offered a job. He has been living in London for a few years now, during which he has worked on projects for Keith Urban, Take That, Elton John and the Rolling Stones.

Fashion designer Nataša Čagalj first won the competition for young designers and acquired a post-graduate scholarship at the prestigious Central Saint Martins College in London. After more

than fifteen years of work, Čagalj is a renowned name in international fashion. She has been designing for some of the greatest names in fashion; first for Cerruti and later for Lanvin, Stella McCartney and Victoria Beckham.

"Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street; fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening." (Coco Chanel)

"In the world of fashion, hard work also prevails over talent. In my profession, you are worth as much as your latest work; actually, you repeatedly start anew."
(Nataša Čagalj)

Jure Prek is an art director and senior director of design and animation at the company Outfit7, which created the Talking Tom Cat smart phone application. Prek is responsible for producing mobile applications and TV ads and is also the leading animator of Talking Friends. He told the participants at the conference that he enjoyed doing what he had always wanted to do and in the country in which he was born.

His experience was also shared by director Mitja Okorn, who directed one of the greatest Polish hit films – Letters to St. Nicholas. "I am proud that 2.5 million Poles have seen my film, and although my mother says let another praise you and not your own mouth, I had to praise myself just now," jokingly concluded the director, who gets energy from his creative work. Okorn also added that he

would have been a guitarist, had he not been a director.

FASHION SHOWS AND ELLE STYLE AWARDS

October's Fashion Week officially started with an evening show in Kino Šiška and was anxiously awaited not only by designers, but also by numerous journalists, bloggers, fashion experts and enthusiasts who applauded the new styles and particularly new ideas which the Slovenian fashion scene desperately needs.

The second day of the October fashion story was further varied by new ideas intertwined in new-age fashion fairy-tales in which material and scissors are used by a new group of Slovenian designers. The spectacular conclusion of Fashion Week was provided by fashion designers whose collections satisfied the fashion appetites of the fully packed hall.

Tomaž and Urška Draž ended this year's Fashion Week with a collection entitled Diatomeja, named after the fragile diatom algae with which the designers metaphorically connect the

world of fashion. "The idea of intertwining our lives with water and nature, of the constant need to pay respect to the living beings that surround us and enable us a better life."

The awards of first prizes for the most creative accomplishments and style in the Slovenian fashion field, the ELLE Style Awards, followed the fashion shows. Tomaž and Urška Draž (Draž trademark) won in the best designer category and Andela Lukanović (Angela Lukanovich trademark) was declared the best young designer. Singer Polona Kasal became the ELLE Style Icon; the best Slovenian model was Branko Maselj and the best fashion photographer Mimi Antolović.

The Lifetime Achievement Award went to the exceptional handbag designer, Marjeta Grošelj, an unsurpassable master in her field, whose work leaves fashion enthusiasts amazed time and again.

"Fashion's not about looking back. It's always about looking forward." (Anna Wintour)

The Lifetime Achievement Award went to the exceptional handbag designer, Marjeta Grošelj, an unsurpassable master in her field, whose work leaves fashion enthusiasts amazed time and again.

Left: Akultura: designer Alenka Globočnik focused on white. The silhouette simultaneously interacts with the volume and geometry; it evokes a sense of airiness and firmness and denotes both fragility and strength.

Middle: Ivan Rocco: took his inspiration from the art of painting; he combined several threads into an original Chinese whole.

Right: With her Marroxxo collection, Andela Lukanović, the young designer of the year, presents the temperament of the Balkans, located somewhere between Marrakesh and Casablanca.



Photo: Archives of Fashion Week/Elle.si



Photo: Archives of Fashion Week/Elle.si



Photo: Archives of Fashion Week/Elle.si

Ljubljana Marathon – the biggest running event in Slovenia

It's not the kilometres that matter, but the purpose

When you cross the finish line of a marathon, you become a different person. The old person is forgotten and the new, better, more confident, determined and healthier person appears. The countless drops of sweat carry a lot of symbolism; the threshold of pain and will is tested and new

circumstances are explored. Others believe that those who run are either insane or have stolen something and are running away. Whatever the case may be, if Slovenians were considered a skiing nation in the past, nowadays we are gradually becoming a running nation.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

The 18th Ljubljana Marathon at the end of October was attended by 19,335 runners.

This year's 18th Ljubljana Marathon at the end of October drew 12,795 runners who ran distances of 10, 21 and 42 kilometres. The event on Saturday attracted 6,540 participants. A total of 19,335 runners was recorded over the entire weekend, a record turnout indeed.

Running is all about having the desire to train and persevere until every fiber in your legs, mind, and heart is turned to steel. And when you've finally forged hard enough, you will have become the best runner you can be. And that's all that you can ask for.

This year's 18th Ljubljana Marathon at the end of October drew 12,795 runners who ran distances of 10, 21 and 42 kilometres. The event on Saturday attracted 6,540 participants. A total of 19,335 runners was recorded over the entire weekend, a record turnout indeed.

Why was the event so popular? The main reason for taking up running is undoubtedly concern for health; the second is well-being; the third is enjoying good-quality leisure time and the fourth is the motivation to

progress and achieve good results. Another basic motive for running is socialising; people like to spend time with each other, to belong, feel appreciated and accepted. I am happy to say that the number of runners in Slovenia is growing – I have been one for 20 years – which means that people are living more healthy lives and are aware that running gives them strength and improves the quality of their lives. Running is good aerobic exercise, and has a positive impact on health, as it can prevent typical chronic diseases

of modern times.

It is particularly important that children are introduced to running from an early age. The organiser of this year's marathon also included young people from primary and secondary schools, with 6,540 children taking part. The sport is introduced to children as an enjoyable and relaxing activity, which will encourage them to remain involved in running later.

All the runners who participated in the running weekend on 26 and 27 October deserve



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Photo: Darinka Mladenović



Satisfaction and congratulations at the finish line. Running also rejuvenates us and keeps us healthy in old age.

congratulations. The event did not see any records, but there was record participation. Special congratulations go to the official winners, the fastest runners: a triple Kenyan victory for women: Caroline Chepkwony (2:27:27); Edinah Kwambai (2:29:35) and Emily Chepkemoi Samoei (2:30:01). In spite of difficult windy conditions, the winner managed to improve her personal record by more than three minutes. The winners of the 42-km marathon for men were Mulugeta Wami from Ethiopia (2:10:26), Deribe Robi from Ethiopia (2:10:30) and Julius Chepkwony from Kenya (2:10:31). The new national marathon champion was Anton Kosmač with a time of 2:24:57. The second Slovenian was Robert Kotnik with 2:36:40, and the third was Aleš Žontar, with a time of 2:37:14. The best results qualifying for the national championship in the 42-km marathon for women: Žana Jereb (2:42:09), Mojca Kermavnar (3:09:05), Katja Rakušček (3:15:16).

I HAVE TO RUN. IF I STOP, I DIE

Returning to recreational runners, psychological preparation,

experience and an understanding of their bodies is very important to them. Also, the legs must be resilient. For a good run in a marathon, you must keep in good physical and mental condition, which naturally requires regular training sessions. Long-distance running makes a person determined even at the limit of their abilities. It is said that when you think all your strength is exhausted, you can still run at least twice as far. Interesting, is it not? This attitude can also be applied in our daily lives. With the help of running, we can set our goals much higher, which then result in success and greater satisfaction. I am certain that if we run, we do many things differently. We simply think differently, eat different, lighter food, and laugh more, since endorphins, the hormones of happiness, are released when running. We concentrate more on things that enrich and fill us with positive energy and set aside things that consume our energy and make us feel bad. The ability to run is a privilege to be nourished and preserved also in old age. Running is not merely a healthy form of recreation; it is also the

most natural form of human movement. When walking becomes too slow, start running everywhere, at any time; in this way, you only compete against yourself. The marathon is a special athletic discipline, which alongside the training requires a lot of wisdom, patience and psychical strength. Solutions to the toughest problems can be found while running. "I have to run. If I stop, I die", said Haile Gabreselassie, one of the best long-distance runners in the world.

CITY IN MOTION

A special feature of the Ljubljana Marathon is Mayor Zoran Jankovič, who stands at the finish line for several hours every year, giving high-fives to runners, greeting and congratulating them. This does not happen at any other marathon in Europe. The Mayor knows that the marathon sets the city in motion, those who run and those who cheer along the course. The fact that the number of participants is twenty-five times higher than when it began 17 years ago is very encouraging. Long live the Ljubljana Marathon!

The main reason for taking up running is undoubtedly concern for health; the second is well-being; the third is enjoying good-quality leisure time and the fourth is the motivation to progress and achieve good results.

Left: Chepkwony Julius, Robi Deribe, Wami Mulugeta

Right: Mojca Kermavnar, Vesna Kiradijeva, Žana Jereb

Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Photo: Rosana Rijavec/STA



Aluminium on the Teeth, Chalk on the Lips

Kristina Hočevar received the Jenko Award for her collection of poems 'Aluminium on the Teeth, Chalk on the Lips' (Na zobeh aluminij, na ustnicah kreda) in Medana in Goriška Brda.

The award ceremony was marked by patronage, since sponsorship of the award for the next three years has been taken over by entrepreneur Nedjan Brataševc, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland to Slovenia. In his speech, Veno Taufer, President of the Slovene Writers' Association, stressed the exceptional significance of patronage at a time when the crisis has also severely affected art.

Photo: Tamirno Petelinšek/STA



Necropolis at Storyville

In October, the Storyville electronic application began offering 'Necropolis' (Nekropola) by Slovenian writer Boris Pahor in the USA, Canada and the UK.

The novel in e-form is available to users of tablets and other electronic devices, who can purchase the book via applications at iTunes and Amazon. Storyville is using its Facebook and Twitter sites to conduct a discussion on this autobiographical novel, in which Pahor describes his experience of Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War.

Photo: Archives of Mladinska knjiga



'The Toast' receives award for picture book

The Kristina Brenkova Award was presented to Damijan Stepančič for his illustrations in the picture book 'The Toast' (Zdravljica). The book illustrating the Slovenian national anthem, published by the Mladinska Knjiga Publishing House, is distinguished by a studious and analytical approach to artistic interpretation typical of the frequently awarded illustrator.

Stepančič intensifies the dramatic arch of Prešeren's poetic story with daring artistic compositions. The hymnal and subtle surface collages dominate the two-sided compositions of ruptures. Stepančič's expressive power reaches excellence with his meta-physical depiction of timeliness through layers of images from the past, recent past and the living present.

Photo: Tamirno Petelinšek/STA



Start-up success

The start-up environment in Slovenia has become very lively, and many start-ups have enjoyed considerable success, according to Forum 100% Start:up, an event held in Ljubljana on 24 October.

Start-ups Lumu Labs, Chipolo and Flykly have successfully met their funding targets on crowdfunding site Kickstarter. Layer won the prestigious Disrupt San Francisco event and the DORA team won second place at the Imagine Cup 2013, said Urban Lapajne of the Start:up Slovenija initiative. Despite the successes, financing is still limited, but plans are afoot that could change that. Maja Tomanič Vidovič, the head of the Enterprise Fund, said existing schemes would be upgraded with a seed capital fund.



Decoration for Bishop Erniša

Borut Pahor, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, bestowed the Silver Order for Services on Geza Erniša, the first bishop of the Evangelical Church in Slovenia. At the award ceremony, Bishop Erniša emphasised the importance of tolerance in Slovenian society.

When he received the Order, Bishop Erniša stressed that he understood this gesture was also a recognition and thank-you to all Protestant ministers and lay people who had greatly contributed to the Slovenian nation years before him. He said that Protestants call on Slovenians to live according to principles and values and to not exclude or discriminate against anyone because of their religious beliefs or philosophies of life. Protestants also promote Trubar's and Luther's maxim that it is necessary to stand by one's words and actions and to strive for a decent life for the people around us.

Borut Pahor, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, decorated Geza Erniša with a Silver Order for Services, Viktor Blažič and France Bole with the Order for Services and Wolfgang Johannes Bandion and Caspar Einem with the Medal for Services.



Awards for the queen of gardens

Slovenian inventors were very successful at the Innovation Exhibition ARCA in Zagreb and at the exhibition in Sevastopol, Ukraine.

Ivan Gregorič received one of the prizes at ARCA for his 'queen of gardens', the mobile lawn mower that also impressed the Association of Polish Inventors and Rationalisers, which awarded it a gold medal. The Primorje innovators were also successful in Sevastopol. Gregorič's queen of gardens again received a gold medal. Another gold medal went to Alojz Tomazin, an innovator from Koper, for his special steel blade combined with plastic blades.



The Brumen Award goes to Objektiv covers

At the 6th Biennial of Slovene Visual Communications, designer Tomato Košir and the team of the newspaper Dnevnik received the Grand Prix – Big Brumen Award in the category of covers and front pages for the collection of Objektiv covers.

In its citation, the international jury wrote that the covers are not cliché, but fresh and provocative and would stand out in any publication and in all markets. The jury found them beautiful as a collection and individually. Dnevnik and Objektiv were also winners in the category of magazines and newspapers, because they are "excellent examples of the transformation of a publication."

President of the Jury Roger Black and designers Tomato Košir and Samo Ačko.



White Circus on the Sea

In mid-October, the Ski Association of Slovenia and the company Elan organised 'White Circus on the Sea', an exceptional and unique event. An artificial snow track in the immediate vicinity of the sea, i.e. on the steps of the Bernardin Hotel complex in Portorož was created, the first in Slovenia.

The organisers staged the event to raise awareness and encourage children to spend their leisure time actively in the countryside and on snow. 'White Circus on the Sea' was part of the International Ski Federation's SnowKidz campaign promoting sports on snow for children.

Photo: Archives of GCC



Land of ice and Father Christmas in Bohinj

21–22 December 2013, Bohinj

An elf will accompany participants through the woods to Father Christmas' idyllic home. In the warm shelter of his hut, children gathered around the open fireplace will listen to tales from a magical world and enjoy tea and biscuits. The youngest will be able to enjoy the deer's downhill, the icy toboggan, the snow tunnel and the spider's winter web.

More on the event at <http://www.topdogodki.si/component/content/article/9-uncategorised/102-ledena-dezela-z-bozickom.html>

Photo: Nebojša Tejić



Let us turn on the light, people!

3 December 2013, Ljubljana

Every year, this short ceremonial event organised at Prešernov trg in the capital marks the beginning of the New Year's Eve festivities in town. After a cultural programme and the mayor's address, all the decorative lighting will be turned on. The cultural event is dedicated to the memory of two Slovenian classical literary authors: France Prešeren, the greatest Slovenian poet, born on this day, and Fran Milčinski, "Ježek", the most popular Slovenian humorist author of all time. Ježek was also the author of the poem which inspired the name of this cultural event.

More on the event at <http://www.visitljubljana.com/si/prireditve/19019/detail.html>



Happy feet

16 December 2013, Ljubljana

This year's traditional Christmas and New Year's concert by the SAF Military Band will be held on Monday 16 December at 20.00 in Cankarjev Dom's Gallus Hall. It is a charity concert. The money raised will be used to support the Vesele nogice (Happy Feet) society. The honorary sponsor of the concert is the President of the Republic of Slovenia and the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, Borut Pahor.

More information available at: <http://www.cd-cc.si/en/>

Photo: Aleš Fevzer/SPRIT



Cableway dinner

26 December, Cerklje na Gorenjskem

The Dvor Jezeršek and Krištof restaurants are preparing a culinary experience in the heart of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps. Dvor Jezeršek and Krištof's top chefs de cuisine will change the Krvavec cableway cabins into small private restaurants. A maximum of four persons will be able to enjoy a three-course dinner in their own private cabin. The third ride will be followed by a stop at the bottom of the ski-slope and a sweet surprise. Guests will close the evening by socialising and drinking a glass of wine in a nearby mountain hut.

More on the event at http://www.napovednik.com/dogodek274451-vecerja_na_zajli_2612

Slovenian architecture of the 19th century

The architectural creativity of the 19th century left a significant impact on the image of Slovenia, particularly on towns, spa locations and transport routes. It was developed in the controversial era of the modern nations' formation, a period which saw a sudden increase in population, and a period of limitless optimism and belief in the power of science, which seemed to produce ultimate answers to every question. The country had never seen so much construction. In addition to traditional building types, numerous new ones appeared, intended for all social classes. Public buildings with complex designs for the needs of administration, education, the judiciary, and culture, post offices, banks, health care and military buildings were constructed en masse, including numerous private business-residential houses, spa-catering and tourist-recreational buildings, as well as technical construction for the needs of the railway, road and water traffic, factories and other industrial buildings, public plantations and, finally, countless new churches and traditional castle-like buildings. In the light of social, economic and political factors, the exceptionally diverse architectural activity of the 19th century encroached on all areas of public and private life and took Slovenian towns from Baroque culture to a new stage of development, characterised by broad creative progress. Never before had functional requirements and expressive capabilities so thoroughly and with such diversity put architecture to the test. Architectural experimentation occurred in many contexts. More than ever before, architecture was co-dependent on scientific research, inventions, legal regulations and the establishment of new theories of history. The 19th century left many representative public buildings of great symbolic significance which still affect our daily lives. At the time, town centres acquired their images, the majority of which are still maintained today. Many people still live in multi-apartment buildings or villas from the 19th century, which in terms of comfort are considered unsurpassed. We continue to use the railway network constructed in the 19th century, which has not been significantly altered. The 19th century undoubtedly had a significant impact on the modern way of life, but we are nevertheless very poorly acquainted with the architectural achievements of the period.

We wish to change that with an exhibition which is open until 23 March 2014 at the Museum of Architecture and Design. It is the first detailed review of the architectural creativity of the 19th century in Slovenia. With the help of old and new photographs, archive plans, historical depictions, models and descriptions, the exhibition highlights this exceptionally complex issue, and gives a rounded and unbiased presentation of the most important architectural and urban creations of the period, the most important architectural centres, the most important and typical architectural types, and the most important architects and constructors and fundamental stylistic periods.

A large format monograph with several hundred pages and many illustrations accompanies the exhibition, and presents the 19th century Slovenian architecture for the first time, with different points of view, a general historical framework, a review of stylistic developments and the main building types and an extensive catalogue of the buildings and biographies of the most important architects. The descriptions are accompanied by numerous photographs of former and current images of significant architectural creations, plans and illustrations from Slovenian archives and museums.

Source: promotional material of Museum of Architecture and Design



Town Savings Bank in Celje. Photo: Archives of the Museum of Architecture and Design