

A child wearing a dark jacket and a hooded hat is seen from behind, reaching out with their right hand towards a dense wall of warm white bokeh lights. The lights are out of focus, creating a soft, glowing effect. In the background, a building with a pointed roof is visible against a dark sky. The overall mood is festive and magical.

Sinfo

Let the Holiday Season light
Sparkles in our Eyes

**I FEEL
SLOVENIA**

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SLOVENIA

Sinfo

SINFO - Slovenian information

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EDITORIAL



Photo: Bruno Toič

LET THE HOLIDAY SEASON LIGHT SPARKLES IN OUR EYES

Time goes quickly by, and you are already reading the last issue of the Sinfo magazine in 2023. In the holiday season, we frequently ask ourselves what comes next. We wish each other happiness, health and good luck. We wish for the difficult past moments to acquire meaning and for the pleasant moments to serve as an inspiration for the future.

At events organised nationally and abroad, Slovenia was once again successfully showcased this year as a country of the future, as innovative and green and as a country of top achievements in various fields.

In this edition, we look at the Frankfurt Book Fair and present the Slovenian Book Fair. There is an abundance of outstanding Slovenian literature and we could say that the writers are the architects of Slovenian history. Slovenia is gradually becoming a film location destination. It has truly unique natural features and a wealth of cultural heritage, which serve as an excellent backdrop for the world of imagination.

At the end of the year, it is also fitting to look at what the new year has in store in terms of sport. The 60th edition of the Golden Fox skiing competition will take place at the beginning of 2024 and later we will enjoy a sporting summer.

Ahead is the holiday season, the time of the aroma of biscuits, potica nut roll and other holiday delicacies, the time spent with our loved ones and the time of hope. Let the warmth and sincerity of words make us happy and let the festive joy and delight last throughout the year.

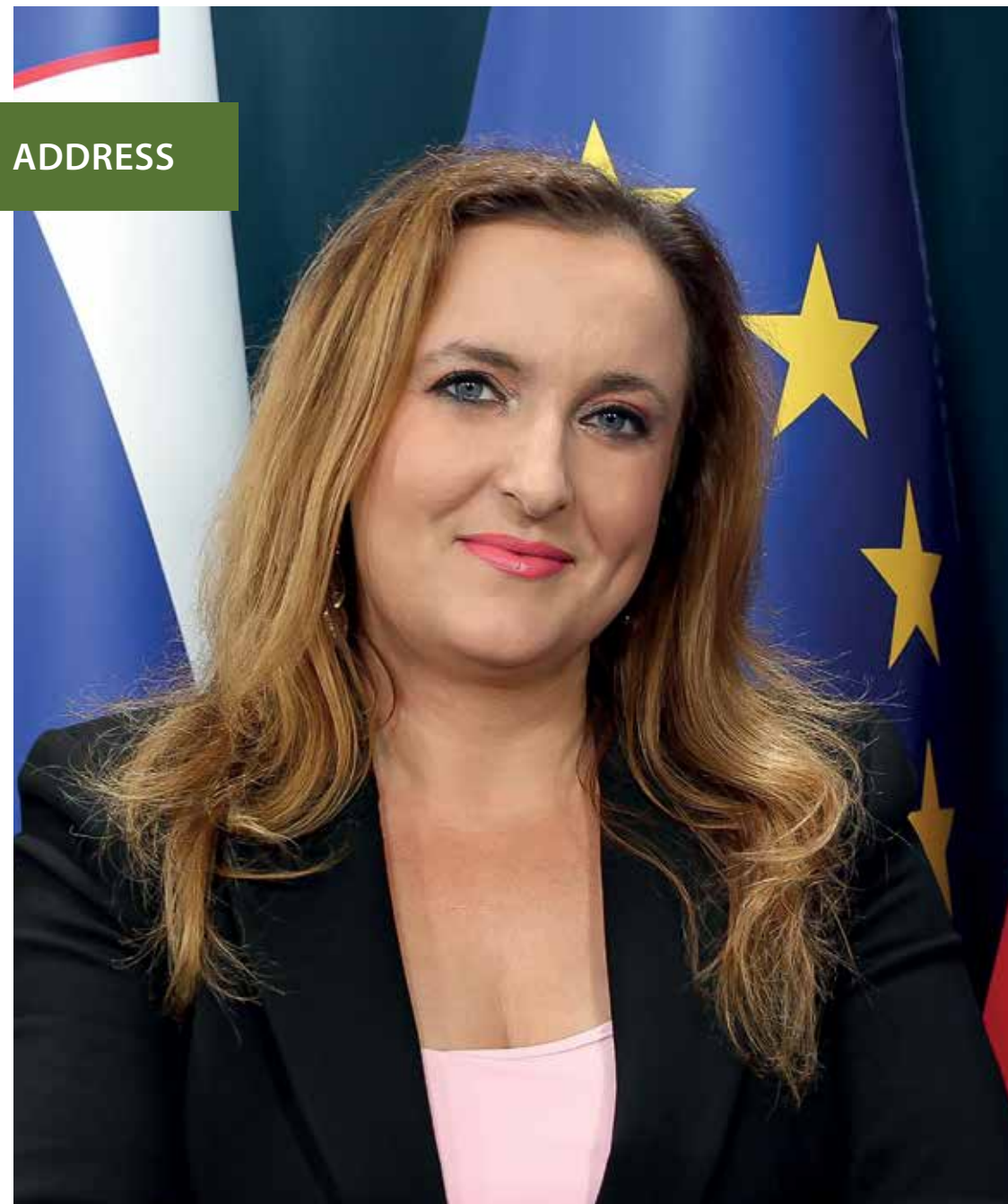
Tanja Glogovčan Belančič, Editor-in-Chief



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Photo: Olga Simonova/depositphotos.com

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ADDRESS

Photo: Žan Kolman/UKOM

Dream big and make the most of 2024

The Government Communication Office (UKOM) is an independent professional service within the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The Office deals with publicity relating to the Government and keeps the national public informed about the work of the Prime Minister and ministries. The Office also drafts and carries out communication campaigns highlighting the Government's most important programme priorities.

We further inform the foreign public about the work of the Government, the Prime Minister, ministries, the President of the Republic and other important developments in Slovenia. We provide professional support to the government public relations officers and public relations offices at ministries and governmental services. We offer communication support during large state events, such as state visits, international meetings and conferences at the highest level.

Our work also includes planning and implementation of the state's general promotional activity and activities linked with the Government's direct communication with citizens. In cooperation with the government public relations officer, we coordinate the operations of public relations consultants at ministries, governmental services and offices. Furthermore, the Office is the custodian of the 'I Feel Slovenia' (IFS) national brand.

In the past year, Slovenia has dealt with many difficult challenges and reached for the stars to find solutions. During the Nordic World Ski Championships held in Planica, we successfully showcased Slovenia as a country of great sporting achievements.

In October, when Slovenia was the Guest of Honour at the 2023 Frankfurt Book Fair, we showed the richness of our written language by attracting great attention from the international public for our presentations and events at the largest book fair in the world.

With 153 votes of support in the first round of voting, Slovenia was elected a non-permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations for the 2024–2025 term at the UN General Assembly in New York. 2024 will be an exceptional opportunity for Slovenia in the UN and also a responsibility, particularly at a time in which we are facing great geopolitical changes and divisions.

In terms of national developments, we successfully established crisis communication during our greatest natural disaster, i.e. the floods in August, which affected two thirds of the country. UKOM's communication was immediate and we maintained an excellent provision of information for the domestic and foreign public and showed that the Government provides solutions in such situations. By doing so, the Government obtained international attention and assistance. Especially valuable was the help of Ukraine, a country at war, which nevertheless managed to help Slovenia in its recovery.

In 2024, Slovenia will be required to wisely and prudently address the challenges which cause suffering, wars, inequality, etc. in Europe and around the world. The Government, led by Prime Minister Dr Robert Golob, has already shown that it is an important player at home and on the world stage and that the stars are on its side. The current Government knows that nothing is impossible. It is necessary to reach for the stars and dare to dream incredible things.

Whatever is beautiful. Whatever is meaningful. Whatever brings you happiness. May it be yours this holiday season and throughout the coming year.

Petra Bezjak Cirman
Director, Government Communication Office



IN FOCUS

Piran. Photo: csakisti/depositphotos.com

ICONIC SLOVENIAN FILMS

Slovenian Hollywood

TEXT BY TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ

One of the prettiest Slovenian towns, the coastal town of Piran, was the location of many iconic Slovenian films. Irrespective of the capital being Ljubljana and the fact that one of Slovenia's most renowned scenic locations is Bled, Piran remains the capital of film.

The Slovenian film industry developed there from 1959, when the first Slovenian film studio, Viba Film, was set up at Fornace and the Slovenian Hollywood started to blossom.

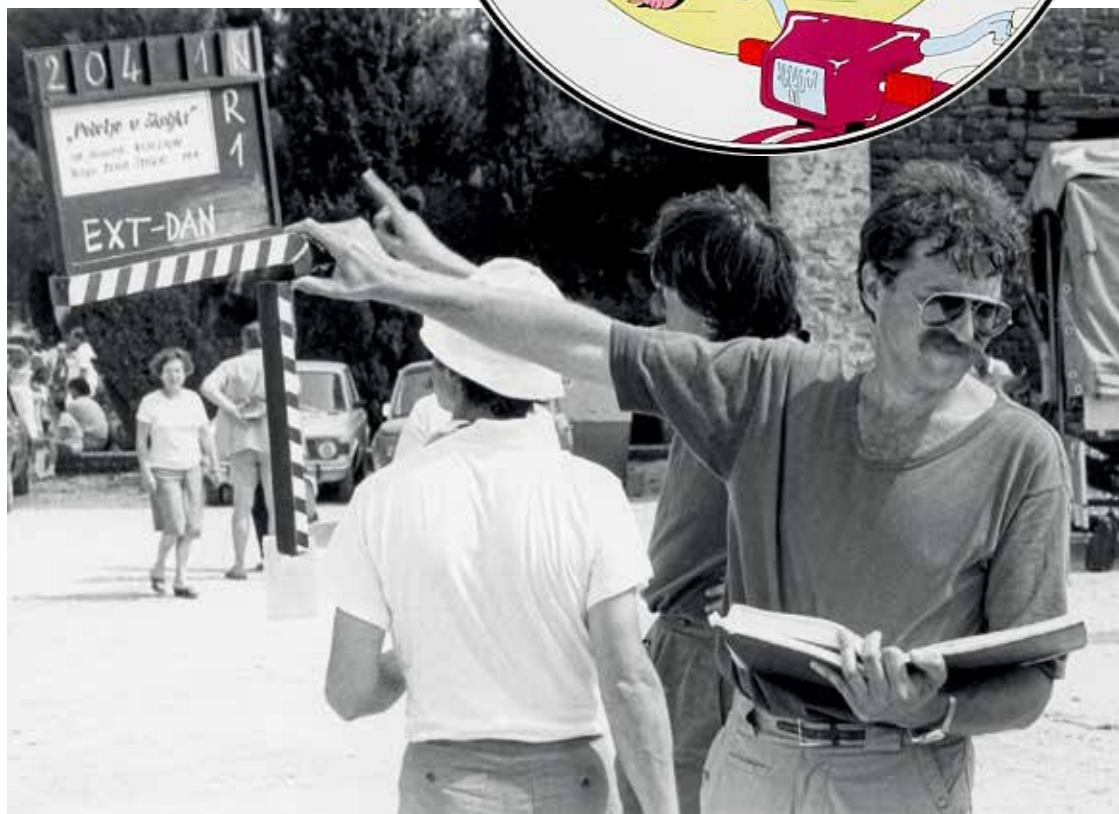
Piran was discovered by the director, screenwriter and film editor of Czech descent, František Čap (1913-1972).

This was also the start of the film industry in the former Yugoslavia. Foreign film crews have always been attracted to Piran. Pristine nature, the sea, an excellent geographical position, a high-quality labour force, financial benefits and top cuisine were the advantages identified by foreign film studios. As a result, Slovenian filmmakers were able to learn new film techniques and, equally importantly for Yugoslavia, earn foreign currencies.

The visionary director of Triglav Film, Branimir Tuma, introduced scholarships, hired an array of local authors and invited the most experienced artists from abroad to transfer their knowledge.

Filmed in Piran this year was the feature film, *Tartini's Key*, in which three young people discover the hidden and unknown corners of Piran. Through puzzles, rebuses, anagrams and other tasks, they are trying to find the solution while saying goodbye to the summer. The violinist and composer Giuseppe Tartini was one of the most renowned residents of Piran.

Piran was also the location for the most iconic Slovenian youth film, *A Summer in a Sea Shell* (1986), about 12-year-old Tomaž, who falls in love for the first time, makes new friends and spends the last summer on the streets of Piran, at Piran salt pans and in Portorož before moving to Ljubljana.



Director Tugo Štiglic during the filming of the film *A Summer in a Sea Shell*. Photo: Wikipedia



The Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) recognizes the potential of film production on tourism, emphasizing the significance of promotional activities. Working closely with the Slovenian Film Centre, the STB played a role in creating a specialized thematic brochure and implemented the national I feel Slovenia brand across all printed materials of the Slovenian Film Centre.



Bled Castle, situated above Lake Bled. India is considered the country with the largest film production in the world. Slovenia has been featured in several Indian films. Photo: RTA agencija d.o.o. archives

SLOVENIA AS A FILM DESTINATION

Scenic backdrop in Slovenian and foreign films

TEXT BY TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIĆ

Slovenia is a very diverse country in terms of landscape, gastronomy, culture and dialects. Its picturesqueness and diversity make it an excellent film location for Slovenian and foreign film productions.

The Alps, the sea, vineyards, hills and valleys, olive groves, high mountains, lakes, river islands, dense and numerous forests – all of these are easily accessible.

The country's diversity and accessibility are strong arguments in favour of Slovenia, where there are also well-preserved historical buildings and the hospitality and reliability for which Slovenians are known.

This year, the Slovenian Film Centre (SFC) was featured for the first time at the American Film Market (AFM). The presentation of Slovenia as a film location took place in cooperation with the Slovenian Tourist Board (STO). So far, Slovenia has been successfully featured at festivals and film markets in Cannes, London and Berlin. And now for the first time in America as well.

Prior to the increased interest in film production, Slovenia was particularly attractive for advertisers in the automotive industry.

Global film stars in Slovenia

The homage to the film heritage of Piran brings back the golden times when world-class film stars such as Orson Welles, Marcello Mastroianni, Peter Ustinov, František Čap, James Mason, Yves Montand, Maximilian Schell, James Coburn, Sam Peckinpah, Klaus Kinski, Stewart Granger, Simone Signoret, Alida Valli, Senta Berger, Alberto Lattuada, Alberto Sordi, George Hamilton, Rex Gildo, Arne Mattsson and many forgotten ones walked along the streets of Piran.

After Piran, the filmmakers also began discovering other locations.

So far, the most famous and successful film for which certain scenes were filmed in Slovenia is *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008).

In the film directed by Andrew Adamson, the Soča Valley became the fairy-tale Fords of Beruna for a few minutes on screen, and even a wooden bridge was built for the purposes of filming.

Pierce Brosnan. Photo: s_bukley/depositphotos.com



Kočevje. Photo: Jošt Gantar/www.slovenia.si

Scenes for foreign films that featured very famous actors were filmed in Slovenia. Among the best known are Pierce Brosnan and Tom Cruise. In 1992, Brosnan, who among other roles also played the legendary James Bond, performed in the film, *Death Train* (1993), which featured a scene filmed on the Ljubljana – Kočevje railway line, more precisely from Ribnica, past Hrovača towards Lipovec.

Henry Cavill. Photo: Jean Nelson/depositphotos.com



Postojna cave. Photo: Miha Krivic/www.slovenia.si

The *Witcher* (2019) filmed by Netflix is considered one of the most popular TV series of all time. The crew, along with the famous actor Henry Cavill, shot certain scenes for episodes of the third season in Postojna Cave and Predjama Castle, in the surrounding area of Kranjska Gora and at the church of St Jerome on Mt Nanos.

Jackie Chan. Photo: s_bukley/depositphotos.com



Predjama Castle. Photo: Alan Kosmač/www.slovenia.si

Jackie Chan also filmed in Slovenia. His film, *Armour of God* (1986), was filmed at Predjama Castle near Postojna.

Rosamund Pike. Photo: s_bukley/depositphotos.com



Rakov Škocjan Valley. Photo: Kancijan d.o.o., arhiv RRA Zeleni kras d.o.o./www.slovenia.info

The picturesque Karst natural wonder – the Rakov Škocjan Valley – was one of the filming locations of the high fantasy television series, *The Wheel of Time* (2021), which features Oscar nominee, Rosamund Pike. Filming also took place in the valley of the emerald Soča River.

Ben Barnes. Photo: s_bukley/depositphotos.com



Soča River. Photo: Alan Kosmač/www.slovenia.si

The mysterious spring of the 137-kilometre long Alpine Soča River can be found in the Trenta Valley at the foothills of the majestic Julian Alps. In 2007, Disney filmed several scenes for the film, *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*, on the rapids of the Soča River. Due to its exceptional blue and green colour, it is also known as the emerald river. Ben Barnes is famous for his role of as Prince Caspian.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas. Photo: imagepressagency/depositphotos.com



Bovec. Photo: Boris Pretnar/www.slovenia.info

The American spy thriller series, *Citadel* (2023), was filmed in the UK, Spain, and the USA, while certain scenes were also shot in Bovec and Kobarid. The star-studded cast included Richard Madden and Priyanka Chopra Jonas. Filming took place in Slovenia's ski centre, Kanin. Certain scenes were also filmed on the slopes of Mt Stol near Kobarid.

Halle Berry. Photo: s_bukley/depositphotos.com



Piran. Photo: Nikola Jurišič/www.slovenia.info

At the end of 2022, American action thriller *The Union* was filmed in Piran with a star-studded cast that included Halle Berry, Mark Wahlberg and J. K. Simmons. They filmed at 17 different locations in Slovenia, but most of the film was shot in Piran.

Naomi Watts. Photo: everett225/depositphotos.com



Mt Krvavec. Photo: Miha Krivic/www.slovenia.si

The Australian actress and multiple Oscar nominee, Naomi Watts, filmed *Infinite Storm* (2022) at Mt Krvavec. Watts was making a film in the snowy environment about a climber caught in a snow blizzard.

Scenes for Bollywood films (Hindi cinema, formerly Bombay cinema) were also filmed in various corners of Slovenia.

The Lebanese crime series, *Al Wasem* (2021), dramatising shady dealings between Middle Eastern gangsters and the European Mafia, was partly filmed in Maribor. The series was shown on the Shahid platform, the Arab version of Netflix.

Stardust

Slovenia's film story is developing towards greater prominence. There are many attractive locations in the country waiting to be discovered.

The curtain on the big screen is being pulled back and film industry insiders are becoming increasingly excited about Slovenia.

Many visit the country after seeing it on the silver screen. Slovenian films and film creators were the pioneers who took the beauty of Slovenia into the world and now global stars are discovering it, too. We can certainly be proud to live in a country that offers such a wealth of wonderful film locations.



Ljubljana. Photo: Miha Krivic/www.slovenia.si

Central Slovenia, particularly Ljubljana (greatly impacted by the works of architect Jože Plečnik), is also attractive for foreign film productions.

The Slovenian Film Centre promotes Slovenia as a film destination, particularly within the operations of the Slovenia Film Commission which is intended for the promotion of Slovenia as a film destination. Foreign producers and film directors are offered support in the form of information, location scouting and making contacts with Slovenian companies and local industry professionals. In accordance with the law, the Centre carries out the measure of remuneration that complies with 25 per cent of eligible costs used directly for the production of cinematographic or audiovisual works in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia.

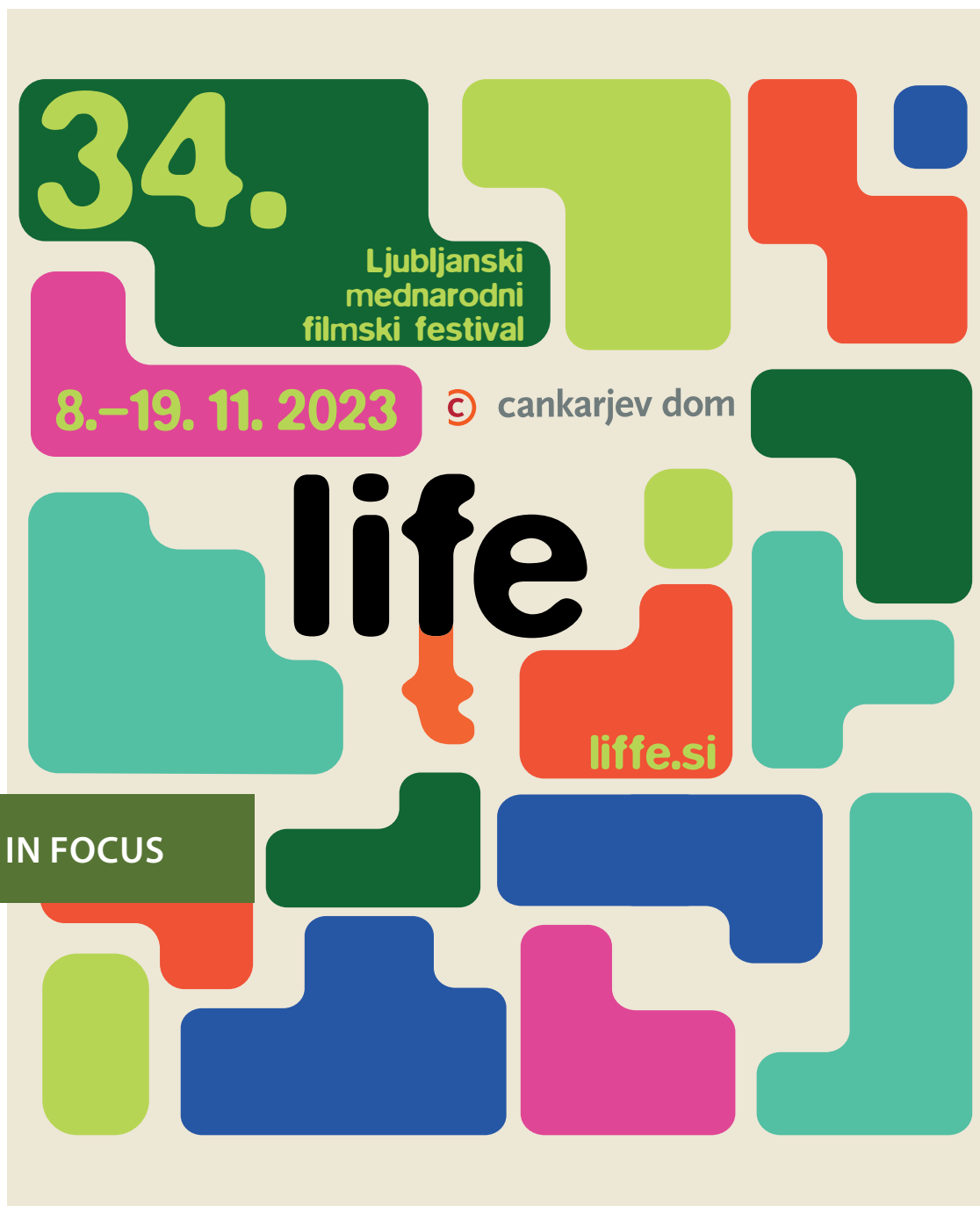


Production companies from the UK, the USA, Italy, Finland, the Netherlands, South Korea and others have filmed in Slovenia in the last five years.



Bled. Photo: Vid Rotor/www.slovenia.si

Bled is an image of paradise. This tourist gem of global proportions located on the edge of Triglav National Park has an island and a church situated in the middle of the lake. It charms visitors in all seasons.



IN FOCUS

LIFFE

A festival for film lovers

TEXT BY POLONA PREŠEREN

Liffe – The Ljubljana International Film Festival has reached its 34th iteration this year. For many years, it has been bringing to Ljubljana selected achievements of world cinema and winners of the most prominent festivals (Cannes, Rotterdam, Berlin, Venice, etc.), and it has also been drawing the attention of visitors to the most important achievements of domestic cinema.

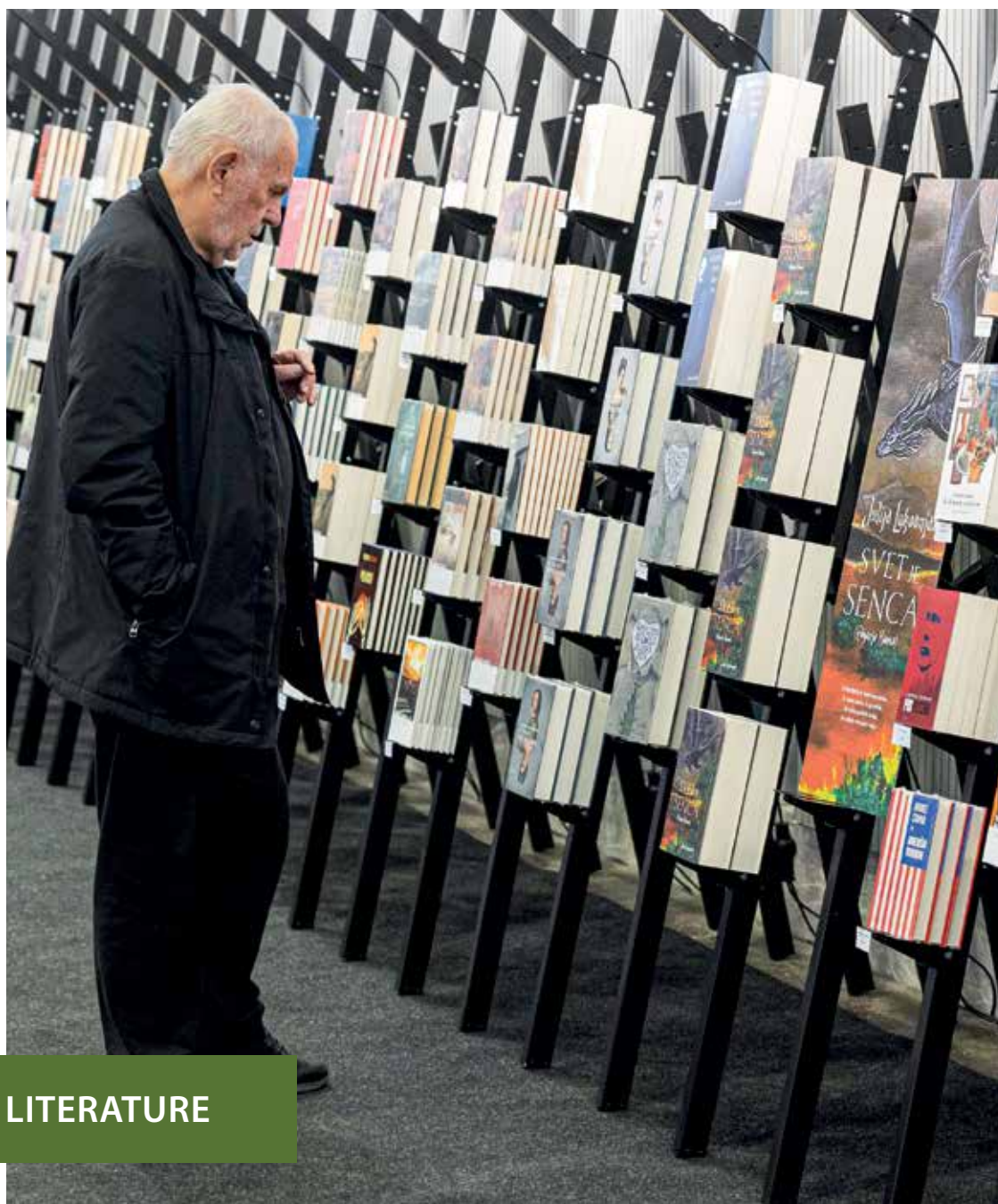
The Festival has an extremely loyal audience, with between 40 and 50 thousand visitors each year, and has grown since its inception in 1990. This year's edition brought to Ljubljana selected achievements of world cinema and winners of the most prominent festivals (Cannes, Rotterdam, Berlin, Locarno, Venice, etc.), turning Ljubljana into the capital of cinema for twelve days. The rich accompanying programme included interesting talks with festival guests and filmmakers, as well as panel discussions and workshops.

Liffe is for lovers of good cinema and those who want to learn about and follow the world of film.

The Festival offers something for all age groups. The goal of the Festival is to encourage and promote young and established, predominantly European filmmakers, and to bring them into dialogue with Slovenian audiences. Several awards are given at Liffe (Vodomec for best young filmmaker; best short film; Audience Award; Fipresci Award, etc.).

The integration of digital innovations and educational programmes for young audiences have been an important element of the Festival in recent years, and its mission remains to educate various age groups. The Festival has been produced from the very beginning by Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana Cultural and Congress Centre, the programme of which is co-funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia.

Vodomec, the main award of the Ljubljana International Film Festival, which is awarded in the Perspectives section, went to the Hungarian film *Three Thousand Numbered Bricks*, directed by Adam Csasz. The highest score was awarded by the audience to *Kiss the Future – U2* in Sarajevo. Directed by Nenad Cicin-Sain, this music documentary tells the story of the people of besieged Sarajevo, who used music and culture to preserve humanity and spread hope during the war, and who connected with the band U2 that became their spokesperson. Liffe has officially said goodbye until next year, but visitors will still be able to enjoy some cinematic treats in that time, as the organisers will be screening films throughout the year.



LITERATURE

The Slovenian Book Fair tried to bring the printed book closer to readers in the digital age. Photo: Bor Slana/STA

39. SLOVENIAN BOOK FAIR – A WORD TO THE WORD

A book at the heart of the cultural awareness of Slovenians

TEXT BY VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

The Slovenian Book Fair, thematically entitled 'Besedo besedi' (A Word to the Word), opened its doors to visitors on 21 November. Books and other publications were exhibited by all major Slovenian publishing houses on more than 2000 square metres, and more than 260 events were held at different venues during the week.

As expected, the Fair was strongly influenced by Slovenia's recent successful appearance as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Nataša Pirc Musar, also recalled Slovenia's visit to Frankfurt, saying that Slovenian literature and culture had shown itself in its full spectrum. She thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the presentation.

According to her, the Slovenian Book Fair is not far behind the larger Frankfurt Book Fair in terms of its importance for the Slovenian book market, as it has developed into one of the most important book events, not only because of the many new titles that publishers offer to visitors every autumn, but also because of the accompanying discussions and literary events. This was confirmed by the more than 45,000 visitors last year.

Consolidating identity through language

Slovenia bases its identity on its language, which is closely linked to Primož Trubar and his first printed book in Slovenian, published in 1550.

Great Slovenian writers such as Boris Pahor, Vitomil Zupan, Drago Jančar, Maja Haderlap, Dušan Šarotar, and others speak of their times and of solidarity, love, resistance, and the suffering of the people of a certain time.

In the age of digitalisation, many at the Fair called for a return to the classic, printed book, which was highlighted in Frankfurt with the Ljubljana Reading Manifesto on Higher-Level Reading. The Slovenian Book Fair is trying to do just that – to bring the printed book closer to readers in the digital age.

Šoštanj was the host city, as the fair was also dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the poet Karel Destovnik-Kajuh, and various publications about the poet were presented. At this year's Slovenian Book Fair, organised by the Chamber of Book Publishing and Bookselling at the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the guest nation was Serbia, which will be the focus of the 50 50 exhibition, dedicated to Serbian translations into Slovenian and Slovenian translations into Serbian.

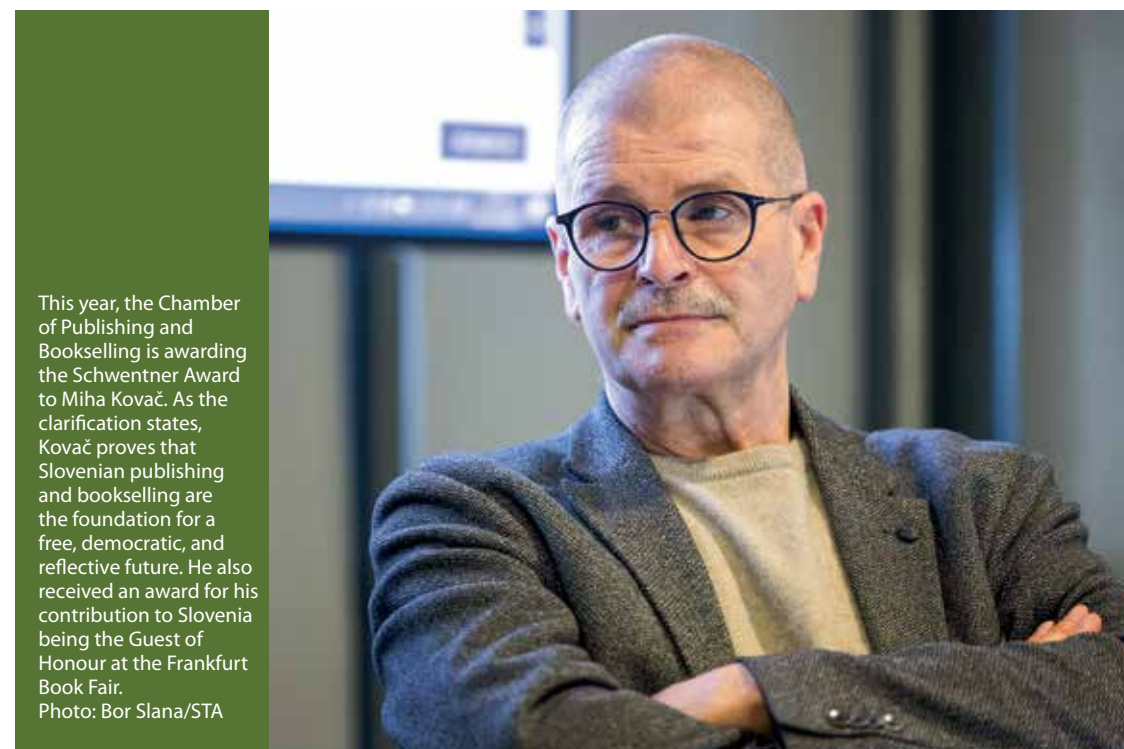
Several awards were presented during the Fair

This year's Schwentner Award for significant contribution to the development of publishing and bookselling was awarded by the Chamber

of Publishing and Bookselling to Miha Kovač, a professor from the Library and Information Science and Book Studies Department of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, including for his contribution to the presentation of Slovenia in Frankfurt.

According to the clarification regarding the award, Kovač proves that Slovenian publishing and bookselling are a foundation for a free, democratic, and reflective future.

Several other awards were presented during the Fair. In cooperation with the Slovene Writers' Association, the Literary Debut of the Year Award



This year, the Chamber of Publishing and Bookselling is awarding the Schwentner Award to Miha Kovač. As the clarification states, Kovač proves that Slovenian publishing and bookselling are the foundation for a free, democratic, and reflective future. He also received an award for his contribution to Slovenia being the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair.
Photo: Bor Slana/STA



The Book Fair has developed into one of the most important book events. Photo: Bor Slana/STA

was presented. At this year's 39th iteration of the Slovenian Book Fair, the Literary Debut of the Year Award went to Pia Prezelj for her novel *Težka voda* (Heavy Water), published by Goga Publishing House. The jury selected it from among three nominated works. The award for the most beautifully designed book was also announced, as well as the award for the best business book in cooperation with the Managers' Association.

At the Slovenian Book Fair, the publishing house VigeVageKnjige presented the Golden Pear Award-winning children's comic book entitled *Tik je šel v gozd po drva* (Tik Went to the Forest to Fetch Firewood) by Ram Cunta and Miha Ha.

In a conversation with Eva Ule, they discussed the creation of the book, which, according to the award committee, represents an important contribution to the development of Slovenian comic art. Simon Chang's *Shepherds* and the *Slaughterhouse* won two awards at the Fair, the Best Designed Book for Adults and the Best Designed Book 2023. The book was designed by the award-winning Anja Delbello and Aljaž Vesel from Studio AA.

The Publishing Academy offered insights into copyright sales, entry into international markets, and cooperation with foreign publishers. The exhibition also includes a selection of illustrations from the 14th Biennial of Slovenian Illustration.

KATJA STERGAR – DIRECTOR OF THE SLOVENIAN BOOK AGENCY

We come from a country where people dare to say more

TEXT BY VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

Slovenia's participation as guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair put our country on the literary, cultural and, thanks to Žižek, political map of Europe and the rest of the world. The Ljubljana Manifesto on Higher-Level Reading was of a particularly high profile. It has achieved widespread international support, with many writers signing it. The event at Goethe University was attended by six hundred people. Most of them were young people who sat on the floor and listened to what the theoreticians of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and the Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis had to say about the critique of ideology.

Seven years of discussion and preparation are behind you, culminating in the Frankfurt Book Fair, where Slovenia was this year's guest of honour. Praise is coming in from all sides. What were your impressions on returning home?

On my return, I was very relieved that things had gone so unexpectedly well. It is also a great joy to see such satisfaction in the authors' eyes and see the audience turning up to the events in such large numbers.

All this created a special positive energy among the authors, a very beautiful community with strong bonds.

It was also an immense pleasure to see that young people were so interested in an in-depth debate – I am referring to the event at Goethe University. We said we needed a hall for 600 people for the Ljubljana School of Philosophy's presentation – they tried to persuade us that this was unnecessary, but in the end quite a few people were left outside the hall, watching what was happening on the screens outside.

To what do you attribute your presentation's success?

When designing all the events at the fair, we thought most of all about the audience, asking ourselves who the presentation was aimed at, who all would visit our pavilion. We identified our target audiences well and we had the right



LITERATURE

"It is a great joy to see such a satisfaction in the author's eyes." Photo: Holger Menzel/JAK

events at the fair – and not only at the fair, but we were able to attract many visitors with events in the city as well. The credit for this goes to our entire team.

You also received strong and highly commendable support from prominent German and other media.

Yes, we did. We had tremendous media support, with Claudia Roth, the Federal Government's Commissioner for Culture and Media, publicly endorsing the Reading Manifesto. She already quoted the Reading Manifesto at the opening ceremony, which is of course a great recognition for us.

The loftiest goals you had set for yourselves before you left for Frankfurt: improving copyright trading, increasing the reputation of Slovenian culture abroad (visual arts, film, etc.) and the Republic of Slovenia's renown as a tourist destination, networking between companies in the printing industry, improving the marketing of Slovenian design products, and increasing the amount of translations of Slovenian literature... have they come to fruition?

Even more rights have been sold than planned, but of course, we want to keep the level of sales high. It is a great asset for us to have received such good media coverage. Our authors are certainly more visible now. But of course, funding for translations and training for translators must be provided, and the state must invest in this. Nowhere are books translated well on their own.

The two opening speeches at the fair, by the poet Miljana Cunta on the importance of poetry and by Slavoj Žižek, also attracted a great deal of public interest.

Žižek hit a nerve and said what most dare not. This alone showed that we come from a country where people dare to say more. It is important

that, as representatives of the country, we supported his speech, we did not back down.

The Germans thought that our whole programme was very daring, that it did not follow established blueprints; even the Laibach concert, with its Iranian participants, was an innovative, daring thing.

For almost a year, we had been talking to the fair organisers about whether they would dare to organise such a concert. You know, to have a performance like this is not a matter of course. Slovenian authors are often bold in their words as well and that is why I am really happy that our authors did a great job on stage. It was a joy to listen to them. There was no conformity, and that is something extraordinary to me. Slovenia's appearance at the fair showed a certain cultural breadth. Visibility was not limited to one week, but stretched over a much wider period. The events that took place in other cities in Germany were also very high profile.

Before the fair even started, you also put together a trip for German journalists to visit Slovenia and get to know the country as a whole.

Yes, it was a really nice experience to mingle with them. We took them to the mountains, from Tamar Valley to Sleme Peak and the Vršič Pass, which was great fun for everyone. Only two participants were really prepared for a mountain hike, none of the others had the right equipment or footwear. I was thinking about how differently we perceive nature. For us Slovenians, the mountains are a familiar thing, we know how to approach them. We know that if you go to the mountains, you have to wear the right clothes and shoes, and you have to carry a backpack. But above all, you need

to be fit. They have a different attitude towards the mountains, some of them were driven forward during the hike only by stubbornness and their strong desire to reach the top.

Two journalists even said it was the best day of their lives. Can you imagine what a recognition that is for us!

In the great outdoors, the socialising and atmosphere among the participants were taken to a whole new level. We were especially pleased to see that the German media wrote a



"It is a great asset for us to have received such good media coverage." Photo: Sabine Felber/JAK

lot of nice things about the Slovenian wilderness and mountains. This is precisely what we were aiming for. We had excellent cooperation with the Slovenian Tourist Board and were able to do many things together. We combined literature with good cuisine and everything else. For example, Slovenian philosophers talked about Hegel and the Škocjan Caves, so we took a group of journalists to these caves and to the Karst to see the churches painted with frescoes by Tone Kralj. It is one thing to just talk about something, but another to take people there. We also showed them where Srečko Kosovel lived, gave them the opportunity to see the natural surroundings in person, to feel the bora wind and the Karst. Experiencing it all in person is something else altogether. Our advantage is that, in just a short time, you can visit a lot of different places that fascinate you. Above all, we managed to establish informal relations, which brought us even closer together.

There was praise for your ability to create a pleasant atmosphere.

Our curators are open and warm people. We also created a warm atmosphere with our individual approach. Even those journalists who do not normally take part in group press trips joined us. This has deepened our contacts and made them more genuine. That is what I call passion. I was encouraged by them to speak in German, even though my German isn't first-class. It helped them get a better feel of me, they said, also of my humour and my personality. It shows your character and brings people together. You have already achieved something more by creating such an atmosphere. Then they want to come back for more. We spent a lot of time together with the curators Miha Kovač and Amalija Maček. When the going got tough, we joked around and found a way to make it easier with humour. There was never any tension between us. Sometimes we surprised our German colleagues with our

dark humour – at first they were surprised, then they got used to us.

What were the reactions to the appearance of our pavilion?

We had many conversations with the architects and graphic designers who took care of the furnishings and lettering, and we listened carefully to each other during the design phase. We drew on our past experience from the Frankfurt fairs, looking at what had worked and what had not.



The Ljubljana Manifesto on Higher - level Reading was of a particularly high profile. Photo: Sabine Felber/JAK

We shared a common desire to create a pavilion that is warm and that invites visitors to read, to pick up a book and flick through it with pleasure.

Books were shelved in the centre of the pavilion, next to comfortable seats, where people could sit down. At fairs, people mainly just walk back and forth, which can be very tiring, especially at this fair. We offered people a comfortable place where they could read books in peace with a cup of coffee. We wanted to influence all the senses; we highlighted nature by installing planters with rosemary, which spread a beautiful scent. We wanted to be playful, setting up video screens and a swing for the children, which was very cute. Many took pictures of it to post on Instagram. The lace installation under the ceiling brought a softness to the space, while the lace's reflection on the floor made it feel even cosier. The natural light in the pavilion also contributed to the pleasant atmosphere.

We noticed that on the days when the fair was open to a professional audience, the pavilion was quite full, but when the fair opened to everyone, it was bursting at the seams.

Visitors came back again and again. They could have a coffee with Slovenian authors, and watch and listen to one of the many talks with authors in the pavilion. We attribute this to the pavilion's pleasant atmosphere. Putting words on the pavilion's walls, we brought to the fair Slovenian words that otherwise would not have been there, since the books in the pavilion were of course not in Slovenian; the graphics made it possible for the visitors to read Slovenian words. It is also worth noting that the pavilion was built to be eco-friendly – for example, the shelves folded up to be easily transported. I am also pleased that the pavilion was made by a Slovenian company,

showing that we can do things just as well as other countries. In recent years, pavilions had always been made by Germans, but this time we constructed it ourselves. I am really happy that Mugada did such a good job.

66 Slovenian illustrators also presented their work at the Frankfurt Book Fair – there was a lot of interest and positive feedback.

The fair included two exhibitions of Slovenian illustrations. Our illustrators have attracted a lot of interest in Germany, and next April they will also go to Bologna to the professionals-only book fair. Slovenian authors will also visit schools and present themselves in the local festival hall. I am also pleased to see that there have been several new translations in Italian recently.

Of course, this is an event that is worth taking advantage of to a greater degree, so we will be linking up with the STB and the Government Communication Office.

It takes a lot of networking to get good results.

Finally, congratulations once again on your excellent presentation of Slovenia at the Frankfurt fair! What are you currently doing at the Book Agency?

I am readying our financial plans for the next year, which is not a very easy job for me. (Laughs)



The pavilion was a comfortable place where visitors could read books in peace. Photo: Sabine Felber/JAK

LESNAVESNA WOODEN CHRISTMAS TREES AND DECORATIONS

Made with love for nature

TEXT BY DANILA GOLOB, PHOTO BY LESNAVESNA ARCHIVES

Architects and designers Eva Štrukelj and Ignacio Lopez Sola from the LesnaVesna design studio create wooden products with which they preserve historical tradition in a contemporary style.

Wood is one of natural resources that is abundant in Slovenia. Slovenian wood is primarily used in the LesnaVesna studio. It involves a lot of manual labour with the purpose of supporting local resources and people. The architects and designers craft and manufacture wooden furniture and design interior elements.

They have their own line of unique wooden products which are made with great love and particular intention of reviving the tradition in various forms of modern design with the application of today's technology.

Take a walk in the nearby forest

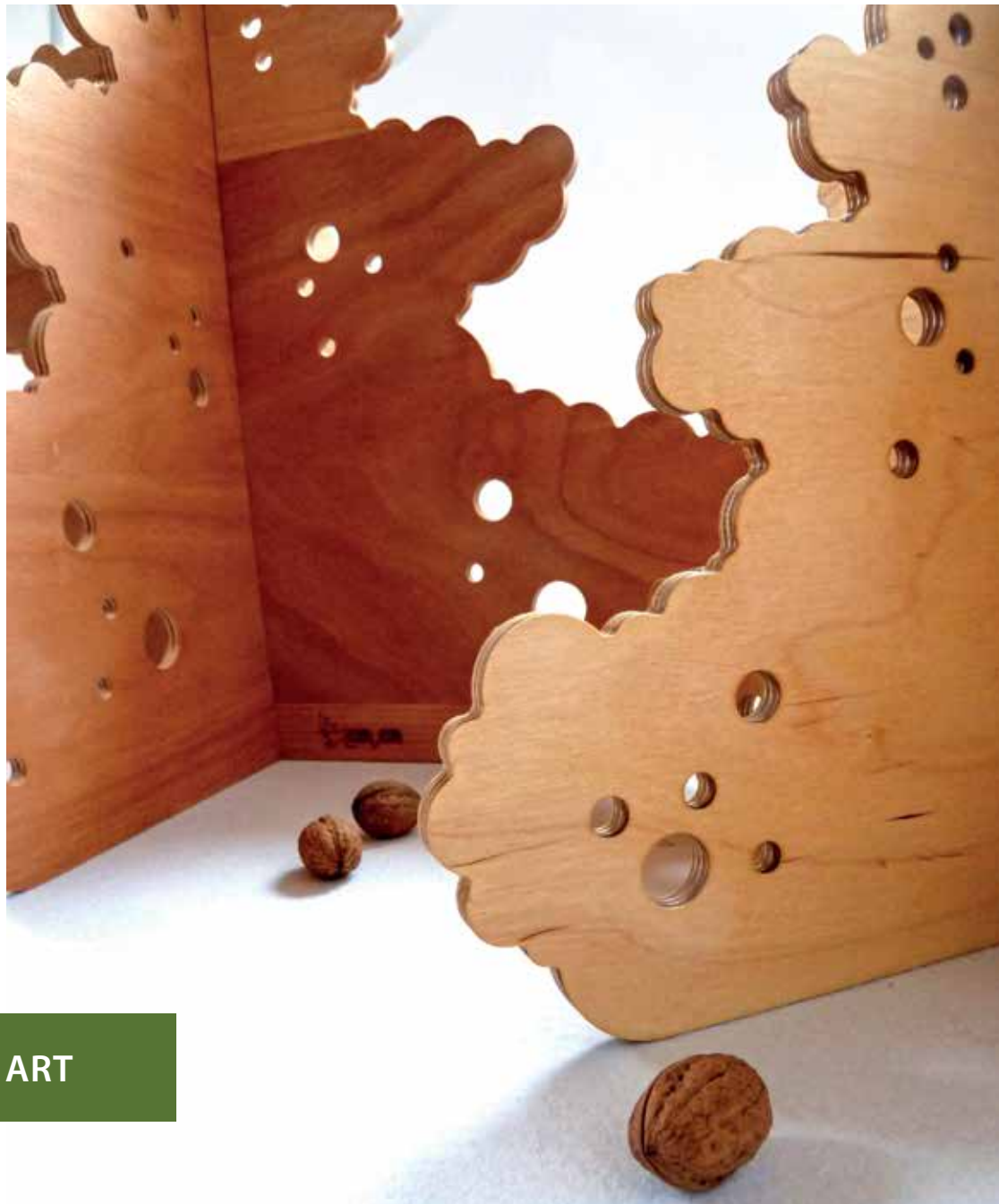
"I get ideas from the world around me. I observe forms in nature. I'm interested in ethnology, children's playfulness, products of Slovenian handicrafts made by the old masters from the past centuries ... Ideas are everywhere if we're

open to life," Eva Štrukelj explains. The wonderful wooden Christmas trees named *Forest Walk*, *Snow Cloud* and *Winter Flower* also encompass the beauty of our nature.

The wooden trees are made of hand-brushed beech plywood impregnated with natural oils. Each tree is something special.

Forest Walk, the largest one, pays homage to Slovenian forests. The free-standing construction enables the assembly of a Christmas tree, while the pieces of an animal puzzle add the element of fun and interaction. Children can "take a walk in the forest" while fitting numerous forest animals into the openings, placing small birds onto the branches, hiding a rabbit behind the tree. Christmas decorations or colourful ribbons can be installed in the small holes. The playful tree stimulates imagination and enables fun.

Snow Cloud and *Winter Flower* are smaller trees that can be put on a desk, hung from the ceiling



ART

Wooden Christmas trees are easy to assemble.



Pendants from the DomaDoma collection.

or are free-standing. "Snow Cloud has a fluffy, stocky form, resembling soft piles of snow in Slovenian mountains. An image that is reminiscent of winter, happiness, home and all the values with which we grew up and which we carry in our hearts into our adulthood," Eva Štrukelj describes the Christmas tree. The Snow Cloud has small holes for decorations as well.

Winter Flower is a wooden plant, something between a flower and a Christmas tree with small holes running along its side all the way to the blossoms. Why a flower? "Because it's the flowers that we miss the most in the long winter days," says the architect and designer, and adds, "At the moment, Winter Flower is my favourite. It's simple, feminine, soft."

DomaDoma collection

When designing pendants of the DomaDoma collection, which are made of poplar wood, the architects and designers also found their inspiration in Slovenian traditions. Each pendant represents a typical Slovenian folk motif.

They are equipped with humorous descriptions in two languages, which makes the collection particularly entertaining.

Choose among the pendants featuring a bear, apple heart, dragon, potica nut roll or a tree to decorate your Christmas tree.

Eva Štrukelj is happy to design something new or add features requested by their clients. "I'm very open for cooperation on exciting projects. Whether interior design or products. In this sense, it was a pleasure to design the museum souvenir shop at Liznjek Homestead which also received the BIG SEE Interior Design Award 2023," says the architect who never runs out of ideas.

With wooden Christmas trees and LesnaVesna decorations, it is possible to bring into our homes the magic of Slovenian forests and the beauty of nature and revive the tradition.



Wooden Christmas trees are lovely decorations which stimulate creativity.



Silver Radgona Sparkling Wine. Photo: Radgonske gorice d.o.o. archives

SLOVENIAN SPARKLING WINES

Bearers of joy and wit

TEXT BY TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ

Slovenia is the land of the oldest grapevine, supreme wines, wine roads and diverse wine events. In addition to different wine varieties produced by Slovenian winemakers, Slovenian wine cellars also boast shelves bustling with sparkling wines.

Sparkling wines were first mentioned in the territory of Slovenia on 10 December 1853 in the newspaper, *Novice kmetijskih, obrtnijskih in narodskih reči*, edited by Dr Janez Bleiweis, "Champagne or sparkling wine is the most popular and loved among today's Slovenian gentry. There is no true festivity or ceremony where sparkling wine would not foam."

In this text, Bleiweis mentioned that sparkling wine was invented by the French, as the history ascribes the start of sparkling wine production to Benedictine monk and cellarer of Hautvillers Abbey, Dom Pierre Pérignon (1639-1715), but he further highlighted that wine production had also started on Slovenian soil.

where wine has been produced since 1852. In the newspaper, Bleiweis mentions Alojz Kleinošek and it was actually in this very newspaper that the Slovenian word for sparkling wine, *penina*, was used for the first time. Kleinošek learned the process of sparkling wine production in the homeland of champagne, France. He went there in 1846 to discover the traditional methods of champagne production. In 1852, Kleinošek made the first 12,000 bottles of sparkling wine from local wine grape varieties. The classical method (*Méthode Classique*) of sparkling wine production was brought to Gornja Radgona by the Swiss-French winemaker Clotar Bouvier, who established a company to produce sparkling wine from local Slovenian wine grape varieties in 1882.

Cradle of sparkling wine production

The Radgonske Gorice Hills are considered the cradle of Slovenian sparkling wine production. The oldest sparkling wine cellar in Slovenia can be found here,

Golden and silver bubbles

The golden and silver sparkling wines are so different and yet so excellent. The Golden Radgona Sparkling Wine became a brand

in 1977, while the Silver Radgona Sparkling Wine is younger. In a very short time, they both gained in popularity and became synonymous with sparkling wines in Slovenia.

Their original image did not change for more than 40 years, and it was only on the occasion of last year's 170th anniversary that certain modifications were made.

The Golden Radgona Sparkling Wine consists exclusively of Chardonnay that ripens in the area of the Radgonsko-Kapelske Gorice Hills where the Pannonian Sea deposited an abundance of clay soil and sandstone, which give the wine freshness with a low level of inconspicuous acids. This is a Blanc de Blancs sparkling wine. All golden sparkling wines are vintage wines, and it is possible to choose from very dry, dry, semi-dry and rosé Golden Radgona Sparkling Wine.

The Silver Radgona Sparkling Wine is a bestseller. It is made in accordance with the Charmat method. Italian Riesling, Furmint and Chardonnay represent the basis for this type of sparkling wine. It is sold as dry, semi-dry, rosé and PiNQ sparkling wine in a trendy small bottle.

The offer of the Radgonske Gorice Hills is further enhanced by the Untouched by Light sparkling wine. This is the first sparkling wine in the world made from grapes that are picked at night and the wine is processed, matured and consumed in complete darkness. The wine matures in cellars, untouched by the outside world, in the complete absence of light. When it leaves the cellar, the wine is bottled in black glass and sealed in black foil to prevent the access of any additional light or contact with air.

Slovenian sparkling wines are recognised throughout the world

In addition to the most traditional ones, other Slovenian sparkling wines are also becoming appreciated throughout the world, as proven by their Decanter scores.

The largest Slovenian wine cellar, Klet Brda Winery, is known for its still wines, but offers prestigious sparkling wines as well. One of the most exciting ones is the Classical sparkling wine Bagueri Zero, which is comprised of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Rebula.

Other renowned sparkling wine producers include Krško Cellar, Domaine Slapšak, Santomas, Vinakoper, Ščurek, Metlika Wine Cellar, Čarga, Hiša I.A.Q.U.I.N, Klet penin Istenič, etc.



Čarga Farm is a family farm that cultivates 15 ha of vineyards. The oldest record of the farm is from 1767. Photo: Danijel Novakovič/STA



The story of Untouched by light sparkling wine is authentic and globally unique, as it is the first sparkling wine in the world produced in complete darkness. The harvest is also done at night, the sparkling wine matures without access to light, so that it is filled in black bottles and sealed in black foil. Exclusivity is further emphasized by the ambiance of the cellar and the limited series – only 2,000 bottles per year. Photo: Radgonske gorice d.o.o. archives

For more than three decades, the Slovenian Sommelier Association has been overseeing the expert development and dissemination of the wine drinking culture in Slovenia. In December 2023, the Association organised a traditional social event entitled Iskrivi večer (Sparkling evening) at Zemono Manor, at which various sparkling wines were available for tasting. The attendees were addressed by the President of the Slovenian Sommelier Association, Valentin Bufolin.

Important dates:

30 October 1997/14 November 1997 – term “sparkling wine” (*penina*) is defined as a high-quality or supreme sparkling wine with protected geographical indication produced in the Republic of Slovenia.

2001 – term “sparkling wine” (*penina*) is introduced into the Slovenian orthography.

2014 – term “sparkling wine” (*penina*) is introduced into the second edition of the Dictionary of the Standard Slovenian Language.



Our grandmothers' recipes bring back nostalgic memories. Photo: HASLOO/depositphotos.com

KUHNAPATO

Our Grandmothers' Festive Recipes

TEXT BY ANKA PELJHAN

The festive season has its own culinary charm. In the past, housewives skilfully combined ingredients that were not on the daily menu to make festive dishes. Christmas, in particular, is a season rich in food heritage and traditional holiday recipes.

About the Kuhnnapato project

In the flavour world of the Kuhnnapato project, Slovenian primary school pupils dive into the art of culinary creation using seasonal ingredients sourced from their surroundings in traditional, even forgotten, dishes. These young chefs learn about the laws of seasonality and, above all, about the cultural milestones that left their mark on special dishes. The project has been running for 13 years in primary schools all over Slovenia, and during this time thousands of interesting dishes have been brought to life and graced both our tables and those of all lovers of Slovenian cuisine.

Through intergenerational collaboration, children gain knowledge and skills that inspire a generation of young people to eat responsibly. The aspiration is that, for many, the concept of "sustainable development" or a "sustainable living" will evolve from mere idea to a child's

conscious daily routine. The dishes that end up served in school kitchens are only part of the broader journey toward sustainability. As these young chefs create modern creations rooted in history or tradition, they are helping to place Slovenia among the world's culinary superpowers. Each dish becomes an invitation to explore the cultural specifics of its region.



Young chefs like to cook. Photo: Kuhnnapato archives

DRAŽGOŠE HONEY BREAD



Dough 1:

250 g wheat flour
250 ml honey
40 ml water
Half a tsp hartshorn
Pinch ground cinnamon and cloves

Dough 2:

150 g rye flour
70 ml honey
20 ml water
Pinch hartshorn

1. Put the flours in two separate bowls.
2. Heat the honey and stir in the cinnamon and cloves.
3. Dissolve the hartshorn in lukewarm water.
4. Mix each dough separately, kneading, as it needs to be firm.
5. Roll out each dough very thinly.
6. Cut out ornaments from both versions of the dough, using various objects.
7. Use the leftover dough to make thin strips to decorate the bases, usually hearts, but also various shapes of festive bread. Use the more lightly coloured dough for the dark bases and vice versa, or as desired.
8. Bake in a preheated oven at 160°C for about 10 minutes.
9. Brush the baked breads with a mixture of warm honey and a little water to make them glow.

CHRISTMAS BREAD POPRTNIK WITH BIRDS



1 kg flour
1 dl warm milk, 1 tsp sugar, 1 cube of yeast for leaven
2 large spoonful of sugar
2 tsp salt
7 tbsp melted butter
1 tbsp sour cream
4 egg yolks
5 dl lukewarm milk
1.5 dl rum
1 egg and whipped cream for coating

1. Heat the milk in a small saucepan, stir in a teaspoon of sugar and flour and the yeast. Stir and leave to rise until the top of the pot is covered. This is how the leaven is prepared.
2. In a large bowl, whisk the egg yolks with the sugar and butter until foamy.
3. Stir in all the other ingredients and the risen leaven and knead into a dough.
4. Leave the dough to rise for at least 1 hour.
5. Then tear off a piece of the dough to make the decoration, roll the rest into a ball and leave to rise again for another 40 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, shape the decorations to match the particular holiday or occasion. In our case, it is birds. There are usually as many as there are people.
7. They are attached to the base loaf and the whole loaf is coated with a mixture of egg and cream.
8. Bake in a preheated oven at 170 °C for about an hour.



GASTRONOMY

Bread is an important part of everyday lives of Slovenians. Photo: VitalikRadko/depositphotos.com

SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST A FOOD

Slovenia's love for bread

TEXT BY POLONA PREŠEREN

Slovenians simply love bread. It is an important part of our diet, and in one form or another is indispensable on Slovenian tables. Bread has a rich heritage and tradition in Slovenia. It is one of the most basic foods among Slovenians and an essential element on the plate. We eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner, snacks, with soup and salad, and so on.

Written sources mention bread as early as the second half of the 9th and the first half of the 13th centuries, while the Slovenian word for bread itself (*Slov. 'kruh'*) was first recorded in the mid-16th century. "Bread has been and still is food, cultural heritage, and a symbol to Slovenians," says ethnologist and professor, Dr Janez Bogataj, author of a comprehensive monograph on the heritage of bread entitled *Good as Bread (Slov. Dober kot kruh)*, published by Hart publishing company. As you read the book, you will learn about the peculiarities and varieties of bread in Slovenia, the types of bread, and the customs and professions associated with it. Dr Janez Bogataj has also included a bread dictionary and, in his own words, baked folk wisdom and phrases.

Slovenians and bread

Bread is an important part of our everyday lives. We rarely throw it away, and we have interesting ways of using it even when it is no longer fresh.

The importance of bread for Slovenians is evidenced by the many proverbs that have survived over the centuries.

"As good as bread." (*Dober kot kruh.*) "Stomach in search of bread." (*S trebuhom za kruhom*) "Spoken bread is the most eaten." (*Zarečenega kruha se največ poje*) "Even if a man has travelled halfway round the world, the best bread is baked at home." (*Če človek pol sveta obteče, najboljši kruh doma se peče.*)

Slovenians eat bread for all meals – for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, for a snack, with soup and salad, and so on. It is very popular to eat it with different spreads. As a traditional Slovenian foodstuff, it has also found its place in the Slovenian Food Day and its main project, the traditional Slovenian breakfast, which was held this year under the slogan 'Bread for breakfast – a great day'. In addition to bread, the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast also includes butter, honey, milk and an apple.

According to the latest Eurostat data, the average person in Slovenia consumes almost 27 kg of bread and other baked goods per year at home. Last year, we paid an average of €2.87 for a kilo of bread (white, semi-white, or black), but in September this year, a kilo of bread was 9.5% more expensive than a year ago. Last year, an average of 116 kg of cereals was available for food per person in Slovenia, and the self-sufficiency rate for this crop was 72%.

The traditional role of bread for Slovenians

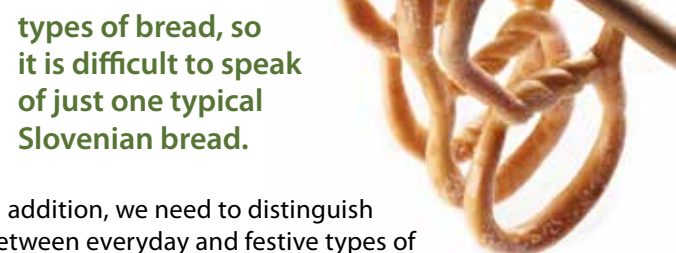
"The symbolic significance of bread for Slovenians is very interesting, since it is associated with rituals. Many Christian and pagan celebrations and traditions, both on a personal and ritual level, have been associated with bread, which is not merely a food but also a ritual symbol, the material understanding of abundance, an attitude to the harvest on various occasions," explains Dr Bogataj.

What is typical Slovenian bread?

Slovenia has 24 gastronomic regions, each of which has several



Photo: Hart Publishing



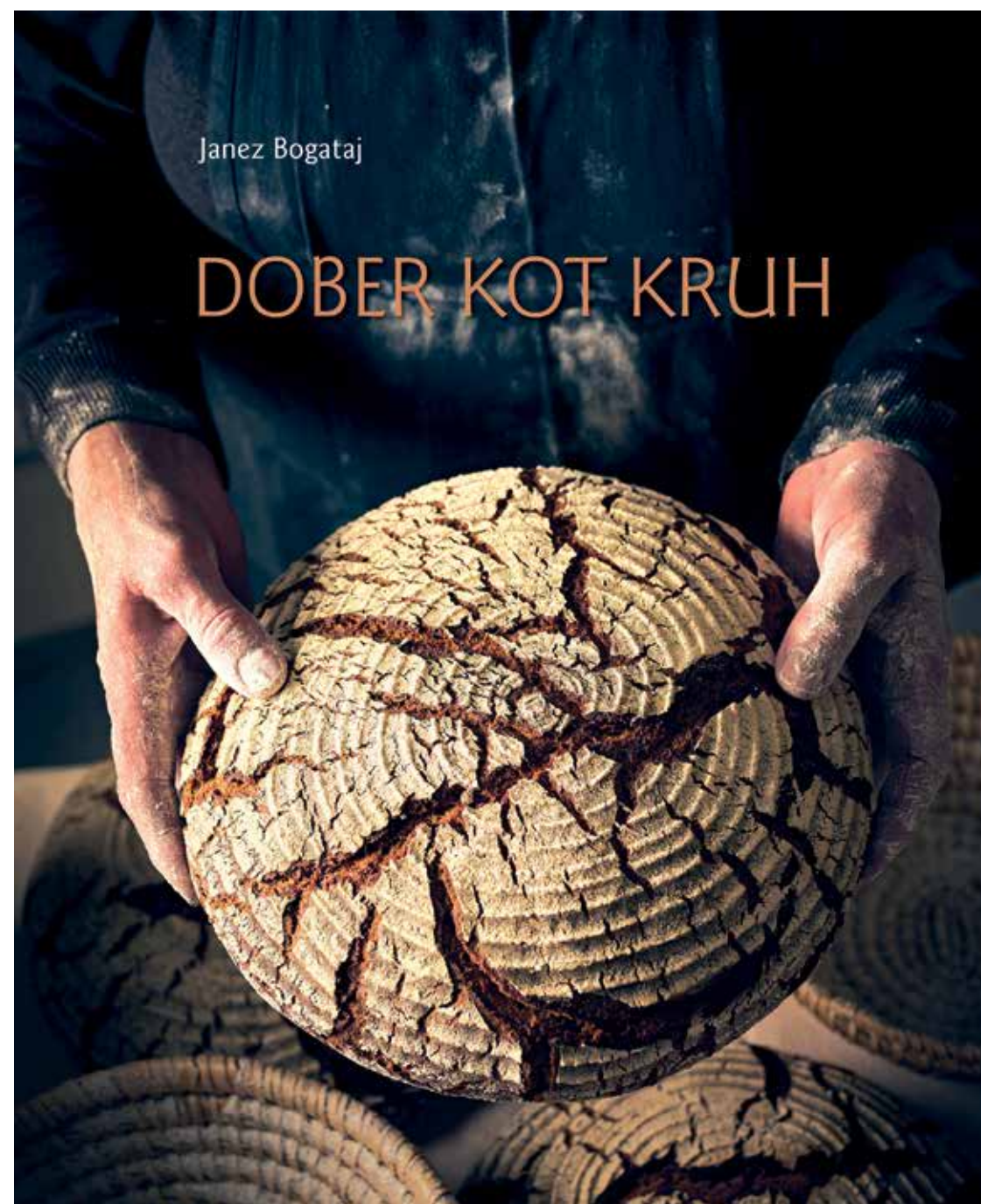
types of bread, so it is difficult to speak of just one typical Slovenian bread.

In addition, we need to distinguish between everyday and festive types of bread. Bread made from different cereal mixtures, so-called bread mixtures, is very common. And there are many such mixtures. "One of our most typical desserts, potica, which is known today in over 100 sweet and savoury variants (as per its filling), was initially a type of bread for festive occasions which had different additions, such as herbs, pork crackling, raisins, eggs, etc." says Dr Bogataj.

The polyhistor Janez Vajkard Valvasor also wrote about cereals and bread as early as 1689.

He wrote of buckwheat bread that it was as black as the earth. Rye flour used to be much more commonly used than buckwheat for bread, while buckwheat was more popular for other dishes. Today, however, buckwheat bread is one of the most popular, and millet is also making a comeback.

Recently, seasonal bread has become increasingly common, with the return of sourdough, the dough that our ancestors used to make using a starter. Popular offers include bread that is guaranteed to be free of all additives, traditional baking, and so on. Tradition thus lives on in a modern form and with delicious flavours for all bread lovers. As for Slovenians and bread, we can certainly say that this love is great.



Dr Janez Bogataj is the author of a comprehensive monograph on the heritage of bread entitled Good as Bread. Photo: Hart Publishing



BARCELONA CONVENTION
COP23
 PORTOROŽ 2023

Photo: wildam/depositphotos.com

COP 23 – CONFERENCE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Slovenia hosted the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention

TEXT BY OLGA GOLUB

As one of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, better known as the Barcelona Convention, Slovenia hosted COP 23 – Conference for the Mediterranean between 5 and 8 December 2023 in Portorož. The meetings of the Contracting Parties are biannually organised by one of the Contracting Parties to the Convention, which thus also assumes its presidency. Slovenia is taking over the presidency from Turkey and it will pass it on to Egypt in 2025.

The purpose of the meeting taking place under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme is to review the implementation of the Convention and its protocols and determine the programme and priorities of the Contracting Parties for the next two years.

Many renowned guests from various international governmental and non-governmental organisations participated in the general discussion entitled “Green Transition in the Mediterranean: From Decisions to Actions”.

A ministerial meeting took place within COP 23, which was attended by Maša Kociper, State Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister. The

attendees were also addressed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Robert Golob. Lučka Kajfež Bogataj, a renowned scientist and one of the Slovenian pioneers in the research of climate change impact, participated in the panel discussion on behalf of Slovenia.

With the adoption of the Portorož Ministerial Declaration, the Contracting Parties advocated measures for a faster green transition and investment in the safer water, climate, food and energy future of the marine environment and the coastal region of the Mediterranean.

The official part of the meeting was accompanied by many side events on topical issues.

Young people were placed at the forefront.

Discussion partners exchanged good practices at the event entitled "Education and Youth: For a Sustainable Future in the Mediterranean" and drafted joint guidelines for the transformation of school systems in Mediterranean countries so they could provide efficient tools when combating environment pollution and adjusting to climate change in the light of increasingly frequent and high-impact extreme weather events.

Slovenia's role

The main tasks of the Slovenian Presidency will be linked with the management of areas on land, coast and sea, including modern measures to prevent pollution and other ecological disasters and their management if they occur. Special attention will be dedicated to the measures for reducing the negative impact of climate change and improvement of biodiversity.



The Barcelona Convention was the world's first convention on the protection of regional seas and the only regional multilateral legal framework for the protection of the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment. It was adopted on 16 February 1976 in Barcelona and will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary. It is based on an initiative of 21 countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, which have committed to protect its natural environment.

Since 2004, an amended version has been in force. It was the result of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) designed by the United Nations within the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to improve the status of the environment in the Mediterranean and in other parts of the world. This represents a great step forward in the establishment of a new culture of cooperation in the fight against pollution and the reduction of adverse environmental impacts, preservation of biodiversity and improvement of the climate situation.

The official website of the Slovenian Presidency can be found at www.cop23-slovenia.com. In the field of spatial planning and the environment in connection with management of coastal and marine resources, Slovenia is an example of good practice. It is the first country in the European Union to have a maritime spatial plan. During its Presidency of the EU Council, it obtained the Contracting Parties' consensus to designate the whole of the Mediterranean Sea as an emission control area for sulphur oxides (MED SECA), which was the greatest achievement of COP 22 in Turkey and which the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) will enforce in 2025.

Slovenia's COP23 logo

The shades of blue and green highlight Slovenia's efforts dedicated to blue and green corridors in modern spatial planning.

The logo consists of elements symbolising the sea, rivers and forests. The silhouette of a fish combined with Neptune grass (*Posidonia oceanica*) points to the importance of biodiversity protection at a time of ever-increasing climate change impacts.



Prime Minister Robert Golob: "We must make sure we provide food, energy, climate and security for the whole Mediterranean area. This is something that we truly owe to our children, to our common history and to our common future." Photo: Peter Irman



The 23rd conference (COP23) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention was chaired by Mitja Bricelj. Photo: Peter Irman



At the 23rd conference (COP23) of the contracting parties, Slovenia assumed presidency of the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea and Its Coasts (The Barcelona Convention) for the period 2024-2025. Photo: Peter Irman



SPORTS

The 60th Golden Fox will take place on 6 and 7 January 2024.

THE GOLDEN FOX

60 years of the Golden Fox

TEXT BY POLONA PREŠEREN, PHOTO BY SPIRIT SLOVENIJA

The Golden Fox competition attracts large crowds every year. The 60th Golden Fox will take place on 6 and 7 January 2024 and from now on will be officially held in Kranjska Gora.



60. LDEN FOX

AUDI FIS SKI WORLD CUP KRANJSKA GORA
KRANJSKA GORA 2024

Alpine skiing has a long and rich tradition in Slovenia. After all, the first skis in Central Europe were made here, in Slovenia. They were initially used for transport and only later for sports.

World Cup competitions were soon put on the FIS calendar.

And as a result, January 2024 will mark 60 years since the first competition took place at Maribor Pohorje Hills.

In the past sixty years, numerous marvellous and inspiring stories have been written. The Golden Fox competition was traditionally organised in Maribor, and it has recently been "officially" moved to Kranjska Gora. In recent years, Maribor experienced many organisational problems, as it lacked sufficient quantities of snow due to climate change and the temperatures were not low enough for artificial snowmaking.



In the six decades, the competition was held eleven times in Kranjska Gora, once in Sarajevo and once in Bad Gastein.

The Golden Fox was the venue where giant slalom took place in two runs for the first time in the history of women's Alpine skiing (1972). There are a number of stories referring to the competition and people involved in it.

The jubilee edition of this prestigious women's Alpine skiing competition will be held between 6 and 7 January 2024. The best Alpine skiers in the world will race down the slopes of Vitranc in Kranjska Gora; in giant slalom on the first day and slalom on the second day. The organisers expect numerous spectators, who generate an exceptional atmosphere every year.

Several Slovenian competitors will also be there. It is too early to give names, but in addition to young enthusiasts there will also be Slovenian national team representatives such as Ana Bucik, Andreja Slokar, Neja Dvornik and local Meta Hrovat.

This edition of the competition will be entitled *At Home in Slovenia*. In addition to the most important sports competition of the season, the event is synonymous with great fun and is considered a skiing holiday.

Many Slovenian sportswomen such as Mateja Svet, Nataša Bokal, Urška Hrovat and Tina Maze, who have stood on the podium of the Golden Fox, will be able to reminisce about their victories. A wonderful skiing holiday is guaranteed.



The Golden Fox is a wonderful skiing holiday.



SPORTS

The Slovenian national football team will be part of the European Championship for the second time.

SLOVENIA GOES FORWARD!

The Slovenian national football team qualified for the 2024 European Championship

TEXT BY TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ, PHOTO: DAMJAN KONČAR/NZS

The victory over the Kazakhstan national team, taking place in the Stožice Stadium in Ljubljana in November, was decisive. Benjamin Šeško and Benjamin Verbič scored the decisive goals.

Slovenia played ten matches in the qualifiers. Overall, they came second in Group H and thus qualified for the European Championship.

Slovenia has competed in the European Championship once before, in 2000.

The success must be attributed to the entire team. Verbič and Šeško, the national team players who scored in the last match, emphasised that scoring a decisive goal to qualify for the European Championship is something that every professional football player dreams about. Petar Stojanović was another major player in the match.

Slovenia has waited more than 20 years for such success and the matches which the Slovenian national team will play during the championship will be special and emotional because Slovenians are great sports enthusiasts,

passionate fans and keen recreational athletes. Children and adolescent boys enjoy scoring goals in school playgrounds and aspire to realising the dream that has just come true for the entire nation.

You were the wind in our sails

Captain Jan Oblak thanked the fans for their support over the years. He said that without them the team could not have succeeded. The fans are already determined... "Work and study can wait; we're going to cheer on our boys!"

Europe is certainly the continent of football and now Slovenia is also part of the rich history of European football.

In addition to basketball, volleyball and handball, football is again becoming one of the hit team sports in Slovenia.

Exciting sporting summer

To reach the semifinals and finals of the championship in Germany, Slovenia will play against England, Denmark and Serbia in the group C and will certainly give its best performance.

The UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin underlined that this was not only great news for Slovenian sports, but for the whole country.

We are expecting an exciting 2024 when it comes to sports. In June and July, we will be able to enjoy football matches, cycling races and the Summer Olympic Games. Without a doubt, the number of Slovenian fans in France and Germany will be large.



Slovenian football team.



Dear readers of Sinfo magazine.

*A kind word finds a kind place, goes a Slovenian proverb.
May the festive season be full of kind words, good tidings and positive thoughts.*

*Remain readers of Sinfo's magazine and follow us on slovenia.si and
instagram [@slovenia](https://www.instagram.com/slovenia). Let the words woven into stories carry you off to a place
where you feel our beautiful Slovenia.*

The Sinfo editorial team wishes you all the best for the coming year.