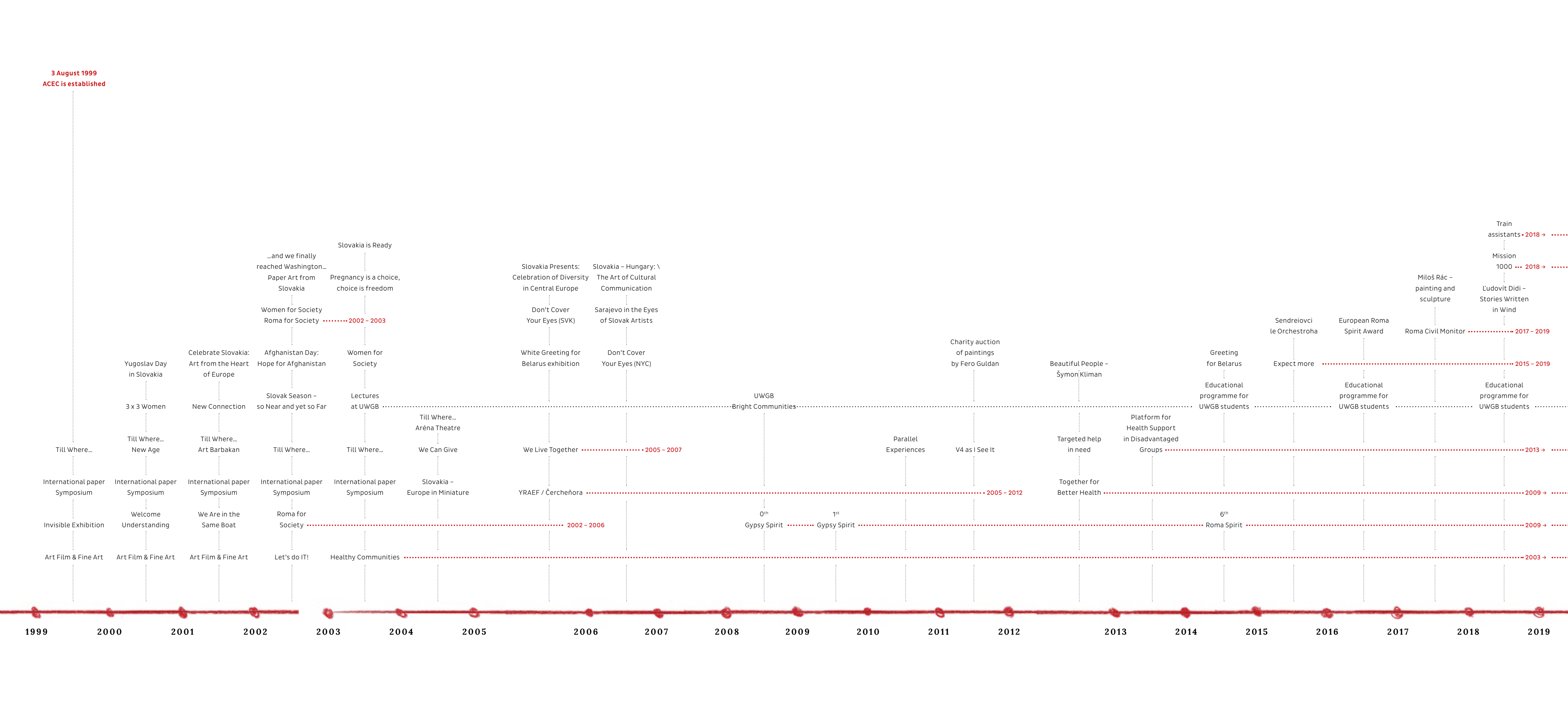


20 years of ACEC

Since 1999





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Lubomíra Slušná-Franz
Founder and President of ACEC

Since its founding twenty years ago, the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC) NGO has been based on firm ground built in the mid-eighties and solidified in the nineties with unobstructed, independent activities and exhibitions of visual arts.

To mention just one, there was an open-air exhibition in the Castle Park in Pezinok called Pezinok '87, which was a unique show publicly presenting the works by so-called banned artists. In the same vein, there were also regular solo and group exhibitions on the premises of the 1st Neurology Clinic in Bratislava, which had for a time become an unofficial exhibition space. Our Fashion and Jewellery Design shows were held in Brno and other places in Moravia (today part of the Czech Republic), where the officials did not interfere with our vision.

These events would not have been possible without the culmination of energy generated by the enthusiasm of a group of resourceful and daring artists.

The Velvet Revolution in 1989 opened borders and the new possibilities brought on by these changes were fascinating. A door to the wider world had opened and expanded our horizons, which meant new challenges and new cultural influences but also political and economic ones too. Several exhibitions both abroad and in Slovakia, with a strong interna-

tional participation, organised by the International Association of Contemporary Arts (C. ART. A – International), which I founded and led, sought to make full use of these new circumstances. C.ART.A – International organised events such as the International Textile Symposium and later International Symposium on Paper; the open-air exhibition Common Space focused on environment; TONAL – young Slovak artist of the year award; regular exhibitions of contemporary Czechoslovak fine arts in Vienna and others.

Our artistic activities have continued and we have also searched for ways to bring fine art as close to people as possible. Therefore, exhibitions were held not only at prestigious domestic and European galleries but also in non-traditional exhibition spaces and various open-air environments. We crossed the boundaries of visual arts and the showcased artforms have gradually expanded, grown richer and intertwined. New, non-traditional connections were created and thus produced additional creative ideas and opportunities.

This approach and the new vision of using culture and education as a means of effective communication inspired the founding of the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC) in 1999. Our focus has shifted to conveying as clear a message to the recipients of our projects as possible.

Communication has become the key element of our activities. From the very outset our mission has been to build understanding, expand education and create space for further mutual communication. In fulfilling this mission, we have created cooperating networks and partnerships with NGOs, institutions and companies, as well as experts from different areas at home and abroad.

Few generations can say that they have witnessed such dramatic changes as ours. The transformation of society was very quick; Slovakia has become a sovereign nation, a member of both NATO and of the EU, and has begun writing its modern history. We have played an active part. We have presented Slovakia as a country that can contribute to Europe and to the world, as a country that can offer new ideas and new methods on an international level. We have responded to developments in society not only in Slovakia but also beyond its borders in regions where democracy was threatened.

Several of our projects resonated both domestically and in the countries in which they were accomplished. All of those organised over the past two decades have been geared towards civil societies, international cultural exchange, strengthening and improving communication, interpersonal relations, social affairs and education. Educational and awareness-raising activities for socially excluded groups have been an integral part of our projects since 2002. We have focused on the inhabitants of Roma settlements in Slovakia and on the implementation of educational programmes created for this specific purpose.

If I had to pinpoint the most important thing during these twenty years it would have to be, without hesitation, the human capital. People who adopt and identify with the role and mission of this organization are irreplaceable. In the first place, it's the colleagues with whom we have always formed long-standing and stable teams and who have met and advanced the ACEC mission. And although it was not always easy, we believed in the purpose of our work and the meaning it had for our target groups.

We were united in a strong will to implement projects with added value and sometimes even the power to change outlooks or lives. Cohesion and perseverance are probably the qualities that helped us implement even those bold ideas and projects that have been exceptionally demanding. Several of our projects are long term, e.g. Healthy Communities have been running continuously for nearly two decades. ACEC's network of great partners, associates and friends is also extraordinary. This network was formed gradually and grew with every new project. It's also valuable because it has cooperated for a long time and I highly appreciate all those who not only believe in us, but also play or have played an active part in our common effort.

I would like to sincerely thank all existing members of the ACEC Advisory Board, as well as all colleagues, individuals and organisations that have cooperated with us over the course of two decades. Even after twenty years I still believe that the energy of a joint effort with good intent is difficult to resist. I believe in the power of real communication, collaboration and the inner power of humans. I am convinced that eliminating the cause is more important than addressing the symptoms, even if it means an incomparably more strenuous challenge.

In the current digital age, which seems to be a playfield of clear opposites without any centre ground, in an age when the world is more complex than in the past, I see an even greater need for face to face communication. In my opinion, it's not only needed, it is essential. I believe that in the next twenty years ACEC can contribute to the development and creation of new forms of communication.

I wish that the Association for Culture, Education and Communication retains its independence also in the future, so that we can continue fulfilling our mission with a clear vision and the knowledge that we can achieve anything as long as the intentions are good and legitimate.



Magdaléna Rothová
Director of ACEC

The Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC) was founded to connect and has been actively fulfilling its mission for twenty years. It brings together dedicated, open minded, inspirational people full of humanity. Because of this it has been successfully evolving and growing for two decades.

Entering a fully-fledged whirlwind of activities and stories that had been taking place for years and were judiciously developed, is binding. It is a commitment to the people who have been a part of it. At the same time, it is a commitment for me. A commitment to dedicate myself to writing a story that is inextricably linked to the story of the organization.

A natural connection is a dynamic process. Therefore, I am even more pleased that it includes an organic group of professionals and enthusiasts who inspire and support each other, who collaborate and create. Patience, loyalty, devotion, endurance, creativity and friendship. These are just a few of their features and the characteristics that shape our organization.

I am thankful that every single moment on our timeline is full of amazing people, good deeds and vibrant inspiring energy.

I wish that the coming years will provide the freedom to create, the courage to enter the uncharted waters, the will to cooperate and the strength to persevere.

We'd be glad to see you join our efforts!



Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel and H.E. Carl Spielvogel
Co-chairs of the Advisory Board, ACEC

Since 1999, the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC), which we co-chair, has fostered understanding, strengthened international cultural exchanges, enhanced education, and created new and innovative programs to encourage closer ties between mainstream society and underserved minorities. ACEC's recognition, and long-time support of direct engagement by the Roma communities in the development of a civil society has been exemplary. It has been commended for its efforts by the World Health Organisation, and the European Public Health Alliance, among others. This development has been due, in large part, to Ľubomíra Slušná-Franz, whose vision has been key in the creation of an organisation that has, with a lighter footprint, a flexible approach, and reliance on new forms of communication, improved understanding and enhanced connections between very different groups of people.

Since ACEC was founded, we have witnessed a dramatic diaspora that continues to shape many of the policies and programs around ideas of citizenship, nationalities, and our responsibility to society, and each other. ACEC, a key part of the "third sector"

of Slovak society, is needed now, more than ever, as it continues its fine work for all citizens, regardless of their origin or history. By providing access to education, and improving lives, ACEC has advanced sustainable and vibrant communities, for the Roma, and for their neighbors in Slovakia. And its talented director, Ľubomíra Slušná-Franz, should be congratulated for ACEC's significant and lasting accomplishments, which have resulted in the expansion of its effective programs. Under her leadership, ACEC has brought its thoughtful and creative ideas to New York, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Warsaw, Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Minsk – helping us all in the global struggle against discrimination and intolerance.

Ľubomíra Slušná-Franz has been the essential guiding force for ACEC, and has shown, through her grace, knowledge, determination and resilience, that there is a constructive way forward for us all. For her inspirational work, we send her our warmest congratulations, in the knowledge that the next 20 years, under her dedicated leadership, will be as productive, life-enhancing, and exciting as the last.



Pavol Demeš

Member of the Advisory Board, ACEC

When it comes to the founding of a non-profit NGO, it is usually the effort of one enthusiast who brings it to life and wins the support of other enthusiasts. In the case of ACEC, at its founding there was the creative and inspiring Ľubomíra Slušná-Franz, who transformed her vision of culture and humanism into a functioning organization twenty years ago.

ACEC was established at a specific point in time, a year after the 1998 general elections, which ended the era of Mečiarism and restarted Slovakia's process of democratisation and its accession into European and transatlantic organisations. Civil society has had an irreplaceable position in these processes. ACEC has created its own approach in expressing solidarity and a sense of belonging, both at home and in foreign countries, as well as presenting Slovakia abroad. It relied on art, creativity and networking with partners from both the private and public sector.

As an example, I can mention the unique exhibition of artists from war-torn Yugoslavia in Bratislava in 2000, whose work and fates had been forgotten. The exhibition Welcome Understanding was not only an opportunity for them to present their works but also to forge new friendships and experience Slovak solidarity.

At the time of the accession negotiations to the EU and NATO, a time when Slovakia had to show its partners in the West that it was part of the same civilization, it was necessary to find fresh and effective forms of presentation of the country abroad. ACEC, in cooperation with many artists and diplomats, organised an unprecedented series of presentations of Slovak culture in New York City. The project Celebrate Slovakia: Art from the Heart of Europe lasted for a month and the individual events were held at the most prestigious venues of the Big Apple.

No-one could have predicted that New York's Twin Towers would soon become

the target of a terrorist attack and that there'd be an enormous number of victims. ACEC responded promptly and organised a unique act of solidarity named We Are in the Same Boat. In 35 towns around Slovakia, people folded little paper boats with inscriptions of solidarity. There were about 100,000 of them. The Slovak ambassador to the USA, Martin Bútora, and I personally handed over a sample of them to the visibly moved Senator for New York, Hillary Clinton.

ACEC is an example of an NGO that has fully grasped and highlighted the importance of cultural diplomacy with the intention to present Slovakia as a modern and engaging country, whilst also encouraging the interest of the world in Slovakia. Together with numerous artists and diplomats ACEC organised such projects as Slovakia is Ready (2003) – held on the occasion of Slovakia's membership of the UN Security Council; Slovakia – Europe in Miniature (2004) – presentation of Slovakia in EU countries; White Greeting for Belarus (2005) – presentation of

Slovak culture in an internationally isolated post-Soviet country; V4 as I See It (2011) – a project organised in Brussels on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the foundation of the Visegrad Group.

ACEC has also been involved in the pre-electoral impartial call for increased election turnout Let's Do IT! intended mainly for the female segment of voters. General elections in 2002 were of great importance to Slovakia and a confirmation of its direction into European structures.

Following the admission of Slovakia into the family of developed democracies, ACEC focused mainly on the challenging Roma issue. It has achieved a number of notable results in this field and they are mentioned in this publication.

ACEC survived, and not only that. Even after two decades of work at home and abroad it is still relevant. I wish that the ACEC story encourages us not to resign ourselves to the circumstances, but to actively pursue a change.

Invisible Exhibition

1999

Castle Park, Pezinok

Additional events:

- Fashion show Till Where 3, directed by Miriam Petránová
- Integration – Art and Science – Environment – Human Being, a lecture by Prof. Ján Morovič
- Workshop Sensho-ku-do, traditional Japanese method of textile dyeing and weaving, presented by Akihiko Izukura
- Part of the exhibition was a compilation of works by children with special needs led by Daniela Kytková from the Prof. Karol Matulay Social Services Home in Bratislava



Gramén Magnus, Sweden,
material: wood, paint,
dimensions: 260 x 300 cm

“Invisibility is not only about things you cannot see, but also about things that slip your attention.”

— Waeckerlin Theresa/ Zobrist Agatha (Switzerland)

Eduard Kukan

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

I accepted the invitation to this event with delight and I am proud that this extraordinary project involving over fifty artists from twenty-nine countries from nearly all the continents of the world is held under my auspices. I am pleased to welcome participating artists not just from Europe but from the Americas, Asia and Australia too.

The number of artists participating in the Invisible Exhibition suggests a return to the original bond between art and nature and that their shift to an almost perfect union is very inspirational for artists. It opens a whole new world of possibilities in expressing shared feelings about our endangered blue planet in this overly technological era. Invisibility, which is the main force of this exhibition, is also a manifestation of human awakening and a legacy not only for our generation but for the ones to succeed us.

I am convinced that this unique event is a platform for cultural exchange and creative dialogue between our own artists and foreign artists, and opens new doors for presentation of their work abroad. Culture is often the best ambassador because not only is it an opportunity for informal contact but also because it often lets us see a people or a country more intuitively.

Hana Dolská

Director of Malokarpatské múzeum in Pezinok

This generously prepared project has caught my attention as well as the fact that Castle Park will come alive again with an event. This has already been the third project in the Pezinok park I have worked on with the exhibition curator Ľubomíra Slušná. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who worked on this exhibition and also to all Pezinok residents who were sympathetic to this project..



Anna Goebel, Poland, material:
maple tree seed pods



Helmut Becker, Canada,
material: paper made by hand
from linen and willow, maple
and oak tree leaves



Anna Moro-Lin, Italy, material:
dyed gauze

3 August 1999

ACEC is established

17–26 September 1999

Invisible Exhibition
Art Film & Fine Art 1999
Till Where – Pezinok



Vladimír Popovič, Slovakia
Happening

**“The more one thinks about
the word invisibility, the more
questions arise.”**

— Brett Alexander (Australia)

Walter Rochel

Ambassador and the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Slovakia

Delegation of the European Commission to the Slovak Republic has welcomed the opportunity to attend the event Integration—Invisible Exhibition, which is the largest exhibition of its kind in central and eastern Europe with the focus on the environment.

The motto Environment Has No Borders was the slogan of the 1970s when the then European Community started building its first environmental legislation. In 1999, at a time when Slovakia is preparing for its admission to the European Union, this slogan rings even more urgent and true.

The issue of the environment is one of the most complex questions and a key that demands no small effort in the entire process of admission to the EU. Its effective solution is only possible through European, and what's more, worldwide cooperation. I am convinced that a more environmentally conscious Slovakia will profit not only its citizens, but the whole of Europe.

Martin Fazeli

Project coordinator (ACEC)

“A drop in the ocean is the ocean.” This quote by the Persian poet Rumi sums up my understanding of invisibility. Invisibility, in my understanding, is not about our inability to see. It is the highest form of harmony and as such it is our only possible way of how to enter the relationship with nature.

On the one hand, the Invisible Exhibition was an experiment trying to examine the possibility of a harmonious unity of art and nature, and on the other hand it was a fresh



Martin Janoško, Slovakia,
material: artificial flowers

perspective hoping to push the limits of its own function. It was a fine art exhibition for the environment in which human work did not preside over nature. That in itself makes this project an exceptional artistic event, which was not just about art. I would like to express my thanks to all participating artists and everyone who supported us in preparation of this event.

Happy New Millennium!

Art Film & Fine Art

1999, 2000, 2001

Trenčianske Teplice

Exhibitions and in-
stallations, outdoors in
the park and indoors at
the venue of the Interna-
tional Film Festival Art
Film Fest



Vladimír Popovič, How do I get to Koliba, 2001

Katarína Ovečková and (dach)

Taken from the journal and catalogue
of the International Festival Art Film,
Trenčianske Teplice, 2000

Just as an art film represents an uncommon
genre in cinematography, the Art Film & Fine
Art exhibition too showcases works of visual art
that don't shy away from meaningful content.

The exhibition outdoors in the park was meant
to put a smile on the faces of passers-by and to
make them ponder and wonder on their way to
the cinema, not to raise pretentious awe and pay
tribute to the artists behind the works. It pre-
sents poetry in the form of visual art but doesn't
lack humour, healthy irony and an overview of
current tendencies in the Slovak visual art. Who
could possibly resist smiling confronted by the
symbolic depiction of the Slovak film as a wood-
en, nearly ten-foot-tall, walking homeless man
created by Vladimír Popovič asking How do I get
to Koliba? [*Koliba Film Studios]

The combination of fine art and art film
opened new possibilities in depicting motion
through various techniques and their combina-
tions. One of the artists, Miloš Kopták, reversed
the film festival's motto Art Film—a Film Festi-
val About Art, into art about film. He used his
mother's collection of photographs of actress-
es popular twenty years ago and using collage
techniques transformed them into interesting
artefacts.

Marek Kvetan played about with computer
software whilst processing the films of Star
Wars and Trainspotting. He compressed the
whole movie into one image and thus created
an artistic connection between the park and
modern art.

Robo Kočan, a photographer, presented an
installation of portraits of famous people born
in the star sign of Sagittarius called In the Sign
of Sagittarius. The connection between picture
and motion is truly vivid. Along with the young-
er generation of artists, the prominent Slovak
director Dušan Hanák also presented his pho-
tographs.



ACEC team and the exhibiting artists, 2000



Ján Hoffstädter, The Dwarf, 2001

June 1999

Art Film & Fine Art 1999

June 2000

Art Film & Fine Art 2000

June 2001

Art Film & Fine Art 2001



Miloš Kopták, Embroidered Faces, 2001

MAREK KVETAN — MILOŠ KOPTÁK
— ANTON ČIERNY — MÁRIA
ČOREJOVÁ — VLADIMÍR POPOVIČ
— JÁN HOFFSTÄDTER — MARTIN
JANOŠKO — EZECHIEL — MICHAELA
KLIMANOVÁ-TRIZULJAKOVÁ —
DANIELA KYTKOVÁ — MIRIANA
MATERÁKOVÁ — MIRIAM PETRÁŇOVÁ
— IVAN HRMO — SOŇA SADILKOVÁ
— ROBO KOČAN — MICHAELA
NOCIAROVÁ — LÍVIA SLÍŽOVÁ —
PETER POHANKA — PAVLINA FICHTA
ČIERNA — INGRID VIŠŇOVSKÁ —
PETER FAŠANOK — MARTIN ŠTRBA
— BEA DE VISSER AND OTHERS.

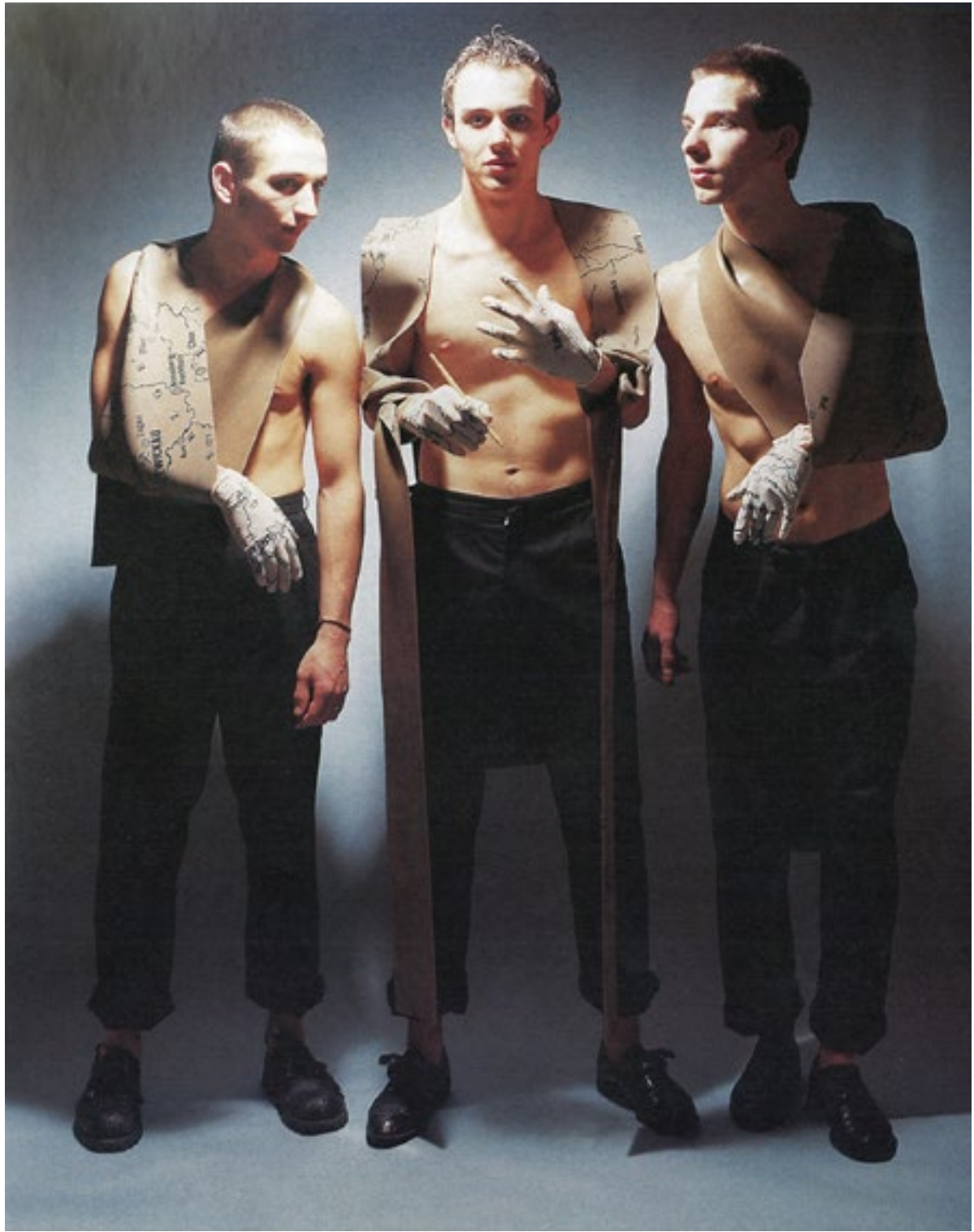


Till Where...

...Can We Shift The Dynamic Between Clothing And Art Form?

1994 – 2004

- 1994 – SNP Square, Bratislava
- 1997–2003 – Ružomberok (part of the International Symposium on Paper)
- 1997 – Pezinok (part of the Common Space exhibition)
- 1999 – Pezinok (part of the Invisible Exhibition)
- 2000 – Till Where – New Age – Danubiana art museum, Bratislava
- 2001 – Warsaw, Poland (part of an international visual arts project called Art Barbakan 2001 in the historic centre of Warsaw; Potential of Paper exhibition was also presented),
- 2002 – Červený kameň Castle, Častá
- 2004 – Aréna Theatre, Bratislava



Anna Daučíková, 1994

Till Where...how far, to what extent is it possible to push the dynamic between clothing as an art form, an object and its wearer? Till Where... to what extent can and may we go in our experiments, in our search for new artistic expression? This project attracted many Slovak artists coming from numerous artistic fields, many working with textiles and fashion designers but also sculptors, glassmakers, jewellers and set designers. Among others: Silvia Fedorová, Júlia Kunovská, Miroslav Brooš, Soňa Sadilková, Lívia Slížová, Ildikó Dobešová, Erika Trnková, Jozef Bajus, Michaela Klimanová-Trizuljaková, Milota Havráňková, Aleš Votava, Anna Daučíková, Ondrej Rudavský and Zuzana Piusi.

The theme of this project presented a challenge but the only limitation was to transform the original thought, design or idea into reality. Fashion shows under the heading Till Where were a nod to exhibitions such as Fashion Design and Jewellery, which were held a few times in the latter half of the 1980s at the Institute of Industrial Design in Brno but also at other venues, e.g. at Mikulov and Valtice Castles. The first Till Where fashion show took place in SNP square in Bratislava at 3 p.m. on Friday 15th April 1994. The intention was to transform an otherwise ordinary Friday into something extraordinary and make the weary people rushing home from work after a long week pause and escape their normal routine for a while. It turned out to be a successful event.

A performance, Till Where—New Age, directed by Anton Šulík was staged in 2000 at the Danubiana gallery in Bratislava with set design by Ondrej Rudavský, Marek Kvetan and Ezechiel Zorla. Choreography was done by Ján Hromada, music by Peter Meliš and dramaturgy by Stanislav Bachleda and Zuzana Sidhi Vraštiaková.

The next Till Where fashion shows were occasionally held as part of other interna-

tional or local projects organised by ACEC. One such occasion took place annually at the International Symposium on Paper in Ružomberok until 2003. This was one of the reasons why the artists, international participants by then, started using paper as their preferred medium.

What set the Till Where events apart was the collaboration of artists from diverse art forms and artistic fields (visual artists, musicians, choreographers, playwrights, DJs) and a remarkably creative atmosphere surrounding the event. The fashion show models were always exceptional but chosen strictly from non-professionals, students and friends.



Aleš Votava, 1994



Jozef Bajus, 1994

1999

Till Where, Ružomberok
Till Where, Pezinok

2000

Till Where, Ružomberok
Till Where – New Age, Bratislava

2001

Till Where, Ružomberok
Till Where, Warsaw, Poland

2002

Till Where, Ružomberok
Till Where, Červený Kameň Castle, Častá

2003

Till Where, Ružomberok

2004

Till Where, Ružomberok
Till Where, Bratislava



Až Kam - New Age, performance, Danubiana, 2000



Slávka Doricová, Aréna Theatre, 2004



Aréna Theatre, 2004



Aréna Theatre, 2004



Ezechiél Zorla, Invisible Exhibition, 1999



Till Where - New Age, performance, Danubiana, 2000



Až kam - New Age, performance, Danubiana, 2000



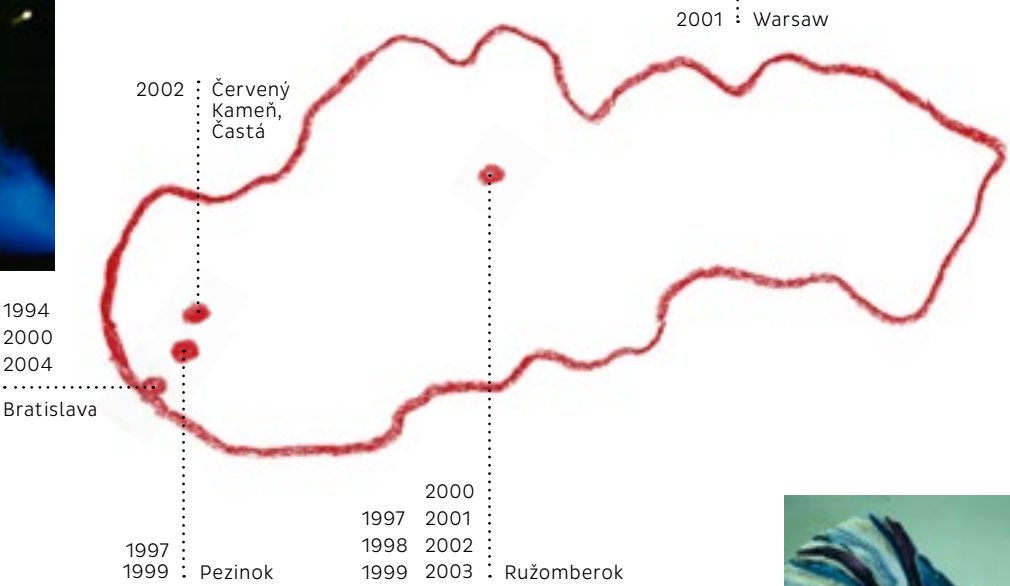
Jana Majtánová, Invisible Exhibition, 1999



Warsaw, 2001



Michaela Klimanová-Trizuljaková



Lucia Slušná, Common Space, 1997



Michaela Klimanová-Trizuljaková, Common Space, 1997



Zuzana Piussi, 1994



Peter Machata, 1994

Excerpt from the catalogue for the first Till Where fashion show in 1994, in Bratislava:

The clothes I saw at the fashion show were a scandal. They horrified me deeply. Can their creators imagine that a woman-comrade could sit down at the rotary press in similar clothes? Do any of those so-called artists tend to think that young comrades wrapped up in rubber would make themselves useful in the public militia? Do these comrade artists have the slightest idea how a woman welded in a metal structure would perform her practical function efficiently in a khozaschyot*? The exposed fashions simply weren't fit for work, dear comrades, perhaps only for some bourgeois strumpets at debaucheries somewhere in Crimea*. Therefore, dear comrades, I am leaving my office disappointed and full of bitterness and wondering till where (how far) will things go? Could our lifetime struggle to protect the working man and woman from these perversions of freedom and the responsibility of choice fizzle out?

Big Brother
Jiří X. Doležal



Andrea Vonkomerová, 1994



Milota Havráňková, 1994

*khozaschyot – loose equivalent of cost accounting in the socialist economy of the Soviet Era

*Crimea – peninsula, formerly a part of the Soviet Union (now Ukraine), rumoured to have been popular among apparatchiks and their 'female friends'

The story of paper comes in many forms and has a unique history in Slovakia. Its newest chapter is written in the Slovak visual art and is closely connected to the International Symposium on Paper that was organised in central Slovakia every year, starting in 1995.

During the 10 years of its existence, the symposium was attended by over 100 visual artists from 17 countries. Symposium exhibitions showcased the world's trends in artistic paper processes and served as a window

into the advancement and latest developments in this branch of visual arts at the international level.

The event was organised by the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC) and the International Paper Association Another Paper (IPAP) along with the Neusiedler SCP and the Liptov Museum in Ružomberok that have co-organised the symposium since its beginning.



Malgorzata Skuza, Poland

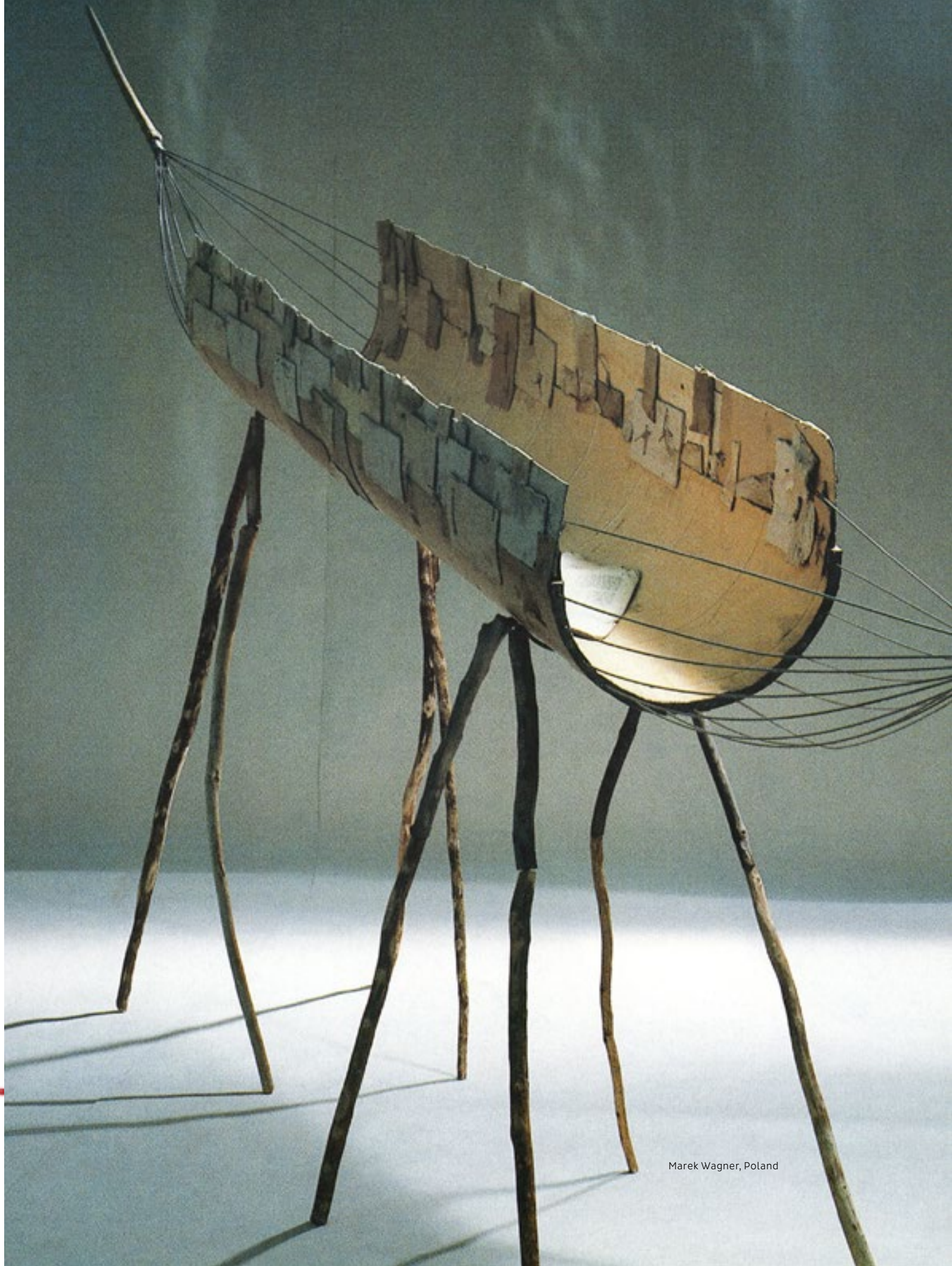
1999

2000

2001

2002

2003



Marek Wagner, Poland



Leena Naumanen, Austria

Ján Liška
Managing Director

Since 1995 our company – SCP North Slovak Pulp and Paper Mill – has become the meeting point for visual artists from all over the world. They come together to challenge the possibilities of this interesting material. Their novel creations and their highly untraditional work with paper and paper material keep astounding us year after year. For most employees of the SCP Ružomberok, paper and raw cellulose have only practical uses but thanks to the creativity of the visual artists we can now define practicality in a different light.

The annual symposium is mutually rewarding and does not lack a warm, human aspect. The cooperation between the artists and our workers has deepened throughout the years. Many of the artworks created by the participating artists at the Symposium have been successfully presented at international exhibitions abroad.

Lubomíra Slušná
Curator

The annual International Paper Symposium in SCP Ružomberok has certain characteristics that make it a somewhat special event for the artists. One of these characteristics is the good working conditions. Participants can use as much and as many different materials for their works as they need. They can use final products, materials at different stages of the production process, raw cellulose, even so-called industrial waste, which is the favoured choice of artists for its unparalleled uniqueness. The opportunity to use such a variety of materials significantly influences the final artworks; the artists can transform their imagination into reality in ways that would not have been otherwise possible.

The Symposium is concluded every year by an exhibition at the Liptov Museum in Ružomberok of the works created throughout the symposium. Every exhibition showcases

a unique set of creative findings and the talent of artists who dared to push the boundaries of the known.

Having worked as the organiser and curator of the Symposium for the past five years I think that the best word to describe these events is a gathering. These are the gatherings of professionals and friends. They are a valuable contribution to paper art in Slovakia and abroad. In addition to direct cooperation, the artists have an opportunity to present their (previous) work documented in catalogues, brochures, slides, etc. or their view on the situation in their field in their country. The event has become a platform for new professional and personal friendships that present the basis for future artistic cooperation on other international projects.

When we enter the factory every employee there knows what it means. Let me take this opportunity to thank them for their friendship and kind help.



Ildikó Dobešová, Slovakia

Anna Goebel,
Poland





Waste material SCP Ružomberok, photo: Anna Goebel, Poland

2000

Pálffy Palace, Bratislava

„Understanding is a principle to live by.“



Pavol Demeš

Director of German Marshall Fund for central and eastern Europe

I can hardly imagine a better way to break down barriers among nations than through art. And this project is indeed breaking down some barriers. Ľubomíra [Slušná] travelled to Belgrade several times in the last couple of months, visited artists' studios and selected an enormously powerful collection of artworks. Her true discoveries will remind us all that human suffering does not stop the search for beauty and harmony, and that Serbian people are just like "us" and not like "him" [Slobodan Milošević].

I truly hope that this collection of artistic expressions of 17 Serbian artists will help us learn more about the human soul and will initiate a dialogue on the interdependence of Serbia and the rest of the world not only in Bratislava but in many other cities around the globe..

Miroslav Mojžita

Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Yugoslavia

One of the worst consequences of the events in Yugoslavia in the past decade was the harmful effect it had on culture and science. Outstanding scientists and artists, who in previous years had been used to acknowledgment and communication with the whole world, had suddenly lost their possibility of travelling abroad and lost their access to basic information on the happenings in their fields. Most of those who stayed in the country, faithful to the refractory nature of the Yugoslavs, continued in their creative endeavours. Consciously thinking Serb peas-

ants, in the eyes of some maybe the unlikely supporters of culture and science, decided that artists, scientists and intellectuals should continue their creative efforts in Belgrade. But not in an isolated Belgrade, rather in a Belgrade that is a centre of free spirit and international cooperation.

Ľubomíra Slušná

Curator of Welcome Understanding

Understanding is a principle to live by. The fact that it is about Serbia this time does not change a thing. I met extraordinary people and experienced extraordinary situations on my travels to Yugoslavia. My first train journey.... It was getting dark and a group of smugglers were throwing big packages out of the carriage in which I was coincidentally the only passenger.

My next trip by train... People sitting around me were discussing the situation in the country. Their stories were real. It would have been better if most of them were not. My most recent trip... A demonstration in Novi Sad.

This exhibition of Yugoslavian art has been a challenge. It has been hard work, in a terrain which was, nevertheless, closer and more understandable each time I visited. Some of the things I came across in Yugoslavia were known to me from the times of the former Czechoslovakia, before the Revolution in 1989. And yet, it was somehow different. We were born in isolation, and we lived in it. We did not have any experience of how it could be better. Yugoslavia did. Does isolation mean lack of interest? One thing is for sure: there are many forms of overcoming isolation. Therefore, this catalogue of fine art is mainly about the art of understanding.



UŠER FRENDOV, 1994, box, bullets (part of the installation)

Zdravko Joksimović

31 March 1991

The start of the Yugoslav Civil War

2000

Welcome Understanding

12 November 2001

The end of the Civil War and the breakup of Yugoslavia

Welcome Understanding



Miroslav Mojžita, winner of the Welcome Understanding award



Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel (left), the award Welcome Understanding created by Miloš Balgavý

Welcome Understanding Award

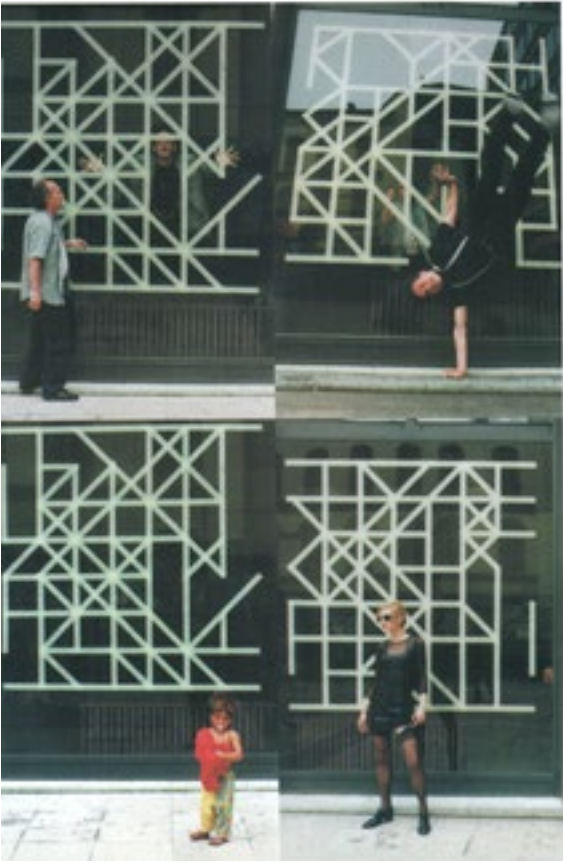
ACEC creates projects that work on an international level and help Slovakia's integration into international structures. The projects focus on presenting Slovakia abroad and many of them improve the quality of civil society.

While carrying out our projects we meet extraordinary people whose actions contribute to improved international cooperation and understanding and who help spread a positive human message. ACEC and its International Advisory Board therefore

decided to present an exceptional award Welcome Understanding. The first Welcome Understanding Award was presented to the Ambassador of Slovak Republic to Yugoslavia, Miroslav Mojžita, for his exceptional diplomatic work in war-torn Yugoslavia and for his help in organising the exhibition of Belgrade artists in Bratislava. The Award was presented to him in Bratislava by the Chairman of the Advisory Board to ACEC and the Ambassador of the U.S. to Slovakia, Carl Spielvogel.



Windows secured by tape during the bombardment of Beograd inspired Era Milivojević's artwork The Mirror of Life: machine vs human (1999) recreating the moves from a chess match between Gary Kasparov and the IBM Deep Blue.



Excerpt from the event journal, 2000:

We believe 7th November will be the day of the solemn opening ceremony by Ľubomíra Slušná, Director of the Association for Art and Communication - Bratislava & NYC, and Eduard Kukan, the Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General and with the participation of the exhibiting artists. We believe the opening will include a piece composed especially for this occasion by Serbian composer Boško Milaković. The exhibition will later travel to other cities and countries to welcome the democratic Yugoslavia and to spread understanding.

Barbara Holubová
project manager ACEC

Era Milivojević

Slušná travels to Belgrade. The objective is to map out the art scene in isolated Yugoslavia and to evaluate the possibility of its international presentation via an exhibition in Slovakia and other countries. She is assisted by Miroslav Mojžita, the Slovak Ambassador in Belgrade and his colleagues, although they are convinced that this project is, under the current circumstances, destined for failure.

After the initial research, on her second journey to Yugoslavia, Slušná focuses on a particular group of artists. She meets new visual artists, visits studios and selects the first works, which she brings to Slovakia to present them both to laymen and experts in the run-up to a Yugoslav Day in Slovakia.

Pavol Demeš hosts Yugoslav Day in Slovakia; a unique meeting of representatives from Slovak NGOs, media outlets, cultural institutions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs centring on sharing experience with organising projects in Yugoslavia. The event includes the opening of a limited exhibition accompanied by music and films by Yugoslav authors. Subsequent articles on this unique exhibition of Yugoslav visual art appear both in Slovak and Yugoslav press.

The world is astonished by the news that, after the changes to the Constitution and various manipulations, Slobodan Milošević announces snap regional, parliamentary and presidential elections to be held on 24th September 2000. Montenegro expresses opposition. The political situation in Yugoslavia is bleak.

Election day in Yugoslavia. At first, Milošević's regime refuses to concede defeat. The climate in the country is tense. The possibility of another civil war looms heavily. // Working conditions worsen. Zoran Naskovski cannot proceed with his work on the catalogue due to power outages. The artists are unable to transport their works to an agreed extraction point and thus the works cannot be transferred to Slovakia.

General strike. The Yugoslav Parliament is occupied by protestors. The 10 year-long dictatorship collapses. Slobodan Milošević finally admits defeat. The world expresses support to President-elect Vojislav Koštunica and the embargoes put on Yugoslavia in 1992 are gradually lifted.

The catalogue is now in production at Typocon, a graphic studio in Bratislava.

Most of the selected artworks are in transit to Bratislava. The electricity supply to the exhibition venue begins. The final leitmotif for the catalogue and poster is chosen.

11–15 May
2000

2–4 July
2000

6 July
2000

end of July
2000

24 September
2000

27–28 September
2000

29 September
2000

15 October
2000

3 x 3 Women

2000

Slovakia

- October 16th – Austrian Cultural Centre, Bratislava (Ursula Fuhs, Saša Petrovická, Jana Illésová)
- October 19th – Gallery of Spiš Artists, Spišská Nová Ves (Miriam Petránová, Ivana Korská, Soňa Horňáková)
- October 31st – House of Culture SKC (Dom kultúry), Banská Bystrica (Viera Dubáčová, Pavlína Fichta Čierna, Lubka Žilková)

The project presented the joint works of three different trios of women, in three separate exhibitions, in three different places, working with different media.

Saša Petrovická, Slovakia

Some things in life are highly improbable and yet they have happened to me. It's like a game and I don't know the rules. Moreover, I don't even know if I am the one playing it or just a pawn being played with.

The 3x3 women project aimed to highlight the creative processes of different personalities working in different conditions and different artistic and cultural areas; working through individual perception of realities, either accepted, rejected or simply dismissed by the society at the end of a millennium. Their presented works spanned various forms of fine art, film, literature, music and dance to theatre.



Ursula Fuhs, Rakúsko

Individualism and gaining independence: we live in a world and society that requires us to go about our business very carefully. My graphics are a search, an exploration – a study of people and things that I hold dear. I can see this search being implemented into this collaboration of three artists in the 3x3 women project.



Ursula Fuhs

A GAME

Anybody can play this game, all are equal. I invited Tereška, aged 7, Marek, aged 21, Zuzana, aged 45, and the nearly 67-year-old Ivan to the game. Feel free to play it, too.

The rules are simple:

- Draw your idea of a HE and SHE
 - Draw the interaction between them
 - Draw the place where the interaction happens.
- Now put the drawings in their respective buckets or bowls.

And the game can begin.

- Pick any number of HE and SHE images from the bucket/bowl
- Pick an interaction between them
- Pick the place where the interaction takes place.

Now put together various scenarios: funny, painful, loving, awkward, embarrassing, logical, inevitable...anything goes. It's easy, we live through similar situations every day. Only now we are the ones making the rules.

Don't misuse it!

I'll blow you a kiss in the misty morning
And like my breath in the air I am learning
To first recognise myself.
I can see behind the bend of your thoughts.
First there's me and then a long line of faces swirling around you.

Soňa, Ivana, Miriam



Miriam Petránová

Each of us three approaches the theme of this project from a different perspective. Miriam [Petránová] through her camera lens, Soňa [Horňáková] through music and I through movement. I am trying to express, to give body to the things Miriam tries to convey through her images and Soňa through her songs. Inspired by their images and music, I conclude our threesome collaborations with dance, the so-called "body language", movement and expressive imagination, and thus join the idea that has brought us together.

Ivana Korská

Miriam Petránová, Slovakia

22 photographs are part of a series called Diary of an Earthling that I have been working on ever since I started taking photographs. They are flashbacks to moments I wouldn't have otherwise remembered. I am grateful for their existence. I am also grateful for Sonička [Horňáková] and Ivana [Korská], who used the images as their inspiration. The three of us, although similar

in our shape, i.e. female bodies, bring different gifts and ideas to the table. Exploring the same old terrain of images and seeing a different approach, a different story and a different time emerging is very exciting. There are so many questions and even more answers. There is no end to it... but what good are endings anyway. I hope that your own diaries of earthlings are filled, day by day, by ever more soothing winks.

16 October 2000

Austrian Cultural Centre
Bratislava

19 October 2000

Gallery of Spiš Artists
Spišská Nová Ves

Lonesome Mariner Has Drowned in my Soul.

Bare stage (no curtains), with the exception of a solitary grand piano. The piano is gradually illuminated by a spotlight, behind it we can guess a figure. It is a female figure sleeping behind the piano. She is waking up, caressing the piano keys. Random notes gradually turn into a melody. It feels weary at first, but this is her monologue, which transforms into vocals as if the actress wanted to scream. Her voice wakes up all inhabitants or more precisely, all female dwellers of this house. They assemble at the piano as if it was a royal court. They come from all directions: from north and south, from the past and the present. Women. A rather odd assembly.

They hold two-arm candelabras in their hands, they are clothed in thin dresses worn out by years of use. They come disturbed from sleep, from life, from work, from lovemaking. They are here by the piano, the centre of their intangible world. One of the figures does not stop there, she goes on and on and on, all the way to the faces of people, spectators. A monologue... which sends ripples through the woman's story and events. The stage shivers with ripples and in this fairy tale of motion and words the characters bare themselves to play out their little stories which come together as one coherent image. There are six women. The pianist is the inner voice. Nobody ever knows when our inner voice makes itself known, one day it's just there and something has to be

done. It should - at least - be heard. It is a weary inner voice, it is the music in us (hence the piano). Sometimes it shrieks, sometimes it begs, or yells or sighs, we are always on the move, in the female tremble and suspense.

Today it calls from the depths of its solitude. And wakes the whole body and soul. No, it won't let her be and so the whole system of this fragile but strong miracle awakes. The women get up and meet in themselves, in their shells. Figures with little lights, tiny pieces of a grand mosaic. The shadows cast by the candlelight are on all walls of the stage (they are like the women; imposing yet trembling). Slowly they meet at the piano. Big matrons, seductive beauties, exhausted souls, naïve blondes, shrinking violets... all... come together at the epicentre of the previous explosion. The one figure going on and on and on as if insane, that is her, the mature woman, no-one can crush her delusions. She doesn't have any... and if, by chance, she has some illusions left, they are stashed away in that sarcastic bundle of flesh-and-blood. Yes, she is the one to break the silence, because she despises the pathos of arrivals. She is matter-of-fact, she is sarcastic, she knows what's what. The inner voice is a cue stick and these women are balls on the great pool table of fate. Delusion? Truth? Ever changing reality? One human drama in six parts and six stories slowly unfold.

Viera Dubačová



Theatre Divadlo z Pasáže



Pavína Fichta Čierna

I am interested in the mutual interaction and specifically in the communication between people that meet...on stage.

I am interested in the limits of understanding...on stage.

Pavína Fichta Čierna



Theatre Divadlo z Pasáže

31 October 2000

House of Culture SKC (Dom kultúry SKC)
Banská Bystrica

2001

New York, USA

OCELEBRATE SLOVAKIA:
ART FROM THE HEART OF
EUROPE

1st February, Opening re-
ception, Courtyard Gallery
of the World Financial
Center

NEW CONNECTION – CON-
TEMPORARY ART FROM
SLOVAKIA AND CZECH
REPUBLIC

1st February – 4th March,
Courtyard Gallery in the
World Financial Center

3 X PAINTING – ROBERT
BIELIK, VANESA HARDI,
BOHDAN HOSTIŇÁK

2nd February, premises of the
Permanent Mission of Slova-
kia to the UN in New York

SLOVAK ART FROM
PRAGUE – EVA CHMELOVÁ,
PAINTING

2nd February – 4th March,
Czech Center New York

SLOVAK-AMERICAN BALL

3rd February, New York
Athletic Club

Month of Slovak Culture in New York

Presentation of Slovak art and culture con-
sisted of multiple art forms, such as visual
arts, music, dance, pantomime and film and
was held at prestigious venues in New York
City.

Mikuláš Dzurinda
Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic

The Month of Slovak Culture in New York
has set itself an ambitious goal to present
the best of Slovak culture and art.

The scope of the works presented at this
event is indisputably broad. It is difficult to
tell which of the creative works deserves
greater attention. If you wish to create an
accurate picture of the true depth hidden
in our art, every detail is important. The so-
called “tenth muse” – the film – will proba-
bly attract the most attention and yet I will
be glad if other muses of Slovak art come to
the centre of your attention.

I hope you will feel drawn to the world as
we see it – to a world created in the souls of
Slovak artists. Let the Month of Slovak Cul-
ture in New York be a well which will later
develop into a river of further cooperation
between our nations, not only on the artis-
tic level.

Václav Havel
President of the Czech Republic

I consider the establishment of the
Jindřich Chalupecký Award to be a very good
and glorious achievement and I am very
pleased that cooperation with the organis-
ers of a similar project in Slovakia is being

developed. The exhibition New Connection,
the first joint showing of the young Czech
and Slovak art generation, is an example of
not only understanding and cooperation but
also of the power of friendship and good
traditions.

I hope the artists of this presentation will
succeed in their intentions to develop simi-
lar aspects of connection through the visual
arts that are new in a broader context.

Milan Kňažko
Minister for Culture of the Slovak Republic

At the time of its entry into the third mil-
lennium, the world is one. It is full of human
and national diversity which gives it its
charming colourfulness and perhaps also
its meaning. The Slovak part of this diversity
will be presented to New York and Ameri-
can audiences by our musicians, theatre ac-
tors, filmmakers, graphic artists, dancers,
and designers. They are going to present
but a small sample of contemporary Slo-
vak art yet I believe they are going to send
a message to the United States about an
ambitious and open people in the heart of
Europe. I also believe that American audi-
ences will receive our art as an expression
of our fondness and friendship towards their
country, which has become a new home for
hundreds of thousands of Slovaks. I thank
all the organisers who prepared this event
with an open mind. I wish all those who are
interested in Slovak art and our country an
intense artistic and emotional experience.
a jeho umenie, prajem intenzívny umelecký
a emotívny zážitok.

John Goodish
President of U.S. Steel Košice

The men and women of U. S. Steel and
U. S. Steel Košice are proud to support the
Month of Slovak Culture in New York. Since
we first began visiting Slovakia, we have
been impressed with the great array of na-
tional artistic talent and productions. The
country’s many gifted artists make major
contributions in the areas of opera, sym-
phony, ballet, and national song and dance.
Their significant talents greatly enhance
the quality of life in the country, making
the Slovak Republic a culturally rich and
exciting place in which to live and do busi-
ness. We at U. S. Steel Kosice are delighted
to share in the life that is theirs. We salute
the commitment of the Slovak people to
e arts and applaud their determination to
excel in all they do.

Martin Bútora
*Ambassador of the Slovak Republic
to the United States of America*

For the next thirty days, some of Slova-
kia’s most remarkable musicians, dancers,
singers, actors and actresses will be here to
perform for you. Some of the greatest Slovak
films – current and classic – will be shown in
New York screening rooms. Some of our most
talented painters, sculptors and graphic art-
ists will present and discuss their work. These
and many other activities are detailed in this
brochure; I urge you to review it carefully as
you plan your visits to this festival. The great
modern artist Andy Warhol – whose parents,
many of you know, came from Eastern Slova-
kia – once said that, “In the future, everyone
will be famous for fifteen minutes.” I like to
think that if Andy Warhol were to look at this
rich and varied programme, he would agree
that this is, indeed, Slovakia’s fifteen minutes
of fame. In light of the wealth of our offer-
ings, we hope that Andy won’t mind when
we stretch our fifteen minutes to an entire



J.A.N. Agency and Theatre Nová Scéna, ...on Your Graves

month. Thank you, and enjoy your visits to the
Month of Slovak Culture.

Carl Spielvogel
*Ambassador of the United States
of America to the Slovak Republic*

When Slovakia became independent in 1993,
it was faced with a lack of name recognition
internationally. In my conversations with Slo-
vaks, I have often told them that one of the
country’s greatest assets in its drive to attract
tourists and foreign investors is its rich cultural
heritage. Since our arrival in the country last
year, my wife Barbaralee and I have been im-
pressed by the wealth of musical, artistic and
literary talent in the country. That is why I con-
sider the Month of Slovak Culture in New York
to be so important. It is a means for Slovakia
to raise its international profile by showcasing
some of its tremendous cultural achievements
and a way for Americans to know better the
newest country in Europe. We hope that this
event serves as the beginning of a long and mu-
tualy rewarding interchange..



Ilona Németh, Alley, 1994

1 February 2001

Opening reception of Celebrate Slovakia: Art
from the Heart of Europe and
the opening of the New Connection exhibition

28 February 2001

Dance Theatre performance:
Nová Scéna theatre and J.A.N. Agency

4 March 2001

event for the closing day
of the New Connection exhibition

Celebrate Slovakia: Art from the Heart of Europe

BENYOWSKY – AMERICA & THE WORLD
5th February, Columbia University

MOYZES QUARTET, CLASSICAL CONCERT
7th February, Winter Garden, World Financial Center

YOUNG TALENTS, CLASSICAL CONCERT
8th February, The Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium, UN building

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS
10TH FEBRUARY, ZUZANA RUDAVSKÁ, JEWELLERY
24th February, Jozef Bajus, paper and Ezechiel Zorla, ceramics

ĽUBICA VARGICOVÁ, OPERA CONCERT
11th February, Winter Garden, World Financial Center

CONTEMPORARY ARTISAN CRAFT IN SLOVAKIA: SPECIAL FOCUS – PAPER
15th February, lecture, Ľubomíra Slušná, American Craft Museum



Michael Gabriel, Snake, 2000



Astorka Theatre



Milan Sládek, Juraj Jakubisko



Milan Sládek



The opening of Celebrate Slovakia, Ľubomíra Slušná, Martin Bútora, Carl Spielvogel, Mikuláš Dzurinda



Workshop, Jozef Bajús, Craft Museum

Columbia University

Film Society of Lincoln Center
Walter Reade Theater

New York Athletic Club

Museum of Modern Art – MoMA

American Craft Museum

Czech Center, New York, NY

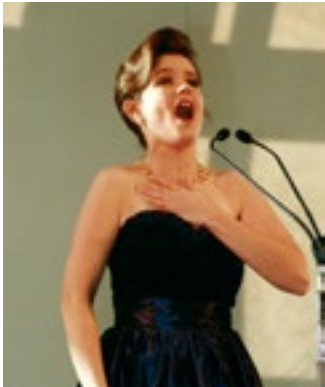
Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the UN
The Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium OSN

La MaMa Theatre

World Financial Center
Courtyard Gallery
Winter Garden



World Financial Center, NYC



Ľubica Vargicová

Celebrate Slovakia: Art from the Heart of Europe

ASTORKA THEATRE, PERFORMANCE
15th and 17th February,
La MaMa Theatre

NINA VESELÁ, PAINTING
15th–28th February, Papp
Gallery

SIX DAYS OF SLOVAK
CINEMA
16th–21st February, Walter
Reade Theater – Film Soci-
ety of Lincoln Center

ARÉNA THEATER – MILAN
SLÁDEK – MIME PERFOR-
MANCE
21st February

THE FIRST AND LAST
SLOVAK FILM ABOUT THE
COUNTRY
26th–27th February, Muse-
um of Modern Art MoMA
– film presentation

DANCE THEATRE PER-
FORMANCE: NOVÁ SCÉNA
THEATRE AND J.A.N.
AGENCY
28th February, Winter
Garden, World Financial
Center

Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel
Co-chair of ACEC Advisory Board

As an ardent American, and a caring and involved New Yorker, I have become an enthu-
siastic admirer and supporter of Slovak culture
and the Slovak people for their creativity
and for their courage. It is my hope that you,
too, will be as moved and as appreciative at
the month’s end by what you have seen and
experienced.

Richard S. Lanier
Trust for Mutual Understanding

Celebrate Slovakia provides a unique and un-
precedented opportunity for audiences in the
United States to experience the extraordinary
creativity and vitality of cultural life in the Slovak
Republic today. The variety and richness of the
many activities being presented as part of this
celebration are wonderful examples of the dyna-
mism and talent of Slovakia’s remarkable visual
and performing artists. Congratulations to all of
the many people – including those in the Czech
Republic who are participating in the New Con-
nection exhibition – for making this celebration
such a successful and memorable event.

Wendy W. Luers
President and founder of the Founda-
tion for a Civil Society

February will be a very important month for
Slovakia and its visibility in New York City. The
very best of Slovak culture from multiple art
forms will be exhibited and performed in prestig-
ious venues throughout the city and particularly
at the World Financial Center where hundreds
of thousands of people will visit the exhibition
New Connection, which presents the work of
the most acclaimed young artists from the Czech
Republic and Slovakia. They are all winners of the
Czech Chaluppecky Award and the Slovak TONAL
Award – important juried awards which recognise
artists under 35 and provide them a three-month

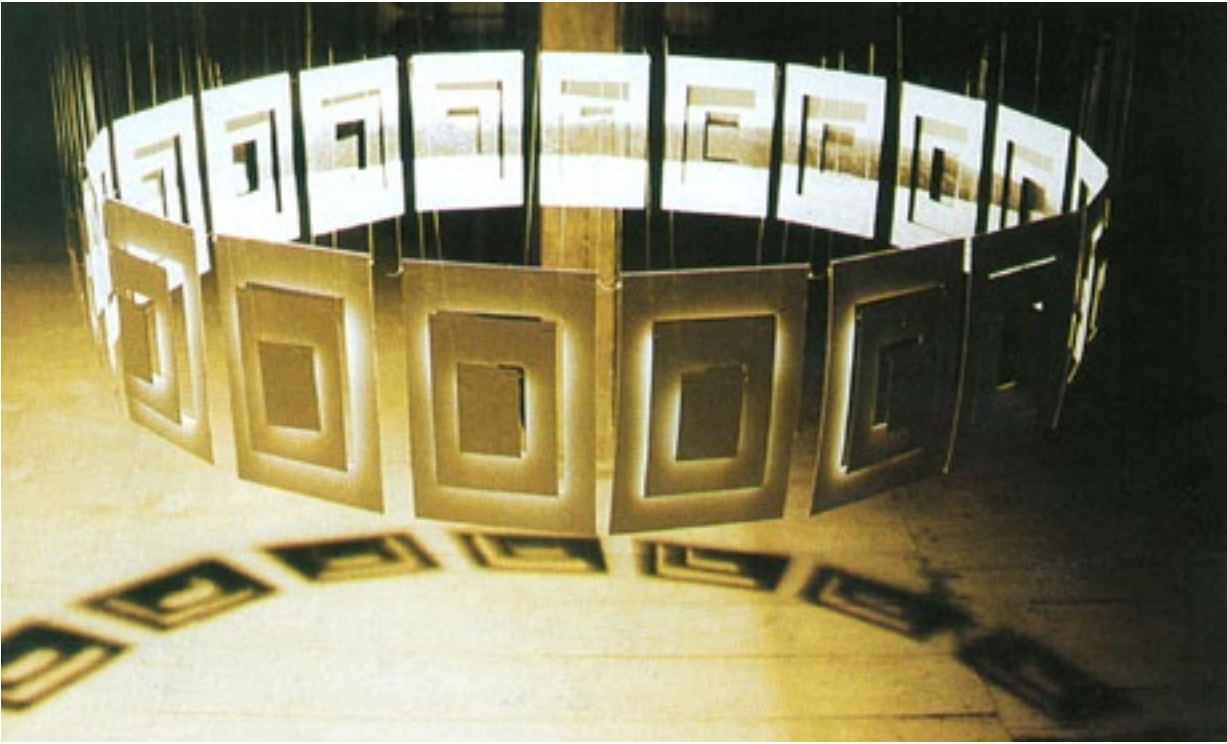
US fellowship. The Foundation for a Civil Soci-
ety and the Chaluppecky Association started in
1990 in Prague and, based on its phenomenal
success, FCS established TONAL in 1996 in Bra-
tislava. Czechoslovakia, unlike other countries
in the region, dissolved peacefully in 1993. This
exhibition celebrates their renewed relationship
– through art – of the younger creative leaders
of these two countries. I salute all the artists
with great pride.

Paul J. Smith
Director Emeritus – American
Craft Museum

One of the exciting aspects of New York is the
vast landscape of cultural activities from all parts
of the world that is presented each year. Now, Cel-
ebrate Slovakia, a Month of Slovak Culture, gives
a special opportunity to experience an impres-
sive variety of visual and performing art events.
The concentrated series of exhibitions, perfor-
mances and lectures offers an insight into the rich
cultural activity in Slovakia today and presents
a special opportunity for the participating artists
to have their work gain wider visibility. I personally
hope that this celebration will be a great success
and will launch an ongoing series of future cultur-
al programs from Slovakia, both here in New York,
and throughout the United States.

Pavel Traubner
Honorary President of the Jewish
Community in the Slovak Republic

Slovakia can offer and take pride in the beautiful
voices of its opera singers, its folk music singers,
the splendid tradition of its folk dance, the ex-
cellent works of its artists from both the 19th and
20th centuries, its literary jewels and its excellent
theatre actors and films, the recipients of prizes
at numerous festivals. Therefore, let the Month of
Slovak Culture in the United States be like a burning
torch which will shed light on our culture, so that
it can enter the hearts and minds of the citizens of
the vast United States of America..



Dušan Záhoranský, Moments from a Journey II

New Connection

The joint Czecho-Slovak exhibition pre-
sented winners of the 1999 Jindřich Chalu-
pecký Award (Czech Republic) and concur-
rent Slovak TONAL Award (in 2001 renamed
to Oskár Čepan Award). All exhibiting artists
attended the exhibition in person; Vladimír
Kokolia, František Skála, Petr Nikl, Kateřina
Vincourová, Jiří Příhoda, Jiří Černický and
Michael Gabriel represented Czechia, and
Patrik Kovačovský, Dušan Záhoranský, Anton
Čierny, Illona Némethová, Dorota Sadovská
and Emöke Vargová represented Slovakia.
The exhibition was later showcased in Bra-
tislava City Gallery, Slovakia and Trade Fair
Palace of the National Gallery Prague, Czech
Republic..



Jiří Černický, Medusa, 1998

We Are in the Same Boat

2001

35 towns in Slovak
Republic

This project was
a reaction to the tragic
events of 11th September
2001 in the USA. What
happened there affected
us deeply all the more
because in February,
earlier that year, we had
organised an array of
events taking place at the
World Financial Center
in New York (Winter
Garden and Courtyard
Gallery) as a part of
our Month of Slovak
Culture named Celebrate
Slovakia – Art from
the Heart of Europe.



9/11

4 March 2001

Celebrate Slovakia:
Art from the Heart of Europe

11 September 2001

Terrorist Attack on the
World Trade Center in New York City

28-30 September 2001

We Are in the Same Boat

A message of solidarity to the American People and to all those who suffer violence and terrorism around the world.



Eduard Kukan



Nasir Jalili, Douglas Hengel



Project authors Vladimír Popovič and Ľubomíra Slušná (EDEN)

September 11th, 2001 has entered history as a tragic day. What transcended the tragedy was that it directly affected us all. In the wake of the horrifying attacks on the U.S. and at the time when every nation tried to express its solidarity for the American people, we Slovaks, too, joined the message with our demonstration of friendship and support and presented a project called We Are in the Same Boat. The project was based on the simple artistic expression and leitmotif of a boat. The event took place simultaneously in 35 towns in Slovakia, and entailed the mak-

ing of 35 large boats (3–5m/3–5.5 yd.), which were eventually filled with 94,376 tiny paper boats made not only by Slovaks but also by 15 other nationalities who wanted to express their solidarity. The boat corresponded with the circumstances in which we found ourselves on a number of levels. Terrorism and violence strike and touch everyone indiscriminately. We Slovaks are in the same boat as the Americans and all other nations in our fight against violence and inhumanity.

The event was organised by the Association for Culture, Education and Communication



Martin Bútora, Hillary R. Clinton, Pavol Demeš

“One hundred thousand boats are like one hundred thousand bonds between our countries.”

— Hillary R. Clinton

on 28th–30th September 2001 with support of Eduard Kukan, the Slovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, Douglas Hengel, Charge d’Affaires of the US Embassy in Slovakia and Ralph Johnson, the former US Ambassador to Slovakia.

As a symbol of solidarity one of the boats was dedicated to the City of New York, where the first Month of Slovak Culture had been showcased earlier that year in February. The paper boats then travelled to Washington D.C. as part of an exhibition of Slovak paper art at the World Bank.

The symbolic message of solidarity with the survivors and victims of the attacks from nearly one hundred thousand Slovaks was handed over to the Governor of New York, George E. Pataki, to Senator for New York, Hillary R. Clinton and to the Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan. Senator Clinton remarked that, “One hundred thousand boats are like one hundred thousand bonds between our countries.”

October, 2001

Dear Friend,

I extend my most heartfelt thanks for your recent message concerning the attack on the World Trade Center. New Yorkers displayed their characteristic courage, strength, and determination during these very difficult times. I know that we have all been inspired by the bravery of our firefighters, police officers, and emergency workers that terrible day. They met the worst of humanity with the best of humanity. In the aftermath of this unimaginable tragedy, New Yorkers and Americans have united as never before. We are - now more than ever - the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Thank you for your support and God bless America.

Sincerely,

Rudolph W. Giuliani,
Mayor of New York City

*We are glad that in these trying times,
we've been able to send Americans
a message of solidarity. Terror and
violence must not end peace.*

— Ľubomíra Slušná, ACEC



Košice



Banská Štiavnica



Folding of paper boats in hospitals



Ružomberok



Bratislava



Folding of paper boats in schools

**Towns participating in the We Are
in the Same Boat project:**

Bratislava, Dunajská Streda, Piešťany, Trenčín, Myjava, Púchov, Nitra, Komárno, Levice, Nové Zámky, Topoľčany, Žilina, Lip-tovský Mikuláš, Martin, Ružomberok, Tvr-došín, Dolný Kubín, Kysucké Nové Mesto, Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica, Kremnica, Brezno, Lučenec, Zvolen, Košice, Rožňava, Spišská Nová Ves, Prešov, Bardejov, Kežma-rok, Poprad, Medzilaborce, Stará Ľubovňa, Gelnica, Trebišov.

Special thanks to all 344 volunteers without whom this project would not have been pos-sible and also to the city hall offices and high schools in the towns which participated in this project. The project was the biggest of its kind in Europe. Nearly one hundred thou-sand Slovaks participated in the project and as a symbolic gesture of solidarity, dedicat-ed one of the boats to the City of New York.

35
TOWNS IN SLOVAKIA

344
VOLUNTEERS

94 376
PAPER BOATS

We Are in the Same Boat

We are in the same boat, performance, Koliba, Bratislava, 2001





First contacts with people in settlements, 2002–2003

The primary objective of this project was to encourage change in the overall outlook on life and to spark a willingness of settlement inhabitants to find solutions for their current situation. We visited a few dozen Roma settlements in the Prešov region of eastern Slovakia from March to December 2002.

We organised a series of motivational training sessions for larger groups of inhabitants in selected localities. Further educational programmes focused on the improvement of communication skills and educational programs focusing on schooling support and healthcare. The need for education on the topics of schooling and healthcare were the most crucial. These activities were planned to be provided by educational centres.

The educational centres began their activities after intense preparation for the first group of participants coming from eleven Roma settlements. Their mission was to encourage community development in the selected municipalities with a high percentage of Roma population (Stráne pod Tatrami, Podhorany, Výborná, Jurské, Bystré pri Vranove and Sabinov) with the aim to implement the project in places with diametrically different conditions. The differences that we took into account for the selection of our localities included a different ratio of Roma and non-Roma populations, a different ratio of Roma councillors in local governments, different levels of co-operation of local governments with ACEC and finally, although unsatisfactory in all cases, different social conditions.



First contacts with people in settlements, 2002–2003

The educational centres officially opened their gates on 5th September 2003 in six selected localities. These centres were established in co-operation with the local Roma organisation, KC ZOR Kežmarok. The centres focused on general education and healthcare and also housed so-called “little family schools” which focused on preschool children, preparing them for compulsory education, after-school classes, as well as adult education and gatherings of multiple families accompanied by lectures and debates on themes of interest. Local physicians and Roma health assistants regularly visited the settlements and offered education on hygiene, infectious diseases and sex education. The Red Cross helped us to train two assistants directly from each settlement in each locality. Heads of the educational centres prepared comprehensive schedules of activities which addressed the most pressing needs of their locality.

Other activities offered by the centres included: debates with youths and adults, parent volunteers chaperoning children on a bus to and from school from the settlement, sports activities for children and adults, co-operation with schools regarding the at-

tendance of both pupils themselves as well as parents at parent-teacher conferences, courses for girls who have completed compulsory education to pursue their interest in further education, preparation of pupils for high school entrance exams and co-operation with local authorities.

Since 2004 we have continued implementing the project in eight Roma settlements (Výborná, Toporec, Križová Ves, Stráne pod Tatrami, Ľubica, Jurské, Sabinov and Podhorany) in cooperation with the Association of Roma Women led by Erika Godlová. A target group was set up for settlement dwellers and with regards to health and healthcare, especially for women in pre-productive and productive ages. During our event called Health Days in Settlements, we gave out educational leaflets on Hygiene, Coming of Age and Health in both the Slovak and Roma languages.

After a review of field work and solid experience with representatives in dozens of city/municipal councils over three years, we decided to adjust the management structure and to narrow the scope of activities within the project and thus maximise their effectiveness and the benefits felt by our target



March–December 2002

Visits to Roma settlements in the Prešov region of eastern Slovakia

5 September 2003

Educational centres are officially opened

2004

Health Days in Settlements
Výborná, Toporec, Križová Ves, Stráne pod Tatrami, Ľubica, Jurské, Sabinov, Podhorany

2006 – 2007

Series of educational programmes for the long-term unemployed

2011

Series of specialised trainings for community leaders



Training programme for Roma women, Jaroslava Vomáčková, 2003

groups. We decided to systematically focus on targeted everyday health and healthcare education. For that purpose, we decided to create accredited educational programs. We also decided to directly manage the assistants for health education through field co-ordinators, who would become an active link within the management of the project.

We didn't want to compromise the resolution that we, the ACEC team, made in spring of 2002. That resolution was that the projects for settlement inhabitants should be carried out by the Roma themselves and we kept looking for ways to achieve this. We decided to endorse the personal qualities and human potential we came into contact with in our field work and this has, for over 17 years, resulted in some remarkable projects, accredited educational programs and dozens of planned, but also voluntary, activities.

The activities of ACEC in Roma settlements continued as a health education programme called **Healthy Communities** (due to its scope, this is covered in a separate chapter of this publication) and, whenever needed, as specialised educational activities focusing on community development – Roma for Society.

A selection of other activities within the Roma for Society framework:

In 2006–2007 we held a series of educational programmes for a group of thirty, long-term unemployed inhabitants in eleven localities in the Prešov region. The objective was to improve their adaptability in the labour market and to find employment. Nineteen of these participants found work after conclusion of the project.

In September 2011 we started a series of specialised training schemes for community leaders – Communal Leadership Training. This series of specialised training schemes was designed for Roma leaders, activists, formal and informal leaders, local officials and field workers active in localities with segregated settlements.

In co-operation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family's department for Socially Excluded Societies we had chosen five localities. The selection process was carried out in May and June 2011 and the criteria that came under scrutiny were: the need for complex skills regarding the newly elected Roma mayors; populous excluded communities – a settlement in the locality (population over 450); unsatisfactory or non-existent infrastructure (water supply, sewage system, electricity, roads, household waste collection and others) and last but not least – the potential and willingness to take part in the project. Mayors of the localities we had approached were asked to create a team of co-workers who would help implement these activities designed to improve the situation in their locality. The influence areas of the selected representatives were in line with the public capacity they occupied at the municipal authority – deputy mayors, superintendents, executives, but also school employees or municipal employees with limited types of labour contracts – community field workers, social workers or community centre workers.



Sahraa Karimi, Pavol Demeš, Ľubomíra Slušná (right)

The Day of Afghanistan was held on 23rd March 2002 in Bratislava and it was organised in cooperation with the Association of Afghans in Slovakia and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic.

The programme was twofold: one part was a seminar dedicated to topics of the history and culture of Afghanistan; of visions for the future of Afghanistan in the aftermath of the events in September; the past, present and future of Slovak-Afghan relations; the possibilities and limits of involvement of Slovak governmental and non-governmental organizations in the international call for aid for Afghanistan; the potential participation of Afghan professionals – especially medical doctors – living in Slovakia in the rebuilding of Afghanistan; and the issue of Afghan refugees. The seminar was hosted by Pavol Demeš.

The second part of the day was dedicated to cultural and social activities, which culminated in celebration of the New Year. Afghan cuisine was served throughout the event.

2002

Bratislava

The project was held on the occasion of the traditional holiday NAWROZ, celebrating Afghan New Year, this time greeted by Afghans around the world with intensified hope for better times in their homeland.



Sahraa Karimi, Juma Haydary, Eduard Kukan

23 March 2002

Afghanistan Day:
Hope for Afghanistan

Let's Do IT!

2002

Slovakia

Nationwide campaign to increase female voter turnout in the 2002 General Elections, which continued after the elections as Consortium Let's Do IT! via activities in regional coordination centres until 2007.



Barbara Holubová



Let's Do IT! billboard campaign

Independent surveys showed that Let's Do IT! campaign was known to 79.6% of women in Slovakia.

A survey in June 2002 (IVO) reported that up to three quarters of women didn't know any women organisations.

According to DICIO Agency and its survey in October 2002, 15.9% of female voters went to cast their vote "because of" or "also because of" Let's Do IT! campaign.

In March 2002 ACEC initiated the establishment of a consortium of NGOs called Let's Do IT!. The aims were to increase female voter turnout in elections, to bring attention to the urgent issues of women and to increase the interest in solving these issues through active participation in the elections.

The main pillars of the initiative were a motivational media campaign that supported field work activities. These were activities such as public debates discussing the most pertinent issues faced by women and co-operation with organisations and volunteers on a local level.

The media campaign of the pre-election initiative was broadcast in 3 phases via billboards, TV and radio spots: the first phase addressed the women with the motto Let's talk about things that bother us. The wording of the second phase was Let's take what we are entitled to and in the third phase it transformed into a direct appeal: Women let's vote, let's do it!

One channel of communicating our message to women, which provoked strong discussion

from the very beginning, was broadcast in the media, in TV spots and on radio. Fero Taraba, a man whose wife is active in the women's movement Let's Do IT!, spoke to women. Within four months Taraba became a cultural icon in Slovakia, adored and admired for his courage by some and unacceptable to others. However, the fact remains that he was a crucial figure of our campaign who managed to trigger the strongest discussion on the status of women in Slovakia to date.

From the end of August until the middle of September, daily discussions were held all around Slovakia. Guests of individual debates were politicians, representatives of government institutions and NGOs, and leaders in the private sector with whom the women of Let's Do IT! conducted public dialogue. Co-operation with regional organisations was vast and 58 NGOs participated in this project.

The series of public discussions led by female members of Let's Do IT! with representatives of 9 political parties opened up a public dialogue on the pressing concerns of women

and the development society as a whole. 18 meetings in Slovak towns were organised by 9 regional co-ordination centres of Let's Do IT!, with 341 volunteers, and were attended by over 1,500 people.

During the project and in co-operation with Partners for Democratic Change (PDCS), 153 women took part in training schemes. The training schemes focused on improving communication skills. This was in order to be subsequently better equipped and better prepared when presenting their requirements, when formulating questions and when communicating with politicians.

The most pressing demands of women that emerged from discussions were transcribed into the Public Declaration Let's Do IT!. This declaration was presented to representatives of political parties during the final debate that took place in Bratislava on 18th September 2002.

After the elections we repeatedly addressed leaders of coalition parties and asked them to meet the first of the demands, the

establishment of a Board for Sex Equality in the National Council of Slovak Republic, part of the government coalition negotiations. We succeeded in this and a Commission for Equal Opportunities and Status of Women was created within the Board for Human Rights, Minorities and Women Status of the National Council of Slovak Republic. Implementation of this demand was an important milestone for all women involved in the Let's do IT! movement. Their pre-election effort, attendance at the polling booth as well as their active participation in public life brought visible results. Among the members of this commission there were five active members of our movement.

People unable to be reached by billboards, TV or radio were addressed through a newsletter called Let's do IT!. The newsletter updated readers about the current events of the campaign, results of public opinion polls and factual information about the status of women and men in Slovakia. Thanks to the newsletter many members from many re-

The media campaign was carried out in cooperation with the advertising agency Wiktor Leo Burnett, in particular Igor Brossmann. We would like to thank them for their work on the campaign, which they offered without charge.

gions of Slovakia registered with the movement. The newsletter was published three times during the campaign, each time with a circulation of 250,000 copies and as an additional supplement in 32 regional newspapers and one national daily newspaper.

August-September 2002

Let's do IT!

18 September 2002

Public declaration Let's do IT!

20-21 September 2002

General Elections
Slovak Republic

2002

Commission for Equal Opportunities
and the Status of Women is established



Discussion forum Let's Do IT!, Rimavská Sobota, Milan Urbáni, Oľga Pietruchová, Gábor Grendel

Discussion fora of Let's do IT! women with representatives of political parties took place in the following towns:

- Banská Bystrica
- Nové Zámky
- Rimavská Sobota
- Prešov
- Košice
- Spišská Nová Ves
- Trebišov
- Rožňava
- Poprad
- Žilina
- Čadca
- Kráľovský Chlmec
- Liptovský Mikuláš
- Dunajská Streda
- Nitra
- Lučenec
- Komárno
- Trnava
- Bratislava

Dagmar Šimunková
NGO, Women Professionals

Yes, equal opportunities in every aspect of life means improved conditions for women to enter public and political life. Yes, women are right to take these seats – they bring positive changes, new experiences and methods, other points of view and other ways of solving issues, new political agendas and an indispensable rearrangement of priorities. Women are ready to shoulder their part of responsibility for the future outlook of our society. Let's harness this hidden energy, let's put the skills of women to good use, let's do it together, women and men, let's use all resources at hand to achieve a respectable and decent life.

Katarína Košťálová
Slovak Academic Information Agency

Since 1989, non-governmental organisations are one of the newest types of organisations in Slovakia. They have opened up a new way for citizens of stirring the course of development in our society, of developing

new alternatives in many areas of our lives and consequently entering new partnerships with state administration looking for solutions, which are part of our future development of this country. This space was naturally and immediately entered mainly by hundreds of women, who saw it as a chance for change. Not only in traditionally “female” activities such as social services, working with children, youth or culture, but also other areas like human rights, environmental work and work with minorities. This was not just about showing interest, it was as a result of the courage shown by a large group of citizens, many of them women, to learn brand new things, to cope with the instability that still burdens NGO work and to push one's own limits of flexibility and professionalism. Without these people, many of whom are volunteers, we could not speak of the work made by thousands of NGOs today. We are living in times when it is perhaps more pertinent than ever to understand the purpose of a civil society and to do everything in our power to secure adequate conditions for their functioning, conditions that will attract women as well as men.

Helena Woleková
Social Reform Foundation

When something happens in the family, when one family member needs help from others, it is the women – mothers, wives, daughters – who don't hesitate, who shoulder the responsibility and stand by the one in need. They have to put their own dreams on hold for a long time and oftentimes their own careers. I want it so that these women don't feel alone. I want other women, women who have gone through similar situations, to help them deal with the issues they are facing. I want these women to demand professional social services, of which we are still short and whose lacking in quality is lamentable. I want women themselves to be at the creation of new services, services that will answer their needs, so that they can help their kin without harming themselves.

24th September 2002

Did Fero Taraba and his wife go to the theatre this weekend? Three days at the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra 2002 in the spirit of bombardment, experiments and the East Cool style

Most Slovaks still have no idea who this miserable Fero Taraba is, from the never-ending adverts, and why he has tried the patience of the tranquil citizens of our country for so long. And they went voting and voted this weekend – maybe partly because he was such a nuisance about it. Maybe he lives in one of the windows on the block of flats that the Divadelná Nitra organisers chose as the leitmotif of this year's festival campaign. And the spectres wandering along its façade were maybe the notorious women – the reason why Ms. Tarabová was never at home. Perhaps now she is and, together with Taraba, went to see some of the performances at the international theatre festival.

Mária Jenčíková, Národná obroda newspaper



Fero Taraba

Fero Taraba Effective in Voter Turnout

23rd September 2002

Elections don't have to be all serious, there's room for humour as local resident Jozef Šranko confirmed. To answer our question as to why he had decided to vote he said, "...because Fero Taraba is so incredibly sad that his wife is never home. So I'm going to the polling station to help him out a bit." It seems that despite all reservations about their campaign, the women movement Let's Do IT! worked and was effective even on the election turnout of the male population.

Hospodárske noviny national newspaper

2003

Ženy pre spoločnosť
Rómovia pre spoločnosť

2003 – 2007

Konzorcium Urobme TO!

Let's Do IT!

Ann Stone,

Former spokeswoman of George Bush Sr. She had led over 400 campaigns in the USA, six of which were presidential. She is a lecturer and leader in communication training. She is a successful businesswoman.



Erika Godlová, Ann Stone

I am a woman, Roma, a mother, a citizen of the Slovak Republic. I think that these facts alone are reason enough to be personally active in this campaign.

– Erika Godlová, Association of Roma Women in the Slovak Republic

Fero Taraba Has Become an Icon

Working with women in Slovakia during the past year has been an honour and joy.

The Let's Do IT! movement had, from the start, one mission – to boost women's interest in elections. Let's Do IT! wanted that the women in Slovakia come out from the backseat and make their voice heard. The media campaign hoped to start a debate and convince women to think about what it is they want. Let women alone decide what worries them and vote for the party that best represents their opinions. That's a very fresh and democratic approach!

The media campaign was provocative and controversial. But if you want to bring about change and make people change their behaviour, that's what is called for. Some people said that the opening campaign spots were too vague. But the Wiktor Leo Burnett advertising agency used an old trick – the vagueness rouses interest to learn more... and it also starts a debate.

And then there is the character named Fero Taraba, who was in most of the ads. He's become a cultural icon. I dare say that most of the population heard about him and know that his wife is not at home and that she works on the elections. Fero Taraba has provoked an interest and started a debate on the role of women in the society. This was the set target.

For many weeks, we carried out two-day trainings for groups of 20-30 women. We also trained two groups of Roma women. I can only say one thing about the women I worked with at the trainings: they are pretty smart and eager to leave their mark. Some of them had tears in their eyes when they talked about the impact this training will have for them.

It was a great honour to work with people who started such a meaningful project as Just Do IT! indisputably is.

Ann Stone

Let's Do IT! Consortium

The Let's Do IT! (LDI!) movement and its pre-election activities had fulfilled its objective and purpose. Direct and active participation of women in various regions of Slovakia was vital. A wide network of local co-operating organisations, associations and individuals united in the Let's Do IT! Consortium continued its work also after the elections.

In 2003, a national conference of Let's Do IT! was organised in Banská Bystrica. The conference was the first opportunity of its kind to meet members and representatives of the movement from all regions of Slovakia. The conference was focused on the review of activities, outlining strategies and new objectives, and discussing topics such

as women in business, women in politics, prevention of domestic violence and many others.

The regional coordination centre LDI! in Banská Bystrica continued its activities such as consultations in family and labour law. Since January 2005 it has run a project called Family and Work: Dilemma or Harmony? Part of this project was an informative campaign; an expert conference with presentation of positive examples, experience and know-how from home and abroad and open fora – educating on family friendly models of employment. These open fora were focused directly on employers in different regions in the hope of implementing family friendly policies in their companies.

Regional coordination centres of Let's do IT! Consortium:

- **Banská Bystrica**
- **Dunajská Streda**
- **Martin**
- **Michalovce**
- **Poprad**

Women for Society

The project Women for Society started in 2003 and was a continuation of the Let's do IT! campaign and focused primarily on sex equality issues.

The project consisted of a lecture by the Norwegian Gender Equality Ombudsman Kristin Mile but designed for female members of the Slovak parliament and women, who actively participate in changing and creating legislation. A seminar for women, leaders of NGOs, led by Norwegian lecturer Janneke van der Ros focused on raising awareness and knowledge of women's issues and sex equality. The seminars in Banská Bystrica and Košice were attended by almost 100 women from the NGO sector. An important part of these activities was a training session for co-ordinators of Regional Coordination Centres focusing on communication skills, basics of project management and the concept of sex equality with an additional training session for improving the communication skills of Roma women.



Nationwide conference Let's Do IT!, Magda Vášáryová, Banská Bystrica, 2003



Training programme for women of Let's Do IT!, Čertovica, 2002

...and we finally reached Washington... Paper Art from Slovakia

2002

Washington, D.C., USA

Five visual artists from Slovakia presented their large-scale works and monumental installations made from paper at the premises of the World Bank in Washington, D.C.

Paper Art from Slovakia at the World Bank



The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2002

ACEC, in cooperation with the World Bank in Washington D.C., organised the project ...and we finally reached Washington... Paper Art from Slovakia.

Paper artworks made by five distinguished Slovak visual artists – Miroslav Broos, Vladimír Popovič, Michaela Klimanová-Trizuljaková, Ezechiel Zorla and Samuel Juriš – were showcased in an unconventional and striking fashion at the premises of the World Bank HQ in Washington D.C. The artists created site-specific paper objects and the large format and large-scale

art installations became part of the World Bank building for several months. The grand opening was on 6th March 2002 in the foyer of the World Bank in Washington, D.C. and the exhibition was open for ten months.

The main idea behind the exposition by Vladimír Popovič was called Paper Boats; a tribute to the We Are in the Same Boat project organised by ACEC in Slovakia in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. One hundred thousand Slovak citizens took part in that 2001 project and expressed solidarity with the victims of the attacks.

MIROSLAV BROOŠ — VLADIMÍR POPOVIČ — EZECHIEL ZORLA
MICHAELA KLIMANOVÁ-TRIZULJAKOVÁ — SAMUEL JURIŠ

28-30 September 2001

We Are in the Same Boat

6 March 2002

Opening of the exhibition
...and we finally reached Washington...
Paper Art from Slovakia



Vladimír Popovič



Vladimír Popovič

Artemis A. Zenetou
Curator and Manager of the World Bank Art Program

Art is a universal language. It transcends cultural and geographical barriers and serves as a creative means of communication. In recognizing the contribution of art and culture to social cohesion and economic development, the World Bank established an Art Program, which manages the institution's permanent collections and acquisitions, and promotes visual art from its member countries. The program makes a particular effort to identify artists from developing nations and make their work available to a wider audience. The Art Program organises exhibitions, educational and cultural partnerships, artistic projects and site-specific installations. We are pleased to collaborate with the Association for Culture, Education and Communication in Bratislava. This unusual exhibition will bring to Washington D. C. some of the finest Slovak artists.

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in the U.S. Spring 2002

Have you ever thought that the simple paper boats you used to fold at school could be a piece of art? How about fruit made of paper? Visitors to, and employees of, the World Bank Headquarters in Washington D.C. had a chance to admire a rare art exhibit that was unveiled at the beginning of March under the name ...and we finally reached Washington... Paper Art from Slovakia. The exhibition, organised by the World Bank Art Program and the Bratislava-based Association for Culture, Education and Communication, includes paper artworks by five prominent Slovak artists. Slovakia has a long tradition of paper art. What makes it a unique art form is perhaps the fragile quality of paper and the delicacy that working with it requires. The five Slovak artists presented here have their own special techniques for translating their ideas to paper art. As the curator of the exhibition, Ľubomíra Slušná, wrote: To us, possibility is freedom and paper is yet another possibility! Also featured in this

exhibit are paper boats made by people in many Slovak towns and villages as an expression of solidarity with Americans after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. The project We Are in the Same Boat, organised by the Association for Culture, Education and Communication between September 28th-30th, 2001, was carried out in 35 towns and villages in Slovakia. It entailed making 35 large boats, which were eventually filled with tiny paper boats made by ordinary Slovaks, young and old. Nearly 100,000 people participated in sending this message of support and friendship to the people of the United States.

The exhibition was unveiled in the presence of all five artists on March 6th, 2002, by Slovak Ambassador Martin Bútora, Deputy Speaker of the Slovak Parliament Béla Bugár, and Ľubomíra Slušná, president of the ACEC. President of the World Bank Mr. James D. Wolfensohn and other representatives from the World Bank attended the opening.



Ezechiél Zorla and Samuel Juriš



Vladimír Popovič



Miroslav Brooš

Slovak Season – So near and yet so far

2002

Poland

Centre for Contemporary
Art, Ujazdowski Castle,
Warsaw, Poland

The presentation of
Slovakia in Poland
consisted of visual art
exhibitions featuring Andy
Warhol, Andrejko Varchola
and The Cult of Paradox,
as well as a selection of
Slovak cinematography
and a music programme
by Dodo Šošoka.

Magda Vášáryová

Ambassador of the Slovak Republic
to Poland

I have a tremendous appreciation for the work that has gone into this project, for all the dozens of people on the Polish and Slovak sides who nursed it into being, laboured over it, and helped it grow to “adulthood”. I will admit that in doing so they were also fantastically excited to see the reactions that it would create. I thank them from the bottom of my heart and hope that you, too, will feel the mountain wind that blows in the place where we come from, in that not too distant land, in the country next door.

Milada Šlizińska

Curator, Centre for Contemporary Art,
Ujazdowski Castle

In most of the recent writings to appear in Poland about Slovakia, it has often been stated that we know little about each other. This is, of course, a generalization, for those living along the border of our countries must certainly see this differently. After all, a border is not a line but an area, and the one in question is a rather large area, extending along the Carpathians from the highlands to the north and south of the Tatras to the Bieszczady Mountains. There are also those who exhibit a special interest in what is happening in, and between, the two countries – for reasons of profession, scholarship, family, or out of pure interest untainted by other motives. However, there is no denying that the general populations in Poland and Slovakia possess what can be at best termed as a modest knowledge of each other. The situation begs the words of novelist Tadeusz Konwicki: “So near and yet so far.”

So near...

**...and
yet so far.**

Envelope from a letter sent
by Julia Warhola to her
sister Eva Bezekova in 1960



Myroslava M. Mudrak

Ohio State University, Columbus,
Ohio, USA

In describing Warhol as a “holy fool” of Slavic lore, John Richardson who eulogized Warhol after the artist’s death, sensed these Slavic religious roots in the artist, but overlooked the fact that those “holy fools” were also the first iconographers. Andy Warhol’s fourteenth century namesake, St. Andrew, was the “holy fool” who first beheld the painfully beautiful vision of the Virgin in a golden solar light. Can the Gold Marilyn Monroe (1962) be its modern-day rendition?



Artist’s leather jacket, glasses,
and the christening gown of
Paul, John and Andy Warhol.



Andy Warhol, Ladies and Gentlemen, 1975

October 2002

Slovak Season – So Near and yet so Far

19-23 October 2002

Presentation of films

Slovak Season – So near and yet so far

The Cult of Paradox exhibition presented works by Marko Blažo, Bohdan Hostiňák and Miloš Kopták, three visual artists of the contemporary generation.



Marko Blažo, Igloo, 2002



Miloš Kopták, Integrated Woman, 2002



Miloš Kopták, Illusionist, 2002

Bohunka Koklesová *Cult of Paradox curator*

There are flashes of pop-art tendencies in terms of form and content present in the Slovak art of the second half of the 20th century. In the course of the 1960s, many artists adopted the principles of combined paintings, assemblages, ready-made, environmental and accumulation artworks. At the same time, the boundaries between high and low cultures were undermined or eliminated. Through their interest in depicting the position of the individual in the mass production/consumption society, the artists geared towards French New Realism. Any talk of Warhol's direct influence on

Cult of Paradox

the Slovak art scene is probably unfounded, despite the fact that his family roots were in Slovakia. It is particularly because of the then political and social arrangement of the two blocs, east and west, whose principles were based on fundamentally different values. The creed of Andy Warhol's creation was his perception of art as business. This basic model of his notion was absent in Slovakia, as free trade in the arts hardly existed. However, in his creations Andy Warhol concurrently formulated direct as well as mediated principles, which are reflected in post-modern and post-pop-art. It should be noted that this involves a mixture of marginal forms, the use of the means of expression provided by mass media or graphic design, serial arrangement of motifs in a single area and "endless reproduction" ... The cult of stars, advertising and consumer goods form the basis of Andy Warhol's art. Fractions of the above-mentioned principles appear also in works of various Slovak artists of the 1990s. Their backward reflections are not rooted in the authentic pop-art era, but in the cyclical re-discovery of and re-reflection upon deep "dematerialisation" of the arts.

The Cult of Paradox exposition introduces three artists of the "rising generation." Each of them works with a different medium, but what they have in common is perhaps a certain paradox, a moment of surprise, in which individual motifs are combined, or individual artworks treated. The works present the element of absurdity, humour or exaggeration.



Bohdan Hostiňák, In the Wood, 2002

14 October – 10 November 2002

Cult of Paradox exhibition

Slovakia is Ready

2003

New York, USA

Presentation of Slovakia in New York City, USA on the occasion of the 14th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution via a concert at Carnegie Hall – Weill Recital Hall, and an exhibition named Roma Photographers from Slovakia.



Ľubica Vargicová and Daniel Buranovský at the Carnegie Hall

This exclusive concert of Slovak opera soloists organised by ACEC was performed at one of the world's most pre-eminent music venues in the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City and featured Ľubica Vargicová, a soloist of the Slovak National Theatre. The performance was held on 18th November 2003 commemorating the fourteenth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution and the fall of the Iron Curtain in Slovakia. Ľubica Vargicová is one of the most sought-after coloratura sopranos at prestigious European venues. NYC had already had the opportunity to experience her back in February 2001 as a part of the Month of Slovak Culture. This time the soloist was accompanied by young piano virtuoso Daniel Buranovský, a popular chamber accompaniment working with prominent opera soloists of the Slovak National Theatre.

A special feature of the evening in the Weill Recital Hall was the opening performance by the Slovak Roma quartet Anyalai Gypsy Band. Their performance was a medley of classic and passionate melodies from Roma folklore.

Another part of the project was an exhibition called Roma Photographers, which was showcased concurrently with the concert at Carnegie Hall. The Roma living in settlements, who had only held a camera for the first time as part of this project, presented their everyday lives in images reminiscent of poetry.

Roma in Slovakia and elsewhere have been depicted by many local or foreign photographers. For these photographers, Roma communities are a source of many unique moments. Pictures made by professional and amateur photographers capture their poverty, their struggle but also their unbound joy and the diverse expressions of their culture. However, never before have we had a chance to see pictures taken by the underprivileged Roma themselves. The pictures on display at this exhibition in New York were taken by ten Slovak Roma: Cecília Blanárová, Albína Mirgová, Ľubomír Klempár, Dušan Sykora, Anton Klempár, Marianna Tobiášová, Ladislav Duda, Ľubomír Mitráš, Júlia Veselá, and Ivan Holub. They documented life in six Roma settlements during the course of the summer 2003.



Ambassador Carl Spielvogel, Anyalai Brothers, Rastislav Káčer at the opening event



Roma Photographers exhibition

Prior to participating in a crash course in photography, which set this project in motion, none of them had ever held a camera. Digital cameras allowed them to capture moments of their lives that often remained hidden from the eyes of strangers. These were moments that they wished to share with people around the world. Their images brought us closer to their joy, to their sorrow and, most importantly, to their humanity.

This project was the initiative of Pavol Demeš, civil activist; Ľubomíra Slušná, curator; and Ľubo Špirko, photographer, from Bratislava, Slovakia.

18th November 2003

Today, New York City's pre-eminence in the art world – one of its most visible and valuable assets – is undeniable. However, the description is misleading because New York City's art world embraces the whole world's art, and that has been true for more than two generations. Therefore, it is only fitting that the Slovak Republic, one of the world's youngest nations, takes its place in the rich mosaic of this city's cultural life.

The program stars the celebrated soprano Ľubica Vargicová, together with baritone Vladimír Chmelo and is accompanied by pianist Daniel Buranovský. As a special feature of the evening, you will hear admired Roma musicians from Slovakia, who will play traditional and folk melodies.

As an ardent American, and a caring and involved New Yorker, I have become a profound admirer and supporter of Slovak culture, and the Slovak people – for their creativity, and for their courage. It is my hope that you too will be involved and appreciative at the end of the performance by what you have heard and experienced. We were eager to participate then and continue to give our warm support now to their remarkable cultural efforts. We hope you will join us, and them, in sharing their musical past with interest, and consider their vibrant future with hope.

Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel
and the former U.S. Ambassador
to Slovakia Carl Spielvogel

18 November 2003

Concert at Carnegie Hall

Healthy Communities

2003 – present

Slovakia

Since 2003, *Healthy Communities* has been the largest educational project of ACEC. Its main objective is to educate inhabitants in Roma settlements on health and healthcare. The project reflects the existing situation; the needs of respective localities as well as the education and communication level of the settlement inhabitants.



Rudňaný, 2014, photo: Richard Gerényi

The project started in 2003, when the pilot project began in eleven segregated settlements with an education on health and it has been active ever since. The number of localities and human resources involved have increased over the years and in 2013 it was the most extensive and longest-standing project in Slovakia. The project has focused on improving the health of the Roma population and providing healthcare education for the residents of segregated Roma settlements.

Prior to the launch of the Healthy Communities project in 2003 we had visited several dozen settlements and thoroughly mapped out the situation. Our strategy and methodology were tested out in two pilot projects carried out between 2002 and 2004.

The need for education support and improvement of healthcare proved to be the most noticeable finding. The obvious indicators were 100% unemployment, low level of education, illiteracy, poor personal and communal hygiene, the spreading of infectious and parasitic diseases, STDs, mental retardation, drug addictions and non-existent sex ed-

ucation. These correlated with a catastrophic standard of living, apathy and demotivation. These were the reasons why we decided to organise and implement a project that would focus on improved health awareness, health standards and education levels.

Based on our knowledge gained during our pilot projects we developed educational programmes with regards to the needs of individual localities and their inhabitants. The Slovak Ministry of Education accredited these programmes "Health Education Assistant and Community Worker – developing knowledge and skills for work with the Roma community".

Over the course of ten years, we optimised and developed our methods and logistics, we searched for the best tools for implementing the project and improved the training programmes. Our experiences led us to the knowledge that employing local people hailing directly from the segregated settlements was crucial to the success rate of the project. Though they predominantly leave the education system after the primary level, after completing the highly specialised and local-



Marián Pecha, Markušovce, 2014, photo: Richard Gerényi

ised training they are equipped to meet their work requirements. Health education assistants – members of the community they work in – have the local knowledge, they know the language of the community, they understand the general situation, relationships, customs and other specifics that are necessary for the successful implementation of the project in their particular locality.

From 2003 – 2013 the project was financed from private sources, which provided us with flexibility and enabled us to continue with the methods proven in practice and enabled us to continue searching for an optimal model of implementation.

Thanks to the support of Union, a health insurance company, and specifically to Tibor Bôrik, there were already 91 field health assis-

tants and coordinators, 68 Roma settlements and their local councils, 102 general and paediatric practitioners and 26 primary schools involved in the project by 2007, with direct impact on a population of approximately 45,000 Roma people in Slovakia. The Healthy Communities project was for some years the only continuous support system providing health education and disease prevention in the segregated and Roma communities and to some extent substituted the social and health services in these communities that should have been offered by and run by the state.

The Healthy Communities project is the result of substantial funding and exceptional human effort of over ten years. The project represents an extraordinary social and cultural asset.

2002

Roma for Society

2003

Healthy Communities

2008

Health insurance company Union, a.s. is awarded the Philanthropy Award for support of the Healthy Communities project

December 2010

A case study of the Healthy Communities project is published by the WHO

Year	Localities
2003 ¹	11
2005 ¹	30
2007 ¹	68
2013 ²	108
2014 ²	155
2015 ³	239
2016 ³	218
2017 ⁴	194
2018 ⁴	271
2019 ⁴	263

Implementation and development of the Healthy Communities project:

¹ Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC)
² Platform for Health Support in Disadvantaged Groups
³ Healthy Communities, non-profit organisation
⁴ Healthy Regions, national project



Barbora Bačová, Stráne pod Tatrami, 2014, photo: Richard Gerényi

Field Work

The most extensive part of the project is the field work. The pillars of this project are health assistants and co-ordinators whose work is closely linked to healthcare providers (physicians) and local town councils. The conditions of the field work are trying. The work requires preparation, experience, a decision-making ability and a specific set of communication skills.

Health assistants regularly inform about mandatory vaccinations, medical check-ups and they educate on health. The most common form of education are lectures or discussions on various topics depending on the specifics of the target group – children are taught about personal hygiene, youths are warned about the harmful effects of smoking and alcohol abuse and are educated on sex, young mothers get information

on childcare and a healthy diet, and the elderly are urged to take their prescription pills regularly. Other issues include personal and communal hygiene, prevention of infectious diseases, medical check-ups for women, co-operation with gynaecology and obstetrics surgeries, paediatricians and consultants for mothers with newborn babies.

Other daily activities carried out by health assistants include the treatment of a wide range of injuries and burns, taking blood pressure readings in those suffering from chronic diseases or those not feeling well. In terms of communal hygiene, the health assistants organise cleaning events around houses and in public spaces.

Health assistants become respected through their knowledge and skills not only in settlements they work in but also with local healthcare providers who see them as a significant aid.

Gradually we managed to provide a 100% revaccination rate in some localities and create long-term quality co-operation with adult and paediatric general practitioners. For example, in 2008 the number of medical check-ups increased to over 36%. In comparison, the national average in Slovakia is less than 16%. We also vaccinated against jaundice beyond the required compulsory vaccination in the settlements. 3,500 children and 1,500 adults were vaccinated between September 2007 and March 2008. This number grows every year and health assistants have been a great help in managing a few localised outbreaks of jaundice. The co-operation of health assistants with physicians is vital also in recognising TBC symptoms and its subsequent treatment.

In 2008 the health insurance company Union, a.s. was awarded Slovakia's most prestigious Philanthropy Award in the category of Social Aid in Need/Health by the Pontis Foundation for the Healthy Communities project. The Healthy Communities project and its achievements caught the attention of national and international organisations. Healthy Communities was given the chance to host a presentation at the European Commission conference in Brussels, the conference titled Communicating Health in Secluded Communities and How to Reach Everyone. A case study of the Healthy Communities project was published by WHO in 2010 as an example of good practice. The project has also been featured at Columbia University in New York, the University of Wisconsin Green Bay in Green Bay, WI, USA and at the University of Newcastle in Australia.

Thank you to all the health education assistants and their coordinators, your long-term efforts and results have proven the benefits of, and need for, a nationwide programme of health education for disadvantaged groups of people.



Kežmarok area, 2003, photo: Jana Sýkorová



Doctor Eva Kuffřová, Stráne pod Tatrami, 2003, photo: Jana Sýkorová



Health education assistant Vierka Mirgová, Výborná, 2003, photo: Jana Sýkorová



Educational activities in settlements, Michal Kubo, ACEC, 2008

Our activities gained momentum in 2012 when ACEC initiated the creation of a Platform for Health Support in Disadvantaged Groups (Platform), which actively involves the Association of Field Health Assistants, Slovak Society of General Practice of the Slovak Medical Association, WHO Country Office in Slovakia, Slovak Ministry of Health, Office of the Plenipotentiary of Government of Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, Emergency Ambulance Rescue Centre and others. Owing to the effort of multiple non-governmental, governmental and private sectors united by the Platform and with financial funding coming in from multiple sources (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family) the Platform managed to launch Healthy Communities nationwide on 7th October 2013. This nationwide project has put

into practice the first systematic solution for health education in the segregated Roma communities in Slovakia. The first 120 health education assistants of the nationwide project were trained with the financial support of the H. Stepic CEE Charity.

Ministry of Health and the Platform for Health Support in Disadvantaged Groups established a non-profit organisation called Healthy Communities on 1st October 2014 to implement the nationwide project. The Healthy Communities organisation implemented the Healthy Communities project with funds from the operational programme Employment and Social Inclusion from 1st October 2014 to 31st December 2015.

The main objective of the Healthy Communities national project was to improve health in the disadvantaged, marginalised Roma communities and others through bet-

ter health awareness and better education on health.

The Healthy Communities national project capitalised on the decade-long experience generated by ACEC's work with disadvantaged communities regarding health issues. The project was exceptional not only in Slovakia but also throughout Europe for its elaborate, regularly tested and revised methodology reflecting the latest findings in its approach to marginalised groups and taking into account Slovak specifics, which were fine-tuned by input from health education assistants and co-ordinators.

The Healthy Communities project has been an exceptional endeavour because it has been put into practice since its beginning by the inhabitants of settlements themselves, although their participation was not formal at that time. In almost seventeen years we have successfully trained and motivated a few hundred employees who have come to identify with the project and its activities. It can be best described by the phrase they tend to repeat among themselves "Our project has a soul." The ones that have been with us since those difficult beginnings are our project memory bearers (e.g. Anton Mirga, Mária Nazarejová, Zoltán Batka, Anton Vavrek, Iveta Lacková, Ľubka Horváťová, Lucia

Horváťová, Zdenka Mirgová, Vierka Mirgová and many others).

This health education programme was taken over by the public health department on 1st January 2017 in an unchanged form (including infrastructure, methodology and human resources) and is now run under the original label Healthy Communities as a national project by the Ministry of Health, Healthy Regions state-funded institution.

The transformation of the health education programme Healthy Communities was challenging beyond all expectations and without the active efforts of individuals, partners and co-operating organisations that have helped us pull through, it would never have been possible to successfully reach the finish line, or better yet, the new beginning on a national level with financial assistance from EU funds.

Here are just a few of those individuals: Michal Kubo, Elena Marušáková, Monika Palušková, Ivan Poprocký, Michal Vašečka, Barbora Vávrová, Darina Sedláková, Anton Marcinčin, Peter Marko, Tatiana Hrustič, Richard Koky, Anton and Eva Bohumel, Miťa Vavreková, Pavol Kaňka, Paul Van Hoof, Pavol Trnovec, Andrej Belák, Jozef Minár, Margita Vernarcová and others.

We keep improving the health education programme and its implementation in segregated localities. We believe that the currently run programme of health education called Mission 1000, based on the activities of health assistants specialised in work with pregnant women and children up to the age of three years, will be met with a positive response and will benefit those who need it most; the inhabitants of Roma settlements. Childcare in the first 1,000 days of life plays a key role in the health of the individual as an adult. During the first 1,000 days we have the power to influence and shape almost 80% of that child's lifelong health. The local women who finish our training and work in their local neighbourhoods are makers of change and initiators of early intervention activities.

We Can Give

2004

Poprad, Banská Bystrica,
Bratislava; Slovakia

The We Can Give project connected many Roma who wanted to share their life and their art and those who wanted to transfer their emotions, desires, thoughts and outlooks onto a piece of paper. To open one's heart and let someone else wonder about their own self. In this project, we hoped to create an image full of feelings which captured the temperament and character of the Roma living in Slovakia and thus create a bridge connecting Roma and non-Roma people.

Authors of the project:
Lubomíra Slušná and
Vladimír Popovič (EDEN).

The project was realised
under the auspices of
the Minister of Foreign
Affairs of the Slovak
Republic, Eduard Kukan

We Can Give is a message from the Roma culture to the European Union.

– Jolana Husárová,
Chairwoman of Romita NGO

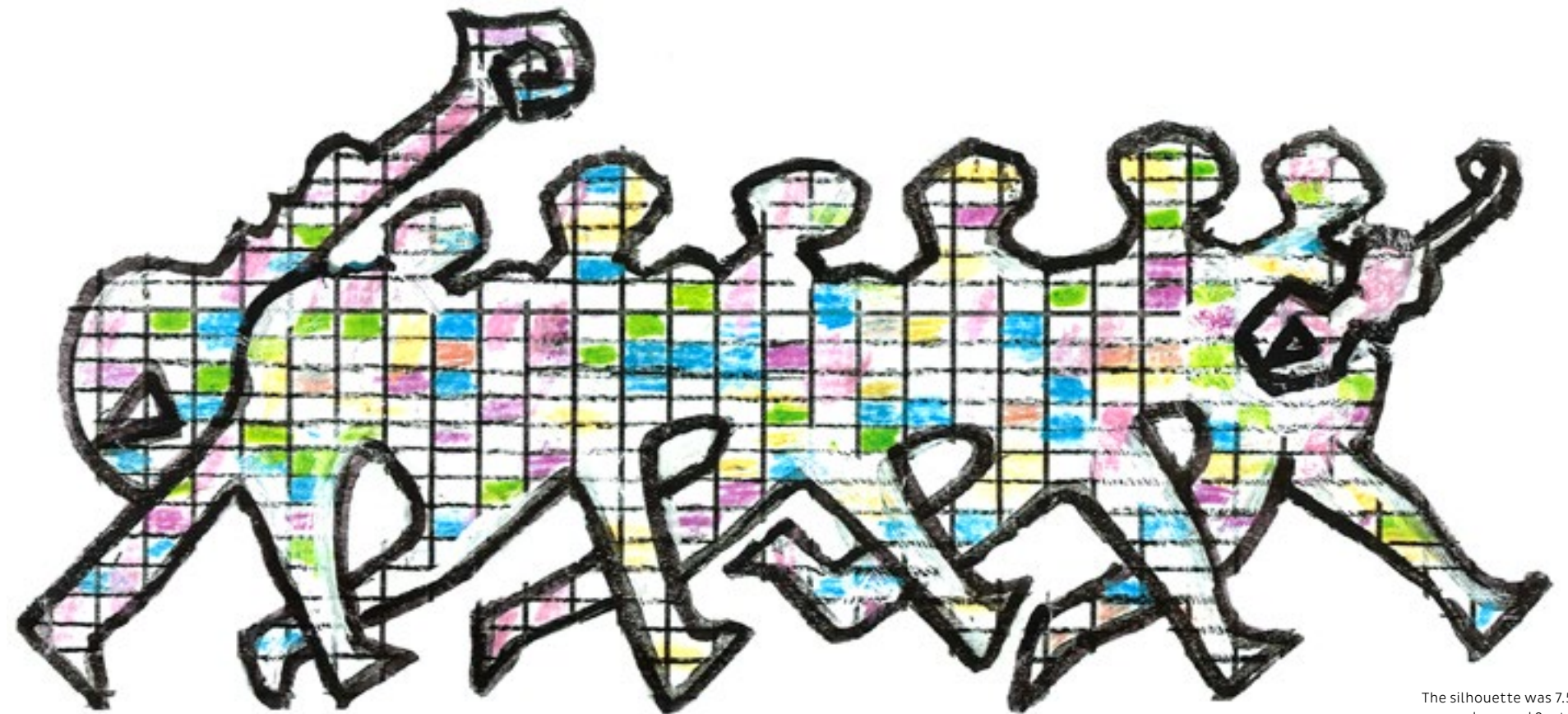
The way the non-Roma majority sees the Roma minority and vice versa is burdened by the feeling that neither can be beneficial for the other. We are quick to name all of the shortcomings but none of the things that we can give. The inhabitants of 62 settlements around Slovakia, along with twelve Roma NGOs and ACEC, decided to advance the process of mutual understanding with a symbolic message. We have built a symbolic but visible bridge to overcome the barriers between us.

We decided that our unwritten message of We Can Give would be represented by a silhouette of figures (2m/6½ ft. tall, 75m/82 yd. long) walking symbolically into the future. The silhouettes were made from drawings created by Roma inhabitants in 62 different settlements. The reverse was made of portraits of people

who contributed to the making of the silhouette as well as those who wanted to join in with this message. Every drawing depicted what the Roma of the particular settlement or village can offer either physically or symbolically.

The silhouette was assembled gradually, starting on 15th February 2004. The last phase took place across three Slovak towns: Poprad, Banská Bystrica and Bratislava. It was finished on 25th May in the Main Square in Bratislava where the last three paintings were added.

This project was a call for necessary and much needed communication and it also highlighted the fact that there is true value in giving, in making something and then giving it away. We Can Give can help overcome the barriers between Roma and non-Roma people.



The silhouette was 7.5m
long and 2m tall.

Eduard Kukan

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

This project, without being forceful, paves a way to learning more about the Roma minority and brings us all, Roma and non-Roma, closer to each other. The project is a tangible effort of people from various backgrounds and regions. It gives Roma an example of civil activity and behaviour and shows them that the ethnic majority is indeed interested in them, in what they are about, what they hold dear and what they cultivate. It can realistically improve the social status of the Roma ethnic group. It focuses primarily on young Roma and Roma women and there is a good chance that it will take root and receive positive feed-

back in Roma settlements and that its effects will be felt not only short-term but especially long-term. The good communication and trust established by this project can be the basis for future improvements and other projects between Roma and non-Roma people.

Eva Vancurová

A-projekt, non-profit organisation,
Liptovský Hrádok

We liked this event immensely, only we didn't manage to get to see you. I applaud you. In such a short time, such a big event, involving so many people and what's more, the fantastic idea behind it... great project. Thank you, thank you also on behalf of the Roma people in Pribylina.

15 February 2004

The gradual assembly of the silhouette
begins



Poprad, 2004

Eric van der Linden

Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Slovakia

The European Commission fully supports the great idea behind the project We Can Give to create an atmosphere for better communication between Roma and non-Roma people in Slovakia. We believe that this event will improve the relationship between different ethnic groups living in Slovakia and spread a message of tolerance in society.

Gabriel Hlaváč

Editor at the Roma Newspaper

We Can Give is a message inherent to Roma people. Because the good in them, as God said, should be shared. And so, these people, for their own good, give.

Alexander Daško

Statutory of NGO Laluta

This project showed us the importance of connecting the Roma culture from every region, improving the relationship between children and adults and it made clear that their culture and art can show us how to strengthen our relationships.

Cecilia Julin

Swedish Ambassador to Slovakia

I enjoyed the project very much, it's a great way of connecting people of different ethnicities and from different cultures. What I have witnessed is a very good sign from Slovakia.

Márius Mika

Deputy Mayor of Banská Bystrica

Every such activity brings us closer to each other. Any steps taken by the legislative body can only hold their ground if there is co-operation between communities. An event like this has merit and is important

Nataša Slobodníková

Advisor to the Head of County Offices of Banská Bystrica, Regional Association of Roma Initiatives (KARI)

This was a truly interesting event. We always hear how the Roma people are parasites and how they only take, take, take. But Roma people can also give, they are very smart and skilful and they can create and make things, but unfortunately, and I feel very sorry for them, they often have no chance to prove it in life – and that's tragic. However, I think that if we have more projects and events like this, Roma people will gain more opportunities for employment. Some people say that the Roma don't want to work, but that's not true. I dare say that 80% of them want to work. We only have to stimulate the other 10–15%, but people who want to work should get the opportunity and be paid at least the minimum wage.

Martin Baník

Head of District Offices of Banská Bystrica and a Member of the Regional Council

If only there were more projects like this because the barrier and public awareness in the majority doesn't receive the chance or opportunity to learn more about the Roma minority. People know the Roma mainly from the media, who only report things like violent crimes. They don't get a chance to learn about their positive attributes and that they are just like anyone else; they worry but also feel joy, there's humour, folklore, culture and everything that makes up life.



Banská Bystrica, 2004



Banská Bystrica, 2004

10 March 2004

Poprad

12 March 2004

Banská Bystrica

17 March 2004

Bratislava

25 May 2004

The final three images are added and the silhouette is complete

Co-operation with the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, USA

2004 – present

Slovakia; Green Bay,
Wisconsin, USA

Transformation of
the Healthy Communities
health education
programme

Co-operation with the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay (UWGB) began in 2004 with a series of lectures on topics such as “Application of New Communication Strategies in Risk Groups of Society” and “Culture and Art as a Messenger Reaching All Social Classes”. Based on these lectures, and after another meeting at the UWGB in 2007, a group of students decided to participate in some of our programmes.

Students and teachers together with ACEC prepared a training programme focused specifically on health education and open creative workshops. In May 2008, students and ACEC raised awareness of health issues and as a part of the Healthy Communities project led a series of seminars and talks in kindergartens, schools and in Roma settlements in eastern Slovakia. Together we implemented an educational project called Bright Communities



Bright Communities, 2008

in these four localities – Stráne pod Tatrami, Hranovnica, Spišský Štiavnik and Vydrník.

The main focus of the health education was aimed towards first aid and hygiene, the most common diseases in settlements – their symptoms, prevention and treatment – nutrition and its effect on health, a healthy diet for mothers of young children, the importance of vaccination, the importance of breastfeeding and an educational art activity for mothers and children called “Happy Families”.

The art workshops were led by Katina Daanen, who had previously worked with a group of visual artists in Arusha, Tanzania, where she had participated in an art camp for orphans and HIV positive children. The participants in the workshops in Slovakia first learnt about the basics of painting and then applied their newly gained knowledge in practice. The theme of the murals in the settlements was “Bright Communities”.

Based on our long-term cooperation, we began creating a unique educational programme for the students of UWGB, which is structured to provide expertise, practical experience and memories from a learning trip to central Europe. Different study courses, e.g. Community Nursing or Human Development, require specifically tailored educational programmes, which we prepared in cooperation with UWGB.

The training programmes start with an in-depth introduction into the relevant issue prepared in co-operation with professionals and partner organisations active in their relevant fields, with a special emphasis on the Roma community. Students of UWGB, accompanied by student volunteers from Slovak universities, take part in presentations and debates with experts and personalities active in the respective fields to better understand the cultural, social and health issues within the marginalised Roma population in Slovakia. They practice nursing treatments in disadvantaged communities and follow a guideline teaching about health and disease prevention and help raise awareness on these topics in this community.



Summer educational programme for UWGB students, Luník 9, 2018



Happy Families, 2008



Bright Communities, 2008

2004

Series of lectures at UWGB

2008

Bright Communities

2014

Educational programme
for UWGB students

2016

Educational programme
for UWGB students

2018

Educational programme
for UWGB students

Slovakia – Europe in Miniature

2004

Paris (France), Brussels (Belgium), Berlin (Germany), Vienna (Austria)

This project, initiated on the occasion of Slovakia's accession to the European Union, intended to introduce Slovakia as an open, active, convincing, attractive and communicative country. Slovakia was presented in the capitals of selected countries with concerts and represented through bilateral economic fora. The economic fora were conducted in co-operation with Eurocham and under the expert guidance of BAS – Business Alliance of Slovakia.

The concerts were prepared by Adrián Rajter – dramaturg and manager of the Chamber Orchestra of Bratislava, which performed in Paris, Brussels and Berlin, conducted by Anton Popovič. The soloists in Brussels and Paris were the coloratura soprano Ľubica Vargicová and the excellent, world-class oboist Francois Leleux, and in Berlin Dagmar Livorová with the trumpet player Joachim Schäfer. In Vienna the Chamber Orchestra of Bratislava was conducted by Tomáš Hanus and the solo was brilliantly executed by the talented trumpet player Juraj Bartoš.



Miriám Petrářnová, 2004

Ľubomíra Slušná
President of ACEC

In the project Slovakia – Europe in Miniature, we are searching for points of intersection between Europe and Slovakia. These make it easier to get to know each other and to look for common ground. A new door has been opened and now we realise that there are many things that feel familiar to us in other European countries; just like other Europeans will gradually come to see that there are many things in Slovakia that feel familiar to them.

Katarína Glončáková-Golev
President of Marketing, Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency, SARIO

The economic forum in Vienna helped shape a positive image of Slovakia. I was impressed by the positive atmosphere which was in direct rebuttal of all supposed prejudice of Austrian representatives and investors towards Slovakia.

Oľga Gyarfasová
Programme President of IVO

Having the opportunity to see Slovakia through a different set of eyes and to introduce the “new”, successful and inspirational Slovakia to our Austrian neighbours was a valuable experience.

Regina Ovesny-Straka
General Manager and Board Chairwoman of SLSP bank

The economic forum in Vienna was opened by the Slovak Minister of Finance, Ivan Mikloš, who informed the Austrian investors on the progress of our reforms. Amongst other things, he said, “Tax reform, labour reform, the reform of the welfare system and pension reform have helped to put our country on the right path and



Juraj Bartoš, Chamber Orchestra of Bratislava, Mozartsaal, Vienna



Martin Bolldorf, Ivan Mikloš, Reinhard Ortner, Jozef Klimko, Regina Ovesny-Straka, Economic forum, Vienna

this has been reflected by an influx of foreign investment. Healthy business conditions and the reforms we have done so far are an essential basis for stable economic growth and the growing welfare of our citizens.”

The point of this economic forum in Vienna is mainly to show that Slovakia has more to offer than just reforms and that it is a very interesting country for investors. If you don't know Slovakia, you should come. And if you're already here, you should do more.

1 May 2004

Slovakia becomes a member of the European Union

14 and 25 May 2004

Paris
Concert at the Pavillon Gabriel, economic forum UBIFRANCE

24-25 May 2004

Brussels
Concert at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, economic forum FEB – Federation of Belgian Enterprises

20 September 2004

Berlin
Concert at the Konzerthaus am Gendarmenmarkt, economic forum EAB – European Academy Berlin

10-11 November 2004

Vienna
Concert at the Mozartsaal, Wiener Konzerthaus, economic forum Museumsquartier



Economic Forum, Brussels



Francois Leleux, concert at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels



Joachim Schäfer, concert at the Konzerthaus am Gendarmenmarkt, Berlin

Jan Massmann

Member of the Board of SPP

Slovakia is becoming a good example of successful economic development within Europe, creating beneficial business conditions. The forum in Paris was a good opportunity for a discussion of various issues and also served as a platform for new business opportunities between companies of both countries.

Ivan Štefanec

President of Business Alliance of Slovakia

The tax reform, specifically, is a positive signal by Slovakia. Many countries employ marketing strategies to find their niche and Slovakia has already found it.

Manfred Mai

CEO of Hornbach, s.r.o.

The economic forum in Berlin was a great platform for information exchange for foreign investors interested in Slovakia. Overall, the forum was a place for the exchange of valuable experiences between Slovak legislative representatives and foreign investors in Slovakia.

Eduard Kukan

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

I won't say anything new when I'll repeat that the Federal Republic of Germany, with its human and economic potential and political regard is one of the main decisive forces in the European integration process and on the world stage. Many central and eastern European countries today see Germany as their most important political and business partner. In this regard, Slovakia is no exception.

Lucia Šimončíčová

Exhibition Curator, Programme Director ACEC

Photography is a powerful medium. The people in the portraits – publicly known or unknown – want to help us highlight the fact that there are issues in our society. Issues which often go unnoticed, issues which we don't see or sometimes don't want to see. But just because we don't see something it doesn't mean that it isn't there. Domestic violence is a typical example of this.

Lubo Špirko

Photographer

The main idea of the project Don't Cover Your Eyes is to highlight the fact that domestic violence is indeed present in our society, and it depends on every one of us, whether we see or would rather not see, what takes place in our families or in families around us. Therefore, we decided to build the visuals around a person, a citizen of society, who regardless of their social status or whether they are publicly known or not, has their own outlook on this issue.

2005

Bratislava, Slovakia

2006

New York, USA

Public presentation of a study – Violence Against Women as a Public Policy Issue (Institute for Public Affairs, IVO), accompanied by the opening of an exhibition of portraits by photographer Lubo Špirko, dedicated to this serious social issue.



Don't Cover Your Eyes

19 May 2005

Café Reduta, Bratislava
opening of a portrait exhibition
by photographer Lubomír Špirko

13-25 March 2006

United Nations, New York,
exhibition Don't Cover Your Eyes as a part of Slovakia
Presents: Celebration of Diversity in Central Europe

Don't Cover Your Eyes

Selection of participants' answers to the following questions:

- 1. What is your opinion on domestic violence?
- 2. Do you think that there is domestic violence in Slovakia?
- 3. What do we cover our eyes from?

Elvira Chadimová

President of the Top Centre of Businesswomen

- 1. I condemn any violence and especially the domestic sort. Violence is indicative of underdevelopment as a person. It is a manifestation of weakness and, unfortunately, in some countries it can often be a result of a long-standing tradition, where it can be considered a heroic act. What makes it even more lamentable however is when the people in culturally more developed countries resort to domestic violence and whichever personal shortcomings they suffer, they “resolve” them with violence inflicted on those who love them.
- 2. There is violence in Slovakia just as it is in other countries. I, for one, am very glad that it is publicly spoken of and that there are people looking for ways of eliminating it as much as possible.
- 3. 3 | From everything that we feel uneasy about and in this case from tough issues that must be addressed.

Bibiana Ondrejková

Actress

- 1. Any violence is unacceptable, inexcusable and immoral... I think that it begins with an unhealthy belief that someone belongs to us and that we can decide for them and order them around. Domestic violence spreads insidiously and deceptively, seeing it for what it is can be difficult at first, especially if we don't want to admit it to ourselves. Breaking out of it later can be oftentimes nearly impossible, and therefore it is essential that others are perceptive and helpful. Minding one's own business doesn't apply here!
- 2. When we walk about with blinkers on, we can happily assume (blinded by our excuses) that domestic violence is not our problem. After all, don't we all have enough on our own plate?

Peter Novák (Šarkan)

Radio presenter, singer

- 1. I condemn all violence whether in public or behind closed doors. The violence within families is all the worse for the difficulty of proof and it causes far more long-term pain, not only physical.
- 2. Unfortunately, there certainly is. When it comes to domestic violence our society suddenly "respects" the right to privacy and covers its eyes.
- 3. I try to keep my eyes open. Both of them, to see under the surface... I am not always good at it, but not for a lack of trying.

Jozef Matějčík

Doorman

- 1. It shouldn't exist. It's immoral. Domestic violence can escalate and children are also affected.
- 2. I think there is, also in the form of verbal, emotional abuse, which is even worse.
- 3. We cover our eyes from all violence so perfectly that we don't see what is happening at our neighbours', in the neighbouring houses and even less so in the neighbouring streets.

Richard Stanke

Actor

- 1. Just like every normal person, I condemn it.
- 2. Of course there is, and there will be as long as others will stay indifferent and blind to it. And the authorities, which should act quickly, will take their time and stay inconsistent.

Štefan Stojka

Nota Bene* vendor

- 1. I condemn it.
- 2. Yes, in Slovakia I think there is.
- 3. From things that make us sad and worry us.

*Nota Bene is a magazine offering employment opportunity for people in need, in poverty and rough sleepers

Magda Vášáryová

State Secretary, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic

- 1. Experience has taught me that only insecure men with issues resort to violent behaviour towards the weak; within the family, especially towards women and children. However, violence is not only a physical attack, it can also come in the form of verbal and emotional abuse.
- 2. Violent people are present in every population.
- 3. We still consider those who are weaker, predominantly children and women, to be somehow responsible for the violence committed on them and make them feel guilty. This is why every campaign against domestic violence has to make clear that it is not the fault of the victims. They did not bring it on themselves.

Tono Popovič

Conductor

- 1. You can break out of the vicious circle of violence by making a choice and with the help of love.
- 2. Slovakia is still a country where domestic violence is present in various forms.
- 3. Among other things, from the various forms of economic, political, environmental violence of a pragmatic and profit-driven society.

László Nagy

Chairman of the Human Rights, Ethnic Minorities and Women Rights Committee within the National Council of the Slovak Republic

- 1. It is vile, because the bully abuses their position of power in the family.
- 2. The phenomenon of domestic violence in Slovakia is more common than one would like to think.
- 3. From our own cowardice.

Silvia Porubánová

Deputy Director of the Centre for Family Studies

- 1. Domestic violence is a gross violation of fundamental human rights, a threat to elemental dignity and ultimately a serious social problem (it is by no means just a "private thing" of the victims). Domestic violence doesn't "skip" any historical epoch, or country – the victims are women, children, men, the elderly... Research experience shows that no social group is "immune" from it, it occurs at all economic, educational, social and cultural levels. Advanced European countries have had structures in place that are devoted to comprehensive attention to, and elimination of, this issue for several decades. Many of their methods, strategies and good practices can serve as an inspiration to our conditions. I have to stress that this is not a "private matter", it is a nationwide problem with serious health, family and socio-economic consequences.
- 2. Unfortunately, as a sociologist I know for a fact that there is domestic violence in Slovakia. However, significant analysis, legislation and media attention has only been drawn to it in the last few years. The current objective of reducing the occurrence of domestic violence is to involve a wide range of different professionals and focus on prevention, a stronger support network with protection of victims and increased public pressure on a clear condemnation of domestic violence or, more precisely, a zero-tolerance policy on the issue.
- 3. Don't cover your eyes – violence is not a norm, violence is not "normal!" Violence is criminal and needs to be condemned!

Pavel Traubner

Neurologist

- 1. Any violence, especially violence within families and on the innocent is condemnable and unacceptable.
- 2. Unfortunately, in Slovakia, there is a lot of domestic violence. As a neurologist I have witnessed the evidence countless times.

We Live Together

2005 – 2007
Slovakia

INFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN

A video and a computer game for primary school pupils were developed as a part of the project as well as an ethical education methodology manual for teachers.

TRAINING SESSIONS

There were eight training sessions with teachers in all eight regions of Slovakia.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The message of the project was promoted among the public via TV spots as well as in print media.

COMPETITION

A painting competition for primary level pupils on the topic of tolerance and on how to live together in harmony, which culminated in a cultural event and the handing out of prizes at a primary school in Detva.



Screenshot of the PC game for primary school pupils

The objective of the We Live Together project, organised under the EQUAL Community Initiative within the European Social Fund framework, was to help eliminate the xenophobic attitudes, prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination of the general public towards the Roma minority by means of an active participation of both the public and the media in this process. We decided to achieve this objective via a media campaign and an informative educational campaign at schools.

The project focused on the primary target group of children aged 10–15yrs – pupils at the upper primary education level. The reason

why we decided to focus on this age group is the fact that the youth of this age are already emotionally and educationally well equipped to not only receive information, but also effectively process it. The project for elementary schools assumed that through children the project will have a secondary effect on parents and teachers – on other opinion makers.

In addition to an informative educational school campaign, we also decided to organise a supplementary media campaign to increase motivation within the target group and to gain wider public involvement..



Ďuro Turis, the award ceremony, primary school in Detva



Print media campaign

24-30 May 2005

A survey into the default intensity of discriminatory tendencies in Slovak citizens prior to our communication campaign We Live Together, sample of 3353 respondents

26 June 2006

ZŠ Detva
Kprimary school in Detva
Cultural event and the handing out of prizes for an art competition

June 2006

Krížová Ves
film adaptation of seven stories by settlement inhabitants

March 2007

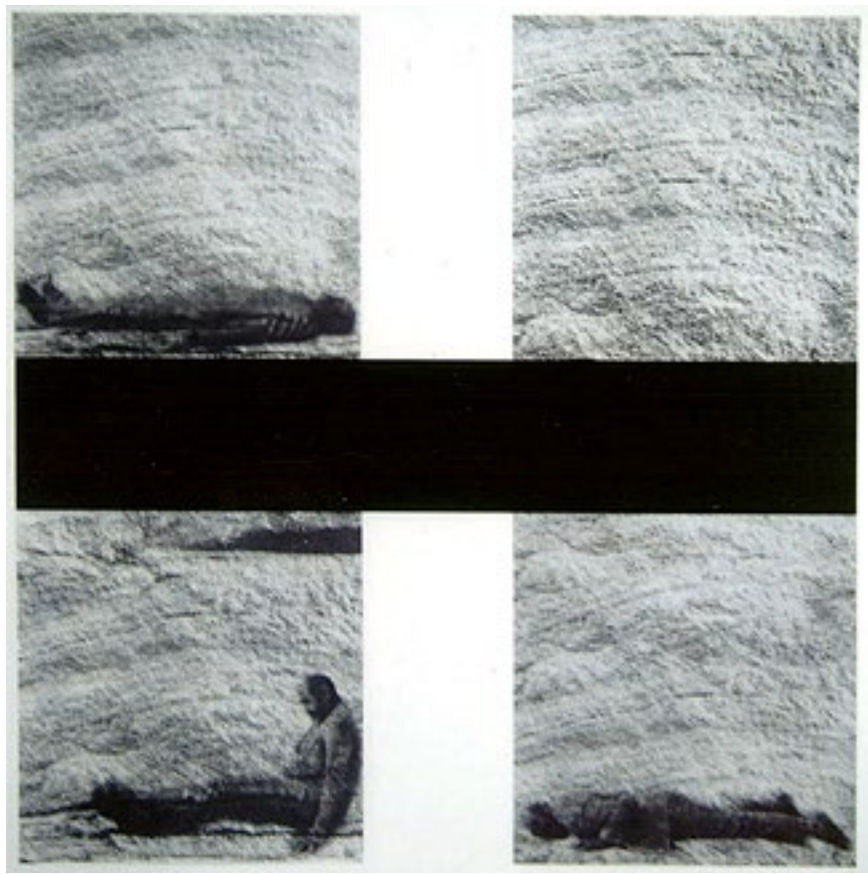
Slovak Radio Bratislava
Presentation of the films as a part of the European Science Week

Slovakia Presents: Celebration of Diversity of Central Europe

2005

New York, USA

Project Slovakia Presents: Celebration of Diversity of Central Europe. The project showcased visual art and music performed by Roma artists and central European cinema at such prestigious venues in New York as the Judy and Arthur Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, the United Nations building as well as the Anthology Film Archives, and featured a series of lectures on Slovakia at Columbia University. The events were organised on the occasion of the Slovak Republic becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.



Contemporary Slovak Art Exhibition, Rudolf Sikora

Eduard Kukan

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

In October of this year Slovakia was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. In the short 13-year-old history of our independence, election onto the Security Council is one of the biggest achievements in Slovak foreign policy. Exerting influence within this important body is an opportunity to establish Slovakia as a confident and expert player in international affairs who is able to shoulder the responsibility of finding solutions to global issues.

Membership of the Security Council opens up possibilities to present ourselves from

another perspective – we have a wealth of original culture, art and folk traditions and we have always been at the crossroads of different cultures that have influenced and enriched one another. Visitors to the events organised within the project Slovakia Presents: Celebrate Diversity of Central Europe will get to know this attractive side of the country which will participate in the decision-making process regarding pertinent global issues of security and peace during the next two years. I appreciate the initiative of the Association for Culture, Education and Communication who, in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the UN and the Slovak Consulate General in New York, made this project possible.

October 2005

Slovakia becomes a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council [



Patrik Žigmund, Richard Rikkon, Carnegie Hall, 2005

Magdaléna Vášáryová

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

Thanks to the project initiated by Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC) "Slovakia Presents: Celebrate Diversity of Central Europe", organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Slovakia will be presented in New York as a country with a rich, multifaceted and established culture, which can attract even the most ardent connoisseur. One of the inseparable efforts of Slovak diplomacy is the support of Slovak culture, which retroactively leads to ever deeper knowledge and appreciation of foreign cultures. I would like to point out

and appreciate the original approach of the organisers and the choice of new unconventional forms of presentation. I especially applaud them for organising the concert "Slovakia Presents: Roma Spirit Concert", which will be performed at Carnegie Hall. The Roma minority have lived with us for more than 700 years, and their rich culture, customs and traditions have made our central European region more culturally diverse. And yet, the culture of this ethnic group remains relatively unknown to the rest of the world. I am glad that because of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ACEC, the outstanding Slovak-Roma artists will have a chance to demonstrate their mastery in front of an audience in New York.

2005

Roma Spirit concert at Carnegie Hall

EXHIBITION OF SLOVAK CONTEMPORARY ART

UN, New York
Curated by Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel.
Presented artists: Jozef Jankovič, Marián Meško, Otis Laubert, Milan Bočkaj, Rudolf Fila, Miroslav Cipár, Igor Minárik, Rudolf Sikora, Daniel Fischer and others.

DON'T COVER YOUR EYES

UN, New York
Portrait exhibition by photographer Ľubo Špirko focusing on the issue of domestic violence.

ROMA PHOTOGRAPHERS FROM SLOVAKIA

Columbia University
Exhibition of photographs made by the Roma and a series of lectures on Slovakia.

ROMA SPIRIT CONCERT

Carnegie Hall – Judy and Arthur Zankel Hall
Music performed by Roma musicians: Patrik Žigmund (violin), Richard Rikkon (piano), Miro Herák (vibraphone), Jana Sendreiová (vocal soloist) and the Anyalai Gypsy Band.

White Greeting for Belarus

2005 – 2006

Minsk, Belarus

An extensive presentation of contemporary Slovak art in Belarus.



Juraj Čižmárovič, Anton Popovič, The State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Belarus (rehearsal), 2005

The presentation of contemporary Slovak art in Belarus was launched with a concert called Slovakia – Europe in Miniature. The State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Belarus was conducted by Anton Popovič, in the dramaturgy of Adrián Rajter, and with Juraj Bartoš on trumpet and Juraj Čižmárovič on violin.

Adrian Rajter Dramaturg

White Greeting for Belarus is one of the most fascinating projects in which I have ever participated. I knew practically nothing about this country, it was a “white place” on the map of Europe for me, but we experienced an incredibly pleasant, welcoming atmosphere. We felt an intense interest in our work and we were met with a surprisingly positive response.

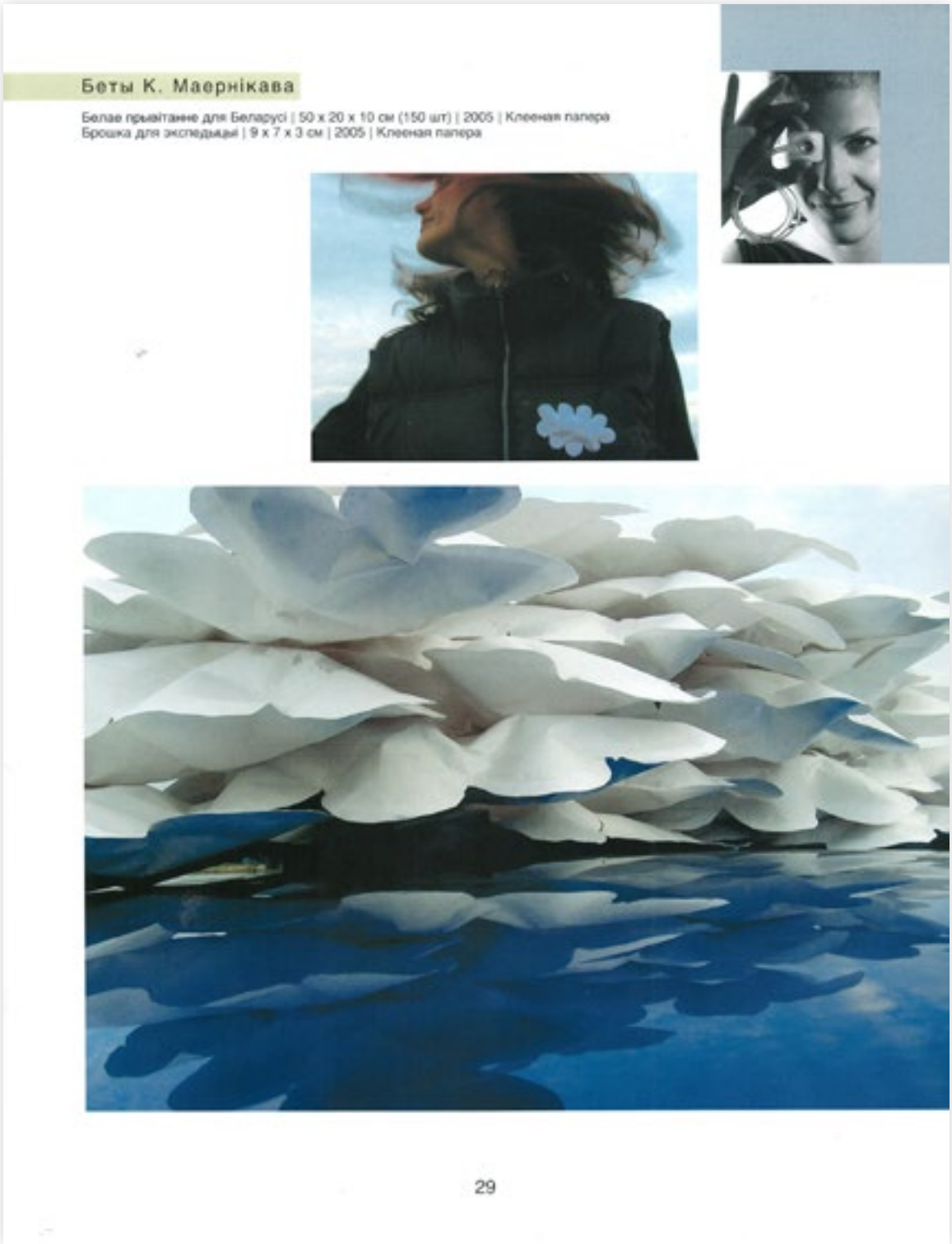
Anton Popovič Conductor

The visit to Belarus came as a huge surprise to me. I immediately felt in my element in Minsk because of its wonderful greenery, its

parks and the people I met had an admirably profound interest in culture and art. Co-operation with members of the Belarusian State Philharmonic was very constructive and their interpretation of Bella, Humell and Godár (*Slovak composers) was enthusiastic. I have to confess; I had not expected Belarus to find its way into my heart so quickly.

Juraj Bartoš Soloist

My impressions are very good. I have a very good feeling about Belarusians, they are very close in mentality to us. It reminded me of the old days. The concert with the Philharmonic was very pleasant and I think that events like these are very desirable and good because through art one can say much more than in meetings of politicians or businessmen. The event was well organised and fulfilled its purpose. And, among other things, the bread in Belarus is truly fantastic.



Piece of art and brooch for the exhibition visitors, Bety K. Majerniková, 2005 (p.29 from the White Greeting for Belarus catalogue)

18 October 2005

Slovakia – Europe in Miniature concert

19–30 October 2005

White Greeting for Belarus exhibition

White Greeting for Belarus

Slovak art was presented at the most prestigious venues of Minsk:

- Belarusian State Philharmonic
- Belarusian State Academy of Music
- National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus
- Art Palace
- Belarusian State University of Culture and Art
- Museum of Contemporary Art
- National Museum of History and Culture of Belarus
- Belarusian Society of Foreign Friendship and Cultural Affairs
- Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora

An exhibition of visual art and paper art installations called White Greeting for Belarus presented unusual works of visual art. The artists used unique techniques in their work with paper, their only source material.

Bety K. Majerníková
Visual artist

In Minsk, I met a cultured, open and grateful audience. But behind all these positive experiences, one can feel the regime's iron fist ruling over this country; it is felt almost everywhere, although not always visible at first glance. I've brought back many strong feelings from Minsk, feelings I had already slowly forgotten in Slovakia. People are thirsty for freedom and look for it even in places where it might not be found. I hope that my white greeting will find its addressee and that they'll be able to read it. After meeting with the people of Belarus I feel that they will. In any case, if my work awakens someone's dreams and desires, and subsequently leads to a stronger desire for change, it will be the greatest satisfaction I have ever had in my professional life.



Michaela Klimanová-Trizuljaková



Vladimír Popovič



Miroslav Brooš



White Greeting for Belarus exhibition (an artwork by Brett Alexander can be seen front right)

MIROSLAV BROOŠ (SK) — MARTIN KRATOCHVÍL (SK) — VLADIMÍR POPOVIČ (SK)
ZUZANA RUDAVSKÁ (SK) — MICHAELA KLIMANOVÁ-TRIZULIAKOVÁ (SK)
MILOŠ KOPTÁK (SK) — BETY K. MAJERNÍKOVÁ (SK) — GRAŻINA BRYLEWSKA (PL)
ANNA GOEBEL (PL) — JOLANTA WAGNER (PL) — BERND PREIML (AT)
GUANG YAO WU (DE) — TERUYOSHI YOSHIDA (JP) — BRETT ALEXANDER (AU)

Miroslav Lajčák
Political director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

Belarus and Slovakia had to invest considerable effort in foreign affairs in the process of building our mutual self-awareness and the awareness of our own cultures. It was true for both of our countries in equal measure. Even though we are not completely unknown to each other, we are now entering a new stage in which we have started presenting ourselves to each other on a more complex level. I am glad that this process of getting closer is happening not only in top institutional state structures but also at levels closer to citizens; new links between our nations are becoming a civic activity and in this case the activity of the NGO Association for Culture, Education and

Communication (ACEC). I am glad that ACEC has turned east of our borders this time, to the Republic of Belarus, as the next country where it would like to introduce Slovakia and its culture.

The project called White Greeting for Belarus is another project that involves visual artists and their artworks made of paper. The exhibition of visual art of the same name, with paper as the primary material, will take place at the Art Palace in Minsk. White Greeting for Belarus is a play on words, which uses the fact that Belarus means 'White Russia' in translation and the fact that paper is, in its basic form, white. The symbolic messages from artists from Slovakia, Austria, Poland, Germany, Japan and Australia, which are brought to Belarus and its people in the form of visual art, come in many different shapes. From inspiration by Marc Chagall, who was born in Vitebsk, to white birch grove and endless clouds.

White Greeting for Belarus



Viera Šindelárová

A separate exhibition of Contemporary Slovak Graphics presented the works of Martin Derner, Katarína Slaninková, Štefan Kubovič, Viera Šindelárová, Marek Kianička and Martin Melicherčík.

Contemporary Slovak Painting and Sculpture was an exhibition curated by Pavol Urbán and it presented the artworks of Martin Piaček, Peter Gregvorek, Martin Derner, Dorota Sadovská, Veronika Šramatyová and Jana Farmanová.

A selection of outstanding works from the artists Miriam Petránová, Monika Hurňanská and Dominika Horáková, whose artwork formed the nature of contemporary Slovak visual art, was showcased at the exhibition Contemporary Slovak Photography. The three photographers reveal their homes and consciously create previously non-existent codes. That's how things can appear when they are photographed in houses, in rooms full of light and darkness, but also as trifles, which characterise their macroworld. All three photographic messages of women and their view of the space in which they live, are intimate confessions of the mysterious corners of the female psyche.



Jana Farmanová

A series of lectures on literature *Let's Explore our Literatures* (produced and hosted by Dado Nagy). Three Slovak and three Belarusian writers presented their literary works in pairs and in three separate debates. Each of the debates was accompanied by readings from works written in both countries, chamber music performances and an exhibition of Slovak illustrations.

20 September – 12 November 2005

Contemporary Slovak Graphics
Museum of Contemporary Art



Monika Hurňanská



Monika Hurňanská

Central European Film Week introduced contemporary Slovak cinema, selected by Martin Ciel, and showcased feature and documentary films made in Slovakia. Films produced in co-production with other Central European countries were also presented. One day was dedicated to documentaries and animated films made by students of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava who were awarded distinction at either domestic or foreign film festivals. The programme was decided upon at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava under the guidance of its Vice-Dean and film theorist Martin Ciel.

Martin Ciel *Dramaturg of the Central European Film Week*

The selection of films does not only focus on Slovakia. It also offers a look at films from other European countries that deal with Slovak or central European issues. The main themes of this event are the differences between the centre and the periphery, national minorities, multinationalism, odd nostalgia, or bitter memories of the period of the totalitarian communist regime and its aftermath. There is also one other distinct theme and that is the theme of the border between countries and nationalities because it often is at the state border where the most interest-

1 November 2005

Let's Explore our Literatures
Belarusian Society of Foreign
Friendship and Cultural Affairs

ing things happen. These films don't concern themselves with being popular, they are profoundly authentic and critically acclaimed. On a formal level, the structure of a film copies reality. The films are a metaphor for the central European story. Each of the selected films received an award at international film festivals either in this year or previous years..



Martin Piaček

1-7 November 2005

Central European Film Week



Martin Derner

Stanislav Stanislavovich Shushkevich

Former President of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus, leader of the Belarusian Social Democratic Assembly

All the events have made an unforgettable, lasting impression on me. I was specifically touched by the splendour of the Slovak music performed at the concert and the trumpet player, Juraj Bartoš, was like a discovery of a new world, not only for me but for the whole audience. These events demonstrate that even when we have no access to objective facts in Belarus, you can still show us Europe in ways other than the simple, dichotomous Belarusian way. The presentation was a revelation, in a way, because the lack of political engagement in it made it acceptable to all layers of the population. This project has brought Belarus closer to European values.

Arina Viachorka

Producer of ancient Belarusian music

The concert at the opening of Days of Slovak Culture at the Philharmonic became a big event. The flag of the united Europe next to the Slovak one gave us hope that one day we Belarusians will be able to openly show our historical symbols under the insignia of a united Europe.

Tatiana Ivanova

Leading concert maestro of the National Opera Theatre and Ballet of the Republic of Belarus

White - means clean, bright. The cultural event of the Slovak Republic White Greeting for Belarus was breathtakingly well organised and extensive. Every meeting with Slovak art, either in concert or at an exhibition, was a discovery for us, a joy. It shows a level of high professionalism and the mastery of a talented nation.

Vladimir Kobets

Co-ordinator of the Belarusian youth resistance movement for a democratic and European Belarus Zubr

We Belarusians highly appreciate that in these difficult and critical times in Belarus it was Slovakia, a nation close to us, a nation that had survived the horrors of totalitarian regime and defended and elevated its hope for freedom and democracy, which was one of the first nations that has come to us, civilians with outstretched hands. Today, Slovakia helps us to defend our freedom and give birth to Belarusian democracy.

Vintsuk Viachorka

Leader of the Belarusian National Front

White Greeting for Belarus is indeed a breakthrough in the relationship of Belarusians, Slovaks and their mutual understanding. At this cultural event the citizens of my country have been given a unique opportunity to familiarize themselves with works of Slovak music, film, and visual arts. But also, through the culture of Slovakia, to bring themselves, Belarusians, closer to Europe, from which we are still being isolated.

The presentation of Slovak culture and art in Belarus is a real cultural breakthrough in the relations of both countries. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, because Slovakia is now in the European Union and we have to overcome the stereotypical propaganda which would have us believe that the cultural specifics of member states are being eradicated in the European Union. Nothing of the sort. Secondly, it also served as proof that Slovakia, a former constituent part of a federative state, has not by any means lost its cultural distinction after gaining independence.

White Greeting for Belarus through the eyes of Belarusian personalities



Čercheňora CD cover, 2010, photo: Šymon Kliman

**“Čercheňora (Little Stars)
is a rare music project
with an extraordinary
educational value”**

– Anton Popovič, Conductor and producer



Jana Sendreiová, Kokava nad Rimavicou, 2007



Sarah Meredith Livingston, Kokava nad Rimavicou, 2007

We started organising an alternative education programme called Čercheňora / Little Stars in co-operation with the civic association Lácho Drom during the 2005/06 school year. The education was led by Roma teachers throughout the school year and continued into summer holidays, including the preparation and selection of pupils. Our objective was to provide meaningful after-school activities for children and youths coming from Roma communities and to motivate and prepare pupils for further education. These activities continued until 2012.

The project was carried out in Kokava nad Rimavicou, Klenovec, Poltár and Lovinobaňa. It provided music lessons twice per week, which were attended by roughly 60 pupils a year. Children received singing lessons and lessons in playing various musical instruments such as the violin, piano, viola, contrabass, accordion, guitar and bass guitar.

One of the highlights of this project was the arrangement of popular Roma songs and their recording for a CD in the interpretation of the legendary Roma band Sendreiovci, accompanied by selected young Roma talent united in a 20-member child choir. The album included a booklet with song lyrics and their Slovak translation, but also an additional CD with music materials. In addition, the songs from the CD were published as unique sheet

music material, which is available for interpretation of Roma music by folk musicians, hobby collectives and others.

Besides the discovery of young talent and the creation of the Čercheňora Child Choir, our activities resulted in regular invitations to performances at various cultural events both in Slovakia and abroad and helped to develop the individual success of Anička Oláhová, at the time only eleven years old. Anička collaborated not only with Vladimír Sendrei but other renowned names in Slovak music industry, e.g. Anton Popovič (producer), Ida Kellarová (singer), Ernest Šarközi (cimbalom player with the Gypsy Devils) and Dorota Nvotová (singer).

The YRAEF programme had for a long time systematically supported the talented Roma violinist Patrik Žigmund, who played at the famous Carnegie Hall at the age of 13, within the framework of a presentation of Slovakia in New York organised by ACEC.

Performers in the Čercheňora project were Sendreiovci & Kokavakere Lavutára, Čercheňora Child Choir and soloists Janka Sendreiová, Vladimír Sendrei, Anička Oláhová, Ján Čonka and Slávka Oláhová. As well as Ján Kuric, Dominika Mirgová and Peter Lipa. Music producer of the project was Anton Popovič.

23 March 2007

Concert YRAEF, Slovak Radio

October 2010

Launch of CD Čercheňora

Sarajevo in the Eyes of Slovak Artists

2006

*Sarajevo, Bosnia
and Herzegovina*

In 2006 ACEC presented an exhibition of paper art at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sarajevo. With regard to the post-war situation and destruction of the city, the curator Lucia Šimončíčová decided on a motif for the installation; a 3D map of Sarajevo. The exhibition was held under the auspices of Miroslav Mojžita, Slovak Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Each artist who decided to support our project in Sarajevo with their work was allotted a section of the Sarajevo map. This became an inspiration for their artwork, which had to be either in 2D or 3D. There were no prescribed techniques or colour palette.

Choice was limitless. The unique creative outcomes of the artists brought a breath of fresh air to Sarajevo.

The following artists participated in the project Sarajevo in the Eyes of Slovak Artists:

Martin Derner, Ildikó Dobešová, Peter Drmlík, Róbert Fulek, Robert Szegény, Slavomír Gabriška, Monika Hurňanská, Lukáš Jablonovský, Martin Janoško, Samuel Juriš, Michaela Klimanová-Trizuljaková, Robo Kočan, Jaroslav Košš, Ivica Krošlákova, Bety K. Majerníková, Lucia Mrvíková, Štefan Oslej, Miriam Petránová, Daniela Kytková, Martin Popovič, Katarína Slaninková and Viera Šindelárová.



Viera Šindelárová



Samuel Juriš



Michaela Klimanová-Trizuljaková



Róbert Fulek a Robert Szegény

2006

Sarajevo in the Eyes of Slovak Artists

V4 as I See It

2011

Slovakia, Czechia,
Poland, Hungary

Project organised on
the occasion of the 20th
anniversary of the
founding of V4.

Lubomíra Slušná

Exhibition curator

This is a story that began more than a year ago when we were in search of a way and a medium as to how to present the collective effort of the V4 countries. We have chosen to present the Visegrad group in a collection of photographs by four renowned artists: Magdalena Ciszewska Rzasa (Poland), Zsuzsanna Kemene-si (Hungary), Robo Kočan (Slovakia) and David Cysař (Czechia). The photographers were asked to be true to the concept of the exhibition and the fact that they would each be shooting one of the other V4 countries, not their own.

These unique photographs represent not only captured and procured atmospheres in

neighbouring countries, but also a collection of excellent artistic photographs and a rich variety of photographic technology. Travel journals from the individual photographers bring us closer to their trips and to their relationship with the country next door. There are recognizable common features, the incredible uniqueness of the mundane and specific features endorsed in the context of new stories; culture, arts, history, architecture but also nature, memories of the not too distant past and present, lighting tricks, mystery, openness...

These are all traits of fellowship between the four countries, each one of them a country next door for the participating artists.

David Cysař (CZ)

The Slovak Journal

(excerpts from the text)

Day 3 – 8th February 2011

I set out to try my luck in the south, between Nitra and Levice. The first thing I noticed in the morning was that my style of photography had shifted from the original concept a little more towards romanticism, which has always attracted me. Well why not? Why shouldn't I take some romantic pictures? But then it was all wrong. The southern part of Slovakia failed to inspire me and did not provide even the anticipated themes. The highlight of it all was when I arrived in industrial, flat Levice and realized that I wasn't in the Levice I was looking forward to. So, I floored the accelerator and stopped by at the mines in Banská Štiavnica. The weather felt almost like springtime. It was then that the beauty that is the Banská Štiavnica appeared – a truly magnificent town. I even found a theme after a whole day of failure – at the shaft entrance and a cross. It must have been jinxed or something because I exposed the second negative to light and spoilt it, I took it as a sign that this image was prob-

ably not meant to be. Then a grey cat crossed my path. I wondered if it wouldn't be the same bad omen as with a black one. It turned out not to be the case. Banská Bystrica, where I stayed for the night in a great lodge in the town centre, is full of inspiration. And the surrounding areas are too. In the morning I got up early to get everything done because the first part of my journey was to end the next day.

Day 9 – 28th February 2011

In the morning, with tears in our eyes, we said goodbye to the lodge owner, who had really grown on us, and set off for Bratislava. I found that the ideas we had for our pictures were either unavailable, in the case of the UFO restaurant on the New Bridge, or did not have the right light, as in the case of Slavín. With sadness I photographed both at least in a small format and we headed home. Czechia welcomed us with a double-policed border, where one officer finally found at least one minor problem in the trailer registration papers. So, a 200 CZK fine as a welcome – goodbye to you, beautiful and welcoming Slovakia.



David Cysař
Jánošík – Terchová



David Cysař, Czecho-Slovak
Double-cross – Varín

15 February 1991

Visegrad Four is founded

March 2011

V4 as I See It

22-27 March 2011

The Best of V4 – Film Festival

14 November 2012

Opening of the V4 as I See It exhibition
in the foyer of the Hungarian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



Magdalena Ciszewska-Rzasa, Aching Hill

Magdalena Ciszewska-Rzasa,
Vinyards



Magdalena Ciszewska-Rzasa (PL)
Zemplen Winter 2010/2011
(excerpts from the text)

Hungary. My little warm country. I often go there for the sun and the wine. Often, but only in the summertime. I gorge myself on sweet tomatoes, juicy peppers, and sweet-smelling melons. I love it when their juices drip through my fingers and down my chin, when I get all warm inside and melt into the world around me.

Everything is sticky, everything smells, arid dry ground, the chirp of

crickets in the heat of day and delicate evening warmth. We sit on the veranda entwined with vines. The earth breathes on remembered light, the colours are heavy. We drink Tokay wine – the sun sealed in an oak barrel, aged in the coolness of the cellars. Sweltering golden joy.

For the first time in my life I went to my little paradise in winter but it turned out that the country had fallen asleep. It had frozen, tucked in a cold damp mist. (I was in Hungary between Christmas 2010 and New Year 2011.)

The air temperature fluctuated around -12°C/10°F (the heated seats in the car came in very handy). The sun rose at about 8 a.m. and set at around 4 p.m. A short day full of shooting. I spent the rest of the day in a lodge utca (regardless of the town, the name of the street was still the same, always utca). We welcomed the new year in utca Bodrogkeresztúr at the House of Dance. We didn't dance. The mood was wonderful. We drank Tallya Tokay wine from the cellar of quite possibly the best winemaker in Central Europe.

4 April – 1 June 2013

Exhibition V4 as I See It in the Gallery
of the House of Photography
in Liptovský Mikuláš

Robert Kočan (SK)
Pictures of Memories

(excerpts from the text)

Poland has gone through many changes since the time I first got to know it, as have all the V4 countries. I remember Poland when empty meat hooks hanged at the butchers but then again it was possible to buy cassettes with music we couldn't afford in Slovakia. I remember the sweets – known as "Krówki" – that we used to smuggle from Poland even when there were strict checks on the border where it was common practice to look up people's behinds (and I'm not

talking figuratively here!). Clothes, furniture, food and other things could always be bought cheaper in Poland, especially at their famous markets along the border. Poland is however a country of deep-rooted Jewish culture, which is something else that connects the V4 countries, as does the Holocaust – something which significantly marked Poland's culture and the nation itself during WWII.

Because to me Poland is everything that I have mentioned in this text, and in everyday life things pale, I chose overlay techniques from a number of shots (parallel worlds) which stir my emotions.

Róbert Kočan,
After Supper



Róbert Kočan,
Silent Night



Róbert Kočan,
Gate to the Past



Zsuzsanna Kemenesi,
Polish Post Office Museum, Gdansk

Zsuzsanna Kemenesi (HU)
Culture of Freedom

From Gdansk I left for Třeboň (CZ). Třeboň is a “sea of fishponds.” There are 500 fishponds in and around this little town in Bohemia. The history of the fishponds can't be separated from the story of the Rosenberg family. The Rosenbergs did fishponds – the most famous fishpond builder's house can be seen in the main square.

Indeed, the Rosenbergs transformed the countryside around Třeboň. Třeboň can be found between the Golden Canal (Zlatá stoka) and the World Pond (Rybník Svět) and was founded in the middle ages. Třeboň is the centre of Czech fish-breeding. After the Rosenberg family line died out, the Schwarzenbergs were the last private owners of the property. The history of the City Hall dates back as far as 1566. The inhabitants of Třeboň are very trusting of foreigners – the key to the old Town Hall with the access to the stairs leading to the top of the tower was given to me just like that.

The tower is a great vantage point and I could admire the splendid Renaissance stone fountain, the Baroque Marian Column surrounded by burgher houses and the Fishbone heritage of Třeboň that was put on the Unesco World Heritage List.

My other stop in Czechia was at České Budějovice, the royal city, which was created as a platform of the King's power in southern Bohemia and to counterbalance the powerful aristocratic House of Rosenberg. Even the King's crown jewels and the regalia were transported here from Prague in 1631 to keep them safe. Jan Žižka Square, built by Přemysl Otakar II, is exactly 133m by 133m. There's Samson's fountain in the centre of Žižka Square. In the vicinity you can see the Episcopal Palace, the Town Hall, St. Nicolas' Cathedral and the 72m (236ft) tall Black Tower. This series of four pictures was made around the Samson Fountain from the four corners and four views of the square.

Petr Vágner,
Executive Director of the International Visegrad Fund

Twenty years is a relatively long time in a person's life, and also in the life of an organisation. Such a long period gives us the opportunity to look back and contemplate what further direction we should embark on. The anniversary of the Visegrad Group gives us precisely such an opportunity.

At the time, the group was founded mostly for the protection of our newly acquired freedom. Later on, new issues proved the group's legitimacy and broadened its activities – CEFTA, joining NATO and the European Union amongst others. Fostering co-operation within the Visegrad region, strengthening the inner cohesion of the EU and cooperation among neighbours are some of the current objectives fuelling our further cooperation. Long live the Visegrad Group, as it is no longer a matter of stability and prosperity of the Visegrad region as such but a significant contribution to the development of co-operation in Europe, be it within the EU or vis-à-vis our near and distant neighbours.

Tomáš Strážay
Senior Research Fellow, Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA)

Regional co-operation in central Europe, namely the Visegrad co-operation, has been one of the priorities of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association Research Center (RC SFPA) since its inception. One of the research programmes of the RC SFPA focuses specifically on Slovakia's relationships with neighbouring countries, while specific attention is also paid to relations with Visegrad neighbours. Of course, this does not mean that bilateral relations with other partners – from

inside or outside the EU – only play a secondary role in Slovakia's foreign policy. Nevertheless, from among alimental initiatives established in central Europe after 1989, the Visegrad Group has played the most important role and can be considered the most viable and efficient.

Though in the beginning the V4 was a predominantly political project, it soon branched out and reached civic proportions as well, thanks to the support of the International Visegrad Fund – which so far has been the only institution in the V4 – many projects initiated by non-governmental organisations have been implemented. The RC SFPA, as a non-governmental expert think-tank, has also found its closest partners among the Visegrad countries. We can only conclude that this was nothing other than a natural choice.

Visegrad Jazz Quartet

The V4 Through My Eyes project is founded on a great notion. I'm glad that the Visegrad Jazz Quartet is part of the project, especially since the band was put together specifically for this occasion and serves as a good example of V4 artistic collaboration. Our artists are connected by the same interest: jazz music. Jazz musicians understand the same language, the language of jazz, regardless of their nationality. This language allows us to communicate at the highest level without having to suppress our identity. These things that connect us also allow us to preserve our diversity. And it is this diversity that makes this formation interesting and brings about new impulses. I think it is safe to say that in terms of mutual communication, jazz musicians and artists in general serve as a good example for politicians.

Matúš Jakabčič
Musician

Platform for Health Support in Disadvantaged Groups

2012 – present

Slovakia

Transformation and stabilisation of the health education programme Healthy Communities.

www.ppzs.sk



General assembly of the Association of Field Work Health Assistants, Poprad, 2015, photo: Richard Gerényi

After a decade of field work, time-proven methods and demonstrated results in the area of health education in Roma communities, ACEC decided to find a way to stabilise the Healthy Communities project on a national level. In ten years of work, we had built a stable network of participating physicians, created a proven methodology for the implementation of the health education programme in settlements, built an effective and transparent chain of management and created our own participatory educational programmes. The health education project Healthy Communities was funded from independent sources and in the ten years of its continuous work had produced significant results and a measurable improvement in the state of health in the population of settlements.

We have therefore focused specifically on developing advocacy activities in order to stabilise and transform the health programme on a national level. To this end, we have addressed everyone who had in their work dealt with the health issues of disadvantaged groups in Slovakia or had experience with this issue. During 2012 we organised dozens of individual meetings, fourteen round tables, dynamic meetings with representatives of fifteen organisations as well

as individual experts in the field. In early 2013 this advocacy culminated in the founding of an association of legal persons, which adopted the name Platform for Health Support in Disadvantaged Groups (Platform).

Platform's objective is to protect and promote health in disadvantaged populations and excluded communities. Platform implements educational activities, research and promotion aimed at the creation of a comprehensive model for health support in disadvantaged groups and developing medical mediation in Slovakia. In order to achieve these objectives, Platform co-operates with Slovak and foreign individuals, and institutions with similar focus and has made good use of practical experience at the European level. Platform brings together agents from NGOs, the state and private sector.

Since October 2013 Platform has implemented the nationwide project Healthy Communities. The Healthy Communities project has built and further developed the practice of implementing medical mediation in marginalised communities through health education assistants. The first model of the systematic health solution for disadvantaged groups was active until 30th September 2014.

There were 144 health education assistants and 16 coordinators in 144 localities of Slovakia. The

project was implemented in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities and was financed from the state budget with the support of several ministries - the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic. Project activities had a direct positive impact on more than 150,000 inhabitants. In many municipalities, a vaccination rate of 100% was achieved and functional co-operation with municipalities was established. The health education assistants initiated many changes to improve the overall living situation in settlements such as building up basic infrastructure, addressing the availability of drinking water, sewage, waste disposal and the regular cleaning of the settlement's environment. Over a period of one year health education assistants performed a total of 93,108 interventions benefiting 779,193 clients. They handed out 92,690 invitations to medical check-ups and 45,775 to vaccinations. The largest number of interventions was carried out in the Prešov, Košice and Vranov districts.

Based on the results, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic expressed interest in this project. On 1st October 2014, the Platform and the Ministry established a joint non-profit organisation Healthy Communities. The Healthy Communities non-profit organisation has emerged as a model solution that has effectively and actively linked several organisations to achieve the common objective of improving the health of disadvantaged groups and which brought a social innovation in the approach to this issue. Uniting a central government body as a competent authority and an NGO with a long-established know-how in the field was one of the unique and innovative elements of the Healthy Community non-profit organisation.

Healthy Communities non-profit provided generally beneficial services in the field of creation and protection of the environment and health protection of the population in order to increase the education levels, skills and health education of the population. The main objective of the non-profit



Richard Koky, Healthy Communities Conference, Poprad, 2014

organisation was to systematize a program of health education in disadvantaged communities throughout Slovakia, to promote the use of human resources directly from segregated settlements and to increase the employment rate through the implementation of the Healthy Communities National Project. The national project, implemented between 1st October 2014 and 31st December 2016, directly continued with the Platform's proven implemented model of the project built on more than a decade of ACEC's experience.

From 1st January 2017 the Healthy Communities National Project was taken over by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, which implemented it through the Healthy Regions State Contribution Fund. The Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic adopted the Healthy Communities programme in full, including the name, methodology, structure, education methods and trained employees, which created room for the implementation of a comprehensive, long-term solution for the situation of disadvantaged groups in the area of health at national level. Within the Supervisory Body of Healthy Regions, a representative of the Platform is elected and the Healthy Regions organisation is a member of the Platform for Health Support in Disadvantaged Groups..

The Platform continues in an active pursuit of its targeted activities. Membership of the organisation is open to all who care about improving health in disadvantaged groups and developing health mediation for disadvantaged groups in Slovakia and abroad, and want to actively contribute to their improvement with their know-how.

The Platform has become a member of EPHA – European Public Health Alliance – in 2016.



Together for Better Health

2012 – present

Slovakia, Hungary,
Romania, Serbia

Together for Better Health is an innovative international project improving the health of the Roma population in settlements across Europe.

Since 2012, the project has been implemented by the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (Slovakia), Asociatia OvidiuRo (Romania), Partners Hungary Foundation (Hungary), Association National Network of Health Mediators (Bulgaria). The network of partners expanded to UNICEF Serbia in 2017. Since its beginning the project has been implemented with financial support of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

The international platform Together for Better Health brings together partners whose common objective is to improve the health of Roma population of Europe. One of its objectives is the personal and professional growth of health education assistants, inhabitants of the communities. Project activities include vocational training, lectures, organisation of health awareness and hygiene events. An important part of the project is the mutual co-operation, support and exchange of experiences and proposals for improvements between partners from different countries with different conditions but with the same aim: advocacy and co-operation in developing health mediation and improvement of health in marginalised Roma communities across Europe.

Since 2012, within the Together for Better Health framework, we have managed to expand our project Healthy Communities to an additional 32 segregated settlements in eastern Slovakia, with 39 health education assistants and 3 co-ordinators. Project activities

have had a direct positive impact on more than 31,000 inhabitants in those participating settlements. The objective of the activities was to raise awareness of disease prevention and possibilities of healthcare treatment in the Roma community via regular and systematic work of health education assistants in Roma settlements.

Co-operation and the exchange of experiences within the international network had a significant impact on the shaping and development of the Healthy Communities project.

The accompanying event of the 6th Annual Conference of the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) – "Access to Basic Healthcare for Roma Living in Segregated Communities" – was prepared in co-operation of EPHA and the partners of Together for Better Health. In the event organised in Brussels in 2015, Slovakia was, among others, represented by; Branislav Ondruš, State Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic; the Mayor of Markušovce Marek Virág; and Rado Horváth, a health education assistant. This meeting at a European level has provided a platform for discussing Roma integration issues, past successes and barriers, but also strategies for the future and opportunities to share reliable methods that could be applied in other countries.

Within the project we are currently working on educational activities for healthcare providers, carrying out activities on the occasion of the International Day of Clean Hands for pre-school children and pupils in the lower levels of primary education, and developing educational projects on health for settlement inhabitants. Due to our experience and methods proven in practice, the natural continuation of our efforts is to focus on the early development of children. The project Together for Better Health – MISSION 1000 – provides health education assistants with specialised training in correct pre-natal preparation, breastfeeding, as well as other activities for mothers and children to help with early child development and the teaching of parental skills.



Educational activities for children, Prešov – Stará tehelná, 2017



Via Bona 2017 Award, Katarína Bodnárová, Paul van Hoof, Miriam Kejzlarová, Andrea Kočíšová, Magdaléna Rothová, Michal Kubo, Bratislava, 2018



Mária Nazarejová, Nikola Kroková, Luník 9, 2017



Health Collaboration Award 2016, Paul van Hoof (centre), Brussels, 2016



Together for Better Health partners meeting, Košice, 2019

Together for Better Health – Luník 9

2012-present

This has been an extension of the long-standing international project Together for Better Health and its main objective is to improve health, increase education levels and improve the employment rate of Roma residents at the Luník 9 estate in Košice.

Between 2012 and 2017 the programme Together for Better Health – Luník 9 found and trained six volunteer health education assistants who served as mediators between public healthcare services and Roma citizens, educated on hygiene, nutrition, care for infants and children, and implemented activities for health improvement and protection. Alone in 2017, our six volunteer health education assistants carried out more than 18,300 interventions at Luník 9.

The activities at Luník 9 continue to this date. In addition to the awareness-raising activities for children, we are preparing to expand the skillsets of our volunteer health education assistants to meet the requirements needed for our new project MISSION 1000.

For the realization of the project, GSK Slovakia received the Via Bona Slovakia 2017 award in the Good Community Partner category.

Pan-European co-operation was born thanks to the initiative of Elena Marušák and Paul van Hoof, the then CEO of GSK Slovakia, which further develops and actively promotes this initiative. The extension of the project to the Luník 9 borough was initiated by Pavol Trnovec of GSK Slovakia.

In 2016 the Together for Better Health project was highlighted by the European Commission as an inspiration for European countries and an effective health programme in its report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies. For our co-operation and involvement of multiple partners, Together for Better Health received a Health Collaboration Award in 2016 granted by the EFPIA Patient Think Tank and was highly praised for its focus on Roma populations across eastern Europe.

2012

Together for Better Health project is launched

2016

Health Collaboration Awards

2017

Via Bona Good Community Partner
awarded to GSK Slovakia

Greeting for Belarus

2014

Minsk, Vitebsk, Belarus

Project organised on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the admission of V4 countries into the European Union.

“The presented photographs are critical, too – free society means freedom of expression.”

– Miroslav Mojžita, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Belarus

In 2014, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the admission of Visegrad group countries into European Union, we organised a culture project called Greeting for Belarus. The exhibitions were presented in two Belarusian cities – in Minsk and Vitebsk.

Each V4 country was represented by two artists – one photographer and one composer who together had prepared an audio-visual report of the current state of affairs in the country they represented. Every photographer created a slide-show of photographs from their own portfolio, which was then accompanied by music composed by the composer of the same country reflecting the current sound and atmosphere of their place of origin.

All artists (Boris Németh and Henrich Leško – SK, Tomáš Pospěch and Vít Zouhar – CZ, Péter Puklus and Bálint Veres – HU, Agnieszka Rayss and Mateusz Ryczek – PL) captured the changes undergone by Slovakia, Czechia, Hungary and Poland in the previous ten years, i.e. since their admission to the EU. Their photographs and music mirrored the characteristics that are ingrained in each respective country and the characteristics that stay the same even in the face of vast socio-economic shifts.

Denisa Gura Doričová
Curator of Greeting for Belarus

The exhibition Greeting for Belarus set out to reflect the current state of affairs and the image of V4 countries in the eyes of artists – photographers and composers. Their works were to capture a unique look at a fragment of their country or their country as a whole. Photographers chose from themes they had worked on before but arranged them into new compositions. Composers created music to accompany the photographs in harmony with their mood but also to reflect the mood and emotions of the artists as citizens of Slovakia, Czechia, Hungary and Poland.



Péter Puklus, Hungary



Boris Németh, Slovakia



Tomáš Pospěch, Czech Republic



Agnieszka Rayss, Poland

1 May 2004

V4 countries become members of the EU

17 September – 1 October 2014

Minsk
Greeting for Belarus exhibition
Minsk Historical Museum exhibition hall

19 September – 1 October 2014

Vitebsk
Greeting for Belarus exhibition
Vitebsk State Medical University

European Roma Spirit Award

2016 – present

The European Roma Spirit Award (ERSA) is an international award celebrating activities and projects that promote the integration of Roma in Europe and activities that bring functional and effective solutions for the issues faced by the wider Roma community.

www.romaspirit.eu
FB @romaspirit.europe

“The 1st ERSA introduces a fascinating diversity of people who dedicate their lives to the enhancement of Roma life in Europe and not only presents the scope of challenges facing the Roma in Europe today, but also a wonderful imagination and creativity of how to improve the quality of life of Roma communities in all areas. ERSA is also a tangible outcome of an idea of the Council of Europe that the homeland of Roma is in Europe and that the Roma are the truest of Europeans.”

Michal Vašečka,
Chair of the ERSA preparatory committee



European Roma Spirit Award 2016



International jury ERSA 2016, Věra Jourová, Andrzej Mirga, Bratislava, 2016

The 1st European Roma Spirit Awards (ERSA) 2016 were held in Bratislava, on the occasion of a conference titled Improvement of the Status of the Roma Youth as a Driving Force of Change, which was an official event of the SK PRES 2016. There were 65 nominees (individuals, organisations and projects) from 23 European countries.

The winners of the European Roma Spirit Awards 2016 were chosen by an international jury composed of Ethel Brooks (Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences), Andrzej Mirga (Roma Education Fund), Michael Kocáb (activist, Czechia) and Mirjam Karoly (Office for Democratic Insti-

tutions and Human Rights). The chairwoman of the international panel of experts was Věra Jourová, the EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality.

The gala ceremony of the international award was streamed live online.

The gala of the 1st ERSA in 2016 owes gratitude to the support from the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Roma Communities and other partners and benefactors.

10 October 2016

1st European Roma Spirit Award



Rehearsal, State Chamber Orchestra, Žilina, 2015

The project brings together 35 concert masters of the State Chamber Orchestra in Žilina with 6 renowned Sendrei musicians, led by the unique vocalist Jana Sendrei and accompanied by a children's vocal choir called Čercheňora (consisting of predominantly Roma children from disadvantaged circumstances). The association of top-level musical bodies created an intense feature length gathering full of music, beauty and energy in the dramaturgy and arrangement of Slavomír Solovic.

Music dramaturgy was based on a Baroque form called concerto grosso, when a small group of soloists takes turns with a large orchestra. Slavomír Solovic, music dramaturg, was inspired by Roma folklore in his selection of music and in the composition of the concert itself. Using specific themes from that folklore enabled the use of textures rearranged into a modern orchestra form with the insertion of contemporary rhythms, cadence and harmony, creating room for the use of style, dynamism, colour and sound contrast between a small group of traditional instruments played by Roma musicians and other players in the orchestra.

Both groups play off and affect each other – the vitality and drive are transferred to different parts and the rustic expression of the orchestra with, conversely, the sophistication and discipline into the traditional Roma music. The atmosphere is completed by the children's vocal choir Čercheňora in a line-up of 35 children. Symbiosis

of three musical bodies created a unique musical fusion, wherein the elements of both styles of music (classical music and Roma folklore) were combined into a single sensitively balanced work. The project was organised in partnership with the State Chamber Orchestra in Žilina and with financial support from the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. The first performance was at the largest music festival in Slovakia, at Pohoda 2015, where it received a jubilant welcome and thrilled feedback from the audience. Because of the great success of its début in 2015, two other concerts were organised in the building of the State Chamber Orchestra in Žilina and at the House of Art in Piešťany. The connection of unbridled Roma folklore and the uncompromising consistency of classical music, and the arrangement of selected songs of Roma folklore into an orchestral form, was a unique achievement not only in Slovakia, but also anywhere around the world.

Sendreiovci le Orchestroha

2015 – present

Trenčín, Žilina, Piešťany;
Slovakia

The Sendreiovci Le Orchestroha project was developed following an idea of the Roma Spirit Award, intended to attract the attention of individuals and the media to the importance of recognising the natural dignity and equal and vested rights of all people, regardless of their nationality and ethnic affiliation.

11 July
2015

Music Festival Pohoda,
Trenčín

10 November
2016

State Chamber
Orchestra, Žilina

11 November
2016

House of Art,
Piešťany



Roma Spirit

2009 – present
Slovakia

Roma Spirit is a successful, established event in both Slovakia and Czechia and has been organised since 2009. The Europe-wide version of this project called European Roma Spirit Award was first organised in 2016.

www.romaspirit.sk
FB @romaspirit.slovensko

“We support the active effort of all who are improving the situation of the Roma population in Slovakia.”

– Ľubomíra Slušná-Franz
President of ACEC, creator of Roma Spirit



Ľubomíra Slušná-Franz, Roma Spirit 2015

The Roma Spirit initiative promotes the efforts of people who actively improve the situation of the Roma population. The project has created a tradition in recognising activities and working with Roma communities as well as creating a public platform which annually introduces the general public to the positive, practical activities of organisations and individuals that benefit from the integration of a Roma minority into society and their situation in general.

The Roma Spirit Awards publicly recognise and support projects and activities, which

bring tangible, measurable results and solutions to the problems of the Roma community, those that are a true help for the Roma population. They award help, work and support that serves as a motivation for others to create their own effective projects in this area.

The Roma Spirit Awards have been granted annually since 2009. In the past 11 years, there have been 1,566 nominees and an award from the hands of jurors, organisers or partners has been received by 68 winners.

The Roma Spirit Awards are organised by the Association for Culture, Educations and



Roma Spirit 2016, RTVS, Bratislava, 2016

“Every nomination comes with a story; some are so powerful they could be made into a feature film.”

– Marta Gajdošíková
Director of RTVS* channel 2
*national tv and radio service

Communication (ACEC), Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS – public broadcasting service) and the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Roma Communities. In previous years the event was held under the auspices of Andrej Kiska, the then President of the Slovak Republic. In 2019 the new President, Zuzana Čaputová, has taken over this privilege along with the Ombudswoman Mária Patakyová.

There are seven award categories: Non-governmental Organisation, Personality, Municipality and City, Company and

Employer, Media, Culture and a special category Act of the Year.

The nomination process has two phases. All received nominations which meet the rules of entry are forwarded to the Roma Spirit preparatory committee, which by consensus, decides on a shortlist of twenty-one nominations; three in each of the seven categories. The winner in each category is chosen by an international panel and by the Act of the Year panel.

Past members of the panel include Václav Havel, Michael Kocáb, Romani Rose, Past

2005

Concert Roma Spirit
at the Carnegie Hall

2008

0th Gypsy Spirit

2009

1st Gypsy Spirit

2010

2nd Gypsy Spirit

2011

3rd Gypsy Spirit

2012

4th Gypsy Spirit

Roma Spirit

The European Commission's official 2016 evaluation of national strategies for Roma integration praised the Roma Spirit project amongst other effective programmes in the area of culture. We were selected mainly because of the positive presentation of the Roma and their culture, and for the contribution to the elimination of prejudice and stereotypes associated with the Roma population.

“Roma Spirit is a unique format of public recognition in Slovakia.”

Ivan Antala, Managing Director of Radio Expres, partner of the Act of the Year category

“Roma Spirit recognises the outlooks and activities that make Slovakia a modern and humane country for all.”

Jarmila Lajčáková, Senior researcher



2009 – 2019:

1566
received award nominations

68
awarded winners

3 800
guests at the gala ceremony

6 YEARS
and 765 minutes of televised broadcast

244 000
television viewership

“Without promoting good examples, our progress would be much slower.”

Ábel Ravasz, Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma communities

Past members of the panel include Václav Havel, Michael Kocáb, Romani Rose, Helfried Carl, Cristi Mahalache, Hilda Ó Riain, Marta Garcia Fidalgo, Gheorge Raducanu, Ivailo Tournev, Josh Warmisham, Ivan Antao, Katarína Mathernova, Andrzej Mirga, Rumyan Russinov, Nicholas Martyn, Costel Bercus,

Orhan Galjus, Marcel Šaňa, Mária Nazarejová, Anna Jurgovianová, Monica Nicoara, Sahraa Karimi, Elena Marušiaková, Angelina Dimiter Taikon, Ion Duminica, Tímea Kardos Werner, Laco Oravec, Hristo Kyuchukov, Janette Mottlová, Jarmila Bath, Timea Junghaus and many more.

2013

5th Gypsy Spirit

2014

6th Roma Spirit

2015

7th Roma Spirit



Roma Spirit

Bronzová skulptúra Roma Spirit, Ezechiel Zorla

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION

Award for activities of a civic association, foundation, non-profit organisation, interest collective or other non-governmental organisation.

PERSONALITY

Award for an individual who has been enduringly and actively improving the situation of the Roma community and helped with intercultural dialogue.

MUNICIPALITY AND CITY

Award for municipalities and territorial units which have, together with their local government, contributed to a honourable status of the Roma community and promoted understanding and co-existence with the majority.

COMPANY AND EMPLOYER

Award for activities of a company, entrepreneurial body, organisation or an institution such as a kindergarten, university or research centre.



Roma Spirit 2017, Aréna Theatre, Bratislava, 2017



Press conference announcing Roma Spirit 2017, Vladimír Sendrei, Vašo Mika, Ábel Ravasz, Magdaléna Rothová, Zuzana Havirová, Ján Orlovský, Open Gallery, Bratislava, 2017



Roma Spirit 2014, Vladimír Sendrei, Jana Sendreiová, Dan Bárta, Čercheňora choir, Theatre Nová Scéna, Bratislava, 2014

MEDIA

Award for a journalist or mass media outlet promoting positive, objective, sensitive and balanced information about the Roma minority or otherwise meaningfully contributing to the understanding and tolerance in society.

CULTURE

Award for an individual or organisation for a lifelong effort and/or for activities worthy of a special recognition, which contributes to the positive presentation, preservation or advancement of the Roma culture and identity.

ACT OF THE YEAR

Act of the Year is a special award for an exceptional act which saved a life or improved the quality of life of an individual or community.

Recognising and awarding practical and successful projects improving the living conditions of the Roma is extremely important. We succeed because of extraordinary people and organisations that significantly contribute to making Slovakia a country with a big heart and equal opportunities for everyone. And of course, thanks also to the relentless support from our partners and sponsors, reaching out in growing numbers every year. Thank you!

2016

8th Roma Spirit

2017

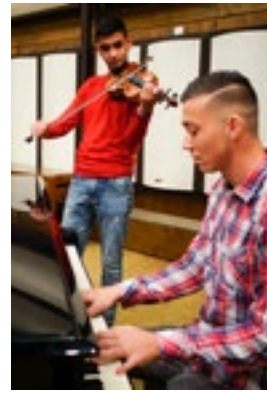
9th Roma Spirit

2018

10th Roma Spirit

2019

11th Roma Spirit




Thank you, one and all,
who have been
a part of our story!

ACEC

**Association for Culture,
Education and Communication
(ACEC)**

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Registered with the Ministry of
the Interior of the Slovak Republic
Legal form: Civic Association

Company registration number (IČO):
31 797 580

Tax Identification Number (DIČ):
202 169 7337

Registration number:

VVS/1-900/90-15506-4

IBAN: SK03 1100 0000 0029 2883 5813

Photo editor: Barbora Haviarová

Design: Dve Lamy

Print: BIND print

Font: Pluto Sans, Lora, Playfair

Cover and contents are printed on
the Pergraphica Classic Rough book
paper by Europapier Slovensko.

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