

24TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PUPPETRY ART

BÁBKARSKÁ 2024 BYSTRICA



24TH EDITION OF BÁBKARSKÁ BYSTRICA CONTINUES OUR LONG-TERM FESTIVAL EXAMINATION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF PUPPET THEATRE. LAUNCHED IN 1994, THE PUPPET THEATRE AT THE CROSSROADS (HEREAFTER BDNR - BÁBKOVÉ DIVADLO NA RÁZCESTÍ) INDEPENDENTLY CONVENES THE 30TH FESTIVAL EDITION. THE EVENT IS HELD UNDER THE FOUNDING AUTHORITY OF THE BANSKÁ BYSTRICA SELF-GOVERNING REGION (BBSGR) WITH LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE SLOVAK ARTS COUNCIL AND BBSGR.

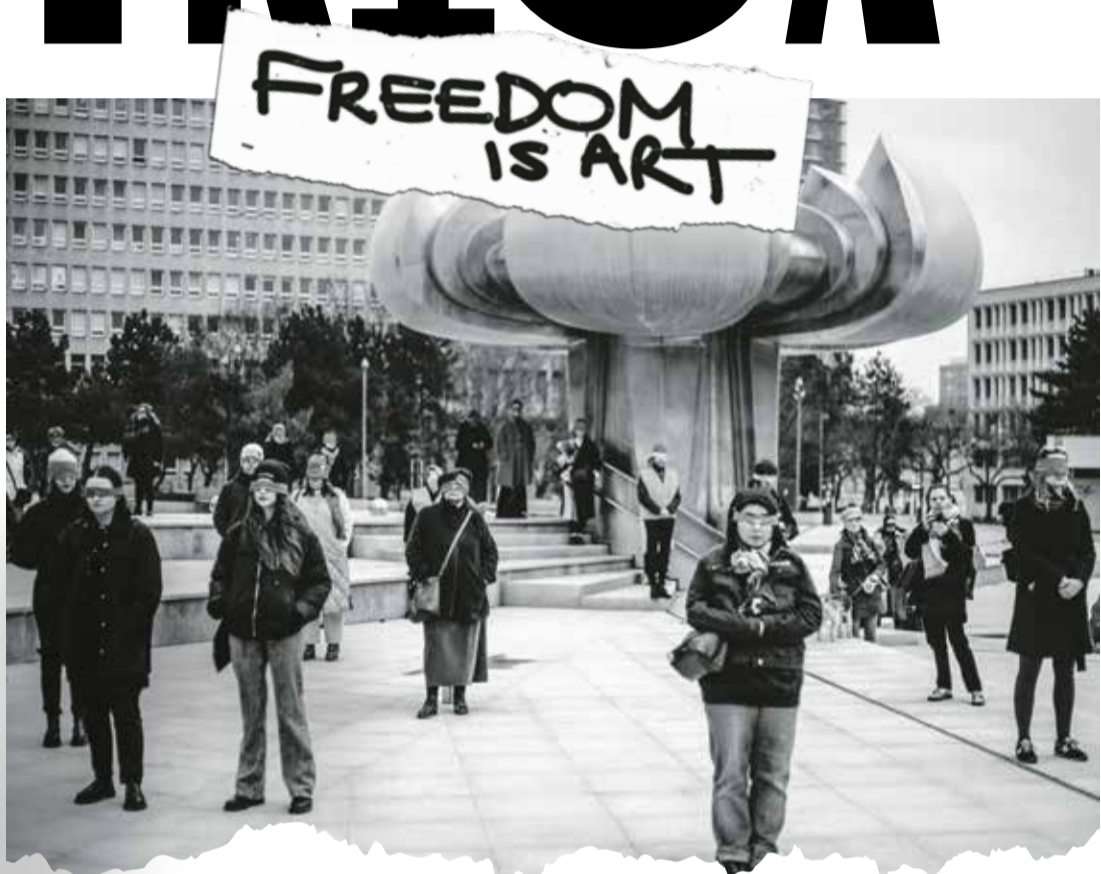


Photo © Andrea Kalinová (Otvorená Kultúra!)

Since the Velvet Revolution and the fall of Communism in 1989, Slovak puppet theatre changed fundamentally in its forms and content. Quantitative and qualitative changes are taking place in all aspects of creation – be that in content, form, in relation to the audience, or age-specific approach. Intersections of puppet theatre and other types of art, such as dance, opera, drama, music, performance, or new circus have become commonplace, as have creative works for youth and adults, along with addressing a range of socio historical, intergenerational themes.

Metamorphoses of puppet theatre evidence the expansion of the genre. In our region it has arisen from the freedom reclaimed after 1989. The change of the constitutional system, from totalitarian to democratic facilitated an expansion of art and creation in puppet theatre. Under the regained democracy and freedom, circumstances emerged for the emergence of independent

puppet theatre companies across Slovakia, along with the foundation of the Department of Puppet Art at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (est. 1991), the Museum of Puppet Culture and Toys at Modrý Kameň (est. 1996), a number theatres governed by municipal authorities have or are going through technical overhaul and venue renovations (BDNR, Puppet Theatre Košice, Puppet Theatre Nitra, Puppet Theatre Žilina, Bratislava Puppet Theatre). The era has also seen the nascence of a number of Slovak puppet festivals (Bábková Žilina, est. 2008, Virvar est. 2012), an original children's play competition Artúr (est. 2003); along with the encyclopaedia History of Slovak Drama in Puppet Theatre (Dejiny slovenskej dramatiky bábkového divadla), a range of publications dedicated to puppet theatre were published and translated. A commendable number of leaders in stage directing, creative art and acting were born.



IVETA
ŠKRIPKOVÁ
FESTIVAL
DIRECTOR

Quite a few creative international puppetry projects were completed; UNIMA advanced its activities; the legacy and work of Slovak nomadic puppeteers was established – those of the Anderle family, the Dubsky family, the Stražan family; puppet television and film production gained ground. There were many events, processes and system changes.

After the 23rd edition of BábkarSKá Bystrica in 2022, when we were looking for a connection with the European spirit of informal learning through art and theatre, we realised that the development of puppet theatre spanning over 35 years was not an accident. It came about thanks to democratic developments after 1989 that proved conducive for freedom of thought and creation in Slovakia. The events of the recent few months in the public administration of culture, inept personnel changes in cultural institutions, professionally unfounded changes to the legislation on the Slovak Arts Council and the public broadcaster Slovak Television

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BÁBKARSKÁ BYSTRICA 2024

Dear Festival aficionados, I allowed myself to use this address as it is essentially due to you, your goodwill and support we can make our ideas, plans and progress come true. Our international festival BábkarSKá Bystrica is no exception. For decades, the Festival has been making noteworthy mark in the cognisance of stage art, not merely puppetry. The Festival makers enjoy the favour of children and adult audiences. The same applies to the interest of local and international theatres that present their work at the Festival, bringing new perspectives on current trends in puppet theatre. For seven years, the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region has been supporting the Festival convenor – the Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads that is free to create and artistically interpret current themes that echo across the public.

Puppet theatre has its roots in antiquity, when it served as a mirror of the times. I recall that, as pupils, we used to go to puppet theatre. We had no idea that the theatre was subtly cultivating us. That is indeed the point. To guide and teach softly, yet tellingly. As a parent, I also use the gifts that theatre brings and I enjoy taking my children to the puppet theatre.

I highly value the work of the Festival team for taking the challenging path of promoting in practice the ideas of informal learning through art and theatre. It is also through the Festival that the team accentuates the international good practice abroad and aims to transfer it into creative work.

In 2024, the Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads comes with an innovative concept of the Festival. In addition to regular participants, the current Festival edition will feature new theatre companies, such as those from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland and Israel. Audiences will no doubt welcome the live opportunity to compare our and international perceptions of art.

I am delighted that the Puppet

Theatre at the Crossroads has long been working with additional cultural institutions founded by the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region, such as the Studio Dance Theatre that will host some of the performances, or the Central Slovak Gallery. Its garden will be the venue of the Festival novelty – an outdoor theatre and art installation of works by students of the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica.

"Freedom is art. Art is freedom" This is leitmotif of the 2024 BábkarSKá Bystrica. My patronage of the Festival is a pledge freedom of artistic creation. Art is to be the bearer of mutual understanding, cohesion and harmony. Let's tune in to its wave together. ♥



ONDREJ LUNTER
CHAIRMAN OF THE
BANSKÁ BYSTRICA
SELF-GOVERNING
REGION

remind us that democratic processes are not and have never something to be taken for granted. Our predecessors were also well aware of this. This year, Slovakia makes proud and frequent references to the legacy of the Slovak National Uprising, as we are commemorating its 80th anniversary. The message of many people of Slovakia who gathered the courage to disagree with the totalitarian regime and Fascism holds its currency, significance and inspiring charge today. Let's not forget that our ancestors were ready give their lives for democracy and freedom. Our predecessors also remembered this in 1969 and 1989. Democracy and freedom must be protected. To be safeguarded. And, if required, to be fought for. Historia magistra vitae. Let's remember. Remember!

The 24th edition of the festival BábkarSKá Bystrica, its theme and programme accentuates the importance of free thinking for creation, for our culture, for puppet theatre, and for references to the past. Freedom is art. Art is freedom. Both are an integral part of democracy. We don't want to go back to before 1989, not even before 1939. ♥

MAIN PARTNERS

u. fond na podporu umenia
Festival BábkarSKá Bystrica 2024 z verejných zdrojov podporil Fond na podporu umenia

Realizované: **S FINANČNOU PODPOROU BANSKOBYSSTRICKÉHO SAMOSPRÁVNEHO KRAJA**

Partners: **café európa**

PARTNERS

Partners: **Akadémia umení v Banskej Bystrici**, **DŠT**, **DIVADLO ŠTÚDIO TANCA**, **THE URBAN SPOT**

HOGO FOGO Tento projekt sa uskutočňuje vďaka finančnej podpore **Nadácia SPP**

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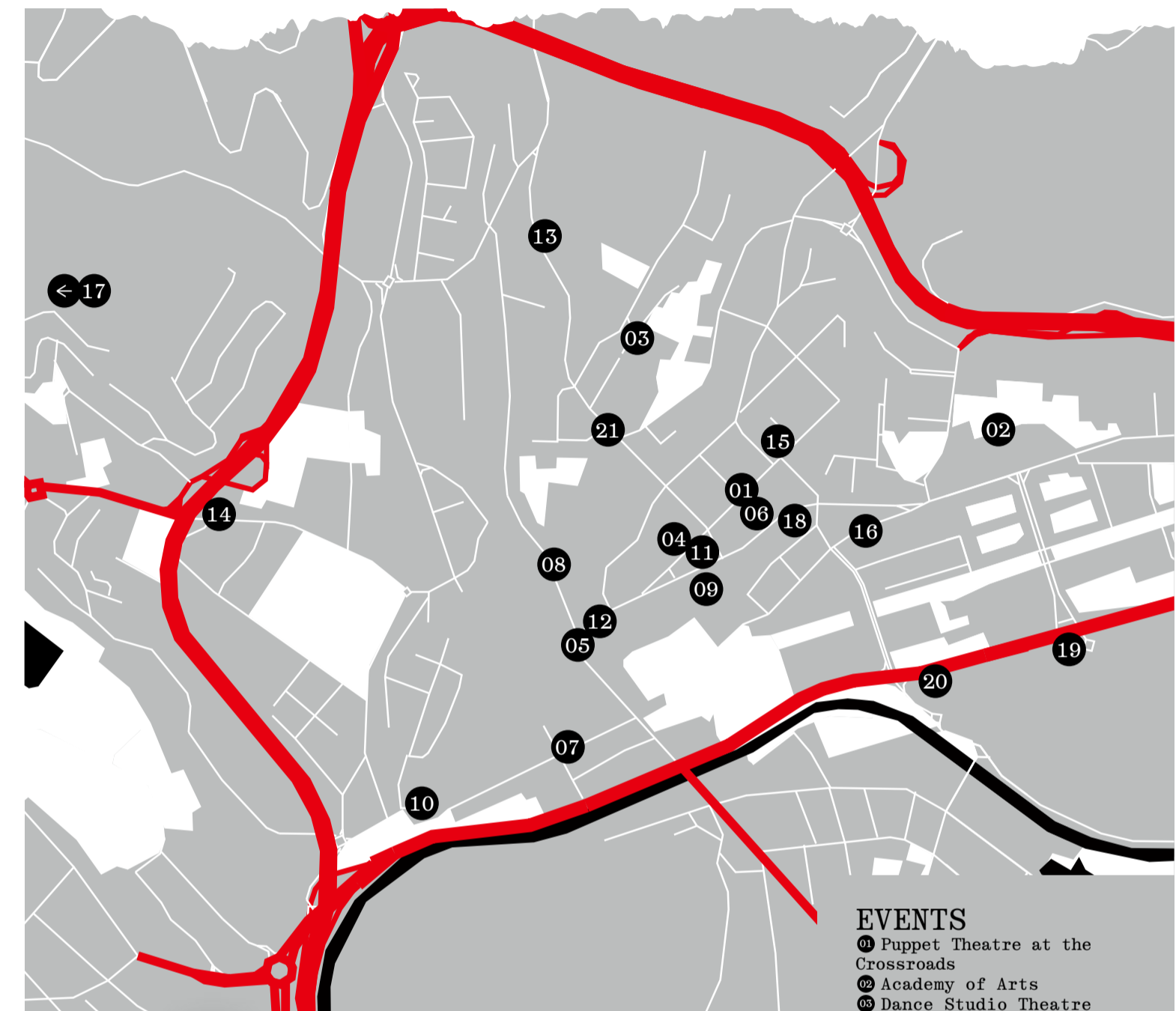
MAP OF FESTIVAL

FEST-IN

Fest-in is part of the Festival life, a diary capturing current events at the Festival. The production team comprises students and graduates of theatre departments: Kateřina Mikutová and Jakub Tesárek from the Department of Theatre Studies at the Faculty of Arts & Letters of the Charles University in Prague; Oleksandra Titarova, a graduate in theatre criticism from the Theatre Faculty, Academy of Performing Arts (DAMU) in Prague; Filip Vrabel, a student of aesthetics at the Faculty of Arts & Letters of the Comenius University in Bratislava. The team is works under the tutelage of Petronela Brotková, a graduate from the Department of Theatre Studies, Faculty of Theatre, Academy of Performing Arts (VŠMU) in Bratislava, currently a student of theatre studies at DAMU in Prague. Natália Božíková, student of visual art animation at the Faculty of Education of the University of Trnava, is the Fest-in graphic artist.

Fest-in bears witness to the days of the Festival. It is an invaluable contribution to the Festival memory. It offers space for a broad discussion on the Festival themes and serves as a reflection of the view and attitudes of contemporaries. It also builds upon Czech-Slovak cooperation through the involvement of students and graduates from theatre departments from both countries. Fest-in will come out during the Festival in seven issues available at

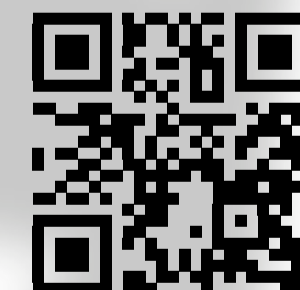
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FESTIVAL WHO-IS-WHO, THEATRES

At the Festival, we feature welcome a number of outstanding artists from seven European countries and Israel. Their detailed profiles are at

BABKARSKABYSTRICA.SK



PERFORMANCE VENUES

Academy of Arts, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, 95 Horná Street
Dance Studio Theatre
Urban Spot
Garden of The Dominik Skutečný Gallery

PODCASTS

Our pre-Festival podcasts address the theme of freedom and art. In culture, the theme is not so new that we wouldn't know that it periodically appears in connection with threats to democracy and human rights. It this comes as no surprise that many influential figures have addressed it over history. As their ideas have loss none of their currency, it is well worth to revisit them. The Festival has in store four podcasts.

A series of three podcasts are entitled Fictional Conversations on Freedom with Non-fiction authors. Two are produced in cooperation with Zuzana Galková, playwright and editor at Radio Devín, who spoke with George Orwell and Christa Wolf. The third is an interview with Virginia Woolf conducted by Iveta Škripková.

The fourth podcast, produced by Terézia Šusteková, focuses to the Festival and the development of volunteerism and civic solidarity.

EVENTS

- 01 Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
- 02 Academy of Arts
- 03 Dance Studio Theatre
- 04 Urban Spot
- 05 Hogo Fogo Jazz & Art Club
- 06 The Central Slovak Gallery

ACCOMMODATION

- 07 Hotel Národný Dom
- 08 Hotel - Penzión Kúria
- 09 Penzión Grand
- 10 Penzión BOCA
- 11 Slovenské Misijné Hnutie
- 12 Penzión Moyzes
- 13 Právnická fakulta Univerzity Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici
- 14 Penzión Al Corso

DINING

- 15 Reštaurácia Elysian

HOSPITALS & SHOPPING

- 16 Outpatient clinic Banská Bystrica
- 17 F.D. Roosevelt University Hospital & Outpatient Clinic
- 18 Prior Shopping Centre

TRANSPORT

- 19 Main train station Banská Bystrica
- 20 OC TERMINAL
- 21 ECO Hybrid TAXI Banská Bystrica



CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

The theatre programme for children comprises **15** productions of puppet theatres and independent companies from five European countries: the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Ukraine, and Slovakia. The selection includes productions for all ages of children – ranging from 0 to 15. It presents various forms and methods in contemporary puppet theatre.

The featured productions are highly diverse in content; they open such themes as home and small invisible significant things in life; they bring contemporary approach

to classic national fairy-tale; they address friendship between man and dog, ecology, thoughts about old age, about the courage to dream and be oneself. There are plays with shadows, poetry, words, sounds, and fantasy.

The performances present quite diverse contemporary puppet theatre tools that reflect the intersections of all kinds of art. The Festival is a sampler of productions with different ways of communicating with audience – from silent participation to live interaction, and audience participation in the play.

Children's theatres from Denmark and Germany will feature for the first time not only in Banská Bystrica, but in Slovakia, as will our colleagues from the Czech Republic – the young Czech-Slovak company Zdruhestrany, the Prague-based soloist Andrej Lyga, and the Lampión Theatre Kladno.

The children's festival is an example of the aforementioned qualitative expansion of puppet theatre. It is also a parade of the joy of creative freedom for children. (is) ♥

COLOPHONE

Festival newspaper, 24th edition of the international festival of contemporary puppet theatre 2024. Freedom is art. 1 October - 6 October 2024.

Editorial: Iveta Škripková, Michaela Gádošiová (BDNR)

Input: Marián Pecko, Livia Pyšná (BDNR), Lenka Dzadiková, Katarína Vozárová, Theatre Institute, Bratislava. Slovak language proofreading: Lubomír Gábor Translation into English: Lucia Faltin Photos: personal and theatre archives, BDNR archive, Otvorená Kultúra! platform Graphic design: Martin Mistrík Printed by: Petit Press, a.s. Print run: 2 000 pcs

FESTIVAL FOR ADULTS

THROUGH THE LENS OF WOMEN & CURRENT SOCIO-HISTORICAL THEMES

The Festival programme for adults (or for adult and youth) presents **9** stage productions from 4 countries: the Czech Republic (5), Finland (1), Israel (1) and Slovakia (2).

In connection with the Festival leitmotif **FREEDOM IS ART**, we gave space to productions addressing socio-cultural and historical overlaps. The lens of women represents the second distinctive line of performances for adults and youth. For the first time ever, we have decided to draw attention to the lives and attitudes of women towards the above themes, to focus spotlight on female protagonists and, at the same time, the creative individuals behind the performances. Each performance is followed by a Q&A with the creative team focusing on the content of the production. The discussions will be chaired by Lukáš Kopas, Marián Pecko, Daniela Brezániová and Barbora Bystrianska.

Though most lay public still thinks that puppet theatre is for children, there is no denying that puppet theatre works for adults and youth have become a regular instrument of creation. The expansion of intergenerational, cultural-social and historical themes, taboos that are rarely discussed in art and the public, is a frequent phenomenon in puppet theatre bringing an expressive emotional theatre experience.

For years, we have been surrounded and troubled by such phenomena as extremism, radicalism, restriction of democracy, war and human suffering in war conflicts, necropolitics and permanent (e)migration. Thus, it comes as no surprise that two performances for adults are inspired by the works by the Nobel Prize in literature laureate Svetlana Alexievich (BDNR and Spitfire company Prague) who talks about people and totality so enticingly that her works cannot be forgotten. (That also applies to the two productions.) The sample of performances includes an author's play by the theatre Líšeň with a highly important and little-addressed theme of aging and life as experienced by mature adults. The sample concludes with an evocative Finnish performance about the fate of (e)migrants in the so-called civilised European world.

Through the lens on women consists of five performances from Czech, Slovak, and one Israeli production. They focus on exceptional (little-known) female heroines. The productions simultaneously highlight the female experience in questions of freedom and lack of freedom, both in the past and present. We will encounter the lives of personalities such as Charlotte Masaryk, Ružena Zátková, Helen Keller, and Ann Sullivan, and not least the living legend of the Israeli visual performance and puppet theater scene, Michal Svironi. The sample is complemented by the story of ordinary sisters who excel in obedience and fear of authority.

The phenomenon of female

creators and the so-called female perspective is not new, even in puppet theater, although in the Czech and Slovak context of puppet theater, it is hardly written or spoken about (which is certainly a pity). Abroad, female personalities like Ilko Schönbein (Germany), the theater and group Nicole Mossoux (Belgium), the Plexus Polaire theater led by Yngvild Aspeli (France/Norway), or the Belova Iacobelli group (names of the creators, Italy), Nathalia Sakowicz (Poland), etc., are renowned creators who bring a female perspective to the world.

The BB 24 Festival for Adults once again testifies to the diverse expansion of the theatrical resources of puppet theater. It is a testament to free creation. (is) ♥

APPENDIX: The selection of productions for the festival program is formed from the end of one year to the opening of the next year, approximately two years. And this is based on the intersection of three forms of research into the creation of puppet theatre, based on the personal visit of the BDNR team to festivals (at home and abroad), the selection of registered theatres (application form with video recording), consultations with domestic and foreign experts* (from the Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, Finland, etc.). In 2023 and 2024, more than 30 productions of domestic and foreign puppet theatres applied for the selection.



PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 2 OCT

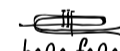
TUESDAY 1 OCT

9:00 | 13:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
THEATRE MADAM BACH, Odder (DK)
Pernille Bach: HOME
Non-verbal | 30 min. | € 7 | [T](#) [+](#)

11:00 | Academy of Arts,
Faculty of Dramatic Arts
KYIV NATIONAL I. K. KARPENKO-
KARYI THEATRE, CINEMA AND
TELEVISION UNIVERSITY, Kyiv (UA)
**Jafer Bekirov: THE LEGEND
ABOUT GULJIAN**
Ukrainian language | 30 min. | € 7 | [T](#) [+](#)

16:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
PUPPET THEATRE AT THE CROSSROADS,
Banská Bystrica (SK)
**Katherine Mansfield:
THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE COLONEL**
Kindly note: expressive language
appears in the production.
Q&A after the performance.
60 min. | € 12 adults, € 8
students | [A](#) [D](#) [U](#) [L](#) [T](#) [S](#)

18:00 | Urban Spot
THEATRE LÍŠEŇ, Brno (CZ)
**Pavla Dombrovská, Luděk Vémola:
CRIPPLETREK**
Q&A after the performance.
Czech language | 50 min. | € 12
adults, € 8 students | [A](#) [D](#) [U](#) [L](#) [T](#) [S](#)

 20:00 | HOGO FOGO
The popular jazz club
Hogo Fogo will serve as Festival
club during the Festival days.
Guest of the evening: **Tomáš Pohorelec**,
singer, principal and comedian.
Price € 20 (on the spot).



01



02

01 KAMIL (Marta Guśniowska)
02 THE LEGEND ABOUT GULJIAN (Jafer Bekirov)
03 THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE COLONEL
(Katherine Mansfield)
04 NO! (Braňo Mazúch)
05 CRIPPLETREK (Pavla Dombrovská,
Luděk Vémola)

03



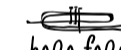
9:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
PUPPET THEATRE AT THE CROSSROADS,
Banská Bystrica (SK)
Marta Guśniowska: KAMIL
70 min. | € 7 | [T](#) [+](#)

Kindly note that the originally scheduled
performance BRZECHWATORIUM by Jan
Brzechwa from the Polish theatre Opolski
Teatr Lalki i Aktora, is cancelled.

11:00 | Dance Studio Theatre
PUPPET THEATRE, Košice (SK)
Braňo Mazúch: NO!
50 min. | 7 € | [T](#) [+](#)

15:00 – 17:00
Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
+ online stream
CAFÉ EUROPE FREEDOM IS ART
Discussion of topics that concern
the individual, but have a European
dimension. The format of the discussions
was created under the banner of
the Representation of the European
Commission in Slovakia in 2010.

18:00 | Academy of Arts,
Faculty of Dramatic Arts
SPITFIRE COMPANY, Prague (CZ)
THE LAST OF THE SOVIETS
Q&A after the performance.
Czech language | 45 min. | € 12
adults, € 8 students | [A](#) [D](#) [U](#) [L](#) [T](#) [S](#)

 20:00 | HOGO FOGO
The popular jazz club
Hogo Fogo will serve as Festival
club during the Festival days.
Guests of the evening: **The Bombardák
Band with Jiří Jelínek**, actor,
director, comedian, Brno (CZ).
Price € 20 (on the spot).

04



05





01

THURSDAY 3 OCT

9:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
ZDRUHESTRANY, Prague (CZ)
Jazmína Piktová: MICROWORLDS
Non-verbal | 45 min. | € 7 |

11:00 | Dance Studio Theatre
MALÉ DIVADLO, České Budejovice (CZ)
Petr Erbes, Karolína Kotrbová: SPAGHETTI FUTURISTA!
Q&A after the performance.
Czech language | 65 min. | € 7 |

13:00 | Academy of Arts,
Faculty of Dramatic Arts
NEW THEATRE, Nitra (SK)
Veronika Gabčíková, Šimon Spišák: ABOUT PLANTS, ANIMALS AND PEOPLE
60 min. | € 7 |

18:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
PUPPET THEATRE AT THE CROSSROADS,
Banská Bystrica (SK)
Svetlana Alexijevič: THE SECONDHAND TIMES. THE END OF THE RED MAN.
Kindly note: expressive language appears in the production.
Q&A after the performance.
100 min. | € 12 adults, € 8 students |

20:00 | HOGO FOGO
The popular jazz club
Hogo Fogo will serve as Festival club during the Festival days.
Guests of the evening: **Martin Husovský, Veronika Husovská**, leader of the band Komajota and a well-known Slovak actress from Prešov.
Price € 20 (on the spot).



02

01 SPAGHETTI FUTURISTA (Petr Erbes, Karolína Kotrbová)
02 CARTE BLANCHE (Michal Svironi)
03 MASARYK(OVÁ) (Milada Vyhňálková, Silvia Vollmann)
04 COSMOS (Odivo)
05 ROBINSON.KA (Monika Kováčová, Mária Danadová)



03



04

FRIDAY 4 OCT

9:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
INDEPENDENT THEATRE GROUP
ODIVO, Banská Bystrica (SK)
Odivo: COSMOS
35 min. | € 7 |

11:00 | Dance Studio Theatre
PUPPET THEATRE, Žilina (SK)
Monika Kováčová, Mária Danadová: ROBINSON.KA
45 min. | € 7 |

17:00 | Academy of Arts,
Faculty of Dramatic Arts
THEATRE NA CUCKY, Olomouc (CZ)
Milada Vyhňálková, Silvia Vollmann: MASARYK(OVÁ)
Q&A after the performance.
Czech language | 60 min. | € 12 adults, € 8 students |

19:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
CIE MICHAL SVIRONI, Tel Aviv (IL)
Michal Svironi: CARTE BLANCHE
Q&A after the performance.
English language with subtitles | 60 min. | € 12 adults, € 8 students |

20:00 | HOGO FOGO
The popular jazz club
Hogo Fogo will serve as Festival club during the Festival days.
Guests of the evening: **Andrea Bučko**, Slovak singer, musician and actress, **Daniel Žulčák**, musician, singer and actor of the Slovak National Theatre.
Price € 20 (on the spot).



05



01



02

SATURDAY 5 OCT

10:00 | 16:00 | Dance Studio Theatre
FLORSCHÜTZ & DÖHNERT, Berlin (DE)
Florschütz & Döhnert: ELECTRIC SHADOWS
Non-verbal | 40 min. | € 7 |

13:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
ANDREJ LYGA, Prague (CZ)
Andrej Lyga: THE FAIRYTALE FOR THE BRAVE
Non-verbal | 40 min. | € 7 |

19:00 | Urban Spot
OUKEJ THEATRE ASSOCIATION, Brno (CZ)
HEROINES?!
Q&A after the performance.
Czech language | 75 min. | € 12 adults, € 8 students |

20:00 | HOGO FOGO
The popular jazz club
Hogo Fogo will serve as Festival club during the Festival days.
Guest of the evening: **Eva Pavlíková**, well-known Slovak actress, member of DAB Nitra.
Price € 20 (on the spot).

01 INVISIBLE LANDS (Sandra Lindgren, Ishmael Falke)
02 ELECTRIC SHADOWS (Florschütz & Döhnert)
03 KOMODO (Petr Sis, Jakub Maksymov)
04 HEROINES?!



04

SUNDAY 6 OCT

10:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
THEATRE LAMPION, Kladno (CZ)
Petr Sis, Jakub Maksymov: KOMODO
Czech language | 50 min. | € 7 |

16:00 | Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads
BRATISLAVA PUPPET THEATRE,
Bratislava (SK)
Jiří Adámek Austerlitz: HUGO'S WORLD
55 min. | € 7 |

18:00 | Dance Studio Theatre
GRUS GRUS TEATTERI, Turku (FI)
Sandrina Lindgren, Ishmael Falke: INVISIBLE LANDS
English language with subtitles | 55 min. | € 12 adults, € 8 students |
After the performance, the festival conclusion.

20:00 | HOGO FOGO
The popular jazz club
Hogo Fogo will serve as Festival club during the Festival days.
Guest of the evening: **Mária Knoppová and Moruša**, singer and actress of DJGT Zvolen.
Price € 20 (on the spot).



03

MAN, PUPPET AND SPACE

13. 9. – 11. 10. | Skutecký Street,
Banská Bystrica
Outdoor theatre-art installation on the street where the theatre is located.
1. 10. – 6. 10. | 10:00 – 17:00 | **EN TY TÁ**
Performance in the Garden of Dominik Skutecký Gallery. Author Viktor Fuček.
In cooperation with the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica.

CREATIVE WORKING MEETING
5. 10. | 14:00 | Teatrium BDNR
A meeting of creative writing lecturers within the framework of non-formal education. Under the auspices of the Theatre Institute.

WORKSHOP
1. 10. | 12:00 and 3. 10. | 14:15 | Room 222, Academy of Arts
THEATRE MASK: FROM ANTIQUITY TO MODERNITY
Led by: Mykhailo Urytskyi (UA).

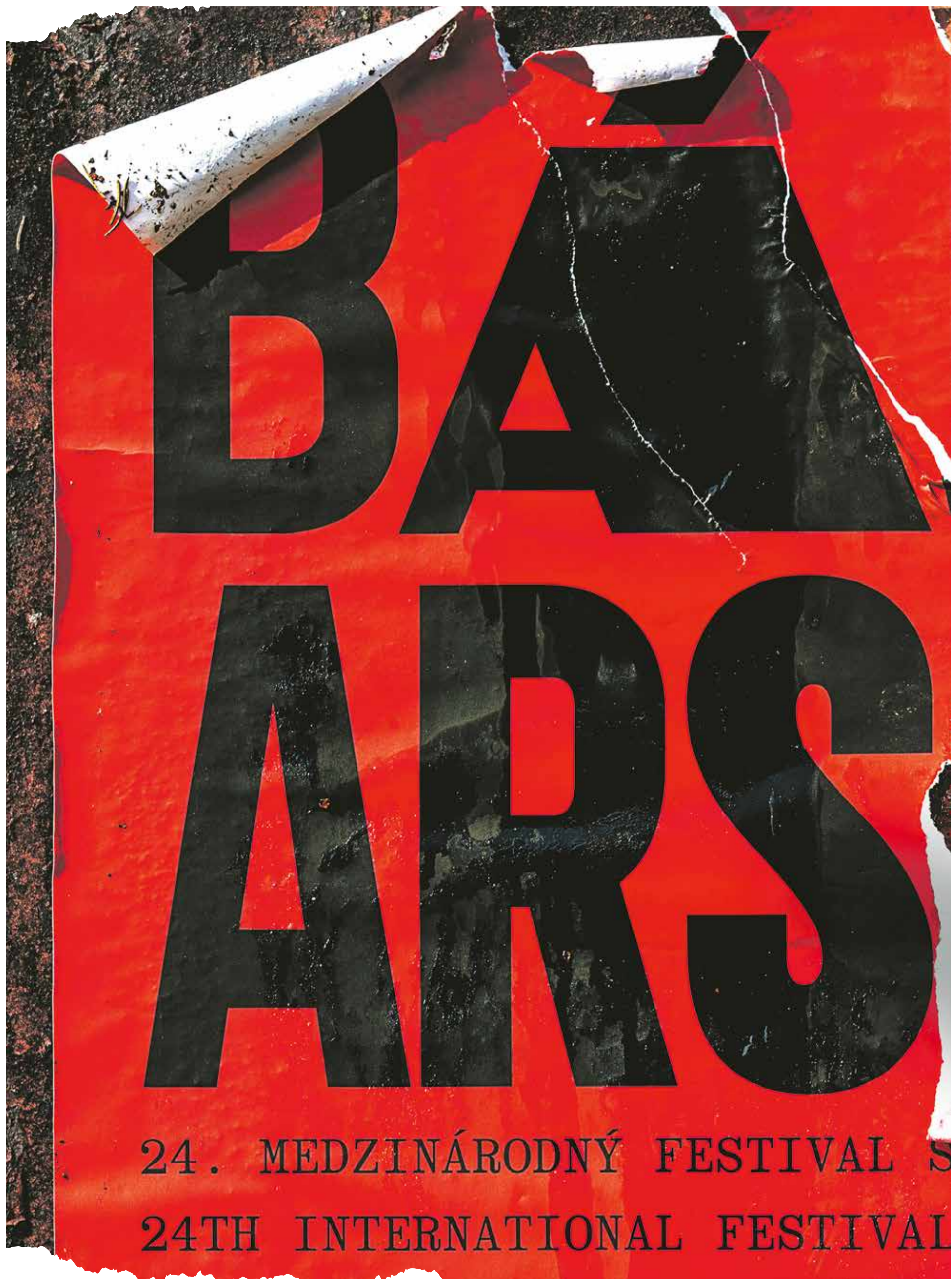


Foto © Nina Mikulášová

At the 2022 Bábkarská Bystrica 22, we focused on informal learning through art, with leitmotif THEATRE FOR EVERY DAY. The outcome of the 2022 edition was an initiative that accentuates the long process and evolution of formal and informal art education in Europe, something we in Slovakia are still to achieve for different reasons. In May 2024, the Strategy for the Development of Culture and Creative Industry in Slovakia 2030 came out (at last). It sets out systemic frameworks for development of culture and, last but not least, informal education. Alas, the current administration does not follow the strategic document. The document states, inter alia, that:

(...) The vision of culture and creative industry in 2030 is Slovakia that is free, culturally diverse, self-confident, with values firmly anchored in democracy. Together, we desire to create a country that protects and develops cultural and natural heritage, invests in education, supports talents and creativity, opens up to innovation and cooperation with the world. We therefore need a respected culture that unites diverse people and contributes to a high-quality and meaningful life for all.

Achieving this vision is identified and (...) elaborated in strategic priorities and measures:

- WELL GOVERNED CULTURE
- EFFECTIVELY FINANCED CULTURE
- DIGNIFIED CULTURE
- QUALITY CULTURE
- INCLUSIVE CULTURE
- RESPECTED CULTURE
- RESPONSIBLE CULTURE

WELL GOVERNED CULTURE, to strengthen the delivery of cultural policy based on quality management, participation and cooperation at all levels, and to introduce a result-oriented evaluation approach.

EFFECTIVELY FINANCED CULTURE to systematically reduce infrastructural and modernisation debt, and to increase the efficiency of management and financing of culture and creative industry, to supplement public funding sources with private ones.

DIGNIFIED CULTURE, to improve the circumstances for the work and creation of people working in culture and creative industry.

QUALITY CULTURE at increase expertise, innovation and quality in culture and creative industry.

INCLUSIVE CULTURE to ensure the availability of culture and the development of its specifics for everyone.

RESPECTED CULTURE to increase the prestige of culture and creative industry, and improve their recognition as a significant value for society at the national level, to increase the efficiency of international presentation and cooperation.

RESPONSIBLE CULTURE to participate in the identification and solution of current environmental and other public challenges, thereby increasing the cohesion and resilience of the society.

S touto témou sme oslovili našWith the theme, we approached our colleagues, who collaborate with us on the Festival, and who make it possible for the Festival to be held in four different venues. Within the framework of the overarching theme, we approached our Ukrainian colleague, Daria Ivanova, who – together with fellow academic and their students – maintains education at the University of Kyiv in the challenging war conditions. ♥

FREEDOM IS ART

EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 13: Art and scientific research shall be free of constraint

Today, within the tense socio-political situation, it may seem simple to say that art is and ought to be free. As someone who has long been involved in art and culture, I feel the need to elaborate on this. An artist and their work are often not entirely free. Just by the fact that we create with to earn our daily bread, we keep applying for subsidies, are employed in cultural institutions and so on, our work, the attitude of an artist and his or her presentation are limited to a certain extent. Yes, we believe and it seems to us that every artist naturally creates being driven by an inner tension, from an inner need and freely, without external commands. Nevertheless, I hardly know a work that would be formally

&
Lucia Kašiarová



**DIRECTOR,
STUDIO DANCE
THEATRE**

wholly free. Perhaps children's creativity comes closest. Yet, what matters most is that an artist with every single of his or her works, aims to approach freedom as closely as possible, to let art live within them – and not to live through art.

Yet, when looking at freedom from the perspective of external factors, freedom is the most fundamental aspect of creation: in its absence, art and artist cannot fully utilise their creative potential. Freedom is the cornerstone of artistic creation.

Yes, the two views somewhat contradict and determine each other; it seems as if neither were entirely true. Indeed, the essence of art is the endeavour to shape an abstract, so that it can be formed

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through the prism of an artist and transferred to the spectator, where it again takes on an abstract form that the spectator carries on, a form on which an artist and the art can no longer affect. This flow, this transformation, this morphing from one to another is possible only under the context of freedom. The more freedom is restricted, the less possible is the process of transformation and transfer. Free art is an endless endeavour to approach freedom. It is a manifestation of the endeavour on the part of the society to approach to the maximum extent the vital, critical entity that advances its empathy and becomes life itself.

In times when the power becomes an all-too dominant force, art is often censored and abused, as it is the censorship of art that most successfully disrupts freedom, or the sense of freedom of an individual and the society.

Freedom is art, art is freedom. **"Inner dignity has always been associated with a sense of freedom."** Ján Johanides, Slovak novelist. ♥

FREEDOM IS ART

When thinking about the theme Freedom is art, it ought to be said what art is. Whether it is a job or a mission. To me, it is clearly a mission. Therefore, it is alright for an individual to express how he or she feels, how they like it. Many others can thus partake in his or her emotion. That is how communities emerge. If we excessively control this state of freedom in art, we risk tedium and, consequently, long-term disinterest within the public in what has become monotonous, lifeless, emotionally void art. The best control of a performer – artist is when he or she has a full audience or, on the contrary, no audience ... As someone who has been touching culture for nearly 20 years, and actively for 17 years by making events and running a music club, I have already seen quite a lot. This is precisely why I try to give space to young unestablished and often unfamiliar performers. At least this way I can contribute to developing a new cultural generation.. ♥

&
Erik Oslanec



**FOUNDER,
URBAN SPOT***

[*] Urban Spot is the venue of a former cinema that currently serves as space for cultural events.

BÁBKARSKÁ BYSTRICA 2024

FREEDOM IS ART

To me, creation and, especially, the rehearsal process in stage art is associated with courage. The courage to express one's opinion, thoughts, emotions. In the creative process, we seek answers to different questions and often try, over and over again, not to give up. This phase is often accompanied by frustration, because, in order to get to the core, we have to remove many layers like in an onion. Spectator sees the final scene, the result of which is often a series of attempts where the creative team said, "This doesn't work, let's try something else." Creative process is fragile. It is a fusion of different aspects, discovering new options, paths, mutual augmentation and inspiration, as well as respect. The interplay of the uniqueness of individuals in a cooperating whole. Revealing a diverse perception of the world, crossing one's own limits, trying to achieve the truth and authenticity in reflecting the themes by which we live. Everything fragile can break under pressure. I would very much like for us not have to experience the sense of unfreedom. And to be brave. Not only in art. ♥

&
Soňa Kocánová



**VICE-DEAN FOR
ART, SCIENCE,
RESEARCH AND
INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS,
FACULTY OF
DRAMATIC ARTS OF
THE ACADEMY OF
ARTS IN BANSKÁ
BYSTRICA**

FREEDOM IS ART

Let me add a few thoughts to this wonderful catalogue of this incredible festival. Before I say something inspiring and here comes a brief statement. I would like to refer to the dictionary. The word freedom means "the condition or right of being able or allowed to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited"; and the word art means "the making of objects, images, music, etc. that are beautiful or that express feelings".

These words sound incredible, they are charged with incredibility, charged for a positive creation. Their combination is like a cocktail

that could be called Paradise for Artists – and also for all who respect themselves and others. To be free, to create, to express, to think, to speak, to express oneself, to feel – isn't it a blessed feeling?

But what happens when an artist and an ordinary person are deprived of this? It's unpleasant, but ... Admittedly, we can try to live without songs, without cinema, without theatre, without painting. We can live, satisfy our basic daily needs. Yet, after all that humankind has achieved in the field of creativity, how can we live without art? How can we accept this?

How can we manage without freedom? How can we accept

&
Daria Ivanovová



Photo © Daniel Voelsen

it? What does it feel like to live in conditions of limited choice, pressure of circumstances, when you are forced to think 24/7 about basic needs (water, food, air, electricity, safe shelter for yourself and your family)? These are uncomfortable and terrifying questions as we are now well into the twenty-first century.

These are the questions you can raise during this Festival on 1 October, after the performance at 11:00. You can direct them to those who have been living like this since 24th of February 2022, the day Russia launched its full-scale invasion in Ukraine. To those for whom the word art, the word freedom, and many other beautiful words charged



Photo © Tibor Czitó (Otvorená Kultúra!)

Photo © Olja Triaška Stefanović (Otvorená Kultúra!)



with beauty, incredibility, safety, and life were erased within a few minutes. You can ask those on stage.

The students of the Kyiv National I.K. Karpenko-Karyi University of Theatre, Cinema and Television, whom you will see in the performance *The Legend about Guljian*, continue to live and create despite everything and against all odds: rehearsing, researching, arguing, expressing themselves, making music, sculpting, tailoring costumes, singing, playing musical instruments, falling in love (I hope!). Nonetheless, they do it in an unusual way: in the subway during air raids, in a basement during missile

ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR AT
THE DEPARTMENT
OF PUPPETRY,
THE IVAN
KARPENKO-KARYI
KYIV NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY OF
THEATRE, FILM
AND TELEVISION;
UNIMA (UK)
PRESIDENT

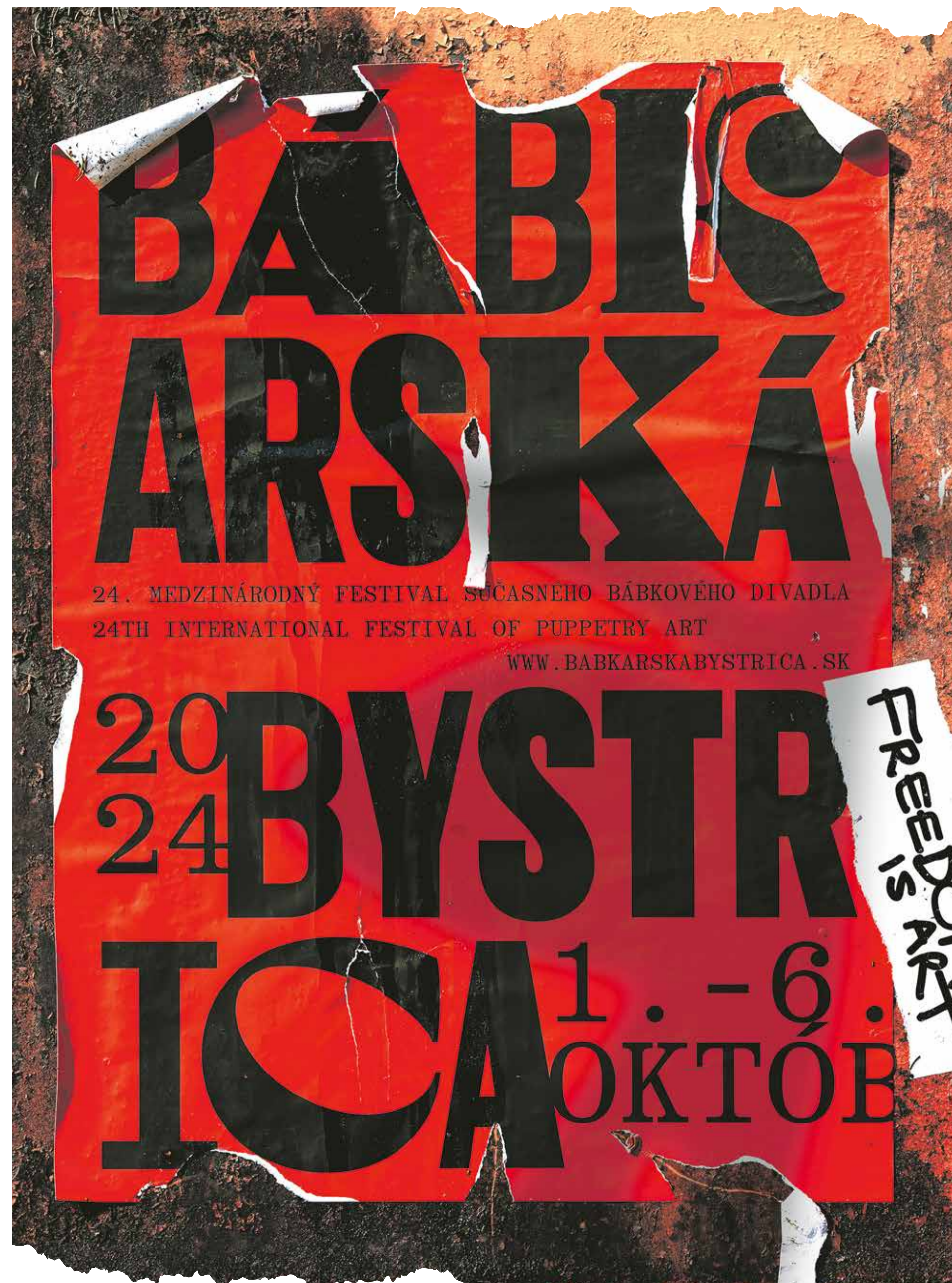
attacks with no security, while facing real risk of losing their lives, by candlelight or in utter darkness during endless hours of complete blackouts because of the country's destroyed energy structure, exhausted after sleepless nights spent in shelters or in bathrooms or in corridors trying to hide from explosions. They do art in those moments when the war that Russia has brought to the territory of a free state is raging around us.

How to live in such conditions and not limit oneself to basic needs? How to continue creating and still believe in freedom? You can address all these questions to the students you will see. You can ask them about the future of Ukrainian theatre and the future of Ukraine as a whole. At

the age of 20, they were deprived of the freedom not only to create as usual, but also to live a normal, full-fledged civilised life.

In spite of everything, they live in the heart of a free country, in Kyiv. Every day they do art, proving in practice the applicability of the word freedom, embodying it and giving it a broader, deeper meaning – because it is a "state or right to be able to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want without being controlled or restricted". And what they do, fits the definition of art to no lesser extent, because they create truly beautiful things – "objects, images, music, etc. that express their feelings." ♥

Photo © Miro Ivan (Otvorená Kultúra!)



WHO IS WHO
AT CAFÉ EUROPE

Mr Šimečka is the son of philosopher Milan Šimečka and translator and university teacher Eva Šimečková. The Communist régime prevented him from pursuing studies and he studied at chemical secondary school completing his A-levels in 1977. He started publishing in 1980 and continue to write books regularly. In 1990, he founded the Archa publishing house, where he served as editor-in-chief until 1996. From 1999 he was editor-in-chief of the daily SME, later as editor-in-chief of the Czech weekly Respekt. Since 2016, he has been the permanent editor of Denník N, where he also serves as the head of the editorial board.

A little extra: The BDNr creative team Iveta Škripková and Marián Pecko first met Mr Šimečka in 1992, during their research on the work and life of Dominik Tatarka. This controbuted to the major production *Dojimate ma veľmi...* (fragmenty zo života diela D. Tatarku) / You Move Me So (fragments from the life of D. Tatarka) was created. It is included among the 100 foremost productions within the Golden Heart Collection of Slovak Theatre. ♥

MARTIN M. ŠIMEČKA
NOVELIST, COLUMNIST

CAFÉ

WHO IS WHO
AT CAFÉ EUROPE

Having studied acting at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, Mr Bebjak went on to pursue studies in film and television directing at the same school, graduating in 1999. During his studies, he made short film *Štefan* that received multiple awards. His feature directorial debut was the film *Marhuľový ostrov*, which he made in 2011. The film won the Grand Prix award at the Rouen Film Festival (France). His film *The Cleaner* that premièred in 2016 at the Panorama Europe festival in New York, received an award for the best cinematography and editing awarded at the festival in Lecce (Italy). The film editor Marek Kráľovský received the Sun in a Net award. In addition to films, Mr Bebjak works with television, having directed a number of television series with the DNA Production that he has owned since 2001 together with the producer Rastislav Šesták. Mr Bebjak also directed the award-winning thriller *Čiara*. His film *The Auschwitz Report* was nominated for the best international film at the 2021 Academy Awards for Slovakia.

A little extra: As student, Peter Bebjak worked at BDNr in 1988 – 1989. ♥

PETER BEBJAK
FILM DIRECTOR,
PRODUCER, ACTOR

EUROPE

DISCUSSION ON THEMES THAT CONCERN AN INDIVIDUAL, YET BEAR A EUROPEAN DIMENSION. THE DISCUSSIONS FORMAT EMERGED UNDER THE BANNER OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN SLOVAKIA IN 2010.

CHAired BY MARTIN STAÑO, THE DISCUSSANTS INCLUDE SILVIA HRONCOVÁ (CULTURAL MANAGER, THEATER RESEARCHER), JANA JURÁŇOVÁ (NOVELIST, PLAYWRIGHT, TRANSLATOR, COLUMNIST), MARTIN ŠIMEČKA (NOVELIST, COLUMNIST), PETER BEBJAK (FILM DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, ACTOR), VLADIMÍR ŠUCHA (HEAD OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN SLOVAKIA).

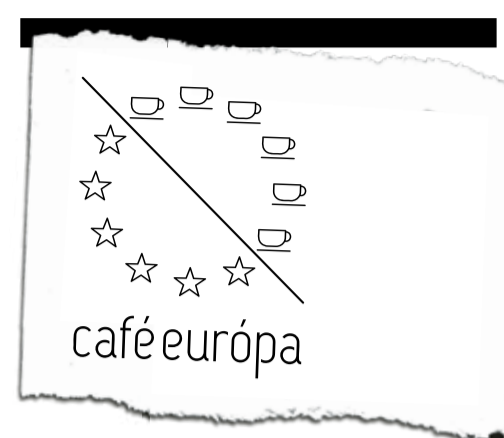
WHO IS WHO
AT CAFÉ EUROPE

Having studied philosophy and aesthetics at the Faculty of Arts and Letters of the Comenius University in Bratislava, Ms Hroncová also completed theatre studies at the Faculty of Theatre of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. She was director of the Theatre Institute in Bratislava (1999–2006), director general of the Slovak National Theatre (2006–2009), director of the Opera of the National Theatre and the State Opera in Prague (2013–2019). After her forced departure from the Slovak National Theatre, she was general director of the media company Film Europe in 2009–2013. She participated in the launch of broadcasting and the development of the programme structure

SILVIA HRONCOVÁ
CULTURE MANAGER,
THEATER RESEARCHER

of the first European television station Film Europe Channel, the only European film channel of the kind in Europe. It broadcasts in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Belgium. She was also involved in film distribution in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In 2013, she played a major role in facilitating the reconstruction and operation of the Film Europe cinema in the premises of the Pisztory Palace in Bratislava. From 12 May to 25 October 2023, Ms Hroncová served as the Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic.

A little extra: In 2004, Ms Hroncová as the director of the Theatre Institute, supported the launch of the Henryk Jurkovský Award for creative work at the BábkarSKá Bystrica festival, and the publication of *Shamans, Magicians and Comedians* – a book about the puppet theatre. Since then, the Festival and the Theatre Institute in Bratislava have cooperated systematically and prepared a number of specialist Festival publications. ♥

WHO IS WHO
AT CAFÉ EUROPE

From 2022, Mr Šucha is the head of the European Commission (EC) representation in Slovakia. In 2021, EC sent him to UNESCO in Paris. From 2012, he managed the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. Between 2006 and 2012, he was director at the General EC Directorate for Education and Culture. Before joining the European Commission, Mr Šucha held several positions related to European and international policies. In the period of 2005–2006, he founded the Research and Development Support Agency in Bratislava. From 2000 to 2004, he was member of the Slovak team that negotiated in Brussels Slovakia accession into the EU. At the same time, Mr Šucha has been dedicating his time to research and teaching in Slovakia and further afield. He published over 100 research works. ♥

VLADIMÍR ŠUCHA
HEAD OF THE
REPRESENTATION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMISSION IN
SLOVAKIA

Photo © Filip Pavlač (Otvorená Kultura.)

WHO IS WHO
AT CAFÉ EUROPE

Having studied Russian and English, majoring in interpreting and translation at the Faculty of Arts and Letters of the Comenius University in Bratislava, Ms Juránová held a two-year research post at the Literary Institute of the Slovak Academy of Science (today the SAC Institute of World Literature). She was also dramaturge at the Theatre for Children and Youth in Trnava (now The Ján Palárik Theatre). She was editor and deputy editor-in-chief at the magazine Slovenské pohľady (1991–1993). At the same time, she was commentator for Radio Free Europe (until 1994). In 1993, together with a few colleagues, she founded the feminist cultural, learning and publication project *Aspekt* and she remains its coordinator. Over the decades, she participated in editorial and organisational projects as translator and author. Between 2010 and 2018, she was with the editorial department of the Theatre Institute as a specialist and language editor.

JANA JURÁŇOVÁ
NOVELIST,
PLAYWRIGHT,
TRANSLATOR AND
COLUMNIST

In 2019, the President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska awarded Ms Juránová the the Order of Ludovít Štúr, first class, for exceptional services to the development of democracy, protection of human rights and freedoms, and for the development of literary activity. Ms Juránová is author of plays, many of which have been performed on professional stages. In her drama works, she addresses with feminist themes, as seen in her first play, the monodrama *Salome* (1989) or in the play about women from the Štúr period of the 19th century national renaissance *Misky strieborné, nádoby výborné* (1997).

A little extra: The methodical cooperation between BDNr and *Aspekt*, a feminist publishing house and association, founded by Jana Juránová, dates back to 2005. The cooperation includes, inter alia, the 2006 *Nová Eva* festival, KLUB EQ, the project www.ruzovymodrysvet.sk and others. In 2011, Ms Juránová wrote the play *Reality snow* for BDNr staged by the theatre presented under the direction of Iveta Škripková. In 2021, Ms Juránová wrote a one-act play *Pop-Oluška* as part of the production *Divadlo na konci sveta*, presented by BDNr, directed by Marián Pecko. ♥

WHO IS WHO
AT CAFÉ EUROPE

Host of the radio morning programme *Ráno na eFeMku*, and of the programmes *Osmička* and *Demovnica*, Mr Staňo is one of the longest serving staff members at Radio FM. He invites a wide range of thought-provoking guests to the morning show, through whom he wishes to inspire, entertain and engage listeners. He is the host of the discussion format Café Europe, that emerged under the banner of the Representation of the European Commission in Slovakia in 2010. Me Staňo will feature at the Festival in the latter role. ♥

MARTIN STAŇO
HOST



THE YEARS OF THE FESTIVAL KEEP PASSING. ONE WONDERS WHERE HAVE THE NEARLY THIRTY YEARS HAVE GONE SINCE THE FESTIVAL TURNED FROM NATIONAL TO INTERNATIONAL. EVERY TWO YEARS WE TRIED TO BRING THE BEST IN PUPPETRY AND STAGE ART. EVERY TWO YEARS MANY INFLUENTIAL ARTISTS AND MINDS FEATURED AT THE FESTIVAL - EITHER AS MEMBERS OF THE FESTIVAL TEAM, OR WITHIN THE PROGRAMME OR DIRECTLY AT THE FESTIVAL. YEARS PASS AND SOME PEOPLE PASS AWAY. THE PAST TWO YEARS BROUGHT SOME PREMATURE DEPARTURES OF A NUMBER OF THOSE WHOM WE HELD DEAR AND INFLUENTIAL. LET'S DEDICATE A FEW MOMENTS TO REMEMBER THEM AND THE WORK THEY LEFT BEHIND.

LEAVING US UNEXPECTEDLY...

Prepared by Lenka Dzadiková,
Theatre Institute in Bratislava

EVA ČÁRSKA

* 30 August 1950 — † 10 September 2023

Having graduated from the Puppetry Department of Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Ms Čárska was with the PKO Children's Theatre Studio (1985–1995). There she prepared a number of first-rate productions with children that were successful in amateur theatre showcases. The selection of patterns was varied, revealing, providing space for developing children's playfulness, improvisation and creativity: *Little Sparrow*, *The Alphabet and the Cat That Walked Alone*, *Children's Dreams*, *Children from Bullerbyn*, *Danube Eagle*, *What a Cat Can Do*, *Planet Earth*. Ms Čárska also passed on the joy of theatre to children at the Local Cultural Centre Bratislava – Old Town. She also devoted herself to children's creativity as lecturer, jury member at theatre competitions (regional competitions for children's dramatic creativity and the all-Slovak Zlatá priadka Šaľa) and literary contests (Dramatically Young).

Shortly after the foundation of BIBIANA, an international art house for children, Ms Čárska was appointed its chief dramaturge, having served there from 1996 to 2011. As an author and dramaturge, she participated in productions for children created at Studio BIBIANA. She prepared dozens of exhibitions featuring influential authors, artists and musicians.

In 2001, she founded and became programming director of the international presentation of alternative and puppet theatres for children, *Hráme pre vás – We are Playing for You*. She invited international theatres to Slovakia, filling the summer theatre recess with utmost productions for the little ones. Ms Čárska also served as President of the Slovak section of the international puppetry organisation UNIMA.

Eva Čárska presented playfulness, creativity, sophistication as basic attributes in creating with children and for children. In her work – teaching, dramaturgy, exhibitions – she explored interesting, profound and current topics. She remained fully committed to the finest standards of creative work for children. ♥



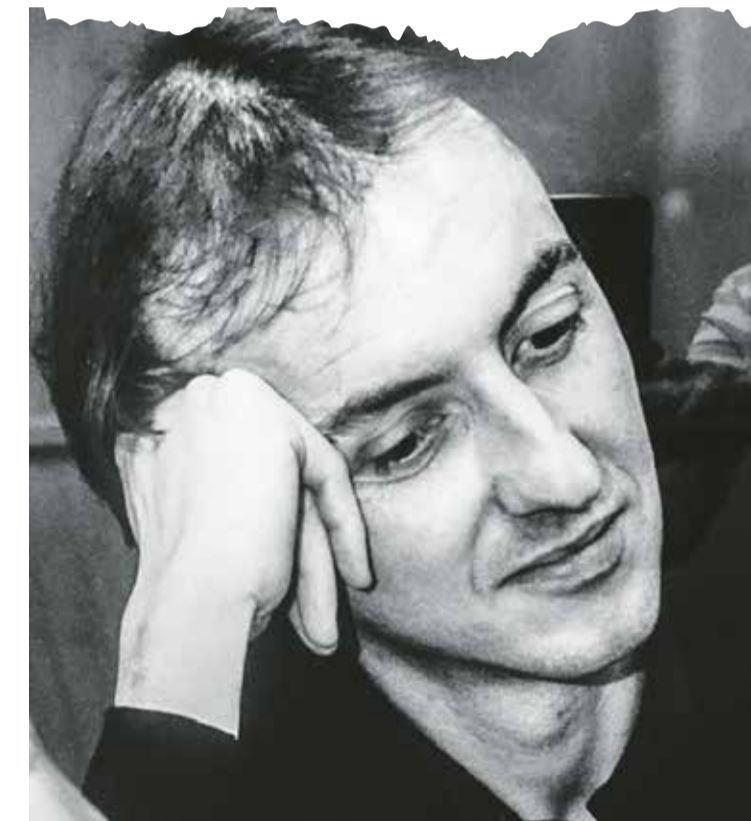
MARICA MIKULOVÁ

* 15 May 1951 — † 18 January 2024

As a recent graduate of the Puppetry Department of the Prague Academy of Music (1976), Ms Mikulová joined the GONG company in Bratislava as artistic and stage director, and dramaturge (leading the company from 1976 to 1994). Under her guidance, students participated in the major shows and competitions, and represented Slovak puppetry internationally. In the 1970s and 1980s, Ms Mikulová was among those who promoted drama education in Slovak puppet theatre. From 1989, she was a lecturer at the then newly established puppetry unit of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. It later became the Department of Puppetry. She was the Department Head from 1990 to 2003, and afterwards continued there as lecturer until her passing. ♥



Photo © Miriam Horňáková



PAVOL UHER

* 4 November 1948 — † 8 December 2023

It was primarily two factors that stirred Pavol Uher to the puppet theatre: stimulating meetings with his uncle, the sculptor Rudolf Uher, and trick films, particularly those by Jiří Trnka.

After graduating from secondary school in Poprad, Mr Uher enrolled at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague to pursue studies in puppetry. After a year, he switched to puppetry directing and dramaturgy and graduated in 1971 with the production *The Canterbury Ghost*.

Mr Uher worked primarily with two Slovak puppet theatres. In the season of 1971–1972, he was the in-house stage director at the Regional Puppet Theatre in Banská Bystrica (today the Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads), with Jozef Mokoš as dramaturge. There he introduced the whole series of Lubomír Feldek's plays about *Botafogo*. Uher's directing of Mokoš's adaptation of the Romanian author Alexandra Davidescu's *The Play* were among their highly commended productions.

For nine seasons (from 1973–1974) Mr Uher was in-house stage director at the State Puppet Theatre in Bratislava (today the Bratislava Puppet Theatre) where he

had staged twenty productions. While with this theatre, he was fortunate to work, at the theatre, with the influential dramaturge Katarína Párnická (Revallová). Mr Uher presented his own dramatisation of *The Little Prince*, Lubomír Feldek's *Fairy Tales on a Thread* and several musical black theatre productions (Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, Juraj Beneš's *The Emperor's New Clothes*, Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird*, and Béla Bartók's *The Wooden Prince*).

Mr Uher also wrote a number of puppet plays, inter alia *Magnet Mountain*, *If You Were Seven Like Me...*, *Jačmienok*, *Hide and Seek*, *The Smallest Arena in the World*, and *Across the Black Lake*, having directed the first four. He also worked for television. He wrote the script of the television puppet series *Invincible Vilma*. In 1978, *Stone Boy* was produced as directed by Mr Uher. In 1981 – 1982, sci-fi series *The Day After Tomorrow* about the preservation of life on Earth were directed by Mr Uher based on his scenario.

As a 33-year-old, he emigrated to Germany in 1982. Before the exile, he managed to give Slovak Puppet Theatre productions that did not underestimate the child audience: on the contrary, they expected its reaction and stimulated its imagination. Uher was stage director with a philosophical view of the world, even that of children.

From 1984 he was with Schwarzes Theatre Zürich, later with Schwarzlicht Theatre Augsburg as stage director, screenwriter and producer. In 2000, he concluded his work in Augsburg to found the publishing house Theatrum mobile in Prague, where he published plays until the publishing house's demise in 2007.

After 1989, Pavol Uher prepared several productions in Slovak theatres and in the Chamber Opera of the Slovak National Theatre.

He worked at BIBIANA, an international art house for children, where he participated in the preparation of exhibitions and, as stage director and dramaturge, in productions for children. He staged several productions at the Puppet Theatre in Košice, the most ambitious being *The Mystery of the Golden Suitcase* (2020). With his experiences, he influenced young artists and theatre community also as a lecturer at the Department of Puppetry at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava.. ♥

BLAHO UHLÁR

* 26 August 1951 – † 13 July 2024

Having graduated in stage directing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, Mr Uhlár was stage director the Theatre for Children and Youth in Trnava between 1974 and 1989. In a creative dialogue with Juraj Nvota they were instrumental in shaping the remarkable era of this theatre.

Mr Uhlár's productions were a metaphor for the society, they were thought-provoking, often shocking the audience. The utmost examples include *Laco Novomeský* (1984) and *Theme Mayakovský* (1987), which were preceded by *Episode 1939-44* (1979) or *Commune de Paris* (1981), along with, no doubt, the productions of *Princess Maru* (1979), *About the Drummer* (1986), *Where's the North* (1987), *Penultimate Supper* (1989).

Mr Uhlár also staged two productions at the Regional Puppet Theatre in Banská Bystrica (today the Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads), *About the Great Karbus Barbus* (1982) and *Kingdom of the Dead* (1987) – a story about Dodo coming to a kingdom where everything looks beautiful on the outside, but everyone lives in fear of the dragon Izma. The role of Dodo was played by Marián Pecko.

During the years spent in the brick Trnava-based theatre, Blaho Uhlár's disenchantment about the conformity of this type of ensemble grew, his scepticism gradually turned into defiance and defiance into a manifesto of new stage poetics. The production *Kvinteto* (1985) can be deemed groundbreaking. It was made through actors' improvisation based on a brief directorial script. Uhlár gradually moved to the territory of his own statement and his own topic. To identify its power, he required cooperation and understanding. Yet he could not find it in the context of repertory theatre. That was the case, even though, in the drama company of the Ukrainian National Theatre in Prešov (today The Alexander Duchnovič Theatre) in cooperation with the artist Miloš Karásek, he had a radical effect on the development of the ensemble's traditionally oriented stage approach. In 1988, they created the 1st and 2nd Slovak theatre manifestos identifying decomposition, fragmentation, discontinuity, the use of chance and indeterminacy, the rejection of story and prescribed form and trust in the natural course of things as their main methods. In the Prešov theatre, Mr Uhlár staged landmark productions *Kysak Railstation* (1988), *Sens Nonsens* (1988) and *Vinegar* (1988) in which he deepened and advanced the method of collective improvisation.

The creative tandem Uhlár – Karásek founded the STOKA company in 1991. It premiered in the same year with *Kolaps*, followed by cult productions such as *Dyp Inaf* (1991), *Impasse* (1991), *Eo Ipso* (1994), *Nox* (1995), *From a Distance* (1999). In the 1990s these productions shaped Slovak independent theatre. After the demolition of the

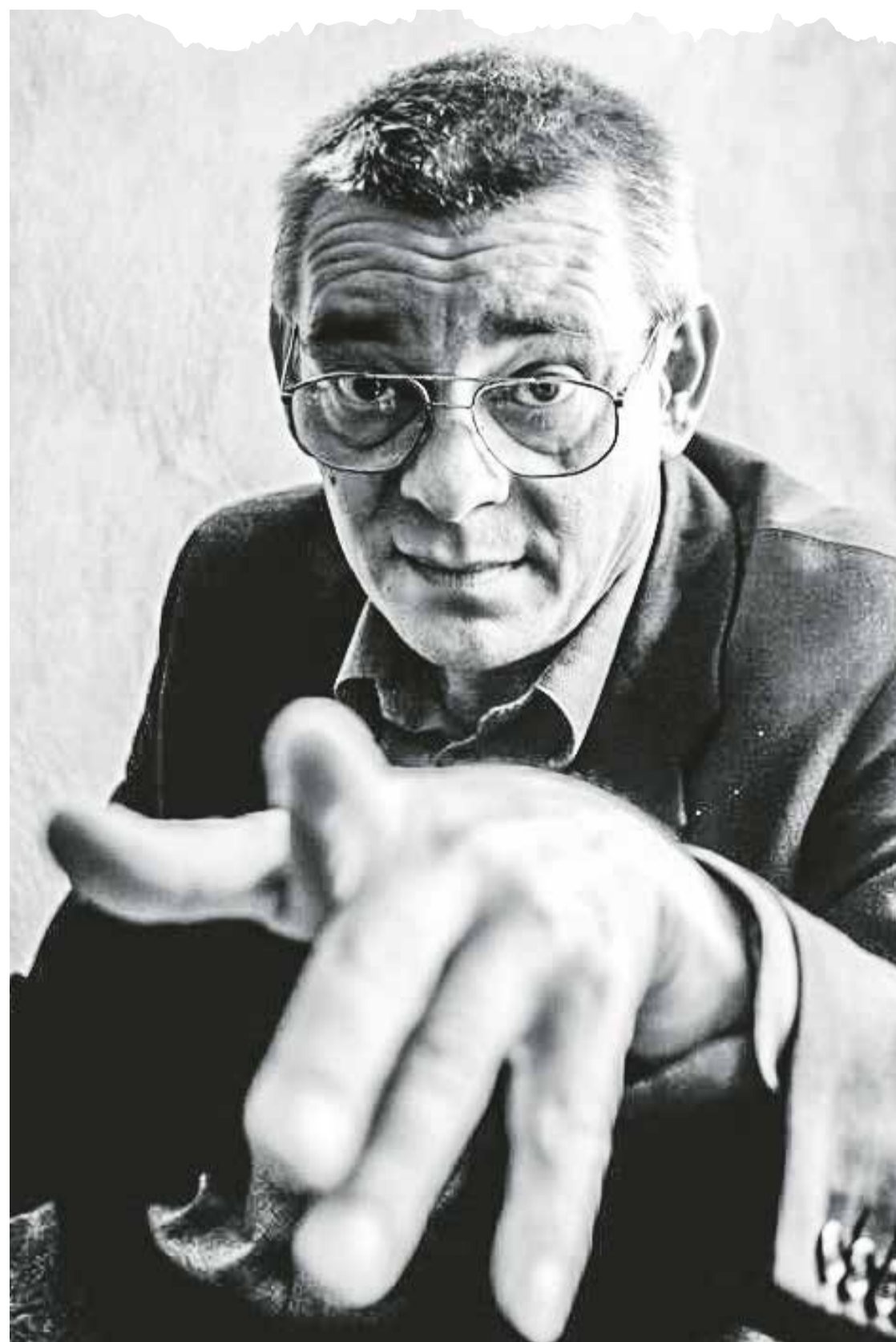


Photo © Ctibor Bachratý

STOKA building in 2007, Mr Uhlár made several attempts to revive the theatre. In 2011, he gained attention with a video production *Attempt*, then *Uncertain Ground* (2012). With the new generation, made up of students of puppetry, Mr Uhlár continued the method of collective creation, addressing current topics through powerful expressiveness and stylisation: *Victory* (2014), *Wellness* (2016), *Postfaktotum* (2017), *Endocannabinoid* (2022), *Defeat* (2023) or *Lark* (2023).

Mr Uhlár built upon cooperation with amateur theatre makers from the DISK theatre company and made with them a series of remarkable productions, such as *Volunteers* (1987), *So What?* (1988), *TANAP* (1989), *PAI (Who Are the Swine)* (1990). 2019 brought the publication *Blaho Uhlár and DISK: Plays*.

Blaho Uhlár the stage director was inspiring as a representative of author's studio work, collective work and of theatre of gradually fixed improvisation. Mr Uhlár, and later STOKA Theatre led by him, brought significantly fragmented, decomposed formations to Slovak stages, full of cruelty to the point of brutality and civilian acting sincerity. In January 2024, the President of the Slovak Republic awarded Blaho Uhlár the Ľudovít Štúr Order of merit for the contribution to the development of the Slovak Republic in culture and art. ♥

JÁN ZAVARSKÝ

* 31 July 1948 – † 29 May 2022

Photo © Eva Horáková



Set designer, artist, designer and pedagogue Ján Zavarský was epitomised by his ability to collaborate with various theatres and ensembles, shape puppet and drama scenes, work on a classical stage, as well as in a non-traditional space. He was among the representatives of action set design, his work was characterised by element of surprise. Mr Zavarský's set design has gone through several evolution stages, from minimalism to a return to classical set principles, to an expressive play of light and colours. The refined aesthetics and sophistication of his productions were etched in the spectator memory.

In 1967, Mr Zavarský graduated from the College of Art in Bratislava, majoring in graphic design. In the same year, he began studying architecture at the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava. In 1974 he graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, having studied set design under Ladislav Vychodil. It was during his studies, that Ján Zavarský started working as set designer at the Regional Theatre in Nitra (today The Andrej Bagar Theatre). Between 1975 and 1979, he was set designer at the State Puppet Theatre in Bratislava (today the Bratislava Puppet Theatre). In 1979, he joined the Theatre for Children and Youth in Trnava (today The Ján Palárik Theatre) as set designer and also served as artistic director until 2018. He worked with a multitude of stage directors of different generations including Peter Scherhauser with whom they created for the Goose on a String Theatre in Brno from 1981 to 1999.

He made major works in puppet theatres, including *Tales on a Thread* (State Puppet Theatre, 1976), *Vlkolacká Pumpkins*. (Puppet Theatre Žilina, 1980), *Three Butterflies* (Košice Puppet Theatre, 1989), *Balík* (PRAK Theatre, 1990) and the production *You Move Me So / Dojimate ma veľmi...* at the Puppet Theatre on the Crossroads in 1992 that is included in the Golden Collection of Slovak Professional Theatre.

From 1979 to 2004, Ján Zavarský was lecturer in set design at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, and from 1990, he was also with the set design studio at The Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno. Between 1996 and 2001, he was the chairman of the non-governmental organization OISTAT – Slovak Centre of the International Organisation of Scenographer, Theatre Architects and Technicians.

Ján Zavarský made nearly five hundred set designs for opera, drama and puppet theatres in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, and the US. He participated in numerous exhibitions and competitions at home and internationally. He is the laureate of many major awards for set design. He was also involved in also worked in graphic design, free work and architecture. ♥

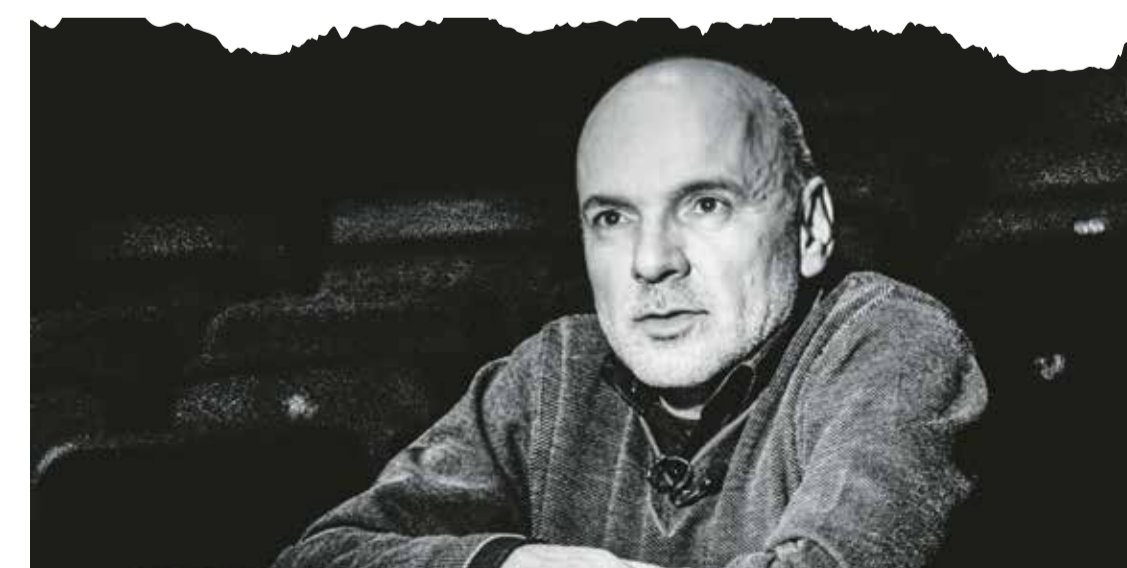
JÁN ULIČIANSKY

* 29 October 1955 – † 3 May 2024

After completing studies in dramaturgy and puppet theatre directing at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Mr Uličiansky was with the Puppet Theatre in Košice as stage director from 1979 to 1986. In 1988, he became dramaturge at the Department for Children and Youth production at Slovak Radio in Bratislava, where he worked for twenty years. He was co-founder of the international festival of radio fairy tales *Zázračný oriešok – kniha v rozhlase – rozhlas v knihe / The Miracle Nut – book on the radio – radio in the book*. As a respected author, in 1997 he became the President of the Slovak section of IBBY. From 1991 to 2023, he was lecturer at the Department of Puppetry at the Theatre Faculty of Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava serving as the Head of Department from 2011 to 2015.

Mr Uličiansky focused primarily on children's readers, viewers and listeners. He wrote numerous award-winning fairy-tale books for children, such as *Adelka Zvončeková*, 1981; *Sunday*, 1987; *Snowman Islands*, 1990; *We Have Ema*, 1993; *Veronka the Squirrel*, 1996; *Little Princess*, 2009; *Analfabeta The Illiterate*, 2011; *Leonardo, Cat from the Street*, 2013, *Líza, Cat from the Trinity*, 2019. His books are on the IBBY list of honour and have been translated into several languages. He also wrote and edited plays for the radio or staged them – *Tik Tak*, *Golego*, *Čáry máry fuk*, *Bohatier Kremienok*, *Peter Klúčik*, *Magic Moment*. He also worked with television and prepared several animated series or programmes for children, including the highly popular *Dwarves*. Mr Uličiansky also left his imprint in Slovak drama opus as playwright with plays for adults that appeared on stage and television – *Allergy*, *Monogrammed Tablecloth*.

As stage director, Ján Uličiansky worked with a number of Slovak puppet and drama theatres, inter alia, the Puppet Theatre in Košice (O. Wilde: *Happy Prince*, J. Uličiansky: *Peter Klúčik*), State Puppet Theatre in Bratislava (D. Hevier: *Uspávankúš*, J. Lenhart: *The Last Flower*), The Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra (J. Uličiansky: *Sveričky*), Slovak National Theatre Bratislava (J. Uličiansky: *Cat on Rollerblades*), State Theatre Košice (J. Uličiansky: *Four Gnomes and a Fairy*) and in the Slovak National Theatre Opera (B. Britten: *Chimney Sweep*). ♥



13 SEP – 11 OCT

Skutecký Street, Banská Bystrica
Vernissage: 13 September at 18:00

The Festival presents a new feature within the off-programme: the first outdoor theatre-art installation of artefacts by students and teachers of the Department of Intermedia and Digital Media, Faculty of Fine Arts of the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica, dedicated to the theme Man, Puppet and Space. The installation is complemented by performances in the Central Slovak Gallery garden.

The installation was coordinated and planned over several months by a team led by assistant professor Viktor Fuček.

The installation represents a selection of works entered by over 15 students from the Department. The installation was made out by BDNR as directed by the head of the studio Katarína Mazáryová and Viktor Fuček.

Exhibitors: teachers doc. Mgr. Ján Adamove ArtD, MgA. Ing. arch. Viktor Fuček, ArtD and students Nikol Hanousková, Júlia Lachová, Sarah Kasanová, Emma Kavčáková, Ema Prajová, Jessica Tonková.

1 – 6 OCT

10:00 – 17:00

EN TY TÁ

Performance in the Garden of the Dominik Skutecký Gallery. Author Viktor Fuček.



MAN, PUPPET & SPACE

