

THE PROJECT *WORLD DAYS OF SLOVENE CULTURE*

Dear Reader,

The booklet before you offers a brief presentation of Slovene culture. *The country and the nation, History, Natural and cultural history, The economy, Tourism and cuisine, Science and technology, Literature, Music, Art, architecture and design, Stage and film, and Sport* are the areas focused on within this year's extensive international promotional project **World Days of Slovene Culture**, organised within the programme *Slovene at Foreign Universities*.

The goal of this year's, eighth joint project involving Slovene Studies departments and teachers of Slovene from around the world was to draw up e-material for teaching Slovene culture at foreign universities. Working with the teachers who a year earlier formed online working groups, overviews and presentations (PPT) were prepared using current and archived materials, including internet links and other sources, to which were added tasks for students. All the material is available in the e-classroom *World Days of Slovene Culture* and teachers will be able to adapt it to their learning programmes and the needs of their students – their knowledge of Slovene, familiarity with individual areas of Slovene culture, and the study goals and intercultural goals of learning within which Slovene culture appears at universities around the world. The e-classroom will continue to be regularly updated with new content.

At over 50 universities, the project **World Days of Slovene Culture** will conclude in the traditional way with numerous events during the week from 3 December, when in Slovenia we celebrate the *Happy Day of Slovene Culture*, until 9 December 2016. During this time, Slovene culture around the world will come to life in various forms – with film and literary evenings, and appearances by guest lecturers, artists and cultural workers from Slovenia and abroad, as well as with culinary tours of Slovene regions. The project is organised in participation with the foreign universities that include Slovene in their programmes, together with students of Slovene, Slovene embassies, the Ljudmila Society and numerous other institutions in Slovenia and abroad.

It is said that culture is the *salt* of a nation – its wealth shaped through history by natural characteristics and social changes, as well as by people's everyday life, and determined by stereotypes, prejudices, achievements, hardships and happiness.

We hope you experience many inspiring encounters with Slovene culture.

Dr Mojca Nidorfer Šiškovič

Head of the programme *Slovene at Foreign Universities*

THE COUNTRY AND THE NATION

In 2016 we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Slovenia's statehood. It was declared on **25 June 1991**, half a year after the plebiscite on independence on 23 December 1990, when the Slovene people decided to leave Yugoslavia. At that time we also acquired new state symbols, such as a flag, a coat-of-arms and an anthem. **The flag** has three horizontal strips, white, blue and red, from top to bottom, while in the top left is the **coat-of-arms**, a shield with a red trim. In the shield, on a blue background, is a white outline of Mount Triglav and beneath it two wavy blue lines, representing the sea and the rivers; above Triglav are the three golden six-pointed stars of the Counts of Celje, arranged in the shape of a downward pointing triangle. The Counts of Celje were the most important medieval aristocratic family originating from the territory of the present-day Slovenia. Mount Triglav, which at 2,864 metres is the highest mountain in Slovenia, has been considered the main Slovene national symbol since at least the mid-20th century. The Slovene **anthem** is the seventh stanza of the poem *A Toast*, with a strong humanistic message. It was written by France Prešeren (1800-1849), a great Romantic poet and an equally important symbol of Slovenia. Slovenia has a **population** of just over **two million** on a territory of **20,273 km²**. In the south-east it borders Croatia, in the north-east Hungary, in the north Austria and in the west Italy. The Slovene Adriatic coast between Italy and Croatia is 47 km long. The **capital Ljubljana** has a population of 280,000; other large towns are Maribor, Celje, Kranj, Novo mesto, Domžale, Velenje, Nova Gorica, Kamnik, Krško, Slovenska Bistrica, Brežice and Ptuj. A Hungarian minority lives in the north-eastern part of Slovenia and an Italian minority along the coast. They have a constitutional right to use Hungarian or Italian, and each minority has its own representative in the parliament. The immigrant

population, which mostly originates in other republics of the former Yugoslavia, consists mainly of Croatians, Bosnians and Serbs. Slovenes also live in the neighbouring countries, particularly in the eastern part of Italy and the southern part of Austria, as well as elsewhere around the world.

The Republic of Slovenia is a **parliamentary democracy**. It is represented by the President, who is elected for a period of five years. The Slovene parliament is bicameral: the National Assembly for the elected representatives of the political parties and the National Council, with representatives of social, economic, professional and local interests. The two houses are asymmetrical since the Constitution does not grant them equal political power. The **National Assembly** has 90 members, representing the citizens of Slovenia, including one member each from the Italian and Hungarian national communities. The **National Council** consists of 40 members, elected for five years. The government of the Republic of Slovenia consists of the Prime Minister and Ministers. The government and individual ministers are independent in their responsibilities and answer to the National Assembly. Administratively, Slovenia is divided into **212 municipalities**, with 11 of these having urban municipality status.

Slovenia became a member of the United Nations on 22 May 1992. Today it is also a member of the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organisation, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, NATO, the Schengen Agreement and other international organisations. Since **1 May 2004** it has been a **member of the European Union**, and in 2007 it exchanged its national currency the *tolar* for the joint currency the **euro**. Eight members of the European Parliament come from Slovenia. The country has presided over the Council of the European Union once, from January to June 2008.

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Drawn up by **Simona Gotal** (University of Paris), **Maja Rančigaj** (Universities of Nottingham and London) and **mag. Bojana Todorović** (University of Krakow).

HISTORY

Although Slovenia has been an independent state only since **1991**, the territory of the present-day Slovenia has an exceptionally rich and eventful [history](#), reaching back to before the settlement of the Slavs. Archaeological remains attest to the area being settled in prehistoric times and then taken over by the Romans, who created settlements which later developed into the present-day towns.

The forebears of the Slovenes moved to the Eastern Alps in the late 6th century and in the 7th century formed the first Slavic independent principality of Carantania, although it soon lost its independence. After inclusion in the Frankish Empire, there began Christianisation, as attested to by the Freising Manuscripts, the oldest text in the Slovene language, written in the Latin alphabet. This variety and geographic diversity marked this small area in the heart of Europe and enriched it with the special characteristics that have been preserved to this day. Until the 20th century, Slovenia's territory was in the hands of foreigners. In the Middle Ages and the Modern Period it was marked by Habsburg rule, which in the early 15th century was briefly successfully interrupted by the Counts of Celje. In spite of repression, constant pressures and attempts at assimilation, the Slovenes managed to develop into a nation.

In the shaping of Slovene identity, a very strong role was played by the Protestant movement of the 16th century. At that time the Slovene written language began to emerge when **Primož Trubar** wrote the first two Slovene books. There followed the Counter-Reformation, which destroyed many of the progressive Protestant achievements and in

many areas of Slovene culture halted development for a century.

Between 1809 and 1813, Slovene territory fell under the administration of the French empire. The **Illyrian Provinces** were established, in which the use of Slovene was encouraged and a number of Slovene lands were united, thus influencing the strengthening of Slovene national awareness. The Slovene national awakening gradually accelerated and in 1848 there appeared the first national political programme, known as **United Slovenia**, which demanded the unification of all the Slovene lands. In the second half of the 19th century there arose a political division between the Liberal and Catholic political poles.

After World War One, Slovenia became a part of the **Kingdom of Yugoslavia**, and then after World War Two of the **Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia** which, in spite of the totalitarian nature of its regime, practiced a milder form of Socialism and thanks to its foreign policy based on Non-Alignment enjoyed a good international reputation. In the late 1980s, due to economic difficulties and nationalist strivings, conflicts arose among the Yugoslav republics, as well as endeavours for Slovenia's independence. At the 1990 plebiscite, nearly 90 per cent of voters supported **Slovenia's independence** and 1991, when Slovenia became an independent state, was not far away.

In 2004, Slovenia joined the **European Union** and NATO, in early 2007 it adopted the euro, and in the first half of 2008 presided over the European Union. In 2016, Slovenia and its inhabitants proudly celebrate a quarter of a century, a full 25 years of independence.

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Drawn up by **Boštjan Božič** (University of Bucharest), **mag. Mateja Kosi**, (University of Brno), **Primož Lubej** (University of Lviv) and **Dr Mladen Pavičić** (University of Budapest).

NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

It is well known that Slovenia is a country where you can ski in the Alps in the morning and afterwards set off for Piran, where after only just over an hour's drive, you can have a coffee by the sea. It is also well known that in the summer you can swim in the sea and an hour later you can be in the mountains and cool off even more. This is testimony to the fact that Slovenia, where **Romance, Germanic, Finno-Ugric and Slavic cultures** meet, has a very diverse relief and is divided into five natural units: **Alpine, Pre-Alpine, Dinaric, Littoral and Pannonian landscapes**. This diversity is also reflected in the culture of this country with just over two million inhabitants. The natural characteristics helped shape the appearance of different types of **houses** (Alpine, Pannonian, Mediterranean), strongly influenced the emergence of various types of **crafts** (e.g. woodenware, charcoal burning) and the appearance of **customs** which differ greatly from one village to another – the Pannonian **traditional dress** thus differs greatly from that in Gorenjska (Alpine Slovenia) or Primorska (by the sea). The people, particularly farmers, were often involved in **home crafts**, either individually, as a family or as a whole community. These crafts gave farmers, particularly those with small farms, an additional income, which made survival easier; one such craft was umbrella making and more on this can be found at: www.rokodelstvo.si.

What about **legends, fairy tales and myths**? These also attest to the diversity and richness of the Slovene culture which is passed from generation to generation, reflecting the experiences of our forebears. Legends became popular in the 19th century, when there appeared **mohorjanke**, stories published by the publisher [Mohorjeva družba](#), intended for the religious education of young

readers. Today, Slovene cultural history is also revealed in a unique way by myths that express man's attitude to natural and supernatural phenomena. The entire collection of myths and legends was presented in **Jakob Kelemina's** book *Bajke in pripovedke slovenskega ljudstva* (Myths and Fairy Tales of the Slovene People, 1930). Our ancestors tried to explain the world through the presence of mythical beings. The most famous Slovene mythical folk character is the **Kurent** (also Korant or Korat), which originates from Proto-Slavic times. The world of Proto-Slavic man was shaped by magical and demonic beings of animal or human origin. Thus in some parts of Slovenia there are still tales about **Faronika the Fish**, a mythical being that carries the world on its tail. In Alpine areas there are stories about the **Goldenhorn**, a mountain goat with golden horns who guards a treasure. Our ancestors also made requests for help to higher deities, the most popular gods being **Veles, Živa and Svarun**.

People also liked to have fun outside the home, dancing folk dances such as the polka, *štajeriš* or *kolo*, and for these occasions dressing in their local costumes. Nowadays, this can only be seen on holidays and in appearances by folklore groups. One of the most popular and best preserved customs is the celebration of the **Shrovetide Carnival**, when people dress up in costumes of funny, frightening, modern or traditional characters – one of the best known being the **Ptuj Kurent** (more about the Ptuj carnival can be found at www.kurentovanje.net).

At the national level, this domain is cared for by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, as well as many other organisations and individuals.

Drawn up by **mag. Laura Fekonja** (University of Belgrade), **Polona Liberšar** (University of Padova), **Katja Piuži** (University of Kiev) and **Dr Saša Vojtech Poklač** (University of Bratislava).

THE ECONOMY

The opening of the [Idrija mercury mine](#) between 1490 and 1500 represents the beginning of industry in Slovenia, but true development came only in the 19th century, with the introduction of the steam engine and with the opening of the railway line known as the **Southern Railway**, built during the 1840s and 1850s and connecting Vienna with Trieste, the most important port in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, via Maribor, Celje and Ljubljana. In addition to mining, crafts and iron making also have a long tradition, but in the 19th century most of the Slovene population lived from farming.

Industrialisation only truly flourished after World War Two, in socialist times. **Industrial giants** appeared, such as the still existing **Gorenje, Krka** and **Iskra**. In the 1950s, economic growth was very strong, provisions for the population improved and consumerism developed during this period of relative prosperity. But in the following decade the economy found itself in trouble: wages grew too fast, imports increased, production fell and the value of the currency fell. When Slovenia became an independent state in 1991, its priorities were to introduce its own currency, the *tolar*, to implement a restrictive monetary policy and a gradual reduction in inflation. Soon, Slovenia was recognised as one of the most successful countries in transition and became part of global development. On 1 May 2004, it became a member of the European Union and on 1 January 2007 it entered the European monetary system and the *tolar* was replaced by the euro.

After 2008, in spite of its economic success, the country had to face challenges such as the **global crisis**, the **privatisation of state-owned assets** and **relatively low competitiveness**. Since 2013, the economic climate has improved, but because of its export-orientated economy Slovenia is greatly dependent on external conditions and influences. The most successful industries are those with above-average innovativeness and a strong export orientation, such as the **metal, automobile, chemical, pharmaceutical** and **electrical industries**. Gorenje, Krka, Lek and Elan are among the best-known **brands**. Slovenia's main trade partners are **Germany, Italy, Austria, Croatia** and **France**.

The majority of those employed – 65% – work in **service industries**, 23% in **production**, and 4% in **agriculture and forestry**. In addition to the **forests** which cover 60% of the country, an important part of the Slovene natural wealth consists of **agricultural land**. An increasingly important role is played in the economy by **tourism**, which is also the biggest exporter of services. The most popular tourist destinations are **Piran, Portorož, Postojna Cave**, the [Lipica stud](#), **Ljubljana, Bled**, the [Triglav National Park](#) and **Terme Čatež**. Slovenia promotes itself through the green label **I feel Slovenia**. The country is striving towards sustainable development, co-existence with nature and innovation. With excellent infrastructure, a well-educated workforce and its strategic position between the East and the West, Slovenia is at the top of the GDP per person ladder in SE Europe.

TOURISM AND CUISINE

In the last year, the green, active and healthy Slovenia has experienced a record number of tourist visits. Everyone knows that today the most attractive destinations are [Ljubljana](#), [Bled Castle](#) and [Postojna Cave](#), but we may be surprised to learn that most of the country was explored as early as **1689** by [Janez Vajkard Valvasor](#), who wrote about it in his *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*. The subterranean attractions of Postojna Cave and the karst landscape are timeless, and the modern traveller is charmed by them, just as Thomas Cook was in **1868**, when he immediately included them in his **European Tour**. Today, foreigners recognise and prize the exceptional diversity of the Slovene landscape, and the rich natural and cultural heritage. The International Golf Travel Market awarded Slovenia the title of the most promising golfing destination for 2015 and the country is also striving to become the best fishing destination in Europe. In late September **2016**, Slovenia was given a most flattering title: according to the new standards of sustainable tourism, it became **the first green destination in the world**, while the capital [Ljubljana](#) has for the second time been included among the **hundred most sustainable destinations**, along with another **16 Slovene municipalities**, joined together under the brand name **Slovenia Green**.

Slovenia can also be felt. Because of the word "love" in its name and the word "*ljubljen*" (beloved) in the name of its capital, it caresses visitors' hearts and the taste buds of even the most discerning gourmets. Although we have a monument to Maria Theresa who made us adopt what is now our beloved potato, Slovene **cuisine** is a true cornucopia of tastes that Slovene housewives have always been able to lure in an original way from the local produce on the already

varied culinary map between the Alps and the Mediterranean. Can you list the **13 food products** that Slovenia has protected with the European Commission? You will definitely not have a problem with the rich pastry *prekmurska gibanica*, the air-dried ham *kraški pršut*, extra virgin olive oil from Slovene Istria and perhaps a cheese or two, but you will probably get stuck at *ptujski luk*, the old name for an onion with excellent cooking characteristics, grown on Ptujsko polje for over 200 years. The respect for and loyalty to tradition and nature is shown in the dishes produced both by Slovene farm women, as well as world renowned Slovene chefs.

Food demands a toast ... and we Slovenes praise wine in our national anthem. According to the *Guinness Book of Records*, Maribor boasts of the **oldest grapevine in the world**, and Slovenia, alongside Croatia and Greece, has the **longest tradition of wine making in Europe**, going back to pre-Roman times. With an average of 100 million litres of wine produced, internationally Slovenia belongs among boutique wine producers. Literally, as on such a small surface there are so many different terroirs, microclimates and vine growing regions, each with its own grape varieties and special features, so that as many as 70% of Slovene wines have the designation quality and premium wine.

Nor must we overlook the wonderful Slovene honey. For centuries, the Slovenes have been a [nation of beekeepers](#), while our country is the only EU member to have protected its indigenous bee, the **Carniolan honey bee**, and for the last twelve months we have been drawing attention to bees with an initiative that the United Nations should declare 20 May as World Bee Day.

Drawn up by **mag. Rada Lečič** and **Dr Karin Marc Bratina** (University of Trieste), **Sanja Pirc** (University of Rome) and **Eva Srebrnič** (University of Udine).

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Science is an “activity striving to methodically arrive at systematically derived, ordered and provable findings” (Dictionary of the Standard Slovene Language). It is derived from philosophy and first developed as the natural sciences, its methods only later spreading to the social sciences and the humanities. Technology is interpreted as the technical procedures and devices necessary for the development of science and at the same time as an achievement thereof. In Slovenia, the first important centres of knowledge were monasteries (Stična, Žiče, Bistra), where **medical** and **pharmaceutical** science prevailed, whereas in the field of modern technology the **mercury mine in Idrija** was of particular significance.

Among the first and most versatile scholars was [Janez Vajkard Valvasor](#) (1641–1693) whose life’s work was *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* (1689), and among the most interesting was the Jesuit **Avguštin Hallerstein** (1703–1774), a cartographer and astronomer who worked in China. **Anton Janša** (1734–1773) was renowned across Habsburg monarchy as the father of modern beekeeping, while the best-known Slovene mathematician was **Jurij Vega** (1754–1802), who is famous for his logarithm tables. The physicist **Jožef Stefan** (1835–1893) is the only Slovene scientist to have discovered one of the fundamental laws of nature (Stefan’s Law of thermal radiation), while a special place is taken by the medical doctor and chemist **Friderik Pregl** (1869–1930), the only Nobel Prize winner of Slovene origin, who won the prize in 1923 for his improvements to microanalysis.

Slovenes are also very productive inventors. Among the oldest inventions glass photography stands out, started by **Janez Puhar** in 1842, and among modern inventions the plastic zipper, invented by **Peter Florjančič** in 1948. We must not overlook the scientific achievements of Slovenes around the world. It is not widely known that the father of the Boeing 747 was the Slovene emigrant **Joseph Sutter** (1921–2016), or that the wheels of the lunar vehicle were the product of research by the Slovene **Albert Volk** (1922–2011), or that the record holder for the number and length of space walks for women, **Sunita Williams** (1965–), is of Slovene origin. Most people also do not know that in Slovenia we had our own personal computers as early as the 1980s (Triglav) and that the telephone the ETA 85, made by Iskra and designed by **Davorin Savnik** (1929–2014), is the most copied telephone in the world and exhibited in New York’s MoMA. An important milestone in the development of Slovene science is represented by the founding of the **University of Ljubljana** in 1919 and of the **Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts** in 1938. Presently, the **Ministry of Education, Science and Sport** is responsible for the field of science in Slovenia, while an important role is also played by the **Slovenian Research Agency** (ARRS), founded in 2004. The **Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad** oversees connections and cooperation between Slovene scientists and other top experts abroad with the homeland.

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Drawn up by **Tjaša Lorbek** (University of Buenos Aires and La Plata) and **Luka Zibelnik** (University of Cleveland).

LITERATURE

The development of Slovene literature can be divided into six main chapters. The period of **religious literature and folk literature** begins with the written sermon and confessional form in the Freising Manuscripts, from around 1000. The shaping of the communal awareness was strongly influenced by the stylistic and intellectually rich [Protestant literature](#), which combined the ardent Reformation struggle with an honest commitment to the education of the people. In 1550, **Primož Trubar** published the first Slovene printed books *Catechism* and *Abecedarium*, and these were followed by numerous religious texts by Protestant writers.

Secular literature was born during the **Enlightenment**, which was in Slovene lands, as elsewhere, a time of optimism and unshakable belief in the strength of reason, and so the literature from that period is also joyous and educational. Theatres wanted to stage plays in the Slovene language, which resulted in the beginnings of the **Slovene drama**. The first plays were written by **Anton Tomaž Linhart**: *Županova Micka* (Micka, the Mayor's Daughter, 1789) and *Ta veseli dan ali Matiček se ženi* (This Merry Day or Matiček's Wedding, 1790).

The **Romantic** period is marked by the collection *Poezije* (Poetry, 1847) by [France Prešeren](#), which is a constitutive work for the whole Slovene culture. The second half of the 19th century was characterised by the development of prose genres moving towards **Realism**. Popular didactic writing reached its peak with the tale *Martin Krpan* (1858) by **Fran Levstik**.

At the turn of the 20th century, **Modernism** began to be established through demands for the autonomy of art, individual linguistic expression, originality and a critical attitude to the bourgeois culture and tradition; its characteristics are present in the work of [Ivan Cankar](#) and other writers. Drama became established as an independent

literary genre, surpassing the time in which it appeared. **Ivan Cankar's** seven plays moved it away from the European bourgeois drama and towards artistic summits with new romantic and symbolist elements. The second peak in drama consists of the works of **Slavko Grum** during the period of Expressionism in the late 1920s, particularly with what is today a canonical work, the grotesque play *Dogodek v mestu Goga* (An Event in the Town of Goga, 1930).

The initial post-World War Two years favoured Social Realism, but the modernist trend, which reached its first peak with the novel by **Dominik Smole** *Črni dnevi in beli dan* (Black Days and a White Day, 1958), was stronger. The representatives of the new avant-garde then developed modernist techniques in the direction of linguistic experiment and the pure absurd. After 1950, alongside poetic drama, stage writing took the shape of philosophical thesis (existentialist drama) or of grotesque irony (theatre of the absurd). The shift from the criticism of the bourgeois ethic to criticism of the regime through a clinical study of social repression was eloquently verbalised by **Drago Jančar** in his play *Veliki briljantni valček* (The Great Brilliant Waltz, 1985).

With the emergence of the new generation of authors in the 1980s, the markedly modernist artistic writing began to abandon the literary ground to interwoven genres and new sensibility. These authors do not have a negative attitude to tradition, originality is for them no longer a dogma; they have also lost the modernist restlessness connected with the insufficiency of artistic language. In short, there began the period of "**post-Modernism**". In the new millennium, the Slovene drama has also lost its historical charge and become anchored in the everyday life of everyman, focusing on everyday stories, the social environment and the problems of ordinary people.

Drawn up by **mag. Pavel Ocepek** (University of Sarajevo), **Monika Pemič** (University of Cologne) and **Dr Jasmina Šuler Galos** (University of Warsaw).

MUSIC

Thanks to their musical past and present, the Slovenes occupy an equal place on the musical map of Europe. Particularly rich and interesting are the folk musical heritage and composing in both serious and popular genres. The Neanderthal Flute – a 50,000 to 60,000 year-old femur of a cave bear with holes – discovered in Divje Babe Cave is considered to be the oldest musical instrument in the world.

The folk musical tradition of polyphonic singing, the zither, the dulcimer, string instruments and wind instruments is preserved and developed in various ways: in the folklore manner following ethno-musical traditions (e.g. the groups **Tolovaj Mataj**, **Kurja koža**, **Volk Folk**, **Vruja**, **Beltinška banda**), through modern urban interpretations (**Katalena**, **Brina**), in popular music (**Vlado Kreslin**, **Rudi Bučar**, **Magnifico**), and in jazz (**Renato Chicco**, also **Tone Janša** and **Kaja Draksler**). Folk music is, of course, also one of the sources of **Oberkrainer music** and the whole of the Alpine region is enchanted by the **Brothers Avsenik Ensemble**.

Slovenia also appears on the maps of classical music. Slovenj Gradec is the birth place of the giant of the Romantic Lieder **Hugo Wolf**; from Piran came the violin virtuoso and composer of the famous Rococo *Devil's Trill Sonata* **Giuseppe Tartini**, but even in the 16th century, the master of motets and madrigals, **Iacobus Gallus Carniolus**, emphasised in his signature his Slovene origins. In the Romantic period, the composer and pianist **Jurij Mihevec** published his compositions in Paris, while over recent decades the world has closely followed the work of one of the leading European musical avant-gardists **Vinko Globokar**. Before him, Slovene audiences were excited by the Expressionist **Marij Kogoj** and his outburst of 20th century musical elements.

Since 1960, an important part of the musical pulse of Slovenia has been contributed by the **Ljubljana Jazz Festival**, said to be the oldest in Europe. It is organically tied to the **Big Band of the Slovene national radio and TV**, which emerged immediately after World War Two based on the heritage of a number of pre-war ensembles, and under the masterful leadership of **Bojan Adamič** and **Jože Privšek** rose to the top. The same applies to a number of its soloists and some independent instrumental and vocal groups, such as the gospel sensation the **New Swing Quartet**, and a generation of exceptionally talented, creative and highly educated young musicians, some of which (e.g. **Samo Šalamon**, **Jure Pukl**, **Marko Črnčec**) are ranked by international critics as among the most interesting and influential young jazz musicians in the world.

Slovene popular music is less renowned than it deserves to be, as particularly the songs from the “golden years” of the Slovene popular song, from the early 60s to the mid-80s, were the fruit of collaboration among excellent composers, vocalists and lyric writers, the latter including some accomplished poets. Groups like **Pepel in kri**, the rock bands **Srce**, **September**, **Buldožer**, **Oko** and **Lačni Franz**, the heavy metal band **Pomaranča**, the pioneers of punk **Pankrti**, the New Age band **Vidosex** and the singer-songwriter **Tomaž Pengov** were welcome everywhere in Yugoslavia. In recent years, the rock groups **Siddharta** (partly in Slovene) and **Elvis Jackson**, the rapper **N'toko**, the “electronic” musicians **Umek** and **Gramatik**, and of course the world stars of avant-garde styles, the group **Laibach**, have appeared on large international stages.

Drawn up by **Dr Andrej Šurla** (University of Prague).

ART, ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Slovenia is a meeting point of various cultures which have influenced the country's art. Initially, artistic works were created by foreign masters. In a number of Slovene settlements there are still visible Roman remains, but most towns are reminiscent of those of the former Austria-Hungarian monarchy, although in coastal towns the Venetian influence can be observed.

Art in Slovenia acquired a Slovene character during the Romantic and Gothic periods with the appearance of building and painting workshops, which involved local masters. While the Renaissance left only traces, Slovene art was truly shaped by the Baroque, with outstanding examples of church and secular buildings, as well as the sculptures and paintings inside them.

After 1870, with the period of Realism, landscapes, still life studies and portraits by **Janez and Jurij Šubic**, **Jožef Petkovšek**, **Anton Ažbe** and **Ivana Kobilca** ushered in the golden era of Slovene visual art. At the turn of the century, there followed the [Impressionists](#) **Rihard Jakopič**, **Ivan Grohar**, **Matija Jama** and **Matej Sternen**, and after World War One the Expressionists **Božidar Jakac**, who is also the beginner of Slovene graphic art, and **France** and **Tone Kralj**. Before World War Two the painters who marked Slovene art with their individual artistic expression began their careers: **Zoran Mušič**, **France Mihelič** and **Lojze Spacal**.

The reconstruction of Ljubljana after the 1895 earthquake, led by [Maks Fabiani](#), indicated the start of modern architecture in Slovenia. It was marked most importantly by the architect [Jože Plečnik](#). One of the priorities in sculpture was the erection of monuments to Slovene cultural figures; these were created by the first academy-trained sculptors **Alojz Gangl**, **Ivan Zajec** and **Franc Berneker**.

After World War Two, in addition to fulfilling public commissions, Slovene sculptors were also involved

in their own personal searches. In painting, an extreme rejection of the prescribed rules was exercised by the conceptualism of the neo-avant-garde **OHO group**. At the same time, particularly after 1970, there emerged painters who explored other avant-garde approaches: **Franc Novinc**, **Boris Jesih**, **Nejc Slapar** and **Franc Vozelj**. The creative powers of Slovene artists attained an enviable level; the [Ljubljana Academy of Art](#) educated numerous artists who became internationally established.

Post-war modernist architecture, often referred to as socialist, was marked most strongly by **Edvard Ravnikar**. At this time, industrial design came to the forefront, the icon of which is the Rex chair, designed in 1953 by **Niko Kralj**. Larger companies established their own design departments, while in the 60s at the University of Ljubljana a design programme was introduced, attended by generations of Slovene designers, including **Saša J. Mächtig**, the creator of the legendary K67 kiosk.

After 1991, Slovene artists were faced with a different social and economic reality. The new Slovene architecture is being created by, among others, the [Sadar + Vuga](#) studio, while the design tradition is carried on by **Nika Zupanc's** lights and **Lara Bohinc's** jewellery. The new forms of expression, shaped by stylistic and conceptual diversity, are explored by numerous painters, sculptors and multimedia artists of different generations. Photography and book illustrations also continue to be important creative fields, as they have been for decades.

The achievements of Slovene art are exhibited in [the Museum of Architecture and Design](#), the [National Gallery of Slovenia](#), the [Museum of Modern Art](#) and the [International Centre of Graphic Arts](#).

Drawn up by **Tina Jugović** (University of Katowice), **Dr Irma Kern** (University of Tübingen), **Matej Klemen** (University of Graz), **mag. Metka Lokar** (University of Beijing) and **Lara Pižent** (University of Vilnius).

STAGE ARTS AND FILM

Theatre activities in Slovene appeared as early as the Middle Ages, but the true beginning of this art is considered to be the staging of **Linhart's Županova Micka** (Micka, the Mayor's Daughter) in Ljubljana in the late 18th century. Until World War Two, there were endeavours for the establishment of a permanent Slovene-language theatre, while after the war the stage arts developed considerably and, through various institutional and experimental projects, attained the level of theatre productions elsewhere in the world. **Ignacij Borštnik**, the **OHO group**, *Missa in a minor* at the **Mladinsko Theatre**, the cult chicken from the performance *Gratinirani možgani* (Brain Gratin) staged by **Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre**, **Neue slovenische Kunst** and the **Ana Monró Theatre** are but a few significant elements of the rich Slovene theatrical production.

Slovene **puppet theatre** was started by **Milan Klemenčič** in the early 20th century. Now, the **Ljubljana Puppet Theatre** and the **Mini Theatre** appear at highly regarded international festivals and stage excellent productions at home.

The first **film projection** in Slovenia took place in **1899**. Six years later, the first Slovene film-maker **Dr Karol Grossmann** appeared and today **a festival of fantastic film** is named after him. By World War One, all the larger towns in Slovenia had a cinema. In the 30s, the first Slovene feature film was made, *V kraljestvu zlatoroga* (In the Kingdom of the Goldenhorn), directed by **Janko Ravnik**, which was

soon followed by other mountaineering or patriotic films. In the second half of the 20th century screen adaptations of literary works appeared (e.g. *Deseti brat* (The Tenth Brother) and *Na klancu* (On the Hill), directed by **Vojko Duletić**) and after World War Two the Partisan film emerged. *Na svoji zemlji* (On Our Own Land), made in 1948 by **France Štiglic**, is considered the first Slovene talking feature film. The main representative of the Slovene commercial film is **František Čap**, who made two classics: *Vesna* and *Ne čakaj na maj* (Don't Wait for May). The 60s were marked by **Boštjan Hladnik's** modernism. After independence in 1991, many new names appeared, directors of the "older" and "younger" generation. At the national level, the **Slovenian Film Centre** is responsible for film in Slovenia.

Ballet and modern dance developed mostly after World War Two. The dancers **Pia** and **Pino Mlakar** combined the two dance genres, while a central figure in the field of modern dance is **Ksenija Hribar** and it was also developed by the **Meta Vidmar** dance school. In recent years the classical programmes of the ballet houses in Maribor and Ljubljana have been updated with modern dance performances that have enjoyed international success. This process has been led by **Edward Clug** in Maribor and **Darinka Lavrič Simčič** in Ljubljana. Since 1991, great success has been achieved in the field of competitive ballroom dancing at various international competitions.

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Drawn by **Ana Fras** (University of Granada), **Magda Lojk** (University of Moscow) and **mag. Mateja Rozman** (University of Lisbon).

SPORT

The Slovenes have always had a strong connection with the countryside and sport. Slovene sportsmen and women have achieved top results particularly in individual and extreme sports, and hold a number of records. They include the extreme cyclist **Jure Robič**, the only one to win five times the ultra-marathon race across America (RAAM; 4,800 km, covered in less than ten days). Historic successes were also achieved by the alpinist **Tomaž Humar** with the first independent ascent of Annapurna 1 (8,091 m), **Davo Karničar** as the first to ski from the top of Mount Everest, and the swimmer **Martin Strel** with the longest swim (the River Amazon, 5,268 km). But the most dramatic is the story of the ski runner **Petra Majdič** at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver: during the warm-up she suffered a serious injury, but still appeared in every stage of the race and won the bronze medal. She described the race of her life with the following words: "This medal is covered with diamonds, not gold."

Other Slovene competitors achieve top results in world competitions and the Olympics. This particularly true of skiing, traditionally the most popular Slovene sport. Among the most important Alpine skiers are **Bojan Križaj**, **Rok Petrovič**, **Mateja Svet** and particularly **Tina Maze**, the best ever Slovene skier in terms of the number of wins in the world cup, and the records and points achieved.

Another winter sport that brings incredible results for Slovenia is ski jumping. Since they were opened in 1934, world records have been broken on the [Planica ski jumps](#): **Janez Poldaj**, **Franci Petek**, **Primož Peterka** and **Peter Prevc** are just a few names that have marked this sport. In the other winter disciplines: **Jakov Fak** is impressive in the

biathlon, **Žan Košir** in skiboarding and **Anže Kopitar** in ice hockey.

Slovenia has also scaled the Olympic heights: in the 1930s the gymnast **Leon Štukelj** won 6 medals and in the 60s **Miro Cerar** won 3. The country has also been very successfully represented at the Olympic Games by the rower **Iztok Čop**, the shooter **Rajmond Debevec**, the sailor **Vasilij Žbogar** and the judoist **Urška Žolnir**. Also of exceptional importance are the medals and records achieved by competitors in the Para-Olympics, particularly the swimmer **Darko Đurić**, who is without legs and an arm, and the shooter and paraplegic **Veselka Pevec**.

Given the natural terrain, Slovenes have always been involved in [mountaineering](#). **Jakob Aljaž** is renowned for his purchase of the highest Slovene mountain and symbol of "Slovenehood", [Mount Triglav](#), and for erecting the small tower on top of it. Other exceptional Alpinists include **Stane Belak - Šrauf**, **Tomo Česen** and **Martina Čufar**.

Finally, we should note that sport enthusiasts in Slovenia are not only keen spectators and dogged supporters, but also active participants. There are around 3,000 sports associations in the country, with a membership of around 400 thousand. Approximately a fifth of the population participate regularly, particularly in outdoor sports. Among these, hiking and cycling are among the most popular in the summer and skiing in the winter. Team sports like basketball, football, handball and volleyball are also popular and Slovene teams are often among the best, at least in Europe. Slovenes are also keen on adrenalin sports: paragliding, rafting, caving, canyoning and climbing. Sport is simply an important way of spending free time and this is why we say: "If you don't jump, you're not a Slovene!"

Drawn up by **mag. Meta Klinar** (University of Zagreb), **Eva Šprager** (University of Sophia), **Ivana Petric Lasnik** (Universities of Gent and Brussels) and **Vesna Bukovec** (University of Łódź).

SLOVENE CULTURE ONLINE

[Kulturnik](#) is an entry point for Slovene culture and the wealth of its internet resources. This tool makes searching easier and quicker, and the hits are more useful than the ones found by the commercial search engines. Kulturnik searches 50 digital collections, scans 80 blogs and podcasts and visits 300 cultural websites. Fresh news from culture, interviews and reviews are drawn from 50 online media and the site also keeps up with information from the social media.

www.kulturnik.si

[Culture.si](#) is a website containing material about culture and art in Slovenia in English; it is an encyclopaedia, a directory and a generator of international links. In five years, a number of extensive databases has grown, which are accessible free of charge for further use: opinions and reference texts about artists, festivals and settings, galleries of photographs and logos, contact addresses, and so on. Culture.si also presents data in the form of interactive info-graphics: an annual calendar of festivals in Slovenia, a map of the world with the places where Slovene artists are presented, and an overview of European cultural projects by the country's producers within the last fifteen years.

www.culture.si

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, the websites [Culture.si](#) and [Kulturnik.si](#) were designed by [Ljudmila Art and Science Laboratory](#), which has been updating and developing them since 2011.