



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 30, 2015, VOLUME 11, NUMBER 30

25th Anniversary of the Plebiscite Decision for A Sovereign and Independent Slovenia

On December 26, Slovenia celebrated its Independence and Unity Day, commemorating the proclamation of the official results of the independence plebiscite 25 years ago.

The referendum took place on December 23, 1990, when 93.2% of eligible voters came to the polls to declare with an overwhelming majority of voters (95% of those who voted and 88.5% of all eligible voters)

that Slovenia would, within six months after the plebiscite, conduct disassociation talks with the other Yugoslav republics and persuade foreign countries to grant recognition to the new state. The plebiscite took place following the first multiparty election in Slovenia in April of 1990. The Independence and Unity Day was also observed throughout Slovenia. The national ceremony was held on Wednesday, December 23 but

various events were scheduled throughout the following days.

To honor the 25th anniversary of the independence referendum, Ambassador Dr. Cerar and his wife, Dr. Martina Skok, hosted a reception on December 21 for the Washington local Slovenian community members and their families and other guests, among them former U.S. Ambassadors to Slovenia, embassy liaisons at the U.S. administration, entrepreneurs,



The reception was hosted by Ambassador Dr. Cerar and his wife.





journalists, representatives of cultural institutions and galleries and embassy neighbors. In his address, Ambassador Dr. Cerar underlined the importance of the event 25 years ago, which led to the declaration of independence on June 25, 1991, and on December 23, 1991, exactly one year after the referendum, to adopting the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. In his speech, the ambassador recognized the role of the Slovenian community in the U.S. in the process of gaining recognition from the United States and also thanked it for its support on Slovenia's pathways to Euro-Atlantic integrations. In his remarks, the ambassador also outlined the most important

highlights in the U.S.-Slovenia relations in the past year and wished all the guests a merry holiday season and a happy new year 2016.

On this occasion, a Christmas Still-Life Exhibit of the artwork of Teresa Velikonja Oaxaca, was opened. Teresa Velikonja Oaxaca, an award winning artist, was born in the United States. Her parents are of Slovenian and Mexican heritage. She spends her time between the United States and Europe acquiring inspiration, working on her oil paintings, teaching master-classes all over the world and taking portrait commissions. Her work is exhibited regularly both nationally and abroad. When not traveling, she keeps a

busy studio in Washington, DC.

The show features a range of mediums and sizes including large scale oil paintings to small finely crafted drawings and etchings. The work is focused on the representation of classical still life as the title suggests: "Natura Morta" is Italian for Still Life, and indeed many languages use the term Dead Life, rather than still life to convey the time honored genre. The exhibition "Natura Morta" will remain on view for visitors every day Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until February at the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, 2410 California St., Washington, D.C. 20008. More of her work can be seen at www.teresaaxaca.com





Teresa Velikonja Oaxaca and her artwork.



Santa also attended the reception.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Slovenian Government Nominates Dr. Danilo Türk For the Post of U.N. Secretary-General



Dr. Danilo Türk

Dr. Danilo Türk was the President of Slovenia between 2007 and 2012. Before that, he worked for the U.N. for a long time, including as the U.N. Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs under Kofi Annan. He is a recognized diplomat and international lawyer, who is recognized and respected at

the U.N., which makes him an excellent candidate. He chairs the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace. In his career, he has mostly dedicated himself to human rights, also working with Amnesty International and presiding over the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. He was the initiator and vice-president of the Human Rights Council in Slovenia.

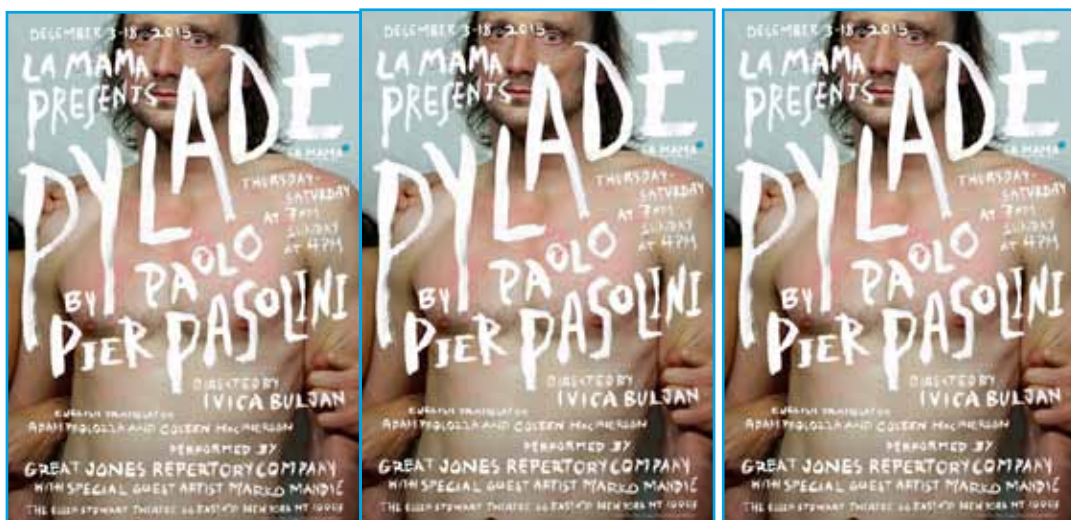
Dr. Türk has authored many publications on international law and proposed many projects, both with regard to the functioning of the U.N. and humanitarian issues. He has received much international recognitions. and chairs the Global Fairness Initiative Board. He was also involved in the creation of the Institute for Global Policy at Columbia University in New York.

The mandate of the current U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon expires on December 31, 2016. On January 2, 2014, the government was informed of Dr. Türk's intention to run for the post of U.N. Secretary-General. The Slovenian government decided to support his candidacy and will, therefor, provide him with relevant support. The government's proposal will be followed by Dr. Türk's formal candidacy in the form of a letter to the General Assembly president and the president of the U.N. Security Council. The Eastern Europe group, which includes Slovenia, is the only group in the U.N. that has never produced a secretary-general in the seventy years of the U.N. A successful candidacy would be immensely significant to Slovenia, as well as a great honor and recognition.

Pylade featuring Marko Mandić at La MaMa in NYC



Marko Mandić.



PYLADE poster designed by Nicky Lindeman and Mirko Ilić.

Pasolini's *Pylade*, a contemporary reinterpretation of the relationship between Pylades and Orestes from Greek mythology and the *Oresteia*, ran from December 3 to 18th on the stage at La MaMa's Ellen Stewart Theatre in New York. A play by the late, celebrated Italian film director Pier Paolo Pasolini was directed by Prešeren Award laureate Ivica Buljan, and in the title role featured guest Slovenian actor Marko Mandić together with members of La

MaMa's Great Jones Repertory Company.

Performance by Slovenian actor Marko Mandić was acclaimed in many reviews. *New York Theatre Review* stated that "Marko Mandić is one of the bravest actors in the city. Granted, he's Slovenian, but he threw himself into every scene, every gesture, every orgy, every battle without care or concern. Maybe we could use some more Slovenian courage on stage in this town." "Mandić, gives the performance

of a lifetime, as a man willing to throw himself into the fire if it means he will have gotten a better sense of who he was," wrote Jose Solis for *stagebuddy.com*. Randy Gener outlined in the *Culture of One World* that the *Pylade* "is quite simply the theatrical event of the 2015–2016 New York theater season." *Pylade* is one of six little-known plays written by Pasolini, is a poetic, tragic meditation on democracy, consumerism, and the struggle for real social change.

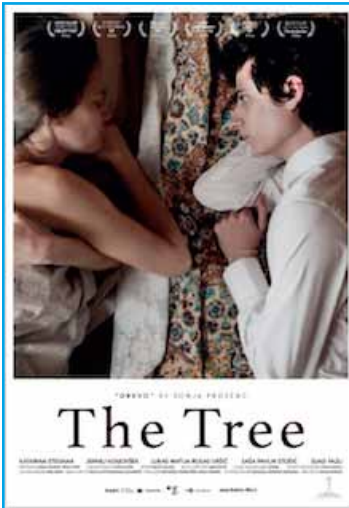


Tunde Sho and Marko Mandić in *Pylade*.

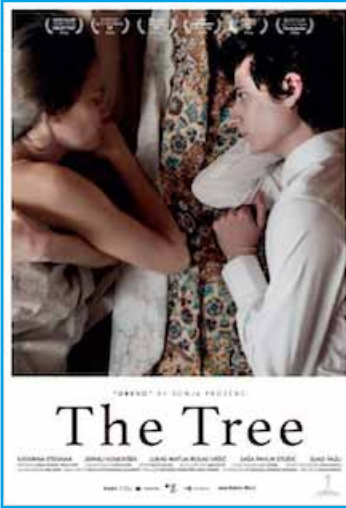


The program.

Film The Tree at the AFI European Union Film Showcase



Poster of the film.



Still from the film.

The annual AFI European Union Film Showcase ran from opening night on December 1 through December 20, bringing the best in European cinema to Washington audiences. The festival in its 28th edition took place at the historic AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was presented by the American Film Institute (AFI) in collaboration with the Delegation of the European Union to the United States and E.U. Member States.

This year's selection of more than 50 films included award-winners, international festival favorites, local box-office hits and debut works by promising new talents. Many of the 28 European Union countries plus presented at the festival their official Oscar® submissions for Best Foreign Language Film, including Slovenia, which introduced the 2015 Oscar® Selection, *The Tree* (*Drevo*) directed by Sonja Prosenč.

The Tree is the first feature film of the director. A gripping drama vivisection family values. A family finds itself in a dead-end situation. Mother Milena (played by Katarina Stegnar), teenager Alek (played by Jernej Kogovšek) and nine-year-old Veli (played by Lukas Matija Rosas Uršič) are only safe behind the walls of their own house and yard.

As time vanishes from their home, the shelter slowly turns into a prison. However, nothing can keep the children from dreaming and yearning to be free, and the urge to make a decision seems inevitable. Across three chapters, each exploring the perspective of a single family member, the family's story and the reasons they fear their neighbors gradually come into focus of the director. The film was presented in Slovene and Albanian with English subtitles.

The Tree was world-premiered at Karlovy Vary

International Film Festival in July 2014. Since then it was a winner of several awards at the Festival of Slovenian Film, winner of Youth Jury Award – Film by the Sea in Netherlands in 2014, and nominated for Grand Prix du Luxembourg, Black Horse Award in Poland, Best Feature Film at the Mumbai Film Festival, Heinrich Award at the Braunschweig International Film Festival, for the Trieste Prize at the Trieste International Film Festival, for New Talent Grand Prix in Copenhagen, Best feature at Tripoli International Film Festival and at Alexandria Film Festival, among others.

The official website of the film is: <http://www.thetree-film.si/home.html>



Holiday Potica Baking and Tree Decoration at the Slovenian Consulate in Knoxville, TN



On Sunday, December 20, 2015, on a sunny winter afternoon, the Slovene Consulate in Knoxville TN was host to Slovenes, Slovene-Americans, numerous other Americans, and five friends from Azerbaijan for a Potica baking party to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Plebiscite on Independence for Slovenia. The event included traditional Slovene party food (pršut prosciutto, for example), 7 different Slovene wines (4 reds and 3 whites), Christmas tree decorating, and lessons on how to complete the entire 5

hour potica-baking process from starter yeast to finished product. The group baked a walnut/honey version while munching on a tarragon/cottage cheese version baked the day before.

Sherry Kallas who drove several hours from central Tennessee to attend, had just returned from a trip to Slovenia and enjoyed regaling all with her enthusiastic analysis of her trip. She had chosen a privately guided 10 day tour, led by Sanja Djorčev from Rogaška, which included visits to private homes as well as most of the standard

tourist highlights, such as Lipica, and Bled. During this event, other Slovene-related projects were discussed, including the Woodworker Exhibit from the Ribnica Handicraft Center, Slovenia, which is circulating in North America, and the developing project on Slovene Beekeeping. Also in attendance was Maja Jeranko from Ljubljana, an MA Student in the Latin American Studies Program at the University of Florida, Gainesville. She is a guest of the consulate for the Christmas Holidays.



Murska Sobota Gallery



What better way to learn about Slovenia's history, art and heritage then by visiting various museums spread throughout the country? When making a list of things to do in Slovenia, do not forget about interesting galleries and museum collections. We will do our best to introduce as many as possible in our newsletter.

Art gallery activity in Murska Sobota started in 1965 with the opening of The Exhibition Pavilion of architect Franc Novak. Since 1980, the gallery has been housed in the present location.. Gallery of Murska Sobota has the status of an authorized museum functioning within the national public service of museums and galleries.

Gallery Murska Sobota, as a central gallery in the Prekmurje region, is responsible for the continuous and undisturbed operation of the public service of protecting, conserving, researching, presenting, exhibiting and popularizing of movable cultural heritage from the 20th century onwards. The Gallery of Murska Sobota takes care of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, with buyouts, acquisitions and donations

of works of contemporary art is managing its own museum collections. Its permanent collection is being continuously developed and expanded, and monitors the development of contemporary art at the regional and national level. The gallery independently organizes temporary exhibitions of Slovenian contemporary art of the 20th and 21st centuries. The gallery's program includes the study of contemporary art that is accessible to the general public in the form of texts in the catalogs of the individual temporary exhibitions.

The exhibition program consists of solo and group exhibitions of Slovenian and foreign painters, sculptors, printmakers and photographers. The gallery's biennial exhibition, titled *Coincidences*, usually presents works of different generations of artists. Many exchange exhibitions are the result of cooperation with domestic and foreign galleries in order to promote Slovenian and foreign contemporary art. By 2015, the gallery succeeded to collect 670 works of art of 158 authors in its permanent collection. Murska Sobota Gallery currently does not have enough space to have on exhibit a full permanent

collection; it exhibits representative parts of its permanent collection through various thematic temporary exhibitions. The entire permanent collection, however, is digitalized and accessible to the public through the gallery website.

Next to its primary exhibition program, Gallery Murska Sobota also offers a varied accompanying program in the form of adult education (press conferences, guided tours, lectures) and pedagogical activities (guided tours, art workshops, ...) to satisfy the wishes and needs of a diverse audience.



Galerija Murska Sobota
Kocljeva ulica 7
9000 Murska Sobota
Slovenia
E-mail: info.galerijams@siol.net
Website: www.galerija-ms.si
Telephone: + 386 (2) 522 38 34

UPCOMING EVENTS - WASHINGTON, D.C.

NATURA MORTA: A CHRISTMAS STILL-LIFE EXHIBIT WITH THE ARTWORK OF TERESA VELIKONJA OAXACA

Teresa Velikonja Oaxaca, an award winning artist, was born in the United States. Her parents are of Slovenian and Mexican heritage. She has lived and traveled in many places throughout her life, and art has always been a part of it. These days she spends her time between the United States and Europe collecting inspiration, working on her oil painting, teaching master-classes all over the world and taking portrait commissions. Her work exhibits regularly both nationally and abroad, and her portrait sitters consist of an eclectic mix of individuals including notoriously hard to capture young children, ambassadors, Smithsonian museum Curators, and rock stars. When not traveling, she keeps a busy studio in Washington, DC.

The show features a range of mediums and sizes including large scale oil painting to small finely crafted drawings and etchings. The work will be focused on the representation of classical still life as the title suggests; "Natura Morta" is Italian for Still Life, and indeed many languages use the term Dead Life, rather than still to convey the time honored genre. Figures do make appearances in this show however they are often as not mere effigies of the human. There are masks of all expression, painted faces on models, skulls, dolls and German Nutcrackers, paintings of children's blocks from another age depicted Aesopian Fables with stern warnings. Through the stern reminders of vanity and mortality the nature and life spring forth in the abundance of rich colors and fabrics, abundant heads of hair and above all the flowers. If one was to count the number of flowers in the show there would be hundreds, possibly thousands. Life is represented in the cycle of demise, renewal and rebirth. Much like the celebration that takes place in the dead of winter in cultures throughout the world.

On her Slovenian side, her mother is Maria Velikonja, her grandparents were Joseph Velikonja and Tilly Rus Velikonja. Maria Velikonja has conducted some genealogy research, and discovered that the Slovenian baroque painter Anton Cebej is an ancestor. The Velikonja family comes from Predmeja, and the Rus family comes from Novo Mesto. Teresa's grandparents immigrated to the United States in 1955. This exhibit includes a large portrait of Teresa's grandfather, Joseph Velikonja, who died earlier this year in Ljubljana.

When: [Show runs December 21-February 8, on view Monday through Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.](#)

Where: [Embassy of Slovenia, 2410 California Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20008](#)

For more information call: +1 (202) 386-6610

UPCOMING EVENTS - NEW YORK

CONCERT BY IN NYC SAŠO SANDIČ, JOE BONADIO, KEVIN BENTS

Slovenian-born singer-songwriter and guitarist, Sašo Sandič, moved to NYC in 2014. After a couple of open mic appearances, Sašo released an unofficial album of demo songs with the help of Oz Noy, Keith Carlock, Mike J. Visceglia, Kevin Bents, Joe Bonadio, James Genus, Jeff Kazez, Danny Lapidus and Ted Spencer. On January 4 he will perform at the Bitter End in West Village (NYC) with Joe Bonadio (Sting) and Kevin Bents (Bozz Scaggs).

When: [Monday, January 4, 2016 at 8 p.m.](#)

Where: [The Bitter End, 147 Bleecker St., 10012 New York, NY](#)

Line-up: Saso Sandic, Joe Bonadio, Kevin Bents

More information: www.bitterend.com, T: (212) 673-7030

www.sasosandic.com

<https://sasosandic.bandcamp.com>

www.facebook.com/sashosmusic

<https://sasosandic.bandcamp.com/album/alley-raven>

The weekly Embassy Newsletter, produced by the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, is available on: www.washington.embassy.si.

Send us your comments or request for a subscription on: vwa@gov.si

Editor: Nuška Zakrajšek, Language consultant: Vladimir Pregelj