

Remeslo | Umenie | Dizajn

2022

# R | L | I | D

special  
edition

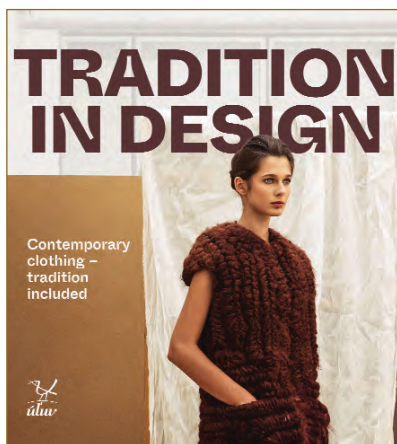




## Tradition - Untraditionally: Wood

ÚLUV Gallery | Obchodná 64, Bratislava  
Opening hours  
Monday - Friday: 12.00 - 18.00

**20. 1. - 4. 11. 2022**



## Rings in Water 2022

ÚLUV Gallery | Obchodná 64, Bratislava  
Opening hours  
Monday - Friday: 12.00 - 18.00

**24. 11. 2022 - 3. 3. 2023**

## Masters of Musical Instruments

ÚLUV Gallery | Másiarska 52, Košice  
Opening hours  
Monday - Friday: 13.00 - 17.00

**21. 10. 2021 - 30. 10. 2022**



## Tradition in design Contemporary clothing - tradition included

Galerie G18 Faculty of Multimedia Communications of Tomas Bata University in Zlín | Štefánikova 5670, Zlín  
Opening hours  
Monday - Thursday: 10.00 - 18.00

**3. 8. - 12. 9. 2022**

Hungarian Folk Museum of Applied Arts  
1011 Budapest, Fő utca 6  
Opening hours  
Monday - Thursday: 10.00 - 18.00

**20. 9. - 25. 10. 2022**



## Special edition | 2022

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# Editorial

The Centre for Folk Art Production (ÚLUV) is a state organisation supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. What makes this organisation unique is its development of traditional crafts as part of Slovakia's intangible cultural heritage and the help it provides to those who work in crafts today.

ÚLUV's activities are varied. The 'Remeslo, umenie, dizajn' (RUD) [Craft, Art, Design] magazine you are holding in your hands has been coming out for 23 years. ÚLUV's other specialist activities include the publication of various books as well as managing electronic encyclopaedias of crafts. Through the competitions 'Rings in Water' for designers, craftspeople and students and 'In the Land of Crafts' for young people, the organisation seeks to bring crafts to the younger generation. The 'ÚLUV Master Craftsmen Days' is also popular and has now been organised for 30 years, attracting hundreds of master craftspeople. The Museum of Folk Art Production is also an important part of ÚLUV and manages a unique collection of objects and documentation; ÚLUV also has a library specialising in traditional crafts and design. The ÚLUV School of Crafts provides education in the area of traditional folk production; the three ÚLUV Regional Craft Centres pass on practical craft skills in hundreds of courses. This year, the school was nominated on behalf of Slovakia for inclusion in the UNESCO List of Intangible World Heritage.

The 'Open Studio' provides a space where traditional craft can move closer to contemporary design; new product designs are born here from the cooperation between master producers and artists. Reaching beyond traditional crafts is also important, especially with a view to cooperating with associations of craftspeople, designers, schools focusing on design and partner organisations in Slovakia and abroad.

The magazine you are holding will show you some of these activities and interactions. We hope you enjoy reading it, and that you will find it inspiring.

*Editorial board*



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# Behind everything, there is a person

Eva Ševčíková, a graduate in the history of art and ethnology from Masaryk University in Brno, a long-term external colleague but also an internal employee of the Centre for Folk Art Production, rejoined the organisation in January 2021. On July 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, after winning the selection procedure, she was appointed general director of ÚĽUV. You can find out more about her plans and visions, and also about where the institution is heading, in our interview.

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Martina Bizovská, Eva Ševčíková

## How was your relationship to traditional culture shaped?

I have a deep bond with traditional folk culture. When I was sixteen, I took part in the School of Folk Culture in the Museum of the Slovak Village in Martin during the summer holidays. We tried many activities linked to traditional jobs, housing (we were accommodated in the grounds of the museum), clothing, food and crafts. At the end of this excellent event, we organised a wedding with all the trappings of a traditional ceremony. As the youngest participant, I “acted” as the bride in this beautiful performance, wearing a traditional costume for the first time. At that moment the organisers had no idea that they were laying the foundations of something important. In time, the activities of the School of Folk Culture moved to the isolated hamlet of Zaježová (Zvolen district). This event not only influenced the personal lives of its participants, but also subsequently a whole generation of people enchanted by a lifestyle linked to folk culture. In Martin, I discovered not only the museum, but also the people who worked in it and who worked on documenting and presenting folk culture. I discovered the existence of ethnology, and even that it could be studied. I felt that this was the right direction for me to take. And I’m lucky that I’ve spent my entire professional life working with the protection and development of cultural heritage. This area interests me, and being able to work in it brings me personal satisfaction.

## You have been working with ÚĽUV since 2003. What form did your cooperation take?

My first work for ÚĽUV was a lecture at a conference in 2003. It was focused on pottery and its contemporary forms in western Slovakia. The topic of my dissertation was field research focused on mapping traditional crafts in the Záhorie region. Pottery and woodcarving were the strongest representatives of these crafts. I also continued my research into pottery as a specialised employee of the Museum of the Little



Carpathians in Pezinok. My cooperation with ÚĽUV gradually developed: articles for the magazine *Remeslo, Umenie, Dizajn* [Craft, Art, Design] (as an enthusiastic museologist I read it from its very first issue), lectures for the School of Crafts, joint authorship of the ÚĽUV Virtual Gallery, the exhibition “Masters of Majolica Today”. I became a full-time ÚĽUV employee in 2013 in the course of my subsequent exhibition, devoted to the artistic pottery of Milan Árendáš. I worked in various positions; as an editor of RUD and also a museum curator, later as an under-secretary for the section of care for folk art production. And I have been working for eight years in the Committee for awarding the title of Master of Folk Art Production.

## How do you see ÚĽUV as an institution, and its potential?

I see ÚĽUV in the context of cultural organisations established by the state as a unique institution, with a portfolio consisting of a wide range of activities devoted to a single goal: the documentation, support and development of traditional crafts, or in the language of the organisation itself, folk art production. I have always enjoyed working with interesting people, particularly with bearers of knowledge from past times in today’s world. Craft is beautiful in that it perpetuates itself by passing on knowledge. The people who develop it are the foundations of craft; it all depends on them. I often say that every craft is disappearing until someone comes along to breathe new life into it. The purpose isn’t to create perfect replicas, to imitate, but rather to create something new, to follow on creatively from tradition. The overlaps with design and art and the mingling of these areas are also inspiring. In ÚĽUV, the artistic side of the craft has always been at the forefront, too; it is not only about keeping to demanding technological and material criteria. And all this in today’s world governed by digitalisation and information technologies, which is diametrically opposed to production principles from the perspective of the material, technology, economic and consumer habits etc.



↑ During the Master Craftsmen Days, the general director of ÚLUV, Eva Ševčíková, paid a visit to every producer's stall. In addition to giving her personal thanks for taking part in the event, she also appreciated their work and craft skills.

**Perhaps these were also some of the reasons why you applied for the position of general director of ÚLUV. You were the successful candidate and your project was the one that convinced the committee the most. Could you share with us some of its basic ideas?**

The concept is built on the basic idea that has driven the way ÚLUV works since its foundation in 1945. The starting-point is the past, that is tradition; traditional crafts and home-based production in the Slovak lands, as a source of inspiration. The present consists of more than seventy-five years of activity by ÚLUV. Over the years, a huge number of productions, producers and products have been documented, supported, newly-created and presented. We are not building the organisation on a greenfield site. Many crafts and types of production have survived in Slovakia thanks to ÚLUV's activities. And we should work to ensure we create the conditions for safeguarding the knowledge and skills associated with traditional crafts for the future, too. The cooperation between producers and designers – design inspired by craft – is one of these conditions. I needed to define this basic principle on which all the organisation's activities are based. I believe it is the key to achieving fully the organisation's mission.

I formulated my ideas in short slogans in which I define ÚLUV as a partner in cultural policy and intangible cultural heritage. ÚLUV should be an open, specialised institution, guaranteeing the safeguarding and development of traditional crafts and production. It should work as an active bringer of education; in recent years, the organisation has achieved exceptional results in this field. It should also be an

innovator, promoter, publisher: in all these areas, the institution plays an important role, and spreading high-quality information is an important part of its mission. As the only state-funded institution established by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic with such a profile, it has all the cards in its hands, as well as the obligation to use them.

**Ideas and visions are one thing, the practical management of an institution is another. You have been in the post of general manager since January 2021. How would you evaluate your first year at the head of this organisation? What needs to be adjusted in the institution?**

On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 I was appointed to this position temporarily, until the end of the selection process set up by the founder. Before that, I had worked in a different cultural organisation, but I continued to follow what was happening in ÚLUV. The most important thing was, and still is, to create the conditions for fulfilling the mission for which the organisation was founded. This includes not only defining specialist activities to support the development of craft in Slovakia, but also all the supporting activities essential for the running of this institution. Only people work in culture. Therefore, all its employees also need the right working conditions. I am convinced that if the conditions are right for carrying out a job, including clear rules, there is a better chance of having good relations in the workplace. These are clearly reflected in all relations, not only within the organisation, but also towards the outside world. Open cooperation means a serious partner at all levels and in all directions.



↑ The general director of ÚLUV at the opening of the exhibition "Traditional untraditionally: Wood", together with one of its curators, Ferdinand Chrenka.

I have always seen working in culture as a service. For the moment, I consider the position of general director of ÚLUV as the most demanding service I have ever performed in my professional life; and also an exceptionally stimulating and meaningful one.

**In your presentation, the keywords were PEOPLE, VALUES, AUTHENTICITY. Can you give further details?**

People: behind everything, there is a person. In the case of craft, they are craftspeople and producers (as we call them in ÚLUV), as well as designers, theoreticians, the specialist public. But what would it be like without those who love traditional craft and support it, buy it, learn about it. And what would it be without those for whom work in this area is also their employment. Or even a calling, when many people see its meaning in passing down the craft to others.

Values: everything concerning ÚLUV's missions is based on the values of traditional folk culture, cultural heritage, the heritage of our ancestors (everyone can choose whatever is closer to them).

Authenticity: in the sense of something true, trustworthy, coming from its origins.

Anyone reading this interview carefully will also find an explanation in my previous answers. In my presentation I also mentioned other important words which I associated with craft, such as sustainability, ecology, hand-made work, meaningfulness, fulfilment, beauty, pride, joy, enjoyment, slow life, high-quality sources of inspiration, creativity...

**How are you succeeding in putting your vision into practice? What is needed for them to be carried out?**

Despite the fact that my colleagues and I carried out many activities in 2021, I must point out that I arrived in an organisation which already had a defined plan of activities and budget. At the same time, we were affected by the measures related to the pandemic, which had a large impact not only on our personal lives, but also on our professional lives. So changes came and are still coming gradually. What's important is to finish the work we have started. At the moment, we have several new projects underway. I can mention, for example, "Tandems" which creates space for cooperation

with universities focusing on design. The student forms a tandem with the producer, making innovative works combining contemporary design and traditional craft. "Tradition in Design" is another new project, creating and presenting new works by Slovak artists, focusing this year on clothing design. We are currently finishing the preparations for the project "Crafted from wood" in cooperation with the Studio of Design of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. The objective is to find a new architectural and artistic solution for the Craft Courtyard in the organisation's headquarters on Obchodná street in Bratislava. In October, we opened the exhibition "Slovak folk costumes - creative synergies" in Schloss Hof palace in Austria. In November, the newly-opened ÚLUV Design Studio on Dobrovičová street in Bratislava will expand our exhibition space, presenting the results of the "Identity.sk" project.

Exhibitions are one of the ways in which we will communicate the new concept of our work. A representative survey mapping out how traditional crafts are perceived and awareness of the ÚLUV brand brought us many new stimuli in many areas. Of course, we are also thinking of support for producers. We have added a new event "Craft in the Tatras" to our summer offerings. Participating producers appreciated this form of presentation, so next year we plan to organise this event on an even larger scale.

Readers can read about all this on the pages on the RUD magazine, on the organisation's website or via other media, or even through personal contact. At the moment we are putting together a new concept for the organisation's main projects which we will be presenting to the public. This also involves creating conditions for monitoring and collecting information related to our sphere of interest, analysing it, the research and development of new products, new forms of education, communication and presentation. We are also waiting for the results of the evaluation of future development projects, including international ones. Everything takes time. But I'm already looking forward to the results. ■

*Photographs: ÚLUV archives*

# Quite a different ÚLUV

Centre for Folk Art Production – ÚLUV. This cultural organisation with its long-looking name and established brand celebrated in 2020 another venerable anniversary: its 75 years of existence.

Jaroslav Ondruška

For younger generations, it might come as a surprise that the Centre for Folk Art Production (ÚLUV) has been present on the cultural field since 1945. Over this long period, it has succeeded in becoming a cultural phenomenon in Slovakia. Gradually, discreetly, but certainly with merit. From the very beginning, ÚLUV has had much in common with culture, and even before the Act of the Slovak National Council no. 4/1958 on Folk Art Production and Artistic Crafts in 1958 definitively integrated it into the ministry of culture as a state budget organisation. The organisation developed and grew over the decades – both in capacity and importance – and has changed radically over the last three decades. I would like to express one personal opinion on the question of the organisation’s historical changes. The dynamics of change were so radical that ÚLUV before the mid-1990s and ÚLUV today are in essence two completely different institutions. Each one in its time and as the circumstances allowed it fulfilled a cultural mission in the field of safeguarding and developing living cultural expression: folk art crafts and production in Slovakia. Today, ÚLUV is known by many lovers of traditional craft in Slovakia and abroad, but not every one of them would be able to answer the important question as to what was and remains its main sphere of activity, and why it is one of the institutions supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak republic.

It is not the ambition of this article to present the succession of milestones which shaped the organisation in the historical sense over its seven and half decades. However, let us at least look back from a distance at a few of ÚLUV’s internal “processes”, in many respects a particular entity.

## Pragmatism in its blood

The first thing that comes to mind concerning ÚLUV’s beginnings is its vital duality. In addition to cultural interests, the birth of this organisation also had purely pragmatic objectives: to create a stable organisational base for the production and sale of products which would otherwise remain locked within the borders of the local market. Naturally, we cannot overlook the great enthusiasm for protection of ÚLUV’s founding personalities. They wanted to bring closer in a new way the whole wealth of aesthetic expressions associated with the surviving craft tradition in Slovakia. It was an idealistic and altruistic attempt to better discover the state of the issue, to document living crafts and to begin to carry out activities leading to their maintenance and passing on craft skills to their successors. It is not with-



↑ ÚLUV research staff at work – documentation of traditional folk production. Katarína Brindzová, master of folk art production, decorating Easter eggs, Chorvátsky Grob (Senec district), 1971. Photograph: MĽUV archives

out interest to note that this initial artistic help in designing new products had within ÚLUV an acknowledged aspect in terms of the national economy: to maintain and develop the capacities of small local production and craft activities as a way of supporting the regional economy in the first decade after the war. From the pre-war era, ÚLUV even inherited after 1945 the name for these syncretic activities. This was the well-known “enhancing activity”. However,



↑↑ The oldest ÚLUV exhibition room and shop on Michalská ulica in Bratislava existed since 1954, but it had to close due to the return of the building to its original owners in 2005. Photograph: ÚLUV archives

↑ ÚLUV Design Studio on Dobrovičová ulica in Bratislava presents to the public design focused on craft. Sample of the exhibition 'Modré blues', 2014. Photograph: ÚLUV archives

very quickly this simple edification was replaced by a more sophisticated form of protection in the shape of planned research and documentation, artistic consultancy and dif-

fering forms of direct organisation support for production centres. The duality which we are pointing to was not at that time an obstacle, but on the contrary an opportunity for



brave initiatives. As they travelled to visit producers, ÚLUV's employees discovered the state of each branch of industry, documented and promoted it, and also organised local productions and helped with the logistics associated with product sales. Last, but not least, ÚLUV trained its own experts more or less on the go, specialising in modelling new products in individual groups of materials. All their attention was naturally focused on organising sales, even after the country's economy changed following the Communist coup d'état into a non-market, state regulated economy. 'Odbyt' – or sales – now an almost forgotten word from old economics textbooks, accompanied the entire first half of the organisation's history. In time, ÚLUV had its own central warehouse and buffer stocks; it partially employed or otherwise legally guaranteed work for a large number of producers (their numbers long exceeded 1,000 to 1,300 people). It is interesting to note such a bizarre fact such as ÚLUV having at one point an export plan for its own production prescribed by its founder, and that this economic indicator was part of its overall evaluation until the mid-1980s. The organisation thus followed the path of extensive growth, and opened one gift shop after the other. This appeared to be the best way of not leaving traditional art productions in regions without client demand. The magic formula of organised sale rid the producers of responsibility for the sales of their own production; the purchase of products was also organised by the centre. However, producers had no significant economic profit from it. Most of them did not see any real "enhancement" of their own production capacity; it did not transform into an independent, prospering workshop. The state regulated economy was one of the reasons why producers often worked on their hobby alongside their main, "civilian" employment. And later, when they retired, they produced and created objects in their leisure time, in improvised conditions at home. They saw in this activity, as well as personal self-realisation, an opportunity to earn a small amount of extra income.

### Support for quality

We can objectively state that the centre gave producers regular creative impulses. These were at least as important as the economic factors. ÚLUV sent the producers specific suggestions on how to better focus their range, how to introduce rationality and savings in their production process, how to maintain the quality of production, where not to lower the bar of the product's aesthetic value. During the first decades of the organisation's activity, attention was mainly focused on the producer, on their needs and personal development, on interesting – even exceptional – products, and on the cultural distribution of these products in the social environment. Most of ÚLUV's jobs were related to some degree or another to producers, products and to the organisation of sales. Somewhere in the background of this priority remained all of ÚLUV's other cultural output carried out during this period with similar enthusiasm. However, over whole decades, the institution's material and technical infrastructure lagged behind.

Advisory and consultancy activities, several retraining courses for newly-acquired candidates interested in cooperation, thematic competitions, the systematic evaluation of new products...all these were activities which had one final



↑ The courtyard of the ÚLUV School of Crafts in Bratislava with its adjacent workshops is familiar to thousands of attendees of courses, workshops and presentations of work products. The place has a *genius loci* with a unique atmosphere. Photograph: author's archives

objective, one important output: to build up an easily recognisable brand.

From the 1960s, ÚLUV's exhibition premises and shops differed at first glance to everything else that was appearing in the field of folk art production in Slovakia (let's mention at least ÚLUV's main "competitor" – folk art production cooperatives). The public was aware of these branded shops mainly by buying gift items there; they were easy to remember because of their unusual atmosphere combining the simplicity and mastery of folk artists with refined taste. The shops thus spontaneously fulfilled the function of some sort of exhibition halls. With hindsight, we can clearly see ÚLUV's merit in the fact that its promotional and commercial activities created an important environment of criteria for relatively varied branches, that it placed an emphasis on the artistic side of craft production and was able to attract exceptional figures in folk art production to work with it.

The organisation would never have fulfilled these ambitions had it not had its own research and development department, employing at one time several devoted and talented employees with a training in art. The particularity of their work was that on their travels to meet producers over the course of several decades, they somehow gradually became part of their professional stories. And this was not just because they overcame the initial mistrust and reluctance of



↑↑ A course in making 'fujara' pipes, led in 2005 in ÚLUV by the lector and producers of musical instruments Michal Filo. Photograph: author's archives

↑ Course in tambour hook embroidery in the Regional Craft Centre in Banská Bystrica, 2014. Photograph: ÚLUV archives.

craftsmen to make changes to their usual routine. The organisation's human and personal relationship with "its" producers was (and remains today) the identifying feature of ÚLUV's cultural attitude. With a certain exaggeration, we can say that without building up trust and without a thor-

ough knowledge of the conditions in which producers make their products, ÚLUV would not have been nearly so successful in its first four decades of existence.

Another activity carried out by ÚLUV's specialist staff was related to research: the research and documentation of liv-



↑ Holidays with crafts. Workshops for children in the ÚLUV Regional Craft Centre in Košice, 2016. Lector Ludovít Cehelský. Photograph: ÚLUV archives

ing forms of traditional folk production in the regions. Thanks to their research trips and the organised collection of material (1950s-1980s), a wide-ranging documentation collection was built up, which together with the collection of objects formed the basis of the Museum of Folk Art Production in Stupava which was founded later, in new circumstances.

All its activities of the time (including those focusing on producers, and those aimed at gathering knowledge) showed themselves to be valuable capital for the organisation's future. Based on this experience, ÚLUV was able to shape itself with a much more ambitious range of basis activities; we can call it a completely different ÚLUV.

### Opening doors

From the beginning of the 1990s, society returned to a democratic system and a market economy, and literally everything within the state went through a transformation, beginning with institutions and finished with lifestyle. Over the following three decades, ÚLUV, too, went through a complicated path of change; from a relatively cumbersome and very specialised safeguarding institution, to a more efficient, more modern cultural institution open to the public and perspective in all ways. It was no simple or direct process. Once more, as in the first post-war years, the decisiveness and courage of the management of the time helped change things in a fundamental manner, while avoiding a reduction and instead expanding and strengthening ÚLUV's basic functions. For example, at first it was not at all clear whether ÚLUV would permanently defend its classification under the Ministry of Culture as a publicly supported institution linked to the state budget. For the purposes of this article, we can only give a brief illustration of what in real time took years, even decades; namely changes which were not a matter of course at first but ended up making up ÚLUV's current programme priorities.

The first things which the organisation dealt with were the consequences of the loss of its hitherto unwritten monopoly on commerce with folk art production, the necessity for new contractual relationships with a narrower circle of producers, perceivable changes on the labour market (these years were characterised by several producers moving into other professions), and naturally there was clear pressure on the economic efficiency of its overall running. Several fundamental changes needed to be made at the same time: to modernise the outdated infrastructure, to recognise the work of its specialist sections and to bring the cultural public into the centre of interest of its specialist activities. To be brief, we can state that ÚLUV did succeed in doing all of this over the next years, and all this effort is still worthy of recognition and merit today.

The institution's running in the changed social and economic conditions will forever be associated with active cultural mar-

keting, looking for and creating a new client for its own cultural output, opening up to the public and maintaining meaningful international contacts. At the end of the day, for ÚLUV it was an existential necessity to stand up to the competition of other providers of "cultural goods".

Let us return again to the above-mentioned duality of its main activity, which characterised the organisation from the first years of its existence. On the one hand, discovering and preserving all that is valuable; on the other hand, supporting and maintaining a circle of active producers using and developing craft techniques for producing gift and art items in these new conditions. At the time we are talking about, the main part of the work gradually moved from focused work with the producer towards work with the general public, towards the production of cultural events (at first smaller one, followed later by huge ones such as the urban festival "ÚLUV Master Craftsmen Days") and towards the specialist processing of acquired knowledge: in academic articles, publications and in museums.

### Workshops for everyone

The most visible bearer of continuity in the organisation's protection mission was, surprisingly, education. Not the occasional courses of the part, but systematic, year-long course. The period was kind to such activities. Liberalisation in society made space for people's individual needs; new leisure activities were born. An interest in hobbies connected to folk crafts appeared quite naturally. ÚLUV reacted quickly to demand. In 1999, it already had not only functioning teaching workshops in Bratislava, but also an integral concept of courses and other educational activities for adults and young people in traditional crafts and folk production. The ÚLUV School of Crafts brought with it from the first moment many benefits. For craft masters, it was an opportunity to apply their teaching skills; for the organisation, it was an impulse to publish a new edition of picture and text

guides on specific craft techniques and artistic work with natural materials, which was very successful over the following years. Not mentioning the fact that to support its courses, ÚLUV also opened to the public its own specialised library, allowed its rich documentary fund and collections to be used for education, and also expanded its range of popularising lectures. However, the greatest benefit was the simple fact that hobby courses in crafts, and creative workshops for schoolchildren brought the general public into ÚLUV to an unprecedented extent. To make it clear what transformation we are referring to, it must be said that not one hundred or two hundred people came through the gates of ÚLUV every year, but over one thousand people attended its courses and creative workshops. Visitors to the courses returned and registered again and again for new additional topics. Several later became lecturers themselves, or tried to make products. The story of ÚLUV's Bratislava school of crafts is truly fascinating in hindsight. It is all the more inspiring in that that the working conditions of the lecturers, the spatial limits of the workshops or the financial security of the school were not exactly generous during the first two decades of its existence. Tenacity, passion and specialist knowledge were required of the organisers. It soon became apparent that paid public courses were the right choice for passing on knowledge of traditional production to the next generations, for stoking an interest in this area of cultural heritage. This is how the concept of ÚLUV's regional craft centres was born, first on paper, and in the following years in reality, too.

From 2005, the newly-established ÚLUV Regional Craft Centre in Banská Bystrica began organising its courses, and ten years later hobby craft courses were launched in another of ÚLUV's regional centres, in Košice. Today, they are lively cultural institutions offering hobby courses, educational programmes for schools, exhibitions, lectures, meetings with producers and presentations of traditional production techniques; they also sell folk art products and specialised publications from ÚLUV's publishing house.

### **Entering the digital age**

With the courage of a pioneer, the organisation adapted to the new cultural situation: the opportunity to record on electronic media the knowledge obtained and visual data. Documents on valuable, disappearing or rare crafts were made, on traditional productions, on exceptional craft masters, and above much work was devoted to what we now find on the internet in the form of ÚLUV's electronic encyclopaedia, that is a public informational portal on crafts and craftspeople, drawn up over the years by ÚLUV's internal staff and external colleagues. Encyclopaedias on the internet are aimed at the wide public, and expanding their content and improving their quality is an ongoing task. ÚLUV's encyclopaedias comprise four groups of information: traditional crafts and home-made production, the traditional clothing of Slovakia, profiles of producers – contemporary producers of folk art production, a visual database of products widespread in the past and present under the ÚLUV brand.

We can find an added social value in each of the new presentation and media platforms on which the organisation has focused over the last three decades. There is no room

here to name them all. Let us mention at least the key ones, overlapping the older stereotypical idea of ÚLUV as only an intermediary for the sale of folk art products.

### **Professionalism is the key**

The organisation's key mission for twenty years has been a systematic editorial and publication activity, the publication of a specialist journal, monographs and practical guides. The educational and popularising impact of the magazine and its publications can only appreciate with difficulty. ÚLUV's publishing activity crossed the borders of space and time; by publishing texts by renowned experts, it stabilises unbalanced values and turns our attention to the highest artistic and aesthetic quality. In addition to this, the organisation also began to make its year-long exhibition activity more visible by running the ÚLUV Gallery in Bratislava, working with designers to find overlaps between craft and design (including the recurring 'Rings in Water' competitions), and by organising numerous promotional and presentation events.

In 2008, ÚLUV opened a new specialised workplace: the Museum of Folk Art Production with its temporary headquarters in Stupava. With its changed status, the organisation became even de jure the real heritage institution it has always striven to be. However long the museum's journey towards a permanent exhibition and to an expansion of its collection and research activity will be, it always bears the hope that this will be a path which strengthens the institution's professionalism as a whole. It is a good thing to remember this fact in this jubilee year. Since its first years of existence, ÚLUV was – and is bound to remain – a professional authority, a workplace with demanding jobs in ethnology, art and art history. Without specialist output such as rescue field research, its own publications and electronic publishing, providing consultancy services to producers or first-class educational courses, it might happen over that ÚLUV would offer at its event only something like a legend of itself, that is a brand with no content.

When calculating the changes taking place in ÚLUV, some people might ask the logical question: what form has cooperation with the producers themselves taken on? The answer is quite simple. They have remained part of everything which gives life to the organisation and which its capacity can take. The producers are involved in courses, in publishing, in presenting production, in thematic workshops and exhibition; to a manageable extent the sale of a certain part of their production has been preserved through the branded shops. For dozens of years, ÚLUV has been rewarding master craftspeople annually, and promoting their lasting, exceptional work.

But now these producers have changed; they have a different confidence, different opportunities and ways of finding their place on the market. They have changed, just like the organisation has changed which gave them a helping hand seventy-five years ago. Thanks to new communication tools, information about them is easy to access and the knowledge they need for their work can be found on their own with much less effort than in the past.

Professionalism and respected partnership are now present on both sides of the proverbial playing table. This constellation favours innovative projects which are bound to come and are worth looking forward to. ■

# ÚLUV's new presentation concepts and visions

The current trend in exhibitions, not only for art and crafts, is to present works from the perspective of the contextual understanding of the texts, for example by looking for places where present and past meet. One of the methods used in this approach is the equal presentation of artefacts from museum collections together with works of modern and contemporary design which are based on knowledge of traditional materials or technologies, or featuring innovative solutions. The ambition behind this new exhibition concept is to focus the visitor's attention on the material itself and to display it in its whole range of expressions.

Mária Hriešik Nepšinská, Tomáš Mikolaj



↑ Exhibition "Tradition untraditionally: Wood". A view of the exhibition space. Photograph: ÚLUV archives

The current project entitled "Tradition untraditionally: Wood" follows this line in ÚLUV's Bratislava gallery, curated by the tandem of designers Ferdinand Chrenko and Václav Kautman junior. They try to focus attention on the material essence of wood while presenting a range of everyday, decorative and functional objects made of wood, across time until the present day. The exhibition deals with the theme of this material's wide range of uses. The wooden objects appear in the exhibition in harmony as well as in contrast, in transformations of stylistic forms and inevitable technological progress. Nevertheless, the curator's selection

does not focus on the idea of authorship. The latter is suppressed for the benefit of the essential visual experience which is meted out to the viewer in the varied typological composition of the objects within the gallery's multiple spaces, ranging from containers through seating, musical instruments, toys, jewellery to walking sticks. It is important to emphasise that the curator's conception of the exhibitions even lacks a chronological movement or a focus on the development of forms based on functional needs or the artist's technological possibilities. So works by unknown producers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries from various places deliberately



- ↑ ÚLUV in cooperation with the Faculty of Architecture and Design of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava opened an exhibition entitled “*Identita.sk*” in the Design Studio. It presents the traditions of our material culture and using the examples shown it introduces different approaches and creative strategies used by regional elements to transform or adapt to contemporary life. Photograph: ÚLUV archives
- From September, a sales exhibition in Tatranská Lomnica will present a varied range of works by the former head artist of ÚLUV, Stanislav Koreň. Photograph: ÚLUV archives.

find themselves next to iconic solitaires or product items by such figures of 20<sup>th</sup> century Slovak design and craft as Václav Kautman, Viktor Holešťák-Holubár, Juraj Leporis or works by contemporaries such as Marián Huba, Tibor Uhrín, Michal Hanula, Martin Hartiník or the works of their students and graduates. The curators’ choice of artefacts tries to reflect the huge number of functions, production processes, decorative techniques, types of wood, methods of design and craft finish of the objects which change over time, as the needs of society change too; yet still they fascinate us. In addition to the powerful visuals, the exhibition also has a strong education element. This is clear in the varied typology of wooden objects or production techniques used in the past which is completed by an interactive panel presenting works by ÚLUV producers and by video presentations showing the work of several masters of folk art production. The overall impression of the exhibition is heightened by the tailor-made gallery space designed by Peter Baumann which will also used be a platform for installing the following materials-based exhibition project. In 2023, the exhibition will be devoted to the topic of natural weaving materials.

After some time, the ÚLUV Design Studio gallery on Dobrovičová ulica in Bratislava also resumed its activities. The reopening of its exhibition premises was primarily the result of the need to support artists of innovative, function and ex-

perimental design by presenting them and their work. The gallery’s concept focuses on presenting short-term projects by artists belonging to the middle and younger generation in the form of collective and individual presentations. Both student projects and individual exhibitions by beginning artists who are just starting to establish themselves are equally welcome, so long as they include inventive ideas produced using traditional and modern technologies. In the ÚLUV Design Studio, artists can present authentic design products or objects freely inspired by craft tradition in terms of the materials, techniques or decorative elements used, from one-off items to objects produced in a small series. The idea is to offer the public fresh, local design in a whole range of materials such as textile, ceramics, wood, metal and glass which are becoming increasingly popular in areas such as interior accessories, furniture, dining, clothing and clothing accessories and jewellery. One example of this is the project presented at the end of last year and the beginning of this year, *Identita.sk*, based on research into local craft traditions with a dominant use of natural raw materials and traditional materials. The gallery’s exhibition portfolio this year is completed by exhibitions of recent works by graduates of the Textile Studio of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, by students and graduates of the Faculty of Design of the Technical University in Košice, a reinstatement of the competition “In the country of crafts 2021” and others.



In a similar way, ÚLUV is also conceiving a new format for the gallery and shop in Tatranská Lomnica. In our series of exhibitions featuring artists' works for sale, we intend to make room for established Slovak producers who will prepare for this space a special edition of their range with the stamp of high-quality craft production. This year, we will gradually present works by Míchal Fratrič, Stanislav Koreň and Jana Majerská whose work is based on wood, since the concept of these exhibitions with works for sale also reflects ÚLUV's intention to focus this year's activities on bringing wood to the forefront as a timeless and highly attractive material.

Searching for systematic solutions has been typical of ÚLUV's activities over the last year in other spheres, too. In its specialised activity, the organisation has set out many topics which were not given the opportunity to develop sufficiently alongside its presentation function which had been dominant until then. The challenge is to find intersections between traditional craft and design, and to map out and analyse these areas in schools and regional development, and even abroad. Discovering working models and coming up with ideas for new ones can be inspirational for our geographic territory.

The people involved at a local level, or in education and training, have their own expectations and ideas of how things should move on. For this reason, they should be brought together to search for systematic solutions which could be

winners for all those involved: from local development managers and active representatives of self-government through people dealing with these areas on a practical level (traditional craftspeople, teachers, farmers and others), to institutions on a regional and national level. Networking with people with a common interest appears a logical step. The joint output should then be passed up in the hierarchy; in ÚLUV's case not just to its founder, the Ministry of Culture, but also to other ministries involved in traditional crafts and the development of the local economy or education. Traditional craft should not just be a display of our past, but part of our living culture which we experience and shape for today's - and future - generations.

Let us not simply abandon all this knowledge which has survived until the present day thanks to all the efforts of our predecessor. The skill of a traditional craft shapes its artist spiritually, too; using local sources of raw materials, energy-efficient technology, manual work or manual tools and small machines, sales aimed at a narrow consumer segment are the antithesis of robotised large-scale production which forms the majority of consumer habits through their aggressive advertising campaigns.

ÚLUV will be having several meetings this year to deal with this subject and try to find through joint discussion a system worth developing. The same applied to its exhibition activities, where the presented results are a reflection of a well thought-out concept.

↓ View of the ÚLUV gallery and shop in Tatranská Lomnica. Photograph: ÚLUV archives





# ÚLUV's importance in safeguarding the knowledge and skills of folk art production and crafts

The Centre for Folk Art Production, known as ÚLUV, is perhaps most often associated with the sale of products, items which carry the clear and unique stamp of Slovakness. They are perceived as expressions of Slovak folk art; for contemporary people they are associated with the country's traditions and sometimes also with an idea of its past when people used to walk around wearing traditional clothing and they could obtain and make almost everything they needed with their own hands. However, regular and casual visitors to ÚLUV's Bratislava centre or its branches in Banská Bystrica and Košice and the shop and gallery in Tatranská Lomnica are not just looking for an interesting accessory for their home or an original gift for a guest from abroad.

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Juraj Zajonc

They also come to ÚLUV for an experience, to gain knowledge or to fulfil their personal ambition of being able to make with their own hands a simple object out of wood or clay, or a hand-woven mobile telephone case. They want to learn something new that not everybody can do nowadays. Such knowledge, such a skill, also enables them to enter the notional circle of past and present masters of folk art production and folk craft. The awareness that they are continuing something and perhaps a sense of pride and responsibility allow them to discover and create in a conscious contact with tradition.

The basis of folk art production is a material process during which a material (mainly a natural raw material) through the application of specific traditional knowledge and skills, ones mainly requiring manual processes, is transformed into a folk art product, a practical or decorative item with its own artistic value. ÚLUV's mission is to ensure the continuity of this line of art and craft activities, including the above-mentioned sum of specific knowledge and skills. However, the latter does not concern only the properties of materials, the methods used to obtain them, shape and process them, but also the function of these items, the significance of decorative motifs or the range of colours used. In a wider context, this knowledge also testifies to the history of the given branch in the area or to important products. However, these are not only knowledge and skills which were part of home-based production, widespread in the rural environment. Contemporary folk art production also includes skills and knowledge which belonged to guild production, mainly active in towns. The combination of both these historical forms of manual production in contemporary folk art production is also expressed in the use of the terms "folk" or "traditional" crafts as well as alternative terms.

Safeguarding folk art production is not motivated today exclusively or primarily by economic factors. In the society of contemporary Slovakia, it has rather a deep, symbolic significance. It is considered a unique part of a living cultural heritage and is an element used by Slovaks to identify themselves as members of their national community.

## Exploring the past for the present

Information on the past and present forms of folk art production are an essential resource for the continuity of knowledge and skills, as well as of the traditional shapes of objects or the range of decorative motifs, and increasingly valuable when looking back at the past. ÚLUV is important as an institution specialising in the process of collecting and preserving this knowledge, and is the only institution in Slovakia to fulfil the role of an open depository of folk art production. For this purpose, ÚLUV established in 2008 a separate branch: the Museum of Folk Art Production, based in Stupava (MLUV). The museum continues the research into traditional forms of home, craft and folk production in their authentic environment; this research has been a permanent part of ÚLUV's activities since its foundation. The results are the collections of artefacts, text and pictorial documentation materials. Here, ÚLUV preserves the knowledge and data which have a unique informative potential for keeping folk art production alive, in the activities of producers. The database built up by ÚLUV is unique in terms of the width of its thematic scope. Institutions which organised activities in this field before ÚLUV focused their attention only on one, or several, branches and always only on the territory of present-day Slovakia. It was only in the Ústředí lidové a umělecké výroby [in Czech: Centre for Folk and Art Production], established in 1945, and then in ÚLUV,



↑ Researchers doing field work.

established by an act in 1958, that the safeguarding of the whole range of branches of folk art production continued; their breadth and structure is still today based on the types of raw materials processed and the items produced.

#### **Support for producers and education for the public**

ÚLUV ensures the preservation and development of folk art production in Slovakia through a wide range of activities which can be divided into two broad categories, albeit often closely mutually connected.

The first category is focused on safeguarding contemporary folk art production, that is mainly on producers as active bearers of knowledge and skills. The second category concentrates on spreading and passing down knowledge and skills of folk art production outside this community. The activities carried out in both these categories contribute to the preservation of knowledge and skills of folk art production in a particular way. The consultancy which ÚLUV provides to producers at the Section for Care of Folk Art Production creates the right conditions for preserving knowledge and skills in a living form. With the aim of increasing the quality of its production, ÚLUV enables its producers to gain further knowledge, for example about the traditional forms of a product, about the decorative motifs used in the location or area where the producer works. A specific form of transmitting and preserving the knowledge and skills of folk art production in an active form is the revival and maintaining of disappearing branches of traditional folk production, or the production of certain products, for example by moving production to a location where it was not known.

In its second category, ÚLUV carries out activities intended to preserve knowledge and skills of folk art production by passing them down to the public, mainly through courses. Interest in the understanding and processes leading to the creation of folk art products grew in the 1990s together with an interest in intangible cultural heritage, and also together with the new functions of folk art production as a leisure activity or means of self-realisation. Through teaching, folk art production also becomes part of the life of people in towns. In order to undertake educational activities, in 1995 ÚLUV established in its headquarters in Bratislava the “Court of Crafts” information and education centre. In 1999, it began to organise craft courses for the public under the name “ÚLUV School of Crafts”, which is part of the ÚLUV Regional Centre of Crafts in Bratislava together with its workshops. Since 2005, the “ÚLUV School of Crafts in Banská Bystrica” and since 2013 the “ÚLUV School of Crafts in Košice” have been active, working on the same principle. The schools of craft organise courses for adults and children. They are led by specialised instructors using a set method, and since 2004 several courses have received accreditation from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. The syllabus in the accredited courses also includes information on the history of the particular branch of folk production or craft. In the workshops, children from schools or after-school clubs can also enjoy trial lessons working with craft tools, focused on creating simple items using natural materials. In the summer months, ÚLUV organises daily camps for children up to the age of 15 in the school of craft workshops in Bratislava and Banská Bystrica called



↑ Bobbin lace-making course, where lace-makers learnt to make a form of lace that is disappearing.

“Holidays with Crafts”. During this week-long course, children try out several types of traditional production.

The fact that the ÚLUV School of Crafts is an effective tool for preserving the knowledge and skills of folk art production and craft is confirmed by its inclusion on the “List of best methods of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage” of 2016. It is the first organisation to be included on this list in Slovakia. ÚLUV thus joined the ranks of institutions on an international level whose activities best reflect the principles and objectives of the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Worldwide Intangible Heritage”, which was approved by UNESCO in 2003 and ratified in 2016 by the President of the Slovak Republic.

#### **Workshops, books and the internet**

ÚLUV’s publishing and editing activities play a key role in safeguarding the knowledge and skills of folk art production and crafts. It has been working on spreading information about folk art production in print since the 1950s. Its brochures with texts and pictures gave a brief cultural and historical overview of the hand-made production of the selected group of artefacts, linked mostly by the same material,

as well as information on the practical steps used for their production and ornamentation. However, only in rare cases (for example embroidery), could the scope of the brochures, which were often associated with an exhibition, contain all the information needed to apply fully the processes needed to create a final folk art production. A strong stimulus for a rise in the number of books published by ÚLUV and a diversification of their type according to purpose and target group was given by the change in the means of passing down knowledge and skills of folk art production and craft. Until around the mid-20th century, knowledge and skills were passed down mainly through direct communication, including repeated demonstrations of the activity in the environment in which the producer worked. Teaching outside this environment, however, makes it impossible to acquire the skills through a long repetition of actions and methods. At the same time, the sum of the knowledge passed on is made greater with information concerning the history, types and functions of traditional products in this given area of folk production. These changes reinforced the importance of indirect communication when passing on knowledge and skills of folk art production. One means of

passing on such knowledge is the publication of books, which ÚLUV publishes in several specialised editions, and since 2009 in its own “vydavateľstvo ÚLUV” publishing house. Even before its foundation, it began to publish in 1996 in its edition “School of traditional production and crafts” instructions for acquiring the basics of traditional hand-made production techniques in the form of textbooks. Each guide (32 were published by 2019) contains a historical introduction, information on the material, aids and tools, the work process and samples of products. Publications from the Pramene [Sources] series add to and expand the information provided in the guides. The three volumes published to date (from 2001) present not only a representative selection of products of a specific type of traditional production or craft but also the range of production and decorative techniques used. In 2017 the first volume in the Inšpirácie [Inspirations] series was published, an event which should encourage the use of traditional decorative motifs in contemporary art. Since 2009, ÚLUV has published in its series Tráďcia dnes [Tradition today] extensive popularising monographs on traditional and contemporary forms of folk art, production and crafts. Up to 2019, eleven of these volumes had been published, with five of them containing texts in a parallel Slovak-English version. The Osobnosti [Personalities] series is devoted to folk art producers, as well as artists and designers who are inspired by traditional production and folk art. Since 2008, monographs on four personalities from the world of painting on glass have been published in this series. The series Zborníky zo sympózií remeselníkov [Anthologies from symposia of craftsmen] has a special place in ÚLUV’s production. It includes tests from the presentations of participants in the symposium, organised by ÚLUV since 2002 as an accompanying event to creative encounters between producers processing one type of material or using one group of production techniques.

In addition to traditional forms of printed publications, ÚLUV also provides information on folk art production and crafts via the Internet. The main source is its electronic encyclopaedias: ÚLUV’s original information products which are a continuation of the “Virtual Gallery of Folk Art Production in Slovakia” built up from 2005 to 2007. As well as its electronic encyclopaedias “Traditional Clothing in Slovakia” (made accessible in 2014) and “Traditional Crafts and Home-made Production” (the first of the current 31 entries published in 2016), text and illustrations on contemporary folk art producers and on ÚLUV products are also available in this form.

### A new dimension for ÚLUV

Although the above text deals with the activities of ÚLUV which have a direct effect on safeguarding the knowledge and skills of folk art production and crafts, the range of its activities is much broader. And as far as each one is concerned – whether it is an exhibition, the publication of the Remeslo, Umenie, Dizajn [Craft, Art, Design] (RUD) magazine or the organisation of the “ÚLUV Craftsmen Days” festival of traditional crafts and folk production – we can state that in a certain way they also affect how this specific knowledge and these skills are obtained, preserved or spread. ÚLUV’s importance in safeguarding and developing this element of



↑ Publications from the series “Tradition today”.

cultural heritage, which is part of our national culture and currently spills over, for example, into contemporary design or the leisure activities of the urban population, is no longer restricted only to guaranteeing the quality of folk art production. Its new dimension is to enable the discovery of folk art production and its distribution. ■

The author is an academic working at the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. His research concerns traditional textile culture, folk artistic expression and holidays in contemporary Slovak society.

### Photographs: ÚLUV archives

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[Act of the Slovak National Council no. 4/1958 of April 29<sup>th</sup> 1958 on Folk Art Production and Art Crafts]

# GOD, THAT'S SO BEAUTIFUL!

## *What does it cost and where can I buy it?*

This text is a reaction to the 'TRADITIONAL UNTRADITIONALLY' exhibition which we prepared about wood for ÚĽUV together with my colleague Václav Kautman and to my studio's 'TOGETHER' exhibition held with my colleague Eva Veselá in the Ernest Zmeták Gallery in Nové Zámky. We present a selection of the studio's work, including one part devoted to the long-standing cooperation with the Studio of Industrial Design of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (AFAD) and ÚĽUV.

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Ferdinand Chrenka

"God, that's so beautiful, what does it cost, and where can I buy it?" These honest words are people's frequent reaction when looking at original Slovak design production. We have the ability to come up with unique, exceptional design, but we don't know how to sell it. Commerce has become a synonym for sordid, questionable business. We forget that in the past, a skilled craftsman designed and produced the practical objects that he sold. It is a dry but quite a clear statement. The link between craft and sales was natural. Bowls, spoons, salt cellars, wooden mugs, cradles, toys. The

craftsman's talent and skill was the lifeblood of a whole family, often a family with many children. He produced and sold things, end of the story. Regions were known for their fairs in Trnava, Banská Bystrica, Bardejov, Trenčín, Kežmarok, Pukanec, Levoča, Čadca; the Radvaň fair was legendary. Craft was socially respected. The craftsman was acclaimed, his production quickly disappeared from the stall, and people often needed to wait to buy his products.

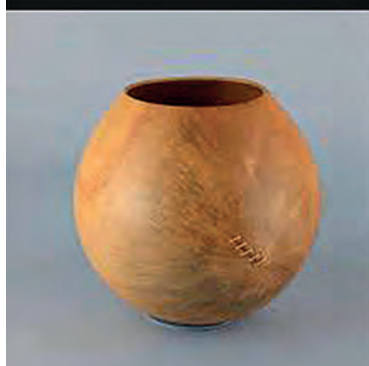
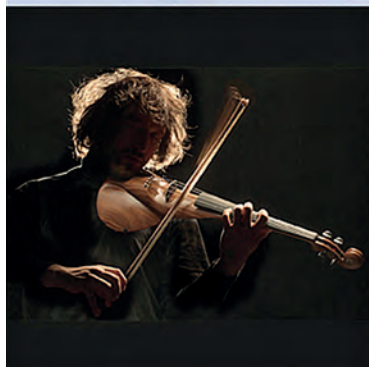
Today, ÚĽUV integrates activities which help safeguard and develop traditional crafts and folk art production. It also pro-

↓ The photographs from the opening of the 'SPOLU / TOGETHER' exhibition reflect the cooperation between the Studio of Industrial Design of AFAD and the business sector. Ernest Zmeták art gallery in Nové Zámky. Lamp designers: BIG BIRD – Eliška Dudová, GALASSIA – Peter Kuliffay, TEAR – Tomáš Brichta. Photography: Kati Decsi.





SLOVENSKÝ DIZAJN





vides support by selling the production of selected artists via specialised shops in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, Tatranská Lomnica and Košice. The products are carefully selected by an expert committee which tries to protect the quality of the proposed products. They mainly keep an eye on the craft perfection and aesthetics. In the past, I was a member of this committee, and hence comes my experience that it reacts with great respect to safeguarding tradition, but contemporary design stands no chance here. The wire craft work by Šimon Mišurda, works by Tibor Uhrín, Miro Mládenek, Michal Hanula etc., all finish in the depository of the Museum of Folk Art Production in Stupava after exhibitions and the 'Rings in Water' competition. Time cannot be stopped; the traditional visual of ÚLUV's production does not provide any sales opportunity for contemporary design. Contemporary design needs new space.

I see ÚLUV as a quality brand. This quality brand has a logo and a value which is important for its business and has been growing over time; today it is a wonderful 77 years old (since 1945). ÚLUV documents traditional crafts and folk products, it takes care of documentary collections, it publishes specialised books and the RUD magazine about crafts and design, it organises exhibitions, competitions, festivals, courses, it provides specialised consultancy services, it has promotional, book and information, it is involved in international cooperation with partner institutions; in brief, ÚLUV is a great brand. The vision of a shop with new design gives sense to the existence of the 'Open Studio', connects artists who did not have the opportunity to do so previously, and raises the

credit of the ÚLUV institution and brand. The focus on Slovak design, OLD AND NEW TRADITION, will be easily noticed by viewers, buyers and artists.

So now let me write a little about the energy which led me to consider the concept of a new shop. The view from within the organisation about artists is distorted, because the artistic community is much, much bigger. University and secondary education has a big impact on it. Tradition as an assignment topic has existed for a long time and in very many variations. Memories of the future in the studio of professor František Burian, the topic 'Tandem', the topic "From the past to the present - a return to sensibility and sense." At the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, the departments of applied arts in the Metal and Jewellery, Pottery and Glass studios, and the department of textiles in its studios of clothing and textile design and spatial textile creation have had, and continue to have, admirable results; these topics are also dealt with in the studios of the design department. In addition to student work, the works of individual personalities, the heads of studios, is also important. The Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, the Technical University of Košice and vocational secondary schools have great artistic potential. The objective of my article is to initiate discussions and meetings concerning the opening of a new space for presenting and selling contemporary Slovak design under the ÚLUV brand. ■

*Photographs: archives of ÚLUV and Ferdinand Chrenko  
Technical preparation of the photographs: Miroslav Gasidlo*

➤ Dolphin, chiselled poplar, plum, produced by: Marián Huba, 1980s, private collection. Photography: Marko Horban

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Lucia Šúpolová, Markéta Nováková, Michal Hanula, Ernest Marko, Ferdinand Chrenka, Šimon Mišurda, Tomáš Brichta, Lucia Šunová, Petra Rybanská, Daniela Mládeneková, Žofia Poliaková, Jorgo Somarakis, Andrea Bišťanová, Michal Staško, Eduard Herrmann, Tomáš Brichta, Michaela Wallachová, Peter Korecký, Markéta Nováková, Michal Hanula, Tibor Uhrín, Eduard Herrmann, Tibor Uhrín



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Michal Staško, Denisa Lukáčová, Tomáš Brichta, Tomáš Brichta, Patrik Illo, Václav Kautman, Eliška Dudová, Michaela Wallachová, Ernest Marko, Lenka Abonyiová, Eliška Dudová, Patrik Illo, Ernest Marko, Denisa Lukáčová, Eliška Dudová, Peter Kuliffay, Daniela Mládeneková, Miroslav Mládenek, Lukáš Prieccko, Václav Kautman, Natália Hoosová, Daniela Mládeneková, Tibor Uhrín



# TANDEMS with the Slovak University of Technology

The Centre for Folk Art Production has been supporting, protecting and promoting traditional crafts for over seventy-five years. The producers nominated for the title of Master of Folk Art Culture are selected by a committee which also supervises how they preserve traditional materials and technologies in their work. ÚĽUV has worked with original folk production nationwide, and professionalised it by involving trained artists in the design process. In the new millennium, this has been achieved through the Rings in Water competition, in which students and professionals compete to look for various ways of maintaining the use of traditional materials and craft techniques. ÚĽUV's new initiative continues in this spirit: renewing and strengthening cooperation between craftspeople and designers to produce a joint piece of work. The project has been given the appropriate name of "Tandems".

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Veronika Kotradyová

The intention of the first phase is to connect students with masters of folk art production to produce original works of art. The Institute of Interior and Exhibition Design of the Faculty of Architecture and Design of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava has also joined the cooperation between ÚĽUV and universities focusing on design.

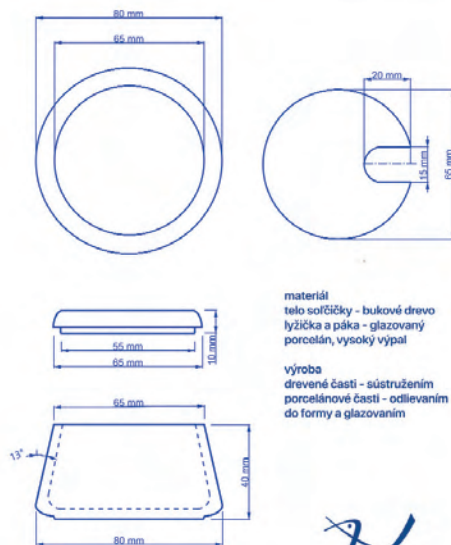
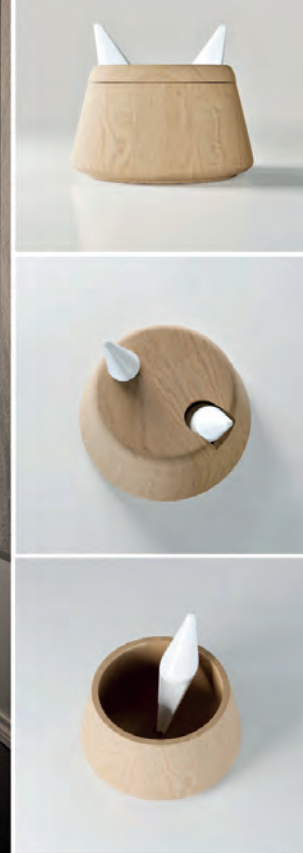
From ÚĽUV's point of view, it is important for the project to deepen the theoretical and practical knowledge of young designers by incorporating traditional technologies, patterns and materials in order to combine their designer work with the foundations of traditional art. The purpose of "Tandems" is to connect students' inventiveness with the experience of masters of folk art production, and to supplement the students' theoretical knowledge and ideas with a practical knowledge of craft and a better experience of material. Students are thus given the opportunity to gain a more comprehensive experience. Alongside creative and technical skills, social skills are also acquired. Meeting master craftsmen and working with them is also enriching on a human level, because many of them are independent, free and original figures who have made their living for their whole life with their own hands. If a designer is to enter the process of creating new products inspired by traditional culture, it is clear that there will be a certain transformation, adaptation, a shift in its original form, and perhaps even in its function. This requires an open mind and a high degree of resourcefulness and improvisation by both parties in examining the limits of the material and searching for technical solutions for new shapes.

During their direct interaction and cooperation with the master craftsmen, the students can discover the limits of each material, because not every design can be put into

practice in its proposed form. It is important to be flexible as an artist, and to adjust the original design to the current possibilities. It is difficult to retain the artist's view, but this is a skill which is essential in a designer's professional life. This also fosters an understanding, or even a mastery, of the craft by the artists themselves, moving them forwards on both a professional and a human level.

Local materials which continue to be used today (not only by professional artists and craftspeople, but also by the wider public) include wool, leather, linen, wicker, iron, stone and above all wood, all of which can become outstanding artefacts in the skilled hands of a craftsman. Working with these materials requires wisdom, respect, knowledge and experience to let their beauty shine through. This requires a comprehensive set of skills, an exceptional aesthetic feeling by the craftsman, close cooperation between the artist and the craftsman or the mastery of the craft by the artist themselves.

Every designer who develops a new product intended at least for small-scale or craft production knows that the jump from sketches and a 3D virtual model to the prototype phase (and thus the materialisation of the design into real materials and seams) changes much of the overall appearance. Several prototypes are often needed before all the technical and aesthetic deficiencies are found. This is a strategic part of the whole design process. If the partners are on an equal footing, in our case the designer and the craftsman, and understand each other as people, and respect each other, there is a chance that the result will be a success. Each craftsman is also a designer, and this applies all the more to ÚĽUV master craftsmen. In this tandem work, the product is co-authored, and this is properly admitted and is the fairest option for its creators.



materiál  
telo soľčičky - bukové drevo  
lyžička a páka - glazovaný  
porcelán, vysoký výpal

výroba  
drevené časti - sústružením  
porcelánové časti - odlievaním  
do formy a glazovaním



**sol'čička** *úľuv*



ÚSTAV DIZAJNU/INSTITUTE OF DESIGN – APLIKÁCIA DREVA V DIZAJNE

Téma/topic: Soľčička/Salt cellar  
Pedagóg/pedagogue: prof. Ing. Veronika Kotradyová, PhD.

Študent/student: Eva Polgárová  
Akademický rok/academic year: 2020/2021  
Ročník/class: III.

STU  
FAD

SLOVENSKÁ TECHNICKÁ  
UNIVERZITA V BRATISLAVE  
FAKULTA ARCHITEKTÚRY A DIZAJNU

↑ *Sol'čička* is a sample of the cooperation between Eva Polgárová, a student of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, and the master of folk art production Eduard Hupka, who works with woodturning. The illustration shows the initial visualisation of the product.

### Conclusion

The “Tandems” project was created with the aim of reviving the cooperation between artists and craftspeople, and giving traditional craft a new form. This should lead to a range of products that follow on from the decades of work by ÚLUV artists who have helped producers give their works anchored in traditional art an artistic value.

The project’s aim is to create an object with a clear reference to traditional folk craft, as well as to progressive or trans-

formative design which refers back to, interprets and changes in different ways the traditional material culture. The reopening of the ÚLUV Design Studio in November this year is also connected to the direction ÚLUV is taking. ■

This article is published as part of the project APVV 16-0567 *Identity SK – joint platform for design, architecture and social sciences.*

# IN TANDEM

## with Bratislava's Academy of Fine Arts and Design – tradition untraditionally

Finding inspiration in tradition is a natural process in art and for the Centre for Folk Art Production, it is one of its visions for the future. The result is the “*Tandems*” project, which aims to discover what tradition means for students of design.

Ferdinand Chrenka



← Laptop case/rucksack from the leather collection. “My project aimed to transform traditional folk products into contemporary ones. This also applied to the ornamentation which was often a feature of folk products. I used this idea when designing and producing a set for everyday use made of natural leather. It consists of a rucksack, a laptop case and a wallet with a single visual style. I adapted the product design to make them simpler to use, clean and care for. I used a laser to cut the leather, modern technology which brings something untraditional to a traditional sector and also makes it quicker and more precise to produce.” Matúš Lagin

The cooperation between student and master was given the name “tandem”; five out of the eight students chose this option. Their work methods force designers to continually process information, and so at the beginning of the project, they carefully studied the specialist literature, visited libraries, museums, got to know the artists, technologies and materials as well as the crafts themselves. Each student had to find the right stimulus to open up their path to come up with ideas and the first sketches. The project’s development was hindered by communication without personal contact. Coronavirus and its ensuing restrictions forced us to work using the *trello* project management web application. This method of communication allowed the workshop students and teachers to connect with the masters or consultants, to share information, correct ideas, and also communicate together. Assistant lecturer Petra Rybánska and doctoral student Pavol Soukal instigated discussions on the form and content of individual solutions. There were many questions: where is the borderline of the perception of tradition in design? To what extent should design contain elements of crafts? How should historical, craft technologies be used in the context of contemporary technology?

Many answers were provided by the individual approaches of students who created content using various materials (wicker, leather, ceramics, metal, textile). Once they had done the initial research, the first drawings and visualisations, the tandems were formed: Matúš Lagin – Jiří Halánek; Beata Jurítková – Ladislav Jurovatý; Georgios Somarakis – Ján Zeman; Mário Coufal – Jarmila Rybánska; Simona Duchoňová – Miloslav Orságh.

The task was an open-ended one, and so students were able to react to the topic “tradition untraditionally” using their own interpretation. They also had a choice: not only to follow their own path, but also to work alongside masters of folk art production. On behalf of ÚLUV, Diana Némethová drew up offers by thirteen masters in different crafts and types of material.

### **MATÚŠ LAGIN – JIŘÍ HALÁMEK**

A young artist with a desire to learn new approaches, discover materials and technologies. His ambition was to create his own design using his own hands. The experienced master Jiří Halámek knows how to share his long years of experience working with leather: he worked as a teacher for many years at ÚLUV, and also published articles. This tandem was a partnership. Matúš actively took on board the experience passed to him, and by testing and trying the materials, he was able to produce prototypes. He used a laser to make the individual components of his leather items. The result is a collection containing a rucksack, a laptop bag and a wallet.

### **BEATA JURÍTKOVÁ – LADISLAV JUROVATÝ**

This student took an interest in wire craft. It is a national treasure, a synonym for Slovak tradition, but what to do with it? A difficult question for design. A visit to the wire craft exhibition in Budatín castle and the “Big Book of Wire Craft” by Ladislav Jurovatý junior inspired the student, but she found herself stuck for a long time in a vicious circle. I prolonged her creative agony by trying to prevent her in my corrections from designing objects without a function. The idea of experimenting with creating volumes by combining wire and optic cables brought new energy to the topic. In this case, the motto that everything is possible on a computer was confirmed. Moving from visualisation to prototype was not ideal. Ladislav Jurovatý only confirmed that this path requires more time. The example of our graduate Šimoa Mišurda is unique. I appreciate this striking out into unknown territory...maybe one day.

### **GEORGIOS „JORGO“ SOMARAKIS – JÁN ZEMAN**

Two pure and positive energies came together in the Jorgo and Ján Zeman tandem. From the beginnings of their research and design, they tried to create a functional item for everyday use, which gave the project a clear direction. The search for a form and material changed. Choosing wicker and cooperating with a master craftsman sped things along. Master Zeman offered the student the certainty of a functional craft and introduced him very practically, with his own hands, into the world of basket-makers. A visit to his home provided a magical experience of a working craft; and for the young designer a creative stimulus to put into practice his own idea down to the last detail. A designer's work includes presentation. Jorgo Somarakis, the artist behind the three “UJI” wicker carriers, produced a video which will convince everyone of untraditional tradition.

### **MÁRIO COUFAL – JARMILA RYBÁNSKA**

I was pleasantly surprised by Mário's choice of source of inspiration, namely the process by which material is made: yarn, loom, shuttle, an attractive kinetic world. Here he wanted to discover a new form and material. He was introduced into the world of textile by my assistant Petra, together with her mother Jarmila Rybánska, a master of folk art production in this field. Their joint efforts were a success, and the experiment with optical fibre helped create a new light-sensitive material. Mário Coufa used it in his design for the hanging lamp “Weawe”.



↑ *Svietidlo [lamp]* is the entwining of two worlds, the world of traditional wire and the world of untraditional light fibre. “Last school semester was about crafts; wire craft was the one that fascinated me most. In my work, I try to combine the traditional technique of wire weaving with an untraditional, modern material. The lamp represents two worlds overlapping in the middle, thus creating an interesting play of light and form. For me, this experience was enriching since I found out about many mysteries hidden within our traditional crafts.” Beata Jurítková



↑ Weawe is a hanging lamp for large, open spaces and generous interiors. The project attempted to combine traditional folk techniques with contemporary technologies and materials. The result is a lamp inspired by the visuals of bobbins and traditional manual looms with the addition of fabric made from optic fibres, creating an ambient atmosphere of gentle light. The fabric is combined with various materials, optic fibres of differing thicknesses and wooden features.

"This project was a very interesting experience for me. The combination of tradition and modern technology is an endless source of inspiration and opportunity. This project, combined with the possibility of working with craftspeople who have devoted their lives to their craft, was educational for me, and is certainly something I would repeat. It's a great shame that many projects didn't make it to their final vision, but considering the circumstances during this semester, which was online, I think we got enough out of this topic, and the diversity of projects was interesting. I would like to thank Mrs Jarmila Rybánska above all for her assistance and advice, as well as the beautiful demonstration of weaving techniques, both manual and using a loom." Mário Coufal

### SIMONA DUCHOŇOVÁ – MILOSLAV ORSÁGH

Simona is a perceptive artist and an MA student capable of reading between the lines in complicated topics. Traditional untraditionally: what does it mean as a starting-point for design? Is it craft or a material? Her initial stimulus was original: she compared communication at the dinner table of a Slovak rural family in the past and in the present. She found her inspiration in folk lore, in proverbs such as: "what goes around, comes around", "you reap what you sow". Simona, however, paraphrases these proverbs using contemporary slang: If it's on your plate, it's on Instagram. He who has a phone in his hand, does not listen. Better to ask twice than to read a hoax. He who asks a lot, googles little. If it's not on your story, it didn't happen. He who shares little, lives little. Much chatter, no wifi. She found a place for contemporary communication around

a cup of coffee, and so a coffee set became the design topic. Simona asked the master of folk art production Miroslav Orságh to be her tandem. His comprehensive craft background and experience helped the young designer create the KÁVEJ set.

### Conclusion

The ethnologist Oľga Danglová worked with us on our corrections via online meetings. She helped the students discover many hidden mysteries of traditional culture which could inspire contemporary design. I would like to thank warmly all those who helped this refreshing student project come about. During the "Tandems" project, I often thought of the life work of Mrs Janka Menkynová, who designed for ÚLUV. I have a great respect for her work and I hope we pleased her at least a little. ■

→ *UJI* is a collection of three wicker carriers. The aim was to create products featuring traditional crafts, which can find their place in contemporary design.

"After the endless period of online learning and preparing semester projects only in electronic form, the topic of "tradition untraditionally" was a very welcome change, which I looked forward to very much, albeit with some trepidation. After all, these are traditional Slovak crafts which deserve a certain respect, and in a way it was difficult not to create superficial, banal objects and to approach the question from a different perspective. Working directly with the craftsman Mr Ján Zeman was enriching, not only from a creative point of view, for which I am very grateful." Georgios "Jorgo" Somarakis

↓ *Kavej*. An invitation for a coffee is not just about having a drink. It's about meeting, communicating and friendship. It's a time when we enjoy someone else's company. As in the past, when a meeting was considered a ceremony. Although coffee is not a traditional drink, it has become part of our society and we consider it as "ours". The artist tries to find an answer to the question of what a traditional Slovak coffee set would look like. Its shape is reminiscent of a jug, which meets the function of a container for filter coffee. The handle-less objects allow you to hold them in your hands, maintain contact and read the text while turning them around. The aim was to show traditional craft in a contemporary light; to create a contrast between hand-made products and text which acts as a decoration. The stoneware set is made for two people to ensure personal communication. "The opportunity to work with a master of folk craft was a very valuable experience for us, which every student of design should have. The connection between contemporary design and craft is very strong for us, and this is why as students we should continue in this trend. The project "Tradition - untraditionally" is proof of how to work with tradition in an unconventional way." Simona Duchoňová



# Slovak folk costumes – creative synergies

In cooperation with the Slovak Institute in Vienna, the Centre for Folk Art Production (ÚĽUV) opened to the public in Schloss Hof castle a unique exhibition entitled "Slovak folk costumes – creative synergies" (*Slowakische Trachten – Kreative Synergien*), which ran from October 8<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup> and then from November 20<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup> 2021. The aim of the project was to showcase the wealth of folk expression in traditional clothing belonging to the collections of the Museum of Folk Art Production, to present its documentation and collection activities and to work with folk producers and designers.

Silvia Fedorová, Radoslava Janáčková



↑ The exhibited traditional clothing, bonnets, headdresses and corsets are from the collections of the Museum of Folk Art Production in Stupava. They were made in the period from the second half of the 19th century to the 1950s. They come from different areas in Slovakia, and so visitors can observe their variety and particularities. From left to right: Wedding folk costume from Šarišské Sokolovce (Sabinov district), male folk costume from Turá Lúka (Myjava district) and ceremonial folk costume from Terchová (Žilina district).

Some of the most striking expressions of Slovakia's traditional material culture in the past could be seen in clothing, which was worn in villages for working in the fields, in the forest, in the pastures as well as on various special occasions. The poorer the region, the longer it retained its archaic form of clothing. Regional differences in clothing were apparent in the economic and administrative division into counties, which lasted for several centuries in our lands, until 1922. However, despite the disappearance of counties, regional differences in traditional clothing persisted for

another few decades. It was the shift to an urban way of life that facilitated these changes, first near large towns and gradually across the whole of Slovakia.

## ÚĽUV and research into traditional clothing

In 1945, the Centre for Folk Art Production was established by a decree of the President of the Republic to preserve the traditions of popular material culture. Enthusiasts from among the ranks of artists, ethnographers and historians

stood at the birth of the organisation, and its activities were shaped under their expert supervision. The state's role was to subsidise production and sales through ÚLUV. Immediately after its foundation, ÚLUV began its documentation and archive activities in this domain. The organisation's activities gradually grew wider. Field research and documentation became its basic sources of information. Documentation work included the establishment of a collection which is now part of the Museum of Folk Art Production in Stupava (MLUV).

The central focus of field research was traditional clothing and accessories. Other areas of research and documentation of folk art production and its development included various techniques of working with wood, metal, natural weaving materials, the processing of horn, leather, decorating eggs and gingerbread, textile techniques such as knitting, lacemaking, indigo print, weaving, embroidery and many others. ÚLUV's staff researched and documented hundreds of items which are now being used as study material and are also available to members of the public. The field research lasted almost forty years and helped safeguard many traditional production techniques before they were forgotten. Mária Moravčíková-Kautmanová systematically documented traditional clothing from 1950 onwards. At that time, traditional clothing was still commonly worn in certain regions of Slovakia, so records concerning it are very precise and detailed. Later, other ÚLUV members of staff joined in the field research. This was the origin of a rich documentary collection containing descriptions of traditional clothing, colorized drawings, patterns, photographs and slides. Alongside its documentation activity, ÚLUV also cooperated and continues to cooperate with producers across Slovakia. Many contemporary producers already have artistic training as well as the ambition to move traditional craft closer to a contemporary form.

The painter Viera Škrabalová-Ličeníková (1925 - 2007) played an important role in documenting traditional clothing and accessories. Today, her detailed drawings of traditional clothing are a precious study material. Clothing producers and folk groups consult them, and they have also provided valuable information to scriptwriters, costume designers and

clothing designers. Škrabalová was employed in ÚLUV from 1947 to 1953, and she worked externally for ÚLUV until 1976. She made dozens of colorized drawings and studies of traditional clothing in the field. She also designed clothing, into which she carefully added traditional motifs. Some of her designs were also put into production and became part of the ÚLUV range. After finishing her cooperation with ÚLUV, Škrabalová continued in her textile work, designing tablecloths, rugs and other interior textile accessories. MLUV owns an extensive collection of this artist's drawing and fashion designs, some of which were presented at the exhibition.

### Fashion clothing

One of ÚLUV's long-term areas of interest is without a doubt unique and unmistakable fashion clothing based on folk traditions. It is important to understand that at that time, the market offered unvaried clothing lacking imagination, and so the clothing produced by ÚLUV was very sought-after. It was a brand that stood for uniqueness and originality. A change came about in 2000, when ÚLUV organised the first annual design competition focused on craft, called Rings In Water. This competition motivated many young designers to create works based on traditions. This was also the case for fashion design. Some fascinating and timeless clothing creations were born as part of this competition, which is organised every two years. During its ten editions, twenty clothing designers have won awards.

### ÚLUV exhibition at Schloss Hof castle

The invitation to prepare an exhibition of traditional Slovak clothing in the newly-renovated Schloss Hof castle was a huge, yet tempting, challenge. MLUV has a rich collection of traditional clothing and accessories. The point was not only to show off the most beautiful items, but to point out the particularities and differences in clothing in Slovakia's regions. The proposed exhibition premises consisted of a series of five rooms. This division of the space was key to the exhibition concept. The collection was opened by folk costumes newly made in ÚLUV based on Viera Škrabalová-Ličeníková's watercolours. Enlarged drawings by this talented textile artist were

↓ Traditional folk clothing from the collections of the MLUV acquired through research.







← Viera Škrabalová-Ličeníková, Design of women's dresses, colored drawing, combined technique, 1953

only to admire the skill and aesthetics of the rural population, but also to compare the varying scale of colours, different cuts and the various techniques used to ornament the clothing depending on its area of origin.

Some of the most important items of clothing were head covers which did not differ only according to geographical location, but also according to the status of the wearer. Bonnets and headdresses were a unique source of creativity and fantasy. The third room was devoted to bonnets which were proudly displayed on long poles. Two grand restored headdresses, metal clips and buttons were displayed in cases for visitors to admire.

ÚLUV also includes fashion inspired by traditional clothing in its programme. During her time at ÚLUV, Viera Škrabalová-Ličeníková produced dozens of fashion designs, many of which were actually made. Some of these can be found in the collections of the Museum of Design in Bratislava, from where a knitted jumper was loaned for the exhibition. Unfortunately, MLUV does not have products based on these designs in its collection, but they have been preserved in the form of watercolours. The originals of the watercolour designs and blown-up photographs of the artist's produced models were exhibited in the fourth room.

ÚLUV's mission is to link the past to the present, traditional craft with modern design and aesthetics. The transition from past to present was illustrated by a selection of clothing by ÚLUV's in-house artists Janka Menkynová, Klára Brunovská, Oľfia Kopecká and Oľga Koreňová which were made in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and by clothes from the "Shifts" project initiated by ÚLUV from 1995 to 1996. Several textile designers took part in the project, and visitors could see in the exhibition designs by Jozef Bajús and Silvia Fedorová as well as a video recording from the event. Contemporary works by designers finding inspiration for their work in folk clothing,

or using traditional techniques, were represented by clothing from the Rings In Water competition. These included original items by Vivien Babicová, Michaela Bednárová, Ľubica Poncik and Veronika and Matej Rabada.

Together with the fashion show held during the exhibition's grand opening, visitors were able to discover a complete picture of the rich visual variety of traditional clothing, of its demanding textile techniques, of how it still remains a source of inspiration today for many designers and producers, and of its importance for the future of fashion. ■

*Photography: ÚLUV archives*

← Contemporary design. The exhibited collection of ÚLUV fashion from the 1980s and 1990s is characterised by its use of traditional textile techniques: indigo print, weaving, embroidery, knitting, pleating. There is a strong emphasis on wearability and the opportunity to produce the items in small series.

also part of the exhibition. The second room was a little larger, and thus suited to a presentation of historical traditional clothing from the museum's collections, namely women's clothing from the following locations: Ábelová (Lučenec district), Moravské Lieskové (Nové Mesto nad Váhom district), Trnava, the Tekov region, Torysky (Levoča district) and Važec (Liptovský Mikuláš district). The men's clothing came from Detva, Dolný Lopašov (Piešťany district) and Omšenie (Trenčín district). The public thus had the opportunity not



# Tradition in design

## Contemporary clothing – tradition included

The Centre for Folk Art Production (ÚĽUV) is the only state institution dealing with the safeguarding and development of traditional craft and folk art production in Slovakia. ÚĽUV has been shaped since its beginnings by artists (designers) inspired by traditional crafts and folk art production who transformed traditional shapes and patterns into forms which speak to contemporary clients. In the field of clothing, it combines several ancient crafts: tailoring, weaving, embroidery, lace-making, sheepskin-making, shirt-making, hat-making, furriery, indigo print, knitting on a loom, on a mould or with needles, and crochet. In order to incite young clothing designers to find inspiration in traditional craft, which is part of European culture, ÚĽUV launched the first stage of its project "Tradition in Design" in 2021.

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Lubica Poncik



ÚĽUV contacted five young but well-established clothing designers who like using local traditions in their work. Marcel Holubec W., Martin Hrča, Mišena Juhász, Lubica Poncik and Henrieta Tholt accepted the offer to work together on this project.

The output of the first stage of this project is a collection of artists' models by five designers, inspired by traditional craft and presented on the website [www.traditionindesign.sk](http://www.traditionindesign.sk) and at the exhibition "Tradition in Design. Contemporary clothing - tradition included" which is a continuation of ÚĽUV's similar projects from the past.

All the exhibited artists use tradition in their work. This is perhaps a consequence of their studies, since they attended courses at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (AFAD) given by several lecturers whose work was associated in the past with ÚĽUV. Perhaps it is due to their education and inner spirit which was shaped in a dialogue with our past, our roots, our ancestors.

→ Designer **Martin Hrča** graduated in clothing design from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. He bases each collection on a specific topic, developing it in the form of several models. The exhibited "SKRZ" collection is a celebration of his homeland and the meaning of tradition which his contemporaries often overlook in their search for repute. It is inspired by the Liptov region and the Slovak countryside. Wool, hand-woven linen and natural materials are dominant. Through these materials, Martin Hrča wants to highlight the fact that even a traditional, rough material can be processed in a creative manner in a sophisticated design and with a contemporary expression. In his models, he combines in a refined way the raw animal side and wilderness of nature with a hint of luxury and grandeur.

The waistcoat on the photograph is made of hand-dyed wool using the technique of weaving and knitting.

← Padded scarf with pockets – accessories made for ÚĽUV by Martin Hrča.





↑ **Marcel Holubec W.** graduated in clothing design from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. He wanted to be a fashion design from his primary school years. His signature style typically features minimalizing cuts and high-quality materials such as silk or leather. His collections are often restricted to purist black and white, with occasional colour accents. A key role is played not only by his architectural vision of clothing, but also by its transparency, for example. One technique to which he likes to return is pleating. It is also present in his *Parfaititude* collection inspired by the inimitable world of ballet, its stories without words, probably best expressed by the image of the swan. The collection is symbolically produced in black, white and skin colour, combined with gold jewellery in the shape of feathers. The photograph shows a two-piece dress made of silk chiffon, satin and gazaar made using the techniques of sewing and pleating.

Each artist has their own identifiable and original signature which marks out their work, but the exhibited clothing and accessories are linked by their innovative relation to traditional craft, traditional technologies and motifs. The joint tendency of the exhibiting artists includes a return to good, honest craft and respect for centuries-old values. We can feel



↑ **Mišena Juhász** graduated in clothing design from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. She designs and produces clothing and accessories mainly using indigo print. In her work, she tries to find beauty in traditional fine art culture. She prints by hand the patterns which inspire her on cotton fabric, to which she adds white, single colour linen material on the finished models. She also creates her own artist's fabrics and by experimenting she pushes back the frontier of the traditional indigo print technique of dyeing fabrics in indigo. The above also applies to the "Inšpirácie" collection. The motifs on the indigo print clothing (hearts, birds etc.) are inspired by the Slovak fairy-tales of Pavol Dobšinský and are supposed to symbolise the happy end hidden in every story. The atypical types of fastening and cuts make the clothing into an unusual whole.

in their work a return to nature, to natural materials and sustainability, which is a clear fashion world trend today. The designers revived some traditional crafts such as pleating, weaving, knitting, macramé, embroidery and indigo print. In addition to textile techniques and materials, they were also interested in traditional architecture (shingle



↴ The photographs show leather handbags – accessories made for ÚLUV by Martin Hrča.



↑ The necklaces with tassels were designed for ÚLUV by Henrieta Tholt.

← **Henrieta Tholt** graduated in spatial textile art from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. In her work, she is often inspired by traditional artistic culture, more particularly by embroidery, decorative motifs; she hints at elements of rural architecture or mountain living. She works with textile in an experimental and creative way, overstepping the traditional borders of craft and its utilitarian function towards artistic expression.

Her collection *"Rural monochrome"* pays homage to period folk architecture. Before producing her work, she researched period rural architecture, the materials used and their properties, shapes, colours, and above all their structures. From the artist's subjective point of view, the structure is most striking on traditional houses with a saddle roof. The wooden shingle roofing was altered by the weather, often leading to shingles being dislodged. This created a unique structural element which the artist records and reshapes in contemporary textile materials. The collection consists of three items of clothing which can be combined with the artist's previous series of bonnets, "Status" or jewellery "Other/traditional". The monochromatic scale allows the properties of the chosen material to stand out. Henrieta Tholt works with hand-pleated textile, which she layers and combines rhythmically with the background material.

The photograph shows a bonnet made of tulle and plastic, and a waistcoat made of silk, cotton and satin ribbons. The structured trousers were made using the technique of folding and sewing.



↑ Feather-shaped brooch designed for ÚLUV by Marcel Holubec W.

structure), Haban majolica and works by important figures in this part of our culture such as the renowned artist Karol Plicka. The most important factor is that the exhibited clothing and accessories are linked by their innovative relations to traditional craft, as well as to traditional technologies and motifs. A joint tendency by the exhibiting artists was a return to good, honest craft and respect for centuries-old values. The exhibition is designed to be mobile and to attract the widest range of publics.

#### The exhibition consists of:

- five metal stands for placing or hanging models by five designers,
- five mannequins for the designers' models,
- five large-format textile banners (photographs of the clothing worn by a model)
- 24 items of clothing (making up 15 models), 18 clothing accessories and items of jewellery by five designers,
- one metal structure containing text in Slovak and English (can be replaced by a different language on request)

In the second stage of the project, in 2022, ÚLUV plans to have selected accessories by the designers produced manually in a limited edition and to include them in its product range under the brand *designer (name) x ÚLUV*, thus making the wider public aware of the shift and overlap of tradition into contemporary design. We will also present individually the work of each designer on social networks. ■

→ **Lubica Poncik** Lubica Poncik graduated in applied art from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, specialising in textile. Her work refers back to traditions, mainly in the area of folk embroidery and Haban faience. She uses modern technologies, thus giving her models a contemporary, even timeless, look. She applies traditional decorative motifs to modern cuts of clothing using sublimation and digital printing, mainly certain regional types of relief and three-dimensional embroidery. In her production, she also uses traditional textile techniques such as crochet, lace-making or knitting. The artist's collection of clothing and jewellery (produced in cooperation with the jeweller Viera Joštová Igriciová) entitled "Haban Touch" is based on motifs from Haban pottery of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Traditional motifs of flowers, animals and various craft attributes set in typically rich colours are altered by the artist using a graphics programme and then transferred to the fabric made of cotton, and mainly of artificial and natural silk. For her ornamentation, she uses a combination of two printing and pleating techniques. These "3D" pattern effects are visible mainly when the clothing is set in movement, or even just when worn. The photograph shows a tunic dress made of artificial silk with the artist's print of a Haban motif: the guild of tailors. In her work, she used the technique of sublimation print and sewing. The cut leaves no waste fabric.



↑ Waistcoat with pockets and a hair ornament from the workshop of Mišena Juhász designed for ÚLUV.

Product photography: Peter Simoník, ÚLUV archives  
Fashion photography: Mariana Tomanová, ÚLUV archives

Model: Patrícia H. EXIT model management, s.r.o.  
Styling: Lubica Poncik  
Make-up: Michaela Warenitsová  
Lokation: Slovenská ľudová majolika, Modra  
Produkción: Zuzana Macková Juríková, Andrea Orelová, Lubica Poncik



# *Rings in water*

## Design – developing its status in traditional craft

A focus on craft and folk art production is given by ÚĽUV's long-standing mission.

Close cooperation with craftsmen and producers has been characteristic of its work since its very beginning. From the mid-1990s, this communication has also developed to address young creators – artists and designers – in applied art. Through them, the potential of traditional craft can be harnessed to contemporary approaches. This is best documented by the 'Rings in Water' competition. For ÚĽUV, this competition is like a laboratory, bringing together progressive, innovative approaches; a space where inherited knowledge and skills combine naturally with contemporary needs and experiences.

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Mária Hriešik Nepšinská, Mária Tomová



↑ Tomáš Brichta, 'Hurdy-Gurdy' musical instrument, 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 'Open' category, Rings in Water 2000

An interest in craft has recently become perceptible throughout Europe. Since the 1990s, the idea called 'Back to Basics' has been applied in design: a return to reduced, rough and authentic properties which match the newly-discovered sense of measure, certainty, individuality and rationality. Whether it was a reaction to the exuberant and exhausting

postmodern, or an "awakening" provoked by the ecological movement, the fact remains that craft, and associated terms, have become part of a continuing trend for a "return to our roots" and "looking for the essence". In its most trivial form, it has found its place as an opposite and universal answer to the negative consequences of industrial mass



production. Craft, closely followed by nature, as remedies against today's saturated, tired consumer society. We cannot either overlook the safeguarding projects to revitalise crafts by preserving local identity. This is closely linked to the renewal of craft professions, particularly in traditionally rural regions.

One often quoted example of a functioning connection between traditional and modern principles, the unique and the repeated, the craft and the design, is Scandinavian design, although this term is associated mainly with the 1950s, when "Scandinavian design benefits" appeared in America and Europe. Design identifying with simplicity, purity, easiness and democracy captured the world's imagination. It incorporated the principles of craft quite naturally. Despite the fact that there are often polemics about the justification of the term "Scandinavian design", its positive features have remained. It is synonymous with a friendly, open and sensible approach to applied design. The Scandinavian model of how design works even inspired the Czech social democrat Theodor Pistorius, who was one of ÚLUV's ideological founders in 1945.

Already in the introductory project of the European Folk Art and Craft Organisation (ECO), designed as an international

competitive exhibition featuring national rounds in eight European countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, Austria, Sardinia, Slovakia, Spain) ÚLUV organised the first inventive show of contemporary design inspired by traditional craft. For the other participating countries, it was a one-off event, but thanks to ÚLUV, in Slovakia it became the introductory edition of what is now a traditional competition. It was focused on local conditions and the cultural context. Young creators gave it a progressive boost, because they see traditional as a stepping stone towards experiment and creativity. The competition opened up interesting opportunities for valorising traditional craft in relation to contemporary design.

Several now well-known designers took place in the competition, such as Lenka Sršňová, Marcel Holubec W., Michaela Bednářová, Lubica Poncik, Mária Štraneková, Michal Hanula, Tibor Uhrín, Zdeněk Hogh and many others. The competition also produced many works of artistic craft and design which are directly or indirectly inspired by traditional production and folk art. They were made by designers, artists, craftspeople, producers, university and secondary school students. During the course of its existence, the competition has gained the reputation of a well-respected show-



↑ Kristína Ligačová, 'VVVASE' collection, mention in section A (professionals, producers), Rings in Water 2022



↑ Martin Jankura, tattooed tables, main prize in the 'Wood' category, Rings in Water 2010

case of the latest craft and design productions, not only in Slovakia, but also abroad.

### Each year has produced interesting works

Each year of the competition brings different types of works, mainly characterised by their use of modern technologies and materials in traditional cultural patterns. Specific examples include the hurdy-gurdy by designer Tomáš Brichta (Rings in Water 2000), a highly contemporary version of the traditional musical instrument, table linen made of rubber-coated textile by Arty Weinerová (2006) evoking traditional embroidery, or the 'Indigo' clothing collection by textile artist Kateřina Žaludová (2016), who designed her own indigo print patterns and produced the printing moulds.

We can talk about a similar approach in the case of artists who focused on innovations of traditional technologies, materials and shapes, such as Tibor Uhrín or Michal Hanula. In their work, they use different woodworking methods (bending wood on a mould, splitting, hollowing out, milling), and develop them in unusual contexts. From the biggest group of professionals, we should mention the pottery works by Ivica Markovičová, the recipient of several awards who focused on shifts in traditional pottery, mainly from eastern Slovakia, or the minimalistically pure designer version of traditional wire craft as seen by Šimon Mišurda.

### More than just regular events

In addition to the regular biannual competitions, ÚLUV also held a jubilee exhibition entitled 'Rings in Water 2009' presenting ar-

tists and designers from abroad, as well as award-winning creators from Slovakia. The common factors were crafts and traditional culture, seen through fragments of sources of inspiration taken from history. For example, one of the foreign designers whose works were presented at the exhibition was Anna-Maria Väättäinen from Finland, who had already been successful during the introductory international project. Back then, she had caught attention with her willow work; at the jubilee exhibition, she presented objects made of willow bark. A Czech view of craft-focused design was presented by Eva Jandíková, who works on shifts in traditional Czech cotton canvas. Out of the Slovak creators, we can mention Michal Hanula who experiments innovatively with traditional techniques such as pouring molten tin, wire crafts or woodturning.

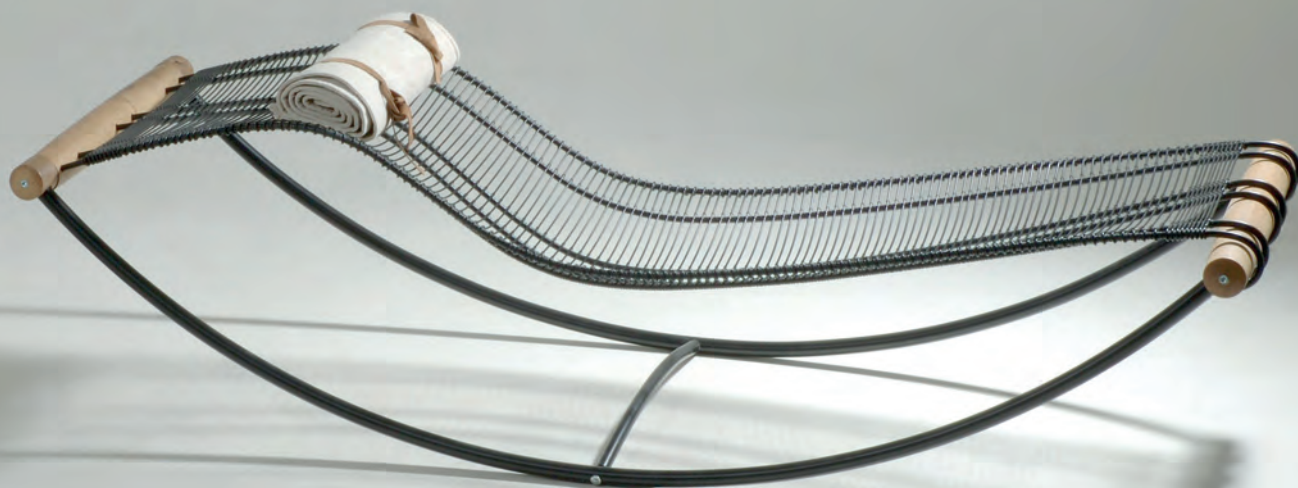
### International dimension of the competition

Participants from outside Slovakia can also take part in the 'Rings in Water' competition. The seventh and tenth competition had an international dimension, bringing many works of artistic craft and design, directly or indirectly inspired by traditional production and folk art. The artists behind them were designers, artists, craftspeople, producers, students of universities and vocational secondary schools from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Its international dimension created space for confronting the approaches of each country, and comparing how creativity and ideas are dealt with.

In addition to presenting the competition within Slovakia (Dom umenia Bratislava, ÚLUV Gallery Bratislava, ÚLUV Gal-

→ Andrea Vonkomerová, 'Biela' clothing collection, 1<sup>st</sup> prize in section A (professionals, producers), Rings in Water 2022

↓ Michal Hanula, rocking chair, 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 'Interior' category, Rings in Water 2004





lery Košice, Cvernovka Bratislava, Courtyard of the Ministry of Culture SR, Satelit Gallery of the Slovak Centre for Design Bratislava, Kasárne/Kulturpark Košice); some editions of the competition were also presented abroad (Moravian Gallery Brno, Slovak Institute Warsaw, Hagymányok háza Budapest, Slovak embassy in Berlin).

### 2022 and the future of the competition

The current, eleventh year of the competition is in full flow. It was opened at the end of 2021, and students of art secondary schools and universities joined the open challenge together with designers, artists and traditional producers of art and craft products from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Out of a total of over 200 submitted works, the international jury of experts consisting of Veronika Kotradiová (SK), Zsuzsanna Hegedűsné Sevelle (HU), Ferdinand Chrenka (SK), Pavel Jarkovský (CZ), Zuzana Šidlíková (SK), Michal Hanula (SK) and Dominika Mačáková (SK) selected around one hundred works in early July 2022 to be presented at the final exhibition, opening on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2022 in the ÚLUV Gallery in Bratislava.

In the most important category of professionals and university students, the jury awarded the main prize to the artist behind the 'Biela' [White] clothing collection, inspired by the traditional technique of pleating. Andrea Vondkomerová was loosely inspired by the folding and smocking of cloth in folk clothing. Knitted clothing made of linen and cotton is folded without cutting, using right-angled pieces and zero waste, just as is the case for folk clothing. Krisztina Szente from Hungary won an award for her collection of porcelain bowls with a fine glaze, and Georgios Somarakis, a student from the Studio of Industrial Design of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design

in Bratislava won a prize for his collection of woven carriers 'UJI'.

In the category for secondary school students, the jury gave awards to individuals from the studios of toy and decorative items production and of clothing design at the School of Applied Art in Ružomberok, as well as from the studio of wood design and shaping and pottery design at the J. Vydra School of Applied Art in Bratislava.

In the separate category of 'Tradition', producers who valorise the artistic craft tradition through exceptionally well produced practical objects received awards; the jury in these cases highlighted the uniqueness of style and the link to traditional craft. Zuzana Golierová received an award for her collection of felt slippers, Martin Hartiník for his collection of alternately stacking bowls made of turned wood and woven out of spruce roots, on which he worked together with the master craftsman Jozef Boďa. Awards were also presented to the collection of framed mirrors made by Štefan Smržík (with artistic cooperation from Lubica Poncik) using the wire craft techniques, the woven scarf 'Margó' by Mária Bognárová from Hungary and a series of wooden puzzles for children with a Kyjatice motif by Jana Majerská.

Over the twenty years of existence of the 'Rings in Water' competition organised by the Centre for Folk Art Production, designers, design students, artists and craftspeople have presented around twenty thousand works. The competition has much to build on. Its aim is to bring the competitive designs to the wide public, not only in the form of exhibitions. Producing and getting suitable competitive designs to the state where they can be made in small series (which is also included in the terms and conditions of this year's competition) is a task which is still awaiting its practical fulfilment for this competition. ■

↓ Martin Hartiník, Jozef Boďa, collection of bowls 'Drevokruhy', prize in the 'Tradition' category, Rings in Water 2022



# Return to sense and sensibility

Design has accompanied humankind since “Adam” – in objects and actions alike. It cannot be dissociated from people, it fulfils their ideas and desires, gives form to a way of life. We look with admiration at the heritage of our ancestors, at the silent testimonies hidden in vessels, tools and jewellery. A trace of history in the form of a designer’s message speaks of a logical connection with the extent of our knowledge. At the beginning, there is the spontaneity of growth, creativity, skill. A person connected to nature, surrounded by natural materials, created objects to make their life easier. They are always improving the quality they achieve. A sceptre passed down from father to son, inheriting chisels and planes. This is how the experience as one’s own property is born. A world of colours, materials, technologies, materialised in architecture, clothing, tools...

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Ferdinand Chrenka

An individual who inherits personal property can immediately decide how to make a good investment. An individual’s awareness of a common cultural heritage, however, is particular. Many people do not even know that it belongs to them, and they have no idea of its value.

Becoming aware of their own “me” was the impulse behind the concept of semester works set for student of the Studio of Industrial Design of the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. Their basic source of inspiration was information from the Centre for Folk Art Production in the form of research reports, literature, videos and the advice and knowledge provided by specialists on regional culture, and the network of folk producers across the whole of Slovakia. The topic “from the past to the present” as one of the possible design outputs represents a return to the roots, to sense and to sensibility. The result should be design without “olde worlde” folklore and with a clearly defined function and a high aesthetic value: design that can be mass produced. The students familiarised themselves with technologies (woodturning, barrel-making, metal inlaying, wood splitting, wire craft), materials (corn sheaf, leather, horn and others), purposes (musical instruments, buckles, distaffs, cheese moulds, containers for cereals, toys and others). This input is a “genetic code” revived by the contemporary intellect. It does not imply creating replicas of objects we already know, but rather designing new ones. Dividing sources of inspiration into technologies, materials or purposes creates unexpected potential for connections. Many of the designs born of this assignment were a surprise even for me. The students had no purpose or technology defined beforehand. The only certainty was the direction, and so analysis and much discussion and thought preceded their decisions. This era sets a mirror in front of us in which we can see how we used to live not so long ago. Perhaps it would be simpler to forget part of the past. However, a glance at the landscape, architecture, customs and technologies prevents us from doing so. Design is a direct, easily identifiable trace of the level of national production. I think it is important to look back and not to make the same mistakes. ÚLUV has also been through dynamic changes, on a par with our activities.

Thanks to the vision and willingness to adapt of ÚLUV’s staff and its director Milan Beljak, from the 1990s we succeeded in turning our initial words into actions. I was happy when ÚLUV gradually changed, through the projects of its Information and Education Centre, the Courtyard of Crafts and other activities which culminated in the “Rings in Water” competition and the “Craft, Art, Design” magazine. Working together also means living with the other side’s problems. I had the opportunity to see that the radical changes were repaid by people’s ambitious work and submission to a common cause.

The expansion of international trade eliminates the particularities of national and regional cultures. Quick production and distribution enables strong economies to saturate incredibly large areas with their goods. There are few opportunities to resist such pressure and search for one’s own production. From this point of view, the need for ÚLUV is of national importance. The cooperation with my studio was not ÚLUV’s only cooperation, since the “Rings in Water” competition also addressed other departments of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design. The spirit of young, brave design was born in the studios of textiles, ceramics and jewellery. An exceptional artistic community was also founded at the Technical University of Košice around the outstanding artist and teacher Professor Tibor Uhrín, as well as at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, to say nothing of applied art schools.

After Milan Beljak’s departure from the post of director in 2012, ÚLUV began to stagnate in this area. During the last few years, it was in an alarming state and desperately needed a restart. For this reason, as someone who after 1989 was present at ÚLUV’s important milestones in the world of design, I am pleased that some years later I can help once again through my activities to shape the direction of this exceptional institution: in a broader dialogue between designers and master craftspeople, with mutual sense and sensibility. ■

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The Studio of Industrial Design of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design is a long-standing partner of ÚLUV in the sphere of design.

# The new face of ÚLUV's Craft Courtyard

The idea for a facelift for ÚLUV's Craft Courtyard on Obchodná street in Bratislava was born earlier this year with the arrival of ÚLUV's new general director and a new set of circumstances.

The first phase of this project entitled "Made of wood – bringing new life to a public space using functional design elements anchored in traditional craft" was also supported as a priority project by Slovakia's Ministry of Culture.

Tomáš Mikolaj



↑ Renovation of the ÚLUV Craft Courtyard in the first half of the 1990s. Photograph: ÚLUV archives

Obchodná street in Bratislava used to have a rich life based around crafts. It is this aspect which the architect Jozef Smida took into account in 1992 when planning the renovation of what had been until then ÚLUV's administrative building, turning it into a multi-functional building incorporating cultural heritage into the wider social and culture dimension. The main objective was to bring the world of traditional

craft and craft-based design closer to the public, and thus reinforce the natural place of this part of our culture. In practice, the premises of this ancient craftsmen's house were expanded to include a shop, craft workshops, an exhibition room, a library, accommodation facilities and a now closed restaurant and café alongside the administrative premises. The renovations took four years, and in 1996, the reno-

vated building was officially opened. A quarter of a century later, circumstances led to those in charge thinking that a change would be welcome. At the beginning of this year, the waste water pipes were replaced in the courtyard, and all the decor was removed. The question remained as to whether to return the courtyard to its original state once the paving was replaced or to try something new. Both the internal wear-and-tear of the decor and the fact that 2021 was declared the "Year of Slovak Design" swayed the decision towards the second option.

After discussing this topic among a wider group of staff, we decided to try to give the ÚLUV Craft Courtyard a new look as the public's first point of contact with our institution. We asked the Studio of Interior Design of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design led by associate professor Miroslav Debnár to work with us. The starting point for the five students who ended up working on this assignment was to be the use of traditional crafts in their proposed design. Wood is ÚLUV's main topic this year, and so this material was to dominate other materials in the proposals. In the traditional environment, wood was used by trough-makers, wood-turners, woodcarvers, barrel-makers, shingle-makers, cabinet-makers, carpenters and basket-makers. We were interested to see what the dialogue between tradition and contemporary young design would look like. This was a new experience for those of us currently working at ÚLUV. The ori-



↑ Life in the Craft Courtyard a few years ago. Photograph: ÚLUV archives



ginal assignment which we submitted to Miroslav Debnár changed over time and in the course of discussion. However, the function of each part of the courtyard, tried and tested over the years, remained unchanged. We are extremely pleased with the resulting design which should be implemented in the years to come. However, we were also interested in the opinion of those who carried out the whole process.

“I visited the ÚLUV Craft Courtyard for the first time in person in the winter. It was chilly and the paving wasn't quite finished. It wasn't much to look at, and to tell the truth, I hesitated about accepting the project. However, I see every assignment as a challenge that should be taken on,” said Miroslav Debnár, beginning his evaluation. “In a similar way, the students were not convinced at first about the topic. In our studio, everything's about reaching agreement. We look for a consensus together and the students, too, as designers, had the opportunity to give their opinion on the topic. The main issue was that it is not a traditional interior; even though it is an enclosed building with walls, it has no ceilings. However, I think that sev-

eral people became enthusiastic about the assignment as it went on, which can be seen in the final proposals.

Until now, we hadn't worked on any similar assignment. It was specific and the students had to tune in to the wavelength of traditional craft and to premises with precisely defined elements and functions. At the same time, they were supposed to add their modern view as a young person, something contemporary and starker in design, and thus find an interface between these two poles.

As a teacher, I view this opportunity to deal with an assignment from a direct client as a very positive thing, because graduates will often come across this situation in practice. In school, we usually work on more fictitious projects: we define a topic, but without any strictly defined parameters. It is just a vision of an interior, of premises, and developing it provides further opportunity for developing creativity. For this reason, too, the practical experience gained by students in this assignment for ÚLUV was a very good school for them.

It is true that there were times when they lost their way; there were several

changes during the process. But this too was good experience. However well we plan our work, things can change as they go along, and we need to be ready for this. Clients probably realise at a certain moment that they have forgotten something, that something isn't as important as it first seemed, and so on. This creative process de facto never ends. The deadline is the only limit which we choose for an assignment. In our case, it was the end of the semester. Work on this assignment was also specific in terms of the pandemic restrictions which prevented the students from attending classes for a certain time. From my point of view, there is nothing better than in-person communication. At least in our art world, where things are not just about words. Students have to hold the material in their hands, they need to know how to work it, to make a prototype or model. And at home they don't usually have the machinery or technological help. So last semester we gradually became used to Skype conferences, which took on an additional dimension in this particular assignment thanks to the regular participation of ÚLUV represen-





↑ Visualisation of Tímea Kepová's design which will be implemented  
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tatives. The students discovered the functions of the space itself better during a joint visit to ÚLUV which took place once the pandemic measures had been relaxed. Discussions with our lecturer Petra Rybánska were also of great help, since thanks to her mother, the textile master craftswoman Jarmila Rybánska, who was employed in ÚLUV for many years, she has known these premises since childhood."

Once the student designs had been submitted at the end of June, the difficult stage of choosing one of them to use in practice began. Following discussion with people and colleagues from inside and outside the organisation, we agreed on a shortlist of two third-year students: Tímea Kepová from Trhovište (Michalovce district) and Barbora Siráňová from Varín (Žilina district). Tímea's design, more playful, used stools (hokerlík) as the basic element. Barbora's grander design was based on a traditional log building.

"I think that the topic was a good match for Tímea, and she believed in it. She visited ÚLUV even during the pandemic to check out some aspects in person; she asked questions, looked for answers, analysed. This was not really the case for the other students. They preferred to listen to her ideas. Perhaps

these are just details, but this is what clinches the deal in the end. Her design changed as time went by. She gradually stylised, abstracted and simplified it until it became a very comprehensive proposal with the simple stool which formed its foundation being transformed into objects with varying functions. Her result is no accident; she worked a lot and systematically, thinking about many aspects.

Barbora is very hard-working; she thinks clearly and precisely. She struggled a little with this topic at first, but I think her result - like all her other assignments so far - was very good. The philosophical concept of large wooden "trees" forming a sort of avenue in the courtyard, anchored onto beams placed on the ground which serve as the basis for the other elements of her design, is impressive and also functional," said Miroslav Debnár, summing up the work of both students.

In addition to them, a further three students worked on their own designs. Sophia Lukáčová from Trenčín based her concept on a repetition of structures. Veronika Pintérová from Bátorové Kosihy (Komárno district) used the organic curves of nature, and Miroslav Vašek from Dunajov (Kysucké Nové Mesto district) centred the courtyard's

life around a dominant podium. We would like to thank all five students sincerely and hope that this experience will be of use in their further professional development.

In the end we chose to use Tímea Kepová's design. In the current situation, it best matched the direction in which our institution is going. Its best feature was probably the fact that many of its proposals could be realised in cooperation with master craftsmen, which is very important for us. This will ensure the new premises of the Craft Courtyard will be the result of dialogue in the implementation as much as it was during the preparation of the project. On the way towards our goal, we will host creative workshops where craftsmen and designers from various areas will exchange theoretical and practical experiences while producing the individual elements of the design. The prototypes of the elements were made this year by the methods engineer from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design Eduard Herber. However, the production process is not inflexible, which is what has given craft work its unique charm over the centuries. And we are delighted that implementing the new face of the ÚLUV Craft Courtyard will also provide this kind of opportunity. ■

# Awarding the title of “Master Craftsman” to producers

In the past, folk art production was looked upon as an anonymous expression of creativity by talented ordinary people. The artist behind these traditional folk and artistic values was unknown. Interest was focused on products, on their perfect beauty and on the emotional effect, but the person responsible for this beauty remained in the shadows and was only part of an unknown workforce. Their name and works were known only to a few researchers.

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Helena Haberernová



↑ Producers awarded the title of Master of Folk Art Production 2021. Photograph: Barbara Neumannová

The passing of the Act on Folk Art Production and Artistic Crafts no. 4/1958 set out the conditions for folk producers to leave behind their anonymity and for their name to be associated with their work, and for the true bearers of tradition to be not only essential intermediaries but especially for them to come forward as artists.

Since the beginnings of its existence, the Centre for Folk Art Production has tried to support folk art production and producers, and as a result in 1959 it established a specialist committee composed of representatives of academic and artistic institutions to evaluate the specialist qualifications of folk producers based on predefined conditions, namely

technical skills, knowledge of local folk traditions in the relevant branch of folk art production and conditions for creative work. Once these criteria were met, the committee gave the candidate a certificate of “folk art producer”. If they showed a master’s talent and creativity, they were awarded the title of “master of folk art production”. The first producers to receive the title of master were the potters Ján Frankovič from Bardejov, Emil Majnhold from Lubietová (Banská Bystrica district), Michal Parikrupa from Pozdišovce (Michalovce district), Ján Moravčík from Pukanec (Levice district), Vincent Labaj from Modry, Ján Kováč from Šivetíc (Revúca district), Jozef Koloži from Prešova, the basket-maker Ján Lička from Vrbovce (Myjava district), the woodcarvers Jozef Kemko from Heľpa (Brezno district), Ján Macko from Rejdová (Rožňava district), the lace-maker Žofia Vilímová from Rejdová, the weaver Zuzana Selecká from Dobrá Niva, Anna Hroncová from Očová (both Zvolen district) and the embroiderers Katarína Brinzová from Veľký Grob

**When deciding on the awards to be given, the committee mainly takes into account the following criteria:**

- the mastery of the folk producer, their technological maturity and artistic taste as represented by the candidate’s works;
- overall output of the producer over the course of several – at least five – years since the first public presentation of their work;
- the ability to work independently, make continual progress, the ability to accept new challenges in a creative manner;
- their attractiveness and strength as a personal model for gaining followers for the given type of production.

The award is ceremoniously handed to the folk producers by the general director of ÚLUV together with a representative of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic during the gala evening which is part of the “*Master Craftsmen Days*”



↑ Mrs Eva Ševčíková, general director of ÚLUV, handed over the title of Master of Folk Art Production to producers.  
Photograph: Kvet Nguyen

(Galanta district), Katarína Brúderová from Vajnory and Katarína Kanišová from Čataj (Senec district).

In 2014, the Master of Folk Art Production Statute of Award came into effect, issued by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. A seven-member Committee for awarding the title of Master of Folk Art Production decides on the award. The committee is made up of ethnologists, historians and former specialised ÚLUV staff with many years of experience in safeguarding folk art production. Its members are appointed by the minister of culture on the proposal of the general director of ÚLUV. Proposals for the awards are submitted by ÚLUV’s specialist staff.

event held every year in the centre of Bratislava, usually on the first weekend of September.

From 1959 to the present a total of 429 titles of “Master of Folk Art Production” have been awarded. Although those receiving the title have no significant financial benefit from being awarded the title, and it is more of a moral reward, ÚLUV fully supports the status of the master as a figure in folk art production and tries to find ways of making the masters known among folk producers and among the public interested in folk art production.

Masters of folk art production hold this award in very high regard, and it is also an incentive for them to maintain in



↑ Committee for awarding the title of Master of Folk Art Production 2022. Photography: Barbara Neumannová



↑ Products made by Master of Folk Art Production 2021. Photograph: Kvet Nguyen

the long term the set quality criteria and not to compromise on the technique or artistic value of their work. The figure of master of folk art production is expected to find followers in their environment to whom they can pass down their experience, knowledge and skills, and who also have the qualities required to continue their work.

**Benefits for those awarded the title of master of folk art production:**

- filming of a video portrait of the ÚLUV master,
- article about the ÚLUV master in the magazine "Craft, Art, Design",
- first choice as producer to take part in exhibitions, festivals and other representative ÚLUV events in Slovakia and abroad,
- free participation in "Master Craftsmen Days",
- free subscription to the "Craft, Art, Design" magazine,
- free study and services provided in the ÚLUV library and in the Museum of Folk Art Production,
- profile in the ÚLUV encyclopaedia of producers,
- professional leadership and consultancy within ÚLUV.

Since the main tasks of the Centre for Folk Art Production include safeguarding and developing folk art production (as explicitly set out in the Act of the Slovak National Council no. 4/1958 on Folk Art Production and Artistic Crafts), it is just as important today as in the past for the specialist consultants of ÚLUV's Section for caring for folk art production (ÚSoLUV) to bring new ideas and artistic designs inspired by original patterns and techniques transformed into the contemporary environment, and thus to support the preservation and development of folk art production. This can only be made possible through talented folk producers to whom we look as bearers of traditions which give their products the stamp of art. We believe we need to emphasise constantly that folk art production stands or falls on the figures of master craftspeople since, without their high quality, it would lose the attribute of "art". ■

Photography: ÚLUV archives

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# Finding ourselves through craft

More and more often nowadays, our internal traffic lights which regulate our everyday feelings and relations start to flash orange. Most of us just ignore this signal for change. Whether it is out of fear for our material existence, or the fear from looking into oneself, or from false satisfaction: there are always plenty of ready excuses. Some people pay heed when the red light comes on, but by then it's usually too late. To stop and calmly experience our life to date, but at the price of a painful truth, requires courage. The woodcarver Ladislav Hedvigi found it. At the end of the day, courage is part of every craft.

Tomáš Mikolaj



↑ Ladislav Hedvigi at work in his workshop. Photograph: Andrej Galica

Leaving the place where you grew up to find work is a common thing today. Ladislav Hedvigi, originally from the Gemer region, lived for a long time in Malacky where he worked in a big wood-processing factory. He enjoyed his work, it was well paid, but working on

three shifts left him little time for personal or spiritual growth. And so he was quickly faced with a choice between health or money. He had some savings, and so he decided, as he says himself, to devote a year of his life to himself and left his job. One year turned

into three, and alongside improved health, seeing what Ladislav Hedvigi has achieved as a woodcarver is also impressive.

As a child, he did not show a keen interest in crafts. He only began to take an interest in making wooden toys

when his children came along. He gradually discovered the iconic toys from the town of Kyjatice, just a few kilometres from Rimavské Zalužany where he grew up, but which he didn't know in this context. And in time, he decided to focus only on these objects.

The artist Peter Heriban, who worked for ÚLUV at the time, wrote very nicely about the phenomenon of Kyjatice inspirations in RUD in 2017. It was with him that Ladislav Hedvigi found much in common, including in their ideas on where to go in life. Back then, however, he had no inkling what his decision to return to his home region and do what he enjoyed would lead to. In his first year already, he obtained a grant from the Slovak Arts Council which he used to make replicas of more than one hundred historical Kyjatice toys. The models from museums and private collections came from different periods and were made by different masters, and Ladislav Hedvigi made them into an exhibition collection to show visitors from schools and the general public the technological and artistic development and life of Kyjatice toys.

Next, he founded the citizens' association "Kyjatické hračky" [Kyjatice toys]. He is helped mainly by family members who perform those tasks for him which he is not qualified to do, mainly concerning computers, graphics and promotion. In addition, the legal framework provided by the existence of the association enables him to enter into a partnership with different entities. This is how he succeeded, for example, in 2019 in adding Kyjatice toys to the list of products of protected origin; this means that a toy labelled as "Kyjatice" must meet the set technological, material and geographical criteria. Or in 2021, the association obtained free of charge from the Lutheran Church the building of the former school in Kyjatice, which was visited two hundred years ago by Pavol Dobšinský, when he was still a school inspector. Ladislav Hedvigi's aim is to set up inside it an exhibition of Kyjatice toys and create a space for a protected workshop where the toys would be produced by people who have difficulties finding employment. He managed to collect the finances needed to renovate the building's veranda via an internet cam-



✦ An example of Ladislav Hedvigi's work. Photograph: Adrian Růčka



paign, with the help of the “Čierne diery” [Black holes] and “Posledné domy” [Last homes] associations, and that of the Gemer Region Tourism Office within a single day. In the summer of 2022, Kyjatice toys were successfully added to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovakia in cooperation with ÚLUV.

Ladislav Hedvigi has many more ideas for further activities up his sleeve; after all, people and things can connect. In 1925, the Czech artist Bohuslav Šippich, from the State Institute for Promoting Self-Employment opened courses in Kyjatice for producing Kyjatice toys. In the past, their production had been widespread in that village in the past, but over the years the required knowledge had been lost. Graduates of these courses then found employment via the institution for a full ten years. In the 1970s, Anton Oboňa from Prievidza revived the Kyjatice toys for ÚLUV, and via another native of the Gemer region, Rudolf Stehlík, who learnt from the last graduate of Šippich’s course, Július Beňo

of Kyjatice, the baton was passed on to Ladislav Hedvigi.

Perhaps, after one hundred years, the Kyjatice spiral is returning to the phase of being promoted. It certainly does have potential: both human and artistic. The Kyjatice phenomenon is not only about toys, but also about furniture, which in past centuries was the main activity for local masters. Mapping out traditional Kyjatice furniture is in fact Ladislav Hedvigi’s next objective. He then wants to try to design new types of furniture, in cooperation with designers, respecting traditional technologies, patterns and material. The symposium “Kyjatice inspirations” might be a launchpad for him, an event that he organised in early June this year which resulted in three new types of Kyjatice toys from the hands of designers Tibor Uhrín, Michal Hanul and Peter Heriban.

Compared to his previous employment, Ladislav Hedvigi’s workload has certainly not shrunk. However, what is important is that he defines its content and deadlines. And although he does

not have much time left over to work in his workshop alongside his projects (though he feels he needs to spend hours in there because creating is about the ideas which people get as they perfect their craft), he is not afraid; he is confident that he will find time for this in the winter. Over the three years he has been back in the countryside, he too has intuitively adapted to the rhythm of the seasons, which today people in the fast world of modern towns often see only through changing temperatures or longer and shorter days.

People support him in his efforts, which have become known through the media. And there are often people who come to help him. People from his immediate surroundings also know of him, and they too occasionally help him out. You can find out what he has done, or what he is planning, on the website or Facebook page of his citizens’ association. We are confident that Ladislav Hedvigi will continue to succeed in promoting the potential of the Kyjatice phenomenon, which has been rekindled in recent years. ■

↓ Ladislav Hedvigi at work in his workshop. Photograph: Adrian Rúčka



# The movement and tremors of wood

The fact that the designer and craftsman Tibor Uhrín (\*1966) is able to extract such properties as movement and tremor from wood is proof of his long-standing processual project, stretching without a break from 2004 until today. His experimentation with wooden matter, and his complete understanding of its characteristics, is an opportunity for Uhrín to look for other ways of removing matter from wood, namely hollowing out and turning. His literal handpicking of wooden fibres, the harmony between the movement of the material and the hand guiding the machine which is shaping it, resulted in objects which bear all the marks of their work in their structures and final appearances.

Zuzana Labudová

Tibor Uhrín has long been active somewhere on the borderline between design and craft; he creates new designer items using craft skills. It is almost as if he is re-creating the items, and their shape is often a reflection of the chosen production technology. However, he always lets the practical function of end product shine through; he often makes containers and bowls. The results of Uhrín's processual approach to his work show that we can also look at these objects as works of art, which are autonomous and do not require a function to explain their existence.

The objective of his approach as a designer and craftsman is to create experimental product design. He is thus heading towards Pye's workmanship of risk. He can see in the distance the guarantee of the individuality and uniqueness of each item he creates, believing that it will last for a long time and serve its purpose. The risk of creation and experiment most probably brings with it new, more lasting qualities as an alternative to objects produced in large series, quickly worn down mentally in the machinery of consumer exchange. Part of the result in his project of milled and chiselled bowls includes his record of the production process. They consist of grooves and structures in varying forms: lengthwise, circular, rising and falling. These are the defining and forming moment of their appearance and expression. However, this is not explicitly a hand-made craft approach. The smooth movement of Uhrín's bowls, with their organic and



↑ Milling the inside of the 'Cadlab' cylindrical vessel, 2019

soft appearance, is the result of a technical experiment and conceptual thought about his own original production machines which he gradually made afresh during each phase and shift in the process.

## Bent and milled bowls

Uhrín's experiment with milling and hollowing out bowls using a jigsaw began in 2005. He discovered the appealing structure left by the saw blade in the wood as it moved quickly, gently vibrating. The mechanism consisted of a circular saw blade on a jigsaw and a part which enable the blade to be lifted gradually, and to tilt the material by ten to twenty degrees against the level of the blade. This resulted in parabolic cuts with an interesting grooved structure on kinetic bowls, later bent lengthwise, which received the working title of 'Bananas'.

## 'Fossils'

This creative and technical shift resulted in the bowls which belong to the 'Fossils' collection (2007). Repeated and overlapping negative shapes were cut and milled into the depths of the wood in basic formats of squares or rectangles. The artist used the tool's gradual movement to make a repeated cut, where the oscillating movement of a special hollowing-out blade placed on a home-made machine, followed by its carefully controlled cutting into the material created different structures. They appear more static and seem to be peeled off from the matter, just like the imprints of the bodies of ancient animals, which gave the bowls the telling name of 'Fossils'.



### Whirled and furrowed bowls

Here too, the original playing field was a rectangle or square of wood, of average thickness and dried out. Uhrín had already looked here and found dynamic, moving advances with a more striking relief. In his next experiments, he changed the movement of the tool along different trajectories. The result was *'Zvířené misy'* (2012) [Whirled bowls], made on a machine in the form of a compass, where the drawing tool was replaced by an angle grinder with different types of hollowing-out blades. The diameter of the trajectory could be changed, and the gradual vertical movement into the cut was provided by a mechanism with a fine movement screw. 'Whirled bowls' express an irregular movement with its own centre, around which individual trajectories of movement and structures turn.

Uhrín subsequently created a mechanism allowing the blade to move along a horizontal course, where the height of the course could be modified using a template. The result is the *'Zbrázené mísy'* (2012 - 2016) [Furrowed bowls] series with a rectangular format, reminiscent of the cross-section and poetry of the landscape of a deeply ploughed field. The simpler and colourful, archetypal-looking *'Pirogy'* (2016) [Pirogues] also come from this phase, made using the movement of a tool hung on a pendulum.

### Erosions and sinks

His further development brought journeys deeper into the material, where Uhrín plunged through the deep canyons of structured drillings. The complex organic structures freely diverge and connect smoothly like soft landscapes, turning around the centre of the drilling. They were created using a combination of circular and vertical movement, copying a circular template. These are the bowls *'Erózie'* [Erosions] and *'Závrtý'* [Sinks] (2018), objects with their own poetry as reduced models of a dreamed geologically formed landscape. With these works, Uhrín achieves the autonomous activity of the object as a purely art form.

↳ 'Erosion' bowl made of maple wood, 2018

↓ 'Sink' bowl made of walnut wood, 2018



### Cadlaby

The larger containers called *'Cadlaby'* (2019) are a return to a more functional purpose. To make them, he combines woodturning with milling their outer and inner surface, once more using his home-made machine. The position of each groove can be adjusted by tilting the axis or shifting the raw material. The furrowed structure of the outer perimeter of the containers adds an organic touch to what is otherwise a monotonous and symmetrical round shape.

### The story has not ended

His attempt to create organic bowl structures by moving towards digital crafts is in the verification stage. This work will be carried out via a robot programmed by the artist to fulfil his intentions.

Tibor Uhrín's work, however, resists reproduction; its unrepeatable marks resist an artificial, controlled process. It doesn't always have to work; it is about trial and error just as craft work includes risk, even though the artist's machines are involved in the process of creation. The wheelwork of his creative process, harnessing the technical and poetic ideas in the material, gives a different result each time. ■

The author is a theoretician and historian of fine art and architecture. She mainly studies the history of 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture, works on modern and contemporary design as well as publications from these spheres. She works in heritage protection as an expert consultant. She is also a university lecturer at the Faculty of Visual Art of the Technical University of Košice.

Photography: Tibor Uhrín's archives

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# Zhrnutie

## Za všetkým sú ľudia

Martina Bizovská, Eva Ševčíková

Mgr. Eva Ševčíková, absolventka dejín umenia a etnológie na Masarykovej univerzite v Brne, dlhoročná externá spolupracovníčka, ale aj interná zamestnankyňa Ústredia ľudovej umeleckej výroby, opätovne pôsobí v organizácii od januára 2021. Po úspešnom absolvovaní výberového konania bola dňa 1. júla 2021 vymenovaná do funkcie generálnej riaditeľky ÚLUV-u. O jej plánoch a víziách, ale aj smerovaní inštitúcie sa dozvieme viac v našom rozhovore.

## Celkom iný ÚLUV

Jaroslav Ondruška

Ústredie ľudovej umeleckej výroby si v roku 2020 pripomína ďalšie, takmer sa žiada povedať úctyhodné, 75. výročie svojej existencie. Pre mladšie ročníky je možno prekvapením, že sa ÚLUV pohybuje na kultúrnom poli od roku 1945. Za ten dlhý čas sa stihlo stať kultúrnym fenoménom Slovenska. Postupne, nenápadne, určite však zaslúžene. Organizácia sa rozvíjala a rástla desaťročia – kapacitami aj významom, a v ostatných troch desaťročiach sa aj významne menila. K otázke historických premien organizácie si dovoľme vysloviť jeden osobný názor. Dynamika zmien bola taká zásadná, že zhruba do polovice 90. rokov, a ÚLUV v aktuálnej súčasnosti, to sú v podstate dve celkom odlišné ustanovizne, z ktorých každá v svojej dobe a každá podľa svojich možností naplnila kultúrnu misiu v oblasti ochrany a rozvíjania živého kultúrneho prejavu – ľudových umeleckých remesiel a výrob na Slovensku.

## Nové prezentačné koncepcie a vízie Ústredia ľudovej umeleckej výroby (ÚLUV-u)

Mária Hriešik Nepšinská,  
Tomáš Mikolaj

Súčasným trendom výstavníctva nielen v oblasti umeleckoremeselnej tvorby je prezentácia diel z pohľadu kontextuálneho uchopenia témy, napríklad formou hľadania prienikov histórie a súčasnosti. Jednou z metód tohto prístupu je rovnocenná prezentácia zbierkových muzeálnych artefaktov spolu s dielami moderného i súčasného dizajnu, ktoré vychádzajú zo znalostí tradičných materiálov alebo technológií, prípadne prichádzajú s inovatívnymi riešeniami. Ambíciou nového konceptu výstav je upriamiť pozornosť diváka na konkrétny

materiál a ukázať ho komplexne v celej škále výrazových možností.

## Význam ÚLUV-u pri zachovávaní znalostí a zručností ľudovej umeleckej výroby a remesiel

Juraj Zajonc

Azda najčastejšie je Ústredie ľudovej umeleckej výroby, teda ÚLUV, spájaný s predajom výrobkov, predmetov, ktoré v sebe nesú zreteľnú a jedinečnú pečať slovenskosti. Sú vnímané ako prejavy slovenského ľudového umenia, pre súčasníka sa spájajú s tradíciami krajiny a neraz aj s predstavou o jej minulosti, keď ľudia chodili v tradičnom odevu a takmer všetko, čo potrebovali, dokázali získať a zhotoviť vlastnými rukami. Pravidelní, ale i náhodní návštevníci bratislavského centra ÚLUV-u či jeho pobočiek v Banskej Bystrici a Košiciach. ako aj predajne a galérie v Tatranskej Lomnici však nehľadajú iba zaujímavý doplnok do bytu alebo originálny darček pre hosťa zo zahraničia. Do ÚLUV-u prichádzajú aj za zážitkami, poznaním alebo naplnením osobnej ambície dokázať vlastnoručne vytvoriť jednoduchý predmet z dreva, hlíny alebo vlastnoručne utkaný obal na mobilný telefón. Chcú sa naučiť niečo nové, čo dnes nedokáže každý.

## Bože, to je krásne!

Ferdinand Chrenka

Bože, to je krásne, čo to stojí a kde sa to dá kúpiť? Tieto úprimné slová sú častou reakciou ľudí pri pohľade na originálnu produkciu slovenského dizajnu. Máme schopnosť unikátny, výnimočný dizajn navrhovať, ale nevieme ho predávať. Komercia sa stala synonymom nekalého, podozrivého podnikania. Zabúdame, že v minulosti šikovný remeselník navrhoval a vyrábala užitočné predmety, ktoré predával. Suché, ale veľmi jasné konštatovanie. Spojenie remesla a predaja bolo prirodzené. Misy, lyžice, soľníčky, krpce, kolísky, hračky. Talent a zručnosť remeselníka zabezpečoval život často mnohopočetnej rodiny. Vyrobil a predal, hotovo. Regióny boli známe jarmokmi, či už trnavský, kežmarský; remeslo sa spoločensky cítilo. Remeselník bol uznávaný, jeho produkcia z pultu rýchlo zmizla a často bolo treba na jeho výrobky čakať.

## TANDEMY s STU

Veronika Kotradyová

Ústredie ľudovej umeleckej výroby podporuje, chráni a kultivuje majstrovské tradičné

remeslo už viac ako 75 rokov. Majstri ľudovej umeleckej výroby prechádzajú výberom komisie, kde sa dohliada na pôvodný tradičný materiál a techniku. Zároveň mu patrí prvenstvo v spolupráci remeselníkov s výtvarníkmi, a to už od konca 40. rokov 20. storočia. ÚLUV pôvodnú ľudovú produkciu podchytil v celoštátnej mierke a profesionalizoval ju zapojením školených výtvarníkov do návrhárskeho procesu. V novom miléniu sa tak dialo aj formou organizovania súťaže Kruhy na vode, kde sa študenti aj profesionáli zapájajú s cieľom hľadania rôznych stratégií nadväzovania na tradičné materiály, formy a remeselné techniky. Práve v tomto duchu sa nesie nová iniciatíva: obnoviť a posilniť spoluprácu remeselníkov a dizajnérov pri tvorbe spoločného diela. Tento projekt dostal trefný názov Tandemy. V článku sa dozvieme viac o jeho prvej fáze i o spolupráci s vysokými školami zameranými na dizajn. Do projektu sa zapojil Ateliér dizajnu Vysoké školy výtvarných umení pod vedením Ferdinanda Chrenku a študenti Dizajnu na Fakulte architektúry a dizajnu Slovenskej technickej univerzity pod vedením Veroniky Kotradyovej.

## TANDEMY s VŠVU

Ferdinand Chrenka

Tradícia ako inšpirácia je prirodzenou súčasťou umenia a pre Ústredie ľudovej umeleckej výroby aj jednou z vízií do budúcnosti. Aj preto vznikol projekt Tandemy, ktorého cieľom je zistiť, čo znamená tradícia pre študentov dizajnu. Zadané bolo otvorené, a tak na tému tradícia netradične mohli študenti reagovať podľa vlastnej interpretácie. Zároveň mali možnosť voľby – vybrať si nielen vlastnú cestu, ale aj spoluprácu s majstrami ľudovej umeleckej výroby. Spolupráca študenta a majstra dostala názov tandem. Vybralo si ju päť študentov z ôsmich. Postupne sa vyformovali tandemové dvojice: Matúš Lagin – Jiří Halánek; Beata Jurítková – Ladislav Jurovateľ; Georgios Somarakis – Ján Zeman; Mária Coufal – Jarmila Rybánska; Simona Duchoňová – Miloslav Orságh.

## Slovenské kroje – tvorivé synergie

Silvia Fedorová, Radoslava Janáčová

ÚLUV v spolupráci so Slovenským inštitútom vo Viedni sprístupnil od októbra do decembra 2021 verejnosti na zámku Schloss Hof jedinečnú výstavu s názvom Slovenské kroje – tvorivé synergie (Slowakische Trachten – Kreative Synergien). Zámerom projektu bolo

ukázať bohatstvo ľudového prejavu v oblasti tvorby tradičného odevu a odevných súčastok zo zbierok Múzea ľudovej umeleckej výroby (MLUV), predstaviť dokumentačnú a zbierkotvornú činnosť, spoluprácu s ľudovými výrobcami a dizajnérm. Poslaním ÚLUV-u je prepájať minulosť so súčasnosťou, tradičné remeslo s novodobým dizajnom a estetikou. Súčasnú tvorbu dizajnérov, ktorí sa pri svojej práci inšpirujú ľudovým odevom alebo využívajú tradičné techniky reprezentovali odevy zo súťaže *Kruhy na vode*. Išlo o originály od Vivien Babicovej, Michaely Bednárovej, Lubice Poncik a Veroniky a Mateja Rabadovcov. Spolu s módnou prehliadkou, ktorá sa konala počas slávnostného otvorenia výstavy, si mohli návštevníci vytvoriť ucelený obraz o bohatej vizuálnej rôznorodosti tradičného odevu a o náročnosti textilných techník i o tom, ako dodnes slúžia ako inšpiračný zdroj pre mnohých dizajnérov a výrobcov a o ich význame pre budúcnosť ďalšej módnjej tvorby.

### **Tradícia v dizajne – Súčasný odev so vžitou tradíciou**

Lubica Poncik

S cieľom podnietiť tvorbu mladých odevných dizajnérov inšpirovanú tradičným remeslom, ktoré je súčasťou európskej kultúry, ÚLUV v roku 2021 realizoval prvú etapu projektu *Tradícia v dizajne*. ÚLUV oslovil päť mladých, no zároveň už etablovaných odevných dizajnérov, ktorí vo svojej tvorbe radi vychádzajú z domácich tradícií. Výstupom prvej etapy projektu je ucelená kolekcia autorských modelov piatich dizajnérov inšpirovaných tradičným remeslom. Každý autor má rozpoznateľný a originálny rukopis, ktorý určuje jeho tvorbu, no vystavené odevy a odevné doplnky spája inovatívna väzba na tradičné remeslo, tradičné technológie i motívy. Dizajnéri oživil tradičné remeslá, ako je plisovanie, tkáčstvo, pletiarstvo, makramé, výšivkárstvo či modrotlač. Na projekte spolupracovali Marcel Holubec W., Martin Hrča, Mišena Juhász, Lubica Poncik a Henrieta Tholt.

### **Kruhy na vode**

Mária Hriešík Nepšínská,  
Mária Tomová

Orientácia na remeslo a ľudovú umeleckú výrobu vyplýva z dlhodobého poslania ÚLUV-u. Úzka spolupráca s remeselníkmi a výrobcami je preň charakteristická už od jeho počiatkov. Od polovice 90. rokov 20. storočia sa táto komunikácia prehlbuje aj smerom k mladý

tvorcom – dizajnérom či výtvarníkom v oblasti úžitkového umenia. Ich prostredníctvom sa prepája potenciál tradičného remesla so súčasnými prístupmi. Najvýraznejšie to možno dokumentovať súťažou *Kruhy na vode*. Pre ÚLUV je táto súťaž akýmsi laboratóriom, kde sa kumulujú progresívne, inovatívne prístupy, priestorom, kde sa zdedené vedomosti a zručnosti prirodzene prepájajú so súčasnými potrebami a skúsenosťami.

### **Návrat k citu a rozumu**

Ferdinand Chrenka

Dizajn sprevádza ľudstvo od „Adama“ – v predmetoch i skutkoch. Nedá sa odtrhnúť od človeka, naplňa jeho predstavy a túžby, dáva podobu spôsobu života. S obdivom hľadáme na dedičstvo predkov, na mlkve svedectvá ukryté v nádobách, nástrojoch, šperkoch. Historická stopa vo forme dizajnerskeho odkazu hovorí o logickej väzbe s úrovňou poznania. Na začiatku je prirodzenosť vývoja, tvorivosť, zručnosť. Človek spätý s prírodou, obklopený prírodnými materiálmi tvoril predmety, aby sa mu ľahšie žilo. Dosiahnutú kvalitu posúval stále ďalej. Žezlo podávané otcom synovi, dedenie dlát a hoblíkov. Tak vznikala majetok skúseností. Svet farieb, materiálov, technológií zhmotnený v architektúre, odevoch, nástrojoch... Jedinec, ktorý zdedí osobný majetok, sa vie okamžite rozhodnúť, ako výhodne investovať. Vedomie jedinca vo vzťahu k spoločnému kultúrnemu dedičstvu je však zvláštne. Mnohí ani nevedia, že im patrí, a netušia, akú má cenu.

### **Nová tvár Dvora remesiel ÚLUV-u**

Tomáš Mikolaj

Ústredie ľudovej umeleckej výroby realizuje projekt *Z dreva stvorené* – oživenie verejných priestorov funkčnými dizajnovými prvkami ukotvenými v tradičnom remesle. V rámci neho piati študenti Ateliéru interiérového dizajnu Vysokej školy výtvarných umení vytvorili výtvarno-architektonické návrhy riešenia priestoru Dvora remesiel ÚLUV na Obchodnej ulici v Bratislave. Vybraný návrh študentky Tímej Kepovej sa bude realizovať aj v praxi, prvé kroky dokonca už tento rok.

### **Oceňovanie výrobcov majstrovským titulom**

Helena Haberernová

Ústredie ľudovej umeleckej výroby sa od počiatku snažilo o podporu ľudovej umeleckej

výroby a výrobcov, preto v roku 1959 zriadil Kvalifikačnú komisiu, ktorá posudzovala odbornú spôsobilosť ľudových výrobcov na základe stanovených podmienok. V súčasnosti platí Štatút ocenenia majster ľudovej umeleckej výroby vydaný Ministerstvom kultúry Slovenskej republiky v roku 2014. O udelení ocenenia rozhoduje sedemčlenná Komisia pre udeľovanie ocenení majster ľudovej umeleckej výroby na základe návrhov odborných zamestnancov ÚLUV-u.

### **Cez remeslo naspäť k sebe**

Tomáš Mikolaj

Súčasnému človeku na vnútornom semafore každodenných pocitov a vzťahov čoraz častejšie naskakuje oranžová. Väčšina tento signál na zmenu ignoruje. Či už zo strachu o hmotnú existenciu, alebo z obavy z pohľadu do seba, alebo z falošnej spokojnosti – ospravedlnení je vždy dostatok. Viacerí sa spamätajú, až keď svieti červená, no vtedy býva často už neskoro. Na to, aby sme sa zastavili a v pokoji precítili svoj doterajší život, aj za cenu bolestivej pravdy, treba odvahu. Rezbár Ladislav Hedvigi ju našiel. Veď nakoniec odvaha patrí k remeslu.

### **Pohyb a chvenie dreva**

Zuzana Labudová

To, že z dreva možno dostať aj také vlastnosti ako pohyb a chvenie, dokazuje dlhodobý procesuálny projekt dizajnéra a remeselníka Tibora Uhrína, ktorý trvá nepretržite od roku 2004 až podnes. Experiment s hmotou dreva, pri dokonalom poznaní jeho charakteristík, je pre Uhrína príležitosťou na hľadanie iných ciest pri uberaní z hmoty dreva, teda dlabaní a frézovaní. Doslova preberanie sa vláknami dreva, súzvuk pohybu materiálu a ruky vedúcej stroj, ktorý ho opracováva, priniesli vo výsledku predmety, na ktorých je všetko viditeľne zaznamenané v štruktúrach a vo výsledných formách. Tibor Uhrín sa dlhodoobo pohybuje na rozhraní dizajnu a remesla – remeselným spôsobom vytvára nové dizajnerské objekty. Predmety akoby nanovo tvorí, pričom ich tvar často vyplynie zo zvolenej výrobnjej technológie. Výsledným produktom však vždy priznáva úžitkovú funkciu, často sú to napríklad nádoby a misy. Výsledky jeho procesuálneho prístupu k tvorbe dokazujú, že na tieto predmety sa môžeme pozeráť aj ako na výtvarné objekty, ktoré sú autonómne a nepotrebujú na ospravedlnenie svojej existencie funkciu. ■

