

DID YOU KNOW?

THIS IS SLOVAKIA

 MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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GOOD IDEA SLOVAKIA

DID YOU KNOW?



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the glass of beer you can enjoy at a mountain chalet in the High Tatras comes from a beer keg carried on the shoulders of a mountain porter just for you? The alpine porters found in the Slovak mountains are unique in the world. The alpine porter tradition began at the beginning of the 17th century. Porters carried materials for the construction of chalets and dwellings as well as food supplies. Even today there are places in the Slovak mountains that are inaccessible by other means. Mountain porters can carry more than a hundred kilos on their shoulders and with determination lug them up out of the valley to heights of over 2,200 metres.



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Alpine mountain chalets

The mountain chalets in the High Tatras have been a popular tourist destination since the beginning of the 19th century. You can follow hiking trails in the Slovak mountains to 13 alpine mountain chalets with views of the exquisite peaks, wide valleys and crystal clear lakes. The highest chalet is Chata pod Rysmi, but Téryho chata, Zamkovského chata and the romantic charm of Rainerova chata are just as iconic. Visitors to Slovak chalets love the mountain atmosphere and excellent cuisine, and the chalet keepers, who have been an inseparable part of chalet life for many years, are popular too.



Kysucké sandstone spheres

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Slovakia has its own Stonehenge? In the locality of Megoňka in the north-west of the country, you can find spherical natural sandstone formations, which are a geological rarity. These unique stone spheres are estimated to be 30 to 40 million years old. The largest is 3 metres in diameter and weighs almost 30 tonnes. This is one of the most geologically fascinating places in Slovakia and one of the world's sites with the largest number of stone spheres.



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Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians

Slovakia's forests are among the most beautiful and well-preserved in the world and consequently a UNESCO Natural Heritage site. The Vihorlatský prales virgin forest and the beech forests of Stučica, Rožok and Havešová in Poloniny National Park have earned this distinction. Slovakia's virgin forests are unique and an authentic snapshot of the forest and untouched nature as it appeared centuries ago. The old, gnarled beech trees, some up to 240 years old, are truly wondrous. The forests provide a natural habitat for more than 10 thousand species of wild animals, plants and fungi, making them a rare example of a natural laboratory.



DID YOU KNOW?

Beekeeping has existed in Slovakia for over a thousand years and was part of the traditional way of life among village inhabitants. In subsequent centuries it became an important economic sector. Today the Slovak Beekeepers' Association has almost 15,500 members with more than 255,000 beehives. Annually 5.5 million kilos of honey are produced. Today Slovak honey is considered to be among the best quality honey in the world. It has a great taste, unique composition and is highly treasured. Slovak beekeepers and their products regularly win world competitions.



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Mountain sheep farming in Slovakia

Mountain sheep farming is a highland sheep rearing system characteristic of the Karpaty (Carpathian Mountains). It was introduced into Slovakia at the end of the 14th century and adapted to the environment. Sheep were grazed on higher, previously unused pastures and reared mainly for their milk and dairy products. The sheep farming in the mountain regions of Slovakia influenced the traditional folk culture. It gave rise to distinctive pastoral songs, dances and customs. The strong sheep rearing tradition can also be seen in Slovak dishes. Bryndzové halušky is the Slovak national dish and cheeses such as oštiepky and parenice and the fermented sheep's milk known as žinčica are also popular.



DID YOU KNOW?

Špania dolina is one of the most picturesque mining villages in Slovakia. It lies in the middle of a region with a mining tradition dating back to the 11th century. Famous for its copper ore deposits, it is an excellent place to explore the mining history. The historic Pension Klopačka is located in an ancient 620-year-old building that originally served as the headquarters of the mining administration. The wooden tower contained a “knocker” or signalling device that called the miners to work. Be sure to visit the museum of lace-making which Špania dolina has been famous for since the 17th century. It is one of the few places in the world where the fine craftsmanship of lace-making has been passed down through the generations and lives on to this day.



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Opal mines

Discover the mysterious underground world of the famous opal mines located in the Slanské vrchy mountain range in eastern Slovakia. For centuries Slovak opals have been distinguished by their intense flashes of colour and highly valued on world markets for their unique properties. The world's oldest opal mines, the Dubnícke bane, first became known at the end of the 16th century. This underground network of tunnels stretches for up to 35 kilometres and connects an extensive system of underground mining that was in operation until 1922. These days you can discover the history and unique character of the opal mines by following a 1,280 metre-long track in the company of experienced guides.



DID YOU KNOW?

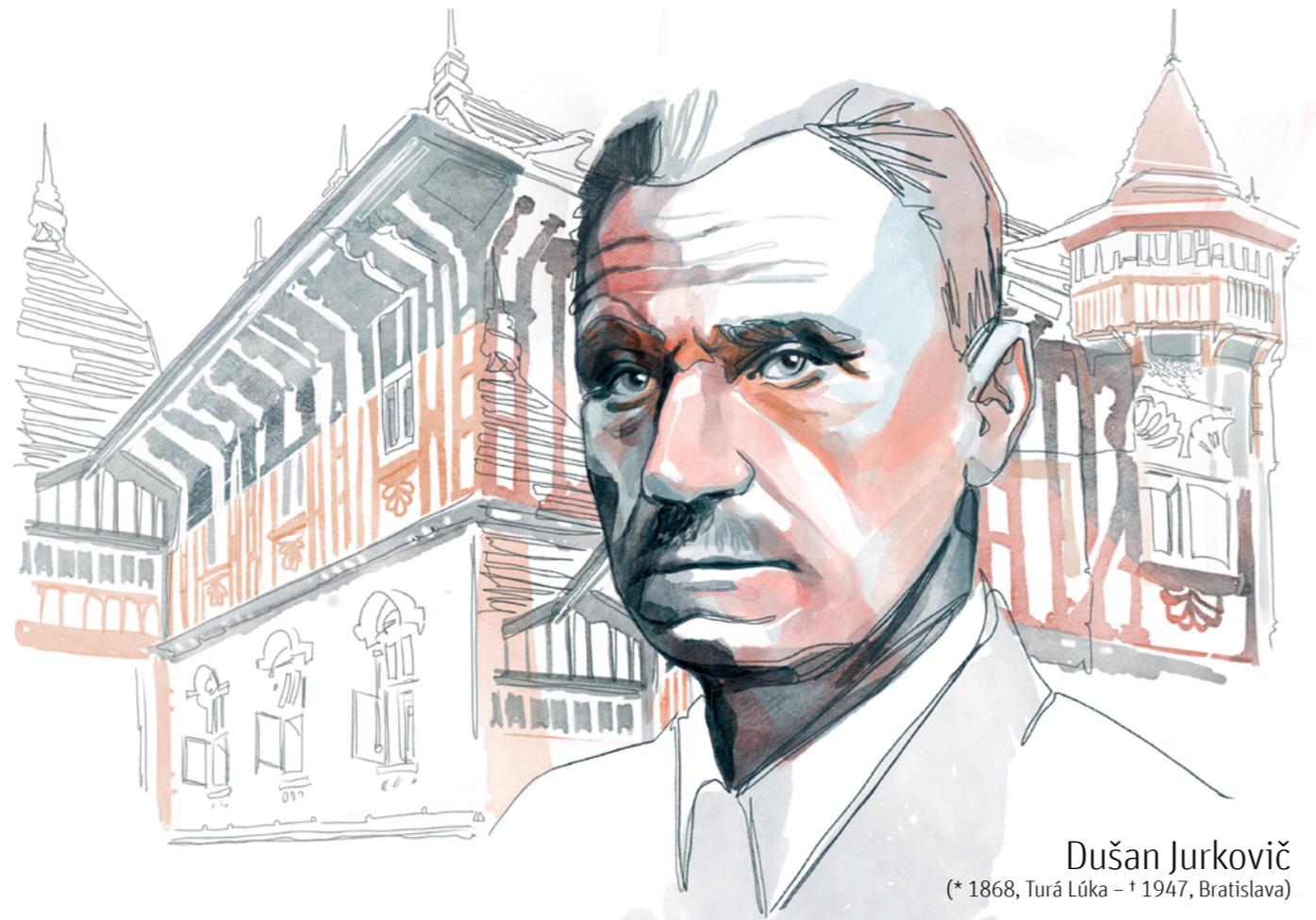
The rock dwellings in Brhlovce are a unique and precious example of Slovak cultural heritage. This complex is carved into the rocks and represents a special type of folk architecture and dwelling. Nowadays the rock dwellings are a heritage site of traditional folk architecture and visitors will be surprised to learn that some of them are still inhabited. Others are still used as wine cellars or outbuildings.



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Water mills

Did you know that there are historical water mills in Slovakia, built where mountain rivers meet in the beautiful setting of two valleys Prosiecka and Kvačianska dolina. The two water mills were constructed in the first half of the 19th century along the road that connected the Liptov and Orava regions with Poland. The mills are among the last surviving of their kind, sensitively set into their natural surroundings. One of the mills was converted into a sawmill. Today you can visit that sawmill when walking through these beautiful valleys.



Dušan Jurkovič
(* 1868, Turá Lúka – † 1947, Bratislava)

DID YOU KNOW?

Dušan Samuel Jurkovič is considered the founder of modern architecture in Slovakia. His work is in the style of geometric Viennese Art Nouveau combined with folk motifs. He did not shy from the modern trends of the interwar period. His style was unique and inimitable. In 1928 he produced his most famous design – the Milan Rastislav Štefánik Burial Mound at Bradlo. Jurkovič also designed some unusual buildings – the four funicular railway stations between Tatranská Lomnica and Lomnický štít peak. In Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, you can admire Jurkovič's heating plant, a functionalist building that is now an innovative coworking centre.



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Ludovít Fulla gallery in Ružomberok

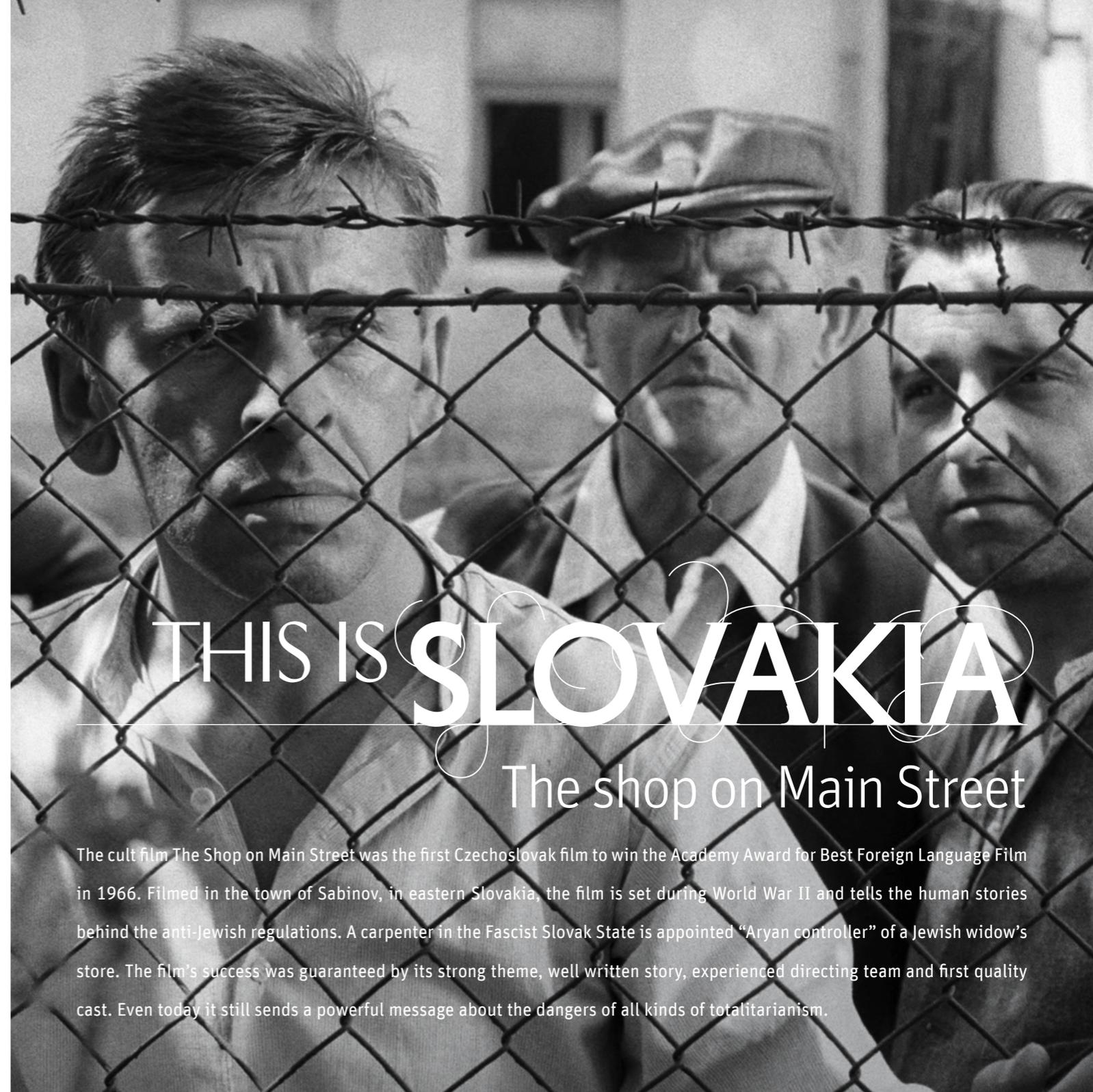
Visitors to the Ludovít Fulla Gallery will learn about the life and work of Ludovít Fulla, one of the founders of modern art and graphic art in Slovakia. His work draws sensitively on Slovak folk art and incorporates elements of Cubism, European avant-garde, traditional iconography, German Expressionism and children's art. The gallery is located in an unusual building that is formed of two asymmetrically arranged blocks, lying perpendicularly one on top of the other. The front of the gallery bears a mosaic designed by Fulla. His apartment and studio, which are part of the gallery, provided a fashionable meeting place for the artist and members of the intellectual and cultural community.



Arthur Fleischmann
(*1896, Bratislava – † 1990, Tenerife)

DID YOU KNOW?

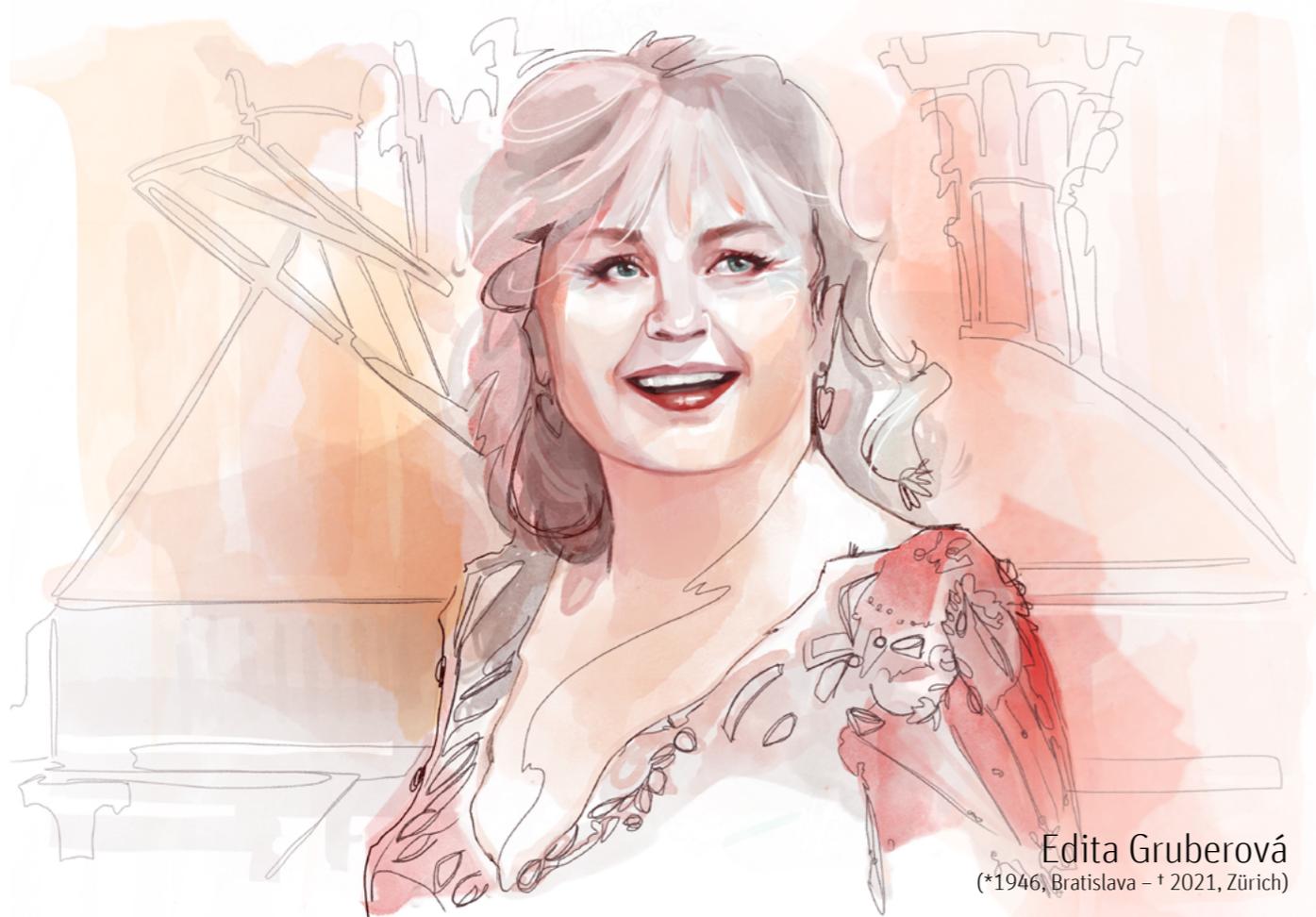
Arthur Fleischmann, who was born in Bratislava, was one of the world's most important kinetic and op-art sculptors. He emigrated to escape the threat of fascism, choosing London as his home. He was the first to use Perspex in sculpture. To sculpt a memorial commissioned for Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee he used the largest ever single piece of Perspex, which director Stanley Kubrick had originally intended to use in his 2001: A Space Odyssey before later abandoning the idea. Fleischmann was also commissioned by the Vatican to sculpt portraits of the popes and created busts of four popes. You can admire the artist's works in Bratislava at the Arthur Fleischmann Art Museum on Biela Street.



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The shop on Main Street

The cult film *The Shop on Main Street* was the first Czechoslovak film to win the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1966. Filmed in the town of Sabinov, in eastern Slovakia, the film is set during World War II and tells the human stories behind the anti-Jewish regulations. A carpenter in the Fascist Slovak State is appointed "Aryan controller" of a Jewish widow's store. The film's success was guaranteed by its strong theme, well written story, experienced directing team and first quality cast. Even today it still sends a powerful message about the dangers of all kinds of totalitarianism.



Edita Gruberová
(*1946, Bratislava – † 2021, Zürich)

DID YOU KNOW?

The Slovak prima donna assoluta Edita Gruberová was a wonderful coloratura and bel canto soprano with a distinguished career, who performed in opera houses and concert halls for 52 years. During her career she performed 2,357 times and was legendary for her triple Fs and rendition of Donizetti's unforgettable aria of madness, Lucia di Lammermoor. She worked tirelessly, as was evident in her truly professional performances around the world, from La Scala in Milan to the Teatro Liceu in Barcelona and Covent Garden in London, from the Paris Opera and the Zurich Opera to the Salzburg Festival and Glyndebourne Festival and from the Metropolitan Opera in New York to opera venues in Japan.



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Pohoda Festival

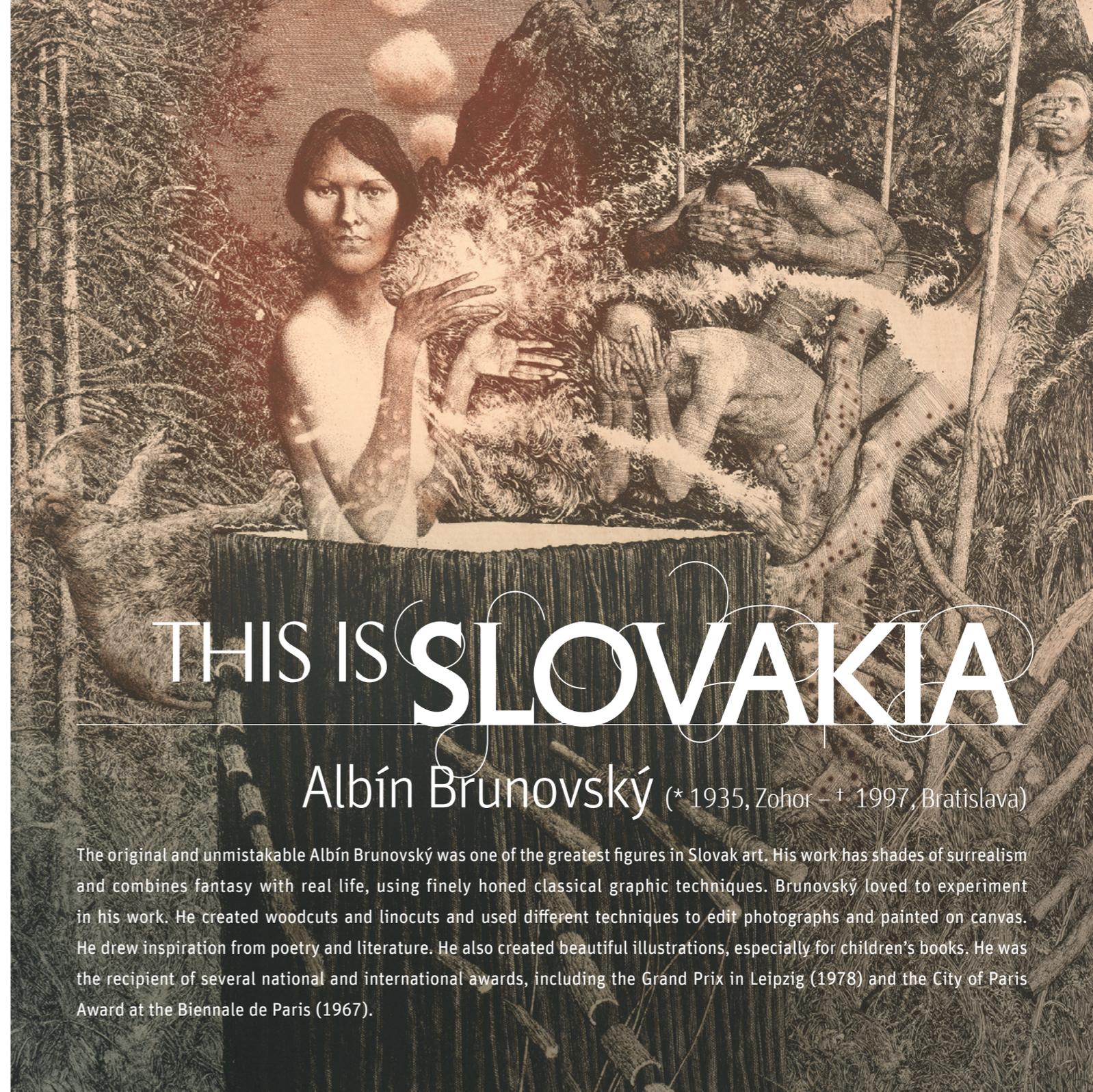
Pohoda is an international multi-genre festival that has been held in Trenčín since 1997. In 2000 it became the best well-known Slovak event and in 2010 the daily capacity was limited to 30,000 visitors. Over these 25 years it has gained a reputation as a festival offering an outstanding programme, with superb production and eco-friendly visitor services. Pohoda has been described as the tour de force of European festivals by Gigwise in the UK. It has also been praised by The Telegraph, The Guardian and The Independent, who called the festival “a jubilant three days, where the feel-good vibes are reflected by a stellar, diverse line-up. Visitors are treated like family and there truly is something for everyone.” Pohoda has also been repeatedly nominated for Europe's most prestigious festival awards, winning the green solutions prize, as well as the Take A Stand Award and the Award For Excellence And Passion.



Steel printing

DID YOU KNOW?

Slovakia is one of the few countries in the world where steel printing, a special technique used to create postage stamps – miniature graphics – is still in use. Steel printing is an onerous task. The stamp design is scaled down and converted into a system of lines and dots, before being engraved on a steel plate. The resulting steel engraving serves as the printing matrix. Stamps printed using such classical engraving methods are in high demand among philatelists. The Slovak Stamp Engraving School is world leading and high-ranking, having won awards in competitions for the most beautiful stamps in the world.



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Albín Brunovský (* 1935, Zohor – † 1997, Bratislava)

The original and unmistakable Albín Brunovský was one of the greatest figures in Slovak art. His work has shades of surrealism and combines fantasy with real life, using finely honed classical graphic techniques. Brunovský loved to experiment in his work. He created woodcuts and linocuts and used different techniques to edit photographs and painted on canvas. He drew inspiration from poetry and literature. He also created beautiful illustrations, especially for children's books. He was the recipient of several national and international awards, including the Grand Prix in Leipzig (1978) and the City of Paris Award at the Biennale de Paris (1967).



DID YOU KNOW?

The Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava is the oldest art education institute in Slovakia. It was founded in 1949. It specializes in visual art – the fine arts, design, architecture and restoration. Throughout its existence it has encouraged progressive approaches and rigorous professionalism. Slovak designs for fashion, glass, the automotive industry, books and packaging are popular around the world. The school's graduates regularly win prestigious awards around the world. The respected automotive designer Jozef Kabaň and glass designer Patrik Illo are among them.



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Medieval murals

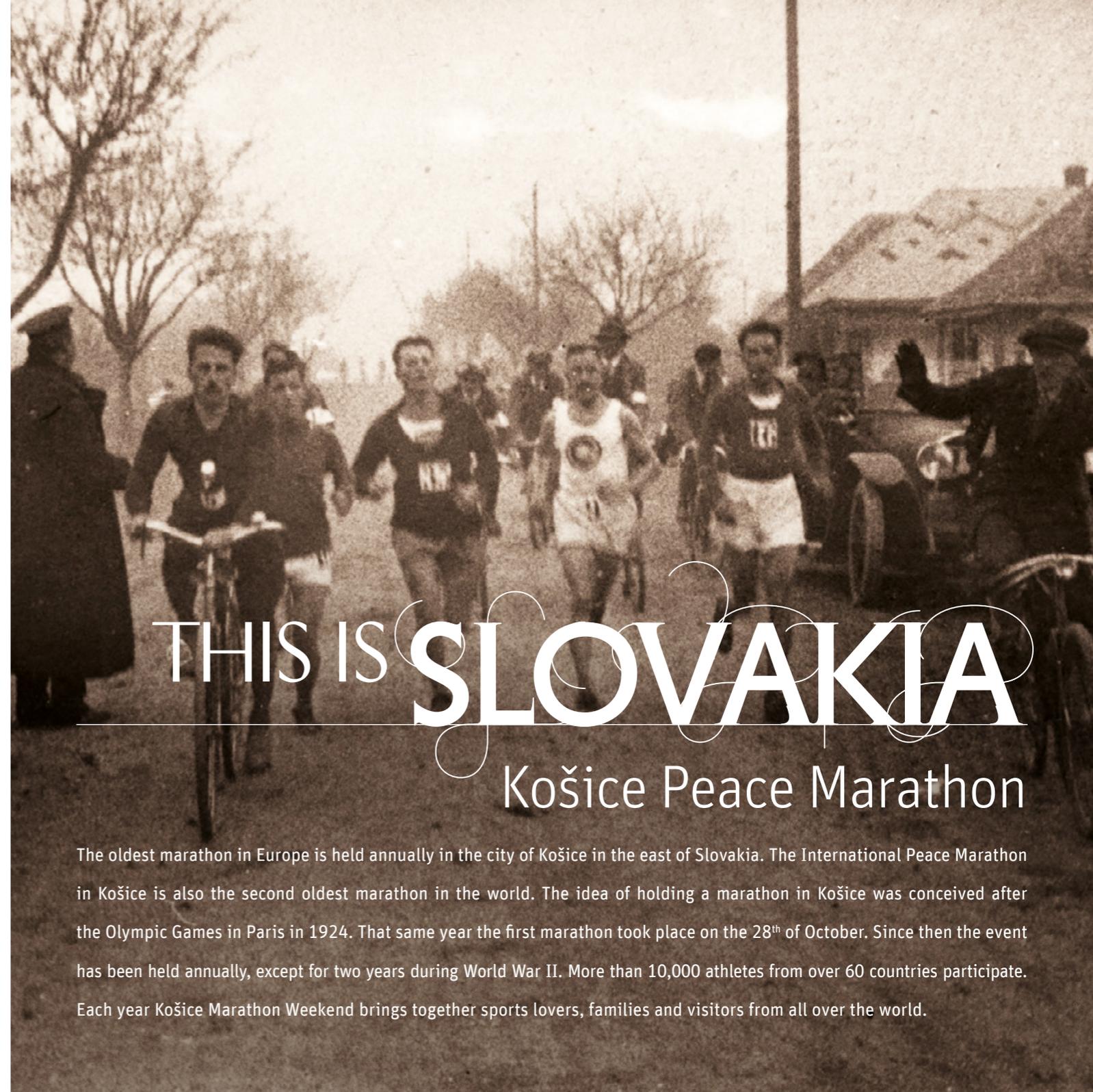
Slovakia has been awarded the European Heritage Label. There are only 12 sites in Europe that hold this prestigious award, including the medieval murals in Gemer and Malohont. The murals are unique to Central Europe, having been preserved undamaged in medieval churches built in the 14th century. Discover these beautiful sites in the old Gemer-Malohont region, which was once a thriving, prosperous and wealthy region with diverse religions and cultures.



Jozef Vengloš
(* 1936, Ružomberok – † 2021, Bratislava)

DID YOU KNOW?

Jozef Vengloš, Slovak football coach of the century, was the only coach to lead the Czechoslovak team at two World Football Championships. As assistant coach he witnessed the biggest success of Czechoslovak football – winning the 1976 European Championship. He coached five national teams: Czechoslovakia, Slovakia, Australia, Malaysia and Oman. Under totalitarianism even the famed Barcelona team fought to hire him, but communist officials wouldn't allow Vengloš to travel to Spain. He later coached Sporting Lisbon, Aston Villa, Fenerbahce Istanbul and Celtic Glasgow. When Aston Villa hired him in 1990 he became the first foreigner in history to lead one of the teams in the famous Premier League.



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Košice Peace Marathon

The oldest marathon in Europe is held annually in the city of Košice in the east of Slovakia. The International Peace Marathon in Košice is also the second oldest marathon in the world. The idea of holding a marathon in Košice was conceived after the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924. That same year the first marathon took place on the 28th of October. Since then the event has been held annually, except for two years during World War II. More than 10,000 athletes from over 60 countries participate. Each year Košice Marathon Weekend brings together sports lovers, families and visitors from all over the world.



Mountaineering

DID YOU KNOW?

The first Slovak Mountaineering Association was founded in 1921. But do you know what its name IAMES stands for? Idealism, Alpinism, Morality, Enthusiasm and Solidarity. Five beautiful words that Slovak climbers still believe in. Slovakia has a strong mountaineering tradition. The first known ascent of Kežmarský štít peak in the Tatras was as early as 1615 and true mountaineering took off in the Tatras at the beginning of the 20th century. Peter Hámor, a high-altitude mountaineer, is one of the best Slovak mountaineers, with 15 ascents to all fourteen 8,000 peaks under his belt. He has climbed Annapurna twice and is the only mountaineer in the world to have climbed it via two different routes. For many years now he and his wife Mária have been organizing a successful International Festival of the Mountain Films in the town of Poprad.



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Treetop walk

Bachledka is a spectacular and extremely popular treetop trail, located at the point where the Pieniny and Tatra National Parks meet, on the ridge of Spišská Magura. It is a gentle climb and takes you safely up to a height of 24 metres. The walk brings you into direct contact with forest life, where you will discover many special animals and plants. You will also have a breathtaking view of the Belianske Tatra mountains, Pieniny and the picturesque Zamagurie. The trail is supported by 120 columns and has 6 stopping points, where you can admire nature. To return you can take the 67 metre slide back.



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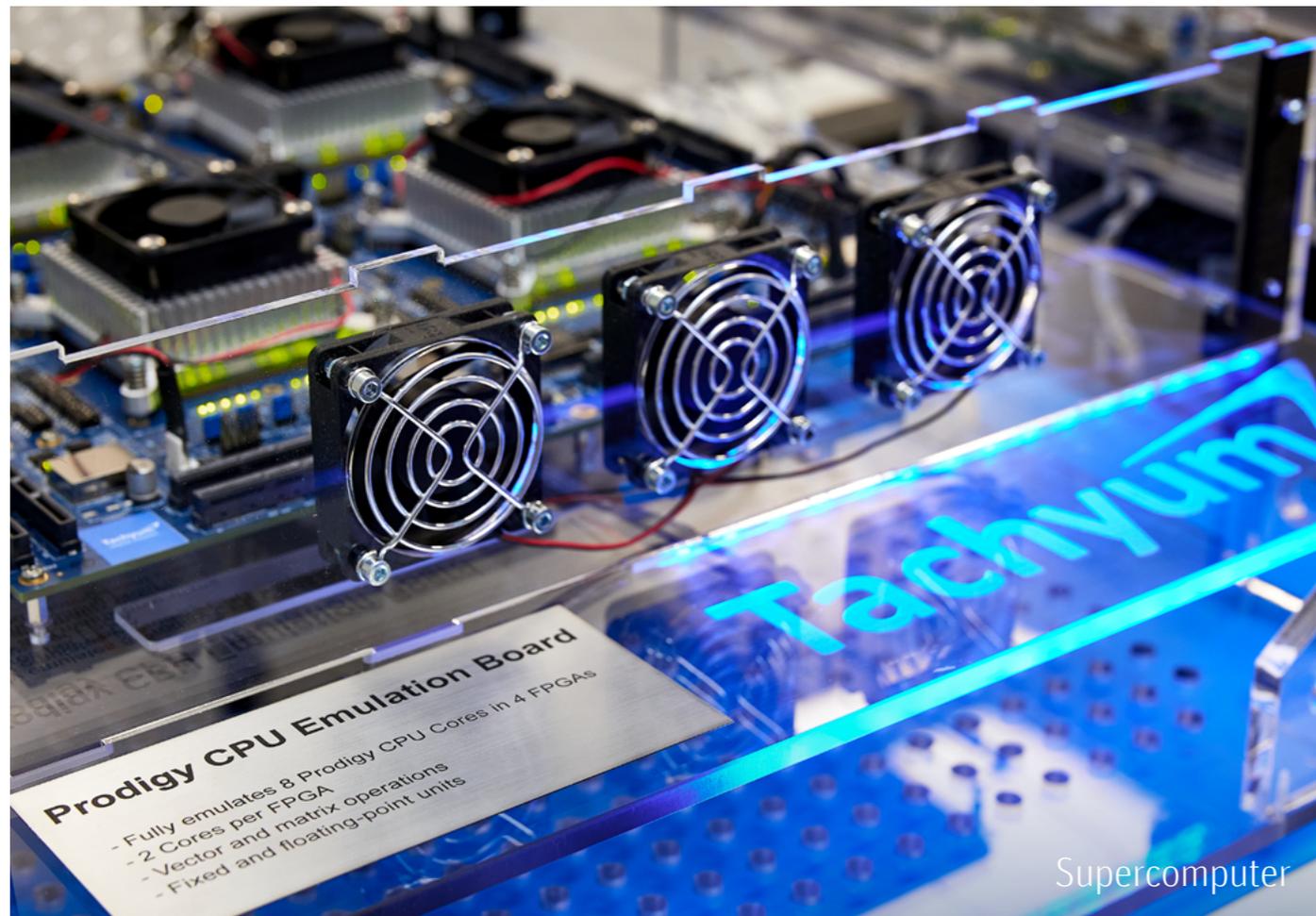
Slovakia helps protect our planet through its progressive, environmentally friendly ideas. Nonoilen is a special eco “non-oil – oil-free” bioplastic developed in Slovakia. It is produced exclusively from renewable resources and is fully biodegradable so it can be used to nourish plants and it is 100% natural. Nonoilen bioplastic was invented by Professor Pavol Alexy and a team of scientists at the Polymer Institute. It is already being used in 3D printer cartridges for example, so whatever you print you can later safely compost. It decomposes without producing microplastics.



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Green energy

Reliability, predictability, low CO₂ emissions and minimal land use – these are the biggest advantages of nuclear power. Visitors to Energoland, the interactive centre at the Mochovce nuclear power plant, can learn about the advantages of nuclear generated electricity. You will also discover that nuclear-generated electricity accounts for just over half of Slovakia’s total electricity production and is still growing. Slovakia’s power plants can produce up to 95 percent of our electricity without creating emissions and that figure is gradually rising. That’s why Slovakia was the only Central and Eastern Europe country to be included by the Financial Times in its Europe’s Climate Leaders 2021 ranking.



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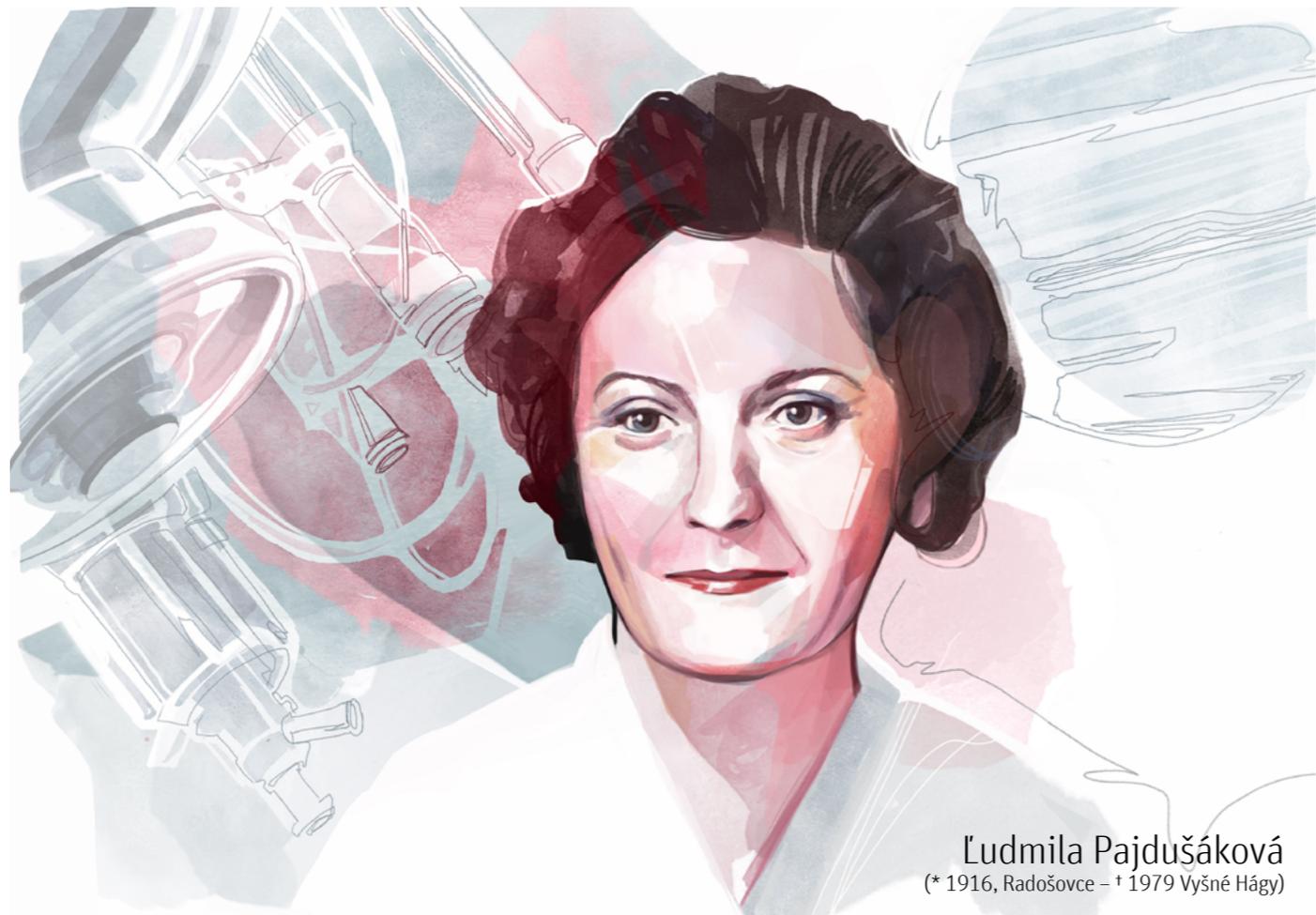
Slovakia is unveiling a breakthrough technology to the world. Tachyum's flagship product, Prodigy, is the world's first universal processor that has the potential to create unrivaled computational speed and vast energy-saving capabilities. This processor will enable Slovakia to procure the world's fastest artificial intelligence (AI) supercomputer delivering up to 128 ExaFLOPS (exaflop = 1018 floating-point operations per second) of AI computing performance. For the first time in the history of humanity, this will enable the delivery of a human brain-scale AI supercomputer.



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Aircar

Professor Štefan Klein's project, the development of the flying car, made world headlines. The flying car attracted massive attention, especially in 2020, when it completed high-altitude test flights. In early 2022 it was awarded its final airworthiness certificate and production can now begin. The Aircar has the potential to completely change the philosophy of car travel. It takes 2 minutes and 15 seconds to transform the car into a small aircraft. It needs a mere 300 metres for take-off, can reach a speed of 170 km/h and an altitude of 2,500 m and has a flight range of 1,000 km. This flying car takes off and lands just as a conventional aircraft does and so would-be flyers will need a pilot's licence.



Ludmila Pajdušáková
(* 1916, Radošovce – † 1979 Vyšné Hágy)

DID YOU KNOW?

Ludmila Pajdušáková was the brightest star of Slovak astronomy. She swapped her original profession as a teacher for a career in science. In the years after the World War II, she searched for new comets, working alongside the staff at the Skalnaté Pleso Observatory. Their efforts brought extraordinary results. They discovered 18 of the 70 comets detected worldwide between 1946 and 1959. She herself discovered five of the new comets, three of which were named after her. After surveying the comets, the sun and meteorites, she began observing stars and galaxies. The photographs she took of the starry skies are exceptional. Her life's work did much to help popularize and develop astronomy in Slovakia.



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The 8th continent

The 8th Continent® is a unique project by the Slovak architect Lenka Petráková. The 8th Continent® is a design for a floating cleaning station that is shaped like a flower and collects waste from the surface of the sea or the ocean, which is then either biodegraded or recycled and used as needed. It relies on the wind to move and rotate and is completely self-sufficient thanks to solar and wave energy. It can be used as a greenhouse for growing plants and can desalinate and filter water. The 8th Continent® is an amazing design that offers a platform for research and education and has the potential to help save the underwater ecosystem.



Marína Paulíny
(* 1897, Slovenské Pravno – † 1945, Blackbushe, England)

DID YOU KNOW?

Marína Paulíny was a Slovak diplomat, journalist, health professional, interpreter and an important envoy of Slovakia. She had immigrated to the USA with her parents and later became a member of the American Red Cross. After WW I she travelled with the Czechoslovak Legionnaires all the way from Siberia to the USA, crossing Japan and Singapore, helping endless number of soldiers. In Czechoslovakia, she devoted herself to empowering women and their position in society. Also, she was a founder of the first Slovak travel agency - Slovakotour. With the outbreak of WW II, she remained determined in her commitment to help her country. She became a Vice-President of the Czecho-Slovak Red Cross, facilitating help and assistance to thousands of soldiers in our army. She perished tragically after returning to her beloved country following the end of the war. Her story can be an inspiration to the younger generation.



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Roman waterfall

Betliar is a stunning Renaissance manor house famed for its library and historical park, which is the largest in Slovakia. The park contains rare tree species and historical buildings, while its Great Roman Waterfall, the only one of its kind in the world, is popular with visitors. The owners of the manor, the Andrassy family, have kept polar bears in the waterfall since 1908. These are the only known polar bears to be reared domestically in the world. The waterfall was built at the beginning of the 19th century by the Andrassy family, one of the most important aristocratic families in Europe. The waterfall can still be admired today for its remarkable height and original function as a special water system.



DID YOU KNOW?

The winemaking tradition in Slovakia is centuries old, dating back to when vines were first imported into the Roman Empire. Grapevines were so extensively grown and exported to foreign markets in the 17th century that it is known as the golden age of winemaking in Slovakia. Eastern Slovakia was home to the famed Tokaj wines that the French monarch Louis XIV declared to be the wine of kings and the king of wines. These days Slovak wines perform well in international wine competitions, regularly coming in as champions. Other varieties cultivated in Slovakia that are highly valued are the Dunaj and Devín, with the latter being the first recognized Slovak white muscat variety.



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Mineral springs

Did you know that the sheer volume of natural mineral water in Slovakia makes it a world superpower? There are over 1,700 mineral springs in Slovakia and 23 of these are healing springs. The latter are the backbone of the Slovak spa industry. They are used to treat various diseases ranging from musculoskeletal disorders, rheumatic diseases, as well as neurological and skin diseases. Slovakia's world-renowned spas with a long tradition include Piešťany Spa, Bardejov Spa, Trenčianske Teplice Spa and Kováčová Spa.



Falconry

DID YOU KNOW?

The art of falconry dates to the 5th century in Slovakia. It is an amazing tradition still practiced today that features on the UNESCO World Heritage List. But what is it that makes Slovakia unique among the countries that have kept this tradition alive? Located in the beautiful Štiavnické vrchy mountains you will find the first primary school in the world where falconry is a compulsory school subject. At Maximilian Hell Primary School in Štiavnické Bane pupils learn about this ancient form of hunting that uses trained birds of prey, but also about responsibility, mutual respect, tolerance and patience. Beautiful birds of prey are bred at the school, along with owls, spectacled caimans, exotic birds, green iguanas, pine monkeys, tamarins and many other creatures. Thanks to these birds and animals the pupils learn about evolution, habitat diversity and the importance of conservation.



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Limes romanus

Did you know that the Danube Limes, stretching roughly 2,000 km from Eining in Bavaria to the Black Sea, formed the northern border of the Roman Empire in this part of Europe, from the reign of Emperor Augustus until the 6th century AD? The part of the Danube Limes that can be seen in Slovakia, demarcating the border of the Roman Empire in Slovakia, consists of two cultural heritage sites – the Gerulata Roman military camp (fort) at Rusovce in Bratislava and the Roman military camp at Iža. The Danube Limes Romanus is a UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage site, parts of which are located in Germany and Austria.



Kenya business incubator project

DID YOU KNOW?

Slovakia has been supporting humanitarian activities in Kenya for some years now. With SlovakAid support the St. Vincent de Paul Education Centre in Eldoret has educated more than 1,200 students since it was established in 2012. One of the most recent initiatives is a business incubator project. The main aim of the project was to raise living standards through education and to improve school leavers' professional and entrepreneurial skills. Female students were taught hairdressing, tailoring, machine knitting and computer skills. After completing their studies 81% of school leavers found employment and were able to set up businesses in their field of study.



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Water reservoir in Lebanon

Through development aid, Slovakia provides assistance in various parts of the world. One successful project is the construction of a water reservoir for the inhabitants of Hay Al Shaab Wal Zahraa near the town of Baalbek in eastern Lebanon. The aim was to provide access to safe and clean water for the local Lebanese communities and Syrian refugees. Clean water from the new reservoir will significantly improve the living conditions of around 30,000 people. The project included water awareness training to encourage positive, responsible water management practices and sensible water use and saving.



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