

About the Golden Boat Programme

More at: <http://www.festiwalzlotalodz.pl/en/>

Did you know that The Golden Boat Festival is only one part of the extensive Golden Boat program that was conceived in the remote year 2004 by the [Literary Association IA](#)? The first [Golden Boat International Poetry Translation Workshop](#), took place that year. The Literary Association IA, in collaboration with the [Polica Dubova Cultural and Artistic Association](#), and partnerships across Europe, organised several literary events in Germany, Great Britain, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland, where [Slovene poets were reading](#). Also, three resounding international [comparative symposiums](#) were organised: Kosovel and the Political Truth of Poetry, Ecology through Poetry of Jure Detela and The Concepts of Reality through the Experimental Poetry.

The year 2016 brought us new challenges ...

Confronted with the modern-day forms of censorship, which are like a plague spreading across Europe, we are now, despite the exceptional popularity of our events, exactly where we used to be twelve years ago: Without the financial support of the state. At the same time, we are far away from the same position because we are richer in experience and, new partnerships and our vision is even clearer than it used to be.

In spite of extremely unfavourable conditions, we have decided to carry on the Golden Boat Programme in a somewhat different, slightly renovated form, and to introduce necessary changes.

The countries of central Europe are witnessing a return to the old conditions of political exclusion based on the fact that certain cliques have usurped key decision-making positions and thus the control of financial resources. This applies to supporting the production, distribution, as well as the affirmation of works and authors. Despite the fact that we are talking about EU countries, which means that individual cultural organisations have access to EU funds, for most European organisers of cultural events, this accessibility of European funds is merely conceptual, since without a share of funding from their own states, they cannot apply for EU funding. This modern form of political censorship, and exclusion of those who think differently in individual countries, is connected to the distribution – or control of the distribution – of financial resources. This prevention of activity and exclusion from the circle of state-subsidised organisations, also indirectly or directly controls access to international (European) funds, since organisations are unable to put together the necessary co-financing from other sources and their own contributions. This stops the organisation of traditional and internationally successful events that do not fit the policy of the cliques in power, since they represent competition for similar events organised by those in said power who have a considerably higher degree of state support. Slovenia, which has always considered itself to be a liberal and progressive country, has unfortunately ended up in the conservative waters of censorship, the prevention of the international affirmation of “unofficial authors”, and the centuries-long exclusion and persecution of those who think differently.

Because we have been left without even minimal sponsorship, we have had to change the ways we seek international recognition in the field of literature. Instead of festivals and workshops lasting several days, we have been compelled to change the basic structure of our activities in the international arena, in a manner reminiscent of the transformation that has taken place in the organisation of climbing expeditions to the Himalayas. The large-scale, state-sponsored expeditions of the past, involving large groups of climbers and requiring a great deal of time and an enormous amount of resources, have been substituted by small groups of elite climbers. This has enabled the rapid and successful conquest of numerous summits. Inspired by these experiences, we decided to organise some brief literary expeditions around the EU with a small number of authors, who would no longer travel from place to place, making an appearance in each one, but would instead visit a single location, make several appearances, and then return home. This reduces the costs of travel and accommodations while at the same time still allowing high-quality presentations and direct contacts between creative people in host countries and the visiting authors. .

In the light of these small-scale events it has become clear that major festival-type events can no longer justify such lavish spending in order to achieve results that are more or less the same. A large number of participants in any case makes genuine contacts and cooperation physically impossible. Small exhibitions, on the other hand, allow the presentation and affirmation of authors who are excluded, censored and persecuted at home – and who often turn out to be those who are most interesting internationally.

Now that these smaller teams are no longer dependent on territories that are closely connected in the geographical sense, we are able to reach more places and countries distant from each other, and in this way, visit those points and cultural milieus which we would be unable to include in our literary itinerary in the context of multi-day tours. Not only that, but we are no longer dependent on the constant begging for funding, bureaucratic procedures, administrative maltreatment of government agencies, and their procrastination when it comes to dealing with applications. These things make it impossible for all those who are not party to inside information, and who do not serve the intersecting interests of government officials and their indirect recompense for their services, to make professional agreements in advance for the long term. The purpose of the programmes, adapted to modern possibilities, is to cover a wider geographical and cultural space. At the same time, by distributing events over the course of the whole year, we also adapt to local conditions and the needs of local communities—in other words we coordinate with locally organised events and programmes.

In conclusion, here are a few words, concerning The Golden Boat Festival ...

We decided to maintain the frequently visited websites of the Golden Boat Festival as an info point where our loyal audience will be informed about the events concerning Slovene literature and culture, which take place in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia.

The Golden Boat Festival is closely connected to the Slovenian poet Srečko Kosovel (1904–1926). Due to poet's premature death, his first collection of poems, *The Golden Boat*, remained unpublished. However, Kosovel was one of the most important Slovenian poets in the 20th century, not only because of his *Golden Boat poems*, but mostly because of his

constructivist poems. More importantly, Kosovel is one of those rare poets who managed to fuse their artistic and human demeanour inventing a completely new quality. Instead of perceiving art and humanity as mere conceptual phenomena, Kosovel rather saw them as ethical phenomena that make sense only and as long as they are practiced in the everyday life. This would also have to serve as the basis for a transformation of the ways in which human society operates. The Golden Boat Festival has thus strived to explore the spaces opened by Srečko Kosovel, the poet who set the direction of our voyage which has started in Poland in 2010 and had branched to include the Czech Republic in 2013. The Golden Boat Festival has been founded on the principles of openness and inclusion, we have looked for open spaces. One layer of this openness relies on the diverse history of cultural exchanges between Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia which had begun already in the 19th century and is still based on personal relations and mutual respect.

In the last years, a continual Polish-Slovenian cooperation in the field of culture has resulted in publications of Slovenian authors in Polish translation. We are proud to present a bilingual poetry selection of [Srečko Kosovel, Kalejdoskop. Izbrane pesmi/Wiersze wybrane](#) (translated by Karolina Bucka Kustec, 2012), selected poems of [Iztok Osojnik, Spodnie na niebie](#) (translated by Marcin Warmuz, 2012), the novel by a contemporary writer [Maja Novak, Karfanaum, czyli as killed](#) (translated by Wojciech Domachowski, 2013), and the poetry collection by [Jure Detela, Mech i srebro](#) (translated by Karolina Bucka Kustec, 2014). In 2017, a selection of poetry by [Saša Vegri, Wędrówka w czasie](#) (transl. by Karolina Bucka Kustec), will be published.

The main aim of the multi-lingual project ***Would You Like Some Poetry?***, which has taken place in all the festival cities since 2015, is wide distribution and popularization of poetry in the form of brochures and readings in public spaces. The passers-by are offered texts of contemporary Slovenian, Czech and Polish poets, and poems of **Srečko Kosovel, Jure Detela** and **Saša Vegri**.