

THE SLOVENIAN LITERARY GARDEN

A new concept for the Slovenian Collective Stand at International Book Fairs

RENATA ZAMIDA
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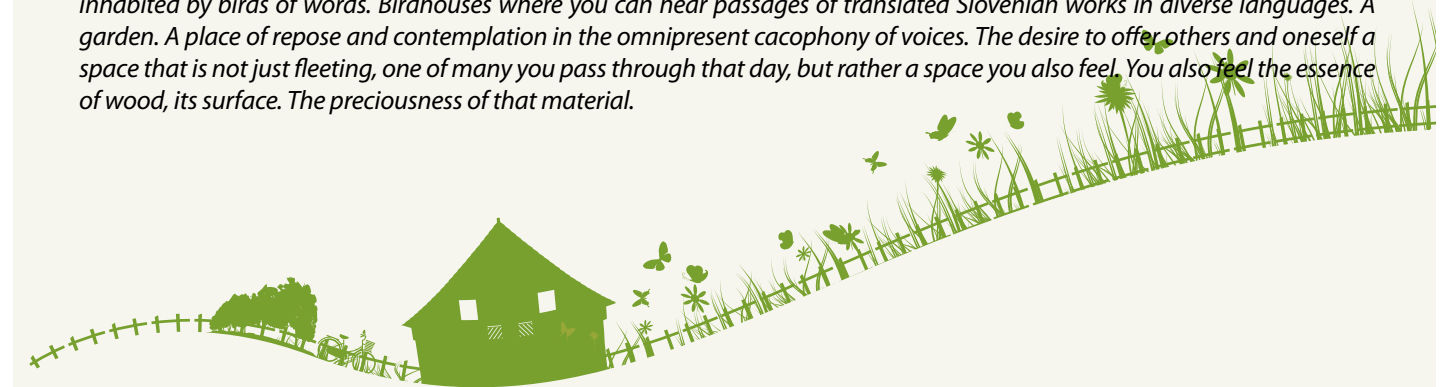
Lucija Stupica is a creator of a new visual appearance for the Slovenian national stand at book fairs where the Slovenian Book Agency participates.

Slovenian Book Agency asked the architect and poet Lucija Stupica for a conceptual record of her thinking around the creation of a new visual appearance for the Slovenian national stand at book fairs where the Slovenian Book Agency participates. Visit our literary garden – in Frankfurt, Leipzig and Bologna ... you will find more than books. Official opening: Frankfurt Book Fair, Hall 5, C103, Wednesday, October 11 at 1 p.m. Save the date.

Stupica (1971) is a poet and interior designer. Her first book of poetry, *Čelo na soncu* (*Forehead in the Sun*, 2000), was awarded two national prizes.

Since then she has published two more critically acclaimed books of poetry, *Vetrolov* (*Windcatcher*; 2004) and *Otok, mesto in drugi* (*The Island, the City and the Others*; 2008), leading up to her being awarded the prestigious German Hubert Burda Prize for young Eastern European poets. She currently resides in Sweden, where she was awarded the Klas de Vylder scholarship for best writer born outside of the country. Her poetry has been translated into more than fifteen languages worldwide.

A garden. Or forest glade. Trees. The rustling of leaves, pages of books turning over under the fingers of visitors. Birdhouses inhabited by birds of words. Birdhouses where you can hear passages of translated Slovenian works in diverse languages. A garden. A place of repose and contemplation in the omnipresent cacophony of voices. The desire to offer others and oneself a space that is not just fleeting, one of many you pass through that day, but rather a space you also feel. You also feel the essence of wood, its surface. The preciousness of that material.



“As a poet and designer of space, carrying within myself a love of books, a love of language and also of nature, the greatest challenge in design has been how to open up the senses that accompany a stroll through books, a stroll through the forest, the forest of words, how to awaken the polyphony of senses when a visitor stops at one of the five trees and lets their gaze slide along the shelves with titles of children’s literature, award-winning authors or literature in translation, when they open a book and read a few lines. All these tiny images that fill hundreds of pages of books and then us who read. Designing a stand which I, as a poet, would like to visit, that was my greatest desire. And in choosing among all the possible approaches and possibilities, opting for one where, as the great Polish poet says, I could say: “I prefer to knock on wood. I prefer not to ask how much longer and when. I prefer keeping in mind even the possibility that existence has its own reason for being.” (Wisława Szymborska, from Nothing Twice (1997), translated by Baranczak & Cavanagh). Even just for a fraction of a second, so I can justify the existence of the design of this stand.

It is no coincidence that the thinking that helped guide the design of the new stand for the Frankfurt Book Fair also led to the originators of two new creative collectives, Oloop and Smetumet. Common to them is a connectivity, environmental thinking and operating, and sensitive social topics are the cornerstone of their creativity.”

(by Lucija Stupica)



Oloop is managed by three designers, artists and producers, Katja Burger, Tjaša Bavcon and Jasminka Ferček. They are active in various fields of visual creation, from product design and spatial installation design to textile art. In this they are sensitive to vulnerable groups, which they demonstrate most in their latest project, called Revealed Hands. The hand-crocheted pillows, made by immigrants in Jesenice, were one of the reasons for cooperation. As part of the project of the new Slovenian Book Agency stand the designers are presenting seven large-dimension seat cushions.



Smetumet comprises Maja Rijavec and Alenka Kreč Bricelj. They both love and are never put off by reusing, recycling and creating items out of waste materials. You could call it garbage, or useless junk in our houses. In their hands the reworked things take on a new mission. They drew our attention with the product O Beautiful Pendant, as they call recycled old paper in the form of a croissant with meadow flower seeds. Since the stand has a garden and bird houses and meadow flowers in the form of seeds are something you can take home and plant, sometimes recalling that space full of Slovenian books and words, or better, you can open a Slovenian book in the original or translation and immerse yourself in it. And there is a fragrance all around you. Or perhaps you will put the seeds in the birdhouses, in case any birds actually stop by.

One of the first thoughts on creating a new exhibition space was a dedicated chair. It is hard not to think about a chair when you think about books. For both writers and readers. And since in the modern age the last word in Slovenian chairs was created by the great Slovenian industrial designer Niko Kralj (1920-2013), we once again delved into recycling – of ideas and materials. The architect Primož Jeza designed a chair for the company Donar called the **Nico Less**, made of 100% recycled felt, which won an international Red Dot Prize in 2016 for product design, and is a homage to Kralj’s Lupina chair.

