

## HIDDEN HARMONY

The novel *Prikrita harmonija* (Hidden Harmony), a family chronicle set in the period around the First World War, has been praised for the “Proustian sensibility” with which the author reveals the inner worlds of the protagonists.

## ABOUT THE THREE

The book *O treh* (About the Three) contains three novellas that take place in different historical periods and, with the exception of a few episodes, not in Slovenia. The main characters of the three stories are the Etruscan Vel Matuna, who we meet after his convalescence from a serious illness, the Belgian botanical draughtsman Pierre-Joseph Redouté, who, while absorbed in the drawing of flowers, is enveloped in the outbreak of the French Revolution, and the Slovene immigrant, Zlatko, who travels to America in the 1950s for an eye operation. Although these are three distinct destinies, the author unobtrusively links them: all three exceptional and unique protagonists share liminal experiences. A similar atmosphere and sensuous impressions characterize the three novellas.

## ON MARINČIČ'S WORK

“The writing of Katarina Marinčič lures us with its ambiguous, slightly open and partially unsaid quality. Marinčič's writing is at once intoxicating and sensitive, the language harmonious and the style polished. She has a keen ear for the details that create the atmosphere of a book and characterize the protagonists.”

*Petra Pogorevc, Dnevnik*

“Katarina Marinčič is an extremely cultivated author.”

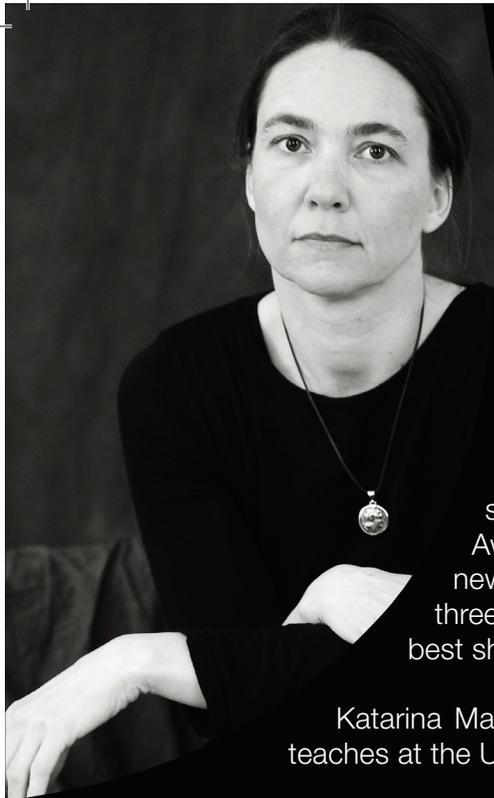
*Tina Kozin, Dnevnik*

photo by Jože Suhadolnik



KATARINA MARINČIČ

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## KATARINA MARINČIČ

born in Ljubljana in 1968, is the author of the novels *Tereza* (1989), *Rožni vrt* (Rose Garden, 1992) and *Prikrita harmonija* (Hidden Harmony, 2001, published in German in 2008 under the title *Die verborgene Harmonie*) for which she received the prestigious Kresnik Award, given by *Delo*, the foremost Slovene newspaper. Her last book *O treh* (About the three, 2005) won the 2007 Fabula Award for best short story collection.

Katarina Marinčič has a PhD in French Literature and teaches at the University of Ljubljana.

Katarina Marinčič: [kmarincic@gmail.com](mailto:kmarincic@gmail.com)

## SOME BOOKS BY KATARINA MARINČIČ

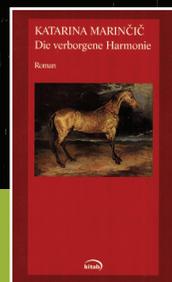
*Prikrita harmonija*



*Rožni vrt*



*Die verborgene Harmonie*



*Tereza*



## ABOUT THREE

Excerpt was translated by Michael Biggins



Zlatko's kinfolk appeared to her in the glow of the twenty-five watts hanging close to the high ceiling: people who comprised a silent, even taciturn community. They spent most of their days in the kitchen. The kitchen walls were painted in a pattern, with columns of rust-colored cherries against a yellow background. (This method of decorating was referred to as "roller-style.") The food was meatless, for the most part: batter dumplings, green salad with garlic, noodles and sauerkraut. Even the smell of garlic and the smell of sauerkraut blended with the smell of clamminess in this sanctuary of frugality.

His mother was small and likely a paragon of virtue. His sisters were as tall as him, proud of their legs, and cruel toward their hair with curling irons. Their teeth peeked out from under their disdainfully upturned lips. (Whenever they were out with somebody, Zlatko's sisters would laugh out loud.) His step-father and half-brother, neither of them tall, ate with their heads hunched between their shoulders, but without looking down at their plates. The father kept wiping his brow, fatigued by the unusual posture.

They didn't heat their bedrooms. The bedsheets were neither clean nor dirty.

Of course, all of this was dreary and ugly, just as dreary and ugly as Zlatko, who sat in the corner behind the stove (since childhood, in fact) bent over a book from the Blue Bird series.

"Ah, but yes," she suddenly realized, "it was in this Litija hovel, on the tile floors or the linoleum, amid the damp flannel sheets, that those smooth, straight childish limbs one day began to fill out into manly calves, knees, shoulders, wrists and knuckles, without a soul to notice those great, gawky protuberances, or to kiss them with pride."

Thus it happened that a poet came onto her flight home, and the most outstanding of those who were inspired by modern travels, at that (O God, young husband and son of woman / Lovelier you are than a young bull! Paul Claudel, the strongman with the bullish neck, explained as an old man, "Our mother never kissed us.")

Some things are as eternal as god's love, she thought. Of course it's not right for us to blame everything on the tiles, the linoleum and Litija. And yet: Litija just after the war!

Zlatko grew up and left for two years at a boarding school. Then he returned to Litija (probably by train and not at all under the flying bathtubs), reinhabiting his cold room, and assuming his usual place at the kitchen table.