



GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Project name: **Unheard Crying of Lost/Stolen Children**

Leading partner: **Zavod Samostojen si** (*Cerknica, Slovenia*)

Other project partners: **Geraubte Kinder-vergessene Opfer Society** (*Freiburg, Germany*)

Association **Nestale bebe Beograda** (*Belgrade, Serbia*)

Year of project implementation: 2020 – 2021

The project is co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union.

ABOUT THE MURAL "Do you really hear crying?"

Мурал под насловом: „Да ли заиста чујеш плач?“ је јединствена слика - трајно уметничко дело насликано директно на зиду 3.5m X 18m и симболизује однос мајке према материнству, према тајни рађања, као и према детету које се рађа, кључ до истине и подстиче сећање на све жртве трговине људским бићима, а посебно децом! Уметничко дело је тако снажно и упечатљиво да утиче на подизање јавне свести о рањивости и беспомоћности нестале или украдене деце са освртом на повреду њихових основних људских права без обзира на државу, режим или време и утиче да се унапреди култура сећања тако да се жртве никада не забораве.

The mural entitled "Do you really hear crying?" is a unique painting - a permanent work of art painted directly on the wall 3.5m X 18ms symbolizes the mother's attitude towards motherhood, the secret of birth, and the child being born, the key to truth and encourages remembrance of all victims of trafficking human beings, and especially children. The work of art is so powerful and striking that it raises public awareness of the vulnerability and helplessness of missing or stolen children with a view to violating their basic human rights

regardless of state, regime or time, and promotes the culture of remembrance so that victims never to be forgotten.

ABOUT THE CREATOR OF THE MURAL

Umetnički duo, ATELJE ŠOLN, čine Marija i Stevan Šoln diplomirani slikari primenjenog slikarstva, koji se dugi niz godina bave street art-om, savremenim zidnim i klasičnim



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slikarstvom. Uz brojne izvedene radove u javnom prostoru, kao i učešća na međunarodnim i domaćim festivalima, pojedinačno broje i samostalne i grupne izložbe.

Idejno rešenje murala "DA LI ZAISTA ČUJEŠ PLAČ" bilo je izazovno, kako u tehničkom tako i u estetskom smislu. Prikaz majke koja je okrenuta naglavačke, simboliše situaciju u kojoj roditelj ostaje bez deteta i u kojoj se život menja, ona poseže za ključem, kao simbolom tajne koja treba biti otkrivena i rešenjem njenog problema. Svetlost koja dolazi iz jajeta i obasjava je, simboliše rađanje života međutim jaje je prazno i osim svetlosti akcenat je dat na odsustvo onoga što bi iz te svetlosti trebalo da se rodi. Iz tog razloga, topli zraci obasjavaju majku sa jedne strane, dok se istovremeno u kontra svetlu vraćaju ledeni, plavi odsjaji.

Skica je inspirisana simbolizmom kao slikarskim pokretom kao i izvesnim elementima art nouveau pravca, u ruhu savremene estetike, s namerom da ostavlja utisak kako monumentalnosti tako i arhaizma.

Slika je postavljena tako da komunicira sa prolaznikom, da ga natera da se zapita i promisli, takođe s idejom da koloristički bude dopadljiva i uklopiva u javni prostor, a pozadinski da izaciva emociju tuge, saosećanja ali s druge strane i nade i snage.

Artist duo, ATELIER ŠOLN, is formed by Marija and Stevan Šoln, artists graduated in the field of applied painting, with many years of experience in street art, wall painting and classical painting. With numerous works realised in public space, as well as participation in international and domestic festivals, they both took part in many solo and group exhibitions.

The conceptual solution for the "Do you really hear the crying" mural was challenging in both technological and aesthetic sense. Depiction of a mother turned upside down symbolizes a situation in which a parent is left childless and in which the life itself changes; she is reaching for a key, a symbol of a secret that needs to be revealed, a solution for her misery. The light that radiates from the egg and shines on her symbolizes the birth of life, however, the egg is empty, and besides the light, the absence of life that should emerge from it is emphasized. For the same reason warm rays land on the mother from one side, while a cold, bluish highlight appears on the other.

The sketch is inspired by symbolism as an artist movement, as well as certain elements of art nouveau, laced together with contemporary aesthetics, with the intention of creating an impression of both monumentality and archaism. The image is composed in such a way that it engages the bypasser, that it makes them contemplate, while still preserving its coloristic appeal and public space applicability. The emotional layers of the image should emanate the sense of grief and compassion, but of strength and hope as well.

ABOUT THE PROJECT UNHEARD CRYING OF LOST/STOLEN CHILDREN

The goals that we pursued with the project were:



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- To contribute to the understanding of the citizens of the European Union, its history and the diversity, within which we
- Raised awareness of the memory, common history, values and goals of the European Union, i.e. Promoting the peace and prosperity of the people of the Union by encouraging debate, reflection and the development of networks.

The European Union is founded on the promotion of the values of peace and solidarity that are fundamental to human rights. To raise awareness of the importance of this, the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000)** was signed twenty years ago. Through the activities of the project, we strived to shed light on the fundamental human rights enshrined in it and their fragility in different regimes, times and areas.

The main goal of the project is to raise awareness among the general public about **the vulnerability and helplessness of stolen/lost children and, in this context, to make sense of human (especially children's) rights, regardless of country, regime or time.**

With the project we informed and raised awareness of the general public about the historical facts related to the lost/stolen children. On the other hand, we raised awareness about the parallel stories that are happening today to migrant minors across the Europe.

WHY THE PROJECT?

The need for our project arose from the perception of disrespect for the fundamental rights of children, such as the right to life, security, liberty, family and dignity. Violations of such rights are reflected in atrocities from the past as well as today through insufficient awareness of the problem of missing migrant children. This is manifested in the lack of existing monitoring of data on migrant minors as well as through criminal acts and insufficient legislation dealing with missing/lost children.

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The memory of the horrors of WWII fades only 75 years after its end. There are fewer and fewer victims and participants in the crimes and atrocities that took place in concentration camps and beyond. At the same time, we are witnessing the rise of increasingly authoritarian, undemocratic regimes in the European Union. WWII was a terrible example of massive violations of fundamental human and children's rights, as evidenced by the article "Lost Children: Displacement, Family and Nation on Postwar Europe". Evidence shows that between 1945 and 1956 alone, more than 330.000 children were stolen from Europe. Many of the stolen children were Polish (approximately



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200.000). There were more than 600 stolen children in Slovenia, of which just over 100 are still alive. Similar things have happened elsewhere in Europe: both in the Franco's regime, where around 300.000 children were stolen and illegally adopted, and in Serbia, where about 20.000 couples lost newborns in maternity hospitals in the post-war period. So far, no one in Serbia has been held accountable for these crimes.

Human trafficking is a transnational, timeless problem that occurs in a variety of circumstances and is one of the most serious violations of fundamental human rights. Human trafficking with minors and children is particularly appalling and shocking. Regardless the extreme violation of human and children's rights during and after WWII, we are witnessing such acts even today. According to Missing Children Europe, one child disappears every 2 minutes as a result of the growing number of migrants, their children and young people coming to the European Union each year. According to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), in 2018 alone, there were 12.717 (42% of all) unaccompanied minors who arrived in the EU. Between 2014 and 2017, at least 30.000 underage migrants disappeared. As this number grows, it raises concerns that migrant minors are victims of human trafficking, sexual exploitation, drug smuggling or even forced slavery.

Our project focuses on **raising awareness of historical memory, common history and EU values and the well-being of each individual** through stimulated debate, reflection and the development of transnational networks. Through the promotion of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, we also want to shed light on the manipulation and exploitation of populist media, thus pointing out that civil society, free media and open debate are indispensable elements of democracy and EU values.

ABOUT PROJECT PARTNERS

The leading partner of the project is **Zavod Samostojen si**, a private NGO from the Notranjsko-Primorska region (Slovenia), whose main goal is to protect children and raise awareness of the general public about the vulnerability of various target groups, with an emphasis on children and adolescents. Within the NGO, there is the Multigenerational Family Centre, which is providing an assistance and support to families and children either through individual or family therapies or through activities such as learning assistance, learning foreign languages and lectures for parents on the topic of raising children. We are also the coordinators of the Unicef Safe Spot for Children.

The **Geraubte Kinder-vergessene Opfer Society** from Freiburg, Germany, is seeking justice for the victims of abductions that took place during WWII, when the Nazis forcibly took away many children, Germanized them and gave them a new identity. The members of the society strive to achieve justice and recognition of Nazi crimes for these forgotten victims. They are raising awareness among general public, especially children and young people, about the atrocities and crimes of the Nazi regime, thus keeping the memory of the lost children alive.

The **association Nestale bebe Beograda** is an NGO from Belgrade, Serbia, that actively deals with the issues of child theft between 1960 and 1990. It brings together parents who suspect that their



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children have been stolen from maternity hospitals. Members are actively working to change the legislation in Serbia, which would make it possible to prosecute persons (doctors, nurses, midwives) suspected of stealing children from maternity hospitals in Serbia. With the help of the amended legislation, they could gather evidence against the perpetrators and accomplices of these serious crimes. The association has the function of civil control over state bodies and organizations, which have the power to influence and in some way force state bodies to change legislation and work for the benefit of the civil sector.

ABOUT THE EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME

In the period 2019-2020, the Europe for Citizens Programme supported NGO projects in the European area that contribute to citizens' awareness of the European Union, its history and diversity, promote European citizenship and contribute and improve the conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union's level.

They pay close attention to raising awareness of historical memory, common history, values and the fundamental purpose of the Union strand: European Remembrance) and promoting democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union's level, opportunities for social and intercultural participation, volunteering and understanding and developing policy-making of Union (strand: Democratic engagement and civic participation).

In achieving the written goals, the principles of the transnational and local dimension of an individual project, which include intercultural dialogue and volunteer work, are particularly important.

The project was founded by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).



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