

**Where:** the Slovenian exhibit at the **54th International Art Exhibition ILLUMinazioni – ILLUMinations** in Venice at the Slovenian pavilion / Gallery A+A/

**When:** pre-vernissage 31 may, vernissage 1, 2, 3 June, **official opening 3 June**; open to the public from 4 June to 27 November 2011

**Who:** sculptor Mirko Bratuša, commissioner Dr. Nadja Zgonik, producer Božidar Jakac Art Museum, Kostanjevica (*Director Bojan Božič*)

**and** associates Jasna Hribernik (*original video*), Jaka Simenc (*lighting design*), Matjaž Cuk (*information design*)

**What:** exhibition entitled **Heaters for Hot Emotions**

The point of departure for the sculpture exhibition at the Slovenian pavilion will be an ambient production prepared by Mirko Bratuša for the Božidar Jakac Art Museum in Kostanjevica in the premises of the former monastery church. The Hypocrites, monumental statues of fired clay, powered by electricity and emitting heat, with their anthropomorphism and their simultaneously supernaturally fantastic forms, will attract visitors through the huge gallery window and into the high entrance area, which will be further deepened by mirrors. This will create a labyrinth for passersby, to whom it will seem as if the path from the streets of Venice lead into the infinite space of the gallery. The feeling of stepping into a different reality will be enhanced by video projections of the installation in the medieval atmosphere of the Kostanjevica church. The story will continue in the upper areas with contrastingly pointed, re-dimensioned and cold statues, which will intensify the effect of the low ceiling and the smallness of the space. Where the statues on the ground floor will invite us with their warmth and tactility, those on the upper level will remain inaccessible and foreign in their coldness and severity. The installation will lure us with its contrasts, and Bratuš' communicative humour will compel us towards reflection.

The title of this year's Biennale is Illuminazioni – Illuminations, and it commingles the problem of light with the theme of nationalism. Light is the thing that enables visual perception. During these times of people's alienation from their emotions, awakening is possible through being direct and physical. The statues of fired clay, which emit heat or cold, affect the viewer through their size and unconventionality. The unusual interweavement of iconography as would emanate from medieval, Renaissance or Baroque churches, adds a dimension of memory, which is supranational. This is combined with the concrete lines of the space, e.g. the Kostanjevica church, which has local coordinates. Not just the lume (*light*) from the theme of this year's Biennale, but also the concept of nazioni (*nations*) will be visible in the installation in an aestheticised manner, which will be enlivened by traces of one of Slovenia's original venues for the exhibition of fine art, and in doing so help promote it.

We will ask ourselves about the nature of art, which through the physical aspect of sculpture returns to the viewer's real space, in order to position itself in a newly discovered, freshly viewed physical reality of the world. The sculptures are made of ceramics and have heaters built into them, and their tactile corporeality will be enhanced in the installation by light and computer-generated video effects. In this complex manner they unravel the viewer's tactile-emotional experience with the additional inclusion of the sense of heat, and complete the wholeness of the artwork in the fulsome embrace of the felt and experienced. Through the complex effects and interplay of precarious objects, light, heat, video effects, and playing with spatial illusion, the project will attract the audience in an innovative manner and keep them in the

gallery for a long time. In these times when we are increasingly enticed by artificial three-dimensional images, by cinematic art, this sculpture project will be an attempt to return to the realm of lost sensitivity. The statues will be communicators which will use the realm of art to inform and broaden the audience's perceptions and shift our social consciousness of being.

### Bios

Mirko Bratuša (*b. 1963*) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana in 1989, and continued his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich under Professor Leo Kornbrust from 1990 to 1992, and in 1993 at the Academy of Arts in Dusseldorf with Professor Tony Cragg. He completed his postgraduate work in 1993 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana with Professor Lujo Vodopivec. Since 1997 he has taught at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana at the Department of Art Education, where he is an associate professor of sculpture. In 2005 he received a Golden Bird award for sculpture, and a Prešeren Fund award (*Slovenia's highest award in the arts*) in 2006.

A more detailed bio, list of exhibitions, bibliography and other documentation are available (*in Slovene*) at [www.galerija-bj.si](http://www.galerija-bj.si).

**Contact:** [mirko.bratusa@guest.arnes.si](mailto:mirko.bratusa@guest.arnes.si), 00.386.41.692.516

Dr. Nadja Zgonik (*b. 1964*), art historian, critic and curator, associate professor of art history, works at the Academy of Fine Art and Design of the University of Ljubljana. She focuses on Slovenian modern and contemporary fine arts, its history and the problems of its identity. She is currently preparing an exhibition of modern and contemporary art and has worked on original projects, projects for specific spaces and monograph presentations of Slovenian artists with all of the most important Slovenian galleries, including the Modern Gallery in Ljubljana, the Maribor Art Gallery, the Piran Coastal Galleries, the City Gallery in Nova Gorica, and the Božidar Jakac Art Museum in Kostanjevica na Krki, and has organised several presentations of Slovenian artists around the world (*Brussels, Bonn, Bologna, Shanghai, Priština...*).

**Contact:** [nadja.zgonik@guest.arnes.si](mailto:nadja.zgonik@guest.arnes.si), 00.386.41.605.999

### Božidar Jakac Art Museum, Kostanjevica na Krki

The beginnings of gallery activities in Kostanjevica go back to 1956, when the **Gorjup Gallery** was established on the premises of the local elementary school at the initiative of Principal Lado Smrekar, and which has operated under the auspices of the Božidar Jakac Art Museum since 1974. The permanent collection includes a selection of sculptures, paintings, drawings and graphic art from the extensive international collection of 20th-century art. The permanent collection is exceptional owing to its installation on school premises, and allows the opportunity of a direct combination of gallery and educational work. The Lamut Art Salon has been in operation since 1958, in a former mansion in the town, on the island, and features temporary exhibitions of Slovenian and foreign artists. The Forma viva international sculpture symposium was begun in 1961. Like the Gorjup Gallery, since 1974 the Lamut Art Salon and Forma viva have both operated under the auspices of the newly established **Božidar Jakac Art Museum**, whose headquarters are located in the former Cistercian monastery, where permanent exhibitions are dedicated to Božidar Jakac, Jože Gorjup, the brothers France Kralj and Tone Kralj, France Gorše, Janez Boljka, Zoran Didek and Bogdan Borčič, as well as the Pleterje Collection. The former monastery church, which is not presently consecrated, is currently the site of major exhibition projects prepared especially for that space. The original chapel statuary is housed in the lapidary.



Galerija Božidar Jakac  
Grajska cesta 45  
8311 Kostanjevica na Krki  
Slovenia  
tel: 00.386.7.49.88.140  
e-mail: [info@galerija-bj.si](mailto:info@galerija-bj.si)  
[www.galerija-bj.si](http://www.galerija-bj.si)

