

**Miha Pogačnik**  
**President**  
**IDRIART**  
**Initiative for the Development**  
**of**  
**Intercultural Relations**  
**miha@mihavision.com**



**IDRIART** was born out of recognition that the healing forces inherent in art must take on a more social role in answer to increasing isolation among people and cultures. For the past 20 years we have been trying to build a creative environment where people from different walks of life and from different countries, can meet in the atmosphere of arts. Meeting through the arts enables one to learn the art of meeting.

IDRIART (Initiative for the Development of Intercultural Relations through the Arts) -- a non-profit organization founded in 1981 by Miha Pogačnik, violinist and cultural ambassador of Slovenia -- follows a dynamic principle - that artists and their audiences purposefully travel throughout the world and gather in places that really need them. In these places IDRIART can take the initiative to intervene in political, social and cultural situations. Thus, IDRIART has been working in synchronistic ways within the global stream of awakening and radical change. IDRIART has produced with local hosts, more than 140 festivals around the world.

IDRIART is an international network with national foundations in Germany, The Netherlands, Slovenia, UK and USA.

### **The technique developed by IDRIART**

Intercultural meetings in the heightened atmosphere of art-experience proved to be very productive beyond various ideological traps. In over 20 years thousands of IDRIART participants have been travelling to the specially chosen (crisis) areas of the world, creating, together with local hosts, more than 140 festivals, hereby practicing the potential "how" of the human society if developed through the powerful/gentle principles of Art.

The festival of art & business takes place at the **Borl Castle**: Located where the 16th meridian crosses the river Drava in the eastern Slovenia, the castle has more than one thousand years of dramatic history, rooted in the dynasty of the great medieval Knight - King Parzival.

This location evokes the clarifying challenge and vision for Europe and signal to the world: Revisiting the productive polarity of the "two kings" relationship: Parzival and Arthur; center and periphery; the Grail and the Round Table; artistic inspiration and the world economy; individual and community.

Some of us hear the challenge echoing from the Middle Ages in Borl: How to transform modern-day knighthood to cultural-entrepreneurship? Is the economy supposed to serve the human being or the other way around...? As an artist living in our present day economic society, I feel challenged to actively respond.

What is a HUMAN BEING, where is the threshold, what kind of environment would reveal the true nature of being human? This is the story of IDRIART, the search for the ART OF MEETING, beyond races, cultures and religions. With the intensity and urgency of making and perceiving Art, we reach beyond our "usual self." Actively, consciously participating in the unfolding complexity and beauty, in tensions and resolutions, in meaning and more meaning, we exit at the other end of the masterpiece with all too quickly perishable precious new eyes and ears: for THAT dimension of human being, which is none and all of us -- BECOMING.

How many times, during the decades of IDRIART, have we suddenly recognized that quality, which could never be forced, no matter how much planning and care flew into the preparation of festivals: suddenly it would hit like lightening ! ...and we all knew: this is IT, now we have IDRIART again. Inspiration hits like lightening. You can not force it, you can only prepare yourself and dare make mistakes. May we be hopeful for the fruits of the efforts we sunk into these "meetings of humanity" - celebrations, like lighting candles in a spiral of times and spaces: ... Chartres ... Bled ... Lhasa/Tibet ... Budapest ... Trondheim ... Ulan Bator ... Belem/Amazon ... Irkutsk ... Cape Town ... Sydney ... Beijing ... Hawkes Bay/NZ ... Santa Cruz/CA ... Prague ... Cluj ... Sarajevo ... Sao Paulo ... Dublin ... Bishkek/Kirgisztan ... St.Petersburg ... Dubrovnik ... Cracow ... Kathmandu ... Cuernavaca ... Vancouver ... Dresden ... Lahore/Pakistan ... Borl ... and more?

Maybe; but coming back to the first question: Does living in the all-prevailing global economic society mean "working for money?" "Making war to achieve peace?" To engage truly in the act of Art means: doing it for love of it, period. Here is something to learn from the Arts: to learn how to bring means and ends together, to strive with "inner jihad" towards becoming a whole human being. The time has come for the muses to step out of museum and teach us the Art of interdisciplinary modes of being; how to bring the obvious "daily bread" of the true artist: mobility, creativity, inspiration, enthusiasm, love, charisma and perhaps a token of "productive resignation" (Goethe) to the every aspect of life, including business. And here is the guiding star for the artist - cultural entrepreneur: "good is not good enough - only genius counts !"

## CASTLE BORL

### The castle of culture

Since their early beginnings, castles played an important social, military and cultural role. Not only did they represent irreplaceably important forts for inhabitants from the surroundings, but they also contained executive and judicial powers that managed the society for centuries.

In the beginning of the Middle Ages the knightly singers characterised the castle civilisation travelling from one castle to another and spreading poems of love towards their dames, life and battles they or their heroes fought and thus brought distant places together. The entire culture obviously shared deep Christian beliefs and some knights used the poems to bring spiritual truths to people.

One of these minnesingers was also **Wolfram von Eschenbach** (lived approximately between 1170 and 1220) who among other works wrote the medieval masterpiece, the epic **Parzival**. Along with Dante's Divine Comedy it is a unique work of art of the time. In the 24810 lines written in Middle High German the epic demonstrates exceptional flexibility regarding the aspects of human spiritual inclinations. The inner principle of the epic is the journey of an individual in their essential relationship towards the world. It is the life of one searching fervidly for the significance in themselves and in the world. The journey leads the individual from the initial child's carefree world and doubt to renunciation of God, pain and spiritual certainty. The basic idea of the epic is the search of the Holy Grail which Eschenbach was inspired by, as he calls himself, "the wise master Kyot of Provence". The main subject of the epic are deep human yearnings. What makes the poem especially interesting are the sensitive descriptions of the child's world and vivid descriptions of cruel and exhausting battles, knightly expeditions, romances and passions between man and woman, interwoven with humour and wise dialogues. The reader's imagination may find itself in another world that is yet to discover our everyday lives.

The link between Borl Castle with its surroundings and Parzival is that the few places named with their accurate names in the epic lie in the Štajerska region. In the 9th book Eschenbach writes that Trevrizent, Parzival's uncle and the brother of Grail king Amfortas, left **Oglej** (Aglei) for **Celje** (Zilje) and went from there on to **Rogatec** (Rôhas) where he fought a three-day battle with men of Slovenian (windisch) descent. From there he continued to **Hajdina** (Gandîn), where **the Grajena River** (Greian) flows into **the Drava River** (Trâ) and which nowadays is the centre of the historical town of Ptuj. Trevrizent then tells that Hajdina (Gandîn) is the birthplace of Parzival's grandfather **Gandin von Anschouwe** (Anjou) and that he had been named after it. Most definitely this is the same town, Hajdina near Ptuj. He also mentions the Štajerska region (Stîre). Gandin and his son, Parzival's father Gahmuret, had a black panther in the coat of arms which at that time was also the coat of arms of Karantanija and in the times of Eschenbach the coat of arms of the Štajerska region. (Today a white panther stands in the coat of arms.)



Coat of arms of Štajerska



Coat of arms of castle Borl (Anckenstein)

It may be a coincidence, but the fact is that the coat of arms of Borl Castle also represents **an anchor** with a golden rope which was also the coat of arms of Gahmuret von Anschouwe (Anjou), Parzival's father. Eschenbach claims Gahmuret chose it himself as he worked for caliph in Baghdad. There are many questions waiting to be answered. Did the real story of Parzival come to pass in these places? Was it only Eschenbach who had been in these places? Or perhaps only someone Eschenbach knew and the story is complete fiction? The best starting point for the search of answers to these questions is certainly the masterpiece Parzival, one of the spiritual sources for human contemporaneity and its culture.

The historical events of the story allegedly happened in the 9th century, claims Eschenbach in his 3rd book when he says that Herzeloide, Parzival's mother, died eleven generations before Eschenbach's time.

The Middle Ages architectural features can be clearly seen only in the castle's keep. The visible structure of the castle dates from the Renaissance when the castle was renovated. On the whole, the castle leaves not as much an impression of a cultural building as of a building of culture which has steadily, although slowly, risen because of the general state of the human society. In the contemporary times, the lively culture started developing in 1994 as **IDRIART** found the abandoned and overgrown castle. With that a new era started: artists, organisers and supporters from Slovenia as well as from abroad bring the castle alive at a yearly international festival. The rebirth of the castle demanded many sacrifices from the organisers' part in the first years but also offered the opportunity to thousands of people to get to know the qualities of art, life and nature. The foundation as the castle's lifeblood is gradually bringing the castle to life throughout the year in different cultural and social areas.

Initiative for the development of intercultural / transdisciplinary relations through the arts (IDRIART) in Slovenia is represented by the Gandin Foundation. With the help of similar organisations the foundation organises a varied programme with international participation: art and business conferences, youth festivals dealing with various art and social issues, seminars, crossroads of cultures from all over the world, concerts, workshops for children, summer camps and similar. The castle is also host to the yearly painting camp, different exhibitions of fine arts and photography, folk music concerts and other occasional events.



Concert of Miha Pogačnik and the Sinfonica orchestra of Ljubljana in 2002

### **Sources:**

Wolfram von Eschenbach (2001) *Parzival*. Stuttgart: Reclam, Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch.

Wolfram von Eschenbach (1961) *Parzival*. New York: Vintage Books.

Anton Janko (1994) *Parzival in slovenska Štajerska*. Celjski zbornik.

### Castle Borl's name and the position

In the first known written sources the castle is mentioned with two names: Borl and Anckenstein. The German name Anckenstein originates from the German words *Anker* (anchor) and *Stein* (stone). The name can thus be interpreted as a stone or a castle with an anchor. *Borlyn* is a Hungarian word from which the castle's name originates. Both the German and the Hungarian word share the same meaning: anchorage or river crossing. The name is meaningful inasmuch that the place has always been associated with journeys along the Drava River and the crossings of it.

The castle lies on a rocky pier over the Drava River where the Ptuj plain starts rising into the rolling hills of the Haloze region. It is situated in the municipality of Gorišnica at the edge of the Štajerska region, only a few kilometres from the Croatian border. Its geographical position is longitude 16 degrees east, latitude 46 degrees 37 north at 251 metres above sea level. The castle can be reached from Ptuj following a 12-kilometre road in the direction of Zavrč.

### The history of the castle

Since not much is known about the beginnings of Borl Castle we can illustrate them with 19th century historians' words that its beginning lies in the darkness of the Middle Ages. Some older historical works claim that on this very spot there used to stand an old neolithic settlement and later a Roman fort. However, none of this can be concluded from poorly archeologically researched remains or other sources.



Castle Borl, 1681 (Vischer)

The contemporary history following the found sources dates the castle's beginning into 12th or 13th century. The first written source dates from **1255** when the Hungarian king Bela IV. let Frederick of Ptuj castles Središče and Borl and the tower Tra.

The first known owner of the castle was the family of **Anchenstein**. The last member of the family died in 1323. The estate was later inherited by the **Lords of Ptuj** whose last family member died soon afterwards, in 1438.

It is known that Borl Castle has stood at an important crossing since the Middle Ages. During the course of time many different borders were situated close to it which kept the castle and its surroundings very busy. The castle played a strategically important role because of its geographical situation on the rocky pier and the vicinity of the Drava River which was an important trade route and where rivercrossing had to be controlled. However, the importance of its situation was closely linked to fight for power. Already in 1291 the castle and the pertaining estate became an independent territory and the Lords of Ptuj did not have to serve neither the German nor the Hungarian emperors.

Later the castle was passed on by hereditary rights to Ana of Ptuj, who was married to Hermann von Schlaumberg. **The Schlaumberg family** owned it until 1464 when Anna Alrich's son swapped the ownership with Johan **Montfort** who owned the castle the following seven years. Then the ownership passed on to **the Austrian emperor** for three years. After Hungarian army under the leadership of commander Viljem Fettauer had defeated the emperor's army, the castle passed on to **king Matthias Corvinus of Hungary**. In 1488 he gave it to his relative **Jakob Szekely**. When Matthias Corvinus died in 1488, the emperor Frederick IV got the castle. On 25 January 1497, on the day of St Paul's conversion, Jakob Szekely was presented with the castle again. His family owned it until 1596 although they had gone bankrupt in 1579 already. Until 1610 the castle was owned by **the Erdödy family**, the next ten years by **the Herberstein family** and from then until 1639 by **the Thurn family**. It was in that time that the castle was probably adapted to contemporary living conditions and a vaulted corridor was built.

Later the castle was bought by baron **Hans Karl Sauer**. The Sauer family changed their name to von und zu Ankenstein and renovated the castle completely. They had

both wings in the courtyard built, the Chapel of the Holy Trinity arranged and the interior richly decorated. In 1801 **Prince Stanislav Poniatowski** bought the castle and two years later gave it to Countess **Jožefa Leslie, born Wurmbrand**. In 1843 her nephew Count Ferdinand Wurmbrand Stuppah rearranged the castle into a summer residence.

In 1901 Adelberta von Kuebeck, born Wurmbrand, inherited the castle and in 1922 she sold the Borl estate for 4,219,750 crowns to winegrowers and brewers company **Borlin**. Until World War II **Zora Weiss** owned the castle but in 1941 the Germans arranged a transit camp from which people were sent abroad until March 1943. After the war the castle was nationalised and was left uninhabited until 1948. Later a refugee camp was set in it for a short period of time. It was slightly renovated in 1952 and a restaurant was opened which by 1972 and with more extensive renovation grew into a more modern hotel. The renovation works were seldom adequately carried out and there were never enough means for a thorough renovation and the castle was dilapidated. When the bridge across the Drava River collapsed in 1981, the hotel closed down.



Castle Borl, 19th century

The castle was quickly overgrown and only little of the rich furnishings were safe from thieves. In 1994 the castle was discovered by IDRIART which made it come to life again. Since then a rich cultural and educational programme has been organised at the castle each summer. With the help of the Gandin Foundation and the state as the castle's owner it has grown into an all-year-round event.

#### **Sources:**

Ivan Stopar (1991) *Gradovi na Slovenskem*. Ljubljana.  
Municipal Archives Ptuj  
Slovenian State Archives in Ljubljana  
Krajevni leksikon dravske banovine (1937)  
Josef Janisch (1878) *Lexikon von Steiermark*. Graz.  
Carl Schmutz (1822) *Historisch Topographisches Lexikon von Steyermark*. Graz.

## CASTLE BORL SURROUNDINGS

### Sights

Variety of nature life is making a unique atmosphere by the culture of the region.

In this area findings of stone axes and settlements from Neolithic Age (5.-2. millennium B.C.), decorations, weapons and dishes from Bronze Age (1750 B.C.) and Iron Age (700 B.C.) are discovered. There is a lot of burial places of Celts and Slavic tribes from 400 and 800 A.D.. And from 900 A.D. first Christian basis of churches are found.

From Roman times the city of **Ptuj** (Poetovia) is very famous. It was a great city, settled before Roman times and mentioned by Tacitus in 69 A.D., when Caesar Vespasianus was set up in Ptuj. Beside nice thermal baths (and swimming pools that are open today) numerous archeological findings, like four temples of god Mithra, reveal us Roman time. But we can also meet fabulous Middle age city center with interesting houses and sights where also Paracelus lived. In the museum of Ptuj castle this times can come closer to us.

We can also find burial places of Turks on Turški vrh and perfectly preserved unique farm buildings, vine growing-and-making equipment and the way of farm life as whole. On plain Ptujsko polje 300 years old typical Pannonian farming house with roof made of straw is preserved and opened for public (**Dominkova domačija** in village Gorišnica). Until today also "gostüvanje" and "kurentovanje", old traditional habits from Pagan times are still alive.

Pictorial hills, covered by vine and forests are accomplished by river Drava, where is also Regional park Šturmovci, which hides interesting animal (specially bird) and plant species, can move everyone. A fact that area is connected to historical part of epic poem Parzival and specially hidden small things, like small karst cave with the spring of salt water - "solenica" in the forest Bolšak, are making the region so mysterious. The best way how to come closer to life in this region is to use tracking paths, where you will surely find warm people and precious wine.

### The culture and people's habits

The Haloze region is marked for small and scattered private farming estates and expansive vineyards. The inhabitants on the plain part of the region are mostly farmers and in the hills wine and fruit growers, all of the trades originating from centuries old and rich tradition. The region is scattered with settlements that developed mostly in the 18th century around churches and schools.

Good wines, local food specialities, the wide plain and the rolling hills have undoubtedly contributed to the merry, hospitable and open-minded character of the local people. The rich tradition has been maintained and is being further developed, gaining new significance in our time. In summer and early autumn months international cultural and educational activities are organised at the castle by the Gandin Foundation. In August a festival *Pesem klopotcev* can be visited and in November the celebration of St Martin, the day when grape juice turns into wine. The Haloze region is also renowned for prayers of intercession which are addressed to various saints and the fair "jarmek-sejem" (from German Jahrmarkt) along the pilgrims' way to Marijatrošt in Žetale.

### Kurentovanje

The kurent is the contemporary costume of an ancient carnival character originating in pagan times in the Ptuj Plain. The centre of the carnival is in Markovci. Kurent makes deafening noise by jumping and thus, as the legend goes, chases away winter and invites the spring to come into the country. He is accompanied by other costumes, known as "orači" (ploughmen), "picek" (chick), "pokač" (whipman), "kokot" (rooster), "medved" (bear), "hudič" (devil), "ded in baba" (grandfather and grandmother), "ploharji" (unmarried people who should have married), "vile" (fairies) etc. The kurent wears a sheepskin coat, either black or white, and a leather belt or a chain with numerous cowbells. The cowbells are family inheritance. The colourful wool socks he gets from his girlfriends and from other women he collects handkerchiefs. He also wears a fearsome hat.

It is assumed that the kurent is a personification of an ancient totemic demon and Bulgarian kukerei are believed to have developed from the same belief. The legend also says that kurent used to be a restless handsome young man which girls from everywhere adored. He went to the desert and prayed to god to spoil his face. His prayers were answered and horns grew on his head. The women did not care for him anymore but in the memory of the once handsome man they have ever since joyously celebrated the carnival. Even nowadays in the carnival the kurents draw attention with their unusual appearance - the original significance has been forgotten, only fun and frolics remain.

### Cask-making

Cask-making is an ancient craft. For wine casks mostly oak wood is used, sometimes acacia wood. Once the wood is properly treated, it is dried in the open air, shadow and rain for at least two years and then composed into a cask. Bigger casks are "cooked" over the fire, smaller ones in water before the final manufacturing process.

### The taste of Haloze cake and the festival of pig-slaughtering

The Haloze cake is a renown speciality. It is baked in a baker's oven on the beech wood live coals. It is made of one (*ošigana gibanica*) or two to three (*cimpetana gibanica*) layers of cheese and pastry dough. Cheese is mixed with eggs and cream which also serves as topping.

Koline (pig-slaughtering) were in some parts called also the "home holiday" because this was the only time of the year when people could afford to eat larger amounts of meat. Towards the evening the participants of this custom were visited by "koledniki" in the evening, sometimes dressed as the ghosts of the deceased. The sausages they came to get presented the sacrificial course to calm down the demons and the wish to safeguard the house. However, a sausage was also given to a beggar.

It is worth tasting traditional meals like "ašenkol" (dried meat speciality), "meso iz tunke" (meat in hardened pig fat), warm cottage cheese, fruit bread "krhljak" etc.

