Hi-story lessons.

22

05.09.1967

First year of the international Biennial of Illustration Bratislava

After a short post-Second World War transitional period, Slovak culture had to confront the arrival of communism. The party started to control and guide cultural life. According to the Soviet model, it adhered to the theory of social realism and in culture separated correct class attitudes from incorrect, obsolete and misleading theories. This was officially called 'cultural policy.' Cultural artists who adapted to the trend found support, whilst others, who considered the policy contrary to their conscience, emigrated or selected internal emigration – they stopped their creative work, or produced work without any opportunity to present it. The schematise of social realism strongly affected all cultural output, but mainly literature, the visual arts and architecture that had to be subordinated to political requirements. This was manifested as artificially highlighted heroism, building enthusiasm, the artificial exaggeration of conflict between the old world and the new socialist system, suppression of individual character and internal intellect and faith in the power of collective action. Social realism highlighted recent events such as the workers' movement, partisan battles, the Red Army, and February 1948, and focused on current successes in establishing socialism. In the 1960s a new artistic generation arose including writers such as Vincent Šikula, Ladislav Ťažký, Ján Johanides, Rudolf Sloboda and Anton Hykisch and lone-voice poets such as Ivan Štrpka, Ivan Laučík and Peter Repka. From 1965 the international Bratislava Music Festival was held, and from 1966 the Bratislava Lyre – an international festival of dance songs. The main visual artists were Albín Brunovský, Viera Bombová and Miroslav Cipár. Book illustration achieved a global level of acclaim – an exhibition of children's book illustrations was held in Bratislava in 1965, with great success nationally and internationally. The exhibition thus returned two years later on 5 September 1967 as the first Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB) international contest for children's book illustration. Dušan Roll, author of literature for children and young people, was BIB's founder. UNESCO and the International Association for Children's Books assumed patronage over BIB. Each annual BIB aims to show the latest book illustrations created in the previous twelve months. The international BIB jury awards the prestigious Grand prix BIB, Golden Apples of BIB, Plaques of BIB to illustrators and a Certificate of Merit to a publisher. Various accompanying activities (international symposiums, seminars, screening animated films) are an integral part of BIB and it remains one of the most important cultural events in Slovakia.

Translated from Slovak to English by Darren Chastney, proofread by Dr Ian Copestake

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