

# The Art Lexicon of Vojvodina

Contributed by Case study prepared by Roman Vehovec

As a principle, the Observatory wishes to present the financial background of proven best practices. The present case, however, is one in the making. Many if not all of the figures appearing in it might be modified by the time the project reaches its successful culmination. The main reason for including it is because it came from one of the hottest points of our region.

## Presentation

The Art Lexicon of Vojvodina is a complex project. It consists of publishing a book, a compact disc and an Internet site, all done by VEGA Media Ltd .

Vojvodina is definitely the most European part of the country, a region consisting of various national communities and having a "complicated" structure which is deemed to become an integral part of a one day finally united European economic & cultural space, first among present day Yugoslavia's regions. Its history led to a cultural and aesthetic value which differs so much from other regions that inevitably leads to such a prospect. The artists and art of Vojvodina could be observed and defined as a peculiar organism. One could find a proof in painting and literature, above all. Softer, slower rather than outbursting and vivid.

The book will consist of about 500 pages, printed in full color, divided in 6 parts (plus index);

- Drama and theatrical artists;
- Film, photography, television, video, digital art, web design;
- Music;
- Painters and artists of applied arts;
- Writers and translators;
- Art managers, art institutions (theatres, galleries, museums, cinemas, groups & associations...)

An interactive CD will be organized in two parts;

- Yellow pages data browser and
- Electronic book with audio, video and animated elements.

The Internet presentation at the top-level domain address [artlexicon.com](http://artlexicon.com) is already in function, with registers of names and addresses of artists by categories under the name of World art directory .

Basic principles:

1. No selection will be made according to non-artistic principles. Furthermore, the Lexicon has to discover unknown, or forgotten artists, wherever they are hiding and whatever they think or do, whether loved by "the powerful" or mistreated, successful or living at the edge of existence;

2. Creating a precise data base and thus offering a deep insight in what could be called a broad and ambiguous artistic family of Vojvodina, it will become a useful, & representative never-ending publishing and above all, civil, cultural project.

1. Many art associations, founded as an administrative governmental bodies, with a purpose to control and not promote, to serve but not to their members, are still functioning, giving (?) to the everyday life an "adequate" and desired shape.

Wrongly enough, but artists have always been defined as professionals and amateurs. What and where is the difference, according to the everyday policy maker's dictionary?

Those who studied (and finished) faculties of art (Academies?) automatically became professional artists. Furthermore, actors, for example, here automatically become members of the Actors Association. Although many of them never earned one single coin as an actor, as they gave up of the acting profession, still they remained members of their professional associations. That made possible (or at least it seemed that way) for the bureaucratic association's "leaderships" which were supposed to be taking care and protecting their members interests, to serve to the regime, protecting it from their own colleagues, by controlling them.

It should be clear enough that professionalism has nothing to do with being member of some (professional?) association.

Resolving the "problem" of "professional" artists in the way they did it, regime created yet another problem. Amateurs! So another type of control was found. Amateur associations, societies and institutions. And, even worse, as if these societies were not ridiculous (controllable) enough, they were organized according to the principles of ethnic groups and nationalities. So what was the result? Hungarian, Slovakian, Serbian "Cultural Artistic Societies", created as show-rooms. (See what a democratic society we are: We even have our good Whatever-ians, who love our state and our brave, wise and adored leader... They even paint or play because they are happy and secure here). This kind of things were supposed to be prolonged arms of the regime, rather than someone's democratic right to respect its own national feelings and rights. It is hard to see the difference between a Hungarian, Serbian, American or any other artist, unless his art is based in ethnic folklore. One is either orartist or not. His or her nationality has nothing to do with it.

Today's regime never gave up these organized institutions, using them for public image and various propagandistic pressures, especially during the electoral campaign.

If one's artistic expression is to be defined, it can, and should be done only by evaluating its esthetic values. An artist has its own more or less dominant cultural, ethnic, geographical or any other characteristic. But it is not what makes his artistic effort more or less successful. It is the divine sense for art, and nothing more. And nothing less. Being a professional can only mean that someone was lucky enough to make his living through his art. But everybody dealing with art is an art lover. Or an amateur.

That is why

The ART LEXICON OF VOJVODINA is A LEXICON OF ARTISTS regardless of their ethnic, national, professional, political or any other non-artistic definitions and characteristics.

2. There is not one single comprehensive guide, book, directory or database of any kind, dealing with artists of Vojvodina. Several Associations have published (years ago) their directories, but obviously, with a list of their members only. (Writers, designers...)

Accordingly, there is no way one could establish communication or get to know the work of hundreds of artist, be it because they are not known outside their local community, or because they are not in favor of the local or regional art policy makers, journalists, publishers... Not to mention our bizarre state owned, or constantly persecuted private media.

Vojvodina is understood as a geographic fact and seen as a future civil society region. Communication, understood as free exchange of information, is the very foundation of any free society. Every contemporary artist, who is borne, lives or, for some time, lived and worked in Vojvodina, is going to be represented in the book, CD and at the artlexicon.com Internet site - without artistic evaluation.

The Lexicon is not going to be the judge of someone's aesthetic merits and values. It has no encyclopedic ambitions for the moment. It is going to be a millennium picture of present situation; a vocabulary of names creating a fact called today's art of Vojvodina. And it is a useful directory.

The ART LEXICON OF VOJVODINA is the only database with each and every artist represented, with addresses, phone numbers and e-mails.

Getting started:

As the project is based on establishing new and authentic, exact facts about the present art in Vojvodina, the only way of getting the relevant data was to find and contact thousands of known but also unknown artists, groups, non-budgetary organizations etc. directly. This project has, what could be known as, direct marketing approach.

Exploring and finding addresses was the first and huge problem. Co-editors, six of them, (literature, music, painting-applied arts, theatre, and another two for modern music, photography, film, video and digital arts, and art &cultural institutions) which are chosen among known professionals, provided addresses, and are still working on it.

It should be quite obvious that Ministry of Culture or any other state institutions could not finance such a project. Firstly, because the basic idea is to create a data base without political, national, ethnic or any other than artistic values. And secondly, if the project is financed by the state,

even in smallest part, it could easily enable various kinds of pressures, be it in defining which artist and especially which association or group of artists should, or should not be represented. Automatically, the project would become something else.

On the other hand, years of wars, corruption and political instability led the domestic economy to one extremely difficult situation, with high rate of unemployment, lowest production, etc. No independent publisher could finance with its own resources such an expensive project. In such a situation I have had to find another solution.

The artists were offered to participate in financing the project.

The first phase of the campaign, which started in May, finished in July with results as follows:

2.500 letters and forms sent - 1200 responded.

Artists were asked to provide all the data in a form (basic, such as name, middle name, birth date and place, kind of artistic expression, membership in art associations and groups) but also other data (more detailed bibliography, exhibitions etc) asking them to participate financially. The artistic work and biography of about 1000 artists with greatest merit will be published anyway, regardless whether they responded or not. They are asked to send photos as well. Full color is necessary because of the many painters, whose work must be displayed. The maximum length of about 250 words for an entry is defined by the importance of the artist, and it depends on the quantity and quality of the information.

Second phase of the campaign started 15 August.

1000 letters and forms sent - 300 participants responded (part of them from the first portion of letters)

Third phase of the campaign started in September.

3000 invitations (repeated mail and new addresses)  
were sent to individual artists plus 400 to various institutions.

The preparations for a new  
edition of the book will start right after it appears. At the same time continuous  
updating will be executed on the website.

## Financing

Logistical background:

VEGA media: 4 persons

Editorial board members: 5-6 persons

WEB: 2 persons

Database: 1 person

Sales: 1(+1) person

-----

Additionally 2 to 4 persons occasionally.

Revenues:

The Faculty for Entrepreneurs Management (Fakultet  
za preduzetny menadzment) is a private training center, whose students had summer  
practice working on Artlexicon; the Faculty decided to use this project as a  
case study and provided the first 50.000 dinars (about 1000 euro) as seed money.

Artists were asked to participate in financing the project with  
small but necessary sum (from 150 to 1500 dinars - 3 to 25 DEM). Participating  
is naturally not obligatory. 180 participated financially during the 1st phase.

Sponsors:

Non-governmental institutions, private companies, banks, etc. have been invited to participate in the project. This campaign started in May for theaters and in August for others: theatres and other institutions have their own entries, but they were invited to help us by ordering copies of the lexicon in advance. In that way they appear as some kind of sponsors as well. The lexicon is offered to them for a price of 25 euro.

Table 1:  
Revenues

The amounts are in euro,  
calculated from the dinar and DEM in the original version.

By  
31st December

From this by 1st September

Faculty support

1000

1000

First phase

2725

1075

Second phase

2050

750

Third phase

2500

0

Book sales

11 500

1500

Advertising

5000

500

Total income

24 775

4825

Remarks:

1st phase: further amount is expected from those who have chosen to pay in two parts and those who wanted to participate later.

Advertising: the price is 500 euro per full page.

The final price is expected to be around 50 euro.

Expenditures:

Table 2:  
Preparatory costs

Title

Per month

Lump sum

Total

Office, accountancy,  
Internet domain

150

1200

Other office expenditures  
(paper, phone etc.)

75

600

Editors' fees (6 people)

900

900

Chief editor's fee

75

500

1100

Editorial board secretary

50

400

Database  
(hardware,  
software and labour)

3500

Postal costs

250  
(+250 expected)

500

Advertising

1250

Total (projected to  
December 31st)

9450

Remark: The intensive political changes have questioned the realities of the deadline in the tables, which will rather be the spring of 2001.

Table 3: Book production costs

Title

Units

Unit price

Total

Film & filming

945

Offset plates

275

3,10

852,50

Paper (135 gr. mat

kunstdruck)

2000

2,06

4120

Printing & binding

2000

4

Cca  
8000

Total

13 917,50

Table 4: Internet presentation

Title

Amount

Fees for web design

600

Site maintenance

400

Total

1000

Table 5: CD production

Title

Units

Unit price

Total

CD production

1000

6

6000

Total expenditure (Tables 2-5): 30.367,50  
euro

Balance:

The difference between the total expected income by 31st December of 24.775 and the total expenditure of 30.367,50 is 5592,50 euro. The misbalance is supposed to be covered before finished production. If not, the part of production (CD) will have to wait until first income arrives from the book selling. The major problem which concerns the publishers most is the current economic situation that is getting dramatically worse every day. It is a great question how the political and economic conditions will effect upon the financial plan of the project.