

ArtCafé

ArtCafé – Czech Radio, Vltava

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I am not cutting down art into an adoration of Romani people, my intention is dialogue, says an important Slovak artist exhibiting in Prague.

Emília Rigová is the first Romani artist who was awarded the prestigious Oskár Čepan prize for young artists. At her current exhibition in Prague she revives forgotten Romani songs.

My art does not adore Romani people, just the opposite – from the very start it is based on a dialogue between a Romani person and Non-Romani person. In my creation I reject cutting down just to Romani culture. I am interested in collaboration, says the Slovak artist Emília Rigová.

Her creation interweaves Romani and Non-Romani worlds and tries to conduct a dialogue with the spectators. In the framework of her new exhibition project in Prague's Artivist Lab in Kampus Hybernská, she invites the visitors to try and sing a forgotten Romani song. The lyrics of the song refer to the Romani holocaust and in a very contemporary manner combine the tragic past of this stateless nation with our present.

Rigová exemplifies that remembering the Romani holocaust is not only a matter of the Romani people and gives a Non-Romani spectator a chance to create an emotional bond of his own to the stories carried by the old Romani songs of the halgato genre.

According to her the Romani holocaust has been more widely acknowledged already, yet because of the current worldwide happenings the visual artist and university pedagogue is rather skeptical to thinking, that the atmosphere in society towards Romani people and recalling their tragic past would turn towards the better.

Halgató songs, used by Rigová at her exhibition, are slow solo songs sung in Romani settlements in Slovakia mainly by women, but we may find them sung by Vlax Romani Hungarian men. Their themes often revolve around poverty and difficult life destiny.

“The Romani people in Bohemia usually come from Slovakia and their ancestors do not belong to the victims of the Romani holocaust here, yet they created their own recollection of this tragedy. A the halgató songs are helping them to remember,” says the ethnomusicologist Zuzana Jurková.

“Romani artists are not creating any folklore” / Tamara Moyzes

It is important for the majority of society to understand that Romani visual art is not folklore. Here we have high quality Romani artists, who are able to compete with all others, says the founder of Artivist Lab and also the curator of the exhibition, Tamara Moyzes.

Alter ego as a symbolic bridge between Romanis and Non-Romanis

Emília Rigová was awarded the prestigious Slovak Oskár Čepan Prize for visual artists under the age of 40 years.

Bári Raklóri then became a solid part of the Slovak art scene, says about her alter ego, which symbolically connects in itself Romani roots and Non-Romani outlook. Because of the prize her work found its way into renowned artistic institutions.

Emília Rigová also works as a university pedagogue, curator and aside from her other occupations she served as a part of the committee at the landscape-architecture contest for the memorial of the victims of the Romani holocaust in Lety u Písku.

You are invited to the exhibition of Emília Rigová REVIVE/PURANO HANGOS – Reviving old voices in Kampus Hybernská. Opening dates: 1st of June till 3rd of August 2020. Entrance free.