

HISTORY OF THE TRIENNIAL

The International Baltic Mini Textile Triennial originated in Gdynia, Poland in the early 1990s with the first one being held in 1993 as a triennial; the event then became biennial until 2004 when it reverted to being a triennial.

It is the youngest of four European survey exhibitions of miniature textiles, but already has its own authority and tradition and can be compared to other great international events in Szombathely (Hungary), Angers (France) and Como (Italy).

The initiator of the Triennial was Aleksandra Bibrowicz-Sikorska, fiber artist from Gdynia. Her ideas were met with enthusiasm by the President of Gdynia and the Department of Culture of the City Hall of Gdynia. Mrs Bibrowicz-Sikorska initially collaborated with the Polish Maritime Museum in Gdańsk and the first exhibitions were organized on board a sailing ship "Dar Pomorza" ("Gift of Pomerania") called the White Frigate; it belongs to the Polish Maritime Museum in Gdańsk but is moored at the quay in Gdynia.

In 1999 the Museum of the City of Gdynia became involved in the project and the exhibition on board the White Frigate was expanded to include concurrent exhibitions in museums and galleries in a number of Pomeranian towns.

Then in 2004 the Museum inaugurated a series of exhibitions of Grand Prix winners of this international competition. At the same time the exhibition in Gdynia linked to The International Triennial of Tapestry in Łódź. Thus since 2004, after being exhibited in Gdynia, the selected miniature textiles are now also shown in the Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź (Poland).

Officially the main organizer of the event since 2007, the Museum of the City of Gdynia arranges for the miniature textiles in the collection to be shown in the Museum's exhibition rooms. Now almost 20 years old, the Triennial has gained a prominent and prestigious position in the international calendar of Poland's artistic events as well as being a part of the cultural life of the region of Gdańsk.

ART WORKS

According to the rules of the Triennial, works submitted for selection cannot be larger than 20 x 20 x 20 cm (including framing). The choice of the miniature form was made for sound practical reasons. Miniature textiles are easy to transport,

so related exhibitions can cover an uncommonly diverse spectrum of artists and approaches on a limited budget.

In addition to their practicality, there are ways in which miniature textiles link with current art concerns. With their intrinsic attention to scale, and the potential for obsession with what they are made from, they are perfect vehicles for highlighting new materials and exploring new possibilities for fiber art. For that reason, small-scale artworks can be very compelling - sometimes even more so than large-scale textiles.

Thanks to the commitment of Aleksandra Bibrowicz-Sikorska, it was possible to invite artists from different countries to work towards creating miniature textiles for exhibition in Gdynia. To date artists from the USA, Mexico, Canada, Australia, Israel, Qatar, Korea, Japan and almost all of Europe have taken up the challenge. The best works are traditionally distinguished with awards: the Grand Prix; two Prizes from the Marshal of Pomeranian Voivodeship and the Prize of the Museum of the City of Gdynia. The Grand Prix winner is awarded a statuette of amber and a solo exhibition as part of the next Triennial.

The 8th International Baltic Mini Textile Triennial was organized in 2010 and attracted 190 entries from 33 countries. Six Polish judges selected 100 works to be exhibited and made awards as follows. The Grand Prix went to Anna Więckowska-Kowalska (Poland) for "Nokturn" ("Nocturne"). Two Prizes from the Marshal of Pomeranian Voivodeship went to Ursula Gerber Senger (Switzerland) and Dorota Taranek (Poland), while Silke Schossig (Germany) was awarded the Prize of the Museum of the City of Gdynia.

In addition, the jury decided to award four other artists additional distinctions: Bogusława Koszałka (Poland), Rolands Krutovs (Latvia), Velga Lukaza (Latvia) and Birgit Vogler (Germany). The Gdynia exhibition of miniature textiles saw an additional thirteen associated exhibitions staged in Pomeranian museums and galleries including Gdańsk, Wejherowo, Lębork, Kartuzy, Bytów and Puck.

COLLECTION. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The uniqueness of the event in Gdynia lies in the fact that participants leave gifts for the museum — miniature textiles. Thanks to donations the Museum of the City of Gdynia possesses a considerable collection, numbering over 230 works. In 2005 selected works from the collection

were presented in Kiel (Germany) and in 2008 in the Martha Gault Gallery, Slippery Rock (USA).

During 2012-2013 works from the collection will be shown in Australia in collaboration with TAFTA, The Australian Forum for Textile Arts.

There are plans to extend the significance of the Triennial and establish regional partnerships through the Weimar Triangle (Voivodship Pomeranian, District of Middle Franconia and the Limousin Region).

The 9th Triennial in Gdynia will take place in 2013. For further information contact the Art Department, Museum of the City of Gdynia (sztuka@muzeumgdynia.pl). www.muzeumgdynia.pl/mt2007a.htm

SLOW DOWN III by Ursula Gerber Senger (Switzerland), Bronze, partly melted. ASTRAL EXPERIENCE by Dorota Taranek. 54 P by Silke Schossig (Germany), woven (labels, cotton), machine and hand sewing. FRUIT CUPULE by Brigitte Vogler (Germany), felt. ZMIERZCH by Bogusława Koszałka, wire, steel wool, beads, plexiglass. THE BORROWED TIME FROM GOD by Roland Krutovs shown 2007. LIVING DOWN UNDER by Jolanta Szymczyk, felt. All works from the 2010 Triennial except where noted. Maximum size of any work including mounting and/or frame: 20 x 20 x 20cm.

