



4 ELEMENTS in arts

**Improve the foreign language learning and
intercultural competences of adults through e-
learning**

The project

The Erasmus+ KA220 project “4 Elements in Arts” helps educators of adults with specific learning needs and talents. These adults have specific talents but they also have to cope with specific difficulties and challenges. The project explores how the four elements — common images in European culture— influence thinking processes, creativity and arts. The exploration comprises analysing stories depicted in visual works of art such as paintings and sculptures, as well as cinema. The project aims at improving the skills of educators in the field of arts, cultural heritage and English language teaching. It engages adult learners in lifelong learning and education aiming at improving their linguistic, digital and artistic skills as well as their European awareness.



Introduction

The "**4 Elements in Arts**" project focuses on the exploration of concepts related to the fine arts and non-formal education. The project aims to facilitate English and intercultural learning through the visual arts, specifically through paintings/images depicting the four elements: **Water, Fire, Air and Earth**. The following carefully selected artworks serve as **teaching tools for adult learners**, including those with specific learning needs.

In addition, the project aims to contribute to the creation of a **European identity by exploring the cultural significance of the visual arts**, particularly painting, in the European consciousness. It recognises the role of art in shaping national and transnational identities and aims to promote cooperation and understanding between Europeans through cultural exchange.

The importance of the four elements is rooted in both the universal and poetic imagination, emphasising their symbolic meaning and cultural significance throughout history (Gaston Bachelard, 1972). For this reason, the 4 Elements in Arts project emphasises **the importance of exploring these elements through art and literature** in order to understand their deeper meaning and influence on the human imagination.

To summarise, the project, and this document in particular, aims to **promote creative and inclusive non-formal educational approaches through the exploration of art, culture and identity**, focusing on the four elements as depicted in European paintings.



What you will find ...

In this document you will find a collection of artworks on the fourth element - **earth** - from various European countries. Take a look at the artworks selected by the partners and read the stories based on the artworks.



Partners

The project was coordinated by CVO EduKempen (Belgium). The partnership also included DomSpain Consulting (Spain), Zini Foundation (Latvia), Les Apprimeurs (France), Istituto dei Sordi di Torino (Italy), Slovenian Third Age University (Slovenia) and MyArtist (Greece).

The partnership of the "4 Elements in Arts" project wrote these stories between 2022 and 2024.



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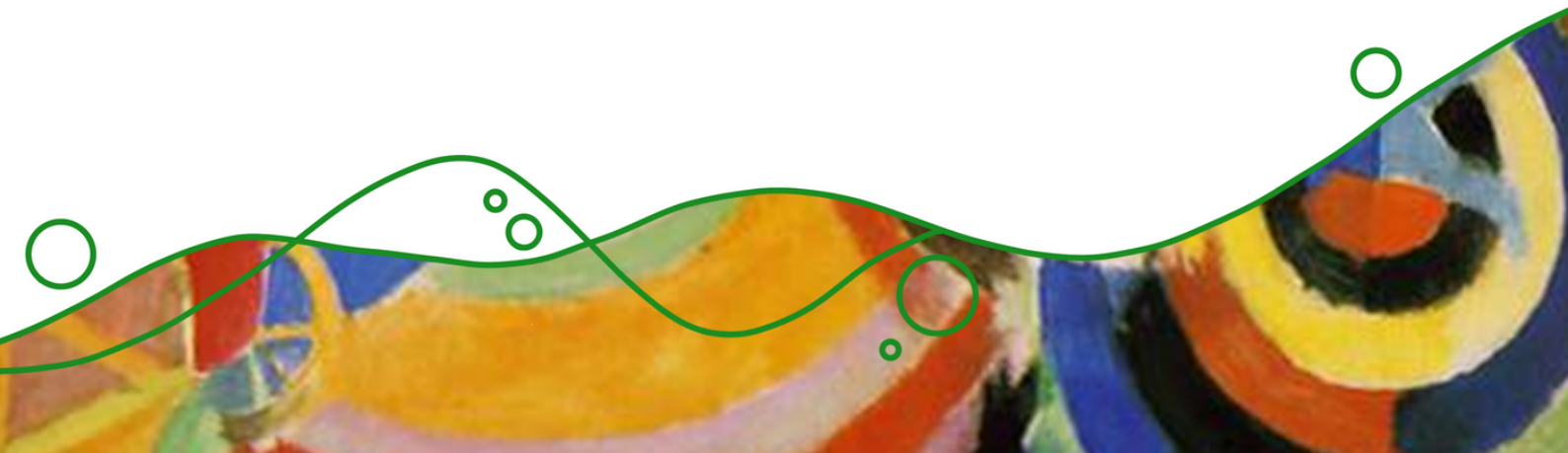
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Belgium



Wannes from Lichtert (“Wannes van Lichtaart”)

Tom Frantzen (2000)



A shepherd figure with a dog in bronze are attracted by the mysterious light that emerges from the Kempen heathland. They stand on a typical dune soil.

Story



This work of art, a shepherd figure with a dog, refers to the historical origin of the village. Lichtaart was a village with several hamlets scattered along the Kempen ridge. This barren sand dune belt between two rivers contained the highest points of the region. Since this drifting sand was not suitable for agriculture, the local population settled on both sides of the dune area near the cultivable land. This is how the old fields were formed. From there, shepherds and farmers moved along roads and paths to graze their cattle. Wannes van Lichtaart is a symbol of these people.

The shepherd and the dog are attracted by the mysterious light that rises from the Kempen heath. The mysterious light emerges from the haze of time and refers to an "end without end" (Augustine). Not only it speaks about light years but also gives life to people, animals and plants. A mysterious light that enlightens our spirit but also warms our soul.



Links for more information:

<http://blogimages.bloggen.be/voetstukjes/attach/45399.pdf>



Monument to Mine (“Mijnmonument”)

Dominique Mailleux and Miel Voeten (1966)



This sculpture is placed on the concrete slab that covers the shaft of the Zwartberg mine, closed in 1966. It depicts five miners standing on and around the symbolic shaft towers. They embody the men who came from all corners to work in the mine.

Story



The first miners in Belgium came from Wallonia, Antwerp and northern Limburg. After the First World War, however, there was not enough manpower and people were recruited from countries such as Croatia, Hungary or Slovenia because they had knowledge of mining. After the Second World War, more immigrants came from Poland and Italy. Most miners came to Belgium because of the better wages, and when they had saved enough, they wanted to return to their home country because they felt lonely here.

In 1963, new recruits came again, but this time they were completely unknown. They were the Turks and the Moroccans. These recruits came because many Belgians wanted to work at Philips and Ford. The newcomers knew nothing about mines. Moreover, the mine management and the miners were not prepared for the new religion, the foreign languages and the unfamiliar writing. They also built up their

own society. They were given cafés, stores, football clubs and mosques, so they could feel at home. They were better off in Belgium than in their homeland and did not want to return.



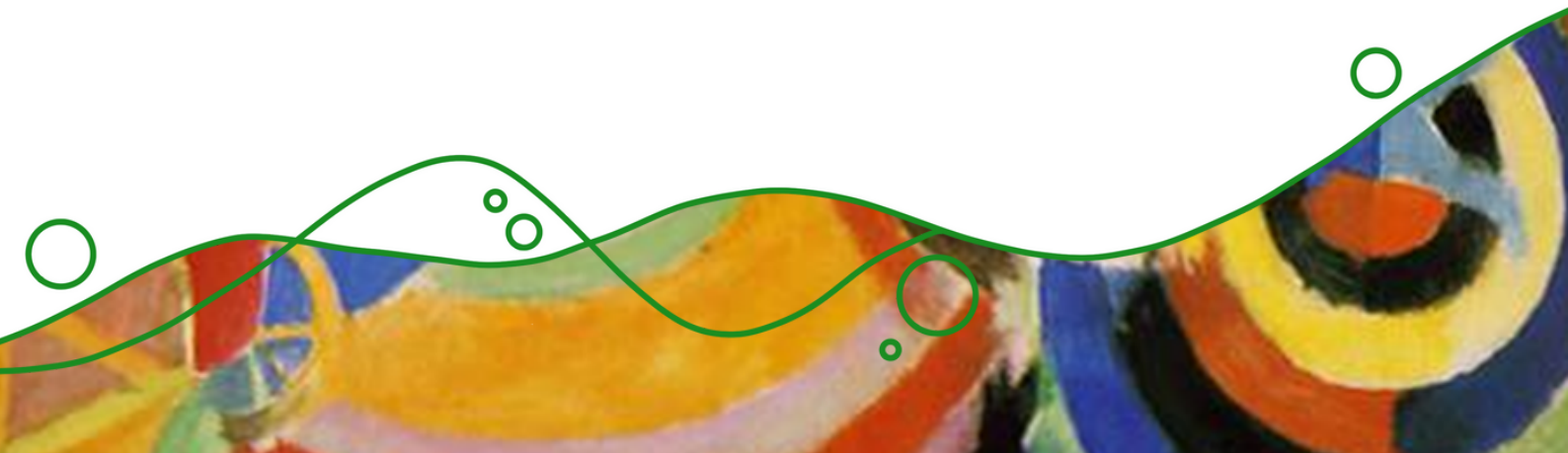
Links for more information:

<https://www.visitlimburg.be/en/what-to-do/mine-monument>





France



The Equatorial Jungle (“La jungle équatoriale”)

Henri Rousseau (1909)



This painting depicts dreamlike animals, which are difficult to identify, in the middle of a jungle.

His visits to the Jardins des Plantes and the Jardin d'Acclimatation in Paris allowed him to familiarise himself with various plant species, and the rest came from his imagination. There is nothing realistic about Rousseau's jungle: it is dreamlike.



Links for more information:

<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.46688.html>



The gleaners (“Des glaneuses”)

Jean-François Millet (1857)



Three poor peasant women glean the ears of corn left on the ground after the harvest.

Story

Jean-François Millet's interest in rural subjects is quite natural. He was born into a wealthy peasant family in Cotentin and worked on the farm until he was twenty.

The collection of crop residues (straw, ears, grains, potatoes) on the ground is a customary right. This customary right originated in the Middle Ages and has been maintained throughout the centuries. Collecting is therefore legal and is different from plundering, which is the theft of crop residues that have not been taken from the ground.

With this painting, Millet presents the result of ten years of research into the subject of women collectors, or gleaners, who embody the rural proletariat. They can be seen walking through the harvested fields before sunset, picking up the neglected ears of corn one by one.

Through his simple and sober modelling of the women's figures, Millet gives these undoubtedly poor but no less worthy gleaners an emblematic value, free of any misery.



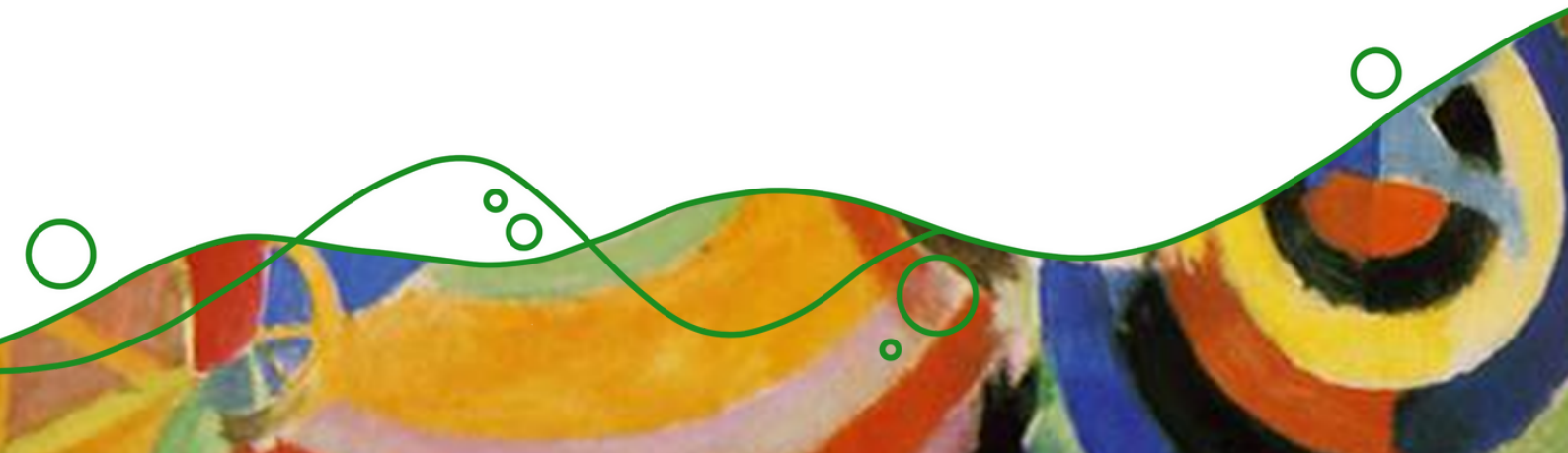
Links for more information:

<https://www.musee-orsay.fr/fr/oeuvres/des-glaneuses-342>





Greece



**ALT! Patriot what did you do today for the struggle?
("Αλτ! Τι έκανες σήμερα πατριώτη για τον
αγώνα;")**

Costas Balafas (1944)



A black-and-white photo of a landscape in Epirus is depicted. All that remains are the ruins of an abandoned or destroyed village, nature taking over, and an inscription that says "Alt."

Story



The contrast lies in the fact that the inscription seems to want to say something to someone, but the landscape looks deserted. Costas Balafas is a photographer who followed the partisans in the Greek mountains during WWII. This photo symbolizes the resistance of the Greek people against fascists and Nazis.

With his photographs, the artist is giving a voice to the small forgotten villages. He is telling the story of the village where he was born. He is representing the resistance history of Greece, in this case of ELAS, but it is as if he is talking about all the resistances that were created during the WW2, for instance, the Partisans, etc.



Links for more information:

<https://www.thegreekfoundation.com/event/costas-balafas-photographic-memories-modern-greece>



Grateful Hellas (“Υπέρ πατρίδος το παν”)

Theodoros Vryzakis (1858)



A woman is depicted in the center, occupying the entire central part of the painting. She has her arms outstretched, and it is the brightest part of the canvas. She is surrounded by men, some kneeling, some standing, all facing her.

Story



The work of art depicts the fighters of the Greek Revolution of 1821. There is a crowd of warriors surrounding the figure of a woman. The figure depicts Greece personified as a woman of classical antiquity, Hellas, with broken chains at her feet, thanking the heroes of the Greek War of Independence for liberating her from the Ottoman rule.

The artwork tells the story of the Greek War of Independence, which was a war of independence won by Greek revolutionaries against the Ottoman Empire between 1821 and 1829.



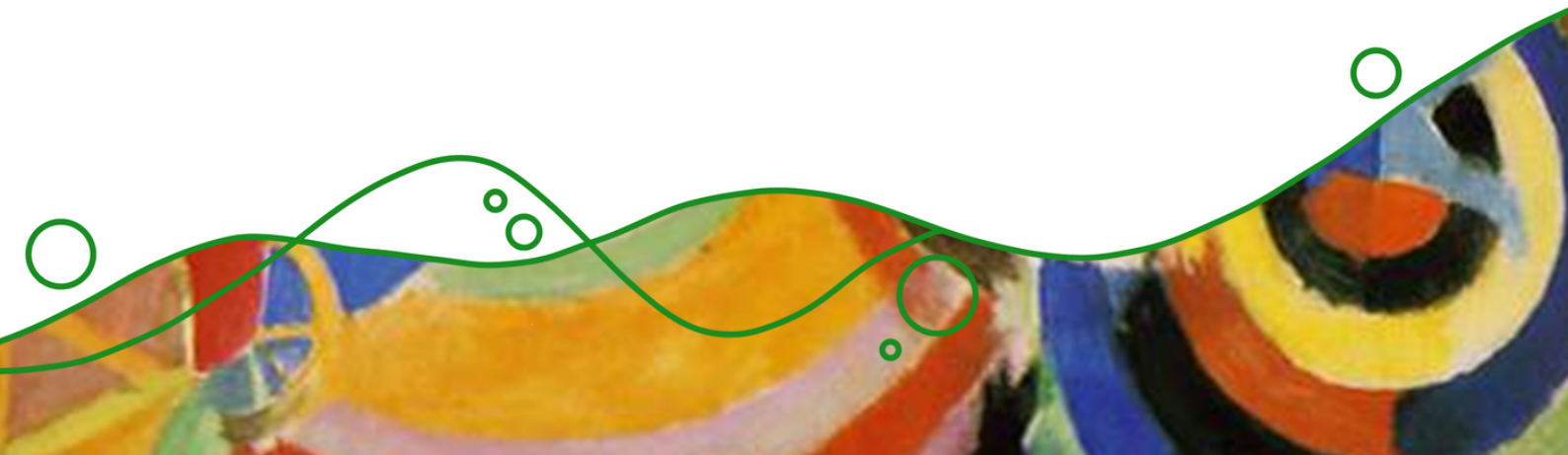
Links for more information:

<https://greekreporter.com/2022/04/08/10-priceless-masterpieces-in-the-national-gallery-of-greece/>





Italy



The dream of the pomegranate ("Il sogno del melograno")

Felice Casorati (1912)



A woman is lying on a wonderful carpet of flowers; above her we see beautiful, juicy bunches of grapes. The woman is sleeping and holds a pomegranate in her hand.

The painting therefore shows us the state of immersion in sleep. The protagonist remains totally still, surrounded by the flowering of the nature world. We can have a similar experience only when we dive in art.



Links for more information:

<https://www.analisedellopera.it/felice-casorati-la-vita-e-le-opere/>



Earthrise (“L’alba della Terra”)

William Anders (1968)



Photograph of the Earth taken during the orbit around the Moon during the Apollo 8 mission in 1968: how a photo changed forever the consciousness of our position in the Universe.

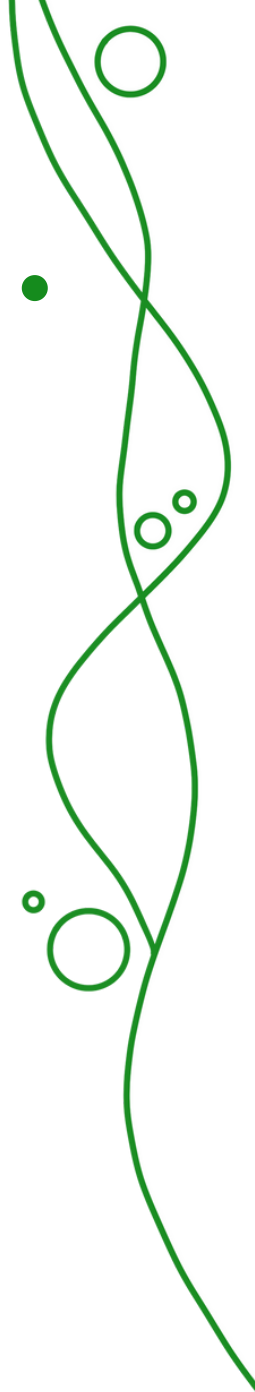


Story



In 1968, the Apollo 8 mission took a human crew into orbit around the Moon for the first time. The three astronauts were Frank Borman, James Lovell and William Anders. Anders took a photo that immediately became famous: the dawn of the Earth seen from the Moon. The terrestrial globe is only half visible and shows off its beautiful colours: the blue of the sea, the green of the forests and the white of the clouds.

The name of the photo is "Earthrise", the dawn of the Earth. NASA, on the other hand, cataloged the picture with the initials AS8-14-2383HR. The image was taken from the lunar orbit as the mission did not land on the satellite, but only flew over its orbit.



This image changed forever our idea of the Earth: it seems to be a coloured island, so beautiful and so delicate! Considered one of the most important shots ever made, the photograph was included in 2003 by Life magazine in the list of "100 photographs that changed the world". In 1969, the United States Postal Service reproduced it on a postage stamp celebrating the Apollo 8 mission.



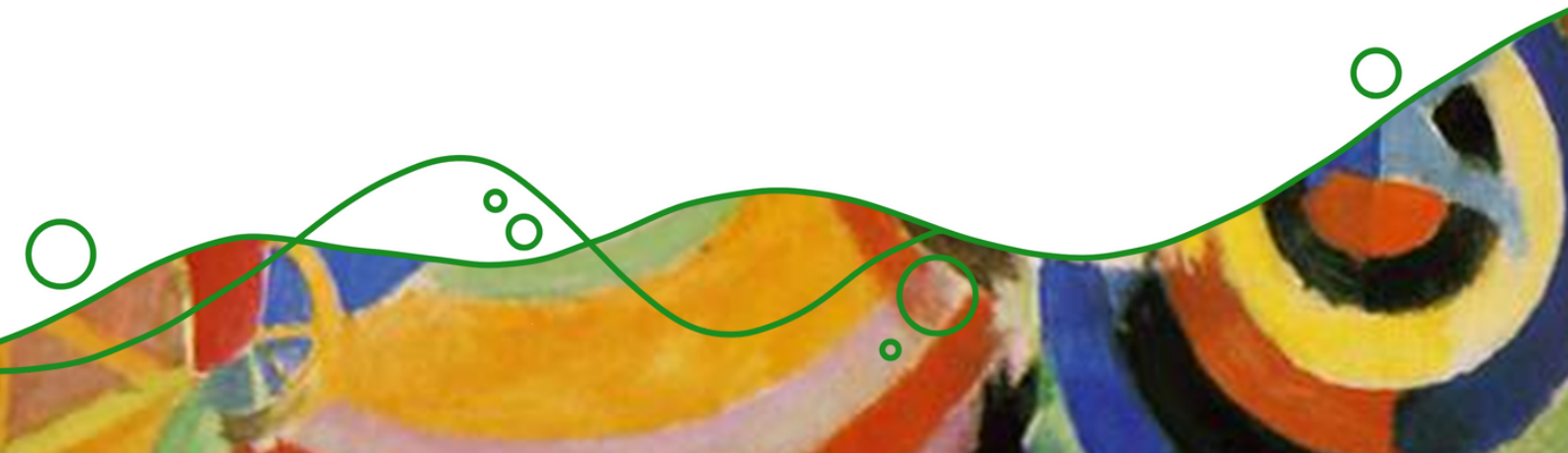
Links for more information:

https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_1249.html





Latvia



Zvarte's rock ("Zvārtes iezis")

The Art Supply of the State Administration of Catering and Printing Companies in Riga (Valsts apgādniecību un poligrāfisko uzņēmumu pārvalde - VAPP- Mākslas apgādniecība)



Zvarte rock is one of the most beautiful sandstone outcrops in Latvia and it is a state-protected natural monument.

Story

Zvārtes Rock is one of the most picturesque sandstone cliffs on the banks of the Amata River and within the entire Gauja National Park. It lies snugly among forests and meadows. The rock and its vicinity is a truly magnificent place where people can draw inspiration from the magical, primaeval and mysterious power of nature. It is said that the ancient people were able to predict witch gatherings in the nearby meadow — the witches dashed here on their brooms when the winds were high and danced until the crack of dawn.

Links for more information:

<https://www.redzet.eu/en/photo/zvartes-rock-U-024-14>

Working in haste (“Darba steiga”)

Jānis Ūdris (1931)



Painted as part of artists' diploma thesis, “Working in haste” received the highest rating of the jury and earned a prize of 1,500 lats.

Story



Art historian Jānis Pujats shares his thoughts on the painter: “Jānis Ūdris enters our art in the early 1930s. Continuous work, studying nature has helped his talent to flourish and over the years to clarify his creative face, to cultivate the painter's special handwriting. Living far from Riga (the capital city of Latvia) - in Balvi, he is not tired at all, but every year he shows more and more activity in creative work, becoming an important factor in the aesthetic upbringing of the farmers in his neighbourhood. Direct contact with ordinary working people brings a lot of freshness and topicality to Jānis Ūdris' art. ”

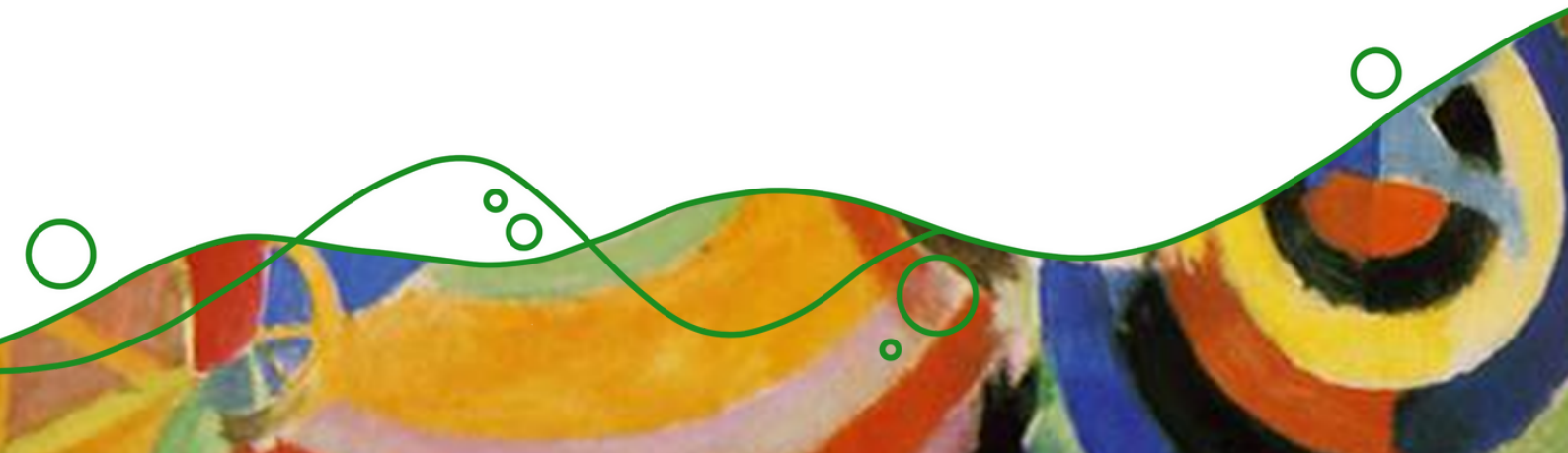


Links for more information:

<http://balvurcb.lv/kb/index.phpview=entry&EntryID=96>



Slovenia



Fields (“Polja”)

Tone Lapajne (1984)



In the painting “Fields” one can see Lapajne’s individual thin sensitivity and attachment to his native land since most of his paintings are made of mud for wetlands of his native Slovenia.

Story



In his own words, Lapajne said “...the earth nurtures me both materially and spiritually! I pick up some earth... this matter which is a part of the universe, and I lay it on canvas. Cracks in the earth are scary”.

Tone Lapajne, a Slovenian sculptor and painter was born in 1933. He was a prolific artist. Lapajne not only "painted" with mud but he went out and took it from wetlands to create his pictures. He searched for different kinds (50 and more) of colours of the earth. Sometimes he added some black or some olive green colour to the earth. Lapajne owes himself to earth and because of it he became “a sort of painter”, in his own words.

“Ravne na Koroškem”

Milan Lorenčak (1984)

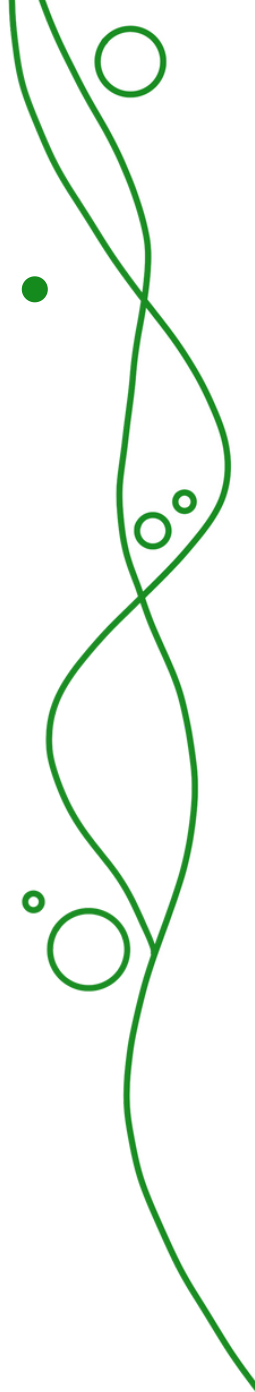


Small locality in Slovenian Carinthia under snow.

Story

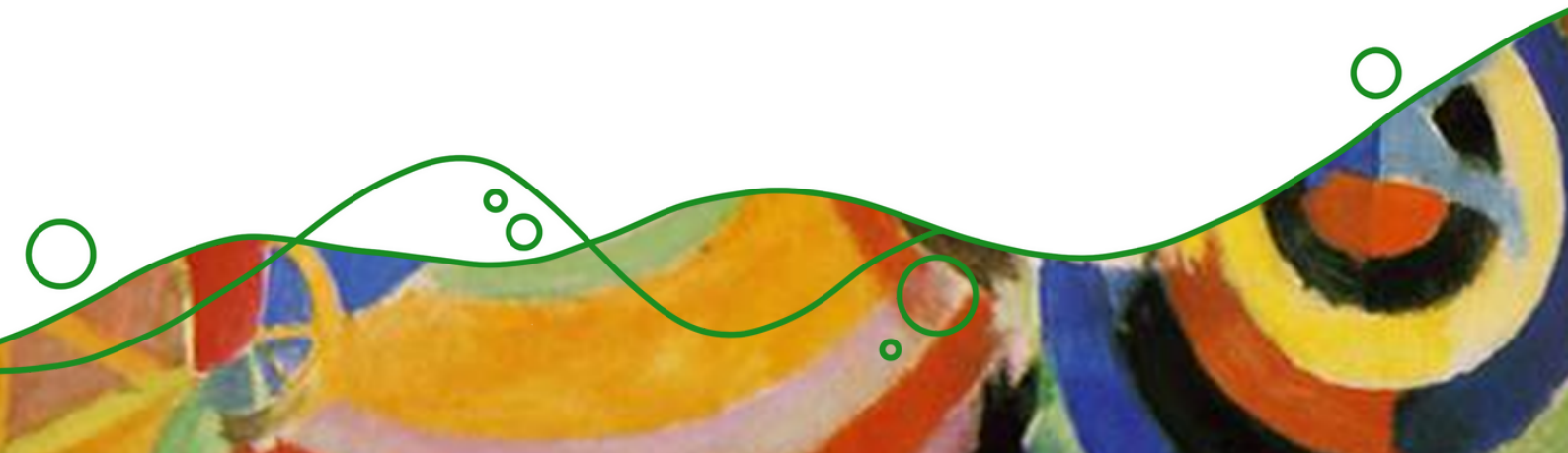


Milan Lorenčak was born in Vienna (Austria) in 1921. He spent most of his life in Celje (Slovenia), one of the medium-sized Slovenian cities where he worked as an art teacher in a secondary school. Milan Lorenčak participated in many collective exhibitions and worked in different artist colonies. He was often awarded in Slovenia and abroad.





Spain



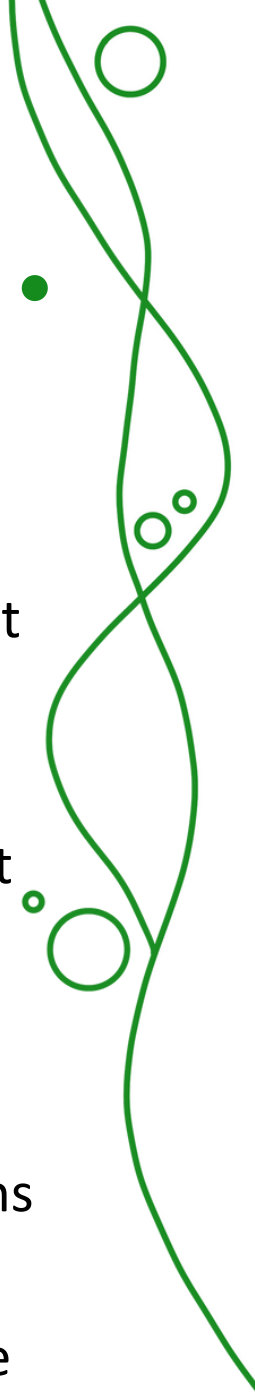
Drama in Sierra Nevada ("Drama en Sierra Nevada")

Antonio Muñoz Degrain (1910-1920)



“Drama in Sierra Nevada” echoes popular Granadan legends that recount terrible episodes amidst blizzards, in which travellers crossing a mountain range on foot are attacked by packs of hungry wolves.

Story



Lush and inaccessible landscapes are part of the imagery of many cultures. As it happens, the wilderness has, for centuries, been considered a place inhabited by fantastic creatures that protect the forests and defy human beings. These beings have their origins in superstitions as a way to explain natural phenomena or warn people about the dangers of the unknown.

Undoubtedly, Granada and Sierra Nevada's mysterious scenery is the perfect setting for myths and legends and thus the region's rich folklore. Consequently, there is a deep-rooted belief in the existence of a malicious character that causes snow avalanches and buries mountaineers. The sole purpose of this creature is to punish those who go into the mountain without the fear and respect it deserves. This character's name is "El mono careto" (monkey face) which is a kind of goblin with the appearance of an ape.

These imaginative tales and other stories about travellers crossing the mountains on foot and getting trapped during blizzards perhaps inspired Muñoz Degrain. In his painting “Drama in Sierra Nevada” no mythological monsters are present, simply true and real monsters: wolves.



Links for more information:

https://augustoferrerdalmau.com/inicio/249-miguel-de-cervantes-8436575121406.html?search_query=CERVANTES&results=5



Constellation (“Constel·lació Vinyoli”)

Enric Pladevall Vila (2010)



“Constellation” (Eric Pladevall) is a cylindrical body full of holes, cracks and small bumps that refer to the essential cosmography, that of the four elements: earth, fire, air and water.

Story



The victory of the Romans against the Carthaginians in 218 BC meant the establishment of a new culture in the Iberian Peninsula. Almost 2000 years later, the influence of Roman myths is still evident in the Spanish national iconography and its contemporary arts. An example of this is Eric Pladevall's sculpture “Constellation”, placed in Reus’ city centre.

According to the artist, the inspiration was the baobab tree whose “crown of roots” seem to penetrate the sky. The source of this idea was the book “El Callat”, a compilation of poems by the Catalan writer Joan Vinyoli.

Vinyoli, in an analogy, imagined himself as "a tree of aerial roots" who could not root anywhere on earth. Vinyoli also alludes to the constellation of Orion. According to Roman mythology, Orion was a mortal god who was not born of a woman but blossomed from the earth as a plant.

This piece of art is an extraordinary communion of inherited elements. It represents the universal human desire to understand the mysteries of nature and go beyond what is possible



Links for more information:

<http://joanvinyoli.cat/portal/noticies/254-la-ciutat-de-reus-ja-llueix-l-escultura-constel-lacio-vinyoli?showall=&start=1>





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4 ELEMENTS in arts



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