

## THE VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN SLOVENIA, CONVERSATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS WITH NASKO KRIZNAR, JELKA PSAJD AND JOZE REHBERGER OGRIN

The conversations were led by Elizabeta Pavkovic.

### Nasko Kriznar<sup>1</sup>



*Photo: Jozse Rehberger Ogrin*

### *What was the reason to start the Summer School of Visual Anthropology?*

Yes, we do have a summer school every year. It was envisaged as continuation of the lectures. Usually, sixty university classes are stipulated for the subject Visual Anthropology, which is not sufficient for the implementation of practical work as well. It is so little time, sixty classes. Fifteen topics, four classes each, and if you have fifteen or twenty students, it is impossible to work practically as well. So I established the summer school, so that the students who are interested in my subject can come and work there. Later,

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The conversation took place on 15.12.2011 in Ljubljana.

postgraduates started to come as well. It takes place in Nova Gorica every year, mostly in July. We select only about twenty students, because it is impossible to work with a larger group. We didn't do a lot of advertising, just to avoid the selection. Primarily, at the Department, we ask which of the students will definitely come. For the remaining positions there are students who come from Belgrade, Zagreb, Italy, Austria. It lasts ten days.

*Can you say something more about the program of the summer school?*

We start from the beginning, from what actually means visual anthropology, visual ethnography, then technical works that refer to cinematography, film structure, how the research for a film is planned, how a shooting schedule is prepared, how the shooting takes place, how the material that was obtained is conceptually organized. Then, once again field visit can be performed, it can be amended, then an editing plan is prepared and editing in the end. All this results in a short ten-minute film. We have had different participants in the school, amateurs, between fifteen and sixteen years of age, both male and female. Some who have heard about this school came as amateurs in order to learn how they can make a film. They were mostly interested about the procedure, from shooting to editing, because they do not have an opportunity to learn this in some other way. This year was the fifteenth edition. We're still holding on, however, there are some changes. When we were starting, no one was working on this yet. And this visual technology was not that popular. Now, you know, everyone has it. It's in the mobile phones, in the camera and everyone would like to film something, everyone is editing something at home. Look at all the things being uploaded on YouTube. Some people come, however they underestimate that knowledge, because they think that they know everything already; that they are not supposed to learn anything more. However, it turned out that more work has to be done in this field of film in order to obtain higher quality. Because it is not only important what you film, but also how you film that. You know, the satisfaction is greater when ultimately a beginner realizes that he or she can do something. There was never a case of a beginner doing nothing. There is always a result. It is extremely stimulating.

*How does your work environment accept your work?*

Now the Summer School is working in an environment, actually it's a village near Nova Gorica, and we are also getting feedback from people. Because they are following our work, they know exactly what is being done with them; they come and see the results. I enjoy in this the most. Yes. You know, this is the ethical problem, because you can never tell if someone will be unsatisfied. However, everything was well done so far, so they don't have any remarks. But I constantly tell the students, "Pay attention, talk to them. Tell them honestly what will happen when you film them", so that they would be already prepared. Sometimes, I find this difficult because sometimes the participants at the school film marginal people, who already have a stigma in their own village, and now we present them there. In a manner, we are doing these people a favour, because their neighbours see them as something positive for the first time - in a positive light. And on the other hand, they may ridicule them. It is a very delicate thing. Still there is no requirement to get their formal approval for filming and presenting the filmed material. The participants in the school are mostly young people. The residents of the village know that it's a mat-

ter of some people who make films and that everyone has been informed that maybe they would be visited as well, and then they decide whether they will cooperate themselves. The most dramatic part is when topics for the films are being selected. A written approval has not been our practice yet, although this is an issue that is intensifying in our country as well. They pay a lot of attention to these things in the museum. My colleague from the museum did not make a single move, not a single exhibition, without written approval from the people. Because, their children might react, she says. I have to say that I have never had problems with that summer school. People always accepted this very positively. Because, still, we create an atmosphere there, everything is familiar. We have been in the city, in Nova Gorica, more than ten times. There were times when the same person was filmed several times. There was this one time... when I was walking in the city and... I saw someone familiar. Where have I met him? So I remembered that I saw him on film. If true understanding does not exist, a mistake can easily be made. However, the longer you work with people, the more you know about them. You adjust; they adjust, so you feel more secure. If you do something quickly, a mistake can easily happen. You know, "hidden camera" is the first thing that goes through the mind of young people. When you say objectivity, objective representation of reality, to some people this means, "hidden camera". That's what was done before. It is no longer... The point is not about making it "hidden camera".

*Can you describe the Festival "Days of Ethnographic Film"?*

We decided not to have juries and awards in our festival. However there should be selection. In the first editions of the festival, I made the selection myself. Last year, when most of the films arrived we formed a group of five members who decided what films will be selected for screening and they made the program. Usually we choose about thirty films from about ninety films that have arrived. In regard to the criterion, we stick to the view that the ethnographic film should be based on research. And this should be the work of the researcher himself. It should not be a team that is working for the researcher; rather the researcher should be the generator of this visual research as well, such as Bocev. He is filming himself, he prepares the film and this is usually called "visual ethnography". Hence, the researcher himself, by means of visual images, creates some story about that topic. But what happens then? Reality is such that sometimes we do not get the cleanest films from visual ethnography; rather we get different, documentary films - from television production as well. Then we have to adjust our criteria. Hence, these are not absolute criteria; rather they are relative criteria according to which the films we received meet our criteria the most. We have to be realistic. You know what? This is happening now, at the festivals of ethnographic films. They are increasingly subjected to that criterion of publicity and the television medium. This is horrifying! If only research films are placed, we wouldn't have an audience. However, if we put only documentary films in the program, we are not so specific anymore, what shall we do then? We have to maintain balance. Another problem is that films today are longer and longer. A film of seventy minutes, this is usual now. In the propositions we indicate a recommendation that the film should last mostly forty minutes, but... It's true that there are mostly films of twenty-five or thirty minutes. However, when the long ones come, it is very difficult to make the program. I think that if in the invitation we indicate that they should strictly adhere to

the criteria, we would have to reject one third of the films. This happens in the other festivals as well. We suggest the quality films to the audience by screening these films in better terms. Hence, if the film is presented in the evening or late in the afternoon, this film is better according to our opinion.

### *Where does the Festival take place?*

We organize the festival in different locations; we have not determined a single location. This requires great costs. In the past two years we were in an art cinema in Ljubljana, it is called "Kino Dvor". They expressed preparedness to receive us in the large hall. I insist, since we already have a festival and since authors come who are ambitious and have quality, we have to present them in a surrounding that is filmic, and not in some classroom. There are many such classrooms at the faculty and in the Museum as well, however this is not worthy for a festival.

### *Who makes up the audience?*

The audience mostly comprises of authors, our colleagues and students. I think that if this festival survives, other people will come as well... We announce the organization of the festival in printed media and through the Internet. Now there are numerous reporting, informative pages that publish. The interest and the attendance are not as we would like them to be, they are much lower. However, this is usual. I have visited many festivals. Only in Romania, in Sibiu where this type of films has really great support, there were about hundred visitors: every day, in the morning and in the afternoon. Otherwise, these festivals are not so attended. We're sorry for that, because those films, although maybe they do not have the best quality from filmic point of view, they cannot be seen anywhere else. The television films are screened on televisions and they immediately have one hundred thousand spectators, while these films are presented only in festivals. It is our argument why these festivals should be held.

After the projection of each film, if the author of the film is present, a discussion takes place. And now, the problem of our festival, which is international, is that we do not have the funds to invite the authors. If they come, we rejoice, because we can cover some expenses, we can accommodate them etc. It would be ideal if all authors can come. And everyone, after the film, would be able to discuss. If they come, they have this.

### *Does the Festival have good media support?*

Last year we had an excellent media support. Achieving this requires a real skill. There is the formal way of sending invitations to all those newspapers and other media, however personal contact is best. If you know an editor, a journalist, you make a phone call and tell him, "(You) listen, can you come and..." And we had strong support. Over the years we gradually managed to affirm ourselves. There is response in the daily newspapers, and mostly on television and radio. They respond to the message very quickly... very quickly. You know, they actually need a program.

*What is the foundation of visual ethnography in Slovenia?*

In our country there's a very small group of people who are working on ethnographic film. I started to teach visual anthropology exactly here, at the Department of Ethnology, in 1995. Since then and until ten years ago when I stopped working there, I trained two female students who are working professionally now. One of them is a curator at the Ethnographic museum, and the other one is working at the faculty. This is little. And another person is my colleague here, in the Audio-Visual Laboratory and this is almost everything. There are also people who are employed in museums who practice field filming, preparation and filmmaking. It is a small group, you know. And for this reason it is difficult to achieve reaction, professional reaction. Some reflections are published; our own reflections, however this is not what you asked, to be done by someone else. There are more people outside. As far as I know, there are problems in those environments as well; there is no sufficiently large population that deals with this matter. Maybe this is the reason why the development of this area is so slow... very slow. And Gottingen has great support, however I know that last year it was mostly attended by students who were encouraged to come there by the professors, it was compulsory.

*How are the films for the Festival being invited?*

If I personally undertake something through my personal contacts, more films would be created. However, sometimes a person finds something enough. This year I did not do that, I said, "Good, let's see how many people will arrive without such personal activities" - and more than sixty came, about seventy films. Films from throughout the world arrive. Our festival is a member in the network called CAFFE – Coordinating Anthropological Film Festivals in Europe). There are many ambitious people, especially students who are looking for festivals. They send their films to five festivals at the same time, hoping that someone will accept them and this is how they will get a reference.

Sometimes we receive films from Asia and from other countries beyond Europe. Fine, they mostly come from the neighbouring countries, but also from Russia, Germany and England. Student films mostly come from England, because there's a large centre there, Granada film or Visual anthropology studies. Actually, it is the most productive one and with the most quality, a strong one. Sometimes, these student films that have been made under the mentorship of the best visual anthropologists, are even better than some professional films. Hence, sometimes, we put these student films in the main section. We have three sections. The first one, it is the most original thing about our festival, is the section for visual material. Hence, every ethnologist, everyone who is using a camera in the field, can bring their material, unedited material. He gets forty minutes, half an hour or less, to present it, and then a discussion follows. Hence, that... walk in progress, should not be a film. Because no one is shooting in order to edit that film. They only collect material. The second section is Student Film, which is quite productive. And the third own is the regular program.

### *What is ethnographic film today?*

Recently, it was well defined by Asen Balikci from Bulgaria. He says that the documentary film actually stole all characteristics of the ethnographic film and used them for itself. Many of the things that were in the field of visual anthropology and ethnography twenty years ago, exist in the documentary film now. For example, that realistic type, observational approach, which is called observational realism, it is already present in the documentary film. Even in the feature film. For this reason, the ethnographic film was slightly withdrawn, and now again I would like it to be a bit different. More radical. And even the best ethnographic films are so different than the documentary films, that you immediately realize that it is some other type, both of film and aesthetics and everything. These are visual researches. Hence, we constantly need to search for new methods in order to be different than the documentary film. At least that is my viewpoint. You know, life stories are mostly produced now. You leave the person to speak and you get some really interesting things. It's on the Internet as well. You know who is working the best? That famous American director David Lynch. He created a portal of portraits. You have to find that, I don't know the exact address. Through the portal, or life stories, or David Lynch life stories. It is a fantastic portal. That is only a man who speaks of himself, and it is very effective. It is something that every anthropologist would have to see. We do this a lot. Some people ask, "Shall we call this ethnographic film"? "No, I say, it is not an ethnographic film, it is a research film". Actually, there is no real term for what we do because visual ethnography, research film and visual documentation are constant issues of discussion. Just to be able to show that we are different than the documentary film. They actually "colonized" the ethnographic film. And, I think that this is a good definition. It is a procedure that lasts long. It is a process. And for this reason, you know, in these festivals of ethnographic film there are an increased number of documentary films that are like mimicry. Hence, from formal point of view, they transformed into an ethnographic film. To be more interesting, I guess. I know that our television made a large step forward, even twenty years ago, when the documentary films were entirely metaphorical, only speaking and speaking, no images. And now they already started with observational realism. The camera should only observe; there should be no comments, people should speak by themselves...

### *Where do the authors of documentary films get educated?*

Do you know what the bad thing is? There are no studies in documentary film at the Higher School of Film within the university to learn that feeling of documentary film. The documentary films are mostly made on television, and they are made by directors who were taught to make motion picture at the academy. They can make a documentary film, but that is more artistic, you know - mostly with comments and with instructions for the spectators. We would rather leave the spectator to look for something in the film himself. We do not suggest something with music or with a comment. Actually, the ethnographic film should... the audience for ethnographic film should be a bit more informed in regard to ethnography, cultural heritage, film. That is why conflict and misunderstanding happens, because some people who are familiar with films would come to our festival and say, "These are bad films". Which is actually true. However, we have to be tol-

erant. Wait, first see, think for a while and then criticize. The first thing they say, “Well, how can I leave a person to speak for three minutes?! How is that possible? Because on television there’s a rule that after ten seconds you have to “remove” the person and show something else. His/her voice can be audible, however s/he should not be visible for more than ten seconds. Yes, yes. And the old visual anthropologists taught us, “Don’t switch off the camera! You should just observe, maybe something will happen”. It takes months and months to create the best films. It is not something that can be done in a day. It is impossible. However, it is feasible in cases of short student films that are being made in ten days, under the supervision of a mentor.

## Jelka Psajd<sup>2</sup>



*Photo: Tomislav Vrećić*

### *Where are ethnographic films being created?*

In regard to the ethnographic films, they are mostly created at the Institute and in the Ethnographic Museum. Exactly the Ethnographic Museum has a department of audio-visual anthropology. In the museum where I work, there is no such department. I do this

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<sup>2</sup> Jelka Psajd graduated ethnology and cultural anthropology. Since 1999 she was working in the Memorial Park Kozjansko and in the City Museum of Ljubljana. Since 2002 she is working as a senior curator in the Regional Museum Murska Subota. She is the author of several exhibitions and publications.

The conversation took place on 18.12.2011 in Divaca, Slovenia.



only for myself, because of the ethnology, because I believe that if you film something, if you have live picture, you will show, in the best way, the type of procedure or the type of skill that is applied. Mostly, let's say, when I film craftsmen, artisans, I believe that this is the best way to see how the process is performed. Sometimes it is possible to present how things were once performed and how they are performed now.

*Where can people see these films?*

Different types of documentary films are screened on television, whereby the wider audience has no idea what an ethnographic film is. Ethnographic films can be seen only in the museums or at the DEF – Days of Ethnographic Film, where many ethnographic films are presented. However, generally, people are familiar with the documentary film, but not with the ethnographic film. You know, I don't care at all whether what I do is ethnographic or documentary, or it is not any of these. It is not important to me at all. What is important to me is to document. This means, for the skill of the artisans or, let's say, when I was filming the Furmans, to get documentation in an image. These footages can be seen in the museum, and some of the films can be seen in DEF as well.

While I studied, at the faculty we did not have an opportunity to watch ethnological films. We watched them at exhibitions, but not in all, they were present in some exhibitions as audio-visual additions. In the exhibition you were able to see, I don't know... if the topic is pottery, then you have objects, artefacts and then a film. It was like an addition.

*Did you have training to make ethnographic movies?*

I attended Nasko's Summer School, however I have to say, I'm an amateur in this work and I do not ponder in theories. Film is not a profession to me, as it is to Nasko or Nadja. To me, this indeed represents an addition or a document. This is what matters to me. So I do not go into theory at all, that is absolutely not my interest. And I say, I work differently than the ones who work professionally. I, let's say, when I agree on something with people, I come to the field, I set the camera and I leave it to shoot. And then I try to make the man feel relaxed. This means to get an image as close as possible, as the protagonist would be without the camera. It is the goal of my work. I only shoot that and then I edit it. And not everything, I have many materials that I do not edit. Of seven and a half hours of filmed material, I need to make a film shorter than one hour.

Film is not in the foreground to me. I started working this in order to document, because still it is a live picture and it is important to me as such. Depending on who was documented or what was documented, additional explanations are contained or lack in the film in writing or in audio-form. When I film craftsmen, I think that it is not necessary. However, let's say, in the last film I worked about the Furmans, there is text there. In the festival of ethnographic film I send my footages in the category "ethnographic materials". After the projection, I have the obligation to speak about my way of work, what I'm doing well and what is not so well. Now I'm interested how the film about Furmansko will do. I'm really interested. I haven't been in this section so far.



*What is your attitude in regard to the cooperation with professional film workers?*

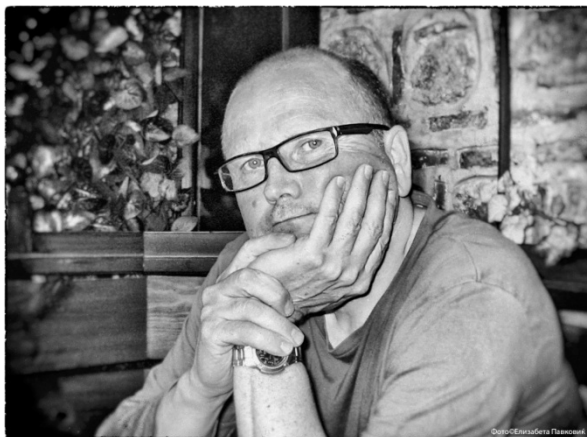
About working with a professional cameraman? Do you know what I have noticed? If you are working with someone, he doesn't see the same things you do. It happened to me... he is there, the process lasts, and I tell him *Shoot!* And then I see that he is not shooting at all! I ask him *why* – *Well, it is not important.* I tell him – *Well, how come it is not important!?! For everything you have to...* And that... makes me nervous. I shoot by myself ever since then. Now I know, where the light is supposed to be, to bring... However, I see... I feel according to people's reactions. When you have such a large reflector, first, it is hot, and then suddenly you are under light. Another thing is the stress. I can see that. And for that reason I do not like the technique. I have a small camera... However, it is a stress by itself already; when a person notices that s/he is being filmed. And for that reason I never say *Stop!* The television teams need to have everything prepared in advance. This never applies for me. I set the camera and I film, and then in editing – I edit. Hence, I believe that I also get good things, which, let's say, are not present on television. I work alone and now I see that it is the best way – the less people, the better. However, in regard to the technical part, I'm not so good at it.

*What is your experience with people who are protagonists of your ethnographic recordings?*

I'll call the people and I'll tell them – *Well, I'd film you. You are important for this to remain, to be kept.* And they say – *Yes. No problem.* However, still, I know that after I call them, they think *How will I...* Often when I shoot someone working something, that person is well dressed. I know that it is not a good thing. However, I can't tell him that now. I have to tell him nicely, but I don't want to think too much as well. So the best for me is just to shoot with the camera – bam! I lend myself to work and shoot. So far no one refused to cooperate with me, for the shooting. Still, most of the time, I previously agree and somehow, in an ethnological way, I convince them, nicely. I see that the greatest problem is that they have fright before the appearance. And this lasts during the first ten to fifteen minutes, and then they forget. Once, I was filming a life story, this means that you have a static camera and you shoot. However, I saw that the man had a lot of fright before the appearance. Then, I left the camera to shoot and I set in front of it, so my interlocutor wasn't looking at the camera at all. He was filmed in profile, but what was more important to me was to leave him speak freely and feel comfortably. I see the fright before the appearance as the greatest problem. In the end I always give them the film. And I have to say that most of them are people I knew previously. I know their work, what they do, how they work etc. We know each other. I always ask them how they liked it. The older people say – *Oh, dear!* However, we have to know their initial attitudes – *Film me? I'm not famous. I don't know enough...* However, when they see the footage, they are happy, that they have been filmed, that they are documented. We presented the film about the Furmans for the first time before an audience, in public. We invited all protagonists and I have to say that the response was remarkable. The people had a lot of fun and they reacted well. Everyone received the film, so... it was a good reaction. However, this certain-

ly depends on the topic, of course. When it comes to some delicate topic, such as menstruation or sex, we wouldn't present this in such manner. However, this turned out well, they were very grateful. And still someone might say - *Oh, this film was good*. And they speak about it.

### Joze Rehberger Ogrin<sup>3</sup>



*Photo: Elizabeta Pavkovic*

*How did you become interested in photography and how did your interest develop?*

I think that sometime in high school I exchanged something with a friend of mine, some Russian Zenith and that is when I started working, slowly, in a dark chamber and then with a magnifier. It was spontaneous; there was no tradition in the family. I had no inspiration or encouragement from my family. The digital device came after a half period of... my "Macedonian era", if I can say so. During the first years when we were coming, the entire technique was analogous, the diapositives and the negatives we made here, in Macedonia. I use them now as well, however, more rarely, normally. It is a questionable issue, but basically, if I shorten the talk and without details, in the past the film was the important medium for the camera, and now it is the card inside, still the principle is basically the same, as well as the knowledge. The fascination is to have the image immediately. Yes, the digitalization has other advantages that it brings with itself, however what is still most important to photography is lightness. Normally, the image is "softened" in

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<sup>3</sup> Joze Rehberger Ogrin is a professional photographer and cameraman. He lives and works in Ljubljana.

The conversation took place on 13.9.2013 in Skopje.

digital form. When it comes to basic things, I still do not reject the possibilities offered by the digital era. And when work was done with a photographic film, in the beginning there were no many types of films, paper, chemicals that you could contrast with. At the time we were working in a dark chamber, so if we damaged the footages, in order to get something of it, you would need special paper, and then you would slightly darken half of the image, etc.... In that regard, we also repaired the mistakes or we made some effects as it can be done now with some computer programs. Still, the base is the same. Now when you come home, you sit in front of the computer ... that takes even more time. Even after you download the footage in the computer, you start working then... It depends on the methods, some prefer this way and some prefer something else... I process every photograph. Even when we were not working with a photographic film, I didn't make photographs of the negatives that were not sufficiently good. Basically, things are not better or worse, rather they are different. I also work on black and white photographs, but I do not neglect the colour as well. Colour is an interesting thing in photographs. The selection depends on the current decision. Of the topics... people are always interesting, portraits, details of nature... The only thing I do not like and that I would never do is "paparazzo" photography. No!

*What are your interests and experiences in engaging in professional photography?*

Couple of years ago I was working on press photography. However, now there is fluctuation of photographs, they are excessively present in publishing houses. I focused on film that is what I want to do. In film festivals, I cooperate with film workers, if an opportunity emerges; I also work as film photographer, and normally, with anthropologists.

In Koper I was working in the museum, it is a regional museum. I was a photographer there – a documentarian at the department of ethnology. It was a two of us when we were starting, the colleague who was a manager and I, a documentarian. Together we did field work, we documented, and we made exhibitions, interviews. Our parts were Kras and Istra in Slovenia. The municipalities funded the work of the museum that belongs to that region from administrative point of view. I went to practice there during my studies and then I was invited to work. I left everything in Ljubljana and... poof in Koper! I lived and worked there for six years. I was always bored while I was there. In the museum... Now that museology has changed, there are different concepts and approaches. There is something modern in every period, something that can be composed into *professional work*, into *a new doctrine*, into *new trends*, *fancy*. And this is perceived through years. And now when we look back, what the exhibitions in the fifties, the sixties and the eighties were like, we can perceive this. This work in a museum... is it a commodity or not? People know how work in a museum was done; sometimes you do nothing, right? Let's be honest. Well, not nothing, but, that... coolness... And we all say, *we work so much!* *We work so much!* After some time new constant exhibition is set, and then again. There, it was like this in our museum, we set a constant collection; it was "World of Stone". The colleague Zvona, a curator and a manager of the department of ethnology, managed the project and prepared a scenario according to which we made a documentary film. An entire series for "World of Stone", about the use of stone in the region, about the people, the

architecture, the symbols, the dishes. It was a constant exhibition. Fine, we made a constant exhibition, it is primary work, field, documentation, collection etc., however there is a lot of manoeuvring space here, to be able to go to the market for a while, to meet a friend...

The department of ethnology is located in a nice facility, which is actually a Venetian-Gothic house. It is physically dislocated unit of the museum. Downstairs there is space for temporary exhibitions, and there, you know, everyone in such museums insist on *what is ethnological only!* And it... it became boring. The architecture from the region of Istra was interesting, the *Istrian kazuns* and... like everything has to be an ethnological material. It became a bit boring to me. At the time, still there were no conversations about attracting people, making a concert, people would come, they see that something is happening here, it doesn't have to be *the primary thing*, what ethnology is and doing that only. There was no interest in the museum, because if you change the concept, you will have to finish some work, to engage yourself. And no one likes that, *who will come in the afternoon now? Concerts?* And then, together with my colleague, we organized an exhibition with a Serbian painter, who we invited to make illustrations of those mythological creatures. It comprised of ethnological material, but it was more extensive, artistic.

In this period I regularly followed the events in the Slovenian Cinematheque because it is my field of interest. There I met Mrs Lily who had made two very interesting exhibitions about the history of film, "Cinematographer in Ljubljana 1896-1918 (Kinematograf v Ljubljani 1896-1918)" and "Cinematographer in Gorica (Kinematograf v Gorica)". I contacted the Slovenian Cinematheque, because we had that place for temporary exhibitions, which was great, and the exhibition referred to the cinematography of that area, the region Primorska. After a month, we received that exhibition. I organized everything, I engaged musicians who played film music, and that is how we started to cooperate. When I left the museum and I moved to Ljubljana, I worked with her for couple of years at the museum department of the Slovenian Cinematheque. There a photograph is considered a museum object that is differently valorised. In that period, it rarely happened in museology for a photograph, a printed photograph, to have special importance, to reflect the essence, although it is maybe five years old. Printed photograph. There, let's say, some photographs from filming, working recordings or portraits are absolutely considered a museum object. We arranged a great part of that documentation, photographs, footages, visual material of which the colleague later made an exhibition about the Slovenian actress Ita Rina, which was set in the memorial house in Divaca - research was conducted, original photographs were collected. Unfortunately, I have to say that while she was there, and the director at the time, times were better and the house was more maintained.

### *How familiar are you with the events in festivals of ethnological and documentary films?*

I was working at the Film Festival "Cinema Otok (Kino Otok)" in Izola. I was working as an official photographer during the first years of this festival. I'm present in Innsbruck for almost ten years and until now, I'm engaged as an official photographer. At the invitation of Ines Prica, I was cooperating with my Croatian colleagues - anthro-

pologists for a couple of years. As a photographer and cameraman I participated in few of their projects and interesting field research. I cooperated with colleagues from Serbia at the ethnological conferences in Sirogojno and Vrshac. I was at the film festival in Bolzano, Italy, for two years, and I was also an accredited photographer at the festival Manaki Brothers. As a photographer and co-author of films, I also participated at the Festival of Ethnological Film in Kratovo. Lately there are an increased number of film festivals, however in regard to the quality of films, I'm quite sceptical.

*Through cooperation with the ethnologists and the anthropologists, you already know Macedonia well.*

I come to Macedonia every year since 1998... sometimes twice a year. I came three times once. I met some wonderful people from your institute and we maintain professional and friendly relations to this date. I did field work in Poreche, Mariovo, Mavrovo, Prespa and Strumica... It was (and still is) interesting, because my experience and the impressions I acquired were coloured with contrasting feelings of beauty, sadness, madness, melancholy, joy, powerlessness, disappointments, celebrations... I speak about my personal impressions about the country called Macedonia. Many things have changed since then. I'm not referring to this "Disneyland" here in the city. Some things did not work as they do now. When I come, I have this feeling of a lack of time. I need two or three days to feel things, and actually I should return already. Space should be felt. I had a great time in Poreche, however it was too intensive because we had limited time. In my opinion, all fieldwork was excellently organized by you. I felt sorry that I had to subordinate to the colleagues a lot because of the photographic material; I was related to them. I did field work even when they didn't. I would do that differently today, definitely. We didn't work systematically, by making a plan, "We are interested in this and that. We need *that* visual material". I was a photographer, fine; I photographed portraits, situations, something from architecture. I can make an interesting photograph as I see it, however I like it when we complement with the anthropologist, the researcher. I ask what his intention is, what he is thinking about, what he will warn me about. There we went to Peshna, Devich, Manastirec, Samokov, Inche and in other villages. We also went to Mavrovo and Galichnik. We always had excellently organized transportation; *Ramce Tours* drove us. Everything was perfectly organized by the Institute, whereby the terrain offered here never reached the level of the terrain organized in Slovenia. I photographed and I filmed. We filmed a *kurban* in Strumica. It would be nice to go again and observe things from a different point of view. To film some additional materials, to edit them a bit and prepare an educational film intended for the students. I like being early at the spot, to prepare myself, to talk to the people about the development of things regarding the ritual. If you arrive later, you will miss some parts about that material. Precisely about the *kurban*, some things that emotionally oppose the personal attitudes (however, when that is a fact, people live with that, that is how things are done), in such circumstances, metaphorically speaking, during the editing we can "iron" these things, such as the act of killing the animal. This can also be presented in a different manner; still some things should be visible. We visited the mayor of Strumica, we established good relations with the priest and the priest's wife

from the village, however this is only the beginning. In my opinion, we obtained only a base on which quality research should be built.

When I photograph people, I like meeting them better before I do this. It would be ideal. You are always in a dilemma, not a moral one, rather a personal dilemma, due to the dissatisfaction to come, to do something quickly and leave. I like to come there and be with them; honestly, it is not a bluff. Normally, sometimes you need to convince people, but you should not lie to them. That is important. Sometimes you are successful and, normally, there are times when they are unkind, often you convince them that you are not *a bad guy*. When a man comes to a village, with a backpack and an appearance of a stranger, they are doubtful. It was not your fault and it was not their fault either. Simply, that is how the situation developed. But then you should dedicate some efforts and energy and destroy that barrier. And this takes time.