

NEWS FROM BORDERLAND

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2018

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EUROPEAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION AWARD FOR BORDERLAND!

On 16 May, the European Cultural Foundation will present two laureates with the 2018 ECF Princess Margriet Award for Culture: cultural centre Borderland (PL) and multidisciplinary research agency Forensic Architecture (UK).



ECF is the founder of the Princess Margriet Award for Culture, an annual award for cultural change makers in Europe, established in 2008. The Award honors inspiring examples of people and organizations who dare—through various modes of cultural expression and discourse—to imagine and enact a more inclusive, shared European space.

The independent, international jury, whose meeting took place at ECF in Amsterdam 8–9 January, chose Borderland Foundation and Forensic Architecture as the two laureates of this year's ECF Princess Margriet Award for Culture. Both organizations were selected for their determination in addressing—albeit on different scales and with different approaches—urgent contemporary challenges.





Borderland has been selected for bringing the arts of many cultures that have tragically disappeared from a rural community back to the community and is giving this cultural expression new life through young generations. Over the 28 years since it was founded, Borderland has become a lively cultural agora, archive and reflection space thriving within the complex, conflicted history and diversity of Sejny, Poland —a “borderland” of the EU.

Among previous laureates are: John Akomfrah (a British artist, writer and film director of Ghanaian descent), Borka Pavićević (a Serbian dramaturge and cultural activist, founder of the Centre for Cultural Decontamination), Asli Erdogan (Turkish writer and journalist), Kretakor (a Hungarian centre for contemporary arts which creates creative community games), Visual Culture Research Center (Ukrainian institution serving as a platform for collaboration between academics, artists and activists), Teatro Valle Occupato (an Italian theater group that began an occupation strike to prevent the privatization of the old theater in Rome, later socialized the space, starting its artistic and social activity on a new basis - cooperation between employees and viewers), Luc Mishalle (saxophonist and composer, artistic director of MET-X - a house of music makers in Brussels), Stuart Hall (a Jamaican-born cultural theorist, political activist and sociologist) and Navid Kermani (German writer and Orientalist).

CELEBRATING TOMAS VENCLOVA'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

In 2017, the celebrations of Venclova's 80th birthday took place in his native Lithuania. The Borderland Centre also honoured as their master and friend, a borderlander and citizen of the Miłosz's native realm. The festive ceremony took place on December 10, 2017 in the White Synagogue in Sejny, and gathered like-minded citizens of the world borderlands as well as his closest neighbours from the Lithuanian-Polish borderlands: eminent intellectuals, people of culture and fans of his work. Among those participating were: Beata Kalęba, Andrzej Strumiłło, and Dominik Wilczewski. Read were letters with congratulations from Timothy Snyder, and Marci Shore, Barbara Toruńczyk, Alina Kuzborska and Irena Grudzińska-Gross. It was a time of conversation, singing songs and readings of poetry in several languages, and a time to give birthday presents to our honoured guest.





We all owe a huge neighbourhood debt to Tomas Venclova, a man who did a lot to make the Polish-Lithuanian borderlands a truly good neighbourhood. It is very rarely that you can meet a man like him - an artist able to extend the boundaries of our world and build a common spiritual space between bordering communities - said Krzysztof Czyżewski during the event.

He also added that the presence of Tomas Venclova and Andrzej Strumiłło, who have both witnessed the madness and tragedies of the twentieth century, reminds us that peace is not given forever, and we have to laboriously strive towards a good neighbourhood, doing the homework that we all have been assigned, grain by grain.



[LANDSCAPE, SUMMER 2001](#)

In the beginning was the wind, the signboards,
the tower breaking through the awkward gravel,
the wells of dingy courtyards and the rounded
space of Parmenindes extending upward.

The dust wafts to the groves in the outskirts.
An unseen butterfly clings to the volute,
and unremitting chance wipes out completely
a star's reflection in the quivering waters.

A loudspeaker by the open window,
broadcasts the roar of the archangel's trumpet
and the God, upon waking, reduces
the square to a pinch of love and ashes

The sun comes up above ruined city.
Lights gropes for the desk and quickly finds it,
and empty time is severed sentence
which contradicts the night that has just ended.

Translated by Constantine Rusanov. The poem was published in "Sejny Poems" by Tomas Venclova.

SILVA RERUM

The Silva Rerum (Home Book) is composed of multi-generational, interdisciplinary activities bringing together inhabitants of four villages adjacent to the International Center for Dialogue: Krasnogruda, Dusznica, Żegary and Ogrodniki.



The project participants were a group of 30 of both young and older residents of the places. Drawing on the legacy of the historic silvae chronicles, they created a book-diary of the history of these towns and their families. The Silva of Krasnogruda is a tale of common life; it records major events – births, funerals, and notes and memories of persons who passed away. The project included also workshops which gathered mainly the young participants of the programme.



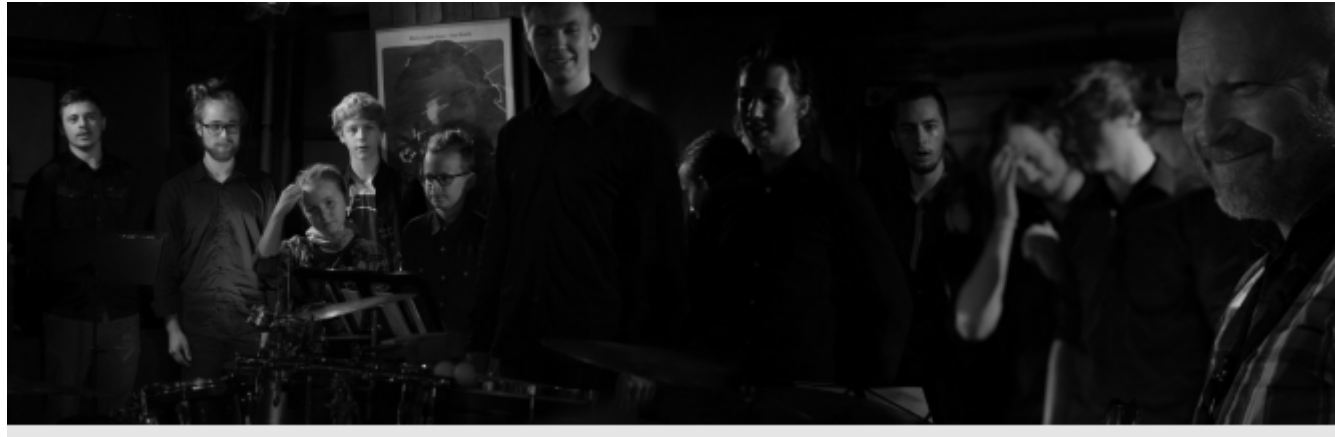
The chroniclers of the Silva of Krasnogruda explored old documents and photographs that bear witness to the past and in a meticulous way tell about the old days: the history of the region, patriotic events, times of war, shifts of borders, religious life, common neighbourhood fates of the living here Poles, Lithuanians or Old Believers.

The project included also workshops which gathered mainly the young participants of the programme. These were workshops of journalism, film-making, photography, literature and art. The project was composed also of meetings and interviews as well as trips to the places where participants could have access to rich collections of films, photographs and documents recording the history of Poland and its culture.

A very important element of these activities was a meeting within the creative work of different generations. The eldest shared their knowledge and experience, and the young drew on this knowledge by learning how to record and document a remembered past using film, photography and reportage. The project ended with a festive presentation of the Home Book, combined with an exhibition, screening of films and an evening of story-telling.



THE KLEZMER ORCHESTRA OF THE SEJNY THEATRE



TWO LONG-AWAITED PREMIER RELEASES
OF THE ALBUMS BY THE KLEZMER
ORCHESTRA OF THE SEJNY THEATRE IN
2018!



The first one, already available, is the fruit of the Musicians' Raft, New York to Sejny program. The project included meetings with outstanding musicians who create the contemporary sound of the Jewish music in the world. David Krakauer, Michael Alpert, Mikołaj Trzaska, Raphael Rogiński and Frank London met with the Orchestra in 2017. Together, they recorded the score of the album, including some world premieres composed especially for the Klezmer Orchestra. The Raft program was implemented thanks to the financial support of the National Centre for Culture.

The second album contains original music of the Klezmer Orchestra of the Sejny Theatre, recorded in December 2017. Michał Moniuszko remembers: "Working in the studio was an interesting experience for us, not so much different from our regular rehearsals or concerts. The music was recorded with all the musicians playing at the same time and place. In our group of twenty people there is still room for spontaneity, freshness, and good energy. The album is to premier in March 2018.





THE KEEPERS OF THE FLAME

Both albums were made in an improvised studio, in the rooms of the "Song of Porcelain" Literary Café, Miłosz's Manor in Krasnogruda. Excellent sound and work conditions and were arranged by the record producers: Andrzej Giegiel and Karol Dobrowolski from Agrorecording, whereas Sebastian Witkowski took care of the quality of sound and audio post-production.

MYSTERY OF THE BRIDGE 2017

THE FILM COLLECTION - PART VI - BORDERLAND TALES

Film Collection - Part VI - Borderland Tales. After folk tales, songs, stories about Krasnogruda, neighbours' memories and childhood recollections, it is time for the family jewels - Keepsakes.





These are stories about the most valuable household items, passed from generation to generation, painstakingly cared for or sometimes forgotten or lost. Touched by a warm hand, they are revitalised, their content and value restored. Touched by a warm hand, they are revitalised, their content and value restored.

Ten new films were added to the collection, the product of cooperation between three generations, grandparents, parents, their children and grandchildren. Long family gatherings, conversations and memories led to the initial concept for the script/screenplay. The next step was independent preparation of the scenery and the puppets, followed by the long process of animation, storyline and narration. Just the sound and music... and our film is ready. We invite you into the world of Sejny's Memory.



IN BETWEEN?

SEARCHING FOR LOCAL HISTORIES

IN POLISH-LITHUANIAN

BORDERLAND

In July 2017 young generation of Europeans explored history of Polish-Lithuanian borderland and 7 other European regions. As a part of In Between? project, launched and organised by European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, students visited Sejny and Krasnogruda in Poland, as well as Vilnius, Keturiasdešimt Totorių, Trakai and Panierai in Lithuania. Participants were given a unique opportunity to gain theoretical and practical experience in documenting oral stories.





The project was open to all candidates age 18-25, including students and freelancers representing various areas of interest such as history, cultural anthropology, sociology and audiovisual arts.. After the recruitment process they took part in interdisciplinary workshops and study visits to .. Polish-Lithuanian borderland, Vojvodina (Serbia), Berlin, Mostar (Bosnia and Hercegovina), Prespa lakes region (Macedonian-Albanian-Greek borderland), Albanian-Montenegrin borderland, Hungarian-Romanian borderland and Catalan cross-border region.

Local partners in Polish-Lithuanian borderland were: Lithuanian House in Sejny, “Pogranicze” Foundation in Sejny, Polish Institute in Vilnius, Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum. Short films made by the students are now available online.



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