

## **The Measure of the Sea**

**20/4/2024 – 24/11/2024**

Pavilion of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the  
60th International Art Exhibition –  
La Biennale di Venezia



## Info visitors

Pavilion of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
**at the 60th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia**

Palazzo Zorzi – UNESCO, Venice  
**April 20th – November 24th, 2024**

## Opening Hours

Opening hours 11 AM-7 PM

**(from 20 April to 30 September),**

10 AM-6 PM

**(from 1 October to 24 November)**

Closed on Mondays

**(except 22 April, 17 June, 22 July, 2 and 30 September, 18 November)**

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## **The Measure of the Sea** An Ode to the Mediterranean Identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The artistic project "The Measure of the Sea," by artist Stjepan Skoko and curator Marin Ivanović, deals with reading the layered meaning and symbolism of the sea, its depth and spaciousness, civilizational conditioning, and role in the identity of the individual. According to Fernand Braudel, the Mediterranean preserved its continuity more in the hinterland than along the coast. The Mediterranean cultural space belongs to Herzegovina, which is the homeland of Stjepan Skoko, so the authenticity of his work is manifested in the inherent belonging to the sea, which is physically just within reach.



### Components of the “Measure of the Sea” Art Project

The first part of the sculptural ensemble consists of square sections formed from aluminum painted a bright blue color with some elements that are covered with rust or sandblasted in raw aluminum. These square elements represent the “measure of the sea,” the eternal human need to know the world by means of categorization, organization, and calculation: the sea is divided into latitudes and longitudes, geographical coordinates that are drawn with regular lines on nautical charts and form “quadrants,” distances are measured in nautical miles, speed is expressed in knots, the direction of movement is determined with a compass, and the rose of winds is inextricably linked to it, and winds are the greatest help and greatest threat to a man at sea.

The second part of the sculptural ensemble evokes the undersea, mussels, and other shells. These sculptural elements are made of iron forged in a traditional forge in Kreševo, and with this, the author connected the sea with the deep interior of Bosnia and Herzegovina, very close to its geographical center. Individual circular elements are welded to each other and are shaped like verticals, thus evoking the method of growing

mussels on vertically placed ropes. Others, on the other hand, are arranged on the stone floor, pointing to the rocky seabed covered with a variety of life.

In a symbolic sense, the sea represents connection but also separation. It is said that “when you put your finger in the sea, you are connected to the whole world,” but the sea is also a great obstacle that man wanted to conquer by building ships and sailing on the sea. The sea represents freedom, uncertainty, and possibility. The reflections of light on the polished surface of these sculptures convey these symbolic features to the viewer. Light and luminescent effects affect the perception of the beholder, deceiving the eye as an apparition, and whether it is bright sunlight or subtle artificial lighting, the mirroring and reflections on the surface of these elements are the key visual determinants of this sculptural installation.

The spatial sculptural unit is completed with sound elements, reinterpreted sounds of the sea and human activity, which creates a link with the forging of sculptural components, the welding of metal (which is also the sounds of the shipyard), and the sounds created by sea creatures.





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## The Peculiarity of the Ambience

The art installation in the Zorzi Palace in Venice brought a completely new ambient value. Renaissance architecture and contemporary sculpture establish a relationship of extreme contrast: white stone, architectural plasticity, and open space are juxtaposed with polished square elements made of painted aluminum and oval shapes made of wrought iron. This creates an impression of aesthetic wonder that is surreal and beautiful. This art installation offers us three key viewing perspectives: one is from the main entrance, which provides an overview of the two entities and achieves a momentary impression of surprise; the second is from the end of the atrium towards the arches and columns of the palace, from which we see the “surface of the sea” in front of us and the “depth of the sea” in the semi-darkness of the vaulted space; and the third is from a height that offers, for humans, always the most intriguing upper perspective, from which we can see the perfection of the symmetry of the square sections of the “Measure of the Sea”. It is precisely from the awareness of the centuries-old course of human creativity that connects the architects of the Zorzi Palace and the contemporary artist Skoko that our intellectual satisfaction is born because we are part of an unfathomable civilizational, temporal, and spatial entity!











### **The Relationship Between the “Measure of the Sea” Project and Venice and the Theme of This Year’s Biennale**

Although the theme of the Venice Biennale is not binding for the national pavilions, this year’s theme, “Stranieri ovunque / Foreigners Everywhere,” is very compatible with the theme of the exhibition because the sea is an obstacle that separates people and makes them foreigners. In the context of modern migrations, it should be pointed out that the UN has published data on over 20,000 drowning deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea since 2014 who were fleeing from North Africa to Europe. The sea is a blue tomb for those who did not want to be “the others,” who did not want to be strangers.

Venice as a city has a special relationship with the sea since it was built entirely on the sea, which is why it is called the “Bride of the Sea.” Its naval dominance at sea has lost all traces of historical significance in the 21st century and has acquired the aura of a fragile heritage that is literally sinking and that needs to be saved. The writer from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Predrag Matvejević, wrote the prose-publicist work “The Other Venice,” in which he dealt with its specificities that are not known or accessible to tourists, thus exploring the layers of its cultural history. He is also the author of the book “Mediterranean Breviary,” from which we can read the spiritual postulates that directed Stjepan Skoko towards this topic.



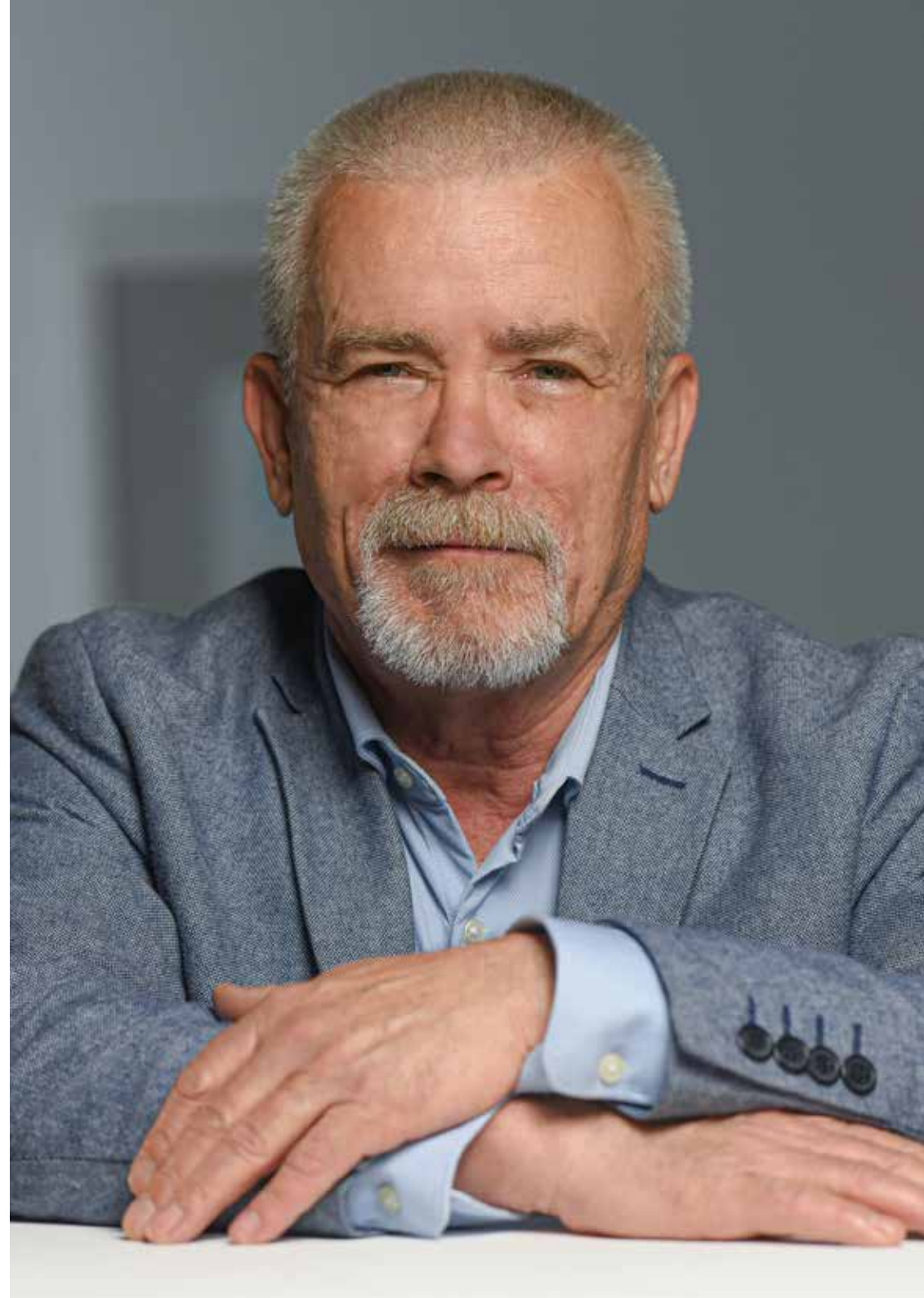






## About the artist Stjepan Skoko

Stjepan Skoko is a renowned Croatian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian artist who created dozens of monuments and sculptures in public spaces, and his works are in many museum and private collections. Numerous renowned art historians, writers, and critics wrote essays and art criticism, as well as many reviews, about his work. His works are represented in textbooks, literary editions, monographs, and anthologies, such as the monograph *Destination Art on sculpture in public spaces* by Amy Dempsey, published by Thames & Hudson from London, and other editions published by the University of California Press, Ludion and Belser. Stjepan Skoko was born in 1959 in Grab near Ljubuški, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He graduated from the School of Applied Arts in Sarajevo in 1979, and in 1986 he graduated in sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, in the class of Vjekoslav Rukljač. Since 1987, he has been a member of the Croatian Society of Fine Artists in Zagreb and the Association of Fine Artists of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. In 1995, he founded the TMT Art Gallery in Ljubuški and participated in the founding of the Academy of Fine Arts of the University of Mostar, where he is the head of the sculpture class as a full professor. He served as the dean of the Academy from 2013 to 2020, and since January 2021, he has been the Assistant to the Rector for the field of arts.





# Project

## **The name of the Pavilion**

The Measure of the Sea

## **Commissioner and curator**

Marin Ivanović

## **Exhibitor**

Stjepan Skoko  
University of Mostar and  
the Museum of Modern Art

## **Rector of the University of Mostar**

Zoran Tomić

## **Head of the project organization**

Damir Vasilj

## **Exhibition production manager and deputy curator**

Vladimir Filipović

**Project team** Dora Vidović, Vladimir  
Vegar, Dinko Baković, Toni Barać,  
Lea Kraljević

## **Head of public relations**

Vladimir Vegar

## **Composer of the musical**

**composition “The Measure of the  
Sea”** Andrijan Zovko

## **Graphic designer of visual identity**

Marin Musa

## **Production of video materials**

Franjo Takač, Vinko Barić

## **Photographers**

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Miho Skvrce

## **Architectural project**

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Gabrijel Pavlak, Vlado Topić

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Ivo Karačić

## **Blacksmiths, welders and**

**sprayers** Ranko Čiča, Mijo Filipović,  
Željko Crnjac, Žarko Bebić,  
Snježana Bebić

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Toni Barać

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