

Jury report

Report of the session of the expert panel of judges held on 6-8 May 2021 to assess the 49th ICEFA Lidice 2021

MEMBERS OF THE PANEL OF THE 49TH ICEFA LIDICE 2021

Chairwoman of the panel:

Ivana Junková – headmistress at Art School Řevnice

Members of the panel:

Jana Anděličová – teacher at Marie Podvalová and Štítný Art Schools, Prague

Eva Bartošová – teacher at Art School Nové Město pod Smrkem

Čeněk Hlavatý – headmaster at Art School Mšeno

Martin Homola – fine art photographer Buštěhrat

Vladimír Hrebeňák – teacher at Art School Karlovy Vary

Kateřina Krutská Vrbová – teacher at Art School Řevnice, film editor

Helena Lisá – teacher at M. Stibor Art School Olomouc

Romana Pavlíčková – headmistress at Art School Most, Moskevská

Jaroslava Spěváčková – deputy headmistress at Art School Plzeň, Jagellonská

Martina Sumcová – teacher at the school Na Dlouhém Lánu

Romana Štajerová – teacher at Art School Plzeň, Jagellonská

Pavel Rajdl – visual artist, Kolín

Josef Zedník – visual artist, Olešná

Alena Zupková – deputy headmistress at V. Vančura Art School, Háj ve Slezsku

A hundred years ago, in his drama R.U.R., the Czech writer Karel Čapek used the word 'robot' for the first time. That was one of the reasons for choosing "The ROBOT and artificial Intelligence" as the main theme of the 49th ICEFA, with the following sub-themes: What a robot can and cannot do, Inside the machine, R.U.R.: Robots in literature and film, The year 2121, AI development and AI types, Technology and ethics, Data, Nanorobots.

Such interesting theme was surely close to children's heart and brought virtually unexpected results. Members of the panel were able to peer into the world of the first robots and home appliances but also into the world of complex, sophisticated and autonomous robots used in industry and science. They saw simple little robots such as pets but also the most complex one, such as devices used in space and undersea

exploration and medicine. Also robo services were presented, such as barbers and hairdressers, assistants in traffic and safety control, law keepers, fire fighters as well as robo paramedics and hospital attendants. Many entries were inspired by films. A special chapter consisted of nano-robots, the little and invisible ones, which navigate the human bloodstream. Young artists were impressed also by artificial intelligence, data as well as ethical issues involved in new technologies and progress. Also portraits of the brothers Čapek as well as famous inventors and technical geniuses were represented. The ICEFA panel of judges was clearly overrun by robots! We believe that Karel Čapek would be pleased with the creativity and ingenuity of children and young people.

This year, as the year before, was affected by the covid-19 pandemic. On the whole, this situation made itself felt not only in the number of entries reduced by half but often also in their quality. At first it may appear that distance education offers an easy and quick solution for art education, however, the reverse is true. Children and young people surely need artistic assistance, consultation and sensitive guidance; no wonder that indecision and uncertainty are often very much obvious in their works. Thus, working together appears to be indispensable, it cannot be replaced fully just by communication via the computer screen. Despite the above-mentioned facts, the panel of judges was pleasantly surprised and gratified by the interest, zest and inventiveness young people showed in setting about the issue.

Summary on entries:

Number of entries in total: **11 213**

Number of participating/award-winning countries: **72/71**

Number of participating / award-winning organizations and individuals: **1,328/340**

Number of newly registered schools: **237**

Out of the total of 11,213 entries from 72 countries 945 were awarded 952 prizes including 156 medals (124 individual medals and 32 medals to schools for their collections).

Our credit and admiration go to all who wanted to and did work artistically. Compared to the last ICEFA, this year's one was again a bit more complicated. Conditions under which children were able to work differed across schools, towns and countries a bit more than in usual years. A significant portion of entries were created totally independently within distance education, without personal presence of teachers. Despite that, this year's exhibition had upwards of ten thousand entries, which is an admirable number in view of the situation.

Foreign countries

Despite the complicated global situation, a number of countries sent in very interesting art collections. Understandably, it was obvious that less entries came in and that they had not been created in direct interaction with a teacher. Some countries did not participate at all in the ICEFA this year; all the more we need to appreciate the works that did come in.

The panel was impressed, for instance, by interesting collections from Belarus, Thailand, Korea and Kenya with the last mentioned achieving a marked progress in artistic quality. Also surprising was the collection from Indonesia, which was much richer than in previous years, containing even works in photography. The panel also appreciated the collection from Myanmar, where there is a very difficult situation. An excellent, balanced collection of paintings came from four- and five-year-old children from Vkids Creative (Hong-Kong), traditionally outstanding works came from Simply Art (Hong-Kong) and very interesting entries employing traditional techniques came from Artspire in Shanghai (China). As for prints, the attention of the panel was captured by linocut collections from F. Kazinczy Primary School and Art School in Debrecen (Hungary), from the PIKTUM Association in Belgrade (Serbia) and an outstanding collection from Visual Art Center in Kryvyj Rih (Ukraine). Traditionally beautiful watercolour came from the GBOU School no. 1955 in Moscow (Russia) and from the Academic Lyceum of Fine Arts Igor Vieru in Kishinev (Moldova). Inspiring entries came from MAOU DO Tsentra Detskogo Tvorchestva in Birobidzhan (Russia).

Slovakia

Collections from Slovakia were also markedly strongly affected by closed schools and distance education. Much less entries and in lower artistic quality arrived than usual. It is all the more necessary to appreciate the collections coming from Art Slnečnice. o. z. in Bratislava and from Private Art School Trenčín, Gagarinova.

Nursery schools

While only two Slovak nursery schools sent in their entries, Czech nurseries were represented relatively well both in number and in quality. The panel of judges praised collections from the Nursery School Kampanova in Hradec Králové, Nursery School Háj ve Slezsku-Smolkov, Nursery School Háj ve Slezsku, Školní, Nursery School Sluníčko in Roudnice nad Labem and Sunny Canadian International School – Nursery School, s. r. o.

Primary schools

As for primary schools, the attention of the panel was captured by the collection of entries from T. G. Masaryk Primary School in Opava, which sent in a collection of colour linocut prints, and from the Primary School Nové Město Pod Smrkem, which adds to the exhibition a very good collection of portraits of Karel Čapek that were created according to a model turned upside down.

Secondary schools

There were very few entries coming in from secondary schools this year and their quality of execution and the inventiveness in rendering the theme were not, in general, very high. However, we very much appreciate the fact that teachers at secondary schools could manage time to register their students for the competition.

Clubs and youth centres

Also among the clubs the lockdown made itself felt. All the more it is necessary to commend those who sent in interesting works. The panel would like to praise Art Workshop Očko in Dvůr Králové Nad Labem for their fine collection of linocut prints and the Leisure centre Bájo in Česká Skalice for their collection of monotypes.

Special schools and Centres for the handicapped

In contrast with other schools, special schools were, but for several days, able to work as usual. It showed itself also in their output. An exquisite collection of intaglio prints came from Domov Zběšičky, the unit DUHA in Písek, and a truly extraordinary collection of prints from Social Service Centre Horizont in Protivín.

Art schools

As with Slovak art schools, so with Czech art schools, there was decline in number of entries and, in consequence of distance education, often in artistic quality. An honourable exception was the Art School Strakonice, the collection of which was affected by the lockdown neither in number, nor in quality, nor in variety in media. The panel highly appreciates its work. However, the panel of judges would like to praise other schools who maintained a very good standard in this difficult time. The Art School Mšeno for a varied collection in areal and spatial work, the M. Stibor Art School in Olomouc for a nice collection of prints, the Art School Jilemnice for excellent linocut prints, the Art School Nové Město Pod Smrkem for excellent guidance in distance education, the Art School Prague 9, Prosek for a very good collection of drawings, the V. Vančura Art School in Háj Ve Slezsku for a beautiful collection of prints, the PhDr. Zdeněk Mrkos Art School in Brno for an imaginative collection of large collages, the F. X. Richter Art School in Holešov and the Art School Krnov on the Main Square for their collection of works.

Spatial entries

To the surprise of the panel, even this year spatial entries came in great numbers. And there was something to look at. In foreign section, the panel was captivated namely by the collection of robots from Algeria. Outstanding among the Czech collections were the pieces of ceramics from Zásكالák Liteň, the collection of robotic beetles from the Art School Mšeno, the papier maché sculptures from the Art School Strakonice, then also works from the Art School Most, Moskevská street, the Art School Postoloprty and the art School Moravský Beroun as well as the collection of delicate papier maché things made of wooden skewers from the T. Brzková Art School in Plzeň. The panel also found interesting the collection of peculiar figures of robots from the School Sedmikráska in Rožnov Pod Radhoštěm.

Comments

The panel observed that closed schools and distance education adversely affected both number and quality of entries. Nevertheless, all the more it appreciates those who engaged in creative work despite the unfavourable situation and sent in their works to this year's competition. Members of the panel also stated that they lack an international dimension of the panel, recognizing certain limits of their European view of artistic aesthetics.

With their schools closed and without any personal contacts, children from across countries including Czechia increasingly searched for inspiration on the Internet. Thus the panel could see for example several entries from various countries that obviously drew inspiration from the same photo. That is surely not the way the artistic work should follow. Hopefully, the next year will not see such difficult situation and young artists, assisted by their teachers, will be able to fully unfold their imagination.

Photos

As for the photographic output, the panel considered extraordinary the photos from the Vilnius Mykolo Birzhishkos Gymnasium (Lithuania), which are the best photos of this year's ICEFA in general, and the collection from OS Polzela (Slovenia). From among Czech photos, the panel was most impressed by entries from the Art School Ostrava-Poruba, the Art School Mšeno and the Art School Nové Město Pod Smrkem. Also photography was affected by a decline in number and the distance education. Generally, the entries were of descriptive character, without any artistic added value. There was no apparent serious work either with the composition or with the technique. Some non-traditional techniques were completely missing this year, for example analogue photography, which is directly dependent on the work at school. However, the panel was pleased that photography was represented even in such difficult time.

Film

The film category has been among the ICEFA categories for five years, becoming an integral part of the exhibition. Making a film is one of the rather complicated ICEFA

disciplines and ways of artistic expression. Filmmaking is usually not included in the school curriculum. It is a team or individual work that requires a certain technical base. These facts are reflected in the resulting form of short films that have been sent in to the competition. As the film section was included into a visual art competition, the assessment puts stress on the artistic approach, visuality and the choice of visual film technique. The content of the film should be connected with the given theme and the narrative should go beyond emotions, drama etc. An integral part of the assessment is the execution of the film both in terms of technique and content, so-called film language and chosen artist's approach, dramaturgical structure and maintaining the story line, choice of the soundtrack, editing structure, image composition, camera work etc. Even in the simplified child version, the criteria must be the same as for any other age category.

As against last year, the standard of this year's film entries got a bit higher but in terms of visual form and content. The panel stated that the distance education left more time for creative filmmaking. Missing pedagogical guidance made itself felt in the technical aspect, which, on the other side, pushed the quality of entries down. Although this year's theme was multilayered, with many subthemes, the entries showed one-sidedness in its understanding.

Often there was no digging deeper into the theme. Entries were often just records about robots or film collages, pixelations consisting of heterogenous recordings taken place in the same space. Often the makers just animated one or two shots based on a vague story, only marginally connected with this year's theme. Many entries lacked a dramaturgical structure, an idea and even an aesthetical appeal (entries artistically poor). In a wider scope of seen and assessed films, they were just pictures put in motion, but lacking elements of animation and film language, there was no connection between the image composition and the soundtrack, in many cases, the sound only illustrated the moving image without any further relation to it. The theme of the robots was generally approached superficially, without any effort to capture any deeper meaning or message.

Out of 92 entries in total only several were distinctive, interesting in terms of visual form, content and formal execution, met the requirement of originality and at the same time, were shot authentically through the eyes of children, not teachers. Twenty-two films qualified for the 2nd round, the panel awarded 4 medals and 10 honourable mentions. The panel appreciated animated films, using e. g. cutout animation, cartoon animation or pixillation, as well as actors' films.

Three medal-winning films were from Czechia. A one-shot stop motion called *Metamorphosis* by Štěpánka Šimonová from the Art School Moravská Třebová appealed to the panel by its playful, simple form and also by its visual quality. A full animation called "I Think" by Antonie Zavadilová from the Art School Řevnice came as a surprise due to the pureness of the film work. The theme of the story had an existential outreach. *Robot Kožko* by Eugen Moers from the Charlotte Masaryk Art School in Prague wittily adapted a simple story, using elements of film language; also the model of the robot was very interesting.

One of the award-winning foreign films, Blue Pyramid by Polina Kornychenko from the Children and Youth Cinema Center "Vesnyanka" in Ukraine, was made almost to professional standards in terms of art and technique. It is a traditionally well-led school in terms of pedagogy.

Honourable mentions went to Montenegro, Croatia and the Philippines, others went to the Czech Republic.

The film category had entries from Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Hong Kong, China, Croatia, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malaysia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, UAE and Ukraine.

An outreaching content standard, a message, contemplation on the theme, all of that was in the above-mentioned emotional film by Polina Kornychenko from Ukraine, an adaptation with elements of drama, well-timed within the structure of the film. There were no documentaries in this year's ICEFA.

The recommendation of the panel is to approach and invite to participate in the Lidice art exhibition specifically schools, classes and studios that occupy themselves with filmmaking, both in Czechia and abroad. Thus they will be able to inspire other pupils and teachers, showing them how to work with the film media correctly and sensitively. Within the scope of educational activities, it is possible to prepare film workshops for teachers.

Prize of the Panel of Judges

This year, the Prize of the Panel of Judges to a Foreign Participant went to Visual Art Center in Kryvyj Rih (Ukraine) for an extraordinary collection of prints of very high quality. The Social Service Centre Horizont in Protivín sent in a unique, unusual and very impressive collection of entries. Thus the Panel awarded it with the Prize of the Panel of Judges for the Czech Republic. Both prizes were awarded also for long-standing co-operation with the ICEFA Lidice.

Conclusion

If last year's ICEFA was not easy, this year's one can be surely described as very demanding and difficult. And not only for participants but also for the organizers. Both parties worked under difficult circumstances. Despite all of that, all deserved not only thanks but also commendation. We are pleased to say that the 49th ICEFA will reach the standards of quality and appeal of previous years. Zest, enthusiasm and and enthusiasm for artistic work do not disappear and and will be clearly seen in the exhibition. Out thanks go to all who provided contribution and help!

The ICEFA assessment took place again in a difficult global situation of covid-19 pandemic. Even though the Lidice Memorial managed to create excellent conditions

for the work of the panel. Our thanks go to the staff and collaborators of the Lidice Memorial for their effort.

We extend our thanks to all members of the panel for their meeting the challenge of the assessment with great effort, thus enabling the success of this year's ICEFA.

Last of all, we cordially invite all to come to the Lidice Gallery and see the various mechanical creations, robots and robotic animals and good works inspired by Karel Čapek.

Táňa Válková, ICEFA curator

Romana Štajerová, a member of the 49th ICEFA Lidice Panel of Judges

Ivana Junková, Chairwoman of the 49th ICEFA Lidice Panel of Judges

Josef Zedník, a member of the 49th ICEFA Lidice Panel of Judges

Martin Homola, a member of the 49th ICEFA Lidice Panel of Judges

Kateřina Krutská Vrbová, a member of the 49th ICEFA Lidice Panel of Judges