

## THE JURY

### **BOŽIDARA TURZONOVOVÁ**

The essay topic could also be reversed: what should be discussed, but is not – what is kept in silence, obscured, tabooed, ignored and sidestepped. We adults, each for himself, maybe feel in the corner of our souls, maybe even have articulated the WHAT – and since we are adults (which does not necessarily mean wise enough), we are cowardly hiding behind the “is”. And so there “is” silence and we “are” sleeping.

“Youth, you are the awakener of the morning” – as schoolchildren we mocked Hviezdoslav.

Today I agree with him: young people, those perceptive and smart boys and girls have the natural privilege to awaken us, the world, the age. – It may sound pretentious, but I firmly hope it is true.

*Božidara Turzonovová is a university professor and an actress. She was the first Dean of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts at the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica.*

### **DARINA ABRAHÁMOVÁ**

Words are hurled at us from all sides, from short ads and huge billboards to the shrill title pages of tabloid magazines which we “*don't read*”, and of which we only caught a glimpse at the petrol station when paying fat bills for the liquid gold. Nothing is taboo, everything is allowed, the letters are attacking us, and for every problem we have a disgustingly huge amount of information, certified opinions and manuals, and almost nothing can be experienced in our own way, on our own expectations and experiences anymore. The older adults have an advantage here, considering they have already experienced most of their “first times” without the modern obtrusion of magazines and their reports on who and what is sexy, “in”, successful, in demand, happy... The classical novels from family libraries, deeply offended, turn their dusty backs on this masquerade of forever repeated nonsense. Where in all this are my words, which I cannot, or don't have the power to, express in this universal cage of freedom, and which I must say? And to whom? And why? I promise to read Your words with my inner sight.

*Darina Abrahámová is a dramaturge and an actress for the City Theater of Žilina, Radošinské Naivné Divadlo and the GuNaGu Theater.*

## **ĽUBOMÍR FELDEK**

What do I like about this topic? Over twenty years ago, under socialism, when censorship was at large, the free spirit had to be able to read and write between the lines. The totalitarian regime expressed itself through meaningless fixed phrases, and Western political scientists were on the lookout for any changes in the phrases, for words that were added or omitted – and they could often derive great insights from these changes. Artists developed the art of allusion, metaphor and parable – the best of them are now glad that the censorship forced them to foster their imagination. For over twenty years that now belongs to the past – nowadays we can speak about anything. But that does not mean censorship has disappeared. It has disguised itself but it remains with us – in the form of meaningless civil lawsuits, in the form of economic terror, in the form of a flood of half-truths and lies which smother the truth, in the form of demonizing the minutiae or downplaying the monstrous – and yes, also in the form of silencing the critics. For that you do not need SÚTI (as the censorship bureau was officially called) – an anonymous phone call, a car set on fire, or a shot in the night are often enough to silence the critic. But I believe that the contemporary youth will not allow its freedom of speech to be taken away, just as we did not allow it in our time.

*Ľubomír Feldek is a poet, writer, playwright and translator.*

## **SAMUEL ABRAHÁM**

Each age has its taboos – sacred or untouchable topics. What was improper to say a hundred years ago is now ridiculous; what is off-limits now may be considered an outdated prejudice in a hundred years. And conversely, what used to be or now is discussed as a matter of course may in a hundred years be considered a blasphemy by a future – not yet known – political system. One thing is clear: in a hundred years, progress will bring dilemmas of which we now do not have an inkling, and which will be challenges for philosophers, theologians, politicians and students of the future.

Looking for the boundaries of what is not allowed to be done or spoken about is a challenge for every age and every society. The creation, but also the destruction of various taboos are the paradoxical features of every developed civilization. Thus their creation and destruction is nothing unnatural. Regrettably (or fortunately?), most adults are quick to adopt the taboos of their era. It shouldn't be so unequivocal for you. Some things enrage you, some things you don't understand, and you certainly know topics and things surrounded by an unnatural silence. Reflect upon them, make use of your freedom and share them with us.

*Samuel Abrahám is a political scientist, editor-in-chief of the journal KRITIKA & KONTEXT, and the president of BISLA.*

## **TATIANA BLASZEKOVÁ**

For twenty-one years we have been able to speak freely, yet we don't. What prevents us from doing so? What's keeping our tongues tied? Let's not be afraid to open the proverbial "thirteenth chambers" of our history, but also of the contemporary problems.

This contest gives you a possibility to show that the way to solve our problems is not endless appeasement and hiding from them, but an open discussion.

*Tatiana Blaszeková is a BISLA student.*

## **NIKOLA REVICKÁ**

Writing about what is not discussed is a great topic, because it reveals and unmask the hidden sorrows and emotions with which people step forward only slowly or not at all. Nowadays we can talk about anything, but despite that we keep silence about many things, just to stay on the safe side.

Writing an essay on such a well-guarded topic is just the thing that may help us to bridge this chasm.

*Nikola Revická is a BISLA student.*

## **VIKTÓRIA MIHALOVIČOVÁ**

I am simultaneously excited and honored by the possibility to participate in this project. As a student, I have so far only been in the position where my work was evaluated, and I am curious as to how it will feel on the "other side". I am also looking forward to the collaboration with the other jury members.

Regrettably, young people nowadays often do not make the effort, or conversely do not have the space, to express their opinions directly and publicly; in the worst case they do not have these opinions at all. Therefore I think that this project is a great opportunity to express oneself – for the writers to get inspired – and for us, the readers, as well as for both sides, it is an opportunity for reflection.

*Viktória Mihalovičová is a BISLA student.*

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