

LIFE & LOVE
SIMULTANEOUS
EXHIBITION

Cultural Heritage without Borders is an independent organization based in Sweden dedicated to rescuing and preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage touched by conflict, neglect or human and natural disasters. We see our work as a vital contribution to building democracy and supporting human rights. CHwB is neutral when it comes to conflicting parties, but not to the rights of all people to their cultural heritage.





The making of 1+1: Life and Love

One afternoon in March 2009, a group of people from six Balkan countries sat in a cold room in the National Museum in Sarajevo. The subject under discussion was how to produce a joint exhibition. The problems seemed huge. Political divisions and disagreements meant that it was sometimes difficult for some museums to work together. Travelling across borders was not easy, for people or objects. At the same time, the conversation was littered with connections, from the past and the present. Objects were common, stories were shared and histories touched all areas. Jokes, food, textiles, words and songs were familiar. Eventually, a solution was found, to have a 'simultaneous exhibition' that would open in multiple venues at the same time. There was complete agreement that the theme would not be related to the recent history of the Balkans. Everyone felt that the image of the region was negative and based on recent conflict and divisions. The desire was to show the other Balkans; the one that shared a rich, diverse heritage that crossed boundaries, histories and identities, and the universal values that were common to all.

Life and Love

'We are creating a Balkan Museums network. We have had difficulties in the past, but we now make plans together - to visit each other's museums, to make a travelling exhibition. Culture is the best way to connect people. Everybody needs to express their feelings, and we do it with the symbols of life. If we start with feelings and symbols - then the politicians see what common people want. Hopefully they will listen to this and take care about the questions raised about our future.'

Museum worker, Serbia



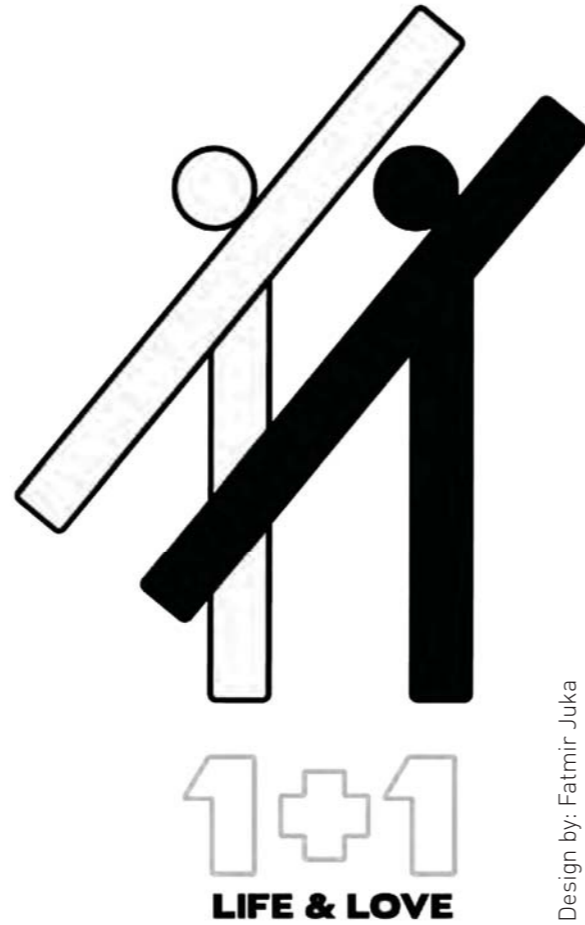
'This is a small step into the future. We now communicate across the borders. The Western Balkan Museums are linked together, in the same way as our history and future is linked together. I think this will inspire others to do the same - meet each other, to cross borders.'

Curator, Albania

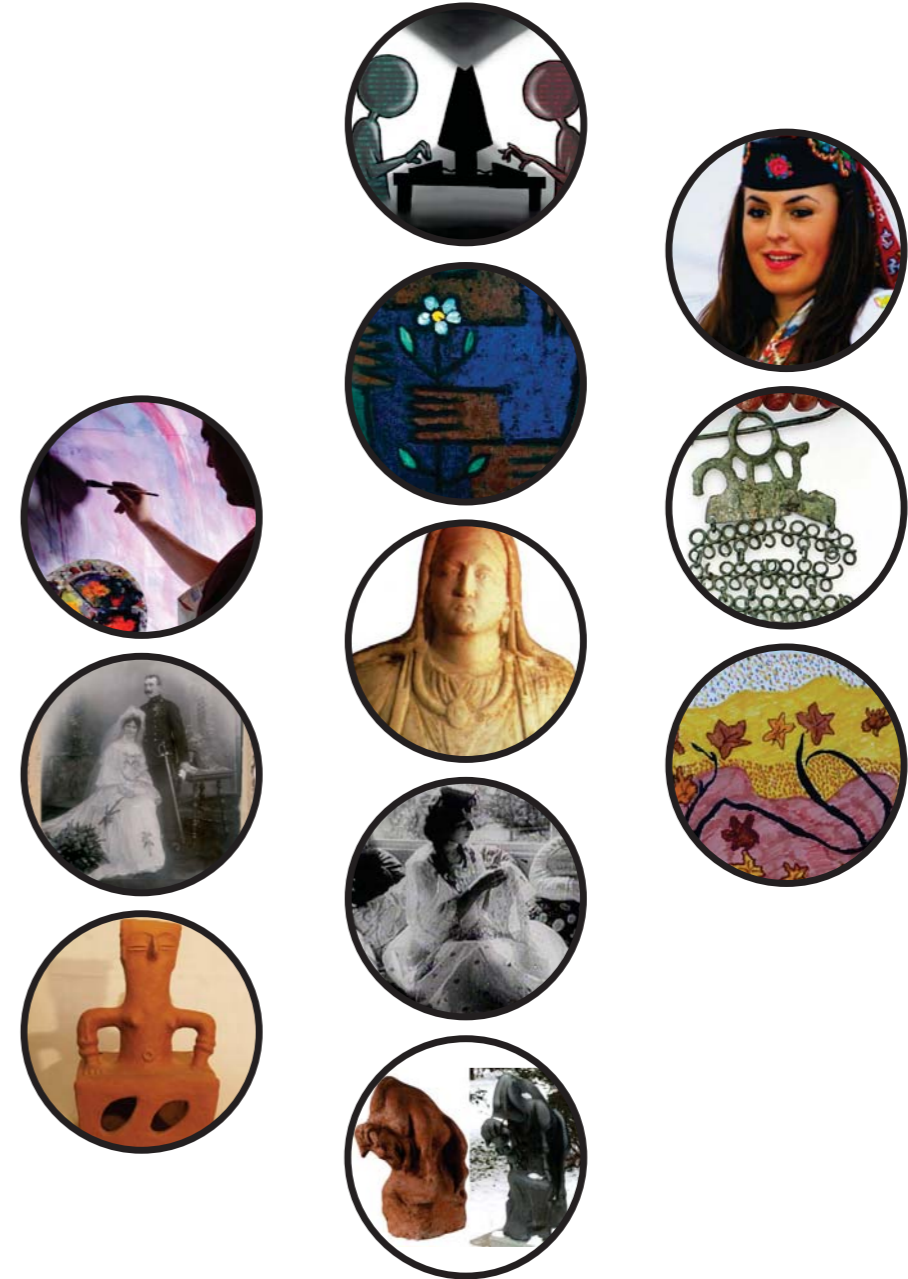


Behind the symbols: Why 1+1?

Once the topic was chosen, the creative energy began to flow. The network has worked together for four years and there is a good level of trust and communication, but this was sadly not always true in the wider context. The network is a forum whereby understanding, training and creative problem solving is shared, as a small way of contributing to reconciliation and a more peaceful future for the region. Eleven museums form the network from six different Balkan countries. The number 11 is formed by putting two 1s together, a numerical representation of the most basic of human relationships.



Design by: Fatmir Juka



'Love is the most important thing in life... In our exhibition we focus on young people and women in jail. These prisoners have a hard life - but they make the most beautiful expressions about life and love. Albania has been closed for so many years - in a way we have had the same situation as the prisoners. Now we want to break down the walls with love, to start something new.'

Historian, Albania

'It's a challenge to communicate museologically and technologically all over the Balkans, and it's a challenge inside our museum. We have chosen young curators to find out what in our collection from the past is talking about life and love in a way that attracts young people. What can a figurine 6000 years old tell a young boy or a girl of today? What is the hidden message from our ancestors?'

Curator, Macedonia

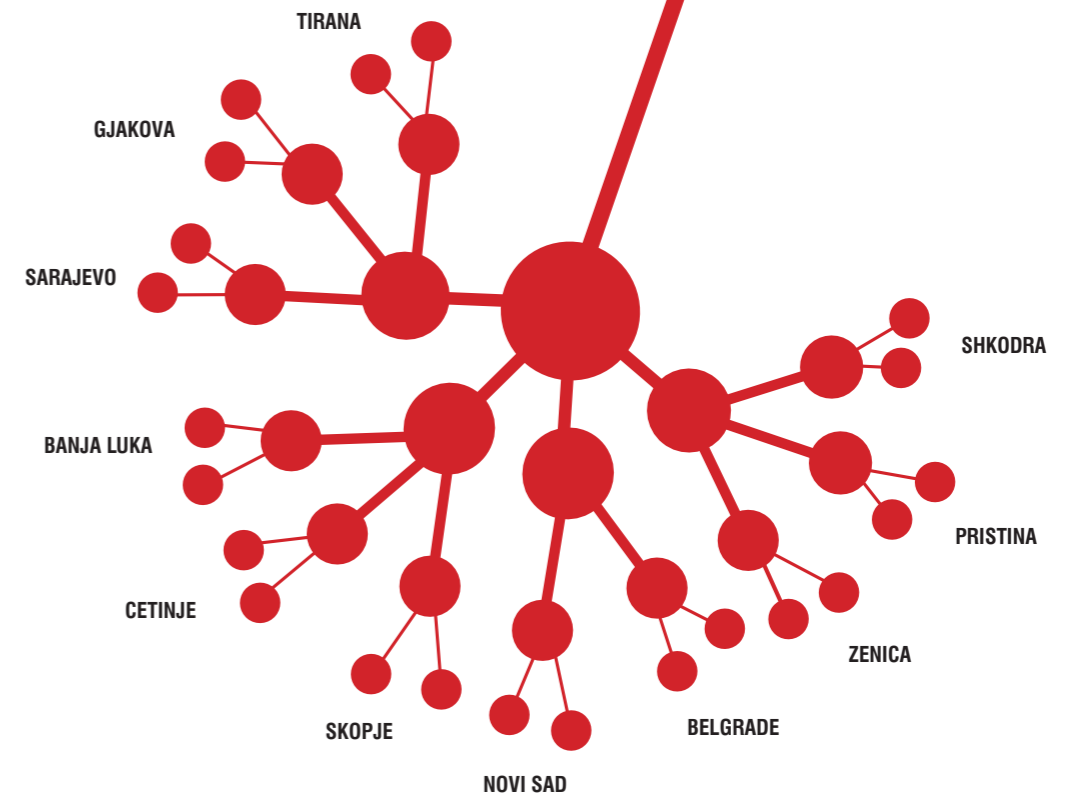
'We don't talk about the war because there is still a lot of tension between us, a lot of hidden emotions... but to be like this - in the same room, to work at the same subject, to work at the same project - is really a step ahead. For a long time our borders were closed, we didn't see each other, we didn't exchange exhibitions... Now we connect again. Culture and art is the way that we can connect.'

Educator, Bosnia and Herzegovina



The simultaneous exhibition and the creation of the travelling exhibition

The eleven exhibitions open on March 11, 2011. Connections between them are both open and hidden. A bus tour will accompany the openings, bringing partners together to celebrate and join the party. This 'peace bus' is a manifestation of the collaboration. Each museum has been asked to select a part of their exhibition that could form part of a travelling exhibition for international touring. We hope to be able to take the '1+1:Life and Love' message to other parts of the world, especially where there are Diaspora communities.



MUSEUM OF REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA, BANJA LUKA

'Despite all the troubles of our world, in my heart I have never given up on the love in which I was brought up or man's hope in love. In life, just as in the artist's palette there is but one single colour – the colour of love.'

Marc Chagall

In the simultaneous exhibition '1+1: Life & Love' the Museum of Republica Srpska and Banja Luka as a cultural centre will present works of eleven young artists, each showing two pieces, created in the spirit of the topic with a lot of love. The artists are Jelena Karanovic, Sandra Banjac, Djurdjica Bjelosevic, Berina Suscevic, Jelena Crnokrak, Zvezdana Veselinovic, Mirjana Grabovica, Bojana Baralic, Igor Sredojevic, Slobodan Vidovic, Branko Jungic and a potter Sonja Bikic. Taking love as an eternal topic, both in life and in art, they speak in a youthful and a completely modern way.

The artists all began from the same starting point, using the same language of love as an unchangeable and permanent value in life and across the whole world, yet their works are all individual, using different techniques, approaches, sensibilities and styles.

Images, sculptures and installations were created in this great project, showing the story of love hidden behind different symbols, coloured with different colours, just like every human being in the world. It discovers and perceives the puzzling nature of love in some other way, just as every love is always and again special...



NATIONAL MUSEUM IN BELGRADE

The project '1+1: Life and Love' represents the results of work with young people in research into artwork in a city environment and in a museum, current attitudes towards the city and public spaces and the meaning of artworks in public spaces and in the museum collection.

'1+1' is: the city and its young inhabitants; public space and art work; the city and the museum; youth and museum professionals. The sum is represented with different life and love manifestations.

The sculptures from the city environment are represented through photographs and short films made by young artists and contrasted with a selection of works from National Museum collection, thus supporting new relations toward city environment and the function of art in everyday life.

Sculptures around us represent life, because they are witnesses, on the one hand, of events from our history and people who made it, inspired by love; and, on the other hand, our relation towards life values. They all contain love, whether they send messages or are void of unartistic functions, which together with love of beauty, should be lastingly transferred to new generations.

What the teenagers said

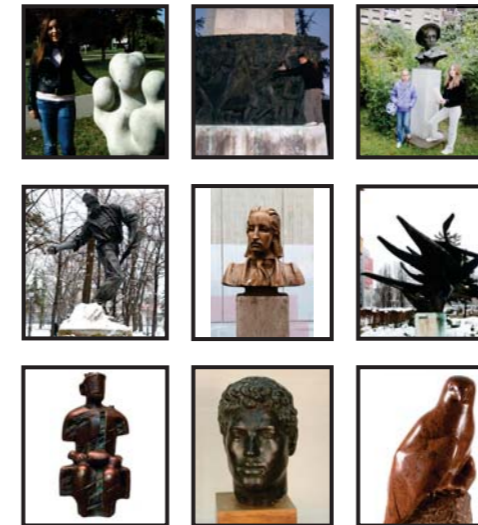
'Authors have hidden the secrets of mankind in their works and we are too busy living our everyday lives to see and interpret them. Look at the artworks you pass by; they will enrich your lives'.

We loved the idea of learning a lot about sculptures in the spaces we spend a lot of our time in, through fun and play and our natural desire for new knowledge'.



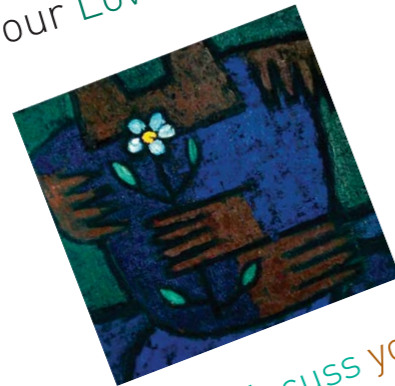
PREVIOUS

NEXT



'Love is the poetry of the senses'
Balzac

Think about life!
Express your Love!



Discuss your feelings!
Share your thoughts!
Create Art!



In Kosovo, the traditional costumes worn by women are linked to geographic regions. The area of Has lies on the rocky hills at the bottom of the Pashtriku mountain, beside the Drini River, from the city of Gjakovë to the boundary village of Gorozhub. There are about 40 Albanian villages there. The local inhabitants are known as good craftsmen and excellent bakers, and the women are known for handiwork and efficient households.

We chose this costume because it is one of the oldest preserved ones we have. It is full of unique colours and artistic expressions. For example, the wooden belt at the waist, 20 – 25 cm wide, for carrying heavy goods. Over the belt are a shirt and an apron. This typical 'long shirt with two aprons (front and rear)' is special to Has, and is associated with bright, cheerful colours like this red.

Shirts are made from white cotton, with intricate decoration on the breast, and underneath the hand woven woolen drawers keep the legs warm. On her feet she wears white socks, also finished in red, and green leather shoes. On top of the shirt a decorated waistcoat is worn, striking in its redness. A hand woven satin kerchief is worn on the head, whose ends are embroidered in silk on the loom or with a needle. The way the kerchief sits on the woman's head, with the hair and the ornaments, ensure a gracious and very special look.



We keep them in family albums, shoe boxes, on CDs and DVD RoMs, framed, in photo albums on Facebook profiles, in mobile phones....
→ PERSONAL PHOTOS



They follow us through our entire LIFE.
They are testimony about important events, interesting moments, emotional moments → ABOUT LOVE
Imagining → LOVE



19th century → SHE in a white ruffled wedding dress with long veil and roses on her lap + HE an officer in parade uniform with his sword and a proud attitude....eyes full of uncertainty, beginning together LIFE.



21st century → I am remembering → My wedding photo, SHE + HE → I am realizing how similar we are → LIFE and LOVE



Love fulfills us, makes us happy, makes us laugh and creates better people out of us. Also, love hurts, demands sacrifice and sometimes isn't simple. But, that's life, right?

Let us take you on a trip that will remind you of all of that...



'In love, one and one are one.'
J.P. Sartre



Women in the Archive of the Museum of Kosova

This is the first exhibition of its kind in Kosova, both in the fact that it presents a collection of images of women and creates representations of women, drawing from a period of some 5000 years. We see this exhibition as an invitation to begin and place at the center of attention the possibility of accessing and reading archives of national and institutional memory, and the museum as a conduit of narratives about culture, society, and history. The choice to focus on representations of women within the archive is particularly exciting and challenging. Therefore, we hope that this exhibition offers a possibility to think a necessary shift and emergence of new positions from which to think about women and institutions that make official or marginalize certain narratives. Finally, while it is necessary to critically evaluate the appropriation of cultural heritage into a national and/or patriarchal narrative, it is also necessary to do the same with attempts to depoliticize global flows of power and knowledge, which in turn determine what relevant stories about Kosova and women's histories should be.



Dreams on thread

Tantela embroidery is one of the oldest forms, The most massive and most human of crafts. Young girls and women in Shkodra decorated with multicoloured yarn their outfits, unique and wonderful. Besides the clothing, embroidered textiles in linen, cotton or silk as covers for the bed, or the table of diwaniya, or curtains for the walls. Also interesting is the intricate worked crochet. The instruments of embroidery work are gjergjefi hand, gjergjefi the big one in wooden needles, nizhdeja, strands of silk, gold or silver. Girls from adolescence, with the assistance of their mothers and other women of the house prepare all of the textiles that will be needed during married life – the 'dowry'. A special place was prepared for baby clothing for the hoped for children. Through the techniques, the motifs of different colours express the most beautiful dreams for life and pure feelings of love.



'1+1: Life & Love' through Macedonian history

'1+1: Life & Love' represents the essence, the basis of the creativity which distinguishes man from the rest of the living world. Love is present in all the segments of life from conception until its end. Macedonian, as well as world's cultural history, is interwoven with love.

In '1+1: Life & Love' the objects tell their stories expressed through their inherent forms and contents. This is the story of life and love. It is impossible to distinguish love from life exactly as the form cannot be separated from the intrinsic message of the object. Exhibits in the museums are not mere representatives of the past. They transmit information about past generations, reminding us that we should always discern the message, interpret the vocabulary of history, and not just simply read them. Through symbolic visual expressions of the Mother Goddess, the Dioscourses, the Holy Virgin Pelagonitisa, the poetry of the Miladinovci brothers, and traditional folk dress, we tried to point to their inward message - that they are not just objects, but also eternal symbols of life and love in their timeless space.

The aim of this exhibition is to communicate with the young population, showing that the museum exhibits also bear profound messages and truth.



The Earth was life

With a song of love to...

If I had an eagle's wings
I would rise and fly on them
To our shores, to our own parts,
To see Stambol, to see Kukush;
And to watch the sunrise: is it
Dim there too, as it is here?...



With love for life in the future



Moments of life



Art inspired by life



The Exhibition '1 +1: Life & Love' aims to show that life from the very beginning until now is 1 +1, for nature, man and society are in a permanent interaction. '1 +1: Life & Love' is for us as humans looking out over the sea. It gave us the opportunity to observe further, farther, and more clearly because it comes from a fruit of cooperation. We feel better because this exhibition is for us more than just an exhibition. '1 +1' is the key that helped us to open the gates of partnership. And in this way, we see the light; we see the contours of life and love, a light that blinks in space reflecting itself but also keeping us awake. Let's keep the dream alive.

'If you judge people, you have no time to love them.'

Mother Teresa

'Love is life. And if you miss love, you miss life.'

Leo Buscaglia

'The tree of life' comes to the spiritual world of Albanians from pagan times to the present day as a symbol of love for nature, life and man. The origin of it is from an Albanian province that bears the meaningful name of the human congratulation 'GOOD DAY'. It has been neatly worked in various ways on the back of folk costumes. The tree of life has spoken and continues to speak to generations the language of human love.



The tree of life



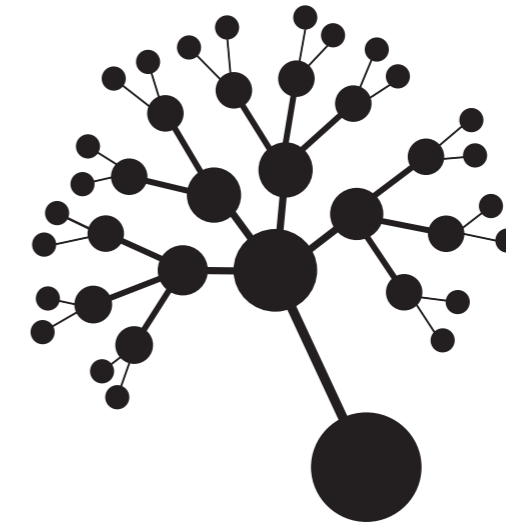
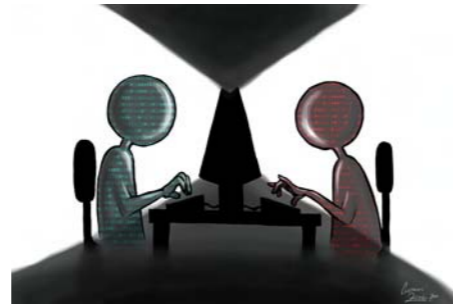
CITY MUSEUM OF ZENICA

The exhibition 'She and He' seeks the vision of artists to show relationships between men and women once and always. Of course, artists treat not only social relations but also a reflection of these relationships in religion and mythology. They use all forms of visual expression, photos, posters, cartoons, comics, paintings, installations and movies.

Therefore, it is a conceptual exhibition whose theme is more or less clearly expressed: time and diversity are too big in sexual relations to give the overall show. Therefore we have decided to allow the freedom of artists to express some of the most memorable sexual relations in their own way - why not, when the art itself strives to be the essence of the overall social relations in a certain time and climate?

'The art precedes reality ... so in sexual relations ... In the beginning was the Word.'

Adnadin Jasarevic



1+1: Life & Love



MCMLXVI Muzej grada Zenice

The Balkan Museums Network

Following the '1+1: Life & Love' project, a new Balkan Museums Network is being formed, with the following draft mission statement.

'The Balkan Museums network exists to celebrate, preserve and share the complex common heritage of the western Balkans. It is based on mutual respect and guided by a commitment to professionalism and shared ethics. It supports the development of creative museum leaders and is underpinned by the principles of peace and reconciliation through heritage of the past, present and future.'

For more details about the network, its objectives and projects, please see the Balkan Museums Network website www.bmuseums.net



Balkan Museums Network

List of participating museums

Museum of Republic of Srpska, Banja Luka
National Museum in Belgrade, Belgrade
National Museum of Montenegro, Cetinje
Regional Museum Gjakova, Gjakova
Novi Sad City Museum, Novi Sad
Museum of Kosovo, Pristina
National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo
Historic Museum Shkodra, Shkodra
National Museum of Macedonia, Skopje
National Historical Museum Tirana, Tirana
City Museum of Zenica, Zenica

Credits

Text: Diana Walters and museum teams

Exhibition Project Managers: Slavka Miroslavljevic; Eliana Gavrilovic, Vera Grujic; Ljiljana Zekovic and Ana Pavlovic; Fatmire Buza and Masar Binxhia; Vesna Nedeljkovic-Angelovski; Ana Maric; team from the Museum of Kosovo; Fatmir Juka and Zamir Tafilica; Gordan Nikolov and Simonida Miljkovic; Sali Kadria; Adnadin Jasarevic

Produced by: CHwB

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'We shall never forget but we cannot stay forever on the battlefield.'

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