

The song of the thread – Idrija lace

Idrija was reputed for its 500 year old mercury mine. During the 17th Century the improvements in extraction technology meant that many of the town's women lost their source of income. As a result, the women of Idrija turned to making bobbin lace as a means of financial survival. The craft was introduced by the wives of miners who came from countries such as Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. Lacemaking became widely practiced by women across Slovenia.

It was common for Slovenian lace makers to gather at one another's homes to make bobbin lace. On warm summer days they were able to work outdoors. This allowed them to socialise and give their creativity free rein in the environment of their homes and gardens. As time went on, the making of bobbin lace was not

reserved for women alone. In Ljubljana, lace making was also practiced by men.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, a surprising 1,800 people in Idrija alone were engaged in the making of bobbin lace. The first lace making school was formed here in 1876. This school remains in operation today and is the only specialised school for teaching one of the many domestic crafts still alive in Slovenia. Today, Idrija's lace makers continue to receive the highest awards for their product at world craft fairs in Vienna and Paris.

The highly skilled craft is also practiced by Slovenian women in Australia today. This pass-time fulfilled a silent yearning for their homeland and was a strong link to memories of family and heritage. Lacemaking and other crafts helped to lessen the homesickness and loneliness women often felt. Today, Slovenian lace is often exhibited and awarded at cultural festivals and craft fairs.



Marija Uršič at the Craft exhibition at the Religious and Cultural centre, Kew, 1974.

Marija Uršič na razstavi ročnih del v verskem in kulturnem središču, Kew, 1974.



Kristina Cestnik, Miriam Kim and Marija Uršič making Idrija lace, 1988.

Kristina Cestnik, Miriam Kim in Marija Uršič klekljajo, 1988.



Marija Brne, Marija Uršič and Pavla Humar making lace, 1998.

Marija Brne, Marija Uršič in Pavla Humar klekljajo, 1998.

Pesem niti-klekljane čipke

Umetnost izdelovanja čipk so v Slovenijo prinesle žene čeških in nemških rudarjev in lastnikov rudnika živega srebra, kot tudi iz Italije in Nizozemske. Idrija je zaslovela po 500 let starem rudniku živega srebra. S tehnološkim razvojem čiščenja rude v 17. stoletju je mnogo mestnih žena izgubilo zaslužka, zato so se za preživetje posvetile klekljanju. Čipke so izdelovali tako v mestih kot na podeželju. S tem se je začela nova slovenska obrt.

Slovenske klekljarice so se navadno zbirale na domovih. V toplih poletnih dneh so lahko delale zunaj v svojih vrtovih, kjer je svobodno cvetela njihova ustvarjalnost in družabnost. V kasnejšem obdobju izdelovanje čipk ni bilo samo ženska obrt, marveč so jih v Ljubljani izdelovali tudi moški.

V začetku 20. stoletja je samo v Idriji izdelovalo čipke 1800 ljudi. Leta 1876 so ustanovili prvo čipkarsko šolo, ki še vedno deluje, in je edina šola za to domačo obrt v Sloveniji.

Slovenske klekljarice prejemajo najvišja priznanja za svoje izdelke na svetovnih razstavah domače obrti na Dunaju in v Parizu.

S to zapleteno obrtjo se ukvarjajo tudi Slovenke v Avstraliji. Z izdelovanjem čipk zapolnijo njihov prosti čas in zadostijo tihemu hrepenenju po domovini. Hkrati pa izdelovanje čipk krepi družinske odnose in nadaljuje močno vez s slovenskim izročilom. Izdelovanje čipk in drugo ročno delo pomagajo premagovati domotožje in osamljenost, ki ju ženske velikokrat občutijo.

Slovenke pogosto razstavljajo slovenske čipke in dobivajo na kulturnih festivalih in razstavah ročnih del pomembna odlikovanja.



Lucija Smec and Marija Uršič at Slovenian exhibition at the Back to Bonegilla – 40 years celebration, 1985.

Lucija Smec in Marija Uršič na slovenski razstavi na srečanju Back to Bonegilla – 40 let, 1985.