



VDMFK INFORMATION



**ASSOCIATION OF MOUTH
AND FOOT PAINTING ARTISTS OF
THE WORLD**

**DECEMBER
2024/209**

Contents

FOREWORD	3
MISCELLANEOUS	4
EVENTS	5
Artists' activities	6
PERSONAL	9
New Full Members	10
New Associate Members	11
New Scholarship Holders	12
The significance of painting	17
We mourn for	19
VDMFK personalities	22
SERVICE	25
Information from the office	26
Health and care	27
Caricatures	28
PUBLISHERS	29
Publishers' activities	30

**Cesar Andres Barcia (Associate Member, Argentina),
"Snowy smile", watercolours, 25x35 cm.**

Credits

Published by: Vereinigung der mund- und fussmalenden Künstler in aller Welt – e.V. (VDMFK)
Im Rietle 25 · FL-9494 Schaan · Principality of Liechtenstein
Phone +423 232 1176 · Fax +423 232 75 41 · Email: vdmfk@vdmfk.li · Internet: www.vdmfk.com

Edited by: Mario Famlonga, Managing Director VDMFK
Design / Printed by: Wolf Druck AG, Triesen

Print run: 1000, 2 ×biannual

Foreword Kun-Shan Hsieh, Board member of the VDMFK

Greetings to my dear friends

Someone once asked me: "Mr Hsieh, are you a mouth and foot painter or an artist?" That was a great question. For me, the answer is simple and yet profound. In our Association, there are more than 700 artists who defy physical illnesses and obstacles on a daily basis with admirable perseverance. Nevertheless, we have never given up our goals and endeavours. We decided to express ourselves with paint on the canvas, which over time becomes beautiful works of art. Our pictures not only show our passion for creativity, but also our determination to continue, despite all adversities. We hope that with our art, we can bring joy to our friends who have supported us. We must make the people who have not yet heard of us aware of the great energy that arises from an appreciation of life in the form of magnificent creations. Our works speak for themselves: "We are mouth and foot painters."

Whenever I have the good fortune to come across a brilliant work of art, whether by old masters or contemporary talents, my heart is always filled with passion. I spur myself on to learn from them. With the sincerest attitude, I express my feelings and thoughts through countless combinations of lines and colours. My physical capacity may be restricted, but my inspiration and my enthusiasm for creating have never diminished. Every time I take the brush in my mouth, I follow the path of art further. With this thought, I can say with certainty that I really am an artist.

In the almost forty years that I have belonged to our Association, I have always been grateful to Mr Stegmann, founder of the VDMFK. He laid the foundation for a unique way of life for all mouth and foot artists, which enables self-realisation through painting. With this way of life, we have revealed a tangible form of appreciation for life to the world. As a result of the joint efforts of all the artists, the office team and the publishers all over the world, our careers as artists have flourished and our talent becomes visible when we appear as a group. In the eyes of many, we are no longer a despondent burden, but rather people full of hope.

Times have changed, and the work of our Association now faces numerous obstacles. I am aware of both the underlying mindsets present when people buy our products: One is the respect that our perseverance gives rise to, and the other is the willingness to help people in need. In such a difficult sales environment, we should refocus to an even greater extent on the original commitment of Mr Stegmann and improve our artistic abilities further. In this way, we can deliver great works of art to the people who support us, regardless of their views, which either remind them of the beauty of life or bring them comfort in times of crisis.

A heartfelt thank-you to the wonderful VDMFK family, in which we are able to be successful together.

Kun-Shan Hsieh, Board member of the VDMFK



Mouth painter Kun-Shan Hsieh, Board member of the VDMFK from Taiwan.

SWITZERLAND: Online workshops 2024: "Rethinking art"

In recent months, the online workshops of the Switzerland publishing house were transformed into a creative centre again in which the participating artists turned the exciting world of art upside down with their talents. With the motto "Rethinking art", our online artist workshops provided opportunities to discover new thematic worlds and modern art forms. The focus was on the learning objectives of "Getting to know new things – from development to realisation". The result? Numerous new works in expressive colours, ideas and a lot of humour.

The workshops 1 + 3 in February and September had the guiding theme of "artistic diversity" and dedicating oneself boldly to new topics. This was done freely with the motto: "Art never stands still". Inspired by the wishes and the collection of ideas from the conversations at the last workshop events, the participants immersed themselves in the world of thematic and still subjects. They designed, painted and experimented, and unusual subjects and content from various sources were produced and merged. In short, humorous and colourful subjects for a variety of occasions evolved.



The artwork by Lars Höllerer (Full Member, Germany), which he painted during the workshop, bears the name "Bathing fun".

Workshop 2 bore the title "Street art – public spaces and streets become a canvas". In May, the participants tackled a very topical and popular art form. With the support of the workshop leader Editha Tarantino, Lars Höllerer (Full Member from Germany), Bracha Fischel (Scholarship Holder from Switzerland) and Lea Otter

(Scholarship Holder from Austria) approached the topic of "street art". The focus was on the question of how street art is not only moving when found on walls in public spaces, but is also brought to life on a canvas. How strong visual effects come alive in the street art works, from striking colours, contrasts and clear forms.



Bracha Fischel, Scholarship Holder from Switzerland, also participated in the online workshops.



Lea Otter, Scholarship Holder from Austria, took the opportunity to improve her skills via the online workshop.

Lidia de Jesus Cháidez López (Associate Member, Mexico),
"Lilies & Sunflowers", oils, 40 x 30 cm.



EVENTS

Artists' activities

ARGENTINA

BARCIA, CESAR (Scholarship Holder)

The Association of Argentine Water-colourists invited Cesar Barcia to exhibit a work together with 43 works by artists of this association. The exhibition was held from 3 April 2024 to 15 April 2024 at the Faculty of Law of the University of Buenos Aires.

SEMAÁN, ANTONELLA (Scholarship Holder)

Antonella Semaán can look back on a series of events in 2024, at which she also gave painting demonstrations. Every event is divided into an exhibition, a lecture and a workshop and is based on the fact that she exhibits her works to the educational community, teachers, parents and pupils at each of these events. In 2024, events such as these took place on 7 May in Plátaos and on 17 May in Burzaco. The venue was a kindergarten each time.

BRAZIL

CHAGAS, MARIA GORET (Associate Member)

At the invitation of the restaurant "Canopy Hilton", Maria Goret Chagas exhibited 24 of her artworks as part of a solo exhibition in São Paulo. This bore the name "GoArt – Talent and Inclusion!".

CANADA

JONES, ANNAE CORINE (Scholarship Holder)

Annae Corine Jones was able to hold a solo exhibition from 7 November 2024 to mid-December. Here, she exhibited 39 works with the title "A Life Observed".

MATTHIAS, THERESA HELEN (Full Member)

Theresa Helen Matthias was given a great honour. For her achievements and her service to her country, she was awarded the honourable and privileged appointment as a member of the Order of Canada (C.M.).

CHINA

HUANG, GUOFU (Associate Member)

Guofu Huang held an exhibition at the Shanxi Art Gallery in the Jiulongpo district in Chongqing from 30 April to 6 May 2024. The occasion for this exhibition was the celebration for Labour Day. Furthermore, the mouth painter held an exhibition together with both his pupils Zhang Qihui and

Liu Ganghong in Chongqing from 31 March to 7 April 2024. The theme of this exhibition was "A special art exhibition – three generations of masters and pupils of the armless painters". The artists used their unique emotions and the language of painting and calligraphy to portray their path of resilience to their fate, and created artworks that reflect their unbending spirit and their tireless perseverance.

CROATIA

GLAVIČIĆ-POČUĆ, MARIJA (Scholarship Holder)

Marija Glavičić-Počuč organized her seventh solo exhibition. The exhibition was held from 20 May to 4 June 2024 in Ivanić-Grad, her home town, in the gallery rooms of the adult education centre. The artist presented two themes that are the focus of her research and her work – landscapes and sacred topics. Furthermore, the artist participated for the 19th time in the Equal Opportunities Festival. The festival lasted three days, from 21 to 23 May, and took place in the main square in Zagreb. The Equal Opportunities Festival is a traditional



Guofu Huang on the occasion of a painting demonstration.

Artists' activities

international event of urban culture, whose programme is performed by people with disabilities together with other musicians, performing and visual artists.

KASUMOVIC, ALEN (Scholarship Holder)

Alen Kasumovic had the opportunity to exhibit his works in Venice and Basel in 2024. In Basel, he presented his works from 13 to 16 June 2024 as part of Basel Art Week 2024. Another large project to which he was invited was the global Passion of Christ in Croatia. 15 Croatian painters were selected to paint a motif from the Passion of Christ. Alen Kasumovic was the only artist with disabilities who was selected and his motif was "Simon of Cyrene helps Christ to carry the cross". Every station of the Passion of Christ is presented at a different location. His work for the fifth station of the Passion was exhibited in Krakow, Poland.



The work of Alen Kasumovic on the Passion of Christ, which was exhibited in Krakow, Poland.

GERMANY

MITTELBACH, WERNER (Scholarship Holder)

Werner Mittelbach held an exhibition in "Gallery Auxburg" in Augsburg, which was opened on 13 July 2024. It bore the name "Galactic event". Additionally, the artist presented one of his works for the Augsburg Christmas market in a postcard booklet, titled "Swallow's view – Augsburg from a bird's-eye view".

INDONESIA

AGUS, YUSUF (Associate Member)

Yusuf Agus took part in a number of activities in 2024. These included a painting demonstration on 14 June in the surroundings of the Prambanan Temple in Yogyakarta with Indonesian painters. From 30 June to 5 July, an exhibition at the Prambanan Temple museum in Yogyakarta and from 29 June to 29 July a national educational exhibition at the De Laxston Hotel in Yogyakarta. In addition, Yusuf Agus presented his works as part of a solo exhibition, which was held from 11 to 20 October 2024 in Yogyakarta and bore the name "A bright tomorrow".

JAPAN

MORITA, MACHIKO (Full Member)

Machiko Morita held a solo exhibition from 23 to 28 September 2024. This took place at the "Masago Gallery" in Osaka. The title of the exhibition was "Morita Machiko Poetry and Art Collection Exhibition". On this occasion, the artist exhibited 52 of her works. Furthermore, the VDMFK Full Member presented her artworks as part of the "Thank you heart Exhibition" in Osaka from 25 to 27 October

2024. She also gave painting demonstrations as part of the event.

PHILIPPINES

TONGCO, JULIUS A. (Scholarship Holder)

Julius A. Tongco held an art exhibition, which bore the title "Hinimo Sa Bohol Art Exhibition". This took place on 23 February 2024 at the "Alturas" shopping centre in Tagbilaran City and was held as part of the celebrations for the National Arts Month 2024. Very young, aspiring artists are also included in this event, so that they can learn artistic skills in this two-week art event. Additionally, Julius A. Tongco participated in an art exhibition in Manila. This was opened on 1 June and lasted until 29 June 2024. The mayor of Manila and the vice mayor also participated in the opening. The exhibition with the title "Manila-Bohol" is intended to present the perspectives of the artists from Bohol in Manila and their culture and, at the same time, to highlight the resilience and authenticity of the Bohol culture.

POLAND

WOWER, MARIOLA (Scholarship Holder)

Mariola Wower participated in an open-air event of the Poland publisher. An exhibition of her 70 oil paintings took place from mid-May to the end of June in the sports hall of the culture centre in Sęszew. Her solo exhibition was very successful.

Artists' activities

SERBIA

BAČKO, DEJANA (Scholarship Holder)

In the run-up to the Paralympic Games in Paris, the ceremonial opening of the multimedia exhibition "Art and Sport" took place in the Cultural Centre of Serbia in Paris on 24 August 2024. The aim of this project was to promote the creative potential and the creativity of people with disabilities. Their skills, their talent and their artistic work were presented at an exhibition of pictures and photographs with motifs of sports and athletes who participated in the Paralympic Games, as well as through media content. The main promoter and a participant in the exhibition opening was Dejana Bačko, Scholarship Holder of the VDMFK and world champion in Para taekwondo. During the exhibition opening, the foot painter painted the universal sign language symbol for "I love you" and the symbol of the Paralympics on a large canvas in her competition kimono. Many visitors and many influential people from the Paralympic



Dejana Bačko was the main support for an exhibition within the framework of the Paralympic Games in Paris, the theme of which was "Art and Sport".



Pictures of the mouth painter Aaron Yeo Kwok Chian were displayed at numerous places in Singapore.

Committee, athletes and the Serbian ambassador were present at the opening of the exhibition. The exhibition was able to be viewed until 20 September 2024.

SINGAPORE

YEO KWOK CHIAN, AARON (Scholarship Holder)

In April 2024, Aaron Yeo Kwok Chian won this year's "Shining Hearts Award" in Singapore. This stems from an initiative of Singapore city, which supports the life of people with disabilities and promotes their creativity and their personal development in the visual arts. The project not only recognises the artistic achievements. It is also a step towards artistic further training and accompanies the participants in their artistic process. The award was given to Aaron Yeo Kwok Chian by a minister of Singapore and the mayor of the northeast district of Singapore, Desmond Choo. Furthermore, Aaron Yeo Kwok Chian had the opportunity to give a live painting demonstration at a large

metro station at the heart of Singapore. He created two pictures inspired by the metro network of Singapore, which he gave the president of the company as a sign of recognition. Thanks to this support, posters by Aaron Yeo Kwok Chian hung in train stations, trains and public places all over Singapore. In addition, he had the honour of meeting the president of Singapore, Tharman Shanmugaratnam, and his wife. On this occasion, the artist gave the president a portrait he had painted.

TUNISIA

RADHIA, HOUDA BEN (Scholarship Holder)

The friends of the former pupils of the grammar schools of Bizerte held an exhibition of the mouth painter Houda Ben Radhia. This bore the name "The 85 dreams of Houda Ben Radhia" and took place on 24 May 2024 in the Complexe Culturel Cheikh Driss in Bizerte. The works could be viewed until 2 June.

Patrick John Botto (Associate Member, South Africa),
"Mirror", mixed media, 31 x 23 cm.



PERSONAL

New Full Members

GERMANY

KOLP, MARKUS

Date of birth: 18 February 1966

Place of birth: Augsburg

Painting technique: Mouth painter



Markus Kolp was born in Augsburg on 18 February 1966. In November 1982, the artist had a traffic accident, which left him a quadriplegic (C4). Additionally, one leg had to be amputated. Approximately four years later, he decided to continue his school education and he successfully obtained his secondary school leaving diploma (Mittlere Reife). For therapeutic reasons, he was advised at school to use his mouth for painting. He took pleasure in it and kept mouth painting as a hobby even after school. Mouth painting became more and more important for him and he was an autodidact in terms of learning this artistic activity. He was quick to make significant progress. "When I focused on the colourful watercolour paints, for me it was like I was in a whole different world, a world in which I could leave all my physical and

emotional problems behind", he says. The VDMFK supported him as a Scholarship Holder from 2004. He has been an Associate Member of the VDMFK since 2011.

Flowers and landscapes are Markus Kolp's preferred subjects. He paints these on the canvas in watercolours or acrylics. His progress has repeatedly enabled him to present his works to a wide audience during solo and group exhibitions.

KOSTKA, MARKUS

Date of birth: 1 June 1967

Place of birth: Wiesbaden

Painting technique: Mouth painter



Markus Kostka was born on 1 June 1967 in Wiesbaden. In 1983, at the age of 16, he had a serious swimming accident in Italy. This accident resulted in quadriplegia (C3 – C5). While still at the hospital, he discovered that he was able to paint with his mouth. The renowned watercolourist Sybille Salzeder recognised his talent and gave him lessons in watercolour painting for two years.

After his accident, the mouth painter completed school and took his school leaving examination. He then studied Psychology at the University of Regensburg. He completed these studies in 1998. For many years, the artist has been working at the University of Regensburg as a pure research scientist in the field of traffic safety, with a focus on "Man-machine interaction". He was supported by the Association as a Scholarship Holder from 2008. In 2011, he was awarded the status of Associate Member of the VDMFK.

Markus Kostka is still a devoted watercolourist. The artist predominantly paints animal portraits of all kinds, because as he himself once said: "Especially with animals I find a mixture of motivation, emotion and joy which lend expressiveness to my portraits." Markus Kostka has had success with his works at numerous exhibitions.

New Associate Members

ARGENTINA

BARCIA, CESAR ANDRES

Date of birth: 9 September 1986

Place of birth: Santa Fe

Painting technique: Mouth painter



Cesar Andres Barcia was born on 9 September 1986 in Santa Fe in Argentina. On 7 September 2002 he had a bicycle accident where he suffered an injury to the spinal cord at the level of the cervical vertebra C5. He attended primary and secondary school. He always liked painting and was fascinated by it. He did not think that he could paint until he met a member of the VDMFK who told him about his work and showed him how mouth painting is done. He was very enthusiastic about painting and took great pleasure in it. Since 2010, Cesar Andres Barcia has been supported by the Association as a Scholarship Holder.

CROATIA

PERKOVIĆ, STJEPAN

Date of birth: 1 April 1974

Place of birth: Vitez

Painting technique: Foot painter

Stjepan Perković was born on 1 April 1974 in Vitez, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with congenital cerebral palsy. He completed primary and middle school in Zagreb. In 1992, he began to paint and to write to express the spirit that moved him within. In 1998, he published a collection of poems with the title "Otisci dubine", which he also illustrated. He has illustrated seven books by other authors – six volumes of poetry and the cover of a novel.

Since 2001, Stjepan Perković has been supported by the Association as a Scholarship Holder. In 2007, he completed his studies in Painting at the Arts Academy in Split. He participated in a three-year painting workshop under the leadership of Professor Carmelo Puzzolo. Stjepan Perković is a participant in many art colonies and workshops and has also led art therapy workshops for children



with developmental disabilities. The foot painter frequently organises art workshops for children in nurseries, primary and secondary schools.

HUNGARY

DEAK, FERENC

Date of birth: 10 October 1974

Place of birth: Miskolc

Painting technique: Mouth and foot painter



Ferenc Deak was born on 10 October 1974 in Miskolc. He attended vocational college and specialised in cabinet making. On 25 March 2002 he had a grave high-voltage accident, as a result of which both his arms had to be amputated. In May 2002 he became interested in foot painting and he is making continuous progress. He is self-taught. The VDMFK has granted him a scholarship since 2004.

New Scholarship Holders

The following mouth and foot painters will be supported by the Association as Scholarship Holders starting 1 March 2025.

ARGENTINA

LUJÁN, GUSTAVO DANIEL

Date of birth: 17 July 1981

Place of birth: Córdoba

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Gustavo Daniel Luján was born on 17 July 1981 in Córdoba. At the age of 18, he had a traffic accident. The accident led to a C4 neck injury, which resulted in paraplegia and left him paralysed from the shoulders down. Since then, Gustavo Daniel Luján has learned to master his life under these altered circumstances and to adapt to the new challenges. Despite these obstacles, he completed his secondary schooling and even began a university degree. Unfortunately, he did not, however, find a course of study that truly fulfilled him. He had always wished to draw and paint with his mouth, but for a long time, fear prevented him from realising this dream. Mental blocks stood in his way until he finally decided: "If you really want it, you can manage it". In 2016, Gustavo Daniel Luján eventually began to teach himself to paint with brushes and acrylics. In 2017, Gustavo Daniel Luján began art lessons at the Figueroa Alcorta School of Fine Arts in Córdoba. There were times when he had to take a break because of health problems, but he is now in excellent health. He can now hardly wait to continue painting, as it brings him joy and does him good.

AUSTRALIA

BARRY, AIDAN

Date of birth: 18 June 1997

Place of birth: Ashford

Painting technique: Mouth and foot painter

Aidan Barry was born on 18 June 1997 with phocomelia major and complex congenital cardiac insufficiency. Aidan took a brush in his mouth for the first time when he was three years old and undergoing open-heart surgery in Melbourne. He is studying teaching in secondary education at the University of Adelaide. During his school days, he was not able to take Art as a subject as the teachers were not flexible enough to allow him to work with his feet or his mouth. It was not until he was an adult that his Nanna brought him into contact with his artistic abilities again. Since 2018, he has been a pupil at The Changing Canvas in Glenelg, where he has honed his skills in acrylic painting. As art is of great importance in his family, his mother (Bernadette Maureen Barry, VDMFK Scholarship Holder) was able to set up an art room. This provided Aidan Barry with a greater opportunity to practise and refine his artistic style. Away from the canvas, Aidan Barry is interested in sport, music and writing. He played a key role in founding an inclusive cricket league in South Australia. Art enables Aidan Barry to express his creativity.

BRAZIL

HAGE VIEIRA, LUÍSA

Date of birth: 8 October 2010

Place of birth: Salvador

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Luísa Hage Vieira was born on 8 October 2010 in Salvador. As a result of a prenatal illness, she was born with arthrogryposis, a condition that causes the joints in the upper and lower limbs to stiffen and makes normal use of these extremities impossible. She was raised by her grandmother as her birth parents had abandoned her. The barriers imposed on her were not, however, sufficient to prevent her from developing writing, drawing and painting abilities. At the age of four, Luísa Hage Vieira was already showing an interest in art and began to develop her drawing with the mouth. Her grandmother recognised at an early stage the dexterity that Luísa demonstrated with her mouth, and searched tirelessly for art courses and exhibitions to further promote her granddaughter's talent. At that time, her grandmother decided to encourage her and found a painting teacher who helped to improve her techniques. Since then, she has participated in exhibitions, sold several paintings and even appeared on television programmes. Through these efforts, Luísa Hage Vieira has been able to establish contact with artists of various genres and exhibit her works at important places in Salvador. During the pandemic, she took a break from her artistic work, but at the same time established a close relationship with two married teachers, Cleide and Dielson, from her former school. This special connection led to a "collective adoption", and the couple now lives

together with Luísa Hage Vieira and her grandmother under one roof, enabling them to form a new family.

BATISTA DE JESUS, SEBASTIÃO

Date of birth: 21 January 1971
Place of birth: Medeiros Neto, BA
Painting technique: Mouth painter

Sebastião Batista de Jesus, born 21 January 1971, has been paraplegic since 1994, when he had a serious accident during a football match at the age of 24. As a result of the injuries, he can neither sit nor move independently and is severely restricted in his arm and hand function. After the death of his parents and two sisters, he has lived alone since 2019 and relies on the support of relatives, friends and donations from his community to cover his health and everyday needs. Despite his difficult life circumstances, Sebastião Batista de Jesus was given the opportunity to begin painting in November 2023 through a friend, who is a member of the Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists. This new activity provides him not only with a distraction, but also with important motivation to improve his quality of life.

SANTOS DE OLIVEIRA, MARINA

Date of birth: 8 September 2004
Place of birth: Vitória da Conquista
Painting technique: Foot painter

Marina Santos de Oliveira was born on 8 September 2004 in Vitória da Conquista with cerebral palsy as a result of complications during birth. Oxygen deficiency during the birth resulted in paralysis of the arms, hearing loss and speech disorders. Marina Santos de Oliveira has two younger siblings. Together with their parents, they live in Vitória da Conquista in Bahia. At the age of five, Marina began to write with her foot at

school. In 2018, her school organised an art event, which fascinated Marina and awakened her interest in painting. She began to paint with her left foot by watching courses and videos online. The artist enjoys being inspired time and again by photos of landscapes and places, for example of her aunt's farm. Via Instagram, she met the artist Adolfo Simões de Oliveira Neto (VDMFK Scholarship Holder) and through him, the Association as well. In her free time, Marina plays the keyboard and boccia. Her dream is to study art.

SOARES CARDOSO ROBERTA RAICIA

Date of birth: 16 June 1991
Place of birth: Medina
Painting technique: Mouth painter

Roberta Raicia Soares Cardoso was born on 16 June 1991 in Medina. She was a very charismatic and happy girl, attended school and would never have thought that anything could be impossible for her. She went to São Paulo to work, in order to support her family, who was experiencing poverty. At the age of 16, she had a serious car accident, which resulted in quadriplegia. After 18 months in hospital, she was allowed to return home. At home, her mother cares for her. She has not lost her vitality or her enjoyment of nature. After Roberta Raicia Soares Cardoso lost a brother, she began to paint with her mouth. Unable to walk, unable to work, unable to do anything, she thought that she had to find something to distract herself with, to alleviate her grief at the loss of her brother. Her mother bought her a pencil and paper. For Roberta Raicia Soares Cardoso, the discovery of art was very important because it helps her to feel more alive and to see that she is not useless.

COLOMBIA

HORTA COCOMA, JOSÉ WILMER

Date of birth: 11 September 1995
Place of birth: Rovira, Tolima
Painting technique: Mouth painter

José Wilmer Horta Cocoma was born on 11 September 1995 in Rovira, Tolima. As the son of farmers, he grew up in poor circumstances, worked with his parents in the fields and for lack of financial means, he only learned to read and write. At the age of 21, he became a spastic quadriplegic as a result of a gunshot wound. For his recovery, José Wilmer Horta Cocoma moved to the city of Ibagué, Tolima. In 2021, he met Alcidez García Giraldo (VDMFK Scholarship Holder), who told him about the Association. This motivated him to tackle his life project of mouth painting. José Wilmer Horta Cocoma began a course with the teacher Carlos Parra Duarte.

MUÑOZ ZAMBRANO, MARÍA ALEJANDRA

Date of birth: 16 December 1998
Place of birth: San Cristóbal, Venezuela
Painting technique: Foot painter

María Alejandra Muñoz Zambrano was born on 16 December 1998 in San Cristóbal, Venezuela. Since her birth, she has lived with arthrogryposis multiplex, a physical disability that impairs her joints. Her birth parents did not wish to raise her, so she was brought up by her maternal grandmother. She is the youngest of one biological sister and five foster siblings. She completed her school education at the age of 16 at the Cipriano Castro music school. Aged 19, she became a Colombian citizen and moved to Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, Colombia. From an early age, María Alejandra Muñoz Zambrano learned to do things with her feet and her mouth as a result of her disability. She

New Scholarship Holders

showed a great interest in music from an early age and began to play the piano at the age of eight. She gave concerts in various districts of San Cristóbal. At the age of nine, she joined the national symphonic children's choir of Táchira, where she sang for three years. In addition to music, she also developed a talent for digital art. Aged 16, she began to produce drawings on her computer. At the age of 18, she began to draw and to paint more often. At the age of 20, she decided to professionalise her art and created a website to publish her drawings. She also began courses in English, digital marketing and graphic design. These are areas in which she now works. She currently teaches children English and creates content and advertising for her website and for others in the area of digital marketing and graphic design.

PINZÓN LOZANO, DIEGO ALEJANDRO

Date of birth: 30 December 1985

Place of birth: Ibagué-Tolima

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Diego Alejandro Pinzón Lozano was born on 30 December 1985 in Ibagué-Tolima, Colombia. At the age of 19, he became a quadriplegic as a result of a gunshot wound in a street battle. For Diego, it was very difficult to accept the reality of his new life. He became depressed. Years later, he came into contact with Cristian Humberto Vasquez Casilimas (VDMFK Scholarship Holder) through social networks. With his support, he discovered a path to art. Since 2022, Diego Alejandro Pinzón Lozano has been painting with his mouth, and taking painting lessons with Carlos Parra, a sculptor in the city. During this learning process, he has not only recognised that there are no boundaries, but in painting he has also found a means of distraction that not only helps him to improve himself, but also to forget, for a moment, some

of the problems that accompany life with quadriplegia. He lives together with his mother and one of his three children in the city of Ibagué in the Department of Tolima (Colombia).

SUÁREZ REY, MIRZA SOLEDAD

Date of birth: 21 November 1973

Place of birth: Bogotá

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Mirza Soledad Suárez Rey was born on 21 November 1973 in Bogotá. Shortly after her birth, her parents separated, but she had a happy childhood, shaped by nature and rural schools. When she reached pre-puberty, she and her sister moved to their father in the city, which was a drastic change for Mirza Soledad Suárez Rey. At the age of 14, she was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis, an incurable degenerative disease, which sent her into a deep depression.

Through the support of a psychologist and her faith, she found the strength, however, to accept her new life and developed remarkable resilience. In 2003, she moved in with her sister Beltsy, and in 2005 she passed her school leaving examination at the ASED Institute, where she experienced inclusion and social life for the first time. Although she began a study programme in Psychology, she had to give up her studies after two semesters for financial reasons. A defining moment in her life came when she found out about the Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists. She began to develop her artistic potential further, and after years of practice and preparation, she decided in 2023 to pursue her passion. With her family's support, she took the step of rising to this challenge and is thankful today for the opportunities that life offers her.

CUBA

MARCOS OVIEDO, GIOVANI

Date of birth: 14 May 1976

Place of birth: Cuba

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Giovani Marcos Oviedo was born on 14 May 1976 in Cuba. He is the proud father of two children. As an adolescent, he was adventurous; in 2009, Giovani Marcos Oviedo had a serious accident, which left him with a permanent disability. He lost his right arm and sustained severe injuries to his knee and his left hand, which still impair him today. In 2019, Giovani Marcos Oviedo discovered his passion for painting. He began to practise mouth painting. It became a fixed component of his life. He loves to paint with his mouth, and he practises at least twice a week. His path has not been without challenges, however. The Cuban government has made life difficult for the citizens through inflation, violence and kidnapping, and it has not always been easy to pursue his passion for art.

GERMANY

BENNEWITZ, DIRK

Date of birth: 25 August 1970

Place of birth: Hoyerswerda

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Dirk Bennewitz was born on 25 August 1970 in Hoyerswerda. He completed training to become an engineer, worked for four years in this profession, before working as a salesman in a hardware store. In May 1995, he had a swimming accident, which left him paraplegic from the neck downwards (at the level of C5). Since Dirk Bennewitz had already enjoyed drawing and painting before his accident, he continued to be interested in the art of painting. For this

reason, he has watched videos about mouth painting for many years. His partner gave him the final impetus to try it himself. Since then, he has been painting with self-constructed mouth sticks, with charcoal, acrylics and oil paints. He lives with his father in a house in Hosena.

GREAT BRITAIN

NELSON, SUZANNA

Date of birth: 21 September 1984
Place of birth: St Albans
Painting technique: Mouth painter

Suzanna Nelson was born on 21 September 1984 in St Albans. Her life took a dramatic turn in 2005, when she sustained a spinal cord injury at C5/6 in a traffic accident at the age of 20. As a result of a cyst on the spine and the resulting surgeries, her injury spread to the fourth vertebra. She lost a large part of her arm function and the little independence she still had. Before her accident, Suzanna Nelson was known for her love of adventure and passion for horses. She retained this mentality and continued to experience a variety of adaptive activities, including adaptive skiing, indoor parachuting, ultralight flying and sailing. In addition, she participates in voluntary work. Despite the many challenges that shape her life, including anxiety states, depression and anorexia, Suzanna Nelson found a path to self-discovery through the lockdown. She discovered her artistic side and began to paint and draw. Therapy brought her into contact with the VDMFK.

INDIA

GHADI, RAJ ASHOK

Date of birth: 3 May 2012
Place of birth: Jamsande
Painting technique: Mouth painter

Raj Ashok Ghadi was born on 3 May 2012 in Jamsande, India, with several joint contractures. He was later diagnosed with arthrogryposis multiplex congenita (AMC). Raj Ashok Ghadi lives in a large family with 10 members. His mother Ranjana is a housewife and his father Ashok is a farmer. As a result of the remote location, his physical condition and the lack of healthcare facilities, Raj Ashok Ghadi has mostly been cared for at home and attended the first form of the local school for one year. His uncle liked to draw and occasionally talked to him about his art. This was the beginning of his career as a mouth painter. Raj Ashok Ghadi was admitted to the orthopaedic department of Bai Jerbai Wadia Hospital for Children in Mumbai, where the entire team of healthcare personnel, doctors, nurses, auxiliary staff and even other parents and children were impressed by his ability to establish himself as an artist. As the hospital is a charitable institution, his diagnoses, treatment costs, medication and hospital stay were financed by health programmes and donations.

RANI, REHNUMA

Date of birth: 12 July 2001
Place of birth: Uttar Pradesh
Painting technique: Foot painter

Rehnuma Rani was born on 12 July 2001 in Uttar Pradesh, India. She was born without a right hand, with a left hand that was too small and without fingers, and a leg that was too short. Despite these challenges, Rehnuma Rani demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability at an early stage.

Since the death of her father in March 2024, she has lived with her mother, who is a housewife, and her six siblings. Rehnuma completed her studies in Visual Art at Government College in Chandigarh, and is now preparing for her master's in Visual Art. Art is her great passion, particularly drawing landscapes. Rehnuma Rani is determined to continue to pursue this passion.

ITALY

CRISTOFOLI, STEFANIA

Date of birth: 18 January 1967
Place of birth: Verona
Painting technique: Mouth painter

Stefania Cristofoli was born on 18 January 1967 in Verona. She is married and has two adult children. Since a heavy fall on 12 March 2023, her life has completely changed. She has been quadriplegic since then. During the months of rehabilitation in Negrar Hospital, she attended art therapy and found relief in painting with the mouth. She is currently continuing to paint with the support of Ms Flavia Rossignoli.

NEW ZEALAND

SHEIKH, ABDIFATAH HUSSEIN

Date of birth: 1 January 1969
Place of birth: Mogadishu, Somalia
Painting technique: Mouth painter

Abdifatah Hussein Sheikh was born on 1 January 1969 in Mogadishu, Somalia. At the age of 26, he came from Somalia to New Zealand. When he was 31, he had an accident that left him a quadriplegic. In 2002, his friends encouraged him to start painting. He therefore visited extracurricular painting courses at the Spinal Unit in

New Scholarship Holders

Otahuhu, Auckland. At first, he found painting with his mouth too difficult and he almost gave up, but thanks to his friends' support, he continued. He gradually understood the process of painting and gained more trust in the application of paint, by focusing and concentrating strongly. He began to set new goals for his painting. His pictures are of his home country, and he enjoys the memories that these pictures awaken in him.

RUSSIA

KRAVCHENKO, KRISTINA

Date of birth: 26 January 1991

Place of birth: Alban

Painting technique: Foot painter

Kristina Kravchenko was born on 26 January 1991 in the small town of Alban in East Siberia. She was born with a childbirth injury, and later, at the age of seven months, she was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. At the age of three, she already began to learn everything with her feet. From the age of eight, she began to draw and to participate in creative children's competitions. She has taken part in several important art exhibitions in her region, including in Moscow. Her hobbies are crocheting, embroidery, sewing and cooking.

SPAIN

HENAO GUTIÉRREZ, JAVIER ALBERTO

Date of birth: 18 February 1981

Place of birth: Montenegro Quindío, Colombia

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Javier Alberto Henao Gutiérrez was born on 18 February 1981 in Montenegro Quindío, Colombia. He led a normal life until he was 35 and worked hard to feed his family of five. In 2017, the family was involved in a traffic accident, in which Javier Alberto Henao Gutiérrez lost both arms, his wife lost her right arm and his three-year-old daughter lost her life. Since then, it has been very difficult for him, as his disability hindered him in finding work. His wife left him, and he remained with his mother, who always stood by him and encouraged him to keep going. In winter 2023, Javier Alberto Henao Gutiérrez discovered a school that offered painting courses. This inspired him to learn to paint with his mouth. With great love and interest, he began to develop this new skill. Before the canvas, he realised that there are no obstacles or barriers if you do something with passion and love. Painting brings him great joy, and his greatest wish is to become a professional painter one day. In February 2024, he moved from Colombia to his daughters in Mallorca.

UGANDA

MWESIGYE, DENIS JOHN

Date of birth: 12 November 2000

Place of birth: Kampala

Painting technique: Mouth and foot painter

Denis John Mwesigye was born on 12 November 2000 in Kampala, Uganda, with deformed arms. His father left the family, as he saw his son as an unlucky person. His mother was soon overburdened with the daily domestic needs. Denis John Mwesigye was given to Arms Around Africa Foundation. The carers believed, however, that his brain did not work normally as a result of the physical deformities. A psychologist tested his brain function, which was very normal and active. From that point on, he began to take chess lessons. He participated in chess championships in Uganda and New York. During his stay at Arms Around Africa Foundation, he attended school, where he discovered his artistic and musical talent. Through his skills in painting and singing, Denis John Mwesigye was able to earn a little money to survive and, at the same time, to support his unemployed mother and his two brothers.

The significance of painting

Below is the significance of painting for mouth painter Keith Jansz, Full Member from Great Britain.

The gift of a book telling the stories of disabled artists around the world literally changed my life, inspiring me to paint and become a member of our incredible Association. My journey as an artist who paints with his mouth has been filled with moments of frustration, but also profound moments of joy, connection, and purpose. Painting is not just about creating images on a canvas – it's about finding freedom, embracing expression, and loving the art I produce, regardless of how it's made. For me, painting is an act of empowerment.

As disabled people, we are familiar with the challenges life throws at us, but in those challenges, we also discover something uplifting; the ability to express ourselves through our art, breaking barriers and transcending expectations.

As disabled artists, we each face our own unique hurdles, but the beauty of art is that it allows us to communicate our stories and emotions in ways that transcend words, in any language. Whether we paint with our mouth or feet, the important thing is not how we create, but that we do create.

The work we make is a testament to our strength, our vision, and our resilience. Don't be discouraged by the challenges you face or the doubts that sometimes creep in. Keep pushing forward. Keep exploring new ideas, new techniques, and new ways of expressing yourself. Our art reflects our unique perspective, and that is something to celebrate!

”

My artistic journey: a message from one artist to another.



"Santa Maria della Salute", oils, 50 × 60 cm.



"Sunset, Chaîne d'Arvais", oils, 50 × 60 cm.



"Tower Bridge, distant docklands", oils, 51 × 61 cm.

Art gives us the power to break down barriers, not just for ourselves, but for others who see our work. When people view my paintings, I want them to see more than just the images on the canvas. I want them to see the determination and passion behind every stroke. I want to challenge the stereotypes of what disabled people are capable of and inspire others to do the same. For me, painting has been my therapy. Each time I pick up the brush, I'm not just painting a picture, I'm painting a piece of me.

I'm as enthusiastic about painting now as when I first began because I am always learning. Art has been a profound source of meaning in my life, and I hope that it is the same for you. Let us continue to inspire each other. We may have different abilities, but we all share a common drive: the need to create and tell our stories. So, pick up your brush and let your art reflect your inner world, a gift to yourself and to others.

Keith Jansz, Full Member, Great Britain

JANSZ, KEITH (GREAT BRITAIN)

Date of birth: 8 September 1961

Place of birth: London

Full Member of the VDMFK

since: 2000

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Keith Jansz can look back on a very successful professional career since he completed his school education. In addition to his work as an independent financial advisor and stockbroker, he was very active in sports. In 1995, he broke his neck at the level of the fifth/sixth cervical vertebrae in a car accident. The result was that he remained paralysed from there downwards and was therefore no longer able to use his arms and legs.

He subsequently had to spend a long time in hospital. Two years after he was discharged from hospital, he met the now deceased mouth painter Trevor C. Wells. This encouraged him to attempt to paint with his mouth too. As early as 1998, he became a Scholarship Holder of the Association. In addition, he began the painting course of the Open College of the Arts. In 2000, he became a Full Member.

Keith Jansz's painting style is impressionist. His favourite subjects include Venetian landscapes with atmospheric skies as well as figures and still lifes. For these, he mostly uses the technique of oil painting.



Keith Jansz, mouth painter from Great Britain, has been a Full Member of the Association since 2000.

We mourn for

Deceased Full Member

GERMANY

Melzer, Reinhard

Date of birth: 8 September 1938

Passed away on: 20 September 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Reinhard Melzer suffered from spastic paralysis from birth and he was hardly able to move his hands. Although he spent many years of his life in institutions, his family was very important to him. Already while at school, Reinhard Melzer discovered his ability to write and paint with his mouth. It was therefore not surprising that mouth painting very soon became his hobby. He was able to dedicate

more of his time to this hobby when he became a Scholarship Holder of the VDMFK in 1962. He studied mouth painting on his own and with the help of art teachers and other professional artists. His moving to a small flat in Berlin made it possible for him to study even more intensively on his own. It was a great personal success when he was granted permission in 1975 by the former East German association of artists to work as an artist and sell his paintings. From 1980 onwards, he had numerous exhibitions. Reinhard Melzer became a Full Member of the VDMFK in 1992. He was very fond of experimenting and painted realistic and abstract motifs in oils and

watercolours. Reinhard Melzer passed away on 20 September 2024.



Deceased Scholarship Holders

BELGIUM

Van den Abeele, Roger

Date of birth: 1 December 1950

Passed away on: 17 May 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Roger van den Abeele was born on 1 December 1950 in Ronse (Belgium). After attending primary and secondary school, he completed an apprenticeship as a mechanic with graduation from a vocational school. He had quadriplegia from 8 October 1984 as a result of an accident at work. He attended a secondary school until his accident.

Through the now deceased member Marthe-Angèle Janssens, he began to paint with his mouth in January 1988. Roger van den Abeele was supported by the VDMFK as a Scholarship Holder from 1989. This made it possible for him to have private painting

lessons. His hobby was reading. Roger van den Abeele passed away on 17 May 2024.

BRAZIL

Batista de Oliveira, Juracir

Date of birth: 6 October 1959

Passed away on: 15 November 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Juracir Batista de Oliveira was born on 6 October 1959. Since he was nine, he worked as an agricultural worker and cattle drover in the states of São Paulo and Mato Grosso. The mouth painter attended primary school until Year 8, but without completing that year, while he was working as an agricultural worker in Presidente Venceslau. Juracir Batista de Oliveira had a very happy childhood and was always in contact with nature. Aged 17,

the mouth painter decided to work in Wild West shows. He practised this work until he was 19. At the same time, he began to paint Wild West show motifs on undershirts, which he then sold at these events and thereby earned some extra money.

On 17 December 1978, the accident then occurred during a Wild West show that resulted in him becoming quadriplegic. He fell and his horse, which had run into the protective wall of the arena, fell onto the artist. The mouth painter was admitted to a hospital and began to paint with his mouth after some time. From 1993, Juracir Batista de Oliveira was supported by the VDMFK as a Scholarship Holder. The mouth painter passed away on 15 November 2024.

Deceased Scholarship Holders

Garcia, Simony da Rosa

Date of birth: 8 October 1971

Passed away on: 9 June 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Simony da Rosa Garcia was born on 8 October 1971 in Vila Valéria (Brazil). As a result of a car accident in July 2000, where she suffered injuries to the C3, C4 and C5 cervical vertebrae, she was unable to use her hands or legs. Several months after the accident, she began to paint with her mouth as part of a therapeutic programme. In order to master her difficult fate, the artist worked very hard and was able to make steady progress. Simony da Rosa Garcia contributed to several group exhibitions and had her own exhibitions, too. Simony da Rosa Garcia was supported as a Scholarship Holder from 2003. She passed away on 9 June 2024.

ESTONIA

Tael, Allar

Date of birth: 29 June 1983

Passed away on: 25 May 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Allar Tael was born on 29 June 1983 in Taali, Estonia. As a child, he loved to go fishing and cycling. After his time at school, he began his training to become a car mechanic. Upon graduating and completing obligatory military service, he worked in a garage in Pärnu as a car mechanic. He loved his job and worked at this garage until 2005, when he became a quadriplegic due to a car accident. After the accident, he learned to use his computer with a pen in his mouth. The humorous "Pilkaja" magazine published his comedy stories. In spring 2017, he met the Scholarship Holder Melis Luks. Thanks to this meeting, Allar Tael became aware of mouth painting and began to watch videos online. On 4 June 2017, he took

a blank piece of paper for the first time and began his first painting attempts. He learned from his mistakes and improved with the help of the Internet. Thus, painting became his new vocation. He found inspiration in nature for the pictures he drew with coloured pencils. Allar Tael was part of the VDMFK family from 2019 as a Scholarship Holder. He passed away on 25 May 2024.

FRANCE

Leclerc, Annick

Date of birth: 12 January 1955

Passed away on: 10 October 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Annick Leclerc was born on 12 January 1955. She attended primary school and grammar school. In 1991, she became a quadriplegic, and in 1996 she decided to paint with her mouth and very much enjoyed it from the beginning. She had private lessons with the art professor Peter van Mourik. The mouth painter's works demonstrated artistic talent. From 2002, she was a Scholarship Holder of the VDMFK. Annick Leclerc passed away on 10 October 2024.

Maillard, Christophe

Date of birth: 7 February 1962

Passed away on: 13 November 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Christophe Maillard was born on 7 February 1962 in Évreux (France). He was quadriplegic. Christophe Maillard attended primary school. In 1987 he began to paint with his mouth. To learn mouth painting, he had private painting lessons. Christophe Maillard was supported as a Scholarship Holder from 1990. He was subsequently able to participate in several exhibitions. The mouth painter stayed in the same hospital in which the now deceased Scholarship Holder

Josée Bernard stayed. Through her, he became familiar with the Association. His hobbies were playing chess and music. Christophe Maillard passed away on 13 November 2024.

GREECE

Apostolou, Maria

Date of birth: 25 January 1953

Passed away on: 5 October 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Maria Apostolou was born in Lavrion (Greece) on 25 January 1953. As she suffered from myelopathy since birth, all four of her limbs were paralysed. She received private art lessons from Ms Dina Bata from June 1995. Her work demonstrated talent, which is why she was a Scholarship Holder of the VDMFK from 1996. Maria Apostolou passed away on 5 October 2024.

ITALY

Chinello, Guido

Date of birth: 19 February 1962

Passed away on: 1 August 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Guido Chinello was born in Brugine, Padua, on 19 January 1962. He was married and had one child. He became a quadriplegic aged 20 as a result of a traffic accident. He attempted to paint with a brush in his mouth 13 years ago. He took great pleasure in it and he saw that he was able to do something that he was incapable of with his hands. Three years later, Guido Chinello became familiar with the VDMFK. He was supported by the VDMFK from 1995. Guido Chinello passed away on 1 August 2024.

SINGAPORE

Ngo, William

Date of birth: 14 March 1965

Passed away on: 9 June 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

William Ngo was born on 14 March 1965 in Singapore. He was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy when he was 17 years old. The muscles in his hands became increasingly weak. At the age of 30, he was forced to give up his job. He had lost all use of his upper extremities. William Ngo preferred painting landscapes using water-colours. From 2013, he was a Scholarship Holder of the Association. William Ngo passed away on 9 June 2024.

SOUTH AFRICA

Afrikaner, Henry

Date of birth: 20 January 1979

Passed away on: 2 October 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Henry Afrikaner was born on 20 January 1979 in Karl Bremer, South Africa. He attended secondary school in Scottsville. Until his accident, he lived at his mother's home with his two sons. In 2007, he broke his neck at the level of C5/C6 while playing rugby, becoming a quadriplegic. In 2013, he moved into Huis Andries Olivier (a home for paraplegics). While he was there, he was a board member for a year. In a course at Stellenbosch University, he became familiar with pastel drawing. He also played wheelchair rugby. His main goal in life was to be independent and to be able to lead a happy and normal life. His hobbies were painting, watching sport, and listening to music. Henry Afrikaner was supported as a Scholarship Holder from 2022. He passed away on 2 October 2024.

Van der Westhuizen, Michel

Date of birth: 18 October 1964

Passed away on: 28 May 2024

Painting technique: Mouth painter

Shortly after his birth it was discovered that Michel van der Westhuizen suffered from a hereditary disease called Kugelberg-Welander disease, or spinal muscular atrophy. As this condition caused motor weakness, the progression of the disease cost him the use of his arms/hands and legs. He became interested in mouth painting at the end of 2002, when former VDMFK Scholarship Holder Susanne Kiesling-Wahl still taught mouth painting. He enjoyed it very much and saw every painting as a challenge. From 2007, he was supported by the VDMFK as a Scholarship Holder. Michel van der Westhuizen passed away on 28 May 2024.

VENEZUELA

Rodríguez, Melitón

Date of birth: 12 October 1947

Passed away on: 25 April 2024

Painting technique: Foot painter

Melitón Rodríguez was born on 12 October 1947 in Voladora, Córdoba district. After he had finished primary school, he attended the Simón Bolívar secondary school in Ciudad Bolívar. At the age of 15, the foot painter travelled to the capital for the first time. There Melitón Rodríguez was interviewed by the "Venezuela Grafica" magazine, and the interview drew his attention to our Association. Melitón Rodríguez began to study fine arts and started academic training. He participated in various solo and joint exhibitions. The VDMFK granted him a scholarship from 1993. Melitón Rodríguez passed away on 25 April 2024.

The VDMFK mourns

On 3 September 2024, Hans Waibel, our short film producer of many years, passed away at the age of 79 years. From the 1980s, he accompanied the mouth and foot painting artists of the world with his camera team around the globe. Innumerable anecdotes, unforgettable moments and numerous friendships arose from this. Hans Waibel made a significant contribution to increasing the awareness and acceptance of the art created by the mouth and foot painters in the world. We will remember Hans Waibel very fondly with his humorous manner and will honour his memory.

Board of the VDMFK and employees of the administrative office



As he was known: Hans Waibel behind his video camera.

VDMFK personalities

In the section "VDMFK personalities", we present mouth and foot painters who have made outstanding contributions to the VDMFK in the past. This time, we present Christy Brown, a foot painter from Ireland.

Christy Brown was born on 5 June 1932 in Dublin. He was born with cerebral palsy, which resulted in him being unable to control his limbs, except for his left foot. His mother, who had 12 other children and refused to allow him to be sent to an institution, taught him to read, and to write and type with his left foot, his only usable limb. Thanks to the devoted care of his mother and his wife Mary, who he married in 1972, as well as his own determination, his speech and muscle control improved.

The artistically gifted Christy Brown had private art lessons with Patrick Carrol in Dublin from 1958. In the course of time, he evolved into a renowned artist. Landscapes and

compositions are expressed in dark colours and in abstract shapes. Christy Brown was a Full Member of the VDMFK. He passed away on 7 September 1981.

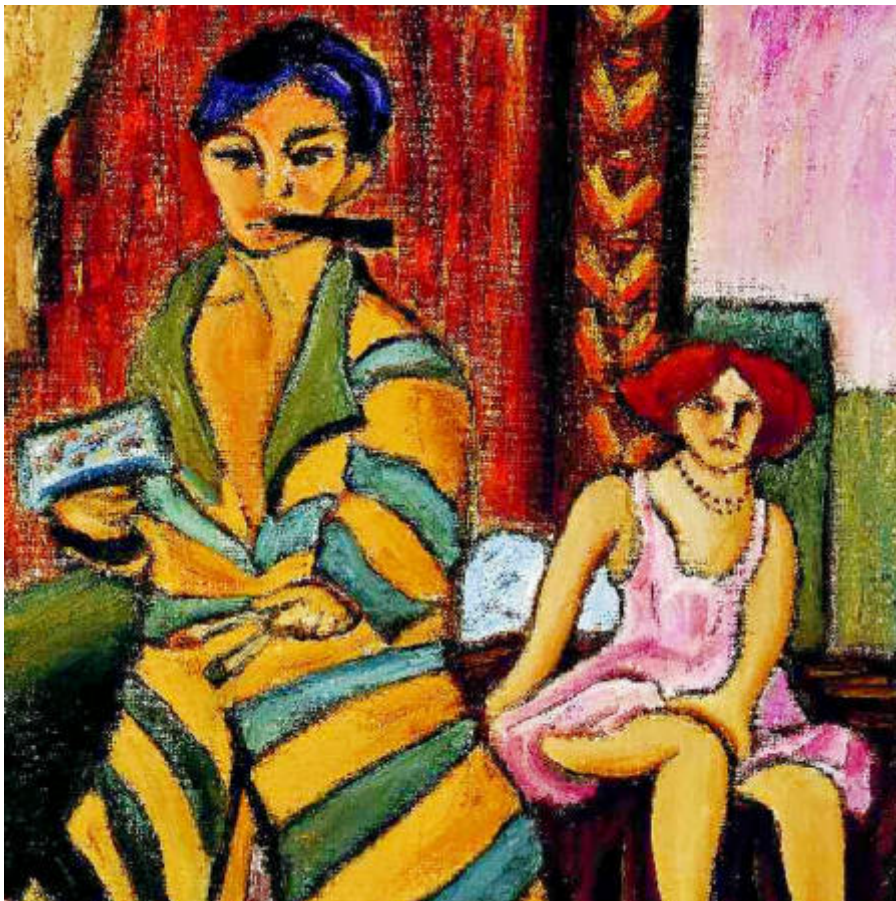
Christy Brown participated in various exhibitions, which took place in Dublin, Cork, Belfast and in many other cities all over the world. He wrote novels. His best-known literary work is "My Left Foot" and the best-seller "Down All the Days". These books were published in many languages and had excellent reviews in the international press.

His autobiography "My Left Foot", published in 1954, was filmed, making it famous worldwide. Daniel Day-Lewis



Christy Brown, foot painter from Ireland, became world-famous through his book "My Left Foot", which was filmed.

as the leading actor and Brenda Fricker as the supporting actress both won an Oscar for their performances in this film in 1990.



"In the studio", oils, 75 x 61 cm.

Text extracts from the book "My Left Foot" by Christy Brown.

"My mother came in from the pantry with a steaming pot in her hand. She stopped midway between the table and the fire, feeling the tension flowing through the room. She followed their stare and saw me, in the corner. Her eyes looked from my face down to my foot, with the chalk gripped between my toes. She put down the pot. Then she crossed over to me and knelt down beside me, as she had done so many times before. 'I'll show you what to do with it, Chris,' she said, very slowly and in a queer, jerky way, her face flushed as if with some inner excitement. Taking another piece of chalk from Mona, she hesitated, then very deliberately drew, on the floor in front of me, the single letter 'A'. 'Copy that,' she said, looking steadily at me. 'Copy it, Christy.' I couldn't. I looked about me, looked around at the faces that were turned towards me, tense, excited faces that were at that moment frozen, immobile, eager, waiting for a miracle in their midst."

"I did. I stiffened my body and put my left foot out again, for the third time. I drew one side of the letter. I drew half the other side. Then the stick of chalk broke and I was left with a stump. I wanted to fling it away and give up. Then I felt my mother's hand on my shoulder. I tried once more. Out went my foot. I shook, I sweated and strained every muscle. My hands were so tightly clenched that my fingernails bit into the flesh. I set my teeth so hard that I nearly pierced my lower lip. Everything in the room swam till the faces around me were mere patches of white. But – I drew it – the letter 'A'. There it was on the floor before me. Shaky, with awkward, wobbly sides and a very uneven centre line. But it was the

letter 'A'. I looked up. I saw my mother's face for a moment, tears on her cheeks. Then my father stooped down and hoisted me on to his shoulder. I had done it! It had started – the thing that was to give my mind its chance of expressing itself. True, I couldn't speak with my lips, but now I would speak through something more lasting than spoken words – written words. That one letter, scrawled on the floor with a broken bit of yellow chalk gripped between my toes, was my road to a new world, my key to mental freedom."

I had done it! It had started – the thing that was to give my mind its chance of expressing itself.



“My Left Foot” – A masterpiece of cinema

The film “My Left Foot” from 1989 tells the impressive life story of Christy Brown, an Irish writer, foot painter and poet, who was born with cerebral palsy. Directed by Jim Sheridan, the film is based on Brown’s autobiography of the same name and provides a profound portrait of courage, talent and overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Christy Brown, played by the brilliant Daniel Day-Lewis, is the tenth of 22 children in a working-class family in Dublin. Despite his physical limitations – he can only control his left foot – Christy discovers his extraordinary talent for art and literature early on. Thanks to the unconditional love of his mother Bridget, acted by Brenda Fricker, he finds the strength to realise his potential and to find his voice as an artist and a person.

The film brings Christy’s world to life with intense emotionality. Particularly worthy of mention is the acting performance of Daniel Day-Lewis, who was awarded an Oscar as Best Actor in a Leading Role for the film.

Brenda Fricker is also impressive, and also won an Oscar for her portrayal of the self-sacrificing mother. Both portrayals capture the challenges and the resilience that characterise Christy’s life story.

“My Left Foot” is more than a biopic – it is a tribute to human willpower and the transformative power of art. The film shows the struggles of people with disabilities and, at the same time, illuminates the significance of family, community and individual determination. With a sharp-witted script, strong characters and authentic production, it is moving at the deepest level and inspires viewers to redefine the boundaries of the possible, time and again. An indispensable work for everyone who wishes to be inspired by stories about extraordinary personalities.

Advertising for the film “My Left Foot”, which won two Oscars.



Paulus Ploier (Full Member, Austria),
"I just wish to bring joy", acrylics, 80 x 60 cm.



SERVICE

Information from the office

SUBMISSION OF ORIGINALS

The office of the Association kindly asks all artists to read and take note of the following information.

All consignments of originals sent in to the VDMFK are subject to inspection by the Swiss Customs Administration (Liechtenstein is Swiss Customs Territory and part of the Swiss Currency and Economic Area). Import levy is imposed on all originals, which will be paid by the VDMFK.

As artists constantly send their originals to the VDMFK we have commissioned the forwarding agency DHL Logistics AG, Switzerland, to handle this difficult matter.

We therefore request you to send all your parcels containing originals to the following address:

**DHL Logistics (Schweiz) AG
Für VDMFK
Heldaustrasse 66
CH-9471 Buchs
Schweiz**

Please keep in mind the following points when you send in your paintings:

- no framed paintings
- no passe-partouts
- no eye bolts or other hanging devices
- no oil paintings that are not dry

Please write the following information on the reverse of your original:

- name
- country
- original title
- technique
- on sale or not on sale

With your cooperation you save us additional correspondence and considerably facilitate the work of the VDMFK.

Please send only originals to DHL but no correspondence, reports, photographs, catalogues, biographies, etc.

All your correspondence etc. should be addressed solely to the:

**VDMFK
Im Rietle 25
P.O. Box 818
FL-9494 Schaan
Principality of Liechtenstein
Email: vdmfk@vdmfk.li**

Return of originals

Due to lack of storage we have to return the originals to our artists from time to time. We send back those originals that have already been reproduced or motifs that are not needed for other purposes any more. The VDMFK does not need these paintings any more, so please do not submit the returned originals again. You can use your works for your exhibitions or sell them. However, please take into account that the purchaser does not acquire the right to reproduce the original.

For private sales please use the form of the VDMFK, which has to be signed by the respective purchaser.

Well-being and mindfulness

Below is a further section of the column "Health and care", written this time by Ann Lund Wahlberg, VDMFK Board member from Denmark.

What makes us happy? What makes us flourish? When we feel good, we are more successfully creative and grow in our life. But how is it possible to convey our own feeling of well-being to other people in an inspiring way through our art? Flourishing is an expression of well-being, which gives individuals the feeling of additional value, courage and joie de vivre. Well-being means feeling good physically, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and socially, and able to achieve what we want in our professional and private life. I believe that it is important for most of us to experience the feeling of being happy so that we feel good ourselves and can be creative. Flourishing and well-being are a balance between an appreciation of the positive things and learning to cope with difficult circumstances well and sustainably. If we manage this, we find it easier to express ourselves creatively and to create beautiful artwork.

We do not always have the feeling that life is easy or that we are thankful for the situation in which we find ourselves. If we experience pain, loneliness and other challenges, it can be difficult to be thankful. But if we pause for a moment and notice the things that have recently brought us a little (or great) joy, and think about them, then we should try to cherish them. The more we begin to focus on the small joys in life, the greater they become and we often discover that there is more that we can be thankful for than we thought at first. So when we learn to see adversities not as obstacles, but as a chance for growth, that can change our attitude to life. Challenges can provide us with new skills and strengthen our self-confidence.

In my opinion, this was precisely what drove our founder Arnulf Erich Stegmann. He saw his disability not as a limitation, but rather as an opportunity to grow and to show his art to the world. And it was not growth that he kept to himself – no, he saw the potential for more people to be part of this success. And that is the reason why we are here today. Because one man saw the positive things in life, managed to find inner well-being in these, had an idea and passed it on to one generation after the other of mouth and foot painters worldwide. With the greatest wish for them to experience well-being and to find joy in painting.

Ann Lund Wahlberg, Board member from Denmark

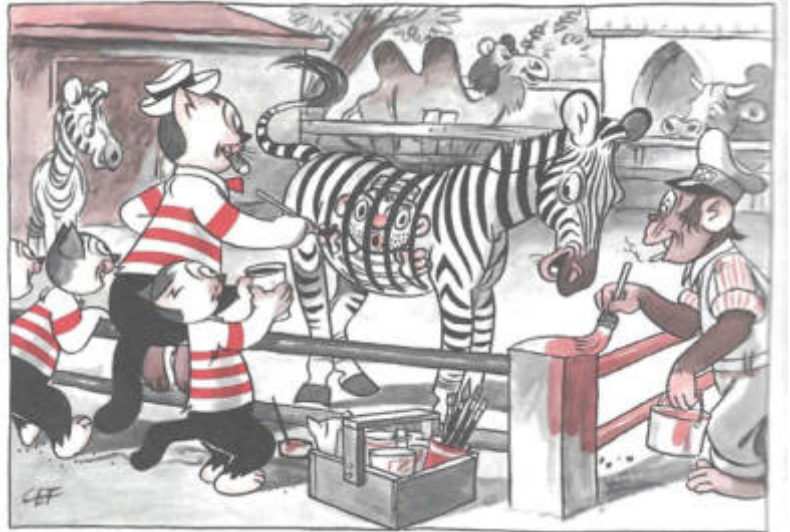


”
**When we feel good,
 we are more
 successfully creative
 and grow in our life.**

Caricatures

Mouth painter Carl Ernst Fischer (Cefischer) from Germany made a name for himself with his caricatures and the picture stories of the cat "Oskar". These were also published in book form. On this page, we show three of these caricatures.

Cefischer gave this caricature the name "Behind bars".



"Outboard engine" is the name of this caricature.

This caricature has the title: "Lumpi is no guard dog".



Chong Keow-Leong (Associate Member, Singapore),
"Oranges and Bouquet", mixed media, 41×31 cm.



PUBLISHERS

Publishers' activities

BRAZIL

The Brazil publishing house organised a special exhibition with the name "Wonders of Brazil", which took place this year at the Naval Club and could also be seen at the "IBEU Art Gallery" (Institute Brazil – United States) in Rio de Janeiro. The inauguration took place on 19 August 2024. The artwork was on display until 13 September 2024. The following mouth and foot painters participated in the opening: **Marcelo da Cunha (Full Member), Gonçalo Borges (Full Member) as well as the Scholarship Holders Bárbara Correa da Silva, Carlos Eduardo Fraga Rosa, Débora Ferreira dos Santos, Eduardo Moreira de Melo and Luciano Alves dos Nascimento.**



The mouth and foot painters from Brazil participating in the opening of the special exhibition.

as close as possible to the subject, but to interpret it in their own style. The idea was to come together in a specialist conversation via the task, to exchange ideas about the challenges and how they were able to be overcome.

During the course, fundamental topics are also always addressed. This year, "Background and lighting control" were the focus. "The background of a subject plays an essential role in painting, as it significantly influences the perception and effect of the main subject. It is not merely decorative, but rather an active element," as Monika Sieveking explained.

conference in St. James Park in Burton-on-Trent to talk about their art, the Association and possible public relations work.

The conference was organised by **VDMFK Board member Tom Yendell** and important representatives of the Association and the English publishing house of mouth and foot painting artists also participated. The main topic of the event was the various painting techniques, and knowledge of the areas of artist reviews and social media presence was also deepened. The renowned English mouth painter and **Full Member of many years Alison Lapper** gave a motivating lecture about her personal career.

On the last day of the conference, a discussion round on the topic of "Communication" took place and the "International VDMFK Day" on 5 September 2024 was announced.

GERMANY

From 21 August to 24 August 2024, the 21st workshop of the German mouth and foot painters took place. The participating artists were **Full Members Thomas Kahlau, Lars Höllerer, Antje Kratz, Associate Members Markus Kolp, Markus Kostka and Scholarship Holders Selma Aman, Waldemar Merz and Werner Mittelbach.**

Under the workshop leadership of Monika Sieveking, the artists all painted the same subject: the back view of a small girl in a summer dress. All the participants were asked to keep

GREAT BRITAIN

From 29 to 31 August 2024, 18 British mouth and foot painters met for a



The participants of the workshop of the Germany publishing house.

MEXICO

The Mexico publishing house looks back on three events:

a.) The Mexico publishing house organised the exhibition "Identity and tradition", which took place on the occasion of "Fiestas Patrias" at the museum for the bicentenary in Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato. The exhibition was opened on 6 September 2024.

Publishers' activities



The participants at the conference 2024 in Burton.

VDMFK Full Member José Gerardo Uribe, who was born in this important city, was a guest of honour. Artwork by 34 mouth and foot painters was exhibited and admired by the visitors. The event took place in an atmosphere of harmony, music and celebration. The exhibition was open for two months.

b.) On the occasion of the international celebration of mouth and foot painters, the Mexico publishing house called for participation in the project "Nuestro Arte en tus manos" (Our art



VDMFK Full Member José Gerardo Uribe on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition "Identity and tradition" by the Mexico publishing house.

in your hands), which is intended to create artwork for blind and partially sighted people. The project began on 5 September 2024 and the exhibition will take place in spring 2025. The participating artists communicate this message: This project is an opportunity and a loving challenge for your hands to connect with our art.

c.) The chocolate museum "Mucho" has smartened itself up for the exhibition "The beauty of the animal kingdom" on the occasion of the night of the museums in Mexico City. The inauguration took place on 26 June 2024 and was visited by **Scholarship Holders Rogelio Robles, Jesús García and Carlos Mauricio Covarrubias.**

Twenty works were exhibited relating to animals that are native to the cocoa producing region. The event was

successful and was greatly appreciated by the visitors. The museum invited the artists to hold this beautiful exhibition for more than two months.

POLAND

The publishing house in Poland held its traditional workshop in Wisła from 9 to 13 June 2024. The following artists participated in this: **VDMFK Full Member Stanisław Kmiecik and Scholarship Holders: Arkadiusz Cyprian, Teresa Frys, Małgorzata Waszkiewicz, Jadwiga Markur, Mikołaj Kastelik, Jan Sporek, Mariola Wower, Marika Kropidłowska, Bartosz Ostałowski, Martyna Gruca, Joanna Sobierajska, Grzegorz Gawryszewski, Miłosz Bronisz and Staś Salach.**

The theme of the workshop, led by artist Mariusz Drohomirecki, could be chosen freely. Artists allowed themselves to be inspired by the world around them. The mouth and foot painters set to work with commitment and great motivation. It was a pleasure to see the concentration with which the participants approached their task. The course tutor provided the artists with much valuable advice, which they were able to apply to their work.



The mouth and foot painters of Poland who participated in the workshop.

