



## Comic situations in EU corridors: Backlight Award to Martin Kollar

Slovakian photographer and artist Martin Kollar is the winner of the international Backlight Award. The prize of 5,000 euros was granted at the Backlight 08 Photo Festival vernissage in gallery TR1 in Tampere on Friday (19 September). The award jury consisted of representatives of the international partner galleries:

**Maria Gourieva** from *the National Centre of Photography in St.Petersburg*, **Beate Cegielska** from Gallery Image in Denmark and **Paul di Felice** from the University of Luxembourg who also headed the jury.

Martin Kollar won the award for his photographic series Not Guided Tour. Kollar's documentary photographs illustrate the everyday work in the European parliament from a perspective through which the daily routine appears comic, absurd and subtly humorous. Martin Kollar receives the Backlight Award for the second time. He shared his first award with Alexander Honory in 2002.

In recent years, Martin Kollar has worked on projects dealing with media, social rituals and stereotypes. Kollar describes his award-winning series: "The EU parliament consists of 27 states. The process of harmonisation of all the diversities among different nations with their minorities and majorities cannot happen without major or minor unpredictable difficulties and confrontations. One particular characteristic of my work is that I try to reveal the subtle and often concealed humour of a situation".

Backlight 08 Photo Festival features the works of 56 different photographers and video artists from across the world. Curated in March, the exhibition received submissions from altogether 572 artists.

### Martin Kollar

After graduating from the Academy of Performing Arts Bratislava where he studied in the Film faculty, camera department, Martin Kollar (b. 1971) has worked on several long-term projects as a photographer and cinematographer. His work has been exhibited in venues not only in Slovakia but also in France (Maison Europeen de la Photography Paris ja Recontres des Arles), China (Guandong museum of art), Czech Republic (House of Photography in Prague), Poland (Month of Photography in Krakow) and in Greece.

Kollar has received several grants and awards, including the 3ppp photo -stipend, Worldpressphoto Joop Swart masterclass Award, Oscar Barnac honorable mention, SCAM Rodger Pic Award and the FujiFilm Euro Press Photo Award.

Martin Kollar was Born in Zilina in the Slovak Republic, former Czechoslovakia. He currently lives in Prague and is a Member of the Gallery and Agence VU in Paris.

[www.martin.kollar.com](http://www.martin.kollar.com)

## Backlight 08 Photo Festival Organisers:

The international Backlight 08 Photo Festival takes place in Finland, Italy, Austria and Poland. The Finnish exhibition will be held between 19 September and 9 November. Comprising a network exhibition of photographic and video art, Backlight 08 displays works in Helsinki, Oulu, Tampere and Valkeakoski and later on in the autumn exhibitions are also set up in Pori, Turku and Kotka. The main organiser of the Festival is the Photographic Centre Nyky aika in Tampere, which has organised the large-scale photographic festival every third year since 1987.

Titled Tickle Attack, the Backlight 08 Photo Festival is built around the themes of humour, laughter, irony, paradox and absurd. Laughter is a reaction to both physical and mental tickling.

The Backlight 08 Photo Festival comprises two parts: a network exhibition and a Symposium. The exhibitions displayed in the different countries form an ensemble that features the photograph and video works of 56 artists from across the world. The festival presents works by eight Finnish artists: Tatu Hiltunen, Okko Oinonen, Jorma Mylly, Pekka Niittyvirta, Anu Suhonen, Sari Tervaniemi, Iikka Tolonen and Filippo Zambon. The Backlight 08 Symposium consists of seminars, workshops, related exhibitions and reviews.

The purpose of the festival is to promote **international dialogue** and to provide an encounter between artists and the public. The way the curators have selected the exhibited works in collaboration is also a representation of the nature of the event and of the pursuit of a dialogue. The curators are: Martin Breindl (Fluss – Society for the Promotion of Photo- and Media Art, Wolkersdorf, Austria), Krzysztof Candrowicz (Lodz Art Center, Lodz, Poland), Alessandra Capodacqua (Fondazione Studio Marangoni, Florence, Italy), Ulrich Haas-Pursiainen (Photographic Centre Nyky aika, Tampere, Finland) and Alla Räisänen (Northern Photographic Centre, Oulu, Finland).

Once the Backlight 08 Photo Festival is over, the works will tour around the European partner galleries. At the end of the project, a representative selection of works from the whole festival will be presented at the Lodz Art Center in Poland in May 2009.

## PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS AND IMAGES FOR MEDIA

Previous Backlight 08 Photo Festival Newsletters and Festival Programme: [www.backlight.fi](http://www.backlight.fi).

Images for media: [www.backlight.fi/bl08/press/press08.htm](http://www.backlight.fi/bl08/press/press08.htm)

NOTE! More images are available. Please contact Pirjo Talvio, Tel. +358 40 728 5260 / [pirjo.talvio@pointtia.fi](mailto:pirjo.talvio@pointtia.fi)

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