



A moral panic and defamatory attacks surrounding the Piti Peta Hofen Show in Croatia

At LPM, we firmly believe that the ability to laugh at social issues and to engage in self-deprecating humor is essential for bridging divides and reestablishing genuine human connection. However...

On June 12, we presented our show, the Piti Peta Hofen Show, in Tar-Vabriga, Croatia, in partnership with the Festival Iličnih Čarbonjaka. The show was a hit with the families in attendance. Several audience members came to express their enthusiasm after the performance. The next day, we learned that someone had filmed the entire performance without our knowledge and edited it into a 43-second video clip. This clip completely distorts the show by taking it out of its artistic context, by isolating specific images/scenes. The video was sent to the institution that funds the festival in an attempt to have a performance, scheduled for June 13 in Novigrad-Cittanova canceled, under the pretext that the show was not suitable for a family audience. The institution supported the cancellation, distancing itself from a festival that has been active in the Istria region for over 20 years.

Subsequently, political leaders from the Croatian "Most party" shared the video on social media, attacking the festival and our company. The video went viral in Croatia, and numerous media outlets reported distorted versions of the facts. We have seen numerous harsh, defamatory, and slanderous comments there: "denouncing" "LGBT propaganda," "obscene content," "inappropriate for children," and "pure evil." These accusations are primarily driven by LGBTQIA+phobic ideas. Petra Mandić and Ivan Vidović, members of the "Most party", have officially filed a criminal complaint specifically targeting the leaders of the Udruga Čarbonjakov šejir association, and also claim to have filed one against our company and our artists.

Given the seriousness of the criminal charges facing the festival organizers, we wish to issue a statement of solidarity.

The censors are attempting to mask their homophobia behind the legal pretext of protecting minors, illustrating the hypocrisy of a double standard when it comes to freedom of expression. By yielding to this moral panic created by the "Most party", local institutions are demonstrating cowardice. This strategy of canceling events is not limited to the borders of a single state; it reflects the broader approach of the European far right to impose an "under surveillance" culture. We therefore strongly reiterate that public funds are meant to support the arts, not to buy ideological control. Elected officials are administrators, not censors. Culture belongs neither to mayors nor to ministers, but to artists and their audiences.

**Let us support the diversity of artistic approaches.
Let us reject the barriers created by taboos.
Freedom of expression is not a privilege but a right.**

We affirm our full and unwavering support for Irena Boljuncic and the Udruga Čarbonjakov šejir association, which for nearly 20 years has been passionately building a festival dedicated to culture, the performing arts and bringing artists and audiences together. We also express our full support for all Croatian artists on the front line of this crackdown on cultural diversity and creative freedom, in particular the Croatian Contemporary Circus Artists Association (CCCAA). Defending our performing arts and our partners means defending a free and pluralistic society.

No dogmas, no censorship: long live creative freedom!

Los Putos Makinas

A few words about the PITI PETA HOFEN SHOW, which is at the centre of the moral panic :

Our artistic universe is rooted in burlesque and clowning traditions, exploring key themes of iconoclastic circus. Our show as a whole presents a chaotic romp rather than a serious message. This production has already been performed over 300 times, in around twenty countries and across four continents. It is a show suitable for all ages that has been enthusiastically received by family audiences for almost ten years.

Awards received for this show include:

FITT 2019 – Audience Award
FITT 2019 – Best Performer Award
ARCA 2021 – Jury Award
ARCA 2021 – Children’s Jury Award