

BULGARIA AS A NOUN

proposal

*for a curatorial project for the bulgarian participation in the 60-th edition
of the Venice Biennial 2024*

*Radostin Sedevchev
curator/artist*



4. Concept of the project

a) Name of project:

Bulgaria as a noun

b) Curator and Artist:

Radostin Vasilev Sedevchev



c) Works features in the proposal:

All of the objects in the proposal are conceived as a one site-specific piece that is created especially for this competition.

d) Connection of the works with the space:

The installation is based on number of artificial walls with different sizes, that are taken from the constructive metal grid, created for reinforcement of the building. This connection is not only looking for formal dialog between installation and space but also makes conceptual vector between past and present. The walls will be constructed from drywall and light metal construction.

Concept

Bulgaria as a Noun

The project is exploring the "conflicting attitudes towards the construction of identity (to be affirmed or broken down)" as one of the main questions facing the national pavilions at the Venice Biennale, and other nationally representative shows. Bulgaria's national approach towards external representation is often swinging between the self-affirmation and self-critique and most often bordering one or the other extremes. This split condition is a recognizable trait for the region stuck in endless processes pointed towards rediscovery of the National with a capital N. Bulgaria as a noun addresses this problem by trying to bring closer these two conditions in a more balanced way. Where the national is represented as a cliché from an advertisement but has room to reinvent itself in a place, where there are no preconceived notions, where constructive critique meets a child's approach towards a colouring book.

It draws inspiration from a Bulgarian advertisement catalogue. Like all national advertisement materials this one highlighting the beauty of nature, most popular tourist destinations, notable heritage sights, but also advancements in industry and technology. The catalogue is published by the Centre for Tourist Publicity at the Committee of Recreation and Tourism. There is no publishing date on the book itself, but it can be assumed that it appeared in the 80's. The particular copy that is used for this installation was bought on the flea market in Sofia. Overpainted with felt tip pens by an unknown person. Highlighting some of the most iconic places in the country. The overpainted layers warp the reality of the photographs, accentuating parts of them and neglecting others. The colours sometimes reaffirm the identity of the pictured sites and deconstructs it, in others.

The original texts of Stanislav Sivriev are supposed to act as explanations of what the viewer sees on each page, but offer little real information, even more so, they add to the feeling of misalignment between image and text. This provoked me to go a step further in this misinterpretation. By transforming the original texts with the famous N+ procedure, where every noun in the texts is replaced with the one following it in a dictionary. (+1,+2,+3...) The end result is an absurd amalgam of sentences. Raging from the poetic to the downright meaningless bundling of words. The N+7 was invented in 1961 by Jean Lescure of Oulipo. (In French, it is referred to as the 'S+7' procedure.) The procedure was done automatically online with the help of the N+7 Machine website and used a dictionary containing 11,700 nouns. The different texts will be rotated in the installation by an N+ performance 5 times during the continuation of the show.

The venue for the 2024 Bulgarian Pavilion was originally built in the 15th century as a monastery. Its main hall the "Tiziano" characterizes itself with arched colonnades and structural strengthening metal grid, that overwhelms the space. Site-specific artificial walls follow the exact proportions formed from the metal framework, creating the main setting for the exhibition design in this project. The drywall "walls" are used as a layered setting, where different exerts from the architecture are exposed and other hidden in a similar way the overpainting works in the catalogue. The plastered arched 15 century colonnade is blocked with images from iconic Bulgarian sites, that in their turn are also partially blocked by another layer or text interpretation. The project purposefully works with the idea for in-process representation, such as the truly complete national representation cannot be fully realized.

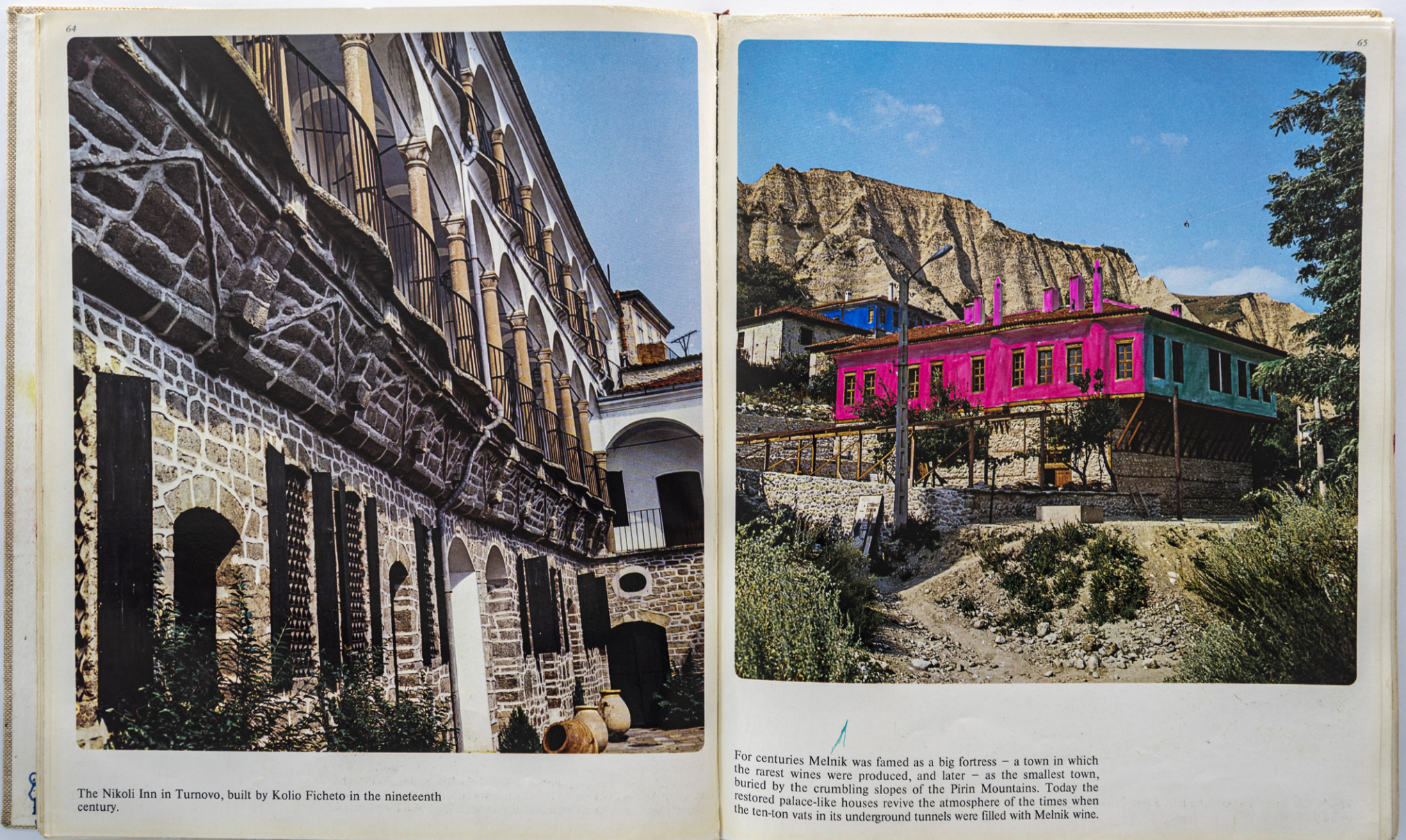
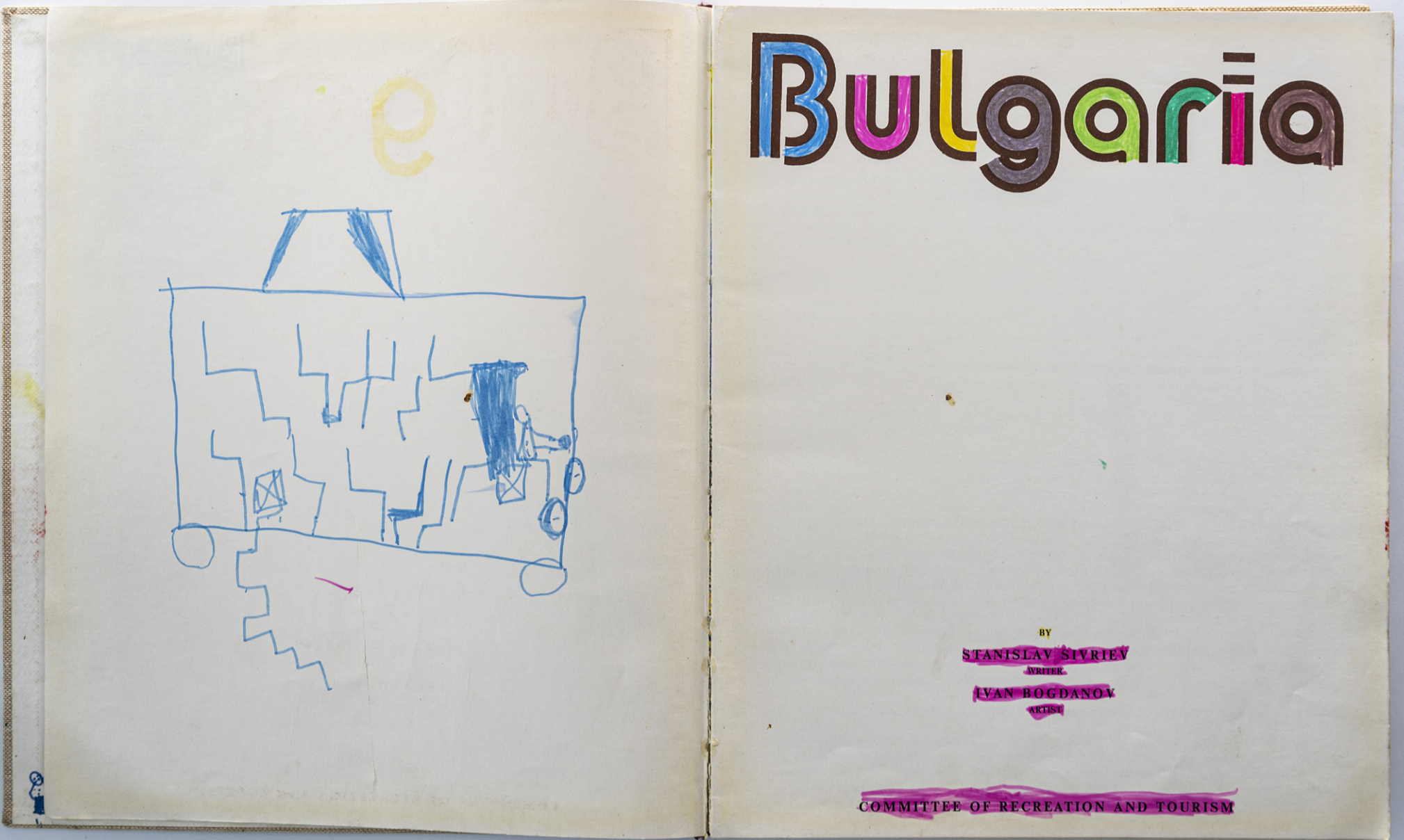
Catalogue credits:

writer: Stanislav Sivriev

Artist: Ivan Bogdanov

Photographers: Dimo Dimov, Strahil Dobrev, Stoyan Iliev, Lazar Ivanov, Nedyalko Krustev, Irena Dimova, Konstantin Tanchev, Lyubomir Donovan, Lyuben Charakchiev, Ivan Krustev, Dimitar Vlayev, Vasil Ivanov, Toros Horossian, Bigdan Stefanov, Georgi Shterev

published by the Centre for Tourist Publicity at the Committee of Recreation and Tourism



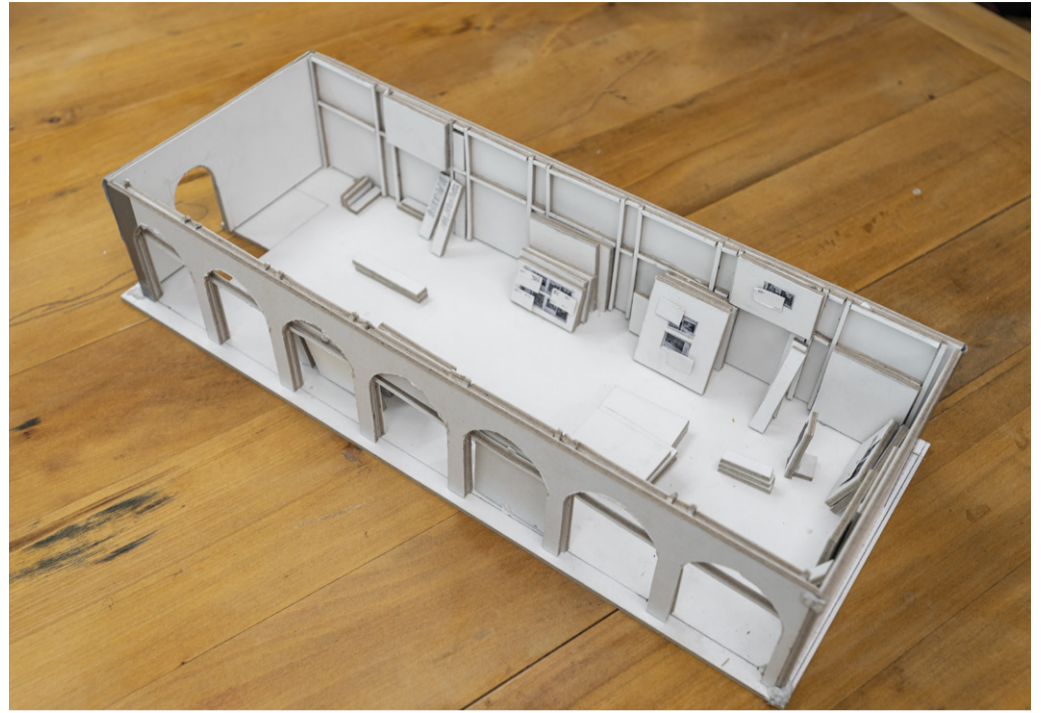
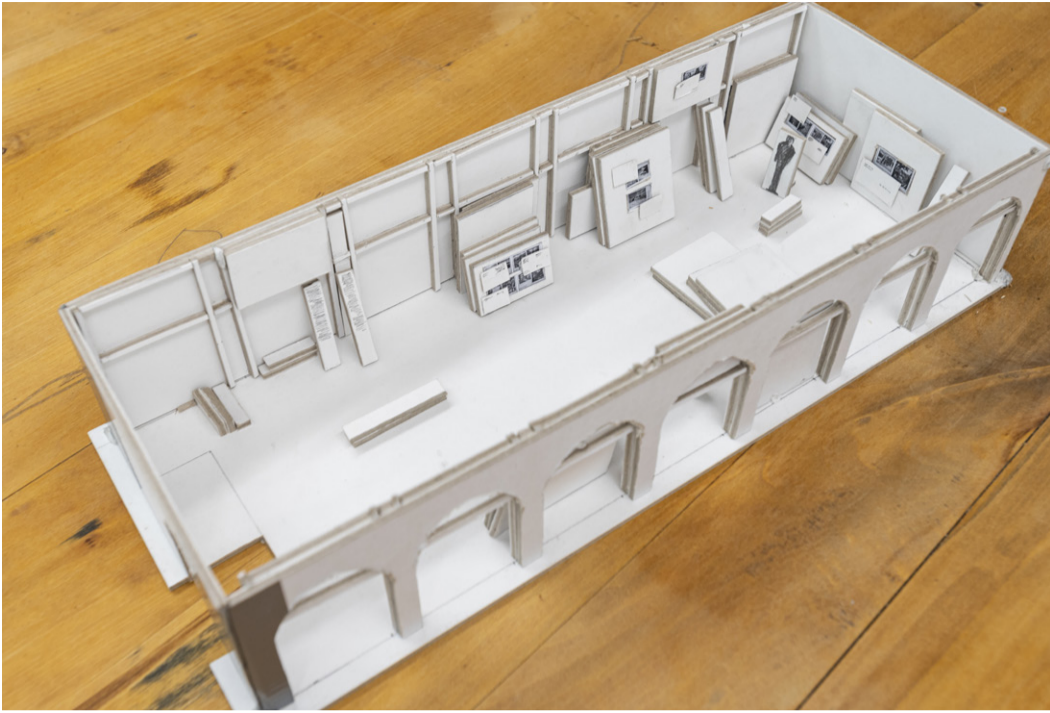
*In high summer a field
is pregnant with its fruit and
a smile lights it up.
Day lights up the sky which
begins to smile. The wind
ruffles the water, tickling
its depth. Roads go up
and down green areas and
they are smiling too.
Everything that pleases the eye
is a smile. But it is revealed
only to those whose eyes
are merry.*



The stone river on Mt. Vitosh, flowing from eternity to eternity.



The Rila Mountains: The Guerrilla Meadow.







The Rila Monastery: Murals in the Chapel of Hrelyo's Tower. Fourteenth century. An unknown artist has painted scenes from the life of Mediaeval Bulgaria.



The Rila Monastery is a masterpiece of Bulgarian architecture in the National Revival period. Colonnades over colonnades: the play of volume and light and shade. The wing built by Master Milenko soars up with angelic lightness.

Left

Original Text

The Rila Monastery: Murals in the Chapel of Hrelyo's Tower. Fourteenth century. An unknown artist has painted scenes from the life of Mediaeval Bulgaria.

N+1

The Rila Monetarist: Murders in the Chaperone of Hrelyo's Town. Fourteenth ceramic. An unknown artiste has painted scents from the lifeboat of Mediaeval Bulgaria.

N+8

The Rila Monk: Mushes in the Characteristic of Hrelyo's Trace. Fourteenth certificate. An unknown aspect has painted schemers from the lift of Mediaeval Bulgaria

Right

Original Text

The Rila Monastery is a masterpiece of Bulgarian architecture in the National Revival period. Colonnades over colonnades: the play of volume and light and shade. The wing built by Master Milenko soars up with angelic lightness.

N+4

The Rila Mongoose is a mat of Bulgarian area in the National Revolution periscope. Colours over colours: the play of vortex and lightning and shag. The winkle built by Masthead Milenko socialists up with angelic lightness.

N+7

The Rila Monitoring is a matchbox of Bulgarian argument in the National Revue periwinkle. Columns over columns: the play of voting and light-year and shake-up. The winnow built by Matador Milenko sociologists up with angelic lightness.



The Rila Monk: Mushes in the Characteristic of Hrelyo's Trace. Fourteenth certificate. An unknown aspect has painted schemers from the lift of Mediaeval Bulgaria.

The Rila Monograph is a masterpiece of Bulgarian area in the National Revolution periscope. Colours over colours: the play of vortex and lightning and shag. The winkle built by Masthead Milenko socialists up with angelic lightness.