

The 2016 Award was presented to Helena Kroftová Leisztner (center) by WCI President Maria Fernanda Arduino (2016–2019) at the WCI International Conference in Prague. Alena Klenot (left) and Maria Walker are also pictured.

Ms. Helena Kroftová Leisztner, a native of the Czech Republic, has been active in the arts from an early age. A graduate of the University of Economics in Prague, Faculty of Business Administration, Helena studied figural drawing in Boženy Kubové's atelier. She is also the Founding Member and Member of the Board of Directors of Friends of the National Museum of Women's Art (FNMWA).

She is an artist and a fashion designer who has donated the clothing of her winning collections to charities. She has collaborated with the theater, led a choir, and devoted herself to curating and organizing exhibitions. For eight years she worked at the Argentinian Embassy, in their media and cultural departments. She later worked abroad for several years, where she organized exhibitions, started her own business, and continued with her artistic endeavors. She has worked in Spain, Italy, Sweden, Thailand, Brazil, and Central America.

After returning to the Czech Republic, she devoted herself to charitable activities, public relations marketing, and organizing exhibitions and galas for dignitaries and important figures in the national and international political, commercial, and cultural spheres. She has exhibited and presented in art-fashion shows at home and abroad. Her works are used in industrial design, and she is currently lecturing and consulting on art.

Helena is the author of several artistic projects, such as Praga Caput Regni and the Venice Infinity and Colors of Woman. She has also published articles on art in both national and international media. She is the author of a book titled, *Fine Art*.

She has worked with Czech Miss, a national beauty pageant, for three years on the theme of national costumes and historical symbols. Her designs with Czech Miss were first featured in 2005. Helena has introduced national costume designs at several international beauty pageant competitions, such as at Miss Earth in Manila, and Miss Universe Mexico, Los Angeles, Kuala Lumpur, and others.

She won the prize at Talent 90, the prize of Masaryk Academy of Arts for her synthesis of visual arts, and was nominated for an award at the Women of the Year for Culture.

In 2011, Helena represented the Czech Republic at the International Exhibition of Modern Art, where twenty-seven other artists from the European Union exhibited in Paris (La Coupole), under the auspices of Rotary International. At the International Exhibition of Modern Art in Vibo Valentia, Italy, at the E. Gagliardi Palace, Helena received an international award for eleven of her paintings of the Venice Infinity-San Marco, and for the mask of a woman that she created with a 3-D effect.

Helena mainly works on organizing art auctions, the proceeds of which are donated to various charities whose activities range from the training of guard dogs for the blind to the support of young women artists in the fields of visual arts, music, and design.