



# Newsletter

Sofia 1000, Al. Stamboliiski blvd., tel. (359 2) 981 85 67, 980 82 12, 981 68 30; fax (359 2) 988 45 17; E-mail: fulbright@fulbright.bg; Internet: www.fulbright.bg, www.fisi-bg.info

## FULBRIGHT COMMISSION ACTIVITIES IN 2006 Message from the Executive Director

During 2006 the Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange continued to work for the implementation of the Fulbright goals defined in the 1961 Fulbright-Hays Act and the 2003 Agreement between the US Government and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria. Its activities were harnessed to the following objectives: supporting academic exchanges in all fields; extending cooperation with US and Bulgarian universities; providing extensive and up-to-date information and guidance on educational opportunities in the US; strengthening outreach to underserved regions and diverse social groups in Bulgaria; creating new programs and program components; expanding English and Bulgarian language training, paper-based and computer testing, including the introduction of iBT TOEFL; diversifying the activities of local Fulbright offices; maintaining high standards of program administration according to the principles of bi-nationalism, peer review, academic and professional excellence and the current Fulbright program priorities.

### A US Grantees in AY 05-06 and AY 06-07

In AY 2005-2006 the number of US grantees was 20: 8 lecturers, 6 students, two teachers and four senior specialists. The lecturers came from the following fields: business administration, US studies, law, art, environmental engineering and social work. They were assigned to Sofia University, the University of Architecture, Geodesy and Civil Engineering, New Bulgarian University, the National Academy of Fine Arts, the National Academy of Theater and Film Arts, the South-West University in Blagoevgrad and the University of Plovdiv. In accordance with the policy of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission arrangements were made for the senior lecturers to visit other universities outside of



*Prof. Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director,  
Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange*

the capital. Thus four of them gave lectures at the Free University in Burgas, the Shumen University, the American University in Bulgaria and did research in the towns of Kurdjali and Sliven. The grantee under the Kathryn and Craig Hall Chair of Entrepreneurship visited Romania.

There were also 6 U.S. graduate students in East European studies, political science, sociology and economic development. Depending on their projects, they were placed in appropriate universities and institutions, e.g. Sofia University, University of National and World Economy, South-West University in Blagoevgrad, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Market Economy and the Animus Foundation.

To help the US grantees adjust more easily to the new cultural and academic environment, the Commission staff invited them to attend the three-week Fulbright International Summer Institute in August 2005, organized a three-day orientation at the end of September 2005 and offered a cultural enrichment program for the whole academic year including trips to historic and natural sights, concerts and opera performances and informal meetings with the Fulbright staff and Bulgarian alumni. The grantees also participated in the 7th international Fulbright conference in May 2006.

In AY 05-06 four American senior specialists visited Bulgarian universities (Sofia University and New Bulgarian University) to deliver lectures, teach graduate and undergraduate courses, help with curriculum development in the following areas: economics, information technology, U.S. studies, sociology.

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Under the Fulbright Teacher Exchange two U.S. grantees taught English language and American literature at language high schools in the towns of Plovdiv and Vratsa.

The Fulbright competition for FY 2006 and AY 2006-07 Fulbright scholars resulted in the selection of 13 US grantees. In the senior scholar category there are 6 lecturers in cultural studies, US studies, US literature, chemistry, dance and choreography. There are five students in economic development, international relations, political science and English. For the first time this year we have a grantee under the English Language Teaching Assistantship program.

Under the Teacher Exchange program there are two US grantees teaching English language and American literature at the school of ancient cultures and classical languages in Sofia and the language school in the town of Pazardjik.

### ***B. Bulgarian Grantees in AY 05-06 and AY 06-07***

In AY 2005-2006 there were 19 Bulgarian grantees in the following categories and fields: 6 scholars in applied linguistics, biotechnology, physics, chemistry, anthropology and political science, 7 students in public policy, law, computer science and international relations, two teachers in English language and American literature and two participants in the U.S. Studies Summer Institutes on „US Foreign Policy“ and „Religious Pluralism in the US“. The scholars received 5-month grants and returned home on time. Their final reports are all very positive and express great satisfaction with the Fulbright experience.

Of the 7 students only one has returned to Bulgaria, having finished a one year LLM program. The others are still in the US completing two-year programs.

The Commission nominated one candidate for the New Century scholar program. We are very pleased that the candidacy of Professor Pepka Boyadjieva from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences was recently approved by CIES and ECA.

The Fulbright competition for FY 2006 and AY 06-07 grants resulted in 15 more Bulgarian nominees that were approved by BFS. There are 6 scholars in education, geography, multimedia, E-medicine, cultural studies, economics. Five of them have already started their projects at prestigious US universities: Smith College, Massachusetts, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, University of Illinois in Chicago, University of Massachusetts in Amherst and the UC in Berkeley. One scholar will start his program in January 2007 at the California Institute of Arts in Valencia.

In the student category 7 students were approved and are currently enrolled in master's programs in business administration, law, architecture. The graduate students are outstanding and it is not surprising that they were admitted to most prestigious universities with financial support: Columbia

University, Harvard University, Simon School of Business at the University of Rochester, Stanford University, Duke University, Price College at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

The Commission also nominated two Bulgarian high school teachers that were approved by FSB. They are teaching English and American literature at high schools in Falls Church, Virginia and New York City.

## ***2. GRANTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS***

Dr. Shirley Gabel, Fulbright lecturer from Fordham University, was invited as a keynote speaker at the UN on the occasion of the UN Social Work Day (April 3rd). In her speech about poverty and human rights she highlighted her memorable Fulbright experience in Bulgaria.

On January 19, 2006, Fulbright lecturer Dr. Phyllis Bell Miller from the Mississippi State University and her Bulgarian students at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia organized an exhibition called „Process & Tradition: Textile Design by Computer“. The students showed their works created through AutoCAD software that used patterns from traditional Bulgarian embroidery.

Fulbright alumna Professor Ekaterina Trendafilova from the School of Law at Sofia University was elected a member of the International Penal Court in the Hague for a nine-year term.

Fulbright alum Dimiter Andreychin from the University of Architecture, Geodesy and Civil Engineering in Sofia recently published a book entitled "The Hero Towers: The Story of the World Trade Center in New York City". The book is dedicated to the memory of the victims of the terrorist on September 11, 2001. It was presented to the Bulgarian public on September 11, 2006 at the Central Office of the Union of Bulgarian Architects.

## ***3. NON-GRANT ACTIVITIES***

Educational advising is a major component of the Commission's non-grant activities. It is a most effective and time-tested instrument of explaining and promoting the American educational system and the Fulbright program by providing up-to-date information and competent guidance. The 2006 statistics is quite reassuring: 6228 advisees, 5565 phone, e-mail and mail inquiries, 407 English language trainees, 4865 testees ( TOEFL, SAT, GRE,EPSS, CFA).

To respond to the new priorities of the Fulbright program regarding outreach to underserved regions and diverse social groups, the educational adviser made numerous visits to the major Bulgarian universities and high schools all over the country. On several occasions US Embassy officers were also involved in the presentations about educational opportunities in the US, the US educational system, admission procedures, visas, testing, the Work and Travel program and many more.

Worth mention is the Commission's regular participation in national and international educational exhibitions and fairs. A notable example is the QS World MBA Fair in Sofia in March 2006 that presented 27 MBA schools in the world, among them Tuck College, Thunderbird, Hult and many more. The Fair was visited by over 1200 Bulgarian students. The Commission co-organized the event and used it to promote the Fulbright program.

During the International Education week (November 14-18, 2005) a number of activities (workshops, meetings, video-sessions) were carried out attracting the attention of hundred of students, professors, high-school teachers and educators from all over the country. In addition, the Fulbright advising center was visited by representatives of four US universities: St. John's University, Richmond University, the University of Chicago and Bard College. A highlight of this year's IEW was the official launching of a Master's program in Transatlantic Studies at Sofia University. The program was designed by Bulgarian Fulbright alumni. It received support from the Fulbright Commission and the US Embassy.

On May 12-13, 2006, the Commission held its 7<sup>th</sup> international conference on „ Culture, Education and Leadership Today and Tomorrow" dedicated to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fulbright program. There were 83 participants from Bulgaria and US who discussed a wide variety of issues related to the main theme in panel sessions, round tables and informal discussions. The conference was opened by John Byerley, Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Bulgaria. The members of the Commission Board were also actively involved in the event as moderators and presenters. An integral part of the conference was a two-day orientation program for departing Fulbright teachers from Central and Eastern Europe. It was conducted by representatives of the Fulbright Teacher Exchange program at ECA and USDA. The workshop was attended by 35 participants from 12 countries.

On August 7-19, 2006, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission held its fifth international summer institute (FISI) in the mountain resort of Borovets. There were 66 participants of whom 51 were students from the U.S., Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Russia and Portugal. The 15 instructors were from prestigious universities in the U.S. and Bulgaria. As usual, FISI 2006 offered an interdisciplinary curriculum consisting of 10 courses in a variety of fields: " Negotiation and Conflict Resolution", "Financial Tools for Business and Personal Decisions", Adjusting to Globalization, Regionalization and the Process of Change", An Overview of the American Judicial System and a Practicum on Litigating a Trial", „Communication, Culture and Technology", Understanding the Media: Cornerstones of Effective Communication", „ American Foreign Policy and the International System in the Age of Globalization", „ The Impact of Globalization on US and European Economies", „ Introduction to

Bulgarian Culture". The majority of the AY 06-07 Fulbright students and lecturers from the US attended FISI. The Institute offered a cultural enrichment program aimed at acquainting the participants with the rich historical legacy and variety of Bulgarian culture as well as with the beauty of local nature. It included a trip to Sofia, a visit to the historic Rila Monastery and a challenging climb of Mt. Moussala, the highest point of the Balkan Peninsula.

The Commission maintains local offices in the major university towns: Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Sliven, Burgas, Varna, Veliko Turnovo, Rousse, Vidin and Smolyan. Their standard activities include educational advising, information about the Fulbright and other related programs, English language training, test registration and assistance to Fulbright grantees. In the period under review we moved our office in Varna to the Technical University. Following the program plan for AY 05-06, the Commission opened a tenth office in the university town of Shumen in the North-East Bulgaria. The University has an English Department that offers American Studies. Located in a region with a relatively large minority population (mainly ethnic Turks), the university is involved in a variety of projects that target these groups. The Shumen office has now become one of the most active and creative among the Commission's outposts.

Earlier this year the Commission submitted a project to ECA for expanding outreach to underserved regions and diverse social groups. The project proposal was approved by ECA, for which we are very thankful, and the Commission received \$ 15,000. In the summer of 2006 the executive director, the financial officer and the educational adviser visited the towns of Kurdjali, Momchilgrad, Madan, Rudosem in south-eastern Bulgaria and met with mayors and municipality workers, high-school principals and teachers to discuss possibilities for cooperation. As a result, two more offices were recently opened in Kurdjali and Madan. Language training for high-school students and local citizens has started along with educational advising. We consider the outreach project a great success because through the support of ECA and the Fulbright Board the Commission is now able to get to underrepresented regions and diverse populations (Bulgarian and Turkish Muslims, Roma population) and offer actual assistance that is much appreciated by the local people.

As can be seen from the above facts and figures, 2006 was another dynamic and productive year for the Fulbright Commission in Bulgaria. I strongly hope that the New Year 2007 will be a smooth continuation of our expanding activities aimed at sustaining the high Fulbright goals and ensuring the long life and well-being of the program worldwide.

I take this opportunity to thank all our partners, colleagues, Fulbright grantees and alumni for their support and wish them cordially lots of health, creative energy and success in 2007!

## Fulbright Office News

# FINAL NOMINATIONS FOR BULGARIAN USAP CANDIDATES IN AY 2008-2009



*The USAP candidates*

The United States Student Achievers Program (USAP) was officially launched in Bulgaria within the 2006 IEW. With the objective of developing a broad, successful program for students across Bulgaria educational adviser Snezhana Teneva visited economically challenged communities in the cities of Sofia, Varna, Stara Zagora, Sliven and Smolyan where most of the candidates to American colleges and universities come from as well as the underserved regions of Shumen, Vidin, Kardzhali and Madan where most of the minority population of Bulgaria lives. She met with hundreds of students, teachers, parents and media representatives and made presentations on the American Educational System and the United States Student Achievers Program (USAP) in Bulgaria.

The USAP competition for AY 2008-09 resulted in the selection of fifteen junior high school students out of thirty two candidates representing diverse social groups and twenty two high schools in Bulgaria. Twelve candidates were from the capital city of Sofia and twenty came from different parts of the country including the towns of Blagoevgrad, Pernik, Sliven, Smolyan, Stara Zagora as well as the underserved regions of Shumen, Vidin and Kardzhali. Twenty of the applicants were female and twelve male. Of the thirty two USAP candidates twenty three were recommended for interviews.

The interviews were conducted on 21 February, 2007. The binational interviewing committee consisted of Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission and Anthony Miranda, Cultural and Educational Attache of the US Embassy and member of the Fulbright Commission Board. All the candidates were of a very high quality and it was not easy for the nomination committee to select the best and most deserving from among such an impressive pool of candidates.

The following candidates for 2008 USAP were nominated by the Interviewing Committee:

### SOFIA

- Anna Stoilova, First SOU "Pencho Slaveikov", Sofia
- Dimitar Milanov, 123 SOU "Stefan Stambolov", Sofia
- Iana Nikolaeva Palagacheva, First English Language High School, Sofia
- Kristina Dimitrova Hristova, Second English Language High School, Sofia
- Maria Viktorova Androushko, First English Language High School, Sofia
- Nora Dafinova Todorova, First English Language High School, Sofia

### KURDZHALLY

- Sofia Arnaudova, "Hriso Botev" Foreign Language High School, Kurdzhaly

### PERNIK

- Hristiyan Daskalov, "Simeon Radev" Foreign Language High School, Pernik

### SHUMEN

- Georgi Popov, "Nancho Popovich" High School of Mathematics and Science, Shumen
- Teodora Ivanova, "Nancho Popovich" High School of Mathematics and Science, Shumen

### SMOLYAN

- Mariana Barakchieva, "Vassil Levski" High School of

Mathematics and Science, Smolyan

- Plamen Dimitrov, "Ivan Vazov" Foreign Language High School, Smolyan

#### STARA ZAGORA

- Donika Magunska, "Romain Rolland" Foreign Language High School, Stara Zagora

#### VIDIN

- Anna Svetoslavova, "Tzar Simeon Veliki" High School, Vidin
- Milen Antov, "Ekzarh Antim I" High School of mathematics and Science, Vidin

We strongly hope that the finalists will make the best use of the unique USAP opportunity and we wish them all a very successful and rewarding USAP experience.



*Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission and CAO Anthony Miranda, U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria, interviewing a USAP candidate*

## EDUCATION FAIR IN PLOVDIV

This year the annual education fair in Plovdiv was held on March 16-18 with the motto "Knowledge Brings Winners into the World - Be One of Them!" Taking an active part in it was Anthony Miranda, CAO and member of the Fulbright Commission as well as three officers from the Consular Section of the US Embassy and Cheresha Chelebieva, coordinator of the Fulbright info-center in Plovdiv. They provided ample information about the educational system in the US, various

Work and Travel programs as well as the Fulbright program. The event presented a great opportunity for students to find out more about studying in the US. With Bulgaria's recent accession to the European Union more and more European colleges and universities are coming to our country to recruit students. Therefore, it is very important to use every opportunity to underline the advantages and benefits of undergraduate and graduate education in the United States.

## OFFICIAL OPENING OF A FULBRIGHT LOCAL INFORMATION CENTER IN KURDZHALY



*Kurdzhaly Info Center*

**LEFT:** Official opening of the Fulbright Information Center in Kurdzhaly. From right to left: John Beyrle, Ambassador of the United States of America to Bulgaria; Valentina Ivanova, President of Friends of the U.S.A. Society in Kurdzhaly and Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian - American Fulbright Commission.

# FULBRIGHT INTERNATIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE 2007

WWW.FISI-BG.INFO

## FISI COURSES (TENTATIVE PROGRAM)

### **Business, Economics and Management**

*Course 1: Negotiation and Conflict Resolution*

*Lecturer: Prof. George Siedel, University of Michigan, Business School, MI, USA*

*Course 2: Modern Microeconomics and the Behavior of the Firm*

*Lecturer: Prof. Ann Fender, Gettysburg College, PA, USA*

*Course 3: Saving, Investing, and Financial Planning*

*Lecturer: Prof. Chenchuramaiah Bathala, Cleveland State University, OH, USA*

*Course 4: Starting a Small Business*

*Lecturer: Prof. William Heath, Graceland University, USA*

*Course 5: An Investigation of Society and Culture as Management Processes*

*Lecturer: Prof. James Patterson, Indiana University, Kelley School of Business, IN, USA*

*Course 6: Teamwork and Teambuilding*

*Lecturer: Aneta Dimitrova, Academic Training Association, the Netherlands*

### **Law**

*Course 7: An Overview of the US and Other International Judicial Systems - The Role of Judges, Juries, Prosecutors, Police and Lawyers*

*Lecturer: David M. Korn, Phelps Dunbar LLP, LA, USA*

*Course 8: Prosecuting War Crimes and Genocide in the 20th and 21st Centuries*

*Lecturer: Prof. Howard Ball, Vermont Law School, VT, USA*

### **Communication and Media**

*Course 9: Intercultural Competence for Students in Global Times*

*Lecturer: Dr. Noemi Marin, Florida Atlantic University, FL, USA*

*Course 10: Communication Management and Managing Change*

*Lecturer: Danail Danov, Media Development Center, Sofia, Bulgaria*

*Course 11: Pop Publics: Mass Media, New Media and the Formation of the Public Sphere*

*Lecturer: Dr. Benjamin Hodges, Independent Researcher, USA*

*Course 12: Psychology of Mass Media: The Effective Use of Metaphors in Understanding Significant Global Phenomena*

*Lecturer: Prof. Tolya Stoitsova, New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria*

*Course 13: Understanding the Media: The Cornerstones of the Effective Communication*

*Lecturer: Dr. Madeleine Danova, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria*

*Course 14: Interactive Multimedia for Web and CD-Rom*

*Lecturer: Dr. Boyan Dobrev, National Academy of Arts, Sofia, Bulgaria*

### **Education**

*Course 15: Developing a Successful Integrated International Education Program*

*Lecturers: Dr. Leon Richards and Linda Fujikawa, University of*

*Hawaii, Kapi'olani Community College, HI, USA*

*Course 16: The Social Foundations of American Higher Education*

*Lecturer: Dr. Elena Galinova, The Pennsylvania State University, PA, USA*

*Course 17: Introduction and Development of an Online Conference and Courses*

*Lecturer: Karl Naito, University of Hawaii, Kapi'olani Community College, HI, USA*

### **Politics and International Relations**

*Course 18: American Foreign Policy and the International System in the Age of Globalization*

*Lecturer: Prof. Mark Kramer, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA*

*Course 19: Trans-Atlantic Cooperation and Counter Terrorism*

*Lecturers: Dr. Dinko Dinkov, University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria, and Stoyan Stoyanov, The George Washington University, Washington D.C., USA*

*Course 20: Middle East in World Affairs*

*Lecturer: Prof. Benedict DeDominicis, American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria*

*Course 21: International Security Studies - Understanding International Security in a Post 9/11 World*

*Lecturers: Abdel-Allah Bennis, Director, Diplomatic Academy of London and Paris, and Victor Primov, the University of Westminster, London, UK*

### **Social and Cultural Studies**

*Course 22: Globalization: Its Impact on Today's Students*

*Lecturer: Dr. Timothy Ilg, University of Dayton, OH, USA*

*Course 23: The Roots of the Modern Global Experience: A Selective Examination through Primary Sources*

*Lecturers: Dr. Terry D. Goddard and Dana Goodrich, Northwest Vista College, TX, USA*

*Course 24: Anti-Manipulation Consumer Protection: Logical and Psychological Perspectives*

*Lecturer: Dr. Alexander Gungov, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria*

*Course 25: America's Cultural Empire: How Should a Globalized World Respond?*

*Lecturer: Dr. Jeffrey Smith, University of Southern California, CA, USA*

*Course 26: The Nature and Pace of Change: Understanding the Process of Something that may Overwhelm Us*

*Lecturer: Prof. Randall Baker, Indiana University, IN, USA*

*Course 27: Sustainability: Strategy for Survival*

*Lecturer: Prof. Robert Chianese, California State University, CA, USA*

### **Bulgarian Studies**

*Course 28: Introduction to Bulgarian Culture (history, politics, economy, folklore, literature and the arts)*

*Lecturers: Team*

## BULGARIAN FULBRIGHT GRANTEES in Academic Year 2007-2008

### SENIOR SCHOLARS

**1. Tatyana Stoicheva**

*Field:* Cultural Studies

*Host institution in the US:* University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

**2. Gergana Marinova**

*Field:* Law

*Host institution in the US:* Northwestern University, School of Law, Chicago, IL.

**3. Kiril Tenekedjiev**

*Field:* Decision Analysis/Statistics

*Host institution in the US:* SUNY Binghamton University, New York, NY

**4. Irena Dineva**

*Field:* Geology

*Host institution in the US:* University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

**5. Gergana Apostolova**

*Field:* Philosophy

*Host institution in the US:* Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA

**6. Plamen Chipev**

*Field:* Economics

*Host institution in the US:* University of Missouri - Kansas City, MO.

*Host institution in the US:* Tufts University, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, MA

**3. Nadezhda Varbanova**

*Field:* Law

*Host institution in the US:* Harvard, Law School, Cambridge, MA

**4. Boyan Konstantinov**

*Field:* Law (Public Service Law)

*Host institution in the US:* Columbia University, Law School, New York, NY

**5. Maria Mihaleva**

*Field:* Law

*Host institution in the US:* Columbia University, Law School, New York, NY

**6. Atanas Chobanov**

*Field:* Business Administration

*Host institution in the US:* Oklahoma University, Norman, OK

**7. Nikolai Yanev**

*Field:* Law ("Thanks to Scandinavia" Grant)

*Host institution in the US:* Columbia University, Law School, New York, NY

**8. Polyana Ilieva**

*Field:* Cultural Anthropology

*Host institution in the US:* SUNY, Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY

**9. Alexandra Bizerova**

*Field:* Business Administration

*Host institution in the US:* Emory University, Atlanta, GA

### HUBERT H. HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIP

**Christina Popivanova**

*Field:* Public Policy Analysis

*Host institution in the US:* University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

### NEW CENTURY SCHOLARS

**Prof. Pepka Boyadjieva**

*Field:* Education,

*NCS seminars:* Buffalo, NY; Sao Paolo, Brazil;

Washington D.C

### GRADUATE STUDENTS

**1. Alexandra Mechkova**

*Field:* Media and Communication Studies

*Host institution in the US:* Emerson College, Boston, MA

**2. Tihomir Tsenkulovski**

*Field:* Economics/International Trade

### SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

**Anna Marinova**

*Field:* School Principal, "Vassil Aprilov" National High School, Gabrovo

*Host institution in the US:* "Freire Charter School", Philadelphia, PA

### TEACHERS

**1. Elka Vesselinova**

*Field:* English as a Foreign Language

*Host institution in the US:* "Robert Gray Middle School", Portland, OR

**2. Natasha Krumova**

*Field:* English as a Foreign Language

*Host institution in the US:* "Park High School", Livingston, MT

**БЪЛГАРО-АМЕРИКАНСКА КОМИСИЯ  
ЗА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЕН ОБМЕН**

София 1000, бул. "Ал. Стамболийски" № 17, тел. (359 2) 981 85 67, 980 82 11, 980 82 12; факс (359 2) 988 45 17  
E-MAIL: [fulbright@fulbright.bg](mailto:fulbright@fulbright.bg); INTERNET: [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg)

**КОНКУРС ЗА СТИПЕНДИИ "ФУЛБРАЙТ" И "ХЮБЪРТ Х. ХЪМФРИ"  
ПРЕЗ АКАДЕМИЧНАТА 2008-09 ГОДИНА**

Комисия "Фулбрайт" обявява конкурси за стипендии в САЩ през учебната 2008-09 година за:

- Университетски преподаватели и изследователи - 5 месеца
- Кандидати за магистърски и докторски програми - 10 месеца
- Кандидати за докторски програми в областта на науката и технологиите - 3 години
- Кандидати за магистри по бизнес администрация - 2 години, съвместно с университета в Оклахома
- Кандидати за магистри по бизнес администрация - 10 месеца, съвместно с университета в Дартмут
- Кандидати за магистърски програми - 10 месеца, съвместно с "Благодарност към Скандинавия"
- Специалисти от държавния и частния сектор - 10 месеца, стипендия "Хюберт Хъмфри"

*Краен срок за подаване на документи за стипендиите "Фулбрайт" и Хюберт Хъмфри":*  
**3 септември, 2007 г.**

*Краен срок за подаване на документи за стипендиите за докторски програми в областта на науката и технологиите:*  
**1 юни 2007 г.**

*Документи в 3 екземпляра се изпращат на адрес:*  
**Комисия "Фулбрайт", ПК 288, София 1000**

*Повече информация за различните конкурси можете да получите от:*

**Българо-американска комисия за образователен обмен**  
**София, бул. Александър Стамболийски № 17, I ет., стаи 9 и 15**  
тел.: 980 8212 и 981 6830  
e-mail: [fulbright@fulbright.bg](mailto:fulbright@fulbright.bg)  
Приемно време: 14 - 16 ч. всеки работен ден

**Езиков център:** София 1504, ул. "Панайот Волов" № 1, тел. (359 2) 944 0441

**Информационни центрове:** Пловдив 4000, ул. "Княз Александър 2" № 42 тел. (359 32) 652 866; Русе 7013, Русенски у-т, ул. "Риза" № 38, тел. (359 82) 846 106; Бургас 8000, ул. "Неврокоп" № 3, тел. (359 56) 842 453; Варна 9010, Технически у-т, ул. "Студентска" № 1, тел. (359 52) 302 448; Стара Загора 6010, ул. "Армейска" № 9, тел. (359 42) 601 563; Сливен 8800, Технически у-т, ИПФ, бул. "Бургаско шосе" № 59 тел. (359 44) 667 545; Смолян 4700, бул. "България" № 85, Младежки дом, (359 301) 63 680; Видин 3700, СОУ "Цар Симеон Велики", ул. "Търговска" № 6 (359 94) 606 734; Шумен 9712, Шуменски у-т, ул. "Университетска" 115, тел. (359) 899 907 902; Кърджали 6600, Д-во "Приятел на САЩ", бул. "България" № 61, тел. (359 361) 62204; Мадан 4900, Телецентър, ул. "Явор" № 1, тел. (359 308) 4452

## To Chicago and Back

## To Washington, New York, and Back (in a few months)

Elena Atanassova, Nikolay Bebov, LL.Ms, Columbia Law School

*Elena Atanassova and Nikolay Bebov have graduated in law from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky" and are currently completing their LL.M. at Columbia University School of Law as Fulbright graduate students. Nikolay is a practicing attorney-at-law in Sofia in the area of business and corporate law. Elena's interests are mainly in the field of children's rights and since 2003 she has worked at the State Agency for Child Protection in Sofia.*

America. We think we know a lot about it. Basically, every moderately educated Bulgarian (we hope we qualify) has learned about America from sources much wider than just movies. Maybe even movies are sufficient for one to begin to think she or he knows about America. A novel, or history book, a documentary, a specialized book in economics or law, or sociology, or management, always help too. Each of us has seen or read some.

Yet America turned out to be about much more than what we thought we knew.

First time for both of us. Surprisingly so, since we have both travelled to distant places, even places farther away from Bulgaria than the East Coast of the USA.

The latter could also be a reason why we would write not so much about particular events but more about impressions and feelings.

So, here are a few faces of America (well, only the parts of the East Coast we have visited so far) as we saw them.



### America on the alert

Checks at the air terminal upon arrival: we did not have any problems, administrative delays, any discomfort (of course, we were a bit on the alert ourselves). But we saw the ordinary airport officers seemed very careful in their checks. It is a troubled world. A sad observation. The feeling of alert was repetitive in the subway stations, rail stations, sometimes in the streets. Let's hope the world, America, Europe, Asia, the whole world will be less troubled soon; sooner rather than later.

### Washington DC

Our program allowed us to stay there for a month. It was July. Very hot. Unbelievably hot. That was not important. Washington is a great city! At a first look it seems deserted (at least some of the public officers must have been on holidays). But wait until you see how many visitors go to the dozen or more magnificent museums (National Gallery, Natural History, Aviation and Space, Holocaust, Indian Museum, Spy Museum). Most are free. And worth spending hours after hours. Shall we add the Library of Congress. The parks in the downtown are treasures, especially

with the Friday Jazz evenings in the Sculpture Garden. Freely enjoyable. Shall we add the majestic architecture of the buildings locked between the Capitol and Lincoln Memoriam (including most of the museums, administrative buildings, the White House and much more).

Wait until you see people going out for fun. We usually stuck to the riverside area as well as to Dupont Circle in the western part of the city. Young people, laughs, enjoyable cuisine (not inexpensive but we had the right measure in mind), bars and pubs.

And, Georgetown University itself. An institution of splendid architecture (including modern, the Law Center is what we have in mind here), huge libraries, friendly and attentive professors and staff, and, as far as we are concerned, some 150 people from all around the world, intelligent, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, with whom we spend this month together. The start of a few very dear friendships, we hope.

### New York

Our official program is the 1 year LLM course at Columbia Law School in Manhattan's Upper West Side. While we had been in Washington we enjoyed ourselves tremendously but we had also been looking forward to the "real" part of our stay in the US - studying at Columbia and living in New York.

The first time we got to New York was on a "Chinese bus" (several American-Chinese companies compete in the lower-price segment of the shuttle bus services on the East Coast). It was a Saturday. Our mission - to look for an apartment to rent. Our terminal stop from the trip from Washington and our starting point: Chinatown (not surprisingly) in Manhattan.

First impressions: well, Manhattan is big with all the skyscrapers that you can see from the bus while it is still on the highway in New Jersey, but it is not so big. Why are some of the streets of Manhattan so dirty? Not so many people on a Saturday morning. Ah, (as we walk), they are getting more and more (waking up). Nice weather and it is enjoyable to see many of the streets have trees alongside. Hey, there is Empire State Building! Time to have a breakfast: oh, a bit expensive but a friendly place. Here is Central Park. So many people already jogging - let's try not to stay in their way.... Columbia University! A bit far from downtown Manhattan, but the main campus looks majestic. We will enroll in the LLM program in less than a month.

NY overall: indeed, not huge in terms of a territory, but it is huge in terms of people. And huge infrastructure: bridges, bridges, bridges. The subway - very convenient, very fast-paced, very dirty. That is a busy world, not time, no time. Surprisingly, we got used to it quite easily!

Enough sightseeing, it is 10 am - time to look for this

apartment we will live in. Well, it was a complete failure. We should have known better; we should have found out it is difficult to rent one without a credit history (naturally, we did not have one in America and just realized we must have back home but never thought about it), or without agreeing to pay some 6-month rents in advance. Or should we say impossible. A complete and discouraging failure. Why didn't we act on time months ago, when we could have easily applied for "university housing"?

So, it took us a lot of time and effort to find an affordable place. A place in Queens, not too far away from the university but commuting anyhow would take some 50-70 minutes. A cosy place, though. Greek landlords, people from the Southeast of Europe, people like us.

We saw even more of NY in this way. Actually, by leaving there we saw much more than America - Queens, host of more than 130 ethnicities is maybe the most diverse place in the US, even in the world (without counting the UN, headquartered in Manhattan, just opposite Queens bridge). Step by step we started opening our minds for different cultures, traditions, lifestyles and, not least, food. The availability of various kinds of food only could remind of a gastronomic Sesame cave! We were even able to enjoy Bulgarian cheese, lyutenitsa, marmalades, and wine. This in fact helped us to get "integrated" very quick and to feel at home among all the others Eastern Europeans, including Greeks, among the Latin Americans, Indians, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Arabs, Chinese, etc. Though, Queens is not a real "melting pot" - all the recent or not so immigrants, despite the American flags in front of their homes, have managed to keep their own identity, and we like this.

### More impressions:

Harlem (our bus, which we use more than the underground for we do not need to change, runs along it) is also a very interesting place with diverse glory; again, we are getting used to it without a problem. There is a Spanish Harlem and a more African-American one - both with nice architecture but, unfortunately, relatively poorer population. One has to be careful but it is not dangerous. It is rather picturesque and colorful! Especially on Sundays when everybody is dressed quite formal coming out of a Gospel church.

Columbia University: well, we do not have the space to write a lot about it. But it is a pity our program will finish in just a year! Columbia University is a tribune for various speakers - from well-known scholars and politicians to young people with interesting ideas to share - and everybody is always welcome - real renaissance atmosphere, as any university has to enjoy!

Although located in a nice neighborhood near Central Park, it is thanks to the many students that this area is so alive and charming. Many cozy restaurants and cafes offer space for chatting, dancing, eating, or - occasionally - studying (that is a joke, of course).

Cultural and social events: Thanks to the Institute of International Education, managing the Fulbright scholarships, we are able to enjoy all kinds of cultural events - concerts, ballets, Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. Not only do we enrich ourselves, but we also meet very interesting people. We were once invited for a dinner to the Silbigers, a very nice "ex-Fulbrighter" family. Along with the gorgeous time we spent with them and their friends, we were very happy that they were soon heading to Bourgas to teach Law in the Bourgas University. Our Bulgarian background will come very handy! Of course, we have some doubts that they will have the time to visit all the wonderful places we passionately pointed out to them, but at least we have already managed to win some new Bulgarian "fans"!

### Other faces of America

Law: we study law. We had an idea about American law. But it is much more than that. It is amazing. It is huge (51 legal systems - 50 states and also the Federal Law!!! Or even more systems); it is probably hundreds of thousands of court decisions from as far back as the 18th century, at least 95 % of which are easily accessible (through online research systems or in libraries) - oh, it is easy to research but it is easy to get lost too. It is versatile, no pretense for being always right but always self-developing. It is down-to-earth; judges know real life when they write their decisions. It is enormously complex.

America is the place to be a lawyer! No doubt! We will know a lot of new approaches to law when we go back to Bulgaria. Bulgaria will be a place to be a lawyer too!

Technology: it is everywhere. We "lose" it initially, but then we begin to appreciate its benefits. It is everywhere: Amazon

(sometimes it is possible to buy our textbooks cheaper there than in the bookstores close to the university); the online banking; the subway tickets; the cinema tickets which you can buy online; the museum guides. Americans are ready to risk with the imperfection of a new technological innovation but they are thirsty for the benefits and comforts it is likely to bring in everyday life. A question for ourselves: why are we afraid to rely on technology in Bulgaria in our everyday life? Yes, hackers are a threat, but technology brings enormous benefits in everyday life. That was mostly about communications and the Internet. All other kinds of technology too!

The people of NY: As we have already mentioned - so many nationalities, so many different kinds of manners: some we do not like, such as chewing gum with an open mouth; some we envy for their simple goodness (no matter how tired people are - and yes, you can see a lot of tired people because Americans are "maniacs" when it comes to working, no matter what their social status, New Yorkers are friendly, eager to assist you, smiling). So many languages: we wish we could speak Spanish too, an example only. So much life in this city! It seems unbearably chaotic at times; it feels like home most of the time. We gradually learn not to be fussy about the little defects all around us (we hope to learn to do this when we are back in Bulgaria too!). We gradually learn to enjoy this great place!

We have some more months to stay in the US. Hoping to enjoy it even more (as soon as the chilly weather retreats and gives way to spring). Hoping to see our LLM colleagues more often and manage to keep the new friends we have made here. Hoping to come back to NY and America. It is a small world! And hoping to be going back home to Bulgaria full of positive energy and looking for the positive energy of our wonderful birthplace.

## БЪЛГАРО-АМЕРИКАНСКА КОМИСИЯ ЗА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЕН ОБМЕН

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## Out of America

*Matthew Ziems is a Fulbright student in Bulgaria in AY 2006-2007. He has a degree in international business from Bradley University, IL. His Fulbright project focuses on causes and effects of Bulgaria's population loss.*



### Bulgarian Mysteries, Big and Small

Bulgaria remains a relatively undiscovered country. Size and geography easily account for this, as well as a history of foreign domination. Bulgaria simply did not exist independently for over half of its 1300 year history. However, in recent years, Bulgaria has enjoyed unprecedented attention, due primarily to its new membership in the European Union. With the world press closely following the expansion of the European Union, which may soon be the world's largest single market, many were exposed to information about Bulgaria for the first time. What they found was one of Europe's oldest countries, an attractive tourist destination for both summer and winter holidays, and a place where both ancient and modern mysteries continue to amaze and confound.

Perhaps the most well-known Bulgarian mystery is their unique singing style. Referred to misleadingly as an "open-throated" technique, it actually involves constricting the throat to achieve the distinctive sound. Now, this may be more of a specialized talent than a mystery, but we must concede that as we speak, the voice of one of Bulgaria's greatest singers, Valya Balkanska, is floating out in space far beyond Pluto on the Golden Record of the Voyager space probe.

Another common mystery has to do with nonverbal communication. Visitors to Bulgaria are often initially confused by the head gestures Bulgarians use to reply yes and no. Generally speaking, Bulgarians nod for "no," and shake their heads for "yes." No matter how many times you read this before arriving, you will undoubtedly be confused. A lifetime

of universally understood head gestures cannot be undone immediately. I find this aspect of Bulgarian culture quite charming, unique, and fairly easy to get used to after the first few mis-communications. In fact, when Bulgarians try to adjust and reply awkwardly with my familiar head gestures, they usually only succeed in confusing me.

But where did it all start? According to one legend, centuries ago when Bulgaria was part of the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan decided to take a Bulgarian girl into his harem for a wife. She was brought before the Sultan, where she defied the Sultan and refused to marry him. Incensed, the Sultan ordered her held at knife point. With the knife firmly under her chin, the Bulgarian girl chose to accept the Sultan's proposal, by nodding her head down upon the knife, killing herself. In this way, her nod of "yes," in truth, was her final rejection of the Sultan, quite a resounding "No!" An inspiring story perhaps, but unlikely in and of itself to result in an entire nation of people developing a tradition that was most likely already in place at the time of the initial conquest of Bulgaria by the Ottomans.

Perhaps one of the more mundane mysteries I have experienced has to do with the post office. There is no standard postage rate. A letter to the States will require different amounts of postage depending on which city I decide to mail it from. If Bulgaria were about ten times as large, I wouldn't be surprised. But as Bulgaria is about the size of Tennessee, the varying distances within the country seem trite

at best when considering the overall distance said letter will travel. Furthermore, after my phone was recently disconnected, it occurred to me that I hadn't paid the bills for several months simply because I never saw any. Assuming bills were actually sent, it begs the question: where does all my undelivered mail go? And let's not even get started on the odds of me receiving a Christmas or birthday card that has the appearance of containing a little cash. Suffice to say Vegas wouldn't be offering that bet.

Yet another mystery makes headlines every year with the arrival of winter. The Bulgarian people have a love-hate relationship with the cold season. On the one hand, the traditions of Bulgaria's agricultural society live on through the plethora of holidays that fill up the winter months. Historically, the point of this was that after the warm months of constant work in the fields, winter was a time to take a break, feast, enjoy the fruits of the harvest, and regain strength for the work that will begin again in the spring. Coincidentally, about the same time the homemade wine and rakiya is ready to drink, January and February are simply overloaded with festive occasions.

However, winter brings something more feared than snow, the flu, and hangovers combined; heating bills, an annual mystery. In its efforts to modernize the country, the Communist party installed central heating in many apartment buildings all over Sofia in the form of hot water radiators. This was a great improvement in comfort and convenience, saving both money and the trouble of collecting or buying firewood.

The first part of this mystery is; where does the hot water come from? Well, to the best of our knowledge, there must be some massive boiler buried deep in the earth somewhere that supplies the heating to half of Sofia. Lording over this boiler is the wise 'boiler master,' who determines when the water will be heated. If September or October turns out to be unseasonably cool, you may find yourself 'out in the cold,' because until the central heating authority determines it is time to heat up the water, there is no heating to be had.

The second, and infinitely more important, aspect of this mystery is how heating bills are calculated. First off, accurate meters were apparently never installed to monitor the amount of use by each apartment. Secondly, in the spirit of communalism, one cannot simply opt-out of using the central heat. The idea is that an unheated apartment, surrounded on multiple sides by people paying for heat, will absorb free heating through the walls, floors, and ceilings. Obviously, this is not fair to the neighbors who choose to take advantage of a

modern, albeit modest, convenience and decide to heat their apartments. To prevent this, heating bills are based not on actual use, but on other factors such as the outside temperature and number of square meters in an apartment. Basically, the equation works as follows: I will pay the same amount in heating bills whether I keep my apartment as hot as Jamaican sand or as cold as a Swedish ice-hotel.

Naturally, since there is no accountability to the utility company, heating bills are mysteriously expensive, surprise! In a country with an average salary somewhere around \$400 a month, my heating bill was \$100, about the same I paid to heat a similarly sized apartment in Washington, DC.

A final mystery, and one I am trying to explain as part of my Fulbright research, is why Bulgaria has one of the steepest rates of population loss in the entire world. The average Bulgarian woman is currently expected to have 1.3 children over her lifetime. This is far below the replacement level of 2 children, in which case each mother would replace herself and her mate. Most people cite the financial costs of raising children as the primary reason for having only one child, or having children much later in life. However, Bulgaria has posted strong economic growth for over 10 years running, and all macro-economic indicators imply that the standard of living has increased accordingly. To complicate the issue, comparatively wealthier countries such as Italy and Japan are similarly grappling with historically low birthrates. Perhaps financial considerations must be assigned less weight than polls and surveys may suggest. Bulgaria also has among the highest rates of abortions and children born out of wedlock, as well as very high levels of emigration. The numbers may be clear, but the explanation for this remains elusive. Resembling some accidental scientific discovery, there is a combination of social, economic, historical, religious, and other factors at work that somehow put Bulgaria in its current demographic crisis. Some herald the eventual end of the Bulgarian people, or at least a serious dissolution of their national identity. Others cite the move towards a country resembling a retirement community as the population continues to age and the youth continue to leave. Fortunately, the worst rarely comes to pass. And in this case, unlike my missing bills, this is a mystery that will slowly reveal itself as the years go by.

As a friend once told me, people cry twice for Bulgaria. They cry when they first learn they will be sent to Bulgaria, then they cry again when they have to leave. This reflects both the lack of knowledge most people have about Bulgaria before they come here, and the mysteries many of us uncover and struggle with that eventually endear the country and its people to us.



## Out of America

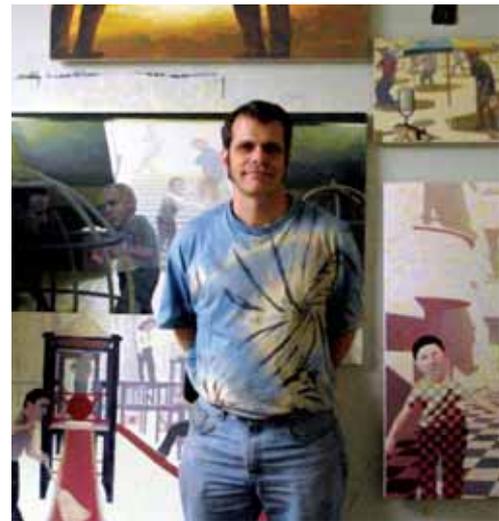
*Brad Guarino holds a master's degree in fine arts from the University of Connecticut. In AY 2006-2007 he came to Bulgaria as a Fulbright graduate student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia*

### Painting in a Changing Culture

I am here in Bulgaria as a painter-of canvases, not houses. In the Bulgarian language, you can't confuse a house painter with an artist, because there are two separate words to describe the different occupations. The Bulgarian word for painting means literally "life writing." It is a nice way to think about it. One of the joys of experiencing another culture and language is that it helps us to view the world differently. The English word for what I do focuses on the mechanical act while the Bulgarian word describes the spirit of the activity.

My fellowship is to study Bulgarian art and culture and to make a series of artworks inspired by the rapid state of change in Bulgarian society. I am based at the National Academy of Arts in Sofia where I work and study. I also take a Bulgarian language class twice a week. I am not good with languages, and Bulgarian has been particularly difficult for me. It is unlikely that I will be able to speak well by the end of my stay, but studying the language is an important part of the experience for me, because language and culture are intertwined.

For the past two years my artwork has focused on masculine themes-male identity, relationships among men, and the cultural construction of maleness. The work I have been doing since I arrived in Bulgaria has focused on men's



difficulties in dealing with change. I am interested in the Bulgarian concept of gender and masculinity, and although my work is not specifically about Bulgarian issues, the work has been influenced by insights I have gained through the subtle differences I see between the ways men behave here and the behavior to which I am accustomed in the States.

My musician wife and I live in the center of the city, in a quiet neighborhood where there are many small shops, cafes and restaurants. In many ways Sofia has the intimacy of a small town-our neighbors greet us each day, and we know many of the shopkeepers, baristas, and restaurateurs in our locale. My twenty-minute walk to the National Academy is always a highlight of my day. I can literally read the history of the country and the city in the street signs, which are usually named after historically important figures in Bulgaria-revolutionaries, poets, teachers, rulers, etc.

Sofia is a beautiful but subtle city, and much of its beauty takes time to discover. For an artist, it is a visual feast each morning. Sofia is busy, vibrant, and ever-changing; the old and the modern relate in unexpected ways to create fresh connections in one's mind. I have grown fond of the Soviet-era art and the utilitarian buildings-not so much for their aesthetic qualities

(although some very fine art was made during this time), but for the ambiance that they lend to their surroundings as reminders of Bulgaria's totalitarian past.

Walking into the National Academy of Arts is like stepping back in time. The cavernous halls are filled with dusty casts of Ancient Greek and Renaissance sculpture. The classroom studios look like something out of the 19th century; large skylights illuminate vaulted rooms with cool and even north light. In each studio, two or three live models pose for the students, who stand at easels or sculpture stands, making academic studies. The student work is generally of high quality, and the students receive a solid education in traditional representational art-making—something that is not common in U.S. art schools. The Academy studio building is in poor condition, and this makes it seem even older. The school is under-budgeted; they are saving to construct a new building with more space and modern conveniences. Sadly, the current studio building will be torn down when the new one is completed.

Three days a week I drop by one of the undergraduate classes to hang out and chat with my advisor, Andrei Daniel, and his assistant Pravdoliub Ivanov. They teach a painting class together. Daniel is an extremely accomplished painter—his style is eclectic, and his work often deals with historical themes with a sense of irony and a contemporary twist. He is not the typical stuffy-academic type that one might expect at a traditional academy—he is warm, engaging, and has a good sense of humor. I spend a lot of time talking with his assistant Pravdoliub Ivanov.



*John Beyrle, U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria, opening the exhibition of works by Fulbright graduate student Brad Guarino and Fulbright alumna Nadine Zanow at the Sredetz Gallery in Sofia on February 26, 2007.*

Pravdo will take Prof. Daniel's position when he retires—this is how it works here—his title is Assistant Professor, and that is exactly what he is. He is understated, extremely sharp and, like Daniel, has a great sense of humor. He's a conceptual artist and has exhibited widely including several of the major European biennial exhibitions. Pravdo studied painting in Daniel's National Academy studio many years ago, but, other than a shared sense of wit, their art bears little similarity today. Pravdo's work, which is often in the form of installation, deals with the absurdity of contemporary existence, nationalism, and occasionally with the peculiarities of being Balkan.

The Academy is very compartmentalized; students and faculty from the different studios tend not to intermix, so it has been a challenge to meet people. Add to this the language and other cultural differences, and it makes for a slow acclimation. I have heard that it has not always been like this, that several years ago it was more open. One student suggested that the transition to the market economy has induced artists to be more competitive with one another, and thus less open, because of Bulgaria's limited art market. During socialist times, most artists were well-supported by the government and were not vying for a limited number of art buyers and commission opportunities.

It has taken some time, but I am meeting more students and faculty each week. I have nice studio space in the attic of the main studio building of the Academy. Most days, I have visitors in my studio, where we exchange ideas and try to understand one another's perspectives. There are many students here from other countries—and I have had visitors from Macedonia, Turkey, Cyprus, Spain, France, Finland, Germany, Japan, and Italy. Fortunately, English is often the common language spoken. Americans are still not common, and Bulgarians are often surprised when they discover that I am from the States.

I share studio space with Krste, a graduate student from neighboring Macedonia. Krste has taught me a lot about Macedonian history and the controversies surrounding Macedonian identity. He speaks English very well. He studied it when he was young in school but says that he picked it up mostly as a kid watching American television and movies—he claims that he was motivated to learn English because he didn't like reading the subtitles. He tells me that there were terms and concepts that he learned from movies that he understood in English before he knew the Macedonian.

It disturbs me how much of an influence the American media culture has here. Most of the young people I know have seen far more American movies than I have. Because of this exposure, even those who claim to have limited experience speaking English are surprisingly familiar with many American slang expressions and idioms. And many of them have a distorted view of America and Americans. I also fear that the influx of so much American pop culture undermines young Bulgarians' sense of cultural identity; I am surprised how many of the students who know our movies well have never heard of some of Bulgaria's own classic films.

Globalism and the changes it is bringing about are all around us here. Since we arrived in Bulgaria, two major shopping malls have opened in Sofia's center, bringing the city's total to four. It is hard to imagine how the small shops in our neighborhood will survive. There is a palpable anxiety surrounding Bulgaria's acceptance into the European Union. What effects will this have on Bulgarian life and culture? Rumors circulated that the EU would ban two staples of Bulgarian cuisine—their tripe soup and their homemade brandy (the rumors turned out to be unfounded.) More than 2 million Bulgarians have emigrated to other countries in the past 20 years; will this trend increase with the relaxed border restrictions of an EU member country? And will foreigners immigrate in large numbers to change the ethnographic character of the country? Bulgaria is in an uncertain place.

Life is moving rapidly in a direction that in capitalist ideology would be labeled as "forward," but the Bulgarian people do not appear ready to abandon their old ways and culture so easily. Although Bulgarians earn far less money per capita than Americans and have far less disposable income, the cafes and pubs belie this statistic. Day and night, the cafes are teeming with life. Bulgarians tend to socialize over food and drink, and even in the least expensive of these

establishments the food is generally of much higher quality than one would expect in a similar place in the States. The pace is certainly slower here than in the U.S., and the majority of Bulgarians I have talked to are in no danger of abandoning this for higher western salaries.

I was talking at length to an Academy student who told me about his passions and the good and bad aspects of his life here; I shared the same about my life and experience in the States. We discovered that we had a lot in common. When we parted company, he shook my hand and told me that he was surprised how much he liked me—I was the first American he had met, and he had assumed some negative things and was pleased to find out that at least one American was different from what he had heard. Others I have met have expressed similar sentiments, and it reminds me of perhaps the greatest value of cultural exchange programs. By giving a face and a personality to the otherwise abstract notion of cultural identity, we uncover the humanity that is often disguised by the politics and rhetoric; the people of a country generally reflect little the stereotypes and propaganda by which they are represented in other parts of the world.



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Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission  
17, Al. Stamboliiski Blvd. • Sofia 1000, Bulgaria  
tel: +359 (2) 981 85 67 • fax: +359 (2) 988 45 17  
e-mail: [fulbright@fulbright.bg](mailto:fulbright@fulbright.bg) • [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg)

