

NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2022

ArtLifeCycle.com (Aiming to live the Art in the Cycles of Life)



Our window in the cupola

Hello Dear Friends,

Your interest is warmly embraced by us (James and Andrea)! Thank you. You can expect updates, reports and tell-tales on our life-journey. Life is Nature. Nature is Art. Transformation of the Self in the Cycles of Life is through Art. And that is what we seek in the breaths we take, the cake we bake, the life we make...

THE CHAPEL HOUSE (A KÁPOLNA HÁZ) VELENCE, HUNGARY

It has been two years since the last Newsletter.
Lots have happened since...

The last newsletter was about the history of The Chapel House from the Roman times to the date of us acquiring it in 2020. We moved in that Autumn to get to know the building. The stonewalls were wet, moldy and crumbly, the plumbing and electricity were too old to manage daily life. Within a month of us moving in the plumbing clogged up and the electricity box burnt down. Therefore, these were the first tasks to be tackled. As a matter of fact, these had to be done immediately as the Winter was upon us.



You can find our Children's Book in our online shop (click below link)

[Annabelle's Lullaby](#)

Storyline:
Annabelle's grandfather goes to fight the wizard. The wizard transforms him and his fellow men into gargoyles. When the grandfather returns in the middle of the night from the battle, he hums [Annabelle's Lullaby](#) for Annabelle. The love of his grandchild, Annabelle helps him on his long journey of recovery...

The book may also serve as a therapeutic tool in communicating about TRAUMA.

Thank you

The garden was cleared and sadly some trees had to be removed to keep the chapel walls safe and intact. We also relocated every stone statue to keep them safe; even though they are not part of the original chapel garden. They have been collected by the previous owner. We don't know much about them other than some of them date back to the 1850's and 1900's. Unfortunately, all of them are decapitated; none the less we live with them.



The old pipes were dug up in order to lay new water- and drain-pipes. And a brand-new electric box was installed; for now, with the old wiring inside...



Then we lived in The Chapel House like bohemian dwellers. We heated the place with our antique Majolica-porcelain stove (more stories of its renovation in the next Newsletter), we laid a thick-construction plastic over the windows for insulation, cooked on a double hub, played music in the belly of the cupola and trying not to break under the pressure and magnitude of the renovation. We project managed everything by ourselves and drew everything on paper at least a hundred times. Then I had to find and communicate with all workers, crooks, craftsman and artisans. I had to develop a good sense of character in order to have the right people working on the building. They had to have an understanding what they are putting their hands into. It is not only building materials but the timeline of history in this building's existence. Naturally, the building scared some people away. Also naturally, we were cheated by some. We had several workers, who supposed to do work and in the last minute they would pull out not feeling up to the task. That has been and still is a very difficult and interesting journey...

Good craftsman is hard to come by and if one finds them in Hungary then one has to book them in at least 1.5-2 years in advance. So after the preliminary works we had 16months break to prepare for the next phase in The Chapel House; the roof, the floor and the walls. In that time, we had to renovate and make useful of an old outer structure. We were on our own for that work...



This was BEFORE

And this is AFTER...



We upcycled, recycled and reused everything we could. James is very handy and I don't shy away from physical work either but this was our first time to design, create and build. Fixing other people's screw up handy-work is very hard to put right. But we prevailed in all obstacles and struggles, and very happy with our cozy studio space.

We also renovated the car-port, the outside eating area, the tool-shed, the log-shed and started to develop our organic garden. Then the time came in February 2021 for the professionals to descend upon us starting with the roof renovation. Given that The Chapel House is a historically significant building we held onto all the old features and structure where we could. In some places, a total rethink was necessary. We had one team for the structure and an other for the thatch to be put on. In the midst of the work, the front wall turned out to be very unstable including the entrance which was a 1970's addition. We hoped for the best but the worst happened. They started to wobble and had to be taken down. Therefore, front of the house was also remodelled in order to make it solid and waterproof. We had at least four different plans going at the same time and they were changing every day. The roofer team was amazingly flexible and supportive. This helped us to semi-complete this phase by April 2021.



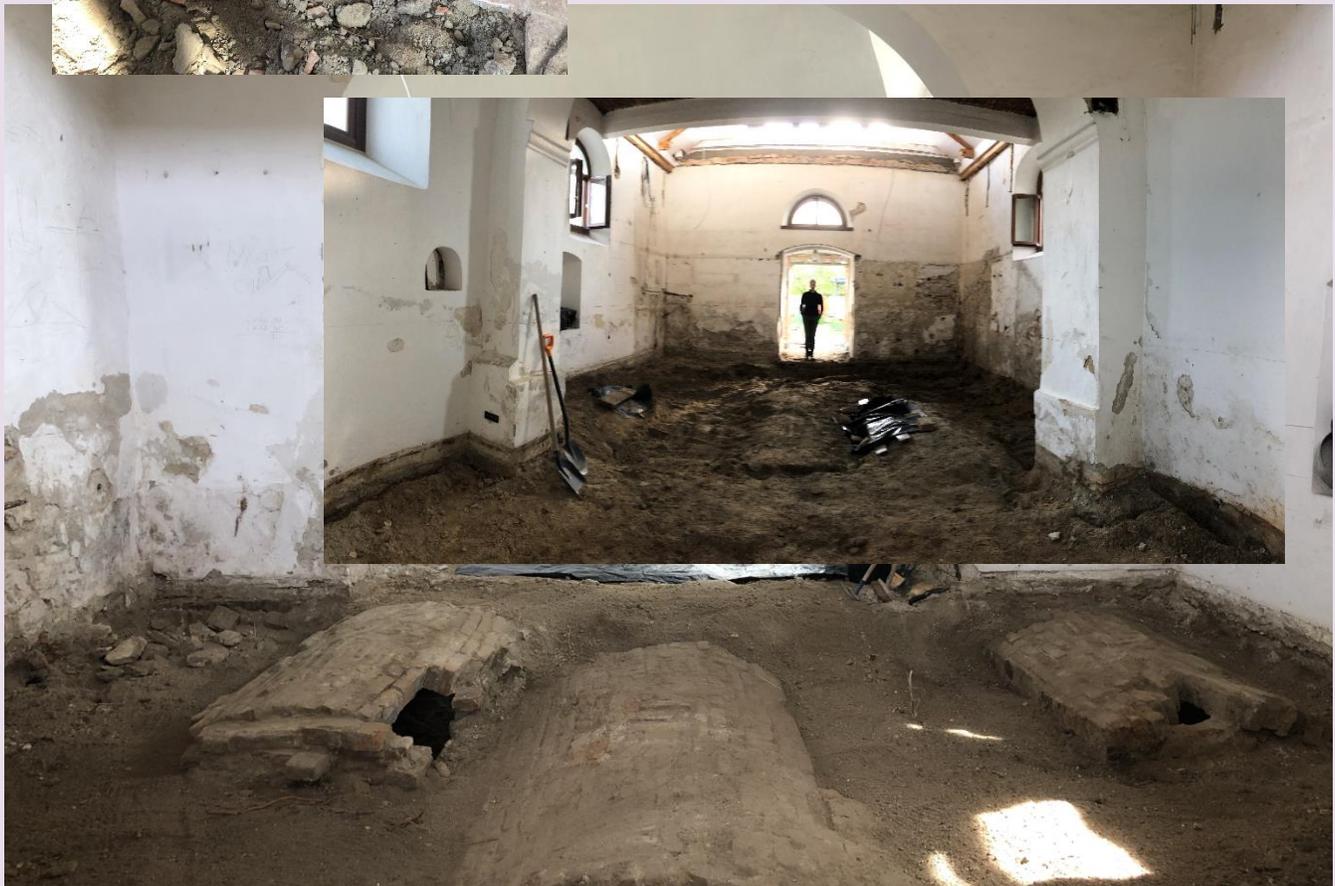
In this process it felt like a threshold was crossed. There was no return or exit. Felt very serious and weighed heavy on us. For both of us, this is the biggest commitment we have ever made to a property considering the amount of effort, work, money and not to mention the historic significance to this town. Especially, when the local council threatened us with a fine. This was a real spirit-killer. I cannot go into the details of the issues because the outcome is still pending... Nevertheless, the work continues! The inside of the building was gutted, emptied and cleaned for the next phase. Little did we know...

We had to push on with the floor. During the Summer 2022 we excavated the floor a bit more than a foot down. This was necessary for the underfloor-heating to be put in. The decision for this additional heating system was supported by many professionals, who explained its benefits to the stone-walls (3-feet thick). Outside we have capillary-water drain-system and inside we have underfloor-heating to help in keeping the walls as dry as possible.

Things were going well until we have discovered not one but three crypts underground. Interestingly, at the time of the purchase we were informed and assured that there used to be one crypt (which corresponds with the original red marble plank built in the wall dated 1759 - see notes from first newsletter) inside The Chapel House but it had been cleared and taken care of by the previous owner. It was a jaw-dropping shock to both of us and also a calling upon our decency to exhume the remains instead of collapsing the crypts and pour reinforced concrete on them. Some may argue that they should have remained there. The Chapel House was never a registered burial site and these remains were dated later than 1711 therefore everything could be removed without the site becoming an archeological plot (according to a Hungarian law from 1890 still in effect today). We carefully lifted everything out and placed them respectfully in new coffins. They were put to rest in their family barrier site.



After this realigning experience we have had a ceremony to allow the spirits to settle and exit, and the upset to heal in the space. We believe, that transformation is inevitable and this building deserves a fresh lease of life. It has stood for 300 years. Now James and I are its custodians. Our aim is to bring our consciousness and humility to it in the deepest sense...It is teaching us and we are learning to listen.



A few weeks later we had the building team in to lay the new floor. They had to work alongside the electrician and the plumber. It was a real group effort and required a lot of time-specific planning.



After collapsing the crypts the ground needed to be packed in and leveled in order to receive plastic sheet, metal-wire mash and the base layer of concrete. Then it was waterproofed for the plumbing and wiring. Hard insulation was installed with plastic sheet and another metal-wire mash for the underfloor heating pipes. The final step was C30 concrete, which is our final flooring as well. I cannot wait to see the diamond-grinded and polished floor...





Pfew...another big step complete. We rested for a few weeks again in order for the concrete to set, dry and properly solidify. This is our final floor and after diamond-grinding and polishing it will look lovely and shiny. The essence of what we are trying to maintain in this building is in its simplicity with a 21st century update. We are not trying to make our work look like it was done in the 18th century. We consider every step we take and make sure it sits well with us for the building. We respect it but we also would like to reside in it.

By this time, we were utterly exhausted, fed up with bureaucracy and needed to get away. Without a front door to close on The Chapel House we drove away into the hills, meadows and sea sides of Europe. We went on an almighty 9-week long road trip within that a 230km pilgrim walk on the Norte-Carmino de Santiago (will post about this journey on our website at a later date). As we returned refreshed and full of enriching and constructive experiences, we were ready to jump right back in where we left off. We -thankfully- are privileged enough to be able to have gone so far that we reached the point of longing to return...



So, in the last few weeks scheduling and working on plans for tin work, hand-crafted window work, traditional wall rendering, new-gallery build and kitchen cabinet designs. All this harmonized on a timeline with an eye on a moving-in date for Autumn/Winter 2023. And as I write this down, I am lightly aware of the unforeseen yet always occurring postponing factors. Therefore, we won't hold our breath on that date!



Right now, the mason team is working on rendering the inside walls. The outside will happen at a later date. We have waited for them almost a year. They are manually rendering the stone walls layer by layer. It was not easy to find a mason, who is willing to do this time-consuming process. Old render off, splash with liquid mixture, first solid rough layer, second smoother layer then final smooth layer...is what we have observed but we might have missed a layer! We are in awe of the walls as to how they are being beautified and solidified for the next 100 years to come...



And that brings you, dear reader up to date on our progress with The Chapel House renovation! It is not done yet...but it is becoming. I suspect the next Newsletter is NOT another two years away.

Thank you

Our daytime wear for the past 2 years...and we keep the fun going!



MAY YOUR
HOLIDAY SEASON
BE SPENT IN WARMTH,
KINDNESS AND LAUGHTER!

DON'T DRINK AND EAT RESPONSIBLY
IF YOU WANT TO...

