

Obverse

The obverse shows a half-length portrait of Janko Jesenský and, below it, a facsimile of his signature. In the background are sheets of paper bearing the titles of selected works by Jesenský: 'NOVELY', 'VERŠE', 'ZO STARÝCH ČASOV', 'MALOMESTSKÉ ROZPRÁVKY' and 'ČIERNE DNI'. To the right of the portrait is the Slovak coat of arms. Inscribed horizontally along the bottom of the design are the name of the issuing country 'SLOVENSKO' and the year of issuance '2024', one above the other. To the right of the signature is the mint mark of the Kremnica Mint, consisting of the letters 'MK' placed between two dies, and to the left are the stylised letters 'MS', referring to the obverse designer Martin Sabol.

Reverse

The reverse is dominated by a bust portrait of Janko Jesenský. To the left of the portrait is the coin's denomination '10', and to the right is the currency 'EURO'. Inscribed along the upper left edge of the design is the subject's year of birth '1874' and forename 'JANKO'. Along the right edge are his surname 'JESENSKÝ' and year of death '1945'. At the left edge, above Jesenský's shoulder, are the stylised letters 'IŘ', referring to the reverse designer Ivan Řehák.

The house in Martin where Janko Jesenský was born (photograph by Ferdinand Jiríček, Matica slovenská, Martin)

Coin details

Denomination:	€10
Composition:	.900 silver, .100 copper
Weight:	18 g
Diameter:	34 mm
Edge lettering:	• AUTENTICKÝ GLOSÁTOR SLOVENSKÉHO MALOMESTSKÉHO ŽIVOTA (Astute observer of Slovak small-town life)
Issuing volume:	limited to a maximum of 15,000 coins in either brilliant uncirculated or proof quality
Designers:	Martin Sabol (obverse) Ivan Řehák (reverse)
Engraver:	Dalibor Schmidt
Producer:	Kremnica Mint (Slovakia)



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150th anniversary
of the birth of
Janko Jesenský

SILVER COLLECTOR EURO COIN

Janko Jesenský (30 December 1874 - 27 December 1945), an astute observer of Slovak small-town life, was a versatile literary and socially engaged figure and a leading exponent of Slovak literary modernism. He was born into a lower-nobility family that had Slovak national sentiments. He belonged to the 'lost generation' that experienced first hand the horrors of World War One, in his case after joining the Czechoslovak Legion on the Russian front. He described his wartime experiences in the poetic war diary *Zo zajatia* (From Captivity, 1918). After the war, in the newly established Czechoslovak Republic, he became a *župan* (governor of a Slovak province). In 1929 he was appointed vice-president of the Regional Office in Bratislava, a position he held until his early retirement in 1935.

As a poet, Jesenský sought to find his own voice and was inspired by Byron, Heine, Petőfi, Pushkin, Lermontov and Sládkovič. In his 'journalistic poetry', including *Po búrkach*



Janko Jesenský with his wife Anna in Martin, 1927



Janko Jesenský speaking at a ceremonial General Assembly of the Matica slovenská cultural organisation held on 25 November 1933 at the Slovak National Museum's new building in Turčiansky Sv. Martin

(After Storms, 1932), *Proti noci* (Into the Night 1945), *Čierne dni* (Black Days, 1945) and *Na zlobu dňa I, II* (Fury of the Day I and II, 1945), he comments wittily, ironically and angrily on interwar life and on life during the Slovak state in World War Two.

While Jesenský's prose displays thematic diversity, it also has a central motif: to spotlight the characteristic vices of individuals and society. He portrays the peculiarities of provincial people of his day through anecdote, miscommunication, pragmatism in matters of love, and through contrast, thereby crafting the tragicomic life fiascos of his protagonists. In his short-story collections *Malomestské rozprávky* (Small-Town Tales, 1913), *Novely* (Novellas, 1921), and *Zo starých časov* (From Old Times, 1935), he employs the grotesque as a device of literary scandalisation. He does not, however, mock without purpose, but 'simply' masks a deep worldly scepticism. The pinnacle of Jesenský's fictional oeuvre is his two-volume novel *Demokrati* (Democrats, 1934/1938), a bravura artistic mosaic encom-

passing virtually every aspect of life in the First Republic.

In terms of the scope and contemporary relevance of his political-satirical work, Jesenský ranks among the few literary exponents of resistance in Europe. He was antagonistic towards the wartime Slovak state and especially its political leaders, as he realised the egregiousness of the then social situation in its broader (not just national) European and world contexts. He was convinced that anti-human fascism could not be a lasting guarantee of Slovak statehood. He was particularly sensitive to the conformism shown by some Slovak writers, and as a former chairman of the Slovak Writers' Association, he was well acquainted with the ins and outs of Slovak literary life. Although he withdrew from public life, as recorded in his diary that is now stored in the archives of the Janko Jesenský Museum, he followed and commented on the political situation through the daily press, radio broadcasts, newsreels, and chance meetings.



Janko Jesenský (first row, first from the right) with friends on a trip to Uhrovec, 1912