

# Bogdan Čobal

## POOLS OF CORES 1992–2022

20 May–18 June 2022

MMC KIBLA / KiBela

### In the Pools of Cores

Art historians like to note that a red thread connects the artistic oeuvre of each artist. It's a synthesis of the artist's poetics. Throughout the creative phases, Čobal remained faithful to visualizations in relation to space, both the illusion of space in the painting itself and the (co)effect of the same artifacts in reality. He intertwined everything he was interested in and disturbed him with motifs and themes. Throughout the creative phases, Čobal remained faithful to visualizations in relation to space, both the illusion of space in the painting itself and the (co)effect of the same artifacts in reality. He did not tolerate the influence of professors, so their influence could not be mirrored in his works, nor the impact of »fashion« practices, which were (too)often dictated by curators/gallerists, as well as by the market and the audience.

Čobal views were always clearly formulated and well-expressed, which is described in his oeuvre by a unique, recognizable, and always authored note – the Čobal note. He never forgot the advice of Prof. France Mihelič, who advised the students to look at their work as if they had not done it themselves, as this is the only way to pass the judgment. He has maintained such a standpoint; even more, he has always seen his works as a whole throughout all the creative phases and motifs. He discovered »new worlds«, but he always returned to the already found; he thought about them and complemented them with discoveries. We could say that he layered the paintings as sediments of memories so that he could upgrade and refine the bodies of the paintings. There were seemingly different cycles such as Cores (Core Dynamics, Return to Core), Fracture in Motion, Energy Fields, Rhythm of the Vertical, Landscapes, Four Seasons, Hayrack Anatomy of Dumb Furrows, Polyptychs, The Raft of the Medusa... , all of which rounded off the painter's complex »painting ecosystem« in transitions and transformations.

For decades, an essential and decisive interest he has been devoted to is matter and its (re) definition of all the living and »inanimate« world. At the same time, he deals with spaces, both from a physical and spiritual point of view; to him, it is essential how we create space and how we perceive it. Space is also a human body. We recognize constructions plotted in the holes and dragged into the depths or ascend into the heights and slowly disappear. Čobal is an »architect« of the painting's structure as an autonomous body. He brings geometric elements to painting fields that are not always identical to reality. Then he additionally covers them with color textures, composing with all the registers of the tone scale and adding an inherent modulation to capture the sounds of colors. Through matter, he discovers even more essential axioms. Between colored blues/lights and browns/darknesses, paintings become in equal measure both alchemists and scientists' laboratories.

For a long time, the micro world was present only to scientists, and artists felt it intuitively. However, when the world was engulfed by the Covid-19 pandemic two years ago, we began to realize this and think about it. We were all thinking about viruses, being afraid of them; scientists rushed with explanations and illustrative representations of these tiny pathogenic organisms' of (interesting)

shapes and colors, which only reproduce in living cells. The pandemic has overshadowed awareness of the dangers of devastating wars and ecological disasters threatening humanity. In the series of paintings, *The Raft of the Medusa*, Čobal, at first sight, concealed the screaming tragedy of the fate of the refugees in 21st century with the intention that the shock of realization at the point of immersing ourselves in the painting and seeing the truth would be so much more significant. This shock proved to be a premonition of war.

Čobal's works from the series *In the Pools of Cores* are, at first glance, masterpieces of art. Immersing in their mysterious pools of colors and shapes in seemingly abstract motifs surprises us. The artist allows us to see the body interior through the body of the image or movement on the screen. Both ways pull us into eruption, into the eruptions of volcanoes that happen around us and within us. He visualized that invisible world with which the human body must live in symbiosis because otherwise, we would not survive. A group of single-celled microscopic living organisms, such as bacteria with a simple cell structure and no cell nucleus, live in the soil, water, air, and bodies of all living beings. The human organism is composed of ninety percent of microorganisms ... When the painter thinks about it, he presents us with a memorable experience; the colors sound and pulsate in their materiality, and the paintings elude us. We can enter them through immersion; once the immersion is pleasant for us and sometimes difficult and depressing. We're trapped in a vortex. We're losing consciousness. We feel trapped instead of free, this feeling so familiar when we are helpless. We accept the fact that we are part of this complex ecosystem.

The silence of the painting, the contemplation after we were able to catch our breath again, is broken by the artist with selected sounds as he guides us through the space. The dark colors and materiality with which he expresses depths, vortexes, and pools become brighter and brighter. Blue is prevalent in the painting field and on the screens, where we see the sky.

- Milena Zlatař

## BIOGRAPHY

**Bogdan Čobal** was born in 1942 in Zrenjanin (Serbia), where the Nazis expelled his free-thinking family. They were, like so many compatriots, emigrants and refugees. After the war, they returned home to Maribor. The family was connected to the intellectual elite of the city, so the parents supported the decisions of the children, including the youngest son, who decided to be a painter like his older brother Ivan. After studying painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, graduating in 1967, he dedicated his creative decades to Maribor as a critical intellectual: an excellent painter, a dedicated pedagogue (ten years as an assistant professor and associate professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Maribor) and a professional activist. Glazer's award of the city of Maribor for an exhibition at the Art Gallery in 2002 and later the Grand Glazer Award testify to his undoubted contribution. Through his exhibitions, he addressed art audiences across the country and abroad, almost all over Europe; he has also been awarded several times. He lives and creates in Maribor.

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MMC KIBLA / KiBela, Ulica kneza Koclja 9, Maribor  
Opening hours: Monday–Friday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.