

Nina Ivančić was born in Zagreb in 1953. In 1977, she graduated with a degree in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb under Prof. Šime Perić. In 1979, she attended a painting masterclass in Zagreb under professors Ljubo Ivančić and Nikola Reiser. In 1987, she received a Fulbright painting scholarship and attended an MFA Program in Painting at the Columbia University in New York. From 1986 to 1993, she lived and worked in New York. Since 1999, she has been teaching at the Academy of Arts in Split. She lives and works in Zagreb, Split and Brač. Since 1979, Nina Ivančić has held numerous solo exhibitions and participated in many group exhibitions in Croatia and abroad. Her artistic activity is accompanied by a large number of bibliographic units and has garnered several awards. Her works are kept in private and public collections in Croatia and abroad.

Mihael Klanjčić was born in Zagreb in 1994. In 2019, he graduated with a degree in painting at the Department of Art Education of the Academy of Fine Arts, University of Zagreb, under Prof. Damir Sokić. He has had seven solo exhibitions and participated in many group exhibitions, among others in the 57th Zagreb Salon, (Croatian Association of Visual Artists (HDLU)), 35th Youth Salon Zagreb, (Croatian Association of Visual Artists), 16th Erste Fragments (Lauba), group exhibitions In the Summer Code (Kranjčar Gallery) and Art Is Doubt (LEXART Skladište), 14th Erste Fragments (Kranjčar Gallery). He lives and works in Zagreb.

Damir Sokić was born in Nova Gradiška in 1952. In 1977, he graduated with a degree in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. From 1977 to 1979, he attended a painting masterclass under professors Ljubo Ivančić and Nikola Reiser. Between 1986 and 1993, he lived and worked in New York. From 1999 to 2019, he taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. In 2018, he received a PhD from the Academy of Fine Arts of the University of Zagreb. Damir Sokić has been exhibiting in solo and group exhibitions in Croatia and abroad since the mid 1970s. His artistic activity is accompanied by a large number of bibliographic units and has garnered several awards (including the annual Vladimir Nazor Award in 2014). His works are kept in private and public collections in Croatia and abroad. He lives and works in Zagreb.

Ljerka Šibenik was born in 1935 in Zagreb, where she graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in 1962. From 1962 to 1964, she attended the master workshop led by Krsto Hegedušić. In the period from 1975 to 2003, she was the manager of the Nova Gallery, where she represented young artists inclined towards avant-garde experimentalism as well as artists of the older generation whose work was committed to artistic innovation. A member of the second generation of Croatian avant-garde artists, Ljerka Šibenik explored complex structures and environments (*Black Object 2*, 1968), at the same time producing intensely colored objects with minimalist forms (*Mini relief*, 1968).

Galerija Kranjčar

Snježana Ban, Nina Ivančić, Mihael Klanjčić, Damir Sokić, Ljerka Šibenik
THE LIFE OF FINELY TUNED FORMS
17 February–22 March 2023

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

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Curated by Kranjčar Gallery from Zagreb, the exhibition weaves into a coherent visual whole the works of five Croatian artists of different generations. **Ljerka Šibenik** formed her artistic sensibility just before and after the legendary year of 1968, **Damir Sokić** and **Nina Ivančić** matured artistically around the turn of the eighties of the previous century, **Snježana Ban** at the end of the second decade of this century and **Mihael Klanjčić** at the very beginning of its third decade.

At first sight, the exhibited works have entirely different formal and spatial-performative characteristics. The cohesive logic of the exhibition as a whole, however, cannot be grasped using the traditional formal-analytical approach – or the rigid genre classifications and definitions. Each of the exhibited works is unmistakably marked with constructive reflection, which, however, never cuts into their unique poetic aura. The common thread running through this selection of works is the extraordinary imaginative rationalism displayed by their authors.

The five artistic languages, five different approaches to using materials and media – be it drawing, painting, sculpture, installation or action – are dynamically intertwined in a series of images and objects in space to create a coherent unit that is able to absorb individual themes and breathe with them through individual forms. Taking us from black and white to color, from abstraction to the concrete, from engagement to playfulness, the presented artworks are created in line with the basic principles of modernist art but are at the same time also upgraded with topical messages and meanings, which are delivered in a critical or ironic way and through visual, social or wider contexts.

Snježana Ban

The artist erects two installations outside, named *Messages in a bottle (Poruke u boci)*. It is a kind of collage, only spatially determined. The artist »compresses« short quotes into, as undoubtedly suggested by the title, bottles with clear allusions to sending messages via unconventional maritime routes. Sending a message in bottle means choosing an extremely unreliable means of communication with a potentially completely unknown original recipient and it often reflects a romantic act of desperation. On the other hand, finding a message in a bottle almost always has a mythic connotation and represents a tempting potential start of an upcoming adventure. Like suddenly stumbling upon a stimulative thought or idea, messages in a bottle travel throughout the entire artistic horizon. (Vanja Babić, from the foreword of the exhibition for the project Katamaran Art, 2022, Kravata Gallery, Jelsa/Galerija umjetnina, Split, 2022)

Nina Ivančić

Because once you try to fly ...

Already the first scenes of the aircraft Nina Ivančić presented in 2006 were interpreted as »emptied out signs«, as objective scenes without any indication on their true nature. The emptiness meant the outlines had no filling, that they do not represent the illusion of volume of the actual object and that they are like the scenes recently exhibited at the Kranjčar Gallery. The signature plastic sign as a general spot, portrayals of the aircraft and related linguistic and verbal commands are incorporated into the same displayed field with the same care regarding positioning, symmetry, and measurements. The question that arises when looking at Nina Ivančić's newer works, which needs no immediate answer, is the following: when mimetic displays are reduced to a neutral visual formula with an even stronger tendency towards symmetry and are named in the typologically exact order – is this then emptying meaning or filling it? If a »lack of« is desired, then the question of the »found« means – artistically defined by Duchamp's atmosphere of *ready made* or »evoked« by planes or ships as »vehicles« in Nina Ivančić's interpretation – is a question on the primary nature of the spatial and/or temporal definition of »spiritual journeys«. The question does not begin with where or when, but rather with what object post-Duchamp is not or cannot be found? The question remains as open as the decision, whether we want to associate the »empty« with the »transparent«. The answer is therefore more than simple: everything lost, everything wished for, everything imaginable ... Ten portrayals of an airplane is the artist's completed cycle, displayed for the first time at the Kranjčar Gallery. The series of charcoal drawings on white paper – considering everything said until now – presents a unique completeness. This special integrity is not only supported by the established principle of seriality. The order and circumspection of each individual work is not only transferred by repeating motives of the same kind (but not identical ones) in the same formats (eight times horizontal and twice vertical), which our eyes perceive as a harmonically repeating unity, as the works occupy, dominate and appropriate the space around them, so the exhibition becomes a well-rounded whole, reflecting the principles of individual exhibits. By choosing Leonardo's quotes and Bellini's *La Virtù*, the latter being »newly interpreted« for the exhibition, so renaissance motives via words and pictures, Ivančić rounds the exhibition as a complete discourse by adding her own commentary to the works, an expression with a clear origin – namely art – on the narrower context of her intentions: order, symmetry, balance, clarity ... Nothing is neglected, nothing forgotten, simulated or shrouded in irony. Here and now. Transparent. (Blaženka Perica, Galerija Kranjčar, Zagreb, November 2008)

Mihael Klanjčić

What sets Mihael apart from others, and what is also most interesting about him, is his ability to join the unjoinable – his eclecticism. Although eclecticism seems difficult, inconsistent, or illogical at times, it is equally noticeable in all of Mihael's works, not only materially, but also in the semiotics of their names, which is paradoxically the author's constant and consistency. Just like in the 60s, when art, influenced by Warhol, Stella, Newman, Duchamp and Reinhardt, clearly showed it is faceless – human and infinitely diverse, just like the autobiographers and figuratists. Art is, whether we want it or not, personal. Or as Lawrence Alloway put it: A system is human as a splash of paint, more so when the splash gets routinized. (Tanja Škrgatić, from the foreword to the exhibition *Objekti*, Galerija SC, 2019)

Damir Sokić

The works of Damir Sokić constantly refer to the period when real artists and intellectuals held important positions and took responsibility; their ethics were without a sliver of speculation, cheap statements, or unscrupulous careerism. This was a time of daring and cosmopolitan ideas and projects, where their bearers did not falter at the last steps towards the final realization. The steps towards utopia. The great and complex era of modernism – the current topic – has been confined exclusively to history for decades now. It is no longer contemporary. Who would have thought this could be considered a compliment? It can though. We must only look at

Sokić's works, which are not classically modernist, this needs to be said. All anachronisms, even the modernist ones, are foreign to Sokić. Real ideas are timeless and indestructible, just like the fact that all human creation has its place in the timeline of history. Tradition can be negated or challenged, but we cannot have a relationship with it, not even a subconscious one. Simultaneously, tradition can be a powerful and dangerous weapon in the hand of the author, a kind of double-edged sword: on one hand, there is a potential for creating visually cultivated and intellectually layered works, which then stimulate a potent dialogue with concrete artistic artifacts or past ideas, but on the other hand, there is the threat of falling into frivolity, saccharine and lifeless kitsch, from where there is no return. (Vanja Babić, from the foreword to the exhibition *Umjetnik Damir Sokić izlaže Skladište Moderne*, French Pavilion, 2019)

Ljerka Šibenik

There are artists, whose name exceeds their work and then there are of course artists, whose work exceeds their name. Ljerka Šibenik is undoubtedly part of the latter category. Her name evokes Croatia's only seldomly bright role in art in the 2nd half of the 20th century (the 60s and 80s to be precise). After expressionist and corrosive informalist testimonies, filled with existential and other anxieties, she spoke with a pure and nurtured culture of plastic form. Šibenik grew up in an internationally avantgarde climate in close proximity to the New Tendencies movement and was a key protagonist of the new sensibility of the 60s, going even so far that she was called »the leader of the new wave« by one of her colleagues (Ž. Koščević). Looking back at her work, this leadership seems evident, looking back at the artist's nature, it is neither formulaic nor brash. Ljerka Šibenik set up a vantage point for a new kind of sensibility and created works that reflected curiosity: she portrays an experimental and insecure openness. She became the bearer of this new sensibility precisely by questioning inherited values, without which everything would be in vain. As said by Ješa Denegri, Ljerka Šibenik's famous »context adopts and continues to evolve in its own way.« Her path teaches us how we can be part of the time we are living in and simultaneously be in touch with our own sensibility. The aegis of this new artistic enlightenment opened a new personal space, a space for inner dynamism in works of art and for diversity; a path that implies »a high level of an aesthetically nurtured plastic form« and »the use of emancipated linguistic principles and form-related principles« (Ješa Denegri). »The curious questioning of the relations of the special value of colors, the relationship between color and form, form and space etc., creating luminokinetic ambients, paintings-objects ... This was the result of a quiet, but persistent and curious life«. (Ive Šimat Banov, from the article 'Ljerka Šibenik' Ješe Denegrija. Monografija posvećena radu važne protagonistice nove osjetljivosti 60-ih, Jutarnji list, 28 October, 2019)

BIOGRAPHIES

Snježana Ban was born in Zagreb in 1980. In 2007, she graduated from the Department of Art Education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, in the class of Prof. Ante Rašić, and in 2008 from the Faculty of Textile Technology in Zagreb, majoring in fashion design. She received her PhD from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in 2019. Since 2007, she has been employed at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Department of Art Education. She has presented her work in ten solo exhibitions and in a number of group and thematic exhibitions in Croatia and abroad. She is the author of the book *Doubt as Creative Potential in Contemporary Art* (2021), published by the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. She was awarded the Grand Prize at the 28th Youth Salon in Zagreb and the 2nd prize presented by the Erste bank (2006).