

Andrej Jemec
Geometry And Handwriting 1967-1983

29. 7.-2. 11. 2014



The exhibition focuses on a specific period, from 1967 to 1983 to be precise, and with interesting and relevant supplementations shows a conceptual context through which we can trace the artist's analytical approach and discover the technological features of the silkscreen printmaking technique, which was still relatively new at the time. The exhibition of colour silkscreens by Andrej Jemec that affords a view into the artist's drawings, paintings, mobile objects and collages produced during the given period, reveals his investigative zeal in mastering each expressive medium as well as their reciprocal sublimation into a thoughtfully structured and visually purified whole, which is particularly topical for today's times, brimming with media diversity, impulsiveness of ideas, as well as momentary and fleeting solutions.

Andrej Jemec donated 68 silkscreens to the permanent collection of the International Centre of Graphic Arts, which represent a brief yet well-rounded series of works produced in the 1970s. This was a period of the artist's marked interest in colour abstraction under the influence of hard-edge painting, which he could execute effectively and consistently within printmaking by employing the silkscreen technique. An exhibition was dedicated precisely to this print series at MGLC in 1996, providing an additional insight into the creative printmaking of Jemec, after his earlier prints in the intaglio technique had already been shown. A repeated viewing of Jemec's silkscreens offers a different insight into the interesting creative period by the artist from 1969 to 1983.

The ideas and different conceptual attitude towards visual problems in terms of content and form were indicated in as early as 1967 in the large series of diary drawings in black marker, in which Jemec vividly recorded his visual reflections and thoughtfully conceived the changes that were made flesh by

the end of the sixties in both his painting and printmaking. At the end of the 1960s, the silkscreen printmaking technique was already well established and at the same time also the most suitable for the artist's rounded off artistic expression. The first silkscreens by Jemec were, similarly to the paintings of that time, recognized as a novelty, by which Jemec moved away from the poetic investigations of the effects of distant light and space in the intaglio method.

In 1969, Jemec presented his first silkscreens at the Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana. A year later he was invited to the experimental pavilion of the 35th Venice Biennale and met Fiorenzo Fallani in the studio, with whom he also continued to work later.

In 1973 he began working on his first mobile objects, which were composed and could be continuously adapted by changing the shape or depth of the individual planes. Despite the fact that the assembled mobile objects are spatially defined, the game with the surface planes is of key importance, as they could be assembled into various colour options in his paintings and prints.

In the mid-1970s, Jemec started to compose drawings in a different way. With pen and ink, he drew continuous parallels, verticals, diagonals, arranging them in variously dense networks on paper. If the drawing diaries at the end of the 1960s evolved rapidly and in large quantities with dynamic and impulsive drawing, then his later drawings were a result of a longstanding and deliberate process, which could be repeatedly interrupted by the artist and then continued again at another time. Each individual drawing was thus created over a longer period of time and often reveals the artist's concentration and disposition, even though it was in some way predetermined.

The structure and effect of the line drawings signalled another interesting and important series of collages at the end of the 1970s, which he produced from paper, cardboard, fabric, canvas and other materials. Some of the collages had an impact on the paintings, others on the prints, among which two print portfolios should be particularly highlighted with five colour silkscreens dating from 1979 to 1982. Both were printed in the silkscreen print studio in Tübach in Switzerland and were also the result of a collaboration with an experienced print master and are exceptional both in terms of artistic as well as production quality. They aptly conclude the creative period in which the artist strove for artistic perfection through technology and execution, coming to a close with his explorations of the pictorial plane and geometric artistic expression.

Andrej Jemec was born on 29 November 1934 in Vižmarje, Ljubljana. He studied Painting at the Ljubljana Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana (1953-58) under Prof. Marij Pregelj and Prof. Gabrijel Stupica, and Printmaking under Prof. Riko Debenjak and Prof. Božidar Jakac. He graduated in 1958 under Prof. Gabrijel Stupica, continuing his studies in Paris (1963-64) in J. Friedlander's studio and in London with the help of a grant from the Prešeren Foundation. After teaching at the primary school in Šentvid near Ljubljana, he was a freelance artist from 1962 to 1973. In 1973 he was awarded the academic title of Assistant Professor and began to lecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. From 1984 to his retirement in 1999, he was employed at the Academy as a Full Professor of Drawing and Painting on the undergraduate as well as postgraduate study programmes.

He took part in numerous exhibitions, including: the Venice Biennale twice (1970, 1972), the Sao Paulo Biennial twice (1971, 1977), in all the editions of the International Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana from 1963 to 1999, as well as others.

He was awarded numerous prizes for his work, including: the Grand Prix International at the 4th Tokyo Print Biennale (1964), the Jakopič Award in Ljubljana (1975), and the 1st prize at the 11th International Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana (1975). In 1994 he also received the Prešeren Award for Lifetime Achievement in Ljubljana.

In 1995 he was elected an associate member, and in 2001 a full member, of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana. In 2005 he was awarded the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art, and in 2010 the First Class Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art.

Exhibition curator: Božidar Zrinski

A catalogue has been published alongside the exhibition on 32 pages, in Slovenian and English.

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IN MEMORIAM ZORAN KRŽIŠNIK AND FIORENZO FALLANI.

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Captions:

(left) **Black square**, 1976, silkscreen

(in the middle) **Universal Composition – Variation I**, 1973, silkscreen

(right) **Drawing III**, 1967, marker