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**RENÉ
MIKOVIĆ**



dr. art.
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Halucinantne
melankolije

Hallucinatory
Melancholies

GALERIJA JOSIP RAČIĆ –
NACIONALNI MUZEJ MODERNE UMJETNOSTI
JOSIP RAČIĆ GALLERY –
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Margaretska 3, Zagreb

Ptica kao metafora prolaznosti

René Miković, zagrebački likovni umjetnik koji je studirao, živio i radio u Nizozemskoj, kao da je nakon prerane smrti zaboravljen, samo da bi nakon više od četvrt stoljeća ponovno bio otkriven. Pa ipak, u trenutku kad su gotovo sve teme već obrađene na bezbroj načina, rijetkost je pronaći djelo čija relevantnost polaže ispit vremena, iako je malo ili nimalo poznato ne samo domaćoj publici nego i profesionalcima kojima je obrađivanje i valoriziranje hrvatske umjetnosti svakodnevicom. Ono poziva na izvorni uvid i originalnu interpretaciju, čime utjelovljuje jedva dostižni ideal suvremenih istraživača, ali i ustanova posvećenih zaštiti, očuvanju i promicanju nacionalne kulturne baštine. Tako prva Mikovićeva samostalna izložba, osim što u Galeriji Josip Račić posthumno predstavlja njegovo sve do danas posve neistraženo djelo, postaje trajnim doprinosom hrvatskoj kulturi i umjetnosti jer kao polazišna točka može poslužiti budućim interpretacijama Mikovićeva nevelikog, ali iznimno zanimljivog i moćnog opusa.

Miković je 1975. završio Školu primijenjenih umjetnosti u Zagrebu tako da je većina njegovih slika iz ranoga umjetničkog razdoblja u posjedu zagrebačkih mu prijatelja, što je uvelike doprinijelo njihovoj dostupnosti, ali i očuvnosti.¹ Sasvim suprotno, cijeli je umjetnikov zreli opus nastao u inozemstvu, gdje se nakon njegove smrti mnogim slikama gubi svaki trag, no neke su ipak završile na međunarodnom tržištu umjetnina pa je o njima moguće doznati putem reprodukcija. Od dviju slika koje su donirane Nacionalnom muzeju moderne umjetnosti, *Mrtva ptica* (1978.) predstavljena je zagrebačkoj publici u okviru izložbe *Eksploatacija smrti*², kad je 2021. uklopljena u šezdesetak radova najistaknutijih hrvatskih likovnih umjetnika 19. i 20. stoljeća. Miković je sve do tada bio posve nepoznat domaćoj javnosti, stoga ne čudi da je slika odmah izazvala pozornost, osobito zato što je jedna od onih koje prepoznatljivo zrače umjetnikovim unutarnjim rukopisom – riječ je o melankoličnoj svijesti o prolaznosti, no umrijeti na Mikovićevim platnima nije isto kao u umirućem gradu, kako je Thomas Mann opisao u *Smrti u Veneciji*, u kojoj je čak i smrt imala poetično značenje simbolizirajući propadanje cijeloga svijeta³: ovdje nema komunikacije i ispitivanja, jer mrtvim se prirodoma slikari iz makrokozmosa povlače u intimu mikrokozmosa, stoga ni Mikovićeva platna ništa manje ne odišu distanciranošću, otuđenošću i samoćom kad se slikar paletom zemljanih boja, krila duboko uronjenih u san o umjetničkoj besmrtnosti, obraća motivu mrtve ptice kao zlatnim rezom odmjerenom metafori vlastite prolaznosti.

Hommage Rembrandtu i flamanskoj umjetnosti

Već je iz *Mrtve ptice* razvidno da je Miković od najranije mladosti bio nadahnut Rembrandtom i flamanskim slikarstvom, stoga je 1976. otišao u svoju duhovnu domovinu, gdje je završio Akademiju likovnih umjetnosti *Academie Minerva* u Groningenu, a potom se usavršavao na poslijediplomskom studiju Akademije *Jan van Eyck* u Maastrichtu. Tako je bio jedan od hrvatskih umjetnika koji su novoj sredini donijeli onoliko koliko su od nje mogli smjesta dobiti⁴, što je potaknulo miješanje kultura te je od hrvatskog slikara stvorilo protagonista suvremene

¹ Riječ je uglavnom o *hommageu* Rembrandtu te portretima prijatelja, poznanika i istaknutih hrvatskih umjetnika, tako da su slike za izložbu u Galeriji Josip Račić posudili Sanja Pilić, Ivan Maruna i Darko Petrinjak, sve umjetnici ili djelatnici u kulturi.

² U autorskoj koncepciji povjesničarke umjetnosti Dajane Vlasisavljević.

³ Više o tomu u: Spengler, Oswald, *Propast Zapada – Obris jedne morfologije svjetske povijesti, Svezak prvi – Oblik i zbiljnost*, Demetra, Zagreb, 1998.

⁴ Analogno npr. Radovanu Ivšiću koji je kao već formirani umjetnik otišao u Francusku i postao članom Bretonova nadrealističkog pokreta, o čemu više u: Machiedo, Višnja, *Francuski nadrealizam – knjiga prva*, Konzor, Zagreb, 2002, str. 446.

nizozemske umjetnosti. Nedvojbeno je bio na dobitku, jer njegov je slobodni duh u novom poticajnom okružju „srodnih duša“ napokon stekao puno pravo glasa, ali i obvezujuće okrilje kad je izlagao na skupnim izložbama *novoga nizozemskog realističkog slikarstva*⁵ u Groningenu, Larenu, Assenu i Amsterdamu. Na tom se putu Mikovićeva mladenačka fascinacija flamanskim i baroknim slikarstvom razvila do razine izravnog dijaloga s prošlošću, ne bi li odabrana likovna djela bila ugrađena u postmoderni slikarski prostor te u suvremenom kontekstu odzvanjala tradicijom mijenjajući pritom njezino značenje. Time kao da je htio pokazati da umjetnost može nastati iz umjetnosti, a povezujući svoju intelektualnu energiju s jednom već iscrpljenom kulturom hranio ju je, oživljavao, podizao i osuvremenjivao novom snagom i neumornom pokretljivošću intuicije i plastičnosti, iz čega proizlazi da je *hommage* Rembrandtu, Janu van Eycku, Rogieru van der Weydenu i drugim neskrivenim uzorima naslikao jezikom metaumjetnosti, u cilju da svojim djelima progovori o prirodi umjetnosti, umjetničkom radu, svijetu umjetnosti i kulturi u kojoj ona nastaje⁶, što mu je dopustilo misliti tuđim mislima – citatom – no nikad doslovnim, jer konceptom naknadnosti Miković je svojim kompozicijama parafrazirao originale kako bi pokazao da oni u sadašnjosti uvijek imaju i tragove prošlosti i budućnosti.

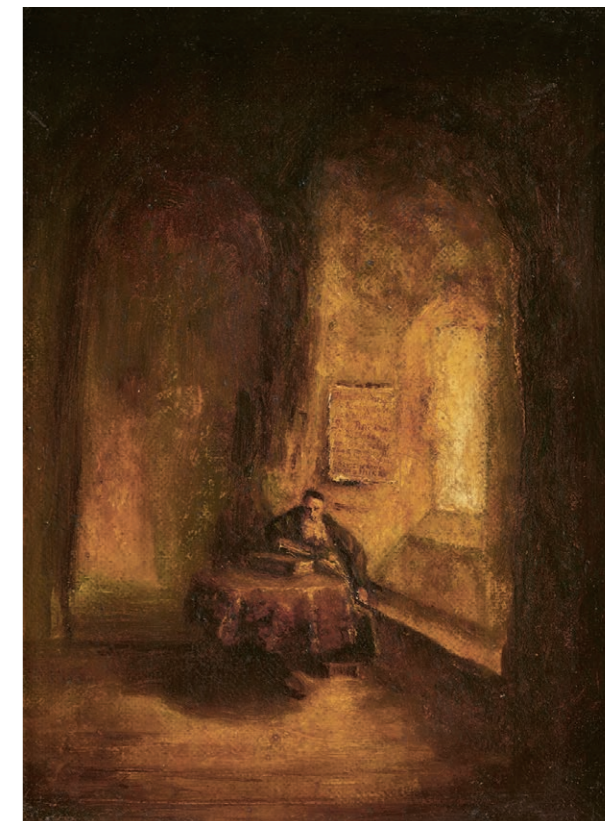
Trompe l'œil kao jeka baroknih perspektiva

Budući da „revizijom“ umjetnosti Miković nikad nije doveo u pitanje klasični red, u njegovu slikarstvu nema dekadencije ili anarhije – u maniri van Eyckova slavnog zrcala on je kistom odjekivao ostavštinu starih majstora kako bi svoje slike proširio akustičkim prostorom koji im je nedostajao. Umnažajući taj postupak ostvario je multipolarnost baroknih perspektiva, što je bio jedan od odgovora novoga nizozemskog realističkog slikarstva na modernističke pokrete 20. stoljeća, osobito na apstraktni ekspresionizam, jer za razliku od umjetničkog automatizma, kojim su se gestualne aktivnosti u Americi i Europi provodile bez razumske kontrole, nizozemski je povratak tradiciji zahtijevao „šareni kaleidoskop

⁵ O novome nizozemskom realističkom slikarstvu u: *The Refined Image: Aspects of Dutch New Realist Painting*, Gallery Lieve Hemel Editions, Amsterdam, 1985; o suvremenoj nizozemskoj mrtvoj prirodi u: *Contemporary Dutch Still Lifes*, Alexander F. Milliken Inc, New York, 1986.

⁶ Više o metaumjetnosti u: Šuvaković, Miško, *Pojmovnik suvremene likovne umjetnosti*, Horetzky, Zagreb, i Vlees & Beton, Ghent, 2005, str. 371.

⁷ Kao što bi rekao Stefan Zweig u *Jučerašnjem svijetu*, Otokar Keršovani, Rijeka, 1966, str. 286.



8. Bez naziva (po Rembrandtu)
Untitled (after Rembrandt), 1974.

vještine“⁷, odnosno tehniku koja je jedino stoljetnom vježbom mogla doseći savršenstvo začeto otkrićem uljanih boja, bez kojih u gotički naturalizam ne bi bilo moguće unijeti za flamansko slikarstvo karakterističan visoki realizam. Posegnuвши za temeljima europskog slikarstva, Miković je tako prihvatio i neumoljivo slikarsko načelo – da prema sebi bude strog u svakom pogledu – te je ubrzo postao poznat po visoko realističkim slikama u tehnici *trompe l'œil*⁸, čija sugestija treće dimenzije izdaleka pojačava dojam da su predmeti, ljudi ili prostori stvarni, iako izbliza postaje jasno da je ipak riječ o slici. Prijevera je to bez imalo prijetvornosti, jer unatoč alkemiji Mikovićevih varki odabir svakoga visoko realističkog

⁸ Naziv slikarske tehnike kovanica je Louis-Léopolda Boillyja; u doslovnom prijevodu s francuskoga: prijevara oka. Na drugim jezicima najčešće: optička iluzija. Tehnika je dosegla vrhunac u 17. stoljeću, a jednako je prisutna na štafelajnim slikama kao i na freskama. Najpoznatija je kao sastavni dio barokne arhitekture, u čijem zatvorenom prostoru stvara iluziju nebeskog prostranstva. Primjeri se kreću od antičkog interijera do suvremene ulične umjetnosti.



29. Bez naziva (po Tiepolu)
Untitled (after Tiepolo), 1992.



31. Bez naziva (po Terbrugghenu)
Untitled (after Terbrugghen), 1994.

slikara tehnička je dotjeranost i opsežna posvećenost detaljima koji ga povezuju s iluzijom kao sinonimom nizozemskog slikarstva od sedamnaestog stoljeća pa sve do danas. Nije, stoga, neobično da je upravo tehničko majstorstvo Mikoviću omogućilo da na svojim platnima prikrije i najmanji trag dürerovske melankolije, poznate kao strašne borbe velikih očekivanja i umjetnikove prekomjerne paralizirajuće introspekcije⁹, čime je ostvario možda najveći od svih umjetničkih privida: snažan osjećaj neopisive lakoće stvaranja.

Melankolična lutka i kišobran bez stola za seciranje

Osim što je Miković usmjeravao dio perspektive prema van kako bi promatrač posegnuo za naslikanim predmetima uvjeren da ih može dotaknuti, trodimenzionalnost njegovih formi analogna je kontrapunktu¹⁰ u kojemu se zasebne melodijske linije ravnopravno kreću u svim smjerovima prateći Hegelovu misao da život i umjetnost ne sjedinjuju samo raznolikosti, već i krajnje suprotnosti. Njihova se borba, stoga, poput dijalektike nadrealističke poetike¹¹ odvija i na Mikovićevim platnima kad umjetnik uprizoruje „slučajne“ susrete naizgled neovisnih, a opet blisko povezanih motiva, čiji se interesi grubo sudaraju dovodeći ponekad i do apsurdnih situacija, no svjetlost je i tada u harmoniji s naslikanim predmetima pa ih umjetnik pomiruje u zajedničkoj kompoziciji. U tom je procesu *chiaroscuro* i bojom postigao zapanjujuću jasnoću forme, a lautrémontovskim spajanjem nespojivoga preobrazio figurativno slikarstvo u magični realizam, što je vidljivo na slikama *Tennessee, spavaš li?* (1985.), *Lutkica* (1983.) i *Pazi! Moglo bi kišiti, uzmi kišobran* (1980.), ali i drugim slikama u čijem su prostoru suprotstavljeni: citati prošlih vremena, kljasta lutka kao simbol krhkosti ljudskog bića, kineska violina, draperija u potrazi za infinitezimalnim proračunom, novine s naslovima posvećenima samome sebi, prazan okvir, kišobran bez stola za seciranje... A da bi spomenuti motivi međusobno još bolje korespondirali, Miković ih je dodatno učvrstio špagom te kompozicijsku dramu ponekad razriješio čak i oružjem kao da jedino pucanj može ušutkati svaku komunikaciju i tako mrtvoj prirodi vratiti unutarnji mir.

¹¹ Riječ je o Lautréamontovim književnim usporedbama nečuvane smjelosti, od kojih je sljedeća uzeta kao osnovni predložak nadrealističke poetike: „... kao slučajaj susret šivaćeg stroja i kišobrana na stolu za seciranje.“, vidi u: *Maldoror*, Šareni dućan, Koprivnica, 2012, str. 150 i 216.

⁹ Više o tomu u: Noble, Bonnie, *Dürer, Melencolia*, mrežni izvor: khanacademy.org, pregledano 4. rujna 2023.
¹⁰ Iz fotografije i programa s recitala *Zvuci gitare* poznato je da je René Miković bio muzički obrazovan te je u duetu s istaknutim hrvatskim gitaristom Darkom Petrinjakom 1973. u ciklusu *Mladi za mlade* nastupao za Muzičku omladinu Zagreb.

Halucinantno optičko djelovanje¹²

Premda Mikovićeve slike sjaje estetikom tišine pronalazeći u nijemoj lutki jedinog svjedoka svojih otmjenih melankolija, u njima ipak postoje tragovi ljudskog djelovanja jer umjetnik je za sobom ostavio kvačice, olovku, karton, zgužvani papir, lokot, rupu na zidu i druge predmete neophodne mu za stvaranje. Pritom je cijeli Mikovićev zreli opus proizišao iz slikarova poigravanja percepcijom kako bi nevidljivo učinio vidljivim, što je možda najprimjetnije na dvama zagonetnim platnima naslovljenima *Dvije slike*, od kojih je na prvoj u cijelosti draperijom prekrpio slikarsko platno sugerirajući obriše *Apstraktne glave*¹³ koja možda to i nije, no utvrđivanje motiva koliko je bitno nebitno je sve dok svoje djelo pretvara u poligon za igru tradicionalnoga i suvremenoga, svjetla i tame, vidljivoga i nevidljivoga, emocionalnoga i racionalnoga, stvarnosti i mašte, istine i zablude... pretvarajući harmoniju i kontraste u nešto sasvim novo i jedinstveno, čak i kad na drugoj od *Dviju slika* razgrće draperiju kako bi pred praznim platnom poput mađioničara razotkrio svoj trik, odlučan pokazati da su njegovi prividi potekli iz vizije svijeta oblikovane srazom i sintezom maštovitosti i rigorozne discipline. Mnogima će se, stoga, naslikani svijet Renée Mikovića učiniti kao uvjerljiva, a time i pomalo fotografska reprodukcija stvarnosti, i to „obične“ – jednostavne i svakidašnje – stvarnosti koju je on prikazivao vješto i nadahnuo. U njegovu prilaženju predmetu sadržajni aspekt često je manje ili više skriven, bilo da je riječ o objektu koji naizgled slučajno negdje stoji ili leži, ili o sastavljenoj mrtvoj prirodi: izbor je uvijek dovoljno intrigantan da bi se iza supstancijalne stvarnosti naslućivalo određeno značenje, a interpretacija bila prepuštena oku promatrača. Pritom se u cijelom Mikovićevu opusu osjeća ljudska prisutnost, čak i onda kad je nema, stoga njegova platna zrače tihom slutnjom svaki put kad mu kao preko ramena virimo u atelijer tražeći u njemu tragove umjetnikovih melankolija, jer koliko god se činilo da su Mikovićevi objekti vjerni prirodi, on umjetnošću dočarava svijet prožet iluzijom kako bi njegovo djelo u konačnici ostvarilo halucinantno optičko djelovanje.

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¹² U drugoj polovici podnaslova odabrani su, korišteni, stilski i sadržajno prilagođeni te originalno nadopunjeni dijelovi teksta doc. Everta Muscha o djelu njegova studenta Renée Mikovića, koji je 1980. napisao za Galeriju Musch.

¹³ Aleksej Javljski ekspresionistički je slikar koji je živio i radio u Rusiji, Njemačkoj i Švicarskoj. Premda je pripadao avangardnim grupama *Plavi jahuč*

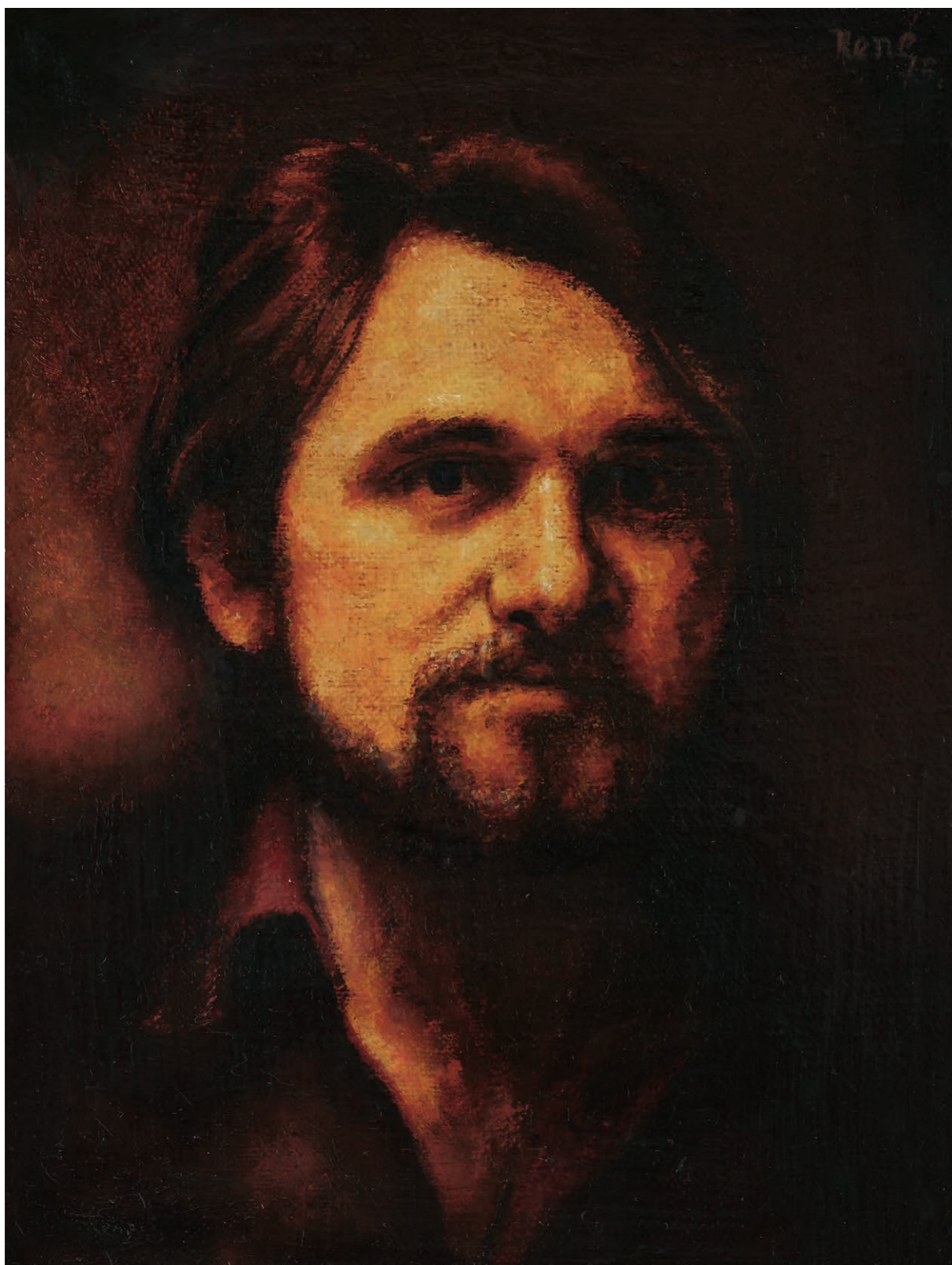


Hommage à Jan van Eyck, 1981.
ulje na drvu / oil on wood, 110 x 75 cm



Trompe l'œil, 1979.
ulje na drvu / oil on wood, 115 x 75 cm

i *Plava četvorka*, ne može ga se identificirati ni s jednim stilskim pokretom. Poznat je po slikarskim serijama koje su brojale po nekoliko stotina radova. Najpoznatije su *Apstraktne glave* (1918. – 1935.), od kojih se pojedinačne slike nalaze u različitim zbirkama diljem svijeta.



17. Ivan Maruna, 1975.



15. Tatjana Carev – Maruna, 1975.

René Miković, a visual artist from Zagreb, who studied, lived, and worked in the Netherlands, seems to have been forgotten after his untimely death, only to be rediscovered more than a quarter of a century later. And yet, at this point in time when virtually all themes have been thoroughly explored in countless ways, it is rare to find a body of work whose relevance stands the test of time, especially when such works are relatively obscure, escaping the attention of both the general public and the professionals whose daily endeavours involve the study and assessment of Croatian art. It calls for an original insight and a unique interpretation, thus embodying the elusive ideal of contemporary researchers and institutions responsible for the protection, preservation and promotion of national cultural heritage. René Miković's first solo exhibition at the Josip Račić Gallery, which posthumously presents his previously entirely unexplored body of work, thus becomes a lasting contribution to Croatian culture and art, and can serve as a starting point for future interpretations of Miković's modest yet exceptionally fascinating and powerful oeuvre.

Bird as a Metaphor for Transience

Miković graduated from the School of Applied Arts in Zagreb in 1975, so most of his early artworks are in the possession of his friends in Zagreb, which greatly contributed to their availability and preservation.¹ In stark contrast, the entire body of the artist's mature work was created abroad, and after his passing, many of these paintings have gone missing. However, some have ended up on the international art market, and information about them can be obtained through reproductions. Of the two paintings that were donated to the National Museum of Modern Art, *Dead Bird* (1978) was presented to the Zagreb audience as part of the *Exploitation of Death*² exhibition in 2021. It was incorporated into a display of around sixty works by the most prominent Croatian visual artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Until then, Miković was entirely unknown to the domestic audience, so it is not surprising that the painting immediately attracted attention, especially because it is one of those that distinctly radiate the artist's inner signature – that is, a melancholic awareness of transience. But dying in Miković's canvases is not the same as in a dying city, aptly described by Thomas Mann in *Death in Venice*, where death even has a poetic meaning symbolising the decay of the whole world³: here, there is no communication and exploration, because with still lifes painters withdraw from the macrocosm into the intimacy of the microcosm. Therefore, Miković's canvases are no less imbued with detachment, alienation, and solitude as when the painter, with a palette of earthy colours, wings deeply immersed in the dream of artistic immortality, turns to the motif of a dead bird as a metaphor for his own transience measured in golden ratio.

Hommage to Rembrandt and Flemish Art

It is evident from the *Dead Bird* that Miković had been inspired by Rembrandt and Flemish painting from a very young age. Therefore, in 1976, he went to his spiritual homeland, where he completed his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, *Academie Minerva* in Groningen, and then pursued further education in the postgraduate program at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht. He

1 They are mostly an *hommage* to Rembrandt and portraits of friends, acquaintances, and prominent Croatian artists, so Sanja Pilić, Ivan Maruna and Darko Petrinjak, all artists or cultural professionals, loaned the paintings for the exhibition at the Josip Račić Gallery.

2 Conceived by art historian Dajana Vlaisavljević.

3 For more see: Spengler, Oswald, *Propast Zapada – Obris jedne morfologije svjetske povijesti, Svezak prvi – Oblik i zbiljnost*, Demetra, Zagreb, 1998.

thus became one of the Croatian artists who contributed to their new environment as much as they could immediately receive from it,⁴ which encouraged the blending of cultures and transformed him from a Croatian painter into a protagonist of contemporary *Dutch* art. He undoubtedly benefited greatly, because in this new and inspiring environment, surrounded by “kindred spirits,” his own free spirit finally found its full expression, but also a binding aegis when he exhibited in group exhibitions of *Dutch new realist painting*⁵ in Groningen, Laren, Assen, and Amsterdam. On this journey, Miković's youthful fascination with Flemish and Baroque painting evolved to the point of engaging in a direct conversation with the past, in order to incorporate the selected artworks into the postmodern painterly space for them to resonate with tradition in a contemporary context, thereby altering their meaning. It was as if he wanted to demonstrate that art could emerge from art itself. By connecting his intellectual energy with a culture that had already been exhausted, he nourished it, revived it, raised it up, and modernised it with renewed strength and the unwavering agility of intuition and plasticity. From this, it can be deduced that Miković painted an *hommage* to Rembrandt, Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, and other undisguised influences, in the language of meta-art, thus enabling his works to speak about the nature of art, artistic work, the world of art, and the culture in which they were created.⁶ This allowed him to think with the thoughts of others – using quotation – albeit never in a literal sense. Through the concept of retrospectiveness, Miković paraphrased the originals in his compositions to demonstrate that they always carry traces of both the past and the future in the present.

Trompe l'oeil as an Echo of Baroque Perspectives

Since Miković never questioned the classical order with his “revision” of art, there is no decadence or anarchy in his painting – in the manner of van Eyck's famous mirror, he echoed the legacy of the old masters with his paintbrush in order to expand his paintings with the acoustic space they lacked. By multiplying this process, he achieved the multipolarity of baroque perspectives, which was one of the responses of Dutch new realist

4 Analogous to, for example, Radovan Ivšić, who, as an already established artist, went to France and became a member of Breton's Surrealist movement, for more information on which, please refer to: Machiedo, Višnja, *Francuski nadrealizam – knjiga prva*, Konzor, Zagreb, 2002, p. 446.

5 For more on Dutch new realist painting, see: *The Refined Image: Aspects of Dutch New Realist Painting*, Gallery Lieve Hemel Editions, Amsterdam, 1985;



21. Holandez
Dutchman, 1976.

painting to the modernist movements of the 20th century, especially to Abstract Expressionism, because unlike its artistic automatism, by which gestural activities in America and Europe were carried out without rational control, Dutch return to tradition required a “colourful kaleidoscope of skill”⁷, that is, a technique that necessitated centuries of practice to reach the perfection conceived by the discovery of oil paints, without which it

for more on contemporary Dutch still lifes, see: *Contemporary Dutch Still Lifes*, Alexander F. Milliken Inc, New York, 1986.

6 For more on meta-art, see: Šuvaković, Miško, *Pojmovnik suvremene likovne umjetnosti*, Horetzky, Zagreb, and Vlees & Beton, Ghent, 2005, p. 371.

7 As Stefan Zweig would say in *Jučerašnji svijet*, Otokar Keršovani, Rijeka, 1966, p. 286.



1. Bez naziva
Untitled, 1971.

would not have been possible to introduce high realism, typical of Flemish painting, into Gothic naturalism. By delving into the foundations of European painting, Miković thus embraced an uncompromising painterly principle – to be strict with himself in every aspect – and he soon became known for his highly realistic paintings in the *trompe l'oeil*⁸ technique, whose suggestion of the third dimension from a distance intensifies the impression that we are looking at real objects, people or spaces, although it becomes clear up close that they are indeed paintings. It is a deception without any pretence because, despite the alchemy of Miković's tricks, the choice of every high realist painter involves technical refinement and meticulous attention to details, linking him to illusion as a synonym for Dutch painting from the seventeenth century to the present day. It is, therefore, not unusual that Miković's technical mastery allowed him to conceal

8 The name of the painting technique was coined by Louis-Léopold Boilly; in a literal translation from French: to deceive the eye. In other languages, it is most commonly referred to as: an optical illusion. This technique reached its peak in the 17th century and is equally present in easel paintings as well as frescoes. It is most renowned as an integral part of baroque architecture, where within enclosed spaces, it creates the illusion of celestial expanses. Examples range from ancient interiors to contemporary street art.

9 For more see: Noble, Bonnie, *Dürer, Melencolia*, web source: www.khan-academy.org, accessed 4 September 2023.

even the slightest trace of Dürerian melancholy in his canvases, also known as the intense battle of high expectations and the artist's excessive paralyzing introspection⁹, whereby he achieved perhaps the greatest of all artistic illusions: a strong sense of the unbearable lightness of creation.

Melancholic Doll and an Umbrella Without an Operating Table

Apart from directing a part of the perspective outward, so that the observer reaches for the painted objects, convinced that they can touch them, Miković's three-dimensionality of forms is analogous to counterpoint¹⁰ in which separate melodic lines move equally in all directions, following Hegel's idea that life and art unite not only diversities but also extreme opposites. Their struggle, therefore, like the dialectics of surrealist poetics,¹¹ also unfolds on Miković's canvases when the artist stages "random" encounters of seemingly independent yet closely related motifs, whose interests collide haphazardly, sometimes leading to absurd situations. Nevertheless, the light is in harmony with the painted objects even then, as the artist reconciles them in a common composition. In this process, using *chiaroscuro* and colour, he achieved a stunning clarity of form, and by merging the incompatible in a Lautréamontian manner, he transformed figurative painting into magical realism. This is evident in paintings like *Tennessee, do you sleep?* (1985), *Dolly* (1983), and *Watch Out! Might rain, take the umbrella* (1980), as well as in other works in the space of which he juxtaposes: quotes from bygone times, maimed doll as a symbol of human fragility, a Chinese violin, drapery in search of the infinitesimal calculation, newspapers with headlines dedicated to him, an empty frame, an umbrella without an operating table... To ensure that these motifs corresponded even better with each other, Miković further secured them with string, and at times, he even resorted to weapons to resolve compositional drama, as if only a gunshot could silence every form of communication and thus restore inner peace to the still life.

10 From photographs and the program of the recital *Sounds of the Guitar*, it is known that René Miković had a musical education, and in 1973, he performed in a duet with the prominent Croatian guitarist Darko Petrinjak as part of the *Young for the Young* series for the Zagreb Musical Youth.

11 These are Lautréamont's literary comparisons of unprecedented audacity, from which the following has been taken as the primary template of surrealist poetics: "...as a chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table.", see in: Maldoror, Šareni dućan, Koprivnica, 2012, pp. 150 and 216.

Hallucinatory Optical Effect¹²

Although Miković's paintings shine with the aesthetics of silence, finding in the mute doll the sole witness to his refined melancholies, traces of human activity still exist within them because the artist has left behind hooks, a pencil, cardboard, crumpled paper, a padlock, a hole in the wall, and other objects necessary for his creation. In this process, Miković's entire mature body of work emerged from the painter's manipulation of perception to make the invisible visible, which is perhaps most noticeable in two enigmatic canvases titled *Two Paintings*. In the first of these, he entirely covered the canvas with drapery, suggesting the outlines of an *Abstract Head*¹³ that may or may not be there. However, the determination of the motif's importance is as irrelevant as it is significant, as long as it transforms his work into a playground for the interplay of the traditional and the contemporary, light and darkness, the visible and the invisible, the emotional and the rational, reality and imagination, truth and delusion... transforming the harmony and contrasts into something entirely new and unique, even when, in the second of the *Two Paintings*, he unveils the drapery in front of an empty canvas like a magician revealing his trick, determined to show that his illusions originated from a vision of the world shaped by the juxtaposition and synthesis of imagination and rigorous discipline. To many, therefore, René Miković's painted world may appear as a convincing, and thus somewhat of a photographic reproduction of reality, moreover, an "ordinary" – simple and mundane – reality that he depicted skilfully and with inspiration. In his approach to the subject, the content aspect is often more or less concealed, whether it is an object that seemingly stands or lies somewhere by chance, or is a staged still life: the choice is always intri-

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Mrežni izvor / Online source

Noble, Bonnie, *Dürer, Melancolia*, Khan Academy Website, khanacademy.org, 4. 9. 2023.

12 Sections of the text by Evert Musch about the work of his student René Miković were selected in the second half of the subtitle, adapted in terms of style and content, and creatively supplemented. This text was originally written in 1980 for the Musch Gallery.

13 Alexei Jawlensky was an expressionist painter who lived and worked in Russia, Germany, and Switzerland. Although he was a part of the avant-

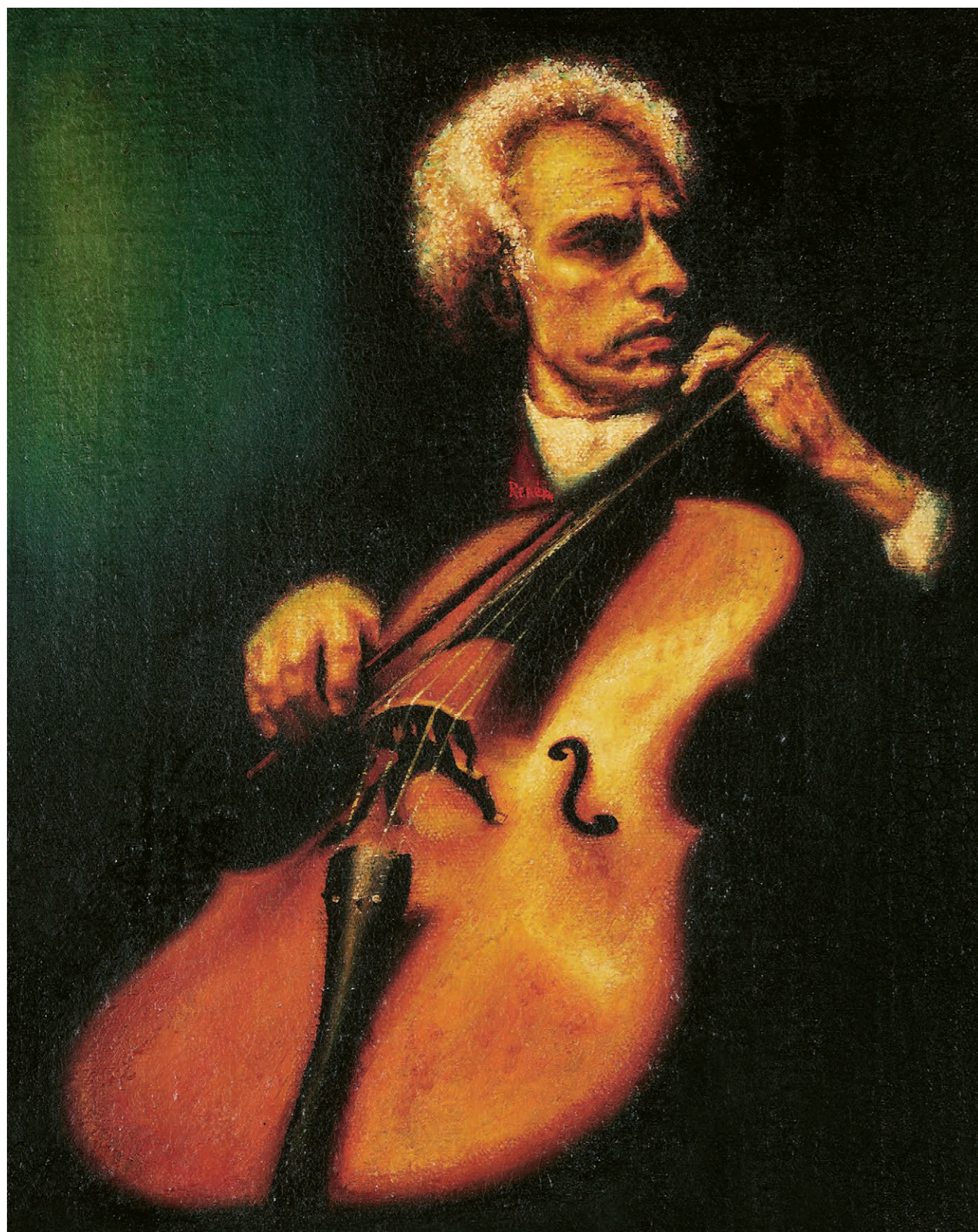


24. Mrtva priroda
Still Life, 1978.

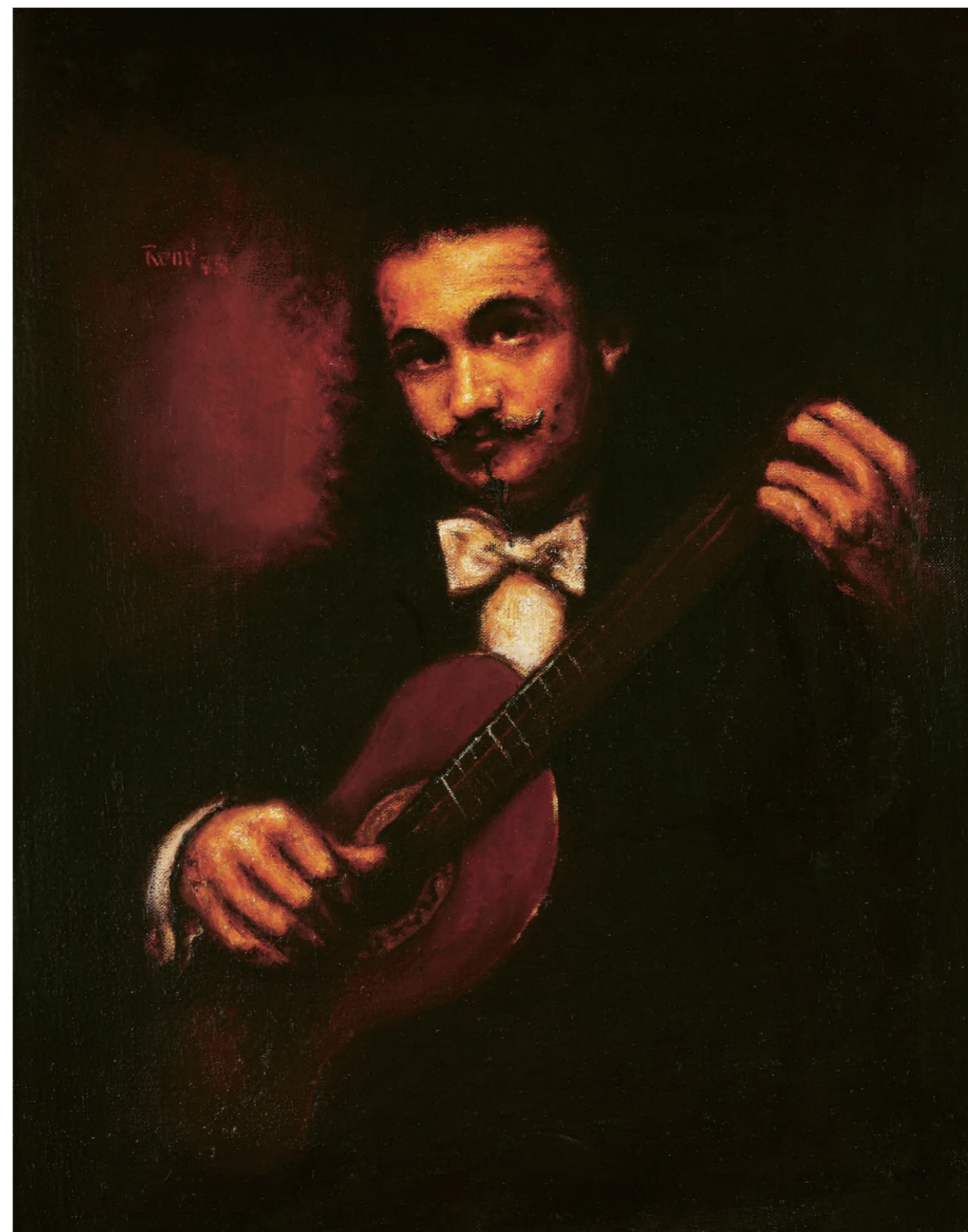
guing enough to allow a certain meaning to be sensed behind the substantial reality, leaving the interpretation to the observer's eye. At the same time, throughout Miković's entire body of work, there is a sense of human presence, even when it's absent. Therefore, his canvases exude a quiet suggestion every time we peer into his studio over his shoulder, searching for traces of the artist's melancholies. No matter how faithful Miković's objects may seem to nature, he uses art to evoke a world imbued with illusion, ultimately achieving a hallucinatory optical effect in his work.

Mirna Rudan Lisak, PhD

garde groups the Blue Rider and the Blue Four, he cannot be identified with any single artistic movement. He is known for his painting series, some of which comprised hundreds of works. The most famous among them are the *Abstract Heads* (1918 – 1935), with individual paintings found in various collections around the world.



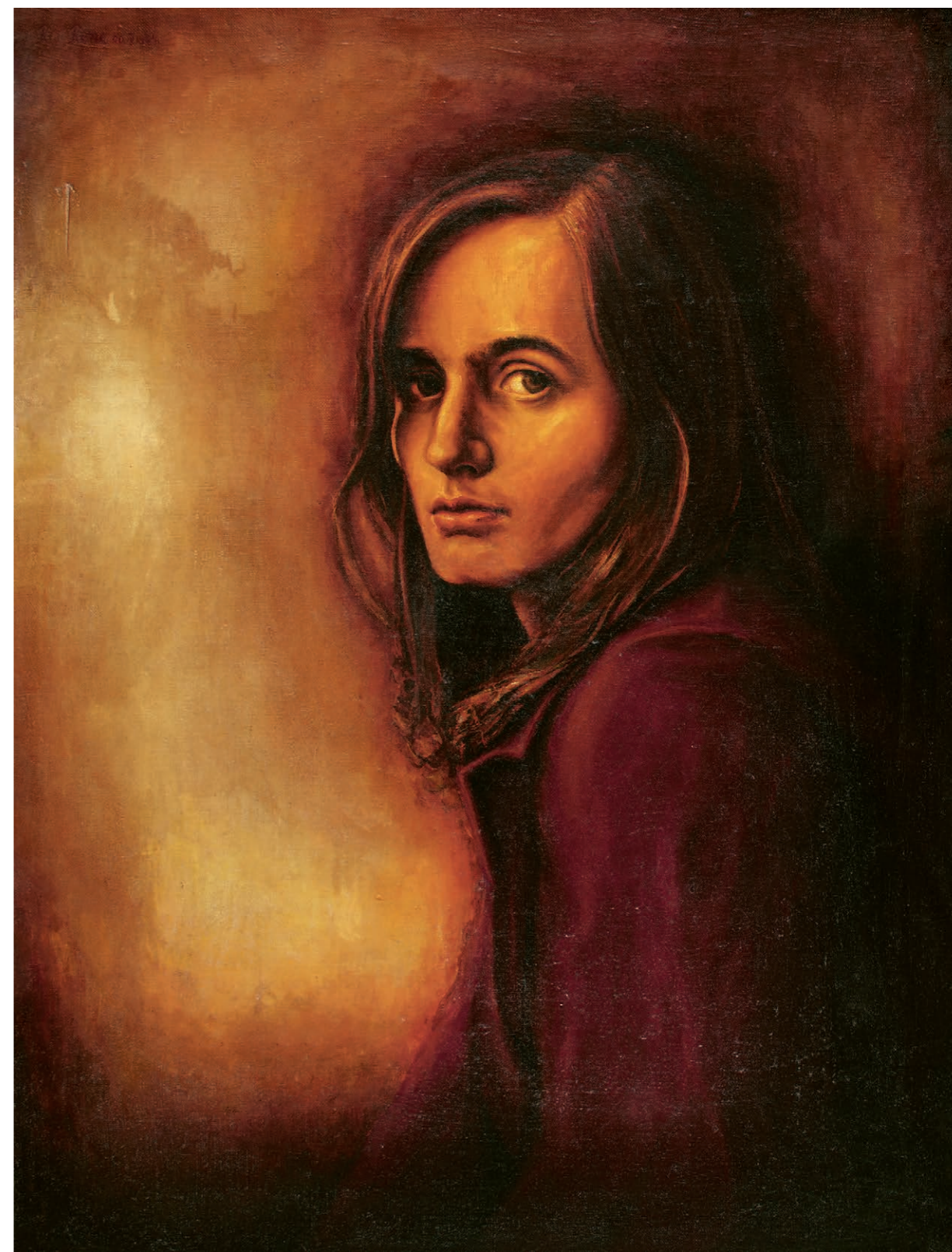
6. Bez naziva
Untitled, 1974.



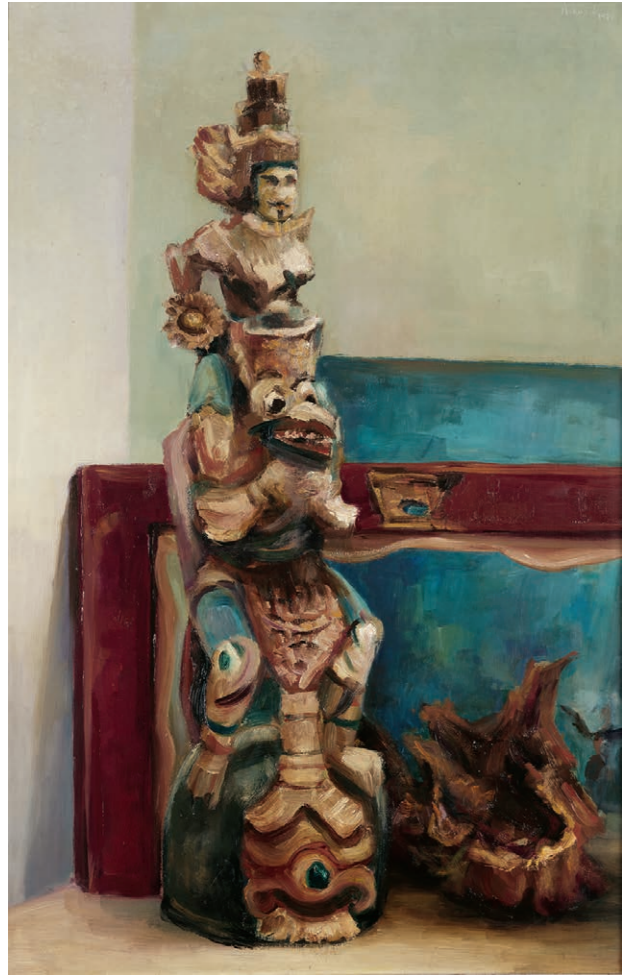
10. Darko Petrinjak, 1975.



7. Autoportret
Selfportrait, 1974.



9. Sanja Pilić, 1974.



25. Indonezijska skulptura s otoka Bali
Indonesian Sculpture From the Island of Bali, 1978.



26. Mrtva priroda
Still Life, 1978.



28. Lutka
Doll, 1990.



Tennessee, spavaš li?
Tennessee, do you sleep?, 1985.
ulje na drvu / oil on wood, 48 x 48 cm



Pazi! Moglo bi kišiti, uzmi kišobran
Watch out! Might rain, take the umbrella, 1980.
ulje na drvu / oil on wood, 170 x 120 cm



René Miković (Zagreb, 1954. – Groningen, 1996.) hrvatski je likovni umjetnik koji je studirao, živio i radio u Nizozemskoj. Od 1970. do 1975. pohađao je Školu primijenjenih umjetnosti u Zagrebu – Odsjek grafičkih tehnika na Odjelu plošnog oblikovanja, a 1976. odlazi u inozemstvo te upisuje The Heatherley School of Art u Londonu (Velika Britanija). Iste godine pod mentorstvom Kurta Löba pohađa Ljetni seminar za slikarstvo na Međunarodnoj akademiji likovnih umjetnosti u Niederbippu (Švicarska), no kako je od najranije mladosti nadahnut Rembrandtom i flamanskim slikarstvom, potkraj godine napušta London te odlazi u svoju duhovnu domovinu, Nizozemsku, gdje u razdoblju od 1976. do 1979. pod mentorstvom doc. Everta Muscha završava Akademiju likovnih umjetnosti *Academie Minerva* u Groningenu, a potom se u razdoblju od 1979. do 1981. usavršava pod mentorstvom prof. Koa Sarneela na poslijediplomskom studiju Akademije Jan van Eyck u Maastrichtu. Djela izlaže u Picturi (Groningen, 1979.), Singermuseumu (Laren, 1979.), De Kolk (Assen, 1979.), Galeriji *Dry Koningin* (Amsterdam, 1979.) Galeriji *Musch* (Anloo, 1980.) i Galeriji *Lieve Hemel* (Amsterdam, 1986.). Osobitost Mikovićeve umjetnosti proizlazi iz slikarske tehnike *trompe l'œil* kojom dočarava svijet u kojemu iluzija igra važnu ulogu kako bi njegova platna u konačnici ostvarila halucinantno optičko djelovanje.

René Miković (Zagreb, 1954 – Groningen, 1996) was a Croatian visual artist who studied, lived, and worked in the Netherlands. From 1970 to 1975, he attended the School of Applied Arts in Zagreb (Printmaking Department). In 1976, he went abroad and enrolled in the Heatherley School of Fine Art in London, United Kingdom. That same year, under the mentorship of Kurt Löb, he attended a Summer Painting Seminar at the International Academy of Fine Arts in Niederbipp, Switzerland. However, as he had been inspired by Rembrandt and Flemish painting from his earliest youth, he left London at the end of the year and went to his spiritual homeland, the Netherlands, where, from 1976 to 1979, under the guidance of Evert Musch, he completed his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts "Academie Minerva" in Groningen, the Netherlands. Subsequently, from 1979 to 1981, he pursued further studies under the mentorship of Professor Ko Sarneel in the postgraduate program at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, the Netherlands. He exhibited his works at Pictura (Groningen, 1979), Singermuseum (Laren, 1979), De Kolk (Assen, 1979), Galerie Dry Koningin (Amsterdam, 1979), Galerie Musch (Anloo, 1980), and Galerie Lieve Hemel (Amsterdam, 1986). The uniqueness of Miković's art arises from the *trompe l'oeil* painting technique he employs to create a world where illusion plays a significant role, ultimately achieving a hallucinatory optical effect on his canvases.



Groningen, 1993.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Bez naziva
Untitled, 1971.
ulje na papiru
oil on paper
33 x 26 cm | 9. Sanja Pilić, 1974.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
77 x 60 cm | 18. Ivan Maruna, 1975.
ulje na lesonitu
oil on hardboard
24 x 17 cm | 26. Mrtva priroda
Still Life, 1978.
ulje na lesonitu
oil on hardboard
72 x 57 cm |
| 2. Bez naziva
Untitled, 1972.
ulje na kartonu
oil on cardboard
16 x 11 cm | 10. Darko Petrinjak, 1975.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
59 x 47 cm | 19. Mato Ergović, 1975.
ulje na dasci
oil on board
40 x 30 cm | 27. Plakat izložbe
Exhibition poster, 1986.
print, 97 x 65 cm |
| 3. Bez naziva
Untitled, 1973.
ulje na lesonitu
oil on hardboard
31 x 25 cm | 11. René Midnight
Circus, 1975.
ulje na koži
oil on skin
99 x 70 cm | 20. Pero Kvrđić, 1975.
ulje na dasci
oil on board
51 x 35 cm | 28. Lutka
Doll, 1990.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
55 x 70 cm |
| 4. Bez naziva
Untitled, 1973.
ulje na lesonitu
oil on hardboard
35 x 25 cm | 12. Autoportret
Selfportrait, 1975.
ugljen na papiru
charcoal on paper
17,5 x 14 cm | 21. Holandez
Dutchman, 1976.
ugljen na papiru
charcoal on paper
48 x 32 cm | 29. Bez naziva
(po Tiepolu)
Untitled
(after Tiepolo), 1992.
ulje na papiru
oil on paper
14 x 13 cm |
| 5. Josip Sever, 1973.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
29 x 23 cm | 13. Bogoslav Erny, 1975.
ulje na dasci
oil on board
25 x 18 cm | 22. Pero Kvrđić kao Klarin
Pero Kvrđić as Klarin
1976.
ugljen na papiru
charcoal on paper
21 x 16 cm | 30. Bez naziva (markice)
Untitled (postmarks)
1992.
ulje na papiru
oil on paper
20 x 28 cm |
| 6. Bez naziva
Untitled, 1974.
ulje na lesonitu
oil on hardboard
50 x 40 cm | 14. Darko Petrinjak, 1975.
ulje na dasci
oil on board
36 x 25 cm | 23. Mrtva ptica
Dead Bird, 1978.
ulje na lesonitu
oil on hardboard
45 x 30 cm | 31. Bez naziva
(po Terbrugghenu)
Untitled (after
Terbrugghen), 1994.
ulje na papiru
oil on paper
23 x 18 cm |
| 7. Autoportret
Selfportrait, 1974.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
54 x 47 cm | 15. Tatjana Carev –
Maruna, 1975.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
16 x 11 cm | 24. Mrtva priroda
Still Life, 1978.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
39 x 45 cm | 32. Bez naziva
Untitled, 1994.
ulje na šperploči
oil on hardboard
29 x 29 cm |
| 8. Bez naziva
(po Rembrandtu)
Untitled (after
Rembrandt), 1974.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
34 x 26 cm | 16. Tatjana Carev –
Maruna, 1975.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
24,5 x 19,5 cm | 25. Indonezijska skulptura
s otoka Bali
Indonesian Sculpture
From the Island
of Bali, 1978.
ulje na lesonitu
oil on hardboard
78 x 50 cm | |
| | 17. Ivan Maruna, 1975.
ulje na platnu
oil on canvas
27 x 20 cm | | |

Nizozemsko razdoblje (1976. – 1996.) / Dutch period (1976 – 1996)
video, koncept i animacija / video, concept and animation: Mirna Rudan Lisak

vlasništvo / courtesy of:

Ivan Maruna: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28

Darko Petrinjak: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 23, 24

Sanja Pilić: 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32

IZLOŽBA / EXHIBITION

RENÉ MIKOVIĆ

Halucinantne melankolije
Hallucinatory Melancholies

Galerija Josip Račić – Nacionalni muzej moderne umjetnosti
Josip Račić Gallery – National Museum of Modern Art
Margaretska 3, Zagreb

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Contemporary Dutch Realist Painting

Zappeion Hall, Athens



Chinese Violin

Exhibition on the Occasion of the Netherlands Economic Mission to Greece

March 18-23, 1986

RENE MIKOVIC

Courtesy of Gallery Lieve Hemel, Amsterdam