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МУЗЕЈ ГРАДА  
НОВОГ САДА

CITY MUSEUM  
OF NOVI SAD

# **BRANKA JANKOVIĆ KNEŽEVIĆ**

*Portreti / Portraits*



Branka Janković Knežević

Fotografija: Branimir Karanović

## **JELENA BANJAC**

### *Branka Janković Knežević. Portreti*

**B**ranka Janković Knežević (Novi Sad, 1950) prisutna je na našoj umetničkoj sceni pune četiri decenije. Uporedo se bavi svim likovnim disciplinama, među kojima je crtež dominantan. Inspiraciju za svoje stvaralaštvo Branka pronalazi u sredini u kojoj radi, društvenim i političkim okolnostima u kojima živi i prirodi koja je okružuje. Mnogobrojna dela iz njenog bogatog opusa zastupljena su u muzejskim zbirkama i privatnim umetničkim kolekcijama u zemlji i inostranstvu. Njena dela se čuvaju u Muzeju grada Novog Sada, Galeriji Matice srpske, Muzeju savremene umetnosti Vojvodine, Muzeju Vojvodine i Rektoratu Univerziteta u Novom Sadu. Dela Branke Janković Knežević nalaze se u zbirkama „Grafičkog kolektiva“, galerije „Haos“, Muzeja Ceptera i „Pen kluba“ u Beogradu, u kolekcijama „Mermer i zvuci“ u Aranđelovcu, Etno-selu u Sirogojnu i Kulturnom centru u Bijeljini. Oko 60 njenih radova čuva se u kolekciji „Kunst und Kultur“ Herberta Konrada (Herbert Konrad) u Beču, dvanaest slika u zbirci Erika Taubera (Eric Tauber) u Švajcarskoj, a brojna dela su u kolekcijama Jan Venemansa (Jan Veenemans) i Ursule Wittmer (Ursula Wittmer) u Švajcarskoj i M. C. Ešer fondaciji (M. C. Escher Foundation) u Holandiji.

Diplomirala je na Fakultetu likovnih umetnosti u Beogradu 1976. godine, na Odseku za slikarstvo u klasi profesora Milana Kečića, i magistrirala na Akademiji umetnosti u Novom Sadu kod profesora Milana Blanuše. Član je više umetničkih udruženja: ULUV-a, ULUS-a,

„Ex libris“ društva u Beogradu i „Grafičkog kolektiva“ u Beogradu. Od 1994. godine je profesor na Akademiji umetnosti u Novom Sadu, na predmetu crtanje sa tehnologijom. Tokom dve decenije uspešnog pedagoškog rada učestvovala je u obrazovanju više generacija novosadskih umetnika.

Tokom svoje bogate stvaralačke karijere radila je i na konzervaciji i restauraciji mnogobrojnih vrednih umetničkih dela od nacionalnog i evropskog kulturnog značaja u Zbirci strane umetnosti Muzeja grada Novog Sada i Spomen-zbirci Pavle Beljanski u Novom Sadu. Od 1976. do 1994. godine bila je zaposlena kao slikar-konzervator u Pokrajinskom zavodu za zaštitu spomenika kulture u Novom Sadu gde je bila angažovana na projektima zaštite kulturnog nasleđa brojnih manastira i crkava.

Aktivno izlaže od 1974. godine na kolektivnim izložbama kod nas i u svetu (Austrija, Španija, Poljska, Grčka, Švajcarska, Holandija, Italija, Mađarska, Turska, Rusija, Francuska, Španija) i učestvuje na brojnim likovnim kolonijama u Srbiji (Ečka, Čačak, Aranđelovac, Lipovac, Palić, Sirogojno). Branka Janković Knežević je više puta nagrađivana za svoj rad u oblasti crteža i grafike u zemlji i inostranstvu.<sup>1</sup> O njenom stvaralaštvu su pis-

<sup>1</sup> Dobitnik je Nagrade za crtež na 7. Novosadskom salonu (1978); Otkupne nagrada Umetničke kolonije Ečka (1984); Nagrade na 33. Prolećnoj izložbi ULUV-a (1984); Nagrade 24. Novosadskog salona (1995); Nagrade likovne kolonije Kovilj (1998) i Nagrade za grafiku na *Inter Balcan forum of Contemporary Miniature Art 2002* u Solunu (2002).

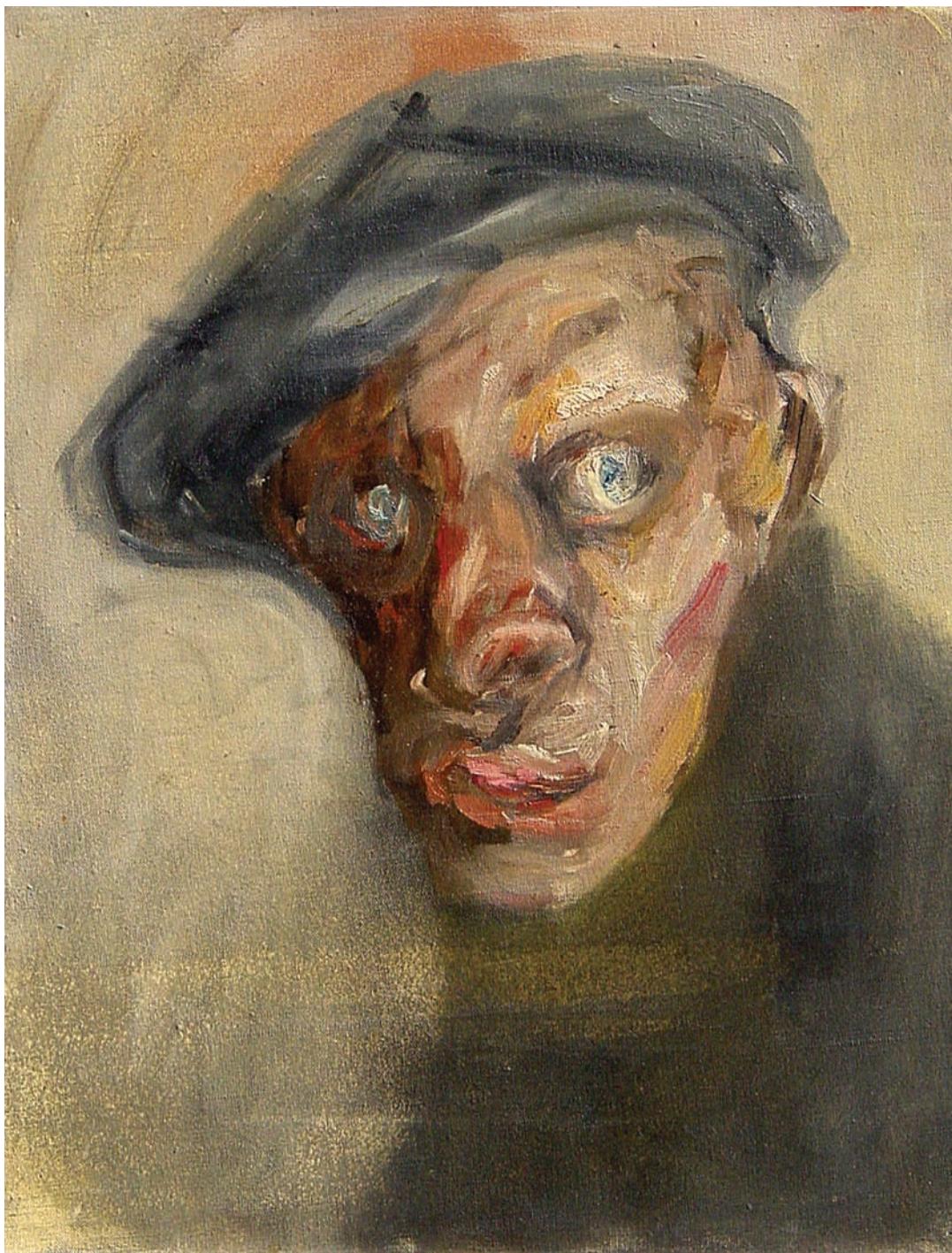
li mnogi ugledni istoričari umetnosti, likovni kritičari i književnici. Svoje stvaralaštvo Branka Janković Knežević je predstavila na 19 samostalnih izložbi:

- 1980.** Galerija SULUV-a, Novi Sad.  
*Izložba crteža Branke Janković*
- 1981.** Galerija „Grafički kolektiv“, Beograd.  
*Branka Janković. Crteži*
- 1985.** Galerija SULUV-a, Novi Sad.  
*Branka Janković-Knežević. Slike*
- 1990.** Galerija „Milenko Atanacković“, Bijeljina.  
*Branka Janković-Knežević. Slike i crteži*  
Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti, Novi Sad,  
*Branka Janković-Knežević. Slike, crteži, reljefi*  
Wangen A. Are (Madonia), Berlin, *Janković Branka – Novi Sad / Knežević Slobodan – Novi Sad / Kollagen, Bilder und Reliefbildner, Press-Papier*
- 1992.** Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti, Novi Sad.  
*Branka Janković-Knežević. Slike, crteži 1975–1992.*
- 1992.** Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti „Olga Petrov“, Pančevo, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Slike i crteži 1975–1992.*
- 1993.** Savremena galerija Zrenjanin  
Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti „Olga Petrov“, Pančevo
- 1996.** Galerija „Pečat“, Novi Sad.  
*Branka Janković-Knežević. Od oblika do znaka*
- 1998.** Galerija „Grafički kolektiv“, Beograd, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Crteži*  
Galerija SULUV-a, Novi Sad, *Za Jozefa K. – crteži*
- 1999.** Galerija SULUV-a, Novi Sad
- 2002.** Savremena galerija Zrenjanin.  
*Branka Janković-Knežević. Slike*
- 2003.** Galerija Ogranka Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti u Novom Sadu, *Branka Janković-Knežević*  
Centar za vizuelnu kulturu „Zlatno oko“, Novi Sad, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Dunav*
- 2004.** Muzej savremene likovne umetnosti Vojvodine, Novi Sad, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Dunav – voda*
- 2008.** Galerija HAOS, Beograd, *Čekajući Godoa*

U umetnosti Branke Janković Knežević jedan od glavnih motiva je portret. Tokom decenija svog stvaralačkog rada, uporedo sa ostalim temama i motivima koji su je pokretali na umetničku akciju, ostvarila je impozantnu galeriju predstava ljudskog lika koja broji na stotine dela. Realizovala ih je u različitim likovnim tehnikama – crtež, ulje na platnu, drvetu ili hartiji, kombinovana tehnika, kolaž, kamenina (glina), često u serijama i ciklusima. Brankini modeli su izabrane ličnosti iz njene okoline i društva, mnogi umetnici, intelektualci, književnici, mitološke ličnosti i likovi iz književnosti. Uvek je reč o ličnostima i likovima koji su u njenom životu imali važnu ulogu, a svojim delima uticali na formiranje autorkinih životnih i umetničkih stavova. O značaju motiva portreta u svom stvaralaštvu Branka Janković Knežević je svojevremeno saopštila: „Još od studentskih dana, uporedo sa osnovnom tematikom, razvijam analitičke studijske portrete. Kasnije ovi intimni, nepretenciozni crteži postaju fundament sveobuhvatnjem pristupa ljudskom liku – individui, ali i glavi kao mikrokosmosu, staništu senzora i duhovnosti. Izbor polazišta – motiva nije slučajan. To su renesansni portreti, zatim ličnosti koje su na određeni način uticale na profilisanje mog, pre svega umetničkog stava. Kafka, Breht, Sartr, Pikaso, Hese, Bojs [...] Abi. Odomaćene u mom svetu, delom i likom, ove ličnosti postaju stalni „modeli“, neko blizak kome se obraćam kada počinjem da radim.“<sup>2</sup> Promišljajući o njihovim delima, Branka ih je portretisala u ciklusima, tako da su, prema njenom svedočenju, „vremenom, neke ličnosti postale usvojeni kod [...] ili više značni simbol“.<sup>3</sup> Stalnu posvećenost motivu portreta umetnica je obrazložila posledicom procesa njenog umetničkog sazrevanja, koji se nije odvijao pravolinjski već „[...] sistemom koncentričnih krugova koji ne dozvoljavaju vraćanje, ali nose nataloženo lično iskustvo, traženja, nalaženja, odri-

<sup>2</sup> B. Janković-Knežević, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Od oblika do znaka*, Galerija „Pečat“, Novi Sad 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Бранка Јанковић-Кнегевић, Галерија Огранка САНУ у Новом Саду, Нови Сад 2003.



Aca (model) (1976) ulje na platnu / oil on canvas, 40 × 30 cm

canja i novih početaka.“<sup>4</sup> Stvarajući portrete u serijama, Branka Janković Knežević je permanentno istraživala: „Strah od zatvaranja u sopstvenu zamku gotovih rešenja primorao me je na stalno preispitivanje i vraćanje polazištu. Svaki ciklus – krug je drugačiji, kompatibilan pret-hodnom, ali sažetiji, produbljeniji i nadam se bliži samoj suštini – epicentru.“<sup>5</sup>

Svoje serije portreta Branka Janković Knežević slika tamnim bojama, ponegde sa svetlim akcentima – najčešće u oku portretisanog. Ona crta, slika, oblikuje u materijalu šestokim potezima, gotovo muške energije. Ekspresivnost svog likovnog izraza, u zavisnosti od примене-ne tehnike, autorka intenzivira pastuoznim slojevima boje i materije, reljefnom fakturom, deformisanim oblicima, komplementarnim bojama, kontrastima, pojednostavljenjima i iskrivljjenjima, primenom specifične perspek-tive i osobenog „kadriranja“ likovne predstave. Takvim umetničkim postupkom Branka nastoji da u ciklusima i serijama crteža i slika prikaže suštinu, karakter i psihologiju portretisanih: Žan-Pol Sartra, Franca Kafke, Bertolda Brehta, Pabla Pikasa, Jozefa Bojsa, Danila Kiša, Samjuela Beketa, Abija i drugih, javnosti poznatih i nepoznatih ličnosti – modela koji za umetnicu imaju važnost simbola.

Polazište Branke Janković Knežević jeste lik portretisanog, a ishodište – likovnim jezikom saopštena metafora autorkinog unutrašnjeg doživljaja sveta, koji je, najčešće, oštra kritika savremenog društva. Imajući u vidu da je izbor portretisanih ličnosti, pa i izbor umetničkog postupka koji primenjuje u materijalizaciji svojih ideja, nedvosmisleni odraz misli i stavova umetnice, njenog sa-gledavanja stvarnosti i društva u vremenu u kome stvara i deluje, Brankine serije portreta doživljavamo kao svoje-vrsne „autoportrete“ stanja duha njenog bića u datom trenutku. Uistinu, njena ostvarenja predstavljaju neposrednu ekspresiju autorkinih unutrašnjih stanja, izraženu likovnim jezikom u materijalu.

Na izložbi „Branka Janković Knežević: Portreti“ u Muzeju grada Novog Sada predstavljen je značajan deo bogatog stvaralačkog opusa novosadske umetnice. Pojedini radovi, oni koji su na izvestan način obeležili

<sup>4</sup> B. Janković-Knežević, *Branka Janković-Knežević*.

*Od oblika do znaka*, Galerija „Pečat“, Novi Sad 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Исто.

stvaralaštvo Branke Janković Knežević, odavno se nalaze u zbirkama mnogih ustanova, kolezionara i poštovalaca njenog dela te nisu bili dostupni za ekspoziciju. Ipak, izbor dela prikazanih na ovoj izložbi dosledno predstavlja portretno stvaralaštvo Branke Janković Knežević. Muzejskoj publici je prikazan reprezentativan odbir autorkinih serija portreta, a među izabranim delima su zastupljene sve likovne tehnike u kojima se ona izražava – slike, crteži, kolaži, reljefi i različite kombinovane tehnike. Izabrana ostvarenja sa motivom portreta prikazana na izložbi u Muzeju grada Novog Sada su nastala u vremenskom rasponu od četiri decenije. Odlikuje ih energičnost njihovog tvorca, iskrenost bez kompromisa i sklonost ka jednostavnom i istinitom sagledavanju stvarnosti.

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Studija renesansnog portreta / The study of Renaissance portrait (1990) ulje na drvetu / oil on wood, 70 x 70 cm



*Autoportret / Self-portrait* (1985) ulje – reljef / oil – relief, 51 × 29 × 3,5 cm  
(u vlastništvu KUNST UND KULTUR, Beč / property KUNST UND KULTUR, Wien)

## **JELENA BANJAC**

### *Branka Janković Knežević. Portraits.*

**B**ranka Janković Knežević (Novi Sad, 1950) has been present on domestic art scene for four decades. She simultaneously explores various fine art disciplines, but the drawing has always been a dominant one. Branka finds the inspiration for her works in the surrounding environment, social and political circumstances, and the nature around her. Numerous works from her vast ouvre have found their place in public and private art collections in country and abroad. Her works are preserved in the City Museum of Novi Sad, the Gallery of Matica Srpska, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, the Museum of Vojvodina, and the Rectorate of the University of Novi Sad. The works of Branka Janković Knežević can also be found in the collections of "Grafički kolektiv", Gallery Chaos, Zepter Museum and Pen Club in Belgrade, Marble and Sounds Collection in Aranđelovac, ethno-village in Sirogojno, and the Cultural Centre in Bijeljina. About 60 of her works are kept in Herbert Konrad's collection of "Kunst und Kultur" in Vienna, 12 paintings in the collection of Eric Tauber in Switzerland, and other numerous works in the collections of Jan Veenemans, Ursula Wittmer in Switzerland, and M.C. Escher Foundation in the Netherlands.

She graduated at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade in 1976, at the Painting Department, in the class of professor Milan Kečić, and received the MA degree from the professor Milan Blanuša at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad. She is a member of notable associations of artists: ULUV (The Association of Fine Artists of Vojvodi-

na), ULUS (The Association of Fine Artists of Serbia), "Ex Libris" society in Belgrade, and "Grafički kolektiv" in Belgrade. Since 1994 she has worked as a professor at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad in the subject Drawing with Technology. During the two decades of successful pedagogical work, she has made a significant contribution in educating generations of Novi Sad artists.

In the course of her rich professional life she has done a great conservation and restoration work of valuable artworks of both national and European importance from the Collection of Foreign Art of the City Museum of Novi Sad and Pavle Beljanski Memorial Collection. Between 1976 and 1994 she was working as a painter-conservator in the Provincial Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Novi Sad where she was engaged in the projects concerning the protection of the national cultural heritage of numerous monasteries and churches.

She has been displaying her works actively since 1974 at the collective exhibitions in country and abroad (Austria, Spain, Poland, Greece, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy, Hungary, Turkey, Russia, France) and has taken part in different art colonies in Serbia (Ečka, Čačak, Aranđelovac, Lipovac, Palić, Sirogojno). Branka Janković Knežević has received a number of awards for her work in the fields of drawing and print, both in country and abroad.<sup>1</sup> Her works have been reviewed by many prom-

<sup>1</sup> She has won the Drawing Award at the 7th Novi Sad Salon (1978), Acquisition Awards of Ečka Art Colony (1984), Awards at 33rd Spring exhibition of ULUV (1984), Awards at 24th Novi Sad Salon (1995), Awards of Kovilj Art

inent art historians, fine arts critics, and writers. Branka Janković Knežević has presented her works at 19 solo exhibitions:

- 1980 – ULUV Gallery, Novi Sad, *Drawings of Branka Janković*
- 1981 – "Grafički kolektiv", Belgrade, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Drawings*.
- 1985 – SULUV Gallery, Novi Sad, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Paintings*.
- 1990 – "Milenko Atanacković" Gallery, Bijeljina, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Paintings and Drawings; Contemporary Art Gallery, Novi Sad, Branka Janković-Knežević. Paintings, Drawings, Reliefs; Wangen A. Are (Madonia), Berlin, Janković Branka – Novi Sad / Knežević Slobodan – Novi Sad / Kollagen, Bilder und Reliefbildner, Press-Papier.*
- 1992 – Contemporary Art Gallery, Novi Sad, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Paintings, Drawings 1975-1992; "Olga Petrov" Gallery of Contemporary Art, Pančevo, Branka Janković-Knežević. Paintings and Drawings 1975-1992.*
- 1993 – Modern Gallery Zrenjanin; "Olga Petrov" Gallery of Contemporary Art, Pančevo.
- 1996 – "Pečat" Gallery, Novi Sad, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Between Form and Sign.*
- 1998 – "Grafički kolektiv" Gallery, Belgrade, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Drawings; SULUV Gallery, Novi Sad, For Joseph K. – Drawings.*
- 1999 – SULUV Gallery, Novi Sad
- 2002 – Modern Gallery, Zrenjanin, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Drawings.*
- 2003 – Gallery of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Branch in Novi Sad, *Branka Janković-Knežević; Golden Eye Centre for Visual Culture, Novi Sad, Branka Janković-Knežević. The Danube – the Water.*
- 2008 – Gallery Chaos, Belgrade, *Waiting for Godot*

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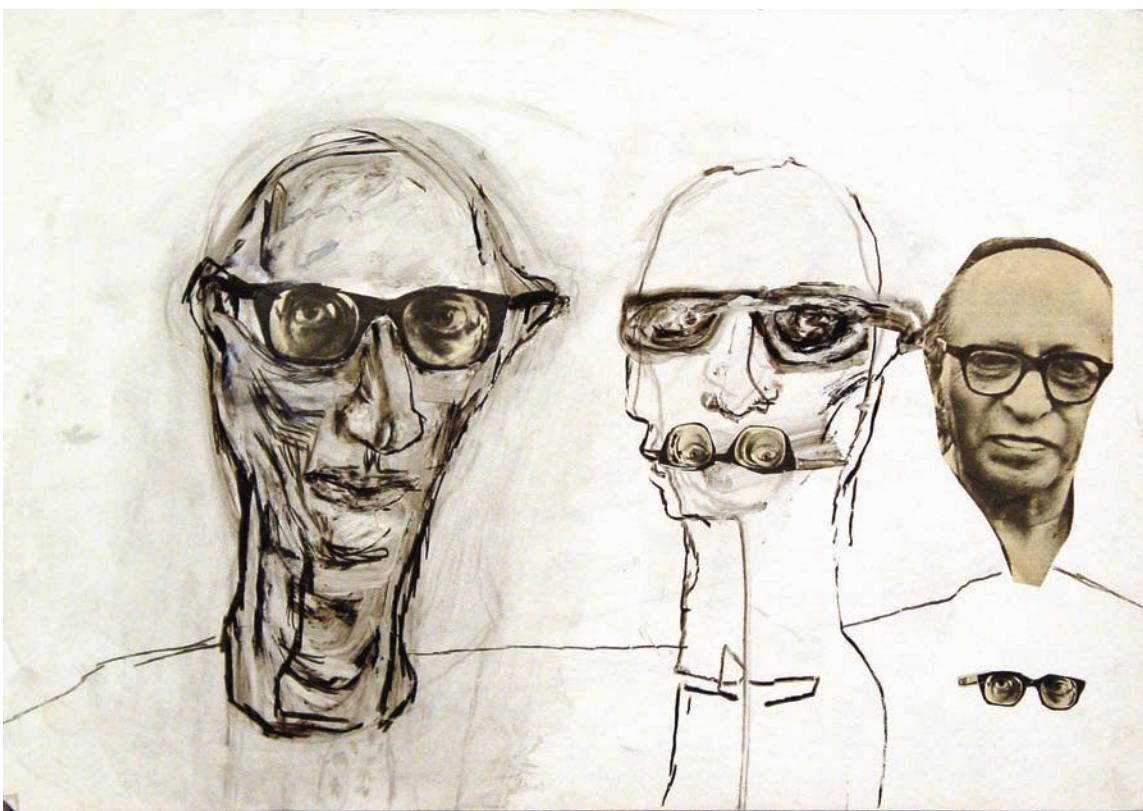
Colony (1998), and Print Award at Inter Balkan Forum of Contemporary Miniature Art 2002 in Thessaloniki (2002).

One of the main motifs in the art of Branka Janković Knežević is the portrait. In the course of her creative work, together with other themes and motifs which have led her to artistic accomplishments, she has created an impressive set of human faces which counts hundreds of works. She has made them using different fine art techniques – painting, oil on canvas, wood or paper, combined techniques, collage, stoneware (clay), which have often emerged in series and cycles. Branka's models are the chosen individuals from her private and social surrounding, artists, intellectuals, writers, mythological characters, and literary characters. All of them have played an important role in her life, and their achievements have affected the author's private and professional views. Branka Janković Knežević once spoke about the significance of portraits in her work, 'Since I was a university student, along with main themes, I have developed analytical portrait studies. Later, these intimate, unpretentious drawings became the base for more elaborate approach to human face, as an individual, but also the head as a microcosm, the habitat of sensations and spirituality. The choice of the initial motif is not accidental. Those are renaissance portraits, and the individuals who have affected, above all, my artistic views. Kafka, Brecht, Sartre, Picasso, Hesse, Beuys, [...] Abi. Being accustomed to my world with their life and work, these characters become permanent "models", as if they are someone close I can talk to when I start my work.'<sup>2</sup> Having reflected on their achievements, Branka portrayed them in cycles, and according to her 'some individuals have eventually become the adopted code [...] or multifaceted symbol'.<sup>3</sup> The artist explained her permanent commitment to the motif of portrait as a result of her artistic maturation, which has not been linear, but represented 'the system of concentric circles that does not allow regression, but rather carries the deposits of personal experience, searchings,

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2 B. Janković-Knežević, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Od oblika do znaka*, Galerija „Pečat“, Novi Sad 1996.

3 Бранка Јанковић-Кнежевић, Галерија Огранка САНУ у Новом Саду, Нови Сад 2003.



1 | 2 | 3

4

1. *Portret / Portrait* (1976) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique,  $30 \times 21,5$  cm
2. *Portret / Portrait* (1976) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique,  $23,5 \times 20$  cm
3. *Portret / Portrait* (1976) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique,  $35 \times 25$  cm
4. *Portret / Portrait* (1979) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique,  $35 \times 50$  cm

findings, renunciations, and new beginnings.<sup>4</sup> By creating the portraits in series, Branka Janković Knežević has been engaged in permanent exploration, ‘The fear of getting caught in my own trap of complete solutions has forced me to make constant reconsiderations and go back to the beginnings. In each cycle the circle is different, compatible to the previous one, but more concise and elaborate, and hopefully closer to the very essence – the epicentre.<sup>5</sup>

Branka Janković Knežević paints her series of portraits with dark colours. The accents of bright colours are scarce and they can often be noticed in the eyes. She draws, paints, shapes the material with relentless motions and almost masculine energy. Depending on the technique applied, the author intensifies the expression of the art form with layers of pastel colours and materials, relief factures, deformed shapes, complementary colours, contrasts, simplifications and distortions, the use of particular perspective and the characteristic “framing” of the display. In her series and cycles of drawings and paintings Branka uses these artistic processes to reveal the essence, personality, and psychology of characters: Jean Paul Sartre, Franz Kafka, Bertolt Brecht, Pablo Picasso, Joseph Beuys, Danilo Kiš, Samuel Beckett, Abi, and other familiar or unfamiliar individuals – models who the author considers to be her symbols.

The beginning for Branka Janković Knežević lies in the image of the person portrayed, and her destination is artistically expressed metaphore of the author’s intimate notion of the world, which ultimately represents a harsh critic of the modern society. Considering the selection of portrayed characters, together with the selection of artistic process which she uses to materialize her ideas, the unambiguous reflection of her thoughts and views, and her notion of reality and society in the time she lives and works, Branka’s series of portraits can be observed as particular “self-portraits” of her state of being in the given moment. Indeed, her works embody the immediate expression of the author’s inner conditions, transferred to a medium using the language of fine arts.

At the exhibition “Branka Janković Knežević: Portraits”, the City Museum of Novi Sad has presented a sig-

nificant part of her rich ouvre. Some works, mostly those who have, in a certain way, marked the professional work of Branka Janković Knežević, have already found their place in the lots of numerous institutions, private collections, and admirers of her work, hence not available for exhibiting. However, the selection of works displayed here offer a valuable insight into the portrait works of Branka Janković Knežević. The museum audience has been provided a representative selection of the author’s series of portraits which were created using various kinds of fine art techniques that she utilizes – paintings, drawings, collages, reliefs, and different combined techniques. The selected works whose motif is the portrait have been created in the period of four decades. They all contain the power of their maker, the uncompromising sincerity, and the tendency towards simplistic and truthful notion of reality.

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(Translated by Sava Rakić)

4 B. Janković-Knežević, *Branka Janković-Knežević. Od oblika do znaka*, Galerija „Pečat“, Novi Sad 1996.

5 Ibidem.



*Na tronu I / On the throne I* (1985) lavirani tuš / ink wash, 50 × 35 cm



1 2

1. *Na tronu II / On the throne II* (1985) lavirani tuš / ink wash, 50 × 35 cm
2. *Na tronu III / On the throne III* (1985) lavirani tuš / ink wash, 50 × 35 cm

## OTTÓ TOLNAI

### Branka Janković-Knežević

Nakon 1948. godine u jugoslovenskom slikarstvu dolazi do neobičnog račvanja: na jednoj grani se našla apstrakcija (i kasnije, enformel) a figuracija (Mediale) na drugoj. Više se podvrgava kritici prvi ogranač, čak se i proganja (pa i šef države nalazi za shodno da kaže svoju reč o tome) međutim, valjda baš zbog toga, upravo će apstrakcija pre da postane zvanična umetnost, slikarstvo u modi, i akademска konfekcija (što, razume se, ne znači da pojedini njeni predstavnici kasnije, pa i danas i sutra, ne mogu imati ozbiljnju ulogu).

Mediale i nakostrešena prljavština njenog okruženja, njena rugoba – s pacovom, pacovom ukrštenim zecom, kao centralnom metaforom – biće prihvaćena, postaće akademска konfekcija tek kroz velike uspehe na Zapadu i domaće angažmane (što ne znači, naravno, da se mora zatvoriti prema tržištu, da mora opstajavati u hermetičkom prostoru, ne – i najveći umetnici živeli su pod papinskim suknjama i kraljevskim plaštovima).

Ali neizrecivi radikalizam Mediale, nakostrešeni, ružni rukopis beogradske škole do današnjeg dana čuvaju, neguju i prenose s generacije na generaciju mlađi akademici. Mislim pri tom na pojedina rana razdoblja, na poneke slike ili crteže Dada, Glavurtića, Toškovića, Veličkovića, Ljube, Dragana Lubarde, Reljića i Gvardiola – zanimljivo je zapaziti da su im ne jednom i modeli identični. I Brankini rani radovi vezuju se za beogradsku radikalnu figuraciju. Štaviše, sva je prilika da ne bismo pogrešili ni ako bismo i čitav njen opus crteža svrstali tamo.

Najpre sam na njenoj izložbi 1980. godine dospeo u intenzivniju vezu sa Brankinim slikama. Nisam znao ništa pobliže o njoj, s oduševljenjem sam je predstavio na radiju. Njen rani radikalizam dotada – barem na nekim, meni bližim listovima – prolazi kroz zanimljivu transformaciju, ako se tako može reći, prelazi u sferu primenljivosti, rugobnost se pripotomila. Razume se, samo naizgled, u vanjskoj formi, tek na nivou anegdote bismo mogli govoriti o pitomosti, jer se po mom mišljenju, naime, suština još više radikalizovala. Mada nije isključeno ni to da sam ja, kao književnik (beletrista) upravo zahvaljujući tom anegdotskom momentu postao osetljiv, prijemčiv.

Na tim listovima teška, naga žena sedi na krhkoj rokoko stolici: oko vrata skupoceno krvno. Kad kažem skupoceno, kazujem i to, kao živo. Maksimalna jeza ušivanja s kurjakom u istu vreću preobražava se ovde u erotiku.

Krvno – smrdljiva lisica i kojot, andeoska, ali krvožedna lasica, koja se pojavljuje i kao kneževski simbol, te kurjak – znači ujedno i sam radikalni crtež, predstavlja onog s pacovom ukrštenog zeca, u opoziciji s rembrantovski i vanggovski fino izvlačenim linijama, dakle, u opoziciji s gotovo celom istorijom crteža, predstavlja haotične, divlje, elektronski iskričave linije.

U Budimpešti, na blistavoj Vaci ulici godinama sam posmatrao iz prikrajka žene iz Transilvanije koje su prodavale krvno lisica. Postrojene uza zid, s podignutim kažiprstima ispred sebe kao da su držale, nudile žive, ili barem napola odrane lisice, sitne zveri. A ta sirota divljač,

kao iznad nekakvog jezivog ponora, očajnički se držala za ružičastu granu kažiprsta. U toj provaliji nazirao sam sav užas Rumunije i praznину potrošačkog društva. Iza tih zimogrožljivih žena – kakve li optičke igre! – blistale su ispostave skupih bečkih krvnara (KVALITETNO KRZNO) gotovo žive srebrne lisice obavijale su se oko gojaznih vrata... Tamo, na Vaci ulici često sam se sećao Brankinih slika.

Krzno, kao takvo, na mnogo načina se i nagovestava, i pokazuje na Brankinim slikama. Ovamo svrstavam na neki način i njen ciklus posvećen Bojsu. Ona crta šešir, štap novog nemačkog proroka, zatim sve više njegove monumentalne krvnene okovratnike, bunde. I eto nas, začas, kod Bojsovog zeca, njegovog kojota...

Posebno poglavje čine Brankini portreti. Kao da svoj radikalizam ovde rastvara u nekakvoj ružičastoj i plavoj materiji (premda ume ona ponekad da radikalizuje i samu materiju – zahvaljujući upravo motivu krvna!).

Slika ljudi sa oštećenim očima. Istina, ponekad precrtava i usta, čitavu glavu svojih modela, na način kao što je Hajdeger precrtavao biće:

Sartr, Onazis, Breht, Pertini (ja bih ovde uvrstio i filozofa Bloha) – svi, od reda, bića sa uvišestručenim dioptrijama.

Neobično suočavanje.

Branka obavlja neku vrstu operacije oka. Ali to je opet samo par excellence likovni – pikturalni postupak. Jer, reč je o centralnom organu likovnih umetnosti.

Na prijatnim portretima boje ružičastog mesa otvaraju se plave oči koje prizivaju Modiljanija, poput različka, poput encijana, alpskih jezeraca, vulkanskih jezera u najužem smislu reči u ružičastom plastelinu ohlađene lave. Osmotrimo malo pažljivije Modiljanijeve portrete. Njegovi kritičari govore o ravnodušnoj praznini bademastih, uskih očiju. Ali ta plavetna praznina ukazuje ujedno i na nekakvu sačuvanu čistotu, na jedva podnošljivu rajsку slast. I kod Modiljanija kao da smo svedoci prekinute operacije oka: po jedno oko Maksa Žakoba i Pola Gijoma, na primer, kao da je zašlo, ostavio uštopovano, da se odmori: na svim njegovim portretima velika je razlika između dva oka u glavi, jedno je otvoreno, drugo zatvoreno, zašiveno itd.

U Modiljanijevom slučaju reč je o lepoti, o možda najlepšim očima istorije umetnosti, a da uzmem drugi primer, u Sartrovom slučaju pak reč je o ružnom. Simon de Bovoar je gotovo naslikala Sartrov portret, odnosno, navodi Sartra da naslika svoj autoportret:

S. de Bovoar: To mora da je nešto iz detinjstva, jer ne treba preterivati: vi niste ružniji od većine muškaraca.

J. P. Sartr: Jesam, ja sam razrok.

Na insistiranje Simon de Bovoar, Sartr se nagnje vlastitom licu i konstatuje da, zapravo, ima dva lica, između kojih nema prelaza, nema ničega što bi ih povezivalo u jedno, jedinstveno lice: prvo je sa svega nekoliko linija naznačeno, opšte, univerzalno, drugo lice je pak konkretno, neobično – kao močvara...

Ima Branka slike na kojima se njeni lebdeći portreti pretapaju u pejzaž. I ima jedan poseban niz slika, na kojima varira jednu monumentalnu bradu. Ove slike s bradom mene podsećaju na jednu apsolutno enformel bradu, na platno Dibifea iz 1959. godine koje nosi naslov Brada meditiranja. Reč je zapravo o portretu njenog supruga, poznatog grafičara, velikog umetnika, alhemičara papira (kARTon) Aby Kneževića – portret Crnogorca koji ima vrednost modela.

Rugobnost ranog sivog i crnog radikalizma sada se prolepšala kao radikalna upitanost nad čovekom kao ružičastim blatom. Da, ružičasto meso – zahvaljujući prijstvu krvna – upućuje i na odranost, na izvrnutu kožu.

Branka Janković Knežević rodila se 1950. godine u Novom Sadu; školovala se u Beogradu; trenutno je konzervator Pokrajinskog zavoda za zaštitu spomenika kulture. Ovom poslednjem podatku treba dodati jednu primedbu: mora da je izuzetan posao ponovo pronalaziti, restaurirati, konzervirati ružičaste obrazbe, plavetnilo očiju andela na ikonama.

(Prevod s mađarskog A. Vicko)

Objavljeno u: O. Tolnai, *Branka Janković-Knežević*, Galerija „Milenko Atanacković“, Bijeljina 1990.



*Teške ptice / Heavy birds* (1979) lavirani tuš / ink wash, 35 × 50 cm  
(u vlasništvu Galerije Matice srpske / property of the Gallery of Matica srpska, Novi Sad)

*Portret / Portrait* (1975) sepija – kreda / sepia – chalk, 41,5 × 35 cm



## **OTTÓ TOLNAI**

### *Branka Janković-Knežević*

A peculiar branching took place after 1948 in the Yugoslav art of painting: the abstract (and later the enformel) was one branch, and the figurative (Mediale) was the other one. The former, the abstraction was criticized, harassed more (even the president expressed his opinion about it), however, perhaps just because of this, abstraction was the first to become an official and fashionable academic serial production (which of course does not mean that its certain representatives may not have a serious role later, today or even tomorrow).

The Mediale and the dirtiness and ugliness of its circle – with the rat, Dürer's Hare crossbred with a rat as with the central metaphor – will be accepted, and become an academic serial production only after its great Western success and domestic engagements (which of course does not mean that it need not turn towards market, that it has to go on existing in hermetic space, no – even the greatest artist have lived under popes' skirts and cloaks of kings).

But the strong radicalism of the Mediale, the disheveled, ugly manuscript of the Belgrade School has been taken care of, it has been fostered and passed from generation to generation by young academists. I mean certain early phases, certain paintings and drawings by Dado, Glavurtić, Tošković, Veličković, Ljubo, Dragan Lubarda, Raljić and Gvardiol – it is interesting to notice that not only once, even their models are identical.

Branka's early works have also been connected with the Belgrade radical figurative art. Actually, we would not make a mistake if we classified her whole opus of drawings there.

My first contact with Branka's paintings was at the exhibition in 1980. I did not know anything about her, I presented her with delight on the radio. Her early radicalism has passed by then through interesting transformation, if we can say so, it has become applicable, the ugliness has become mild. Of course, only seemingly, in its outer form, we may talk about mildness only on anecdotic level, because to my mind, the essence has become sensitive, receptive, just because of the anecdotic moment.

On these sheets, a naked woman is sitting on a fragile, rococo chair; she has a precious fur around her neck. When I say precious, I also mean, as if alive. The maximum horror of being in the same bag with a wolf has been transformed into eroticism.

The fur – the stinky fox and coyote, the angel-like but blood-sucking weasel which also appears as a royal symbol, and the wolf – means at the same time the radical drawing itself, if represents the hare crossbred with a rat, in opposition with Rembrandt's and Van Gogh's finely drawn lines, thus in opposition with almost the whole history of drawings, represents chaotic, wild electrically sparkling lines.

In Budapest, in the glittering Váci Street I have been watching for years the Transylvanian women selling fox furs. Lined up beside the wall, with raised forefingers in front of them as if they were holding, offering alive or at least half skinned foxes, smaller beasts. And those poor beasts as if above a horrible abyss were desperately holding on to the pink branch of the fingers. I felt all the horror of Rumania in that abyss, and also the vacuity of

the consumers' society. Behind these shivering women – what an optical game! – expensive Vienna fur shops were glittering (good quality fur) and fat necks were covered with almost alive silver foxes... There, in Váci Street, I often remembered Branka's paintings.

Fur, as such is indicated and shown in many ways on Branka's paintings. In a way, I would classify here her Beuys-cycle too. She draws the hat, the stick of the German prophet, then more and more his grand fur collars, fur-coats. And here we come to Beuys's hare, coyote...

Branka's portretts make a separate chapter. As if she would like to dissolve her radicalism into a pink and blue matter (though she can sometimes radicalize the matter itself – due exactly to the fur motive!)

She paints people with damaged eyes. She also crosses out sometimes the mouth, or the whole head of her models, in the way that Heidegger crossed out being;

Sartre, Onassis, Brecht, Pertini (I would also mention Bloch, the philosopher here) were all multy-dioptered beings.

A strange confrontation.

Branka performs a kind of eye operation. But this is also a par excellence procedure of fine art. yes, it is the central organ of fine arts.

On the pleasant portraits of pink flesh colour, blue eyes open, recalling Modigliani, blue as the cornflower or the gentian, blue as the alpine lake, volcanic lakes in the pink modeling clay of cooled lava. Let's watch a bit more Modigliani's portraits. His critic speak about the indifferent vacuity of his narrow almond eyes. But at the same time, the blue vacuity indicates a kind of preserved purity, a hardly bearable pleasure of paradise. As if we have been witnesses of an eye operation of Modigliani's: as if he sewed one eye of Max Jacob and Paul Gullaume, as if he left them darned for resting: on all his portraits there is a great difference between the eyes, one is open, the other is shut, darned, etc.

In Modigliani's case we speak about the beauty, perhaps the most beautiful eyes in the history of art, and

let's take another example, in Sartre's case, we speak about ugliness. Simone de Bovoir has almost painted Sartre's portrait, that is she has made Sartre paint his autoportrait:

S. de Bovoir: This must be something from childhood, thus, no exaggeration is necessary: you are not uglier than most men.

J. P. Sartre: Yes, I am. I am cross-eyed.

On Simone de Bovoir's insisting, Sartre leant towards his own face and cocluded that he in fact had two faces between which there was no transition, nothing that would connect them into one unique face: the first was marked only with a few lines, a general, universal one, the second was a concrete, unusual face – like moor...

Branka has paintings on which her floating portraits fade into a landscape. She also has a series of paintings on which she varies one grand beard. These paintings with beards remind me of and absolute enformel beard, of Dubuffet's painting from 1959, which has the title Meditation Beard. In fact this is the portrait of her husband, the well known graphic artist, the alchemist of wrapping paper (CARDBOARD) Aby Knežević – the portrait of a Montenegrin who has the value of a model.

The ugliness of the early grey and black radicalism has become beautiful as the radical wonder above man as pind mud. Yes, pink flash – thanks to the presence of fur – indicates the horror of skinning and half-skinning.

Branka Janković-Knežević was born in 1950 in Novi Sad. She was educated in Belgrade; now she is the conservationist of the Provincial Institute for Monument Protection. This last data must be completed with a remark: it must be an extraordinary work to return, restore and conserve the pink cheeks, the blue eyes of angels on icon.

(Translated by Lilla Jakobsz-Németh)

Published in: Tolnai Ottó, Branka Janković, Galerija „Milenco Atanacković”, Bijeljina, 1990.

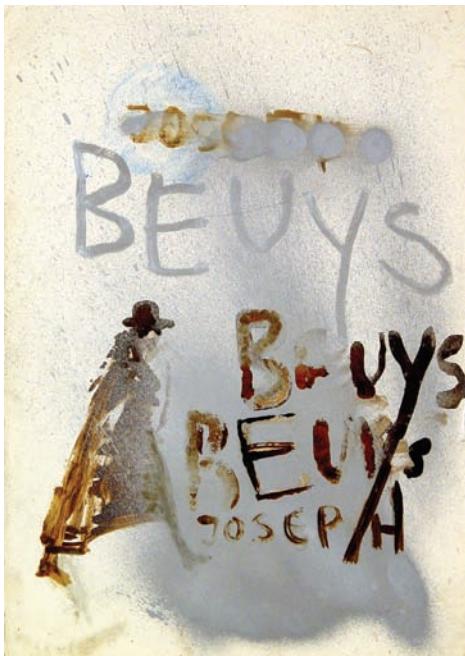


1 2

1. *Mona Liza / Mona Lisa* (1985) ulje – reljef / oil – relief, 51 × 36 × 3 cm  
2. *Gorgona / Gorgon* (1985) ulje – reljef / oil – relief, 66 × 51 × 3 cm

3 4

3. *Eva / Eve* (1985) ulje – reljef / oil – relief, 72 × 44 × 4,5 cm  
(u vlastništvu KUNST UND KULTUR, Beč / property KUNST UND KULTUR, Wien)  
4. *Portret / Portrait* (1985) ulje – reljef / oil – relief, 59 × 41,5 × 4 cm



1 2 3

1. Jozef Bojs / Joseph Beuys (1980) lavirani tuš – olovka / ink wash – pencil, 50 × 35 cm  
(u vlastništvu dr Irine Subotić / property dr Irina Subotić)

4 5

2. Jozef Bojs / Joseph Beuys (1980) lavirani tuš – olovka / ink wash – pencil, 50 × 35 cm  
3. Jozef Bojs / Joseph Beuys (1980) lavirani tuš – olovka / ink wash – pencil, 50 × 35 cm  
4. Jozef Bojs / Joseph Beuys (1980) lavirani tuš – olovka / ink wash – pencil, 50 × 35 cm  
5. Jozef Bojs / Joseph Beuys (1980) lavirani tuš – olovka / ink wash – pencil, 70 × 100 cm

## IRINA SUBOTIĆ

### *Eksplozija stvaralaštva Branke Janković Knežević*

**B**ranka Janković Knežević je svesna odgovornosti slike. Ona zna da je njena posvećenost umetničkom činu – njena lična strast i potreba za izražavanjem, ali u isti mah ona zna i da jedno delo govori mnogim jezicima, da se čita kroz naslage značenja koje ima, i da ni u kom slučaju nije neutralno, nemušto komuniciranje sa javnošću. Ukoliko jeste umetničko osvrtarenje [...]. Jasno je, pri tome, da se dotiču, često i ukrštaju status umetničkog dela kao i oslobođene realnosti i njegova društvena pozicija, najčešće konfliktna, manje ili više naivno konfliktna, kako bi rekao Akile Bonito Oliva, kao savest čovečanstva, kao mera vrednosti i humanosti. U tom smislu se, kao jedan od načina distanciranja pojavljuje ironija koja umetničko oslobađa stega i obaveza, koja marginalizuje značenje i u tom smislu umetnost udaljava od društvenih utopijskih zahteva a vraća joj toliko potreban status preispitivanja estetskog, upućuje na umetnost samu i na kreativni čin kao takav, na potrebu za intimnim izražavanjem, kao fundamentalnom kategorijom čoveka, umetnika povrh svega.

Osnovna tema interesovanja Branke Janković Knežević je *Lik*, najčešće ličnost koja je ostavila dubokog traga u njenom životu, kako sama izjavljuje – ikona njenog i našeg doba, intimna ispovest isto koliko i opšte priznato mesto moderne civilizacije. Nesputanom energijom ona pristupa likovima kojima posvećuje desetine, stotine svojih radova, često u jasnoj putanji sve izrazitije sintetizacije forme kroz koju ona pronalazi srž ličnosti, njen autentičan

karakter, temperament i suštinu. Čini se da upravo izvensnu dozu ironije kao faktora oslobađanja, o čemu govori Akile Bonito Oliva, srećemo na njenoj gusto istkanoj seriji portreta umetnika: ona je sama jednom prilikom govorila o „afinitetu ka notornom cinizmu“ (u predgovoru za katalog izložbe *Za Jozefa K.*, Galerija „Grafički kolektiv“, Beograd, od 2. do 15. novembra 1988. godine). Njen posvećenost određenom *Liku* koji nije samo traganje za fizionomskom fasadom humane forme, već put ka pronaalaženju identiteta. Našeg – koliko i njenog, i ljudskog uopšte. A put do pronalaska je izazovan, razuđeno bogat, ali i trnovit: za umetnicu je taj kontinuirani stvaralački naboј pravo, izvorno ispunjenje, njena osnovna i nasušna potreba. Otuda takva predanost temi, istrajnost u ciklusima koji se ne zatvaraju i otuda tako impresivan rezultat.

U jednom periodu Branka Knežević Janković je koristila prepoznatljive citate egipatske, srednjovekovne ili renesansne kulture, poneku robusnu ili andeosku figuru, a potom je prevagnuo interes za ličnosti – paradigme našeg, tek prohujalog XX veka – od Žana Pola Sartra do Franca Kafke, od Bertolda Brehta do Danila Kiša ili Pabla Pikasa i Jozefa Bojsa. Kod Sartra je nisu zanosile njegove levicaarske ideje, nego njegova dvostruka ličnost skrivena iza naočara; Pikasove ekspresivne fotografije bile su polazište za otkrivanje njegovog višeslojnog temperamento; prema Brehtu je osećala divljenje kao prema briljantnom, velikom čoveku i humanisti; susret sa Bojsom u aprilu 1974. godine u beogradskom Studentskom kulturnom centru

bio je pozitivan šok, ali za taj susret, priznaje, nije bila pripremljena, jer Bojs je predstavljao veliki iskorak iz tradicije kojoj je učena; nije mogla da primi njegovu ekscesnu ličnost; više je bila podstaknuta njegovom pojavom nego smisлом njegovog umetničkog jezika i angažovanja. Sve te ličnosti bile su za umetnicu „staništa senzora i duhovnosti“. Među njih se provlači, kao konstanta, i Abijev portret – lik Slobodana Kneževića, takođe u svim materijalima, dimenzijama, situacijama, stilizacijama – od portretskog i prepoznatljivog, do svedenog, do nebeski plavog, dubokog, iskosa postavljenog pripitomljenog oka – samotnjaka, bojsovskog kojota, šumskog vuka, planinskog kurjaka ili nezaobilaznog Mićka. Sam Abi, ili u porodičnom *Trojstvu*, kao u oličenju duhovnog u nama, kao *slika-biće*.

Svima njima Branka je posvetila veliki deo svoga opusa, svakom od njih pojedinačno čitave cikluse i oni su postali dvostruko amblematične slike – deo njene umetnosti. Na njenim delima zadržan je njihov moćni karakter i snažna energija, a prepoznatljive fisionomske crte postale su apstraktни dijalog linija i površina. Najčešće se ponavlja i hromatski put po istom principu: od beline bezgraničnog prostora i svetlijih kolorističkih namaza, umetница stiže do zatamnjениh i zatvorenih površina na kojima se ponekad jedva prepoznaju izranjanja ili uranjanja njenih transformisanih *Likova*, kao dalekih podsećanja na prve uzore. U pojedinim radovima uzimala je za matricu fotografiju, upravo vorholovski koristeći njihove najupečatljivije i najpoznatije, najpopularnije i gotovo banalne snimke, da bi u nizu varijacija i u nizu tehnika na kraju od tih početnih imputa postali novi *ikonstasi* – samo daleka, gotovo metafizička asocijacija na prvobitne likove.

Istina, *Lik* nije jedina preokupacija Branke Janković Knežević: nju sa istom znatiželjom interesuje i transpozicija okoline, sasvim konkretno portret prirode koju svakodnevno upija – mirne obale Dunava, njegove tiho uzburkane površine, sa odsjajima svetlosti kao bljeskom doživljaja, kao vizure u dahu uhvaćene digitalnom kamerom koja beleži, u naznakama, život reke od ranog jutra do ranog mraka. Ili ogledanje sebe u vodi, kao definiciju mira, refleksije, kompleksnosti smisla na putu shvatanja sopstvenog Ja.

Jozef Bojs / Joseph Beuys (1980) lavirani tuš – olovka / ink wash – pencil, 47,5 × 65 cm





Umetnica veruje u evokativni karakter materije i njenih slojeva koji nose nezabeleženu memoriju i upijaju značenja; ona se služi tim naslagama – to je za nju „umetnost u sirovom stanju“ – početna etapa ka daljem formiranju dela i dubinskom upoznavanju onoga što želi da iskaže. Tim starim, neuništivim slojevima punim sećanja, posebne strukture i fakture, sa minimalnim intervencijama dobija se jaka ekspresivnost i uverljivost. To su nekada odbačene korice jevandjelja, ili neki drugi stari komadi drveta, glina, prirodna koža – osnove na koje ona nanosi slojeve voštane mase, neku vrstu enkaustike, ekspresivne same po sebi. Iz tih snažnih impulsa izranjavaju prikazi njenih ličnosti, uz hrabro korišćenje raznovrsnih tehniku – crtež, islikavanja temperom, uljem, akvareлом ili akrilikom, uz kolažiranje novina, nekog drugog papiра ili neočekivanog materijala, često nabacanog jednog preko drugog, sa manjim ili većim intervencijama u vidu temperamentnih poteza i namaza bojenim akcentima, koji ponekad ostavljaju utisak svesnog negiranja urađenog. U jednom periodu nastaju i figuralni objekti, rađeni od vrste robusnijeg *papier maché-a*, sa jutom i novinskim papirom, zamoćenim u lepak za pločice; taj sudar materije i materijala – građevinske mase sa tankom draperijom koju je postavljala preko nežnih ženskih likova, kao što su Eva ili Mona Liza, akt ili autoportret – od kraja 80-tih godina predstavljao je traganje za novim mogućnostima crteža u *proširenom polju*, da parafraziramo Rosalind Kraus. Ili, stvaranje one *druge umetnosti* dibifeovskog sazvučja u kojoj se slavila *maladresse antiplastique* a umetnici pozivali na Paula Klea.

Eksperimentima sa materijalima i različitim tehnikama umetnica suprotstavlja čisti crtački čin, jak i gust potez rukom kojim ona ponavlja crtež – u (postmodernističkom) *ponavljanju sa razlikom*. Radi uglavnom na ujednačenom formatu papira za pojedine serije i cikluse svojih crteža, kao što je jednačena i naglašena forma kadriranja čije poreklo nalazimo u filmskoj umetnosti, u velikom, gro-planu koji nam približava lik i upečatljivo govori o njemu. Umetnica na taj način stvara koherentno

delo koje ne robuje uskim pravilima kojih bi se slepo držala i koji bi je sputavali da dođe do potpuno osamostaljenog likovnog iskaza. S druge strane, rad Branke Janković Knežević na konzervaciji i restauraciji starih spomenika otvorio joj je puteve ka sticanju tehnoloških znanja, spremio je za inovacije, dao slobodu u korišćenju raznovrsnog materijala. Praćenjem tuđeg načina mišljenja usavršili su se njen rukopis i lična poetika, ona je dobila hrabrost da od čistih medija prelazi na kompleksne, ali uvek sa sveštu o smislu takve vrste angažmana, sa sveštu da time ističe znakovnost i čuva samosvojnost.

Format crteža i slika Branke Janković Knežević ima posebno značenje: umetnica oseća da joj mali format obezbeđuje neposredniji kontakt, da upija više njenog intimnog ispovednog tona, da je to mera njenog neposrednog, impulsivnog kontinuiranog rada (O tome posebno govori serija malih radova iz perioda oko 1993. godine koji su zatamnjrenom gamom govorili o mraku u nama i oko nas). Ali i slike i crteži velikog formata, kao reprezentativni primeri njenog stvaranja, odgovarali su jednom posebnom stvaračkom dahu, jednom času koji se nije rodio po njenoj želji i diktatu, oko 1998/99. godine, godine ispunjene velikom dozom jeze, kada joj je – kako sama smatra – veliki format bio potreban kao ispoljavanje osećaja ugroženosti. Simptomatično je da se u tom času pojavljuje i Kafka, kojeg, kao amblem naše unesrećene egzistencije, ona priziva zbog njegove angažovanosti i simbola kraja jedne epohe. Kafka, tačnije *Za Jozefa K.*, biće posvećena zapamćena izložba crteža Branke Janković Knežević u beogradskoj Galeriji „Grafički kolektiv“ (od 2. do 15. novembra 1998. godine). U katalogu te izložbe, u vidu dijaloga između Franca K. i Branke K., koji je pripremila rukovodilac Galerije i likovni kritičar Ljiljana Ćinkul, umetnica izjavljuje: „Crtež je za mene neprevaziđeni oblik komunikacije, dokument jednog posebnog poetskog stanja, medij u kojem je deponovana kulturna tradicija polje izrazitog kreativnog oživljavanja umetničke imaginacije“. Odista, prava vokacija ove umetnice jeste crtež i to osećaju i njeni brojni studenti kojima prenosi svoje iskustvo, snagu, znanje i mnoge emocije...

Njena dela su u procesu, nisu mirna horizontala; ona stalno interveniše ne priznajući postojeće statično stanje, posebno kada oseća potrebu da izade iz kvadra-ta slike, da se približi gledaocu, da mu prikaže reljefnost ambivalentnog značenja. Tu se približavamo mogućim spojevima Branke Knežević Janković sa latinoameričkom književnošću koja joj je ponudila ključeve za odnos prema realnom.

Radeći kontinuirano na portretima, posebno na portretima umetnika, Branka sa sigurnošću i lakoćom nomada prelazi različite odrednice, pri čemu je gotovo uvek u osnovi zadržana jedna ekspresionistička matrica koja se napaja iskustvima enformela, a potom slede pojednostavljenja koja vode ka suštini, ka apstrahovanju prepoznatljivih detalja i ka jednoj od definitivnih razrešnica, ali nikada jedinoj, definitivnoj formi.

Sugestivnost i iluzivnost portreta, prvog doživljaja jednog *Lika* lagano se, u nizu konsekventnih varijanata, razrešava pitanjem stilizacije, pa i deformacije, koja, prema mišljenju starog teoretičara vizuelne i filmske umetnosti Karla Ajnštajna, zamenjuje apstrakciju. Deformacija, međutim, nije u službi karikature – pre bi se moglo govoriti o autoironičnosti na tragu samospoznaje, o jungovskoj arhetipskoj ikonografiji u kojoj svaki predstavljeni *Lik* otkriva (po malo) i sopstveni, jer se biološko povlači pred psihološkim, tj. mentalnim. Umetnica personalizuje sopstvene stavove – njeni *Likovi* nisu slučajno uzeti, već oni nju samu određuju i njen antropološki značajni pogled na Čoveka, na poštovanje individualnosti, integriteta

ličnosti, njegovih psihičkih kategorija i duhovnih osobnosti. To fizionomsko određenje je deo ličnosti, njegovog karaktera i naših saznanja o njemu.

Branka Janković Knežević postavlja gotovo bez izuzetka svoje portrete u prvi plan, čuva „naboj prvobitne ideje“; njene figure ukidaju tradicionalan prostor, koji postaje ne-prostor i ostaje samo u naznakama, kao tamna masa na čijem fonu izranjaju *Likovi*, da bi čak i iskakali iz tog omeđenog prostora u vidu pastuoznih namaza i jačih strukturalnih zahvata, postali gotovo vajane površine, kao reljefi, plitke skulpture, prostorne forme ali sa uvek sačuvanim naglaskom na dvodimenzionalnosti, dakle na prevashodno slikarsko-crtačkim osobenostima dela, na crtežu kao na traganju. To postaju slikovne strukture nastale na elementima realnosti.

Branka Janković Knežević je umetnik koji misli, njen senzibilitet prati svest o nastajanju njenih oblika, sve vođeno intuicijom, nezasitim potrebama za stvaranjem: „Moji koncentrični krugovi ne dozvoljavaju vraćanje, ali nose nataloženo lično iskustvo traženja, nalaženja, odricanja i novih početaka“, napisala je u tekstu, objavljenom u katalogu izložbe *Od oblika do znaka* (Galerija Pečat, Novi Sad, novembar-decembar 1996). Kod nje nije reč o stvaralačkom redu i radu, nego o eksploziji kreativnosti, koja se dokazuje i ovom izložbom portreta umetnika: nakon susreta sa njenim delima, i Sartr i Breht i Kafka i Bojs, a uz njih i Abi Knežević – ne prestajući da budu enigmatični, postaju deo našeg suživota, deo nas samih. Zar to nije jedan od ključeva kojima se brani Umetnost?



1	2	3
4	5	6

1. *Pikaso / Picasso* (1990–1995) ugalj – gvaš / coal – gouache, 45 × 34 cm
2. *Pikaso / Picasso* (1990–1995) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 33 × 24 cm
3. *Pikaso / Picasso* (1990–1995) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 33 × 24 cm
4. *Pikaso / Picasso* (1990–1995) gvaš – pastel / gouache – pastel, 33 × 24 cm
5. *Pikaso / Picasso* (1990–1995) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 33 × 24 cm
6. *Pikaso / Picasso* (1990–1995) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 45 × 34 cm

## **IRINA SUBOTIĆ**

### *Creative explosion of Branka Janković Knežević*

Branka Janković Knežević is aware of the responsibility of a painting. She knows that her dedication to the act of art is her personal passion and her need for expression, yet at the same time, she knows that a work of art speaks many languages, that it is read through the layers of its meanings, and that, on no account, is it a neutral, wordless communication with the public. If it is a work of art at all... At the same time, it is clear that the status of a work of art as a liberated reality and its social standing, most commonly a conflictual one, more or less naively conflictual (in the words of Achille Bonito Oliva), touch and often intertwine like the conscience of mankind, like a criterion of value and humanity. In that sense, as a way of distancing, irony appears, which frees the works of art of strictures and obligations, which marginalises the meaning and thus estranges art from social utopian requirements, while giving it back a much needed status of aesthetic reassessment, and directing it to the art itself and to the creative act itself, to the necessity of intimate expression, as a fundamental category of man, an artist above all.

Branka Janković Knežević's central topic of interest is the Persona, most commonly an individual who has left a profound impression on her life, as she says, an icon of her and our era, an intimate confession, as well as a generally acknowledged situation of modern civilisation. With unrestrained energy, she approaches the subjects she has dedicated dozens, hundreds of her works to, often in a clear course of an ever firmer synthesis of the form,

through which she finds the very essence of a person, his or her authentic character, temperament, and meaning. It seems that a certain amount of irony as a factor of liberation, which Akila Bonito Oliva also talks about, can be found in her closely woven series of portraits of artists: she once talked about "the affinity for notorious cynicism" (in the preface for the catalogue for the exhibition *For Josef K.*, The Grafički kolektiv Gallery, Belgrade, from November 2<sup>nd</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, 1988). Her devotion to a particular Persona is not only a search for the physiognomic façade of human form, but a way to the discovery of identity, ours – as much as hers, and that of the mankind in general. And the way to the discovery is a challenging one, diversified and rich, yet thorny: for the artist, this continual creative élan is a real, genuine fulfilment, her essential and vital need, thus the devotion to the theme, the stamina in the cycles which are never complete, hence the impressive result.

In one period Branka Knežević Janković used recognisable quotations from Egyptian, Medieval or Renaissance cultures, an occasional robust or angelic figure, and then her interest in personages prevailed – paradigms of our just flown away twentieth century – from Jean-Paul Sartre to Franz Kafka, from Bertolt Brecht to Danilo Kiš, or Pablo Picasso or Joseph Beuys. She was not enraptured with Sartre's leftist ideas, but with the multiple personality hidden behind his glasses; expressive photographs of Picasso were the starting point of the discovery of his multi-layered temperament; she admired Brecht as a brilliant great man and humanist.

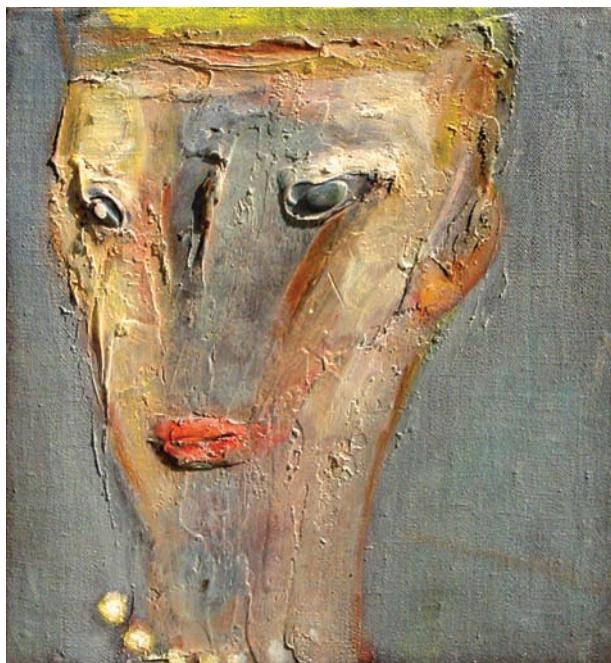
The encounter with Beuys in April 1974 in the Students' Cultural Centre in Belgrade was a positive shock. However, she admits that she had not been prepared for the encounter, for Beuys represented a big step forward, away from the tradition she had been taught; she could not accept his personality prone to excess; she was more moved by his appearance than the meaning of his artistic language and activities. For the artist all these personalities were "the habitat of sensors and spiritualism". Among these personalities, as a constant, a portrait of Abi threads through – the figure of Slobodan Knežević, also in all materials, dimensions, situations and stylisations – from the portrayable and recognisable, to the minimised, to the sky blue, deep, slanted tamed eye – of a loner, of a Beuysian coyote, of a forest wolf, of a wild mountain wolf, or of the ubiquitous Micko. Abi alone, or within the family *Trinity*, like a personification of the spiritualism within us, like a *picture-being*.

To all of them Branka has dedicated a large part of her opus, to each of them whole cycles, and they have become doubly emblematic pictures – a part of her art. In her works, their powerful character and potent energy have been retained, and their characteristic physiognomic features have become an abstract dialogue between lines and surfaces. Most commonly the chromatic way is also repeated, on the same principle: from the whiteness of limitless space and lighter colouristic layers, the artist reaches the darkened and bordered surfaces on which it is sometimes hard to recognise the surfacing and plunging of her transformed Personae, like distant reminiscences of the original models. In some works she took a photograph as the matrix, using, in Warholian manner, their most impressive and best-known, most popular and almost banal shots, to make from those initial inputs, through a series of variations and a number of techniques, the new *iconostases* - merely distant, almost metaphysical associations of the original figures.

It is true, the Persona is not the only preoccupation of Branka Janković Knežević: with the same curiosity she is

interested in the transposition of the environment, or to be more precise, a portrait of the nature she absorbs every day – the calm banks of the Danube, its quietly rippled surfaces, with light reflections like flashes of sensation, like vistas captured in one breath by a digital camera, which records, in hints, the life of the river from early morning to early dusk. Or like looking at oneself in the water, like a definition of tranquillity, reflection, and complexity of sense on the way towards understanding one's own I.

The artist believes in the evocative character of the matter and its layers which convey unnoted memory and absorb meanings; she uses the layers – in her opinion, it is "Art in its raw state", and the initial stage towards further formation of a work and profound familiarisation with what she wants to express. By means of these old, indestructible layers full of memories, by specific structure and facture, she achieves potent expressiveness and persuasiveness with only minimal intervention. Sometimes they are discarded covers of the Gospel, or some other old pieces of wood, clay, or leather – the ground on which she spreads layers of wax mass, a kind of encaustic, expressive on its own. From these strong impulses, apparitions of her figures emerge, along with a courageous application of various techniques – drawing, painting in tempera, in oils, watercolour or in acrylic, as well as collages of newspaper or another sort of paper or some unexpected material, often jumbled over each other, with smaller or larger interventions of temperamental strokes and layers with coloured accents, which sometimes leave the impression of a conscious negation of what has already been done. In one period she created figural objects made of a more robust kind of papier maché, with jute and newspaper, soaked in tile glue; this clash of substance and materials – of building material and a thin drapery which she put over delicate female figures, such as Eve and Mona Lisa, a nude or a self-portrait. Since the late 80s these have represented a search for new possibilities of a drawing in *extended field*, to paraphrase Rosalind Kraus. Furthermore, it is the creation of the *other Art* of Dubuffet-like harmony



1 2  
3 4

1. *Portret / Portrait* (1985) kombinovana tehnika – platno / combined technique – canvas,  $32,5 \times 28,5$  cm
2. *Portret / Portrait* (1985) kombinovana tehnika – platno / combined technique – canvas,  $32,5 \times 28,5$  cm
3. *Abi* (1985) kombinovana tehnika – lesnit / combined technique – fibreboard,  $56 \times 42$  cm
4. *Abi* (1985) kombinovana tehnika – lesnit / combined technique – fibreboard,  $32,5 \times 28,5$  cm

in which *maladresse antiplastique* was praised, and artists invoked Paul Klee.

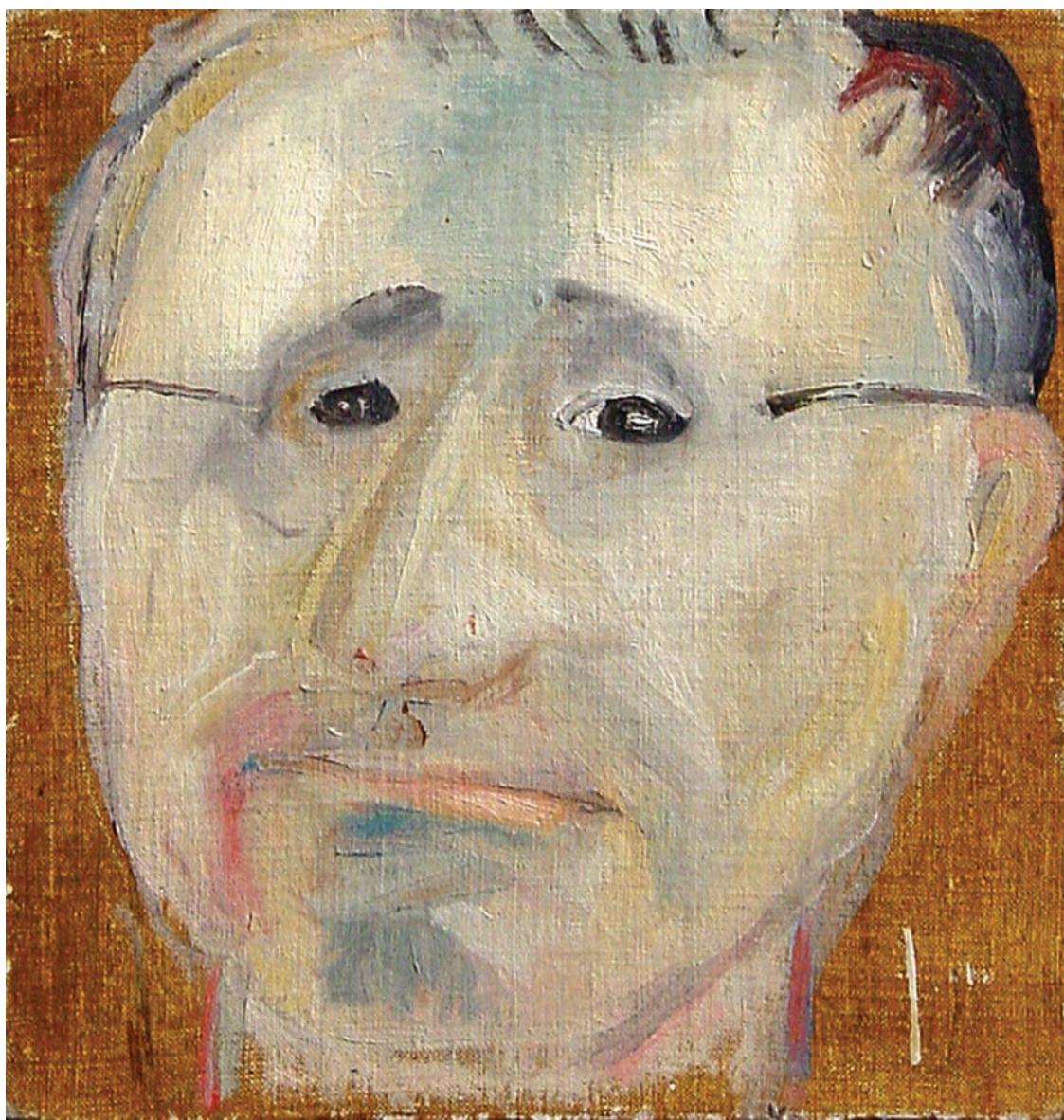
Experimenting with materials and various techniques, the artist confronts the pristine act of drawing, a strong and thick stroke of the hand with which she repeats the drawing – in a (post-modern) *repetition with a difference*. She usually works with the same paper format for specific series and cycles of her drawings, homogenous in the same way as the emphasised form of *framing* whose origins we find in film art, in a large close-up which draws the figure closer to us and tells us more about it. In that way, the artist creates a coherent work that is not a slave to constrictive rules, which, if she obeyed them, would restrain her from reaching a completely independent artistic expression. On the other hand, Branka Janković Knežević's work on the conservation and restoration of old monuments opened pathways for her to acquire technological knowledge, and prepared her for innovations, gave her freedom in the use of various materials. Following other ways of thinking, her signature and personal poetics improved, and she gained the courage to move from a single medium to complex ones, yet always aware of the meaning of this type of commitment, aware that in this way she highlights the symbolism and keeps her individuality.

The format of Branka Janković Knežević's drawings and paintings has a specific meaning: the artist feels that a small format gives her more direct contact, that it absorbs more of her intimate confessional tone, that it is the right measure of her direct, impulsive continual work. (This can especially be seen in a series of small works from the period around 1993 displaying a dimmed gamut, and speaking about the darkness within us and around us.) However, large format paintings and drawings, as more representative examples of her works, corresponded to a specific creative breath, to the moment which had not been born by her wish or order, in 1998/99, years filled with a heightened measure of fear, when she needed – as she believes – the large format to express the feeling of endangerment. It is symptomatic that at that moment Kafka

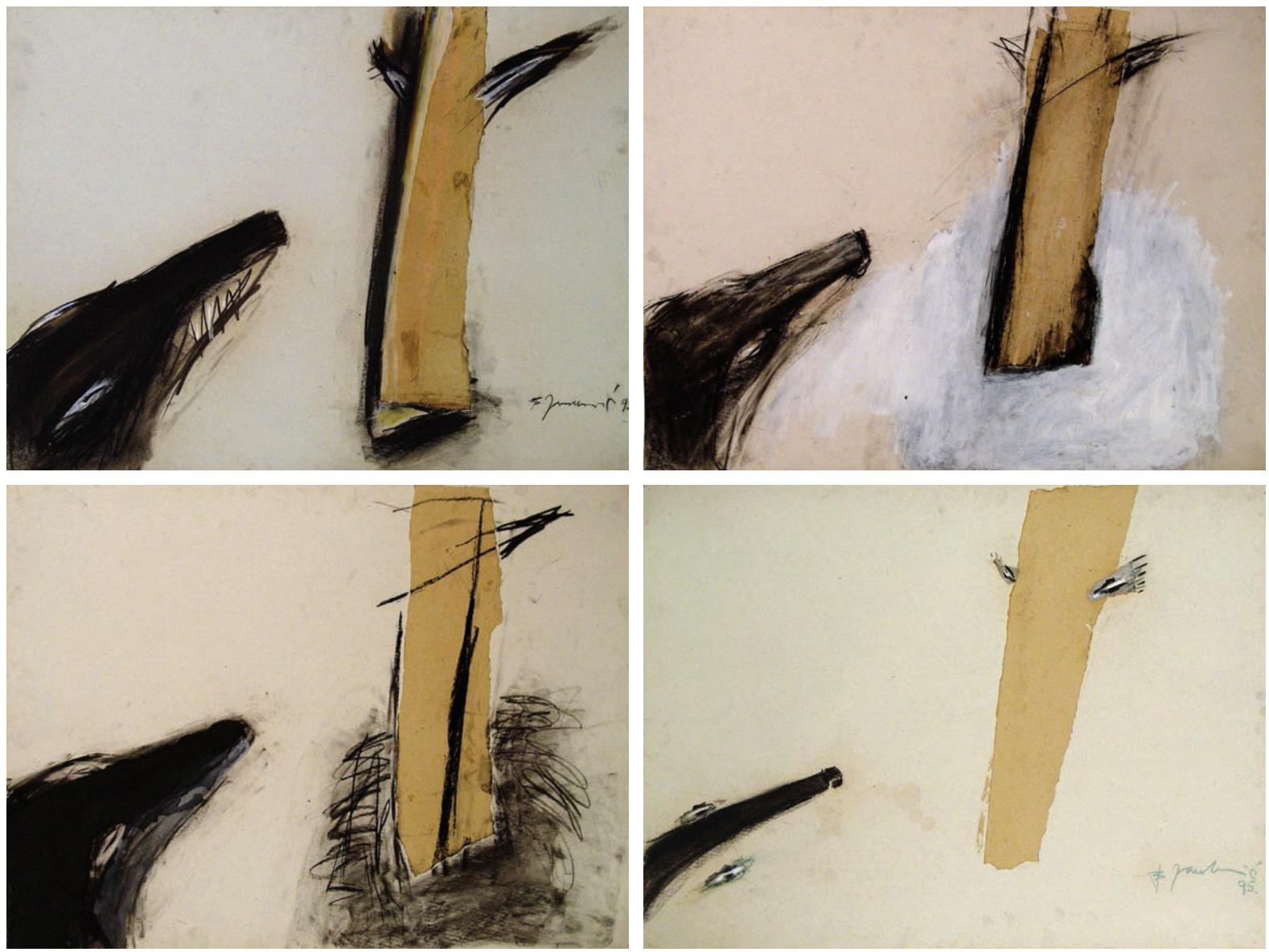
*Abi* (1985) relief na dasci / relief on board, 39 x 59 cm







Breht / Brecht (1986) ulje na platnu i dasci / oil on canvas and board, 31,5 × 29 cm



Portreti Abi - Bojs / Portraits Abi - Beuys (1994–1995) kolaž / collage, 70 × 100 cm

appears, whom, as an emblem of our unfortunate existence, she evokes, not only because of his commitment, but also as a symbol of the end of an epoch. The memorable exhibition of Branka Janković Knežević's drawings in the Grafički kolektiv Gallery in Belgrade (from November 2<sup>nd</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> 1998) was dedicated to Kafka, or to be more precise *To Joseph K.* In the catalogue of the exhibition, in the form of a dialogue between Franz K. and Branka K., which was orchestrated by the manager of the Gallery and the art critic Ljiljana Činkul, the artist said, 'For me the drawing is an unsurpassed mode of communication, a document of a unique poetic state, a medium in which cultural tradition has been accumulated, a field of explicit creative reviving of artistic imagination'. Indeed, the real vocation of the artist is the drawing, and that is what her numerous students feel, those to whom she transfers her experience, strength, knowledge, and a wealth of emotions...

Her works are participants in a process, they are not a still horizontal; she always intervenes, not accepting the existing motionless state, especially when she feels the need to get out of the square of the picture, to bring the audience closer, to show them the relief of ambivalent meaning. Here we approach possible connections between Branka Janković Knežević and Latin-American literature which has offered the key to her attitude towards actuality.

Working continually on portraiture, especially on the portraits of artists, Branka passes over various guidelines with the confidence and ease of a nomad, and meanwhile almost always keeps a certain expressionistic matrix which is charged with the experiences of ENFORMEL, followed by simplifications leading to the very essence, to the abstraction of recognisable detail and to one of the definitive solutions. Never to a single, definite form, however.

The suggestiveness and elusiveness of a portrait, the first experience of a Persona, is slowly, in a series of consecutive variations, resolved with stylisation, and also with deformation, which, according to the old theoretician of visual and film arts, Karl Einstein, replaces abstraction. Deformation is, however, not in the function of car-



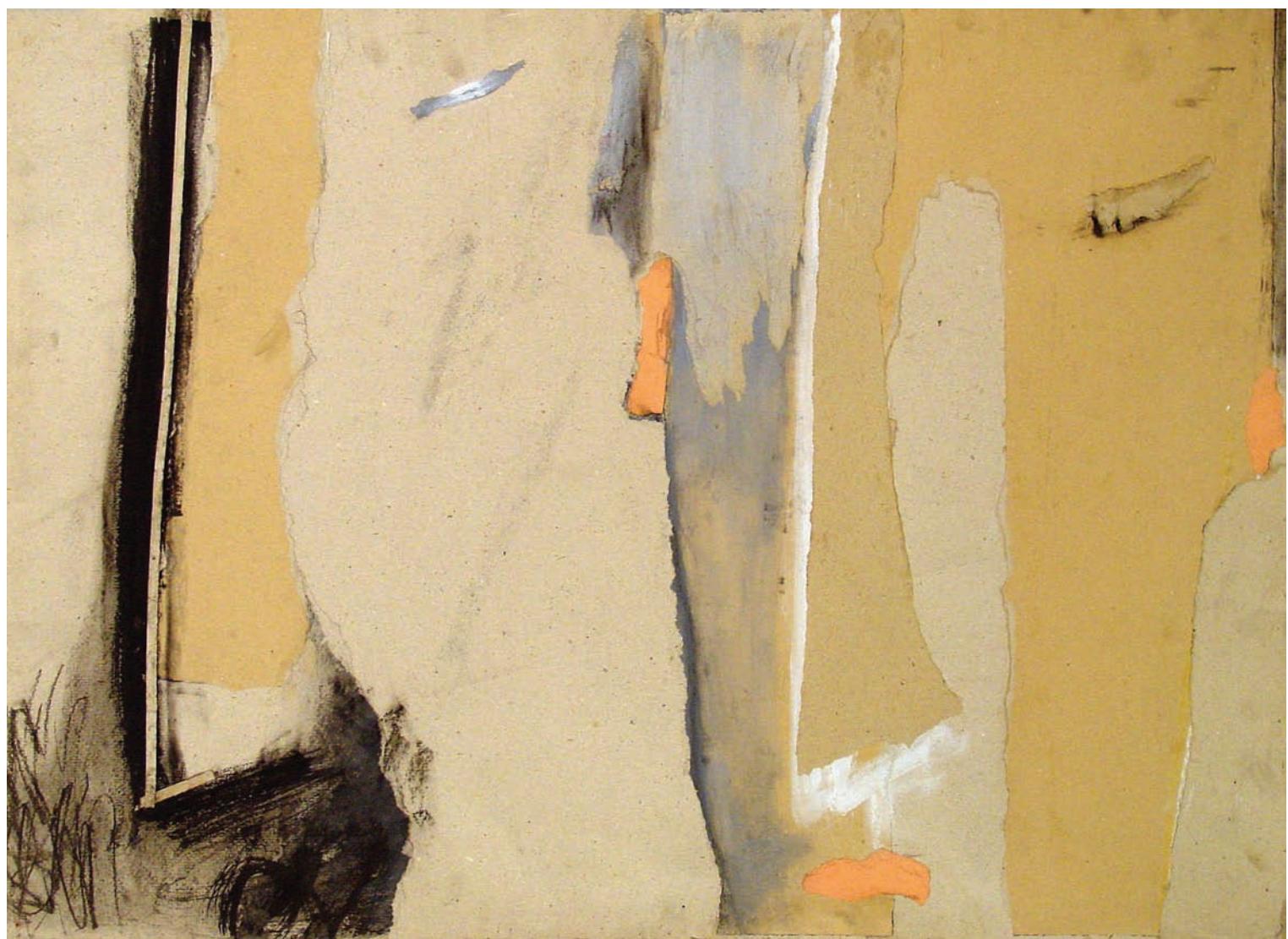


*Portreti / Portraits* (1994) kombinovana tehnika na kartonu / combined technique on cardboard, 30 x 29,8 cm

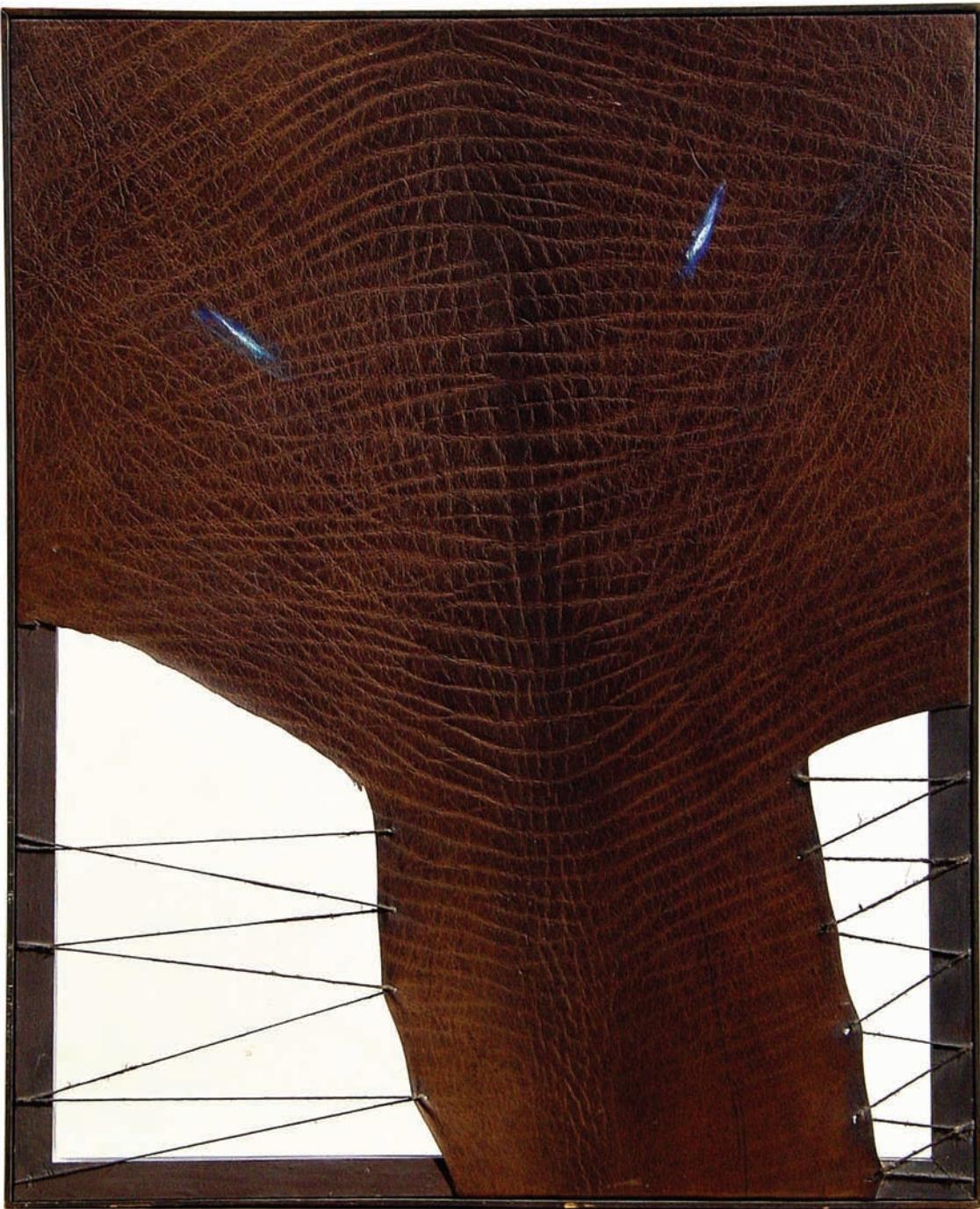


1    2    3  
4    5    6

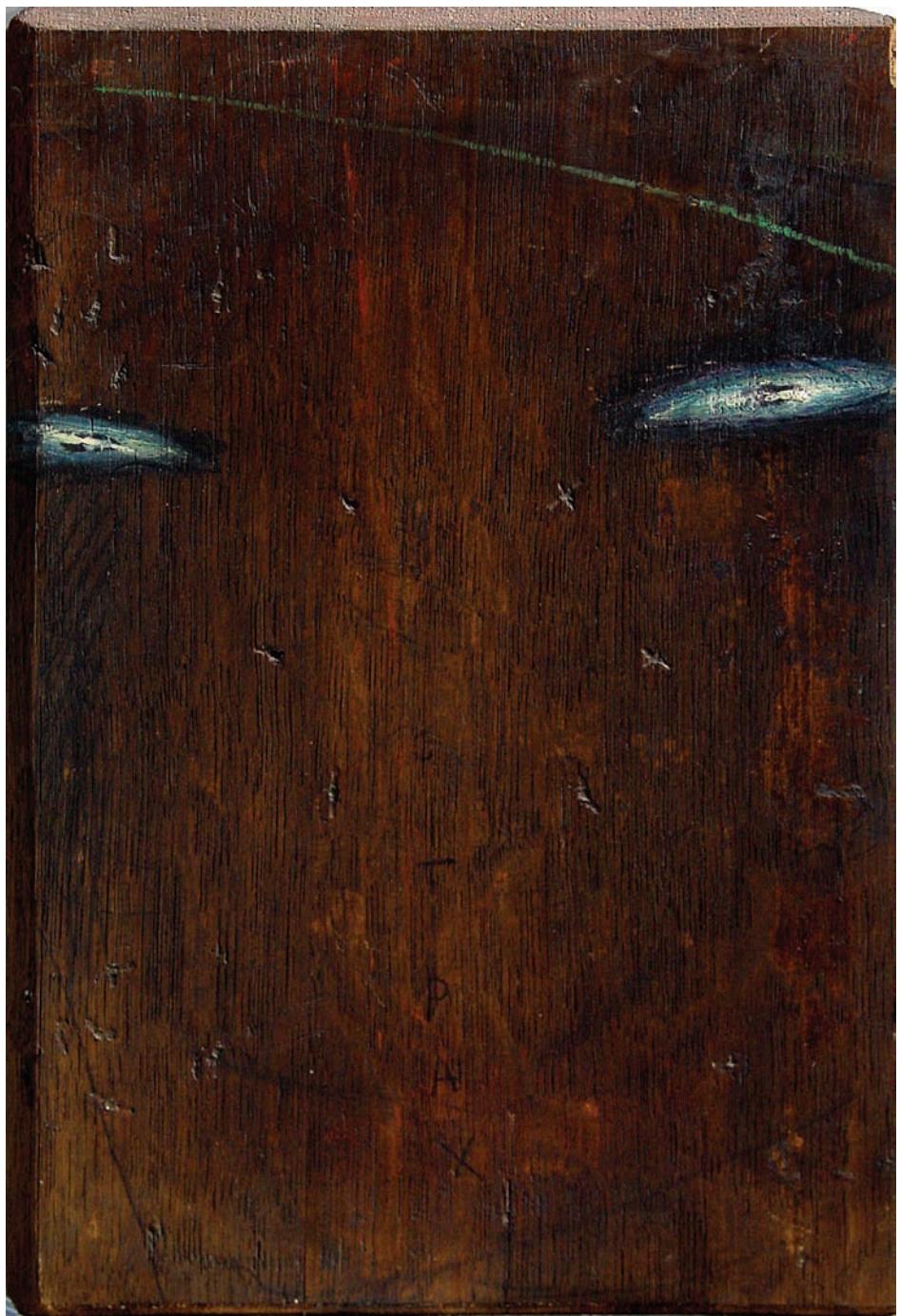
1. *Portreti / Portraits* (1990–1995) kolaž / collage, 50,5 × 35 cm
2. *Portreti / Portraits* (1990–1995) kolaž / collage, 50,5 × 35 cm
3. *Portreti / Portraits* (1990–1995) kolaž / collage, 50,5 × 35 cm
4. *Portreti / Portraits* (1990–1995) kolaž / collage, 50,5 × 35 cm
5. *Portreti / Portraits* (1990–1995) kolaž / collage, 33,5 × 28 cm
6. *Portreti / Portraits* (1990–1995) kolaž / collage, 70,5 × 41,5 cm



*Dvojni portret / Double portret* (1994) kolaž – kreda / collage – chalk, 70 × 100 cm



*Abi* (1991) koža / leather, 56 × 45 cm



*Abi* (1988) pastel na dasci / pastel on board, 46 × 29 cm



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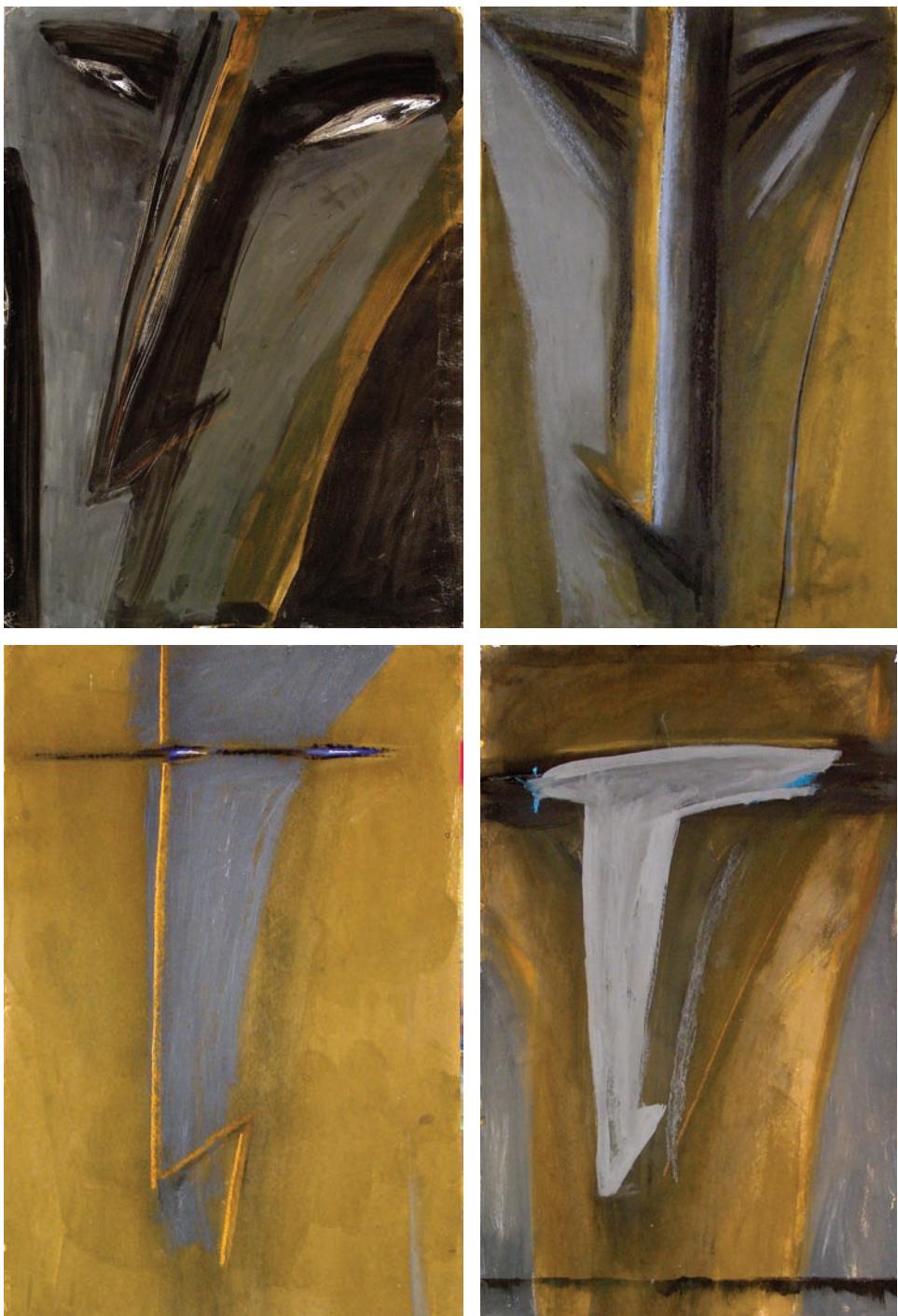
1. *Brecht / Brecht* (2000–2001) kombinovana tehnika na šperploči / combined technique on plywood,  $41,3 \times 33$  cm
2. *Brecht / Brecht* (2000–2001) kombinovana tehnika na šperploči / combined technique on plywood,  $41,3 \times 33$  cm
3. *Brecht / Brecht* (2000–2001) kombinovana tehnika na šperploči / combined technique on plywood,  $41,3 \times 33$  cm
4. *Brecht / Brecht* (2000–2001) kreda i ugalj na natronu / chalk and coal on Natron,  $70 \times 100$  cm

4

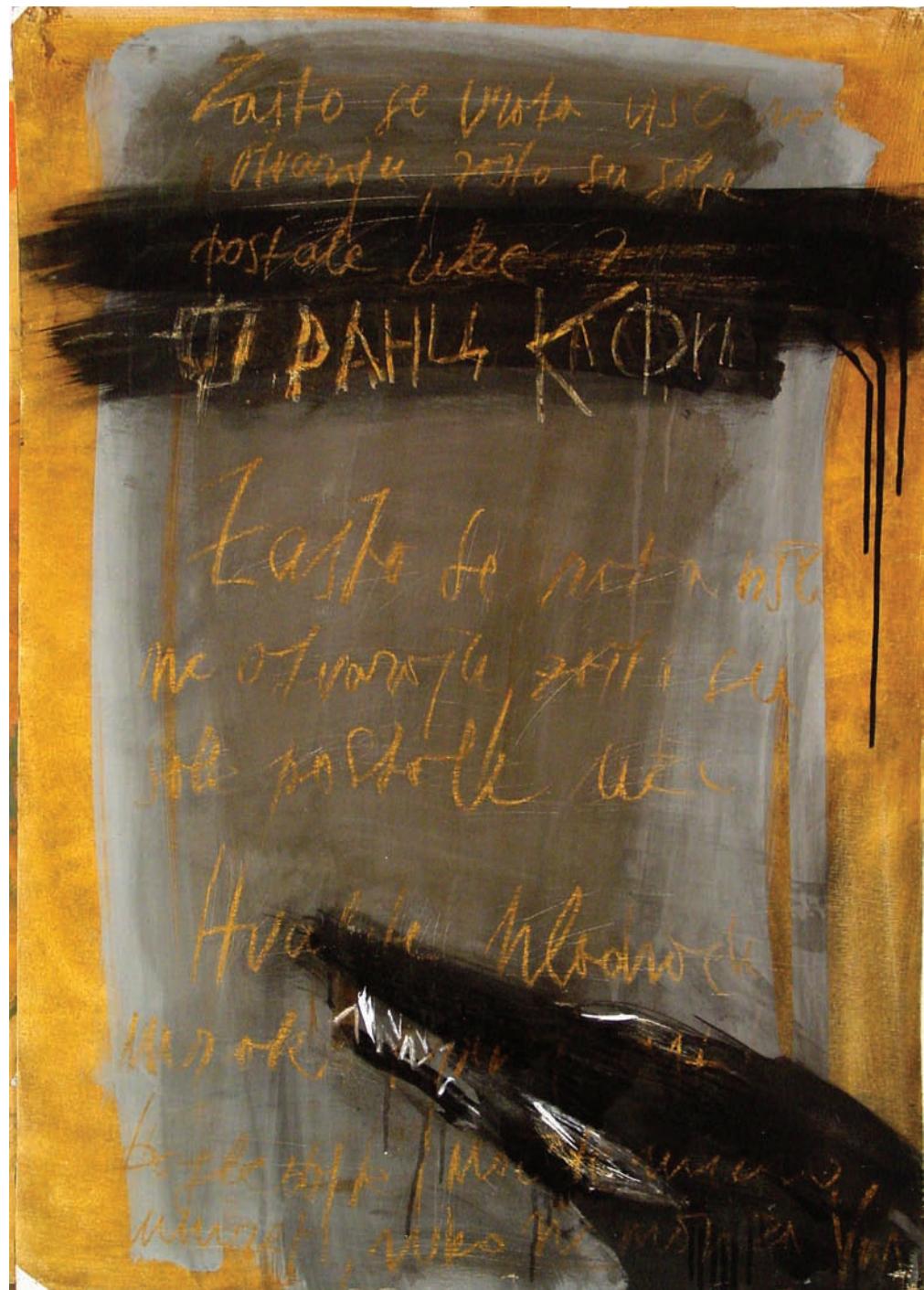


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1. *Portret / Portrait* (1995–1998) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm
2. *Autoportret / Self-portrait* (2000–2001) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm
3. *Autoportret / Self-portrait* (2000–2001) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 94 × 57 cm
4. *Portret / Portrait* (1995–1998) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 96 × 60cm
5. *Portret / Portrait* (1995–1998) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm
6. *Portret / Portrait* (1995–1998) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm



*Portreti / Portraits* (1995–1997) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm



Za Jozefa K. / For Josef K. (1995–1998) kombinovaná technika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm

icature – it could be talked about as auto-irony on the trail of self-cognizance, as Jungian archetypal iconography in which each represented Persona reveals (something of) its own image, as the biological retreats before the psychological, i.e. mental. The artist personalises her own views – her Personae were not chosen by chance, they determine her own self and her anthropologically inquisitive view on Man, on the respect for individuality, for the integrity of personality, man's psychological categories and spiritual distinctiveness. This physiognomic determination is part of a personality, its character and our knowledge about it.

With almost no exception, Branka Janković Knežević sets her portraits into the foreground, keeping the “charge of the primal idea”; her figures abolish traditional space, which becomes non-space and remains just a notion, like a dark mass, from whose background, Personae appear, leap out even from that bordered space, in the form of thick layers and rather forceful structural interventions, becoming almost sculpted surfaces, relief-like, low relief sculptures, or special forms, but always with an emphasis on bi-dimensionality, thus above all an emphases on painting-drawing quality of her work, on the drawing as a quest. They become pictorial structures based on elements of reality.

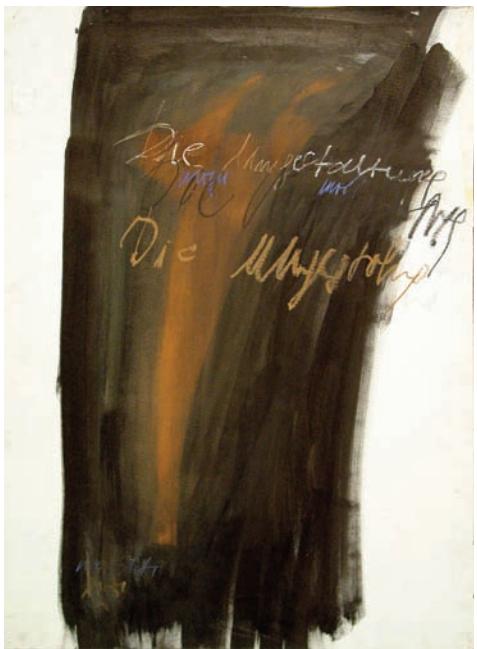
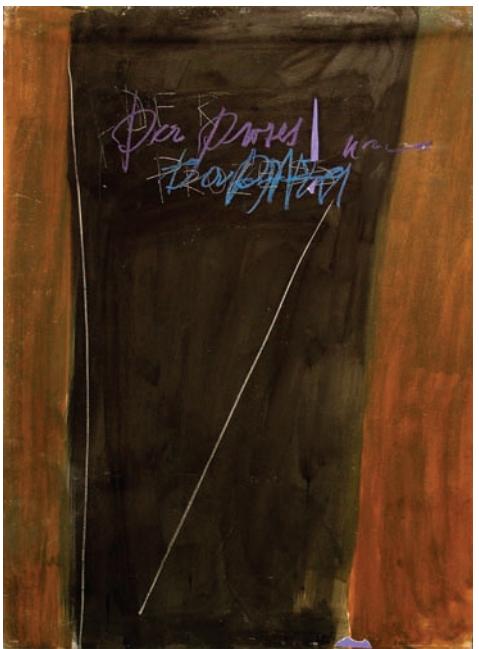
Branka Knežević Janković is an artist who thinks; her sensibility goes hand in hand with her awareness of how her portraits are created, all intuitive, unquenchable desire to create: ‘My concentric circles do not allow coming back, they carry personal experience of search, finding, denial, and new beginnings,’ she wrote in the text published in the catalogue for the exhibition *From the shape to the sign* (the Pečat Gallery, Novi Sad, November–December, 1996). With her it is not only the matter of creative order and work, but of an explosion of creativity as well, also proven by this exhibition of portraits of artists: after seeing her portraits, Sartre as well as Brecht and Beuys, and with them Abi Knežević – not ceasing to be enigmatic - they become part of our coexistence, part of ourselves. Is it not one of the keys Art is defended with?

(Translated by Danica Stanković)

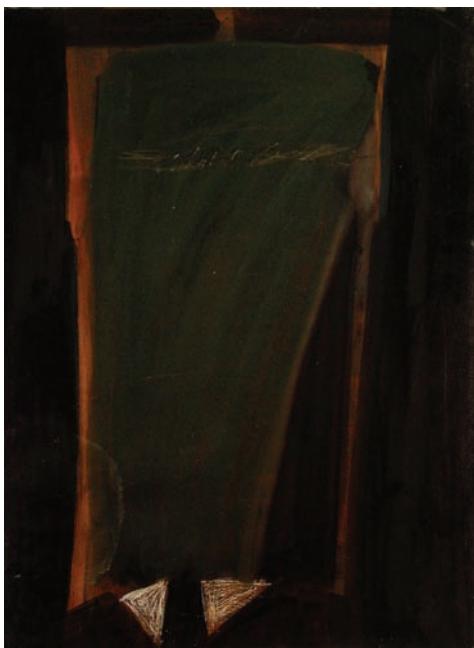
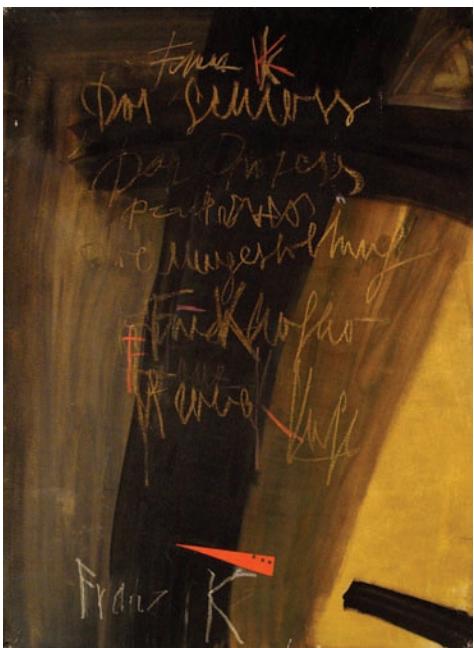
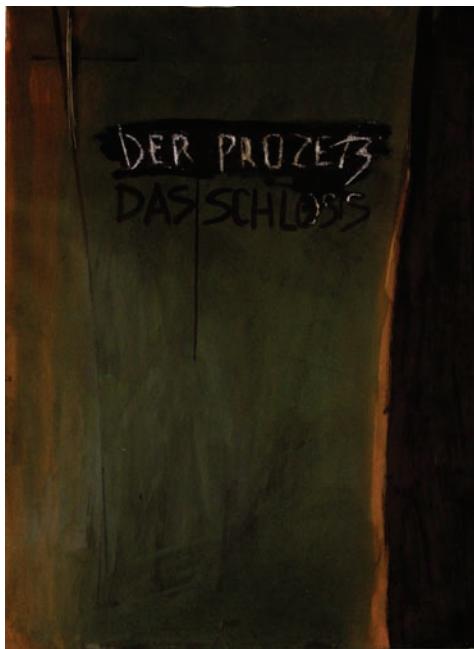




Za Jozefa K. / For Josef K. (1995–1998) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm



Za Jozefa K. / For Josef K. (1995–1998) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm



Za Jozefa K. / For Josef K. (1995–1998) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm



Za Jozefa K. / For Josef K. (1995–1998) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm

**IRINA SUBOTIĆ**

*Čekajući Godoa...*

Nakon serije portreta Žan-Pol Sartra, Franca Kafke, Bertolda Brehta, Pabla Pikasa, Jozefa Bojsa, Danila Kiša, stigao je i Samjuel Beket: Branka Janković Knežević je u njemu prepoznaла ne samo zanimljiv, uvek enigmatičan intelektualni lik karakterističnih fizionomskih crta, već ličnost – simbol, pisca koji nam je pre više od pola veka nepogrešivo ukazao na neke od suštinskih odlika modernog čoveka i sveta uopšte – na naš nemir, stalno nes zadovoljstvo i našu upitanost pred životnim damarima, na naše nade i (luda) očekivanja, na naše nepristajanje, čak i kada smerno sedimo i čutimo; kada čekamo Beketovog i našeg Godoa, tu generalnu, opšteprihvaćenu metaforu, sve više ubeđeni da on odista neće doći – bar ne u idealizovanom obliku koji priželjkujemo i u oročenom vremenskom roku koji se meri samo dužinom ljudske egzistencije.

Ova izložba crteža Branke Janković Knežević – uostalom kao i njeni raniji nastupi – može se protumačiti kao barometar reakcija na datosti okruženja. Kao u bujici misli i u talasima emocija, ona puni tmurnim,

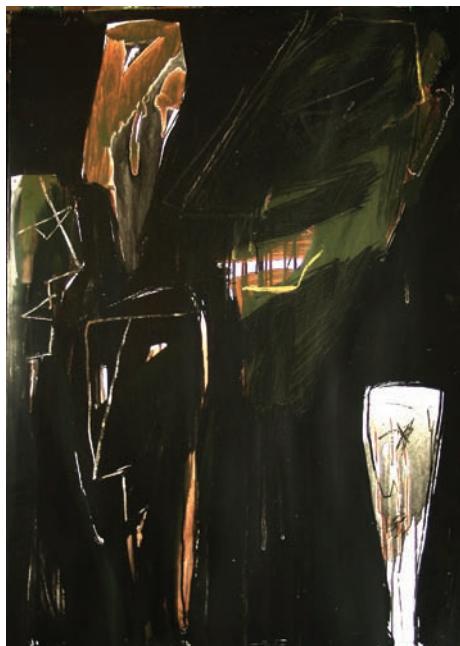
mučnim a žestokim namazima belinu papira do gotovo potpunog začepanja. Ostaju samo naznake – predosećaji izobličenih formi, i ta moguća ambivalentnost značenja još moćnije i sarkastičnije upućuje na diskurs o aktuelnosti. Njeni dugi potezi olovkom, četkom, bojom, u stvari su odslikavanje energije i ispuštanje grča, na granici automatizma i podsvesti, drugim rečima – iskaz duboko proživljene traume. To, međutim, nije lična ili intimna trauma, već opšta, kolektivna, dugotrajna, kao da je – večna. Zato bi bilo nemoguće zaobići značenje i pojам koji Samjuel Beket zrači a samim tim i prečutati da je i ovom svojom izložbom Branka Janković Knežević uputila vapaj: neće ga čuti oni kojima je upućen, ali ćemo mi – svedoci, učesnici ili žrtve istih uzročnika koji obezvređuju naše živote – osetiti da imamo u ovoj snažnoj i hrabroj umetnici sagovornika, istomišljenika i glasnogovornika istih, naših emocija.

Objavljeno u: I. Subotić, *Branka Janković Knežević. Crteži*, Galerija HAOS, Beograd 2008.

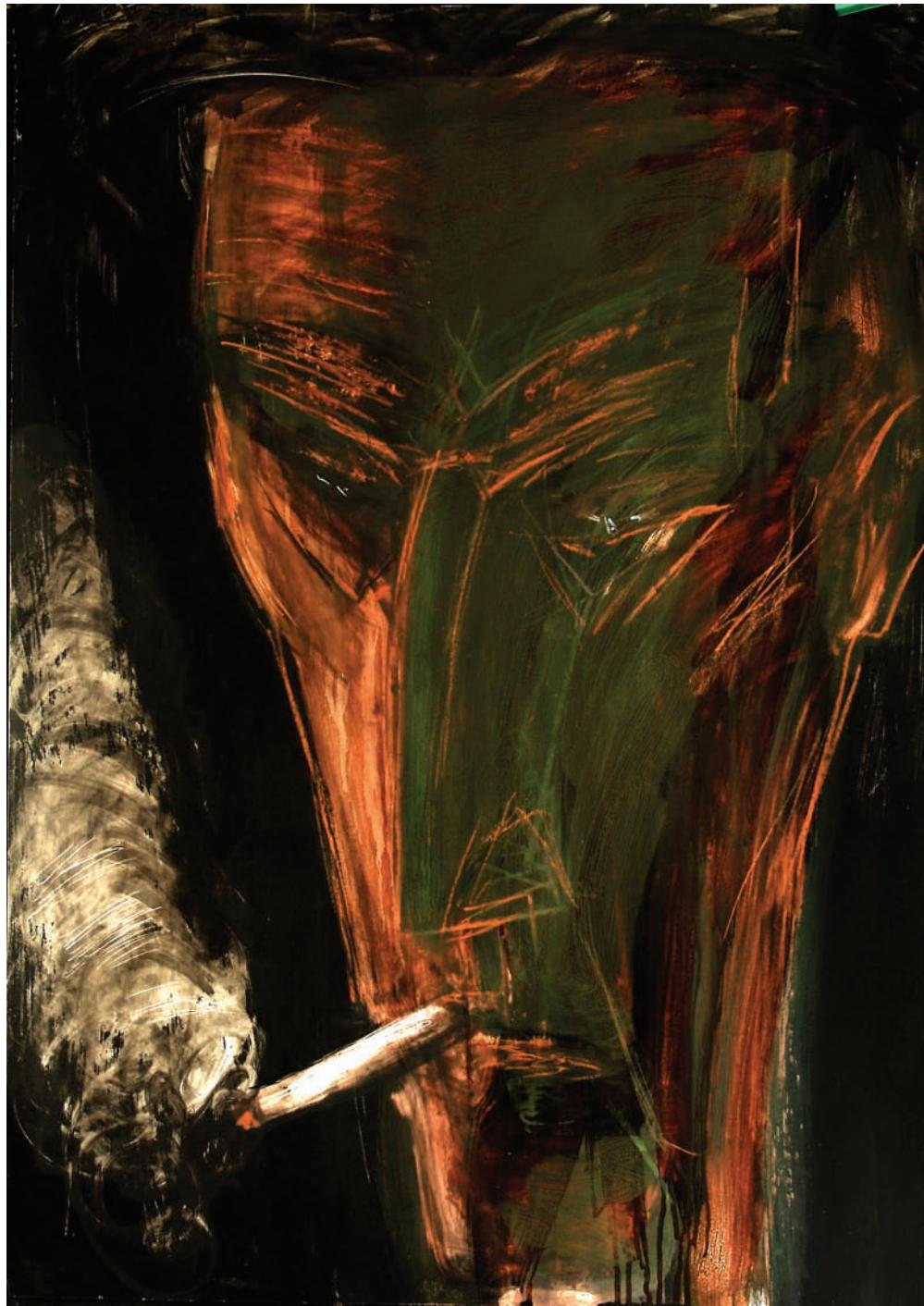


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1. *Godot neće doći / Godot will not come* (2013) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm  
(u vlasništvu Rektorata Univerziteta u Novom Sadu / property of the Rector's Office, University of Novi Sad)
2. *Čekajući Godota / Waiting for Godot* (2013) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 70 × 100 cm
3. *Čekajući Godota / Waiting for Godot* (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 60 × 80 cm
4. *Čekajući Godota / Waiting for Godot* (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 60 × 80 cm



Čekajući Godota / Waiting for Godot (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm



Čekajući Godot / Waiting for Godot (2007) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm  
(u vlasništvu Galerije HAOS, Beograd / property Gallery Chaos, Belgrade)

# **IRINA SUBOTIĆ**

## *Waiting for Godot...*

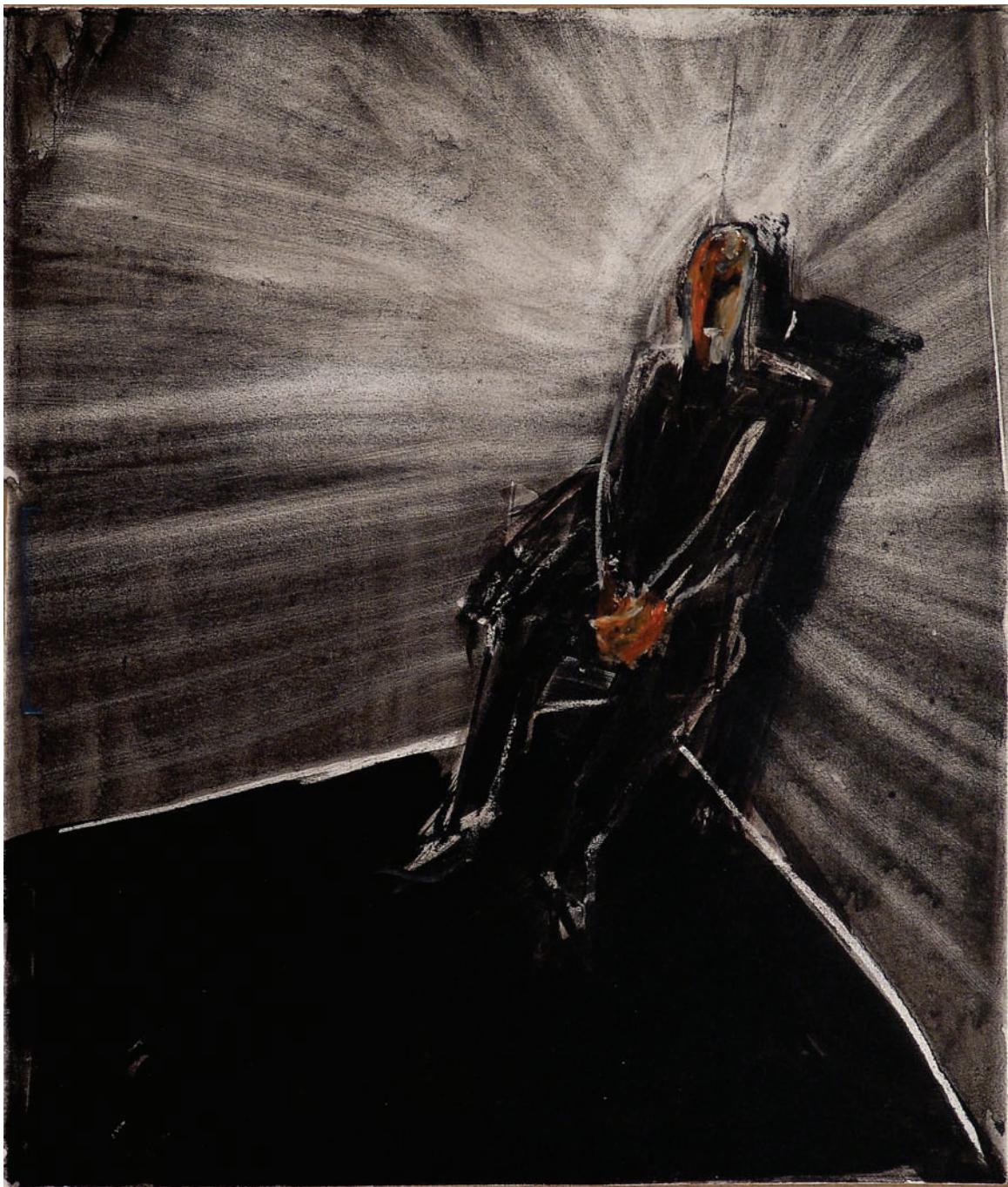
**A**fter a series of portraits of Jean-Paul Sartre, Franz Kafka, Berthold Brecht, Pablo Picasso, Joseph Boys and Danilo Kiš, there comes Samuel Becket, too. He is for Branka Janković Knežević not only an interesting, always enigmatic intellectual figure of specific physiognomic features but also a personality – symbol. A writer who more than half a century ago precisely pointed out some of the essential characteristics of modern man and world in general, our unrest, permanent discontent and our dilemmas over life chaos, a writer who pointed out our hopes, (crazy) expectations, our resistance, even when we stay humble and silent, while we are waiting for Becket's and our Godot, that general, widely accepted metaphor, still more and more convinced he is in fact not coming, at least not in the idealized form we wish and in the period of time limited by human life time and existence.

Like her earlier performances, this exhibition of drawings of Branka Janković Knežević can be interpreted as a barometer of reactions to the reality surrounding us. Like in torrent of thoughts and waves of emotions, she completely fills up the whiteness of paper with gloomy and painful but severe layers. What remains after are only

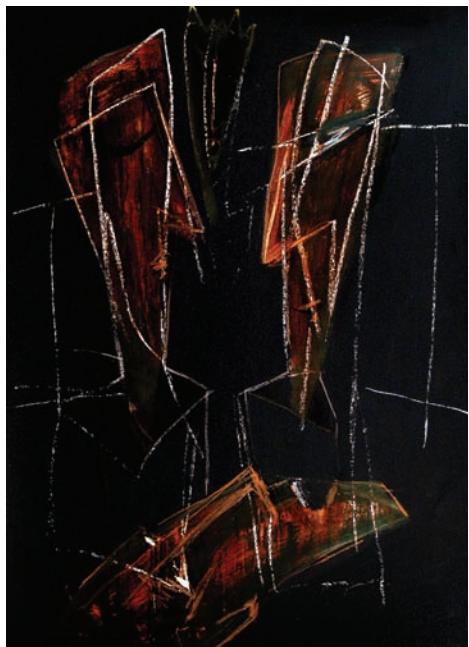
indications and anticipations of distorted forms. That possible ambivalence of meanings directs us even more powerfully and more sarcastically towards discourse upon actuality. Her lengthy strokes of the pencil, bush and color actually reflect the energy and cramp, between the automatism and unconsciousness in other words, they are the expression of a deeply experienced trauma. However, that is not a personal or an intimate trauma, but general, collective and long lasting trauma which seems to be eternal. It would be therefore, impossible to ignore the meaning and idea of Samuel Becket. It would at the same time mean that we ignore the cry coming from this exhibition of Branka Janković Knežević. It would not be heard by those intended to but we, the witnesses, participants or victims of those disparaging our lives will feel that this strong and brave artist is our conversationalist, like minded person and loud speaker of the emotions same as ours.

(Translated by Maja Zauner)

Published in: I. Subotić, *Branka Janković Knežević*.  
Crteži, Galerija HAOS, Beograd 2008.



Čekajući Godot / Waiting for Godot (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 35 × 25 cm  
(u vlastništvu KUNST UND KULTUR, Beč / property KUNST UND KULTUR, Wien)



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4	5	6

1. Čekajući Godoa / Waiting for Godot (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm
2. Čekajući Godoa / Waiting for Godot (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 35 × 25 cm
3. Čekajući Godoa / Waiting for Godot (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 35 × 25 cm
4. Čekajući Godoa / Waiting for Godot (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 35 × 25 cm
5. Čekajući Godoa / Waiting for Godot (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 70 × 100 cm
6. Čekajući Godoa / Waiting for Godot (2005–2015) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 70 × 100 cm



*Autoportret / Self-portrait* (1997) kombinovana tehnika / combined technique, 100 × 70 cm  
(u vlasništvu Ogranka Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti u Novom Sadu / property of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts Branch in Novi Sad)

# **BRANKA JANKOVIĆ KNEŽEVIC**

*U traganju za izgubljenim  
vremenom*

**N**ikada nisam očekivala da će mi se desiti umetnost sa velikim „U“. Mislim da je to rasterećenje za svakog stvaraoca. Zato sam paralelno usavršavala konzervaciju i restauraciju, kopiranje fresaka i štafelajnog slikarstva – sofisticirane „zamate“ koji su mi obezbeđivali egzistenciju. To mi je omogućilo da ostanem dostoјanstvena i slobodna – na svom kursu, bez prilagođavanja trendovima, da „govorim“ (i izlažem) samo kada imam šta da kažem.

Zato se moja „umetnost“ pojavljuje u obimnim ciklusima – a zbog velikih pauza – svaki put kao novi početak. Cikluse višežnačnih portreta, smenuju fini pasaži posvećeni Dunavu – vodi, kao pokušaj ignorisanja nadolazećeg zla. Poslednjih dvadesetak godina, posle perioda ne-delanja, akumuliranu energiju eksplozivno kanališem u stotine crteža. Nema reprezentativnih formata, ni prefijenjenih eksperimenata sa materijalima, biram tehniku koja me bespogovorno sluša – crtež. A teme se same nameću, u interesantnim vremenima, koja su obeležila i na mnogo načina obezvredila naše živote.

Ipak, smatram da sam imala privilegiju da se bavim onim što volim – odnosno da volim ono što radim, od konzervacije preko profesure do umetničkog rada. U sva tri zanimanja sam ulazila sa posvećenošću, strašću i strahopostovanjem.

Na kraju, da parafraziram Marsela Prusta, verujem da se u mom epskom „traganju za izgubljenim vremenom“ ipak dogodila neka umetnost.

# **BRANKA JANKOVIĆ KNEŽEVIC**

*In Search of the Lost Time*

**I** have never dreamed that art with capital “A” will ever reach me. I believe it is the burden off each creator’s shoulders. That is why I simultaneously studied conservation and restoration, fresco replicating and easel painting – sofisticated “crafts” which I have done for living. It helped me to remain dignified and free, keeping the course of my own, without adjusting to trends, and only communicating (and exhibiting) when there is something to communicate.

That is why my “art” appears in extensive series, and due to the lengthy pauses, every time seems like a new beginning. The series of multifaceted portraits are being interchanged with striking passages dedicated to the Danube – the water, as an attempt to ignore the upcoming evil. During the last twenty years, after an idle period, I have passionately channeled the accumulated energy into hundreds of drawings. There are no typical formats, no subtle experiments with materials, I have chosen the technique that obeys me – the drawing. The themes have imposed themselves, in curious periods, which have enriched our lives, but also made them worthless.

However, I consider myself privileged to do what I love and to love what I do, from conservation and academic work to art. I have engaged all professions with commitment, passion and awe.

In the end, to paraphrase Marcel Proust, I believe that in my epic “search of the lost time” an art appeared.

(Translated by Sava Rakic)

**Izdavač / Publisher**  
Muzej grada Novog Sada / City Museum of Novi Sad

**Za izdavača / For the publisher**  
MSc Vesna Jovičić, direktorka / director

**Autori tekstova / Authors of the articles**  
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**Fotografija / Photography**  
Pavle Jovanović

**Lektor / Editor**  
Vesna Bašić

**Prevod / Translation**  
Sava Rakić, Lilla Jakobsz-Németh, Danica Stanković, Maja Zauner

**Grafičko oblikovanje / Graphic design**  
Atila Kapitanj

**Štampa / Print**  
JP Službeni glasnik, Beograd

**Tiraž / Circulation**  
250

[www.brankajankovic.com](http://www.brankajankovic.com)

ISBN 978-86-7637-091-7

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији Библиотека Матице српске, Нови Сад  
75.071.1.929 Janković-Knežević B.(083.824)

ЈАНКОВИЋ-КНЕЖЕВИЋ, Бранка, 1950- Branka Janković Knežević : портрети = portraits / [автор изложбе] Jelena Banjac ;  
автори текстова Jelena Banjac ... [ет ал.] ; фотографија Pavle Jovanović ; превод Sava Rakić ... [ет ал.]. - Нови Сад : Музеј града  
Новог Сада, 2016 (Београд : Слуžbeni glasnik). - [60] стр. : илустр. ; 22 cm Упоредо срп. текст иengl. превод. - Тираž 250.  
ISBN 978-86-7637-091-7

а) Јанковић-Кнешевић, Бранка (1950-) - Сликарство - Изложбени каталоги  
COBISS.SR-ID 302515207

Publikovanje kataloga i realizaciju izložbe omogućila je Uprava za kulturu grada Novog Sada /  
The catalogue is published and the exhibition is realized by the Office of Cultural Affairs of Novi Sad

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