

Tomo Gerić
U SVEMIRU JE SVE SAMO SVEMIR

**Mala galerija Zajednice Talijana
"Giuseppina Martinuzzi" Labin**

GGL

gradska galerija labin
lipanj 2014.

U svemiru je sve samo svemir

Moje zanimanje za svemir bilo je oduvijek čudesno i snažno. Još kao mali bio sam fasciniran prizorom: dolje zemlja, gore nebo. Jednom sam krenuo prema mjestu gdje se nebo spaja sa zemljom. Izgledalo je blizu. Sjećam se da mi je trava sezala do ramena. Vratio sam se neobavljena posla jer je cilj bio stalno jednako daleko. Ipak, čitav život pokušavam ponovo. Ali to što je nekad bilo jednako daleko, danas je nezamislivo daleko. U svemiru je sve samo svemir. Svojim radom želim čovjeka podsjetiti da je zapravo sitnica u tomu prostoru, ali istinski sretan što je dio toga, što se kreće po zemlji, a iznad njega je beskrajni plavi svod, oblaci i zvijezde.

Tako je započeo moj razgovor s Tomom Gerićem, slikarom i kiparom, umjetnikom koji je u gotovo šest desetljeća kreativnog djelovanja stvorio opus visokih estetskih domašaja, temeljen na znanju, vještini, snazi izričaja i doživljaja, na načelima strogosti, reda, čistoće i sklada. Rođen je 1933. u Vrbanovcu. Diplomirao je na Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti u Zagrebu 1957. u klasi prof. Otona Postružnika. Od 1957. do 1962. bio je suradnikom Majstorske radionice Krste Hegeđušića. Slijedile su samostalne i skupne izložbe u zemlji i u inozemstvu, pohvale, uspjesi, nagrade i priznanja. Izlagao je s grupom *Mart* u Austriji (1961.) i Nizozemskoj (1962.). Godine 1971. iznenadila je njegova odluka da se iz Zagreba, središta likovnih zbivanja, nakon vrlo ozbiljnog starta i umjetničkih uspjeha (renome vrsnog umjetnika stekao je gotovo na početku svoga umjetničkog djelovanja), preseli u Oprtalj (Istra), u osamu i izoliranost. Danas zna da to nije bio dobar iskorak: *Htio sam živjeti izvan gradske gužve, biti blizu prirodi. No, trebalo je i preživjeti s obitelji, trebalo je slikati ono što se moglo prodati. A vrijeme se nemilosrdno trošilo.* U Oprtlju je proveo 23 godine. Svoj je novi dom našao u Dragi kraj Rijeke gdje i danas živi i stvara, daleko od rasprava i dokazivanja, daleko od angažmana i svega onoga što bi ga moglo udaljiti od umjetnosti i prirode. Podjednako je njegovo zanimanje za slikarstvo, kiparstvo, keramiku i crtež. Nakon Akademije, sve do umirovljenja, djeluje kao samostalni umjetnik.

U Oprtlju je nastala cjelina keramičkih figura pod nazivom *Kupači* (1970. - 1994.) koje je grupirao u nekoliko različitih stilskih određenja. Prvu grupu čine mirni volumeni glatkih, napeto zaobljenih ploha, naglašene simetrije, sažete kiparske morfologije, jezgrovite koncepcije ženskih tijela koje nose nešto arhajsko, blisko sitnoj plastici ženskih paleolitskih i neolitskih figurica. Odlučniju sintezu temeljenu na ideji konstrukcije primijenio je na grupi glinenih figura s motivom športaša. Sustavom dodavanja obliha geometrijskih elemenata (valjaka) s efektima lomljenja, postigao je snagu napetih odnosa i disciplinu forme. Ekspresivnu izražajnost u modelaciji volumena oštih rezova i uznemirene, grubo obrađene površine postigao je u grupi ženskih i muških figura koje govore kretanjem i dinamikom odnosa, grčenjem i lomljenjem oblika i ploha. Premda malih dimenzija, daju dojam monumentalnosti.

Slike kupača nastale su kasnije, 2008. – 2011. One su dvodimenzionalni zapisi njegovog trodimenzionalnog promišljanja. Nose energiju skulptura. Istim je likovnim jezikom i istom mjerom potvrdio poziv slikara i poziv kipara. Zanimljivo je kako preko slobodnih ploha putuju linije koje više služe kompoziciji nego predodžbi figura i sadržaju slike. Jer, i slikarska i skulptorska realizacija *Kupača* temeljena je na crtežu.

Crtežom razlaže svoju analizu, svoju zaokupljenost volumenom, strukturom i geometrijom, crtežom razrješava osobitost svoje konstruktivne misli.

Kroz sva desetljeća stvaranja, od samih slikarskih i kiparskih početaka do danas prati ga motiv kugle. Prve kugle nastale su još krajem pedesetih, u Majstorskoj radionici Krste Hegedušića. Boris Kelemen je njegove planetarne kugle iz šezdesetih doživio kao apokaliptičnu viziju straha od uništenja svijeta: *Taj slikar nije usmjerio svoj pogled na prošlost, već na kataklizmu budućnosti u kojoj kugle rastočene materije bezumno jure po pustoši u ništavilo kao u nekom halucinantom snu u atomskoj katastrofi.** Motiv kugle, u slikarskoj i kiparskoj realizaciji, zaokuplja ga do danas, ne samo kao forma, već i kao problemsko razrješavanje likovnih problema i situacija koje mu omogućuju stilska variranja i transformacije ovoga geometrijskog oblika. Kugle je gradio na strogim načelima geometrizma i konstruktivizma, ali i na podlozi intimizma i lirske ekspresije. Zatvarao ih je u čvrste konstrukcije ili ih je otvarao sve do unutrašnjosti jezgre, dodavao im je boju do usijanja ili im je oduzimaо sve do tamnih akromatskih polja. Gerić nije kolorist. *Profesor Postružnik nam je govorio da sve što vidimo ima svoju boju. I ono što obično zovemo sjenom, samo je boja. Ali boja nikada nije bila u središtu moga zanimanja.*

Kromatske ili akromatske, analitične ili lirske, kugle odražavaju puninu i kompaktnost volumena, u sebi nose poruke savršenstva i cjelovitosti. One su mjera Gerićeve umjetničke naravi u kojoj žive dvije vizije svijeta: ona analitična, racionalna, disciplinirana i ona intimna, emotivna, ljudski ranjiva. Kugle su njegova veza s početcima, neka vrsta njegovog osobnog slikarskog planetarija, njegov način komunikacije s umjetnošću, sa samim sobom i sa svijetom u kojemu živi. O svojoj prvoj slikarskoj kugli danas kaže: *Kako nisam imao nova platna, staru sliku bih lagano premazao. Na taj način bih uvijek dobio nekakvu mutnu sliku. Odjednom sam na premazanoj slici uočio lebdeći objekt. S malo posla nastala je prva slika s motivom lebdeće kugle. Sačuvao sam samo fotografiju te slike, sliku sam opet preslikao. Nisu mi bile važne slike, važno je bilo slikati.*

Gerićeve *Slikarske konstrukcije* (2010. do 2012.) djeluju poput moćnog zastrašujućeg stroja koji lebdi u praznom prostoru. Centrirane su u strogj projekciji geometrije, uravnotežene tektonskom jasnoćom i čistoćom oblika te britkim geometrijskim kubističkim i ekspresionističkim rezovima s efektima plastičnog iskustva. Potvrđuju autorovu kiparsku vokaciju: u čistoj dvodimenzionalnosti izgovaraju skulptorsku ideju, zaokupljenost volumenom, njegovom težinom, njegovim dinamičnim ustrojstvom i kretanjem. *Mojim slikama i crtežima nedostaje samo još jedan korak pa da postanu skulpture*, kaže autor. Sve varijacije ove ideje slijede struju konstruktivizma. Kubizam i konstruktivizam su stilska obzorja Gerićeva izričaja koja su oslobodila njegovu stvaralačku energiju i dovela ga do elementarnosti vizije u kojoj mu je primarna ideja i logični govor oblika u slobodnom prostoru. Elementi konstrukcije uvlače se jedan u drugi ostvarajući dinamiku prostora u dubinu, širinu i visinu. I ovi oblici djeluju moćno, u pogledu s distance dobivaju lakoću, dozivaju rotacijski efekt i dojam lebdenja u prostoru.

Zgušnjavanje plošnih struktura najčešće se događa u sredini. *Da bi slika bila čvrsta i stabilna, da ima balans, mora se točno znati što se želi, jedna mala crta zna povući u neželjeni prostor*, kaže autor. Ponegdje tek mali bijeli trokut usred teških crnih

konstruktivnih elemenata otvara prodor u prostor. Zapravo se u tom malom trokutastom otvoru u središtu konstrukcije pojavljuje oblik velikog svemirskog prostora kao bezglasni odjek praznine. Mogli bismo satima istraživati njegovu umjetničku viziju iluzije dubine, smjerove kretanja, međuovisnost konstruktivnih elemenata, odgonetavati kako u svojoj plošnoj viziji uspijeva postići dojam pokrenutosti mase u prostoru. Ali Gerićevoj slici izvan nje same ništa nije važno.

Početakom 2012. geometrizam je krenuo u drugom smjeru: javila se površina. Da bi došao do strukture površine, pijeskom je strugao boju (većinom crnu) prethodno nanесenu na platno grube teksture. Tako je nastala tvorna pokrenutost površine, materijalizacija prostora na površini platna. Površina je dobila prugastu ili rebrastu materičnu strukturu koja podupire iluziju o pokrenutosti. Gerić je već u Majstorskoj radionici pijeskom doradivao površinu slike: *Uvijek sam s oduševljenjem koristio strukture prirodnih materijala ili one nastale obradbom. Već na mojim prvim samostalnim izložbama veći dio eksponata rađen je na tom principu. Nažalost, od tih radova ostale su samo fotografije. Kad sam napuštao Majstorsku radionicu, završili su kojekako, nisam ih imao gdje spremiti.*

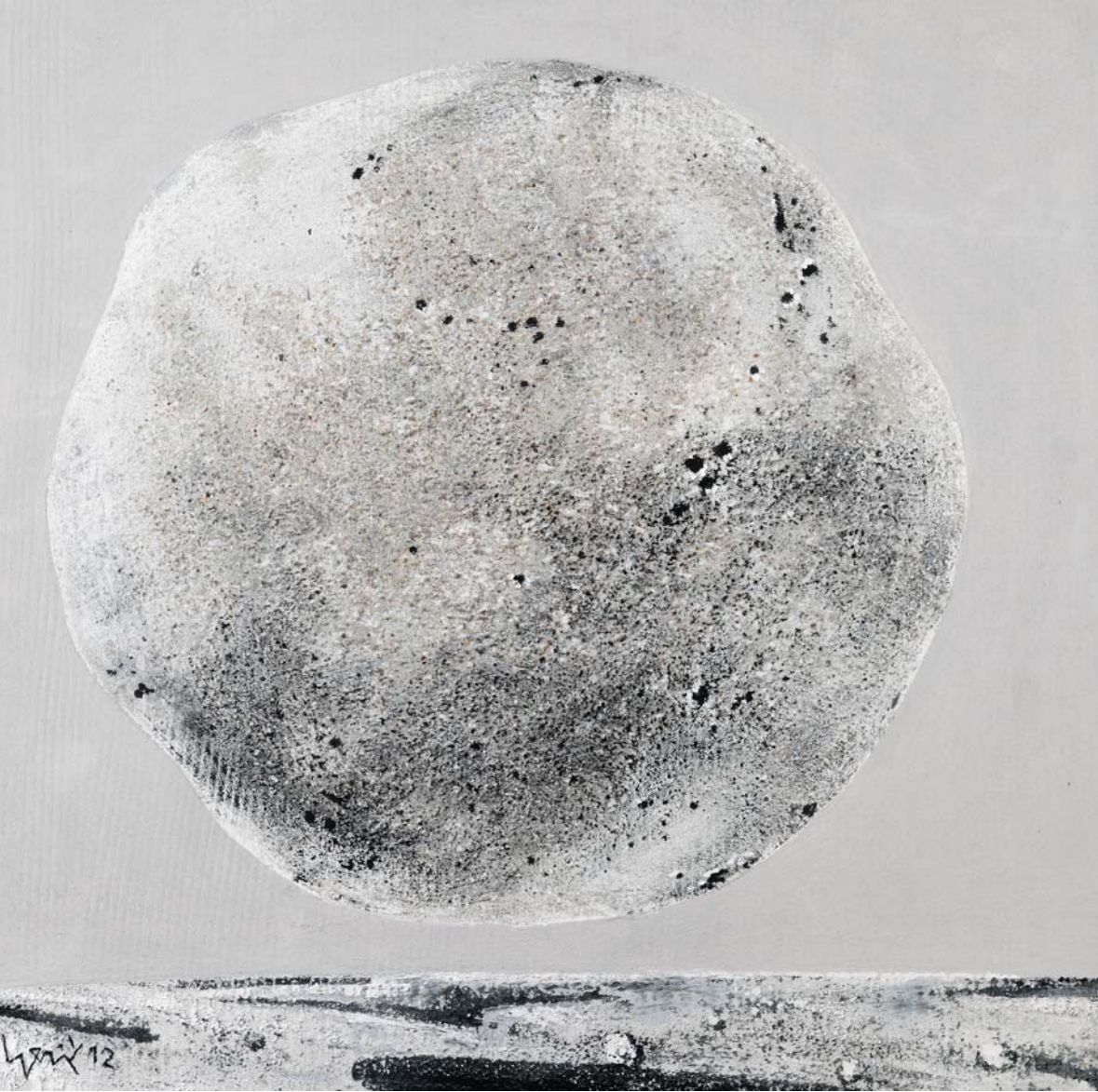
Tomo Gerić živi svoju umjetnost i svoje razloge iskreno, pošteno i hrabro. Umjetnik je dosljednog kontinuiteta, u sebi dorečenog i iskreno odmjerenog: intimnog u svojoj umjetničkoj istini, monumentalnog u doživljaju oblika. Kada danas odmjeravamo njegovu dosljednost i ustrajnost u istraživanju pokrenutosti oblika i života pojednostavljene forme u prostoru slike, njegovu zanatsku vještinu i majstorstvo koje poznaje i priznaje samo govor suštine, čistoću i univerzalnost likovnoga jezika, jasno nam je da je svoje vrijeme stvaranja gradio kao ozbiljnu autorsku i suvremenu posebnost. Tragajući za iskonskim životnim i umjetničkim istinama iskreno i hrabro, čitav svoj slikarski, kiparski i grafički opus naslonio je na načela promišljenosti, logike i reda.

Branka Arh

*B. Kelemen, Fantastično slikarstvo šestog desetljeća u Hrvatskoj. U katalogu, Jugoslavensko slikarstvo šeste decenije, Beograd, 1980.



Kupačica, 1978., terakota patinirana, 29 x 16 x 23 cm
Female bather, 1978, patinated terracotta, 29 x 16 x 23 cm



Kugla 36, 2012., kombinirana tehnika (pijesak, akril) na lesonitu, 100 x 100 cm
Sphere 36, 2012, combined technique (sand, acrylic) on Masonite, 100 x 100 cm

In the universe everything is just the universe

My interest in the universe has always been miraculous and strong. When I was still a child I was fascinated by this sight: the sky above, the earth below. Once I was on my way towards the place where the sky meets the earth. It seemed to be close. I remember the grass reaching my shoulders. I returned after failing to accomplish anything because the aim kept being at an equal distance. And yet, my whole life I have been trying to succeed. But what once was at an equal distance is today at an unthinkable distance. In the universe everything is just the universe. With my work I want to remind people that they are trifles in that space, but especially fortunate to be a part of it, to move upon the earth and to have above them the infinite blue skies, clouds and stars.

That is how my conversation with Tomo Gerić, painter and sculptor, started. He is an artist who in his six-decade career created a work of high aesthetic achievements, based on knowledge, skill, the power of expression and experience, on the principles of strictness, order, purity and harmony. He was born in 1933 in Vrbanovac. In 1957 he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in the class of Professor Oton Postružnik. From 1957 to 1962 he worked in Krsto Hegedušić's Master workshop. In the following years he had individual and collective exhibitions in the country and abroad, obtaining praises, successes, prizes and recognitions. He exhibited his works with the group "Mart" in Austria (1961) and the Netherlands. In 1971 everybody was surprised by his decision to move after a serious start and artistic successes (he acquired his reputation as a high-quality artist almost at the beginning of his career) from Zagreb, the centre of artistic happenings, to Oprtalj (Istria), to live in seclusion. Today he is aware that was not a good decision: *I wanted to live away from urban crowding and be close to nature. However, I faced the challenge of surviving with my family and painting what I could sell. And time was passing by relentlessly.* He spent 23 years in Oprtalj. He found his new home in 1994 in Draga near Rijeka, where he lives and works today, far away from debates and need to prove himself, far away from engagements and anything that could draw him away from art and nature. He is equally interested in painting, sculpture, ceramics and drawing. After graduation from the Academy and until his retirement he worked as a freelance artist.

In Oprtalj a whole series of ceramic figurines called *Kupači* (Bathers) was created (1970 – 1994), which he divided in several groups according to their different stylistic features. The first group is made of quiet volumes of neat and tightly stretched curved surfaces, of pronounced symmetry, concise sculpture morphology, succinct conception of female bodies carrying something archaic, close to the minute plasticity of female Palaeolithic and Neolithic figurines. He applied a more decisive synthesis based on the idea of construction in the case of the group of figurines with the motif of sportsmen. By adding round geometrical elements (cylinders) with the effect of fracture he achieved the strength of tense relations and the discipline of the form. The pronounced expressiveness in the modulation of sharp cut volumes and disturbed, roughly treated surfaces were achieved in the group of female and male figurines communicating through the dynamics of their relationships, contractions and breakage of forms and surfaces. Although their dimensions are small, they give an impression of monumentality.

The paintings of bathers were created afterwards, in the period between 2008 and 2011. They are two-dimensional records of his three-dimensional consideration. They bear the energy of sculptures. With the same language of sculptures and the same measure he confirmed his vocation as a painter and the one as a sculptor. It is interesting how the free surfaces are crossed by lines that are more useful for the composition than for the perception of the figurines or the content of the paintings. The reason is that both paintings and sculptures by Tomo Gerić are based on drawings. Through his drawings he clarifies his analysis, his preoccupation with volume, structure and geometry; through his drawings he clarifies the peculiarity of his constructive thought.

Throughout all the decades of his career, from the very first paintings and sculptures till today, what has been accompanying him is the sphere motif. The first spheres were made in the late 1950s, in Krsto Hegedušić's Master workshop. His planetary spheres from the 1960s were seen by Boris Kelemen as an apocalyptic vision of the world destruction fear: *This painter has not been looking at the past, but at the cataclysm of a future in which worm-eaten matter spheres are running across a wasteland into nothingness like in a hallucinatory dream about an atomic catastrophe.** The sphere motif, in painting and sculpture, has remained his preoccupation until today, not only as a form, but also as a key to visual art problems and situations that give him the possibility of stylistic fluctuations and transformations in the case of this geometric form. He based his spheres on the strict principles of geometry rules and constructivism, as well as on the basis of intimacy and lyrical expression. He would close them in solid constructions or open them reaching the interior of the nucleus, adding colour to them to incandescence or removing it until he would reach dark achromatic fields. Nonetheless, Gerić is not a colourist. *Professor Postružnik used to tell us that everything we see has a colour. Even what we usually call a shadow is only a colour. But colour has never been the centre of my attention.*

Be they chromatic or achromatic, analytical or lyrical, his spheres express the fullness and compactness of volume and each of them bears a message of perfection and completeness. They are the measure of Gerić's artistic nature in which two visions of world co-exist: the one that is analytical, rational and disciplined and the one that is intimate, emotional and humanly vulnerable. His spheres are his connection with his beginnings, a sort of his personal artistic planetarium, his way of communicating with art, with himself and the world in which he lives. What he says today about his first artistic sphere is as follows: *Since I did not have new canvases, I would paint over a used one. Thus the end result was always a blur painting. And one day in a canvas painted over I noticed a flying object. With a little work the first painting with the flying sphere motif was created. I saved only a photograph of the painting and I painted over the latter again. I did not care about the paintings, what was important to me is to paint.*

Gerić's *Slikarske konstrukcije* (Painting Constructions) (2010 – 2012) seem like a powerful intimidating machine suspended in an empty space. They are centred in a clear-cut geometry projection, balanced with a tectonic clarity and form purity, as well as with very sharp geometric cubist and expressionist cuts with the effects of plastic experience. They confirm the vocation of the author as a sculptor: in a pure two-dimensionality they express the sculptural idea, the preoccupation with volume,

its weight, its dynamic structure and movement. *My paintings and drawings are only a step away from becoming sculptures*, says the author. All the variations on this idea follow the constructivism thought. Cubism and constructivism are the stylistic horizons of Gerić's expression that released his creative energy and brought him to the elementary vision in which one of his most important ideas is also the logical speech in a free space. The elements of construction enter one another achieving the dynamics of space in depth, width and height. And all forms seem powerful, observed from a distance they gain lightness, call to mind the rotational effect and the impression of fluctuating in space.

The condensation of flat structures usually takes place in the centre. *In order for the painting to be firm and stable, to have balance, one has to know exactly what one wants, one little stroke can lead to an unwanted space*, says the author. Here and there it is possible to find a small white triangle that in the middle of heavy black constructive elements gives way to the penetration into space. What really happens is that in this small triangular opening at the centre of the structure there appears the shape of the large universe space like a voiceless echo of emptiness. We could explore for hours his artistic vision of depth illusion, directions of movement, interdependence of constructive elements or try to figure out how he in his flat vision manages to achieve the impression of mass motion in space. But in the case of all Gerić's paintings nothing outside them is important.

At the beginning of 2012 this geometricity went in a different direction: surface appeared. In order to reach the structure of surface he used sand to scrape the colour (mostly black) applied beforehand to a rough textured canvas. This is how the surface matter motion, that is the materialisation of space on the surface of a canvas, was created. The surface was given a striped or ribbed uterine structure which supported the illusion of motion. Gerić used sand to finalize his paintings while he was still in the master's workshop: *I have always been enthusiastic about using natural materials structures or the ones obtained by treatment. At my first solo exhibitions most of my exhibits were already made according to the principle. Unfortunately, what remained of those works are only photographs. When I left the Master workshop, they ended up being everywhere and treated in all sorts of ways, I did not know where to put them.*

Tomo Gerić lives his art and his reasons truthfully, honestly and bravely. He is an artist of consistent continuity, which is in itself complete and balanced in a fair way: intimate in his own artistic truth, monumental in the experience of shape. Today when we measure his consistency and perseverance in the exploration of the motion of the simplified form shapes and life within the space of a painting, his artisan-like masterly skill that knows and recognises only the language of essence, purity and the universal language of art, it is quite clear to us that he has been building his creative time as a serious authorial and contemporary particularity. Searching for the primordial life and artistic truths with honesty and bravery, he based his entire oeuvre, paintings, sculptures and graphic works, on the principles of consideration, logic and order.

Branka Arh



Kugla 30, 2010., kombinirana tehnika (pijesak, akril) na platnu, 135 x 135 cm
Sphere 30, 2010, combined technique (sand, acrylic) on canvas, 135 x 135 cm



Konstrukcija 11, 2011., dio diptiha, komb. teh. (pijesak, akril) na platnu, 135 x 135 cm
Construction 11, 2011, combined technique (sand, acrylic) on canvas, 135 x 135 cm

Tomo Gerić

Rođen je 1933. u Vrbanovcu. Diplomirao je na Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti u Zagrebu 1957. u klasi prof. Otona Postružnika. Od 1957. do 1962. suradnik je Majstorske radionice Krste Hegeđušića. Slikar, kipar i grafičar. Izlagao s grupom Mart u Austriji (1961.) i Nizozemskoj (1962.). Godine 1970. Preselio se iz Zagreba u Opatalj (Istra). Godine 1994. svoj je novi dom našao u Dragi kraj Rijeke gdje i danas živi i stvara. Nakon Akademije, sve do umirovljenja, djeluje kao samostalni umjetnik s gotovo podjednakim interesom za slikarstvo, kiparstvo, crtež i keramiku. Ostvario je brojne samostalne i skupne izložbe u Hrvatskoj i u inozemstvu. Dobitnik je više nagrada i priznanja (Nagrada *Vjesnik* na III. Izložbi jugoslavenske grafike 1964.; Zlatna i srebrna medalja s diplomom za područje keramike, Zagreb, 1968.; Ex tempore Rovinj 1979.; Prva nagrada za slikarstvo Ars Histrie 1980.; Prva nagrada za suvenir Istre i Primorja 1986.). Član je HDLU Rijeke od 1970.

Značajnije samostalne izložbe:

- 1960. Zagreb, Salon ULUH-a
- 1963. Zagreb, Kabinet grafike JAZU
- 1968. Nürnberg, Treppen Galerie (s Ljerkom Njerš)
- 1972. Pazin, Etnografski muzej Istre
- 1973., 1974., 1975., 1976., 1977., 1978. Poreč, Zavičajni muzej (Romanička kuća)
- 1991. Rab, Galerija Knežev dvor
Bex (Švicarska), Galeria de l' Avancon
- 2001. Rijeka, Salon Filodrammatica
- 2002. Krk, Galerija Decumanus
Baška, Galerija Zvonimir
- 2004. Buzet, Zavičajni muzej (s Orlandom Mohorovićem)
Pazin, Muzej (s Orlandom Mohorovićem)
Sv. Kuzam, Hrvatski kulturni dom
Rab, Galerija Paradiso
- 2008. Grad Grobnik, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti
- 2010. Novi Vinodolski, Galerija Turnac
Opatija, Galerija Juraj Šporer
- 2011. Crikvenica, Gradska galerija Crikvenica
- 2013. Rijeka, Galerija Kortil
- 2014. Labin, Gradska galerija

Tomo Gerić

He was born in 1933 in Vrbanovac. In 1957 he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in the class of Professor Oton Postružnik. From 1957 to 1962 he worked with the Master workshop of Krsto Hegedušić. Painter, sculptor and graphic artist. He exhibited his works with the group "Mart" in Austria (1961) and in the Netherlands (1962). In 1970 he moved from Zagreb to Opatalj (Istria). In 1994 he found his new home in Draga near Rijeka, where he still lives and works. After the academy, till his retirement, he worked as a freelance artist with an almost equal interest in painting, sculpture, drawing and ceramics. He had numerous individual and collective exhibitions in Croatia and abroad. He won various prizes and acknowledgements (*Vjesnik* at the 3rd Exhibition of Yugoslav graphic art in 1964; Gold and silver medal with a diploma in the field of ceramics, Zagreb 1968; Ex tempore Rovinj 1979; the First prize for painting "Ars Histriae" in 1980; the First prize for the souvenir of Istria and the Croatian Littoral in 1986). He has been a member of the Croatian Society of Artists (HDLU), its Rijeka's branch, since 1970.

Nakladnik/Publisher **Grad Labin, Titov trg 11, 52220 Labin**

Za nakladnika/Represented by **Tulio Demetlika**

Urednica kataloga/Catalogue editor **Tea Bičić**

Predgovor/Foreword **Branka Arh**

Prijevod na engleski/English translation **Tanja Škopac**

Fotografije/Photography **Goran Vranić**

Oblikovanje/Graphic design **Igor Stanišljević, Parabureau**

Prijelom/Lay out **Ivona Verbanac**

Tisak/Printed by **Walter grafika Umag**

Organizacija/Organisation **Tea Bičić**

Postav/Exhibition set up **Branka Arh**

Naklada/Number of copies **150**

Labin, lipanj/june 2014.

Izložba je omogućena uz potporu i suradnju/

The exhibition has been organised with the support of and in cooperation with

Grada Labina – City of Labin

Ministarstva kulture Republike Hrvatske – Ministry of culture of Croatia

Zajednice Talijana “Giuseppine Martinuzzi” Labin – Italian Community

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