

When Eyes Question

Interview – Part Two

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The second part of the interview was made in December 2012, at the end of the series of solo presentations in Slovenia and across the border, which were organised on the occasion of the author's sixtieth birthday.

Thirteen years have passed since our first interview. Throughout this time you have been, so it seems, creating with even greater passion. You have created a number of works, most of which paintings of different sizes and compositions that we have been able to admire at various exhibitions in Slovenia and abroad. There have been a lot of illustrations for which you have also been awarded different prizes. A lot of drawings have been made also in your notebooks, where you tend to record your obligations, commissions, ideas. Unfortunately, these are unknown to the public, although they are precious and meaningful. There have been fewer graphic prints. How do you feel now, reading our first interview, and what would your answers to the issues that affected you the most be now, and which questions would get a completely different answer? Has anything radically changed on your path as an artist?

Time flies, and realizing the fact that so many years have passed since our first interview is shocking. After all these years we are now back, facing the same five canvases which represent the elapse of our time. The very title of these five paintings Dust To Dust does not need any deep explanation, as the title itself and the image of a transient human being raise our awareness to the point when we subconsciously start reflecting upon what we are doing with our time and life. After our conversation then, I created a long series of paintings, drawings, murals, illustrations ... but later about that. Now a few words about my sketch folders from your question: I started keeping them after my meeting with the master Jože Cjuha in Paris in 1996. He said sketch folders were a »bank« of ideas, plans, contacts..., as all the leaflets and note pads on which we scribble and write down ideas tend to get lost, while sketch folders preserve all the important and unimportant information: sketches, travel memories, recorded thoughts and words, telephone numbers, photos, ground plans of exhibition halls... I can still hear the master's voice, saying that with years, ideas just do not come to you out of the blue as often as they do when you are young. In something as little as a fleeting sketch you can find a way, a solution, or an idea for new canvases. Those prophetic words have come true in my case. Now, of course, I carry my sketch book on every travel and art workshop that I participate in at home and abroad. It has become such an intimate part of me that I am really unwilling to show it to just anybody. · While reading my answers from thirteen years ago, I realize that today I would neither add nor remove anything. I would even repeat what I said then. I believe that this happens when you speak from the heart, and when your reflections are led by the truth and clear conscience. However, there have been many changes in my life since then, all of them huge and decisive, because they were brought about by many years of work and experience. I have met many people, artists, critics, gallerists... During this time I have become a granddad twice, and now I find myself, once again, facing the same series of five canvases. Some are coming,

whereas others are leaving ... a never-ending story in different variants, for as long as man has existed.

During the past years you have attributed various roles to your female figures. You have seen and experienced them as queens of playing cards, birth and fate fairies, or witches which can be kind, but also evil, and as queens of heart. It is the queens that come alive in brighter hues. The composition of figures, as well as background structures are richly decorated, and by rule equipped with a date and the letter V to accompany them. In many paintings you are paying special attention to faces, presented either en face or in profile. How do you see them, could they be a metaphor of life, love, passion, eroticism, or did you have anything else in mind? Is it possible that the “queens”, whom you began to paint in the second half of the first decade of 21st century, merely represented the first step of a new period in your creative career? When did you make the first step? And what is the meaning of the cycle Paradise Lost?

Like everybody, I also go through various emotional states in different periods of my life. Joy, delight, happiness, contentment, love, affection and other bright sides of life are on one hand, sorrow, unhappiness, misunderstanding, disease, death on the other hand.... All these moods inside me awake different reactions. Like various mirrors, they are reflected in my painting, drawing, colour, and line... It is for this reason that all female figures, continuously playing different roles carry, depict, symbolize and present everything that is going on inside me in a particular period. Therefore my artistic achievements are not merely a reflection of one day, but of a longer period. In this way, some kind of cycles are created, which represent the roles of female figures by means of different accessories, symbols, numbers, words ... In the period marked by birth fairies, fate fairies and witches, the emotional source of their presence in my painting was completely different than in the case of the queens of heart. While the former ask existential questions and stimulate the search of answers, the queens symbolize the brighter side of life: happiness, love, affection towards someone very dear to me. It is for this reason that the figures are added a date, an almost unambiguous title of the painting on the upper edge, the capital letter V and other meaningful accessories and attributes, blurred inscriptions and signs. The backgrounds in these paintings are also more sumptuous, ornamented, the colours are optimistic, powerful, passionate, and reflect my inner state of mind, harmony, spiritual serenity, and last but not least, my truthful love for my beloved. These paintings are my testimony to my wife, to a woman and womanhood and at the same time also my love of painting and creating art. Therefore the painting titles witness a frequent recurrence of a play of words, especially in the English language:

Dedicated to V,

The Queen of my heart,

The Queen of my art,

The Queen of my life,

The Queen of my love.

At the same time this cycle is dedicated to the love of life in general. It seems to me that in these years I reached the point where I began to accept life unconditionally, where I realized that the whole stream of life consists of wild rapids and of slow, still water flow. All the pain from before subsided through my painting and my soul achieved catharsis, cleansed itself. As a result, the

female figure adopted a different role. From that moment on, my figure has been the medium of happiness, love, perhaps also of concealed eroticism. However, this element is never enhanced to the point of becoming banal, shallow. At least I hope I achieved this effect, as this was my objective. · Visitors to my exhibitions have frequently told me that only on rare occasions they had the opportunity to experience an exhibition where the author confessed his love for his life companion. But I do not find it strange. Perhaps it is true that we do not see this very often in fine arts, but there are of course poetry, prose, theatre, film and other branches of art in which confessing emotions goes without saying. If a man publicly confesses love, people consider this as an unusual act of bravery. At the same time I have a feeling that they support me in this morally and humanly. Perhaps they would do the same thing in the same way, if they were me, because expressing and confessing love for a fellow human being should not be considered a taboo or an unusually courageous act. To me, this is a natural act, which you have to do with the right measure and in the right way. The very act may be looked at as pompous, funny and melodramatic, if it is not done in a suitable way. I have always wanted the emotions that I tend to express through my female figures to awake in the viewers the urge to discover what is going on in all the layers of the painting. Each little symbol, word, number, colour, the rhythm of strokes and all the other elements of the painting gradually guide you towards different meanings and states. Of course, the first sight of the painting is defined by the main idea, story, and emotions. At second, more careful and slow observation and reflection you can touch those sub-meanings which do not stand out and shout loudly, but are expressed in more silent, murmuring tones. This is why I stated in my previous answers that my paintings are intended for a definite, perhaps very small group of people whose way of thinking is close to mine and who are tuned to the same wavelength of emotional responsiveness. This is at least what I hope and also desire for the future. As for the last question concerning the new chapter in my painting, I would not really know how to define what is currently happening. Subconsciously I feel that I have reached the point when my work may take different turns. And each of these potential options is worth studying and discovering, because there are many stories and themes I am interested in. Should I stick to figure painting or start something new? On the one hand I would like to stay with figure, which I would develop in a new way, with a new central idea. I am also attracted to figureless painting with symbolic objects, with colour and with the gestural power of handwriting. A painting should still have a meaningful background, a narrative, a story – I cannot conceive painting without this. Likewise, I do not see myself following merely artistic and aesthetic quests and experimenting. I believe time and work are the only ones to witness what I am drawn to and what I am interested in. For now, it is still not clear what I am carrying in my mind and heart. We will see what happens. · The slightly provocative question in which you are asking about the time when the first step away from the queens happened made me think about that, too. I do not really know when. But I have realized that the series of exhibitions which I prepared for my sixtieth birthday were not the right choice to make. As if I had wanted to prove to myself and to others what I was able to do. Was this approach appropriate? What am I trying to prove with this? Is this really me? · Although the reactions to exhibitions were favourable, I had doubts and began wandering why all my energy was spent on the exhibitions instead of painting and creating. After all, one exhibition would have been enough to mark this turning point in my life. Or perhaps not! Why would I have to publicise my jubilee? After a year of reflecting, I finally realized that I cannot be proud of this series of exhibitions. I am not questioning the quality of the paintings, but the way in which I presented myself with them. Today I have a feeling that a megalomaniac was awakened in me, which is definitely not a trait of my personality. · My sixtieth birthday made me reflect on the painting themes of my youth. I am referring to the ephemeral character of a man's life, to

transformations, to the five canvases on transience of life, when you appear from nothingness and move towards nothingness. After sixty years of life you reach a turning point when you look back at what you have done and created in life to this moment. At the same time you become aware that time to do and create a lot more is running out. You are slowly approaching the dark grey painting, which is the fourth canvas. There is only one remaining canvas, the black one. The cycle Paradise Lost means to me the awareness that I am no longer a man full of wishes, strength and will, and that I am gradually approaching the age when I will never again in life have or do things that I passionately loved as a young man. Rationally speaking, this is normal and expected. However, the emotional side is not as straightforward. Do not misunderstand. I do not fear the end of my timeline. Neither do I have a feeling that I have missed something in life. I even believe that I have not missed anything, and that I would not change any moment of my life. And, as far as paradise is concerned, I still believe that man can live his own paradise already in this world. There might not even be another paradise after death. I live my own paradise at this place and time. Each moment, each event, each person, each relationship is part of this paradise. It is on us to build, create, and preserve it. With maturity and continuous creative work you can acquire a lot of advantages and wisdom. We will see what time will bring. Who knows?

Your last exhibition in the series presented on the occasion of your sixtieth birthday was held in « Cankarjev Dom » in Ljubljana. There you also exhibited the works created during the first years after completing your post graduate studies specializing in painting at Ljubljana Academy of Fine Arts, which already reflected an independent and mature artistic personality. These earliest works and your recent works were displayed side by side, building thus meaningful compositions which created an interesting communication between them. Their interaction stimulated numerous reflections. In the first part of our interview we paid special attention to the polyptych of five large canvases entitled Dust to Dust (1983, polychrome/canvas, 150 cm × 150 cm). · With reference to the works from the above mentioned exhibition which was an original presentation of how you developed figure and its accompanying attributes, I would like to ask you to speak about the 2012 triptych entitled Black Eve behind the Curtains of the Hidden Gardens of Eden. This series also contains the works entitled East of Eden, The Curtains of the Garden of Eden, and Black Eve, all created in 2012. My first thought at seeing these monumental canvases was: “He finally undressed her!” Is this the kind of nude known from art history? Is it a deviation from it? A new way? A new artistic quest? Or just a logical sequence of internalized women of your life? Women as muses, women as women, women as wives, mothers, friends?

Everything concerning the exhibition at the « Cankarjev Dom » Gallery in Ljubljana was related to many unusual and interesting events. I have wished all my life to exhibit my works at a gallery which would be appropriate for both small and large formats, suitably diverse within one room, but most of all intimate in spite of its large size, where I would be able to exhibit works from the earliest to the latest periods of my painting career. Destiny, luck or merely coincidence granted me with this outstanding opportunity. · The layout of the exhibition was carried out by Nina Pirnat Spahić, and when I entered the gallery to see the already displayed works, I was puzzled, as the paintings were not arranged in the chronological order, as I had expected, but the author of the arrangement contrasted them so directly, face to face, that you unwillingly sensed how my figure had changed over the years. Two female characters had to accept the fact that thirty years had

passed between the two. Nevertheless, both depictions are still mine, yet changed, in need of each other, as the former could not exist without the latter, the same as the latter could not have been created without the former. For this reason I am grateful to Nina Pirnat Spahić, because to me her layout was an eye-opener, making me realize that one and the same thing can be seen as different, maybe even better. But most of all, she managed to establish order in the disorder. The result of her exhibition layout tells me explicitly that we have both changed, my painting and I. · As for the paintings, especially those created between 2009 and 2012, I have already talked about them, but I will now focus on my last paintings: Paradise Lost, Behind the Curtains of Eden, Black Eve, Her Apple, Our Apple, and East of Eden... Why does the female figure begin to retreat now, hiding behind the curtains from the viewers' eyes, withdrawing into the Gardens of Eden, as if to hide from our inquisitive looks... However, this time, perhaps, it is this figure that observes us and our curiosity from behind the curtains, because obviously we are ignorant of what is hiding behind the curtains, what gardens of Eden are like, and whether they do exist at all. Thus, the roles are now reversed. · One of the possible explanations why I took to this path is also based on my wish to veil the painting, wrapping it up in mystery. I believe that a good work of art possesses some magic veil, some mysterious elements, and that it does not immediately reveal everything out loud. I believe a good work of art charms us by being a puzzle. Frequently, appropriate amounts of silence, pause or obscurity are psychologically more appealing than shouting, or using the whole palette... In fact, I do not even know, or subconsciously refuse to express in words all that I can express with colours. Therefore I am unable to define whether this new path of mine is merely a follow up to my previous cycles of paintings, or whether this figure is a woman as a woman, a wife, a mother, or as a friend. I do not know. Probably all these, and more! Nevertheless, now I am definitely into a new quest, as I have worked up my previous roles and themes, and new curiosity is awakened in me. The nude itself, resumed after so many years, already represents a novelty to me, along with the doubt whether I should expose this female nude even more, inspiring a story in it, or conceal it even more behind translucent veils, adding new meanings to it. The second option would be to step away from the figure and focus my attention onto large, silent and meaningful emptiness of large formats where colours and personal hand-stroke would speak in either a melancholic, cheerful, or energetic language. The theme would be expressed by symbolic objects: an apple, a snake, the tree of Eden, a fig leaf, a dropped garment... · I will probably take several paths simultaneously, but later on the strongest one will prevail, as usual. Or perhaps a completely different one will show up. I will willingly let a surprise guide my way!

In the past period you have created many illustrations as well. Which ones would you point out and why?

Nearly twenty books with my illustrations have been published with various publishers, or self-published in Slovenia and abroad. I tried to illustrate each one of them in the best possible way, inspiring them with my best feelings, but I would still point out some of those which have remained close to me for one reason or another. One of them is Hans Christian Andersen's picture book *What the Old Man Does Is Always Right*, published with "Prešernova Družba" Publishers in Ljubljana in 2001. These coloured illustrations are executed on large, horizontally laid hand-made paper. The drawing is intentionally robust, evincing a clearly naive effect, and remains at the level of an elaborated sketch. The colour range is limited to earthly tones with blue and turquoise accents. Perhaps it is due to these peculiarities that this picture book drew the attention of a South Korean

publishing house at the Frankfurt Book Fair and was, as a result, published in South Korea in their distinct alphabet letters. I was really happy because of this. Every illustrator knows the feelings of contentment and special excitement, when his work is presented in a new cultural milieu. · Slovene Fairy Tales were published with “Nova Revija” Publishers in Ljubljana in 2002. The selection of a hundred most beautiful fairy tales was made by the poet Niko Grafenauer. This book is distinct by the fact that each fairy-tale has its own illustration. When you take this book into your hands, you have a feeling that you are holding Slovene fairy-tale lovers’ bible in your hands. The illustrations are executed in gentle black and white inks. Although they are tiny, they are rich in line and filigree elaboration. · The book “Vrata” (Doors) by the poet Dane Zajc is also special to me. It was published with “Prešernova Družba” Publishers in Ljubljana in 2003. Each poem is ornamented with a colour vignette, which I brought as close as possible to the poem. While working on this book I met the poet for the first, but unfortunately also the last time. · I have worked with Ivan Bizjak, the author of picture books for children for many years. I would like to focus on the picture book “Mojamoja in Mojmoj”, published with “Sanjska Knjiga” Publishers in Ljubljana in 2006. As far as illustration is concerned, this is the book of my dreams: horizontal layout, with a colour reproduction on the white cover. On each page there is an illustration with a straightforward, but interesting composition, a beautiful typography and a hunch of many little details under the text ... The booklet gives the impression of gentleness, purity, innocence, all of which are typical attributes of the children’s souls. · An unusual incident happened to me with reference to Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers Inc. of Tokio. As I did not have an internet connection and I do not always pick up the phone, it took two years before the publisher finally managed to find and contact me to invite me to cooperate with them in publishing the book Balkan Folk Tales. The project was completed in 2007 when the book was published in Japanese. It contains 63 tonally shaded pencil drawings on hand-made paper of large format.

What about graphic art and drawing in your recent work? Perhaps photography? How do you look at modern art, which many people define by the term visual art? What do you think of the young generation of artists who are still in quest of both expression and the means of expression?

After my “mining period” I somehow neglected graphic art and its noble character, though it was not on purpose. Numerous etchings, aquatints, mezzotints, and other graphic techniques which presented and symbolized the hardships of the miners’ life exhausted me to the extent that I just gave up graphic art. Already the technological procedure of matrix making on a zinc plate is complex and time-consuming. It is followed by the phase of impression, which I always executed by myself. I believe that I simply got tired of long years of working with graphic techniques. · Therefore I devoted myself to art media which are not subject to complex technology. · I was overwhelmed by drawing as a direct medium, which immediately records a thought, an idea, or a painting draft. I practise this technique very often, as I am a born draughtsman. However, I have noticed that my drawing has changed considerably over years. In the past I used to apply the drawing all over the painting surface, using shading to achieve volume. But when I look at those paintings now, I see that they have lost the fresh touch because of the extreme perfection in which they were elaborated. Today, my drawing is, intentionally or subconsciously, created with as few complications as possible. I try to keep the line as live as possible. The very act of drawing means more to me than its final result. I indulge myself in minimalistic strokes, but do not misunderstand

me, I am not careless. I seek the richness of intertwined lines and compositions, with tiny interventions I want to achieve maximum results. I try to stick to the same principle also in painting, so I limit the colour range to achieve the most powerful effect possible. Therefore I still claim today that I am not a painter in the noblest sense of the word, but I definitely am a drawing artist. · You are asking about photography. I like this medium, as it records moments for good, as the fraction of a second on the photograph is never repeated. However, I am puzzled by the technique. Technical devices are not my cup of tea, whether they be photographic cameras, mobile phones, calculators, bank cards, coffee machines or any other devices. I am well aware how much I am missing, but I also know that I am preserving a lot of good things for the same reason. · And about my attitude to visual art: It is perhaps mostly because of my nature which I mentioned before that I have never been into visual art. Probably I will never change in this respect, I do not want to. When travelling round the world visiting exhibitions, I often come across this sort of artistic creation, but they rarely touch me. I like it when different expressions appear together, providing the viewer with a chance to compare them and the freedom of choice. Young artists have been in touch with fast technological advances since their early childhood and they have the possibility to express themselves and their attitude to the environment in their own, unconventional way. Perhaps the magic of life lies in the very fact that we are so different, and yet so alike. It is most tragic if for one reason or another you deny yourself, wanting to become someone else. In this case you have lost yourself.

For many years you have been participating in art workshops at home and abroad. Have you, at any time, counted all the meetings you have been to and who with? Why do you accept invitations? What does socializing with painters and visual artists mean to you? What is your estimate of the quality of the works created in the framework of these workshops? What is your favourite place and why?

It has never occurred to me to count all the meetings and art workshops that I have been to. Your question took me by surprise and encouraged me to find this information. It turns out that I have participated in twenty work meetings in Italy, Austria, France, Denmark, Spain, Canary Islands, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina... I have also participated in forty art meetings in Slovenia. I have met a great number of Slovenian colleagues, sculptors and visual artists from everywhere, probably at least six hundred. · Meeting and socializing with artists seems to be the noblest part of these workshops, besides the bonds which are a result of working together in workshops. These bonds can be more or less solid. I still keep contacts with many participants, although decades may have passed since we met. What keeps us together may be some common trait of our characters or only a wish to understand another artist's work. To me contacts with colleagues are important, as I find a whole range of differences and similarities among us. I maintain these contacts by way of letters, catalogue exchange, invitations to exhibitions and with New Year's greetings. The friendship with some of them remains genuine and alive for ever, whereas you just socialise with others at the workshop, after which you never meet them again. · It is a fact that there are an awful lot of workshops. If I accepted all the invitations that I receive, I would spend several months away from home. So I tend to decide whether to participate or not in a particular event according to how much work in a group I currently wish to do. In the past years I have limited my participation considerably, as the meetings have become physically too strenuous for me. · The works of art created in this way are fairly good in most cases. However, I believe it is unrealistic to expect a masterpiece to be created in five days. Anyway, every participating artist obviously tries to create a

good piece of art. As for myself, I always decide to paint a variant of something that I am already working on at home at the time. · It is true and only natural that I prefer some meetings to others and I still keep a good memory of them. Each one of them is magic, with its own special character and I believe that each organizer works hard to make it succeed. Each one of them is unique; therefore it is difficult for me to point to but a few workshops. The atmosphere created among us participants is a very important element, and it is on us to provide for that. But in general, the conditions of living and working at the workshops are good, if not excellent. · I am always in the mood for socializing with fellow artists. So, as long as I have the will and health, I will be happy to continue participating in art meetings twice or three times a year. Art meetings have become a small change that refreshes my routine, enriches and widens my horizons with new professional knowledge. And last but not least, these meetings help me revise and brush up my knowledge of languages. If nothing else, they provide an opportunity for a good laugh at a good joke or witty remark.

Although you prefer working at the studio, you are also fond of creating in different environments and it is obvious that you like to participate in displaying your works. These exhibitions are always very attractive, meaningful and resounding. Which exhibition would you point out? Myself, I often recall the exhibition at the Italian gallery of Luigi Spazzapan in Gradisca d'Isonzo and the composition of paintings entitled The Great Gathering of Little Fate Fairies, which is composed of more than eighty small format paintings. An outstanding composition with a deep meaning! I also remember your exhibitions at the Museums of Tolmin and Idrija. What is your opinion on this issue?

As I am into playing with canvases of different sizes, a variety of formats is always present - from almost miniscule to monumental ones, from square formats to narrow vertical or horizontal ones. Or I can also build up compositions of two, three or more canvases into one unit. Such an experiment fills me with new knowledge and ideas for my further work. Here I do not want to break any record in the number of paintings. Neither is the greater number of exhibitions shown over these years my objective. The whole process is simultaneous. You paint, draw, reflect, and then feel the urge to exhibit your works. · Each exhibition tells a different story, as each venue has its own characteristics, its measures, conditions, light, layout – whether it be a museum, gallery, cellar, church or corridor. The first time I see an exhibition venue, it is empty. I immediately bring to my mind the canvases I currently have at my disposal, mentally arranging them round those premises. I usually make the exhibition arrangement myself. During the work I welcome the advice of the people who are with me at that moment. The number of works that the exhibition hall can accept plays an important role, too. Cramming the exhibition rooms with too many paintings does more harm than good, as the paintings, especially more colourful ones can be aggressive. They need and take each other's space. · I remember the exhibition at Gradisca d'Isonzo, which you mentioned. · The exhibition was held at the basilica Chiesa di S. Maria dei Battuti in Cividale. The premises are no longer used for sacral services, but for exhibitions. The three-nave basilica is open width-wise, height-wise, and depth-wise. The exhibition walls are pure, without any disturbing elements; grey stone tiles on the floor accentuate the mighty architecture. Beyond compare are the three stone arches above the basilica naves. Such an exhibition venue is breathtaking; therefore you began wondering if it is possible to outdo this exceptional setting by displaying paintings. Even large paintings (2m × 2m) could barely cope with this vastness. · The gallery of the Tolmin museum with

its three square halls is a unique exhibition venue as well. The Town Gallery of Nova Gorica with its large circular ground plan is equally interesting. I could go on listing these venues, but what I cannot forget are the clear order of Loža Gallery in Koper, the beauty of Isis Gallery, and the interesting five-angled tower of the Ljubljana Castle. What matters in the preparation of a good exhibition is the question of how powerful the paintings that you want to display at a definite place are.

You are an extremely renowned author, not only in Slovenia, but also abroad. In more than thirty years you have created a vast opus of works which prove you to be a deep personality, open to everything, but most of all to everything good. You are taking inspiration from the life you are living and the world around you, from the people around you, from the nature that you feel and love. When you are in your studio, you are surrounded by colours, brushes, canvases, paper, drawing pens and pencils of all kinds, by music and books. You read a lot. You like to listen. To what and whom? Who are the people who have helped you grow as a painter, humanist, and thinker, as an exceptional man who tends to pour his heart and soul onto the painting canvas or paper so as to make us richer? And how do you look at our times? The times that most of us consider as a turning point at all levels? Where and how do you see yourself in the coming years which will be very creative, of that I am certain?

Colours, brushes, paintings and other bits and pieces are scattered around several rooms at our house. When I am focused on my work, I find it most useful and comfortable to be alone. Alone with myself and with what I have always been obsessed. Then I can easily bring up to the surface all the images, hidden in my mind and heart. On occasion I need silence, whereas on other occasions I need background music, which can vary depending on my mood: from chanson, ethno, to classical music, but above all I listen to the music of my youth. I spend my time reading when I have no energy nor will left for painting or as a reward to myself after a period of creation, mostly in summer, on holiday or when I am travelling. And in winter when I go skiing! I am drawn to different literary works, different genres and authors. I still like Herman Hesse and Salman Rushdie, recently also Haruki Murakami and others. And when I need to relax I cannot say no to a detective or spy novel. · There have always been turning points and there will always be. Each person reacts to them in a more or less intense way. As a convinced realistic optimist I have no real protection strategy against disturbances. I believe in goodness and hope that today's troubles will be solved somehow. The only way I can have any influence on my environment as an individual is by my way of life. My advantage in these rough times is that with my basic activity I am able and I like to help create a positive atmosphere in the environment around me. · In the future I will keep on creating paintings, drawings, and illustrations. I wish that my life circumstances would grant me this wish.

Rudi Skočir will continue going his own way. He will keep on unveiling his rich, sincere, compassionate and sensitive world by means of his artistic expression, so distinct, rich in expression, original, developing the theme which is part of his life, using the media that he selects spontaneously or by an internal urge. He will continue to create art everywhere, anytime. He will paint and draw, as he has been doing for the past decades. And the statement written ten years ago still holds: "Art world is part of his being: he carries it within him at all times, feeling it and conceiving it either as a whisper or roaring voices which chase away

reflection, thought, decision to pass over the magic edge which would take him to the immense realm of art. To him art is not merely philosophy, but also love, passion, desire to express it, to depict it in order to bring lines, colours, shapes, order, composition, harmony and rhythm to a new life; the life of an artistic idea! The life of an artistic language, which opens the gate of this divine moment for the painter, illustrator and graphic artist to reach the sky, and enter the world of Art. Suddenly, unexpectedly, and instinctively. For as far as he can remember he has been involved in drawing, painting, designing, scribbling and seeking imaginary compositions in space and time, also when he is not facing a canvas or a piece of paper, when he is not holding a pencil or a brush in his hands. And when he is searching a creative urge within himself, when in this hectic life he is lending himself to his own cosmos, rapt into the never-ending artistic creativity! Open to himself, connected to the universe he is convinced that human destiny is defined by fate, perhaps coincidence, nature, god's will of the Supreme Being. These also give zest to artistic thought, and to creating Art." This is how Skočir's impressive opus has been created, expressed with his outstanding line, which is subjective, fresh and primary, with colour in his distinct and suggestive palette. There are portraits, typically stylised figures, secretive and spiritual, inaccessible and hearted. There are attributes and symbols, convincingly expressive and deeply meaningful. Experienced, interpreted in the course of time and growth, they convey multiple meanings. His narrative is comprehensive and artistically clear. His experiential world is wide open. His will is sincere. To paint, to draw. To express himself. To reveal beauty and love!