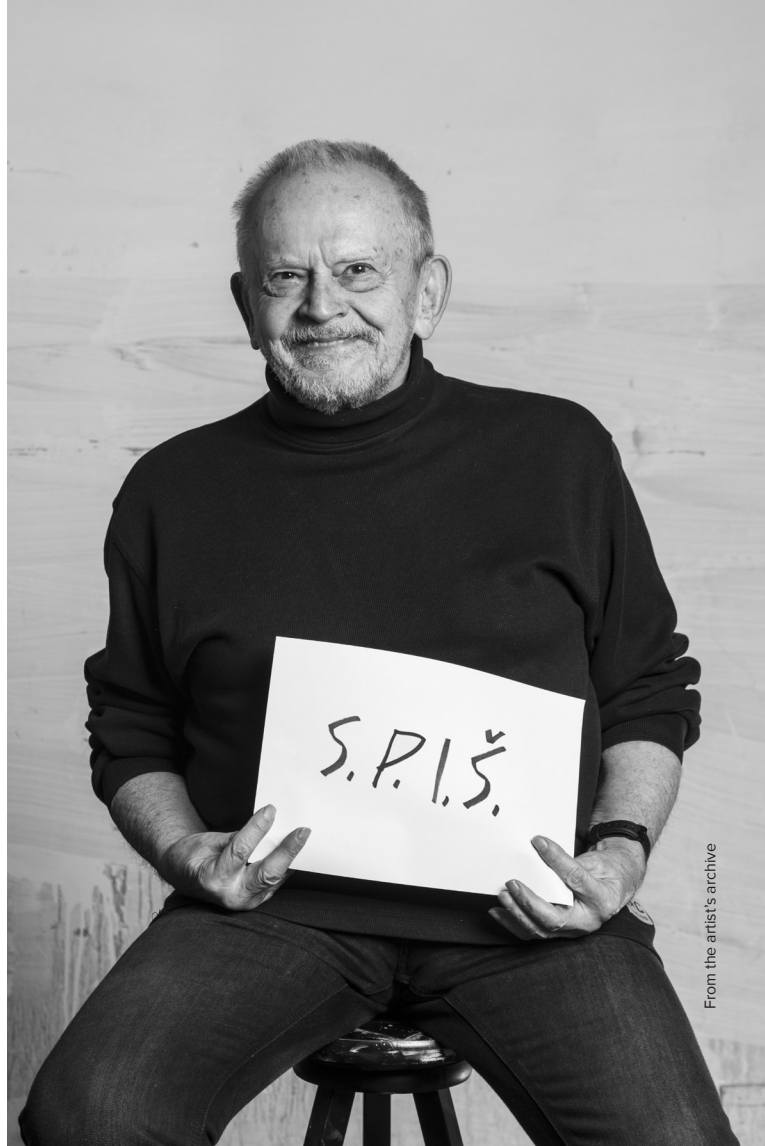


Vladimír POPOVIČ

Vladimír Popovič was born on November 27th 1939 in Vysoká nad Uhom in the Zemplin region, but he spent his childhood in the Spiš region, in the village of Vyšný Slavkov, the home of his grandfather Gustáv Popovič. The Spiš towns of Spišské Podhradie, Hniezdne, and later Kežmarok would go on to resonate throughout his work. In 1954 he moved to Bratislava to study at the School of Applied Arts, and this decision would determine the future course of his life. From 1959 to 1965 he continued his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design under Professors Dezider Milly and Peter Matejka and later studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. Together with Elo Havetta he founded the Theatre of Images in 1960 and 1961, directing a stage adaptation of Exupéry's "The Little Prince". The play was staged with scenic elements using live actors, shadow play and props which would later become an important part of his work. He was one of the first Slovak artists to apply and incorporate paper and text as a regular feature of his paintings, and in the mid-1960s he developed the three-dimensional paper technique of "krkváž" in the form of hung objects or as part of other compositions such as "Actions for 4 Eyes", establishing himself among the developing scene of action artists and conceptualists. In 1965 and 1967 he held his first solo exhibitions (curated by Iva Mojžišová), and in 1967 he published his own biblio-passion project "Mája Dressed Up" for which he was awarded the Lone Runner's Prize. In 1968 he participated in the preparations for the Danuvius international exhibition in Bratislava (curated by Ľubor Kára) in which his own works were also featured. His unmistakable artistic poetic can also be discerned in the film "Celebration in the Botanical Garden" directed by Elo Havetta in which he was the primary creative consultant (awarded the Silver Siren Award in Sorrento). In 1970 he was invited to hold an action at the Polymusical Space in Piešťany curated by Ľubor Kára; his installation was an 8-metre tall "Big Rubber band" at the Hotel Magnólia which formed a silhouette on the main staircase of the hotel.

In the early 1970s he turned his attention to pop-art and later moved towards more expressive paintings filled with spontaneity and painterly gestures, but over the course of the 1980s, he gradually retreated from the use of vivid colour, turning instead to predominantly greyer shades; these so-called "grayscale" are unmistakably his own artistic response to the period of "Normalization". In the 1990s, more rational aspects began to appear in his paintings; while figural representations



From the artist's archive

had always been dominant in his work, they were increasingly portrayed alongside small, seemingly meaningless elements which acquired an important and equivalent significance, the characters of his own specific "alphabet".

Until the Velvet Revolution he had worked as an independent artist, working outside the officially sanctioned art scene, but in the years after 1989 his work gained growing recognition both at home and abroad. Over the course of 1990 his first retrospective exhibition, "from Spring to Summer" (based on a concept by Iva Mojžišová) toured the country, premiering at the Gallery of Spiš Artists in Spišská Nová Ves before visiting Levoča, Banská Bystrica and Košice before closing at the Umelecká Beseda in Bratislava. He was offered a teaching post at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava and became a professor in 1993; he remained at the Academy until 2007, serving as head of the K.R.E.S.BA Studio at the Department of Graphics. In 2002, the Slovak National Gallery held a major retrospective exhibition of his work curated by Zora Rusinová, and a solo exhibition of his work titled "Déja vu" was held in 2010 at the Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum in Bratislava. In 2011 he was awarded the Tatra Banka Gala Prize.

The rich creative life of Vladimír Popovič drew to a close on April 20th 2025. His works can be found in many renowned public and private collections both in Slovakia and abroad.