

Marián Hennel

Prelínanie Overlaps

Viliam Pirchala

Rudolf Hofer

jubilanti
jubilees

Overlaps

This confluence between the works of three jubilee artists (all celebrating their 75th birthdays) held in the Gallery's collection reflects their artistic dialogues across the media of painting, sculpture and graphics. Their work reflects a unique artistic language in which experience intertwines with imagination and a sensitive perception of reality. Pirchala explores a playful painterly shorthand and a wry sense of humour, Hennel adapts the landscape with personal emotion and artistic conviction, while Hofer links traditional materials with contemporary means of expression. The group exhibition emphasizes the diversity of their creative approaches and the continuity of artistic thinking across their generation. The exhibition is presented as part of the Jubilees dramaturgical cycle of exhibitions.

The Gallery's collection offers a representative overview of the artistic career of **Marián Hennel**, ranging from the 1970s to the present day. Through these paintings, we can trace the gradual transformation of his signature style – from intimate spaces of muted colours to bright and vibrant landscape compositions. The collection is primarily formed by paintings executed in oils, acrylics and a combination of tempera and gouache, but we can also find pastel drawings and etched graphics. In terms of theme, the artist explores the motifs of the landscape, the intrusion of industrial elements into the natural environment, and intimate figural compositions which are often suggestive of abstractionism. The predominant line of his work, however, is formed by his landscape paintings. The Spiš countryside, the fruits of his direct experience during plein air excursions, appears here in a modified painterly interpretation – from lyrical vistas to more expressive forms and imposing compositions. In recent years, Hennel's paintings have taken on a more dynamic character, featuring more striking colour schemes.

Alongside his landscapes, Hennel's work has included portraits and sacral themes; in addition to his intimate renderings of Biblical motifs and his cycles revolving around roadside crosses, he has also designed artistic arrangements for the interiors of sacral buildings. Since the 1980s, he has been involved in the creation of large-scale works for architectural projects, including sculptural reliefs inspired by local history. In his artistic approach, he tries to achieve a balance between the realistic premise of the work and the use of a more abstract visual language. The landscape here is often indicated through suggestions, emerging instead as the impulse for his non-figurative compositional structures. In his latest works, Hennel has begun to probe the distinctive material structure of the painting – he uses heavy, pasty layers of paint paste, scoring, scratching and imprinting them to create an illusion of depth and a rich surface texture. These techniques can be found across a wide spectrum of his work and allows us to trace the evolution of his idiosyncratic artistic style.

Marián Hennel was born on May 9th 1951 in Spišská Nová Ves. From 1966 to 1970, he studied graphics under Prof. Gabriel Štrba at the High School of Applied Art in Bratislava. He continued his studies between 1972 and 1978 at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design; under Prof. Ján Želibský

at the Department of Figure and Landscape Painting, and then under Prof. Orest Dubay at the Department of Free Graphics. He subsequently taught at the Elementary Art School in Spišská Nová Ves, and between 1992 and 2010 he taught stone sculpture at the Industrial High School. He works primarily in painting, sculpture, large-scale works for architectural projects and interior design of sacral buildings.

The confrontation between opposing forces plays a crucial role in the sculptures of **Rudolf Hofer**; the artist applies this tension to seek out a mutual continuity, harmony and balance which can foster a greater understanding of their existential core. Among the oppositions which he explores in his work are the dichotomies of the masculine and feminine principles and the contrasts of light and dark. The artistic expression of his thinking is embodied into matter which emphasizes the rawness of the material, with traditional motifs intersecting with contemporary creative approaches.

The origins of his sculptural work can be traced back to 1974 and are closely connected to his work in the steel industry. In this period, the painter Ernest Zmeták had introduced him to the sculptor Vojtech Löffler, and under his expert guidance, Hofer perfected his sculptural means of expression. His interest in art dates back to his childhood; in his carved wooden figures from these years, he sought to achieve an anatomical precision. He later transitioned from wood to stone, and he has also created jewellery and bronze sculptures. In the 1980s, however, his artistic focus has shifted decisively towards the medium of metal. He works methodically with stainless steel, weathering steel and corroded metals, granting the material a remarkable malleability and lightness which belies their uncompromising physical qualities. His flowing lines are achieved by shaping and bending solid material into biomorphic, geometric and amorphous forms. It is in this material that the artist's personal philosophy and ideological core are reflected most clearly in terms of his sculptural intentions. His works are stripped down, shorn of embellishment; they acknowledge the natural processes of decay and the degradation of recycled material, emphasizing the authenticity and physical presence of the sculptural medium.

Rudolf Hofer was born on April 4th 1951 in Sered'. He studied metallurgy in Banská Štiavnica, and between 1974 and 1989 he undertook private studies in sculpture at the studio of Vojtech Löffler in Košice. His work has featured in solo exhibitions in Košice (1976 and 1988), Michalovce (2002), Prague (PKO 1987), Paris and the USA (1993 – Mobile, Pensacola, New Orleans, Atlanta), and he has participated in group exhibitions in Košice, Bratislava and Prague, and in foreign exhibitions in Poland and Lithuania. He has taken part in international sculptural symposia in Košice – Bukovec, in Poland (Rakszawa) and in Lithuania (Alytus). He has also completed study trips in France (1993) and the USA (1994 and 1995 – Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia). Since 2019 he has been an active member of the Slovak Art Forum. Working mainly in small- and large-scale sculpture, he lives and works in Nižná Rybnica in the Zemplín region.

Encompassing graphics, painting and sculpture, the work of **Viliam Pirchala** captivates through its depiction of the commonplace and the interweaving of family motifs and Christian themes. The artist relocates his saints and Madonnas into local environments and links them to stories of families, friends and the anonymous characters of everyday life. The initial intention of his woodcuts is highlighted through the application of colour. He often returns to his graphic works many years later and enriches them by incorporating new narrative lines; the resulting works serve as something akin to a living chronicle of artistic creativity. Folk art has long been a source of inspiration to Pirchala, and he integrates its motifs into stylized compositions which recall the Slovak Modernists (Fulla, Galanda, Bazovský) and the Galanda Group. His work can be defined by its brilliance and the emotionality of its stories. The motif of held hands in spiralling forms recalls the Uroboros – the symbol of unity, time and the infinity flow of the circle of life. In his woodcut versions of the chastushka, a Russian genre of short folk songs drawing on village life, he spins tales which rich in humour and exaggeration. The artist's unmistakable New Year's greeting cards are another crucial facet of his work; alongside their traditional figures we can also see personified animal characters which reflect human behaviour, often displaying characteristics which are more human than the humans themselves.

In his work, Pirchala experiments not only with techniques but also with children's interventions to his paintings or the use of children's drawings which he incorporates into his work; these additions emerge as a quirky substrate for his artistic ideas.

Viliam Pirchala was born on January 17th 1951 in Kežmarok. From 1968 to 1972 he studied at the Department of Artistic Metalworking at the High School of Applied Art in Kremnica. From 1972 to 1978, he continued his studies under Prof. Ján Želibský at the Department of Figure and Landscape Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. After his graduation, he and his family settled in Galanta where he worked as a freelance artist. From 1992 to 2002 he taught at the Department of Toys at the High School of Applied Arts in Kremnica. In 2002 he moved to Poprad and taught at the Associated Secondary Art School in Kežmarok until 2007, before returning to his former school in Kremnica where he taught once again until 2010. He works mainly in drawing, painting and graphics, but he also creates assemblages and object art. He lives and works in Horná Ves near Kremnica.

The exhibition *Overlaps* showcases how a remarkable diversity in artistic approaches can intersect in a shared reflection of meaning and artistic expression regardless of the wide range of media and themes. The featured work connects individual experiences, material approaches and generational parallels to foster dialogue and to reveal a pluralistic perspective on the contemporary artistic environment.

Mgr. Kamila Paceková,
exhibition curator – GUS

Curator: Mgr. Kamila Paceková – GUS

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