

V središču je vedno človek

Slovenski kipar, slikar, grafik in ilustrator Karel Zelenko se je rodil leta 1925 v Celju. Spada v generacijo prvih študentov Akademije za likovno umetnost v Ljubljani, kjer je leta 1949 diplomiral na oddelku za kiparstvo, leta 1951 končal grafično specialko, naslednje leto pa še slikarsko. Po študiju in odsluženem vojaškem roku se je vrnil v Kamnik k družini in se zaposlil v kamniški keramični industriji. Med letoma 1954 in 1959 je poučeval na Šoli za oblikovanje v Ljubljani, od leta 1959 pa je samostojni umetnik. Doma in v tujini je imel več kot sedemdeset samostojnih razstav, poleg tega pa je sodeloval na številnih skupinskih razstavah grafike in slovenske umetnosti. Ilustriral je več kot 20 knjig za otroke in odrasle ter objavjal karikature v slovenskih časopisih.

Zelenko je umetnik, ki je že zelo zgodaj ugotovil, kaj ga zanima kot umetnika in kaj lahko da svojemu poklicu. Njegov likovni jezik se je zgodaj izoblikoval in ostal nespremenjen do danes. Nikoli ni podlegel trenutno aktualnim umetniškim tokovom, ostal je zvest svojim motivom in načinu dela, raziskoval pa je različne medije. Njegov motivni svet se napaja iz realnega življenja, ki ga je živel. Vanj je preoblikoval spomine, izkušnje, tisto, kar je videl in doživel, o čemer je razmišljal. Je neke vrste kronist življenja malih ljudi z ulic in trgov, javni prostori imajo v njegovih delih najvidnejše mesto. Pojasnjuje, da je tako preživel mladost. Pri njih doma so bili branjevci, imeli so stojnico na trgu in prodajali rože ter zelenjavo, imeli so cvetličarno. Kot otrok je strastno ljubil cirkus; videl je slavni cirkus Rebernigg in veliko podeželskih cirkusov. Sam pravi, da njegovi motivi nastajajo iz mešanice cirkusa, otroških spominov in doživetij, vaških pustnih šem in italijanskega filmskega neorealizma, pomembno mesto pa ima tudi ljubezen kot najpomembnejše življenjsko gibalno. Prav zato v njegovem opusu ni časovnega zaporedja. Sestavljajo ga številni kroki, skice, risbe, grafike, poslikana keramika in slike s podobami cirkusantov, pustnih šem, prodajalcev s tržnic in cest, akrobati, kopalke, sprevidi, ljubezenski in mitološki prizori, ki se ponavljajo, prepletajo, dopolnjujejo ali nadgrajujejo. V grafiki, ki je izključno črno-bela in v kateri govori zgolj risba, je čutili tudi družbeno kritičnost. Ta je večinoma prikrita in/ali preoblečena v ironijo, včasih v grotesko. Grafiko je namenoma izbral za to, da je opozarjal na absurdnosti in nepravilnosti v človeški družbi, saj gre za medij, ki zaradi svoje reproduktivne sposobnosti lahko doseže več ljudi.

Čprav so ga povezovali z ljubljansko grafično šolo, v njegovem delu ni najti njenih značilnosti. Zelenko je dosleden figuralik in njegovo izrazno sredstvo je risba. Kot je povedal sam: »... Bistvo ljubljanske grafične šole sta estetika in tehnična popolnost. Moja grafika taka ni bila. Tehnično je popolnoma preprosta. To je klasična grafika, jedkanica, vse je v risbi. Moje izrazno sredstvo je risba, ne tehnični triki in postopki.«¹

Zelenko misli in čuti figuralno. V središču je vedno človek. »Kar naredim, je v skladu s tem, kot dela družba, tega ne bi znal izraziti na abstrakten način.«²

Mag. Breda Škrjanec, muzejska svetnica

Mankind always centre stage

The Slovenian sculptor, painter, printmaker and illustrator Karel Zelenko was born in Celje in 1925. He was among the first generation of students to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. He graduated from its sculpture department in 1949 and completed a specialised course in printmaking in 1951 before undertaking a painting course the following year. After graduating and completing his military service, he returned to his family in Kamnik and started working at the Kamnik ceramic industrial plant. Between 1954 and 1959 he lectured at the School of Design in Ljubljana, becoming an independent artist in 1959. He has had over 70 independent exhibitions at home and abroad, and has participated in numerous group exhibitions of printmaking and Slovenian fine arts. Not only has he provided illustrations for more than 20 books for children and adults, he has also published various caricatures in Slovene newspapers.

Zelenko made his mind up when he was very young as to what drove him as an artist and what he could contribute to his profession. His artistic language developed very early and has remained unchanged to this day. He was never swayed by current artistic trends, remaining loyal to his own motifs and style of work, while exploring various media. His world of motifs is drawn from his own every-day life. He translated his memories, experience, what he saw and experienced as well as his inner thoughts into this world. In some ways, he is a chronicler of the life of the "little people" from the street and markets, the public premises which feature most prominently in his works. The reason for this, he says, is that that is where he spent his youth. He hails from a family of costermongers who worked a stall at the market and sold flowers and vegetables. They also ran a florist. As a child he was passionate about the circus. He visited the famous Rebernigg circus and many rural circuses. He explains himself that his motifs are drawn from a mixture of the circus, childhood memories and adventures, rural carnival masks and Italian neorealism, and that they prioritise love as being the most important driving force in one's life. That is why his opus has no chronological order. It comprises numerous croquis drawings, sketches, drawings, prints, painted ceramics, and paintings featuring images of circus performers, carnival masks, market and street vendors, acrobats, bathing suits, processions, and love and mythological scenes which are repeated, intertwined, complemented and enhanced.

His prints, which are exclusively black and white and only feature drawings, also convey a sense of social criticism. This is often camouflaged and/or dressed in irony, sometimes in a grotesque manner. He deliberately chose prints for this purpose, to use them as a vessel to portray the absurdity and irregularities in society, as this is a medium that can reach many people on account of the ease with which it can be reproduced.

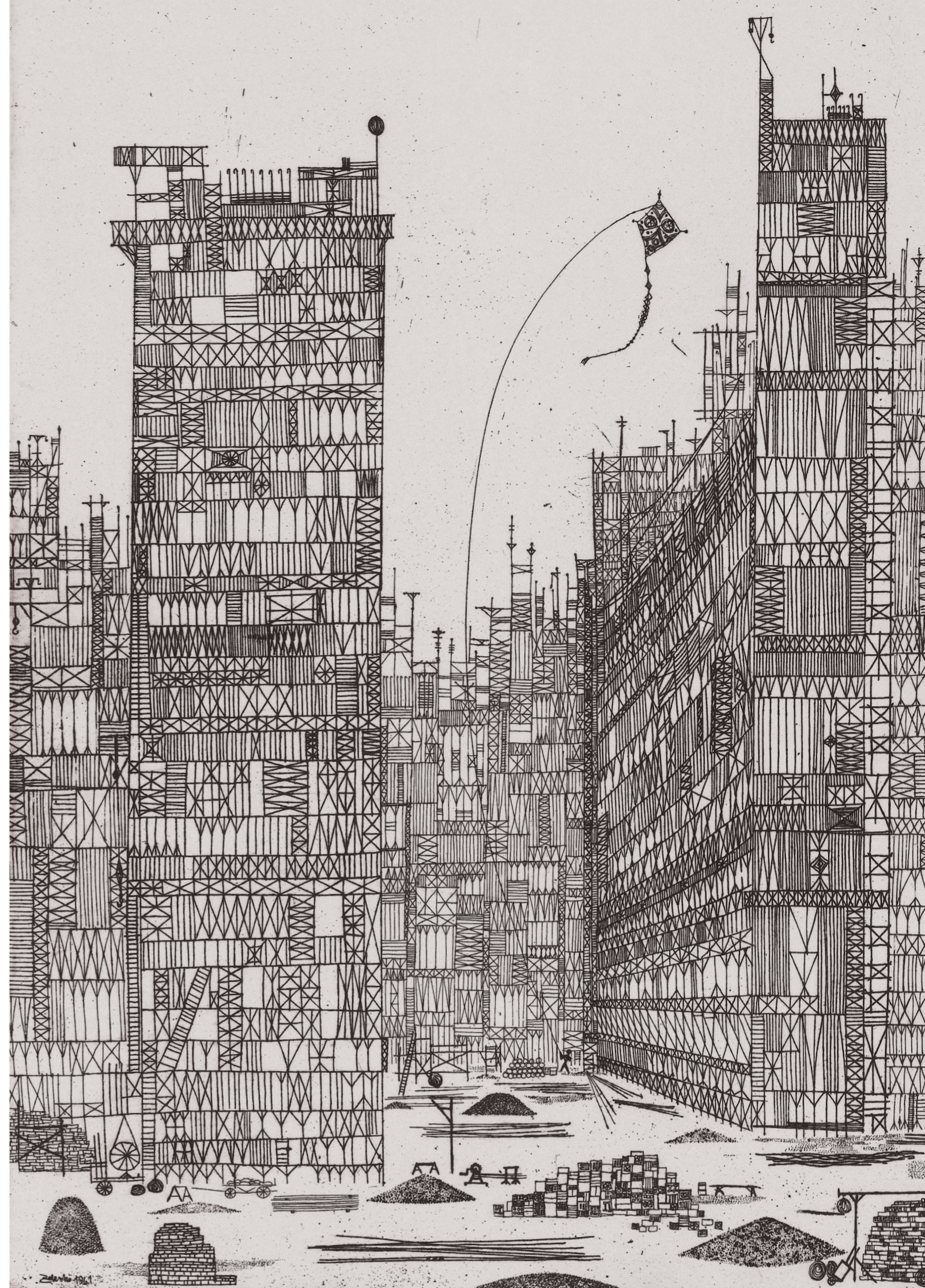
Despite being linked with the school of graphic design in Ljubljana, the features that are characteristic of this school cannot be found in his works. Zelenko is a consistent figurative artist, using drawings as his means of expression. As he once said himself: "... The essence of the school of graphic design in Ljubljana is aesthetics and technical perfection. This was never present in my graphic prints. They are very simple in technical terms. I use conventional prints and etching, all of which are featured in my drawings. I express myself through drawings, not through technical tricks or procedures."¹

Zelenko thinks and feels in a figurative sense. Mankind always takes centre stage in his works. "My works portray the actions of society. I would not know how to express this in an abstract manner."²

Breda Škrjanec, MSc, museum councillor

¹ Figuralna umetnost zame ni ideologija, intervju, katalog razstave Karel Zelenko, Bodi kar si, in pri tem vztrajaj, MGLC Ljubljana, 2016, str. 7. / *Figuralna umetnost zame ni ideologija (Figurative art is not an ideology to me), interview, exhibition catalogue Karel Zelenko, Bodi kar si, in pri tem vztrajaj (Always stay true to yourself), MGLC Ljubljana, 2016, p. 7.*

² Ibid., str. 8. / Ibid., p. 8.

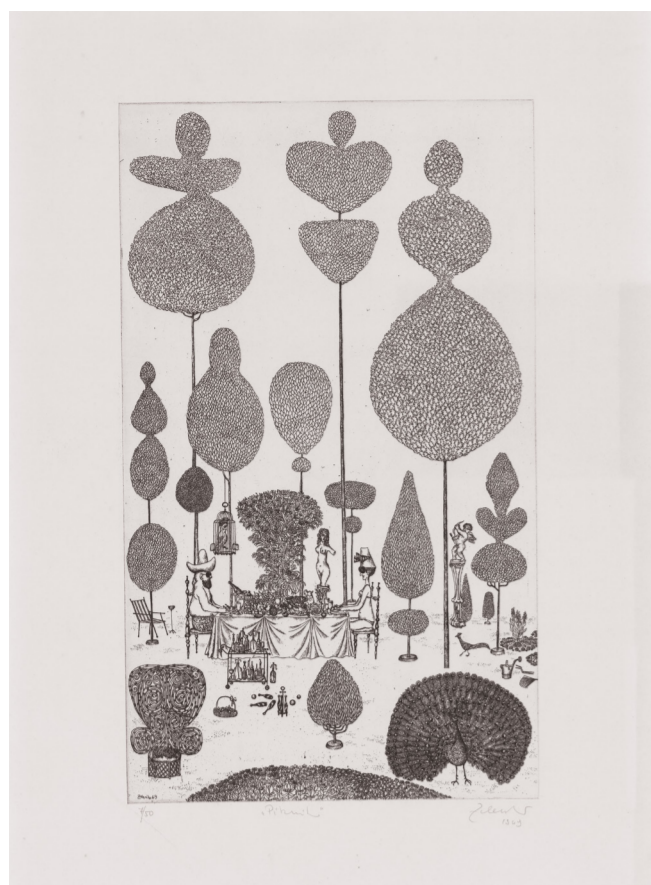


NLB d.d.
1520 Ljubljana

Poštnina plačana
pri pošti 1102

Karel Zelenko v zbirkah NLB in MGLC

Karel Zelenko in the NLB
and MGLC collections



1



2

na naslovnici / on the front page
Gradnje / Buildings, 1961
 tehnika: jedkanica / technique: etching
 last / property: NLB

1
Piknik / Picnic, 1969
 tehnika: jedkanica / technique: etching
 last / property: NLB

2
Pred banko / In Front of a Bank, 1967
 tehnika: jedkanica / technique: etching
 last / property: NLB

3
Mrtvi konj / Dead Horse, 1968
 tehnika: jedkanica / technique: etching
 last / property: NLB

4
Otroci z zmaji / Children with Kites, 1963
 tehnika: jedkanica / technique: etching
 last / property: MGLC

5
Plesalka / Dancer, 1977
 tehnika: jedkanica / technique: etching
 last / property: MGLC



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Karel Zelenko v zbirkah NLB in MGLC

Karel Zelenko in the NLB and MGLC collections

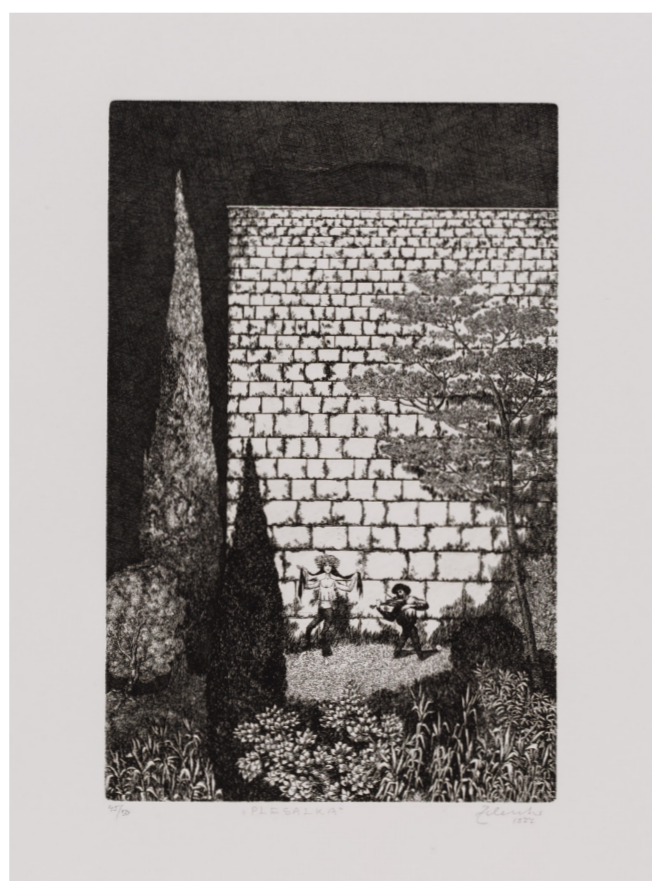
NLB Galerija Avla
 10. 8.–28. 9. 2016

Odprtje razstave: 10. 8. 2016 ob 11. uri. Vabljeni!
Exhibition Opening: 10 August 2016 at 11 am. Welcome!

Karel Zelenko v zbirkah NLB in MGLC je spremljevalna razstava ob pregledni razstavi Karla Zelenka Bodi, kar si, in pri tem vztrajaj, ki je na ogled v MGLC do 25. 9. 2016 in je plod partnerskega sodelovanja med MGLC in NLB Galerijo Avla. / *The Karel Zelenko exhibition in the NLB and MGLC collections* is an exhibition that accompanies the synoptic exhibition of Karel Zelenko *Always stay true to yourself (Bodi, kar si, in pri tem vztrajaj)* that is on display at the MGLC until 25 September 2016 and is a result of a partnership between the MGLC and NLB's Galerija Avla.



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Avtor razstave / Author of the exhibition MGLC



NLB Galerija Avla
 Trg republike 2
 1520 Ljubljana
 Odprto vsak delavnik od 8.–18. ure. Vstop prost.
 Koordinacija izvedbe razstav: Miranda Južnič
 www.nlb.si/galerija