

OSMAN BERBEROVIĆ (1928-2011)

Excerpt from Exhibition Catalog Essay, by Iva Körbler

The act of artistic creation of Osman Berberović most certainly cannot be incorporated into the canons of any standard educational and academic or independent painting artist career. Employed as a medical illustrator with the Zagreb University Hospital for Tumors (then called the Central Institute for Tumors and Allied Diseases) from 1976 to 1993, Osman Berberović – the painter created symposium display boards, posters, medals, diplomas and graphical representations of data from research studies and articles. His subspecialization in illustration of human anatomy, this invisible part of all human internal body systems was being developed and mastered over years – through collecting slides, studying atlases of anatomy, medical literature, and also direct watching of some delicate operations performed in the operating theatre.

His anatomical drawings show largely forgotten skills *'du métier'* and reveal the two faces of the artist, one of an acclaimed painter who continued the modernist tradition of Tartaglia derived from Cezanne's stylized visual representation and color coatings, and another of a meticulous illustrator who, always taking patience and time, worked on any assigned anatomical topic and each of its complex fragments.

Using watercolor and ink painting techniques, Osman Berberović often traced a scene with a pen and graphic needle in the old-style manner of etching, impressing his tiny individual imprint in this precise and serious task that does not tolerate any artistic improvisation. Yet, despite the strict rules that come with an anatomy drawing, with an almost subversive gesture, the artist strived to encode the idea of his own artistic free will in drawings: this can be seen in his choice of background colors where there is always a coloristic clash of primary, secondary and tertiary color combinations, reflected in these visually apart harmonies of orange and blue, red and green, purple and red, pink and orange or pink and blue.

For those who are not familiar with the anatomical details and meanings of templates, his anatomical drawings will still emanate not only the quality of artisanal craftsmanship but also the quality of the fine arts including the full range of free associations: from the surreal poetics of human body presentations (Max Ernst), through contemporary esthetics of horror and fantasy illustrations and comic strips, to phantasmagorical presentations associated with dream imagery.

BIOGRAPHY

Osman Berberović – Beros was born in Bijeljina in 1928. After graduating from the State General Program Grammar School of his native town and taking two years of studies in architecture, eventually he enrolled at the Zagreb Academy of Fine Arts, where he graduated from and completed special training in the class of Professor Marino Tartaglia. He often displayed his works at group exhibitions of the Croatian Association of Artists, and rare solos always shared with his wife, the painter, Marika Šafran Berberović. From 1976 to 1993, he was a medical illustrator at the University Hospital for Tumors (called the Central Institute for Tumors and Allied Diseases at the time) in Zagreb. In 1992, he designed the present covers of LIBRI ONCOLOGICI.

Osman Berberović died in 2011.