

Colours of a Thousand and One Kisses, 2012
from the series ICONS OF LOVE, Acrylic on wood, 12X12X1,6 cm



BLLED ISLAND, December 2012 – July 2013



MATEJ METLIKOVIČ



ICONS OF LOVE by Matej Metlikovič are miniature images, intimate messages painted in spontaneous moments of pure creative inspiration and authentic emotional experience. The artist's love for painting, which is felt as a free, almost childlike joy, is revealed through a playful use of colours, experimentation with materials and the dynamic, dancing strokes of his paintbrush that weave a poetic dialogue between expressive layers of colour and the symbolic figurations vividly depicted in his calligraphic drawings.

Metlikovič's miniature paintings contain all the qualities that we identify in his monumental works. Their format is reminiscent of compact discs, emphasizing the author's affinity with music and poetry. Colourful images permeated with symbols of love (kisses, birds, angels ...) resonate with 'All You Need is Love' by The Beatles, 'Any Colour You Like' by Pink Floyd, 'A Thousand Kisses Deep' by Leonard Cohen as well as Biblical 'Psalms' and 'Song of Songs'.

The artist's original symbols are drawn with irretraceable strokes in many variations, each time anew on uniquely painted backgrounds. 'Icons of Love' are thus truly compelling depictions of the beauty and holiness of Love, such as is interwoven between colours and music or poetry as well as between people and the joys we experience at profound moments in our lives.

Monika Ivančič Fajfar

translated by Silvana Orel Kos and Mojca Kodrič

Matej Metlikovič was born in Kranj in 1956. He graduated with a specialisation in painting from the University of Ljubljana Academy of Fine Arts in 1978, where he also completed his Master class studies in 1981. Since his first solo exhibition in 1979, Metlikovič has regularly displayed his work both within and outside Slovenia. He participates in national and international art workshops/symposia and takes part in many group exhibitions. He is a member of the Association of Slovenian Artists (ZDSLJ) and lives and works as a freelance artist in Ljubljana. Metlikovič paints on canvas, wood and paper, illustrates books of poetry and designs visually distinct graphic symbols. In the 1990's, Metlikovič completed larger artistic projects for three Protestant parish churches in Germany (Biberach an der Riss, Meckenbeuren and Gerstetten). Over the past decade, he created stained/fused and painted glassworks for the parish church of Litija and for the Dr. Janko Benedik Home chapel in Radovljica. He designed embroidered paraments for a new external altar at the Brezje Basilica and created a monumental composition of stained/fused and painted windows for the chapel of the Anton Martin Slomšek Institute in Maribor.

In 2012, Metlikovič displayed his work at solo exhibitions in Ljubljana, Škofja Loka and Bovec and concludes the year with an exhibition on Bled Island.

www.matejmetlikovic.si

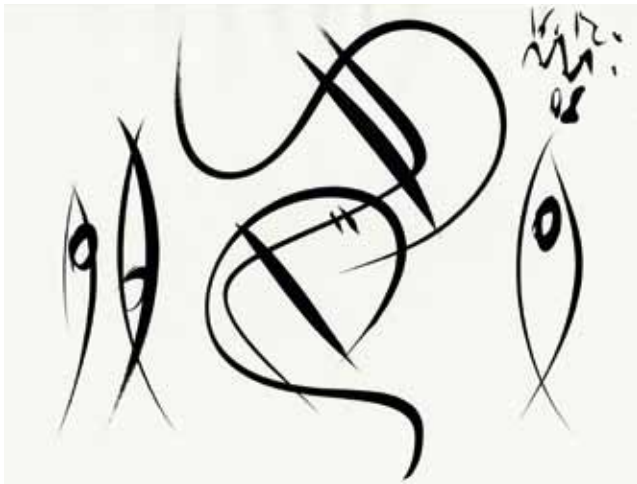
E: matej.metlikovic@gmail.com | GSM: 00 386 51 366 653



I M A G E S
O F L O V E
D R E A M S
R E M I N I S C E N C E

Artworks: From the Intimate to the Monumental

The impressive breadth of Matej Metlikovič's artistic creativity can be appreciated in a wide spectrum of innovative stylistic, iconographic, symbolic, functional and technical approaches to the art of painting. The artist creates in a manner that spans from the intimate to the monumental; artistically adorning architectural ambients as well as illustrating books of poetry, he paints larger formats while also creating more intimate works, ranging from artistic improvisations to drawings and painted miniatures. His work resonates with complexity and meaning, he creates using classical techniques - calligraphy drawing, acrylic painting on paper, canvas and wood - but also seeks innovative techniques that allow him a fresh type of artistic expression, primarily by designing ecclesiastical embroidery and stained glass windows elaborated with fused glass and painting. For Metlikovič, art is an ongoing quest that he undertakes with zeal and passion, the underlying theme and inspiration of his work being Love as *Eros*, *Passion* and *Compassion*. Interwoven with Metlikovič's sensitivity for the poetic world of dreams and (archetypal) reminiscence, this powerful theme spills into the imagery of the artist's internal world, which speaks eloquently also to our own.



The Kiss, 2008

Chinese Ink and brush drawing on paper

Song of Songs, stained glass window (detail), 2008-2010

A. M. Slomšek Institute chapel, Maribor
glasswork Stojan Višnar, photo Miran Morano

Metlikovič's major monumental projects are devoted to sacred spaces. Over a period of more than twenty years, his works have adorned numerous churches in Slovenia, Croatia and Germany and he remains one of Slovenia's most significant contributors to contemporary sacred art. His works are both traditional and modern; he creates on the basis of a profound understanding of Christian art, appreciating the arch it has formed over many centuries and leading up to our times. With an affinity for the work of artists of the modern age - from Kandinsky to Chagall, Matisse, Le Corbusier and Slovenian artists France Kralj and Stane Kregar - Metlikovič builds upon their initiatives, freely and originally transforming their message to achieve a unique contemporary expression in his own art.

Stylistically, we notice several approaches and a duality to the author's artistic expression: on the one hand are characteristic works of art that evolve with a spontaneous application of colour, a method of pouring or even hitting with the paintbrush against the surfaces of his works; on the other, compositions are carefully constructed using colourful surfaces of varied shapes, particularly those that are oblong and vertically billowed. With his colourful backgrounds, be they on paper, wood, canvas, stained glass or embroidery, Metlikovič evokes an underlying emotional mood, masterfully adding a story with spontaneous line drawings of figural symbolic configurations. His works sometimes depict inspirational verses of poetry that he carries internally as a memory of something read or that he records on the spur of the moment while listening to music in his studio.

Metlikovič is not a narrative storyteller, rather he conveys his message using symbolic imagery that may be understood on several levels; it is sacred while also commonly human, touching upon the life of an individual. The artist's symbolic language is easily recognisable, typically depicting motifs of angels, birds, hearts, kisses... and revealing a particular fondness for the imagery of faces. His characteristic theme is *Song of Songs*, which also best expresses the multifaceted apprehension of the artist's images - images that may just as well be understood from a reverent Christian view of transcendence as from an authentic temporal reality. He explains that this ancient poetic prose depicts *the fundamental human experience, expressed in archetypal images of fiery passion and a yearning for love - a theme that has remained the basic inspiration for artistic creation throughout the ages.*

Matej Metlikovič's art is multifaceted, yet irrespective of the themes, formats and techniques he uses or the spaces for



which he creates, his works share many related features and present a distinct iconographic, stylistic and symbolic motif. The always relevant theme of love remains the core inspiration motivating his art and is clearly depicted as the leading theme in his artworks, which are characterised by a special poetic line, a cogency of expression and a uniquely original synthesis of contemporary and traditional artistic expression.

Andrej Doblehar, MA
translated by Mojca Kodrič, MA