

KAROL ONDREIČKA (1944 – 2003)

Karol Ondreička ranks among the leading Slovak illustrators, graphic artists and painters. He was born in 1944 in Čachtice. He studied at the Pedagogical Faculty in Nitra from 1962 to 1966 and at the Academy of Visual Arts, Department of Illustration and Books, in Bratislava under Professor Albín Brunovský from 1968 to 1974. He was one of the first and most important artists trained in the special graphics school of Albín Brunovský. He completed his university studies with illustrations for the bibliophilic issue of “Domov sú ruky, na ktorých smieš plakať” (Home Are Arms You Can Cry On) by Miroslav Válek.

He started working at the Academy of Visual Arts in Bratislava, Department of Illustration and Books in 1979. He was the rector of the Academy in 1989 -1990 and became a Professor in 1991. After 1992 he was a professor of drawing and graphical arts at the Departments of Arts of the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava.

Karol Ondreička focused on graphical arts, book illustrations, stamp designs and painting. His art bears two essential lines, namely the mystery of being which he usually associated with woman and the man-nature relationship. Important aspects of the works by university-educated artist Karol Ondreička were metamorphoses of man and nature which included many symbols and allegories. Illustrations hold an important role in his art. Karol Ondreička illustrated almost two hundred books for children as well as adults that also influenced his graphical works and paintings.

Dagmar Srnenská put it as follows: *“He brought a new relationship of man and the community, an individual and nature, a new role of a human being and things which acquire timeless and associative bonds in graphical art and paintings by Ondreička. His artwork can be characterized as an imaginative perception of man and the world, accentuating emotion, lyrics and imagination. Image associations were drawn from challenging the actually existent principles and their virtual forms such as dreams, fiction and myth. He combined various techniques such as etching, aquatint, mezzotint and dry point in his graphical artwork. Combining them, he emphasized velvet transitions of light and shadow. Using an unusual style, he completed his work to give a poetic and magical impression, intensifying the art embraced in it”.*

A portion of the corpus of illustrations by Karol Ondreička is presented in this exhibition and attests to his mastery of painting and drawing. His illustrations significantly enriched the textual aspect of books and gave the readers a favorable visual experience.

Viera Anoškinová