

The etymology and the root of the Latin word "lux" means light – sparkling, or the verb "illustrare" meaning to illuminate - to clarify. The term primarily referred to the sparkle of medieval illuminations, which were richly enlivened with bright, vibrant colors and shimmering gold. If we interpret and understand the term more broadly, in the sense of illuminating our soul, our imagination and the subtlest pictorial representation, only then does illustration acquire its precise and comprehensive meaning. It has always been mystical, elusive and intriguing, and the masters of miniatures have been compared to alchemists and emissaries of the devil. Today, of course, people are not afraid of illustrators and they do not claim their act of drawing to be a dangerous act, but the lucidity of illustrators and the magic world they create still intrigues and adds to the curiosity. Although the first thought about the interpretation and the place that illustration occupies in the world of visual arts is clear, the more perceptive we will see the unclear limits of artistry and applicability that illustration as such occupies. It found its place at an odd angle and settled comfortably between pure art and commercial application. The illustrator who follows the market and needs of the industry with one eye, with the other staring at himself, he discovers, explores and creates an intimate world of character, ambience and atmosphere. The illustration was torn from the pages of vellum and paper and spread across the street walls, billboards, caps, t-shirts and mobile phones. It sneaked into our lives like a vignette and now we accept it as an irreplaceable form of communication like emoticons, stickers or gifs. Illustration has risen to the pedestal of visual communications, but as it has always been, it has preserved its unobtrusiveness, intimacy and lucidity. So just as it is the one in the name that sparkles and gives away, so it illuminates the paths of communication, interaction, emotion and spirituality. And there would be a word - said God... and next to the word there was a miniature that sparkled.

Boris Kuzmanović

Editor's word

1.

Borges said in one of his eternal and seemingly unfinished alchemical poems that somewhere out there, there really is a bird that can be in two places at the same time... he explains with his metaphors the universal question of existence, spiritual life and the meaning of each being in the realization of its own purpose. The metaphor that Borges uses reminds me irresistibly of the profession of an illustrator. Perhaps the polyphony of this edition testifies to the alchemy and richness of our illustrator's vocation. For Jung and Fromm, imagination is a collection of thoughts, experiences and memories, enriched by free will. Jung believed that if we wanted to collect our thoughts in the physical dimension, not even a million Milky Ways would be enough to accommodate them all. Is there anything more powerful than creating an image and thereby shape another's perception of reality? To guide the reader through the dimension of the visual, to the inner worlds of imagination, as we see them, in all those unreal colors, when we close our eyes before sleep. Reading a good illustrated book is a break from kitsch, a rebellion against bad taste and ignorance, a piece of silence in today's era of cacophony. A good book is our dam against the flood of worthless content from social networks. Warhol brought consumer art to the edge of the industrial era, and showed that the impact of his work came precisely from the simple need from a common postmodern man. With his creativity, he allowed everyone, not only Carroll's Alice, to get society's permission to read a picture without text and admire it as the most powerful deity.

2.

Just as all good things happen at a table where there is enough room for a couple of sketchpads and a few pencils, so this group of individuals and enthusiasts gathered for the first time on the terrace of Marina Veselinović, with homemade food on her table. Full of impressions from my recent visit to Paris, I sat down and admired: how many beautiful things are created before my eyes in Maja's Žvrljosveska and how quickly Darko Grkinić's lines shape the character, the scene, the composition... Unbelievable. As if I hadn't been doing illustration for ten years, and as if I hadn't drawn every day since I was fifteen... I was simply fascinated by their ability to create while talking about something completely different. The exchange of energy during that May afternoon in 2018 gave us an idea (similar to the ideas many illustrators around the world have already come up with): we will meet in the center of Belgrade every month, to draw together. With coffee! When we formally founded the association in 2022, a young colleague interested in becoming a member called me to ask what the benefits of membership were, because that shared coffee did not seem to be enough. My answer on the phone to that question was: Nothing! The conversation was short. As an authorized person, I do not offer benefits and services like for-profit professional associations. I was surprised that such a young person, fresh out of her studies, where you should study and work for exams as a team with others, did not understand the power of sharing life with others. I met a great group of people through Illustration Date. We selflessly exchange information on the issues of our daily work. We share professional advice among ourselves for free (in contrast to the westernized world of courses and life coaching). Many get jobs through the recommendation of others in the group. We help each other when we are unsure of ourselves. I became a fan of almost everything my colleagues created over the years. I am motivated by their attitude towards the work they love, ethos and love for tradition in domestic publishing. In fact, it is not a job but a lifestyle.

3.

Popular culture promotes diversity, but does not point to the beauty of its own. It teaches us certain types of social tolerance, but only sometimes points out that freedom is in the way of expression without sensationalist emphasis and that art lasts and exists as long as someone needs it. The achieved values are difficult to distinguish from the pile of information today - but it is not impossible, and that is why the Illustration Date organization exists. For this purpose, this collection was prepared, which is not an ordinary catalog, but is another gathering place of our creative individualities. Through the collection, the authors, professional applied artists, are presented with what they are working on in this period of their life. Many of the illustrations in this book are segments of our current personal projects. Many of the names in this book are already on global best-of-the-best lists. Among us are award-winning authors, as well as lecturers in professional schools and colleges. And yes, the Illustration Date community is getting bigger! New young giants of imagination will arrive, at first shyly greeting the members, but soon they will embark on a joint adventure of illustration, through conversation with spilled glasses and drawing utensils on the table and try the sweetest coffee in the world.

Nada Serafimović

Reviewer: Luka Tilinger