WHAT YOU CAN SEE

**KOSOVAR ART CIVILIZATION**

1. Nehbi Muriqi
2. Esat Valla
3. Gjelosh Gjokaj
4. Muslim Mulliqi
5. Engjell Berisha
6. Xhevdet Xhafa
7. Nysret Salimamixhiqi
8. Omer Kaleshi
9. Adem Kastrati
10. Sami Gjuka
11. Tahir Emra
12. Alije Vokshi
13. Enver Jaka
14. Ramadan Ramadani
15. Zake Prelvukaj

**THE 'GRAND' COLLECTION**

1. Agim Salihu
2. Budim Berisha
3. Barhri Drançolli
4. Hysni Krasniqi
5. Gjelosh Gjokaj
6. Rexhep Ferri
7. Mikel Gjokaj
8. Rustem Bujupi
9. Shyqri Nimani
10. Skender Idrizi
11. Xhevdet Xhafa
12. Faik Krasniqi
13. Fatmir Krypa
14. Fatmir Zajmi
15. Hamdi Terziqi
16. Agim Çavdarbasha
17. Rexhep Ferri

**GODS OF THE BALLKANS**

NEOLITHIC FIGURINES OF KOSOVO
KOSOVAR ART CIVILIZATION
PIONEERS OF MODERN ART

The cultural civilization of our country, that is known to be of the most ancient in Europe, has always evolved its artistic expression in the spirit of time. Kosovo’s cultivated artistic spirit to this day continues to deliver intriguing contemporary artists and works.

This collection of original art works has been carefully selected from the esteemed fund of the National Gallery of Kosovo, to present the various artistic styles and techniques expressed in Kosovo, during the second half of the twentieth century.

Throughout the collection presented before you, one can clearly observe the distinct traditional motives unapologetically prevailing despite being unorthodoxly expressed in a modern manner that was dominant at that time. These works clearly show the artists’ confrontation with the reality of life and their strong connection to their origin, presented through the painting of landscapes, portraits, monuments and other realistic, impressive or abstract artistic forms.

The transition from realism to impressionism and abstraction was an unpaved road for artists of that time in Kosovo. However, the study of Kosovar artists abroad, as well as participation in various artistic residences around the world, have enabled the exchange of experiences of local artists with international ones, which has kindled an artistic revolution in the country. At the same time these art pioneers prompted the establishment of the essential art institutions in Kosovo, such as the Faculty of Arts and National Art Gallery.

Looking carefully at the works presented before you, we believe that you will be able to wonder through time and experience the artistic expressions from the most diverse, which with such mastery managed to capture the attention of many art lovers around the world.

Therefore, we wish that you enjoy the few fragments of Kosovar art deeply felt and forever perpetuated by eminent Kosovar artists of the last 60 years.
NEBIH MURIQI

VARIOLA, -

OIL ON CANVAS, 100 X 95
ESAT VALLA
STILL LIFE FROM THE WINDOW, 1974
OIL ON CANVAS, 128 X 80 CM

PIONEERS OF MODERN ART
GJELOSH GJOKAJ
HEADS THAT SPOUT, 1983
OIL ON CANVAS, 200 X 79 CM
MUSLIM MULLIQI
BEFORE THE STORM, 1984
OIL ON CANVAS, 140 X 100 CM
ENGJËLL BERISHA
GANIMETE TËRBESHI’S HEARTH, 1984
OIL ON CANVAS, 150 X 150 CM
XHEVDET XHAFA

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, -

COMBINED TECHNIQUE, 100 X 120 CM
NYSRET SALIHAMIXHIQI
THE HORSEMAN, 1965
OIL ON CANVAS, 104 X 87 CM
OMER KALESHEI
THE HEAD, 1992
OIL ON CANVAS, 1992
ADEM KASTRATI
MOTHER AND CHILD, 1972
OIL COLOR ON CANVAS, 62 X 50 CM
SAMI GJUKA
IN INTERIOR, 1983
OIL ON CANVAS, 54 X 44 CM
TAHIR EMRA
VIEW FROM THE WINDOW, 1968
OIL ON CANVAS, 117 X 136 CM
ALIJE VOKSHI
PORTRAIT, 1972
OIL ON CANVAS, 73 X 88 CM
ENVER JAKA
EMIN DURAKU, 1981
OIL ON CANVAS, 40 X 50 CM
RAMADAN RAMADANI
STILL LIFE, 1983
OIL ON CANVAS, 45 X 60 CM
ZAKE PRELVUKAJ
X-ES TALKS AND AN END OF THE CENTURY, 2003
COMB. TECHNIQUE, 135 X 110 CM
The artistic graphics presented through this precious collection, shows the variety of its techniques, crafted with professionalism and outstanding creativity. The “Grand Collection”, already stationed in the fund of the National Gallery of Kosovo, has gone through a peculiar journey, being fanaticly protected from the hardships of time.

When modern art of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century flourished in the world, modern artists such as: expressionist, surrealist, cubist, abstract and even later conceptualists began to emerge in our country as well. The artistic works of Kosovar artists in the two decades of the last century represented levels of great change, which also influenced the general social and cultural thought of locals.

After the ’70s, the thematic content of visual arts showed a multitude of approaches to figurative expression influenced mainly by artistic movements of the time. As per the late ’80s and early’ 90s, the object of visual arts was focused on other topics, not only and exclusively “national” theme, but also on the more intimate, more individual problems with a stronger interest on both human and artistic subjects. This new approach influenced the production of art forms, structural elements and artistic expression in general. This modern way of interpretation was expressed using various means, pure colors, surface factualism or its materialization, differentiation of form, constructiveness, video-technical combination and different materials like plaster, iron, stones, glass, various chromatic and formal effects, etc.

The exhibited works are the product of a prominent category of Kosovar artists of the late XX century, who chose graphic techniques as a rather unique medium of artistic expression for that time.

We hope that through the exhibition brought in front of you, you will be able to dive into this beautifully bizarre fragment of Kosovar artistic history.
AGIM SALIHU
GREEN FRUIT, 1977
GRAPHICS, 78 X 53 CM
BUDIM BERISHA
GRAPHICS, 1977
GRAPHICS, 55 X 76 CM
BARHRI DRANÇOLLI
LEGEND OF KOŠOVO II, 1977
GRAPHICS, 78 X 53 CM
HYSNI KRASNIQI
THE KOBS, 1977
AQUATINT (GRAPHICS), 78 X 56 CM
GJELOSH GJOKAJ
TEARS, -
AQUATINT (GRAPHICS), 46 X 54 CM
REXHEP FERRI
TORSO, 1977
GRAPHICS, 76 X 55 CM
MIKEL GJOKAJ
UNKNOWN, 1977
GRAPHICS, 50 X 60 CM
RUSTEM BUJUPI
THE ACT IN THE INTERIOR, 1977
GRAPHICS, 52 X 66 CM
SHYQRI NIMANI
UNKNOWN, 1974
SERIGRAPHY (GRAPHICS), 50 X 70 CM
SKENDER IDRIZI
UNKNOWN, 1977
GRAPHICS, 78 X 53 CM
XHEVDET XHAFA
GRAPHICS 2, 1972
GRAPHICS, 70 X 50 CM
FAIK KRASNIQI
THE FISH, 1999
ACRYL IN PAPER, 100 X 70 CM
FATMIR KRYPA
HIGHLANDER TOWER, 1976
GRAPHICS, 1976
FATMIR ZAJMI
KEYS, 1977
GRAPHICS, 70 X 50 CM
HAMDI TERZIQI
UNKNOWN, -
GRAPHICS, 84 X 55 CM
AGIM ÇAVDARBASHA
TWO FIGURES, -
SCULPTURE, 120 X 60 X 80 CM
REXHEP FERRI
PRECUSSION, -
TAPESTRY, 220 X 180CM
BALKAN MIDDLE NEOLITHIC AGE FIGURINES AND THE VINCA CULTURE

The cultural groups related to the Vinca culture shared with it a great predilection for small symbolic objects in terracotta, in a distinctive style for each culture and which carried on the tradition derived from the Middle East and Anatolia. Many portable altars, house models and human and animal figurines could be found everywhere in dumps, and were sometimes complete. Their exact use is not clear: dolls, trophies, idols, toys, fetishes, amulets, etc. However, they confirm the existence of a complex body of beliefs and superstitions.

Miniature statuettes found within the models of buildings suggest the existence of temples. Some houses, like in Parta (Romania), can be considered as such, because of the remains of food sacrifices and offerings relating to large clay statues, which were original idols representing a woman and bovine couple. The Vinca statuary features figurines which are mainly female, either sitting or standing, the arms bent towards the hips, or spread out in a cross shape. They are sometimes quite flat or small and are pierced, so that they can be carried on a garment.

The stomach and buttocks are usually prominent. These figurines went from following a fairly standard pattern at the beginning of the Vinca period to becoming unique works later on. The body is smaller than the head, but it is decorated with ridges and incisions, possibly suggesting clothes or tattoos.

The face is hieratic and very expressive. It is oval or lozenge-shaped, with a pointed chin, a prominent nose in the shape of a beak hiding the mouth, a forehead emphasized by strong eyebrows, the hair are sometimes tied in sort of bun, and the eyes are protruding and almond-shaped.

A variant of the figurine called "goddess on her throne" shows a body with a low seat, in a clear position of power. The most famous figurine, which has become the national emblem of the Republic of Kosovo, was found in Tjerrtorja (former knitwear factory), in the suburbs of Prishtina. A mask or face looking in the same style as the "goddesses", in which one can see the stylized mask of felines as a possible symbol of domination face in the same style as the "goddesses", in which one can see the stylized mask of felines as a possible symbol of domination.

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THE NEOLITHIC "REVOLUTION"

In the 9th millennium before our era, after global warming, humanity invented agriculture and animal rearing, which gradually replaced the hunting and the gathering economy, in the Tigris and Euphrates basins as well as in the Jordan basins. The "Fertile Crescent" became covered with prairies of wild cereals, of which men made great use, as well as several flocks of sheep and herds of wild cattle and goats.

The reproduction of these vegetables and animal species, henceforth controlled by man, went hand-in-hand with a changing mentality. The first pastors and farmers crafted small statuettes, in the tradition of those of the hunter-gatherers. These statuettes were already characterized by the simplification of a human form and were showing the dominant position of very rounded women, who were represented with round forms and sometimes dominating cats, perhaps to symbolize unequal social relationships, stylized domestic animals then also gradually replaced the realistic style of "cave art" with the same simplified outline.

The new way of life led to population growth, stone polishing and pottery-making, which spread in such diversity and quality that they became the best way in which archeologists define civilizations.

From the 8th millennium, the need for the new agricultural land led the first farmers to spread out beyond the Fertile Crescent. New civilizations formed in Cyprus, the Taurus, Egypt and Turkey, before reaching Greece, Macedonia and Thrace, whilst pastoralism adapted to arid zones. In the "neolithised" regions, wheat, barley, lentils and pears, as well as sheep and goats were domesticated, unlike the native cattle and wild boar.

The houses of the first farmers kept the round shape of the pre-Neolithic age and were grouped into small hamlets, usually with a larger villages. Religious practices appear to have been principally linked with the cult of the dead, of whom a small number were buried within the villages, probably as venerated ancestors.

These primitive Neolithic men adapted the ancestral stone, bone and wooden tools to their activities, and crafted sickles, axes, scissors, knives, borers, grindstones, punches, lissiots (for smoothing leather), spoons, etc. The trade of rare or special materials started to develop (marine shells, obsidian, hard semi-precious rocks). The diet was less based on meat and more based on different types of flour, starches, dairy products and boiled food.

It also reflected the new subsistence, perhaps to the detriment of health. Hunting only played a secondary role, but was important to subjugate the most dangerous species.
“Neolithisation” came about through the arrival of settlers looking for lands and through the exchange of goods and ideas with the hunter-gathers, who adopted practices of storage and horticulture. According to the regions, the neolithised groups attached a greater importance to livestock farming rather than to grain farming or still regarded hunting as important. Towards the end of the 7th millennium, with the arrival of immigrants from Anatolia and Greece and the evolution of the native populations, a first group of Neolithic people sprung up in Macedonia, Eastern Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia and western Romania. Characterized by beautiful painted ceramics, it included the “Protosesklo”, “Anzabegovo-Vrnisk” and “Karanovo” cultures. During the 6th millennium, its evolution formed the vast group of “Starcevo-Koros-Cris”, centered on the Tisza-Morava-Sava confluence and on the lower basin of the Danube. In Serbia, Eastern Hungary, Kosovo, Romania, Bulgaria and Montenegro, the villages were composed of rectangular or square houses, with earthen walls on a frame of posts, and became frequent near water points in the uplands and fertile plains.

On the periphery of the huge group, other civilizations formed with their own dynamics, sometimes partially Neolithic. The first civilization, called “Proto-lineaire” because of the strips of motifs on its decorated ceramics, formed the first two cores in Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary. The second one was perhaps driven by new immigrants coming over the sea, and occupied the Eastern Adriatic coasts (Dalmatia, coastal Albania, Ionian islands). The printed ornamentation covering its pottery gave to this civilization the name of “Impresso.” Derived from the “Proto-lineaire”, the “Rubane” formed, through colonization, a very homogeneous new civilization covering the upper Danube basin, the Rhine area and the East of the Parisian basin, from 5500 to 4800. The newcomers cleared the plateaus of light and fertile land and cultivated the alluvial plains. They built long rectangular multi-family houses supported by five rows of posts and buried their dead in very separate cemeteries, especially in Central Europe. Some of the deceased were provided with rich ornaments cut from the shells of a large bivalve (the spondyle), imported from Black Sea.

In the meantime, the branch descending from the “Impresso” civilization gained in popularity in the Central Mediterranean area, where it was traded by “cabotage” starting from the early 6th millennium. It fragmented into several groups, probably because of the existence of a large native population that established in Liguria, Sicily, Calabria, Lipari Islands, Malta, Tunisia and Languedoc. On the fringe, new groups formed and were perhaps only devoted to pastoralism. Among these groups could be found the “Roucadourien” of the Massif central and ceramics carriers of “La Hoguette” and “Limbourg” who went around the Loire and Seine basins and Flanders. Another huge group of “printed” ceramics spread very quickly, travelling by sea and called “Cardial” because of its pottery ornamentation printed with the shell cardium. It spread according to regional facies: Tyrrhenian, Franco-Iberian and Atlantic, travelling as far as Brittany and Touraine, before evolving there into “Epicardial”, at the start of the 4th millennium.

THE VINCA CIVILISATION

The Balkan regions continued to develop from 5500, notably under the influence of the new settlers probably still arriving from Western Turkey. This Middle Neolithic age was therefore contemporary to that of the Ancient Neolithic age of Central and Western Europe. It concerned principally the “Vinca Culture” which contained Starcevo-Koros-Cris land, but also spread on larger lands. For about a millennium Vinca culture was established in Southern Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia, Vojvodina, Banad, Montenegro, Transylvania and Western Romania. Vinca had close links with surrounding cultures, before a new fragmentation occurred at the end of the 5th and during the 4th millenniums due to copper metallurgy. Great similarities can therefore be seen between the two main phases, “Vinca-Tordos”, and then “Vinca Plosnick” and the cultures of “Dimini” (Thessaly), final “Karanovo” (Bulgarian, Thace), “Tisza” (Carpathians), “Cucuten-Tripolje” (Moldavia), “Gumelnita” (Wallachia), “Sopot” (Save-Drave plains), “Butmir” (Istria, Dalmatia)...

Vinca ceramics were dark and glossy, decorated with fluting or various motifs (polished strips, curved ribbons, cut out triangles and ridges, punctuation, prints, paintings, etc). The villages were numerous and larger than before and sometimes fortified. They were built on very different types of land and the houses were rectangular with earthen walls on a frame of beams and wattle provided ovens, storage areas and spaces for craft work. There were only a small number of graves, under the streets and houses. Stone, bone and wooden tools evolved little, but livestock included a larger proportion of cattle and pigs than it did before.
Standing terracotta female figurine.

Hands on the hips, prominent belly and buttocks, body and head in a fairly flat profile, rhombic face, nose in the shape of duck beak slightly protruding, large almond-shaped eyes, eyebrows indicated by slight vertical lines; ears suggested by two small side pastilles, hands indicated by engraved lines.

Decors of straight and curved grooves on the body and the arms, suggesting a garment, a sort of fishnet skirt, engraved on the pelvis, empty sexual triangle indicated, legs welded to the cylindrical base forming a hollow plinth.
Standing female terracotta figurine

Baked clay, of small dimensions; flattened-topped head with slight hollow overhanging back, triangular face, sharply flared at forehead; rounded chin, short slightly raised, pyramidal, beak-shaped nose; no mouth indicated; oval eyes, slightly protruding, pointed, forehead very slightly pointed; cheeks and eyebrows are highlighted with vertical lines; fairly elongated neck; arms in a cross-shaped diagram in the form of a flat and rectangular tongue, edged by an incision at shoulder height; a sort of collar traced by grooves forming an indentation under the neck, extending in an axial line separating two well-indicated conical breasts extends in axial lines separating the two well-emphasized conical breasts and ending on the top of the belly at a horizontal line, bordering a smooth and slightly swollen pubic triangle, framed by hips well marked, rounded, wearing a sort of skirt suggested over the entire height of the legs, on the front as well as on the back by four oblique lines forming chevrons; slightly flared flat base, without real plinth; transverse cylindrical appearance, grooves at the base of the arms and down to the hips, on both sides, indicating a sort of a blouse.

Terracotta, brown and tight, of homogeneous tent, in very good condition, (preserved color), Provenance: Kosovo (returned from Germany, in the same conditions as the previous work).
Terracotta female figurine

(slightly accentuated sexual features), standing on a thin circular plinth, straight and tight legs, with two large oblique incisions, arms rounded at the sides, hands on the hips and indicated by a few lines, small belly slightly pointed, very steatopygous buttocks, diamond-shaped face with notched ears, almond-shaped eyes with indicated eyebrows by vertical lines, beak-shaped nose slightly protruding and elongated in axial band on the forehead.

Decor of vertical lines on the body, oblique on the arms, with a vertical lateral bands in the back and a clear triangular notch under the neck on both sides, suggesting a garment, a flat chest without indication of the breasts, body volume slightly sloping, flat in profile, angular spiral pattern on the buttocks marked with horizontal stripes, gender triangle bounded below the abdomen framed by vertical stripes; general orange staining with pronounced brown residue; Provenance: Bardhosh
Figurine on a throne, or mother goddess.

Terracotta figurine, goddess on his throne, legs tight in front but broken below the knees, the left part of the throne is missing, flat but relatively thick volumes with a slight bulge of the lower abdomen, right arm bent towards the hip but missing, the left arm in the handle, missing, except for the upper part, marked by the imprint of another figurine which was placed on the top of the left lap (child?). Rhombic-shaped head with rounded corners, with small aurical reliefs, large horizontal almond-shaped eyes, underlined by eyelashes drawn in tight vertical lines, ears indicated schematically by slightly flattened projections; straightened duckbill nose, high forehead, with smooth ridge and axial band, flanked by ovals engraved on the temples.

Decor of raw incised lines on the bust, back and arms, indicating a garment intended under the neck, a sort of skirt drawn very simply in a checkerboard pattern with grooves on the front; two small hatched compartments on the bottom of the waist, laterally and above the buttocks, in the lower back, square seat, with two smooth rectangular sides, the legs having formed an axial foot. General orange color; black retouch on the left side of face, nose and chin; Provenance: Bardhosh.
Terracotta figurine “Goddess on the throne”:

Oval head, but with a pointed chin; large almond-shaped eyes, slightly oblique, underlined by eyebrows incised in vertical lines in a horizontal band across the entire part of the forehead, which is flat; beak-shaped nose, slightly raised and pointed, prolonged on the forehead by a smooth band no mouth indicated; the half-oval grooves marking the top of the head on both sides of the nose, three furrows on each cheek, obliquely; small, flat bun in the shape of a tongue topping the top of the head towards the back and bearing four perforations; arms bent at right angles to hips, with the fingers clearly indicated by hollow grooves.

Decor of three transverse lines seeming to mark the sleeves; triangle necklace, marbled by furrows, carrying a central medallion in small pastille on the front, and forming an indentation in the back; elbows underlined by a slight indentation, with two suspension holes; vertical sinuous lines on the reverse, at neck height and the bottom of the head (indication of the hair?); on the belly, an incised rhombus, with an angular spiral pattern, surmounted by a sort of schematic comb, with five teeth.

Kind of skirt indicated on the hips, the top of the thighs and the buttocks by parallel incised lines; hips, hindquarters and thighs shaped into a large flattened ring, forming one body with the seat, legs united at the knees, tight ankles; feet not visible; lower part of the legs underlined by slightly oblique incised lines, forming kinds of interlocking chevrons little closed on the front; these tight lower limbs from the front foot of the throne, which also has two other rectangular feet, forming flat uprights each of which is decorated with three furrows; on the back, the neck forms a band of symmetrical triangles on its front part and continues up to the buttocks by three large vertical and parallel lines.

Brown terracotta of uniform color, homogeneous, tight, in very good condition, smooth surface, color intact.
Zoomorphic lid in feline shape, terracotta figurine,

Half-spherical, hollow from the inside, large eyes in half-almond, pyramidal nose of a feline appearance, little protruding, no pointed mouth, triangular ears in the shape of a thin tongue, slightly rounded, which seem to incline downwards. Complex incised decoration formed: 1) furrows under the triangular flat below the nose, 2) parallel hatched lines covering the forehead, top and back part of the head and extending in parallel vertical lines across the back, framed by two rectangular filled with horizontal lines and 3) of two parallel bands and filled with junctions, surrounding the nose, and of which the lower one extends to the edge between the eyes and the upper part of the nose, covering the cheeks obliquely, from the lower line of the eyes, forming a large triangle. Brown earth, homogeneous, smooth and undamaged surface (except under the nose): Provenance: Kosovo (case findings, during undeclared works of excavation, on the art market. The object was taken from the German police service in 2013 and returned to Kosovo).
Cult object/ zoomorphic Rythone, terracotta figurine;

Large regular oval opening, on the front side of the body has a porcine appearance, carried by four thin-tipped legs, flattened, hind limbs being highlighted at their base by a clear rounded groove; rear smooth and somewhat concave; back slightly arched, depressing a little obliquely towards the rear, between the attachments of the legs and bearing on the top, quite near the opening, a large handle shaped into a ring of semi-circular section.

No clearly visible decor.

Fairly uniform dark brown color, polished surface, very well preserved, dark brown inside; Provenance: Reshtan-Suhareke.
Anthropomorphic/Zoomorphic terracotta figurine “centaur”;
Flat chest, enlarged like human hips; forelimbs indicated by weak elongation marked with slightly curved horizontal lines, asymmetrical diamond head, pointed forehead; slight cutouts for the ears; duckbill-shaped nose (but missing tip); horizontal oval eyes. Vertical scratched lines on the top of the head instead of the eyebrows, and on the cheeks; scratches of double inverted lines surrounding each shoulder and forelimbs; a sort of large collar on the chest, drawn with a V-shaped belt; cylindrical body, surrounded in the middle by three parallel lines, rear back both oblique or slightly protruding and flattened, with very schematic, cylindrical hind limbs; orange, slightly wiped outside, rough; Provenance: Bardhosh.
THANK YOU FOR VISITING!