



Raffaella
Zenoni



Raffaela Zenoni

Galerija drugih predaka
The Other Ancestral Gallery

7. 12. 2023. –
– 10. 1. 2024.

GALERIJA JOSIP RAČIĆ – NACIONALNI MUZEJ MODERNE UMJETNOSTI
JOSIP RAČIĆ GALLERY – NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Margaretska 3, Zagreb

Galerija drugih predaka

Branko Franceschi

Tijekom profesionalne karijere povjesničar umjetnosti svako toliko susretne se s umjetničkim radom čije se nadahnuće temelji u paralelnoj stvarnosti koju, uopćeno govoreći, smatramo nematerijalnom, duhovnom. Naravno, njegova se realizacija u umjetnički objekt oslanja na postojeće materijale i oblikuje kroz naučene i prisvojene, rjeđe inovativne likovne jezične obrasce i figure. Možda je ovaj fenomen najjasniji u apstraktnom likovnom jeziku. Sjetimo se da su konstruktivisti i njihovi kasniji sljedbenici zamjerali kritičarima i teoretičarima kada su njihov rad podvodio pod nazivom apstraktna umjetnost. Po stavu da pri konstituciji umjetničkog djela ne oponašaju stvarnost i njezinu predstavu ne reduciraju prema apstraktnom idiomu, sugerirali su da ih je ispravno nazivati konkretnim umjetnicima budući da u suštini proizvode potpuno novu stvarnost nevezanu za svijet oko njih. Složenija je stvar kad razmatramo velike pripovjedače figurativne umjetnosti koji su kroz povijest stvarnost napučili mirijadama prizora, tijela i lica, najčešće izravno ili neizravno nadahnutima povijesnim ili kurentnim događajima i osobama. Neke od povijesnih osoba i zamišljamo upravo slijedeći umjetničku viziju koja se nerijetko umnogome razlikovala od svog životnog predloška. Poznajemo i umjetnike koji kroz svoje opuse razvijaju paralelne svjetove bogato strukturirane stvarnosti koja osim razgranate ljudske tipologije uključuje i izmaštani prirodni svijet i arhitekturu. Ovi veličanstveni pripovjedači, fantasti, kao da sa stvarnošću svoje unutrašnje vizije komuniciraju izravnije nego što to mi umijemo sa stvarnosti koja nas okružuje. Na izvjestan način, njihov rad kao da i na njih i na publiku ima veći terapijski utjecaj od uobičajenog katarzičnog učinka kakvog od umjetnosti generalno očekujemo.

Kad sam prvi put vidio slike Raffaele Zenoni, namah su me privukli portreti, slikani na velikim platnima vehementnim potezima kista i/ili špatule u skladnim kombinacijama intenzivnih boja i ekspresivnim deformacijama obrisa lica ili tijela. No u portretima nije bilo ničeg karikaturnog. Riječ je o onoj sretnoj mjeri kad ni umjetnik, a ni model ne mari za realističan prikaz obrisa lica, boju tena, liniju usnica ili oka, kad umjetnik umije izvesti, a portretirani prihvatiti slobodni, nedoslovni prikaz koji pak u sebi nosi izrazito uvjerljivu psihološku karakterizaciju što je uvjet izvedbe značajno osobnijeg i istinitijeg portreta od onog koji se zasniva na fizičkoj, najčešće uljepšanoj, sličnosti. Kod Raffaele Zenoni, jasno je, slikarski impuls prevladava, ona se prepušta njegovu vodstvu uživajući u boji i potom gesti kojom će bez greške odrediti ne samo formu već i, naglašavam, psihologiju ličnosti. Ne kaže se uzalud da slika govori tisuće riječi. Privučeni tim izražajnim, uvjerljivim osobnostima i licima kao da s lakoćom možemo rekreirati njihovu svakodnevicu, priču koja je šira od onog što je predstavljeno i onog što naše oči vide. Velika većina ovih slika nazvana je osobnim imenom koje dodatno upućuje na portretne karakteristike kompozicija.



6. Mette van Haren, 2019.



2. Julio, 2014.

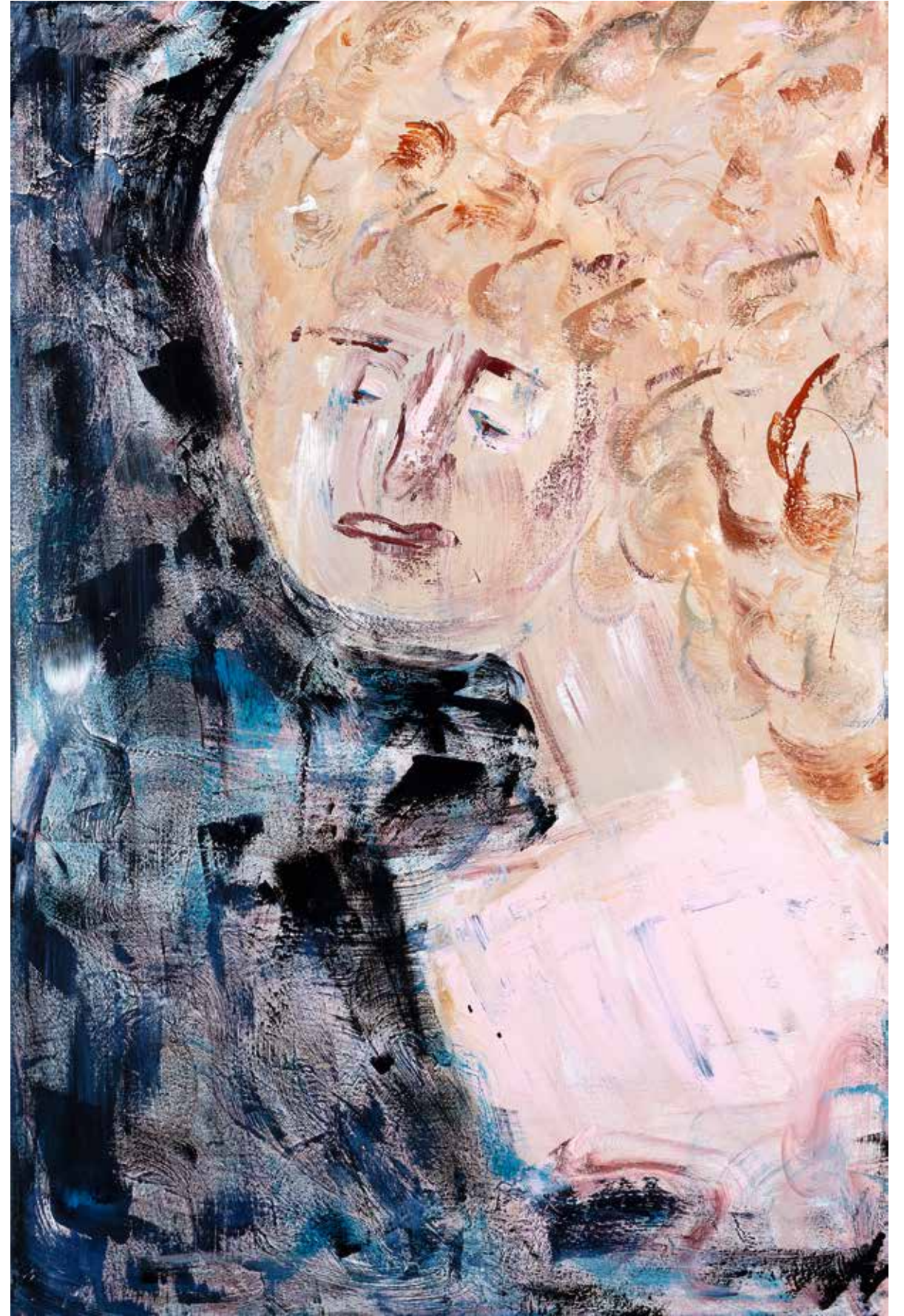
Ciklus je osim motivom objedinjen i nazivom *Galerija drugih predaka*. Uistinu, Zenoni se referira na povijesni običaj postavljanja portreta članova obitelji u reprezentativne prostorije stana, kuće, palače, navade koja korijene vuče od prvih ljudskih kultura. Uloga im je zacijelo da s jedne strane svjedoče obiteljsku, faktičnu i emotivnu povijest i povezanost, ali isto tako i da figuriraju kao zaštitnici, a čak i kao materijalizacija obiteljske moralne vertikale i snage. Portretima se često pridaju nadnaravne moći, posebno u umjetnosti, gotovo neki samostalni život i sudbina ili, intrigantnije, sposobnost da utječu na sudbinu svojih modela za života, a nakon smrti portretiranih i na njihovu okolinu.

Vraćajući se na slike koje predstavljamo, u nazivu ciklusa i izložbe naveden je i ključ za njihovo potpuno razumijevanje – pojam *drugo*. Što, koga uistinu predstavlja ta druga obitelj? Raffaele Zenoni ne mistificira svoj rad. Na pitanje tko su portretirane osobe, ta druga obitelj, ispostavilo se da je riječ o nepostojećim, fiktivnim likovima koji su svoje postojanje stekli filtrirajući se i oblikujući se kroz njene geste i boje koje su joj bile na raspolaganju. Te su slike jedini oblik postojanja koji oni žive u našoj stvarnosti. Bespotrebno je uopće razmatrati odakle dolaze, time se ni umjetnica ne opterećuje dok „portretne“ slike izvodi metodologijom obrnutom od uobičajene. Dok većina umjetnika radeći portret boju i oblik zasniva na modelu ili predlošku, „obitelj“ Raffaele Zenoni nastaje po ključu boja koje su joj trenutno na raspolaganju, a fizionomija i obrisi tijela razvijaju se tijekom izvedbe kao da su „prizvani“. Dok se likovi materijaliziraju, oblikuje se i ime kojim će potom biti nazvani tako da im umjetnica istovremeno stvara i formu i identitet. Druga obitelj Raffaele Zenoni kontinuirano se povećava i mijenja pozicije na zidovima njezinog doma, miješajući se ravnopravno s njezinom zemaljskom obitelji u veselo kućanstvo puno obiteljskih priča.

Onima koji toga neće biti svjesni ili su pak nezainteresirani za oniričke i zaumne poticaje slikarstva, portreti Raffaele Zenoni pružit će iskonsko uživanje u boji, njezinoj materiji i ekspresiji geste kojom ih nanosi na platno. Slike emaniraju energiju i strast, vitalizam koji volimo smatrati privilegijom mladosti, ali i osoba koje žive blizinu životnog tijeka. Formalno govoreći, Zenoni je dok stvara opus svojih „fiktivnih“ portreta stilski čvrsto ukotvljena u likovnu tradiciju visokog modernizma upravo po slobodi kojom se koristi bojom i gestom. U zaključnim riječima treba istaknuti da umjetničin opus obuhvaća i slikarske cikluse sasvim drugačijeg naboja i intenziteta, a koji ovom prilikom nisu predstavljeni. Na izložbi je, doduše diskretno, u izlogu, predstavljena jedna iz opusa njezinih antropomorfni, monokromnih skulptura, čiji izduženi, vitki volumen priziva sjećanje na Giacomettijevu istanjenu figure. Na izvjestan su način i njezine skulpture počast slikarstvu. Izvedene su namatanjem platna oko čvrste jezgre, a često je riječ o materijalima recikliranim iz svakodnevice kućanstva. Ova usamljena skulptura signalizira da izložba ne pruža potpun uvid u mnogolikost umjetničinog stvaralaštva, koje, da napomenemo, uključuje i izvedbu oslikanih drvenih totema kao poveznicu njenih slikarskih i kiparskih poriva, ali i pripovjedački, literarni opus. Izložba u Galeriji *Josip Račić* svojevrsna je dobrodošlica i uvod u naš kulturni krug umjetnice koja će jedan dio svog života provesti u Zagrebu i Hrvatskoj. Bolji početak nemoguće je zamisliti.



3. Campbell, 2018.



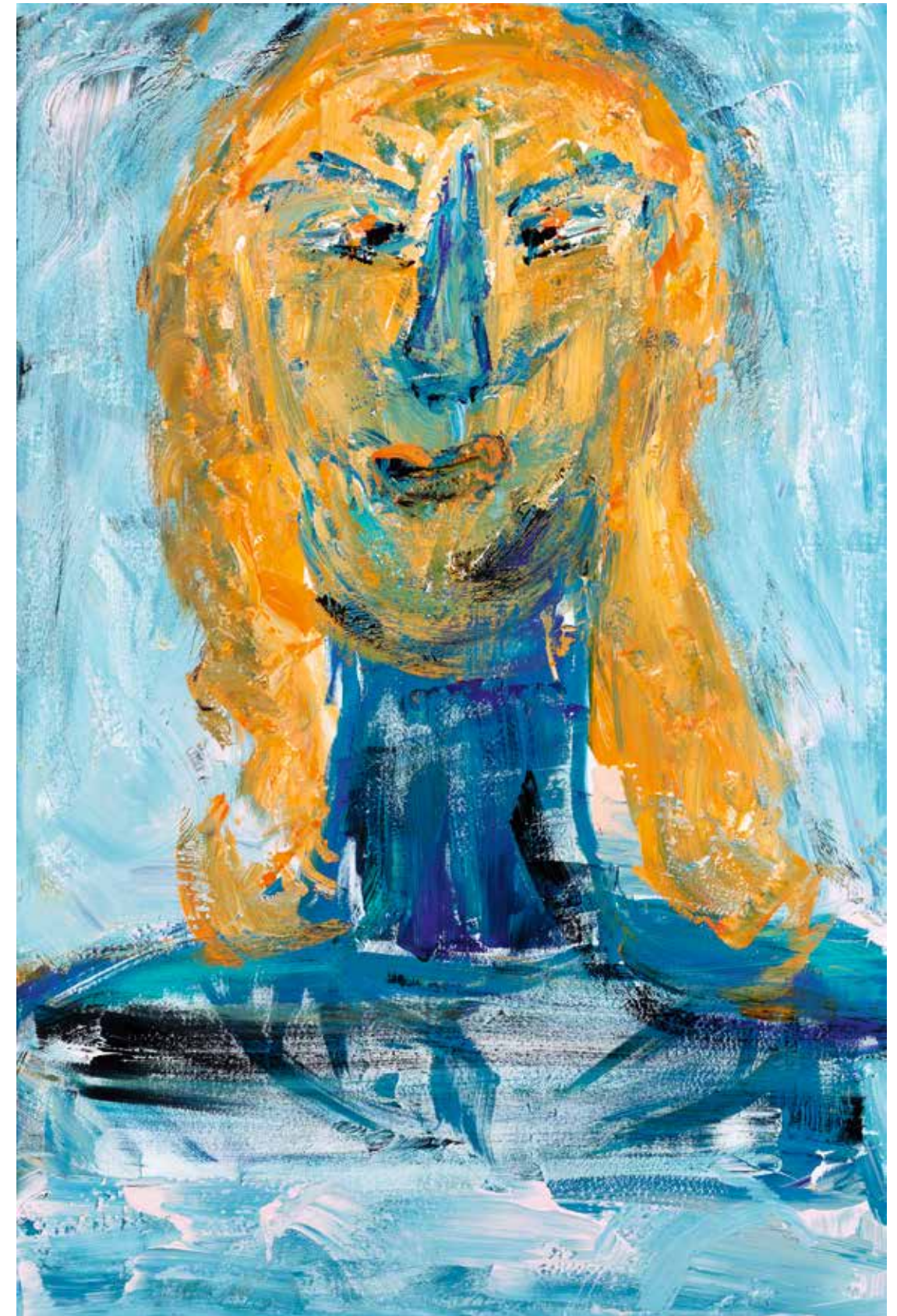
5. Velda, 2019.

The Other Ancestral Gallery

Branko Franceschi

Every now and then during one's professional career, an art historian may come across artworks whose inspiration is rooted in a parallel reality that is generally considered immaterial and spiritual. Of course, its realisation as an artistic object relies on existing materials and is shaped through learned and appropriated, less often innovative, visual language patterns and figures. Perhaps this phenomenon is clearest in the realm of abstract visual language. Let us remember that the Constructivists and later their followers took offense when their work was categorised as Abstract art. By asserting that in the constitution of an artwork, they neither imitate reality nor reduce its representation to an abstract idiom, they suggested that it is correct to call them Concrete artists since, in essence, they create an entirely new reality unrelated to the world around them. The situation becomes more complex when we consider the great narrators of figurative art who, throughout history, have populated reality with myriad scenes, bodies, and faces, often directly or indirectly inspired by historical or contemporary events and figures. Indeed, we envision certain historical figures through the lens of an artistic vision, which frequently diverges significantly from their actual selves. We also know artists who, through their bodies of work, develop parallel worlds of richly structured reality, which, in addition to diverse human typology, include an imagined natural world and architecture. These exquisite storytellers, fantasists, seem to communicate more directly with the reality of their inner vision than we do with the reality that surrounds us. In a certain way, their work appears to have a greater therapeutic impact on both them and the audience than the typical cathartic effect we generally expect from art.

When I first saw Raffaella Zenoni's paintings, I was immediately drawn to the portraits, painted on large canvases with vigorous brushstrokes and/or palette knife work, in harmonious combinations of intense colours and expressive distortions of facial or body contours. However, there was nothing caricatural in the portraits. They strike that fortunate balance when neither the artist nor the sitter care for a realistic portrayal of facial features, skin tone, the contours of lips or eyes, when the artist is able to render, and the subject is willing to accept, a free, non-literal representation that, in fact, carries within it an exceptionally persuasive psychological characterisation. This is a prerequisite for creating a significantly more personal and truthful portrait than one based on physical, often idealised, likeness. In the case of Raffaella Zenoni, it is clear that the artistic impulse takes precedence and she surrenders herself to its guidance, relishing colour and then the gesture that will flawlessly determine not only the form but, I would emphasise, the psychology of the personality. It is not said in vain that a picture speaks a thousand words. Drawn to these expressive, convincing personalities and faces, it is as if we can effortlessly recreate their everyday lives, a story that goes beyond what



4. Miuccia Liselotte, 2019.

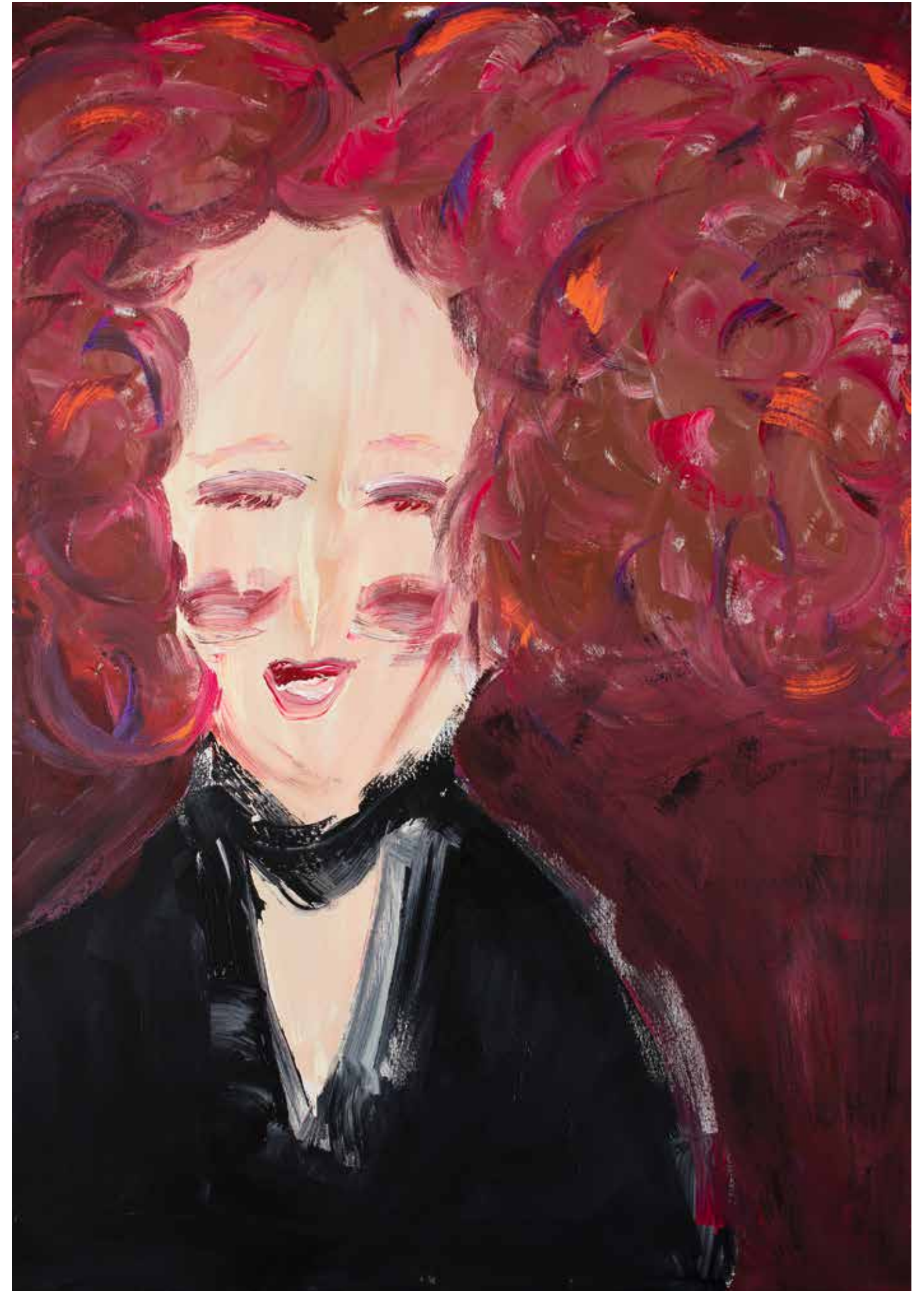
is presented and what our eyes see. The titles of the vast majority of these paintings consist of proper names, which further allude to the portrait characteristics of the compositions. The series is unified not only by the motif but also by the title *The Other Ancestral Gallery*. Indeed, Zenoni refers to the historical custom of displaying portraits of family members in the representative rooms of an apartment, house, or palace, a tradition that dates back to the earliest human cultures. Their role is undoubtedly to bear witness to the family's factual and emotional history and connections on one hand, but also to serve as protectors, and even as a materialisation of the family's moral values and strength. Portraits are often attributed with supernatural powers, especially in art, almost a kind of independent life and destiny, or, more intriguingly, the ability to influence the fate of their subjects during their lifetimes and, after the death of those portrayed, their surroundings.

Returning to the paintings we are showcasing, the title of the series and the exhibition provides the key to their full understanding - the concept of *other*. Who or what does this other family truly represent? Raffaella Zenoni does not mystify her work. When asked about the identities of the portrayed individuals, this other family, it turns out that they are non-existent, fictional characters who came into existence by being filtered and shaped through her gestures and the colours at her disposal. These paintings are the only form of existence which they experience in our reality. It is unnecessary to even consider where they come from, something that the artist herself doesn't dwell on while creating these "portrait" paintings using a methodology that is contrary to the usual. While most artists base the colour and form of a portrait on a model or reference, Raffaella Zenoni's "family" is created based on the colours she currently has at her disposal, and the physiognomy and body contours develop during the execution as if they are "summoned." As the characters materialise, their names are also formed, which will then be used to identify them, allowing the artist to simultaneously create both form and identity. Raffaella Zenoni's other family continues to grow and change positions on the walls of her home, mingling on a par with her earthly family in a joyful household full of family stories.

For those who may not be aware of or are, in turn, disinterested in the dreamlike and transmental impulses of painting, Raffaella Zenoni's portraits will offer a primal enjoyment of colour, its materiality, and the expressive gesture she uses to apply it to the canvas. The paintings radiate energy and passion, a vitality that we often associate with the privilege of youth but also with individuals who live close to the course of life. Formally speaking, while creating her body of "fictional" portraits, Zenoni is firmly anchored in the visual tradition of High Modernism precisely in the freedom she exhibits in her use of colour and gesture. In closing, it should be noted that the artist's body of work also includes painting cycles of a completely different tone and intensity, which are not presented on this occasion. At the exhibition, albeit discreetly, one of the anthropomorphic, monochromatic sculptures from her oeuvre is presented in the display window, whose elongated, slender volume evokes memories of Giacometti's attenuated figures. In a certain way, her sculptures also pay homage to painting. They are created by wrapping canvas around a solid core, and often, the materials are recycled from everyday household items. This solitary sculpture signals that the exhibition does not provide a complete insight into the diversity of the artist's creative work, which, it is worth noting, includes the creation of painted wooden totems as a connection between her painting and sculptural impulses, as well as her narrative and literary output. The exhibition at the Josip Račić Gallery serves as a kind of welcome and introduction to our cultural circle for the artist who will spend a part of her life in Zagreb and Croatia. A better beginning is hard to imagine.



10. Myriam, 2023.



7. Shirley, 2022.



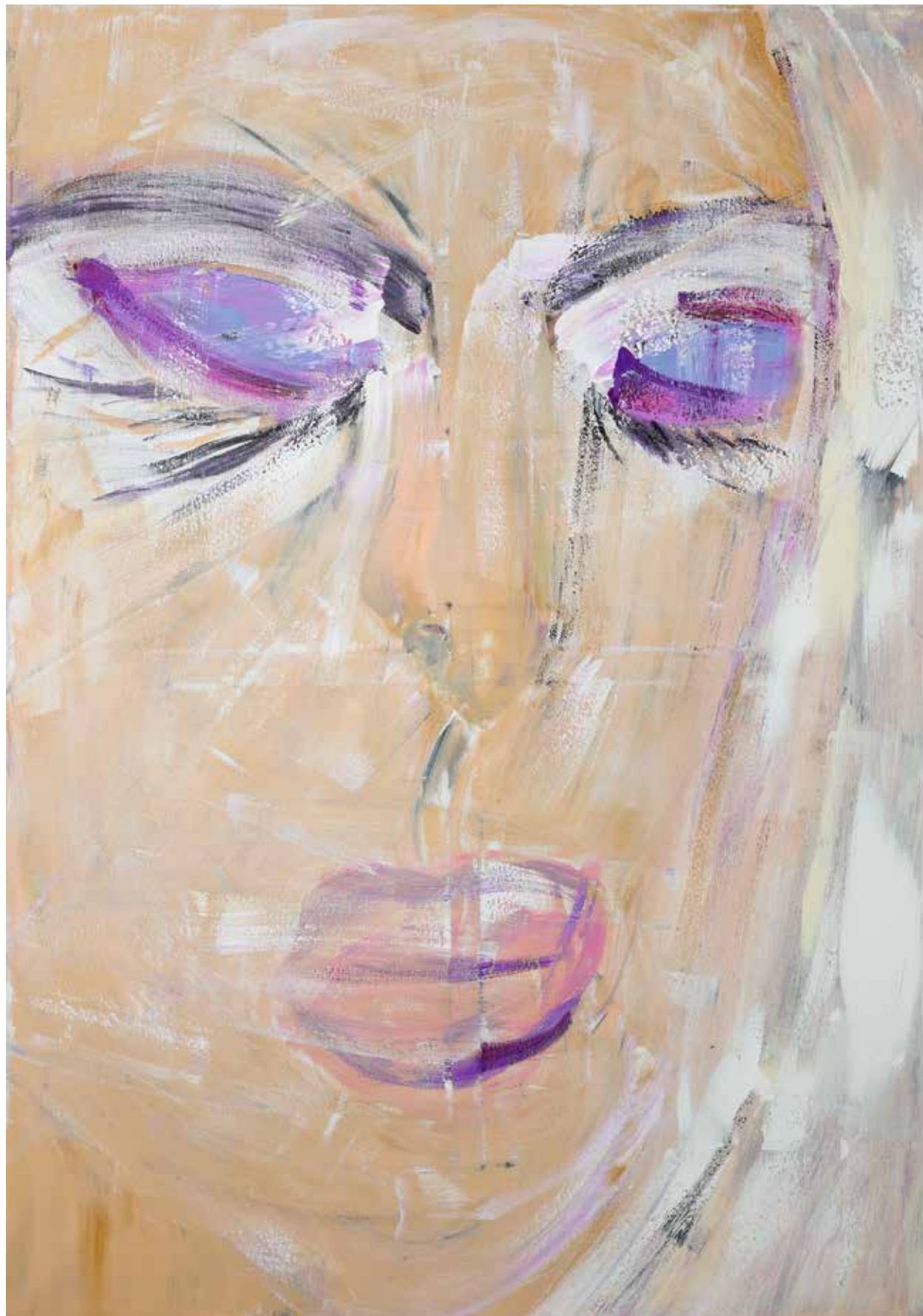
1. Sudac / The Judge, 2014.



9. Seelisberžanin / The Seelisberger, 2023.

1. Klara Hebe, 2020.





8. Marelica, 2023.

Životopis

Biography

Raffaella Zenoni rođena je i odrasla u Altdorfu (Uri). Pedagogiju je studirala do početka karijere u Ministarstvu vanjskih poslova 1990. godine. Istovremeno počinje slikati kao autodidakt u klasičnoj i apstraktnoj maniri. Godine 2008. završila je studij slikarstva u Studiju HC, nezavisnoj akademiji za muziku, ples i slikarstvo u Bernu. Izlagala je u Bernu, Berlinu, Briselu, Echternachu u Luxembourggu, Frankfurtu na Maini, Gaucínu, Luxembourggu, St. Moritzu, Stuttgartu i Zurichu. Živi i radi u Zagrebu i Gaucínu (Španjolska).

Raffaella Zenoni is born and raised in Altdorf (Uri). She studied educational didactics before joining the Foreign Ministry in 1990. In parallel, she initially practised classical and abstract painting autodidactically. In 2008 with a Master of Fine Arts degree she completed her studies at the StudioHC, Free Academy of Music, Dance, Art in Bern. She held solo exhibitions in Bern, Berlin, Brussels, Echternach/Luxembourg, Frankfurt am Main, Gaucín, Luxembourg City, St. Moritz, Stuttgart, and Zurich. She is a permanent member of the artist group "Art Gaucín". Raffaella Zenoni lives and works in Zagreb and Gaucín (Spain).

Popis izloženih djela

List of the exhibited works

Slike / Paintings:

1. Sudac / The Judge, 2014.
130 x 195 cm*
2. Julio, 2014.
60 x 180 cm*
3. Campbell, 2018.
140 x 200 cm*
4. Miuccia Liselotte, 2019.
130 x 195 cm*
5. Veleđa, 2019.
130 x 195 cm*
6. Mette van Haren, 2019.
140 x 200 cm
7. Shirley, 2022.
140 x 200 cm
8. Marelica, 2023.
140 x 200 cm
9. Seelisberžanin
The Seelisberger, 2023.
140 x 200 cm
10. Myriam, 2023.
140 x 200 cm

Sve slike su iz ciklusa *Galerija drugih predaka* i izvedene su akrilikom na platnu. / All paintings are from *The Other Ancestral Gallery* cycle and executed with acryl colour on canvas.

Skulptura / Sculpture:

1. Klara Hebe, 2020.
visina / height 190 cm
širina / width 32 cm
dubina / depth 32 cm
bojani i lakirani gips
plaster, painted and varnished

Fotograf / Photograph

Martin Jepp, Berlin*
Goran Vranić, Zagreb

Raffaela Zenoni

Galerija drugih predaka / The Other Ancestral Gallery

7. 12. 2023. – 10. 1. 2024.

Galerija Josip Račić – Nacionalni muzej moderne umjetnosti

Josip Račić Gallery – National Museum of Modern Art

Margaretska 3, Zagreb

Likovni postav

Visual set-up

BRANKO FRANCESCHI

Koordinacija izložbe /

Exhibition coordination

TIHANA GALIĆ

Odnosi s javnošću

Public relations

LANA ŠETKA

Tehnički postav

Technical set-up

JURA JAZBEC

ALEKSANDAR RADIVOJEVIĆ

Edicija / Edition

STUDIO

Nakladnik / Publisher

NACIONALNI MUZEJ MODERNE UMJETNOSTI

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Ulica Andrije Hebranga 1, Zagreb

www.nmmu.hr

Za nakladnika / For the publisher

BRANKO FRANCESCHI

Tekst / Essay

BRANKO FRANCESCHI

Fotografije / Photographs

MARTIN JEPP*

GORAN VRANIĆ

Lektura i korektura / Proofreading

MATEJA FABIJANIĆ

Prijevod na engleski / Translation into English

ROBERTINA TOMIĆ

Grafičko oblikovanje / Graphic design

ANA ZUBIĆ

Tisak / Printed by

SVEUČILIŠNA TISKARA D.O.O., ZAGREB

Naklada / Print run

200

ISBN: 978-953-348-156-2

© Nacionalni muzej moderne umjetnosti

National Museum of Modern Art, Zagreb, 2023.

CIP zapis dostupan je u računalnome katalogu Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice u Zagrebu pod brojem 001206290.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the National and University Library in Zagreb under 001206290.

Izložba je realizirana uz potpore Ministarstva kulture i medija Republike Hrvatske te Gradskog ureda za kulturu, međugradsku i međunarodnu suradnju i civilno društvo Grada Zagreba. / The exhibition has been made possible with financial assistance from the Ministry of Culture and the media of the Republic of Croatia and the City Office for Culture, International Relations and Civil Society of the City of Zagreb.

Naslovnica / Front Cover:

Shirley, 2022. detalj / detail

Stražnja korica / Back Cover:

Veleda, 2019. detalj / detail



