

- 8. Pithagoras**  
1951-56. Crayon and ink on white textured cardboard. Titled in Greek, lower center. 11¾" × 9¼" (30 × 23.5 cm). Inv. 2216.
- 9. Pithagoras**  
1951-56 (m. 5). Gouache over printed text on the cream wove paper. Titled, lower left, and inscribed "ser. d-5," lower right. 7⅝" × 11¼" (19.7 × 28.6 cm). Inv. 2219.
- 10. Graphs**  
1951-56. Two works from the series "Graphs." Gouache over printed images on cream wove paper. Each inscribed "graphikon," lower center. 6½" × 9⅝" (16.7 × 23.7 cm) and 7¾" × 11" (19.6 × 27.9 cm). Inv. 2258, 2259.
- 11. Glagolitic Letter: U**  
1951-56. Gouache and watercolor on blue wove paper. Inscribed "u," lower center. 9¾" × 6½" (24.7 × 16.4 cm). Inv. 2250.
- 12. Letters: B, C, D, H**  
1951-63 (m.5-6). Four works from the series "Alphabet A-W." Gouache over printed image on white wove paper. 10⅝" × 7¼" (27 × 18.3 cm); 7¼" × 10⅝" (18.3 × 27 cm); 10⅝" × 7¼" (27 × 18.3 cm); 7¼" × 10⅝" (18.3 × 27 cm). Inv. 2246, 2247, 2243, 2241. *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 81 (Letter: B).
- 13. Les Chevaux du Gottchalkh**  
1958. Ink and gouache on canvas. Dated and inscribed "opus 113," verso. 10¼" × 13⅝" (26 × 34 cm). From the series "No-Stories." Inv. 2211. *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 122.
- 14. Gobi (Shamo)**  
1958-59. Oil on canvas mounted on book cover. 8⅝" × 13¾" (22 × 35 cm). Inv. 2213.
- 15. Paysage Veritable**  
1957-63. Oil on plywood. 11" × 9" (28.2 × 23 cm). Inv. 2215.
- 16. La Jighoura, Il Monterosa**  
1957-63 (m. 6). Two works from the series "Names." Gouache over printed texts on cream wove paper. Inscribed "nomina 1" or "nomina 5," lower center. Each 10¾" × 14" (27.3 × 35.5 cm). Inv. 2222, 2231. *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 103 (Il Monterosa).
- 17. Turkey, La Porte, Der Wagen, Gramophone**  
1961. Four works from the series "Nouns/Facts." Gouache over printed images on off-white paper; pencil and watercolor on gray-green wove paper. Each dated, lower center; inscribed "serija" or "seria," lower left, and "imenice-činjenice" or "hauptwörter-tatsach" (noun-fact), lower right. 8¼" × 7⅝" (21 × 20 cm) or 7¾" × 8¼" (19.8 × 21 cm). Inv. 2230, 2224, 2261, 2263.
- 18. Essence, L'image**  
1961. Two works from the series "Abfälle" (Garbage). Gouache over printed images on off-white paper. Each dated, lower left; inscribed "abfälle" and "seria," lower margin. Each 8¼" × 7⅝" (21 × 20 cm). Inv. 2225, 2227.
- 19. Otodra**  
1957-63 (m. 6). Gouache on cardboard. 18⅝" × 22" (47 × 56 cm). Inv. 2232.
- 20. Hammurabi**  
1957-1963 (m. 6). Gouache on pressed wood. 23¼" × 27½" (60 × 70 cm). Inv. 2233. *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 101.
- 21. Gertrude Stein Often Used to Remind Picasso of the Meaning of Things...**  
Circa 1967-72. Gouache and collage on cardboard. 12⅝" × 17¾" (30.5 × 45 cm). Inv. 2235. *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 131.
- 22. Another Resolution (Sense of Orientation)**  
1971-77. Gouache over printed text on off-white perforated paper. 6¼" × 4¼" (16 × 11 cm). Inv. 2177.
- 23. Sensory Certainty and the Like Have No Validity...**  
1971-77 (m. 8). Gouache on purple paper. 8¼" × 7¾" (20.9 × 19.9 cm). Inv. 2178. *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 167.
- 24. The Concept of the Spirit and the Concept of the Sentence**  
1971-77. Acrylic on wood. 12¾" × 10¾" (32.5 × 27.6 cm). Inv. 2181.
- 25. Homo Nāivus**  
1971-77. Gouache and black wash on white wove paper. Inscribed "was ist mit dem [sic] Doppelmoral" (what's with the double standard), lower center. 7" × 5¾" (18 × 14.7 cm). Inv. 2182.
- 26. The Mechanical Means of Production**  
1971-77. Gouache on heavy gray wove paper. 9⅝" × 7" (25 × 18 cm). Inv. 2183.
- 27. Commentary on the Development of Ideas**  
1971-77 (m. 8). Gouache on blue paper. 8¼" × 7⅝" (21 × 20 cm). Inv. 2186. *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 167.
- 28. Mon père Ilija (1895-1972)**  
1971-77 (m. 8). Gouache and gold leaf on wood. 11⅝" × 9½" (29 × 24.4 cm). Inv. 2266. *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 135.
- 29. When Ivana Started Dreaming**  
1977. Gouache on cardboard. 9⅝" × 6½" (24 × 16.5 cm). Inv. 2479.
- 30. The World has Already Changed**  
1977-78. Gouache on cardboard. 19" × 15" (48.5 × 38 cm). Inv. 2193.
- 31. Memory... Truth as Criterion**  
1978. Gouache on pressed wood. 14" × 11" (36 × 28 cm). Inv. 2187.
- 32. Glagolitic Letter: C**  
1978. Acrylic on wood. 11¼" × 9⅝" (28.8 × 25 cm). From the series "Alphabet." Inv. 2239.
- 33. Study—The Law of Energy**  
2455 [sic] (m. 5). Gold leaf over plastic globe. 6¼" × 4¼" (16 × 11 cm). Inv. 2312.
- 34. Kerleja I, II, III**  
1977-78. Gouache on paper over wooden globe. 11⅝" × 8¼" (29 × 21 cm). Inv. 2311.
- 35. Mane Tekel Fares (Measured, Weighed and Divided)**  
1987. Acrylic and gouache on paper over wood and metal globe. 22¾" × 13¾" (58 × 35 cm). *Mangelos 1 to 9½*, p. 39. Inv. 2315.

ILIJA (BOSILJ) BAŠIČEVIĆ (1895-1972)

- 36. Flying People**  
Oil and metallic paint. Signed "Ilija Bosilj," lower margin. 18½" × 27⅝" (47 × 69 cm). From the series "Flying People," no. L-14a.
- 37. The Apocalypse: The Fall of Babylon**  
1959. Oil and metallic paint on canvas. 45¼" × 46½" (115 × 118 cm). *My Father Ilija*, no. 211. From the series "Apocalypse," no. A-211.
- 38. Two-Faced Man Walking on Water**  
1961. Gouache on paper. Signed "Ilija," upper left. 30¾" × 22⅝" (78 × 57 cm). From the series "Ilijada," no. I-29.
- 39. The Fairies' Circus**  
1962. Gouache on cardboard. Signed "Ilija," upper left, and dated, upper right. 29½" × 43¼" (75 × 110 cm). From the series "Ilijada," no. I-26. *My Father Ilija*, no. 770.
- 40. Apocalyptic Riders**  
1962. Oil and metallic paint on canvas. Signed "Ilija Bosilj," lower right; titled and dated, lower left. 39⅝" × 28⅝" (100 × 72 cm). From the series "Apocalypse," no. A-197. *My Father Ilija*, no. 197; *Ilija's World*, p. 134.
- 41. The Accursed Queen Jerina**  
1962. Oil on canvas. Signed "Ilija," center left, and dated, center right. 28¾" × 40⅝" (73 × 102 cm). From the series "History, Folk Poems and Legends," no. F-55. *My Father Ilija*, no. 503.
- 42. The Apocalypse: The Eclipse**  
1962. Oil on canvas. Signed "Ilija," center. 26" × 46½" (66 × 118 cm). From the series "Apocalypse," no. A-194. *My Father Ilija*, no. 194.
- 43. The Apocalypse: The Argonauts**  
1962. Gouache on cardboard. Signed "Ilija," center right. 22⅝" × 29½" (57 × 75 cm). From the series "Apocalypse," no. A-181. *My Father Ilija*, no. 181.
- 44. Wise Men from the East**  
1962. Oil on canvas. Signed "Ilija" upper right, and dated, upper left. 27½" × 40½" (70 × 103 cm). From the series "Bible," no. B-30.
- 45. The Dzigura**  
1963. Oil on canvas. Signed "Ilija," upper center, and inscribed "1/66," by another hand, verso. 27¾" × 65¾" (70.5 × 167 cm). From the series "Ilijada," no. I-63. *My Father Ilija*, no. 807.
- 46. Welcoming the Two-Faced Rider**  
1963. Oil on canvas. Signed "Ilija," upper left. 26⅝" × 39⅝" (67 × 100 cm). From the series "Flying People," no. L-29.
- 47. On Ilijada: Birds with Winged Friend**  
1963. Gouache on cardboard. Signed "Ilija," center. 26¾" × 29⅝" (68 × 74 cm). From the series "Flying People," no. L-26.

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- 48. The Dzigura Takes Wing**  
1963. Gouache on cardboard. Signed "Ilija," upper right. 19¾" × 29½" (50 × 75 cm). From the series "Ilijada," no. I-19. *My Father Ilija*, no. 763.
- 49. Legend with Fairy**  
1963. Gouache on cardboard. Signed "Ilija," center left. 27⅝" × 39⅝" (70 × 100 cm). From the series "Ilijada," no. I-23. *Ilija's World*, p. 187.
- 50. Flying People**  
1963. Gouache on cardboard. Signed "Ilija," lower right. 16½" × 23⅝" (42 × 60 cm). Gouache no. G-31.
- 51. Scene from the Apocalypse**  
1963. Oil on canvas. Signed "Ilija," center right. 25½" × 37" (65 × 94 cm). From the series "Apocalypse," no. A-257.
- 52. The Night-Watch**  
1964. Oil on canvas. Signed "Ilija," center right. 26" × 78¾" (66 × 200 cm). From the series "Ilijada," no. I-131. *My Father Ilija*, no. 875.
- 53. From the Apocalypse: Animal with Human Head**  
1965. Oil on wood. Signed "Ilija," lower right. 9½" × 16½" (24 × 42 cm). From the series "Apocalypse," no. A-69.
- 54. Apocalyptic Angel**  
1966. Oil on canvas. Signed "Ilija," upper left, and dated, upper right. 27½" × 35½" (70 × 90 cm). From the series "Apocalypse," no. A-177. *My Father Ilija*, no. 177.
- 55. My Portrait from Ilijada**  
1966. Gouache and oil on cardboard. Signed "Ilija," lower center, and dated, lower left. 13¾" (35 × 50 cm). From the series "Ilijada," no. I-153. *My Father Ilija*, no. 897.
- 56. Noah's Ark**  
1967. Oil on wood. Signed "Ilija," upper left. 48" × 31⅝" (122 × 81 cm). From the series "Bible," no. B-54. *My Father Ilija*, no. 392.
- 57. Blue Lady**  
1967. Oil on cardboard. Signed "Ilija," center right, and titled, center left. 27½" × 20½" (70 × 52 cm). From the series "Birds," no. P-21. *My Father Ilija*, back cover.
- 58. The Descent of the Holy Ghost**  
1968. Oil on pressed wood. Signed "Ilija," center left. 48" × 53⅝" (121.9 × 136.8 cm). From the series "Bible," no. B-56.
- 59. Golden Ambassador**  
1970. Oil and metallic paint on hardboard. Signed "Ilija," center right, dated, center left, and titled, lower left. 23¼" × 18⅝" (59 × 46 cm). From the series "Birds," no. P-313.

## ILIJA/MANGELOS *Father & Son, Inside & Out*

### Galerie St. Etienne

Although Modernism continues to cast a long shadow over the twenty-first century, its defining dichotomies—realism versus abstraction, East versus West, insider versus outsider—are becoming increasingly irrelevant. In his landmark exhibition, *The Encyclopedic Palace*, at the 2013 Venice Biennale, the curator Massimiliano Gioni suggested a number of alternative approaches to viewing and analyzing artistic production. Works were grouped into typological categories such as maps, catalogues, albums and cabinets of curiosities, or organized according to common preoccupations such as myth, spiritualism and eroticism. Self-taught artists were given parity with trained artists, and the pictorial work of non-artists such as Carl Jung and Rudolf Steiner was also included.

As part of the twenty-first-century process of art-historical revisionism, curators on both sides of the former "Iron Curtain" have been excavating the many layers of artistic creativity that were concealed beneath the monolithic covering of Communist cultural policy. Within this context, the relationship between the father-son artistic duo Ilija and Dimitrije Bašičević (known by the respective pseudonyms Ilija Bosilj and Mangelos) merits renewed scrutiny. Native to the remote Serbian village of Shid, the Bašičević family was persecuted first by the proto-Nazi Croatian Ustashi, and then by the Yugoslav Communists. In the wake of this persecution, Ilija and Mangelos each developed semi-secret artistic practices that endeavored to grapple with the overarching existential issues of their time. But whereas the father, a peasant with only four years of elementary schooling, was typecast as an "Outsider," the son, who had a PhD in art history, has lately achieved widespread acclaim as one of the key forerunners of international Conceptualism. The time has come to remove the obfuscating labels and examine each of these artists on his own terms, separately and together.

Shid has been described as "a lost town at the end of the globe": a rural enclave situated on the border between Croatia and Serbia, torn between the legacies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the West, and the Ottoman Turks to the East. Such historical circumstances may lead to a passive acceptance of forces beyond one's control, or, on the contrary, encourage the rejection of all externally imposed authority. Ilija Bašičević inclined toward the latter attitude. He almost never voted, because he thought the local elections were pointless

and rigged. Commandeered into the Austrian army during World War I, he devised various ingenious ways to escape, not so much to save his own skin, but because he was a confirmed, lifelong pacifist. As a farmer, too, Ilija was a nonconformist. He rejected age-old traditions of crop rotation in favor of modern agricultural methods and machinery, eventually becoming one of Shid's more prosperous residents. Though his mother had been illiterate, Ilija was the only peasant in the area to send his children, Dimitrije and Vojin, to school. He augmented his own minimal education by studying his sons' textbooks and hosting literary evenings, where neighbors read aloud to one another while plucking chickens or husking corn.

In 1941, Shid was absorbed into the fascist state of Croatia. The ruling Ustashi pursued a ruthless policy of "ethnic cleansing," exterminating hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews and Romani. Prominent citizens such as the Bašičević clan were among the first targets. Ilija was interned in a church basement, where he waited while, one after another, his neighbors were executed by firing squad. For some reason he was allowed to return home unharmed; but he, along with his sons, had been sentenced to die at some future date. In October 1942, all three men fled to Vienna, where the sons entered university, Vojin to study medicine and Dimitrije to study art history. However Ilija, who had contracted tuberculosis, soon returned home to Shid, a medical death sentence superseding the one previously imposed by the Ustashi.

Ilija was as contemptuous of the doctor who sentenced him to death as he was of other authority figures. He used his convalescence to read, and eventually he recovered. Toward the end of World War II, Vojin and Dimitrije joined Marshal Tito's Communist partisans to fight the Croatian fascists, but none of the Bašičević men was fully comfortable with postwar Yugoslav Communism. Ilija at first refused to donate his property to the local farmers' cooperative, and when, under intense pressure, he finally did so in 1948, he refused to work on land that was no longer his. As a result, in 1951 he, his wife and both sons were expelled from the cooperative. Weakened by illness and now deprived of his livelihood, Ilija faced an impoverished future. Vojin at this point had moved to Novi Sad to practice medicine, and Dimitrije was completing his doctorate in Zagreb.

Although postwar Yugoslavia was initially part of the Soviet bloc, Tito broke with Stalin in 1948 and established an independent socialist state. In keeping with Tito's desire to chart a "third way," aligned neither with the East nor the West, socialist realism was jettisoned as the official artistic style and replaced by "moderate modernism," a non-ideological melding of abstraction and figuration. Within limits, Yugoslav artists could exhibit abroad, and foreign art was shown in Yugoslavia. Nonetheless art was still very much under the control of the state, which doled out professorships, curatorial posts, financial support and access to exhibitions. As a young art historian and critic navigating Zagreb's government-sponsored arts institutions in the 1950s, Dimitrije Bašičević soon learned that every aesthetic position had political ramifications.

Originally, at the turn of the twentieth century, European modernism had been characterized by an opposition to the status quo, identified variously with the Salon, the Academy, bourgeois society and industrial capitalism. However this contrarian impulse proved difficult to sustain. In the West, the avant-garde was constantly being absorbed into the capitalist mainstream, then revived, then reabsorbed. In the Communist East, where the avant-garde counter-discourse was denied any sort of official platform, it was pushed underground, into the private realm. Expressive freedom required protective secrecy.

In 1959, Dimitrije Bašičević joined the Gorgona group: five artists, three art historians (including himself) and one architect, who for the next seven years met regularly behind closed doors to discuss art. The group took its name from a poem by Dimitrije about the Gorgons: mythical Greek monsters whose petrifying gaze could be avoided by taking refuge in the temple of Apollo, god of music and poetry. Gorgona's members rejected the fabrication of conventional art objects in favor of anonymous collective works, actions and writings that included questionnaires, letters, descriptions of hypothetical artworks and epigrammatic texts. Gorgona's most public presence was an "anti-magazine" of the same title, conceived not as a critical review but as a work of art in itself.

Few people knew at this time that the art historian Dimitrije Bašičević was also making art. To further distance his professional identity from his creative one, he adopted the artistic pseudonym Mangelos, after the hometown of a friend who had died during the war. It was around that time, in 1941, that the future artist began making images, drawing black marks in a notebook every time a comrade, relative or neighbor was killed, "as if he had been deleted." The marks were analogous to graves, Mangelos later recalled, which gradually grew bigger, "so that they took up a quarter of a page, then half a page,

and sometimes the whole page." "I recorded the deaths in this way for a year," the artist explained, "burying, in a way, my childhood and youth." Eventually he began to write on the "graves," transforming them into artworks that he referred to as "*Paysages de la Guerre*" or "*Paysages de la Mort*." After experiencing the annihilating horrors of war, Mangelos felt a need to start from scratch, "not from something that had existed and been developed previously." The "graves" thus spawned the concept of the "*Tabula Rasa*"—a series of works that emulated school slates. The "*Tabulae Rasae*" marked both an end and a beginning, for as the artist noted, "a blank slate could not remain a blank slate forever; it had to be written on."

Mangelos habitually employed schoolroom references, like slates, globes, notebooks and alphabets, to symbolize the process of unlearning and relearning. Yet at the same time he felt that the symbolic nexus between form and content, art's metaphorical significance, had been irretrievably lost. His goal was to create art that was *not* a metaphor; objects that were their own negation. The "No-Art" of Mangelos might, for example, consist of a blackened, over-painted art reproduction. Or he might treat words and letters in purely formal terms, disabling their communicative capacity. Theorizing that the content of art would henceforth derive from logical systems rather than metaphor, he created a series devoted to Pythagoras, who to him represented the quintessence of rational thought. Two further series, "Noun-Facts" and "*Abfälle*" (Garbage), juxtapose, respectively, objective signifiers (hand, chair, table and so on) with supposedly useless "soft" concepts (love, faith, friendship).

Mangelos felt that industrialization (which he referred to as "mechanical civilization") had put an end to "all the social phenomena rooted in manual work," including art. In the future, society would be organized around "functional thinking" rather than instinct or emotion. Still, if Mangelos believed the transition from art to "No-Art" was irrevocable, he did not exactly embrace the change with open arms. His artworks were descriptive rather than prescriptive; a form of art criticism expressed in pictorial terms. Mangelos did not really think that art could or should be rationalized. On the contrary, he believed that art derives from a primordial, primitive impulse that defies theoretical explication. If "mechanical civilization" was gradually eradicating that ancient impulse, it could still be found in the work of "naïve" painters like Henri Rousseau. Defying elitist hierarchies and resisting academic ossification, the "naïves" embodied the contrarian spirit of the original avant-garde. Mangelos identified with them as "anti-artists," immune to the dictates of officialdom.

Thus in his public, professional capacity, the critic Dimitrije Bašičević gravitated to the Yugoslav "naïves"—a group of peasant artists working for the most part in and

around the Croatian village of Hlebine. At the center of this group was a trained artist, Krsto Hegedušić, whose early paintings were Marxist critiques of peasant exploitation, and who in 1930 had founded an art school in Hlebine. After World War II, Hegedušić rose to prominence within the Communist art establishment and supervised Dimitrije's work, first at the University of Zagreb and later at the Archives of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences. As Dimitrije advanced professionally, working at the Peasant Art Gallery and then, in 1957, cofounding the Primitive Art Gallery, he came into increasingly open conflict with Hegedušić. Dimitrije objected to the fact that Hegedušić was sucking the life out of "naïve" art by bringing it under the wing of the Communist Party and turning peasant painting into an official export commodity. Most galling of all, Hegedušić took credit for teaching Ivan Generalić, the greatest of the Hlebine artists, to paint, effectively robbing him of his creative identity. The conflict inspired Mangelos to produce his first globe: a blacked-out orb over which were inscribed words "*Paysage of Al Capone*"—a nickname for Hegedušić.

Amidst this brewing controversy, in 1957 Ilija Bašičević unaccountably began to paint. Heretofore he had taken a dim view of art, which he associated with "immoral" subjects like nudes, and with the vagrant rootlessness of traveling circus performers. He approved neither of Dimitrije's public profession nor his private vocation, at times even painting over his son's artwork. It has been suggested that Ilija may have been inspired to paint by talk of Generalić and the other Yugoslav peasant artists. Some have attributed Ilija's artistic turnabout to the loss of his land and all other meaningful work. Indeed, Dimitrije observed, it was as though his father suddenly became an entirely different person. Painting became his life, pursued with the same obsessive energy he had once devoted to farming.

At first Dimitrije was no more welcoming of Ilija's new vocation than the father had been of his son's career choices. Ilija's paintings were crude in comparison to those of the Hlebine artists, whose reverse-glass technique gave their work a crisp, slick appearance. Furthermore, as Dimitrije gradually became convinced of Ilija's genius, the work presented a vexing political dilemma. Fearful that his father's art would be judged, unfairly, in the context of his own ideological rivalry with Hegedušić, Dimitrije advised Ilija to conceal his identity. Ilija went to paint in the distant seaside village of Bosiljna, where the family had a vacation home, and emerged with a new pseudonym: Bosilj. Still Dimitrije did not dare show his father's work at the Gallery of Primitive Art. Instead, in 1963 he arranged for "Ilija Bosilj" to debut in a one-man exhibition at the University of Belgrade. The work caused a sensation and was immediately

requested for inclusion in two major surveys of "naïve" art, in Amsterdam and Paris. Jean Dubuffet acquired seven paintings for his renowned collection of Art Brut.

If Ilija's international success was a vindication of his son's aesthetic instincts, on a local level it proved Dimitrije's undoing. The conflict with Hegedušić masked a larger struggle for control of the Yugoslav art scene, a showdown between "moderate modernism" and the more freewheeling approach of neo-avant-garde groups like Gorgona. When Ilija's true identity was revealed—inevitably, given his newfound fame—the entire Communist establishment ambushed the Bašičević family. It was a foregone conclusion that a dumb peasant like Ilija could not have painted such wondrous pictures. They must have been done by Dimitrije, or by Vojin, or perhaps by one of Vojin's patients. The "affair" became a *cause célèbre*, milked by the state-controlled press for months on end. Finally, the City of Zagreb appointed a panel of noted art experts to watch Ilija paint. The father's authorship was officially confirmed, but the damage to the son's career was irreparable. Dimitrije resigned his post as director of the Gallery of Primitive Art in 1965. Hereafter his work took a more inward turn. He became less Dimitrije Bašičević, and more Mangelos.

The paranoia that prompted Mangelos to conceal his and his father's artistic identities may readily be ascribed to the exigencies of life under a totalitarian regime. However there was more to it than this. The split between public and private selves derived from a shared fixation on dichotomies that can be traced back to both men's traumatic wartime experiences of good and evil, kindness and cruelty. "People are like scarves with two faces," Ilija liked to say, "claiming one thing today and another tomorrow." The contradictory aspects of human nature are represented in his paintings by the recurrent motif of the two-faced or double-headed figure. Mangelos, in his writings, harps repeatedly on seemingly irreconcilable dualities: mind and body, spiritual and material, reason and instinct. Ilija and Mangelos themselves represented antipodes. While Mangelos saw himself as a rational observer of "mechanical civilization," Ilija was a product of the fading agrarian era, a time when (according to his son) intuitive, spontaneous art was still possible. Even their pseudonyms evoke opposites: Mangelos, a graveyard, death; Bosilj (which translates loosely as "basil"), a carefree summer idyll, life.

As a border town, Šid was emblematic of the divided world that Ilija and Mangelos inhabited, and its main street, the Dzigura (where both were born), served as a metaphysical boundary line. In his paintings, Ilija sometimes took the flawed, corrupt denizens of the Dzigura and transported them to an imaginary planet ruled by love, which he named Ilijada. Birds were common subjects, sometimes designated as "ambassadors"

linking Ilija's two worlds. Human figures were often equipped with wings to prepare them for the journey to Ilijada. Seldom were their feet planted firmly on the ground. Ilija's characters were neither bound by gravity nor fixed within three-dimensional space. In color and form, he made few concessions to representational accuracy. Thus the artist added to the long list yet another dichotomy, between reality and fantasy.

Like Mangelos, Ilija divided his oeuvre into thematic cycles. In addition to "Ilijada," "Flying People" and "Birds," there were series devoted to "Animals," "History, Folk Poems and Legends" and the "Bible." Favorite subjects included the "Apocalypse" and "Noah's Ark," both narratives wherein new beginnings follow catastrophic endings. Just as Mangelos attempted to start from a blank slate, he observed that his father "made his own world like a new construction that followed a previous destruction."

Also like his son, Ilija was interested in the symbolic language of art. A conventional representational painting, Mangelos observed, is an object symbolizing that which it is not: the real world. "Painting in general," he wrote, "is a metaphor." Metaphor joins content to form, and by extension, thought to feeling. Inasmuch as Ilija's symbolism can make his work difficult to decode, but the artist helpfully incorporated in his paintings lollipop-shaped objects that he referred to as "keys." These "keys" resemble flowers and are sometimes aligned in abstract borders. It has been said that they depict the female uterus, but this is only one interpretation. Mangelos likened them to hieroglyphs from an extinct alphabet. "The key is the secret and the key to the secret at the same time," he wrote.

Both Ilija and Mangelos felt compelled to raise unanswered, and unanswerable, questions in their

art. And both artists recognized the ultimate opacity of language, whether verbal or pictorial. Confounded by the acts of barbarism that could be committed by men who were, at the same time, loving fathers and devoted sons, Ilija and Mangelos each struggled to reconcile the contradictory aspects of human nature. These underlying similarities were, however, obscured by the very different iconography used by each artist and, above all, by the differences in their educational backgrounds. As Mangelos knew, formal schooling is not required to create art, but "mechanical civilization" had made art the exclusive purview of an intellectual elite. Ilija could never fully be accepted by this elite, just as Mangelos could not conform to the requirements of the Communist establishment. Ironically these two connoisseurs of contradiction were in the end both excised from the artistic mainstream by the defining dichotomies of their time and place.

Today globalization is gradually eroding the idea of a singular artistic mainstream. The boundaries between distinct cultures, between "inside" and "out" are blurring. As the hegemony of the West breaks down, so too does the dominance of any one art-historical narrative. Instead of a linear trajectory, we see a web of interconnected threads leading in many directions. While this multiplicity is liberating, the lack of an overriding hierarchical structure can be confusing. When everything is perceived as being equal, we lose the ability to make judgments, both artistic and moral. For those who cherish egalitarian values, this may be the most paradoxical contradiction of all.

We would like to thank Ivana Bašičević Antić warmly for her generous assistance in helping us realize this exhibition. Checklist entries are accompanied by their illustration numbers in the exhibition catalogue *Mangelos nos. 1 to 9 1/2* (2003-04) or the books *My Father Ilija* (1996) and *Ilija's World* (2009), when applicable.

#### DIMITRIJE BAŠIČEVIĆ (MANGELOS) (1921-1987)

- 1. *Paysage de Chide***  
1951-56. Gouache on tan wove paper. 7 3/8" × 5 3/8" (20 × 14.3 cm). Inv. 2300. *Mangelos 1 to 9 1/2*, p. 35.
- 2. *Paysage (vom Kunstmarkt)***  
1951-56. Gouache and black wash over printed text on off-white paper. 6 1/4" × 9 1/4" (16 × 23.2 cm). Inv. 2292.
- 3. *Paysage (Auktionskalender)***  
1951-56. Gouache and black wash over printed text on off-white paper. Titled "paysage," lower center. 6 1/4" × 9 1/4" (16 × 23.2 cm). Inv. 2293.
- 4. *Paysage***  
1951-56. Watercolor and ink over printed text on cream paper. 7 1/2" × 10 3/8" (19 × 27 cm). Inv. 2295.

- 5. *Tabula Rasa***  
1951-56 (m. 5). Two works in gouache over printed images on heavy cream wove paper. Each titled, lower center. Each 9 5/8" × 7 1/2" (24.3 × 18.9 cm). Inv. 2302, 2303. *Mangelos 1 to 9 1/2*, p. 62.
- 6. *Tabula Rasa***  
1951-56 (m. 5). Gouache on paper, mounted on thin cardboard. Inscribed "5-serie-d," lower center. 8 1/2" × 11" (29 × 21.7 cm). Inv. 2307.
- 7. *Negation de la Peinture***  
1951-56. Three works in gouache over printed images on white wove paper. Each titled, lower left; numbered XIX, XXVIII or XXXVI, lower right. Each 9 3/8" × 6 1/2" (23.7 × 16.7 cm). Inv. 2194, 2198.