



PRESS RELEASE

Artist, exhibition title:	Milan Kubíček: The Black and White Universe
Venue:	Záhorie Gallery of Ján Mudroch in Senica, Sadová 619/3
Curator:	Božena Juríčková
Opening:	5 December 2025 (Friday) at 17:00
Opening remarks:	Prof. Ľudovít Hološka, academic painter
Musical guest at the opening:	Andrea Báležová – piano
Duration of the exhibition:	5 December 2025 – 1 February 2026

Milan Kubíček, who belongs to the generation of artists who entered the art scene at the end of the 1960s, is at once a familiar and unfamiliar figure. Already in the prologue of his artistic journey, shielding himself from political and aesthetic ideologies with a barrier of artistic authenticity, he more or less resigned from broader public presentation of his work. On the other hand, he was one of the first Slovak visual artists to respond ahead of time to Slovakia's entry into the EU—already in January 2004—with an exhibition symbolically titled *The Gate*, held at the town hall of Mödling near Vienna.

Kubíček was trained in the studio of monumental painting and tapestry, yet very soon redirected his artistic aims toward a different domain—his monumental works form only a small, primarily introductory episode in his oeuvre. The core of his artistic program concentrated on intimate abstract painting and drawing, a position he uncompromisingly defended both against official socialist art and the fashionable currents of contemporary art. This decision contributed significantly to his inwardness and partial artistic isolation. A degree of freedom within his nonconformist personal strategies was enabled largely by his relative financial independence, built on lifelong work as an art educator.

One of the fundamental conceptual spheres, through which Kubíček's painterly and drawing work resonates, is the project of mastering a central theme he himself termed the organic-mechanical world. In his terminology, this means the process by which organic qualities—the original principles of existence, order, and the laws of the universe, Earth, life, humanity, and ultimately of the artist's own inner, immaterial, abstract, and logical subject—grow into the mechanical, that is, the external environment where this ideological platform of existence assumes a concrete form and real shape.

He laid the basic foundation of his program already in the late 1960s, boldly aiming to connect with the current European art scene. From the beginning, he gravitated toward non-figurative representation and abstraction. Kubíček's projection of abstract expression—the organic-mechanical world—was often supported, especially early on, by distant echoes of an initial sensual experience, incorporating elements of encrypted reality, even something as seemingly banal as the visual or emotional impression of a landscape. This hidden or open meaningfulness—an intentional transformation of subjective qualities rooted in objective reality—became, in the artist's formulation, a constructive-intuitive play with artistic and material elements aimed at creating a new authentic reality based on ethical (emotional) and aesthetic definition. The painting became a concentrated visualization of the artist's innermost, intimate encounters with life, the world, and his own art in a polyphony of perception, visual experience, but above all, feeling and imagination. Kubíček's creative play,

in which the personal dimension was paramount, was always guided by the canon of reduction and minimalism. His two-dimensional pictorial compositions may be described as a kind of arche-painting: in a restrained mode, color masses, amorphous and geometric shapes coexist or oppose one another, unified and divided by a bold linear trace.

Kubíček's work cannot be described as a continuous spiral. On the contrary, it is marked by a differentiated, wide-ranging approach, constant movement, and new reflective probes. At its core, he approached abstraction in a distinctive, non-homogeneous, even eclectic synthetic form. From its layered stories and shapes, he spontaneously selected various tendencies and details, integrating them into a unified, original field of personal exploration. At times he emphasized structural, expressive, or lyrical abstraction; at other times, elements of gestural painting, playfulness, or psychic automatism. From the early 1970s to the late 1980s, his works were formed with a 3D and pop-art sensibility, including series of collages, assemblages, and frottages. The final decade of the 20th century saw Kubíček's interest in synthesizing planar abstract painting with spatial objects and installation.

The unexpected concluding phase of his work, emerging at the turn of the millennium, crystallized into a lyrically driven collection of line-accented painterly reflections with a distinctive calligraphic tone. Between 2016 and 2018, two extensive painting cycles were created: *The White Universe* and *Images from the Other World* (working title: *The Black Universe*). They are interwoven with deep inner, almost mystical intimacy, inspired by the artist's thought: "Inside each of us lies an inner universe." Their minimalist yet dynamic visual articulation relies primarily on spontaneous, urgent gesture and the polarity of black and white. A selection from these final abstract sets (untitled, listed only by number, a total of 57 oil paintings on canvas) was donated by Kubíček in 2019 to the collection of the Záhorská Gallery of Ján Mudroch in Senica as a gesture of recognition for the gallery's pioneering and repeated presentation of his free work. Both concluding cycles are being presented publicly for the first time at this exhibition, also in the context of the artist's recent life anniversaries (what would have been his 80th birthday in 2024, and the 5th anniversary of his passing in 2025).

Academic painter Milan Kubíček (*1944 Bratislava – †2020 Skalica), active alternately in Stupava and Bratislava, studied from 1958–1962 at the Department of Display Design at the School of Applied Arts in Bratislava (Prof. Rudolf Fila, Fridrich Moravčík). Between 1963–1969 he continued his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava in the Studio of Monumental Painting and Tapestry under Prof. Peter Matejka. For his diploma thesis he received the Graduate Prize of the Academy Council in the field of integration of architecture and fine art in environmental design. He was a founding member of the art association Art Club 60+8 (1990), through which he also exhibited his work. His multifaceted artistic program encompassed intimate painting, assemblage, frottage, collage, free drawing, monumental works, tapestry, 3D painterly objects, and installation. Alongside his own creative work, from 1973 until his retirement in 2007 he taught at an elementary art school in Bratislava. Outside the arts, he was active in numerous initiatives focused on the history of Stupava and the protection of its cultural monuments.

The works of Milan Kubíček are represented in the collections of the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava, the Záhorie Gallery of Ján Mudroch in Senica, the Gallery of the City of Strumica (North Macedonia), the town hall of Mödling (Austria), and in private collections in Slovakia, Italy, Germany, Austria, Poland, Canada, and the USA.

Božena Juríčková