Portfolio

Aleksandar Žmirić



Jeca, 2021

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



Milos, 2022

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



Mama, 2021

oil on canvas; 60 cm • 80 cm



Mama sleeps, 2021

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



Sreten, 2022

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm

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Culi, 2022

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



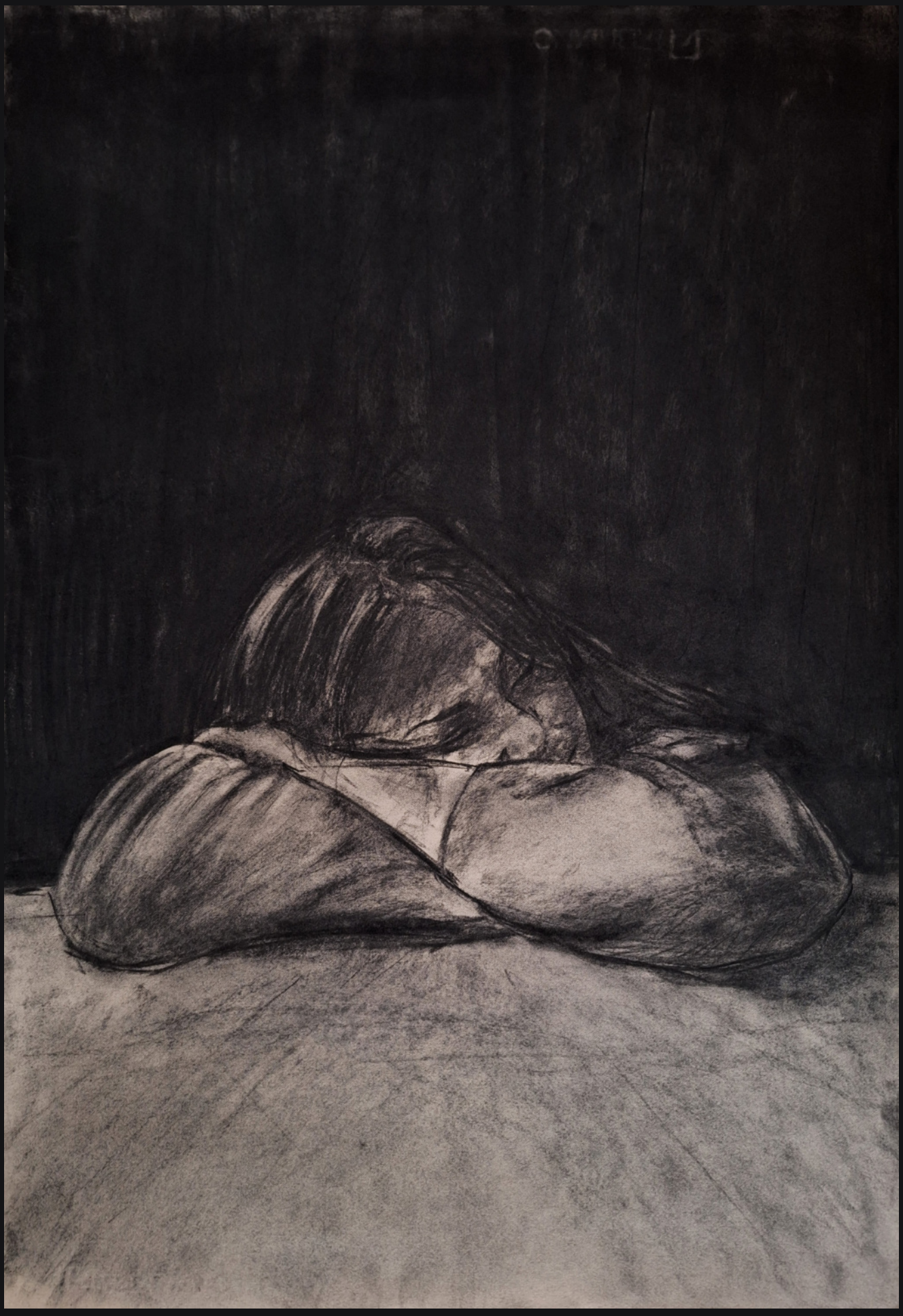
Engna, 2023

charcoal on paper; 70 cm • 50 cm



Engna 2, 2023

charcoal on paper; 70 cm • 50 cm



Aca 3, 2023

charcoal on paper; 70 cm • 50 cm



Mama sleeps 2, 2023

charcoal on paper; 70 cm • 50 cm



Milan 3, 2023

charcoal on paper; 70 cm • 50 cm



Sreten without his ring, 2023

charcoal on paper; 70 cm • 50 cm



Radoje, 2022

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



Teddy, 2022

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



Where'd you think you're going?, 2022

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



Doesn't know what to do, 2022

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



There, there, 2022

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



Chimera, 2023

oil on canvas; 120 cm • 180 cm



„Inter/Action 2023“, Belgrade City Museum, 2023



„Inter/Action 2023“, Belgrade City Museum, 2023

The Weight of Silence: A Resting Place for a Turbulent Mind

The magical power of silence and of light all but extinguished has, since time immemorial, drawn the alchemy of creation into the suicidal vortex of artistic expression through its mysterious potential to give birth to unexpected forms. Silence propelled an adrenaline-charged energy into darkness, which returned its echo in a new guise, in forms suspended within phantasmagorical and intergalactic interspaces.

Academically trained painter Aleksandar Žmirić skilfully dismantles and constructs new labyrinths in which the full spectrum of emotional tremors resides—the same tremors of agony and fear that accompanied the Minotaur through Daedalus's labyrinth as it fed on the bodies of young Greek men and women. The story of concealment and shame, repentance and the search for salvation, punishment and liberation, birth and rejoicing, seen through various artistic manifestations, remains an undying creative force. Through the multiplicity of its possible tellings, it perpetually sustains the omnipresence of art.

The picture plane—a canvas crowned with the challenge of its whiteness—draws the artist's mind, hand, body and emotion into an infinity of space. Illuminated fragments of imagined vistas pass through it, often transformed into unexpected and surprising reflections of ourselves. The fluid dissolution of solid forms, which Žmirić commands with such assurance in the construction of his paintings, carries within it a refined musical undercurrent akin to Mozart's *Requiem*.

Figures from the real world emerge from the darkness, brought into being by the artist's inhalation, only to be transformed, with his exhalation, into hazy shadows of time's dissolving transience. Everything is shrouded in a veil of fantastic apparition and the blurred relativity of human existence. The seductiveness of the real becomes a point of departure for creating an atmosphere of constant, adrenaline-charged vibration, in which a range of skilfully chosen tones achieves a symphonic resonance across Žmirić's canvases.

The artist respects the principles of traditional painting and stands in defence of the sublimity and dignity of the painting as a living, iconic whole, preserving its sovereign place upon its pedestal and its centuries-old aura. This commitment is evident in his meticulous, dedicated handling of materials and technique, and in the dialogue he establishes with the work, in a hyper-accelerated age in which devotion to masterful execution in painting has become passé.

His focus on the human figure is less concerned with skilfully positioning it within a framework of spatial reality—although he certainly demonstrates an abundant talent and mastery of demanding perspectives—than with channelling experiments in mutation and the reshaping of form's representational possibilities into a personal poetic language. The series of paintings produced through this exploratory process reveals an artist who is very close to accomplishing one of the most demanding artistic tasks of our time: developing a recognisable signature, one that commands the unequivocal respect of critics and audiences alike.

An affinity with the masters who skilfully employed the "fullness of darkness" and the dramatic effect of flashes of light suggests an ongoing dialogue. Although Žmirić has

produced a limited body of work since his formal artistic training, each new painting takes his creative practice a step further in translating the experience of earlier masters into a contemporary artistic vocabulary.

Everything seemingly personal, provocative, cynical or ambiguous in the titles of Žmirić's works—*Đes pošo* ("Where D'You Think You're Going?"), *Neka te* ("There, there"), *Ne zna šta će* ("Doesn't Know What to Do")—expresses the artist's unburdened, youthful relationship with his times, in which his humanoids clearly find their place among the headless, insubstantial, amoral creatures of our reality. The personal can thus be read as collective, suggesting a high degree of awareness and intellectual purpose in an artist of this disposition. We witness a progression beyond the comfort zone of lyrical realism in works such as *Mama*, *Đuli*, *Jeca*, *Miloš* and *Sreten*, towards a realm of distorted bodies attuned to a new sound—one capable of producing a scream within the silence of a painting.

Walking through the gallery of Žmirić's anthropomorphic specimens, we consent to enter a new labyrinth in which all our senses will be sharpened to their utmost, and everything that keeps our inner spirit and thought in a state of tension and anticipation will be awakened. This passage through darkness and silence will stir within us the urge to touch the elusive and confront ourselves, our other SELF, and time, which slips away irretrievably with every passing second.

A bold undertaking—and only for those prepared to accept Žmirić's challenge!

dr Siniša Vidaković


Ouroboros



Ouroboros 1, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 2, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 3, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 4, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 5, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 6, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 7, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 8, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 9, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



Ouroboros 10, 2025

oil on canvas; 130 cm • 190 cm



„Ouroboros“, “Banski dvor” Cultural Center, Banja Luka, 2025



„Ouroboros“, “Banski dvor” Cultural Center, Banja Luka, 2025

At the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale, the Arsenale hosted an intriguing exhibition exploring transhumanism, the future of the human species, and its symbiosis and coexistence with nature. One section was particularly compelling and unsettling. In an age when time is not only money but also our most valuable resource, the curators presented a project involving bodily augmentations designed to make the most of our time. Through various masks, wristbands and other devices, we were to receive everything necessary for our biological and psychological functioning while asleep, so that we would not have to spend our waking hours attending to these needs. The aim was to nourish ourselves, exercise and regenerate through these devices, all while sleeping. Both fascinating and terrifying, the concept offered me a glimpse into one possible future for the human species, evoking the sensation of living in a science-fiction film.

The aesthetic of that exhibition, and the feeling it aroused in me, returned when I encountered Aleksandar Žmirić's new series of paintings. At once beautiful and dark, these somewhat unsettling depictions of human bodies seemed to open a window onto our future. My experience of the two exhibitions is their only connection. I mention this because Žmirić's exhibition asks the viewer to look. These paintings need to be felt rather than interpreted.

The series was developed during his master's studies at the Academy of Arts, University of Banja Luka, yet it is far more than a student exhibition. It is a mature artistic experiment and a project that explores the relationship between visual experience and the need for narrative. Aleksandar makes intelligent use of contemporary technologies, experimenting with something that remains taboo in most cultures today: the human body. Using digital software, he quite literally arranges human figures into configurations that would be difficult to achieve with live models. In doing so, he strips the body of symbolism and uses it as material, giving the depicted forms their sculptural quality.

Stark contrasts between light and shadow heighten the drama. They evoke a Baroque dynamism and emotional intensity, but, for me, they most strongly recall the feelings stirred by Goya's *Black Paintings*. Something here touches our deepest emotions and returns us to a primal state. The restrained palette, ranging between extremes of light and dark, masterfully emphasises the tactile quality of the depicted forms.

Although the human body, as object and form, is stripped of symbolism in these works, symbolism emerges in the exhibition's title. The concept of Ouroboros—the wheel of life, the serpent devouring its own tail, the cyclical nature of all existence—has been present since prehistoric times and represents one of the archetypes through which we understand the world and the passage of time. In this series of paintings, it can be understood as something yet to come, yet which has probably already occurred in the past in another form. The exhibition thus leaves viewers with a series of questions that concern each of us as we confront what has been and what is still to come.

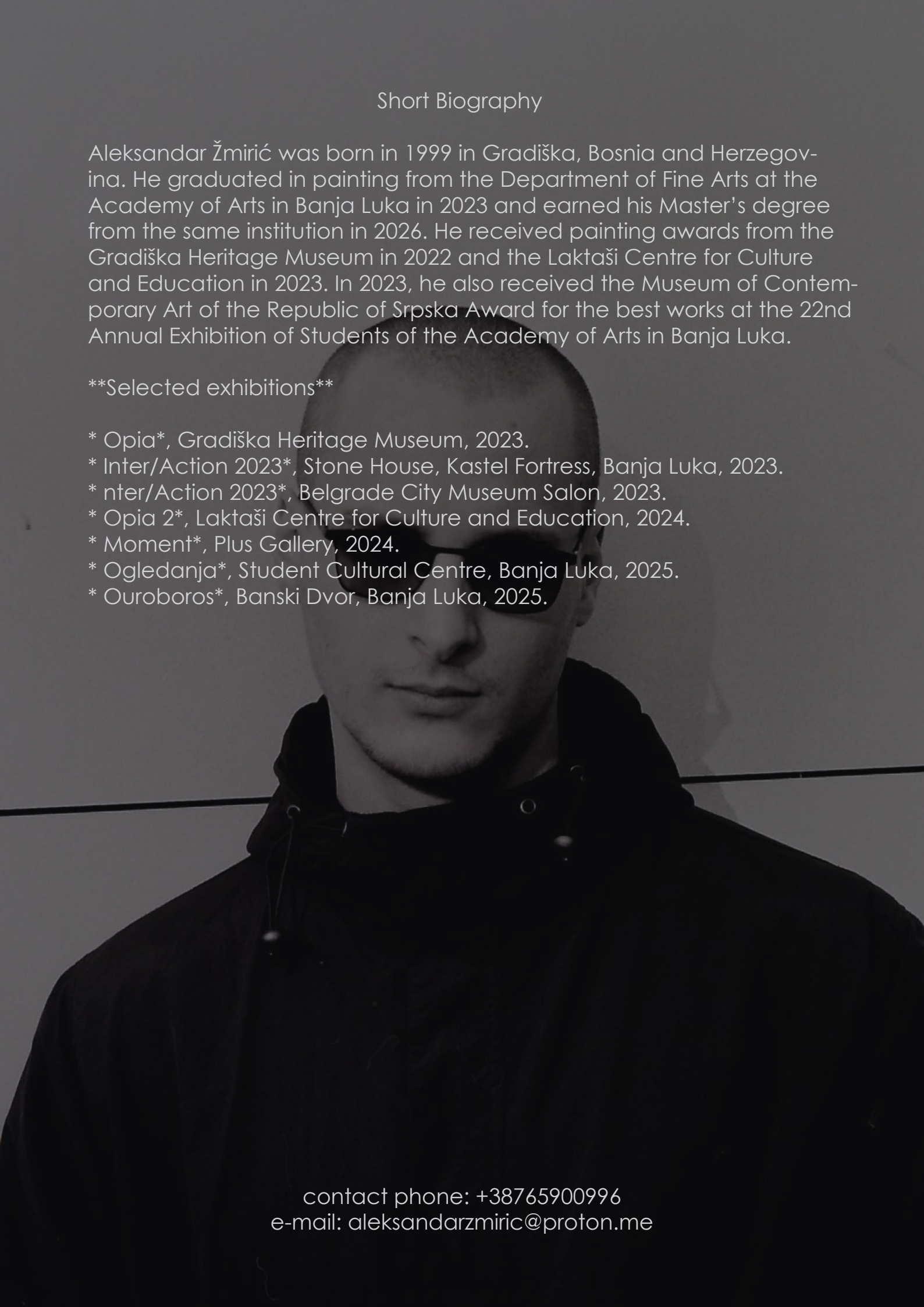
Mladen Banjac

Short Biography

Aleksandar Žmirić was born in 1999 in Gradiška, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He graduated in painting from the Department of Fine Arts at the Academy of Arts in Banja Luka in 2023 and earned his Master's degree from the same institution in 2026. He received painting awards from the Gradiška Heritage Museum in 2022 and the Laktaši Centre for Culture and Education in 2023. In 2023, he also received the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska Award for the best works at the 22nd Annual Exhibition of Students of the Academy of Arts in Banja Luka.

Selected exhibitions

* Opia*, Gradiška Heritage Museum, 2023.
* Inter/Action 2023*, Stone House, Kastel Fortress, Banja Luka, 2023.
* nter/Action 2023*, Belgrade City Museum Salon, 2023.
* Opia 2*, Laktaši Centre for Culture and Education, 2024.
* Moment*, Plus Gallery, 2024.
* Ogledanja*, Student Cultural Centre, Banja Luka, 2025.
* Ouroboros*, Banski Dvor, Banja Luka, 2025.



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