

The Museum of Modern Art

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Press Preview

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YUGOSLAVIA: A REPORT

Approximately 45 prints created since 1965 by Yugoslavian artists will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from September 29 through November 30, 1969.

Made from celluloid sheets and movable plates as well as the traditional techniques of etching, woodcut, and serigraph, the prints reveal the independence and technical sophistication of the twenty-four artists represented.

Yugoslavia has perhaps more government-supported museums and galleries devoted to modern art than any nation of comparable size. A young nation -- a federation of six Balkan states only twenty-five years old -- its "emphasis on independence and individuality induces most artists to work at their own presses; very few lithographs are produced because that would necessitate participation in a workshop. The resulting prints are of technical brilliance and considerable diversity in both composition and subject matter," according to the exhibition wall label.

YUGOSLAVIA: A REPORT was prepared by Riva Castleman, Assistant Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books in the Museum's Department of Drawings and Prints, who selected the works during two visits to Yugoslavia. The artists work in or near the three main cultural centers of the country--Ljubljana, Zagreb, and Belgrade. Three of the printmakers represented work abroad, but continue to show their work in national exhibitions.

Many of the artists have studied in England, France and West Germany, and have thus been exposed to Western European and American artistic developments. Their art reflects historic Byzantine and folk elements along with the most contemporary thought and styles. Miss Castleman observes, "Yugoslavia's artists have such freedom of expression and encouragement to create that it is superfluous to compare them to artists in even the most progressive Eastern European countries." Perhaps the most significant feature of this report is the sense of artist identity that has come out of centuries of turmoil and foreign domination.

The largest international exhibition of printmaking, held every two years in Ljubljana, has been organized by Zoran Krzisk for the past 14 years. Director of the Moderna Galerija in

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Ljubljana, his stubbornness and vision has been largely responsible for the sophistication of printmaking in Yugoslavia.

The works in the exhibition portray the complete spectrum of printmaking in Yugoslavia, ranging in character from the oscillating yellows and purples of Andrej Jemec's serigraph Blueness to the brilliant mathematical optics of Sutej and Picelj; from Pogacnik's meticulous abstractions to the "surreal environments" of Debenjak. A wood-engraved Self Portrait by Bozidar Jakac, the oldest artist represented and considered the father of printmaking in Slovenia, is also included. After the New York showing, YUGOSLAVIA: A REPORT is scheduled to circulate to various colleges and universities in this country.

Additional information and photographs available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Jonathan Wright, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York. 10019 956-7501, 7504, 7298.