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Ljubica Buba Miljković – A sanctuary for the soul

Ljubica Miljković
– A dedication to remember

God gave us words

Ljubica “Buba” Miljković (Belgrade, January 02 1949
– Belgrade, May 26 2025).

She graduated in art history at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. She briefly worked as secretary of the Department of Art History and as a librarian at the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments. She was a curator at the National Museum of Serbia from 1984 to 2015; she worked in the Graphics Cabinet and later took charge of and managed the Collection of Yugoslav Painting of the 20th Century. After passing her professional exam, she earned the title of senior curator and later museum advisor. She researched 20th-century Serbian painting and the history of the National Museum of Serbia, where she worked. She also engaged in art criticism and was a member of selection committees, award juries, and gallery councils.

She authored dozens of thematic or commemorative exhibitions, scholarly studies, professional



Ljubica Buba Miljković

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papers, catalogues, and monographic publications. She wrote the scripts for three television documentaries entitled “Secrets of the National Museum” and dozens of contributions for the RTS Educational Program. She gave hundreds of lectures at

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Memorial evening for Ljubica Buba Miljković, Gallery '73 in Belgrade

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Kolarac University, the Faculty of Education, and cultural institutions throughout the Republic of Serbia. She also launched and edited the *Journal of the Society of Friends of the National Museum*.

She was an honorary member of the Lada Association of Fine Artists of Serbia. She was a donor and a member of the Assembly of Matica Srpska in Novi Sad. For her decades of dedicated work, commitment to the profession, and contributions

to the advancement of museum practice, she received numerous acknowledgments, awards, and significant professional recognitions.

She was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award "Mihailo Valtrović," presented by the Museum Society of Serbia for outstanding contributions to national culture in the fields of research, preservation, use, collection, and presentation of movable cultural heritage. In Ljubica Buba Miljković,



Memorial evening for Ljubica Buba Miljković, Gallery '73 in Belgrade

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we had a rare and invaluable collaborator in the preservation and promotion of Serbian cultural, artistic, and spiritual heritage. Her works are equally a testament to the continuous human journey between reality and vision, earth and sky, the material and the spiritual — a reflection of the fragile sense that arises and fades within a person, pulsating with life itself.

As a preserver of continuity of what was begun, a seeker and devoted fighter — working in the glory of

God, her people, and her homeland — she has left us indebted through her industriousness, knowing that *only acts of love endure*. The true benefit of her labour will be felt by readers and by those who are to come.

Her life and museum work testify to gratitude and love, immortalized in the monumental three-volume work *On Serbian Art with Love*, published by the Foundation “For the Serbian People and the State.”

Evoking joy and goodness

Buba's Singing Heart

“On view to the whole world, which will exclaim:
Behold, the Serbs!”

Miloš Crnjanski, *Migrations*, vol. I

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Ljubica Buba Miljković (1949–2025), through her entire being and her devoted and dedicated work, belonged to and served her people, finding in that belonging her greatest duty, and in that service her greatest joy. With the bitterness of knowing the tragedy of the Serbian people, yet with the breadth of a person who perceives life and history more deeply and over time, she withstood the harshness of the era we live in — because she knew that *only acts of love endure*.

Her academic diligence in comprehensively examining complex topics in the diverse and rich national artistic and literary creation rested on knowledge, dedication, patience, and faith in the *perfect law of freedom*. And her prayer to the Creator, along with her unquenchable desire to contemplate Truth and the Path, strengthened her to see the certainty of the future *in the service of light*.

From this calling and response, Ljubica Miljković, with all her being, legacy, understanding, and convictions, was oriented toward the heavenly heights, and from this harmony arose her worldviews and creative motives. Undoubtedly, this could only be achieved through insight and understanding of the general and national historical, cultural, and artistic context, proving that art transcends na-

tional boundaries and belongs to the world artistic heritage. Ljubica Miljković, with her many years of curatorial experience and abundant literary talent, based on facts and layered, diverse data from archival sources, brought together the lives, paintings, and artistic works of selected Serbian painters — confirming the path of “glory and honour”

Buba strove for every artistic-literary meditation, idea, ideal, aspiration, and description of artists and their works to contribute to shedding light on certain neglected yet crucial issues of our culture, spirituality, and education, influencing our refinement and helping to reassess some of our misconceptions while ennobling everyday life.

She carried within her a longing for peace and meaning — affirming that death does not exist, only a journey, whether real or metaphysical. Essentially, it signifies a quiet, humble life lived with Meaning. In a cognitive sense, Buba followed the thought of Božidar Knežević that “words are living images of things”, returning to them an analogical key of connection through symbols, while seeing their original power to represent reality as continuous transformations of words — which leads to the fullness of their meaning.

Through her knowledge and long curatorial experience, Ljubica Miljković guided us through complex historical truths, artistic paths, and the nature of painterly creation, artistic intersections, and the heights reached by Serbian painters over a century. She presented, concisely and compellingly, how the lives of these artists demanded self-sacrifice and hardships, effort and suffering, bitterness, misunderstandings, and uncertainty. Narratively effortless, thought grounded in the conviction and faith that the past contains living and potent layers, those that radiate in every age.

Throughout her life, wherever she moved, whatever she reflected upon, over everything she did and wrote — Ljubica Miljković perceived the mysterious light of art in *immediate proximity*. Art contributes to the integrated joy of theology. Ljubica recognised this secret of artistic creation — in the devoted praise of the Divine Logos. If profound thoughts require life experiences beyond the bounds of the possible and often surpass the power of comprehension, and if the calling she embraced requires great strength, Buba possessed both. She was gifted with the ability for deep reflection, a sense for strict methodological rules of thought, and an affinity for patient and prolonged study.

Anyone who ever encountered or spoke with Buba felt her cultivated calm. In her presence and bearing radiated the soulful mental strength of an inner world that trembles and burns within, yet appears outwardly serene and untouchable.

A person is always mysteriously prepared, both for their own thoughts and for those that come to them, as if by some miraculous force always ready for feelings that will stealthily enter the soul. Father Tadej of Vitovnica offered guidance exactly in pro-

portion to the soul that came to him in confession, yet of all his teachings, by some thought, the most well-known words have remained in this world: “What your thoughts are, such is your life”. Buba repeated these words daily, both to herself and to her friends. Following Father Tadej’s teaching, she believed that a person who governs their thoughts demonstrates spiritual health.

Buba sought a beacon in every age, a support in every adversity, a guide in every longing, light in every darkness, faith in improvement, in the meaning of existence in this world, in the universe. She gladly shared her knowledge and experiences with others. We all carry that memory of her. She was always in the service of humanity. Tireless in giving love. Buba saw and was convinced that it is precisely the Divine moments of life that constitute the true substance of the world; and that a person with a singing heart is an island of God — His beacon, His proxy.

On earth, there is only one kind of true happiness, and that happiness is the bliss of a *loving and singing heart*: for even in life it grows into the spiritual essence of the world and participates in the Kingdom of God.

