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**engraved
work
1947~1984**

The Métamorphoses bookstore in Paris and the Bordas gallery in Venice are joining forces to present the engraved works of Zoran Mušič from April to May.

Drypoints, etchings, aquatints, lithographs, illustrated books — around a hundred works will be showcased, including some rare or unpublished pieces. From the *Cavallini* of the early period to the moving series *We Are Not the Last*, as well as the *Lands, Landscapes*, and *Plant Motifs*, and of course Venice, where the artist chose to live, this is undoubtedly the largest collection of Zoran Mušič's engraved works presented to date in France.

ZORAN MUŠIČ

ENGRAVED WORK 1947~1984

From April 3 to May 17 2025
Opening on Thursday April 3
at 6 p.m.

Librairie Métamorphoses
17 rue Jacob | 75006 Paris





Self-portrait
Mixed technique on old paper
1986

Cover : *Dalmatian Lands*,
Etching (detail)
1961

Biography

Zoran Mušič was born in 1909 in Bukovica, a hamlet of Gorizia. He was at various times an Austro-Hungarian, Yugoslav, and Slovenian citizen. He experienced a rather nomadic childhood due to his father's job as a teacher, which required frequent relocations, and soon because of the war.

He initially studied in Maribor and traveled to Vienna and Prague. At the age of 19, he entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, where he created his first works, mainly linocuts and woodcuts. On the advice of his professor, the painter Ljubo Babić, he spent time in Spain, particularly in Madrid, where he copied works by El Greco, Velázquez, and Goya at the Prado; until the civil war forced him to retreat to Dalmatia, and then back to Gorizia.

His work was featured in various exhibitions (Belgrade, Zagreb, Maribor, Ljubljana), but it was in Venice, where he had his first major exhibition in 1943, with a catalog prefaced by Filippo de Pisis.

His friendship with resistance fighters led to his arrest by the Gestapo, and his refusal to collaborate resulted in his deportation to the Dachau camp in 1944. He emerged alive at the Liberation in 1945, with some of the drawings he had made there, «as if blinded by the grandiose hallucinatory of these fields of corpses,» on stolen paper.



Mušič's engraved work truly began upon his return from the camp, with his permanent settlement in Venice. He formed friendships with painters such as Kokoschka, Campigli, Tobey, and with writer Carson McCullers, and traveled to Tuscany. In 1949, he married Ida Cadorin, whom he had met during his first trip to Venice.

A recipient of the «Paris» prize for young Italian artists, Mušič went to the capital for his first exhibition at the Galerie de France in January 1952, where his work would be regularly presented in the following decades. His life was now organized between Venice and Paris, and exhibitions multiplied across Europe and around the world.

Zoran Mušič passed away in Venice in 2005. His works are now part of the collections of the world's greatest museums.

Zoran Mušič

Engraved Work 1947~1984

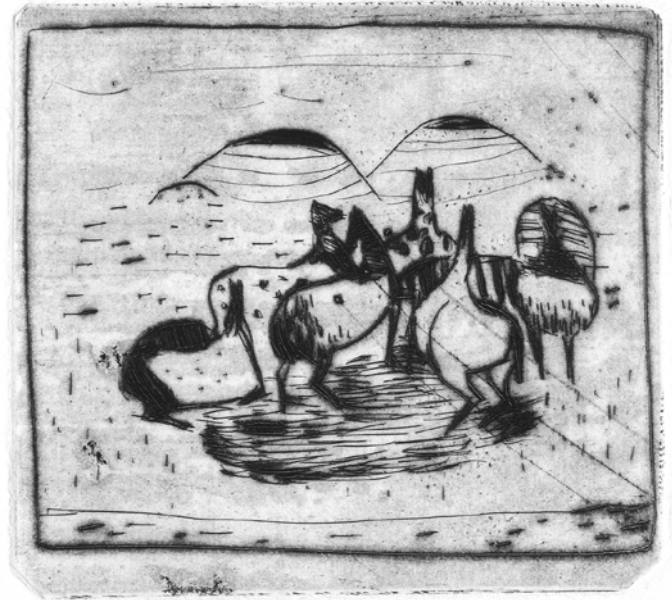
Notes by Hervé Bordas

The engraved work of Zoran Mušič includes approximately 500 pieces, taking into account the numerous essays or state proofs that did not result in any editions. About 400 engravings and 80 lithographs. Like the painted work, it is divided into large thematic cycles that sometimes overlap in time.

1947-1949
First drypoints /

On the presses of the Accademia in Venice, small plates appear featuring the *cavallini* (literally «little horses») and the *traghetti* (those large boats used to transport cattle from island to island). These, along with a few landscapes, are Mušič's first drypoints.

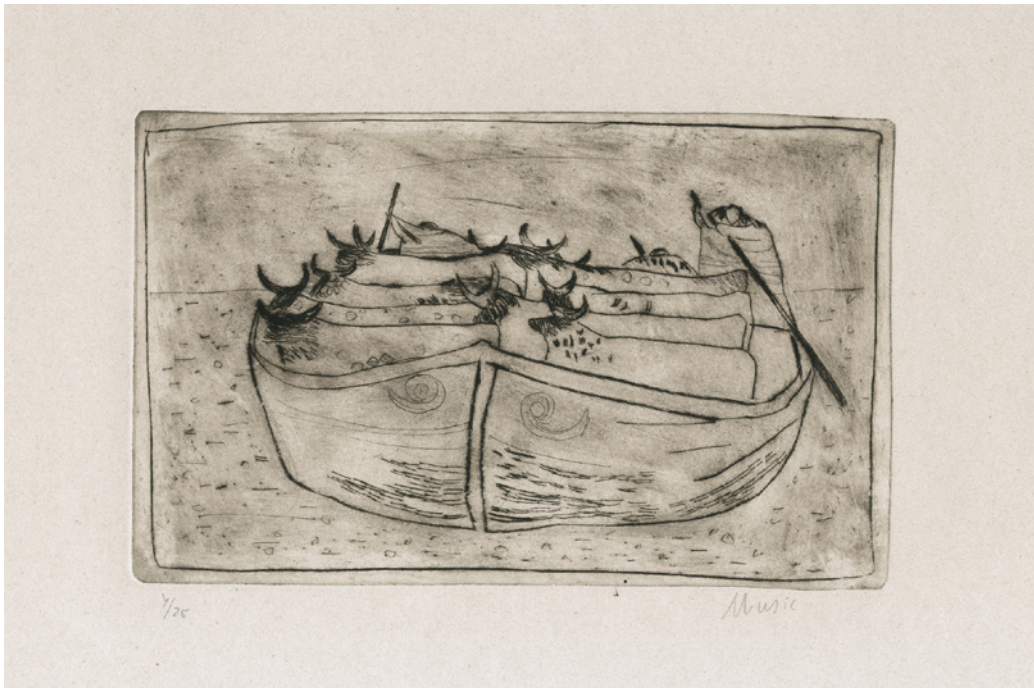
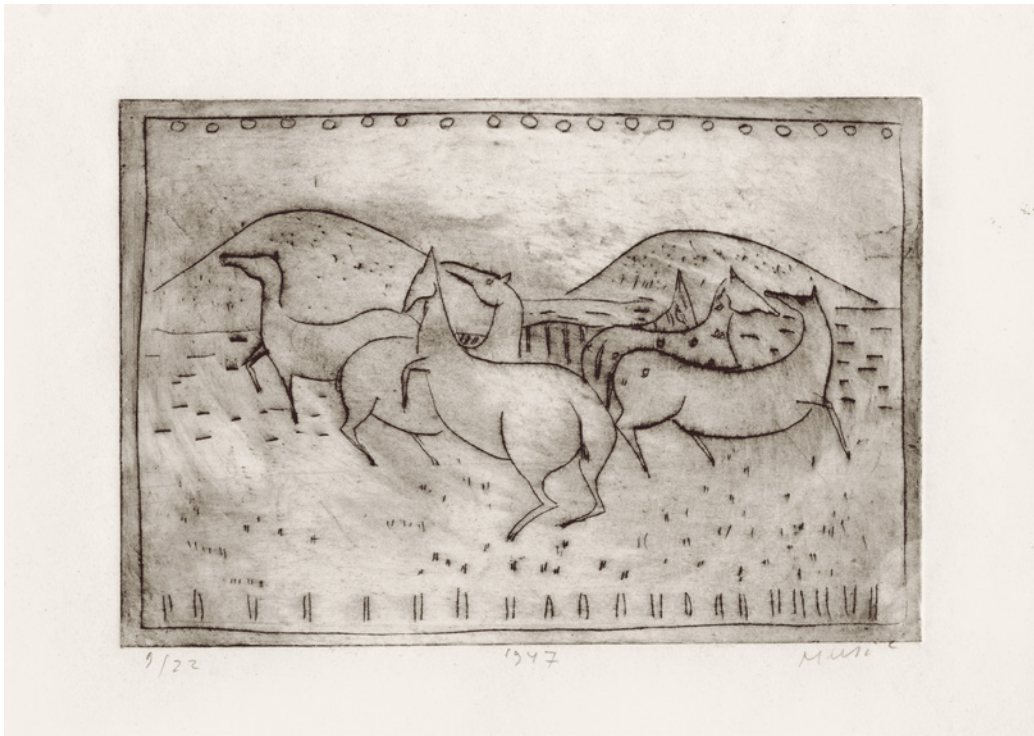
Often printed with makeshift means, these early prints are of irregular quality, sometimes overly inked, on all kinds of papers: old watermarked papers or poor-quality cardboard. The justifications are often «approximate», as Mušič prints as he goes along with his research and likely loses track of the numbering at times. It is highly probable that there is no «complete» edition of these early states, but only a few proofs of great rarity.



Epr. d'art. etc

Mušič 49

At the very beginning of the 1960s, when Rolf Schmücking is about to publish the first catalog raisonné of prints, *Das graphische Werk 1947 bis 1962*, the Lacourière workshop, where the artist is accustomed to working, will reprint these first compositions (at least those plates that have been preserved). The prints will then be impeccable, printed on Vélín de Rives, with 15 numbered and signed proofs and a few signed artist's proofs. It is impossible to confuse the first prints with these reprints from Lacourière, which often constitute a sort of second state.



Cavallini, 1947
Drypoint

Il traghetto IV, 1949
Drypoint

1948-1953
First lithographs /

Mušič begins to learn lithography in Zurich, at the workshop of his friend and gallery owner Charles Lienhard, as well as at Wolfensberger. His first lithographs are published by Arta, managed by Grossenbacher. About twenty of them will be exhibited during these years, notably in Rome, at the Obelisco gallery (1948), and in Venice, at the Cavallino gallery (1949). Mušič will subsequently continue his work as a lithographer, especially at Desjobert. An invitation from the Galerie de France is printed by Mourlot in 1953.

1953-1958
First engravings /

Mušič will create his first engravings at the workshop of Jacques Leblanc, and then very faithfully at the Lacourière workshop, at the top of Montmartre. Residing in Venice, the boats and fishing nets become a subject that piques his curiosity. The mesh of the nets in the sunlight, the geometric structures of the masts of the boats and the intertwined traps, particularly "graphic," will also become a favored subject for him. The motifs are sometimes captured in Chioggia, sometimes on the island of Pellestrina, in the heart of the Venetian lagoon.



Dalmatian Motif, 1955
Lithography



The Nets, 1956
Aquatint

Dalmatian women, 1956
Drypoint
Second state, in two colors.

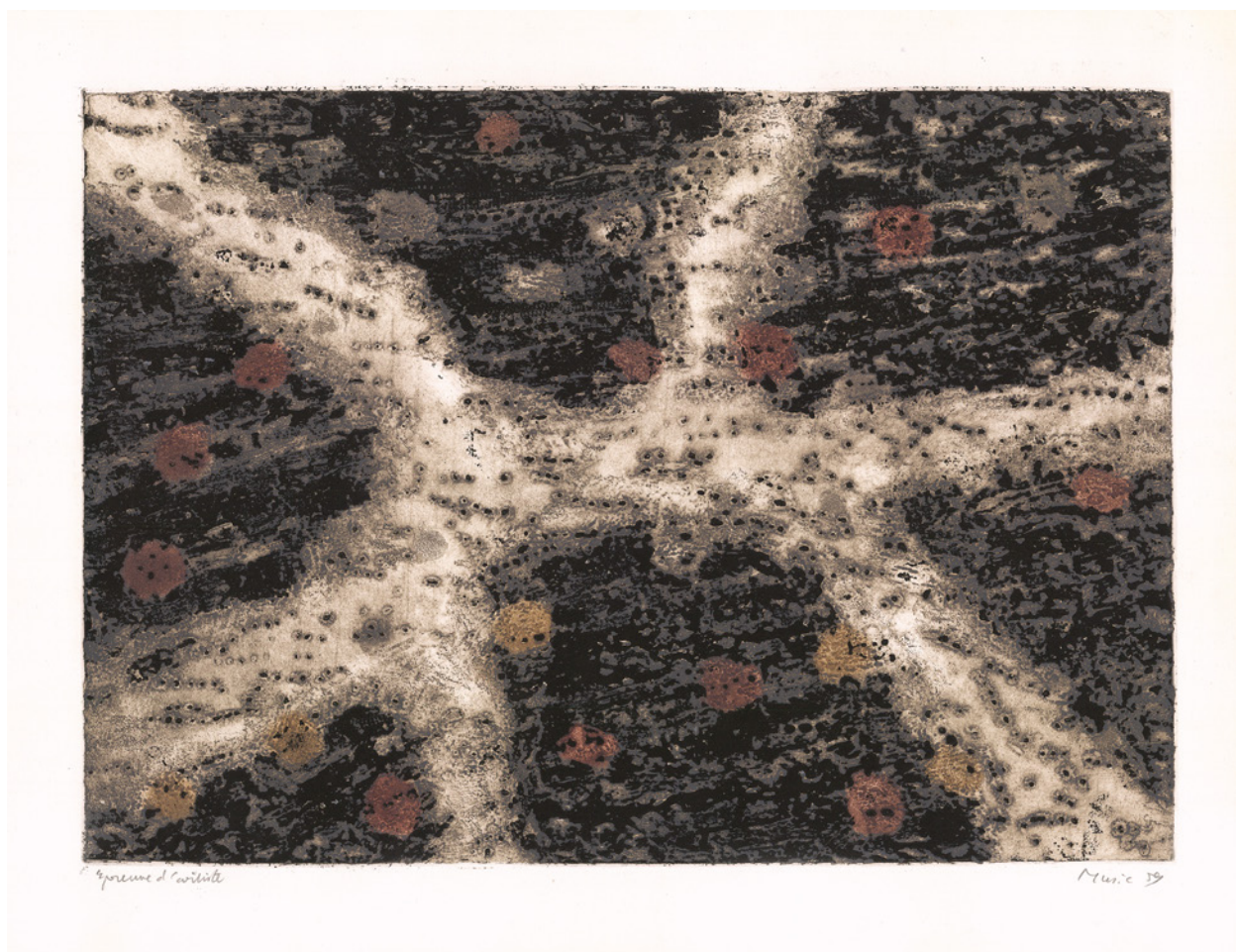
1958-1961

*Dalmatian Lands, Adriatic Lands,
Open Space /*

It was at the end of 1958 that the series of *Lands* was born. Mušič evolved in contact with the New School of Paris, and he was undoubtedly influenced by the abstraction that was omnipresent in the capital during those years. The cycle was presented at the Galerie de France in 1958.

Although these *Lands* may seem completely abstract, Mušič has always protested: for him, these dark expanses are syntheses of the landscapes of the Karst.

There are indeed several significant photos where the artist poses in the midst of «his» landscape. A «burned» landscape of lapiaz, made of stones, striations, grooves, and where vegetation struggles to grow, blooming in engravings in orange, red, or brown spots.



Terre d'Istrie, 1959
Etching



1962-1970
Natural Screen, Landmark,
Italian Motifs, Deserted Gardens /

The following cycle marks a certain return to a more pronounced figuration, with the silhouettes and profiles of mountains in *Jardins déserts peut-être* and *Procession des monts* (poems by Jean Lescure) and the few tender touches illustrating the awakening of vegetation in spring in *La terre écrit la terre* (with Alain Bosquet).

Procession des monts 1,
1969
Drypoint

1970-1976

We Are Not the Last /

As in his painting, starting in 1970, memories of the horrors of the camps resurface in his engraved work after a long lethargy of over 25 years. Mušič made this his main subject for about ten years: he would draw no less than 45 etchings and drypoints and 25 lithographs, counting the state proofs and those for his book with René de Solier, *Cadastre de Cadavres*.



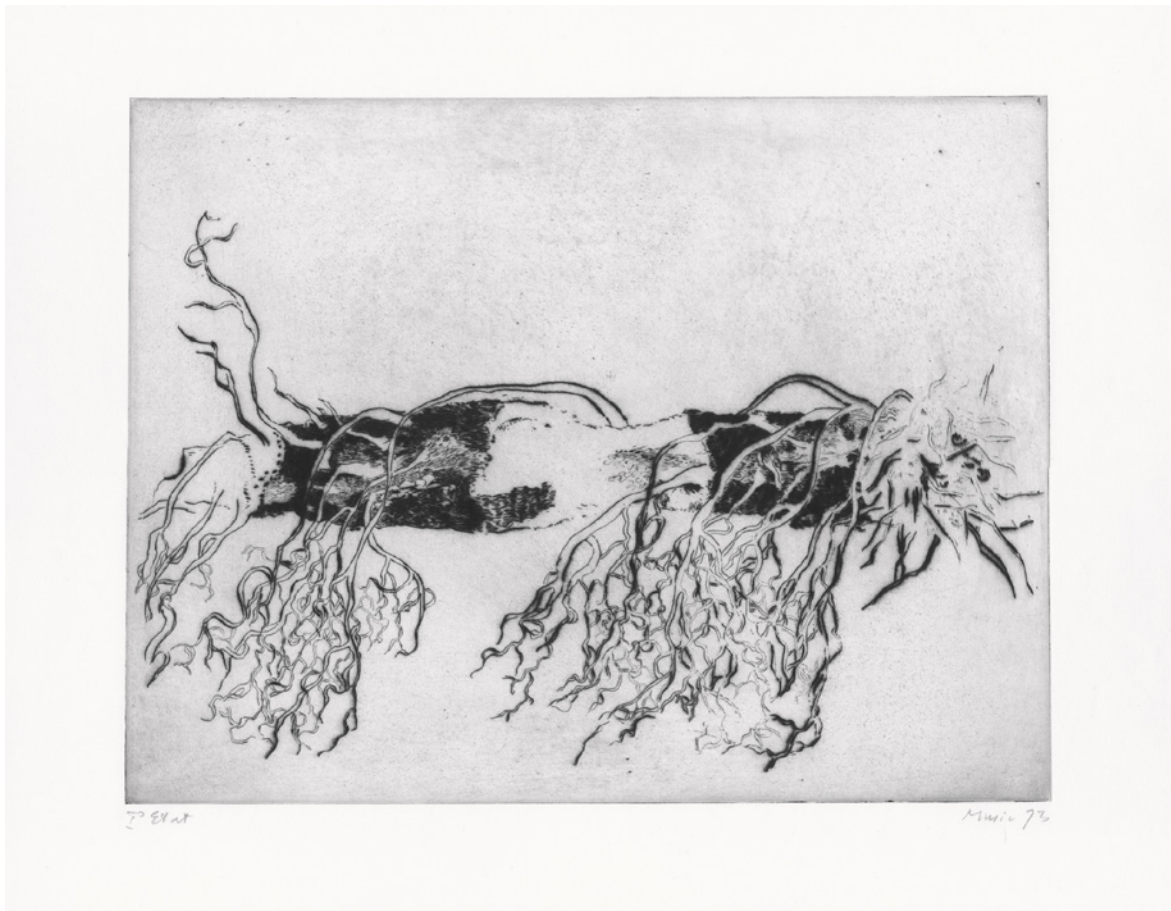
*We Are Not
the Last, 1975
Lithography*

Mušič 75



1972-1975
Plant Motif /

Upright trees, without horizon, often in pairs, resting against each other, twisted, entangled, burned, struck by lightning... Mušič inscribes these «vegetal deaths» in the continuity of *We Are Not the Last*. Numerous essays made at Lacourière workshop will remain unpublished.



Plant Motif, 1973
Etching

Plant Motif, 1973
Second state, in black
Drypoint



Engr.

Muric 73

Plant Motif, 1973
Drypoint
Essay

1975-1977
Dolomites, Siense Landscapes /

About fifteen engravings show the last Siense landscapes and the peaks of the Dolomites around Cortina d'Ampezzo, particularly Cinque Torri, Averau, Becco di Mezzodi. The work is lightly sketched with a point, and all the material around the line is due to the delicate wiping work of the Frélaud brothers.



Dolomites, 1975
Drypoint

Siense landscape,
1973
Etching

1978-1981
Rocky Landscapes /

Stone circles, secret assemblies... Full of mystery and invention, the slow series of *Rocky Landscapes* (born in the Fontainebleau forest) allows Mušič to conduct meticulous research on the grains of material, and the delicate variations of aquatints in the main series are a marvel of harmony and gradations of tones between sepia and coffee, rich in transparencies.



Rocky Landscape D, 1979
Aquatint

1981-1983
Venice /

A complete itinerary of Mušič's engraved work would not be complete without Venice, where he spent most of his life, before and after his deportation, and where he will be buried (in the cemetery on the island of San Michele). In Venice, Mušič lives in a palace in Dorsoduro, not far from the Zattere, this long quay facing the island of Giudecca. There, strange tanker boats are often moored, which Mušič, lingering over their rusty masts and disordered ropes, draws against the backdrop of the island. Beyond the mist, the church of the Redentore, the Mulino Stucky, and the chimneys of the Porto Marghera factories loom... Six of these engravings will be gathered in *Sechs Ansichten des Canale della Giudecca*, an album prefaced by Peter Handke.

1984-1998
Last Prints /

It is worth adding to this last period a few rare engravings of churches and cathedrals in Venice and its surroundings (curiously, Mušič's cathedrals always show the back of the façade) and a few late essays, silhouettes and portraits made at Lacourière or Crommelynck workshops, which will not result in any prints.

Illustration la *Giudecca*,
1981
Aquatint

Following page :
Cattedrale, 1984
Drypoint



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Mušič



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ZORAN MUŠIČ

ENGRAVED WORK 1947~1984

- From April 3 to May 17 2025
- Opening on Thursday April 3 at 6 p.m.
- April 24 : Paul Bernard-Nouraud will present the third volume of his *Histoire de l'art d'après Auschwitz*, l'Atelier contemporain editor, 2025.

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