

# BOZI CA GRSKOVICH

Painter of meditative imagery

*GIFT BEARERS*  
1995  
Acrylic-Mixed  
Media on Canvas  
74x104 cm



Artist Bo Grskovich (1951) was born on the Island of Krk in Croatia, and since 1970 she and her family has resided in Canada. Grskovich received her artistic education in British Columbia, and since 1980s she has actively pursued her career as a professional painter. The artist has participated in eighteen exhibitions for which she has received acclaimed, showing her work mostly in western Canada. Broadly speaking, contemporary art in Canada follows major international trends, but more over it reflex Canadian culture and reality. "Reality", however, should be more narrowly defined, and for the arts, the context is primarily of social character. Today, tension exists between Canadian society and culture, and the reasons for this are multiple. A large influx of different ethnic groups settling in Canada, modernisation, and new technology are only a few obvious reasons for the existing gap between social consciousness and the arts. Artists like Bo Grskovich, whose origins are not of English or French-Canadian, are faced with the problem of how to adapt to the cultural scene in Canada, without losing their sense of identity. Grskovich is an active observer and participant in Canadian culture, yet the most crucial aspect of her art are made of the memories and values she has brought with her from Croatia. At the same time, Grskovich is sensitive and open to the social concerns and spiritual needs of her adoptive country. Throughout the past eighteen years, the painter has been carefully defining her artistic approaches and establishing her place among contemporary Canadian artists.

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Taking in account the artist's entire oeuvre, it becomes obvious that the centre of Grskovich's interest has always been the human being, his inner experiences, and ultimately his belief in a Supreme Being. In the painters' own words, one of the guiding forces in her work is her search for the Transcendental. Grskovich is of the opinion that the mystery of human existence can only be fully understood if we acknowledge our spiritual side, which is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be a human being. The end of the twentieth century is characterised by dichotomy

between strongly expressed empirical rationalism, scientific knowledge, materialism, adoration of false gods (media stars) and the exclusion of the Divine from the everyday life, on the one hand, and faith in God (in the private sphere of life) and a significant increase in spirituality, on the other hand. In this context, Grskovich's creative output may seem to be in direct opposition to our social reality, but many may recognise the insightfulness of her visual narratives.

Looking at Grskovich's work dating back to 1980s, it obvious that she underwent many changes and self-evaluations. Stylistically, her early imagery ranges from figurative to abstract, but despite the artist's strong affinity towards abstraction, she rarely makes full use of this style. Since the early 1990s, the painter has once more returned to the figurative mode of expression. Up until 1993, her themes had included allegorical approaches to family and women's issues and her narratives also dealt with the Third World problems surrounding hunger, illness, and old age. In 1992 and early 1993, Grskovich worked on several series of paintings on misplaced peoples. Chronologically, these canvases coincide with outbreak of the war in Croatia, and thus are a visual testimony of the Croatian reality during the war years, which needless to say the artist felt very deeply

From the 1993 to the present, Grskovich draw her inspiration almost solely from the Bible. She quotes freely from her source, giving even the most sombre and chaotic passages coherence and positive interpretations. The artist has clearly turned towards the religious knowledge of the past, but her methods of work are contemporary and partly reflect on the demands of the culture around her. Today, her most common subjects are non-empirical beings depicted while performing their never ending tasks. The theme of continuity is emphasized on several levels, but mostly by the artist's very mode of working in series' of ten or more canvases consisting of closely-related visual vocabulary. Seemingly her narratives have no beginning or end which also adds to the theme of endlessness and continuity. Grskovich places her dream-like imagery into silent and fluid spaces that counteract gravity, where they float without being visually equipped to do so. Her imagery is not specific enough to serve as venerational objects of art, though they successfully embody abstraction such as hope, faith, and unquestionable obedience in serving the higher Truth. The viewer is not simply an observer, but also a participant in painter's context, which demands much deeper personal involvement. Heavenly beings usually avoid any particularity and exist in silences as general ideas in our psyche, but Grskovich dare to take away their anonymity by giving them form and shape. One has an impression that, for the artist, heaven and earth are so closely intertwined that one may be the reality of the other.

*REVELATION 7,2*  
1997  
Acrylic-Mixed  
Media on Canvas  
116x90 cm



*PILLARS OF TIME*  
1993  
Oil-Mixed Media on  
Canvas  
24x24 cm



