

## GEOMETRIC ABSTRACT PAINTING

Stane Kregar is a pioneer of abstract painting in Slovenia. However, he never reached pure abstraction but preserved a connection with reality in his associative intertwining of the elements of art and the content of a painted work. Kregar's abstract painting has two phases: the first one is known as geometric and spanned between 1953 and 1957, whereas the second one started in 1958 and is called lyric abstract painting. Kregar's geometric abstract painting is not characterised by the use of the technologically strict geometric shapes typical of (neo)-constructivists, but rather by composing the painting according to geometric elements while deconstructing the shapes of real motifs. At the beginning, the reality was still partially evident or at least symbolically present in the natural forms from the world of animals and plants that created the painting's composition grid. The paintings *In the Garden*, *Pilgrims*, and *Spring* show the web of branches and silhouettes of plants symbolising nature and growth. The painting *Birds* depicts a light flight of birds with spread wings, whereas the painting *Boats on the Shore* portrayed the hulls of the ships lying on the shore next to the foaming sea. These paintings are the best examples of Kregar's geometric abstract painting. Later, the associatively recognisable motifs gradually disappeared from his paintings, the lines were substituted with the patches of colour and the colour itself became crucial in transmitting the mood and the message. Each painting is distinguished by its colour mood. Typical of Kregar are red, brown, orange, green, but also blue and grey shades; the colours are strong but muted. He is best known for his warm orange-yellow shades as can be observed on the paintings *Autumn Walk* and *Ploughed Fields*. These shades have its roots in his impressions of nature, especially of the soil. He gathered these impressions in his childhood while working in the fields and in this period, they gushed out of him and found their expression in a variety of paintings. Kregar was one of Slovenia's greatest colourists; his paintings were often compared to music that creates different moods with orchestral colours, just as Kregar did with the colour on his paintings. Kregar's paintings reveal a special inner energy of nature and it seems as the light would come from the depth of the canvas. The painting *Autumn Walk* is, due to some partially recognisable natural forms, understood as a bridge between geometric and lyric abstract painting, whereas the pictures *Ploughed Fields*, *Icarus* and *At the Birth of the Day* belong to his period of lyric abstract painting that established itself after 1958.