

PRESS RELEASE

PROJECT ROOM: BRANKO VLAHOVIĆ
16 NOVEMBER – 21 DECEMBER 2018
OPENING: THURSDAY 15 NOVEMBER 6-8PM



Alison Jacques is proud to present the first exhibition in the United Kingdom of the Croatian sculptor, Branko Vlahović (b. 1924, Bjelovar, Croatia; d. 1979, Zagreb, Croatia). The exhibition will comprise of work from the 1960s, bringing together key examples of Vlahović's plaster sculptures alongside large-scale, monochrome drawings.

It is only recently that Vlahović is recognised as a pioneer of Minimalism in Croatia. His work is an example of important Minimalist sculpture produced outside of the dominant Modernist canon. Without contact with his American peers, Vlahović was independently producing work of a radically reduced sculptural sensibility.

Following a traditional sculptural education, Vlahović's work gravitated towards pure geometric forms which intentionally negated subject matter. The works in the exhibition are important examples of his small-scale plaster sculptures. *Skulptura I*, 1963, resembles Soviet, post-war architectural forms; cylindrical in shape, the sculpture comprises of modular stacking parts, punctuated by protruding elements and receding voids. Again, *Skulptura VI*, 1963, is a modular structure that evokes architectural forms but avoids any literal references.

The sculptures will be shown alongside large-scale drawings that, although relate, do not function as preparatory drawings for Vlahović's sculpture. They formalise his sculptural thinking in two-dimensions and bear the structural, hard-edges of the sculptures but lack the tactile materiality of plaster. Works such as *Untitled* (1965-66) resemble technical drawings or production plans, a structure composed purely of diagonal linear marks which surround rectangular voids.

The exhibition follows Vlahović's inclusion in the seminal exhibition *Other Primary Structures* (2014) at The Jewish Museum, New York. The exhibition was a reworking of *Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptors* (1966), also at the same museum. This brought together, for the first time, artists whose work formed the foundation of what we would now term Minimalism. *Other Primary Structures*, revisited the exhibition with a more global perspective, counteracting the limiting geographic parameters.

Image: Branko Vlahović, *Skulptura I*, 1963. © The Estate of Branko Vlahović, Zagreb

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Branko Vlahović was born in Bjelovar, Croatia in 1924. Vlahović graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in 1951, where he was taught by Grga Antunac, Vjekoslav Rukljač and Vanja Radauš. He completed his postgraduate studies in 1953, overseen by Professor Frane Kršnić. In the same year, he left for a period of study of three-months in Paris. In 1955, he worked as a visual culture teacher at a school in Zagreb, then later in Karlovac. An exhibition of his sculptures was held outdoors in the central park in the city of Kutina in 1969.

During his lifetime his work was exhibited in five solo and forty group exhibitions. More recently, a major retrospective exhibition of Vlahović's work took place at the Technical Museum, Zagreb (2013). This was accompanied by a comprehensive monograph by Guido Quien and Darko Schneider.

Vlahović's work is included in important public collections including Museum of Contemporary Arts, Zagreb; Croatia Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb; Modern Gallery, Zagreb and Glyptothèque, Zagreb.

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