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Admir Mujkić

graphic map

FRONTIERSMEN & KEEPERS



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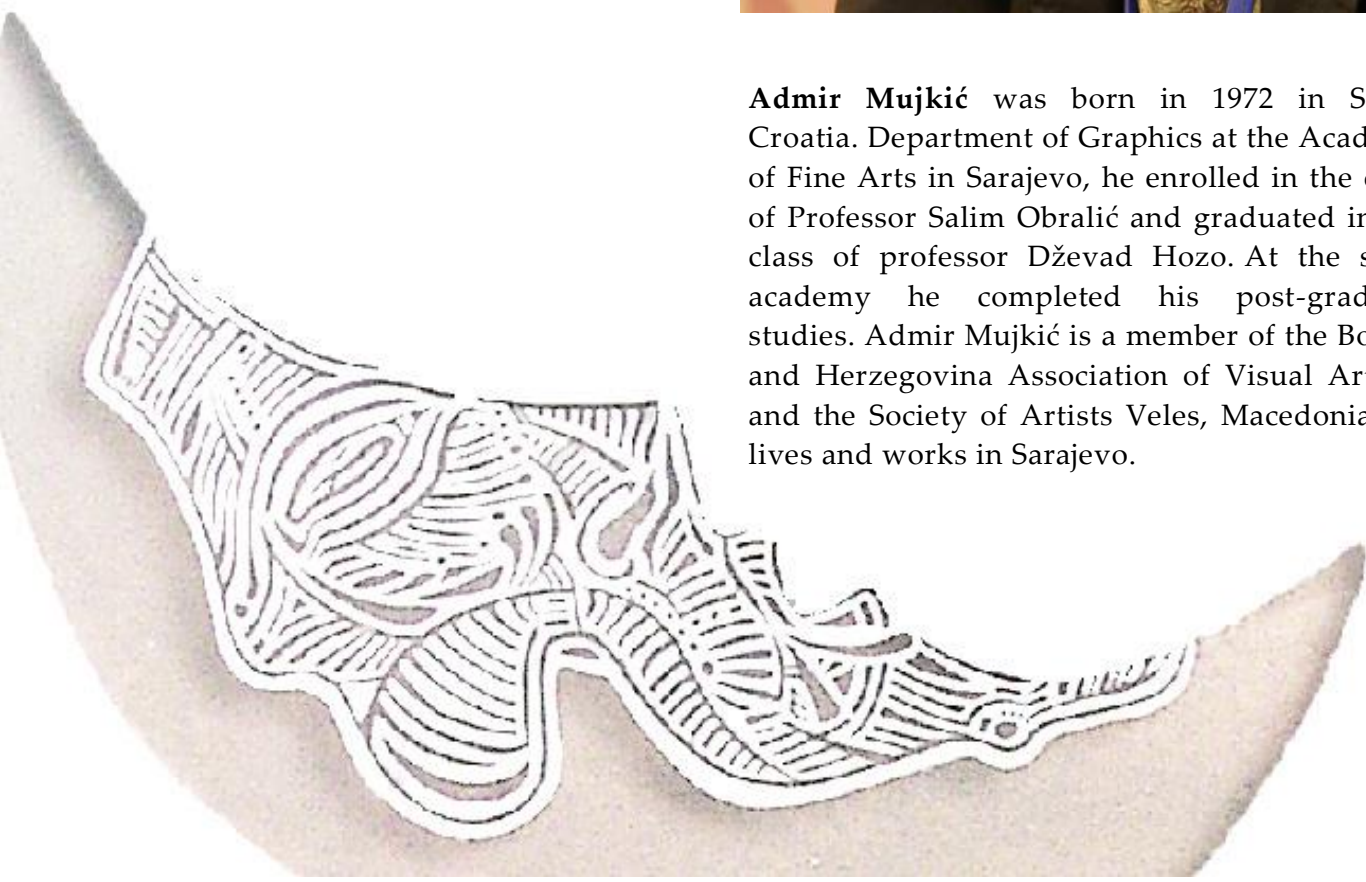
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Admir Mujkić was born in 1972 in Sisak, Croatia. Department of Graphics at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, he enrolled in the class of Professor Salim Obralić and graduated in the class of professor Dževad Hozo. At the same academy he completed his post-graduate studies. Admir Mujkić is a member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Association of Visual Artists, and the Society of Artists Veles, Macedonia. He lives and works in Sarajevo.



Mujkić's pictures

Mujkić's graphics impress in the unease of thought the possible solidification of notions on their material nature, of their comparability with exemplary symbols, of their connection with traditional narratives and a distancing from prevailing formulae.

The measured quality of the relationship between forms, the restrained colour palette, the belief in white as garlanding each graphic sign, and the commitment to the artisanship that has vanished beyond narrative, all point to leading connoisseurs of Bosnia's graphic experience. But the washes and clarity, the quietude and solitude of the laid whitenesses and clear calligraphic inscriptions in old-gold frames and parsimonious reds and dark blues in the manuscripts of sacred verses hover between Mujkić's signs on the expanses of the pictures. All the pictures, which read from one folio to another, speak of Mujkić's uncontestable presence in the studio and narrative of the dependable, quiet masters of graphics, old and new, in Bosnia.

Not one of Mujkić's folios lacks an inquiry into the relationship between the finite and the open, the transient and the eternal. In every breath, the world is destroyed and rises again. But not one moment captures either its Axis or its Centre. This is the mystery Mujkić addresses in his quest to say something about it, and in so doing, he draws ever closer to the ineffable. This too is the living voice of his graphic narrative, which comprises the permanence of the circle and the repetition of Memory, along with the inexhaustibility of Unicity. Every detail, every motion is within it, together with their inadequacy to confirm Oneness and Peace. The presence of Sufis is understandable, therefore, seated with the whirling and influence of the Ineffable that spins around the axis of the world, failing to find it in any form, immersed in listening and looking, while the Beauty of the Face of the All-merciful is never exhausted.

The question that arises from all this is whether Mujkić's reprintings reflect an achieved and tranquil graphic skill in which his fascination and concentration move and manifest themselves with ease.

In the prevailing disconnectedness from the supreme and ineffable that characterizes the modern age, assaults come thronging from below, from the lower regions of existence, unformed matter and all that ends up there. The discourse of the All-high seems to have been broken off in our inability to read the signs in the outer horizons and our inner selves. Fear of the encounter with the multitude of reflections that denote without uttering prompts us to questions that have been declared off bounds in our clouded visions. Is it possible to find the human centre as the point of contact between eternity and every "now?" How are we to find, in all the dispersal to the four corners of the world, the unshakeable, inexhaustible centre of humanity? Is there knowledge that would also be existence? And if there is, how is one to be certain? If there is no return in time and space, is it to be found in reassembling what has been dispersed in the outer horizons and concentrating it within the self?

The discourse of Mujkić's pictures brings them back to speechlessness as the principle of all that is known. They indicate that listening is more meaningful than speech, and that every inscription points to Whiteness.

The art of the modern age, as the expression of the ego that sees itself as essentially self-sufficient and independent, says almost nothing, it would seem, about the meaning of humanity. The question of good and evil, or of ugliness and beauty, becomes ever more remote in this view of the world and the inner self. But the passion for speech is increasingly overwhelming the silence. It often seems that every remembrance of the Ineffable, and the need to renew our covenant with it, has wholly vanished from the image of the times. Though there is more and more art, more and more artists, there is less and less beauty as the manifestation of eternity in temporal changes. Multiplicity is becoming its own reason and purpose. But the human self still cries out, in an ever more muted language: To Thee we surrender and Thee only we serve.

Mujkić's pictures are like an unexpected glimpse from somewhere in the displaced centre of the self that has become a life prisoner within itself, and has lost all openness to the Absolute. They are thus the voice of a possible return to seeing and listening. They often reflect beauty and silence like aliens in the world without God to which we have become accustomed. They are thus a reminder of the possibility of renewing our connection with Openness as Knowledge, Orientation as the Path, and Virtue as Clemency and Generosity.

Rusmir Mahmutćehajić

The Guardian of Redemption

(On the graphic series *Second Journey*, by Admir Mujkić)

The facts that suggest war, as a subject, is finally a thing of the past naturally have feet of clay. Admir Mujkić's most recent graphics, with the metaphorical title *Second Journey*, are yet another proof of just how incomprehensible and inconceivable the immense tragedy of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was and is. Those who hastened to tell themselves and the world that the war is a spent issue and that there is no point in returning to it simply do not belong to this time and this reality, for they lack the strength to face up to the greatest challenge of all – their own trauma and pain as a universal value. These are events that radically alter one's view of life, and war is a cosmic cataclysm that goes on even after it has formally ended – the type of cosmic disaster that has only minor reverberations in the universe, but that finds its mysterious content in the human soul. The soul it is that writes the history of each of us, and that history will never find its way into fat textbooks and dusty books with pompous titles, for it is the kind of history that finds its surest sanctuary in works of art. The graphic series *Second Journey* forms part of the unwritten encyclopaedia of the universal human soul of which the beginnings go back to Gilgamesh and Homer, in which every artistic artefact, be it a book, a graphic, a statue or a video, adds to this mega-book of humankind of which, not so long ago, the great philosophical and literary minds of the 19th and 20th century dreamed.

Whereas the starting-point of Mujkić's previous graphic work, *Small Countries*, was the unusual worlds of imagination and dreams, this new exhibition is based on the wholly visible human figure, again immersed in the regions of fully dreamed tradition, which is thus presented anew in the altered context of the individual that bears the name of Mujkić's real and mythical homeland. All the elements belonging to the heritage and to an entire culture, vanished like Atlantis, acquire a new dimension of meanings, for they communicate with the present-day as beings and things that have just emerged anew, bright and shining, from the oral tradition. This renewed dreaming of the past in a mythical, epic matrix does not seem in the least anachronistic, for it is all set in the framework of the recently ended war, so that these graphic folios may also be read as the reconstruction of an Arcadian time that will never return. Mujkić's graphic vision does not end there, of course, but evolves in various directions, of which the most interesting to me, along with the figures of fragments (irresistibly reminding one of how crippled our world is), is in fact that transition from the human soul to the very soul of the world of nature. Or maybe it just seems that way to me, for Mujkić's graphics could also be amalgams, secret mixtures in which all this is to be found, made by the hand of the master and his feeling for the harmony of colour and form.

Setting aside the scars and records of war (one of Mujkić's graphics is a group portrait of the wartime unit in which the artist served) and the series of photographs of Mujkić's forebears in the wartime uniforms of three different times and states, ending with the artist himself in the uniform of the BiH Army, clearly invoking the idea of war as a ritual that, sadly, constantly recurs in this part of the world – setting these aside, in my view one may get to what is the central strand of this exhibition: our intimacy with nature. This new/old sense of pantheism and of the all-pervasive force of nature, that is renewed in us even after our physical death, is a kind of anthemic experience of nature and our place in it. In Mujkić's microcosmos, people talk with birds, guard the water and the earth, and knowledge too, meet with dragons, horned vipers or falcons.

Mujkić creates his own hierarchy of people and other living beings, bestowing different emotions on them, comprised in the movement of the fragmentary figures, and still more in the fantastic shades of colour found in the graphics entitled *Guardian of the Water* or *Guardian of the Water II*, where the artist counterposes shades of red and blue – the water from which its guardians emerge in an integral symbiosis. All these guardians are perfect, ideal figures, of a kind rarely to be encountered in our world, such as Mujkić presents them to us as the heirs to the virtues, emotions and magical benevolent powers over living beings in a universe through which streams a single soul – the soul that keeps vigil over all things possessed of material existence, the soul that has yet to be described and indeed that will not allow itself to be described, defying our desire to place everything within a specific form that will in time become an end in itself. Often, in these graphics, a protean being appears that may take the shape of a flying cross or of a Medusa-like creature, usually on the actual torso of Mujkić's heroes. It may be a minor hallmark of life, or an obvious religious symbol mingled with the explicitly oriental Islamic symbols of the Frontiersman and the Guard, so that Mujkić's heroes may also be seen as the place where religion and culture meet (in the body, not in state territories) as symbiotic identity elements of *unity in diversity*, regardless of how naive and utopian that may seem today in the light of our mundane political reality. *The real news is that there is no reality/ let us enter the silent, tender garden*, wrote Rumi in one of his poems. It is time for us to enter the landscapes of Mujkić's graphics, in which art once again affirms itself as a catharsis (small, but powerful) that will help our crippled reality to overcome its own despair.

Faruk Šehić



KEEPER OF THE NIGHT
 IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
 100 X 70 CM
 2004





KEEPER OF KNOWLEDGE
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



HAWKER I
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



HAPPY FRONTIERSMAN
 IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
 100 X 70 CM
 2004



FRONTIERSMAN WITH GOLDEN DRAGON

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004





ANGRY FRONTIERSMAN
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



FRONTIERSMAN AND BIRD
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



KEEPER OF THE DREAMS
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



KEEPER OF THE WATER
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004

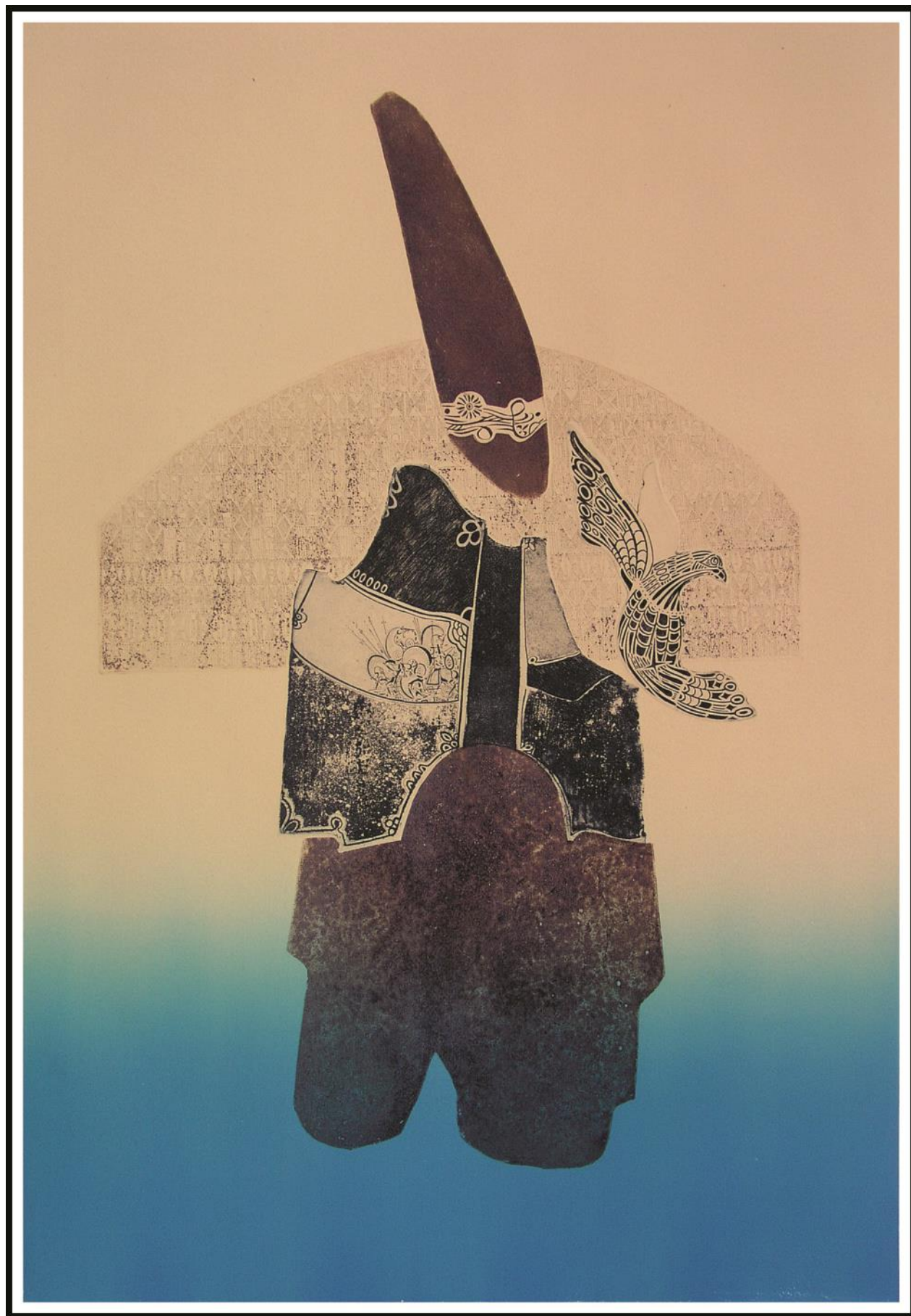


FRONTIERSMAN AND SNAKE

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004



AN LITTLE FRONTIERSMAN
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



FRONTIERSMAN AND DRAGON

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

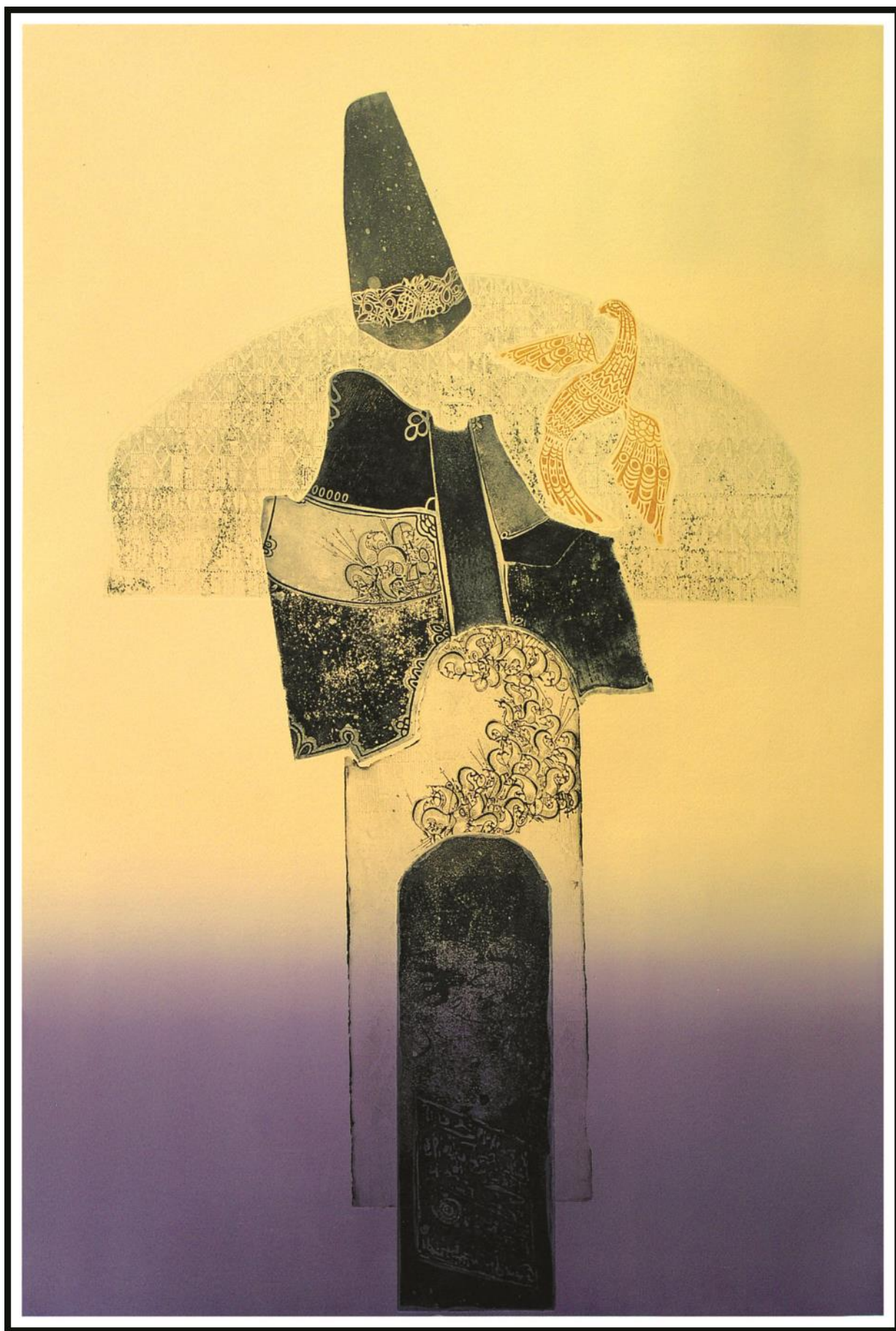
100 X 70 CM

2004



KEEPER OF THE STAMP
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004





DIALOG WITH THE GOLDEN BIRD

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004



KEEPER OF THE WATER II
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



KEEPER OF THE EARTH

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004



KEEPER OF TALISMAN

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004



KEEPER OF THE NIGHT
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



THE ONE WHO TALK TO BIRDS

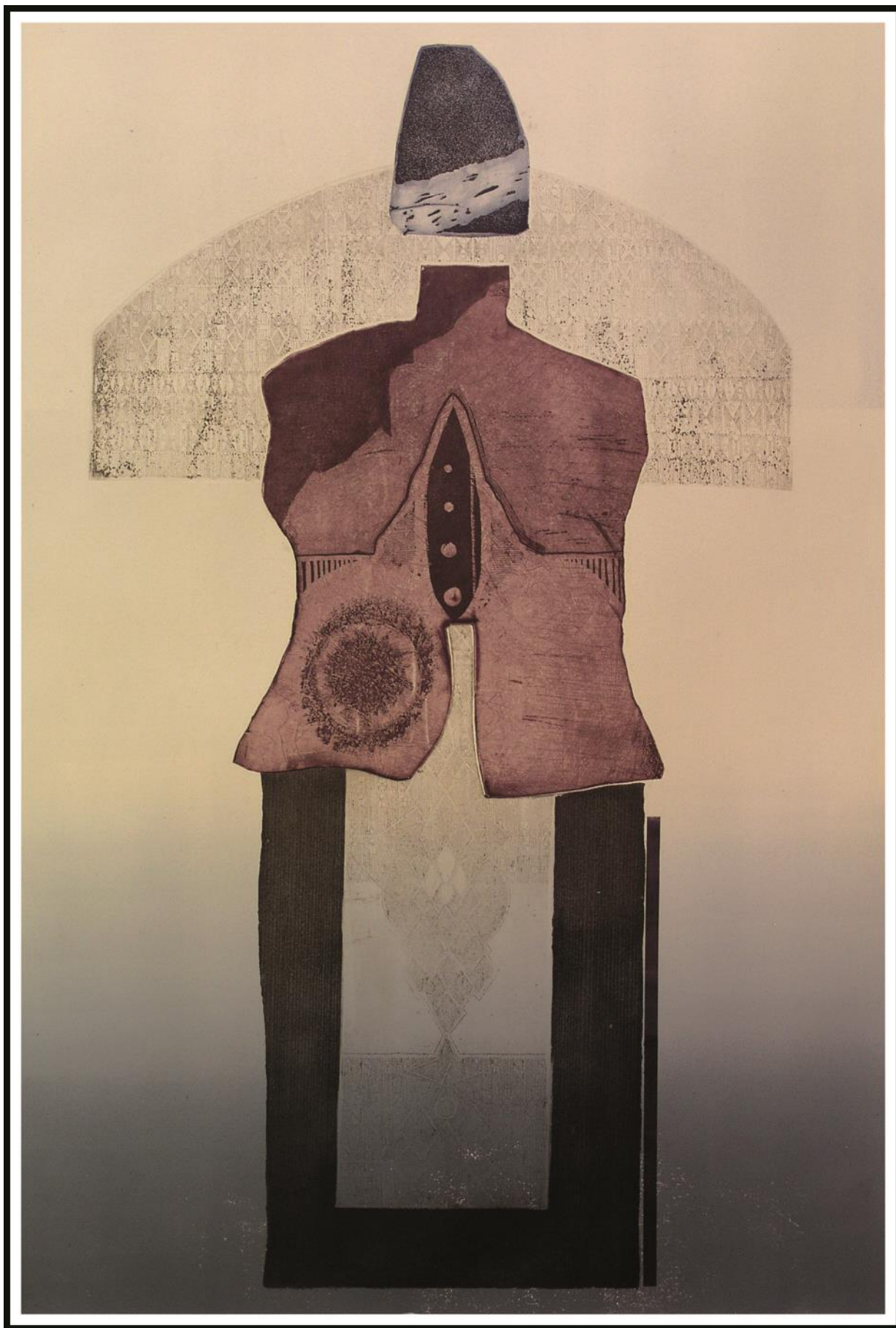
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004



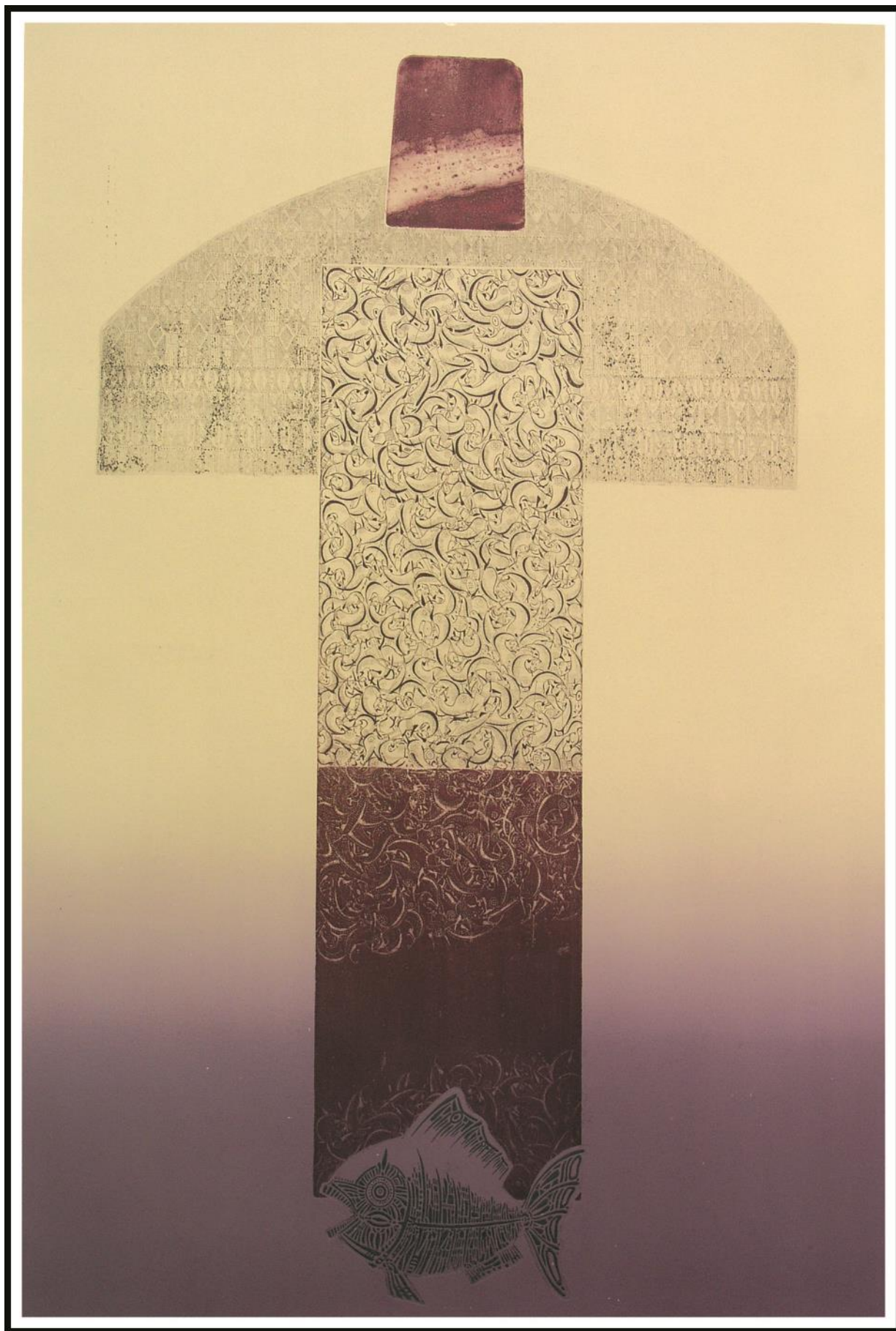
KEEPER OF THE WATER
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



KEEPER OF THE STAMP
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



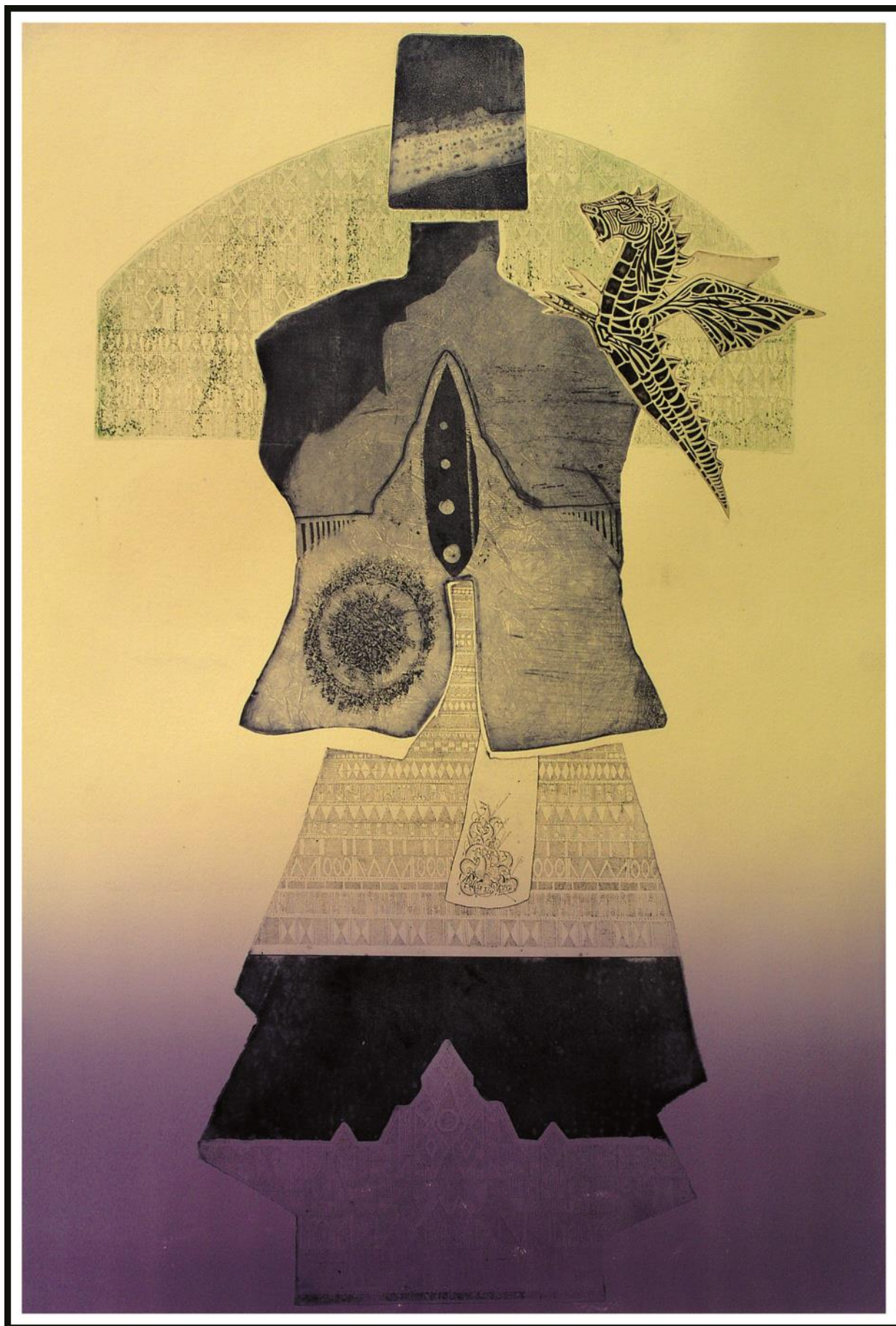
KEEPER OF THE BIRDS
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



KEEPER OF THE FISHES
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



KEEPER OF THE SECRET
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004

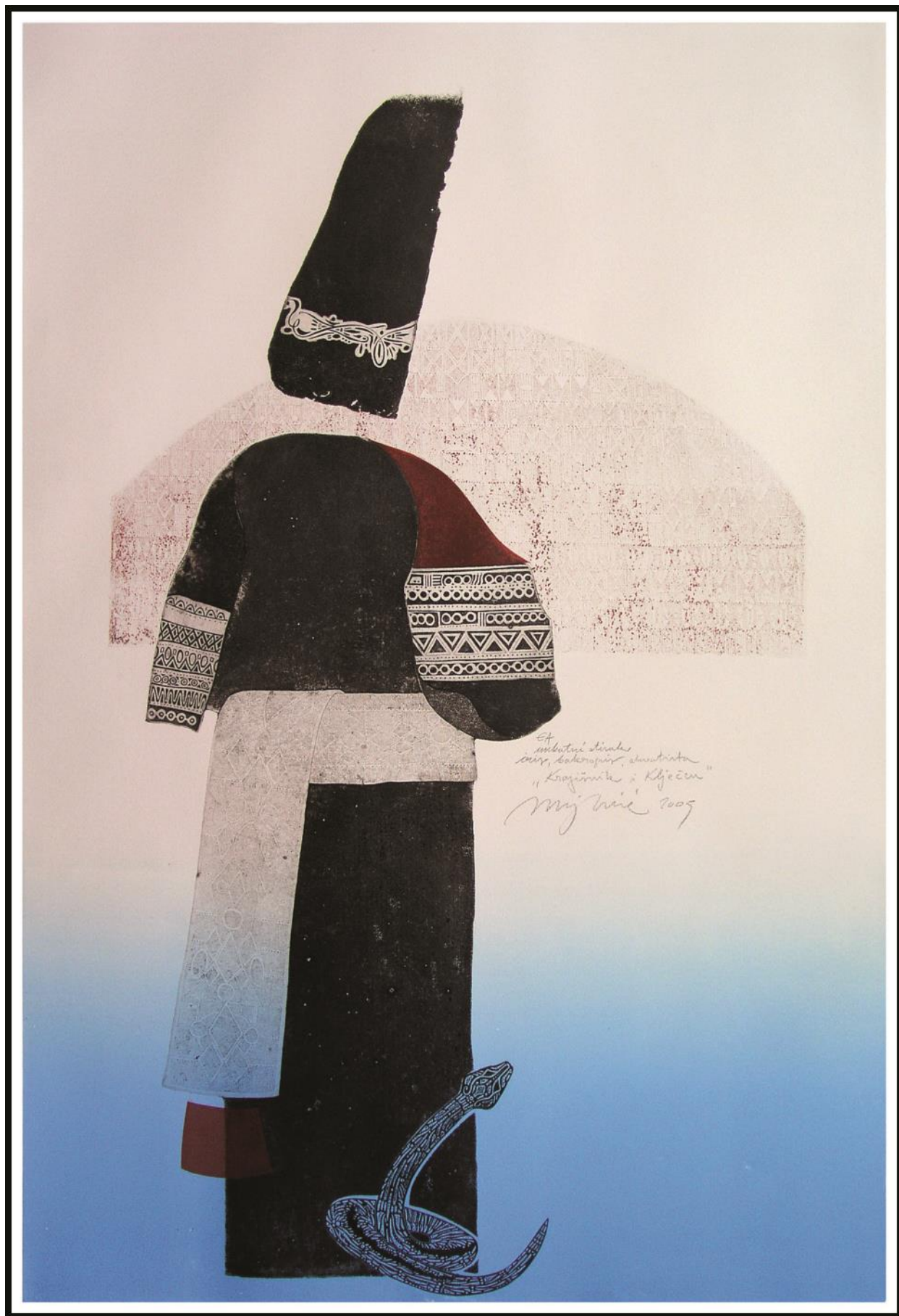


KEEPER OF THE DRAGON II
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004



KEEPER OF THE SOURCE
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004





FRONTIERSMAN AND SNAKE

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004



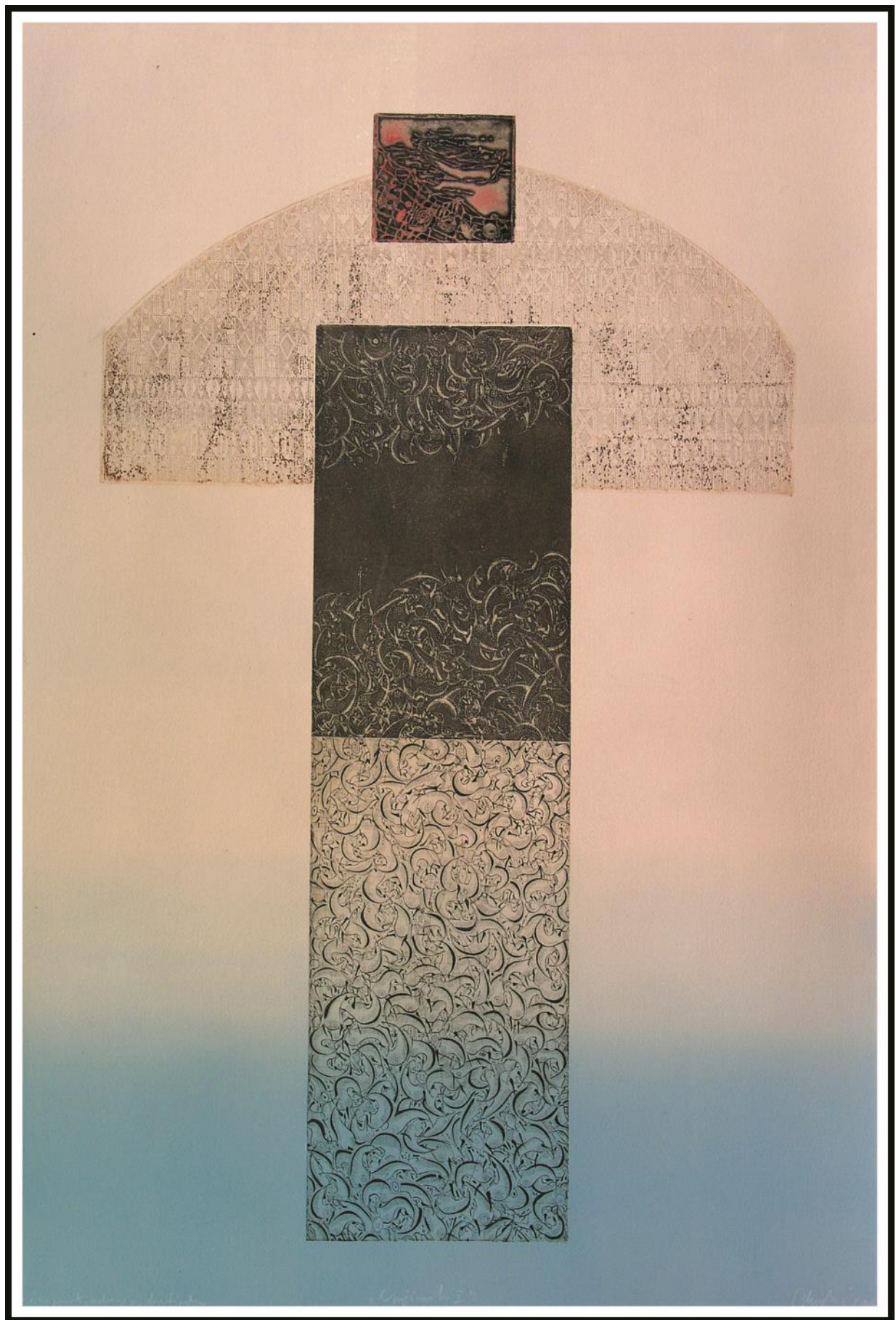
FRONTIERSMAN AND DRAGON III

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004





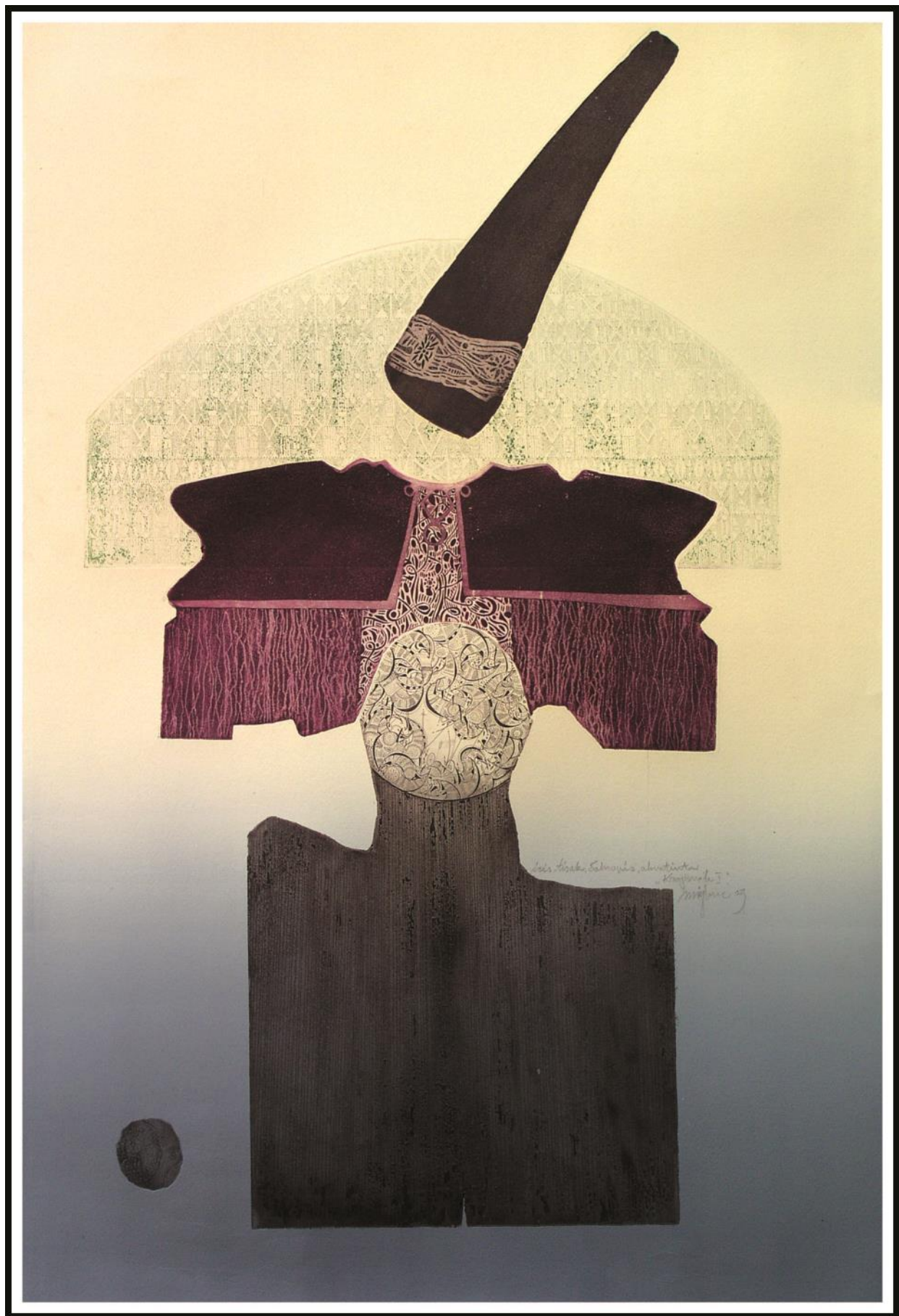
FRONTIERSMAN I

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

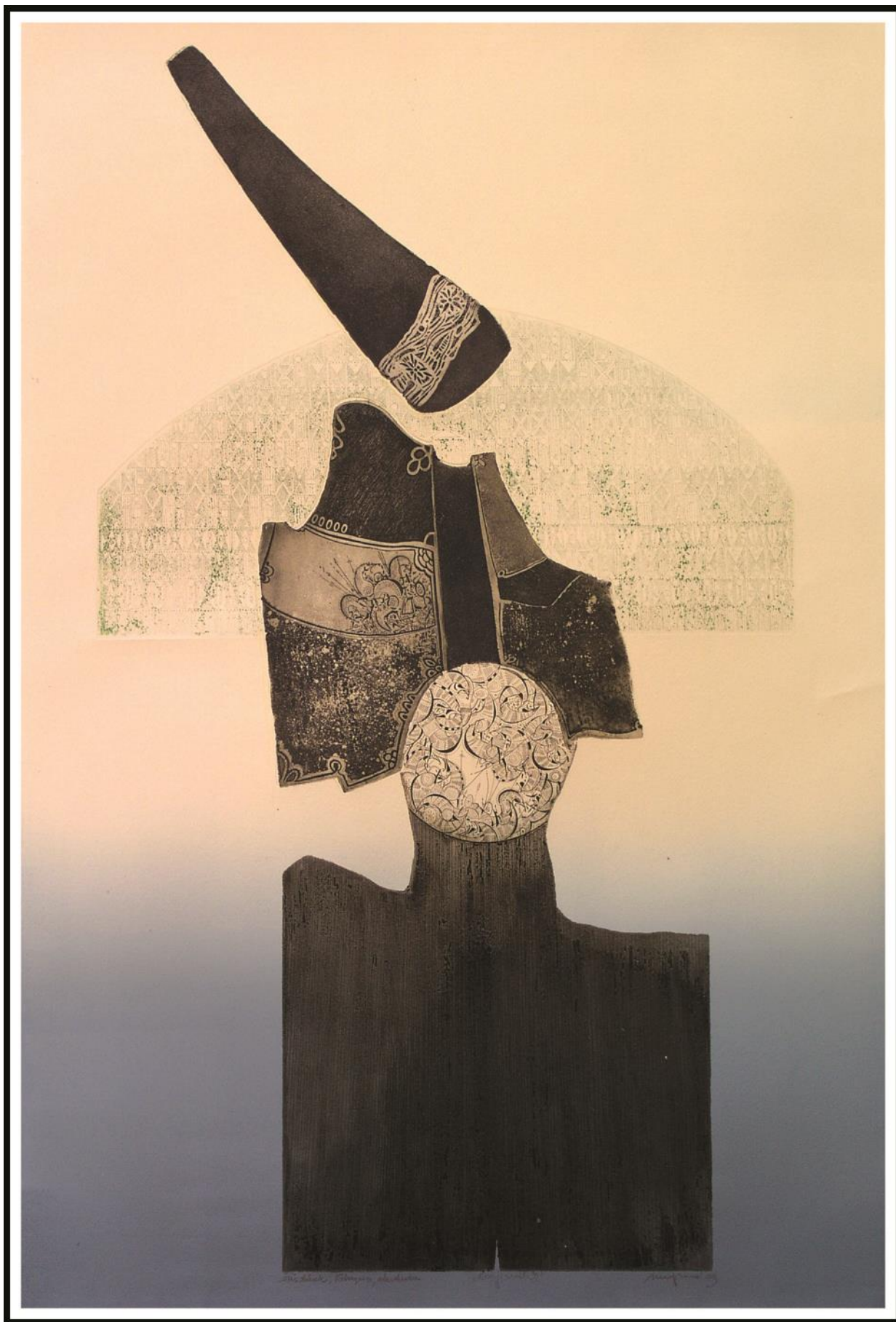
100 X 70 CM

2004





FRONTIERSMAN IV
 IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
 100 X 70 CM
 2004



FRONTIERSMAN V
 IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
 100 X 70 CM
 2004



HAWKER

IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT

100 X 70 CM

2004





HAWKER III
IRIS, ETCHING, AQUATINT
100 X 70 CM
2004

Exhibition

**FRONTIERSMENS
&
KEEPERS**

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