



Бошко Бошковић

Синематске скулптуре

Боравак у Америци промени човека – променио је и уметност Иване Попов. Простране, отворене равнице средњоамеричких прерија измениле су поимање простора и времена, и медија у коме се изражава уметница. Када смо пресељени из свог *дома* – удаљени од најближе породице, изопштени из локалног контекста, путоказа националног – ми преиначавамо нашу представу о бивању, осећај припадности: понекад прилагођавамо нашу идеју о себи самом. У својим новонасталим радовима, Ивана Попов упражњава контемплативну над њеним новим окружењем и оним што је усвојила, и над последицама тога што је измештена из свог родног Београда, из Србије.

После деценије сликања на тканини, прављења колажа, и руком рађеног папира, у који је уметала органске материјале, Ивана Попов се удубила у рад у новом медију – видео уметности. Током последње две године она се усмерила на нове серије радова, користећи видео инсталације као средство за комбиновање и поновно успостављање онога што јој је сликарски

и скулпторски привлачно. Она експериментише покретном сликом и материјалношћу ткања, она пројектује видео радове, којима је својствено то да им је потребан простор да “дишу”, на скулптуралну, таласасту површину тканине.

Преузимајући понешто од, по традицији, дефинисаног синематског простора, Ивана Попов склапа, и поново успоставља, али су извесне преокупације и сензибилитети остали исти, као постојећа упоришта. За разлику од филма, са његовим одређеним почетком и крајем, и окружењем за његово приказивање, у савременим видео радовима суделујемо на један другачији начин. Или, како то пише Самјуел Р. Делејни: “Наставши као уточиниште за уметност која је покуљала као лава с оне стране у односу на физичка ограничења, која се обично повезују са рамом слике, и са пиједесталом, видео инсталација слама разлику између слике (приказа који су представљени дуж зидова) и скулптуре (приказа који стоје независно од тих зидова), између унутарњег и спољашњег, садашњости и будућности.”¹

Прва видео инсталација Иване Попов јесте, као и њени претходни радови, инспирисана Далеким истоком. Она присваја сцену из филма *Кућа летећих бодежа* Џанга Јимоуа. Оригинални филм је рађен у стилу онога што се зове *вусја*, то је, заправо, веома широк жанр, који је, по традицији, повезан са књижевним обликом, оним који се везује за ратничке вештине и доживљаје, првобитно смештене у древну Кину. Засићене боје коришћене у филму сукобљавају се и мешају са живим бојама руком прављених тканина Иване Попов.

“Небо је прекривач од сивила, који се уз обзорје меша са сивилом мора. Тешко је направити разлику између мора и неба. Између путника и мора. Између стварности и онога што су творевине срца.”² Ове речи Харукија Муракамија, из његовог романа *Кафка на обали*, као да одзвањају кроз инсталације Иване Попов.

У видео инсталацији *Дрвеће* уметница се поиграва сценом која се одвија у шуми, и читав “екран” је преплављен бамбусима. Управљајући пројекцијом тако што, без видљивог „шава“, преусмерава приказ са природног зеленила шуме на љубичасте бојене преливе, она, на тај начин, мењајући извесне секције, склапа богато колорисани нови видео, исто онако како је стварала и своје довитљиве колаже од папира. Када их пројектује на велике набране комаде свиленог материјала, сцене постају флуидније: облици се мењају и постају аморфни.

Њена друга инсталација, *Жена која игра*, користи формалне особине тела, његовог кретања, и тканине која га обавија као одговор на његов облик који се мења. Инсталација се састоји од

свежња кружно постављеног материјала који виси са таванице, надмећући се са сукњом „дервиша који се врте“. Та волуминозна тканина постаје подлога на коју се пројектује видео рад. Ивана Попов је направила нову кореографију за соло нумеру плеса из сцена филма *Кућа летећих бодежа*. Она као да ставља рам на тело играчице, тако да га видимо само од струка, па надоле. Плесач може да буде било ко од нас ко се упустио у плес живота, завођења, љубави, или нестајања. Ивана Попов нас баца у транс помоћу текстуре и узорка материјала у овој сцени – прекривачем који подсећа на мандалу и којим плесачица нежно вијуга, слојевима тиркизне свиле која омотава тело особе. И, да парафразирамо Магдалену Абаканович, која је веома утицала на Ивану Попов: тканина је наш покривач и наш украс: направљена нашим рукама, она је запис наших мисли. Ова инсталација постаје, помоћу светла, слој боја. На исти начин на који видео постаје испреплетен са бојом тканине, и тако настаје покретна слика као подсећање на пост-сликарску апстракцију.

Инсталација *Вода* састоји се од „екрана“ који је хоризонтално подељен, са два независна сегмента који се симултано појављују, пројектовани на пластичну мрежу и свилу. Ивана Попов је увелико успорила обе сцене, стварајући контемплативну и медитативну атмосферу. Она истражује расположење помоћу поетске игре бојама, фрагментације и понављања. Ова видео инсталација одражава заокупљеност уметнице сећањем и губитком. Обе пројектоване сцене су из филма *Соларис*, руског режисера Андреја Тарковског, који је, по режисеру Ингмару Бергману, „измислио нови језик, примерен природи филма, јер он ‘хвата’ живот

као одраз нечега, живот као сан.“ На овај начин Ивана Попов схвата кинематографију као медиј који се бави животом између стварности и маште.

За инсталацију *У спомен на Озуа*, Ивана Попов користи филм *Пет Абаса* Кјаростамија, припадника генерације филмских стваралаца иранског „новог таласа“, који је користио технике које укључују поетски дијалог и алегоријско „причање прича“, како би обрађивао политичке и филозофске теме. Филм *Пет*, снимљен из руке, дигиталном видео-камером, дуж обала Каспијског језера, састоји се од пет дугачких prizora снимљених без заустављања камере. Као у типичном филму јапанског режисера Јасуђира Озуа, камера се никада не покреће, никада не зумира, никада се не окреће у руци како би пружила ефекат панораме. Ивана Попов је одабрала снимак изблиза, снимак дела плаже, о који се разбијају таласи који је запљускују, и псе који лутају дуж обале. Видео је пројектован на скулптуру од наборане пластичне фолије и ткања, који на нас, једноставно, покуљају са зида. Ивана Попов помера границе равнине која је својствена видеу, и поново промишља његов однос са скулптуралним елементима у простору. То је њена прва инсталација у којој користи вештачки материјал, а то је утицај Америке, где су синтетички материјали преважно везани за визуелну културу.

У овим инсталацијама постоји један елемент заводљивости: простор нас прогута, уроњени смо у таму собе, наша осетљивост је повећана због могуће близине незнаца око нас. Иако Ивана Попов присваја сцене из других извора, њене видео инсталације су контемплативне, интимне, и често укључују

аутобиографске елементе. Она се обраћа чулима, нуди отворен простор за размишљање, и позива свакога од нас да промисли свој сопствени живот. Медиј у коме ради се променио: пребацила се са сликарског платна на тканину, са боје на видео, али извесне преокупације и сензибилитет су остали исти. Нови лајтмотив воде у инсталацијама, могао би да буде одраз њеног новог живота на новом простору на који је пресељена, ритуал прелаза са „Старог континента“ на нови. „У највећем броју религија вода се симболично користи у ритуалима преласка, ритуалима духовног прочишћавања, и светим церемонијама. Она је, такође, сила промене, она проузрокује растапање материје. Сматрају је извором живота, супстанцом смрти и бесмртности, ризницом мудрости.“³ Оно што је основно за све митове на којима се заснива Америка јесте да можемо увек поново да пронађемо сами себе. Можда су ови радови чин прочишћавања, припремање за нове почетке и нове авеније новог дома Иване Попов.

¹ Samuel R. Delany, *Video Spaces: Eight Installations by Barbara London*, Museum of Modern Art, 1995, 11.

² Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*, Vintage Book, 2006, 24.

³ Frankel Ellen and Teutch Betsy Platkin, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*, Northvale, N.J. Aronson, 1992, 192.



Water, installation, 2008



In Memory of Ozu, video installation, 2009



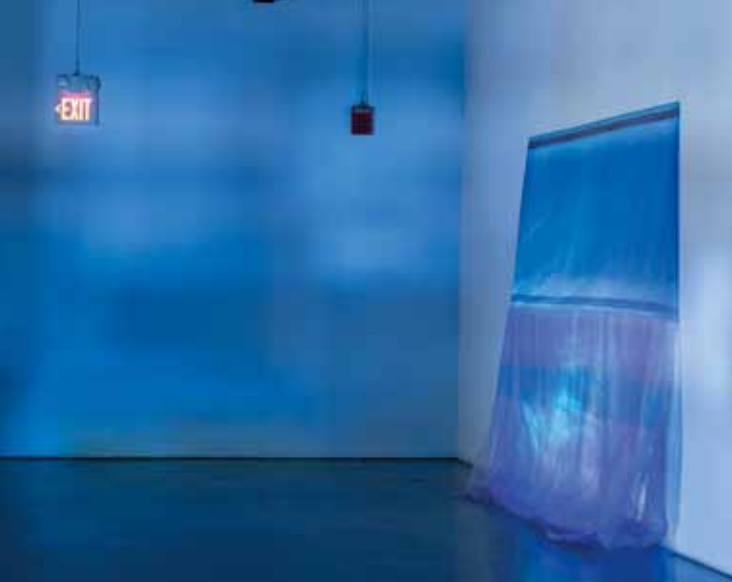




Dancing Tumbleweed, video installation, 2008



Water, video installation, 2008



Trees, video installation, 2008





List of exhibited works

Списак изложених радова

1. Water / Вода, 2008

video installation, 42 sec, loop
fabric, gossamer

2. Trees / Дрвеће, 2008

video installation, 15 sec, loop
fabric

3. In memory of Ozu / Сећање на Озу, 2009

video installation, 42 min, loop
tissue paper, plastic

4. Cates, Cradle / Kolarícu, paniću, 2009

gossamer, yarn

5. Neptune Net / Нептунова мрежа, 2009

gossamer, yarn, fabric, bubble rap

6. Séance of skin / Осећај коже, 2009

leather, yarn, gossamer

7. Dancing lady / Дама која плеше, 2009

video installation, 1 min 13 sec, loop

8. Cabbage / Купус, 2008

leather, yarn

9. Dancing Tumbleweed / Тамблвид који плеше, 2008

tumbleweed, silk, fabric

Boško Bošković

Cinematic Sculptures

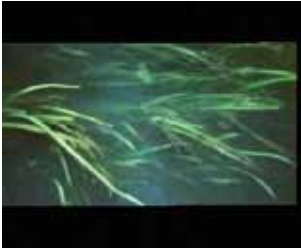


Being in America changes you – it changed the art of Ivana Popov. The vast, open planes of middle American grasslands altered Popov's perception of space, time, and medium. Transplanted from *home* – immediate family, local context, national signposts – we reconfigure our notion of being, sense of belonging; sometimes we recalibrate our idea of the self. In her new body of work, Popov has put into practice contemplations of her new surroundings and belongings, and the implications of relocating from her native Belgrade, Serbia.

After a decade of painting on fiber, collage, and hand-made paper incorporating organic materials, Popov has delved into a new medium, video. Over the last two years, she has been concentrating on a new series, using video installation as a means of combining and reconstituting her painterly and sculptural interests. Popov experiments with the moving image and the materiality of fiber; she projects videos, which inherently need breathing space, onto the sculptural, undulating surface of fabric.

Borrowing from the traditionally defined cinematic space, Popov manipulates, splices and reconstitutes but certain preoccupations and sensibilities have stayed the same, existing footage. Distinctly unlike cinema, with its defined start and end time and expository context, contemporary video engages us differently. As Samuel R. Delany writes: "Beginning as an accommodation for art that erupted beyond the physical confines ordinarily associated with the picture frame and the pedestal, the video installation collapses the distinction between painting (images presented along a wall) and sculpture (images standing free of those walls and commanding space and air), between interior and exterior, present and future."¹

Popov's first video installation, like her prior work, is inspired by the Far East. She appropriates a scene from Zhang Yimou's *House of Flying Daggers*. The original film is in the style of wuxia, a broad genre traditionally in literary form, concerned with martial arts adventures set primarily in ancient China. The saturated colors in the film collide and combine with the vibrant colors of Popov's handmade fabrics.



"The sky is a blanket of gray, merging with the gray sea off on the horizon. It's hard to tell the difference between sea and sky. Between voyager and sea. Between reality and the workings of the heart."² Haruki Murakami's words, from his novel *Kafka on the Shore*, echo through Popov's installations.

In the video installation *Trees* Popov plays with a scene in a forest, the entire screen bathed with bamboo. Manipulating the projection by seamlessly shifting the image from the natural greens of the woods to a purple hue, she edits together a richly-colored new video much the same way she used to create her bright paper collages. Projected on the large creases of silk fabric, the scenes become more fluid; shapes shift and become amorphous.

Her second installation, *Dancing Woman*, exploits formal qualities of the body, its movement and the fabrics which envelop and respond

to its changing form. The installation consists of a swath of circular material, suspended from the ceiling, emulating a twirling dervish's skirt; this voluminous fabric becomes the support for the video projection. Popov created a new arrangement of a solo dance from scenes in *House of Flying Daggers*. She frames the dancer's body so we see it only from the waist down. The dancer could be any one of us engaging in the dance of life, seduction, love, or disappearance. Popov entrances us with the textures and patterns in the scene -- the mandala-like carpet that the dancer softly meanders; the layers of the turquoise silk that wraps the person's body. To paraphrase Magdalena Abakanowicz, a strong influence on Popov: fabric is our covering and our attire; made with our hands, it's a record of our thoughts. Popov's installation becomes a layer of colors through light. As the video become intertwined with the colors of the fabric creating a moving image reminiscent of Post-Painterly Abstraction.

The installation *Water* consists of a horizontal split-screen with two independent shots occurring simultaneously, projected on gossamer and silk. Popov has greatly slowed both scenes, engendering a contemplative and meditative atmosphere. She explores mood through a poetic play of color, fragmentation, and replication. This video installation reflects the artist's preoccupation with memory and loss. Both projected scenes come from the film *Solaris*, by Soviet Russian filmmaker, Andrei Tarkovsky, who, according to director Ingmar Bergman "invented a new language, true to the nature of film, as it captures life as a reflection, life as a dream." It is in this way that Popov comprehends cinematography as a medium that deals with life between reality and fantasy.

For *In Memory of Ozu*, Popov utilizes the film *Five* by Abbas Kiarostam, a member of the generation of filmmakers in the Iranian New Wave who used techniques including poetic dialogue and allegorical storytelling to deal with political and philosophical issues. *Five*, shot with a hand-held digital video camera, along the shores of the Caspian Sea, consists of five long takes. As in a typical film by Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu, the camera never moves, never zooms, never pans. Popov chose a close-up of a section of the beach, battered by lapping waves and dogs wandering along the shore. The video is projected on a sculpture of warped and creased plastic foil and tissue that erupts out of the wall. Popov pushes the limit of the inherent flatness of video and rethinks its relationship to the sculptural elements in the space. This is her first installation in which the material is artificial, an influence of America, where synthetic materials are a dominant referent in the visual culture.

There is an element of seduction in these video installations -- we are engulfed by the space, immersed in the darkness of the room, and our sensitivity is heightened by the possible proximity of strangers surrounding us. Though Popov appropriates film scenes from other sources, her video installations are contemplative, intimate, and often include autobiographical elements. She speaks to the senses, offers an open space for reflection, and invites each of us to meditate on our own lives. Her medium has changed -- she has switched the canvas for fabric and the paint for video -- but certain preoccupations and sensibilities have stayed the same. The new leitmotif of water in the installations might be a reflection on her newly relocated life, a rite of passage from the old continent to the new one. "In most religions water is used symbolically for rites of passage, spiritual purification rituals, and sacred ceremonies. It is also an agent of change, causing dissolution of matter. It is considered the source of life, the medium of death and immortality, the reservoir of wisdom."³ Central to the founding myths of America is that you can always reinvent yourself. Perhaps these works are an act of purification, a readying for new beginnings and new avenues in the new home of Ivana Popov.

¹ Samuel R. Delany, *Video Spaces: Eight Installations by Barbara London*, Museum of Modern Art, 1995, 11.

² Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*, Vintage Book, 2006, 24.

³ Frankel Ellen and Teutch Betsy Platkin, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*, Northvale, N.J. Aronson, 1992, 192.

Биографија

Ивана Попов је рођена 1976. Дипломирала је на Факултету ликовних уметности у Београду 1998, где је и магистрирала 2001. Тренутно је на трећој години докторских студија School of Art and Design, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, САД.

Самосталне изложбе

- 1998. *Shangri-la* (са Маријом Драгојловић и Иваном Кличковић), Павиљон Вељковић, Београд
- 1998. *Пут цвећа*, Галерија Дома омладине, Београд
- 2000/2001. *Одрас месеца*, Галерија Центер, Београд
- 2001. *Одрас месеца*, Модерна галерија, Зрењанин
- 2004. *Покривање стварности велом*, Галерија Дома омладине, Београд
- 2005. *Veil of Reality*, Felissimo Design, Њујорк
- 2006. *Мапа Дана, Д1*, Национална галерија, Београд
- 2007. *Маглено звоно*, УЛУС, Београд

Групне изложбе (избор)

- 1997. *Од априла до априла* (изложба месеца фебруара), Галерија Андрићев венац, Београд
- 1998. *Треће бијенале младих*, Вршац
- 1998. *39. Октобарски салон*, Београд
- 2000. *У част професору Милошу Бајићу*, Галерија ФЛУ Београд
- 2000. *Четврто бијенале младих*, Вршац

- 2000. *41. Октобарски салон*, Београд
- 2000. EN FIN ,UNESCO ,Галерија, Париз
- 2002. *Serbian art*, (Међународни фестивал уметности), Галерија Маруси, Атина
- 2002. *43. Октобарски салон*, ретроспектива награђених радова, Београд Музеј 25 мај
- 2003. *У сусрет десетогодишњици из колекције*, Центер
- 2008. *Changing in direction*, Surplus Gallery, Carbondale, USA
- 2008. *Rated R*, Surplus Gallery, Carbondale, USA

Награде

- 1997. Милош Бајић за особену креативну иновацију
- 1997. Награда за мозаик Траншпед, Београд
- 1998. Награда 39. Октобарског салона

Колекције

Центер колекција (2001.); Колекција Музеја града Београда (2003)
Колекција Музеја града Београда (2004), Колекција Музеја града Београда (2005).

Контакт

Гандијева 27А, Београд
ropovivana@yahoo.com
www.ivanapopov.com

Biography

Ivana Popov was born 1976 in Belgrade, Serbia. Now she lives and works in Southern Illinois University Carbondale, School of Art and Design, 2D, SAD.

Education

- 2010 Candidate Master of Fine Arts, Emphasis: Installation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, School of Art and Design, 2D, SAD
- 2001 Master of Fine Arts, Emphasis: Painting, The Faculty of Fine Arts, Belgrade, Serbia
- 1998 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Emphasis: Painting, The Faculty of Fine Arts, Belgrade, Serbia

Solo Exhibition

- 2007 *Vague, The Bell of Mist*, ULUS Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2006 *Map Of The Day*, D1 National Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2005 *Veil of Reality*, Felissimo Design, New York, USA
- 2004 *Veiling Reality*, DOB Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2001 *Moon Reflection*, Modern Gallery, Zrenjenin, Serbia
- 2000/01 *Moon Reflection*, Zepter Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
- 1998 *The Path of Flowers*, DOB Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
Shangri-la, CZKD "Veljkovic", Belgrade, Serbia

Group Exhibitions

- 2008 *Rated R*, Surplus Gallery, Carbondale IL
- 2007 *A Change In Direction*, Surplus Gallery, Carbondale IL

- 2003 Collection, Zepter Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
43rd October Salon-retrospective of awarded works,
25 May Museum, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2002 *Serbian Art*, Marusi Gallery, Athens, Greece
- 2000 *En Fin*, Unesco Gallery, Paris, France
October Salon, Pavilion Cvjete Zuzoric, Belgrade, Serbia
4th Youth Biennial, Vrsac, Serbia
- 1999 *In Honor of Prof. Milos Baic*, FFA Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia

Awards

- 1998 Award of the 39th October Salon, Belgrade, Serbia
- 1997 The Tran-sped Belgrade Award for Mosaic, Belgrade, Serbia
- 1997 The Milos Baic FFA for an Outstanding Creative innovation, Belgrade, Serbia

Collections

Museum of City of Belgrade, Without Title, collag, Belgrade, Serbia (2005);
Museum of City of Belgrade, Mirror of The Age, collage, Belgrade, Serbia (2004);
Museum of City of Belgrade, Without Title, screen/fabric, Belgrade, Serbia (2003);
Zepter Gallery Collection, Dragon, Without Title, Without Title, Belgrade, Serbia,
Madlen Zepter Collection, Birds, Without Title, Belgrade, Serbia (2001)

Contact:

E-mail: popovivana@yahoo.com
www.ivanapopov.com



Veiling Reality, 2004

By Jasmina Cubrilo

The concept of beauty has long presented a key category of (fine) art, as a postulate of its universal quality and firm evidence that art is superior to nature. Beauty, as one of the aspects of visual arts, has been written about most probably with the aim to define, standardize, naturalize, and transform it into a neutral and unbiased category, which art is on a par with and/or described by. On the whole, the 20th century art is a miscellany of reviewed premises that "the art is intended simply to exist as the truth and beauty". Over the past few decades, textual production, founded in post-structuralism, affected the definition of the term Culture as a compilation of the best ideas and values of civilization. It also re-defined the very concept of art as the Truth and the Beauty whereby art is the result of complex processes and mechanisms of creation, disappearance, and the acting of various, more or less (non)-homogenous, cultural practices. The art-as-beauty concept is transformed into art as one of the feasible discursive practices which can tackle many aspects of beauty.

"Veiling reality" is an installation, or a temporary ambient which assumes inclusion, (and/or cooperation), which generally disrupts the line that distinguishes you-the-viewer from art-the-object. The special feature of the installation is the fact that it functions as a "picture/collage in an extended field". In other words, pictures and collage, which Popov worked on over the past ten years, have "added space" to their two-dimensional quality, while the paint from the tubes, papers of different origins, glittering powder, gold-foils, flower petals, have been replaced with fabrics. Some of the new "pictures" retained translucency and transparency found in earlier works, while in the others, however, compulsive density and the horror vacui effect have been substituted by "thickness", non-transparency, and the fullness of large painted fields of the chosen fabrics. The sensual quality, previously sensed by watching, now is perceived by the body. The choice of fabric has been determined by personal, aesthetic feeling of satisfaction, individual taste (or habit if you like), one's own concept of beauty which is rooted in an arbitrary selection and appropriation of elements of the Far Eastern and Middle Eastern images, as well as the American patchwork kilts. Tendency towards, or longing for, sophisticated forms that are part of some other cultures may be interpreted as escapism, this actually being so to a large extent. However, it should not be confounded with a "non-sentimental" global-local stocking and mixing of the selected items during which the traditional distinction line between the production and the consumption, the creation and the copy-marking, the ready-mades and the originals, and pictures and installation are fading, eclipsed by the shadow of the event and the meaning which ensued.

The use of geometric and/or abstract language outside the convention and the concrete quality of illusive painting, but within the framework of the religious or the so-called high art, has been

referred mainly to its spiritual context. Or, the non-mimetic, concreteness of the medium itself has been created. Meanwhile, in the so-called applied art this type of language served to indicate sadness, personal, political or religious stands, social communication and the relations that lived for the History of anonymous authors and authoresses of these artifacts. Geometric patterns in the "pictures" of Ivana Popov maintain basically the same/similar references out of which predominates the one pointing towards the dynamics of the imaginary, symbolic and the real. Evident is also the intent whereby these "pictures" ought to create a space which would be filled with the silence of unwritten prayers.

Essentially
Moon Reflection, 2000
by Nenad Radic

Essentially, there is flower, changing in kaleidoscopic variations and always creating new images. All changes are captured, sustained within the circle of the moon. Everything indicates the art of Japan. The artist transfers, subtly but forcefully, the enormous wealth of that Far- Eastern culture. The speech of the flowers is silent but eloquent ... The following passages will attempt to designate the basic elements but will still remain voiceless. The essential will be recognized only in a direct encounter with the works . Let us dream about the transitory and consider the wonderful follies of things.

The Moon

He was only two years old when, in accordance with the law of eternal repetition, he asked for the Moon ... to reach for, to catch the reflection of the Moon on the water, the dream of each child, but also a Buddhist parable: water is the phantom movement of feelings and ideas, while the Moon, and not its distorted image, is the Truth.(3) I like to cross the river in bright moonlight and watch the Moon, trodden over and kicked by the feet, explode in hundreds of crystalline drops.

The Flower

Means: to become the flower, to be flower, to bloom like flower and enjoy the sunshine and rain... the flower speaks to me and I know all the secrets, joys and sorrows ... the flower quivers within me ... by knowing the flower I have learned all the secrets of the universe, all the secrets of the mine self, which has always escaped my pursuits because I had doubled into my own self, by losing myself in the flower, I have learned both my self and the flower.

I cannot say where the unconsciousness dwells. Is it in me? Is it in flower? The artist uses paper, paint, brush, and flower... and tries to create from the unconscious part of her being. When this unconsciousness genuinely identifies with the cosmic unconsciousness, the works are authentic.

She artist paints, she creates a new flower. It would be interesting, had we sufficient time, to investigate more deeply the laws of composition and detail, constituted by the virtuosos of flowers. We would discover our connection to the Leading Principle (Heaven), the Subordinated Principle (Earth) and Conciliatory Principle (Man), and each flower arrangement that did not embody those principles would be considered fruitless and dead. Great importance has been attributed to the application of flower in its three different aspects: formal, semi-formal and informal. The first indicates flowers onto festive dress of a ballroom, the second is part of a casually elegant afternoon dress, and the third stays on an enchanting negligee of boudoir.

The legend about the beginning of Zen in India says. Once upon a time Sakiamooni was preaching to a group of his disciples on the hill of the Holy Vulture. In order to explain the essence he retained from a long verbal exposition, but simply raised in front of those gathered a bouquet of flowers presented to him by one of his layman followers. Not a word come from his mouth. Nobody understood what he meant by that, except for the old, revered Mahaksiapo, who gently smiled at the Teacher, comprehending the sense of the silent but eloquent lesson. When he noticed the smile, Buddha opened his golden mouth and solemnly declared: "I own the most precious treasure, spiritual and transcendental, which I hand unto you this very moment, my revered Mahaksiapo."

The space

In front of me there is a vast square room, full of unknown sweetish, smell, smell of Japanese incense, and when the sun shone powerfully, the light that penetrated through the paper was pale like the moonlight, for a couple of minutes I could not see anything expect the glitter of gilding in a gentile mist. When my eyes grew accustomed to darkness, I noticed on the screens covered with paper, that surround the shire on three sides, forms of a multitude of cut flower silhouettes against the misty white light. It was Buddha shrine.

The Sublimity of the Exotic, 2000 **by Suzana Milevska**

In the time of ongoing polemics about the exotics and how it should be re-defined, in fact the time when the criticism of Orientalism (Edward Said) has become a dogma in its own right, it is a bold act to deal with any culture or the art deriving from the Orient that is usually seen as exotic. Thus, the art works by Ivana Popov are worth discussing since she raises question as to whether the transparency, fragility and beauty can still be the categories that concern us. Moreover, the exotic can be interpreted as our facing the sublime.

If we take into account statements by Kant according to which the sublime is something that makes all else small, is incomprehensible and makes us distant from the sublime object then the rituals, the art, the clothes, everything that comes from another tradition and we adore it because of its opaque meaning, can be understood as sublime, the cultural sublime that is irreducible to our faculties of judgement.

And what is wrong with such admiration of beauty that is not anything like our own representation it? Of course, unless its only aim is to conquer such beauty.

Ivana Popov is infatuated with the unknown combination of forms and colors that bring her in the realm of Japanese culture and gender differentiating tradition without the wish to possess them. On the contrary, she creates collated objects, paintings and installations that can easily be added to the treasury of Japanese culture.

Combining different herbs makes her collages, leaves reflecting papers, glittering powder that all provoke a reminiscence of the other culture. Especially putting small pieces of transparent foil evokes reflection as an attempt to establish an identification relation with the Other. The positive aspect of it is the exemplified presence of flowers—the innocent and pure feeling of the nature that is not contaminated by any culture. The haptic quality of the interwoven transparent colorful paper gives way to interpretation of the works by Ivana Popov within a framework of gender subjectivization: taking into account similar codes it seems at first that gender codification does not affect art differentiation in different cultures. Nevertheless, a traditional kimono dress, usually associated with short steps of Japanese women still reminds us of a different cultural stratification pertaining to the relationship between different sexes. The smell of flower covering the floor thus creating ephemeral installation for Ivana Popov means creating a site for meditation that overcomes cultural differences and gives way to admiration of the sublime no matter which culture it belongs to and without fear that she will be blamed for exoticism that is usually the privilege of the imperialistic and dominating cultures.

By focusing on the process of creation, the selection and the original treatment of the materials, the artist enables the small, fragile and fragmented to become sublime in a baroque manner; not astonishing us with its colossal quality but with its different beauty, maybe incomprehensible yet adorable.

Hypothetical Similarity, 1998 **by Branislava Andjelkovic**

Looking at the works of Ivana Popov opens a considerable number of questions, and the search for sensible answers requires the readiness to accept a variety of possibilities. The unconcealed quotations from Japanese art, are the best opportunity to draw the attention of the observer; at the beginning of this text, having in mind that the introduced quotations are traditional and also that most traditional Japanese artists are men, that we are in front of works, that invoke cultural, social, geographic and, last but not least, feminist theoretic elaboration of the visual material. For an audience which is taught to relate art to the cultural heritage and tradition automatically, it is necessary to emphasize that referring to foreign tradition, in this case without hindrance, we should not see as stylistic borrowing, relying on the succession of styles in art has never got us anywhere, but in this case, it would represent mediation between indifference and ignorance.

The Copernican principle should have broken mankind a long time ago of the habit of perceiving this planet as the centre of the universe and the insignificant size of Europe should teach the Europeans to view the world through the relativism of space surfaces and in this way change or, at

least, become conscious of their eurocentric viewpoint. In the same context, a necessity arises to turn the attention of the viewer to another eurocentric habit: the iconographic reading of visual material. Iconic reading is based on the hypothetical similarity between the sign and the object. Nevertheless, such an approach should not be confused with the assumption that the image refers to something only on grounds of similarity, which would be an iconic act. We are the ones who give the sign a meaning in this way making it significant.

On the other hand, why Japan? Of course, a question formulated like this, opens another question. Why not Japan? Every pictorial tradition can offer the artist a context in which to create, regardless of the limits which traditionally designed context would potentially impose on the artist coming from the same tradition. Playing with tradition, however, always enables its transgression. In this way, it is possible to appropriate elements of tradition by putting them in the context of a personal project, and doing this completely exclude the elements of style, which compulsively define the given tradition. A whole series of collages creates a balance between stylistic prejudice, on the one hand, and prejudice of tradition and kinship, on the other. In these works the similarity between Japanese and European traditions become apparent, in the overt borrowing of, at first sight incompatible foreign ideas. However, while Europeans borrow from other practices whimsically and inconsistently, the Japanese approach has adopted the incorporation of foreign ideas through invariable patterns so that harmony of the work is not affected.

Japanese art is often referred to as perfect, but to the contrary, it is dedicated to the worship of the imperfect. In the same way, it is referred to as "authentic" and "distinctive", while it is evidently eclectic, with much more European influence than we are ready to recognize. Nevertheless, in the works of Ivana Popov, the use of natural materials, dried flower petals etc. does not only point to previous readings, but directly calls to mind traditionally feminine artifacts. Through its academic narrative, history of art has been structured on the history of painters and sculptors for centuries. Only occasionally, one comes across an anonymous woman who embroidered, weaved or made something through long-lasting, hard and minute work.

To talk about the work of Ivana Popov actually means to talk once more about the oldest question posed by both critics and artists: the attitude towards one's own work. By offering her own map of different traditions and visual conceptions, Ivana Popov actually offers a map of her own creative process. We are invited to relate imperfection built into the art work. The depth of feelings should be reachable to the viewer. It is on these premises that the Japanese concept of art is based. The emotional investment is understood. Everything that excluded women from public life for centuries (their wish to produce objects which are comfortable, pleasant, harmonious in color, precisely cut, in other words, to be a source of pleasure for everyone they encounter) opens a possibility for Ivana Popov to annul the taboo on the feminine approach to material (neutral-

materials, flowers) or form (which demands skills which European-men do not know). Paradoxically, she finds space for such an opening of an artistic practice which was in the framework even more radical in excluding women from society and public life. Still, it is the Japanese artist who points to the subtlety and vulnerability of feelings, and the imperfection of the world. "With no eye on eternity, he quickens at the sight of unexpected beauty and cherishes its impermanence". He promotes the feeling of social equality and mutual love which is lacking in rigid social hierarchies of the real world.