



To Float

Goran Despotovski

Gallery "Pygmalion", Timisoara
Exhibition *To Float* Installations
February/March 2009.

*"Instead of preparing and heralding future worlds,
contemporary art shapes the existing ones"*¹

... Installations

Goran Despotovski builds his poetics on making a crossbreed between emotional and rational, giving a slight advantage to feelings and a more intimate perception of the world, in which the search for a distinctive, personal space becomes the aim of artistic engagement. Articulating this emotional drive in the direction of achieving his original ideas, his plastic concepts mirror the state of the society they emerged in, putting the cultural-social aspect in the foreground. The artist does so with a right measure, without pathos and powerful expressionistic gestures, but with a profound empathy with the person who is always in the background, at least implicitly. Intimate and public, personal and communal intertwine, erasing their boundaries and merging in a common 'undefined' state, in which personal gets easily transformed into collective, intimate into public, and individual into general and vice versa.

The presence of a human being in spatial concepts developed by Goran Despotovski can be felt even when the human figure is not physically there. Coats and cloaks in the installation entitled 'Showroom' are arranged in such a way to make a special ambience, suggesting memories of people who used to wear them, implying their present or past existences. The sound which is heard when you come closer to this ambient setting only underscores their mysterious presence.

The artist frequently uses old, already used and forgotten objects and fabrics saved from old family houses, puts them in a new context and opens them to the public. The absence of human figure in the following installations makes it even more present: 'Medium', 'Suggestions', 'Folding', 'Repeat', etc.

In the latest spatial works 'Mumbled' and 'To Float' human figure plays the leading role. 'Mumbled' is an installation composed of dolls/human figures as natural-size objects, made of soft materials, sponge and fabric, without defined facial features, placed in a line. The repetition of identical figures serves to state a social criticism - the artist's intention is to remind the audience of the events from the 1990s: wars, isolation, oppression, long lines in front of the supermarkets, banks, petrol stations... The figures stripped of all individuality, as if clones made from one original, underscore the impersonality of these people, merged into a mass, while the sound the visitors hear when they come closer illustrates a murmur which merges with the indistinct mumbling of the masses. The peacefulness and patience of the figures in the line impels the spectator to move them, to do something that will 'shake them up' and rescue them from the situation and hopelessness they have ended up in.

Love for 'a man in the crowd' and the understanding for his problems which come as a result of the insane situation he finds himself in speak of the artist, for whom humanity is an

essential aspect of living, while a critical stance toward the society, warning and expressing public disagreement is a duty of an artist.

It is well-known that the destiny of an individual in a society such as ours is determined not only by their origin, decision to become socio-politically engaged or remain passive observers, but in new actual relations in the society. In the country with a permanent fight among political parties and financial powers for control, where capital is celebrated and consumer mentality is forced upon the people, an inevitable collapse of the value system has occurred together with repression of humanity and solidarity. The artist's concern about the destiny of an 'ordinary man' and the preservation of his microcosm is evident in most installations done by Despotovski. The artist feels with other people's problems, listens to the whispers of the masses and is capable of understanding their essential meaning, which speaks of his strong empathy, his willingness to share the fate of the others.

In the installation entitled 'To Float' the artist uses a transparent white fabric for making figures resembling dolls. These nameless and impersonal dolls have not only lost their faces but all implication of colour, turning into something amorphous, ill, washed out, hospital-like sterile, untouchable and unreal. They cease to represent individuals and become symbols of a general undefined state.

The artist evokes a feeling that human existence is endangered, he warns us of the danger that individuality could be lost in the new world order, of the increasingly present process of individuals turning into a shapeless and faceless masses, of the human alienation.

Despotovski's work is rooted in the criteria of coexistence, which can be seen in his need to instigate dialogue and create opportunities for spectators to give their own contribution. 'Installation becomes a place of encounter, a fleeting space, a place of meeting with the society.'² 'Art is therefore a state of encounter.'³ In some installations spectators set off the sound by their motion, turning it up and down thus making the murmur and mumbling of the masses audible, louder or fade away completely. By this, the audience takes part in forming and changing the work of art together with the artist. Its activity contributes to the factor of surprise, so the final outcome can never be told in advance. Interactivity becomes of essence and without it many of the artist's efforts would stay unfinished or insufficiently understandable. The interaction between the artist, the work and the audience on the one hand, and geographical place, time and space on the other, and memory, reality and predicting on the third, constitute the environment the artistic explorations of Goran Dimitrovski live in...

Extract from the text by Svetlana Mladenov

¹ N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Kosova, No.42-43, Vrsac, 2003
² A. B. Oltva and G. C. Argan, *III Modern Art 1770-1970-2000*, Clio, 2006
³ A. B. O. and G. C. Argan, *III Modern Art 1770-1970-2000*, Clio, 2006



To Float



Mumbled
Insult
Boiling
Plasma
Navel
Civil
To Float



Goran Despotovski was born on August 13th 1972 in Vrsac. In 1999 Despotovski graduated in Painting Art from the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad where he also received his MA in 2003, studying with Professor Dusan Todorovic. He work at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad – Section Painting since 2004.

PRIZES AND RECOGNITIONS: Award for Experimental Watercolour, 7th Biennale of Watercolour Zrenjanin, 2007. The SKC Award at the 5th Biennale of the Young, Vrsac, 2002. Award of the YU Pallet of the Young, Vrbas, 2001. Recognition of 4th Biennale of the Young, Vrsac, 2000. Annual Award for Painting from the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, 1999. Award for Achievements in Art from the University of Novi Sad, 1999...

SOLO EXHIBITIONS: 2008 ULUS Gallery, Belgrade; *To Float*, Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad. 2005 Centre for Visual Culture *Zlatno Oko*, Novi Sad; Contemporary Gallery, Zrenjanin; KC, CSK *Konkordia*, Vrsac. 2003 The Academy of Arts, Novi Sad - Gallery, Novi Sad; *Salon 77*, Gallery of Modern Arts, Nis. 2002 National Theatre *Sterija*, Vrsac. 2001 Gallery of Contemporary Arts, Pancevo; SCC Gallery, Kragujevac; Center for Contemporary Art Konkordia Vrsac. 2000 ULUV Gallery, Novi Sad; CSK *Konkordia*, Vrsac; Gallery of Contemporary Art *Laza Kostic*, Sombor; Novi Sad Art Salon, Cultural Centre of Novi Sad; Culture Club *Campus*, New Belgrade; Serbian House Gallery, Pozarevac. 1999 Gallery SKC *YES*, Novi Sad; *Bridge* Gallery, Novi Sad. 1998 Gallery of the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad; Gallery of the Regional Prison, Zrenjanin...

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS: 2008 Art in Vojvodina today; *Balkan Art*, Pecuj. 2007 *International Biennale of Extended Media*, Belgrade; *In Situ*, MSUV, Novi Sad; *International Exhibition of Artistic Flags*, Gallery Zlatno oko Novi Sad; *7th Biennale of Watercolour*, Zrenjanin. 2006 *Library – The Open Book of the Balkans*, Sarajevo, Cacak; *Examples of Current Art in Vojvodina – Beginning of the Century: Destinies and Commentaries*, Labin, Croatia; *City – Art Stage*, Novi Sad; 11th Art Expo, Novi Sad. 2005 International 46th October Salon, Belgrade. 2004 Observatoire 4 Gallery, Montreal, Canada; *6th Biennale of the Young*, Vrsac; A Space Gallery, Toronto. 2003 33rd October Salon, Pancevo; *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, Novi Sad. 2002 5th Biennial of the Young Vrsac; *5th International Festival of Experiment and Performance*, Sent Petersburg, Russia; *The Mirror of the Balkans*, Kraljevo; 2001 *The Spring Exhibition of ULUS*, Belgrade; *YU Pallet of the Young*, Vrbas; 30th October Salon, Novi Sad; 31st October Salon, Pancevo. 2000 4th Biennial of the Young, Vrsac... 1999 28th October Salon, Novi Sad...

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