

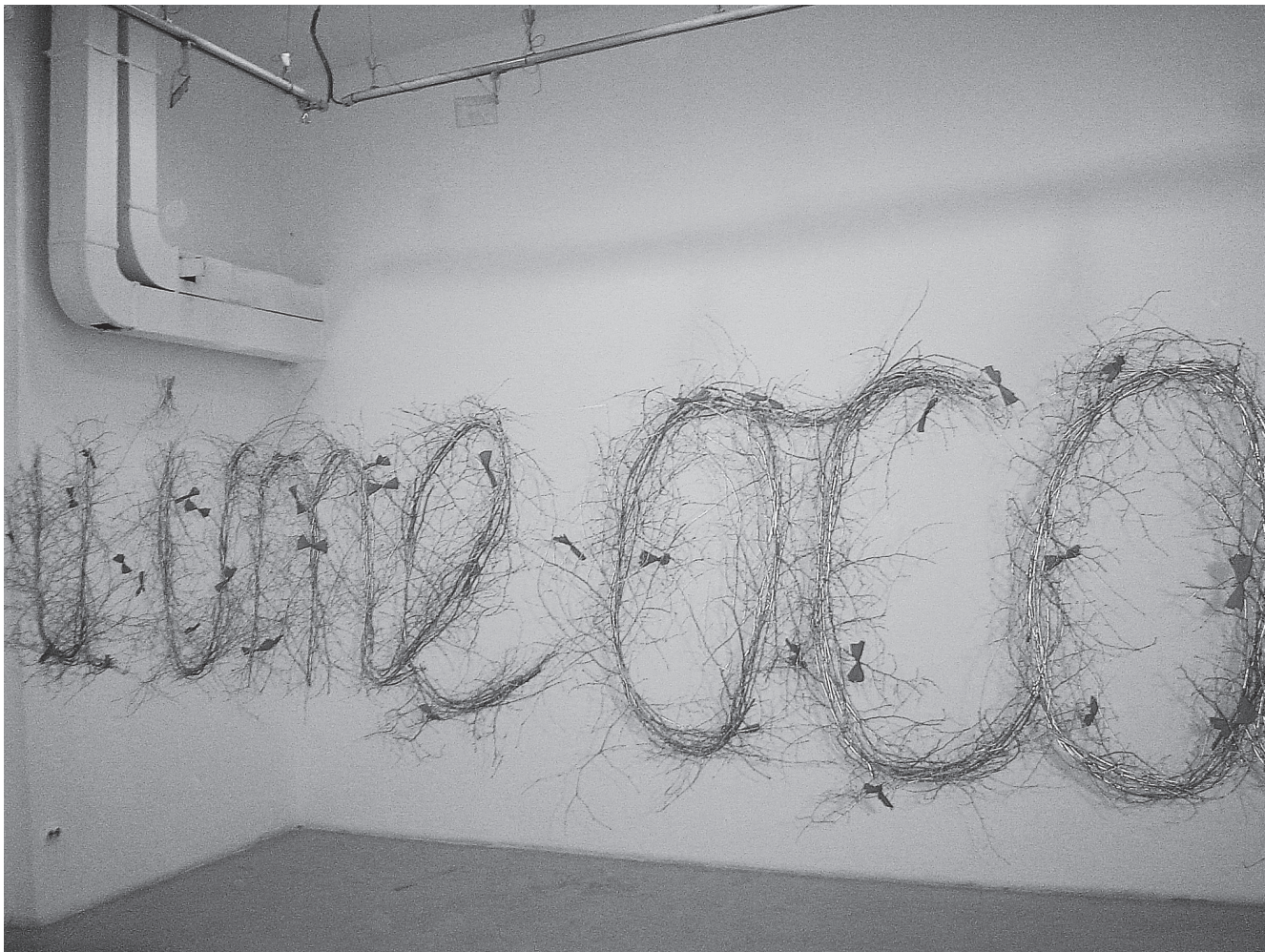
ksenija orelj

**rijeka - zagreb - ljubljana - venecija - durban**

**rijeka - zagreb - ljubljana - venice - durban**

■ U Rijeci sam. Zanima me spontana i životna umjetnička priča o situaciji i komunikaciji na domaćem terenu. Svako razotkrivanje je emocionalno i intuitivno obojano, pa se ženski senzibilitet čini zanimljivim izrazom za propitivanje riječke sredine. Traženje odgovora orijentirano je prema umjetnicama koje se bave tematski srodnim područjima (komunikacijom, percepcijom, memorijom, identitetom), a čiji je rad izrazio, ali iz različitih perspektiva otvoren prema sugovorniku i društvenom okruženju. Radi komparativnog sagledavanja situacije, tekstualni i vizualni materijal sastavljen je iz različitih pogleda na scenu, topografski bližih i daljih, karakterističnih i atipičnih rakursa. Otuda naslov teksta: *Rijeka - Zagreb - Ljubljana - Venecija - Durban*. Krug sugovornica odredio je faktor vremenske distance i prostornog odmaka koji očituju biografije, te njihov relativno neutralni status umreženosti, povezanosti s određenim subjektom na sceni. U razgovoru sudjeluju Melita Sorola Staničić, koju se od 1990. kad završava studij na likovnom odsjeku Pedagoškog fakulteta, često ističe među autoricama riječke scene, te četiri sadašnje protagonistice koje su formativno, a dijelom i djelatno razdoblje provele izvan Rijeke. Lara Badurina, također sudionica riječkih devedesetih, magistrirala je 2003. na ALU u Ljubljani. Živi u Zagrebu, a zaposlena je u Rijeci kao asistentica na odsjeku kiparstva novootvorene Akademije primijenjenih umjetnosti. Milijana Babić, jedna od *emerging* autorica, diplomirala je 2002. na Durban Institute of Technology te se nakon dvogodišnjeg boravka u Ljubljani 2006. vratila u Rijeku. Iako rođena u Splitu, Silvija Đolonga živi u Rijeci od 2001., kada je diplomirala na Accademia di Belle Arti u Veneciji. Povratak Mirne Kutleše uslijedio je 2004., nakon završenog studija na ALU u Zagrebu. Polivalentne biografije, kvalitetne,

● I am in Rijeka. I am interested in a spontaneous and lively story about the situation and communication on the local art scene. All disclosure is emotional and intuitively colouring, so female sensibility seems like an interesting way of investigating the Rijeka milieu. My questions concerns several female artists involved in thematically close fields (communication, perception, memory, identity), whose work is outspokenly open, even though from different perspectives, towards the interlocutor and the social environment. In order to establish a comparative overview of the situation, I have assembled my textual and visual materials from various viewpoints of the scene, topographically closer or more distant, from characteristic or atypical angles. Therefore the title: *Rijeka - Zagreb - Ljubljana - Venice - Durban*. I have defined the circle of my interlocutors according to the factor of time distance and spatial detachment evident from their biographies, as well as their relatively neutral status in the network, in their relationship with various protagonists on the scene. Thus, it includes Melita Sorola Staničić, who is often praised among the authors that appeared on the Rijeka scene after 1990, when she graduated from the Department of Visual Arts at the Faculty of Pedagogy, as well as four artists of younger generation who have spent their formative period outside of Rijeka and partly also worked elsewhere. Lara Badurina, likewise a figure from the 90s, obtained her M.A. in 2003 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. She lives in Zagreb and works in Rijeka as an assistant at the sculpture department of the newly founded Academy of Applied Arts. Milijana Babić, one of the "emerging" artists, graduated in 2002 from the Durban Institute of Technology and returned to Rijeka in 2006, having spent two more years in Ljubljana. Even though she was born in Split,



1

i izvan Rijeke zabilježene izložbe generacijski bliskih umjetnica mlade i srednje generacije, te suptilne i iskrene opservacije odigrali su bitnu ulogu u odabiru. Odabir je začinjen dozom zavodljivosti polimorfnim i tranzitornim vizualnim karakterom radova, te specifičnim i solidnim koncepcijama izvedenim u različitim medijima. Također i subjektivnim zaledem, činjenicom da pratim i poznajem njihov rad.

**1. Milijana Babić, U ime oca, instalacija, 900 x 100 cm, 2006. / In the Name of the Father, installation, 900 x 100 cm, 2006**

Silvija Đolonga has lived in Rijeka since 2001, when she graduated from the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice. Mirna Kutleša returned to Rijeka in 2004, having completed her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. The polyvalent biographies of these artists of younger and middle generations, comparable by the high quality of their exhibitions, which have attracted attention beyond Rijeka, as well as their subtle and honest manner of observation, have played a crucial role in my choice. I have also been seduced to a certain extent by the polymorph and transitory character of their work, as well as their specific and solid conceptions, realized in a variety of visual media. But there has also been a subjective background to that choice, the fact that I have observed and known their work for some time.

■ ■ Koje su bitne razlike u odnosu na sredinu u kojoj si studirala, tj. u odnosu na riječke devedesete? Djeluje li riječka scena poticajno na tvoj rad?

MELITA: Počela sam s radom učeći od starijih kolega (Mauro Stipanov) te družeći se sa studentima. Neki su odlaskom na poslijediplomski studij prenosili nove utjecaje. Ubrzo smo shvatili da trebamo sami stvoriti likovnu scenu kako bi u njoj sudjelovali. Započeli smo kao neformalna grupa, a onda osnovali umjetničku udrugu *URA* (umjetnici Lara Badurina, Damir Božić, Damir Šegota, Jasna Šikanja, Predrag Todorović, kritičari Branko Cerovac i Sabina Salamon). Počeli smo s radom 1995., napravili niz zajedničkih izložbi, akcija za Dan planeta Zemlje u suradnji sa studentima Pedagoškog fakulteta, a iznad svega smo se razumjeli i voljeli. Puno sam naučila kroz tu komunikaciju i mogu reći da me ona formirala.

2. Melita Sorola Staničić, Put crvenog mjeseca, akril na papiru, paus, 70 x 70 cm, 2005. / Orbit of the Red Moon, acrylic on paper, tracing paper, 70 x 70 cm, 2005

● ● What are the main differences that you notice with respect to the atmosphere in which you studied, i.e. Rijeka in the 90s? Is the scene of Rijeka encouraging your work?

MELITA: I began by learning from my older colleagues (Mauro Stipanov) and keeping company with the students. Then some of them left for postgraduate studies and experienced new things there. Soon we realized that we had to create an art scene by ourselves in order to participate in it. We began as an informal group and then founded an artists' association called *URA* (which included artists Lara Badurina, Damir Božić, Damir Šegota, Jasna Šikanja, and Predrag Todorović, and art critics Branko Cerovac and Sabina Salamon). We began with our activity in 1995, organized a number of collective exhibitions and an action for the Day of Planet Earth in cooperation with the students of Pedagogical Faculty, but

2



Sada imam osjećaj da nema neke povezanosti, komunikacije, svatko je zatvoren u osobni rad, što i ne mora biti loše. Mislim da je sada za riječku scenu najvažnija APU koja bi trebala biti centar komunikacije i razmjene ideja.

LARA: Bez obzira što se smatram dijelom riječke scene, ona uglavnom, nažalost, nije previše poticajna za moj rad (uostalom kao ni zagrebačka ili ljubljanska). Nadam se da će se to promijeniti. Nemam direktne reakcije na podražaje iz sredine u kojoj se trenutno nalazim, nego projekti nastaju kao refleksija na te poticaje, i to kada se nalazim u drugoj sredini. Tako "riječki" radovi skoro redovito nastaju u Ljubljani i Zagrebu, i obrnuto. Jednako su mi tako bitna i malo veća putovanja kako bih dobila odmak i shvatila sredinu u kojoj se nalazim, što je posebice vezano uz projekt *Souvenirs Made in*. Mislim da će korjenite promjene nastupiti za nekoliko godina, i to kao posljedica otvaranja Akademije, a tome već pridonose i razne nevladine, stručne udruge koje svojim djelovanjem jačaju kvalitetu kulturne scene pa već sada imamo scenu koja je dovoljno jaka i prepoznata.

MILIJANA: Multikulturalni Durban bio je vrlo plodno tlo na kojem je izrastao i moj rad. Studij je bio životni pogodak; otvorio je oči i vrata širom prema van. Art-scena urezala se kao živa, poticajna i nadasve prijateljska. Ljubljana je bila neophodna usputna stanica, s internacionalnim duhom, i jakom nezavisnom scenom, u kojoj je neusporedivo više bio značajan moj rad u organizaciji festivala *Mesto žensk*, negoli sam poslijediplomski studij (krhotina starog sistema). Što se tiče Rijeke, znala sam gdje se vraćam, a vrijeme će pokazati svoje. Lokalnu scenu doživljavaš jako življavom, kao da tek treba eksplodirati. Kao takva, ne djeluje poticajno u ovom momentu. Mislim da sveukupno može biti bolje, uključujući i vlastitu participaciju.

SILVIJA: Ljepota studija u Veneciji je izloženost različitim kulturama. Studenti su dolazili iz Japana, Irana, Pakistana, Sjeverne i Južne Amerike, Francuske, Engleske..., što Rijeci nedostaje, kao i drugim gradovima u Hrvatskoj. Nedostaje suradnje, uglavnom je prisutno okretanje samom sebi. Nijedna sredina sama za sebe ne može biti poticajna, već samo u korelaciji s drugim sredinama.

MIRNA: S obzirom da je moj boravak u Zagrebu bio vezan uglavnom uz studij, teže mi je usporediti likovne scene tih dvaju gradova. Mnogo toga je uvjetovano činjenicom da je Rijeka ipak puno manja sredina od Zagreba, ali se lakše i brže ostvaruju kontakti. U Rijeci sasvim sigurno ne nedostaje pozitivne inicijative, ono što nedostaje često su sredstva, pa i dosljednost u kriterijima, korektna realizacija projekata. U Rijeci sam vrlo

above all we understood and loved each other. I learned a lot through that communication and I could say that it has formed me. I feel that now there is no connection, no communication, and everyone is enclosed in his or her own work, which is not necessarily bad. I think that now the most important thing on the Rijeka scene is the Academy of Applied Arts, which should be the centre of communication and exchange of ideas.

LARA: Regardless of the fact that I consider myself a part of the Rijeka scene, I must say that, unfortunately, it doesn't really encourage my work (but I can say the same about Zagreb or Ljubljana). I hope that it will change. I don't react directly to the impact of the environment in which I am currently working. My projects are a result of my reflections on these impacts, but it happens when I am staying somewhere else. Thus, my "Rijeka" pieces are almost regularly made in Ljubljana or Zagreb, and vice versa. The same goes for my need to travel somewhere far away in order to gain a distance and understand my environment, which is especially valid for the project entitled *Souvenirs Made in*. I believe that some fundamental changes will take place in a few years and it will happen owing to the opening of the Academy. Various non-governmental and professional associations have prepared the ground for that, since they have raised the quality of the culture scene, so that now we have a scene that is quite strong and acknowledged.

MILIJANA: The multicultural Durban is a very fertile ground, and my work has grown on that ground. Studying there was definitely the right thing to do: it opened my eyes and a gate towards the outside world. The art scene there was lively, inspiring, and extremely friendly. Ljubljana has been an inevitable station on my way; it has an international atmosphere and a strong independent scene, but my work on organizing the festival *Mesto žensk* [City of Women] mattered far more than the postgraduate studies as such (a remnant of the old system). As for Rijeka, I knew what I was coming back to, but I guess that only time will tell. The local scene I find quite rigid, as if it were about to explode. As such, it is not really encouraging at the moment. I think that, all in all, things could be better, including my own participation.

SILVIJA: The beauty of studying in Venice is that you are exposed to different cultures. Students were coming from Japan, Iran, Pakistan, North and South America, France, England... and that is what is missing in Rijeka, just as in other Croatian cities. There is no cooperation; most of the time everybody is closed in himself or herself. No environment can be encouraging by itself, only in correlation with other environments.

brzo stvorila krug ljudi, kolega, prijatelja s kojima rado surađujem, pa tako scenu doživljavam vrlo otvorenom i prijemčivom. Svida mi se što umjetnici imaju dosta različite pozadine u smislu školovanja, od Italije, Rijeke, do Zagreba, pa su tako prisutni razni utjecaji i općenito mi se čini da je manje prisutna podložnost nekom određenom trendu. Ukoliko se može govoriti o *mainstreamu* i alternativni, mislim da su u Rijeci podjednako prisutni.

■ ■ Kakvima procjenjuješ izložbene aktivnosti i prostore u gradu? S kojim subjektima najbolje surađuješ i zašto?

MELITA: Rijeka se nameće kao kulturni centar sa specifičnostima bivšeg industrijskog grada u kojem se stvorila jaka subkulturna rock-scena. Međutim, u medijskom smislu Rijeka je uvijek negdje po strani i sve ostaje nekako na lokalnoj razini, kao i u ostalom dijelu Hrvatske koji nije Zagreb (o likovnim događanjima u Rijeci na nacionalnoj televiziji ima nekoliko priloga godišnje). Predstavljanje riječkih umjetnika u Zagrebu ili inozemstvu isto je tako rijetkost, umjetnici su osuđeni na osobnu probitačnost. Zanimljivi prostori su već dugo isti: Galerija Kortil u sklopu Grada Rijeke, Galerija Juraj Klović u sklopu HDLUR-a, Galerija OK u sklopu MMC-a Palach, Mali salon u sklopu MMSU-a, koji je sada, radi povećane cijene najma, manje dostupan umjetnicima.

LARA: U gradu ima premalo izložbenih prostora; zapravo, ima ih dovoljno, ali ih je samo nekoliko stvarno aktivno. Grad bi trebao raspisati natječaje za kustose, kuratore i programe. Ima dovoljno obrazovanih mladih ljudi koji bi bili spremni raditi taj posao i za malo novaca. Godinama surađujem s MMSU, i to u kontinuitetu. Podržavali su program udruge *URA*, a sada program udruge *A3* za promociju filmske i video umjetnosti u kojoj sudjeluju i filmska redateljica Tanja Golić i filmski kritičar Nino Sorić.

MILIJANA: Nedovoljno raznovrsnima, nedovoljno atraktivnima, s obzirom na predispozicije grada, uključujući njegovu veličinu i lokaciju. Svaka suradnja ima svojih prednosti i mana.

SILVIJA: Smatram da je Rijeka otvorena za nove ideje, i da postoji potreba i želja za novim. Članstvo u HDLUR-u otvorilo mi je razne izložbene mogućnosti, ali i korištenje atelijera, što je svakom umjetniku važno, iznimka je od drugih gradova. Dobrih izložbenih prostora ima, ali su uglavnom loše posječeni. Zanimljivi su industrijski prostori, ali je pitanje koliko bi privukli publiku i medijsku reklamu. Umjetnost je u medijima uvijek nekako po strani (na TV-u u "ilegali", iza ponoci). Općenito, mislim da je problem u lošoj informiranosti i edukaciji, razvojni put vrti se do Picassa.

MIRNA: Since my stay in Zagreb was largely linked to my studies, I find it difficult to compare the art scenes of these two cities. Much of it results from the fact that Rijeka is far smaller than Zagreb, but therefore you establish contacts faster and more easily. There is certainly no lack of positive initiatives in Rijeka, but what is often missing is the finances and also consistency in establishing criteria and realizing the projects in a correct way. In Rijeka I soon established a circle of people, colleagues and friends with whom I like to cooperate, so I am experiencing the scene as very open and inviting. I like the fact that artists have rather different backgrounds in terms of education, from Italy or Rijeka to Zagreb, so you have different influences and on the whole I think there isn't too much slavishness in following a particular trend. If one can speak at all about the mainstream and alternative scenes, I think that they are equally present in Rijeka.

● ● How do you judge the exhibition venues and activities in the city? With whom do you cooperate best and why?

MELITA: Rijeka is naturally a cultural centre with all the specificities of an industrial city, which means that it has a strong subcultural rock scene. However, in terms of mass media Rijeka has somehow remained aside of the events and everything is taking place on a local level, just like in the rest of Croatia, with the exception of Zagreb (on the national television, you have only a few reports a year on the art scene of Rijeka). Artists from Rijeka are rarely presented in Zagreb or abroad; they are forced to promote themselves. The interesting places haven't changed for quite a while: the Kortil Gallery (of the City of Rijeka), Juraj Klović Gallery (maintained by the Croatian Association of Visual Artists Rijeka), OK Gallery (at the MMC Palach), and Mali Salon (at the Museum of Modern Art). The latter is barely affordable to artists because of the high rent.

LARA: There are not enough exhibition venues in the city. Actually, there are many, but only a few of them are really active. The city should launch competitions for curators and programmes. There are enough educated young people who would be willing to do the job even for small money. I have been continuously working for years with the Museum of Modern Art MMSU. They have supported the programme of *URA* and now they are supporting *A3*, an association for the promotion of film and video art, which includes, among others, film director Tanja Golić and film critic Nino Sorić.

MILIJANA: I find the venues insufficiently varied and insufficiently attractive, given the size and the situation of the city. As for cooperation, it always has its advantages and disadvantages.



3

MIRNA: Iako sam član riječkog (i zagrebačkog) HDLU-a, nemam puno iskustva s institucijama u Rijeci. Ipak, čini mi se da bi trebale malo bolje funkcionirati u praksi, što se tiče komunikacije, transporta, organizacije; to jesu sitnice, ali ne volim misliti da problemi počinju već kod toga. Mislim da općenito nedostaju kvalitetne (privatne) galerije koje bi bile okrenute promociji umjetnika na ekonomskoj razini, ne zanemarujući pritom kriterije struke.

■ ■ Je li na tvoj odabir medija utjecao studij ili kasnija istraživanja?

MELITA: O mediju nikada ne razmišljam odvojeno, nego određena priča traži svoj medij i određuju se uzajamno. Koristim klasični medij slikarstva na platnu, kombinirane tehnike stvaranja objekata, ali i ambijente nastale slikama i crtežima na papiru, fotografijama, foto i video projekcijama.

3. Lara Badurina, *Seriya 2*, visina 30 cm, 2005. / *Series 2*, height 30 cm, 2005

SILVIJA: I think that Rijeka is open for new ideas and that there is both need and readiness for something new. Being a member of the Croatian Association of Visual Artists Rijeka (HDLUR) opens up various exhibition possibilities and I can also use an atelier, which is important for any artist and which is a specialty with respect to other cities. There are some good exhibition venues, but they mostly enjoy rather poor publicity. It would be interesting to exhibit in industrial spaces, but it is questionable whether they would be able to attract visitors and the media. Art somehow always remains aside the main events (on the TV, it comes after midnight, like something going on “underground”). Generally, I think that the main problem is the lack of information and education; their development ends with Picasso.

MIRNA: Even though I am a member of HDLU Rijeka (and also Zagreb), I don't have much expe-

LARA: Tijekom studija imala sam sreće upoznati se sa suvremenim tokovima skulpture osamdesetih, jer su mi i mentori pripadali tim strujanjima, moja kasnija istraživanja su samo logičan nastavak tih interesa. Studentima je danas dostupno puno više informacija, ali im je i teže izabrati najkvalitetnije činjenice u tom moru podataka, pokreta, trendova, imena, itd., a uz to imaju i manje vremena za osobna istraživanja. Što se tiče medija, biram ga prema ideji. Često uzimam prakse koje nisu vezane uz umjetničku produkciju, a koristim ih kao sredstvo izražavanja.

MILIJANA: Forma instalacije pokazala se kao najprikladnija tijekom studija, što su potvrdila i kasnija istraživanja.

SILVIJA: Bitno mi je kontinuirano istraživanje i trenutna inspiracija, a akademska naobrazba, grafički i slikarski medij su podloga.

MIRNA: Iako sam za vrijeme studija iskušavala razne tehnike, ostala sam vjerna (zasad) klasi-

4. Mirna Kutleša, Prvopričesnica, ulje na platnu, 146 x 114 cm, 2006. / First Communion, oil on canvas, 146 x 114 cm, 2006



rience with institutions in Rijeka. Still, I think that they should function a bit better in practice in terms of communication, transport, and organization - these may be minor details, but I don't like to think that problems should start from something like that. In my opinion, there is a general lack of good (private) galleries that would focus on the promotion of artists on the financial level, without disregarding the professional criteria at the same time.

●● Have your studies influenced your choice of the medium or was it your later research?

MELITA: I never think of the medium separately, each story requires its own medium and the two determine each other. I use the classical medium of painting on canvas, the combined techniques of creating objects, but also ambiances with paintings and drawings on paper, photographs, and photo and video streaming.

LARA: During my studies, I had the opportunity to get acquainted with the sculpture of the 80s, since my mentors belonged to those currents, and my later research was only a logical continuation of such interests. Today, students have access to a great amount of information, but it has also become far more difficult to select the quality facts in that sea of data, movements, trends, names, etc. They also have less time for personal research. As for the medium, I select the one that fits my idea. I often choose practices that are not even linked to art production and use them as a means of expression.

MILIJANA: The form of installation has proven the most appropriate during my studies and I have remained with it throughout my later research.

SILVIJA: For me, the crucial elements are continuous research and momentary inspiration, while academic education and graphic or painting media constitute the background.

MIRNA: Even though I have tried out various techniques during my studies, I have remained faithful (for the present) to the classical medium of oil on canvas or hardboard. While investigating these ideas, I have also turned to photography, video, and drawing because of the intimist features of these techniques, but for me they have always remained in the service of painting, the final product that is centred on presentation.

●● How important is story in your work? Which stories interest you?

MELITA: I think of art as a means of expression, as a winning combination of content and form. My work consists in finding the best solution for some issue that interests me: an inspiring idea, thought, or feeling that needs to be

čnom mediju ulja na platnu ili lesonitu. U procesu istraživanja ideje okrenula sam se bavljenju fotografijom, videom, crtežom, zbog intimističkih karakteristika tih tehnika, koje ostaju u službi slike, konačnog proizvoda koji je okrenut prezentaciji.

■ ■ Koliko je u tvom radu bitna priča? Koje te teme zanimaju?

MELITA: O umjetnosti razmišljam kao o izražavanju, kao o dobitnoj kombinaciji sadržaja i forme. Moj rad sastoji se u tome da iznadem najbolje rješenje za određeno pitanje koje me interesira, odnosno poticajna ideja, misao ili osjećaj traže način da se izraze. Taj proces nije u vremenskom smislu sukcesivan, već te dvije komponente zajedno izniču i provociraju jedna drugu te formiraju rad. U tom smislu je priča važna, kao ono što želim reći, a to je uvijek bilo vezano uz osobna iskustva i doživljaj sebe i svijeta. Moji radovi su “dokumenti” i mape kojima pokušavam sebi objasniti fenomene, traženje jedne osobne istine, stvaranje jedne mape svijeta, koju svatko gradi na temelju kulture, ali viđeno kroz osobnu prizmu. Teme i pitanja kojima sam se bavila vezani su uz doživljavanje fenomena kao što su promatranje svijeta kao igre četiri odnosno pet elemenata u ciklusu *Četiri godišnja doba* ili čovjekova ograničenost percepcije kontinuuma prostor-vrijeme u ciklusu *Nedogled*. Od 1999. započinjem s ciklusom bilježenja vremena “sada”, u kojem se procesu vrijeme nastanka rada poistovjećuje s biografskim vremenom. Tako nastaju slike vremena i na tom razmišljanju izložbe *Mjesec*, *Zvijezde*, *Putanje*, *Moment*, *Zvijezde-Cvjetovi*, *Vrijeme cvjetanja* te izložba *Tango*, u kojoj sam se oslanjala na jedno žensko iskustvo menstrualnog ciklusa u odnosu na lunarni. Zanimalo me prihvaćanje i crpljenje potencijala iz tog iskustva koje je dio mene i koje me određuje.

LARA: Teme crpim iz svakodnevnog života. To su sam rad, proizvodnja i potrošnja. Priča se razvija sama prilikom postavljanja u prostor predstavljanja.

MILIJANA: Priča je osnova. Zanimaju me iznevjerena obećanja bajki i priča.

SILVIJA: Priča varira. Percepcija je bitna.

MIRNA: Vjerna sam figurativnom slikarstvu, fascinira me realizam u svim svojim aspektima, pa tako i priča i sadržaj... A teme su uvijek isječki stvarnosti, autobiografske priče, na neki način materijalizirane u određenim prizorima, često preuzetim ili sklopljenim iz vizualne rototarnice ideja, društva i kulture. U potrazi za okruženjem u koje ću najbolje implementirati svoju priču zadirem u film, fotografiju, animaciju, postojeće slikarske stilove... Posuđujem jezik i nastojim naglasiti njihovu karakterističnu este-

expressed in a certain way. That is not a successive process in terms of time; instead, the two components emerge together and provoke each other into creating the artwork. In that sense, the story is important, it is what I wish to say, and that has always been linked to personal experience and the impression of the world and myself. My works are “documents” in that folder by which I seek to explain phenomena to myself, they are a search for personal truth, the creation of a world map that each of us constructs on the basis of our culture, but through a personal prism. Topics and questions that I have dealt with are linked to experiencing a phenomenon, like observing the world as a game between four or five elements in the cycle on the *Four Seasons* [*Četiri godišnja doba*]; or the limits of human perception of the time-space continuum in the cycle on *Endlessness* [*Nedogled*]. In 1999, I started a cycle on noting down the time of “now”, in which process the time of creating the artwork has been identified with biographic time. In this way, I have created various images of time and, on the basis of this concept, the exhibitions on the *Moon* [*Mjesec*], *Stars* [*Zvijezde*], *Orbits* [*Putanje*], *Moment*, *Stars-Flowers* [*Zvijezde-Cvjetovi*], *Blossoming Time* [*Vrijeme cvjetanja*], and *Tango*, in which I referred to the female experience of menstrual cycle with respect to the lunar one. I was interested in acknowledging and extracting potentials from that experience, which is a part of me and which defines me.

LARA: I draw my topics from everyday life. They include work, production, and consumption. The story evolves by itself, as it is set up in the space of representation.

MILIJANA: The story is basic. I am interested in the broken promises of fairy tales and stories.

SILVIJA: The story varies. Perception is what matters.

MIRNA: I stay faithful to figurative painting; I am fascinated by realism in all of its aspects, including the story and the content... And my topics are always excerpts from the reality, autobiographic stories, in a way materialized in certain scenes, often taken over or assembled from the visual warehouse of ideas, the society and culture. While searching for an environment in which I can implement my story best, I cross the threshold to the realms of film, photography, animation, and the existing styles in painting... I borrow the language and I seek to emphasize the specific aesthetics that seduces me so strongly. What captures me in the process is balancing the openness and the closeness of the story (image). I am trying to offer a sufficient amount of general information in order to make the story readable, but at the same time preserve its secret; in this push-and-pull between the general and the personal, I am trying to offer



tiku koja na mene djeluje tako zavodljivo. Ono što me zaokuplja u tom procesu je balansiranje između otvorenosti i zatvorenosti priče(slike). Dati dovoljno općih informacija da jedna intimna priča bude čitljiva, ali da u isto vrijeme zadrži svoju tajnu, da u povlačenju između općeg i osobnog uspijem postaviti više pitanja nego dati odgovora, te da u sliku ugradim što više različitih asocijacija, to bolje ako su proturječne.

■ ■ Kako si povezana s internacionalnom scenom? Utječu li recentni trendovi na tvoj rad?

MELITA: Recentni trendovi su prije puno više utjecali, odnosno kroz te utjecaje sam razvijala svoj izraz i učila. Kasnije sam počela sve više osvještavati taj proces i vraćati se sebi, nalaziti ishodište u svojem iskustvu.

LARA: Nisam ostvarila plasman na internacionalnoj sceni, zanimljivo, više me zanima kako ona funkcionira nego da se pokušam postaviti na tržište. Neke recentne trendove preuzimam svjesno, a neke nesvjesno. Ipak, i dalje vjerujem u umjetničku autentičnost.

5. Silvija Đolonga, Prolaznost, instalacija, 2006. / Transience, installation, 2006

more questions than answers and insert as many different associations into the picture as possible, even contradictory ones.

● ● What are your relations with the international scene? How do the latest trends influence your work?

MELITA: I used to be much more influenced by the trends; through them I was learning and developing my expression. Later, I became more conscious of the process and thus I was able to come back to myself, to find my sources in my own experience.

LARA: I haven't made my way into the international scene, but interestingly, I am more curious about the way it functions than trying to put myself on the market. Some of the recent trends I have adopted consciously, others unconsciously. Still, I believe in artistic authenticity.

MILIJANA: Hardly at all.

SILVIJA: I am interested in the spirit of the times, trends included. I believe that it is lethal (for one's work) not to live in the present.



MILIJANA: Minimalno.

SILVIJA: Zanima me duh vremena, kao i trendovi. Smatram pogubnim (za rad) ne živjeti u sadašnjosti.

MIRNA: Internacionalnu scenu nastojim pratiti, volim putovati i posjećivati izložbe. Samostalno nisam izlagala izvan Hrvatske, mada bih u budućnosti voljela. Naravno važno je stvarati kontakte, ali i dobro odraditi svoju prezentaciju. Što se tiče recentnih trendova u slikarstvu, mislim da je utjecaj prilično jak. Počevši od obrazovanja u slikarskoj klasi profesora Rončevića, kod kojeg sam i diplomirala, a koja je izrazito okrenuta suvremenom trendu. Mislim da je to dobro kao početak, kao temelj za daljnje istraživanje. Sve više primjećujem da pronalazim uzore i utjecaje iz svih mogućih minulih slikarskih razdoblja, a ne samo iz suvremene umjetnosti.

■ ■ Živiš li od umjetničkog stvaralaštva? Kako?

MELITA: Ne mogu reći da živim od umjetničkog stvaralaštva iako sam samostalna umjetnica. Galeristi koji prodaju suvremenu umjetnost gotovo i ne postoje, sve se svodi na nekoliko imena koja se prodaju... Plaćeno je svim sudionicima u realizaciji izložbi suvremene umjetnosti, od čistačice, tiskare, lektora... do kustosa, samo je glavni akter ispao iz igre. Umjetnik ne dobiva ni honorar ni nadoknadu za materijal, on treba biti zadovoljan što se sve to oko njegovog rada vrti, pa je prisiljen raditi druge poslove za novce. Tako umjetnički rad za njega postaje nekakva hobi-aktivnost vikendom na kojoj počivaju institucije suvremene umjetnosti. Ipak, jedno od rješenja vidim u redovitom javljanju na natječaje raznih fondacija za financiranje projekata.

LARA: Ne, i to mi nije namjera.

MILIJANA: Kako kod nas nije baš lako (da ne kažem nemoguće) živjeti od instalacija, u ovoj se fazi okrećem komercijalnom/dekorativnom radu.

SILVIJA: Taj je problem konstanta. Prodajne galerije su uglavnom suvenirnice. U Veneciji su već na završnu studentsku izložbu dolazili profilirani galeristi. Umjetniku pri organizaciji izložbe najmanje vremena ostaje za rad, a preoprećenost zasigurno ne izaziva produkciju.

MIRNA: Ne živim od umjetničkog stvaralaštva, ali to mi je svakako jedan od ciljeva. Vidim to kao jedan proces koji ide uzlaznom putanjom, ali možda ne baš tempom koji bih željela. "ini mi se da nedostaje jača struktura likovnog tržišta i komunikacija između umjetnika i potencijalnih kupaca, a također i kultura kupovanja umjetnosti općenito. □

— Ksenija Orelj, diplomirala povijest umjetnosti i germanistiku na Filozofskom fakultetu u Zagrebu 2003. Zaposlena kao kustos u Pomorskom i povijesnom muzeju Hrvatskog primorja Rijeka, Muzejska zbirka Kastavštine.

— Ksenija Orelj, graduated art history and German language and literature from the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb (2003). Currently working as a curator at the Maritime and Historical Museum of Hrvatsko Primorje in Rijeka, Collection of the Kastav Region.

MIRNA: I am trying to keep in touch with the international scene, I love to travel and visit exhibitions. I haven't had any solo exhibitions outside Croatia, but I would like that in the future. It is certainly important to make contacts, but also to present oneself well. As for the recent trends in painting, I think that the influence is rather strong. It started with my education in the class of Prof. Rončević, with whom I also graduated, which was explicitly oriented towards the contemporary trends. I think that it was very good as a start, as a basis for further research. But I am noticing that I have been increasingly finding models and influences in the painting of all possible historical periods, not just contemporary art.

● ● Can you live on your art? How?

MELITA: I couldn't say that I can live on my art, even though I am a free-lance artist. There are almost no galleries that would sell contemporary art, it all comes down to a few names that sell well... Everybody who participates in the realization of exhibitions of contemporary art gets paid: the cleaning woman, the printing house, the proof-reader, the curator, of course, only the main protagonist is out of the game. The artist doesn't even get his fee or money for the material, he should be happy that it is all about his art, so he is forced to do other jobs for the living. In this way, his art becomes a sort of pastime or weekend activity, and that is what the institutions of contemporary art are based on. One of the solutions is to keep applying to various competitions launched by foundations that finance art.

LARA: No, and I am not trying to.

MILIJANA: In Croatia, it is not easy (not to say impossible) to live on installations, so I am turning to commercial/decorating jobs at the moment.

SILVIJA: That is a permanent problem. The galleries that sell art are mostly souvenir shops. In Venice, profiled art dealers were already present at the students' final exhibition. If you want to organize an exhibition here, you have to do so many things that you will basically have no time to prepare your work, and that sort of stress certainly does not favour artistic production.

MIRNA: I don't live on my art, but that is certainly one of my goals. I see that as a process tending upwards, though perhaps not with the speed that I would wish for. It seems that the structure of the art market is rather weak and there is no real communication between the artists and the potential buyers, while the culture of purchasing art is generally rather low. ○