

o junacima, znanima i neznanima on heroes, named and unnamed

1. Ivan Fijolić, *Superman*, 2006.

▼ Reprezentativna je umjetnost od svojih početaka vezana uz razne junačke figure koje su utjelovljivale društveno poželjne vrline poput patriotizma, hrabrosti, požrtvornosti. Kao bogovi ili mitološka bića, stvarne povijesne ličnosti preoblikovane predajom ili alegorijskom predodžbom, herojski likovi nižu se kroz povijest umjetnosti noseći nisku svojih pozitivnih obilježja, s poslanjem mladima (poput helenskih junaka pod Ilijem, u koje su se grčki mladići trebali ugledati). Pauperizirana modernost mitove ozbiljuje u popularnoj kulturi, i to danas u stripu i komercijalnom filmu, da bi ih pop-art, nekoliko desetljeća unatrag, uveo u visoku umjetnost, kada na scenu stupa cijela horda superjunaka predvođena Lichtensteinovim odsutnim Supermanom. Otvorenim dijalogom (koji se nije libio izravnog sukoba ili proračunate suradnje) svijeta umjetnosti i masovnih medija stripovski i filmski junaci već su desetljećima prisutni svojom pojavom ili nekom aluzivnom gestom. Iz ovdašnje vizure, prostor čiji je obrazovni sustav baratao lektirama koja je uključivala i epsko opjevanje hajdučije i kult “narodnih heroja”, nudi inspirativnu menažeriju nadljudskih bića. Nakon antologijski gorkog spoja otrcanog socijalističkog kulta narodnih heroja, s jedne, i bešćutnosti tranzicijskog kapitala, s druge strane u radu Sanje Iveković,¹ što je tim uzoritim bićima ostalo poslije smrti vjere u bolje sutra? Pogledajmo kako se tranzicijskim mukama herojskih uzora pozabavila moćna gomilica s hrvatske umjetničke scene.

Nadljudsko biće s Kriptona udomaćilo se u suvremenoj umjetničkoj ikonografiji od šezdesetih naovamo, i na hrvatskom se tlu ukazalo za prošlog Trijenala kiparstva u skulpturi Ivana Fijolića. Minijaturni lik Supermana prvo je uklesan, a zatim koloristički dotjeran flomasterom na komadu kararskog mramora druge

● Representative art has always been linked to various heroic figures, embodying socially desirable qualities such as patriotism, courage, and self-denial. As gods or mythological beings, or even real historical personalities transformed by tradition or by allegoric imagination, heroic figures have marched through art history adorned with their wreath of positive features, serving as models for the youth (such as the Hellenic heroes under Troy, whom young Greeks were supposed to emulate). The pauperised modernity has materialized these myths within popular culture, primarily comic books and commercial films, and then pop-art introduced them into fine arts some decades ago, when an entire horde of superheroes appeared on the scene headed by Lichtenstein's absent Superman. In the open dialogue (that does not shun direct conflict or calculated cooperation) between the world of art and the mass media, heroes from comic books and cinema screens have been present for decades, be it personally or in allusive gestures. From our perspective, a region with an educational system that used to operate on the basis of literature including an epic glorification of “hajduks” and a cult of “national heroes” can certainly offer an inspiring menagerie of superhuman figures. Following the notoriously bitter fusion between the worn-out socialist cult of national heroes on the one hand and the mercilessness of transitional capital on the other, as manifested in the work of Sanja Iveković,¹ we may ask ourselves: What remains to these eminent beings after the belief in a better future has died? Let us have a look at the way in which a mighty gang of Croatian artists has treated the transitional labours of our heroic models.

The superhuman being from Krypton has found his place in the contemporary iconogra-

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¹ Riječ je o radovima SOS za Nadu Dimić i *Gen XX*.

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¹ I am referring to her SOS za Nadu Dimić and *Gen XX*.





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2. Damir Očko, The boy with a magic horn, 2006

klase. Lik plemenitog snagatora što nosi stijeg Sjedinjenih Američkih Država gotovo je zagubljen na materijalu koji je populariziran kao kiparski materijal *par excellence*. Michelangelo je prije pet stoljeća oslobodio svog *David*a iz nesavladivog komada kararskog mramora da bi skulpturi mladahnog pobjednika Golijata bila pročitana slava firentinske neovisnosti, a Fijolić u cjelovit komad kamena, u kojemu možda i čuči skrivena kakva herojska figura, daje uklesati minijaturnu figuru koja jasno aludira na najmoćniji današnji imperij. No, bilo bi površno u interpretaciji zaustaviti se samo na razini političke dosjetke - flomasterom obojani uklesani lik prije će ruglu izvrći paradigmu o monumentalnoj i reprezentativnoj umjetnosti koja se u široj javnosti percipira prvenstveno kroz skulpturu, dakako izvedenu u mramoru. (Kararsko podrijetlo kamena ukazuje na visoke skulptorske ambicije, a u ovom slučaju zanimljivo je prisjetiti se i da je taj neveliki kraj, tj. Massa Carrara, u drugoj polovici devetnaestog stoljeća dao i dvadesetak - anarhista.)

Dvije godine unatrag, *Urbani pokret Mostar* od istog je autora naručio hiperrealističku, u bronci izlivenu skulpturu Brucea Leeja. Naručitelji i stvarni autori projekta Veselin Gatalo i Nino Raspudić smjerali su, podizanjem skulpture celuloidnom junaku svoga djetinjstva, izliječiti Mostar uništen ratom i tranzicijskim kriminalom. Fijolić,

phy in the 1960s and appeared in Croatia at the last Triennial of Sculpture, in the work of Ivan Fijolić. The artist has first carved the miniature figure of Superman in second-class Carrara marble and then coloured it with felt pens. The figure of the noble muscle-man carrying the American flag appears almost lost in this stone, which has gained the reputation of sculpting material *par excellence*. Whereas five centuries ago Michelangelo liberated his *David* from an unconquerable piece of Carrara marble in order that the youthful victor over Goliath should receive the glory of Florentine independence, Fijolić chose to take a whole piece of stone, which may have been concealing a heroic figure, and carve a miniature figurine with clear allusions to the most powerful empire on earth today. However, it would be superficial to stop on the level of political witticisms the carved celebrity coloured with felt pens would rather mock the paradigm of monumental and representative art, which the general public sees primarily in sculpture - marble sculpture, to be sure. (Carrara marble indicates great ambitions of the sculptor and in this case it may be interesting to recall that, in the second half of the 20th century, the small region of Massa Carrara gave birth to some twenty anarchists.)

Two years ago, *Urbani pokret Mostar* commissioned the same author with making a hyper-

poput tradicionalnog umjetnika-obrtnika odgovara na zahtjeve naručitelja, poštujući i njihovu želju da spomenik bude u prirodnoj veličini i, dakako, "kao da je živ". No, unatoč svim plemenitim nastojanjima organizatora da podizanjem spomenika junaku koji se goloruk borio za pravdu i štiti slabije od sebe, barem gradskoj mladeži ponude pozitivan uzor koji niti jednoj strani u složenoj, potencijalno konfliktnoj mostarskoj sredini ne bi trebao smetati, Fijolićeva skulptura "Malog zmaja" svoj će put završiti skrivena u skladištu. Iako doista prvi spomenik Bruce Leeju na svijetu (onaj šangajski otkriven je dan kasnije), ubrzo ostaje bez nunchaki, da bi se zaredala ozbiljna oštećenja, zbog kojih skulptura zaštićena čeka neka bolja vremena.

Junak novog filma Damira Očka *The boy with a magic horn*, naprotiv, dolazi na poprište bitke prekasno, kada su svi protagonisti ili prepušteni smrti ili utonuli u začarani, neraskidivi san. Sinopsis šesnaestominutnog filma proizlazi iz Wagnerova ciklusa *Die Niebelungen*, s tim da se radnja odvija nakon završetka posljednjeg čina, u Walhalli. Junak dolazi u opustjeli nebeski dvor čiju ulogu preuzima nikada završeni, gigantski kompleks zagrebačke Sveučilišne bolnice u Blatu. Kasnoromantičku adaptaciju srednjovjekovnog epa, u kojoj novac (Rajnino zlato) pokreće radnju i koja govori o vladavini kapitala, Očko destilirao u fantazmagorijski, zagonetni niz sekvenci koje se odvijaju u prostoru jedne od najvećih nedovršenih državnih investicija koja posljednjih dvadesetak godina živi svoj autonomni, tranzicijski život. Nemoguće je procijeniti što je nadrealnije, Očkov film, ili slika o projektu Sveučilišne bolnice koja dopire do javnosti; no, kako sam umjetnik kaže, čarobni rog ima to magično svojstvo da nas primora povjerovati sve što čujemo.

Radovi *Nevidljivi general* i *Noć iguane* Lale Raščić polaze od medijske recepcije slučaja generala Ante Gotovine, optuženika pri Haaškom tribunalu odnosno transformacije jednog segmenta medijske hagiografije u literarnu fikciju. Serija akvarela *Nevidljivi general* tako prerađuje sedam najprisutnijih portreta generala koji su do njegova uhićenja manje-više bili tolerirani u javnom prostoru. Lik koji se gotovo slučajno pojavio u autoričinoj seriji *Nevidljivi* (dok je stvarna osoba još bila u bijegu i dok su mediji izvještavali o njegovim pojavljivanjima u Hrvatskoj i obližnjim krajevima, kao i na drugom dijelu svijeta), koji je u svom skrivanju, pretpostavljalo se, računao na kolektivnu *omertà*, autorica predstavlja u nizu akvarela gotovo viktorijanskog ugođaja. Ipak, mračni eros *pustolova, ratnika i ljubavnika* i svojedobno jednog od najpoželjnijih i najtraženijih građana Hrvatske (prema nekoliko popularnih anketa), možda je najprisutniji u videu *Noć*

realist, bronze-cast sculpture of Bruce Lee. The intention of the commissioners, who may be considered the true authors of the project, Veselin Gatalo and Nino Raspudić, was to erect a monument to the celluloid hero of their childhood and thus cure Mostar devastated by war and crime typical of transition countries. Like a genuine artist/craftsman, Fijolić catered for the commissioners' demands, respecting their wish to produce a life-size monument, which would appear "as if alive." However, despite the noble intentions of the organisers to erect the monument to a hero that fought for justice bare-handed and protected the weak, by which they wanted to give Mostar youth a positive role-model that would not offend either side in that precarious situation, the city ticking with potential conflict, Fijolić's sculpture of the "Little Dragon" ended its career hidden in a warehouse. Even though it was indeed the first monument honouring Bruce Lee in the world (since the one in Shanghai was uncovered a day later), it soon remained without its nunchaku and then suffered further major damage, for which reason it was removed and conserved to await better days.

The hero of the latest film by Damir Očko, *The boy with a magic horn*, arrives too late at the battlefield, since all protagonists have already died or fallen into a magical, unending dream. The synopsis of this 16-minute film originates from Wagner's cycle *Die Niebelungen*, but its story is taking place after the end of the final act, at Walhalla. The hero arrives in a desolate heavenly court, played by the never completed gigantic complex of the University Hospital in Blato near Zagreb. The late-Romanticist adaptation of the medieval epic, in which money (the gold of Rhein) motivates the events and speaks of the ruling capital, is here distilled to produce a phantasmagoric, mysterious series of sequences, which take place on the premises of one of the largest unfinished state investments ever, which has been living its own, autonomous, transitional life for the past twenty years. It is impossible to estimate which is more surrealist, Očko's film or the public image of the University Hospital project; but, as the artist himself has said, the magic horn has the magical power to make us believe whatever we hear.

Two artworks by Lala Raščić, entitled *The Invisible General* [*Nevidljivi general*] and *The Night of the Iguana* [*Noć iguane*] take as their starting point the case of general Ante Gotovina, accused before the Hague Tribunal, and its reception in the mass media - the transformation of a segment of mass-media hagiography into literary fiction. Thus, the watercolour cycle *The Invisible General* deals with his seven most pop-

3. Lala Rašić, Nevidljivi general, 2006. / The Invisible General, 2006

4. Ines Krasić, Found in Supermarket, 2006.



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2 Ista je autorica prije dvije godine objavila roman s identičnim glavnim junacima. U najavi spomenutog romana tada još odbjeglog generala nazvala je “Nevidljivim čovjekom”.

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2 Two years ago, the same author published a novel with identical main characters. In the announcement of the novel, she called the fugitive general “the Invisible Man.”

iguane u kojemu sama umjetnica senzualno čita odlomke iz ljubavnog romana *Oluja nakon oluje*. Još neobjavljeni roman čija je autorica umirovljena stjuardesa Sinaja Bui-Šimunović² donosi niz erotskih fantazija vezanih uz lik i djelo “heroja a ne zločinca”, koje su sustavno pothranjivane u medijskom konstruktivnom muševno-domoljubnog seks-simbola. Da bi se potvrdio herojski status bjegunca (a u istoj paradigmi i erotska privlačnost), nužno je, naime, bilo pretvoriti ga u predmet požude svijuu, od tužiteljice Tribunala do, primjerice, službenih ili neslužbenih hagiografa, ili čak predsjednika Vlade.

Radovi Ines Krasić se prema crnohumornom čitanju jezika masovnih medija i reklamne industrije čine najbliži popartističkoj poetici super-heroja. Ipak, u svojim posljednjim projektima autorica sustavno razvija tematski sklop herojstva “svakodnevnog života” u kontekstu tranzicije.

ular portraits, which were more or less accepted in public space before he was arrested. The man that almost incidentally emerged from this cycle (while the real person was still on the run and the media reported on sightings in Croatia and abroad, even at the other end of the world) and that seems to have counted on the collective *omertà* while in hiding, is presented in a series of watercolours with an almost Victorian atmosphere. However, the dark eros of this *adventurer, warrior, and lover*, one of the most desired and most wanted citizens of Croatia in his time (according to several popular polls), is perhaps more evident in the video clip entitled *The Night of the Iguana*, in which the author herself reads out excerpts from the love novel *Storm after the Storm [Oluja nakon oluje]* in a sensual voice. This unpublished novel, written by the retired stewardess Sinaja Bui-Šimunović,² is full of eroti-

Prva faza projekta *Lost in a Supermarket* bila je izložba u Galeriji SC kojom je autorica, prekrivši zidne površine galerije reklamnim letcima ukinula granicu između galerijskog i potrošačkog prostora. Uskoro bi trebao uslijediti sedmodnevni non-stop *all-inclusive* boravak umjetnice u trgovačkom centru: vjerojatno će biti legitimno promatrati taj boravak kao izlet u kapitalistički surogat "Zemlje Dembelije", možda kao *reality show*, ali i kao bizarno subverzivan spoj marketinga i performansa. S druge strane, projekt *Super Andrija* za polazište uzima jednu od najvećih građevina novozagrebačke spavaonice, zgrade kolokvijalno poznate pod istim imenom. Junaštvo svakodnevice smješteno je u gigantsko zdanje o kojemu se, zbog veličine, dominacije crvene boje na fasadi i navodno megalomanskih ambicija projektanta (koje kao da dijeli s nedalekom sveučilišnom bolnicom), raspredaju urbane legende. U maniri umjetnika/društvenog istraživača Ines provodi niz

cist fantasies linked with person and deeds of this "hero, not a criminal," which were systematically cultivated in the media construct of Gotovina as a masculine and patriotic sex symbol. In order to confirm the fugitive's heroic status (and, in the same paradigm, his erotic appeal), it was necessary to transform him into an object of desire on all sides, from the Tribunal's prosecutor to official or non-official hagiographers, or even the president of the state.

The art of Ines Krasić seem closest to the pop-art poetics of the superhero, at least in the black-humour reading of the language of the mass media and the advertising industry. In her latest project, the author has systematically developed the thematic complex of the heroic in "everyday life", in the context of transition. The first phase of the project, entitled *Lost in a Supermarket*, was an exhibition in the SC Gallery, where Ines Krasić abolished the borders

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video intervju sa stanarima zgrade, ali ne ispitujući ih o njihovom iskustvu života u toj specifičnoj arhitekturi, nego o - herojstvu i superjunacima. No ako zagrebemo ispod započetog istraživanja nekih predaja u nastajanju i njihove utemeljenosti u svakodnevi, dolazimo do lika samog umjetnika/umjetnice čija hrabrost ili junaštvo preživljavanja, kako vam drago, i subverzivna alkemija transformiranja proviruju iz dobrog dijela opusa Ines Krasić.

Urbane mitologije koje se oslanjaju na estetiku punka, fanzina, stripa, mangi i B-filmova, u posljednjim se radovima Marka Tadića miješaju s povijesnoumjetničkim, bajkovitim ili književnim citatima u organsku cjelinu. Ne bježeći od zaigranog, gotovo djetinjeg slaganja stvarnosti na površinu drvenih suvenira, papirnatih tanjura ili drvenih ploča, te koristeći tehnike s kojima su mnogi od nas prljali prstiće u prvim godinama života, poput flomastera i tuša, Tadić gradi višesmislene, fantazmagorijske priče u kojima je naracija naznačena samo do neke mjere. Kao u svakom dječaćkom crtanju (na stolu ili uzglavlju kreveta, što mogu evocirati drvene ploče na kojima je mahom nastao posljednji ciklus), i tu je moguće izdvojiti nekog modificiranog junaka ili barem - robota. No kada se dječaćka crtačka strast spoji sa znatizeljnim pretresanjem odbačenih predmeta i gotovo animističkim

between gallery space and consumer's space by covering the walls with advertising leaflets. The next project is planned as a seven-day, *all-inclusive* stay of the artist at a shopping mall: we may legitimately interpret it as a trip into the capitalist surrogate of the Land of Milk and Honey, perhaps as a *reality show*, but also as a bizarrely subversive fusion of marketing and performance. Another project, called *Super Andrija*, takes for its starting point one of the largest buildings in the "dormitory" of New Zagreb, which is colloquially known under that name. The heroic aspect of everyday life is located precisely in that gigantic structure, which has become the subject of urban legends because of its size, the dominating red of its façade, and the megalomaniac ambitions of its architects (which it obviously shares with the nearby University Hospital). Proceeding as an artist and a social researcher at the same time, Ines has conducted a series of video interviews with the tenants of Super Andrija, although they were not about their experience of living with that peculiar architecture, but about - the heroic and the superheroes. Nevertheless, if we dig a bit deeper in her research on emerging myths and their foundations in everyday life, we will arrive to the very figure of an artist, whose courage or heroism of survival, whatever you may wish to call it, and the subversive alchemy of transformation

5. Marko Tadić, Storyboards, 2006

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fetišizmom prema najbeznačajnijem ljudskom tragu kao što je to, recimo, odbačeni adresar, dnevnik ili jednostavno svaštara, ta se izmaštana stvorenja nađu u prilično napučenim krajevima. Junaci preuzeti iz ostatka svakodnevice (a ti su uporabni predmeti ili dokumenti jednom bili vezani uz neki stvarni identitet, a ne samo uz ime ostavljeno na njima) razvijaju se sukladno nestabilnim pravilima i hirovima tog male-nog mitološkog svijeta, dok rebusoidni pejzaži, uz neizbježan tranzicijski podtekst, skrivaju i zakonitosti nastanka novih mitoloških heroja.

Richard Strauss se u ciklusu *Ein Heldenleben* upitao o tome što se zbiva kada junak/umjetnik ode u mirovinu. Damir Očko istoimeni je rad - koji će kasnije prerasti u ciklus - postavio na izložbi održanoj u Galeriji SC povodom njezina tridesetogodišnjeg djelovanja. U galeriji ispunjenoj dokumentacijom koja je prizivala slavnu prošlost nacionalne konceptuale Očko je objesio zvono: nijemo, bespomoćno i teško zvono potpuno prekriveno i zagušeno jastucima. Herojsko doba koje je htjelo mijenjati svijet umjetnošću dovoljno je blizu da se osjeti umor protagonista. Stoga je dobro da se junakinje i junaci našeg doba drže starih umjetničkih sklonosti poput nestalnosti, kontingencije, nehote satire ili anarhoidnog humora. Jer upravo će u takvoj, iskrivljenoj varijanti stalnosti i odlučnosti herojska priroda, uz svoje breme nemoći, erosa, isključenosti, prosječnosti i anonimnosti, ostvariti svoju sudbinu. No, važno je naglasiti, neopterećena dodatnim zadacima. ▽

emerge from the major works by Ines Krasić.

In the recent pieces of Marko Tadić, urban myths relying on the aestheticism of punk rock, fanzines, comic books, manga, and B-movies merge with the art-historical, fairy-tale, and literary quotations into an organic unity. Tadić does not recoil from arranging the reality on the surface of wooden souvenirs, paper plates, or wooden boards, and he does it playfully, almost childishly, by using the techniques with which many among us used to dirty our small fingers in our early childhood - felt pen or ink - constructing multileveled, phantasmagoric stories with only a hint of narration. As in all boyish drawing (be it on the table or even on the bedside, as evident from the wooden boards on which most of his latest cycle was made), it is possible to perceive here a modified hero or at least - a robot. But when the boyish passion for drawing is combined with the curious investigation of abandoned objects and an almost animist fetishism for utterly insignificant human traces, such as an abandoned address book, diary, or simply a notebook, these imaginary beings will find themselves in a rather overpopulated neighbourhood. Heroes taken from the remnants of everyday life (and these utensils or documents were once related to some real identity, more than the name they bear) evolve in accordance with the precarious rules and whims of that small mythical world, while the rebus-like landscapes, with their inevitable subtext of transition, conceal the laws of creation of new mythical heroes.

In his cycle *Ein Heldenleben*, Richard Strauss has asked the question what happens when a hero/artist retires. Damir Očko set up his work with the same name - later to evolve into a cycle - at the exhibition that took place at the SC Gallery on the occasion of its thirtieth anniversary. The gallery was filled with documentation that evoked the glorious past of national conceptualisation, and Očko hanged a bell there: mute, helpless, and heavy, completely covered and suffocated with pillows. The heroic times, which once wanted to change the world with the help of art, are still close enough to feel the weariness of its protagonists. Therefore, it is good when the heroes of our times stick to the old artistic proclivities, such as instability, contingency, unwilling satire, or pseudo-anarchist humour. It is precisely in that twisted variant of stability and decisiveness that the heroic nature, with its load of impotence, eros, exclusion, mediocrity, and anonymity, can realize its destiny. But - it should be noted - unburdened by any additional tasks. ○

— Jasna Jakšić,
povjesničarka umjetnosti.
Radi u Muzeju suvremene
umjetnosti u Zagrebu kao
knjižničarka i kustosica.

— Jasna Jakšić, art historian,
currently working as a librarian
and curator at the Museum of
Contemporary Art in Zagreb.