**On passageways and spaces/Gallery as a site of event**

**The conversation between Svetlana Volic and the curator Una Popović centred on the author’s artistic practice and the producton of the larger project entitled *NON FINITO/Performings of spatial narrative*s. The exhibition *NON FINITO, Passageway no.2: Where the world ends* was opened in the Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Arts, on Friday, Fabruary 17, and it will run until April 10, 2017. The exhibition, conceived and set up in an interesting way, among other speaks about the position of the image―*tableau vivant*―which in peculiar way is and has to be constructed in an exhibiting, pre-given space.**

**Una Popović:** How would you explain the title *NON FINITO, Passageway no.2: Where the world ends*? This is the second exhibition in the series and it comes within the framework of the broader project under the title *NON FINITO/Performings of spatial narratives*. How would you explain the notion of “spatial narrative”, and how does it develop inside a space/gallery where it is situated. What is the distinctive feature of the part of the project presented in the Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art?

**Svetlana Volic**: The title *Non finito* was chosen having in mind a philosophical sense of it, so as to signify an unbroken process of existing, moving and transforming in time and space. Translated from Italian it means―something unfinished. In art, *non finito* work is characterized by opened form, action or process without a clearly defined ending, instead implying some further development, it is a creator’s conscious or unconscious intention, and at the same time a possibility leaving the spectator a space for hers/his own creative contribution and projection. Here, we come to the issue of the subtitle, *Performings of spatial narratives*. The expression *performing* is related to a specific link with performing arts and the ephemerality of the exhibition set itself. Video installation is a temporary art form, a work does not take its final shape in the artist’s studio but precisely through being performed in a specific space and for a specific occasion. In the framework of the whole project, the realization of a couple of exhibitions, *passageways*, is planned. The material from which the narratives are built consists of video recordings, but only after these being selected, edited and composed into a video installation at the exhibiting space the final structures takes its shape. If compared to poetry, the first passageway performed in Gallery 73, the exhibition *San o drugom mestu* (A dream about another place) was a haiku of a sort. As for the exhibition in the Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art entitled *Where the world ends*, it revolves around a more complex poetic whole and a non-linear spatial narrative, the number of videos and screens is increased, subjects are more elaborated, their relationships are multitiered, contrasted, some new reminiscences are introduced etc. Moving through spatial and temporal framework is not a pre-given thing for a perception of works, the circling through space is presumed, the works run in a *loop* and are not synchronized, there is no pre-set beginning nor ending, which again brings us back to the very title, *Non finito*.

The entire concept behind the work on this project is about the state of movement, from physical movement to the recording of various sights encountered during a journey, to its development in the form of temporary ambient installations. It could be said that it is fluid, like the light, water or human thought. And the very medium for its presentation, the use of video projections in space, has that effect, since they are essentially a light which travels through space, shaping it. The shots recorded while on the journey do not have their clear position, instead dwelling in an inter-space, between the real world and the event in the inner spaces. As I wrote, they are not defined spots on the world map, but rather they reside somewhere on a borderline, *where the world ends*.

**Una Popović: During the last couple of years, examining, rethinking but also “inscribing” positions and identities of a place differing from those we primarily come across, are indeed very distinctive for your practice. It is interesting how the gallery, in fact, becomes this site of the event, and not a mere spatial transfer for “external” inscriptions. How would you describe from this position the symbolical aspect of the public and “pre-set” (art) space, but also oneself as an author becoming only one of the narrators serving the purpose of the exhibition?**

**Svetlana Volic**: Indeed, the gallery becomes the site of the event, the process and action that is supposed to give a spectator an experience in time and space. The immediate presence of a spectator in the space is the only way for the work to be perceived, it is that performative moment. From the very beginning of my professional exhibiting practice, the space had great role in the creative process. Not only as a real place, but also as a possibility for creating virtual landscapes, these other “desired places”. Sometimes history and memory of the space are primary collaborators in the project, as was the case in various *site specific* projects I participated in. Also, the architecture of gallery and theatre venues, for which I composed my video installations, actively participated in their making. My whole experience of working with the space defined my interests, but at the same time it drew me closer to the media with temporal dimension, performative character, and specific narrative. What grew more important over time is precisely this *lasting existence in space*, similar to the processes and the nature of our human existence.

We can say that the artist in this particular project is in the position of the spectator. She records with camera, and assumes the role of the narrator, through the narrative she delivers in the space, but this is only one part of the creative process, since neither the way nor the medium in which she creates is not crucial―what is crucial is the essence. What is made possible by photography and video is precisely the transmitting of the reality into the spectrum of art. Conceptually, this reality was prerequisite for the *Non finito* project, since it is about a certain contemplation on life, existence, transience and dying, but as well about transformation, beauty, Eros, spiritual ascents. I express myself through different media, but this project in particular had to have this direct portrayal of the reality, so as to reach at the surreal somewhere at the reality’s boundary. My view is that the truly extraordinary things are not elsewhere, but precisely on the boundary of the reality, provided that one really knows how to see. It is an attempt to see deeper, to attain a different perception of things, with different attention and interpretation, so as to come to the borderline *Where the world ends*.

**Una Popović: Your videos, with duration of several minutes, as diverse and unpretentious segments of the reality, as a matter of fact are similar to long and focused gazes, to be compared also with the very function of taking photos. Do you consider such “media notes” as possible response to the disappearing of things, and should we consider video and photography as inventions that inscribe the moment and offer to salvage the physical appearance of things; i.e., is every note you take documentary―does it represent a document of the “truly perceived” past?**

**Svetlana Volic**: Yes, these are long and focused gazes, all taken in one shot, and they record certain found moment, although some shots are slowed down, so we can speak about the spaces between the photography and the moving picture. Photography and video document the past, they carry in themselves a memory on “little deaths” raising our awareness of the transience. If their subject is not some staged event, and what is recorded is a moment from the reality, it is a bygone moment that will never happen again. The process of filming with a video camera is similar to goings-on and states in our inner spaces, since there are focuses, movements and thoughts that appear and disappear within us. Constantly during our life, we look, feel, think and shape the reality. That is why a video can be a testimonial about true existence and true perceptions. The sights I record are found inner places, they are an incentive for thought or a thought that found its image; and just as a poet takes a pencil to write down a fleeting thought, so a gaze through the camera for me is a note about the moment, about what was seen as a reflection of inner currents.

**Una Popović: It seems this kind of image―ordinary, general, “unpretentious”―demands a peculiar way of presenting, a specifically carefully thought out setting, a video installation in an exhibiting space.**

**Svetlana Volic**: The images I use constructing a video installation in the space are a product of the careful observing of the everyday. The sights I took an interest in and which fascinated me operate as universal images, because I consciously and unconsciously picked images that will touch those “common places” at a symbolical and semantic level, independently from a labelled destination, cultural or political framework. Although we might say that certain images and symbols have been worn out or “spoiled” during their centuries long use and abuse, I think that it is precisely there that the essential can be found, that there is no other way to reach at the sublime and the universal. Each of the sights in themselves operate as a thought or a narrative, but it is only through their combination in the form of a spatial installation that the final expression is created. Similarly to a poet who uses a word, an image, a metaphor, a symbol etc., I use, in this case, video shots so as to form a visual-poetic whole. The video installation *Where the world ends* exhibited in the Salon of the MoCA is not an arbitrary set of shots taken from the reality, but rather an interdependent and highly reflected upon composition set in the space. In both formal-visual and semantic sense, there is nothing accidental about the choice of place and mutual relationships these video projections are set in. The sights from one screen affect the nearby screens, and all levels of perception of images and angles, offered to the spectator from diverse points in the space, build up that multilayered thought and suggest a possibility of combining, but the number and the quality of these combinations surely won’t go beyond my intentions and pre-given frameworks.

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