

ФЕМИНИЗАМ У НАРАТИВУ СЛИКАРКИ

FEMINISM IN THE NARRATIVE OF FEMALE PAINTERS



Петрија Р. Јовичић, научни сарадник

Српска академија наука и уметности,
Етнографски институт
Кнез Михаилова 35, 11000 Београд
petrija.jovicic@ei.sanu.ac.rs

Petrija R. Jovičić, Research Associate

Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts,
Ethnographical Institute
Knez Mihailova 35, 11000 Beograd
petrija.jovicic@ei.sanu.ac.rs

This monograph represents a part of the research and work done as a part of the project (47016) “Interdisciplinary research into the cultural and linguistic heritage of Serbia – Production of the multimedial internet portal *Glossary of Serbian culture*”, which is wholly funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia. This is a very ambitious interdisciplinary project because it links contributors from various areas for the purpose of conservation of cultural identity and education of the wider public. Culture entails interpellation and variety in the past and the present but also in the future, which is what this monograph is about.

The monograph basically contains a review and a discussion on visual art, based on the specific traits of feminism (feminist constructions) present in ‘female’ visual art of women painters from our region.

Modern attitudes and understandings which nullify old prejudice and obstacles characterized by traditional and patriarchal codes of behavior are present in the monograph. The point of departure is that enlightenment loses all determinants of sex and that culture determines

the opposing traits which enter into a series of dichotomies, ideologically and structurally connected oppositions (private/public, nature/culture, gender/sex, body/spirit) from which a series of new constructions will arise (male/female, masculine/feminine, production/reproduction), which become crucial in feminist definitions of gender relations and hierarchies.

The critical consideration through the analytical-methodological, destructivist and post-structuralist concept widens the development onto the wider issues of culture and politics, and in this monograph, represents the application of interpretative models developed in general feminist theory, current in the theory and practice of feminist art and historical examples of female production in painting. It is especially highlighted that: *through artwork (the collected place of record) female artists acknowledge themselves, because it is an open space of facing which does not display only data on itself as a material work of art, a topic which it shows or the intent of the artist who made it, but reflects a range of immaterial stuff needed to establish a discursive analysis, with a certain social strategy toward the established interpretation of sexual differentiations.*

The results of the research which are described herein show that in the late 70's and the early 80's feminist critique (with postmodern considerations) had as its main object of consideration the old, traditional and unchanged representation of women. The art of women leads scholars (female feminist artists) not to view the poetics of women's painting through a prism predetermined by the psychological-poetic key, generalized through the simple socio-psychological codex of misogynistic domination, which entailed all the limitations in visual art and culture which female artists built.

Objects of research presented in this monograph are feminist methodologies which entail a special core idea, and that is the establishment of an interactive relationship (women studying women) in "the space of female subjectivity", which relinquishes the false dichotomy of subject/object, and which has an orientation toward the benefit of women and the betterment of their everyday lives.

The monograph, in the text which follows, points to uncovering the presence of female art which would mean connecting female culture with the realities of our past and present, and display for scrutiny of the previous and newly formed values of a cannon.

By questioning and researching the historical, cultural and psychological past (there's no such thing as a psychological past) feminist artists create a new female history with the help of personal experience. Through their actions, they establish a true face off with collective existence in the field of cultural events. They acknowledge the ideology of gender relations, following Foucauldian elements (the establishing of power), from a 'female' marginalized position, through the comparison of extant and ideal, they develop their specific and latent strategy which brings them to understanding of their own status, and ultimately the glorification and stabilization of their own power.

Through the analysis of paintings of female artists we get a glimpse of the range of views (narcissistic, scopophilic, performative), enabling the discovery of feminist constructions important to this research. It was not enough

to paint a dreamy nude nor the prominent characters of the time, a genre in a theatre act, innovative visualized reality was to be represented, to faithfully display a moment of crucial spiritual freedom through which a personality is further modeled and refined.

The essence of the research is based on the possibility of phenomena based on the concept of *difference*, starting with external positions and with perpetual forward-backward motion. In this case the visual distance enables the artists a sense of personal safety, which will not be displayed to the survival of trauma, because so positioned in the position of figures of power which observe from the sidelines, from above, from a global perspective offer an illusion of transcendence which is protected from surprise counter-attacks by virtual distance. The view from a distance can never be brought closer, and in that case, it is impossible to view the consequences of one's destruction, and the visual trail destroys itself. The significance value of "traces of memory" (based on the psychoanalytical language in which a work of art becomes an analytical assignment) possesses the maximum value compared to lived experience, introduces the discourse the character of which is linguistic and not factual. This is the feminist analysis of visual display.

The chronology of the creative opus of female artists, viewed within the context of wider segments of time, points to knowledge that all artists formed as painters of modern compositions connected to painting in public spaces, as 'forbidden' spaces of movement and possible creativity for a woman. The strategy of the artists entailed a field trip from the marginal status into the unknown. Through visual narratives completely liberated from reality, details, grandeur, embellishment, through the idealization of universal values, artists come to the internal, true definition of the identity of the woman, which is far more important than the glittery shimmer of jewelry, fancy clothes, luxurious interior design, divine Venuses. Their creative dialogue, representative, displays the public concept of thematic discourse as personal identity. The biographies of female artists

and their monumental corpus of visual spaces, populated by feminist constructions, become meaningful in feminist research and analysis. Looking at their biographies, certain extraordinary knowledge piles up, as well as fact which bring to light the creative persona, creativity, confirming that their creative enthusiasm was nurtured in very hard conditions for a woman.

The paintings of Nadežda Petrović became witnesses to a number of inimitable imaginations and subjective experiences. The material basis of canvas as the bearer of the signified idea of the artist, the context of the sensory adoption of the viewer, is connected with the various and specific forms of expression through which the artist exemplifies an idea. Works of art as aesthetic metaphors of experience are immensely valuable, because combined with the invisible and far off, and the visible and the close, tempt attention which awakens curiosity, which the artists implemented as compositional principles in the masonry of the ideology of their art.

The enclosed content of the artist clearly points to the activist attitudes of the young artist who was far ahead of her time, reacted to the bourgeoisie, the fakers, the incorrectness and social flaws. N. Petrović was born and developed as a bold revolutionary, capable of creating a new society in which the position of the woman was changed in important ways. The artist consciously underlines the exclusive rebellion of the subjected woman in the circle of present male domination.

Zora Petrović is basically a narrator who interprets a written narrative in accordance with certain disciplinary norms. She visualizes herself as center stage, activates the narcissist build which in the process of psychoanalytic meanderings signifies the formation of the ego. She looks for the uncovering of self, her own identity, the uncovering of female subjectivity. The artist uses the visual narrative not to accept or contest male supremacy, she does not wish to rule, only to have her 'degrading' position become equal. With an active role, stability and change, she breaks through the rocky boundary which limits her from actual

social context. Her demand for freedom, while refusing to relinquish herself, her imminent presence, for the profit of another being, which will carry the wanted freedoms.

The safety of the artist in the understanding of the process of building a new (modern) form of the female nude, brings us to concise and multiple interpretations, ideologies concentrated around the perception of the subject. It supplies new possibilities of reading and solving problems in which the surrogate observer possesses the possibility and veracity to imitate him.

Milena Pavlović Barili, by establishing a connection between artistic and artistic-political practices, becomes the social critic, suppresses monism and establishes a pluralism of meaning. The artist constructs her own phantasmagorical field of shifting autobiographical reality, entwined with secrecy, dreams, the unconscious. Many photographs, portraits, self-portraits bear witness to the present female narcissism of the artist, which helps her to freely move about in the field of different social realities. Selected fragments and highly symbolic scenes determine the fictional character of the painter. The artist allows herself to freely govern the scene of the spatial illusion in which an articulated look creates action. The impression of illusion and fiction is made from unexpected elements applied in the picture, and expressed through a painter's craft, become the means with which M. P. Barili displays her visions, and uncovers an impossible world, contrary to the one which exists.

Kosara Bokšan states that she never strives toward copying nature, nor bringing elements which would enable the easier understanding and reading of a visual narrative. She is focused on the reduction of elementary natural phenomena (sea and sky), in order to establish a painting homeostasis (of balance), in which she finds her own painter's entity, a personal autonomy in hidden symbolic expression.

The aim of this monograph was to point out the works of female painters which don't have the mark of specific female production, but possess the codes which enable the

reconstruction of historical subjects as well as the research of relations in marginal women's art. *Theory and practice question the images of the past, in order to understand its phantasmal role and its agency called up from the past, and in that case psychoanalysis become a political tool which demonstrates how the unconscious in a patriarchal society shaped the form of visual*

composition. Results of the research show that the work of art is a means, and an operational subject between the artists and the world, that it presents visual data of female painters from our region in a given context as a contemporary process of subversive action toward the dominant masculine structures and established canonical authority.

Монографија садржи преглед и расправу у пољу визуелних уметности, заснованих на посебности одлика феминизма (феминистичких конструкција) присутних у 'женском' ликовном стваралаштву, сликарки са наших простора.

Ауторка указује на дела сликарки која немају предзнак специфичне женске продукције, али поседују кодове који омогућавају реконструкцију историјских субјеката као и истраживање релација маргиналне женске уметности. Према мишљењу ауторке, теорија и пракса доводе у питање *слике прошлости* како би се схватила њена

фантазматична улога и њено деловање призвано из прошлости, а у том случају психоанализа постаје *политичко оруђе* које демонстрира на који је начин *несвесно* у патријархалном друштву обликовало форму визуелне композиције.

Резултати истраживања указују на то да је уметничко дело средство, операциони субјект између уметница и света, да презентује ликовну грађу сликарки са наших простора у задатом контексту као актуелни процес субверзивног деловања на доминантне маскулинске структуре и утемељење канонски ауторитет.