

Andrej Mirčev – Endless Decorative Curve

Impregnated with distinctive sensibility for metaphysics, Karolina Pernar's work is an act of creation that pushes the defined boundaries of reality by opening itself to imaginary spaces where the laws of logic are temporarily suspended. Regardless whether it is the installation *Crossroads*, in which the artist breaks the substance of time into layers displaying time slips or sculptures which indicate the festive void, the thing that characterise the poetics of her work on a formal level is an aspiration for dematerialisation of the artistic objects and *epiphanic initiation* into the spheres beyond the visible.

Such a *transposition of matter into energy*, as the artist describes her own artistic process, is best presented in the series of miniature sculptures which can from a functional and pragmatic perspective be regarded as jewellery. However, in the case of Karolina's art, we are faced with an attempt to subvert the pragmatism lying in the basic concept of jewellery. If we assume that its function is to decorate whoever wears it and to release fetishistic fantasies from whoever notices it, we will realise that Karolina's "rings" can hardly be limited to such a definition. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to disregard the relation between the miniature sculptures and jewellery as decoration. One indication in favour of this relation can be language. Etymologically, old Greeks equated the term *cosmos* with the term *decoration*, which served as an analogy they drew with their regard of the universe as the most beautiful creation, some sort of divine jewellery. This relationship transferred onto the miniatures brings forth the self evident similarity with the cosmogonic imperative: preoccupied with the *antinomic* problem of the origin and fate of the universe, the artist attempts to solve the riddle by pedantic creation of a continuous and infinite movement, closed in itself and deprived of transitions or beginnings. In other words, due to their *seamless* or one-stroke forms which fluctuate through space forming an ellipsoidal trail, Karolina's sculptures reflect a model of a curved universe by treating it as an infinitesimal journey with no beginning and no end.

In one of the e-mails the artist sent me a few days before I started writing this piece of text, she provided an answer to my question about the conceptual background of her sculptures: „The compositions I create are reminiscent of the Möbius strip that slides through space exploring its

potential“. By positioning her artistic procedure within the sphere of mathematics and with close connection to geometrical paradoxes explored by Möbius, Karolina demonstrates solutions for which physicists need numbers, formulae and complex equations. The unattainable harmony between singularity and plurality is brought out in a miniature form which suffuses the fingers and leaves a mysterious silverfish metal trace. Gracefulness with which the line touches the skin confutes the *plurality aporias* which even Zeno of Elea stressed in his famous paradoxes of motion, and forms a homogenous and continuous space without ruptures; space where matter is spiritualised together with the body which it complements. By restoring the disturbed balance, Karolina's miniature sculptures therefore create a possibility of meditation and transcendental solutions to (meta)physical contradictions. In his book *The Aesthetics of Emptiness* Giangiorgio Pasqualotto considers the relations between Zen and Japanese art and states that the relation is established only when: „...we abandon the traditional approaches based on deduction and induction; then we find the way to the very core of Taoism and Chan and Zen Buddhism which are the source of the flowing energy crucial for the creation and development of these forms. The core is *emptiness*. Not the *idea* of emptiness, but the *experience* of emptiness“. In this context, it may not be coincidental that it was exactly in Japan that Karolina achieved considerable success with her miniature sculptures.

Explicating her idea in even more detail, the artist writes: „One trace - trail and trajectory, unfolded, folded, expounded in itself, without above and below, up and down, condensed despite its lightness; open to the unpredictability of new challenges where the rigorous lessons of constructivism became a motive for meditation“. However, the lightness that Karolina stresses manifests itself not only through the dynamic curve which dissolves and condenses space, but also through the description of energetic fields whose potential gives birth to the suggested *transcending possibility*. A subtle play between emptiness and fullness that takes place in an elusive volume of the miniature sculptures thus substantially illustrates the Zen maxim: “Presence is created out of absence“. Constantly reminding us of the dialectic between full/empty, present/absent, Karolina's work veers towards meeting points: the point where the body transfers into the spirit, that is, the point where the spirit implodes into the body. It is equally an invitation for the Other to approach by crossing the boundary. Sensuality, with

which the curve fluctuates in this process of approaching, releases its erotic potential and displays a distinct feminine energy of genuine tenderness. This feature shows why it is acceptable to treat these miniature sculptures as jewellery, or more specifically, rings. I regard the symbolical background of ring in the same manner as is stated in *The Dictionary of Symbols* by J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant: „From the esoteric perspective, ring has a magical power (...) To put a ring on your or someone else's finger means designating yourself or accepting a gift from someone else as exclusive or shared fortune“.

In the final chapters of the book that deals with dynamic and dramatic changes in the relations between space, society and the body of an individual, Markus Schroer suggests a plausible hypothesis on the meaning and function of contemporary decoration such as piercing or tattoos. What forms the centre of Schroer's analysis is skin, namely the skin as „a borderline surface which separates the inside from the outside. It (skin) is in a certain sense a visible point that forms the place of exchange with the outside world, which can be dangerous and which should therefore be kept under control“. As a border marked by various *accessories* in the form of make up and jewellery, skin is a stage where flirtation is the main act(or). In Karolina's case, the sculptures both provide cosmic-cosmetic energy of endless, paradoxical movement and provoke the act of touching by the Other who is, thus, brought into nearness. Nevertheless, it is also possible to conceive a situation in which the sculptures suggest distance instead of approach since in the time of the break of the public sphere, intimacy remains the only sphere that provides individuals with a feeling (perhaps utterly illusory) of control over their existence. Close to such beliefs is Schroer himself who poses a question: “Is it incidental that physical practices are primarily related to skin? Is it not that piercing and other forms of body jewellery serve to ensure the body distance and withdrawal in itself?”

Becoming aware of the mentioned paradox, I am left with nothing else but to observe the sculptures in a speculative way. Its fragile elegance, which is very physical in its figurativeness, encourages me to make an attempt at regarding them as representation of roundness. Such expressed roundness, which according to Bachelard determines a topologic characteristic of being, directs me again to the *meditation of primeval things*. The French philosopher writes in that regard: „Images full of roundness help us to collect ourselves, to give ourselves a

constitution, to affirm intimately our being, doing that from the inside. Since experienced from the inside, without the exterior, being can only be round“. Karolina's sculptures appear exactly like that: they draw me close to that uninhabited space of the inside which I daily and universally suppress by immeasurable consumption of the outside. However, when her sculpture completely blends with my finger, it is as if I become invisible, as if the outside world collapses and I return to the roundness of Parmenides. I return to the One out of which everything originated, to which everything returns and around which everything moves in an endless silver elliptical trajectory whose ends are connected to create an undetermined, unbroken cycle.

Đandorđo Paskvaloto, *Estetika praznine*, Clio, Belgrade, 2007, p. 9

Đ. Paskvaloto, *ibid.*, p. 19

J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, *Rječnik simbola*, Romanov doo., Banja Luka, 2003, p. 537

Markus Schorer, *Räume, Orte, Grenzen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 2006, p. 291

M. Schorer, *ibid.*, p. 294

G. Bašlar, *Poetika prostora*, Gradac, Beograd/Čačak, 2005., p. 215.