

Željka Gradski

Lucija Marin

Iris Poljan

Nepodnošljiva lakoća računa

14.4. - 2.5. 2022.



Nepodnošljiva lakoća računa

Dok sam onomad bio žena, sa svime što ta definicija i rodno opredjeljenje uz biološko kemijski protokol nosi sa sobom, svakih par godina dočekalo bi me po neko iznenađenje kojem se trebalo prilagoditi. Naporna i iscrpljujuća iznenađenje. Sva ta muka natjerala me da u ovom životu odaberem drugi spol i definiram se u drugom rodu, muškom. Jedina konstanta i stalno prisutna stvar u životu bili su mi komadići papira, računi od raznih kupovina, nepobitni dokazi mog odnosa sa svijetom i mojih mijena.

Željka, Iris i Lucija, akademski obrazovane umjetnice su na različitim pozicijama u životu, karijeri i na koncu estetskom i produkcijskom diskursu koji je usvojen kroz školovanje i početke bavljenja likovnošću. Kako im je nježniji spol zajednička rodna i biološka odrednica, tako su i radovi koje predstavljamo na ovoj grupnoj izložbi okupljeni su oko iste teme, istog artefakta – računa o raznim kupnjama.

Ovaj oblik osobnog političkog komentara bez pretenzija da bude šire prihvaćen, bez ideologije sljedbe, opomene ili pouke svojevrsna je estetizacija tijeka i popratnih troškova unutar kojih se odvija život svakodnevni, nekad radostan, nekad gorak, najčešće siv i turoban.

Svi radovi ujedno su i dnevničkog karaktera, gdje je život i rad, svakodnevna egzistencija, kodiran u novčane jedinice i datume koje kod **Željke Gradski** jasno pokazuju na koji događaj ili u koju svrhu su potrošeni ili, kako su, budimo romantični, omogućili ili pomogli da se događanje i desi. Njezine fotografije često su obiteljske tematike s negativima ili posebno obrađenim računima od pripadajućih kupnji preko njih izravan su, gotovo doslovan, osobno kodiran dnevnički zapis. Ti radovi pokazuju cijenu kojom plaćamo neke oblike egzistencije, ili barem kupujemo zaglavni kamen za neki poseban doživljaj. Ono što se platiti ne može, niti što se može kupiti je ono što na njezinim radovima tako toplo zrači, obiteljsko je okruženje, teško opisiv osjećaj pripadanja i ljubavi naspram djeteta ili zajednički provedenog vremena u krugu najbližih.

Ta dihotomija cijene i emocije, bolje rečeno temelja za stvaranje plemenitog osjećanja između bliskih ljudi koje novac, htjeli mi to priznati ili ne omogućuje, politiziran je i trezven iskaz svakodnevnog života ispričan jednostavnim sredstvima i na taj način ogoljen do svoje srži. Sve košta, sve neku cijenu ima, pa i ono što se kupit ne može, ljubav, no ipak 's novcem se lakše i plaće' kako je to jednom Tereza Kesovija mudro rekla.

Dok je Željka u svome postupku još uvijek nježna prema računima ostavljajući ih onakvima kakvi jesu, kod **Iris Poljan** je prisutan moment svojevrsnog fizičkog obračuna s računima kroz njihovo probadanje šivaćom iglom ne bi li se na kraju tretirali kao podloga za sitni vez bojenim koncem. Grafizam tih crteža nastalih ubodom igle i koncem odaje proketo dobru crtačicu čija ruka bez napora slijedi viziju i ideju. Kod nje nema prethodnih oznaka vodilica kojima bi se crtež koncem na papiru lakše napravio. To je izravan kontakt s materijom koji običan račun odvodi u neku metafizičku, gotovo filozofsku ravan. Taj asketizam dva materijala i zanatska vještina ono je što klasičnog, vještog umjetnika razlikuje od mora konceptualnih umjetnika kojima *métier* ne predstavlja izazov. Kod Iris to je sve upakirano u jednoj osobi, i zanat vezanja bez označenih putanja kojima igla putuje i crta figurativan prikaz, i konceptualno promišljanje pri odabiru podloge koja najčešće predstavlja smeće koje se s gnušanjem gužva.

Konac i razne podloge čest su motiv izražavanja u regiji. Prisjetimo se jednostavno vezenih stolnjaka iz kuhinja naših baka i prabaka s često mizoginim porukama o ženi koja šuti i peče kolače, pa do radova meta konceptualne srbijanske skupine Škart i njihovih feminističkih poruka koje putem konca i podloge pretvaraju običan stolnjak u politički artefakt. No, kod Iris klasični vez koncem u susretu s osjetljivim papirnatim računom, ostaje duboko intimno i osobno svjedočanstvo postojanja. Kod Lucije Marin susrećemo drugi kreativni protokol. Ona je uporni hrčak sakupljač koji opsjednuto bilježi svoje tragove u vremenu kroz godine sakupljanja raznih računa koji tako postaju dnevnički zapisi lako čitljivi samo njoj samoj. "Ja sam ovi računi koje vidite, njima sam kupila svoju osobnost njima sam gradila i razgradila sebe, osigurala si slobodu ili zatvorila sebe u zlatni kavez navika", poručuje njihovom organiziranom visećom postavkom u prostoru.

Poput neke primitivne Matrix zavjese, rasuta je pred nama sudbina, ili bolje rečeno dosadašnji trošak njezinog talenta i posredno, života. Bez intervencija na njima, bez komentara ili bilo kakve osobne bilješke, tisuće računa govori o dubokoj i nadasve složenoj vezi nas sa sredinom u kojoj živimo kroz nevidljive uzajamno povezane *ekonomske i merkantilističke niti*. Aksiom, nepobitna tvrdnja, o tome kako su svi ljudi povezani i s Prirodom tvore jedan veliki organizam kroz Lucijine slobodno viseće račune u prostoru, postaje vidljiva jer je svaki od njih povezan s nekim živim bićem koje je na tome proizvodu radilo ili zaradilo te time pomoglo svojoj egzistenciji.

Lucijin rad svjedočanstvo je potrošačkog društva i posebnog oblika samoodrživosti koji se ostvaruje upravo potrošnjom u neprestanom i zatvorenom krugom kupovanja i pretvaranja kupljenoga u neki oblik našeg identiteta. Svojevrsni je to osobni obračun sa samom sobom i svijetom u kojem se nastoji pronaći mjesto pod suncem u vječnom i utopijskom nadanju da osobni mir postoji i da će jednom doći. Ovi radovi su samo jedan od mogućih sedativa i zabave sa svrhom (da ne kažem konceptualnog pristupa umjetnosti) koja nam ima pokazati kako i ona najtvrdja svakodnevnicu prikazana kroz kodirane brojeve i riječi na računima može u ženskim rukama dobiti filozofsku i duhovnu dimenziju. U ovim sivim vremenima, često odvratnijima i od najgoreg filma jeze, dok ubojiti dronovi od 6000 kilograma padaju s neba, i kada ništa nije nemoguće, postoje osobe koje nam jednostavnom intervencijom u svima tako poznati motiv računa mogu razvući osmijeh na lice. Gledajući njih, te žene različitih pokoljenja, i nježnost i dubinu tog talenta koji svakodnevnicu daje novu dimenziju, skoro da požalim što sam se sada rodio kao muškarac, no tada ugledam prijetnju na horizontu i pomislim, a tko će braniti te talentirane i brižne žene, ako neće muškarac.

Emil Matešić

The Unbearable Lightness of Bills

Back when I was a woman, with all that this definition, gender orientation and biological-chemical protocol carries with it, every couple of years I would experience a certain surprise I had to adapt to. Gruelling and exhausting surprises. All that tribulation made me choose another sex and define myself in another gender in this life, the male one. The only constant and omnipresent thing in my life were pieces of paper, various shopping bills, the irrefutable evidence of my relationship with the world and my changes.

Željka, Iris and Lucija are academically trained artists occupying different positions in their life, career and ultimately their discourse related to aesthetics and production, which they adopted through their education and artistic beginnings. Since the fairer sex is their shared gender and biological determinant, the works we are displaying in this group exhibition are joined around the same theme, the same artefact – various shopping bills.

This form of personal political commentary without the pretension of being widely accepted, devoid of ideological denomination, reproach or moralising, in a certain way aestheticizes the flux and accompanying expenses inside which our everyday life takes place, sometimes joyous, other times bitter, most often grey and bleak.

All the works are also diaristic—for instance, **Željka Gradski** codifies life and work, everyday existence, into monetary units and dates, clearly demonstrating for which event or to what purpose they were spent, or, if we want to put it romantically, how they enabled or helped the event to take place at all. Here photographs often show her family on negatives or specially processed shopping bills, and serve as a direct, almost literal, personally coded diary entry. These works demonstrate the price we pay for certain parts of existence, or at least the keystone we buy to mark a certain special experience. What cannot be paid nor bought is the warm radiance of her works, their family surroundings, the difficult to describe sense of belonging and love towards a child, or time spent in the company of her loved ones.

This dichotomy of price and emotion, or better said, the foundation for creating noble feelings between close friends, which money, whether we want to admit it or not, makes possible, has been politicized as an austere statement regarding our quotidian, told by simple means and exposed to the bone. Everything costs money, everything comes with a price, even what cannot be bought, love. Still "with money ones finds it easier to cry" as Tereza Kesovija once wisely said.

While Željka in her process still treats the bills gently, leaving them the way they are, **Iris Poljan** exhibits a physical confrontation with the bills by piercing them with a knitting needle and ultimately treating them as the foundation for a small embroidery executed with a coloured thread. The graphism of these drawings, made by a threaded needle, reveals a damned good sketch artist whose hand effortlessly follows a vision and an idea. There are no previously marked outlines to facilitate the thread-drawing on paper. Direct contact with the material transposes a simple bill into a metaphysical, almost philosophical plain. This ascetism of the two materials and the artisanal skill are what distinguishes a classical, skilled artist from a plethora of conceptual artists who are not challenged by the *métier*. With Iris we get the whole package – the embroidery craft in not marking a trajectory for the needle to travel and draw a figurative scene; and the conceptualist consideration in choosing for its foundation the junk we usually cannot wait to crumple with disgust.

The thread and various foundations are a common motif of expression in the region. Let us remember the artless brodered tablecloths from our grandmothers and great-grandmothers' kitchens which often demonstrated misogynistic messages like a woman should be quiet and bake cookies. Or the works of the meta-conceptual Serbian group Škart and their feminist messages which uses thread and foundation to transform a simple tablecloth into a political artefact. But with Iris the classical embroidery, the thread's encounter with a sensitive paper bill, remains a deeply intimate and personal testimony of being.

With **Lucija Marin** we meet another kind of creative protocol. She is a tenacious hoarder who obsessively records her temporal traces, collecting various bills for years and transposing them into diary entries only she can decipher. "I am these bills you see, they bought me my personality, with them I built and rebuilt myself, ensured my freedom or locked my self up in a golden cage of habits", she tells us by setting them up hanging in space.

Like a certain primitive Matrix curtain, her destiny is scattered in front of us, or better said the present expense of her talent, and intermediately, her life. Without interventions, commentary or any personal notes, thousands of bills demonstrate a deep and highly intricate relationship we establish with our environment through invisible interconnected economical and mercantilist threads. The axiom, an established truth, regarding the connectedness of all men with Nature, with which they constitute one large organism, becomes visible through Lucija's bills dangling freely in space. For each one of them is connected to a living being that worked on the product or made money on it, thus helping his or her own existence.

Lucija's work is a testimony of the consumer society and a special form of self-preservation which manifests itself through consumption in a vicious circle of shopping and turning bought items into a part of our identity. It is a kind of personal confrontation with oneself and the world where one must find his or her place under the sun; in an eternal, utopistic hope that personal peace of mind exists and will one day be achieved. These works offer only one possible sedative and amusement with purpose (not to say a conceptual approach to art), showing how even the most gruelling quotidian exhibited through coded numbers and words on bills can gain a philosophical and spiritual dimension in women's hands. In these mundane times, which are often more revolting than the worst horror film, when killer drones weighing 6000 kilos fall from the sky, and when nothing seems impossible, there are persons who can put a smile on our faces by simply intervening on an omnipresent motif such as the bill.

By watching them, these women of different generations, the gentleness and depth of their talent for revealing a new dimension of the everyday, I almost regret being born as a man on this occasion. But then I see the threat on the horizon, and think to myself, who will defend these talented and caring women, if not a man.

Text by: Emil Matešić
Translated by: Dina Pokrajac

Željka Gradski rođena je 1975. godine u Zagrebu. Diplomirala je na Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti u Zagrebu, na nastavničkom odsjeku u klasi prof. M. Vuće. Aktivna je na likovnoj sceni od 1997. godine i otada je izlagala na 28 samostalnih i 60 skupnih izložbi u Hrvatskoj i inozemstvu. Radove ostvaruje u raznim medijima, oslanjajući se na intuiciju i teme koje proizlaze iz bliskog, često i obiteljskog, okruženja. Živi i radi kao samostalna umjetnica u Zagrebu i Jurandvoru na Krku.

Lucija Marin rođena je 1995. u Zagrebu, gdje je 2014. završila Školu primijenjene umjetnosti i dizajna. Diplomirala je kiparstvo na zagrebačkoj Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti 2020. godine u klasi Nevena Bilića. Glavne tematske preokupacije u radu su joj ready -made instalacije napravljene od otpada te poetičnost vodenih površina koje prikazuje kroz razne medije. Kroz svoje radove propituje utjecaj konzumerizma na okoliš te odnose između kulture, tradicije i zagađenja prirode. Do sada je imala pet samostalnih izložbi. Živi i radi u Zagrebu.

Iris Poljan rođena je 1989. u Zagrebu. Završila je Školu primijenjene umjetnosti i dizajna u Zagrebu (smjer grafički dizajn) 2008. godine. Iste godine upisuje Akademiju likovnih umjetnosti u Zagrebu, nastavnički odsjek. Diplomirala je slikarstvo 2014. godine u klasi profesora Ante Rašića. U radovima kombinira nađene predmete na kojima intervenira, najčešće kroz neku neuobičajenu formu crtačkog pristupa. Izlagala je na samostalnim i skupnim izložbama u zemlji i inozemstvu. Živi i radi u Zagrebu.

Željka Gradski was born in 1975 in Zagreb. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, at the teaching department, in the class of professor M. Vučo. She is active on the visual arts scene since 1997 and has shown her work on 28 solo and 60 group exhibitions in Croatia and abroad. She works in various media, relying on her intuition and themes originating from an intimate, often domestic environment. She lives and works as a freelance artist in Zagreb and Jurandvor on the island Krk.

Lucija Marin was born in 1995 in Zagreb, where in 2014 she finished the School of Applied Arts and Design. She graduated in sculpture at Zagreb's Academy of Fine Arts in 2020 in the class of Neven Bilić. The main thematic preoccupations in her work are ready-made installations made from waste and the poetic nature of water surfaces she demonstrates in various media. Through her works she questions the impact of consumerism on our environment, as well as relations between culture, tradition, and pollution. So far, she has had five solo exhibitions. She lives and works in Zagreb.

Iris Poljan was born in 1989 in Zagreb. In 2008 she finished the School of Applied Arts and Design, specialising in graphic design. The same year she enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, the teaching department. She graduated in painting in 2014 in the class of professor Ante Rašić. In her works she combines found objects which she intervenes on, most often by employing an unusual form of drawing technique. She has exhibited her work as part of solo and group exhibitions in the country and abroad. She lives and works in Zagreb.

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The Unbearable Lightness of Bills

Željka gradski / Lucija Marin / Iris Poljan

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