

Alenka Sottler

»Dobro jutro« / »Good Morning«

Exhibition opening on Friday, January 13th 2012 at 8pm

KiBela / KIBLA Maribor

Alenka Sottler, the grand prize winner for illustration of the third Croatian illustration biennial at the 'Klovićevi dvori' gallery in 2010, is present as author at all significant world manifestations, dedicated to illustration. A candidate for the Andersen 2011 Award – something not stressed enough in Slovenian public – she once again discovers lucidity and criticism with the Maribor exhibition. Highly original graphic cycles and selected poetry illustrations are showcased at Zagreb. This wondrous opus creator brings magic to the viewers by painting techniques' experimentation and an intense suggestiveness.

Alenka Sottler's illustrations continuously present new solutions to the visitors, a freshness, innovativeness and life energy, in short, whatever represents the quality that illustration presentations in an international context should be supporting. Her opus implies possibilities of being presented in different media, an international recognizability, assessment through intellectual upgrade, and posing questions and comparisons. She stands out among illustrators, acclaimed for her masterly drawing, which serves – together with the expertise on traditional, Slovenian school, popular world fairy-tales visual representation – as a means of questioning personal challenges, which requires outstanding literary background knowledge, a steady arm and an analytical eye. She creates illustrations, full of complex architectonic, metaphysical spaces, used to build a particular, partly idealized, multi-dimensional world. A kind of modern illusionism is also being formed by play of contrasts and monochromacy. This world, unlike the existing ubiquitous consumerism, exhausts the lazy observer with a complexity, and the ambitious one with a seeming airtightness of the scene and in each case excludes passiveness as an option. A similar approach might intrigue the visitors merely with the technique and dimension of the original, so unlike the often pre-ordered, paid illustrations. Contrary to a commercial approach to illustration, Sottler's style upgrades and complements, without compromising later reproductions. With an understanding of the world and favorite literature, she has managed to preserve also the legacy of oral tradition, and involve numerous mediums without having to compromise. The dominating visual messages today, with an insufficient sociological analysis and a lack of criticism, the saturation with poor visual solutions on TV programs, the non-selective piling up of information from web sites and of promotional shopping-center coupons, underline the lack of proper illustration and serious commentaries. Like we are nothing but stripes and numbers of an empty bar code, without any identity.

In the spirit of gallery promotion of a serious artistic project, be that a newspaper or literary illustration, or something else, the innovative visual contents as seen in this exhibition, should altogether override the involuntary uniform image. Besieged with cheapness, it

would be difficult to refresh our view of the sense of values without such experiences. In the process, it is of course possible to combine the experiences of a painter, sculptor, designer, publisher. The fine arts' public could, among other things, identify as the ultimate decisive perception not only the fine arts', but also the content-wise quality, especially in the field of adult illustration. Poetry – lyrical, personal, intimate, or even unpublished prose works of “stretchable” forms is a welcome inspiration. With an upgrade of a personal meditation about fine art essentials, and by finding the point of penetration into the essence of a spiritual scene, Sottler has created a partly rapt, surreal reality in some of her works... Is this a mathematically constructed world of a monumental, non-emotional scene with a renaissance depth, which can produce the effect of timelessness? Is it a creative documentation of the basic laws of optics? Are we talking about the meditative patience of a sketcher with a critical distance from the perspective of the younger? Alenka Sottler uses innovative procedures for the interpretation of serious themes. Among others she does clippings of printed texts, minimalizes the font size, then maximizes the selected syntactical elements, lightens them, darkens them, all in the process of creating what is most often a black-and-white illustration. The ones created through a philosophical sketcher's check-up of banal bar codes, highlight her personality.

The illustrations of Niko Grafenauer's work 'Prividi' (Delusions), which won Sottler a solo exhibition in Zagreb, have successfully conjured up the emotions and spiritual states of all of “us” inside today's social contexts, in the form of relatively small formats on a larger printed one. Similar formats, made up of hundreds of tiny strokes, which add to the depth of interpretation, not only to the volume, as well as the depth of consumer society criticism, represent the basis of this organization.

By interpreting the theme of "The Raft of the Medusa" the artist reveals that literary and historically known characters, just like painters or everyday people, crave for new cars, co-speakers or interpreters, most often inside a corporate-designed and fake consumer world of adult fairy-tales.

Koraljka Jurčec Kos, Zagreb, January 2012

Kindly invited! Admission free!

The exhibition will be showing until February 4th 2012.



January 13th 2012 – February 4th 2012

Opening: January 13th 2012 at 8pm

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KiBela is open on weekdays from 9am to 10pm and on Saturdays from 4pm to 10pm, closed on Sundays.

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