

Balkanication

**Balkanication - used as a word that has a stupid, false and vague meaning*

Balkanication* is a cycle of art works (originating in 2009/2010) in other words, a concept that links literature, recent artistic production and some historic events which are closely related to present ideas of interpreting and understanding recent past of BiH region as well as the wider area of the Balkans. All pieces of work deal with relations between "orchestrating the history", history repeating itself, and the "use" of history for manipulation and creation of ideological patterns in the context of the 20th century and nowadays as well. The starting position of the entire concept is the viewpoint of the famous, former Yugoslav writer Danilo Kis. His insights and his perception on the history of the Balkans were a kind of "open source" history repeating itself and all his fears were founded on a basic human fear, the fear of being different / something that is different. Nationalism as the main collective fear affected all of his works and thought.

Balkanication concept aims to grasp and explain nationalism as the basic human, collective or and/or individual fear. My personal fear manifests itself in recognizing a pattern, in other words, it occurs when I realize that in case of most uneducated people their national awareness has been distorted into chauvinism or exuberant patriotism. Balkanication is also a kind of a virtual heterotopia trying to communicate with individual as opposed to collective entities.

Igor Bošnjak

God made the world so that he would be admired... Essentially it is easy to understand that the greatness that no one can see feels uneasy. Actually, in these conditions there is not a will to be great - greatness is ruined and has no purpose; it is not worth being great in a loneliness fortified once and for all.
Leszek Kolakowski (1)

While analyzing the created world we easily reach the conclusion that greatness cannot be ruined or useless. Transformed, yes. Mutations in formal value of greatness brought about the changes in conceptual domain of the power itself. By creating inhabited space, by altering it, emptying and moving it, and by taking part in a continual discourse of mutual relations, the dominant inevitably started to resemble its manifestations. Following a creative act, the power opted for what was the only possible thing; to follow, to discern, to evaluate, to soften the edges. Mass Adam was no longer suitable for direct

punishment, the punishment vanished as a possibility at the same time when their mutual relation ceased existing, along the line subject / object. By turning into the power of regulation and system propositions, the dominating principle lost its visceral features; changing the carnal for the sake of the monitoring, technically justified existence. (2) We can look into history in order to justify this phenomenon. During the time of the Cold War in order to present the power stemming from newly defined postulates, the USA presented a specifically chosen material in Moscow in 1959, so as to obtain personal promotion. Beatriz Colomina notices very observantly that the emphasis in explication was not put on complex and priceless industrial goods, even the documentarily collected film material was suppressed and summarized into the form of seven screens placed under the ceiling of the exhibition vault; instead, in the discourse of power, the exhibition area was dramatically dominated by the ideal / idealistic American suburban house, that is, its scale model. (3) By exalting its values, Richard Nixon constructed the perfect metaphor of aspirations of power, more precisely its parasite urge. "For us, diversity is the right to choose the most important thing... We do not have one decision made on top of a ruling structure... We have a multitude of different manufacturers and many different washing machines, so that a house wife is faced with a choice." (4) The mentioned quotation presents the ultimate fantasy of a hybrid existence established on a cross section of the visceral and technical that is, the operational modus of power which dissented into a dispersive space of the technical, losing its carnal possibilities, as well the ability to achieve real existence and yet surviving as iconic simulation-screen. Even though we are today "all the time surrounded with layers of multiplied, simultaneous images... the idea of a unique image, which is directing our attention, seems long gone". (5) It is interesting that the author precisely recognizes the lack of autonomy in remarkable specimens of technical saturation, such as TV studios, rocket control centers, war situation rooms. Overall, they emit constant murmur, which can be perceptible only if reduced to the domain of carnal or hybridized into a new molecular existence. The Moscow exhibit, set up aiming to initially move beyond modernistic visual standards, also served as the possibility for a different interpretation of a supple notion of Americanization. Here, it could have been recognized as a formula of an epistemological justification or existential conditioning of the principle of power and specifying its conversion into the mass. Let us try and make a correlation between the previously mentioned term Americanization and the notion of Balkanization. Are these homologous phenomena? If we are to find parallel characteristics between them, would we alleviate the layers of negative in the term Balkanization / Balkanization? Or perhaps it is the other way round? Or is it that Balkanization is simply a recipe for introducing discourse power into the carnal, a form of mass communication, a dispersed dialogue? Let us go back to Moscow 1959; the exhibit in Buckminster Fuller Dome contained in its visual disposition an unsolved aporia, the need to simultaneously show lighted and darkened parts, as basic perceptive areas within the clearly defined exhibition segments. Collision was there as a sign of incompleteness, a deficit in monitor disposition and the need to have the carnal overtake (presented by a typical housewife) become a theatrical form in spatial-time frames. The problem of geometrical translation was obvious and analytically pliable. Intending to use the shatters of previous episteme to make actual relations dynamic, Igor Bosnjak effectively presents the inability of a final, completed formula by segmented artistic sensations in space of Balkanizations. Balkanoids are used as an experimental sign, signum of a research effort to be an analytically disassembled transit structure, built between representation and physical experience. Formalized like laboratory models / puppets, they cope with a layered reminiscence at the same time borrowing sometimes a bit twisted qualities of historicized examples. Still being in the domain of the carnal, Balkanoids draw on by reduced, faceless silhouettes and inner connection (iron rod) towards the production of puppets of Hans Bellmer during the 1930s. (6) While putting his dual creatures into function, Bellmer used the connective mechanism of Cardan joint, explaining it in theory as an apparatus like system of concentric circles "within which there can be a body exposed in the centre, at the same time preventing any possibility of impairing its stability and equilibrium under the traumas of exterior influences." (7) In order to meet the needs of the above mentioned sculptures, Bellmer reformulated the proposition by taking the body out of the apparatus, that is, by placing it on the linking edge of the two sculptural entities. Balkanoids accept the semantic structure developed in such a way in terms of connection - iron rod instead of Cardan joint. Being in contact with provoked memory, we become unpleasantly aware of the inflexibility and impossibility of their physical existence. Even the slightest impact of exterior circumstances inevitably leads to fall, symbolically bearing the sign of being 'funeral like', and additionally endowed with by a linear rigidity of an iron connective vector. Balkanoids are like a unique testimony that has its form in a space, a testimony to former modernistic modalities in exhibitions, aseptized privileged white gallery boxes, space of entirely undisturbed visual subjectivity. Based on a

dramatic carnality, present in silhouettes, Balkanoids degrade every effort to revitalize perceptive conclusiveness by opening yet another allusive exponent. Paragraph 218, Alice Lex-Nerlinger from 1931, is in their ontological foundations by topic and by form. (8) Visceral quality of the narrative - a parallel in theme with Balkanoids; carnal engagement opposite funeral signum; an effort in trying to break off the symbolic iron rod - completed with media intervention, the image of Lex-Nerlinger was performed as a geometric translation of photogram into oil on canvass, testifying to a conscious absorption of cinematographic experience. More precisely, for a critically engaged artist it was not enough to simply ascertain perceptive facts in a poster, it was necessary to make them dynamic, to share them in terms of experience, with an observer, and esthetic postulates of film and film representation were used as predisposed solution. In such a way Paragraph 218 could be seen as the initial moment of recent transformation in basic conditions of artistic exhibition. "Black box becomes a sphere of practical events... while at the same time clear boundaries between the being and the visual presentation begin to fade. Museums are undergoing a process of metamorphosis by becoming cinemas in process, where, as Boris Grois noticed, the necessity of darkness is generating the condition of invisibility... The fundamental lack of visibility becomes a temptation for the observer by turning perception into participation." (9) Balkanoids are consciously in a semiotic homogeneity with Weimer examples, thus becoming an initial paradigm of Balkanication. The artist gets into the "image", he acts, he suffers carnally, bringing out a representation of an earlier comprehension about the priority of relations instead of body. It can be conditioned, naked, traumatized, removed, deceased, and it is accepting an operational principle of the iron rod as an existentially directing vector. Actually, Contemporary Cemeteries and Bosnian Moon can be perceived as a semiotic dual, Balkanoids stretched in another medium, engaging their visceral components, taking up the space of discourse, by suffering and absorbing pain, by falling through. Regardless of the significance and the strength of the model, which is used as the place of events in Bosnian Moon, carnal participation in discursive proportions of power cannot be defined as a triumph. It evokes the narrative on the variety of choices as the key organizational principle of the Moscow exhibition of 1959 - housewives always, and eventually, are faced with their destiny, with the washing machine. Theatrical experience of these examples is not enough, it testifies to softness and inability of the subject of Balkanications, the inability to break through behind the scene, to force the potential of the obscene into disassembling. "In different ways of usage of the word experience... it establishes the existence of individuals which precedes the experience. Such wording about experience leads us to the conclusion that the existence of an individual is given, instead of leading us to wonder how the concepts of being (subjects and their identities) are produced." (10) Therefore, Anatomy Lesson is a paradigmatic model, a field where different identities and different structural set-ups meet, which enabled setting up identities. In the domain of technology the image / the screen concludes the historical process of moving towards the final preference of the black box, and with it the promoted cutting off of the dividing factors and precise carnal statuses. Historical example which serves as an inspirational foundation, Rembrandt's Anatomy Lesson of doctor Tulp contributes to the process deconstruction, enabling the questioning of one's own iconographic set-ups. Classical approach in terms of composition with the topic of anatomic lessons assumed balanced and symmetrical series, often submitted to the rule of isocephaly (Ert Piters, Anatomy Lesson of doctor Sebastian Egbert from 1603). (11) On the contrary, Rembrandt puts composition participants into a palpable space, while Tulp's act of dissection reveals a lot about the conditions of their own identities built on the visceral. This is how the painting becomes a metaphorical confirmation of pre-modern controlling art directed towards the individual. The element of spatiality in Rembrandt's works caused several film makers to try and reconstruct Night Watch within a given film media. Hans Steinhoff with his film Ewiger Rembrandt in 1942 tried the mentioned transcription but did not go further at the presentation of individual costume characters as self-sufficient entities which are individually sitting for the artist. (12) The conclusion of the explicit reveals the painter as the space inventor, compositional anatomist who precisely deals with tendons of three - dimensional illusion. Anatomy Lesson in Balkanication recognizes and reveres Steinhoff's gambit. By contrasting a static print and a dynamic video image the abandonment of space is reinforced for the benefit of the screen disposition as the key representative model following modern regulative power. Igor Bosnjak goes into pre-Rembrandt's examples, makes the spatial dominant meaningless, changing it with isocephalic applications of atomized power or at least the illusion about it. Insisting on facial repetition and poly-semiotic vibrations of it, and the faceless narrative which is the ultimate confirmation for the faces that utter it, Bosnjak presents the image / the screen as the plane of the permanent narration of a two-dimensional, lethal stereotype. Precisely presented iconographic information testifies to a temporal exhaustion of divine power, the creative principle from the introductory

quotation by Leszek Kolakowski. The greatness of principal power does not only feel uneasy, but cannot feel at all in the changed circumstances, and this lack of feeling is what requires the bodies. Through disclosure of the mechanism of dual entity on the axis of power / body, Balkanication warns and asks for a raised level of resistance towards stereotypical narrations seen as negative phrasing with inevitably parasite-like quality.

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- (1) L. Kolakowski, Ključ nebeski-Razgovori sa đavolom, Beograd 1990.
 - (2) Formulacije o promjeni modaliteta moći preuzete iz: Мишел Фуко, Треба бранити друштво, Нови Сад, 1998.
 - (3) Opširno o izložbi i njenim reperkusijama u: B. Colomina, Enclosed by Images: The Eameses Multimedia Architecture, u: T. Leighton, Art and the Moving Image, London 2008, 75-91.
 - (4) Isto, 76.
 - (5) Isto, 75.
 - (6) O belmerovoj ikonografiji. S. Taylor, Hans Bellmer. The Anatomy of Anxiety, Cambridge 2000.
 - (7) Isto, 112-119.
 - (8) O Paragrafu 218: M. Meskimmon, We Werent Modern Enough, Berkeley, Los Angeles 1999, 106-112.
 - (9) U. Frohne, Dissolution of the Frame: Immersion and Participation in Video Installations, u: T. Leighton, 356-357.
 - (10) Dž. V. Skot, „Iskustvo“, u: Dž. Batler, Dž. Skot, Feministkinje teoretizuju političko, Beograd 2006, 44.
 - (11) O ikonografiji anatomskih lekcija u: B. Haak, The Golden Age. Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century, London 1984, 111-115.
 - (12) T. Y. Levin, You Never Know the Whole Story: Ute Friederike Jurss and the Aesthetics of the Heterochronic Image, u: T. Leighton, nav. djelo, 460.

