

From: **Dr. Penesta Dika**

Albana Ejupi presents nudes and silhouettes of nudes dealing with women, love, memories and challenges

The exhibition “Disclosure of Nudes and Synthesis of Silhouettes” presents Albana Ejupi’s works by focusing on acts, but also silhouette appearances that are likely to be acts. Their appearances are made as solitary acts of women, or as silhouettes of couples in love. Visitors will have the opportunity to enter into the world of this relatively young artist from the class of professor Valbona Rexhepi, in order to highlight her large-format works in the Gallery of the Ministry of Culture. The exhibition will be open on 26 October 2017 and will remain open until 26 November 2017.

This exhibition deals with the presentation of works or silhouettes of sensitive topics such as life’s suffering and peripetias. In addition, this exhibition is dealing with love, or tabooed topics such as sexual act, feelings and emotions that emerge from it. At the same time, this exhibition also treats the woman as a bearer of fertility and responsibility for creating a life in general – the content created by the statue of the time of the new Paleolithic which, through the act of a woman, presented Venus. The story of presenting nude is, at the same time, the story of the ideals of human beauty and the artistic connection to reality, depending on perceptions and social relations. As she recalls the works of other world painters of the past, the painter Albana Ejupi handles the story with the focus of the genre of painting in general. Then and now, the changes through which the painting took place and its content appear to us as her visual analysis.

Through these nudes and silhouettes, positioning them in different ways, bringing them together two by two and presenting them through characteristic bodily expressions, she easily conveys emotions to the viewer. She is a painter who convincingly presents comfort, relaxation, passivity, or even the opposite, as well as strong feelings of love and physical activity. She as an artist of controversy presents on the one hand realistic details and on the other hand, while in the same works, leaves the details aside, caring and provoking that always remain a place for individual interpretations of these works by the viewer.

“Disclosure of Nudes and Synthesis of Silhouettes” discloses to the viewer certain parts of the female body in the act or synthesizes two figures in a common silhouette.

Comfortable positions of voluminous nudes

In her personal exhibition “Disclosure of Nudes and Synthesis of Silhouettes”, Albana Ejupi shows us paintings mostly painted on canvas with relatively large dimensions (1.14m x 1.43, or 1.70 x 2.14m), emphasizing the natural size of human body.

A cycle of these acts, which mainly deals with the female body, are presented lying with legs intertwined, creating a diagonal composition from the bottom left toward the upper right or from bottom right to the top left, for example in the painting “Untitled 1” (2017), “To leave the world aside” (2017) and “Don’t look at me ‘cause I’m on the red” (2017). This type of composition gives dynamics to the presented nudes and allows you to consider the baroque compositions in which the positioning of the figures emphasized the movement and simultaneously, while expanding diagonally in the space, highlighting the dramatic of appearance.

All nudes in general are presented with very little detail and are likened to the initial drawings with light lines. They are lying on an almost empty background or painted here and there in monochrome colors. In this way, its composition and dynamics and the scope of nudes in general are emphasized. In this case, the emphasis is not on specific parts of the body, but on the body as a whole and its extent on the surface. This shows a kind of comfort of the figures presented in their space. They have almost now found a place where their body can finally rest, and feel free.

Nudes that seek peace and solitude to deal with sufferings and peripetias

Then, the emphasis is put on the movement and position taken by the nude, which is in principle a natural position, but which carries a lot of emotions; these nudes speak to the viewer through the language of their body. With the position they take, they put us to knowledge that they have gone through various events and want to take advantage of this moment of their stretching slightly to relax from afflictions and peripetias which have brought life to them and need to be overcome. As if they are asking to leave them alone for a few moments because they want to be alone, they want to feel their body alive in space, they want to process the past so they can continue in the future. Even through the title that the painter has chosen for the painting “Don’t look at me ‘cause I’m on the red” tells the viewer that these presentations do not want to contact him for the moment, they are in the spaces where they want to be alone. Even the painting “To leave the world aside” conveys a similar emotion, where not only does it seem to us that we have to deal with a woman who leaves the world aside, but also it seems that she has been overlooked by others in her life path for a long time.

One of the nudes appears on the front of the body, pointing to the stomach, legs and face. In this case, it is noticed that the woman has closed eyes, she is immersed in her world to process an emotion, event, or just to calm down and do not contact the viewer directly. While the viewer is involved in these emotions, among others, even through the expression of her face.

In the other painting with a similar composition a lying nude is presented from the back, emphasizing mainly the back and buttocks. But here too, the figures are immersed in their world and do not contact the viewer at all.

Additional empty spaces for the world beyond the known boundaries

On the face of it, following the contours of the presented ones, we notice that we are dealing with voluminous figures, but who feel comfortable in their body. They stretch to first plan of the painting and occupy a large part of the painting surface, which is two-dimensional. In two of them, the artist uses a separate tableau without figures (see the accompanying painting), which she places near the tableau that represents the nude. With this, the painter Albana Ejupi has enabled the presented nudes to have space beyond the limited painting surface. These extra spaces, she offers on one of the sides (whether it’ll be in the right or bottom of the painting). In

this occasion she creates the opportunity for these women to develop further and, where necessary, extend even beyond the predetermined place specifically for them. The painter almost informs the viewer that despite the fact that the presented nudes have occupied one surface with their body, there are still areas or spaces for them, for their development, for new starting points in their lives, for the world beyond the borders they have known to this day. The painter offers to the acts presented through this empty space a kind of additional solution whether to rest from the past or even to overcome the situations that life has brought to them so far. This is a space without details, mostly monochromatic or with some colors, which provides opportunities for new solutions and reflection on issues that need to be further addressed separately from the personal space of the presented ones by adapting to their needs.

Here, the painting of the young artist Albana Ejupi in general, unlike the unconventional forms of painting, makes an autochthonous development in terms of the development of the painting space. Until now empty spaces presented next to the figure have not received such autonomy to be independent within an art work.

So far are known formats where the artist divides the painting into two, threesome, or even more, by using some canvasses for its completion. But the moment in which the painter Ejupi offers an extra space to her painting without any figurations or details, but only by adapting background color, she puts a cornerstone for the development of the genre of painting in general, and in particular of the space, respectively the presentable surface.

Silhouettes that express love and ambientalization

Contrary to the aforementioned nudes there is another series painted by this artist: Albana Ejupi through silhouettes introduces the lovers and creates wholeness from the combination of silhouettes.

Here the images are spread in the form of silhouettes so that even the tips of the toes stretch almost to the last centimeter of the painting surface, creating the impression that they are occupying a prominent place in their space (see the painting “Untitled 2”, 2017) This illusion is

highlighted by the artist through her painting of stripes with white colors which are approaching the parts of the body of the represented.

They are embraced and sometimes contrast to the monochrome background, while sometimes they only differ in some nuances from their environment. Through this, are also expressed emotions and feelings in general that these images have for each other, but also with regard to their everyday ambientalization.

While figures with strong and contrasting colors in these display of pairs talk about of a kind of love that is still in the creative stage, and the figures that have similar colors to the environment talk about their adaptation between themselves and the neighborhood where they live. They have already overcome many stages of life giving each other whatever they had and making exchanges with the environment seem tailored to each other.

They stay firmly attached to each other, and t differ their heads, their heads have become one. With this it is emphasized the fact that these figures stand side by side even in very close contemplations, for example, in the way of perception of the world and things and events around.

Some of the presentations, considering the positioning of the legs and the weaving of the presented ones, are likely to be during the sexual act and with this presentation the viewer perceives erotic emotions, love, but also the harmony of these images among themselves.

Since the viewer sees the silhouettes of these pairs without details, we are dealing with presentation that depersonalizes; these silhouettes even invite the viewer to identify himself with them.

These are the everyday situations that the painter puts in the context of environment, space, thoughts, time, situations with or without solutions, but in any case they must be overcome, or are the moments of happiness that the painter through solid forms tends to “stiffen” them so they can not be interrupted.

“The Origin of the World” as a hint to Gustave Courbet’s realistic painting – emotions in painting then and now

In one of the nudes painted by artist Albana Ejupi, there is only one woman who is lying in perspective with her legs wide open facing the viewer. A red color thrown vertically with vigour highlights the part between the legs which has to do with the sex of the portrayed. But at the same time this color associates the viewer with the menstrual cycle of women. It also emphasizes female fertility, as well as the rhythm of nature to further develop humanity which depends on this fertility. Through this nude the body and its beauty is not treated, but in fact here as a topic is treated the fact of being a woman. The one presented here, her face can not be seen and it stands symbolically as the appearance of a woman, mother, daughter, who will eventually become a future mother. This painting, which is from the cycle “The Origin of the World based on Gustave Courbet” (2017), is a hint of the work of Gustave Courbet with the same title since 1866. It is a presentation, namely a “translation” of 19th century realistic painting in contemporary language.

While Courbet realistically presents, inter alia, the female sexual organ, the painter Albana Ejupi, giving her a similar pose and throwing red color in the middle of the drawing raises emotions similar to those of Courbet. This is an attempt to reduce the details, to suggest that even in contemporary painting there is possibility and room to create emotions. Then, here we are told that even in contemporary painting there is possibility to carry similar messages as we know them from realistic painting. This work tends to dispel the suspicion about the fact that realistic painting conveys more messages or emotions. With this, the painter gives the value to what is being done in our time, gives value to contemporary thoughts as well as she expresses respect for the realism of Courbet by using it as a motive for consideration in her works.

Facing the scope, materiality, detail and defining foreground and background plans, then the perspective, stands their simplification in lines and colors, two-dimensionality, and emptying space and surface from the details – the typical features of contemporary painting.

In the face of a somewhat lyrical painting of colors used by Courbet, we find an expressionist painting that resembles the lines of the brushstroke of the tashist style (le tache – stain). With this element, the painter Albana Ejupi made a hint of modern French painting.

Recalling the fact that world artists used nudes to address history or mythological stories (e.g. Peter Paul Rubens), to handle nostalgia for the past (e.g. Horst de Marees), or to present social criticism (e.g. Otto Dix), Albana Ejupi treats through their nudes and silhouettes some various topics: being a woman, creating the human world, suffering, peripetias, but also love, coexistence and memories of the past. At the same, through their nudes and silhouettes, she handles the painting as a genre that has undergone through a lot changes in contemporary art and which sometimes happens to be underestimated.

Empty space as an additional opportunity to figure out the portrayed ones

In this exhibition will be included some works from the past cycle painted by the painter Albana Ejupi. These are some portraits that are characterized by the fact that only a few parts of the face are presented in detail (“Inside the Thinking – Portrait of Max Fullenbaum”, 2016).

The painter makes a contrast play in the middle of a part without any detail and a piece of the face that portrays very detailedly the portrayed one. With this the viewer gets an impression that some sort of discovery of details is happening by the author to describe a specific character. While the details with many nuances, shading and contrasts compile a three-dimensionality that here and there reminds you of the hyperrealistic style, the rest is left blank and defined only through some lines of the pencil.

These portraits, which look unfinished, are actually finished in artist's thoughts. These thoughts seems already matured and well-strengthened within her, while she is painting only some parts of them, then she decides which parts of the portrait will reveal, respectively to make them visible to the viewer, which virtues of the presented ones should be displayed and highlighted. With this the artist lets us know that sometimes if we know only a detail about a man then we might understand a lot and draw a conclusion about him. Facial wrinkles, the look of the portrayed, or the head position in space allow us a lot to understand their character, event, history, emotions, virtues and thoughts even if they are not seen in their entirety.

These details are highlighted on the white and raw backgrounds, and in some of them the painter leaves a lot of empty space, by offering this to viewer's imagination as an extra space to continue his thinking about the presented ones. She offers space for each of us to approach in our way to figure it out portrayals from other angles, which she did not treat in particular.