

STATEMENT 2019

ART CRITIC – Alexandra Lazar 2019

ART CRITIC – Mileta Prodanović 2017

ART CRITIC – Alexandra Lazar 2017

ART CRITIC – Stevan Vuković 2017

ART CRITIC – Simona Ognjanović 2012

ART CRITIC - Jelena Spaić 2012

Interview with Ana Knežević by Mara Prohaska Marković 2011

ART REVIEW- Ljiljana Ćinkul 2010

REVIEW - Ljubomir Todorović 2010

ART CRITIC - Mileta Prodanović 2009

ART CRITIC - Jelena Krivokapić 2007

RECOMMENDATION - Michael Mittelman 2004

ART CRITIC - Savo Popović 2000

STATEMENT 2019

I search for new horizons through art practice, and am interested in projects at the intersection of technology and art. In my work, I am trying to visually emphasize the 'void' (the invisible) and to articulate it in such a way that it becomes 'accessible' to the viewers through their own emotional and mental experience. By reducing visual elements and setting the environment with light, geometry and sound, I try to make the spectators aware of the more subtle qualities of the 'empty' space. I would like to overcome the limits of the established concepts and bring new spatial experiences in order to open a way for people to appreciate the immaterial and the invisible. I would like the viewer to turn towards emotive/intuitive experience, instead of knowledge, to give advantage to meditative over manipulative, to open space to individual experience.

Journey for a prepared mind

Alexandra Lazar

Following from her poetic *A Place To Hold You* (2017), a study of proxemic interactions through pared-down geometry and light- and sound-tempered energy, Knezevic traverses into *Voiding the Void* (2019). A motion through a string of beads strung next to each other on a thread, or perhaps a traction through a capsule version of the 555 Buddhist Sutras, *Voiding the Void* furthers the idea of the work of art not as an object or event but the experience engendered within the mind.

Knezevic would have read Alan Watts' lectures and is familiar with his use of the term which she borrows for her title. An intellectual ferment of East and West, *Voiding the Void* is based primarily on the assertion that the Ideal is more actual than the real, and that a space in one's mind is more actual than any attempt of its representation in material. In this sense, Knezevic follows the classic tradition (Coptic, Egyptian, Greek, Chinese) with the aim to awaken the faculty of sight that exists already, but has been tuned in the wrong direction. Socrates' maieutic approach, based on the process of assisting a person into bringing into consciousness their own latent conceptions through the method of conversation and questioning (rather than lecturing), is a philosophical birthplace of *Voiding the Void*: "Our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming into that of being."¹

In an earlier essay about Ana's work *A Place to Hold You* I have touched upon the rising tendency within VR art to create instant transcendence, "the amplification of the modified inner echo chamber"², so I won't dwell on it here, but it is important to note its seductiveness inherent in VR as a medium. So what does this VR envirotecture³ consist of? Just like moving through physical environment is a motion through a path-contingent sequence of scenes, each consisting of a particular space, place and meaning, in *Voiding the Void* we encounter five linked spheres with equal three-dimensional boundary (space), each encapsulating its own inherent DNA of smooth geometric surfaces in divergence or convergence with respect to our body-axis (place). These semi-transparent objects serve as gates to a walled city, an entrance to a castle, which we pass by finding the point of entry established within its code, much like the Japanese

¹ Socrates, Plato's *Republic*, [360 BC], trans. Benjamin Jowett, New York 1991, pp. 258-9.

² Alexandra Lazar, 'A Place to Hold You' in *Ana Knezevic – Geometry of Void*, Belgrade and New York 2017, p. 32.

³ Envirotecture (as defined by Philip Thiel in *People, Paths and Purposes. Notation for a participatory envirotecture*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1996) is the use of architecture and audio-visual experience with intention to guide individuals (users-participants or UPs) to experience a "milieu" for the purpose of immersion into an emotional and physical experience.

chiashitsy (tea-ceremony room) offers a humble entrance as a gateway to its inner space.

The behaviour-setting interior of the place offers a continuous thread of light and sound, which maintain a sense of isolated ethereal experience. While the quality of light remains minimal, it nevertheless contains colour: the undecorated, neutral white of the salt farms on the beaches, or the white cascades of wisteria and deutzia blossom, denoting the month of May; it shifts from a pale porcelain haze that falls short of translucence and washes into the colour of opaque Shino glaze, reminiscent of the thawing surface of frozen snow. Its inherent VR blandness is thus tempered and softened. The audio is generated by the manipulation of the sound of Crotales cymbals used by the Tibetan monks (tingsha), which are sounded to mark the beginning and end of a period of meditation. Crotales were historically intoned to play the ancient pentatonic scale devised by Phrygian musician Olympos (7th century B.C.), the scale still used in the Japanese koto music. The distinct pulsation of sound further combines materiality and etherealness of the scenes.

As Agnes Martin said, “classicists are people that look out with their back to the world”.⁴ Knezevic adapts classic ideas to her artistic practice and language, resulting in reduced, harmonious structure that invites behavioural, discursive and symbolic shift inward. In *Voiding the Void*, Knezevic creates a resonant VR envirotecture that can be seen as a journey for a prepared mind, that seeks conversion of stimuli into a subjective phenomenological transformation of the viewer.

⁴ Agnes Martin, 'The Untroubled Mind', notes for a lecture at the Cornell University, Jan. 1972, as quoted in *Writings of Agnes Martin*, ed. D. Schwarz, Kunstmuseum Winterthür, Edition Cantz, 1991, p. 37.

THE LANDSCAPES OF THE BLACKHOLE

Mileta Prodanović

Astrophysicists say that the blackhole is an object whose gravitational field is so strong that not a single form of material can escape it, this including light quanta which are considered to be the fastest particles in nature.

In order to understand how a blackhole comes into being, it is necessary to know about the lifecycle of a star. After it has exhausted its hydrogen fuel, it cools down and its internal pressure falls so that under its own gravitational pull it begins to self-compact. Paradoxically, whilst the core is compacting, the sheath of the star is expanding. The core becomes so overheated because of this compaction that it starts a second nuclear reaction by which it switches from consuming helium to carbon. Meanwhile the star's sheath expands from several ten to hundreds of times and the star changes colour to red. These stars are called Red Giants, and their temperature is halved to about 2,300 K (whilst the temperature of our "yellow" Sun is about 5,760 K). Red Giants will endure until they have consumed all their helium supply, after which the star is once again overcome by its gravity and compacts even further, its material becomes very dense. The massive star's final stage is the blackhole. The Exclusion Principle in this case isn't strong enough to withstand gravity so that the star collapses into a single point (a singularity) which holds the mass of the star, but with a volume equal to zero.

And now the question of how to relate an exhibition to cosmic relations, theories and speculations? To be honest, there are several levels of *incomprehensibility* for me – in the accounts presented to us by scientists– in the phenomenon of blackholes. Above all, I cannot understand the idea of time in segments measuring millions of years, that *incommensurability* with our feeble existences and the short intervals of life given to us. To this is also added the idea of the concentration of mass. *Singularity* – what a word! Compaction which goes so far that dimensions cease to exist.

The material basis of the works on display in Ana Knežević's exhibition is laser cut sheets of acrylic. The surface of the sheets is matt, but the glass between which they are standing reflects light. In this way a wondrous play of light which gleams, mirrors and reflects is created – space changes and becomes manifold.

The black used by Ana Knežević is-it a mere colour which could be another colour as well? Is it a colour at all?

Art historians of the twentieth century perceive the various forms of minimalism almost exclusively from the perspective of the development of language. As if in addition to this there is also the axiom that minimalism has to be cold, rational... A less insightful observer will in haste recognize these works as a contemporary reading of the minimalist

tradition. That is however the wrong way to go. The black of Ana Knežević is a dense mass of emotions and thoughts arising out of the processes of reduction, precipitation, the trickle of time, accumulation... And it is exactly here that a relation to blackholes can be found: Ana Knežević's works in this exhibition are material condensed into an extraordinarily intense small format.

Black, in the sense of the material but not of light, is the sum of all colours, it is the alchemical *nigredo*, the starting state of material from which through a series of transformations, under the supervision of true adept delving into secrets of the world, gold can be yielded.

The basic unit of the Ana Knežević's spatial installation *Ogledalo svetlosti / The Mirror of Light* is not the individual work but rather the triptych. Three frames are already forming some kind of narrative. The triptych is a situation with a scheme, rhythm and even the rudiment of temporality. Even though all elements are of equal dimension – it is their position which determines them. They have one type of “vertical viewing” in which the middle part is dominantly positioned. And even whilst having their aforementioned identity, the “side wings” are also playing a subordinate role, that of the “sentry”, the guard of the core's energy.

They say that each horizontal format (whether the author wishes to recognise this or not) is in the final instance derived from landscape. Moreover, it's not said without reason in *Globish* “Landscape – format“ for a scene in whose width is greater than its height. Ana Knežević's triptychs also have an important “horizontal reading”, they are sentences in space. Their “content” is a gap that is always at an angle. These leaning lines can be seen as a highly stylised picture of a slope, a hill– and hence the “sign” of the landscape, but more of the metaphysical landscape, that which arises within the parameters of the *unimaginable*, like the blackhole.

These carefully measured gradients form a “horizon” which is actually a kind of an energy diagram, a path of ascent and descent.

Ana Knežević's poetics from her first appearance on the art scene have been based on spatial-ambiental researches, and her latest installations extend and further deepen this approach. The series of triptychs is, therefore, above all functioning as an ambiental impression: the important part in that orchestration of space is played by the pause, the caesura, the light. Without which the black wouldn't be functional.

Distancing the works from the wall adds one more important layer to this installation: the shadows go to form an interplay of two types of black, “dense/primary” and “transparent/secondary”. In order for this interplay to be as convincing as possible, a perfect execution of the work, amongst other things, is necessary – Ana Knežević in all her installations pays an exacting attention to detail. And so it also is here. There are not many elements to these works – and exactly for this reason it is necessary that they all be positioned in a perfect arrangement and order.

Regardless of the question of whether the exhibition *The Mirror of Light* has been conceived and realised as an environment, the individual triptychs have nevertheless been given a title. This title originates from the beginning of the founding book of euro-Mediterranean civilization, from the *Book of Genesis* which opens the Old Testament. On a background of black a fissure of light is made and hence the creationist exclamation *Fiat Lux* “opens” Ana Knežević’s work in a very particular way.

In alchemy there is a moment when the first spark of light appears in the absolute blackness of *Nigredo*. That is a sign that the alchemist is on the right path. If *The Great Work* is a metaphor for creativity, in the sense of cyclicity, unbroken change, then this first ray of light which breaks through can be seen as pointing the way to a new space of meditation for Ana Knežević.

A Place To Hold You
Alexandra Lazar

"Pure form and pure colour can signify the world"

Victor Vasarely

Approaching the work of Ana Knezevic, *A Place To Hold You*, instigates some fundamental questions in the viewer that suggest a possibility that we're at the inception of something completely new. The work provokes considerations of the experience of the interiority/exteriority in the artwork; the realms of visible and invisible in art; the consciousness in art (as opposed to artwork realised within one's consciousness); as well as the forms of art that sought to transcend these categories. These are, essentially, some of the questions posed by the minimal and conceptual art of the twentieth century as well as others before them who attempted to define the relationship between the consciousness and creativity.

Let's start from the beginning. Ana Knežević is an artist that works with spatial installations of light and sound, which serve as a starting point for her exploration of the relationship between symmetry and harmony of a given space, the emptiness and the viewer. The key aspect of her work is the articulation of the void, which she considers to be "the dynamic basis of everything that exists within the visible or manifested world and the potential source of all other not yet activated possibilities".⁵ In her previous minimalist interventions that used sound, light and geometry, the artist framed and emphasised the void, revealing its energetic fluctuations and involving the viewer in a dialogue between internal and external spaces.

Knežević's study of matter – through geometry, mathematics and physics, and documented through her drawings, paintings and installations involving light, laser projections and VR – aims to demonstrate, stimulate, correct or emit certain precisely modulated aspects of the energy within a given space. The core difference between her previous works and *A Place To Hold You* (2003-2017) is that all previous experiments were realised in real space, whereas now they move into the virtual and internal space.

The linear diagrams, which form the basis of the ongoing series *Fiat Lux* (2010-), represent twodimensional rhythmic interventions positioned in a three-dimensional space. This series, as well as her previous work with light and sound (*Light Mirror, Inner Tuning, Light on void*), reflect the artist's aim to use spatial installations in order to initiate a specific energy and balance in real space, which is carried on to the viewer. These studies can be considered precursors of the work *A Place To Hold You*, which is fully realized in VR technology.

⁵ Mara Prohaska Marković, Interview with Ana Knežević, *Art FAMA Magazine for Contemporary Art Scene*, Decembar 2011, No. 59.

A Place To Hold You is the concept conceived in 2003 as an installation in real space where the object, which the artist calls 'light in light', would be realised with the zebra hologram.⁶ Instead, the work was constructed as a space suspended inside the viewer, technologically projected directly on to our senses. *A Place To Hold You* was drawn in architectural software 3D Studio Max, developed in Unity VR and actualised through the HTC VIVE VR set. The virtual installation consists of three spaces filled with soft white light dominated by the diagonally positioned geometric objects rendered in a transparent red light. An unobtrusive electronic sinewave sound is also heard in the space, changing its pitch and volume in relation to the participant's movement through space.

The technology may have affected the parameters and the experience of the work, but its initial concept remains unchanged: a corporeal experience of presence of a geometric form defined by light and sound of specific pulsating frequency, with the intention to observe the feeling of disembodied harmonic assimilation with the artwork. The radical aspect of this experience (unlike most contemporary VR art) is the complete void of narrative and symbolism, which formally puts *A Place To Hold You* into the domain of geometric abstraction.

This is where we need to recall the works of the artists of the Light and Space movement (Doug Wheeler, Robert Irwin, James Turrell), who used light for the creation of a space with an enhanced sensory and psychological range. Especially relevant is Turrell whose "soft walls" dealt with perceptual psychology and mathematics, and Wheeler whose infinite spaces seem to evoke multidimensional worlds, striving for a similar harmonious and meditative experience.

This experience is also closely related to the concepts of modernist avant-garde, and in particular to the ideas of Kazimir Malevich, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee and Johannes Itten. The concept of the dynamic and systematic development of the form developed by Paul Klee in lectures *Contributions on the Morphology of Form* (Bauhaus, 1921-22) and further systematised by Kandinsky in *Point and Line to Plane* (1926), owed a lot to the theosophical ideas about the universal movement of the matter by Claude Fayette Bragdon (1866-1946), especially his theosophical concept about temporalisation of form in space, which served as a direct influence to Malevich's articulation of the Suprematist space, and as one of the guiding principles behind Johannes Itten's artistic and theoretical considerations.⁷

⁶ Zebra hologram is a holographic visualisation tool that uses 3D model projected as a visual light information. Zebra holograms are autostereoscopic (the viewer does not need to use special goggles), has a full parallax (can be viewed fully from all angles) and is created from thousands of hogels (three dimensional pixels).

⁷ An art historic insight into this topic is offered by Professor Christoph Wagner, Chair at the Department of Art History at the University of Regensburg, in his works *Das Bauhaus und die Esoterik: Johannes Itten, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky*, 2005, *Esoterik am Bauhaus: Eine Revision der Moderne?*, 2009 and *Itten - Klee. Kosmos Farbe*, 2012. The above quote is from his essay 'Occultism and Abstract Art: Itten, Kandinsky, Malevich', *Hilma af Klint, the Art of Seeing the Invisible*, Eds. Kurt Almquist and Louise Belfrage, Axel and Margaret Ax:son Foundation, Stockholm, 2015. p. 117.

Bragdon's fundamental belief was that all forms are involved in a systematic process of dynamic shifting, in which the visual elements of point, line, surface and cube develop from a onedimensional towards two-, three-, up to four- and multi-dimensional space: the line therefore is the result of a moving point, a surface arises from a moving line, the cube from a moving surface and finally, the "tetra-Hypercube" evolves from the dynamic shifting of three-dimensional cubes within a four-dimensional system. Bragdon speaks of the "universal flux of things - life, growth, organic being, the transition from simplicity to complexity" and he stresses the time factor as the moving force behind all these operations.⁸

One hundred years later, *A Place To Hold You* evokes and continues some of these concepts. Ana Knežević similarly deals with the question of the temporalisation of form and abandoning the classical Euclidean three-dimensional space which, in her work, expands in the fourth (time), measurable by the pace of individual movement marked by the sound. Her transparent geometric objects in space - light within light - are not only linear or two-dimensional forms, but also projections of multidimensional systems.

What has the use of the VR technology for the realisation of the work contributed or taken away from Ana's artistic concept? What are the ideological, ethical and theoretical implications of this process? Is VR (as some claim) the future of art or an escapist window dressing? How does this process physically and psychologically affect the participant? Can artists like Ana Knežević create relevant works that probe deeper into the materiality, rather than just provide an amusement for our senses? ⁹

HTC VIVE, the set used to create *A Place to Hold You*, is a virtual reality technology launched in 2016 and developed for gaming. It consists of a lightweight mobile headset that uses room scale tracking technology that allows free movement in real space. The headset has a 110 degree field of view, with two screens (one for each eye), each with a display resolution of 1080 x 1200 pixels. The VIVE VR system uses 70 infrared sensors: 32 in the headset, 24 in each controller, as well as a gyroscope, accelerometer and laser photosensors that monitor the positions and movements of the head, which are then sent to a computer that provides graphics. The two infrared cameras set in the corners of the physical space of the gallery the user's movements with motion tracking and feed the graphics in real time. The headset is light, tightly fixed over the eyes, and for someone who is not a gamer the first impression is a mild technophobia. The set's motorics simulate the situations in which the observer feels suspended in space ('a place to hold you'). Although the feeling of the elastic headband and the headset on the ears fades after a few minutes, the visual script imposes an experience that is not identical to nature. The

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "The power of virtual reality is that it goes beyond the conscious," says Philip Hausmeier, a contemporary VR artist from Berlin. "It really pushes your emotions, because it affects your body really heavily." *Is virtual reality the future of art?* Rachel Stewart, Deutsche Welle, 17 March 2017, retrieved 9 August 2017. Permalink: <http://p.dw.com/p/2ZCgv>

experience undoubtedly (unintentionally) refers to the spatial-physical modifications and experiments of the corporeal-technical functionality of the artist Rebecca Horn.¹⁰

The experience of a virtual game - be it mini-golf or a futuristic dystopian battle - is the most common simulation of virtual sparring of partners. In *A Place To Hold You*, you are completely alone. The experience is emptied of all corporeality: you can move freely within the space but you are free of any avatar, so that each crossing or passing through the objects feels like an intrusion. At the brief moment of passing through the red triangle, one's "head" position is somewhere above the transparent object. It feels like being intercepted by a beam of strong headlights, or like that magic trick with a lady in the box sawn in half. The whole experience is significantly calmer and milder than the brutal sensations of the VR games, but neither is it close to the embodied feeling of meditative calm.

In a sense, VR continues the explorative path of the twentieth-century abstraction that dealt not only with the topology of the painting, but also its inner world: an art that emits its own energy and reality through a geometric form, gesture and colour, deepening the connection with the authentic experience. Light artists and more recently VR artists try to explore the same challenge in the "empty" space of the immaterial and to reach or represent the images of pure cerebrality.

An immersion into the VR experience flushes out certain messianic and dystopian elements. "VR removes all barriers between you and the artwork," claims the VR artist Liz Edwards; "when the world outside looks frightful, you might be tempted to put on the blinders", quips artist Jason Farago.⁷ The technology is used not to liberate but to direct our experiences, as our biological senses continue to transmit imperfect informations and lies about the apparent world.

The main ethical ambivalence of dystopian reality lies in cancelling out the point of view: the boundaries between fiction and truth, protagonists and avatars, participants and the artwork are being erased.⁸ It doesn't surprise that the pioneering VR works in art are dominated by the visions of astral projection and models of different worlds: the artist Jeremy Couillard creates a portal for the afterlife; Jayson Musson projects an elegiac piece dedicated to victims of violence; Rachel Rosin envisions a bland world that disintegrates itself as a female voice recites the mantra "happiness, peace and cheerfulness" (*Man Mask*, 2016). The Gardens of Anthropocene, the VR of the Seattle Art Museum Olympic Sculpture Park, offers a future in which native aquatic and terrestrial plants have mutated to cope with increasing unpredictable and erratic climate change.⁹

corporeality.

⁷ Jason Farago, *Virtual Reality Has Arrived in the Art World. Now What?*, New York Times, 3 February 2017, retrieved 8 August 2017.

¹⁰ Rebecca Horn also works with the kinetic and magnetic energy, as well as the light (*Spiriti di Madreperla*, 2002, *Light Imprisoned in the Belly of the Whale*, 2002) and the objects freed from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/03/arts/design/virtual-reality-has-arrived-in-the-art-worldnow-what.html>

⁸ I am reminded of the episode "Playtest" of the British sci-fiction series *Black Mirror* (2016), in which the main protagonist ends up in a similar white room used for testing the VR technology which causes hallucinations and fear, and leaving us wondering if he ever left the VR space or not.

⁹ "Gardens of the Anthropocene" is the augmented reality of the Seattle Art Museum Olympic There is a clear tendency to fill the VR space with trans-dimensional talismans of peace and joy in hope to overcome the fear of death and disappearance. In a world in which modern science shifts the definitions and experiences of humanity, gender, artificiality, and in which the viewer is defined by a unique and fragile balance between the real experience of the outside world that equips them with a spectrum of empathic responses, and the inner world in which they seek transcendence, how will VR affect that balance, therefore shaping that what we "see"? The amplification of the modified inner echo chamber in relation to the external space is clearly set to redress the way in which we experience the world as species.

A Place To Hold You represents a shift in research of our understanding of energy, relative space and the temporalisation of form in art. But the question of participatory conscience remains. Will VR with its aspiration to create new worlds - of the aesthetic, artistic, conceptual and critical kind - be permitted to define its own language and to maintain criticality so crucial in art? Will the nature of a medium created to mask our sensory experience and paper it over with the illusion regarding our point of view, drive and agency be able to further expand our perception, or lure it with the new decoys of itself and others? As for Ana Knežević, perhaps the most important question is whether further research in this direction has the ability to present artistic work that is not palpably technology-led, but is able to reflect our current "total experience" of emotions, thoughts, consciousness and senses.

As Claude Bragdon might have said, *time will tell*.

Sculpture Park commissioned in summer 2016 and placed in an indeterminate dystopian future affected with climate change. The plants are all derived from the native plants in and around the park that are thought to be tolerant to drought or to warming of the sea, and are therefore expected to adapt to the increasing temperatures. The artwork combines scientific findings with the artistic vision of such a world in which mutating species breach their natural boundaries to survive, from using mobile devices' radiation for photosynthesis, extracting nutrients from manmade structures, etc. See the whole project on vimeo, <https://vimeo.com/177393844> See also Molly Gottschalk, "Virtual reality is the most powerful artistic medium of our time", *Artsy Magazine*, 15 March 2016, retrieved August 2017. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-virtual-reality-is-the-most-powerful-artistic-medium-of-our-time>

On Intensities and Affects

A Deleuzian reading of Ana Knežević's art

Stevan Vuković

Mileta Prodanović, asserting that the works of Ana Knežević presented at her solo exhibition at *The Gallery of Modern Art* in Smederevo in 2017 were, in fact, “matter condensed on a small format of extreme intensity”,¹¹ has introduced a feature that might be very significant for interpreting both the phenomenal and the relational aspects of her work in general. Namely, his full statement was that “historians of art of the twentieth century perceive different forms of minimalism almost exclusively in the perspective of the development of language”, that would for him be quite misleading in this specific case, in which the point is in the “density of emotion and thought made by reduction, sedimentation, dripping of time, accumulation”. That claim parallels Brian Massumi’s philosophical statement that “approaches to the image in its relation to language are incomplete if they operate only on the semantic or semiotic level”, because “what they lose, precisely, is the expression event - in favor of structure”.¹² On the other hand, it also resonates Robert Irwin’s line from a text subsequently published in his exhibition catalogue in Whitney in 1977, which, among other things emphasizes that all those “human beings living in and through structures become structures living in and through human beings”.¹³

In fact, Ana Knežević’s works, especially her installations, were always much closer to the heritage of the *Light and Space* art movement, including artists such as Robert Irwin, James Turrell and Larry Bell, than to the ‘proper’ minimalists such as Donald Judd, John McCracken, Agnes Martin, Robert Morris, Anne Truitt, or Frank Stella. She shares their emphasis on constructing immersive environments in which one would be overwhelmed by sensory perception, whose goal was to produce transcendentalist notions. Intense sensory experiences were the expected effect even of her drawings and paintings, while for her installations such as *Intersections*, and *Sound of Light* (both from 2007) one could apply Richard Bright’s words on a James Turrell’s work, saying that it was meant to induce such subjective spiritual experiences in which “light is not so much something that reveals, as the revelation itself”¹⁴. There is a strong persistency and a consistence in Ana Knežević’s works, in the sense that her ambients and installations, and even her paintings, are conceptually the extensions of her drawings, while also the displays of her drawings and paintings are rendered as taking in consideration the surroundings and responding to a site.

Even though she does produce individual artworks which can be seen on group exhibitions, the optimal formats of presentation of her art practice are a site-responsive or site-related exhibition that may include studio produced works as its elements, arranged in accordance with the visual and

¹¹ Prodanović, M: "Krajolici crne rupe", pref. cat. of the exhibition *The Mirror of Light*, Galerija savremene umetnosti Smederevo, 2017.

¹² Massumi, B: *Parables for the virtual: movement, affect, sensation*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002, p. 27.

¹³ Irwin, R: *Notes Towards a Model*, pref. cat. of the exhibition *Scrim Veil—Black Rectangle—Natural Light*, New York: Whitney Museum of Art, 1977, p. 29.

¹⁴ Bright, R: *James Turrell: Eclipse*, London and Osfieldern-Ruit: Michael Hue-Williams Fine Art and Hatje Cantz Publishers, 1999, p. 17.

spatial characteristics of the site, or it can transform the site into an ambiental setting. Each display is centered on the manner in which the attention of the visitor can be captured without any recourse to figural representation, narration, interactivity for the sake of interactivity, without shifting from site to context specificity, or including contextual issues, theoretical or other meta instances into its setting. The only aboutness in them is about the experiences of the visitors, new and unknown, because what matters in art is “never what is known but rather a great destruction of what is already known, in favour of the creation of the unknown”¹⁵.

“No literate meanings, no symbolic references, and no art world contents”¹⁶ was one of Robert Irwin’s dictums on making art, which can be applied to Ana Knežević’s practice as well. Being himself an artist, Irwin took upon a mission to produce a theory that would provide with an epistemology for understanding not only his own, but also the practices of many other installation artists, and its still a very useful tool both for philosophers and art historians. As an avid reader of Husserl, Sartre and Wittgenstein, he stood against the rationalist stream of continental philosophy, and came forward with his own definition of perception as “a direct interface with the phenomenally given”, which is “the over brimming synesthesia of undifferentiated sensations – they are not even defined yet as sounds versus colors, and so forth - they exist as the plenum of experience.”¹⁶ Against the tradition based on the writings of Descartes, according to which “it is the thinking mind (or cogito) that perceives”, Irwin has posited a ‘precogito’ as an “originary *premediated* perceptual field” so that to think meant only to “lay designs, as it were, across this field”¹⁷.

In Brian Massumi’s reading of Deleuze and Guattari, ‘precogito’ of such a kind deals with passed on intensities that become affects, before cognitive percepts capture them and build them into a knowledge. Within that frame of reference affect is that “prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act”, while affection is “each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body”¹⁷ In his further articulation of that concept of affect Massumi then came to the conclusion that “the turn to affect is about opening the body to its indeterminacy, the indeterminacy of autonomic responses”, for which one has to treat affect in terms of its “autonomy from conscious perception and language, as well as emotion”¹⁸. So, the affected subject is the one who manages to “perform its way out of a definitional framework that is not only responsible for its very ‘construction’, but seems to prescript every possible signifying and counter signifying move as a selection from a repertoire of possible

¹⁵ Deleuze, G: *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, Cambridge: Semiotext(e), 2004, p. 136.

¹⁶ Weschler, L: *Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing one Sees: A Life of Contemporary Artist Robert Irwin*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982, p. 74. ¹⁶ Ibid, p. 180 ¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷ Massumi, B: “Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgements”, in Deleuze G, and Guattari, F: *A Thousand Plateaus*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. xvi.

¹⁸ Clough, P. T: “Political Economy, Biomedica, and Bodies”, in Gregg, M: and Seigworth, G. J. (editors): *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010, p. 209.

permutations on a limited set of predetermined terms.¹⁹ In plain words, that subject is doing whatever s/he can do to avoid the position of being “boxed into its site on the culture map.”²⁰

In the framework of Deleuze and Guattari's theories, which Massumi directly relates to when writing those sentences, art can be conceived simply as a ‘block of affects’²¹ that the audience has to deal with. That block can be interpreted in different manners, including cognitive and emotive, and Ana Knežević, as quoted in one of Miroslav Karić's texts on her work, opts for the emotive interpretation, at least when her own work is the object of it. Explaining the intentions behind one of her ambience installations, she stated that *she wanted to „lead the viewer to turn towards emotive/intuitive experience, instead of knowledge, to give advantage to meditative over manipulative, to open space to individual experience, and, in the ideal case, for the viewer to emotively react to the work...“ Trying to avoid immediate appropriation of those works by manifold types of manifestation of the epistemological drive, that usually end up in just feeding the affective networks of today's communicative capitalism,*²² she stressed the emotional quality that one can attain by integrating them not into those networks, but into their personal lived and fully embodied experience. As Hallward has pointed to, when interpreting Deleuze's passages on art, it has a rare capacity “to transcend, without abandoning the logic of sensation, that scientific plane of mere reference and actuality”²³. It does that by the use of a specific type of expression which renders that “it is no longer sensation that is realized in the material but the material that passes”, or simply “ascends into sensation”²⁴.

That necessarily evokes Freud's distinction between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ psychical processes. The ‘primary process’ in the subject is the one in which “psychical energy flows freely, passing unhindered by means of the mechanisms of condensation and displacement, from one idea to another and tending to completely recathect the ideas attached to those satisfying experiences which are at the root of unconscious wishes (primitive hallucination)”²⁵. On the other hand, in the ‘secondary process’, all free energy gets bound, or ‘cathected’ to some representation, so that it can flow only in a manner related to those representation. For Jean-François Lyotard, art can originate only from the ‘primary process’, and the works of art can be treated as pulsional, or libidinal apparatuses (*dispositifs pulsionnels*), or means to regulate, transform and transfer libidinal

¹⁹ Massumi, B: *Parables for the virtual: movement, affect, sensation*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002, p. 3.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ O'Sullivan, S: “From Aesthetics to the Abstract Machine: Deleuze, Guattari and Contemporary Art Practice”, in Zepke, S. & O'Sullivan, S. (editors): *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p. 198.

²² See: Dean, J: „Communicative Capitalism: Circulation and the Foreclosure of Politics“, *Cultural Politics*, 2005, Volume 1, Number 1, and Dean, J: *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, pp. 91-127.

²³ Hallward, P: *Out of This World – Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*, London and New York: Verso, 2006, p. 108.

²⁴ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F: *What is Philosophy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 169

²⁵ Laplanche, J. & Pontalis, J.B: *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1973, p. 339.

energy. Accounting for the libidinal economy of works of art he concludes that their character is affirmative: “they are not in place of anything; they do not *stand for* but *stand*; that is to say, they function through their material and its organization”, so that “their subject is nothing other than possible formal organization”, of the stimuli “whose force lies entirely in its surface”.²⁶

The notion of affected subject as the subject experiencing artworks could perhaps provide some specific answers to a whole set of questions posed by Claire Bishop for the sake of differentiating between the spectators installation art is made for. The questions were the following: “Who is the spectator of installation art? What kind of 'participation' does he or she have in the work? Why is installation at pains to emphasise first-hand 'experience', and what kinds of 'experience' does it offer?”²⁷ Her own answers made a fourfold division: the first model of the subject was the one coming from the tradition of Freudian psychoanalysis, the second from phenomenology, the third from the structuralist redefinition of psychoanalysis, and the fourth from poststructuralist and postmarxist theories²⁸. So, she has simply produced a taxonomy from a set of widely accepted philosophical theories of subject, and forced everything into them. Robert Irwin's work got into the sector of phenomenology, and was tied to minimalism. That was quite strange since it is even from her own text clear that “minimalism is non-symbolic and non-expressive”²⁹, in difference to the “assemblage-based works of Oldenburg and Kaprow, and the tableaux of Kienholz and Segal- art characterised by a symbolic and psychologistic *mise-en-scène*”³⁰, which means that they are symbolic and expressive, while the profile of Robert Irwin's work is obviously non-symbolic and expressive. Expression in his work is simply not channelled through the expressiveness of a specific form, like in the historical examples of Expressionism, but through the use of intensities of colour and light, which are often even rendered into quite simple geometrical structures.

Ana Knežević's works are also non-symbolic and expressive. Whatever medium or material she uses, and whatever narrative might be in their background, their main qualities reside in the manner in which she manages to condense their expressive force into sets of very basic spatial constructions or rhythmically arranged series, attaining maximum sensory intensity of the whole display and minimum predefined meaning of it. It is upon the viewer to become sensually exposed to its visual, spatial, and frequently synesthetic effects, not trying to make sense of them before fully sensing them. She composes her works both in relation to the exhibition space and to the expected spatial and perceptual behavior of the audience. She rarely significantly physically alters the architecture of the space, but she does her best to rearticulate it in the visual sense as much as the character of the works to be displayed there requires it. So, in the scheme Robert Irwin has developed as a review of possible relations between the work and the site, her works are on the scale between 'site-adjusted' (made considering the specifics of the site, but relocatable) and 'site-specific' (made considering the specifics of the site, which cannot be relocated, without being destroyed), in difference to both the 'site-dominant' (imposed into the space, regardless of its features), as well as

²⁶ Lyotard, J.-F: “Beyond Representation”, in: *Miscellaneous Texts: Aesthetics and Theory of Art*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2012, p. 123 – 125.

²⁷ Bishop, C: *Installation Art: A Critical History*, London: Tate Publishing, 2005, p. 6.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 10.

²⁹ Bishop, C: *Installation Art*, p. 53.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 55.

to and to the 'site-determined' (drawing all of its cues only from that site)³¹. In Miwon Kwon's registry, they can fluctuate between site-conscious, site-responsive and site-related"³².

Although the displays of her work appear as very harmonious, and either fit well into the gallery space, or deal with it in a balanced manner, and that goes even for her ambient settings, it is obvious that the gallery space is always treated by her as a field of visual and spatial tensions into which her work intervenes, but which are then brought to a temporary equilibrium by the way their display is organized. Only that equilibrium is not static. All her works also deal with movement, in a very specific manner, which is not accomplished by displaying it, or visually narrating on it, but to inducing it in the viewer. One type of work includes paintings and drawings that induce virtual movement in the mind of the viewer, either by their iconic or structural features, or the way they include shadows or reflections of light, while the other form a spatial setting which has to be explored by the viewer by physically moving through it, and shifting perspectives of viewing it. In other words, the exhibitions that display her works are meant for active viewers, willing to explore not only works as individual pieces, in their visual and semantic aspect, but also to reflectively position themselves towards that process in the very space and in the very context in which they are displayed. What they get is affect, what they strive to get to is meaning.

Yi-Fu Tuan in his seminal book titled *Space and Place - The Perspective of Experience*, wrote that "if we look for fundamental principles of spatial organization we find them in two kinds of facts: the posture and structure of the human body, and the relations (whether close or distant) between human beings".³³ That is a simple consequence of the fact that "the human being, by his mere presence, imposes a schema on space".³⁵ It means that it is not only that all inhabited spaces are scripted, but even that every person does script a space when using it. Therefore, according to Lefebvre, "(Social) space is a (social) product" and "the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action", which makes it a "means of production", but also "a means of control, and hence of domination, of power."³⁴ So how can art, at a specific site, with which it interacts, cope with that? The Massumian and Deleuzian answer would be to deal with the singularity³⁶ of each spatial setting in relation to the potential viewer in a manner that would get "involved in a different kind of production of subjectivity from the typical". In that respect „art objects and practices – specific combinations of affect – offer us models, or diagrams, for our own subjectivities“, or they „operate to break a certain model of subjectivity and indeed other dominant

³¹ See Wortz, M: "Surrendering to Presence: Robert Irwin's Esthetic Integration", Artforum, November 1981, p. 63.

³² Kwon, M: *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002, p. 1.

³³ Tuan, Y: *Space and Place - The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, p. 34 ³⁵
Ibid, p. 36.

³⁴ Lefebvre, H: *The Production of Space*, Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell, 1991, p. 35.

³⁶ The singular in Deleuze "is not opposed to the universal, as it is in traditional philosophy, but to the ordinary", and "a singular point is where 'something (new) happens'", while an ordinary point is where "nothing (new) happens." Adkins, B: "Deleuze and Badiou on the Nature of Events", *Philosophy Compass* 7/8 (2012), p. 508.

modes of subjection“. Both ways they initiate „the production of a kind of affective break within the typical“.³⁷

In its performative aspect Ana Knežević's work produces such breaks. Sometimes it does so only by playing with rhythms and symmetries in the frame of geometric drawings, paintings or objects and in their gallery display, at other times by completely altering spatial experiences of viewers placed into immersive environments, synesthetically effecting them, inducing their spatial reorientation and involving them into an intensive sensory engagement with the surrounding. The scale in which the work alters the space in which it is exhibited and the amount of sensory stimuli it radiates is not as important as are all those fine tuned, often almost indiscernible ruptures in the expected visual and spatial order, in what one typically get from an exhibition display. Their effect is not aimed at stimulating imaginative capacities of the viewers, nor at altering their cognitive attitudes and directly challenging their standpoints towards some specific social and ethical issues, but at challenging routine and disaffected manners of experiencing images and spatial arrangements, and at altering taxonomies and perceptual patterns they have acquired.

³⁷ O'Sullivan, S: "From Aesthetics to the Abstract Machine: Deleuze, Guattari and Contemporary Art Practice", in Zepke, S. & O'Sullivan, S. (editors): *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p. 199.

Love synapse

Simona Ognjanović

Understanding, or perhaps rather, a premonition and sense of space, are some of the fundamental issues, in both, scientific and philosophical, as well as artistic discourse. Moreover, in the art of the twentieth century, the problem of space will prove to be a very fertile area of different formal-conceptual research, among which the most suggestive and most synthetic forms are undeniably different forms of art installation and environmental art. Having in mind commonplaces of such art practices, the light-sound installation by Ana Knežević on the one hand shares undeniable propinquity to the so-called pro-scientific tendency close to neo-constructivism, which is primarily focused on activities in a borderline area that synthesizes scientific, technological and artistic categories and systems. On the other hand, at a formal level, purified, reduced and always geometrically minimized visual aids point to similar solutions which are recognizable by the optical and spatial structure of minimal art. However, spaces that Knežević forms always invariably transcend any literal meaning of their physical appearance; they do not constitute a self-contained optical sensation nor do they strive to gain the value of tautological structure.

The author, one might say, operates in a border area between *research* and *producing* space where line, light, sound and space remain the primary visual and artistic means. However, in Knežević's work, these formal elements are bound into unexpected relations and as such they create an open field of numerous interpretations. One of possible interpretations could be added on Zedlmayer's thesis of the so-called geometry of light. He points out that the close internal relationships between *light* and *clarity*, which he further supports by saying that these two concepts which are even synonymous in many languages directly imply an equally inextricable relationship between *light* and *numbers*.³⁸ The numbers are actually, he concludes, its direct spiritual equivalents.³⁹ What is interesting is that Knežević, using a network of illuminated fluorescent elastics lit by ultraviolet light, therefore using a form of *light matter*⁴⁰ projected into space, indirectly embodies synergetic value of numerical relationships that define and articulate the totality of architectural - in this case - the gallery space of the Third Belgrade. In other words, these parameters of numerical correlations of architectural elements are the starting references from which the artist using, so to say, deductive method, outlines bordering lines and supporting points of the projected light diagram.

³⁸ H. Zedlmayer, *O svetlosti*, Beograd, 2008, p. 45.

³⁹ Further on, Zedlmayer adds that this can be best analyzed if we take a look at the architecture of the cathedral in Chartres, where the force of light on the one hand and the balanced numerical relations of shapes and mass on the other contribute to the feeling of clarity and order. Ibid.

⁴⁰ According to Zedlmayer, almost every epoch invents a new light matter, or they resort to a specific luminescence of old forms. Ibid. P. 48

The all-imbuing dialectics of this spatial constellation, actually a sort of *dialectics of the full* (the substance of light) and of the *void*⁴¹ (empty, dark space of the gallery that supports it) is quite close to the eastern⁴² understanding of emptiness as a *form*⁴³ that is always *effective*⁴⁴⁵, and which, as a constitutive function of everything that is, acts as a rule in the form of a positive and active principle. Moreover, this dialectics is threefold in this work by Knežević. Namely, the spatial dialectics of full and void befits the comparable dialectics in time coordinates within which the fullness is demonstrated by sound, while the void is manifested through silence. The sound, which is the *differentia specifica* of this installation, has partly organic origin and as such is in direct relation with the fullness of the outside world divided from the inner, separate space of the gallery merely by a long glass wall. And the circle is closed. Or rather, the- never-stopped motion commences again. The fullness of the phenomenal and the organic oppose the suggestive, active emptiness of the artistic field, which acts as if it is summoning a concord of art and life, and calls for a dialogue between constructed and alive.

However, the dominant geometrical structuralism of the installation and its undeniable conceptual nature and basis should under no circumstances be recklessly highlighted as a logical source of a cold, rational principle, the principle that unites that line of modern art which Filiberto Menna called analytical. Numbers, proportions and scales, as well as the process of creating an installation always supervised by mind, here are unambiguously the ones that mark what some theoreticians called *sublime geometry* or "geometry of distinctly spiritual qualities" that intentionally and violently mobilize psychological, emotional device sensing⁸ "the laws of some higher arrangement and the highest order, as the basic principles of the harmony and balance of the ideal universe."⁴⁶

⁴¹ Dialectics of full and empty is one of the fundamental principles of Japanese and Chinese traditions that imbues and defines both spatial and chronological relations as well as ethical, aesthetic, political, and life categories. G. Pasqualotto, *Estetika praznine*, Beograd, 2007, pp. 17-29.

⁴² In their study *Void / In Art*, Mark Levy introduces and discusses the distinction between secular and mostly nihilistic understanding of void or empty space within the Western tradition (think only of the phenomenon of *horror vacui*), and that spiritual, meditative approach, which is attributed to Eastern cultures and teachings whereupon the void is the source and condition of all creation. Levi furthermore develops a hypothesis on this difference, recognizing and singling out, among European and American artists, those who are quite close to the Eastern conceptualization, but also those who, although they are not introduced to the foundations of such teaching, unambiguously show similar trends. Also, Levi makes a distinction between authors who utilize emptiness simply to achieve certain visual, even aesthetic effects, and those for whom, at some level, emptiness determined and coloured their artistic path. Among these artists were Ed Reinhardt, Kazimir Malevich, Yves Klein, Mark Rothko, John Cage, Mark Tobey, Anish Kapoor and many other notable names of European and American art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. M. Levy, *Void / In Art*, Ojala, 2005.

⁴³ G. Pasqualotto, *op.cit*, p. 65

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 18 ⁸

In Chinese and Japanese tradition the suggestions, allusions and innuendo are established as the primary aesthetic principle, rich in meanings, and almost instinctive avoidance of direct presentation is all-pervasive and noticeable.. L. Bignon, *Zmajev let, Esej o teoriji umetnosti i njenoj primeni u Kini i Japanu*, Beograd 2005, p. 45

⁴⁶ J. Denegri, *Spiritualna i sublimna geometrija Juraja Dobrovića*, Zagreb, 2007.

Therefore, this principle is by no means strictly analytical but rather synthetic, and at that, synthetic in a Mondrianic sense: it does not propose nor does it impose, but reveals what is, although hidden, already there, and then balances the inherent propositions and powers of the given, current space. The recipient is in turn required to *remain* in this harmonized and very suggestive micro-structure. It is seclusion that is demanded in this, one of *the possible spaces*⁴⁷ whereupon every predictability of the learned perception is undermined and where a prestable harmony is suspected of the endless multitude with which we are one.

⁴⁷ According to Rudjer Boskovic, the subject of geometry or mathematics in their wider sense are those possible unreal spaces which it clearly separates from the real, i.e. the given. S. Ristić, „Osnovi Boškovićeve dinamičke atomistike“, *Gradac*, No.180-181, Beograd, 2011, p. 43.

While Ana is making new hypsometrical relations

Jelena Spaić

Only one colour is capable of releasing visual arts from flaws

And it must glow! **Fluorescent colours** are hypertrophied realistic colours. All of the embodiments of natural energy are expressed with bright colours, and so fluo is connected to supernatural, even with neon signs. While they weaken the purposefulness of time, they bring space in, too with the light, thus revealing the structure of the order of the universe.⁴⁸ Like an X-ray, the Awareness is observed now through phosphorescence that illuminates darkness, the dark, the black hole, whereupon all facts, fictions and realities have originated and disappeared.⁴⁹ Only occasional inscriptions on glass⁵⁰ represent the first indications of space. And what a space it is!⁴ One collective dream is softly illuminated with two stretched rectangles, being shined upon and created by blacklight reflectors, but the tightness, the **tension**, represents the suspense which Ana uses to prepare us for the habitat of the focus. The simplicity possessed by complexity as its own domain is confirmed in the precise measuring and in determining the starting and neuralgic points of the gallery space and time, which Ana alters with her light again and again. Her reduction is an expression of finiteness and completeness. The total sum of the three widths of the columns in the gallery creates an angle in relation to the central axis, the outsets of the rectangles match the outlines of the windows, the clearly planned and emphasised form of the rectangle, almost ritually aspires towards higher, abstract, absolving structures of thinking. It reminded me of how it took me hours to verify the claim that all of the numbers the total of which is nine are divisible by nine. **Ana has created a map of a world of outsets.** Her seemingly simple style offers unusual capacities to create paradoxical connections. Ana teaches us

⁴⁸ Frederick Turner believes that the purpose of beauty is adaptation. This idea is given two interpretations – the first one says that art serves us to cope with this world, and the other, that the art reveals to us the structure of the order of the universe, referring to the correspondence between the sense of beauty and the deepest endeavours of the universe towards the whole. This thesis refers to the seven general features of the universe: self-similarity, unity in multiplicity, complexity within simplicity, creativity and generativeness, rhythmicity, symmetry and hierarchical organisation.

⁴⁹ The material elements are not expressed before they were created. From this subtle, unexpressed state a manifestation emanates, like air emanates out of ether, fire from air, water from fire, earth from water... in the beginning and the end, all of the elements are unexpressed, they are expressed only in the middle... Bhagavad-Gita.

⁵⁰ From 12 to 16 of October 2011, "**Collective Actions**" art group presented their work. They also represented Russia

at the Venice Biennale.

⁵¹ rd Belgrade as a Collective Dream dreamt by Anica Vučetić, Olivera Parlić, Sanja Latinović, Marina Marković, Milorad – Miša Mladenović, Radoš Antonijević, Marko Marković and Selaman Trtovac. Also, Selman Trtovac, Third Belgrade as a mental and physical art space.

geometry of liquid⁵² the moment we turn towards water. The two beats that we hear just before we are faced with a decision of whether to change our position and have a better look at the two empty rectangles simply because they are not emptiness but an activity in a field we have not reached yet. Turn and ... two beats, two rectangles, two spaces...

everything was suggesting a new dualism and dichotomy. It is as if Ana was reading excerpts from Atharva Vedas⁶ creating othernesses for us, for herself.

Love! has proven itself as our only lasting aspect, while the world is turning upsidedown, and the screen is going dark.⁷

We are within the space of desire. The second glance has led us towards the reflection on the glass, which leads us to the city lights on the water. Magical⁸ doubled constructs are amalgamated with lights in an ever new cohesion. Desire for the other is satisfied for a moment, at least with a quiver. As in the Illuminations game: clicking on one square lights up other squares, everything is slowly consolidated, we go to other levels; we walk on water, miracles do happen after all!

⁶

Power of sound and rhythmic vibrations, mantra theory as the sound origin of the overall matter and the world.
⁷ Martin Amis, the Times, 6 November, 2006.

⁸

Based on the sources from the 11th and 12th centuries the love magic was recorded amongst Proto-Slavic tribes. In order to be loved, girls would give young men water they had bathed in ... Š. Kulišić, Neobični običaji, Belgrade, 1968, pp. 95.

⁵² Of all the manifestations of matter, liquid is possibly closest to chaos and the non-expounded.

Interview with Ana Knežević by Mara Prohaska Marković

ArtFAMA: When did you recognize physics as a field that is related to your art work? How did this happen?

ANA KNEŽEVIĆ: In 2004, during my MFA studies at Massachusetts College of Art in Boston, I met Canadian artist Dorothea Rockburne who advised me to get in touch with scientists. She told me about an engineer Billy Klüver (who founded an organization called Experiments in Art and Technology) as well as about her own education at Black Mountain College. That same year, at my final exam at MassArt, Stephen Westfall (an American painter, critic, and professor at Bard College) suggested it would be good for me to collaborate with scientists at MIT to realize my ideas related to light and space -- at that time, those were installation sketches that required zebra holograms. That was unimaginable for me then, but things have come together with time... I was already working with lasers then and in 2005 I did an installation in Planetarium in Belgrade for which I used rotation lasers that followed the shape of the space. At that point, I also realized that scientists in Planetarium have a projector with similar lines (shaping the space) which they use for sky orientation. In 2006, I participated in a multimedia project Radio Light 487796 dedicated to 150th anniversary of Nikola Tesla's birthday. Once I started reading about Tesla's work, I became interested in other contemporary scientific theories and realized that my artistic exploration of the void corresponds with some research in contemporary physics.

A.F: What is the void in your opinion?

A.K: I do not have any pretensions to fully verbalize my experience of the void. I rather try to express it through my work, hoping that by doing so I might eventually make it more appealing to others. Probably some different language might be needed for the different perspective of the world. What I feel appealing is that the void is a dynamic basis of everything that exists in the visible active world as well as a potential source of each and every non-active possibility. Each creation starts from the void, from the empty space. The emptiness does not have identity nor personal appearance. Numerical symbol that represent void is zero, the most mysterious of all numbers. Zero represents neither thing nor appearance, nor does it have geometrical qualities. We cannot know it, yet all numbers rely on it. Emptiness, the numerical symbol of which is zero is the foundation on which everything exists.

A.F: What is the relation between void, light and sound in your installations?
What is the meaning of symmetry in your work?

A.K: By exploring light–sound dimensions of space, I discovered the void as an essential element of my art work. I emphasize the void using a minimalistic intervention – sound and light- geometrical shapes that are in resonance with the site-specific void of the gallery rooms. And then by making harmonically balanced spatial situation, I sharpen the perception of the observer towards the more subtle spheres of existence as an important part of our reality. Symmetry refers to the balanced or ideal proportions of the shapes; it points out a certain order of elements of the unity. In my work I use symmetry, light and sound to redefine the space, to set it right, more balanced. Symmetry reveals the principles of the cosmic order that we are all part of.

A.F: In what way do the observers face the void at your exhibitions?

A.K: In my work, I try to visually emphasize the void (the invisible) and to articulate it in such a way that it becomes ‘accessible’ to the viewers through their own emotional and mental experience. In my installations, by reducing the visual elements and setting the environment in a completely different, unexpected way, using light, geometry and sound, I try to make the spectators aware of the more subtle qualities of the ‘empty’ space. When the observers enter my installation, while coming nearer to the geometrical and light shapes empty at first glance, the light makes those shapes vivid and the architecture behind them appears as if it were behind glass. The eyes do not see the elastics nor the architecture behind, they rather focus on the space inside the shape. From the comments that I have heard, the observers generally have very personal experience of the space and void in my art work, so I guess that sounded void is that which opens the field of the double reflection (work–observer, observer–work), which can be related to the findings of contemporary quantum theory in as much as it states the observer and the observed are one.

A.F: What is the difference between voids in different spaces/exhibitions?

A.K: Every void is unique. The shape of the space affects the setup of the exhibition.

Geometrical shapes that I create are in resonance with the volume of the space and with the architectural elements inside them. Quantum physics has found that the world in its deepest essence is not material. The so-called material substances, from which atoms and the whole material universe are made, are not material at all. They are variable energetic appearances that sometimes appear as energetic concentrates or particles, sometimes as wave fields. As determined

by the quantum mechanics, the material universe consists of the void plus the densified parts of the void that are called elementary particles. Quantum mechanics experiments revealed the principle of uncertainty and proved the consciousness of the observers to be an integral part of the observed situations. They practically proved things that previously scientists had only been able to discuss philosophically, so we now have to leave behind the naïve picture of the reality seen as a sophisticated machine. Quantum theory is forcing us to view reality in a different way, to consider physics in which consciousness plays a major role and where consciousness of the observer and consciousness of the observed are one.

A.F: How do you see the present state in physics, the so-called 'breakdown' in physics, and what effect does it have on your work?

A.K: In 1982 barely unknown, still significant event occurred at the University of Paris, where a research team led by the physicist Alain Aspect performed what may turn out to be one of the most important experiments of the 20th century. Aspect and his team discovered that under certain circumstances subatomic particles such as electrons are able to instantaneously communicate with each other regardless of the distance separating them. The problem with this experiment is that it violates Einstein's long-held tenet that nothing can travel faster than light. David Bohm, a physicist at the University of London, believes Aspect's findings imply that objective reality does not exist and that, despite its apparent solidity, the universe is in its essence a phantasm, i.e. a gigantic and splendidly detailed hologram. An expanding though small group of scientists believes that this is the most precise model of reality that can ever be reached. In his book *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, Mircea Eliade proposes the hypothesis that the future of the dominant western civilization depends on the ability of this civilization to open itself to the experiences that have been pushed aside because they don't match its rationalistic paradigm. Aspect's findings show that we have to be ready to take into account radically new prospective of reality. When we consider new ways of understanding the world, the artistic perception can be an important engine.

[ArtFAMA Serbian Magazine for Contemporary Art, No 59, December 2011]

***Raison d'être*, an ambiental installation by Ana Knezevic in the Chaos Gallery**

by Ljiljana Ćinkul (Politika Daily, March 6th 2010)

The Essence of Space

Seen in the context of 21st century visual art, the idea of drawing as a primary medium can be traced back to an impulsive author's note and the traditional drawing on paper leading to conceptual plastic art structures or their spatial installations and projections. In addition to the Chaos Gallery which has been for nearly two decades promoting drawing in its various forms and has fostered a broad view of this media extending its boundaries, the Vladimir Velickovic foundation award contest has inspired new motivation in the art of drawing. This contest, founded in 2008, which animates younger artists (up to age forty), is realized by this specialized gallery which exhibits award winners' works as well.

Ana Knezevic is the second award winner for drawing from the Vladimir Velickovic foundation for 2009. Her latest work *Raison d'être* is a possible answer to the question – What is drawing today? Accepting the idea that drawing undergoes transformation as does every creative process in terms of time, Ana Knezevic explores spatial geometric drawing and the interrelations of the space–sound–light dimension. By creating an overall ambience in an blacklit gallery, using reduced visual elements correspondent to the geometric concept, she creates lines with fluorescent threads stretching from floor to ceiling, while fine light effects and sound frequencies suggest an illusion of mysterious cosmic distances and an achievement of synergy.

This site-specific project in its spatial inclusiveness creates in viewers an impression of absolute presence which, being a distinctive echo of emotions and contemplation, makes this ambiental situation unparalleled. The convincing power of the multimedia installation *Raison d'être* lies in the annullment of the gap between the spectator and the work, as it invites us into an inner space of its own, and at the same time engages all our senses ensuring the utmost effect of the message conveying harmony quest as an eternal stimulation. In the preface named The Essence of Space, Miroslav Karić focuses on these phenomena in the work of Ana Knezevic.

Names of projects realized by Ana Knezevic in the course of this last decade – Sounded Void, Sound of light, Lines of Desire – illustrate her focus on exploring space and its comprehensive projections in which real and virtual merge.

Light: Raison d'être , exhibition at CHAOS Gallery in Belgrade, February/March 2010.

Ljubomir Todorović

All harmonies are balanced. It is merely a question of how harmony is understood, as opinions and understanding of one particular issue may vary distinctively.

What inspired this contemplation? An exhibition!

An exhibition of four exhibits only and, if I remember correctly, 13 lines! Probably a coincidence, but such that allows imagination to run freely and lets one comprehend the harmony in one's own unique way. The twelve apostles, twelve lines observable as you walk in, and the thirteenth, at first not visible, like Christ, as if testing whether you see just separate exhibits or the whole set – a performance of light! Are the 12 apostles all you see, or, driven by a persistent desire to see everything, you see Christ as well, a sole unique vertical line! Why a performance of *light*? And what are actually the exhibits? It may seem absurd to say that they are but fluorescent threads shaped into rectangular forms illuminated by a dark blue light which makes the threads themselves become a new, unforeseen source of light.

Rectangular shapes which, stretching from the floor to the ceiling at an angle that one is convinced couldn't possibly be altered, vertical as the exclusive single truth, arouse still new reflexions. Reflexions at one moment childish, at another serious when you are aware that life is one big risk. From an imagined swing waiting for you to carelessly swing away like you used to long ago (where have all our childhoods gone!), through a symbolic Sisyphus' climb up a bottomless plane (life struggle), to a trapeze in a life arena with the audience awaiting your *salto mortale* that you are not certain you can perform... or a vertical rectangular shape, skillfully placed at your side as you pass by, a wall limiting, still allowing you to pass through, a matterless wall, a warning and a reminder that impenetrable walls exist... and indeed, the warning was effective! Not anyone dared walk through it, save for art and the artist herself, which is her privilege.

Her world is on the other side, a world from which, like a believer and an icon painter she writes in light her artistic testimony... for light is life for her as well. Uncreated and created... at Mount Sinai and Mount Tabor... in Chaos... At the CHAOS gallery.

The Inner Architecture of the Soul

(on ambiances and spatial drawings of Ana Knežević)

Mileta Prodanović

The existence of light is usually implied; we do not wonder much about its physical being, theories of wave extending or its corpuscular nature, we usually have a vague image about photons ... Some people can say that light does not really exist, and some others can complete and correct this attitude saying that we become aware of light if there is an object in the linear way to stop its spreading, that is, it exists only if it meets other objects or beings.

In the environment where an evolving course in the work of an artist is still important (that is, in the environment which is rather reserved to achievements and radical cuts of all kinds), Ana Knežević's work reliably follows the lines of continuity: she reached minimalism by reducing the abstract painting, she brought a net of lines from the surface of the painting out into the space and in a completely logical way she came to big urban interventions. These projects have brought her in the field of high technologies, the field in the dividing zone of art and science.

The laser beam is a perfect line in the space. This achievement – as well as all other technological breaks in the modern epoch and earlier – was born under support of war industry and then reached the industry of entertainment. It has happened that laser technology has turned aside from the path marked between death and carelessness into the field of medicine and art, the fields that exist to our advantage and not our disadvantage. Ana Knežević used such a possibility – her already formulated language of work in the space was enlarged with another medium, a step towards a further line dematerialization.

However, we can wonder why there is at all that reduced ambientalization in the closed space of the gallery or in the open space of the town. Are these

threedimensional drawings only scenography or are they here to point to a deeper intention of the artist? The marked lines in the space, the segmented sections of dark, underlined by sound as another important dimension, produce a reduced, but a universal platform for the experience of the one who enters the space. This platform is set in such a way that the question of the traditional belief that radical geometry is deprived of emotions is in doubt. On the contrary, the works of Ana Knežević are created with the purpose to serve as unique resonators of emotions. Or thoughts. The instruction, which the artist herself gives by the title – *Lines of Desire* – as a clear paraphrase of the title of a Wender's film - the film about the nonmaterial and chasity, additionally directs our experience.

In this issue of making Ana Knežević's visual ideas be spatial, another inversion appeared referring her previous works – sound, to be precise – music, which came as a final layer in the previous works, that is, *aposteriori*, now precedes a spatial creation. The work in the space of the Gallery “Nadežda Petrović” in Čačak executed with the material to which the “black light” multiplies reflective power, originated as a spontaneous, intuitive response to the sound. Another important premise of Ana Knežević's work represents the given space, its characteristics – here the whole setting has been reconsidered in such a way that the symmetry of the space has been taken into consideration, and symmetry almost always suggests a certain dimension of holiness.

That dimension of quieted holiness is intensified by the fact of *uniqueness, the inimitable* of these works. Ana Knežević's settings can only incompletely be documented. That “non-photographability” disables each additional reading of light structures. In order to experience them, the viewer must enter these spaces, all the mediators are excluded – just in the way how you should go to the place of pilgrimage in person.

It is generally possible to speak about light *as such*, you may picture the beam that comes from a light source in space, the beam that absolutely *never* meets another celestial body that announces its presence. It is similar with love, too – it is possible, in philosophical or even theological speculations, to speak about love *as such*, but we are aware that the emotion really exists only if another human being exists to receive it. The ambiental works of Ana Knežević are visualized and executed as a kind of a visual evidence of that attitude.

Ana Knezevic – SOUND OF LIGHT

Jelena Krivokapić

In the last third of the 20th century, after experience of the historical avant-garde, many discussions were again started dealing with the status of the art object (painting, sculpture, installation) and its spatial extension as an intentionally unfinished category and subject of new kinetic perceptions in the observer's consciousness. Different and specific initial energies, set in motion by these objects – from kinetic and op-art via minimal and land-art to certain minimalist spatial inventions of conceptual art – develop in a given space as continual processes that should transform that space and prevent the possibility of its petrification, whatever that might mean. The artist's motivation for the most varied "spatial exploration" was basically in his/her conviction that the global mediatization of public and political contamination of everyday space reached such an extreme paroxysm that it required a thorough reexamination of perception in conditions of new formative (dis)opportunities and direct experience of inhabiting a physical space.

Spatial constructions and objects represent a type of artistic answer, one that should mediate in the formation of new and subtle forms of existence that gravitate towards the ideal utopian unity with life or the humanization of space for artistic play and is closely connected to the neo-constructivist and minimal art procedures. Other solutions, like the ones in conceptual art, use minimalistic spatial interventions and discrete configurational displacement, aimed at the critical perception of the existing environment and the direct, often radical transformation of its social context. In both cases the viewer is constantly displaced from the inertia of the particular processes that take place in the existing ambient, from the perspectives and focal points of the previously suggested habits, now he/she is invited to be an active participant in the re-creation of his/her own "site experience" within an existing place.

Ana Knezevic is an artist who consistently implements the idea of spatial exploration in her work. Her work is closely connected to different borderline procedures within the Euro – American minimal and conceptual art that is related to the previous generation of artists (Robert Irwin, Fred Sandback, Dan Flavin, and Daniel Buren). Ana exploits the potential of the "imaginary" architectural semantics of a public space and primarily create an assumption for the perception of space in its poetical and intellectual dimension of experiencing a place (site).

Ana Knezevic's opus is based on an articulation of compositions of geometric abstraction on a two-dimensional surface and then in three dimensional space. The axis of her work is created by a linear diagram – that carries the phantasmal rhythms of color and light discharge – that denotes, in a particular way, the spatial planes of the ground plan in regards to the picture's foreground (cycle *Dragon's and Sounded*, 2002).

The artist begins with the real physical space that becomes the subject of radical denotation of special planes and its conventional statuses. In that sense, *The Sound of Light* is conceived as an ephemeral spatial installation specially constructed for one of the two separate rooms of the Gallery "Belgrade". The physical space is in complete darkness or it can be taken as the natural phone of night in the open space that marks the imagined scope of a camera obscura. Different spatial compositions made of

laser light beams that “emerge” of the newly created background, most often function as pseudo-axonometric projection of a ground plan. The projections of dynamic turns of light linear diagrams, will later take part in suggesting a consistent dematerialization of formal spatial planes and their statuses – the horizontal-vertical allocations, the impression of order, weight, stability or our habits of spatial coordination on ground.

Diagrams made of light isolate individual linear turns similar to a melodic punctuation that functions as a displaced echo (monument) of rational perception of the dimensions of physical space (of the present moment), marked out rhythms of the ground (collective history) or our experience of walking (individual memory) - Radio Light(2006) and Intersection (2007)*.

Exploration procedures that exploit the elements of quasi-purist abstraction, dynamic projections of light and sophisticated electronic technology are the subject of an intuitive and direct physical “calculation” in space that reveal new rhythms of purely emotional planes and a new poetic metric. Thus, the names of the works- 6 Lines and 2 Panes of Glass to See You(2004), Faraway, so close(2004) or Sounded Void 3 (2005). Sublime planes of pure tones of color and their linear modulations, participate in the overall suggestion that the sound is that isolated and illusive newly created emotion, emanation caught for a moment and stamped by the dark room”...here and now and the one that strikes me with the sensual environment of light like a star in constant recessive twinkling...” (La chambre Claire, Roland Barthes)

Perpetually configured focuses of sensual and spiritual balance lead us into a unique experience of inhabited space as a virtual meeting place of disparate spatial planes, the continual process of bringing closer the terra firma and the starry sky and an almost tactile feeling of inhabitation in a kind of inter-temporal space.

* Laser beams were projected from four different points on the ground, the monument of Mihailo Obrenovic, Dositej Obradovic, Josif Pancic and Vojvoda Vuk and they intersected on the night sky. The author’s idea was to map disparate spatial planes and the intersection of their energies anticipated with the meaning these monuments have for the author”...symbols of development, Europeanization, synergies of science and nature , culture tradition...”, see in Ana Knezevic, Ivana Malek, The Luminous Architectonic of a Futuristic City, “Intersection”.

Special supplement of Politika, 15 April 2007, published for the manifestation “Days of Belgrade, 16-19 April 2007. Ana Knezevic was the author of this project together with her team Ivana Malek and Aleksandra Raonic.

RECOMMENDATION

May 20, 2004

... I have been teaching Ana for two semesters in an independent study for her MFA from Massachusetts College of Art, and have watched her grow and expand her horizons greatly in that time.

Ana is a driven artist, with distinct vision and the strength of character to follow through on her ideas. Since I was introduced to her work, Ana has taken on the difficult shift from traditional formalist painting on canvas to large scale installations involving light and space. Along the way she has recruited others to the cause of creating her artistic vision and collaborated in various aspects of her creative process. Working with computer animators, Ana has made visual models of works which, as of yet, cannot be materialized. Ana has also been taking on non-traditional materials such as lasers, despite a background in traditional artmaking practices, showing the rare ability to shed years of training in pursuit of her vision of what can be.

More than any other trait, Ana's drive is most apparent in her character. I have seen her decide on several occasions to push on despite being told that her intentions are difficult or impossible. Ana will often continue to push her goals, working alone until she finds others who share her vision and have the ability to help her along.

I am sure the next several years will hold greater change and accomplishment for Ana, and I fully expect that this will be in pursuit of her unique vision.

Michael Mittelman

Adjunct Faculty, Department of Media and Performing Arts

Massachusetts College of Art

Founder and Editor

Aspect Magazine

MINIMALIST ACTION

Paintings by Ana Knežević at the Gallery of Students Cultural Center

Whiteness and nakedness with some blues gather in Ana Knezevic's paintings. The beginning (as a fundament) inside the objective is but a handrail on a stairway to the spiritual, to the purity of the Universal. Because "where others offer their oeuvres, I mind only how to show my soul" Knežević quotes Artaud. At the painter's starting point of this student of the 4th year at the academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade, the spectator will find the clear indications to the works of Milo Milunović and Slava Bogojević (not the quotes from). Her effort could be likewise-to renounce objects in favor of an endless search inside the creative work itself.

Mostly her large format canvases were exhibited. The more she penetrates into the space, the more daring is Ana's creative adventure. Indication on the way she goes is clear. Considering her exhibition at the Gallery of the Student's Cultural center, she is going toward the minimalist action areas. However, the empty space as a visual field is not what matters, because the essence rests in the hints of a vision, in a quiver of life.

Savo Popović

/ BORBA Daily- Belgrade; Art Events column; Friday, 15th of December 2000 /