



# Znakovi/signs

Fatlum Doçi

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# ZNAKOVI

**J**ezik pejzaža – kao kodiranog (skrivenog) sustava vrijednosti, koji se odnosi na (neskrivenu) sliku prirodnih krajolika – u centru je pozornosti umjetnika Fatluma Doçija. Bez obzira koji umjetnički medij koristi, a podjednako ga zanimaju slika i akvarel, nakit, instalacija i video, te vrijednosti – političke, društvene i ekonomske, ali i duhovne – on artikulira skupom vizualno organiziranih odnosa u kojima ni figurativni, ni apstraktni elementi ne zauzimaju centralno mjesto, već se uzajamno generiraju, podupiru i rekonstruiraju: u Doçijevim “živim slikama”, značaj koji se pripisuje Prirodi, vraća moć Duhovnog u naizgled nežive organske oblike koji nastanjuju njegove radove.

“Kartografija ljudskih i neljudskih duša” zabilježena u jednoj njegovoj slici evokativnog naslova – *Znakovi* (2016.), privukla mi je pozornost prije tri godine, kada se Dočijev svijet po prvi puta razotkrio pred mojim očima. Začudo, rad *Znakovi* nema neku određenu Formu u pojmovnom smislu riječi. U konvencionalnom smislu je, pak, vizualno izražen u vidljivoj gesti dva dlana, spojena i otvorena prema gore. Pojava tjelesnih elemenata (ljudske ruke kao centralne teme umjetničkog djela) na skoro jednobojnoj, plavičastoj pozadini (možda površina vode, s fantazmagoričnim cvjetnim detaljima u gornjem dijelu platna) je samo trag nečeg drugog, nevidljivog. Svojim *Znakovima* Doći odaje počast neobičnoj mentalnoj aktivnosti koju svakodnevno širom svijeta ponavljaju vjernici – članovi jedne zajednice, čije rituale pripadnici nekih drugih zajednica ne shvaćaju uvijek kao znak vjere i poziv na duševni mir, nego ih osuđuju u ime “demokracije” ili “etničkog i vjerskog puritanizma”, primjerice. Ova gesta predanosti i obožavanja, koja se može shvatiti i kao obično izlaganje ljudskih šaka kao osnovnog alata za manualni rad, uključujući i vještinu slikanja je Dočijeva osobna vizualna izjava, diskretan manifest o svijetu u kojem živi kao građanin, tvorac slike i vjernik. Osim promatračima na zemlji, on se obraća i nekome ili nečemu iznad Zemaljskih stvari, koje mora ostati nevidljivo u svojoj sveprisutnosti i svojoj jedinstvenosti u Univerzumu. Rad *Znakovi*, u tom smislu, nosi “ikoničku” referencu na svijet bez ikona, gdje je ljudsko tijelo u prostoru i vremenu samo

prijenosnik bezvremenog obećanja i beskonačne zahvalnosti Stvoritelju za Vodu života.

Sušтина stvaranja je priroda, ili kako nas uči islamska kultura – sâmo Stvaranje je vrt. Međutim, “naročito u kontekstu islamskog uređenja vrta i transformacije pejzaža, koje prethodne studije objašnjavaju isključivo na temelju kuranske teme raja, važno je uočiti i značaj geografskih, ekonomskih i političkih faktora” (kako to predlaže Dede Fairchild Ruggles u svom tekstu “Vrtovi Alhambre i koncept vrta u islamskoj Španjolskoj”, objavljenom u knjizi *Al-Andaluz: Umjetnost islamske Španjolske*).

Dočijev noviji projekt *Sjemenke* (2018.) slijedi sličnu logiku. Napravio je instalaciju, u formatu skulpture, koja izložbeni prostor ispunjava volumenima i materijalima po uzoru na prirodu i vegetaciju – što ne iznenađuje, s obzirom na činjenicu da je uzgoj biljaka ukorijenjen u njegovoj obiteljskoj tradiciji, a ideja o Vrtu osnovni izvor njegove inspiracije. Rad se sastoji od osam “ljuštura” – kora od bundeve, postavljenih na isto toliko hidrauličnih cijevi, koje su potpuno umotane u grane vrbe; u svakoj od njih je skrivena minijturna svjetiljka, spojena na električnu utičnicu na zidu. Način na koji je Doçi obrađivao vanjsku površinu kora od bundeve tijekom dva mjeseca, koliko je radio na ovom projektu, sličan je načinu na koji obrađuje površinu sitnog kamenja u svojoj radionici za izradu bižuterije u Skadru. Rezultat tehnike graviranja, koju primjenjuje u oba slučaja, su svjetlosni efekti “čarobne lampe”: topla crvenkasta svjetlost oko zamračenog izložbenog prostora

projicira se iz unutrašnjosti svake bundeve kroz pažljivo izrezane otvore. Time se postižu efekti koji se stvaraju kod onog što se na arapskom zove *mašrabija* – drveni paravani, koji prikrivaju vanjštinu zgrada u tradicionalnoj arapskoj arhitekturi, kako bi se zaštitila privatnost ljudi koji su unutra, a koji ipak, neopaženi, mogu gledati ulicu.

Za svoju prvu izložbu u Zagrebu, Fatlum Doçi predstavlja pet video radova da bi stvorio atmosferu prožetu svjetlošću, meditacijom i duhom, te postavlja jedno osnovno pitanje: kako se stvaraju i mijenjaju sjećanja kada se, u očima odraslih promatrača, prostor počinje prikazivati drukčije u odnosu na percepciju istog prostora tijekom njihova djetinjstva? Doçijevi video radovi, snimljeni na mjestima u okolini njegovog rodnog grada Skadra i Skadarskog jezera, izravno su povezani s njegovim sjećanjima na djetinjstvo i odrastanje u prirodnom okruženju, koje je tijekom vremena, nakon pada komunizma, “okupirano” raznim legalnim i ilegalnim doseljenicima, koji su došli u gradska i turistička područja s okolnih brda i planina.

*Šetnja po sjećanjima* (2015.) je rad koji povezuje uspomene iz Doçijevog djetinjstva sa sadašnjošću, pokazujući kako se neka sjećanja mijenjaju kada prostor poprimi drukčiji izgled. Rad *Copyright* (2015.) bavi se mislima, osjećajima i mnogim drugim procesima koji se odvijaju u ljudskom biću i ukazuje da je ono što ometa duševni mir pojedinca, u većini slučajeva, sâm pojedinac i njegovo osobno djelovanje. *Granica* (2015.) govori o jednostavnoj mudrosti: ono



Šetnja po sjećanjima, 2015., jednokanalni video, u boji, bez zvuka, 3'  
*Walking on Memories*, 2015, Single-channel video, color, no sound, 3'

čega se bojim nije Smrt, nego Vrijeme koje prolazi. *Bez naslova – (izgleda kao...)* (2015.) govori o načinima na koje nas uče da gledamo na stvari, čak i ako su one često samo san – ili iluzija. *Lutanje okolo* (2014.) je rad o čekanju da nešto naraste i razvije grane Duše i Uma, poput stabla čije je korijenje duboko ukopano u prošlost, a možda i budućnost.

Povezujući uspomene iz djetinjstva sa sadašnjim trenutkom, umjetnik preispituje granice čovjekovog odnosa prema prirodnom okružju, percepciji smrti i ideji vremena provedenog u očekivanju, prema unutrašnjim, nevidljivim manifestacijama života, i odnosu između prošlosti i budućnosti. Potaknut duhovnim jezikom pejzaža, kako je to ranije najavljeno u opisu njegovog ulja na platnu i instalacije s bundevama, Doći se ovom izložbom u Zagrebu, još jednom vraća zaboravljenoj Prirodi i zanemarenoj Duhovnosti, dok poziva promatrače da se pridruže njegovom “neobičnom” ritualu. Zaustavite se, zato, na trenutak i meditirajte, tiho i bez žurbe, u atmosferi pokretnih slika, toplih boja i diskretnih zvukova ZNAKOVA...

Marko Stamenković





*Copyright, 2015., jednokanalni video, u boji, zvuk, 3'*  
*Copyright, 2015, Single-channel video, color, sound, 3'*



# Fatlum Doçi

## SIGNS

**A** language of landscape – as a code for a system of values placed on Land – has been at the center of Fatlum Doçi's attention over the last years. Regardless of artistic medium (he is equally concerned with painting and watercolor as with jewelry, installation and video), these values - political, social and economic, but also spiritual - are articulated by a set of visually organized relations in which neither figurative nor abstract elements take center stage; instead, they enhance each other in a way that the significance ascribed to Nature restores the power of spiritual in seemingly inanimate organic forms inhabiting his works.

This ‘cartography of human and non-human souls’ is captured in one of his paintings, evocatively entitled *Signs* (2016), that took my own attention years ago when, for the very first time, Doçi’s world revealed itself to my eyes. Curiously enough, *Signs* has no particular Form, in the conceptual sense of the term; in the conventional sense, it is, indeed, visually expressed in the perceivable gesture of two palms joined together and kept openly up. The appearance of corporal elements (human hands as the central subject of the artwork) on the almost monochrome, bluish background (the water surface, perhaps, with phantasmagoric floral details in the upper part of the canvas), is but a trace of something else. With *Signs*, Doçi pays homage to a peculiar mental activity, repeated daily and on several occasions, amongst devotees – the worldwide members of a community whose rituals have not always been seen (by members of other communities) as the sign of faith and call to peace of mind, but rather condemned in the name of ‘democracy’ or ‘ethnic and religious purity’, for instance. In this gesture of devotion and worshipping (which may also be understood as a simple exposure of basic tools for manual labor, including the skill of painting), Doçi creates a personal visual statement and a discreet manifesto about the world he inhabits as a citizen, image-maker and believer. Besides onlookers on the ground, it also addresses someone or something above Earthly matters, that must remain invisible in its omnipresence and its singularity in the Universe. *Signs*, therefore, bears an ‘iconic’ reference towards the world without icons, where human

flash in space and time is but a conveyor of a timeless promise and infinite gratefulness to the Creator for the Water of Life.

The essence of creation is nature – or, as Islamic culture teaches – Creation itself is a garden. However, “particularly in the context of Islamic garden making and landscape transformation, which previous studies have explained solely on the basis of the Qur’anic theme of paradise, it is critical to recognize the extent to which environmental, economic and political factors played a role,” (as suggested by Dede Fairchild Ruggles in her text “The Gardens of the Alhambra and the Concept of the Garden in Islamic Spain”, published in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*). Doçi’s more recent project – *Seeds*, 2018 – is underpinned with the similar logic. He created a sculptural format for an installation that feeds the exhibition space with voluminous and material suggestions taken from nature and vegetation – and not surprisingly so, given the fact that the cultivation of plants has been rooted in his family tradition and the idea of a Garden remains the central source of his inspiration. The work consists of eight pumpkin shells installed onto the same number of hydraulic tubes, which are entirely wrapped in willow branches; each of them has a miniature light bulb hidden inside, connected to the electric power socket on the wall. The way Doçi treated the external surface of pumpkin shells (or their ‘skin’) for over two months of his work on this project is similar to the manner he treats the surface of small stones in his imitation-jewelry workshop in Shkodra. The etching



*Bez naslova (Izgleda kao...), 2015., jednogkanalni video, u boji, zvuk, 3'35"*  
*Untitled (It Looks Like...), 2015, Single-channel video, color, sound. 3'35"*

technique applied in both cases results in ‘magic lamp’ light effects: the warm reddish light around the darkened exhibition space is projected from the inside of each pumpkin shell through delicately engraved wholes. This resonates with effects created by what is known in Arabic as *mashrabiya* – wooden screens that mask the exteriors of buildings in traditional Arabic architecture so to protect privacy of those inside while allowing them to have a view onto the street, without being seen.

For his first ever exhibition in Zagreb, Fatlum Doçi brings together five video works to create an atmosphere imbued with light, meditation and spirit, while posing one central question: how do memories form and change when, in the eyes of an adult observer, the space begins to show differently than was perceived in the age of infancy? Recorded in locations around his native city of Shkodra and the Shkodra Lake, the videos are directly related to his memories about childhood and growing up in a natural setting that has been ‘occupied’ over time, after the fall of communism, by various legal and illegal settlers coming down to the urban and tourist areas from surrounding hills and mountains.

WALKING ON MEMORIES (2015) is a work that connects the memories from his childhood with the present, showing how some memories transform when the space starts appearing differently at a later point in time. COPYRIGHT (2015) deals with thoughts, feelings, and many other processes happening inside a human being, indicating that – in most of the cases – it is individuals themselves



*Granica*, 2015., jednokanalni video, u boji, zvuk, 3'  
*Borderline*, 2015, Single-channel video, color, sound, 3'

and their personal actions, or deeds, that disturb their peace of mind. BORDERLINE (2015) is about the simple wisdom: it's not Death that I am afraid of, but the Time passing by. UNTITLED (IT LOOKS LIKE...) (2015) is about the ways we are instructed to look at things, even though they are often just a dream - or illusion. HANGING AROUND (2014) is about waiting - for something to grow and to develop branches of Soul and Mind - like a tree, which has its roots embedded deeply in the past (and perhaps the future).

By linking childhood memories to the present moment, the artist re-examines the boundaries of human relationships to the natural environment, to the perception of death and the experience of time spent in anticipation, towards the inner, invisible experiences of life and the relationships between the past and the future. Informed by the spiritual language of landscape (as announced in his oil on canvas and pumpkins-installation described above), Doçi returns, once again with this exhibition in Zagreb, to the forgotten Nature and the neglected Spirituality while inviting observers to join his 'unusual' ritual. So, stop for a moment – to meditate silently and without rush in the atmosphere of moving images, warm colors and discreet sounds of SIGNS....

Marko Stamenković



## Fatum Doçi

Born in 1991 in Shkodra, the largest city in northern Albania, where he currently lives and works. He studied multimedia arts at the University of Arts in Tirana, where he graduated in 2015. Ever since, he participated in group exhibitions in his home country and abroad, among which the most important are: 'Ex Gratia', Collezione Giuseppe Iannaccone, Milano, Italy (2018); ARDHJE Award for Young Visual Artists, ZETA Gallery, Tirana, Albania (2018); The Biennial of Humor and Satire, Gabrovo, Bulgaria (2017); Mediterranea – 18 Young Artists Biennale, Tirana, Albania (2017); 'It Looks Like', Zeta Gallery, Tirana, Albania (2017); 'Inside-Out', Tirana Art Lab, Tirana, Albania (2016); 'Idromeno Award', Art Gallery, Shkodra, Albania (2015); arTVision – A Live Art Channel, M'ARS Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia (2015). His most recent solo exhibitions include 'Signs', Galerija Podroom, Belgrade Cultural Centre, Belgrade, Serbia (2019) and 'The Presence of Absence', Tulla Cultural Centre, Tirana (2019). Besides his participation in Art House Residency Program in Shkodra (2017), he was an artist-in-residence at the Light Residency in Rijeka, Croatia, organized in 2015 by an electro-acoustic duo JMZM in collaboration with Goran Petercol.

## Marko Stamenković

(1977, Vranje, Serbia) Art historian, critic and curator whose most recent projects include exhibitions across the Balkans dealing with issues of mortality, humor, sexuality and civil protest. He is a member of AICA, The International Association of Art Critics – Croatian section.

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## Fatum Doçi

Rođen je 1991. u Skadru, najvećem gradu sjeverne Albanije, gdje trenutačno živi i radi. Studirao je multimedijску umjetnost na Akademiji umjetnosti u Tirani, a diplomirao je 2015. Doçi je sudjelovao na brojnim grupnim izložbama u rodnoj zemlji i inozemstvu, od kojih su najznačajnije: 'Ex Gratia', Collezione Giuseppe Iannaccone, Milano, Italija (2018.); ARDHJE nagrada za mlade vizualne umjetnike, ZETA Centar, Tirana, Albanija (2018.); Bijenale humora i satire, Gabrovo, Bugarska (2017.); Mediterranea 18, Bijenale mladih umjetnika, Tirana, Albanija (2017.); 'It Looks Like', Zeta Centar, Tirana, Albanija (2017.); 'Inside-Out', Tirana Art Lab, Tirana, Albanija (2016); 'Idromeno Award', Art Gallery, Skadar, Albanija (2015.); arTVision – A Live Art Channel, M'ARS Centar za suvremenu umjetnost, Moskva, Rusija (2015.). Njegove najnovije samostalne izložbe su: 'Znakovi', Galerija Podroom, Kulturni centar Beograda, Beograd, Srbija (2019.) i 'Prisustvo odsutnosti', Kulturni centar Tulla, Tirana (2019.). Osim rezidencijalnog programa Art House u Skadru (2017.), Doçi je kao rezidencijalni umjetnik sudjelovao i na međunarodnoj radionici Light Residence u Rijeci 2015. godine, koju je organizirao glazbeni tandem JMZM, u suradnji s Goranom Petercolom.

## Marko Stamenković

(1977., Vranje, Srbija) Povjesničar je umjetnosti, kritičar i kustos, čiji se recentni projekti, predstavljeni u balkanskim zemljama, bave pitanjima smrtnosti, humora, seksualnosti i građanskog otpora. Član je AICA-e, Međunarodne udruge umjetničkih kritičara - Hrvatska sekcija.

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*Lutanje okolo*, 2014., jednokanalni video, boja, zvuk, 2'40"  
*Hanging Around*, 2014, Single-channel video, color, sound, 2'40"