

# ELISA ANDESSNER PIRATE WOMEN\*



**Galerija Art**



**Galerija Art**

**ELISA ANDESSNER**  
**PIRATE WOMEN\***

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BILDET BANDEN, 2022, foto-tapet— detalj /  
wallpaper – detail, 150 x 150 cm

Jednog divnog dana, ugledaćemo  
pramen dima kako se uzdiže sa same ivice pučine.  
A potom će se pojaviti brod.  
Potom će bijeli brod uploviti u luku,  
I zagrmijeće svoj pozdrav.

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Madama Butterfly

One fine day we'll see  
a wisp smoke rising over the furthest edge of the sea.  
And then the ship appears.  
Then the white ship comes into the port,  
thunders its salute.

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Madama Butterfly

Sve učestalija stvaralačka nužnost da se komunicira sa društvenom stvarnošću osnažila je njenu kritičku i korektivnu ulogu i učvrstila areale interdisciplinarnog djelovanja između umjetnosti i antropoloških, socioloških, psiholoških i političkih fenomena. Ovo se osobito odnosi na društvene distorzije na koje umjetnost ukazuje svojim alhemijskim „ritualima“ koji nas „nalaze“ prije bilo kojeg drugog medija. Primjer za to je izložba austrijske umjetnice Elise Andessner pod nazivom *Pirate Women\**, koja problematizuje niz pitanja u vezi sa tradicionalnom rodnom atribucijom i promjenom u predstavljanju uzora žene u savremenim društvenim okvirima. Tako ova umjetnička postavka predstavlja svojevrsan prostor poništavanja utemeljenih rodni uzusa i koridor prelaska ka jednoj sasvim novoj psihološkoj i sociokulturnoj dimenziji, koja polazi od individualne samoaktuelizacije a teži da se ostvari i u kolektivnoj svijesti. Stoga stvaralački postupak umjetnice neodoljivo asocira na savremenu interpretaciju sentence „les rites de passage“, koju postavljamo kao temu njenog originalnog vizuelnog scenarija.

Rodna diskriminacija i diskriminacija „drugačijosti“ predstavlja posljedicu duge istorije patrijarhata kao dominantnog vrijednosnog sistema. Ona nije refleks ustrojstva tek pojedinih društava, već

The ever-growing creative need to communicate with social reality has strengthened its critical and corrective role and solidified the areas of interdisciplinary action between art and anthropological, sociological, psychological and political phenomena. This is particularly true of the social distortions that art points to with its alchemical “rites” that manage to “reach us” before any other medium. An example of this is the exhibition of the Austrian artist Elisa Andessner, entitled *Pirate Women\**, which challenges an array of issues pertaining to traditional gender attribution and changes in the representation of women’s role models in contemporary social frameworks. Thus, the exhibition represents a kind of space that annuls established gender norms, and a corridor for transitioning to a completely new psychological and socio-cultural dimension, which starts from individual self-actualisation and strives to be established in the collective consciousness. Therefore, the creative process of the artist is irresistibly evocative of contemporary interpretations of the term “les rites de passage”, which we hereby set as the theme of her distinctive visual script.

Gender discrimination, and the discrimination of “otherness” is a consequence of the long history of

- u manjoj ili većoj mjeri - neizostavan dio svekolike (nevidljive) stvarnosti i univerzalne rodne nejednakosti. Jer, osim sporadičnih primjera društvenih zajednica u kojima žene posjeduju mnoge vodeće uloge (poput malih izolovanih zajednica u Africi koje Zapad slabo poznaje), žene uglavnom zauzimaju inferiorne uloge i uloge „nižeg reda“. *Oikos* i *agora* kao antički principi ženskih i muških simboličkih prostora ostaju snažno utemeljeni u kolektivnoj svijesti gotovo svakog savremenog društvenokulturnog ambijenta. Umjetničko angažovanje jasne namjere da se ovaj problem još jednom aktualizuje - iskazano je osebnim i intrigantnim vizuelnim artikulacijama koje penetriraju u naše najdublje potisnute psihološke zabrane - jezikom (pseudo)istorije i mita.

Nije slučajna odabir ovakvog vizuelnog narječja. On nas upućuje na Elisino inteligentno razumijevanje smisla jer u svakom mitu mi težimo spoznaji bar male količine smisla koja se podudara sa našom individualnom stvarnošću. Zato prezentovanje umjetničke ideje u obliku vizuelne naracije o ženama piratima pruža mogućnost za bolje razumijevanje i pozicioniranje vlastitih identiteta u složenoj stvarnosti. Mit ovdje, dakle, vrši integrativnu funkciju: svjesnim projektovanjem sebe u piratsku „pripovijetku“ najdublje sežemo do vlastitog podsvjesnog razumijevanja, do mjesta gdje se zaista emotivno i psihološki nalazimo, sa svim unutrašnjim pritiscima. Umjetnica nam otvara put ka identifikaciji, koji predstavlja posredan način da osvijestimo postojanje bezbjednog mjesta u svijetu (pa gdje bi njegovo stanište bilo ako ne u umjetnosti?), gdje će se ojačati naša unutrašnja samospoznaja. Ovo je vid najhumanijeg ohrabrenja u imaginarnom obličju. Piratska storija o ženama predstavlja alegorijski model

patriarchy as the dominant value system. It is not a reflex of the structure of any individual society, but - to a greater or lesser extent - an indispensable part of the pervading (invisible) reality and universal gender inequality. Apart from sporadic examples of social communities in which women hold leading roles (such as small, isolated communities in Africa that the West knows little about), women tend to assume inferior and "lower-level" social roles. *Oikos* and *Agora* as ancient principles of women's and men's symbolic spaces remain strongly established in the collective consciousness of almost every modern socio-cultural environment. Artistic engagement with a clear intention to actualise this subject once again is expressed by distinctive and intriguing visual articulations that penetrate our deepest repressed psychological prohibitions - the language of (pseudo) history and myth.

Such a choice of visual dialect is no coincidence. It illustrates Elisa's intelligent understanding of meaning, because we strive to comprehend at least a degree of meaning in every myth, that would match our individual reality. Presenting an artistic idea in the form of a visual narrative about pirate women provides an opportunity to better understand and position one's own identity in a complex reality. Therefore, in this context, myth has an integrative function: by consciously projecting ourselves onto a pirate "story", we reach deep into our own subconscious understanding, to where we really stand emotionally and psychologically, coping with all the internal pressures. The artist paves the way to identification, which is an indirect way of raising awareness of the existence of a safe place in the world (indeed - where else would it be situated if not within art?), where our inner self-awareness will grow stronger. This is



PIRATE WOMEN\*, 2020, žikle-štampa / Fine Art Print / Hahnemühle papir, 50 x 75 cm

pristupa temi o duboko ukorijenjenoj obespravljenoj. Kao posmatraču nam imponuje u smislu rafiniranog i opreznog ulaska u polja konflikta sa stvarnošću, u polja unutrašnjih autocenzura koje ne dozvoljavaju da se izvjesni lični, rodni i društveni problemi sasvim ogole i demistifikuju. To je prefinjeni umjetnički jezik koji svoju osnovnu ideju čuva u mrežici psihodramskog scenarija, koji odgovara na duboku potrebu u našem biću – potrebu za apsolutnim samoostvarenjem i unutrašnjom obnovom. Smještanjem žena u pseudoistorijski kontekst koji ih predstavlja kao pirate (simbole vitaliteta i supremacije) preispituje se odnos moći kroz diskurs roda i seksualnosti i dodatno usložnjava pojam rodne hegemonije. „Narativni ram“ omogućava prihvatanje kompleksne prirode stvarnosti jer su ove umjetničke akcije usmjerene ka sticanju osjećaja identitetskih vrijednosti i vještina prevladavanja rodni stereotipa. Posmatrajući Elsineradove, arhetipske sadržaje „legendi“ unosimo u svjesna snatrenja koja omogućavaju izlazak poruke u svijet i tako olakšavaju da se sa datim rodni pritisicima sigurnije i nosimo i borimo. Njen stvaralački postupak je isprva naizgled jukstapozicionalan, da bi se u svojoj konačnici otjelovio u ideji koja emituje jedinstvenu poruku o poroznosti rodni identiteta i dekonstruisanju biološkog determinizma. U tom smislu ova umjetnička postavka snažno afirmiše i ideje multidimenzionalni, kompleksni i nesputani interpretacija roda i seksualnosti, kao i nekonvencionalne ljubavi.<sup>1</sup>

1 S tim u vezi, prisjetimo se M. Foucaultovog kapitalog djela *Istorija seksualnosti* u kojem filozof odbacuje seksualne (i polne) obrasce, kvalifikujući ih kao nametnute društveno-

one of the most humane attempts at encouragement in an imaginary form. The story of women pirates is an allegorical model for approaching the subject of deep-rooted disenfranchisement. As observers, we feel drawn to it in the sense that it provides a refined and carefully mapped entry-point into the field of conflict with reality, into the field of internal self-censorship that does not allow certain personal, gender and social challenges to be fully exposed and demystified.

It is a sophisticated artistic language that grounds its basic idea in the web of a psychodrama script, which responds to the deep need within our being – the need for absolute self-realisation and inner renewal. Placing women in a pseudo-historical context that features them as pirates (symbols of vitality and supremacy) re-examines the relationship of power through the discourse of gender and sexuality, and further complicates the notion of gender hegemony. The “narrative frame” enables acceptance of the complex nature of reality, given that these artistic actions are aimed at acquiring a sense of identity values and skills to overcome gender stereotypes. Observing Elisa’s works, we summon the archetypal contents of the “legends” into conscious reverie, thereby releasing the message into the world, and making it easier to cope with and tackle the array of gender pressures. Her creative process is, at first, seemingly juxtapositional, only to be embodied in an idea that conveys a unique message about the porosity of gender identities and the deconstruction of biological determinism. In that sense, this exhibition strongly affirms the ideas of multidimensional, complex and unrestrained interpretations of gender



PAULA MODERSOHN-BECKER, 2020, žikle-štampa / Fine Art Print / Hahnemühle papir, 50 x 75 cm



PIRATE WOMEN\*, 2022,  
foto-štampa / Photo Print / AluDibond,  
100 x 120 cm

Na predstavljenim djelima vidimo portrete žena koje su opisane psihološkim diskursom, koje pokazuju autonomnost, volju, dominaciju, dostojanstvenost, hrabrost, nabusitost, sigurnost i vlastitu snagu. Prikazane su kao simbol predvodništva i intelekta. Međutim, uprkos svim izražajnostima i karakternim specifičnostima, one se ne doimaju kao „idoli“ pred kojima se osjećamo poraženo. Uprkos njihovoj snažnoj individualnosti i simboličkoj grandioznosti, ovi portreti se mogu preoblikovati u opšte generičke slike. Oni su posrednici u procesima aproprijacije svih psiholoških osobina sa kojima se, posmatrajući ih, susriječemo. Postuliraju vrijednosti kao što su povjerenje, osjećajnost i odsustvo hijerarhije. Ohrabruju vitalnost stava o angažovanju u oblasti ostvarivanja svih prava, o prihvatanju datog angažovanja kao neminovnosti u svijetu stalnih kretnji i mijenā rodni strategija. Žensko zajedništvo, dijeljenje, moralna i emocionalna vrlina – postavljeni su kao princip koji ostvaruje nove valere u odnosu na davno uspostavljeni poredak kao *falogocentrični sistem vrijednosti*.<sup>2</sup>

Pored fotografisanih žena pirata koje osvajaju prostore naše perceptivne stvarnosti, na izložbi su prikazani i radovi koji referiraju na ličnosti i pokrete koji su ostavili snažan pečat na tok i razvoj ideje feminizma (radikalnog i postfeminizma): Jeanne d'Arc, Paula Modersohn-Beche, Alaa Salah, Greta Thunberg, Harriet

političke konstrukte: „Seksualnost nije prirodno svojstvo/činjenica ljudskog života i nema biološko izvorište, već se njeno polazište nalazi u istoriji, društvu i kulturi.“

<sup>2</sup> U smislu dekonstrukcije „falogocentričnog“ sistema J. Derrida je dao poseban doprinos teorijom koja je relativizovala „rodni sukob“ – ponajviše uvođenjem pitanja o „prelaznim oblicima seksualnosti“ kojim se napušta binarna rodna podjela.

and sexuality, as well as unconventional love.<sup>1</sup>

The exhibited pieces feature portraits of women who are outlined within a psychological discourse, showing autonomy, will, domination, dignity, courage, arrogance, self-confidence and strength. They are presented as a symbol of leadership and intellect. However, despite all the expressiveness and character specificities, they do not seem like “idols” before whom we bow in defeat. Despite their strong individuality and symbolic grandeur, these portraits can be transformed into universal, generic imagery. They are mediators in the processes of appropriation of all the psychological traits that we encounter by observing them. They postulate values such as trust, sensitivity, and the absence of hierarchy. They encourage the vitality of the position on engagement in the area of exercising of rights, and on accepting such engagement as obligatory in a world of constant movement and transformation of gender strategies. Female solidarity, sharing, moral and emotional virtue – are set as principles that embody new values as a contrast to the long-established structures of the *phallogocentric value system*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this regard, let us recall M. Foucault's capital work, *The History of Sexuality*, in which the philosopher rejects sexual (and gender) patterns, qualifying them as imposed socio-political constructs: “Sexuality is not a natural feature / fact of human life and it has no biological foundation; rather, its starting point can be found in history, society and culture.”

<sup>2</sup> In terms of deconstructing the “phallogocentric” system, J. Derrida made a special contribution with a theory that relativised the “gender conflict” – mostly by introducing the question of “transitional forms of sexuality” which abandons the binary gender categorisation.

Tubman, Rosa Parks, Joanna Dohnal, Stephanie St. Clair i dvije historijske žene pirati – Anne Bonny i Marry Read.

Posebno se interesantnim čini i rad *Al Uzza*, koji predstavlja savremenu reinterpretaciju mitološke priče o arapskoj boginji, jednoj od tri vrhovne boginje predislamskog božanskog kulta. No kako i samo božanstvo predstavlja postojanje samo u sebi (a time i jedinstvo u svom muškom i ženskom totalitetu), tako ovo djelo možemo tumačiti višeznačno, ono izmiče okvirima piratske teme, klizi u ezoterične rukavce svjesnih i nesvjesnih asocijacija zavisnih od individualnih referentnih okvira. Interpretativni diverzitet rasplamsavaju tribalni alati vizuelne inicijacije: krznena omča (okovratnik) i srebrne sablje.

Kakvi su to „rituali prelaska“ kojima se tijelom ispisuje crna posveta? Je li okovratno krzno savremena mitra supremacije?<sup>3</sup> Alhemijska ikonografija trijumfa ili sarkastični simbol društvenog atavizma? Astrahan persijskih boginja ili tribalni relik od kostrijeti? Da li je mač razorni amblem ili simbol lucidne snage borbe duha? Dva su noža – kao dvostruka moć, polna dvojnost utjelovljena u jednom biću kao slika ultimativnog preobraženja u kojem se reperkutira sav potencijal dubina „hermafroditizma duše“, kako kazuje Foucault. Androgino uskrnuće, kojem prethodi metaforička smrt starog i neadekvatnog „jastva“, obredno se obnavlja, izranja i ponovo rađa u višoj ravni ljudskog postojanja. Kao tajni lepet kriilā leptira, inkarniran u mraku trbuha svakog bića.

Selma Đečević

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Uzza*, rad predstavljen na izložbi koji referira na jednu od tri boginje iz perioda predislamskog arapskog religijskog kulta

In addition to photographed women pirates who conquer the spaces of our perceptual reality, the exhibition features works that refer to personalities and movements that had a strong impact on the course and development of the idea of feminism (radical and post-feminism): Jeanne d’Arc, Paula Modersohn-Beche, Alaa Salah, Greta Thunberg, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Joanna Dohnal, Stephanie St. Clair and two historical women pirates – Anne Bonny and Marry Read.

The piece *Al Uzza* seems particularly interesting, as a modern reinterpretation of the mythological story of the Arab goddess, one of the three supreme goddesses of the pre-Islamic religious cult. But just as the deity represents existence in itself (and, therefore, unity in its masculine and feminine totality), so this work can be interpreted ambiguously: it eludes the pirate theme, slips into the esoteric branches of conscious and unconscious associations, dependent on the individual frameworks. The interpretive diversity is ignited by tribal tools of visual initiation: a fur noose (collar) and a silver sword.

What are these “rites of passage” comprised of words, written in black, all over the body? Is the collar fur a modern mitre of supremacy?<sup>3</sup> An alchemical iconography of triumph or a sarcastic symbol of social atavism? An astrakhan of Persian goddesses or a tribal relic made of sackcloth? Is the sword a destructive emblem or a symbol of the lucid power of the prevailing spirit? There are two daggers – representing double power, sexual duality embodied in one being,

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Uzza*, a piece presented at the exhibition, is a reference to one of the three goddesses from the pre-Islamic Arabic religious cult.

an image of the ultimate transformation in which the full potential of the depths of Foucault's “hermaphroditism of the soul” reverberates. Androgynous resurrection, preceded by the metaphorical death of the old and inadequate “Self”, is a ritual of renewal, emerging and being reborn at a higher level of human existence. Like the secret flutter of butterfly’s wings, incarnated in the darkness of the belly of every being.

Selma Đečević



*AL -UZZA*, 2022, žikle štampa /  
Fine Art Print / Hahnemühle papir,  
50 x 75 cm





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PIRATE WOMEN\* Portreti / Portraits / foto -štampa /  
Photo Print / AluDibond, 25 x 20 cm



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*PIRATE WOMEN\**(Greta Thunberg), 2019, foto-štampa /  
Photo Print / AluDibond, 50 x 75 cm



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*PIRATE WOMEN\**(Harriet Tubman), 2019, foto-štampa /  
Photo Print / AluDibond, 50 x 75 cm



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*PIRATE WOMEN\**(Joan of Arc), 2019, foto-štampa /  
Photo Print / AluDibond, 50 x 75 cm



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*PIRATE WOMEN\**(Johanna Dohnal), 2019, foto-štampa /  
Photo Print / AluDibond, 50 x 75 cm



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*PIRATE WOMEN\**(Rosa Parks), 2019, foto-štampa /  
Photo Print / AluDibond, 50 x 75 cm



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*PIRATE WOMEN\**(Stephanie St. Clair), 2019, foto-štampa /  
Photo Print / AluDibond, 50 x 75 cm

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PIRATE WOMEN\*, (Suđenje Anne Bonny + Marry  
Read / Trial against Anne Bonny + Mary Read),  
2019, foto-štampa / Photo Print /  
AluDibond, 50 x 75 cm



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PIRATE WOMEN\* Portreti  
/ Portraits / foto-štampa /  
Photo Print / AluDibond,  
25 x 20 cm





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PIRATE WOMEN\* Portreti / Portraits /  
foto- štampa / Photo Print / AluDibond,  
25 x 20 cm

PIRATE WOMEN\*, 2022, foto-tapet / Wallpaper, 270 x 390 cm





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PIRATE WOMEN\*, 2020—2022,  
foto-štampa / Photo Print / AluDibond,  
100 x 120 cm





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Video-instalacije:  
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PIRATE WOMEN\* 2020.

**Biografija umjetnice**  
**Biography of the artist**

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[www.elisaandessner.net](http://www.elisaandessner.net)

**ELISA ANDESSNER**

Živi i radi u Lincu. Studirala je eksperimentalnu umjetnost na Univerzitetu za umjetnost i dizajn u Lincu i likovnu umjetnost na Ecole Superieure d'Art et de Design u Marselju. Elisa Andessner je *freelancer*, slobodna umjetnica koja djeluje u oblasti fotografije, videa, performansa i grafike. Od 2006. godine umjetnošću se bavi i u okviru rezidencijalnih programa, festivala i izložbi u Vijetnamu, Indoneziji, Poljskoj, Bjelorusiji, Njemačkoj, Francuskoj, Španiji, Belgiji, Austriji i Švajcarskoj, a odnedavno i u Iranu. Dobitnica je nagrada, stipendija i otkupnih nagrada za radove iz javnih umjetničkih kolekcija. Andessner redovno organizuje projekte razmjena i izložbi sa domaćim i međunarodnim umjetnicima i umjetničkim inicijativama, a u skorije vrijeme naročito - sa umjetnicima iz Teherana. Članica je Udruženja umjetnika „MAERZ“, kao i „Innviertler Kunstlergilde“; predsjednica je Kulturnog udruženja „FAMA - Fine and Performing Arts“ („Likovna umjetnost i umjetnost performansa“) i radi kao predavačica na Univerzitetu umjetnosti u Lincu. Elisa Andessner je obučena nastavnica glasa i trenutno radi na temi *Glas i rodne uloge*.

**ELISA ANDESSNER**

Lives and works in Linz, studied Experimental Art at the University of Art and Design Linz and Fine Arts at the École Supérieure d'Art et de Design Marseille. Elisa Andessner is a free lance artist and works in the fields of photography, video, performance and graphics. Since 2006 she works artistically within residencies, festivals and exhibitions in Vietnam, Indonesia, Poland, Belarus, Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, recently in Iran. She was honored with awards, scholarships and art purchases of public art collections. Andessner regularly organises exchange- and exhibition projects with local and international artists and art initiatives, lately with artists from Teheran. She is a member of the artist association MAERZ such as Innviertler Künstlergilde, chairlady of the cultural association FAMA- Fine and Performing Arts and works as a lecturer at the Art University Linz. Elisa Andessner is a trained voice teacher and currently works on the topic „voice and gender roles“.

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