

branko franceschi. the adventure of emotions

In Buenos Aires in 1962, the artist Alberto Greco, contributing to the subversive strategies of his generation that strived to annihilate the art object as a symbol of conformism and alienation of institutional and commercial culture, started his outstanding cycle of performances announced by the manifesto *Vivo Dito* (live finger, a/n), that encoded the elements of living reality as works of art. Moving a-squat around chosen individuals, he chalked out circles thus marking totality of their subjectivity as the unrepeatable, living art work. Simultaneously, Greco determined artist as key protagonist in processing the reality into cultural system and defined art practice as social activism and public space as its domain. At the same time, on the other end of the world, in Skopje, city that a year later would be destroyed by the cataclysmic earthquake, little girl Breda Beban watched couples in love as they kissed by the river Vardar. The couples, imbued by the shared feelings and unaware of their setting, in her mental eye were separated from reality by a crystal sphere which, propelled by (the) emotions, slowly ascended taking them into the skies.

As in a plot of some novel of Latin American magical realism, forty years later our protagonists met in the same space. Sitting on one of many terraces of Buenos Aires, Breda was recounting her childhood vision and somebody present recalled Greco's legendary *Arte Vivo*.

The vision has found its form and the concept retrieved its vision. Greco's basically ontological discourse, inspired by the intellectual rebellion of his time and by then integrated into cultural inheritance, met multidisciplinary discourse of a contemporary artist, procedures of appropriation and re-enactment fuelled by powerful narration with elements of globalisation and gender poetics. Breda assumed Greco's gesture. The photos show her with her hair gathered in a tight bun as she squats in the right corner of the frame, staring into the camera. Clad in uniform-like clothes, with her eyes shielded by dark glasses, in one hand she holds the title card that defines the title of the work and the names

of its protagonists while, by the other hand, she chalks a circle. Within the circle, standing above her, couples kiss in Trieste, Tbilisi, Buenos Aires, London, Athens... everywhere. Figure is the same; identities vanish first in love that merges two into one, then in the universal gesture of kiss that overcomes all geopolitical, ideological, economical, conventional and, for that matter, all imaginable opposing systems. With this apotheosis of love back into the realm of socially engaged art, Breda Beban covered yet another part of her mission to bring emotions and passion, themes that the public understands and loves intuitively, into the domain of referential art thus creating another one of always necessary links that connect general public to the elitism of art and neo-avantgarde heritage. Her œuvre consistently focused on the narratives of individuals caught in socio-political dramas of their surroundings that are completely out of their influence or control.

These little human stories, on which in fact the fate of humankind is based upon, climax in the intimate figure of a kiss which, as merging of two separated souls into one, create the completeness craved for by all mankind from the beginning of time as the pivotal human dimension of our existence.

Culture wise, the implications are numerous: from philosophical, as in Plato's *Symposium*, to those strictly artistic in masterpieces of modernism as in works by Rodin, Munch, Brancusi, Picasso, Warhol and others. Obviously, the realisation of civilisation of democracy and liberal sexuality highlighted the intimacy of kiss as a theme of mainstream art, but it is not accidental that it was *Vivo Dito* of a female artist to point at the universal and quintessentially emancipating nature of its public display. In fact, the female artists were the ones who, thanks to their gender standpoint, drew attention to the mechanisms of sexual repression that glimpse through the iconography of love and factual shifting of sexual themes into the domain of pornography. Although there is something classical in the composition that in Breda's figures of kisses develops from tongues and heads positions suggesting a spiral movement that will eventually propel the lovers in the sky, not unlike the baroque representations of ascension, the kiss in her *Arte Vivo* assumes

the form of political viewpoint and not only about the social reality at that, but about the universal order as well.

Alberto Greco committed suicide in Barcelona in 1965, considering it his ultimate art work, as he stated in his farewell note. The artist who never ceased to annihilate the art object thus promoting identification of life with art, by annihilating the artist and elevating him to myth introduced death into the equation. Breda Beban died in London in 2012, fighting to the bitter end for the intensity of life that she was promoting by her art. The fate coupled these two activists in the great narration about meaning and role of art that marked the culture of the 20th century. Their voices added passion to this central theme that could be generated only from the so called 'cultural margins' they themselves stemmed from and without which the 'centre', as Croatian art historian Želimir Koščević once said, wouldn't be anything else but a 'black hole'.

dubravka cherubini. the adventure of the real

Zagreb, winter '63. The school year had already started when Breda came to my class. We were told she had come from Skopje where a terrible earthquake had happened that summer. She appeared in a shiny black cotton school uniform with a little white collar, her hair straight and combed to the right and pinned back so tight by a hair clip that her already high forehead looked even higher. Her face had an openness about it, her mouth large, full of teeth that protruded a little, and her eyes playful. She had an unusual nose, a kind I had never seen before. The top of her nose seemed to have been lobbed off with a sword, it looked like a trapezoid.

I hadn't noticed her stockings then, always a bit patched up around the knees. I only noticed that following our first school breaks spent together. In fact, at the very sound of the school bell, she would be among the first to rush out into the school yard, with such speed, she would trip over a step and fall or would run into a teacher who happened to be carrying a rather large class register which would then fly out of his hands, falling all the way down the stairs and ending up in a heap. We would see her through the classroom window jumping like a gazelle across the paved school yard with her long legs flinging in the air, or hiding behind a bench covering her already wounded knee and torn stocking. 'She's like quicksilver' the teachers would say.

After school, we would walk home together, down an alley of birch trees. It would take us much longer than the others, she would stop at every house, at every tree, just to recount how different everything was in Skopje, how big their houses were, how full of friends and neighbours their house used to be, how many different types of trees grew there, how side walks there were much wider than ours and how crowded the streets were. There, she would say, all her desires and her dreams had emerged.

Our lives began to intertwine. I came to like her stockings patched up with a different colour thread and she my colourful jumper my

mum had knitted, the colours on which had run, after our house was flooded in '64, so that the blue colour dyed the white and red patterns, while the red colour dyed the whole sweater light pink. We did not know it then, but we would love each other for the rest of our lives. We had our shared secrets, confided our fantasies and daydreams.

And so one afternoon, after school, while strolling through the streets, dilly-dallying in an effort to postpone our parting and laughing ourselves to tears because we had drawn dots on the top of the heads of Boro Sumic and Franjo Junakovic in class to check if and when they washed their hair, I learned her greatest desire, that which she had always dreamed and fantasised about. "You see, my little sister" she said, "In such moments, from such laughter and unspeakable joy, I imagine being with one person who means a lot to me at that moment, a person I love: sometimes it is my grandmother; sometimes Esma, our neighbour from Skopje who always smelled of sweet cakes, or someone from school or playground, and I imagine how holding hands and standing in the middle of the side walk in front of the house, we'd raise them up in the air and a large transparent ball would appear around us, raise us up into the sky, and guide us through the universe".

Since those imaginings, almost five decades had passed. We lived unconventional lives in new countries and continents, experienced great loves and even greater tragedies, went through wars and lost friends along the way, then suddenly, the dream from her childhood started to take real shape on the other side of the globe, in Buenos Aires.

She welcomed me to a house built just as she liked it, the 'chorizo' house in Avellaneda. It was a very functional house, the epitome of simplicity and elegance. She was radiant, with that familiar twinkle in her eyes as though they were about to exclaim 'Eureka!'. In fact, she often reminded me of Nikola Tesla, and not just in appearance. She too was of slim but firm build, with a penetrating gaze that could expose everything, was outstandingly knowledgeable and often had ideas far ahead of her time.

That was how I found her that early afternoon in the kitchen in Avellaneda, a kitchen that was incredibly reminiscent of their kitchen back in Zagreb. The same modernism, the same atmosphere, the same intimacy. A place that lived and breathed the lives of its dwellers and their friends. "You know, my little sister, in Buenos Aires they all kiss!", her words flowed like a torrent, "Wherever you go, you see people embracing and kissing!".

Tamara, Cristina, Debora, Charlie, Pablo, Juan and many others are credited with her falling in love with Buenos Aires. Discovering it closely, absorbing the life of the city and its people and also in love with its contradictions, she dared to touch its every dimension. Through frequent conversations with local artists that lasted late into the night, she discovered Alberto Greco, Argentinian icon, artist and poet who in the sixties upturned art through his actions, in the sense of communication and understanding of art, which were known as *Vivo Dito*. Greco would point the finger at a passer-by and draw a circle around him or her with chalk, thereby creating an object of living art.

A challenge worth a try, the first series of *Arte Vivo* photographs were taken in Buenos Aires and named in honour of Alberto Greco. They were followed by a series of photographs of cities that have inspired her or that she loved, like Trieste, Tbilisi, London and Athens. Many others, I know she wanted to continue with, she unfortunately didn't realise.

(supervision of the translation in English by Ana Čavić)



ARTE VIVO
ALESSIO
FEDERICA
B.BEBAN



ARTE VIVO
GACHI
JAVI

B.BEBAN

ARTE VIVO
GABRIELA
PABLO
B.BEBAN



ARTE VIVO
NATUKA
BACHO
P.B.BEBAN



ARTE VIVO
MASSIMO
ETIENNE
B.BEBAN



ARTE VINO
KATI
BOGI
B.BEAN



ARTE VIVO
LUKA
KATERINA
B.BEŠAN



ARTE VIVO
NORA
VASILIS
MEGAN

Tubidze
Lindra
Junela
Xuco
Bati

ARTE VIVO
KHATUNA
LASHA
B.BEBAN



ARTE VIVO
RAOUL LARA

B. BEBAN

libreria
degli studenti

ARTE VIVO
GIULIANA
FRANCO
B.BEDAN





ARTE VIVO
FRANCESCA
DIEGO

B.BEBAN



arte vivo
series of photographs, 2008 - 2011

The series of photographs titled *ARTE VIVO* was triggered by Beban's childhood imagination and by Argentinean artist Alberto Greco's 1962 performance *Vivo Dito*.

"*Vivo Dito* is an adventure of the real" - A. Greco

The series of photographs were included in the exhibition *Things to do* in Buenos Aires (2008) and in the solo exhibition *Complicity of Gestures* at Kalfayan Galleries, Athens (2011).

production & photography: Breda Beban
photographed on location in: Buenos Aires,

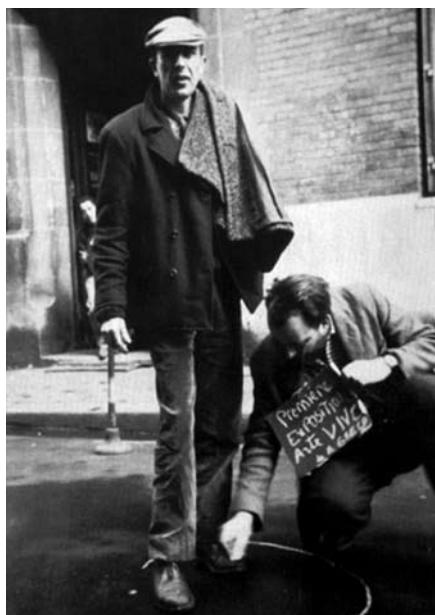
Trieste, Tbilisi, London, Athens

colour

photographs size: ca. 54 x 75 cm + frame

editions: 5 + 2 a.p.

courtesy: artist's estate and Kalfayan Galleries
(Athens-Thessaloniki)



Alberto Greco, *Arte Vivo*, 1962, Buenos Aires, Argentina.



how to change your life in a day
2004; movie for gallery staging

Based on Beban's personal experience of war, *How to Change Your Life in a Day* features a soundtrack from Paul McKenna's mind-programming CD *How to Change Your Life in Seven Days*.

Beban's *How to Change Your Life in a Day* is set to the sound of a hypnotic voice that induces a trance like state in the viewer. The images show the domestic setting of a covered window, overlooking a residential area in London, interjected by newsreel archive footage of grieving women. The window is covered by a blind, which moves with the wind in tandem with the voice and appears to obey its instruction, occasionally revealing the outside view. The quest for the ideal self and perfect life is set alongside the outcomes of the grand narratives of contemporary world politics.

How to Change Your Life in a Day is a full-wall projection. Sound is delivered through headphones for each viewer.

production, photography & direction: Breda Beban
editing: Steve Sprung
sound: Mind-programming CD *Change Your Life in Seven days* by Paul McKenna
archive footage and material filmed in London colour
recommended projection: size 300x400 cm, 10-minute segment looped
commissioned by: Shot by the Sea Film Festival, Hastings, England
editions: 3 + 2 a.p.
courtesy: artist's estate and Kalfayan Galleries (Athens-Thessaloniki)



walk of three chairs
2003; movie for gallery staging

Walk of Three Chairs shows Breda Beban floating on a raft between two banks of the Danube in Belgrade, believed by some to be the point at which the Balkans end and Europe begins. One bank reveals an industrial landscape whilst trees and wooden dachas populate the other. The movie takes its title from a traditional Balkan pagan ritual, one that the artist recalls her grandfather performing after winning at gambling. The precarious yet celebratory act performed by Beban against the shifting backdrop, is for her an expression of 'a complex kind of joy, joy informed by sadness'. This idea of bitter sweet is encapsulated in the love song Beban attempts to sing as she travels: "Who Doesn't Know How to Suffer Doesn't Know How to Love".

production & direction: Breda Beban
photography: Robby Muller
editing: Steve Sprung
sound: Dejan Pejović
music: traditional Balkan song 'Who Doesn't Know How To Suffer Doesn't Know How to Love'
cast: 'Jova' band, Breda Beban
filmed on location in Belgrade, Serbia
colour
recommended projection: size 225x400 cm, 10-minute segment looped
commissioned by: Film & Video Umbrella
funding: The Arts Council of England
editions: 3 + 2 a.p.
courtesy: artist's estate and Kalfayan Galleries (Athens-Thessaloniki)



i can't make you love me
2003; two-screen movie for gallery staging

I Can't Make You Love Me is an homage to *Gertrud*, a film by Carl Theodore Dreyer about a woman who refuses to speak any other language except for the language of love.

The film was predesigned for one continuous shot with two film cameras mounted back to back on a dolly. When staged in a gallery, the film takes the form of a dialogue between two ex-lovers, each of which is projected on a separate screen. In this way, two characters who are sharing the same cinematic space and time are also at once each inhabiting their own frame. Seated on either side of the same table, these two figures cut off at midriff, move away from each other and then into each other and then away from each other again. They are like two moving icons engaging with one another yet unable to exchange or share anything. The movement of the cameras cuts with cruel regularity through the scene. It creates a cinematic point of view that can be thought of as that 'of the wind on the table'. With this movement the viewer is drawn inside the encounter and a space is opened up for the possibility to share in this spectacle of non-sharing.

production: Bevis Bowden
direction and script: Breda Beban
camera script: Breda Beban
photography: Teddy Testar
editing: Steve Sprung
sound: Peter Eason
cast: Breda Beban and Ewan Stewart
commissioned by: Film & Video Umbrella
funding: Arts Council of England
shot on location in London, England
colour
screens: custom made front/rear projection
screens with aluminium frame
size 215x371 cm each screen
two 8-minute segments looped on two screens
editions: 3 + 2 a.p.
courtesy: artist's estate and Kalfayan Galleries (Athens-Thessaloniki)



let's call it love
2000; movie for gallery staging

Triggered by the bombardment of Serbia in 1999, *Let's Call it Love* features a turntable playing a track by Chet Baker which is interrupted by documentary footage of American warplanes. *Let's Call it Love* is about seduction, longing and loneliness. It is also about an overall sense of helplessness within the context of contemporary world politics.

When *Let's Call it Love* is staged in a gallery, sound mix equipment is used to boost low frequencies and thus balance the levels between the love song and the sound of warplanes flying over head. In this way the sound of warplanes flying overhead becomes a physical experience for the viewer.

production and direction: Breda Beban
photography: Alessandra Scherillo
editing: Steve Sprung
sound script: Breda Beban
sound: Ron Wright
music: *For Heaven's Sake* written by Elise Bretton, performed by Chet Baker
filmed on location in London, England and the sky above various countries bombarded by NATO
black & white and colour
recommended projection: size 370x500 cm
duration: 7.30-minute segment looped
editions: 3 + 2 a.p.
courtesy: artist's estate and Kalfayan Galleries (Athens-Thessaloniki)



jason's dream
1997; short

Featuring real-life characters and locations, *Jason's Dream* is a musical about a hesitant relationship between two young city-dwellers. The events are narrated from the point of view of a beautiful, song-speech gifted waitress.

Jason's Dream, with its affectionate atmosphere, vibrant colour scheme and seductive camera movements, has been described 'as if an East European Jacques Demy with pronounced contemporary sensibilities had been let loose in present-day London'.

production: Beban & Horvatić

direction and script: Breda Beban

photography: Paul Swift

editing: Steven Murphy

music: Beban & Horvatić and Bell Helicopter

cast: Aisha Khan, Jason Martin

filmed on locations in London, England

colour

10 minutes

funding: LFVDA and Carlton Television

courtesy: artist's estate and Kalfayan Galleries
(Athens-Thessaloniki)

exhibitions (selected)

2012

The adventure of the real, Studio Tommaseo,
Trieste, Italy

2011

Complicity of Gestures, Kalfayan Galleries, Athens,
Greece.

2010

The Most Beautiful Woman in Gucha - Part One, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art,
Edinburgh, Scotland.

My Funeral Song, Camden Art Centre, London, UK.

2008

The Most Beautiful Woman in Gucha - Part Two,
Galerie Aline Vidal, Paris, France.

The Most Beautiful Woman in Gucha - Part One,
Lightbox, Tate Britain, London, UK.

Things to do in Buenos Aires, Trieste
Contemporanea, Trieste, Italy.

Breda Beban Nights, Visninsrommet USF, Bergen,
Norway.

2007

Galerie Aline Vidal, Paris, France.

New Centre of Contemporary Art, Louisville,
Kentucky, USA.

Nuova Icona, Venice Biennial, Italy.

Salon Galic, Split, Croatia.

2006

Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art,
Rijeka, Croatia.

2004

Mario Flecha Gallery, Jafre, Spain.

2003

For One Night Only, 38 Langham St. Gallery,
London, UK.

Touchdown, Peer at St. Augustine's Tower,
London, UK.

Little Films to Cry To, Peer, London, UK.

I Can't Make You Love Me, John Hansard Gallery,
Southampton and touring Wolverhampton Art
Gallery, Wolverhampton, and Newlyn Art Gallery,
Newlyn, Cornwall, UK.

2000-2001

Still, Site Gallery, Sheffield and touring Lux Gallery,
London, UK and Kunstmuseum Thun, Switzerland.

group exhibitions (selected)

2010

This is All Film!, Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana,
Slovenia.

- Tatton Park Biennial, UK.
- 2009
4th Baku Biennial, Azerbaijan.
Contemporary Video Art, Pennsylvanian Academy of Fine Art, Philadelphia, USA.
How to Change Your Life in a Day, Galerie Aline Vidal, Paris, France.
- 2008-2009
Borders and Beyond, Taidehalli Kunsthalle Helsinki, Finland.
- 2008
Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi, Georgia.
- 2007
3rd International Biennial, Baku, Azerbaijan.
Zoo Art Fair, Royal Academy of Art, London, UK.
Video DUMBO, D.U.M.B.O. Arts Centre, New York, USA.
III Biennial de Jafre, Girona, Spain.
- 2005-2006
The British Art Show, touring exhibition, Newcastle, Manchester, Nottingham, Bristol, UK.
- 2005
Insert, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia.
Premières, Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA.
- 2004
Strangers to Ourselves, 201 St John Street, London, UK.
- 2003
Artists' Film and Video, Art Now Lightbox, Tate Britain, London, UK.
VideoLisboa, Galeria Ze Dos Bois, Lisbon, Portugal.
A Century of Artists' Film in Britain, Tate Britain, London, UK.
- 2002
Gevaltbilder, MuseumsQuartier, Vienna, Austria and touring Museum Bellerive, Zurich, Switzerland.
- 2001
Konverzacija, Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, Serbia.
- cinema exhibitions & presentations (selected)
- 2012
I Mille Occhi International Film Festival, Trieste, Italy.
- 2008
I Mille Occhi International Film Festival, Trieste, Italy.
- 2007
Cinema Tuskanac, Zagreb, Croatia.
Trieste Contemporanea, Trieste, Italy.
- 2006
Cinemateque, Split, Croatia.
- 2005
National Museum Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain.
- 2003
National Film Theatre, London, UK.
Cinema Zuid, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- 2001
VideoLisboa, Lisbon, Portugal.
London Film Festival, London, UK.
Rex Cinema, Belgrade, Serbia.
Lux Cinema, London, UK.
- 2000
World Wide Video Festival, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- awards**
- 2001
Paul Hamlyn Award for Visual Arts, UK.
Golden Sphinx, International Video Festival Medea, Novi Sad, Serbia.
- 1998
Silver Award for Performance in Music Film & Video, Worldfest Houston International Film Festival, USA.
- bibliography (selection from year 2000)**
- The adventure of the real*, Dubravka Cherubini, Branko Franceschi, Trieste Contemporanea, solo exhibition catalogue, September 2012, Trieste, Italy.
- 'Breda Beban: My Funeral Song', Denise Robinson, *Camera Austria*, no. 111, pp. 81-82, September 2010, Austria.
- 'Artist of the week: Breda Beban', Skye Sherwin, *The Guardian*, 25 August 2010, UK.
- 'Breda Beban: My Funeral Song', Irene Revell, *The Wire*, August 2010, UK.
- 'Breda Beban: My Funeral Song', Sophy Rickett, *HotShoe*, August 2010, UK.
- 'Breda Beban', Coline Milliard, *Artinfo.com*, July 2010, UK.

- 'Breda Beban: Funeral Song', Jon Morse, *Fallyrag Magazine*, May 2010, UK.
- The Body in Contemporary Art*, Sally O'Reilly, Thames & Hudson, pp. 184–185, 2009, UK.
- 'On Gypsies and Orgasm', Louise Back, *Toro Magazine*, 19 Aug 2008, Canada.
- 'The Most Beautiful Woman in Gucha: Breda Beban in conversation with Mia Jankowicz', *Untitled*, pp. 4-9, Spring 2008, UK.
- 'Breda Beban', Marcha Morrison, *Art Papers*, p. 60, Jan/Feb 2008, UK.
- 'Short Film Seductive', Diane Heilenman, *Courier Journal*, p. 9, 11 November 2007, USA.
- 'imagine art after', Helen Holtom, *ArtRabbit*, 24 October 2007, UK.
- 'Breda Beban', Eline van der Vlist, *Modern Painters*, p. 99, October 2007, USA.
- 'imagine art after', Letizia Rittatore, *Amica*, p. 677, November 2007, Italy.
- 'Helen Holtom talks to artist and curator Breda Beban', *ArtRabbit*, 11 November 2007, UK.
- 'imagine art after', Antonia Carver, *Bidoun*, Fall 2007, USA.
- 'Venice Takes Flight', Adrian Searle, *The Guardian*, pp. 24-28, 12 June 2007, UK.
- 'The Most Beautiful Woman in Gucha', Branko Franceschi, *Nuova Icona catalogue*, 2007, Venice, Italy.
- 'Breda, L'anima dei Balkani', Tiziana Benedetti, *Zeno magazine*, pp. 38-39, March 2007, Italy.
- 'Breda Beban; emozioni in forma d'arte visiva', Ivana Godnik, *Il Piccolo*, p. 3, 2 March 2007, Italy.
- 'Breda Beban izziva čustva in sproza reakcije', Ivana Godnik, *Primorski Dnevnik*, p.5, 2 March 2007, Italy.
- New Art on View: the Challenge of Collecting*, Sheila Mc Gregor, Scala Publishers, pp. 18, 144, 150-154, 2006, UK.
- 'Istraživanje mogućnosti zaljubljivanja', Branko Franceschi, *Kontura Magazine*, pp. 14-15, December 2006, Croatia.
- 'Novo lice nakon nove slike', Ksenija Orelj, *Vijenac*, p. 7, 7 December 2006, Croatia.
- Mediteran, Novi List, 'Vizualna komunikacija postala jača od komunikacije abecedom', *Nadežda Elezović*, pp. 8-9, 26 November 2006, Croatia.
- 'Publiku općinili kadrovi filma', *Nadežda Elezović*, Novi List, p. 6, 10 November 2006, Croatia.
- Breda Beban*, Branko Franceschi, Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art Rijeka catalogue, November 2006, Croatia.
- 'Sate of the art', Adrian Searle, *The Guardian*, pp. 18-19, 27 September 2005, UK.
- 'Home is Where the Art is', Virginia Matthews, *The Guardian*, Diversity supplement, p. 5, 11 August 2005, UK.
- British Art Show 6*, Hayward Gallery catalogue, pp. 146–152; pp. 186–189, 2005, UK.
- Themes in Contemporary Art*, edited by Gill Perry and Paul Wood, Yale University Press, p. 36, 2005, USA.
- The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, Charlotte Cotton, Thames and Hudson, pp. 164–165, 2004, UK.
- 'Beyond the Multiplex', Geoffrey Macnab, *The Guardian*, p. 28, 12 November 2003, UK.
- 'Spaces of Memory: Photographic Practices of Home and Exile in the work of Breda Beban', Rosemary Betterton, *N.Paradoxa*, vol.13, pp. 22-28, 2004, UK.
- 'Breda Beban at Saint Augustine's Tower and 99 Hoxton Street', Siniša Mitrović, *Circa 106*, pp. 89-90, Winter 2003, Ireland.
- 'Breda Beban: I Can't Make You Love Me', MB, *Modern Painters*, pp. 117–118, Autumn 2003, UK.
- 'Imaginary Balkans', Martin Vincent, *Art Monthly*, no. 265, pp. 28–29, April 2003, UK.
- 'Breda Beban', Martin Herbert, *Art Monthly*, No. 266, pp. 28-29, March 2003, UK.
- Breda Beban in Conversation with Chris Darke*, Imaginary Balkans catalogue, pp. 23–26, Site Gallery, 2002, UK.
- Transmission: Speaking & Listening* vol. 1, edited by Sharon Kivland and Lesley Sanderson, pp.96-100, Sheffield Hallam University and Site Gallery, 2002, UK.
- Zwischen Faszination und Denunziation*, Peter Stohler, Gewaltbilder exhibition catalogue, 2002, pp. 28-41, Museum Bellerive, Zurich, Switzerland.
- 'Stilvoll sterben', M.D., *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 18 March 2002, p. 5, Switzerland.
- Still*, Madeleine Schuply, Still solo exhibition catalogue, 2001, pp. 2-6, Kunstmuseum Thun, Switzerland.

- 'Breda Beban im Kunstmuseum Thun', Elisabeth Gerbert, *Kunst-Bulletin*, November 2001, p. 46, Switzerland.
- 'Breda Beban: Zimmer mit Aussichten', Thierry Greub, Basler Magazin, *Basler Zeitung*, no. 239, 13 October 2001, pp. 7-9, Switzerland.
- 'Sparsame Bilder spiegeln Odyssee', Marcel Henry, *Berner Zeitung*, p. 27, 22/23 September 2001, Switzerland.
- 'Das Erbe von Novi Sad eingefangen', Barbara Basting, *Tages-Anzeiger*, p. 6, 27 September 2001, Switzerland.
- 'Stills, Stille und Unruhe', Peter Anliker, *Fueilletton*, 26 September 2001, p. 6, Switzerland.
- 'Das Visuelle Tagebuch einer Flucht', Murielle Schlup, *Berner Woche*, no. 219, September 2001, Switzerland.
- Someone Slept Oblivious*, Adrian Searle, Still solo exhibition catalogue, 2000, pp. 2-4, Site Gallery, Sheffield, UK.
- After Effect*, Chris Darke, Still solo exhibition catalogue, 2000, pp. 37-40, Site Gallery, Sheffield, UK.
- 'Richard Cork's Five Best London Exhibitions', Richard Cork, *The Times*, 27 January 2001, p. 17, UK.
- 'Acting on Instinct', Ann Donald, *The Herald*, 28 September 2000, p. 22, UK.
- 'Breda Beban', David Briers, *Art Monthly*, no. 238, July-Aug 2000, pp. 35-36, UK.
- permanent collections (selected)
- Tate, UK.
Speed Art Museum, Louisville, USA.
Weltkunst Foundation, Zurich.
Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia.
Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, Serbia.
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton, UK.
Arts Council of England, UK.
- works with hrvoje horvatić
- videotapes / films
Jason's dream (1997)
Hand on the shoulder (1997)
Irina is not herself anymore (1995)
Absence (1994)
The left hand should know (1992)
- The lifeline letter* (1992)
For Tara (1991)
Geography (1989)
For you & me and me in them to be one (1988)
Terirem (1988)
Taking on a name (1987)
A prayer (1987)
Cherishing the heart (1987)
All our secrets are contained in an image (1987)
Bless my hands (1986)
She, four things (1986)
Meta (1986)
Icons of invisible images (1985)
Making performance (1985)
Plan (1985)
- works for television (selected)
Faces and portraits (1991)
Shadows and presence (1991)
Pain or there is no art without consequence (1991)
Jermanogrammes (1990)
For Goranka Matić (1990)
Take me to the water (1990)
Video art and money (1990)
Few dear names (1989)
- In 1989-1991 BB & HH produced and directed *TV exhibitions*, a documentary TV series of 25 films on contemporary visual artists (each programme 10-20 mins) and series of 10 short programmes on special sites for TV Zagreb Culture & Arts Programme.
- video installations
Before the kiss (1993)
The shape of pain (1992)
Geography 2 (1991)
Geography (1990)
House (1989)
- Moneystains* – screenplay 1996
- solo works
- videotapes / films
My funeral song (2009/2010)
Walk of three chairs (2007)
The most beautiful woman in Gucha (2006)
How to change your life in a day (2004)
Stories I tell myself (2003)
I can't make you love me (2003)
Beautiful exile (2003)
Little films to cry to (2002/2003)
Too early for sorrow too late for happiness (2001)

Let's call it love (2000)
Never only one x 3 (2000)
Still (2000)
Bockstory (1999)
May 98 (1998)

photography

Arte vivo (2008-2011), series of 13 photographs taken in various places (Buenos Aires, Trieste, Tbilisi, London, Athens), 75x54 cm each.

Paths (2003), series of 4 photographs taken in various places (Belgrade, Zagreb, Wien, London) (lightboxes at Peer, London, part of the exhibition *Touchdown*).

Aeroport chappels (2003), series of 4 photographs taken in various places (Belgrade, Zagreb, Wien, London), (lightboxes at Peer, London, part of the exhibition *Touchdown*).

The miracle of death (2000), series of 6 photographs taken in London (1998), colour prints mounted on aluminium, 102x152 cm each.

An exile encounters baby Jesus (2000), series of 6 photographs taken in Fibbiano Montanino, Tuscany, 1991, colour prints mounted on aluminium, 102x152 cm each.

I lay on the bed waiting for his heart to stop beating (2000), series of 36 photographs taken in various locations (1991/2000), colour prints mounted on aluminium, 20,5x30,5 cm each.

exhibitions / projects

curator / creative producer of:

The Endless School (2010), an utopian world project, is a proposal for a new landmark school that integrates a wide range of disciplines to explore new value systems for a fresh approach to human comfort and happiness. Physically realised as an architectural model-cum-sculpture and research, the work existed as a proposal that centres on what is essential to our everyday life, our survival, and our progress. Aiming at investing science and technology with poetic intuition and personal expression, the school creates a transition from the old knowledge-based society to the new creative-based society. In its physical manifestation, developed with architect Will McLean, the project took the form of a dolls house, which is itself a model of the school, a self-similar fragment of a pedagogic proposition. An ellipsoid conic vessel fabricated from plywood and skinned in exotic veneers that is both a desk and a motif for an Ark of ideas. *The Endless School* was shown at the Tatton Park Biennial 2010.

imagine art after - IAA (2005-2010) is a multistage project that puts the creative process at the heart to tell stories that official narratives and histories are unable to tell. IAA's first edition started with online dialogues hosted by Guardian Unlimited in 2005 between migrant artists based in the UK, with their compatriots who stayed in their country of origin. Following the dialogues, IAA supported the artists to develop and produce new work, which resulted in an exhibition at Tate Britain (October 2007-January 2008). The second edition of the project started in 2009, but was put on indefinite hold after Breda Beban was diagnosed with a terminal illness. See www.imagineartafter.org.

Imaginary Balkans (2002-2003) was a group exhibition which was on show at Site Gallery, Sheffield (2002); Cornerhouse, Manchester and at the Stills Gallery, Edinburgh (2003).

Starting from her own intimate knowledge of the political and cultural history of her former homeland, Breda Beban returned there to select work by artists from both sides of the Serbian and Croatian divide. Unable herself to deal with the antagonisms created by the unrest and the situation faced by the two nationalities, the selection of work from Zagreb and Belgrade, expressed her own personal reflection on this emotional and turbulent territory.

The exhibition features in Themes in Contemporary Art edited by Gill Perry and Paul Wood (Yale University Press, 2005).

branko franceschi. avantura emocije

U Buenos Airesu 1962. godine umjetnik Alberto Greco, na tragu prevratničke strategije svoje generacije koja je težila dokinuću umjetničkog objekta kao simbola komformizma otudene institucionalne i komercijalizirane kulture, otpočeo je markantni performativni ciklus najavljen manifestom *Vivo Dito* (živi prst, op.a.) kojim je elemente žive stvarnosti kodirao kao umjetnička djela. U čučnju je oko izabranih pojedinaca kredom izvlačio kružnicu, markirao totalitet njihovog subjektiviteta kao neponovljivo živo umjetničko djelo, umjetnika odredio kao ključnog aktera procesuiranja stvarnosti u kulturni sustav, umjetničku praksu kao socijalni angažman, a javni prostor kao područje njenog djelovanja. Istovremeno, na drugom kraju svijeta, u Skopju, gradu kojeg će iduće godine uništiti katastrofalni potres, djevojčica Breda Beban promatrala je zaljubljene parove kako se ljube na obalama Vardara. Ljubavni parovi prožeti zajedničkom emocijom i nesvesni svoje okoline u njenom su se mentalnom oku da stvarnosti odvajali kristalnom kuglom koja ih je pokretana emocijom polako uzdizala i odnosila u nebo.

Kao u radnji nekog južnoameričkog romana magičnog realizma, naši su se protagonisti u prostoru susreli četrdeset godina kasnije. Na nekoj od mnogobrojnih terasa Buenos Airesa, Breda je pripovijedala o svojoj dječjoj viziji, a netko od prisutnih sjetio se legendarnog Grecovog rada. Vizija je pronašla formu, a koncepcija viziju. Grecov u osnovi ontološki diskurs nadahnut intelektualnim buntom njegove epohe sada integrirane u duhovno nasljeđe, susreo se sa multidisciplinarnim diskursom suvremene umjetnice, s postupcima aproprijacije i reenactment- a snažne narativnosti s elementima globalizma i rodne poetike. Breda je preuzela Grecovu gestu. Fotografije je prikazuju kako kose zategnute u pundu, gledajući u kamjeru čući u desnom kutu kadra. Uniformno odjevena, očiju pokrivenih zatamnjениm naočalamama, u trenutku u kojem je jednom rukom izvukla krug kredom drugom rukom drži legendu koja navodi ime rada i imena njegovih protagonisti. U krugu, stoeći nad njom, parovi se ljube u Trstu, Tbilisiju, Buenos Airesu, Londonu, Ateni... posvuda. Figura je ista, osobnosti rasplinute najprije u ljubavi koja dvoje stapa u jedno, potom u univerzalnosti geste poljupca koja nadilazi geopolitičke, ideološke, ekonomski, konvencionalne i, uostalom, sve moguće suprotstavljene sustave. U ovoj apoteozi ljubavi natrag u područje društveno osvještene

umjetnosti, Breda Beban je odradila još jednu dionicu svog poslanja da emocije i strasti, teme koje publika razumije i voli intuitivno, vratiti u domenu referentne umjetnosti i tako stvoriti još jednu od neprekidno potrebnih poveznica elitne umjetnosti i nasljeđa neoavangarde sa širokom publikom. Njen se opus konzistentno fokusira na narative pojedinaca sudsinski uhvaćenih u društveno-političke drame svog okruženja nad kojima nemaju ni utjecaja, niti kontrole. Ove male ljudske priče, na koje se u biti oslanja sudsina ljudske vrste, svoj vrhunac nalaze u intimnoj figuri poljupca, koji kao sjedinjenje dvaju razdvojenih duša stvara onu cjelovitost za kojom čovječanstvo traga od svojih početaka kao ključno ljudskom dimenzijom svog postojanja. Kulturološke implikacije su brojne, od onih filozofskih već u Platonovom *Simpoziju*, do onih uže umjetničkih u remekdjelima moderne epohe u autorstvu Rodina, Muncha, Brancusija, Picassa, Warhola i drugih. Očito su civilizacijske tekovine demokracije i liberalne seksualnosti istaknule intimu poljupca kao matičnu umjetničku temu, ali nije slučajno da je upravo *Vivo Dito* jedne umjetnice ukazao na univerzalnu i suštinsku emancipacijsku prirodu njegove javnosti. Upravo su, naime, umjetnice zahvaljujući rakursu rodne pozicije ukazale na prosijavanje mehanizama spolne represije u ikonografiji prikaza ljubavi i činjenici potiskivanja teme seksualnosti u domenu pornografije. Iako ima nešto klasično u impostaciji koja se iz dodira jezika i položaja glave razvija u Bredinim figurama poljubaca, sugerirajući spiralno kretanje koje će ljubavnike uistinu propelirati u nebo poput prikaza uznesenja baroknih svetaca, poljubac je u njenom Arte Vivo uzdignut na razinu političkog stava i to ne samo prema društvenoj zbilji, već i prema univerzalnom poretku stvari.

Alberto Greco je u Barceloni 1965. godine izvršio samoubojstvo nazivajući ga u oproštajnoj poruci svojim konačnim umjetničkim djelom. Umjetnik koji je aktivno radio na dokinuću umjetničkog objekta promovirajući poistovjećivanje života i umjetnosti, dokinuvši umjetnika i uzdižući se do mita u jednadžbu je uključio i smrt. Breda Beban umrla je u Londonu 2012. godine, boreći se do kraja za intenzitet življena kakvog je promovirala svojom umjetnošću. Ovo dvoje aktivista sudsina je spojila u velikoj naraciji o smislu i ulozi umjetnosti koja je obilježila kulturu XX stoljeća. Njihovi glasovi ovoj su središnjoj temi dodali ostrašćenost koju generiraju takozvane 'kulturne margine' iz kojih su potekli, a bez kojih 'centar', kao što je rekao hrvatski povjesničar umjetnost Želimir Koščević, ne bi bio ništa drugo do li 'crna rupa'.

branko franceschi. l'avventura delle emozioni

A Buenos Aires, nel 1962, partecipando ai progetti di cambiamento messi in campo dalla sua generazione che si batteva per abolire gli oggetti d'arte - intesi come simbolo di conformismo e di alienazione prodotta dalla cultura ufficiale dei consumi - l'artista Alberto Greco inizia l'eccezionale ciclo di azioni artistiche annunciate nel manifesto *Vivo Dito*, con il quale codifica gli elementi della viva realtà come opere d'arte. Scegliendo delle persone e mettendosi rannicchiato a fare cerchi di gesso intorno ad esse, Greco intende marcare la totalità delle loro soggettive esistenze come irripetibili opere d'arte viventi. Con queste azioni, al contempo, stabilisce che l'artista è il protagonista chiave per elaborare come sistema culturale la realtà e definisce la pratica artistica come attivismo sociale e lo spazio pubblico come suo fondamentale ambito d'azione. Contemporaneamente, all'altro capo della terra, a Skopje, città che l'anno successivo sarebbe stata distrutta da un catastrofico terremoto, la piccolo bimba Breda Beban scoprieva le coppie di innamorati che si bacavano sulla riva del Vardar. Nella sua immaginazione, le coppie, assorbite dalle loro emozioni e astratte da ciò che capitava intorno, erano sottratte alla realtà da una sfera di cristallo che, alimentata dalle loro emozioni, lentamente si alzava portandole in cielo.

Come nella trama di qualche romanzo del realismo magico latino americano, quarant'anni dopo i nostri protagonisti si sono incontrati nello stesso luogo. Seduta in una delle molte terrazze di Buenos Aires, Breda stava raccontando questa sua visione infantile e qualcuno dei presenti ha ricordato la leggendaria opera *Arte Vivo* di Greco. La visione ha trovato la sua forma e il concetto ha ripreso possesso della sua visione. Il pensiero di Greco, sostanzialmente ontologico e ispirato dalla ribellione intellettuale del suo tempo, e da allora parte del patrimonio culturale condiviso, ha incontrato la sfera multidisciplinare di azione mentale di un'artista contemporanea, fatta di procedure di appropriazione e ri-attivazione, nutrita da una potente narrazione, da elementi di globalizzazione e da una poetica di genere. Breda ha preso in consegna il gesto di Greco. Le fotografie la mostrano, con i capelli raccolti in una crocchia stretta, nella parte destra dell'inquadratura, mentre accovacciata guarda verso la macchina fotografica. Indossa abiti simili ad un'uniforme. Ha gli occhi protetti da

occhiali scuri. In una mano tiene un cartoncino nero che riporta il nome dell'opera ed i nomi dei protagonisti, mentre con l'altra mano disegna il cerchio di gesso. Sopra di lei, dentro al cerchio, una coppia in piedi si bacia, a Trieste, Tbilisi, Buenos Aires, Londra, Atene... dovunque. Lo scatto riprende sempre lo stesso soggetto: le diverse identità si sciogliono prima nell'amore che fonde due in uno e poi nell'atto universale del baciarsi che supera ogni convenzionale sistema geopolitico, ideologico, economico e, peraltro, qualunque sistema di opposizioni che si possa immaginare. Riportando questa apoteosi dell'amore dentro al regno dell'arte socialmente impegnata, Breda Beban inoltre risponde ad un'altra parte della sua missione: fa entrare le emozioni e la passione, temi che la gente intuitivamente capisce e ama, nel campo dell'arte referenziale e perciò crea un altro di quegli anelli necessari di congiunzione del pubblico generale con l'elitarismo dell'arte e del lascito della neo-avanguardia. Costantemente la sua opera si concentra sui racconti di individui che si imbattono in eventi socio-politici dell'ambiente in cui vivono, di forte emozione e completamente fuori dal loro controllo. Queste piccole storie umane, sulle quali di fatto si basa il destino di tutta l'umanità, culminano nella intima figura del bacio che, riunendo in una due anime separate, crea la completezza, dimensione fondamentale della nostra esistenza, agognata dall'uomo fin dall'inizio dei tempi. Sul versante culturale le implicazioni sono molteplici: da quelle filosofiche, come nel *Simposio* di Platone a quelle strettamente di arte visiva con capolavori del modernismo come le opere di Rodin, Munch, Brancusi, Picasso, Warhol ed altri. Certamente, la realizzazione della civiltà della democrazia e della libertà sessuale ha messo in evidenza l'intimità del bacio come un tema artistico molto convenzionale, ma non è un caso che un *Vivo Dito* di un'artista donna sottolinei il carattere universale e fondamentale dell'emancipazione che gli deriva dall'essere esposto al pubblico. In realtà, sono state proprio le artiste che, grazie al loro punto di vista femminile, hanno richiamato l'attenzione non solo sui meccanismi di repressione sessuale che si intravedono nell'iconografia dell'amore, ma anche sul fatto che il tema della sessualità sia spinto esclusivamente nell'ambito della pornografia. Anche se c'è un certo classicismo compositivo nelle immagini di Breda delle coppie che si baciano, che si sviluppa dalla posizione delle lingue e delle teste e suggerisce un movimento a spirale che potrebbe effettivamente spingere

gli amanti in cielo - in maniera non dissimile dalle rappresentazioni barocche dell'ascensione - il bacio nel suo *Arte Vivo* prende la forma di una presa di posizione politica e non solo sulla realtà sociale, ma anche rispetto ad un ordine universale.

Alberto Greco si suicida a Barcellona nel 1965, considerando questo atto la sua opera finale, come dichiarò nella sua lettera d'addio. L'artista, che non cessò mai di promuovere l'azzeramento dell'oggetto d'arte a favore dell'identificazione della vita con l'arte, azzerà l'artista stesso e lo trasforma in mito introducendo la morte nell'equazione. Breda Beban è morta a Londra nel 2012, lottando fino alla fine per quell'intensità della vita che era sempre stata al centro della sua arte. Il destino ha unito questi due attivisti nel grande racconto sul significato e sul ruolo dell'arte, che ha segnato la cultura del ventesimo secolo. Le loro voci hanno saputo aggiungere passione a questo tema centrale proprio perché provenienti dai cosiddetti 'margini culturali' senza i quali il 'centro', come disse una volta lo storico dell'arte croato Želimir Koščević, non sarebbe altro che un 'buco nero'.

dubravka cherubini. avantura stvarnog

Zagreb, zima '63. Školska godina je već bila počela kad je Breda došla u naš razred. Rekli su nam da je došla iz Skopja, a tamo je baš to ljeto bio strašan potres. Pojavila se u crnoj glotanoj kutiji sa bijelom kragnom, ravne kratke kose na desnu stranu počešljane, zategnute špangom tako kako da joj je ionako već visoko čelo na toj desnoj strani izgledalo još više. Lice joj je bilo otvoreno, usta velika i puna zubi koji su joj malo stršali, a oči razigrane. Imala je neobičan nos, ja takav nikad do tada nisam vidjela. Vrh je njenog nosa bio ko sabljom odsječen, pa je izgledao kao trapezoid.

Taj put nisam bila primijetila njene čarape, inače uvijek malo pokrpane na koljenima. To sam primijetila tek nakon naših prvih školskih odmora. Naime, ona bi na sam zvuk zvona za kraj školskog sata, među prvima izjurila na školsko igralište i to takvom brzinom da bi se već na prvom stepeništu spotakla i pala ili bi udarila u nekog nastavnika, kojemu bi onaj veliki školski imenik odletio iz ruku da bi završio sav raspadnut ispod stepeništa. Mi bi je vidjeli kroz prozor kako juri preko popločanog igrališta skačući ko gazela svojim dugim nogama, ili bi se sakrila iza klupe sakrivajući već oguljeno

koljeno i poderanu čarapu. Ko živo srebro je, govorili su nastavnici.

Odlazile bi zajedno kući poslije škole, a nama je taj prevaljeni put kroz aleju breza uvijek potrajavao više nego ostalima. Ona bi zastala kod svake kuće, svakog stabla, a sve da mi priča kako je u Skopju sve bilo drugačije, kako su njihove kuće bile velike, kako je kod njih u stan uvijek dolazio puno prijatelja i puno susjeda, kako tamo ima više raznolikog drveća, a pločnici mnogo širi od ovih i kako su ulice vrvide ljudima. Tamo su se, govorila je, rađale njene želje i njeni snovi.

Naši su se životi počeli isprepletati. Ja sam zavoljela te njene čarape pokrpane koncem jedne druge boje, a ona moj šareni džemper što mi ga je mama bila isplela, a na kojem su šare, nakon što nam je kuća '64 bila poplavljena, pustile boju, pa je plava boja malo prešla na bijele i crvene šare, a crvena je cijeli džemper malo zarožila. Zavoljele smo se za čitav život, a da to tada nismo ni znale. Čuvale smo naše zajedničke tajne, povjeravale naša maštanja i sanjerenja.

Tako jednog poslijepodneva, poslije škole, švrljajući ulicama, klatareći se kući odgađajući rastanak, smijući se do suza što smo na zadnjem školskom satu Bori Sumiću i Franji Junakoviću našarale kemijskom olovkom točku na vrhu kratko ošišane glave ne bi li kontrolirale kad peru kosu, doznala sam njenu najčešću dodat želju. Želju o kojoj je sanjarija i maštala otkako je znala za sebe. "Eto, vidiš", rekla mi je, "u ovakvim trenucima, iz takvog smijeha i te neizrecive sreće, zamišljam se s jednom osobom koja mi u tom trenutku znači mnogo ili koju volim, ponekad bi to bila moja baka, ponekad Esma, naša susjeda iz Skopja koja je uvijek mirisala na kolače, a ponekad netko iz škole ili sa igrališta, kako se držimo za ruke nasred pločnika ispred kuće, pa podignemo ruke u zrak i tad se oko nas stvari velika prozirna kugla, uzdigne nas prema nebu i mi otputujemo u svemir". Kako smo odrastale, taj put u svemir se svakog toliko pojavljivao u našim razgovorima, znao je biti i predmet šala, pogotovo kad bi se prečesto ti "putnici" u svemir izmjenjivali.

Prevalivši preko naših glava svega i svačega u narednih skoro punih pet desetljeća neobičnih života, novih zemalja i kontinenata, velikih ljubavi i još većih tragedija, ratova i gubitaka prijatelja, njen dječji san je odjednom počeo dobivati stvarne konture i to na posve drugoj strani zemaljske kugle, u Buenos Airesu. Dočekala me u kući taman po njenoj mjeri, kući 'chorizo' u

Avellanedi. Kuća funkcionalna, oličenje ljestve jednostavnosti i ljestve elegancije. Ona ozarena i s onim poznatim sjajem u očima, koje samo što ne uzviknu: Eureka! Često me, u stvari, i ne samo po izgledu, podsjećala na Nikolu Teslu. I ona je bila tanka, a čvrsta, prodornog pogleda koji bi sve razotkrivao, izuzetnog znanja i često s idejama daleko ispred svog vremena.

Tako sam je našla to rano poslijepodne u kuhinji u Avellanedi, u kuhinji koja je nevjerojatno podsjećala na njenu kuhinju u Zagrebu. Isti modernizam, ista atmosfera, ista prisnost. Mjesto koje je odisalo životima svojih ukućana i njihovih prijatelja. "Da znaš, Dubravčice, u Buenos Airesu se svi ljube!", krenule se ko bujica njene riječe, "ideš gradom i gdje god se okreneš, vidiš ljude zagrljene kako se ljube.". Tu je, oduševljena, prepoznaла nastavak svojih sanja iz djetinjstva.

Tamara, Cristina, Debora, Charlie, Pablo, Juan i mnogi drugi bili su zasluzni što je Buenos Aires postao njeni mjesto. Otkrivala ga je ponovo, upijala život grada i njegovih ljudi i zaljubljena u njegove kontradikcije, usudila se dotači svaku njegovu dimenziju. Zahvaljujući čestim razgovorima do duboko u noć s domaćim umjetnicima, približili su joj Alberta Greca, argentinsku ikonu, umjetnika i pjesnika koji je 60-ih godina zaokrenuo umjetnost svojom akcijom komunikacije poimanja umjetnosti, znanom kao *Vivo Dito*. Greco bi ukazivao prstom na slučajnog prolaznika i oko njega iscrtao krug kredom, stvarajući tako od njega živi predmet umjetnosti.

Bio je to izazov vrijedan pokušaja. Bredina prva serija fotografija nastala je u Buenos Airesu, a u čast Albertu Grecu dobila ime *Arte Vivo*. Slijedile su serije fotografija iz gradova koji su je inspirarali ili koje je zavoljela, kao što su Trst, Tbilisi, London i Atena. U mnogim drugima, a u kojima znam da je željela nastaviti, nije nažalost stigla.

(lektorirala Lela Zečković Faverey)

dubravka cherubini. l'avventura del reale

Zagabria, inverno '63. L'anno scolastico era già iniziato quando Breda arrivò in classe nostra. Ci fu detto che veniva da Skopje, e che lì, proprio quell'estate, c'era stato un terribile terremoto. Si presentò con un grembiule nero con il colletto bianco, con i capelli corti e dritti, pettinati a destra, così stretti nel fermacapelli, che la sua

fronte sembrava ancora più alta di quello che era. Con un viso aperto, una bocca piena di denti che sporgevano leggermente e gli occhi giocosi. Aveva un naso insolito, come io non avevo mai visto prima. La punta del suo naso sembrava tagliata da una lama e pareva un trapezio.

Quella volta non avevo notato le sue calze, di solito rammendate sulle ginocchia. Le avevo notate appena dopo le nostre prime ore di ricreazione. Subito al suono del campanello, che segnalava la fine della lezione, lei correva tra i primi nel cortile talmente veloce da inciampare e cadere subito sui primi scalini; oppure accidentalmente colpiva un insegnante facendogli volare dalle mani quel grande registro di classe, che finiva fin sotto le scale. Dall'aula la vedevamo correre velocemente e attraversare il cortile della scuola saltando, con quelle sue gambe lunghe, come una gazzella, o nascondersi dietro una panchina coprendosi il ginocchio già ferito e le calze rovinate. La bambina con l'argento vivo addosso, dicevano gli insegnanti.

Andavamo a casa insieme dopo la scuola, ma per noi il tragitto lungo il viale di betulle era molto più lungo che per gli altri. Lei si sarebbe fermata ad ogni casa, ad ogni albero, e ciò per raccontarmi come a Skopje era tutto diverso, come le case erano più grandi, come a casa loro venivano sempre tanti amici e vicini, come gli alberi lì erano più vari, e i marciapiedi molto più larghi dei nostri e di come le strade erano affollate di gente. Lì nascevano, diceva, i suoi desideri e i suoi sogni.

Le nostre vite continuavano pian piano, intrecciandosi. Io ho cominciato ad amare quelle sue calze rammendate con il filo di tutt'altro colore, e lei quel mio maglione colorato, fatto a mano da mia madre, sul quale i motivi in lana, dopo che la nostra casa nel '64 fu alluvionata, avevano cambiato leggermente colore: il blu aveva stinto le fantasie bianche e rosse e il rosso invece aveva tinto il maglione di un color rosa chiaro. Fu proprio qui che cominciammo a volerci bene per tutta la vita, ma allora non lo sapevamo. Tenevamo stretti fra noi due i nostri segreti, ci confidavamo le nostre fantasie ed i nostri sogni.

E così un pomeriggio dopo scuola, bighellonando e gironzolando per le strade, rimandando il rientro a casa, ridendo fino alle lacrime perché all'ultima lezione avevamo fatto con la biro a Boro Sumić e Franjo Junaković dei puntini sulla testa per controllare se e quando si lavassero i capelli, conobbi il suo più grande desiderio.

Il desiderio su cui fantasticava e sognava da sempre. "Ecco, vedi", mi diceva, "nei momenti come questo, nei momenti di grandi risate e felicità ineffabile, mi immagino con una persona alla quale in quel momento tengo molto o alla quale voglio bene: questa persona a volte è mia nonna, a volte Esma, la nostra vicina di casa di Skopje che addosso ha sempre un eterno odore di dolci, a volte è qualcuno della scuola o del campo giochi. Con questa persona mi tengo per mano in mezzo al marciapiede sotto casa e se alziamo le mani sopra le nostre teste allora si crea intorno a noi un'enorme sfera di vetro, con cui ci dirigiamo verso il cielo e partiamo per lo spazio". Crescendo, questo viaggio nello spazio comparve molte volte nelle nostre chiacchierate, ogni tanto fu anche motivo di scherzo, quando questi "viaggiatori" cambiavano troppo spesso.

Da quei sogni passarono quasi cinque decenni delle nostre vite, così insolite, in paesi e continenti nuovi, con grandi amori e ancora più grandi tragedie, tra guerre e amici perduti. Il suo sogno d'infanzia all'improvviso prese forma, proprio sull'emisfero opposto del pianeta, a Buenos Aires. Lei mi accolse in una casa fatta a sua misura, casa 'chorizo' ad Avellaneda. Una casa funzionale, dove la bellezza della semplicità si fondeva con la bellezza dell'eleganza. Lei radiosa e con quella luce negli occhi come per esclamare: Eureka! Spesso, in effetti, e non solo in apparenza, mi ricordava Nikola Tesla. Pure lei era slanciata e forte, con uno sguardo penetrante che rivelava tutto, di grande lucidità e spesso con delle idee molto più avanzate per i suoi tempi.

Così la trovai quel primo pomeriggio ad Avellaneda, in una cucina che ricordava incredibilmente la sua di Zagabria. Lo stesso modernismo, la stessa atmosfera, la stessa intimità. Un ambiente vissuto dai suoi abitanti e dai loro amici. "Ma lo sai, sorellina mia, a Buenos Aires tutti si baciano!", scorrevano come un torrente le sue parole, "Caminando per la città, ovunque ti giri vedi la gente abbracciata che si bacia". Qui, tutta appassionata, ritrovò la continuazione dei suoi sogni d'infanzia.

Tamara, Cristina, Debora, Charlie, Pablo, Juan e molti altri hanno il merito di averla fatta innamorare di Buenos Aires. Breda la scoprì lentamente, respirando la vita della città e della sua gente ed innamorandosi delle sue contraddizioni, avventurandosi in ogni sua dimensione. Grazie alle frequenti conversazioni, fino a notte fonda, gli artisti del posto la

avvicinarono ad Alberto Greco, l'icona argentina, artista e poeta che negli anni '60 scosse l'arte con le sue trasgressive azioni artistiche, note come *Vivo Dito*. Greco indicava con il dito un passante a caso intorno al quale con il gesso disegnava un cerchio, e ciò era per lui un oggetto d'arte vivo.

Quella fu una sfida che valse la pena. La prima serie di fotografie fu scattata a Buenos Aires ed in onore di Alberto Greco fu nominata *Arte Vivo*. Seguirono le serie di foto dalle città che la ispirarono e che ha profondamente amato come Trieste, Tbilisi, Londra e Atene. So che voleva fotografare in tante altre città, purtroppo, non è riuscita a farlo.

(supervisione del testo in italiano di Fernanda Hrelia)

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