

MEXICO - SEEN WITH THE EYES OF MIĆA POPOVIĆ

In May 1975, I found myself in Mexico in the same time with Mića Popović, by chance. When you travel with your friends or acquaintances, you don't see the world only with your eyes, but with their eyes, too.

I saw the great part of Mexico with the eyes of my companions, the troupe of the theatre "Atelje 212" among whom there was, although grumpy because he hated travelling, a spirit such as Borislav Mihajlović Mihiz. He saw everything in a different way from dozens of other people who surrounded me.

Mića Popović did not talk much, and spent more time in making sketches and writing notes in his well-known notebooks from his long journeys. He told me that all he was drawing and writing was dedicated to his son Jovan; instead of some future old man stories in a corner during long winter evenings in the future. He maybe did not say exactly like that, but it seems to me he did.

After so many years, these drawings from the Mexican diary of Mića Popović are in front of me. The impressions of the moment, characters of the inhabitants of the biggest city of the world, halted experiences of the artist from faraway, traces of people who will never know that the human eyes have not noticed them, spirits have not experienced them and the exceptional hand has not recorded them, appear on the white paper.

I remember that in various periods of my life I was observing the world around me with the eyes of Mića Popović at least for a couple of days. In the period of social-realism, the lyrical canvas "Critics in a landscape" made me happy. All around us were the paintings that celebrated work; suddenly the picture of idleness, the picture of painting, the picture of the painter, and the picture of a pair that stopped in front of the painter and capriciously said something casual. That casualness made me happy, in the middle of so many obligations and duties of the time.

And then, one day, in the middle of a painting with a story and moral, Mića's paintings that did not talk about anything, canvases that did not reflect anything, paintings which were substances, structure, texture- informal artwork.

And when we already got accustomed that Mića Popović was the painter of informal artwork, he surprised us with his new visual art which allowed the breakthrough of reality into the painting, almost in its physicality. Mića Popović warned both himself and us that the trains which took us to trips or great international premieres also took our unlucky fellow countrymen "gastarbeiter" to wait their departure without return in some dirty waiting rooms, on pieces of newspapers, that there was less food, and that Bruegel and Ribera were our contemporaries.

Mića Popović, in the period of his full maturity, travelled the world with the feeling that he was obliged to be engaged in a subject. And the artistic values? They were taken for granted. The experiences of the paintings from the period of the paintings "Critics in a landscape", "The village Nepričava" and informal artworks were contained in the facture of the painting which recognized its subject.

Ten serigraphies from Mexico witness that Mića Popović travelled the world with wide open eyes.

Mića Popović nowadays understands the suffering of our people, but also the suffering of the people from faraway Mexico, for their joys in spite of their hardships, for their proud poverty, for their unrepeatability. In one word, Mića Popović, as a painter, travelled the world with his palette, but also with his philosophy and his sense for social issues, imposed to him by the time, in the same way that happened to many painters before him.

In these serigraphies, except for the ancient pyramid Teotihuacan in only one drawing on second plan, there are only human beings: a barefoot woman waiting hopelessly, a worried old man on a barrel, poor people near a stall on the square Garibaldi, a family on the rug, unknown rider who departs not knowing why he has come at all, a girl who curiously touches her lips, indifferent people in the shadow of their sombreros.

Those all are the motives that could be described by literature and music, film and photography. If only there was not so much sun in these serigraphies...The miracle of these drawings is the presence of the sun on them, unrepeatably flash of hot climes. Mića Popović creates a thick shadow, and the sun glitters, because the painter knew the secret how to glitter: not to spoil the virginity of paper.

Jovan Ćirilov,

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