

## Ways to capture

Krassimira Drenska Selected works: 2014-2015

*Excerpt from the Opening speech from Anelia Nicolaeva, held on January 28, 2016 for the opening in the National Gallery Sofia, The Palace*

One may be tempted to ask: 'Why capture moments?' 'Because nothing comes as an easy gift, one has to fight a bit' — would be Krassimira's reply. This is the way she sees the creative act: „Overcoming obstacles of various kinds – the resistance of materials as well as the ones which come while wrestling with one's ego, trying to translate an idea into a tangible form.“ To 'conquer the image' – a simple and natural key word for her.

Among the qualities inherent to her artistic substance I would quote in the first place the purity of conception of her works... The infallible internal compass guiding her is based upon a deeply analytical attitude towards the surrounding world. As a counterpoint to those parading the spontaneous artists' gesture, proclaiming to be free of the bonds of the ratio, Krassimira is, on the contrary, firmly engaged intellectually. There is always a conceptual argument involved in her works, they are carriers of a certain 'prehistory', bound to the physical parameters of a given moment in time, to its emotional implications, values and impact 'then' or 'now'. The hidden sense of these 'carriers' is made accessible, the fluctuating transformations from one reality into another are carefully held in focus by the artist.

Krassimira Drenska considers her works as objects encompassed in a space of their own, she 'sends' them towards us in the hope that their potential is strong and lively enough to become part of our own space. A work of art's 'own space' cannot be regarded solely as a particular set of elements contained in the pictorial space; it is always a complex amalgam of ideas, suggestions and interpretations of other artefacts. The aspect of the work accessible to the senses thus becomes the focus or the playing ground of cultural discourse. This becomes particularly clear in the context of her artist's books. The author engages a virtual dialogue with writers and poets like Italo Calvino or Emily Dickinson, challenging traditionally accepted interpretative notions by inventing new and surprising visual systems and codes of personal interpretation of the texts.

Here we reach a key moment in her artistic development – a 'crucial point' in her own words. During the eighties, already residing in Switzerland, she turns her back to the values of figurative art and adopts a radically different attitude, focusing on playfully experimental minimal means of expression. Following a clearly defined programme using a set of self-imposed rules collages and drawings emerge. She introduces a variety of chance solutions to the creative process by a throw of the dice. This development, at least unusual for an artist looking back to a solid academic education, is not surprising if one considers the cultural European context of those years. Krassimira responds to exiting, contemporary artistic concerns involving methods of creation striving to get rid of the 'dictate' of imposed or acquired taste. She 'throws over board' any imagery akin to the traditional rendering of the visible.

The installation „Travel notes“, 2014-2015, three large silkscreen banners on white silk, is a vivid and impressive feature showing yet another side of her latest involvement with the fascinating field of correlations between language and image. Based on numerous written notes and small drawings taken out of her notebooks and sket-

chbooks, despite their fragile appearance they strongly convey the presence of a revisited and reappraised past. Later on photography will ascertain itself as a major means of expression which would, in time, build the bridge towards a return to recognisable imagery. Being in command of the various printmaking methods allows her not to hierarchize any technique while handling a wide spectrum of themes. Besides drawings and silkscreen prints, photography represents a strong component of her current work as exemplified by her most recent series „Senegal“, 2015 and „Captured Moments“, 2016.

Krassimira defines herself as a constant seeker. It is clear to me that her finely tuned sensibility will guarantee the quality of her future artistic choices and I hope that we will soon be invited to share