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ALL THAT HAS BEEN CREATED – Valentina Savić

Valentina Savić's artworks are the antithesis of philosophy, as all contemplating is done with the hands and a ceramic kiln. They are also a form of uncommon *ars erotica* - the art of handling porcelain lasciviously but tenderly. At the same time, the works involve a singular culinary skill, discerning the drinkability and sweetness of inedible things, in the way that children do, who become acquainted with the world by licking.

For me, they are primarily feminist, anthropological and philosophical readings in a non-discursive medium, unrestricted by the principles of separation of matter and form, spirit and body, contemplation and sensual enjoyment, the sublime and the everyday, the ancient and the contemporary, the decorative, applied and abstract.

Situated in the domain of female experience, among powder puffs, dining tables, candy boxes and menstrual pads, in which inspiration is found, the works of Valentina Savić give voice to the voiceless and reveal the monumental meanings and extraordinary intervals of our existence in the blazing presence of the everyday and seemingly insignificant.

In one of her interviews, Valentina Savić refers to Plato's Cave as the primary place where her creativity transpires. Luce Irigaray explained the feminist transposition of Plato's Cave as a philosophical and dialectical discursive search for the pure conceptuality of knowledge, with the idea of Good awakening the power of creativity. Her analysis of the cave calls for an exploratory journey through it, a guide to a special kind of *paideia* (education), expressed through the development of a talent for perceiving the unlimited number and quality of beings where darkness otherwise reigns. A subversive transposition occurs through the transformation of the flat ascent to the light outside the cave into a spiral transformation of matter (*khora*). Turning to his essence, man fails to move straight on but rather, changes, just as there is a difference between physical movement and growth, only the latter being a process of (self) education. There is no search for truth without creativity and transformation. Rather alchemically and generatively than dialectically, that process disallows us to reduce the substances, spaces and intervals of the 'cave' to mere reflections, objects and things, even though they are perishable and transient, like all creation.

In this sense, the works of Valentina Savić are intervals of stillness in the "moving image of eternity" (as Plato defines time). The work *Nuwa* (2018, porcelain installation, "Blanc de Chine" International Artist Residency, Dehua county of Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, China) is one of the works in which this idea, the correlation between creation and the created, is most clearly thematized. The work represents a contemplative table made of porcelain, with seemingly run of the mill food and utensils intended for everyday consumption; a part of women's daily life. However, the very title of the work, *Nuwa*, refers to the creative process of

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the divine mother Nuwa, who, according to Chinese mythology, created the world from clay. Her name, Nuwa, is made up of the Chinese character for woman and the character for spiral movement. According to legend, Nuwa conceived the world by creating beings from porcelain but later, due to fatigue, she created lower-order beings out of low-quality brown clay, like ordinary pottery. By creating a series of ordinary porcelain objects, the author points, on the one hand, to the reverse process, to the path of purification, to the sacred origin of all things and beings, including the most ordinary ones, and on the other hand, she gets involved in the completion of Nuwa's work to aid her, as a daughter helps a mother who is tired, allegorically taking on the role of "divine hostess and cook," offering the guests the original and divine idea of the dining table. Of course, you can neither drink nor eat anything at the feast, as the dining table is an offering to contemplate the unity of the eternal and the transitory. The work of art in Savić's style is not the ultimate outcome and purpose of artistic work but rather, the work is completed in the eyes and experience of the observer, which is exactly why the feast is an allegory of the exhibition event, an invitation to participate. In the Bonbonnière installation (2018, solo exhibition, Stepenice Gallery) consisting of a series of "boxes of chocolates" (metal magnetic bases with a peony motif and 'candy' attached to them which can be moved, representing porcelain female pads wrapped in cellophane), visitors are invited to modify the artwork and move the pieces, as the artwork is never actually finished. After all, the process of change surpasses both the visitors and the artist, as it is inexorable. However, in the wake of the innocent role of the artist as a bonbon maker and concealed in cellophane full of porcelain inlays is the magnum opus, the riddle of noxious sweets and healing elixirs that revive the alchemical role of the ceramic kiln and the ceramicist, who is at the same time an artist, a craftswoman, a scientist and a magician.

The part of our own perishability in the creation of artwork is probably most clearly presented in the "Finding Doors In the Wall That Has None" installation (2019, solo exhibition, Cultural Center of the City of Belgrade). The juxtaposition of an imaginary porcelain rosarium composed of consumables, as a place of death, and large metal wings, as a symbol of an ideal and immortal life, is a position that we cannot perceive without seeking a new dimension, one that is unobservable and which requires us to accept our own perishability as a precondition for understanding and experiencing the work of art. The rosarium, as well as the wings, are motifs symbolically saturated with something no one can truly see - their own cremation urn and their resurrection. Therefore, the only way to achieve an artistic experience is to belong to one's own disintegration, a variety of flight.

The overall aim of Savić's works is to introduce the observer/participant into the metaphysical dimension of our existence as an active part of our reality, affirming the everyday, as well as the marginalized experiences. Combining sculpture, design, ceramics and philosophy, the author simultaneously discovers and creates unique reflections of our reality, which are the true subject of her artistic work. In this respect, her ceramic installations, sculptures and environmental settings represent an outstanding example of a sophisticated unity of technique put to the function of creating a clear artistic expression, as well as an artistic idea and a deep philosophical reflection.