

Veronica Georgieva**ARTIST**

I think in this age of internet and of so much information, I don't think it is proper anymore to have this, you know, "all rights are yours" situation. I don't think it works anymore. For example, with the Paper Surgery project, it is actually kind of even anecdotal how this happened, we were sitting –me and Stephen– and our second daughter was playing and we just gave her this magazine pages and she did this! And we were both just sitting there and we started to think about this idea so basically you could say SHE is the author of this whole series because this is how we got the idea. So it is so much influences now, so much stuff around us. So I don't think it is... the author whose name is underneath, who signed it and that's it. And I think you know, like a year ago when Richard Prince won this very big court case for the authorship for the image he used and I think it is very right that he won it. You can't say you know, oh this is mine but you just changed it a little. That is ok, that is how we live our life now.

Um, I don't see myself as a position somewhere. I just want to do stuff, want to have fun and I don't think it's a measure. A position will come, it's not something you are offering to the art society I think it's something that the art society offers you, and you can take it or not take it ... you can play this game or not play this game. It's really not a question everybody should ask themselves and look less at their position because a lot of artists looks just at their positions they are taking and not what is coming from the art I think that is really the biggest mistake of the art world right now. They are giving a lot of attention to people who can position themselves and that is not a talent. I mean, it is a talent but it is not all that talent should be when you are thinking about who is a good artist and who is not.

Of course art it has a connection with which art it is and I think, who the artist is, is something else, some other point of view. That is what it is. It is all about different perspectives, different feelings that I would not find on my own that is what art is about. You know, anything. Movies, literature, visual art, anybody who will shake me I will call an artist.

ARTWORK

This Paper Surgery Project, it is when we take a magazine page and we crumble it in such a way that it becomes kind of a violent gesture of deconstructive face and deconstruction and what is it about? It is about our deception or kind of a societal deception of beauty when so many people are influenced by, what is beauty supposed to be and so many faces in the magazines, it is basically, they don't have any character and you know, for me it is about crumbling stuff because it's actually giving... because you know, I crumble the same over and over and each time they are different. I am giving them character, I am giving them something what basically the soul, what they are suffering, what their pains are, what they experience when they are broken hearted. So I think I am giving them a story, And for quite a while it was... for like two or three years it was on the website without any basically recognition and then Comme De Garcon contacted us and it is kind of from them it started more process of recognition of this series and I see now actually people doing very similar stuff.

I would call... what we are trying to do, what kind of niche we work in, I would call it emotional conceptualism. Because it is still conceptual but we are not abstract artists. We are trying to do stuff... on an emotional level. I think it is important to us. Maybe some pieces do not show this, you know like Paper Surgery but it is about violent assumptions this gesture maybe not so visible, but it is a lot about pain and beauty and the violence and sweetness at the same time.

PRODUCTION

Production can be basically very small or can be much bigger and much bigger and more complicated.

Like with the Paper Surgery, it is not so much of production. Basically the process... I mean it just involved, I mean it just involved us. It just involved artists. For example with this piece on the wall there, what we did for a museum in Ljubljana, it was more about the road and you know, we needed those signs what you find on the american roads. And, you know, we had to go to the New York

Transportation bureau so they produced signs for us... empty signs that usually they would put letters after but we had to order the stuff and of course you know, send the measurements and so this was a big... not actually big of course like Jeff Koons does, but it was some kind of other people involved in the production. As actually was another project, still in the process and that was an extremely painful production because we needed... we needed like animal, we needed...how do you say?

Like a form of a dried animal with the skin but anyway, I can show you... I can show you a picture of what Stephan used to make and we wanted to just do it bigger, so we went to the slaughter house where Stephan worked years ago, it is like two hours from New York and he called before and he was asking "oh we need a goat" you know "can we buy a goat?" and "yeah ok, you can buy a goat," and we came and he said "yeah you know, go to this person, this person will bring to show you a goat" and this person is bringing us and he shows us goats alive. And we're like, no no you misunderstood we just want to buy. how do you say? their body without guts you know, you know like basically what they sell for a meat store and he's like "no, this is already... we already sell this portion. You have to choose. He will kill in five minutes for you what are you speaking about?

You just have to choose one" and then we had to choose basically who out of these goats will die now. Of course they will die tomorrow, you know, maybe later in the week but we are the people who will, you know, have this situation to be god now and say you, you are going to die and we were not prepared for that. It was part of production and we stood with Stephan and we realized, what can we do now? We're like no, we need maybe a small goat and we were kind of postponed in this moment and they brought us and we tried to say you know, just do it by yourself, you know, we don't need so much meat on ... maybe somebody who is thinner and this was very crazy moment and then I realized that I actually should go through all the process and I stood there and I watched how this animal got killed and I was thinking "I need to do this since I choose who will be killed, I need to see it.

MATERIAL

He had this idea what was to everybody crazy which was...Russian curator was totally mad at him because here he wanted to go to the morgue and he wanted to take me, his assistant, and she was very against it and I didn't know what to think about it by myself but I was like "OK I am open to any experience" which was kind of crazy but I am really glad I did it. It is really...it was a crazy experience in the sense... when you see the body as a material. I am not a religious person but it was some spiritual experience, like form what... like the body as a form without, you know, when somebody is dead and it was a morgue full of unidentified, unknown people who basically don't have relatives, and the conditions were horrifying. Some of the people who were basically like in the path, you know? In a room with the flies like this, flying all over the place and then you see the body as, as just a pure form and you feel that some god has to be there in real life, a real soul, whatever you call it.

Material is a very important this for us because, when we're speaking about morgue chocolate, there is another work what came years later after this. Stephan did

suicide bomber. It's a mould for, you know, from a live person we sculpted his body.

It is absolute mini sense of an image from the internet from a real suicide bomber in Iraq and it was done out of chocolate and that really made sense to combine the two materials because of the smell of chocolate. It is very important, you know, this sense of smell because when you see this, you see the violence, you see the guts and then you smell this chocolate and you basically have this very heavy desire to eat it or to do something.

Something from the chocolate, something comforting to you and the visuals is totally, you know, it is in a fight with your other senses and if it would be done out of anything else it would be so totally different. So I think it's very important how you combine materials.

We use a lot of found objects we are very big... if we have one allegiance it is recycling.

We are very big on recycling, with everything, because I think there is so much done in this world so it is just a crime to do something and to not think about, if you produce something new you should think why you are doing this and that is why we use a lot of found objects

and materials what already. We don't want to basically create more stuff, we want to recreate. Yeah from melting plastic it's, you know, we use an industrial oven and a very heavy press and... basically use some tools what are, you know, brings a very violent gesture to the object. Kind of kicking and screaming and fighting with the form.

MEDIUM

As I said, you know, we are not interested in political art but we are very interested in existential. In the human itself. In the body as well as our sufferings and pain and everything what is about feelings and emotions. We work in very, very different mediums because we do sculptures, we do prints, we do performances, we do video art and it depends on the idea. Everything depends on the idea.

PROCESS

You know, I think in a way, all work, we can divide into these three things. like the night, when you are, lets say you know you are drunk and you are, you know, a total fuck up and it's a violent...and you are putting crazy materials together and you are distorting stuff and it is painful. Second is like a morning after... with your regrets, with your kind of addiction. Like Hemingway said, I think it's a pretty nice phrase, like you should write when you are drunk and you should edit when you are sober. So I think it is like morning you kind of edit work and you have this guilt and then the road. It is a lot about the road. Stephan has a lot of performances like the walking performances so the road is, the road is after destruction, being drunk, doing crazy stuff, the guilt and then the road is escape and it is all goes again and again and again.

PRESENTATION

We don't have limits. Our art can be presented anywhere. I can see it in public space, on the streets. I can see it you know, it can just basically be just a public art. Instead of like road signs- these road signs. I know it is kind of crazy because otherwise we need normal road signs. But as a public project, in the gallery, any form. I am open to any forms, anywhere. I don't really care where it is presented. I mean it just should be presented with our idea of how it should be presented.

Everybody is our audience. I don't care who is our audience.

Anybody who would like to ask us questions or to speak with us or open enough to provocation stuff. Or even not open because we got, you know, we got negative stuff about some stuff. You know like suicide bomber also did such and such agency contacted us to do a project for reporters without borders, they did a campaign with us. We did a video and on youtube, you know, because it was involved political leaders from South Korea, Gadaffi and somebody else, Ahmadinejad, so people were posting negative comments, but that is what art is for, to provoke people in a good way, you know I don't want to insult anybody but anything what will create dialogue, what opens people's mouths.

I think the amazing stuff about artists, visual artists much more than actresses is you don't really need an audience. Actresses need an audience because you can't play in front of the mirror but artist is, artists can survive without audience. It's hard because you want to speak to someone about, you know, because of your work. Your work is your mouth but if it does not happen, it's ok too. It's ok. I'm.. you know, people say a lot of stuff. Some people maybe never see the work, it's fine.

Um, for me the borders between art and fashion and music and a lot of stuff is very blurry and the art pieces where we did Paper Surgery, we did it a while ago and then it was picked up by fashion brand Comme De Garcon. With their images they wanted to do worldwide advertising campaign for them. And I did not... a lot of people asked you know, 'do you have a problem because it is fashion?' and I don't have any problems... I don't think it is bad that it is commercial because the more people see it the better and it is just a platform.

INTENTION

I don't think it's art... art shouldn't have an aim. I mean, it's a useless thing. it leads in the process. when you are creating the art, you shouldn't have aim. You should create and be inside of this moment and do not try and ask in your head if somebody would like it or if somebody would hate it.

You just need to be honest with yourself. Only you and that is it and the piece. Second part you know, then maybe you can try and edit this and think about it with your head and then maybe aim will come, but if you have your aim in the beginning you know, I don't think it's a good idea. I am not really a fan of political art. I think any art will be social and will be political and will exist if it's a good one. If it is a good piece everything else counts.

I think art has no function at all. It is really, I mean it has a function if, I mean it is not a question of life and death. Like right now in my home country such crazy stuff is happening with Putin and stuff I see my Facebook on my feed and suddenly all pieces of art disappeared. I have you know mostly artist friends and journalists and curators and stuff and it's all about politics now and unfortunately somebody doesn't want to post any art anymore. Because it is unfortunate but it is not... when such a thing is happening, when it is about war, when it is about death and life- art it goes on, it just disappears. It is very unfortunate so you know, it doesn't have the aim to save lives in this sense. But it is totally, I think it is for me a combination of uselessness and actually amazing helpfulness and it's also, it doesn't save any lives and it saves lives, I think the beauty of this- in the way- in this uselessness.

Artist is a form of connection. Art is... of course it is saving the world and without art it is really - I can't even imagine that. It just would be sad that place. Especially not existing without art-everything. But I think you know, in order to get somewhere, you should not go straight- you should go around. That is what maybe I try to achieve in my thoughts about art should not have like a straight aim of something. It just should be more biotic and then it brings us somewhere. I am sure it does I mean that is the only reason, I mean that is the, otherwise it would be really sad.

You surprise yourself and I think it's the best moments of your life, when you are suddenly bigger than you are. That is what I think art is, it should bring you somewhere and then you feel you are bigger than yourself. I know I am romantic (laughs).

METHOD

Well I think it will be very complicated about methods because I think the only methods should be in a way, to enjoy yourself. Otherwise there is no real point of doing anything but even if you are suffering, it is also could be in a way enjoyment but you need to have fun and not think about what other people will think about your work. We, as I said, you know I think before, because of my architectural background, I am much more organized than Steph and he is more method but then he actually brings- he does more crazy stuff than I am, he brings more crazy materials together and you know we fight a lot because I think you need to have more concept and I think those are our methods and we are used to this, you know as crazy as it sounds we are used to this idea of quarrels. It works for us, it's fine if we do not kill each other. So that is our methods.

ART

For me, art is mostly visual, I think there are... I think when people are writing many, many words about artists I don't think it's good. It's ok, it's fine, I accept this but I think it is very important the first impression is first visual stuff. If I go behind this visual and I want to read about it, it's fine, I read about it but when I see something that is not really interesting to me, I don't want to read more text about it so I WILL like it. It is kind of like twitter for me, the visuals. I see this, I like it, and I want to dive more, but otherwise, I don't think it's relevant. I think this is a problem with visual arts right now a lot, people are writing so many words about it that it just kills the art itself.

Art is something what takes you out, it is escape for me, it takes you out of you know, everyday life and brings you somewhere else where you can enjoy yourself and be more happy and it brings you more than yourself than you think.

When you create something it makes you feel like this and also when you experience someone else's art. It is really... it is a huge inspiration for me to see something what I felt maybe like this, but I never did this and I see the different perspective and it brings me a lot of joy.

BIO *

in Moscow/RU, graduated from Moscow Architectural College (MARKHI). Working in collaboration from 2010 with Stephen J. Shanabrook, the artist created advertising campaign for renowned fashion label Comme des Garçons. They also collaborated with Saatchi and Saatchi advertising agency to create ad campaign for 25th anniversary of Reporters Without Borders, which included TV commercial. The project was shortlisted for Lion Award at Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival. The artists have exhibited throughout the world in numerous solo and group exhibitions, included Drawing Center / New York, Swiss Institute / New York, Ljubljana Contemporary Art Museum and Moscow Biennale. Georgieva also is a frequent contributor for Russian edition of Art Newspaper & Numero among other cultural publications. Veronika Georgieva is based in New York City (USA) and Moscow (Russia).
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