PREFACE

In the artistic practices of the last and this century - that is, modernism, postmodernism and (post)postmodernism - the sphere shape has undoubtedly been imposed as, to say it in Braudellian way, a long-lasting motif. Many have been using the basic shape of the sphere in its diverse variations during the aforementioned epochs, and are still using it, from differently motivated initiatives. There are examples where the sphere will primarily mediate the author's uncompromising negation of traditional figurative-representational conceptions, then there are cases where they mostly insist on its potent symbolic connotations, and there are situations where artists consciously relativize the boundaries between figurative and abstract potentials of this - in the opinion of many thinkers, philosophers and mystics - perfect, absolutely self-sufficient and cosmically conditioned three-dimensional form. Such an extremely simplified division does not nearly cover all possible approaches to the artistic treatment of the sphere - it would be more accurate to say it only begins it - which only reinforces the statement about the challenge or seductiveness of this visually simple but semantically immensely layered motif. Because different and arguably strong artistic personalities have systematically or sporadically dealt with the sphere. Such as Lucio Fontana, François Morellet, Arnaldo Pomodor, Yayoi Kusama, Anish Kapoor, Ivan Kožarić, Dimitrije Bašićević Mangelos, or Dušan Džamonja, to name a few. The sphere, however, among other things, even paradoxically, owes perhaps its permanent presence in the context of modernist and contemporary sculptures and installations, to one painter. It is Cézanne's remarkable advice to a colleague Émile Bernard that nature should be treated using a roller, a cone and, of course, a sphere. Cézanne came to his artistic discoveries, and thus knowledge, thanks to his ability to view the world in a different and new way, and it is precise with this ability that the thought of his noticeably younger contemporary and admirer Marcel Proust will coincide. A thought that will also be taken up by contemporary Croatian artist Mia Orsag as a motto of her latest exhibition. Therefore, also she seeks to observe and act in a different and entirely personal way, except that her focus on this occasion is not nature or the surrounding world, but the abstract and many times interpreted the form of the sphere.

Mia Orsag, therefore, fills the small space of the Karas Gallery with seven - a number burdened with symbolic and associative connotations - white spheres, not entirely regular in shape, in different dimensions and prominent textures. The author creates a sculptural ambiance, as she deliberately sets her spheres to form dynamic interrelationships, which then necessarily results in the activation of the remaining space around and between them. In other words, every visitor becomes physically involved in the work of the artist as soon as he walks into it the gallery, whereby his movement will be significantly conditioned by the arrangement of the spheres. Also, while it is possible for him to focus visually on each of them individually - they deserve it with their visuality - a continuous awareness of the presence of others, of the energy of their volumes, will simply be inevitable.

Each Mia´s sphere with its wrinkled, meshed, we would say wounded, the texture will immediately bring to our mind the particular features characteristic of the sculpture of Art Informel or New realism. But it's just a superficial and misleading impression. These spheres do not speak so much about the agony of industrial civilization, whose material relics are embedded in artistic artifacts pervaded with existentialism, but much more about the crisis in which, in the digitally organized and ever-changing modern world, the human capacity for contemplation and memorization has fallen. Because digital storage is by no means the same as true memorization, just as information does not make knowledge. Mia incorporates such reflections into her spheres through the material. These are handmade laces - coasters and tablecloths. In their original context, lace coasters and tablecloths are generally synonymous with kitsch and petty bourgeoisie, but in the artist's sculptural interpretation, combined with polyester, they take on the characteristics of a metaphor for contemplation, dedication, and processivity. And it is these human qualities that enable quality and true memorization; with impaired or degenerated memory as evidenced by the frantic data storage, our self-awareness, and creativity too, will gradually disappear. The question of „Where are we going?“ is meaningless and incomplete without the „Where do we come from?“ Mia Orsag, in her own words, approaches lace coasters and tablecloths as a medium in which the meditative energy of devotional and process-treated work is permanently stored. By drowning them in polyester, the memory of a completely different time is permanently preserved. Of course, the shape of the sphere contributes to that feeling with its roundness and completeness. Space and time have merged into one, and each of us has yet to find our sphere.

Vanja Babić