

## **THE IMPACT OF VARIOUS CULTURAL CENTERS IN THE PROCESS OF ARTISTIC CREATIVITY AMONG ALBANIAN PAINTERS IN MACEDONIA AND KOSOVO**

**Jeldz Asani**

**State University of Tetovo**

*There are mutual connecting elements in certain works, created in different periods. Similarities are treated in relation to the topics and problem sets. It is about art that operates and develops according to the own internal rules, the artistic tradition and world's artistic trends. There is awareness of the needs, but also there are unavoidable risks to connect the diachronic and synchronic connections of a single lively and open process. That what was created in Western art, as style or direction, in Albanian painters appears only individually impact and that delay in comparison with the general artistic trends.*

*Albanian artists from Kosovo and Macedonia are mostly concentrated in stylistic imitation of the larger names in the world arena, although in this phenomenon, there are some exceptions. The impacts of European artistic movements touch more to the today's art movements of Albanians and less in the content. It proves that the development of the art of the Albanian artists is input in the process of a gradual return to international art trends.*

Important art school which influenced on the development of the art in Albanian painters from Kosovo and Macedonia, as in the early and in the more recent period is the Paris School. Even in the 70's and 80's Albanian painters of these areas visited Paris. Study visit in Paris had *Muslim Mulikji*, Engle Berisha, Masar Caka, Tahir Emra, Mustafa Ferizi, Redzep Feri, Adem Kastrati and others.

But Paris as orientation artistic center for Albanian painters continued to be in the period after 90's. So except painters of Kosovo and the newer generation of artists from Macedonia are staying in Paris in sense of opening exhibitions, i.e. they are presenting themselves in Paris,

while Paris will affect on their artistic creation. Paris and the way of artistic thinking in it, mixed with various artistic traditions of many countries of the world brings with it the unique charm on which will not be able to resist the Albanian artists from Macedonia and Kosovo. They in their artistic expression want to inhale the spiritual climate, the vanguard and freedom of expression of Paris.

Paris with these features of rebirth and enlightenment shows its power for instigation and self examination of young Albanian artists in order for better introduction of themselves, of their location, tradition and lifestyle.

The position of professor *Velickovski* for Macedonian artist in the beginning is more receiving than giving in terms of assimilating elements that suit on his artistic nature and temperament<sup>1</sup>. It is identical for the Albanian painters in Macedonia and Kosovo, which means that this period those of Paris and other centers more will receive features and will make an effort to assimilate it with elements of their artistic nature and temperament than what they will give.

Paris school affects in Albanian painters to develop esthetic-based concepts as a necessary basis for the work of an artist, which also influence on the salvation of subjectivism.

In 1961 Muslim Mulikji got scholarship for specialization in Paris, with which had opportunity to become familiar with the styles and trends of contemporary art. He was impressed by the works of famous artists of the Renaissance and modern art such, Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Titian, Raphael and others. In 1975 he has opened first solo exhibition at, Gallery in Rome and this is his first presentation outside the borders of Yugoslavia. On the exhibition he presented works painted in the studio in Pristine as well as canvases painted during his stay in Rome. These compositions are separated by a fresh symbiosis of atmosphere, drawing and form.

Albanian painters from Macedonia who as students visited Paris and in whose works feels Parisian spirit are: Reshat Ameti, Bashkim Medziti, Ilirjan Beqiri, Nevzat Bejtuli, Agron Abduli, Nehat Beqiri, Hajrush Iseni, Zenun Sherifi and others. The study trips to Paris of mentioned painters who stayed certain period for sub specialization on Cite International des

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<sup>1</sup> Величковски Владимир, *Уметнички критики и есеи*, Книга 5, Скопје 2007, стр.148

Arts, in a center where in meditative form, got in touch with the world concepts from all sides and as a result of the visit to these authors can be viewed the cosmopolitical influence and the freedom in the creative inspiration. The status of Paris as center of many social and artistic movements in Europe, gives the creative freedom, while multitrade and multidimensional artistic thinking in it enables cosmopolitanism to those who stayed and worked there.

Except the studios stay in Paris, the painters: Bashkim Medziti, Reshat Ameti, Safet Spahiu, Ilirjan Beqiri, Nehat Beqiri, Nevzat Bejtuli, Melik Arslani had their own exhibitions in New York, USA.

In New York their artistic language realizes visible emancipation, subordinating and accepting individual painting flows of the new environment. They will be able to exhibit their expression in their artistic skills based in a new world flows. Also, the stay there and the real contact with postmodern American art prominently influenced on the art reorientation of the aforementioned artists. The works realized in a different setting, differ visibly from previous cycles, both in form and intense color. Of particular importance is organizing exhibitions of contemporary French (1952), Polish, Italian (1956), American (1961) art in Macedonia, which certainly influenced on the artists of the country.

One of the Albanian artists where is seen the impact of European centers, especially of Italian and German is Gjelos Gjokaj. He didn't stay just under European influence. Gjokaj with his masterly work in his works managed to insert something from the Albanian soul and identity. The fate and the social circumstances forced Gjokaj to withdraw from Kosovo and live in Italy, where he realized the strongest painting cycles in his work, as metaphysical cycle. In his works he presents the robot man. The background of his work exudes with energy of semantic painting negation.

From Italy, Gjelos Gjokaj passes in Southern Germany in the picturesque Augsburg, where he lives and works today. Here he realizes the cycle of birds and abstraction. Birds in his works are an expression of nostalgia; desire to fly towards freedom, while abstraction to him is symbiosis of the concrete and abstract, of particular and universal.

More sophisticated artistic influence from different centers we can see in the artist Jakup Feri from Kosovo. He is inspired by the conceptual Croatian artist Mladen Stilinovic. He

prepared video titled One artist who does not speak English is not artist, identical with the title of the work of Stilinovikj.

Feri in his art experienced the physical barrier to abstaining in Europe. In the video Three Virgins he tries to exceed the impossibilities to be at a desired point, in an imminent meeting because time can not be undone, but also because of the context and geopolitical limits and the wise barriers which are part of the Balkan mind assembly. According Jakup Feri, the main thing is how you can change the conditions. He is aware that the target is somewhere else. Inside the linear history he can put himself where he wants and how he wants without thinking. Jakup gives an authentic form of its affinity by his geography and remote geographies.<sup>2</sup>

A synthesis of oriental occidental influence is perceptible in the artist Omer Kaleshi. In the eyes of this Balkan artist forever left the image of his village Srbitza, Kichevo and the traces of this place he brings to his work.

He studied painting in Turkey, where he has formed as famous painter. Emigrated in Paris and very rarely he returned to his native country in Kicevo. Balkans remained in the center of his creative world. In his art consistently reflects the strong contrast of colors in white, red or black. Kaleshi his perceptive performances present it by Travel in Anatolia. In mystical oriental literature he tries and manages to find a way for his idea to display it in a contemporary style. He was inspired by reading the works of Kadare, in whose writings he has found many points with the portraits painted by his hand.

In the tradition of Islamic art, Kaleshi says portraying human portrait is prohibited. At the invitation of Fatih Sultan Mehmed II in Constantinople arrived the Italian painter Gentile Bellini. With his stay and exhibition of his works for first time stopped this religious law. Fatih Sultan Mehmed II's portrait, painted by Bellini has been exhibited in several London museums. During the reign of Sultan Fatih, the famous Turkish artist Mehmet Sijah Kalem, along with his students has made the album of Fatih, the owner of galleries and portraits of prominent and distinguished civil rulers and servants. Kaleshi was impressed by the dervish portraits, especially of the portraits of Hadzi Bektesh Veli, exposed in the tomb of Hadzi Bektesh Veli.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Öğüt, Ahmet, *O Zot, më bëj artist shumë të famshëm*, edicioni Jakup Ferri, Prishtinë 2007, 55

<sup>3</sup> Изети Метин, *Тековите на Тесавуџот*, Тетово, 2008.,76

They were created at a time when painting human face is prohibited. The portraits of dervishes have a significant impact on Kaleshi's works.

Later, similar portraits painted Kaleshi on his canvases, successfully repainting the mystical world of dervishes with strange innate march, without use of words. Kaleshi's works represent symbiosis of certain periods experienced by the author, the impressions received after the opening of the first exhibition of artist Henry Moore, the knowledge of painting and trips around Turkey; works created in France in the studio of Bulevar "Arago", the contacts with the masters of modern art, trips in Europe etc.

Kaleshi especially respects Pablo Picasso, whose works he saw as a student in the albums of the Academy of Arts in Istanbul, and later in Paris Galleries and Museums.

While the artists speak about that the significant in the arts should be required, Picasso said regarding it: *je trouve* (I found). In terms of the attitude of artists Kaleshi is in the middle, he says: to find the beautiful and harmonious in the art you should constantly try to find it! We're looking for until we find what touches the audience, the real art, the catharsis.<sup>4</sup>

Kaleshi admired and was delighted of the portraits and human figures of Picasso, especially Rose or blue epoch, not cubistic and abstract painting. Picasso as a revolutionary gave new dimensions to the art and painting. Not in vain, he was saying: painting is weapon of war.<sup>5</sup> During the trips to Albania, Kaleshi was impressed by abundance of icons and Christian frescoes: Onufri, Selenicasi, Shpataraku. In Onufri revealed similarities with him, because he in his writings reflected human life. He liked the style, the red color, the intimacy of the figure. Icons appear to hide any alchemy, liturgical mystery, similar to the heads of Kaleshi, monologues, pagan or mystical rites.<sup>6</sup>

In the sequence of artists inspired by their school platform is the painter Reshat Ameti to whom visibly affects the professor Risto Kalčevski who makes the settling of the art application and expands the interest for geometrics. In the period of postgraduate studies at the University of Pristine, he enlists the creative freedom influenced by Fatmir Kripa and Redzep Feri.

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<sup>4</sup> Rama Luan, *Omeri Strategu nga Ballkani*, Tirane, Korbi, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid,

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

Although the artists from Kosovo and Macedonia in the cultural arena in this region appear as good followers of their schools, but with them in the later period of activity can be seen stagnation in the creative logic and developmental line across the cultural and artistic characteristics and needs.

The fact is that the lack of significant critical studies and problematic thematic analysis, as well the insufficient cleared theoretical positions do not allow deep pledging and valuation of the artistic work.

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