

London, January 31, 2004

For Tatjana

When you listen on the radio to that sort of sports commentators speaking with pathos about a boxing match, about a mute visual action, you experience a genuine metamorphosis of an image. Charged with emotion, at times the commentator endows the image with power and infuses fresh blood into it. Life consumes empty space. The boxer imbues everything around himself with ardour and air. Spectators feel in all this the body and the warmth of the winner's breath.

I recognise Tatjana Ilić by her voice. The photographs of her actions are never perfect. Through these you may only catch a glimpse of the place of delict without the poignant moment which polarises the scene. A bird emerges from the mouth and marks out a surface with its wings. Reflection cannot see the essence, that special moment. It could not tell me whether it was late afternoon or if it was warm.

I believe these differences carry their weight for Tatjana since theatricality, which excludes literary narration, entices extremes; each and every moment is the last one before the portentous and fateful encounter with the truth. A humble soul nurturing poetry within itself so that it may speak in the language of a painter; only one single moment of its duration is so exquisite. Then, a catharsis and slow relaxation, an acrobatic ascent to the next moment, the one springing from the source that carries within itself the experience of the first work, always cherished and yearned for. And there can be no failure because the very next moment is the one which passes judgement for the whole life.

Tatjana thrives on these sublime moments. Perhaps, this is the fate of a painter, the one who unconditionally takes on the risk to strike the right cord from a forgotten score shelved in a dusty cabinet.

Tatjana Ilić, the one I know from the Duesseldorf epoch, is capable of building up suspense, drama and melancholy, playing day in day out on a single string.

Jannis Kounellis