

# MARILENA PREDA SÂNC

INTERVIEW BY: LIVIANA DAN

Liviana Dan: In an attempt to somehow outline your professional path of creation and research, as well as your pedagogical profile, I am thinking about a type of pluralism obsessed with breakthroughs. You have done painting, drawing, performance, video, installation art, interventions in the public space. Is there a difficulty of choice?  
How do you choose?

Marilena Preda Sânc: I have always considered freedom of choice to be vital for the existence of an artist. The studio, which I carry with me at all times, articulates a space of thought, of heuristic prospectations, of artistic experiment or protest and of aesthetic meditation. As a result of a synesthetic process, specific for creators, naturally agglutinating a medium which enables me to build the image / the artistic object

LD: For the exhibition in the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Bucharest (MNAC) in September 2011, Olivia Nitis, the curator of the exhibition, is historically and conceptually pinpointing your trajectory so far through four major topics: Module, Body - scape, Feminisms and Globe. A writhed accuracy, if I may call it so. If we put aside the white territory of the space how would you, in familiar terms, describe this route?

MPS: In 2009, I submitted the application for MNAC out of my desire to put together an exhibition with a retrospective character for 2011, thus marking 30 years from my first personal exhibition which had opened in Atelier 35 of the Artists' Union back in 1981.

The works covered various themes. The series of works have, in time, been exhibited in Module, Body - scape, Cosmic States, Flying Souls, Inside the Living, Constructions / Spaces plus video fragments with feminist topics begun in 1993 and also ecological, centered on the idea of globalization / *remapping the worlds*, the first Globe work being submitted in 1999. We wanted a collaboration with a young curator, and Olivia Nitis, whose activity I knew and appreciated, meant a fresh outlook, a lucid mind, a firm stand, but not always comfortable, a partner for dialogue with a different view on my works who has been with me at all times during the project of this exhibition. The series of works represent intervals in which an idea, a feeling, a reaction to context start turning into images.

LD: You have met Peter Weibel, an early and eloquent champion of media theories and an exceptional curator and you have been working closely with Martha Wilson who occupies an important place in the history of feminism, performance, and conceptual art. They both have been and still are focusing on education and on the freedom of expression. What did these encounters mean for you?

MPS: Meeting Peter Weibel meant coming into contact with Ars Electronica, the media festival which he initiated in 1979 in Linz and which even now represents the realm of technological performance and interdisciplinary experimental scientific thought. The work of the artist Peter Weibel, certified in several artistic and scientific fields, fascinates through its unconventionality, knowledge of mediums and of the space, through depth and creative freshness. Martha Willson, an eccentric presence, refined and rebelling, who performs with irony, scans you easily and helps you gently. In New York, I was shown what it meant to build the Franklin Furnace Foundation, the foundation which she is in charge of and which promotes free creation and artists who take on art as a way of being, reflecting and shaping the society in which they are living.

LD: In the Catalogue of the exhibition 'Cosmic State / Flying Souls' of 1992, the art critic Calin Dan finds within you an 'abstract disposition' reminiscent of Clifford Still and a 'series of surprising drawings'. The similarities with Cy Twombly's style hint at the internal drive of this new discourse: literature, claims Calin Dan. I see in you an almost conservative loyalty towards the abstract and upon this, the quotes of Calin Dan. I recognise in you a growing lyrical intimacy that develops line and color into a free trail which becomes a deliberate space. I do however believe that the mechanisms of your painting and drawing are always a matter of stern abstraction, of rules of geometry employed by/ I hereupon retrieve Calin Dan's courage / Brice Marten and Robert Ryman. There is a clear light and a line of ice. But there are also the motion and the emotion to melt these. How do you actually comply with the rigors of the abstract?

MPS: A state of mind, a sensation, a sound is transformed into color. Color becomes line. The line molds narrative structures / spaces / soulful abstractions. I do not perceive the rigor of the abstract as if it were an actual rigor but as a symbolic metalanguage that I, at times, have access to.

LD: It is surprising, the relationship that a new media artist has with painting and design. Can the sensitivity of the experiment transform the paradigm of painting and drawing?

MPS: In the 1990s, I used to go to restoration and painting sites, in the eighties I painted on canvas, I was drawing, doing collages and manipulated photos. In the nineties, I progressed to objects, installations, video and performance. My exhibitions contain a central theme. The works are naturally brought round in diversified artistic languages and practices. For me, it is important to have an exhibiting route with a visual coherence, but not one of monody. Freedom to create provides me with the power to go on. It is important to believe in what you are doing, but in order to do that, you need to be honest to yourself, informed, to live for art and appreciate the art of others.

LD: MPS, you have allowed yourself to venture into the aesthetic experience, how do you think of the present and the future along the lines of ecofeminism, of social ecology, of social theories constructed through extropy, and those of connecting to the public space?

MPS: I like to watch TV, I watch scientific discoveries and geo-political toils, also social, I'm trying to grasp the mechanisms of power, I remark serious environmental issues, I am against extremism of any kind and against the belief, forever reconfirmed locally/globally, that the woman is not a human being. As a painter of images, my comments are to be found in the artistic object on which I leave my mark, my signature.

LD: In this context what norm of style, or of power, influence your painting and drawing?

MPS: I drill into reality from multiple perspectives and it is only natural for it to be so. I could not have set a career in art on command. The state which I love most is the one in which I am attempting, I simply dare and there is something new emerging inside the picture. Full awareness is only a by-product. I have not problematized the matter of style. I have series of images on certain themes. They fall into a perfectible universe inside which I exist as in a virtual reality continuously objectified in what will eventually shape the artistic outcome.

MPS: I have had the feeling that, in some questions, you would have wanted me to express a few opinions about my work as a teacher. I look upon my work with the students as a continuation of my workshop activity. They are my students and my colleagues. I must talk to them in such a way that they acknowledge their own ability to create. I am interested in the developments of the indigenous artistic education which has remained a bit academic, as I am interested in the rewriting of the history of the European visual arts including the art scene of the Balkans. During the last three decades, numerous and remarkable artistic

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events have taken place within the central / Eastern European space, accompanied by catalogues and consistent theoretical studies, but the history of the European visual arts remains a volume dedicated solely to Western art. This perception must be modified and complex visual studies should be put together so that they comprise the European visual history in its entirety.