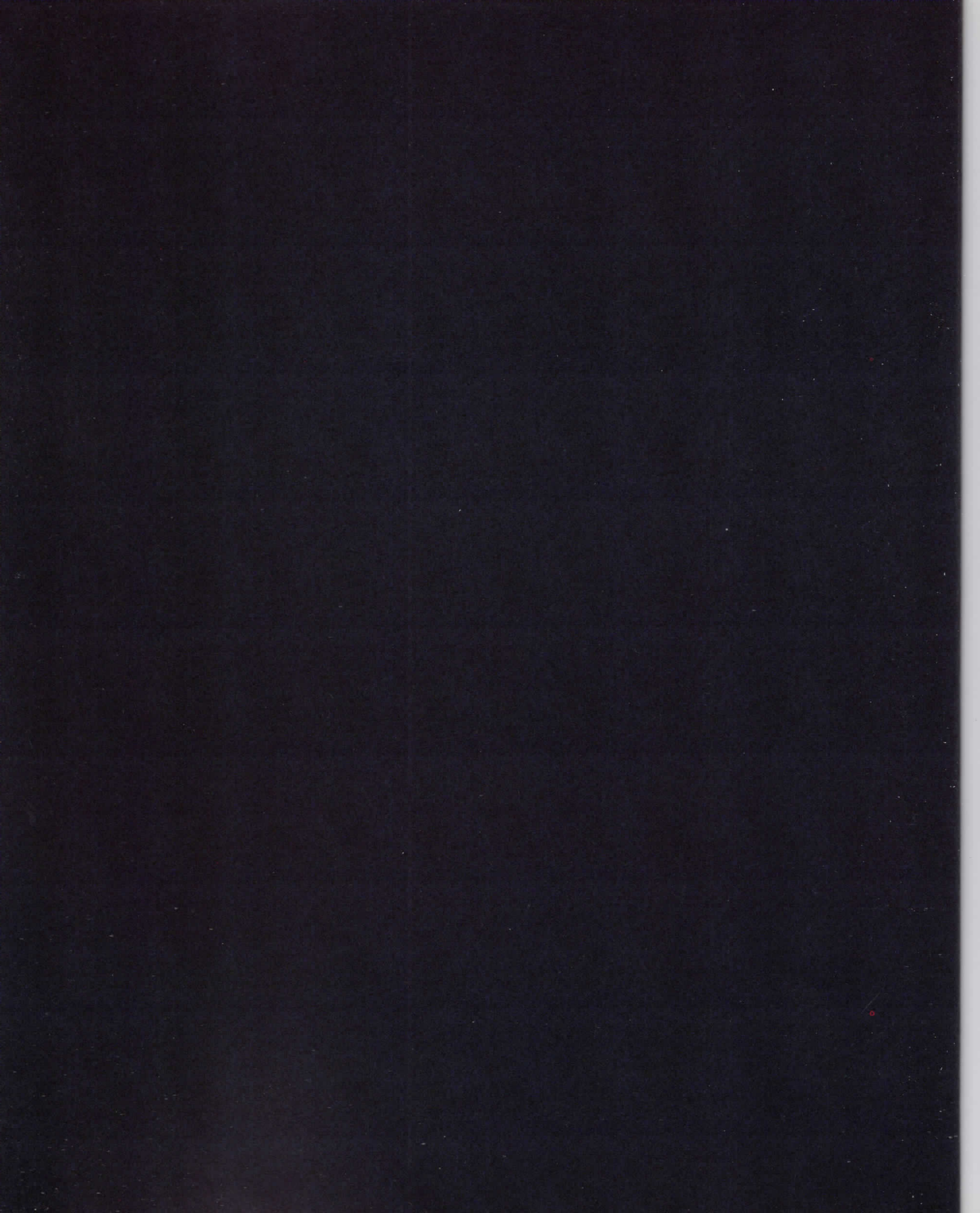
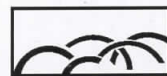




VANGELI





ART GALLERY SKOPJE

I N T E G R A L I S M
Ž a n e t a V a n g e l i

10. Македонска Библиотека

MACEDONIAN PAVILLON
SAN MARCO 2774
CAMPO SANTO STEFANO
VENEZIA

la Biennale di Venezia

50ESIMA
ESPOSIZIONE
INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE

June-November 2003



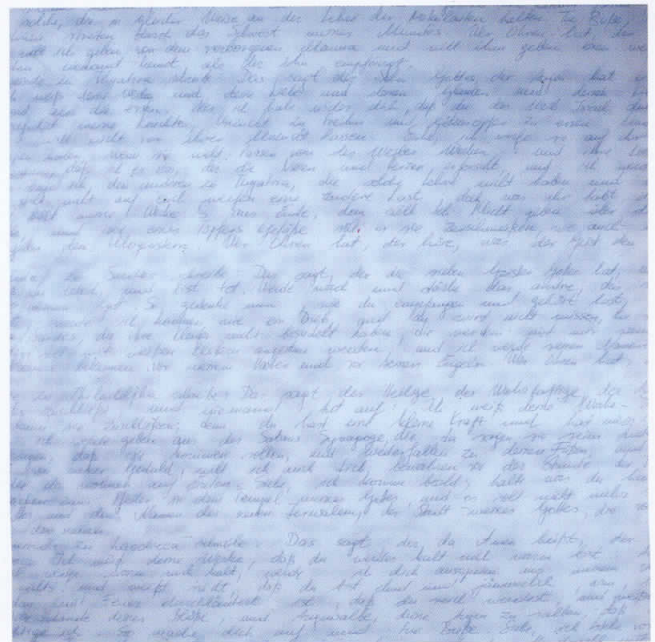
The Small War
 installation: glass-case, British military belts, bullets, ruler, engraved glass,
 floppy discs, hard disc 1992



The Big War
 4 icons, egg tempera, gold/wood, each 24x40cm 1992



The Big War/The Revelation of St. John
 pen, acrylic letters/transparent paper, 3 sheets, 90x250cm 1992



Detail

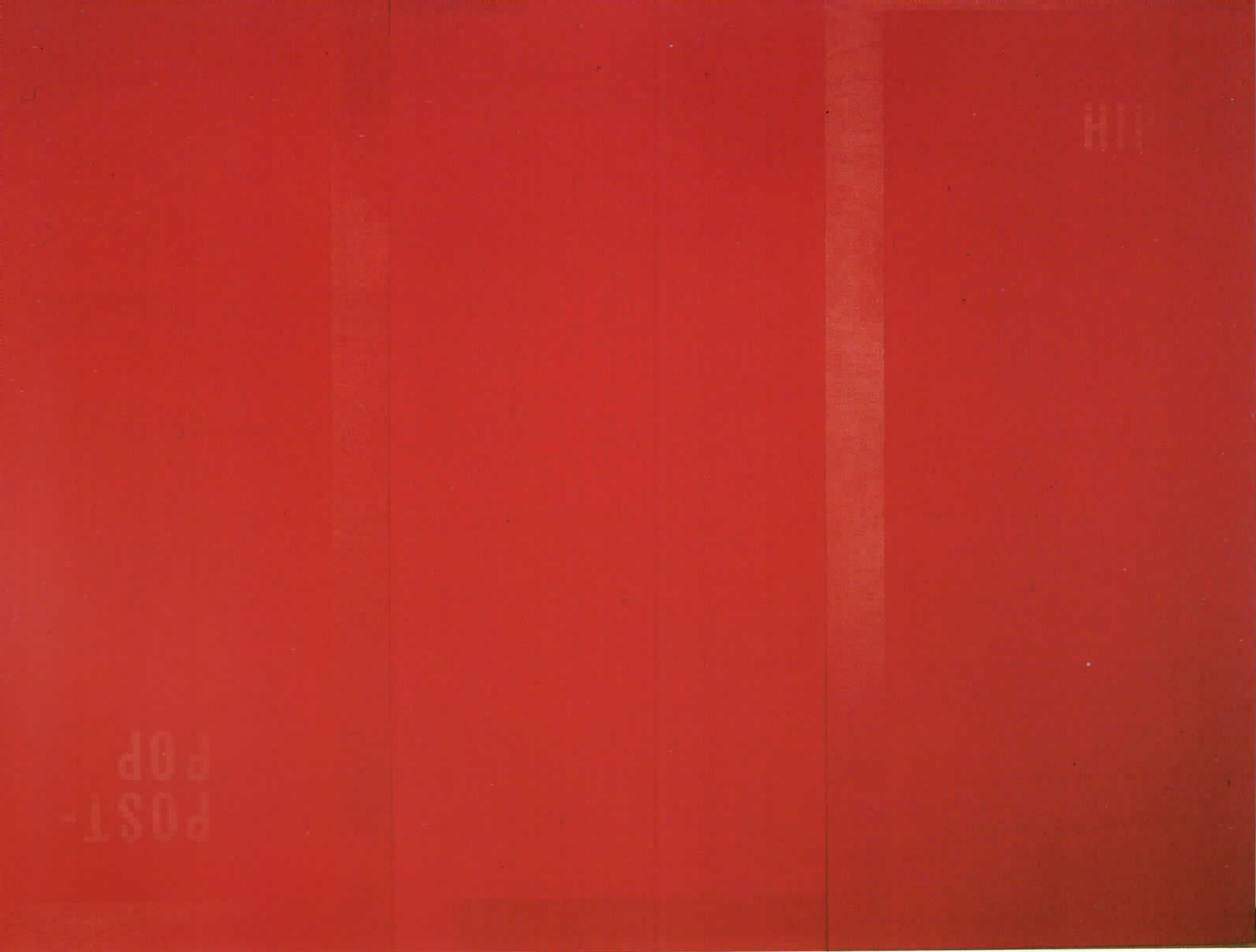
Suzana Milevska

**Reverse Perspective, Negative Theology and Other Denials:
the crisis of subject and geography in art of Žaneta Vangeli**

Žaneta Vangeli is an artist who is profoundly concerned with the cultural and political context of Macedonia, the country where she was born and spent more than half of her professional career and private life. Having said that, one thing should be made clear from the outset: although she is dealing with issues that do not necessarily derive from the internal rules of the art system, the means of engagement with the *real* in her art differ fundamentally from the one accepted and entertained within the realm of socially and politically engaged art, as it is conceived today.

What I would like to emphasize here in order to differentiate Vangeli's art procedures from those of other artists dealing with similar issues is the very specific method of negative theology applied within the conceptual structure of her projects.

In fact, she consciously and continuously questions the possibility of a critique of the real with its own means, within the realm of the real, that what is known, legitimate and not such a different approach from the one of the Western



The Small War
acrylic/wood, each 270x210cm 1993

conceptual artists. The question whether any kind of a definition or a critique of a concept is possible if it is not immanent to the concept, although relevant, is not included here since the questions posed by Vangeli are of a more complex origin.

From the very early stages of her artistic career she has tried to position herself with a very careful and conscious account of some theological rhetorical procedures. Already in 1993, in the exhibition *Der Kleine Krieg, der Grosse Krieg* (Kommunale Galerie im Leinwandhaus, Frankfurt/Main, Germany) it is clear that when taking on the issues of cultural or political identity, or the concrete problems in the recent history and cultural and political geography, Vangeli was in parallel interested in what she calls 'internal war', the introspective and contemplative war going on within the subject.

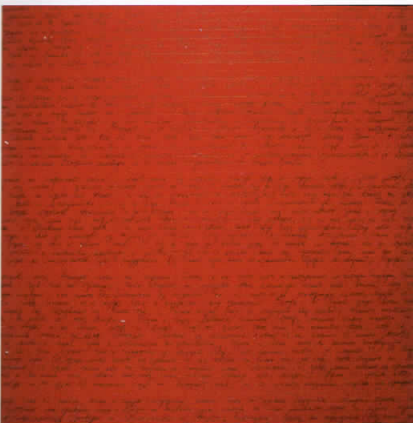
The distinctions made in philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari between the microterritories and macroterritories comes to mind: the difference between the *two politics*, between the individual level and the societal level.¹ Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that in Vangeli's work the classification and differentiation between the two different orders of reality is not between the one of the subject and the reality of the world. The difference in her work is put in reverse order: between the 'micropolitics' of the world and the 'macropolitics' of the subject. Namely, the real world wars going on in different regions about gaining territories, natural treasures and cheap human labour are put on a lower level, dubbed 'small war', than the battles being fought within the subject in the ethical and religious domains. According to the artist's concept the really 'big war', the macropolitics, takes place only when the subject faces the incomprehensible nature of something that is impossible to represent, with the 'Darkness of Unknowing' of the absolute concepts such as good, divinity, God.

While bearing in mind this reverse order that enables Vangeli to decline the position of the artist as a social, cultural, or political critic of globalisation, post-colonialism or other similar phenomena, but still to preserve the possibility of creating art works that reflect on the world with all its tragedy of existence, simultaneously without clinging to the tragedy, it becomes clearer from where the more recent works as the series of "*Integralism*" derive.

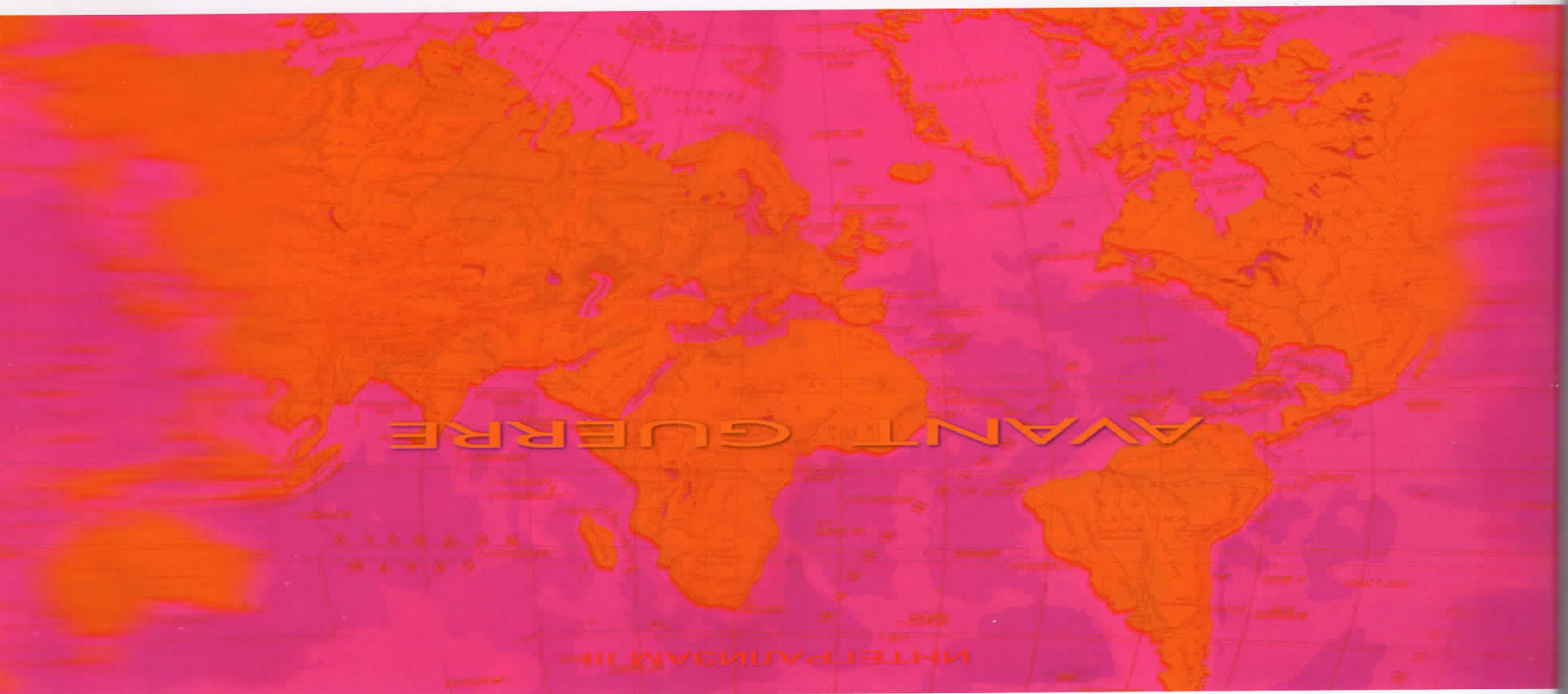
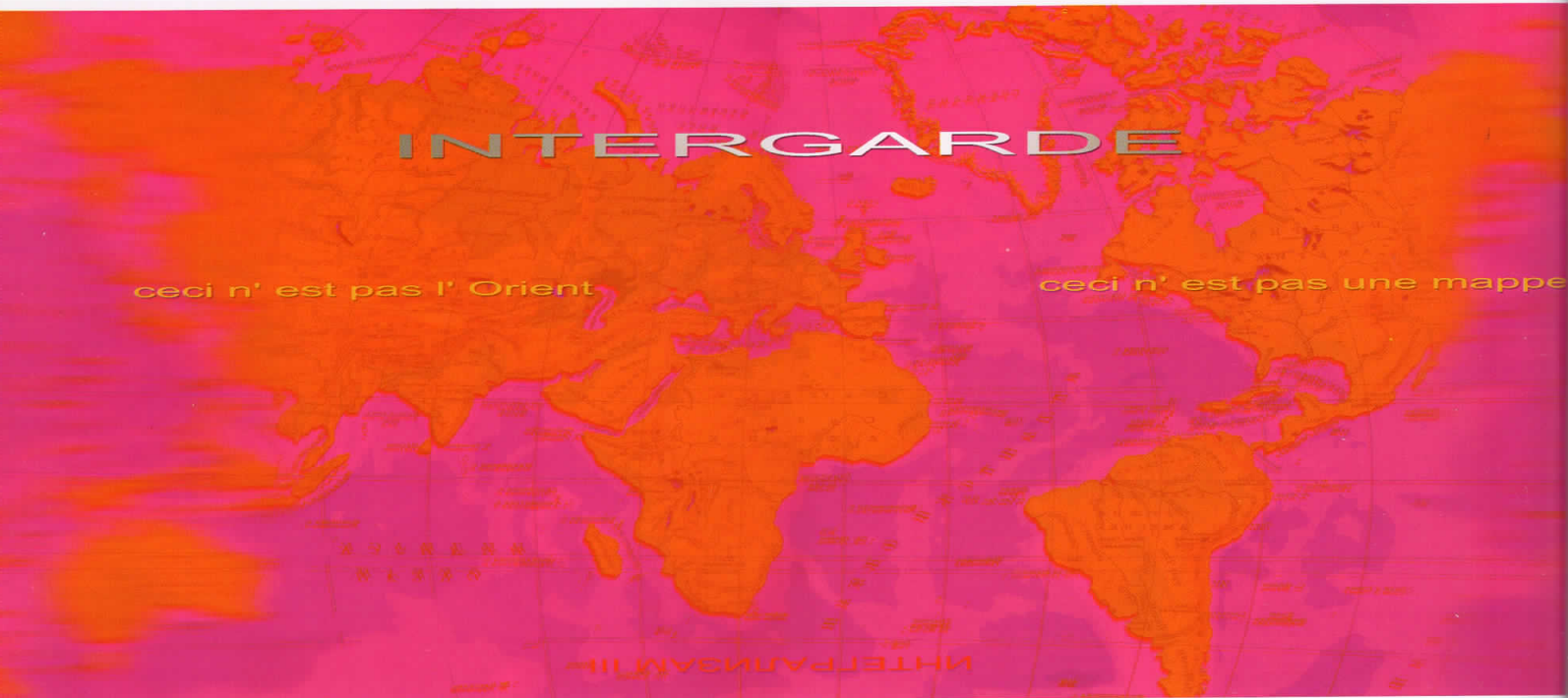
"*Integralism 3*" (2002) is a two part installation that shows the 'reverse



The Big War/The Revelation of St. John
pen, acrylic/canvas, 140x24x12cm 1993



Detail



Integralism 3
plotter prints, each 90x180cm 2002

geography' of the world. The two maps of the world put side by side are showing the world in a 'reverse perspective': as in an Orthodox icon or fresco, where the perspective is not the one of the viewer but the scene is depicted as it could have been seen from inside: the God' point of view. In Vangeli's work the world order is the one seen by the Other who is not outside of the world, a neutral 'observer', but inside of the planet. She plays therefore with the word '*avant-garde*' and replaces it with her neologism '*inter-garde*'. Over the Euro-Asian part of the first map the text "*Ceci n'est pas l'Orient*" is inscribed as a call for "de-orientalization of the East". The text "*Ceci n'est pas une mappe*" and "*Integralism III*" is written over the part of the map showing West as a very obvious irony towards the privilege of West to define the East.

The text written over the second map needs no further extrapolations: "*AVANT GUERRE*" and "*Integralism III*" obviously refers to the intention of each war to integrate another territory, but the ironical tone of the whole project underlines the fact that there is always a strong tension between the terms integration and inclusion, "*the phantasms of belonging as well as of tragedies of not belonging*"² to one territory or community. The "*general crisis of ability to represent any form of stable geographical knowledge*".³

On the one hand the most problematic phenomenon taking place at the moment, the one of globalisation, in this work is viewed in this 'reversed perspective' through the problem of 'selective inclusiveness'. On the other hand integration is seen as a profane phenomenon that becomes irrelevant from the 'inside point of view' of a creator – the position impossible to completely comprehend by our finite mind.

The 'visual theology' of the reverse perspective and negative theology as fundamental principles around which these art projects were to be developed are not easily justifiable positions. Why on earth would a post-conceptual artist today choose the rigorous procedures of Pseudo-Dionysius (a theologian from the early Christian era, 6th century) in order to deal with issues such as globalisation, ethics, 'new world order' etc.?

The negation neither/nor is known mostly from the negative theology and its denial of defining Trinity in itself while negating the essence of each of its com-

ponents, never closing the possibilities for the establishment of relations among the different appearances of one phenomenon. Although if only the neither/nor negation is applied it can sound as only another binary model the logic structure of neither is not that simple. The most well known example of such a negation that can help us in understanding why the *neither* does not entail the binary and dichotomous model is the example from the apophatic theology of Pseudo-Dionysius in his *Mystic Theology* (for a long time by mistake attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite).⁴

Namely, according to this early Christian philosopher and theologian God is undeterminable in itself and it is only possible to define God through continuous negation of different elements of the triad that constitutes deity: '*God is not the father, not the son, nor the holy spirit*'.⁵ Its similarity to other binary logical systems, especially when translated in English, is one of the problems that usually cause caution among the other theorists as well and prevails when discussing this negative model of thinking. Still, its motion and dynamics in contrary to the positive conclusiveness can be found in the basis of many contemporary thinkers.

One possible answer for this could be that the apophatic theology is not about neither/nor double model that calls for the third answer as a solution, but actually it is a call for continuous denial of what something is not, starting with the characteristic of one concept that is the most remote from its essence. Instead of expecting that at the end a third term will be offered as a solution, discovery, revelation, that constant movement of denials allows one to reveal the meaning through the movement itself. In fact, it should also not be forgotten that the affirmative theology of Pseudo-Dionysius applied in his other works such as *Divine Names* or *Celestial Hierarchy* also plays an important role.

However, there are several problematic implications when applying the logical principles of apophatic theology to any discourse outside theology. It is not by accident that Jacques Derrida, in his very influential essay *How to Avoid Speaking: Denials*, denied any affiliation of the deconstruction with negative theology and stated that he refrains from accepting its methods although in many interpretations of his works his critics noticed that his concept of *différance* is based on a denigration of what *différance* is not.

One of the problems, perhaps the crucial one in accepting the model of apophatic theology, derives from the assumption that there is always something undeterminable that escapes definition. In negative theology there is this *hyperessential being* (God) that lingers on the border between rational and mystical, with the ambivalent status of its concept that creates all sorts of epistemological problems if applied in philosophy: "...I thought I had to forbid myself to write in the register of 'negative theology', because I was aware of this movement toward hyperessentiality, beyond Being",⁶ says Derrida when answering why he doesn't want to be affiliated with apophatic theology.

The biggest problem, according to Pseudo-Dionysius, it is not that the concept, the object of interrogation, is unintelligible considered in itself, but the problem is that it stands outside of the human faculties for understanding, due to the "*finiteness of the human mind.*"⁷

To go back to "Integralism III", there is a big danger that the works of Žaneta Vangeli can easily end up being interpreted as dependent only on metaphysical and mystical concepts of a modernist type since it deals with the nature of absolute concepts such as truth, good, God. Therefore it should be emphasised here the fact that in this case through such negation a kind of positive definition can still be expected, only that it is not expected to come in a form of one simple definition of the moment, space, and way in which the subjectivity is being constructed in the Balkans as a direct opposition, or the Other as a mirror image of the Self, being this either the West, or of the East.

The definition of any of the two terms, West or East, is not given as a positive statement (this is...) but only through a chain of negation of what that 'this' is not. There is no comfort of a resolution at the end but the pursuer of the meaning is forced to follow the operation and to come to a conclusion through this motion of following the endless chain of negative determinations.

When negative theology is applied in the attempt to avoid the implications of Orientalism as a definition of what is East by West it emphasizes an ironic specificity of Orientalism: that it actually relies on its own definition, in a vicious circle of argumentation. Moreover, that Orientalism, as a moral negative of the



Culturalism, or about the Ontological Failure of the Tragedy, installation:

- a. *Posthistorical Tourism*, plotter print, 90x200cm, slide projection;
- b., c., d., e., 4 glass cases with ready-made objects and prints 1998/9

West, tells us more about the West than about the East. "*The 'truth', identity, or 'reality' of the Orient as well as the declaration of its exteriority to discourse is constituted by the very discourse of Orientalism as founding principle of its claim to legitimacy*".⁸

Probably another work by Žaneta Vangeli "*Culturalism or About the Ontological Failure of the Tragedy*" (1999) realized within the group project "Always Already Apocalypse" (Skopje, Istanbul) explains more precisely how this interest for the relation between local and global cultural problems, between East and West, is intertwined with national and religious identity through negative theology procedures.

The work itself consists of a large ink-jet print of a photograph of the interior of the Hagias Sofia Church in Istanbul with the title of the work inscribed over it and a slide projection of the same image but turned upside down, as its own mirror or water reflection and, also, of four separate glass cases with small objects and photographs.

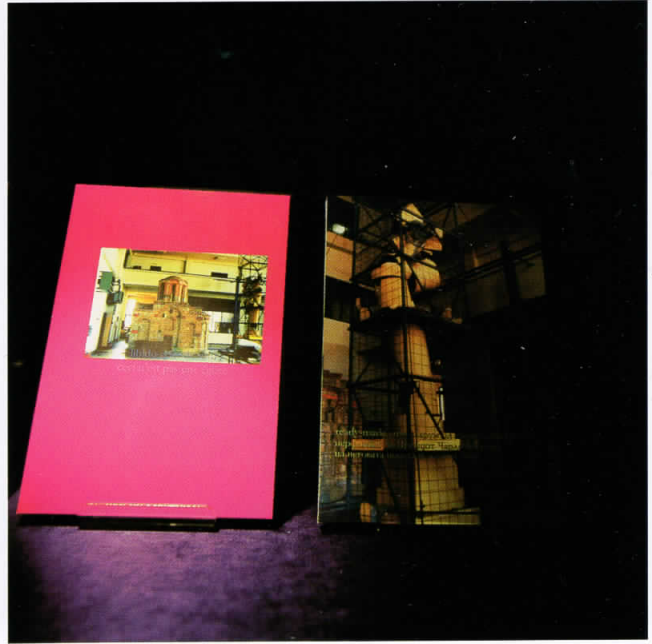
The exhibiting of the Hagias Sofia's Christian interior with frescoes and Islamic writings inscribed as ornaments over them becomes a metaphor for such cultural misunderstanding. The same unexpected conclusion about the absurd relation between the important institutions of the state can be drawn when one observes banknotes of 1000 denars and 500 denars. On the surface of the first banknote there is a reproduction of an icon of the Mother of God, the usual symbol for the national history, culture and religion that from the religious point of view is a blasphemy on the most sacral symbol by the simple act of putting it on something as profane as money. On the other note there is a poppy flower as a symbol of the natural resources of the country although its association with the narcotic circles of the underground producing and selling opium is inevitable.

Such clashes of meanings lay a strong emphasis on the many absurdities in the social, cultural and political life in Macedonia so that, according to the artist Vangeli, the only answer would be the mystical belief in a redemption that does not depend on the ephemeral earth concept of tragedy, it negates it even when caused by the problem of post-colonial domination and conquest of one country and culture over another.



b. left: *Ready-made Icon*
ready-made Macedonian banknote of 1000,- Denars, glass

right: *Amarxistic Anaesthetic, or Opium is Opium for the People*
ready-made Macedonian banknote of 500,- Denars, glass



c. left: *Ceci n'est pas une eglise*
print, 21x30cm

right: *Ready-made Simulacrum of the Apocalyptic Performance in Honor of the Visit of Prince Charles to Skopje*
print, 21x30cm



d. *Godchild*
print, 21x30cm



e. *Designism*
4 ready-made ties

The fetish of money that is adored almost as strongly as the image of Mother of God on the icon is a phantasm, immaterial and powerful although still as vulnerable as any material object. On the other hand, the fetish of poppy – the main drug substance in Macedonia – is also a very old and strong phantasmatic image that can serve for manipulation with the fragile national consciousness and thus, taking in account the famous Lenin's quotation that "*the religion is opium for people*", the religion and drugs are *always already* closing the vicious circle.

Vangeli's usage of Macedonian flags and money should be understood metaphorically and ambivalently since she poses the question of "fabricating" – establishing a legitimate state, church, money and subject identities that will be widely recognized. The usage of readymade by Žaneta Vangeli relates the problem of the readymade to the problems of subjectivisation and national identity, and other unresolved political problems in Republic of Macedonia but always reminding us of the ephemeral nature of such concepts.

A very similar procedure to application of apophatic theology is used by Alain Badiou in his attempt to define the subject without defining it in a positive way. He named this procedure "*Negative Delimitation of the Concept of the Subject*":

a) *A subject is not a substance. If the word substance has a meaning, it designates a multiple that is counted as one in a situation. The intrinsic indiscernibility into which a generic procedure resolves excludes a subject's being substantial.*

b) *Nor is a subject an empty point. The void, which is a proper name of being, is inhuman and a-subjective. It is an ontological concept. In addition it is clear that a truth is realized as multiplicity and not as punctuality.*

c) *A subject is in no sense the organizing of a meaning of experience. It is not a transcendental function. If the word "experience" means anything, it designates presentation as such. Now a generic procedure, hinged as it is on the event that a supernumerary name qualifies, in no way coincides with presentation. We should also differentiate meaning and truth. A generic procedure realizes the post-eventual truth of a situation, but this indiscernible multiple in which a truth consists yields up no meaning.*

The Social Plastic of Macedonia 1996



The Inner Circle
photography/wood, 600x210cm
From left to right: The Archbishop of the Macedonian Orthodox Church Gospodin Gospodin Mihail; Underground Guru Baškim Ademi; The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Macedonia Ljubomir Danailov Frčkoski



Spiritual Macedonia, or Anything Goes
installation: 10 Macedonian flags, lead and gold/wood
25x40cm; 2 objects made of wood, glass, poppies,
each 25x40x12cm



Anamnesis, or How Al Hansen explains the Ultimate Plastic to Baškim Ademi
video installation: 2 recorders, 2 endless tapes, monitor,
video projector

d) *A subject is not an invariant of presentation. The subject is rare in that the generic procedure runs diagonally to the situation. One could add that such subject is rigorously singular, being the generic procedure of a situation that is itself singular. The statement "There is subject" [il y a du sujet] is uncertain or hap-hazard: it is not transitive with respect to being.*

e) *A subject is neither a result nor an origin. It is the local status of the procedure, a configuration that exceeds the situation."*⁹

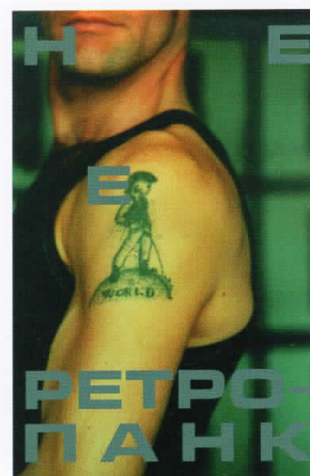
The problem of construction of subject and representation of subjects is also an important issue in Vangeli's works. In particular, her project "*The Social Plastic of Macedonia*" (1996) created for the group exhibition "Liquor Amnii I" (Turkish Bath "Çifte Amam", Skopje), exemplifies the metaphorical way in which this artist plays with the complex inter-relations between objects and subjects. As usual she used objects that are either industrial ready-mades or objects and materials found in nature and juxtaposed them with photographs of chosen individuals.

In this work the artist focused on the questions surrounding the debate on national identity. Her metaphorical interpretation of the exhibit's main concept was through the reference to the relation between the mother and the child from the title (eng. *Amniotic Fluid*) to discuss the problem of the national identity of the newborn state of Macedonia and its citizens going through a transitional stage, to *becoming subjects*.

The project consisted of three installations in different rooms of the main venue. In the first room, Vangeli placed six black and white photographs; there were three on one wall and three identical, blurred ones on the opposing wall. These were life-sized photographs of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Archbishop of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and a well-known, local underground figure, Baškim Ademi. The composition of the three standing, blurred figures in the photographs was an ironic reference to the Holy Trinity, and was meant to emphasize a major problem of the government, namely the fight with corruption and the alleged involvement in illegal drug activity. While one would have expected to see the Archbishop at the centre of the composition, as it is the usual position reserved for the omnipotent figure of God, it was in fact Ademi, the 'naturally



Postnationalism
plotter print, 180x210cm, 1998



Ready-made World
plotter print, 63x90cm 1998

born hedonist' (Vangeli) who was placed in that position, alluding to a more contemporary "religion."

The exhibit in the second room was an installation titled "*Spiritual Macedonia, or Anything Goes*", including ten Macedonian flags, two plates of gold and lead, and framed objects with poppies. This was an obvious reference to the chaotic situation in the country where neither the state nor the church are recognized in the wider international context and all state insignia are still questioned due to the political pressure that Greece applies at the UN, as there is a region in Greece with the same name. The well known problem with the recognition of the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia that was replaced, and still is, by the short F.Y.R.O.M for Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia during these first years of independence went so far that even the design of the flag was changed due to the intervention of the Greek Government. Thus, the putting of the new flags opposite to the opium poppies was a deliberate metaphor of the not readymade state and its blurred, uncertain structure and future. (In her work "*Ex-Fyromism*" (1998) she referred to this issue once more. It was an installation of three photographs, from which the ones showing a man in two positions: preparing to jump on his arms, and the one with his legs already in the air, make a diptych. The inscriptions NATO and META DESIGNER, with this order, over the man in the photographs are very obvious reference to the most powerful geographer and cartographer of the world that may explain the popularity of this work among critics.)

The third part of the project "*The Social Plastic of Macedonia*" included a video installation showing a drugged Baškim Ademi watching the artist Al Hansen, one of the leading members of the "Fluxus" movement, while he recites his own poem. The whole scene alluded to a hallucination, although each of the two video scenes was so documentary and realistic, as ordinary readymade images from everyday life. The presence of Baškim Ademi as a witness of the performance of Al Hansen, and at the same time the absence of his conscious and rational thinking, his blurred vision, underlines the complex meanings deriving from the first part of the installation: as if the three figures on the one wall were watching themselves in a hallucinating fuzzy vision, no matter whether in a high-

er state of mind during a prayer or in a 'higher' narcotised state.

Interestingly enough, for the second phase of the "Liquor Amnii 2" project that took place during the Convergence X Summer Festival in Providence (RI, USA) in 1997 Žaneta Vangeli created another site specific installation again dealing with the same issue of the identity but using as readymade objects the latest model of life vests, perfectly produced in the States. She released floating bright orange objects onto the dark surface of the Providence River in order to stand for the optimistic concept proclaimed by the title of the work itself: "*The Constant Desire for Eternity*" (1997). The obvious irony towards any belief in eternity achieved by mundane values emphasise once more the overall strategy of Vangeli: instead of offering easy choices and direct criticism of globalisation she opts for more profound and complex answers to questions that are pretty entangled in the first place.

In this work the artist also avoided the danger of possible national exoticism with the successful contextualisation of the second part of the project. The neutral industrially produced ready-mades in the USA – e.g. the orange life vests thrown as an alleged support to the small country hoping for salvation – were condemned to become 'subject-less objects'.

Becoming subject is not a process that can be facilitated with life vests, or with the means of cultural cartography and geography. Neither can this process take place through mechanic procedures implied from outside authorities. It is the complex dialectical process of interpellation that, according to Judith Butler's take on Louis Althusser's famous essay *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, takes place when one, in order to become a subject, is forced into a continuous process of 'acquitting oneself of the accusation of guilt'. "*To acquit oneself 'conscientiously', is, then, to construe labour as a confession of innocence, a display or proof of guiltlessness in the face of the demand for confession implied by an insistent accusation*".¹⁰

Still, Butler is aware that the interpellation and the social production of subjects is not the finite formula of becoming a subject; that there is always a failure, a kind of a remainder that allows the subject to be understood as by Agamben, as an inexhaustible possibility and potentiality in one's own existence.¹¹



The Constant Desire for Eternity
site-specific installation in Providence/Rhode Island:
2 red carpets, 2 US flags, 35 life vests,
nylon, title engraved on brass plate/stone 1997

For Žaneta Vangeli the constitution of the subject in Macedonia is an ambivalent and open process, on the one hand under a kind of suspension, on the other hand going through a continuous re-invention of its 'design', as it is being suggested in her latest project exhibited as part of the National Representation of Republic of Macedonia at the 50th Venice Biennial. The three part installation "*Integralism*" (2002/2003) consisting of three spaces: '*The War Room*', the '*The Show Room*', and the '*The Design Room*' are to point to the contact between the two politics: the individual and societal that unfortunately, according to the artist, in its ultimate form happens during a war.

Notes:

1. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism & Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. p.196
2. Irit Rogoff. *Terra Infirmis: geography's visual culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000 pp.2-3
3. *Ibid.*, p.3
4. Frederick Copleston, S. J. *A History of Philosophy Vol. 2. Mediaeval Philosophy. Part I – Augustine to Bonaventure*. Garden City; New York: Image Books, 1962. pp.106-115
5. Vladimir Loski. *Mistična teologija na crkvata od istok*. Skopje: Tabernakul, 1991
6. Jacques Derrida. "Of an Apocalyptic Tone". In: *Derrida and Negative Theology*. Ed. by Harold Coward and Toby Foshay. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992. p. 41-42
7. Jacques Derrida. "How to avoid Speaking: Denials". *Derrida and Negative Theology*. Ed. By Harold Coward and Toby Foshay. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992. p.53
8. Frederick Copleston, S.J. *A History of Philosophy*. p. 110
9. Meyda Yegenoglu. *Colonial Fantasies: towards a feminist reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge, U.K ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1998 p.42
10. Alain Badiou. "On a Finally Objectless Subject". *Who Comes After the Subject?* Ed. By Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy. New York; London: Routledge, 1991. p.26-27
11. Judith Butler. *The Psychic Life of Power*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997. pp.106-131
12. Giorgio Agamben. *Coming Communities*. Trans. Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. p.43, quoted according to Judith Butler. *The Psychic Life of Power*. cf.20. p. 131

Suzana Milevska (1961, Bitola) is an art theorist and curator working at the Museum of the City of Skopje, Macedonia. In 1984 she received her BA from the Art History Department of "St. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje and in 1993/1994 she studied Philosophy and History of Art and Architecture at the Central European University in Prague. From 2001 she is a PhD candidate at Goldsmiths College in London, at the Visual Culture Department. In 2001 she received the Curatorial Research Fellowship of the P.Getty Foundation. Since the late eighties she publishes critical and theoretical essays in many art and theoretical magazines (*Golemoto staklo*, *Siksi*, *Index*, *Nu*, *Springerin*, *Flash Art*, *Afterimage*, *Curare*, *Contemporary*) and she participated in several international conferences and symposia.

Among over 50 curatorial exhibitions and international projects that she curated from 1992 are: 2003-*Divided Sky-Re-unified Territory*, GFZK, Leipzig, 2001-*Capital and Gender/Perfect Match*, City Shopping Mall/Museum of the City of Skopje, Skopje, Macedonia, *Words-Objects-Acts*, Museum of the City of Skopje, Skopje, Macedonia-*Correspondences*, IFA Gallery, Berlin, Stuttgart, and Bonne, Germany, 1999-*Always Already Apocalypse*, Yuldiz Sabanci Cultural Centre, Istanbul, Turkey; Institute for Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology, Skopje, Macedonia, 1998-*Little Big Stories*, National University Library, Skopje, Macedonia; Riksarkivet, Stockholm, Sweden, 1997-*The Bridge* (Marina Abramović solo exhibition), The Museum of the City of Skopje, Skopje, Macedonia, 1996/1997-*Liquor Amnii I/II*, Čifte Amam, Skopje, Macedonia; Providence-RI, USA



Hommage a Nietzsche
gold and letters/granite, 46x23x13cm 1988
(Täuschen - das ist im Kriege alles;
Pretending - that is in war everything)



Stone for Managers, or Transformator
Engraving and gold/granite, 25x20x13cm 1990
(top)



(bottom)

INTEGRALISM



Detail from *Realkunst, or Essential Harvest*, video/endless tape 2003

Zlatko Teodosievski

I. Integralism Is "In"

Integrity — Identity!

Integrity — Integralism?

Integralism — Identity?

Integralism — I n t e g r a l i s m !

Integrity is an intriguing idea but its international impact is intolerable. Integrity, in fact, interferes with international interests. It is incompatible with the internationalism of integralism. Intimidate integrity! Investigate and intercept its inappropriate intentions!

Integrity and identity interact. Identity means individuality, and individuality is intrusive. It is intense, innovative, introspective... it is unexplainable. Identity infringes upon integralism and is therefore intolerable.

Integralism is intrinsically intelligent. It invests and interbreeds. Integralism integrates internationally, interracially, interplanetarily. It both interferes and intermediates. Interpretations of integralism are irrelevant. Integralism is interminable. Integralism is international intercourse!

II.

Integralists of All Nations, Unite!

This paraphrase of Lenin's rallying cry from the early twentieth century and the October Revolution can appropriately be used for events taking place a century later. Workers and proletarians united then; integralists and globalists are uniting today! Marx's capital marches on in new clothes!

"Globalization seems to have the upper hand in today's modern society."

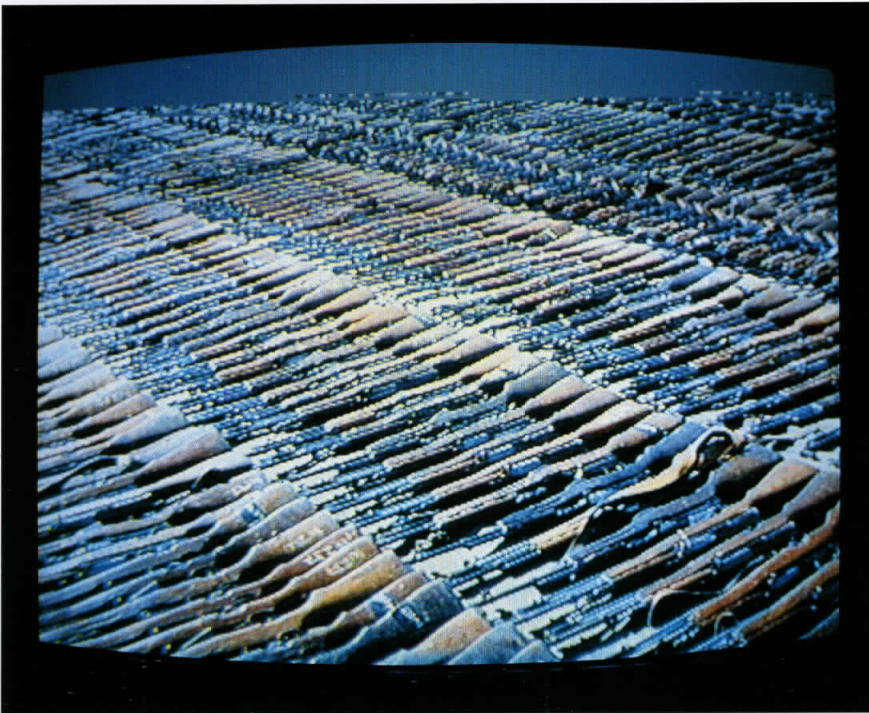
But do not the potentially globalized have the right to think and say whether in fact they want to be globalized?

"We are waging this war for the liberation of *such-and-such* nation."

But does not that nation have the right to say whether it wants to be liberated, or at least to choose who will liberate it ?

"Globalization is the essential spirit of art."

No comment.



Detail



III.

Žaneta Vangeli's interest in global events and their wide-ranging impact dates back several years, but it was in 2001 that she started developing more fully these interests through a project entitled *Integralism*, consisting of a series of works. Whether contemporary events in Macedonia influence this orientation of hers, and if so to what extent, is probably not of essential significance. What is essential is that Vangeli, together with all of us, saw the prevailing modern processes of "integration" and "globalization" in practice. Her experience seems to have only complemented her previous "theoretical" knowledge.

Prepared for the Venice Biennale, the project is preoccupied with what is perhaps the most rigid and extreme form of the dark mechanisms of integration: militarization and its "effects" or after-effects. Vangeli ironically takes for granted – as an international super-process – the operationalized equation *militarization = integration = globalization*, as she does its "products" which involve/affect all dimensions of existence.

To be more specific, Vangeli's triptych *Integralism* aims to discover the relationships governing collective and individual integration (or pseudo-integration), "minor" and "major" wars and their ambivalent meanings, the by-products of these processes as a *ready-made show*, and the inevitable changes at the level of personal identity.



The War Room

left: wood; gold/plotter print; glass; 244x124x72 cm 2003

right: wood; graphite, gold/ 3 relief maps of Macedonia; 345x84x72cm 2003

IV.

The War Room, or the Think Tank

What is the easiest way to integrate a collectivity and introduce into it to the processes of the "modern" world? Or, in plain English, what is the easiest way to defeat a collectivity and make it do what it actually does not want to do?

Capital, investment, technology, culture, computerization; all are possible ways and means, but they require a long time, a lot of money and do not always produce the expected results.

On the other hand, war as a historical phenomenon has proved the most effective and (relatively) the quickest means devised by humans for the achievement of such goals, especially if you wage war against an adversary that is technologically and numerically weaker. Hence, the import of "think tank" logic, which even in the 21st century shows that humans have neither evolved nor learned anything from history. Only technology is evolving, and the principle remains the same: Fabricate a conflict, militarize and conquer!

Such dark plans are typically made in dark places. Every general staff has a space known as the "military room" (also known as the "blind room"). It houses relevant information for future "heroic deeds": global, regional and topographic maps, weather maps, meticulous plans, military data... It is in this room, far from the light of day, that possible military actions, strategies and tactics are planned, outlined and simulated.





Detail





What does the “military room” of “modern” globalists or integralists look like? It probably looks like the one imagined by Žaneta Vangeli. Or is it a little more sophisticated? Probably not, since the sophistication of technology is only an auxiliary. The real idea/goal is in the mind! The “military room” is in fact a playground for immature but ambitious children who frolic there as adults; they create crisis regions, plan conflicts, simulate military actions, predict “collateral damage.” The only problem is that their military “games” later become realities that shatter the world. And yes, people get killed!

Vangeli aims to delve into these “games” more profoundly and more philosophically. By applying gold to the various crisis regions around the world (illustrating the economic factor), she adds a certain alchemic dimension to these “games.” This, in turn, reveals, as she puts it, “the significance of promoting *prima materia* into *ultima materia*.” The real problem is that the modern alchemists of integration act in accordance with the opposite principle: They transmute gold into stone!



Detail



The Show Room

installation: 6 wood/glass cases, each 265x100x27cm, destroyed weapons from the NATO Operation "Essential Harvest" in Macedonia 2001; *Realkunst, or Essential Harvest*, video/ endless tape, recorder, monitor. 2003

(This and next two pages details from video)

V.

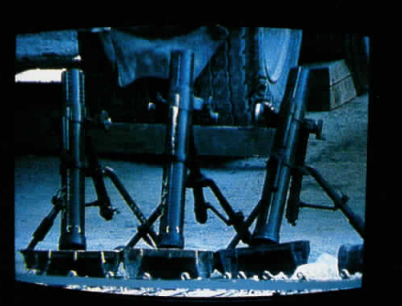
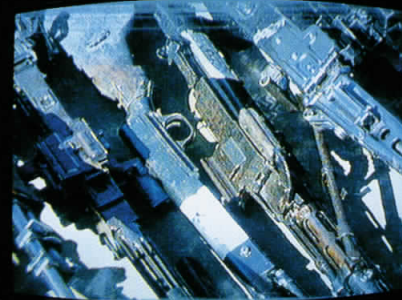
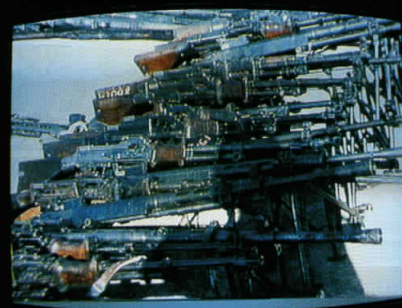
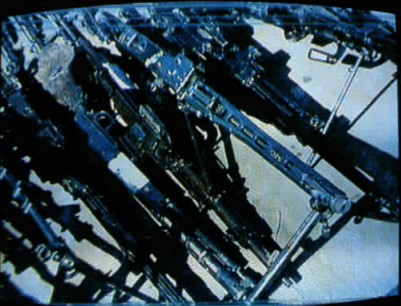
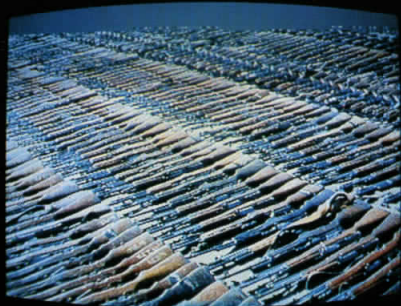
The Show Room, or the Museum of Paradoxes

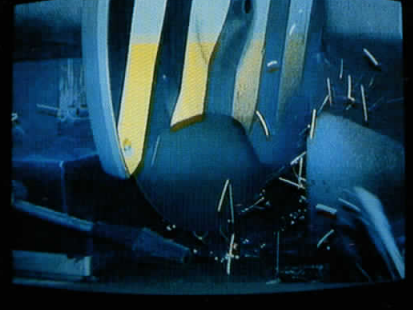
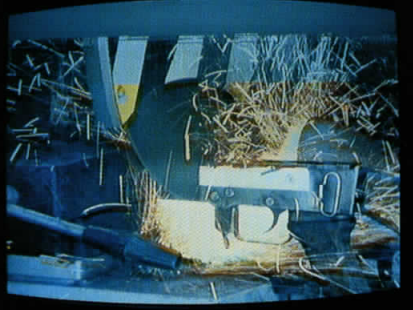
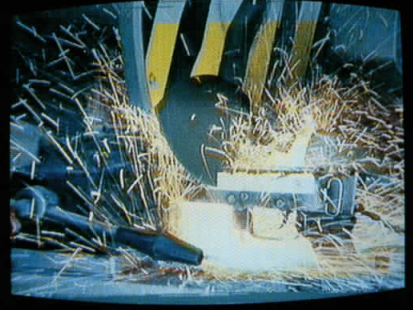
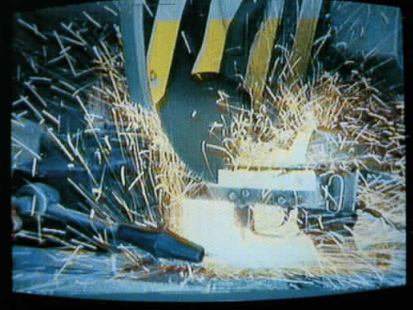
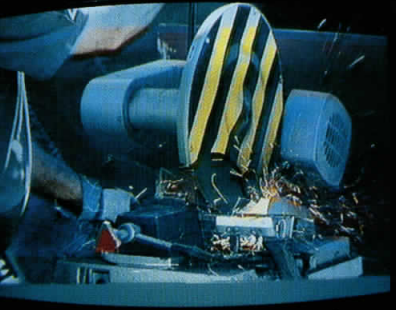
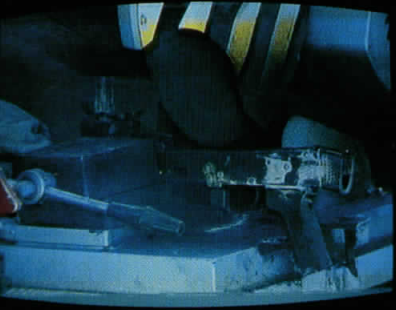
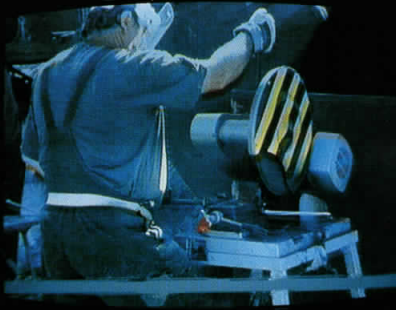
The triptych's second part is intended as a museum, though not an imaginary or virtual facility. Part two is a completely real integralist museum of basic, concrete artefacts (parts of modern infantry weapons) related to globalized society. It is a museum of paradoxes, or rather a quotation museum of integrative processes. Or, if you wish, the artefacts, the weapons, are the *prima* and *ultima* of integralism; they are the *modus vivendi* of the integralist idea.

Unlike Damien Hirst, however, Vangeli does not seek to shock; thus, the cutting/dissecting procedure in her exposition is based on *cause* and not on *consequences*. On the other hand, the procedure of cutting the primary integralist artefact includes the paradox seen in Macedonia during the NATO action known as Essential Harvest 2001. Perhaps every normal person would ask himself or herself: If the conflict was behind us, the weapons were collected, why was it necessary to cut/destroy the weapons in that way? If nothing else, they could have been used for another globalist "operation" in the future.

Of course, paradoxes never come alone; there are always more of them on the way. So, in the manner of a genuine Las Vegas show, weapons originating from the First and Second World Wars were collected during the Essential Harvest 2001 action. These sham weapons were later flamboyantly shown to the Macedonian public only to be smashed by the sharp and "just" integralist teeth of the metal-cutting machine.

Understandably, the real weapons — the new, sophisticated and useful ones — remain intact for "another opportunity."





VI.

The Design Room, or the Question of Identity

The more complicated, painstaking and lengthy the process of identity formation (of a state or an individual) is, the simpler and quicker is its annihilation. Or is this just what the new alchemists — the globalists — think?

Have you ever tried to write your name on the mirror in a hot bath or sauna? The permanence of the record/identity will depend on the constancy of the microclimate in the given space. Every disturbance by (even) minor external influences can be fatal.

Of course, identity, or individuality, is not as fragile as glass or steam. But any disturbances in the collectivity are invariably reflected in its individuality. It is true that a collectivity can be conquered/"integrated" more quickly using "think tank" logic and instant wars, but positive effects are usually not far-reaching. Of much greater import is the second step, that of conquering and moulding identity or individuality. This means that the after-effects of global integration usually involve the full deconstruction and critical contamination of identity.





PAS

D'IN TEXTE

VII.

Taking Sides

Even though Vangeli is perhaps a typical postmodernist, the lethargy of postmodernism clearly does not suit her temperament. Or more precisely, she is not happy with the benevolent ideas that describe art as *something else*. Art is (also) a **position**, and the artist must state his or her position in public, especially during times and processes such as these. Does this mean that the artist will make a mistake if, by stating his/her position, he/she takes a side? Can it be any different?

Vangeli's position is clear and uncompromising. It is based on fully analysed, elaborated and synthesized ideas about the major processes of today. Her position **for** or **against** something is not in the least incidental or guided by accidental emotions. It is rather a position built on a solid foundation of basic human categories about which there can simply be no doubt.

Zlatko Teodosievski (b. 1952) Art historian and art critic. Lives and works in Skopje, Macedonia. He has published numerous art critics and essays on Macedonian and international art in magazines and journals. He has curated exhibitions in Macedonia and abroad (*Selection '97; OPEN 2000; Dialogues: macedonian art today etc.*). Member of International AICA. Currently he is director of the Art Gallery, Skopje.

BIOGRAPHY

Žaneta Vangeli

Born in Bitola, Macedonia, 1963. State Academy of Arts (Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste - Städelschule), Frankfurt/Main, 1988

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2001 *Video Projections*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm
1998 *Ex-FYROMISM, or...*, CIX gallery, Skopje
1997 *Texts*, La MaMa Galeria, (together with S. Pavleski), New York
1994 *Porta*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje
Nightary, (video, co-author A. Stankovski), Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje
1993 *Der Kleine Krieg, der Grosse Krieg*, Kommunale Galerie im Leinwandhaus, Frankfurt/Main

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2003 *Blood & Honey*, Kunst der Gegenwart, Sammlung Essl, Vienna
Dialogues, UNESCO, Paris
Munich International Film Festival, Munich, Section: World Cinema
- 2002 *59. Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica*, World Premiere of the experimental feature "The Judge", Section: *New Territories*, Venice
Panoramica 2002, Milan (Selection from the Mostra)
Venezia à Roma, Rome (Selection from the Mostra)
43rd Thessaloniki International Film Festival, Thessaloniki
European Contemporary Art, The Art of the Balkan Countries, State Museum of Contemporary Art, Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki
Auf der Suche nach Balkanien, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz
- 2001 *The Real, The Desperate, The Apsolute*, Forum Stadtpark Graz, Steirischer Herbst, Graz
Devenirs, National Gallery of Art, Tirana, The Kosovo Art Museum, Priština, City Art Museum, Ljubljana, HDLU, Zagreb, Chapelle de la Sorbonne, Paris
Central European Video Art Presentation, Trieste Contemporanea, Trieste
- 2000 *Radiations - Macedonian Contemporary Art*, The Japan Foundation Forum, Tokyo
Oberhausen Film and Video Festival, Oberhausen
National Collection 14-20 Century, Art Gallery, Skopje
- 1999 *After the Wall*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Budapest, Museum of Contemporary Art - Ludwig Museum Budapest
Berlin, Hamburger Bahnhof
Aspekte, Positionen, 50 Jahre Kunst aus Mitteleuropa 1949-1999, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna
Budapest, Museum of Contemporary Art - Ludwig Museum Budapest
Barcelona, Fondacion Mirò
Southampton, Hasard Gallery/City Gallery
Stop the Violence, Kunstakademie Wien, Vienna

- 1998 *Small Big Stories*, Riksarkivet, Stockholm
- 1997 *Liquor Amnii II, Convergence X International Art Festival*,
Riverwalk Park, Providence
- 1996 *14th World Wide Video Festival*, Haags Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag
Electronic Undercurrents, Statens Museum for Kunst & Filmhuset, Copenhagen
- 1995 *4th International Istanbul Biennial*, Antrepo, Istanbul
Der Blick ins Freie, Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt/Main
- 1994 *Anthology of Macedonian Art 1894-1994*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje
Europe Rediscovered, Kulturby, Copenhagen
Frankfurter Filmschau 1994, Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt/M.
- 1993 *Films for Art 1993 - 2nd European Film and Video Festival*, Folkwang Museum, Essen
- 1989 *Yugoslav Documenta 89*, Skenderija, Sarajevo
Austritte, Karmeliterkloster, Frankfurt/M.

VIDEOGRAPHY:

- 1992 *Porta*, video, 10 min.
- 1993 *Die Versuchung des Hl. Antonius (The Temptation of St. Anthony)*, video, 10 min.
- 1993 *Das Wachen (Vigil)*, video installation
Bongo, or Hommage a Machiavelli, video, 3:30 min.
- 1994 *Nightary*, video, 124 min. (co-author Alexandar Stankovski)
Potencija, Devijacija, Akcija, (Potention, Deviation, Act), video installation
- 1995 *A Documentary about Vladimir Antonov*, video, 7 min.
- 1996 *Anamneza, ili kako Al Hansen mu ja objasnuva Ultimativnata Plastika na Baškim Ademi (Anamnesis, or how Al Hansen explains the Ultimate Plastic to Baškim Ademi)*, video installation
- 1998 *Small Talk*, video, 1:38 min.
- 2001 *Sudijata (The Judge)*, video, 102 min., experimental feature

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- Milevska, Suzana "Culturalism, or About the Ontological Failure of the Tragedy", East Art Map, Artforum in New Moment, 2002
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- Bogoeva, Katerina "Contemporary Macedonian Artists, In association with the Shashoua Collection", Shashoua Press, London, p.48, London, 2002
- Aleksiev, Emil "Crossroad", European Contemporary Art, The Art of the Balkan Countries, State Museum of Contemporary Art, Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki, 2002 (catalogue)
- Teodosievska, Evgenija "Crno-bel svet?", "The Judge", Skopje, 2001 (catalogue)
- Manchevsky VI, Voltaire al Hakim "Vo isčekuvanje na presudata (Hommage au Juge)", "The Judge" (catalogue), Skopje, 2001
- Petrovski, Zoran "Documentary Film about Vladimir Antonov", Regards Projétés, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, 2001 (catalogue)
- Abadžieva, Sonja "Dlaboko Dišenje, Aspekti na ženskoto pismo vo makedonskata likovna umetnost na 20 vek", Skenpoint, Skopje, p.96, 141, 125, 146, 148, 149, 152, Skopje, 2001
- Vaseva Dimeska, Viktorija "Nacionalna Postavka XIV-XX vek", Art Gallery, Skopje, p.9 (reproduction), Skopje, 2000
- Abadžieva, Sonja "Preobrazbi, Modaliteti na makedonskoto moderno i sovremeno slikarstvo", Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje, p.56, 80, Skopje, 2000
- Vilić, Nebojša "Ein Glossar der Kunstbegriffe unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Mazedoniens", Aspekte/Positionen, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, 1999 (catalogue)
- Vilić, Nebojša "Vangeli Žaneta", After the Wall, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1999 (catalogue)
- Suzana Milevska "Macedonia - Skopje", Flash Art, May 1999
- Storch, Wolfgang "Brief an Žaneta Vangeli, Die Theaterräume Einar Schleefs", Das Bild der Bühne, Berlin, 1998
- Nilsson, Hakan "Konstnärer som historieberättare, Little Big Stories", Svenska Dagbladet, 22.08.1998, Stockholm
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