

Ljiljana Burcul Lilly – The Painter of Magical Visions

The Way of Silk

There flow green, blue, violet rivers as the armies of the emperor Han Wu, opening the way to the traders of silk from the Far East. But these colors, that are iridescent, conquering, flowing, winding, reflecting, dissolving, calming in shapes, which speak in hidden meanings, are truly colors. This road, along which, instead of camels, travel the passionate moves of the brush, is not the silk way but the way of silk, stretched across the painting frame, that does not lead from China to Roman Empire, but from reality into transcendence, from the real into fiction, from the material into cosmic.

That is the painting cosmogony of Ljiljana Burcul Lilly, the artist whose artistic world contains primordial energy, whether it has been announced through clear and solid forms, or it is moving freely across the surface of the canvas. Responding to the challenges of silk as the substance, Lilly has crossed her path from figuration towards the abstract, in her previous creative accomplishment, according to the verified recipe that the painting issues could be resolved the best way by overcoming objectivity, in order that the artistic individuality could be expressed in its full glow afterwards.

The Creative Drive

The painting of Ljiljana Burcul Lilly is moving upward for a little more than a decade, quickly and with no hesitation, since it reflects the sincere struggle of the artist to reach the hidden meanings of reality by the liberating energy of her own creativity – individual, personal but also human in general. Although she graduated from the School of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Belgrade, with honors, the art has become the urge of her existence. Owing to painting on silk, Lilly established the contact with the eternal driving energy that provides life and power to everything. Her works of art became the guide mark of self-awareness, but also the discovery of truth of vast areas of the inner world of each and every one of us. Permeated with the powerful archetypal symbols deeply rooted in traditions of almost all civilizations, from the very beginning, they possess very complex meaning that is revealing itself through realistic and abstract forms.

Lilly begins her conquest of the world painted on silk not timidly, but triumphantly over the exposure of strong and beautiful horses as the leading motive. In the beginning, the sole figure of this noble animal, the whole or just fragmentary with the head, is dominating her work. Although it could be rarely seen later in Lilly's opus, it stays present as an important visual character. The simple, beautiful animal, always presented alone as the dominant motive, after early drawings and sketches and first works on silk, originating from 1999, soon everything acquires characteristics that are receding from the imitation of nature. The horse became the ideal form/symbol, the shell full of meaning, since it represents one of the major archetypes embedded in human memory. Its main symbolism reflects two basic driving forces in man: that of dark, chthonic, hampering and leading to nothingness, and that of heavenly, turned to eternity and to the search of the spiritual values. Encompassing both poles of cosmos, upper and lower, it has gained the universal character and as such overwhelmed the imagination of the painter in her early creative phase.

It is not accidental that at the very beginning of her painting career, Lilly chose "animal being" as the leading motive, since it usually represents the symbol of man's instinctive psyche,

emotions that burst from the unconscious. That rescuing foundation of human nature – the instinct – played the crucial role for the expression of creative nature of Ljiljana Burcul. The acceptance of the animal, instinctive within oneself, Lilly raised up onto a conscious level, as the condition for accomplishing the wholeness and deep experience of life.

As the symbol of the unconscious psychic life, the horse is close to the archetype of the mother, the memory of the world, or the archetype of time and infinity, directly related to the tendency of the artist to present the cosmic energy, from which everything originates. In the history of ancient civilizations, particularly Asian, the horse represents the animal, favored in all the human, spiritual quests. Its extraordinary instinct is regarded as clairvoyance, with which guides its rider, so that, in that context, the horse is interpreted as intuition that is enlightening the reason. This kind of symbolism acquires the full meaning of Lilly's presentations of the horse, obviously moved away from the real into the imaginary world. Their manes are white, the skin is rosy, or sky blue and most importantly, they are not painted as animals, but as the portraits of a certain character. "That horse-that is me", explains the artist, thus revealing an important truth, since through transformation of the symbolic meaning of this motive, her overall development could be perceived, both personal and artistic. The painted horse, on some works of art, experiences transformation into related animals and mythological beings, by following the emotional and spiritual states of the painter: it turns into a zebra when she is dealing with the earthly, carnal things (*Love, Kiss*); into Unicorn (*Blue Dream*), when trying to reach the heavenly with its horn; into very important and frequent motive of Pegasus, the winged horse, conquering the spiritual vastness, with the tendency to overcome the narrowness of the earthly matter.



Love



Kiss



Blue dream

In Lilly's painting world, the horse is always free, without the real, painted rider, showing the liberating power of the unconscious, along with all the positive energy, with which the author has fought her way towards her artistic identity. However, the mythical rider here, becomes the sole creativity of the painter, which, united with her rational nature, visible in the precise, graphic craft of shaping the forms, actually wins all the negative, animal forces. Tamed force, domesticated instinct and emotion are obvious in the looks of the powerful, calm animals, which are even more than that: portraits, reflections of various states of the soul of the artist.

Paintings with the motive of the horse, from the period of Lilly's spiritual formation, represent the performance of the twofold mastering: the taming of the instinct and the taming of the silk, elusive, fluid and transparent. The dominant representation of the horse and particularly related beings such as of Pegasus and Unicorn, is the reflection of concretization of absolute values, since their appearance reveals, as in myths, the humanization of the superhuman.

The "way of silk" was to be explored further by Lilly, without big dilemmas. The silk and Swarovski crystals, which the artist has been using since 2000, mostly reflect her character, thus providing the opportunity to reach the complete order between the thematic and technical, and therefore the level of meaning of the painting. Indulging herself into the magic of creation, the artist follows the idea of love as the basic drive. For her, the painting is *modus vivendi*, the lifestyle and the attitude. In the Lilly's painting concept, love, freedom and creation are in constant interaction. Works of art, inclined to the universal values, radiate with life energy and the painter, in accordance with the eternal quest of man for purpose, discovers the secrets of the spiritual world. The creative

act uplifts Lilly beyond reality, into the seductive world of imagination, out of which she brings forth the magic of existence by making it visible. The absolute appears along with glittering of the crystals. Her choice is optimism, vitality, the joy of living, the desire to experience the most wonderful fairytale and share it with others through magic of creation.

The Parallel Worlds

Ljiljana Burcul Lilly is not an ordinary Earthly woman. Unlike the majority of people, she dwells in parallel worlds. Those unusual experiences helped her discover that the movement of space creates time and time is, the way we are used to experience it, actually an illusion. This way, Lilly also grasped the hologramic nature of being. People are small pieces of the universe, infinitely shrinking or infinitely increasing, the light records with information of the entire Creation, little drops of water that reflect the ocean.

Swarovski crystals are twinkling out of her paintings, across the fuzzy colors that preserve the essential glow, fluidity and lightness of the material. There are substances in nature that are being crystallized in geometrical shapes of tetrahedron, octahedron, cube, dodecahedron and icosahedron. Their transparency symbolizes the immateriality, the completely spiritual characteristic, which defines it in both the East and the West as a radiant substance of the other side, beyond this world. Along with the identical characteristic of the silk base, they reveal the unknown spheres of the human being – among them are the powers, with which the invisible force of the subconscious has endowed a man.

There is a belief that the crystals are of the uranian origin and that they provide the ability to fly. On her own inner, astral journeys, Lilly acquires knowledge that mainly concerns the subject of her work as well as creative techniques. It is widely held in South America that crystals possess the magical power, which provides a priest with the ability to see and live on the other side of his bodily dungeon, by passing through his eyes and body. They are the symbol of divination, wisdom and mysterious powers, bestowed upon man, in so many, completely different, people and civilizations, distant both in time and space.

In the seventeenth century, when Johannes Kepler presented the distances between Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn (the rest of the planets were discovered later) in the mutual relations of regular polyhedrons, he believed that they symbolized the dryness of fire and moisture of water, just as the cube symbolized the Earth by its stability, octahedron the mobility of the air and dodecahedron the space. The German physicist Hagen Kleinert constructed the model of the Universe in 2007 and called it “The World Crystal”. The American scientist George Merkel believes that human body is put in motion by tiny crystals that he calls “the crystals of life”. They are “the spawn spilled out into the ocean of all the worlds”, the chemical fuel and the energy of molecules. Is it possible to perceive by the internal sight and in the artistic way present to a naked eye, for what it takes telescopes and microscopes? “The upcoming art will provide our scientific conviction with the formal expression”, these are the prophetic words of Franz Marc, the German Expressionist, the founder of the famous group “The Blue Rider”, who used to like to paint horses the most, just like our painter, before he moved to the abstract art.

The silk and Swarovski crystals, from painting to painting, confirmed the power of transmitting the energy of the very artist, her tendency to overcome reality, so that the world of fiction could show its healing power. In their unity, completion, mutual assimilation, transition from “liquid” into “solid” as if in some act of alchemy, Lilly saw the appropriate medium for the movement and transmission of energy. The real one, that moves, flutters on the surface of the canvas while we are watching it from the various angles, as well as those unreal, that we could just feel reaching us and melting with our emotions. That is the cosmic energy, primordial, eternal, driving one. Indestructible, omnipresent and all-pervading, which is pulsating behind the visible world; the

light flashing like a spark, in beings or subjects, or displaying itself like an abstract vision.

From First to Cosmic Dance

The creator of clear vision and developed artistic philosophy, Lilly reveals to herself and the people the secrets of life, directed towards acquiring wholeness, by the symbolism of the color of the real and mythical beings, of geometrical and abstract shapes. In the beginning, her painting expressed the dynamic intertwining of the earthly and heavenly principle, which the artist discovered within herself and she dedicated to their unification in the later creation.

One of the crucial early works that reflects the preoccupation of the artist with “earthly” themes is *First Dance* from 2001. Also, it is the first painting in which the movement, by itself, is acquiring importance, which is later becoming dominant in the abstract cycle *Cosmic Dance* as the energetic motion. From *First Dance* to *Cosmic Dance* there could be traced more and more distinctive unification of the opposites – of the instinctive and spiritual, chthonic and supernatural – since each and every one of them the artist successfully brought into existence on canvas.

The painting *First Dance* carries the clear symbolism of merging of the earthly opposites, masculine and feminine principle. Dominant red color, the symbol of fire and blood, one of the primary colors, is most deeply connected to the principle of life. In the background of the painting, it has smooth and confluent structure, while on the figure of the horse we see brighter and darker areas, with deposits of white, crimson, almost black, that produce the effect of centripetal motion, following the curves of the animal in some places. Within the symbolism of colors, it is known that there are two kinds of red, feminine, dark, nocturnal, with magnetic centripetal power and masculine, bright, daily with the opposite influence. For that matter, one of the important characteristics of red is that it turns its polarity in daylight, and from feminine becomes masculine, solar principle, the new red that, unified with white and gold, becomes the basic symbol of the life force. This particular power of Eros is dominating Lilly’s painting, since the figure of the horse, in iridescent bright and dark red tones, is adorned with the golden contour and white mane. Consciously or not, following her inner impulses and creative instinct, Lilly presented the connection between masculine and feminine principle, the glorious hymn of life energy that inflames the senses. *First Dance* embodies the love flame and beauty, impulsiveness and the profusion of strength, freedom and victory of Eros, the hymn of accomplishment of earthly harmony.



First dance

First Dance is also the externalization of the animus of the painter, the painting of the ritual trance, liberating dance; the movement is body language, originating from the largest depths of the unconscious and similarly to pagan dances indulges in fervor as the internal presence of God. *First dance* also conveys a general meaning, since it could be perceived as man’s dramatic non-acceptance of the determinism of nature, as a desire for freedom and liberation from one’s own limits. Also, this piece of work presents an announcement of the future cycle *Cosmic Dance*, since the dance inflicts enlightenment and the movements of the dancers, when a part of the ritual, directly relate to the movements of the stars and planetary spheres.

Cosmic Dance is the pictorial representation of the invisible, the search of the artist for the centre of purpose in the personal, spiritual development and it has its own prehistory in painting a circle and mandala. As the symbol of the Self, the circle expresses totality of the psyche in all its aspects. Whether the symbol of the circle appears in a primitive ritual of glorifying Sun, or in contemporary religion, in myths or dreams, in mandalas of monks of Tibet, in layouts of the cities or in the spherical concepts of the ancient astronomers, it always implies to the only one, the most important aspect of life – its definite wholeness. In Zen teaching, the circle represents enlightenment and human perfection. In epic, Christian art abstract mandalas appear in the form of Rosettes on the windows of the temple.

The Circle and mandala are also present in Lilly's painting as the carriers of the meaning on several compositions. Due to the character of her entire opus, that draws essential inspiration from the demanding self-improvement path of her personality, it would be unimaginable if the artist did not reach for this sublime symbol. In Lilly's painting, through displays of the circle and mandala, the important stages of her artistic development are noticeable, that also reflect the stadiums of the spiritual improvement of the artist.

Lilly's Lilith

In the beginning, Lilly paints concentric circles, shown by compositions of *Lilith* (2005), *First Passion* (2006) and then mandala *Hidden Sense* in 2008.

On the painting *Lilith*, green and blue tones of various nuances are arranged in the concentric circles spreading beyond borders of the canvas, in the middle of which is the display of mythological and astral figure of Lilith. The use of colors is not accidental. Blue is the color of *Yang*, the distant sky, of the way to infinity; when light, it is the magical world of daydreaming, when dark, as in the central part of the painting, it becomes mysterious area of the unreal, even surreal, evoking what has not been announced. Opposite to the immaterial character of blue is green, calming, refreshing, the color of mother- nature, feminine principle. As the medium size, it is the mediator between warm, subterranean red and cold, heavenly blue, between low and high. In the mutually pervading green and blue, *Yin* and *Yang*, their twinkling movement from the centre to periphery and vice versa, opposing and unifying at the same time, in the circles melting one inside another, we read the demonstration of Lilly's inclination to accomplish total harmony, unity of creative energy of the inner animus and woman out of the real, outside world, that has won her battle for the artistic freedom. All in the concealed yet obvious whirl of energy, the painting is the symbol of melting Lilly and Lilith, the obscure sorceress, the dark side of personality every one of us has to face on one's way to self-awareness. The complementarity of feminine and masculine principle, the flow of liberating energy from the inner into the outer world and vice versa, signifies victory over demonic, disturbing forces of ego and the beginning of the new stage of self-improvement.



Lilith



Hidden Sense

Thus, Lilly becomes more aware of the role of her own painting, whose magic she needs to use for the change of herself and her own surrounding. The complete acquisition of the new artistic identity would follow three years later, in 2008, when the painter began to sign her paintings with this name, not as Ljiljana Burcul, the way she had done before. The name Ljiljana comes from the Latin word *lilium*, the known symbol of whiteness, purity, innocence and virginity. Uniting of the bright *lilium* and dark Lilith makes reborn sorceress Lilly. As the flower of intense love, containing the symbolism of water, moon and dreams, Lilly establishes the balance between, not only light and dark, but also between masculine and feminine principle. Synthesis of these principles, although always present in her painting, by “giving birth” to Lilly, it becomes major focus of the artist.



Remember

“Lilac” is violet, besides blue and green, one of the three favorite colors of the painter, which dominates the composition *Remember* in 2006. It was the first abstract work of art, which does not belong to either of the cycles, but announces *Cosmic Dance*. Violet is the symbol of the harmony of chthonic red and spiritual blue, the senses and the spirit, passion and reason, the vision of internal balance and liberated consciousness of the artist. If the violet language of the painting were possible to translate, the translation would be: “Remember who we are, where we are from and where we are leaving. Remember the cosmos, the matrix and the womb. Remember that we are all One.”

The Wings of Pegasus

The Pegasus in Lilly’s conception of art represents a particular stadium of spiritual improvement. As the horse denoted liberation of the true, artistic nature of Liljana Burcul with its symbolism, the winged horse became the symbol of the painter getting close to the uranian regions, separating her from the Earth towards the mythological empire of the Heavens. With the wings she raises towards the sublime, since the wings are the symbol of spiritual easiness, liberation from the bodily weight and rising symbolizes getting out of the body and the seed of immortality. Such preoccupation on beauty of transcendence and spiritual spheres is clearly shown in two paintings made in 2003, *Pegasus* and *Second Pass*. In both cases the mythical, winged horses are moving towards the heavenly blue and the only used colors are blue and white. Owing to her sophisticated artistic sensibility, Lilly, in that phase of the painting development, adjusted coloring with the motive in the best possible way. In that sense, Pegasus does not represent melting of the two levels,



Second pass

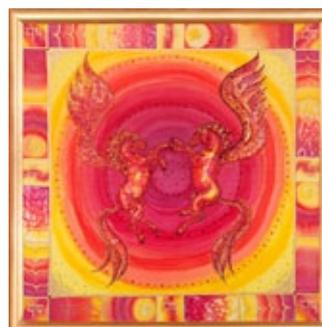
lower earthly and upper heavenly, but the transition, the sublimation of one into another, the same as white is the color of transition that has boundary value. It is the color of transformation, rebirth and enlightenment, internal light and the secret of human being. The dominating blue complements the meaning of white; it is the least material of all the colors and in its own absolute value it is the purest. It is the color of the sky, one of the most powerful symbols of transcendently celestial and imminent human order, the holy order of the universe that man seeks to accomplish within himself. That is why the sky is the symbol of consciousness, the unlimited human aspirations, completeness of the search, the potential place of his spiritual improvement, as if the sky is the spirit of the world. Lightning, the clear rupture in the sky, may be interpreted as opening of the spirit that symbolizes self-awareness.

As the son of the Poseidon and Gorgon Medusa, Pegasus is identified with water; it is the winged cloud, the fertile spring that appears in storms, since, according to the myth, it carries along the thunder and the flash instead of cautious Zeus. On Lilly's paintings, this symbol of water and feminine principle actually represents the metaphor of the artist herself, who reaches self-awareness through the rupture in the sky. It was the new beginning of Ljiljana Burcul as an artistic personality and the announcement of the new creation, more and more apparently directed towards transcendence, supernatural, miraculous.

On the painting *First Passion* in 2006, Lilly lifted up the life, earthly energy onto the cosmic level, since she bestowed it with one form of mandala, by entering the circle into the square. In the base of the painting, the central motives are two Pegasi, heraldically connected by a touch, while they are floating in the background of yellow, red and violet concentric circles. The moment of touch of these two Pegasi is the moment of unification, but also the moment of balance, as the dominant meaning of these paintings: between masculine, active principle of circle and feminine, passive principle of square shape; the balancing power of violet; the balance which is reflected in the symmetrical position of Pegasi. The nature of these winged beings transcends sensuality of touch and passion, whose earthly character repeats itself as an echo in the concentric circles of red and yellow, related colors that evoke the life energy, warmth and passion. More precisely, the dominance of the motive of the circle and Pegasus created of the painting the unique type of mandala, a display of the integrity of the material and the spiritual world on the anthropological and cosmic level. The driving energy, to which the title of this painting implies i.e. *First Passion*, has the initiating power in the successive passing through the circles, loops that actually represent the stages of man's spiritual development, the way the artist herself feels it. The state of perfection is within reach, the most sublime of all the balances, since yellow carries the symbolism of the most divine of all the colors that radiates in the centre of the painting *First Passion*.



First touch



First passion

By listening to the harmony of the Heavenly spheres, in her astral journeys, Lilly painted in 2010 the *Birth of Stars*, the most beautiful painting with the display of Pegasus, one of the most successful accomplishments in her entire opus.

Birth of Stars fascinates at first sight, since Pegasus, before us, made of glass beads, looks as if it is real. Our experience of intimacy with the motive, the painter achieved by shortened perspective of the very Pegasus that is moving towards the observer. Surrounded by the luxurious star dust, it invites us with the tame look in its eyes to step into the unreal and says that every one of us may shine one's own glow if adjusted to the rhythm of the cosmos. Actually, there is a metamorphosis of the artist before us, the image of herself beyond and behind the reality, from where she calmly observes our world. Lilly, with the wings of Pegasus, emerges from the personal universe and melts with the life of the cosmos, giving in to the heavenly influences that will guide her to new, mystical enlightenment. *Birth of Stars* becomes a metaphor of such motion, of shaping of the world but also oneself, the return to watery and luminous sources as the centers of heavenly energies.



Birth of stars

This painting would not have the power to reach the spiritual from the material, to bring the opposites to balance, water and fire, liquid and solid state of the matter, without Lilly's specific and original technique of work on the silk. In her "alchemical pot", the artist mixes color and water, alcohol and salt, thus adding warmth in the moment when she accomplishes the desired coloring effect, and then steams already painted silk canvas. *Solve et coagula*, echoes in her "laboratory-studio" since, in the process of creation, ego melts and the virtue crystallizes, the energy that reconstructs the matter in the purest form is being released, bringing it up to the full glow.

The lightness of the silky matter, on which warm and cold colors are being put together, along with transparent firmness of glass and crystal, as the ultimate result, accomplish the effect of movement and the depth of the space, the movement that develops from the third dimension, as from the depth of the painting, further towards the fourth dimension of the emotion. The accomplished multidimensional effect of the painting translates the language of the painting into the language of the feeling that may be the most intensely experienced from this Lilly's canvas. We observe with her "inner eye" and what appears before us evokes wonderment and excitement, at first, and then tranquility and unshadowed joy.

The Hidden Sense

As the last in a series of paintings based on the principle of mandala, *Hidden Sense* represents the crown of the creative period in which realistic displays dominate. The painting combines two important symbols – the symbol of defeated instincts embodied in the display of the horse, which is announced after the second, dominating motive of flower as the symbol of the Self. The horse in this painting (in relation to earlier works where exists as lively, energetic, strong figure of the animal),

became only two-dimensional, almost abstract sign of the mastered experience of a decade-long maturing in both life and art. The horse is the “hidden sense”, since owing to the intuitive research of layered, archetypal allusion of the meaning of the horse as the symbol, Lilly opened the reserves of her own artistic talent towards new possibilities of expression. The geometrized flower that overshadows it dominates not only with its shape, but also the meaning. Besides being the symbol of fertility, happiness, youth, it is also the symbol of the transitory earthly life and the intimation on new otherworldly birth. We have seen in almost all Lilly’s works that her main goal is the improvement of the personality, a spiritual rebirth, which entirely matches the most important symbolism of the flower: its perfect, symmetrical, palmate shape, with petals arranged in a circle, the flower is, as the Sun or a circle, a very convenient display of the mysterious center of the psyche, the archetype of order and completeness. Inscribed in the center of the square, painted with blue, green and yellow, surrounded by concentric, palmate blue of cosmic sky, it is the part of mandala. Apparently, the entire composition encompasses stages in the development of the Self, with its symbolism of colors and shapes, from the instinctive towards the spiritual, from the earthly towards the heavenly, the imperfect towards the perfect.

Aware that the essence of her creativity is made of successive transmission of positive energy, whose role is the healing one, Lilly will soon be dedicated to the painting without the limitations of the form, with what starts new unity of expression, in which the artist transmits the pre-rhythm of the cosmos on the silk base, in the act of creative game. In the meantime, Lilly entirely mastered her painting skills on realistic representations, on which dominating motives are horses, Pegasi and zebras. That allowed her to provide these works of art of strong archetypal base with more liberated thematic interpretation, primarily on representations of the horse. *Ruby and Sapphire* (2009) are more like female portraits from a fairytale than displays of the horse. Their facial expression is not animal but human and could be perceived as lovely portraits of the artist herself who enjoys the realm of the creative magic. The same year *Lady* was created, the filly running a light trot, unreal as the green on which it moves, since their nature is not from the world of reality. She is oniric and the dreamy ambience is emphasized with the flamboyant texture of the silky fabric that served as the stylized image of the plant cover on which the “lady” walks, as well as with the richness of the applications of Swarovski crystals on her body. The grace of her movements resembles the description of Paul Valery, who described the horse as an ethereal dancer: “Sobriety and sophistication, simplicity and rigor unify into luxuriously pure being of the racial animal. [...] No animal is so alike to the dancer, the prima ballerina, as the perfectly balanced bloodstock that approaches the glow of the Sun in light step as if floating in the arms of the rider.” Always inspired by the representation of masculine and feminine principle, whether as special compositions or encompassed within a single painting, Lilly painted *Knight* as the other side of *Lady*, as the personification of masculine nobility, wisdom, prudence and strength, that resembles with its synthetic form in movement, the antique, epic heroes of Homer as well as middle-aged knights.



Ruby



Blue sapphire

The following year Lilly would paint two more self-representations, hidden behind the character of the horse: *Spring* and *Spring Dream* (2010). As the animal of powerful, complex symbolism, the horse in Lilly’s world proved its favored place, offering its appearance for the projection of the creative nature of the painter. As if the *Spring* represents the painting of the enchanted virgin, who

Lady



Knight



starts the life over and over again with the freshness of her energy, similar as in every fertile, creative act, the painter passes through the moment of rebirth and becomes empowered with new spiritual qualities. On the other hand, *Spring Dream* could be interpreted as hiding behind the character of the animal the portrait of the matron, the lady whose look in the eyes radiates seriousness and maturity. The painting implies one of the meanings of the horse, as the symbol of sharpness and beauty, characteristics that exist together only as the fruit of the continual improvement of the personality. Overall impression is that Lilly has come to realization that constant repeating of the moment of rebirth of nature in spring does not signify transition, but the eternal return of the same. *Spring Dream* therefore becomes the metaphor of the inexhaustible creative energy, whose continual regeneration represents the largest treasure of the painter.

Spring



Spring Dream



To much greater extent than on the described displays of the horse, the character of fairytales on Lilly's paintings is obvious in works with motives of the Unicorn (*Blue Dream*) and Pegasus (*Birth of Stars, Clouds, Celestial Spark*) in 2010. The magic prevailing on these compositions becomes primary and additionally enriches the basic symbolism of the painted image. As if the artist got back to her childhood in order to search through the imagination of the girl, by listening to the fairytale with dreamy eyes, for all the unreal beings, radiant with the essential optimism, transmit them on the silk and garnish them with crystals. Their unrealistic nature is important medium, just like in fairytales, since it reveals that such paintings do not transmit useful information of the outside world, but of the inner processes unfolding in the individual. Continually investing energy of love into the act of creation, the painter offers the possibility of self-realization, like a sorceress, with the optimism of her works, which we could identify with the positive outcome in fairytales. Lewis Carroll called fairytale "the love gift", since it soothes, it provides hope for the future and promises the happy ending.

Celestial Spark



Clouds



An interesting shift occurs in Lilly's painting the following year in 2011, in the series of paintings which, at first, resemble the paintings of Heavenly Pegasi. However, those are not Pegasi, but horses, golden and silver, or with golden and silver manes, graceful and light, since they remained almost transparent as stained glass on a cosmic background in linear performance. They are the first players of the "cosmic dance", the symbol of Lilly's complete uplifting into the spiritual spheres, the self-realization of her ego. All the up-to-date displays of horses were the image of the internal development, maturing of the artist in the sense of liberation from the natural determinism, so that the emphasis was on the earthly aspect of the meaning of the horse as the symbol. However, the basic tendency to reach the heavenly principle remained present, where the display of the Pegasus had only transitory role, as the stage on her way of transition from the earthly into the heavenly. "There are no others – only us in various forms", the artist would say, explaining the personal artistic philosophy. In that sense, the gallery of displays of the horses, created in the course of ten years, provides the clear epiphany of a new personality, of Ljiljana Burcul as Lilly the painter, the realization of her long-standing desire for "realization in creation". In the beginning of the fascinating cycle of the horses, we have seen the powerful display of this animal, dominating the painting *First Dance*, all in red nuances, that carries the direct symbolism of the rule of Eros. In the end of the cycle, the artist completely approached the evocation of the horse, in its sunny, luminous meaning, as shown in the paintings *Fusion Solarus*, *Serenity*. Now, she identifies the creative energy with the cosmic energy, which carries the light in the form of the horse, since for Lilly, the essence of existence is the existence through light in the infinite spatial movement, without the limiting factor of time. Lilly's art, deeply experienced and honest, reveals the universal nature in every phase of its existence, thus showing the relation with some examples in psychology, religion and art. Similarly, the famous historian of religion Mircea Eliade, in writings of the symbolism of the Vedic sacrifice of horses in ancient India, the rituals with extremely cosmogonic features, records the following: "The horse (then) identifies with the cosmos and his sacrificing symbolizes – i.e. repeats – the act of creation."

In these works of art, there is an obvious shift in pictorial process. Lilly uses not only her favorite aquarelle and the salt technique; she often drops directly on the silk the color from the bottle, and she accomplishes the desired effect of movement and diffusion of the form by warming the silk during the process. The glitter of the Swarovski crystals compound glassy beads, by which the abstract matter reaches transparency and colors reach depth. Soon, the compositions will prevail, on which the figural motive completely fades away and Lilly, indulging in the magic of creation, experiences the new stage of creative freedom.



Solarus



Fusion



Serenity

Unus Mundus of Ljiljana Burcul Lilly

Lilly presented her unreal, dreamy art, at first, in a realistic fashion, to expand her limits of expression moving even more to the abstract form in the latest works of 2011 and 2012. The world of known slowly fades away and it seems, at first, that there is no guide to lead us through the labyrinth of the unknown and its meaning. These paintings do not carry a “hidden sense”, as the same painting from 2008 has shown. They transmit a rhythm of pure emotion, the eternal motion of energy that could be neither created, nor destroyed, that shows the change of its way of existence, in the pictorial sense, in the unique harmonies of color on every single composition.

Living through various phenomena, the artist transmits them on the silk (*Victory, Liberation, Celestial Stream, Avatar's Dream*), no longer in the language of symbols, but as the embodiment of the feeling in colors. With the strength of emotions that has the power of intuition, she succeeds in reaching life behind the visible that the artist calls *Cosmic Dance*.



Liberation



Victory



Celestial stream

Victory is in Lilly's non-figural art the equivalent of the triumphant display of *Birth of Stars*, on which rises Pegasus from the dialectics of the instinctive and the spiritual, as the mediator between the natural and supernatural, as the symbol of the sublimation of the instinct and the rise from lower onto the upper level of existence. The light, coming from the central part of *Victory*, originates from the unknown source of energy, while the blue might as well be the blue of the “watery sky” or “celestial water” at the same time. The artist accomplishes the impression of motion on canvas, from the surface towards the depth of the displayed and vice versa, with special relation of warm and cold tones of green, violet, blue and golden yellow. It is interesting that these colors are not “captured” in the continual motion, but the very motion is “captured” by colors, the flowing of the matter in constant metamorphosis, reformation and rebirth. Lilly's journey from the Earthly towards the celestial is encompassed with pure language of the painting, with colors and pictorial rhythm, the absence of any allusion of the visible world. What we have “read” in the complex symbolism of forms, on paintings *First Dance, Hidden Sense* or *Birth of Stars*, we now experience by the immanent forms of painting.

On Lilly's canvases we see the formation, not the form, although her abstract pieces often evoke associations of certain shapes. Thus *New World*, at the first sight, is only a painting within the painting, at the second sight is the painting dropped into the water, at third sight is the opening in this world – the opening of water through which new world is emerging. That opening is in the shape of a rectangle and resembles the painting canvas, but it is not that. It may be simply the center of a new, unknown world that is coming, in which we flow, of which we do not know anything and yet we will discover.

Revealing The Secret by means of art beyond the visible world, behind the forms, gives Lilly's painting a note of mysticism. Lilly often says that in her creative process the feeling of the body is the primary thing, since that is how she can best convey the cosmic energy. Similarly spoke Paul Klee while becoming famous exactly a hundred years ago: “My arm is entirely the tool of a distant sphere. Not even my head takes part in my work; it is something else...” This comparison reveals the regained influence of the unconscious act in the creative process, subsided by the primary role of emotion in her work in order for the work of art to surface. Only by continual mystical diving



New world



Avatar's dream

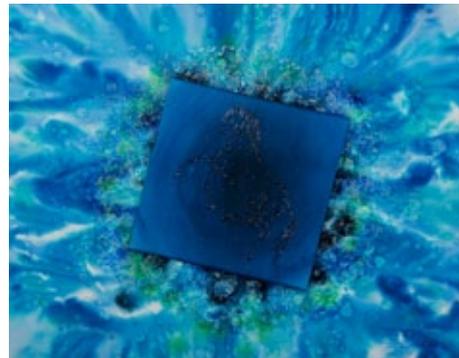
into the chthonic spirit and true foundation of nature the doors open that lead to self-awareness. With known harmonies of various nuances of blue, violet, green, golden yellow, sometimes dominating red, with ascents of white, Lilly's paintings radiate with optimism, characteristic of the entire opus, whether she dives into the depths of the psyche through symbols or through these miraculous explosions of colors that reach the universal in a different way, directly connected with the collective unconscious. This "cosmic dance" of whirled colors may be compared with what the alchemists called *massa confusa*, as the starting point for the search of the essence of being. In other words, the paintings of *Cosmic Dance* represent Nothing, which is All – i.e. the very subconsciousness.

It is held that dance evokes Heavenly bliss, rising on the way of liberation and the invitation of Mercy for the descend. Lilly evoked water With *Cosmic Dance*, the same as North American Sioux used to evoke the precious rain in the year of drought, Lilly evoked water – the source of life, a means of purification and the center of regeneration. On her painting journey through the empire of the collective subconscious, in her latest accomplishments, Lilly reached one of its strongest symbols – water, since water, as the source of everything, announces the transcendent. It is the gathering place of all the possibilities of existence, where the feminine principle of fertility and masculine principle meet, the fertilizing symbol of the spiritual life that purifies, heals and introduces eternity.

Lilly's painting also reflects the complex meaning of water. On the majority of paintings, her drops in the primary rhythms of *Cosmic Dance* are a part of the original unsolvability and altogetherness, preceding every form. The symbolism of these works that transmit energy of water blends with the abstract pictorial language. One painting, however, stands apart not only for its pictorial quality but also for unifying the abstraction and figuration – the work is *Z EYE* from 2012. Here, aiming at new synthesis, Lilly takes over two important solutions from earlier compositions. The first is the motive of the heavenly horse, filigree transparent and graceful, that we have seen in the works from 2011 as "the first dancer of *Cosmic Dance*"; the second is the canvas on canvas, similarly as in *New World*, only in *Z Eye* dominates the horse instead of the abstraction. The difference is that the composition is not "painting within painting", but "painting over painting", the same as The Spirit in the Book of Genesis hovers over the Water that existed before the existence. Here, water has the meaning of the feminine, sensual and motherly; it is nocturnal, lunar and milky, in it awakens the *libido*.

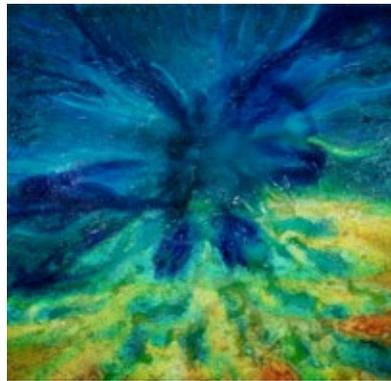


Quantum leap



Z Eye

Water, eternally flowing, is the dynamic symbol of the psychic energy, “the life force of the soulful beings”, through which the artist comes to self-awareness symbolically represented by the figure of the horse. As the new, spiritual world, it emerges from the fertile water foam, the archetype of the mother and feminine principle, reflecting to the full extent the heavenly, masculine principle, due to the emphasized immateriality of blue and transcendence of crystal, with which is represented. The Lilly’s creativity with this piece reveals the power of self-regeneration, since she displays the favorite theme of the harmony of *anima* (the soul, life principle) and *animus* (the spirit, the power of thought, the consciousness) in a different way.



Water

“Vast waters did not have coasts”, says a Taoist text. Lilly’s art continues to surprise and that is why the story about it stays open. This is demonstrated by the painting *Quantum Leap*, that does not belong to the latest cycle *Cosmic Dance*, although it was made in parallel with it. The magic of quantum physics, in whose world of subatomic particles we take part as the creators of our own reality, obtains its form in Lilly’s artistic visions. That is obvious only by the coloring of the painting, that is, unlike the dominance of the deep contrasts and intensive colors in her opus, all in soft tones of violet, blue and green. If the entire Lilly’s painting alchemy is turning of thoughts into the events, then this painting is the artistic evidence of this process as the constant transition from one onto another energetic level. The five-pointed form in the base of the composition, although odd, does not express the condition, but the act i.e. activity. Five is the number of unification, or “marriage number”, as called by Pythagoreans. It is the symbol of cosmos, order and perfection. There are five colors, five tones, five senses, five flavors. The palmate, almost organic shape in the painting could be interpreted as the connection of the reestablished harmony between Man and Universe, the possibility of self-observation and recognition of freedom, the healing regaining of the lost unity, the pure reflection of life.

Whether by the principle of causality or synchronicity, psychology and physics are introduced in the text about the painter. The former, since the art of Ljiljana Burcul Lilly, as rare one, from the motive (lively world, mythological beings, geometrical forms) up to the choice of colors, is entirely based on archetypes and symbols of the collective unconscious. The latter appeared unexpectedly, in a “quantum leap”, creating the connection that proved to exist for a long time, even before the beginning of time.

Karl Gustav Jung, on whose theoretical system this text is essentially based, was convinced that the subconscious was in a way connected to the structure of inorganic matter. He had long discussions with Nobel winner Wolfgang Pauli about that and about the unexpected similarity of ideas in psychology and physics. The possibility that, on a first glance two distant sciences, study the same thing, was something Jung was so obsessed with, that the idea of reality in which matter and psyche are unique and inseparable, he called *unus mundus* (one world).

It seems that Lilly is the painter of that world. Her eye is always turned towards her inner life, and her ear constantly listens to the voice of the inner necessity, which is the only way to express the mystical vision.

Creating of Sorceress

The painting on silk demands the exquisite speed, skill, meticulous precision. Such technique is ideal for Lilly, since she wants to transmit emotion on her canvases, the energy of the infinite cosmos which in that very moment becomes the part of her own. In Lilly's painting, at first, she emerges from the symbolic representations so that, in specific warm colored harmonies that suggest the movement, on her last canvases, she later transmits them as the concrete, painted reality of matter, the sort of *Cosmic Dance*, as the artist names this cycle. Actually, in her art, the entire cosmos appears in various forms, as the symbol of man's continual search for the harmony and wholeness.

The process of liberation of this energy, from the real towards the abstract, developed gradually and related to her personal myth of creating the sorceress. The artist experiences that concept as the constant feat of "self-realization through creation". For Lilly, her art and her life are intertwined owing to love, as the energy that moves them, thus liberating the emotional, intellectual and creative potential of the painter. The personal improvement on the way to self-awareness, by Lilly, developed through the studying of astrology, psychology and the Eastern philosophy and had the direct reflection on her pictorial expression. The spiritual advance through the creative process for the artist has the healing power, which has remained interwoven into the symbols painted on silk. Therefore, her paintings radiate with positive energy of all kinds of Love that is being further conveyed to the audience, what she sees as the fulfillment of her role. As the main tool of her life and artistic self-realization, she emphasizes honesty and on that path of truth she delivers to others a revealed knowledge and personal comprehension, in which, according to her perception, is the crucial mission of the sorceress. The transformation of herself and that of her dear ones, in order to discover the forgotten contents of the psyche and reach the Self, reveals deeply humanistic character of Lilly's overall influence. Also, she attributes a special role to artists, sorcerers and sorceresses of the particular kind, the group to which she belongs herself, since exactly the artists, have always been the rebels, changing themselves and their surroundings. Hence, it is a matter of the active, continual act of improvement, so as through love, as the basic and the strongest driving energy, to develop the constant, fertile merge in the entire universe. "The sorceress creates the magic", says Lilly, who believes that the purpose of the art is not only aesthetics but also the healing, because she helps people to experience, within the boundaries of their possibilities, the maximum in the personal development and improvement; the self-realization and "the continual action out of love" will provide that "sorcerer or sorceress can be everyone".

Lilly's non-figural art has the equal role with her realistic symbolism, since it allows the artist the possibility of approach to the inner reality, along with the understanding of her own being, as the representations of the known symbols of the horse, Pegasus, Unicorn or flower succeeded in expressing the hidden area of her psyche. Realism and abstraction are two poles of Lilly's art that together symbolize the transformation of the instinctive into the creative energy, the liberating power that is obtained by anyone who succeeds in overcoming one's own shadow.

Her painting unifies the sensory and the spiritual categories; it is hedonistic and optimistic, aiming at the same time at the metaphysical, while searching for the formula of the absolute.

Milana Kvas