

napisao
written by



Želimir Košćević

Josip Klarica – čarobnjak pretvorbi

‘Cijenjeni g. Košćeviću,
uredništvo časopisa Oris odlučilo je, potaknuto posljednjom
izložbom J. Klarice u galeriji Račić, objaviti radove iz njegove
rane faze, iz 70-tih. Osobito nas je pritom impresionirala
surrealna poetika tih slika, pa čak i izvjesna asocijativna veza
s dakako mnogo radikalnijim radovima bečkog akcionista
Hermann Nitscha.

Radujemo se vašem tekstu,
uz srdačne pozdrave,
redakcija Orisa

¶ Počinjemo ovom elektronskom porukom, poticajnom u
svakom pogledu, jer se o Josipu Klarici i njegovim začudnim
fotografskim instalacijama i ne može drugačije. Dakako, riječ
je ipak o fotografiji, mediju koji je doduše uvijek imao neku
tajnu vezu s nadrealnim, ali koju se ipak vrednuje estetskim

fotografije
photographs by



Josip Klarica

portret portrait Ivan Posavec

Josip Klarica – The Magician of Conversion

Dear Mr Košćević,
The editorial board of the magazine Oris has decided to publish
works of Josip Klarica from his early period, the seventies,
motivated by his last exhibition in Gallery Račić. We were
especially impressed by the surreal poetics of the photographs
and even certain associative connections with, of course, the
much more radical works by the Viennese actionist Hermann
Nitsch.

We look forward to your contribution.
Kind regards,
Oris Editorial Board

¶ The text starts with this e-mail message which is motivating
in every respect, because it is not possible to start differently
about Josip Klarica and his wondrous photographic installations.
Certainly, it is after all about photography, a medium which, to
tell the truth, has always had a secret connection with the
surreal. Nevertheless, it is still valued by aesthetic standards in
accordance with its own parameters within the aesthetic
universe, and not by the standards of surreal poetics and
philosophy. It can be said that this connection (as well as the
one with Hermann Nitsch) is not only a secret one, but also
tangential, because Klarica's wondrousness is not in the surreal,
but in his skill to transform the physics of the energy of light
into the metaphysics of the energy charge of a photographic
image. After all, a component of the surreal in the poetics of
creation was recognized and instilled into the aesthetics of the
visual arts long after the invention and application of the new
medium in creation of photographic images. It is paradoxical,



◀ Akt s torbicom i velom,
kontaktna kopija 30x40 cm,
Zagreb, 1984.

◀ Nude with Purse and Veil,
contact copy 30x40 cm,
Zagreb, 1984.

Mrtva priroda; ogledalo i svila, kontaktna kopija 30x40 cm, Zagreb, 1983.

Still Life: mirror and silk, contact copy 30x40 cm, Zagreb, 1983



mjerilima sukladno njenim vlastitim parametrima unutar estetičkog univerzuma, a ne mjerilima nadrealne poetike i filozofije. Može se reći da je veza (i s H. Nitschem) ne samo tajna, već i tangencijalna, jer Klaričina začudnost nije u nadrealnom nego u njegovom umijeću pretvaranja fizike svjetlosne energije u metafiziku energetskog naboja fotografske slike. Uostalom, komponenta nadrealnog u poetici stvaranja prepoznata je i ugrađena u estetiku vizualnih umjetnosti mnogo poslije izuma i primjene novog medija u stvaranju fotografskih slika. Paradoksalno je međutim da je fotografija mnogo prije nadrealizma kakvog se zna iz 20. stoljeća, bila nadrealna, jer je

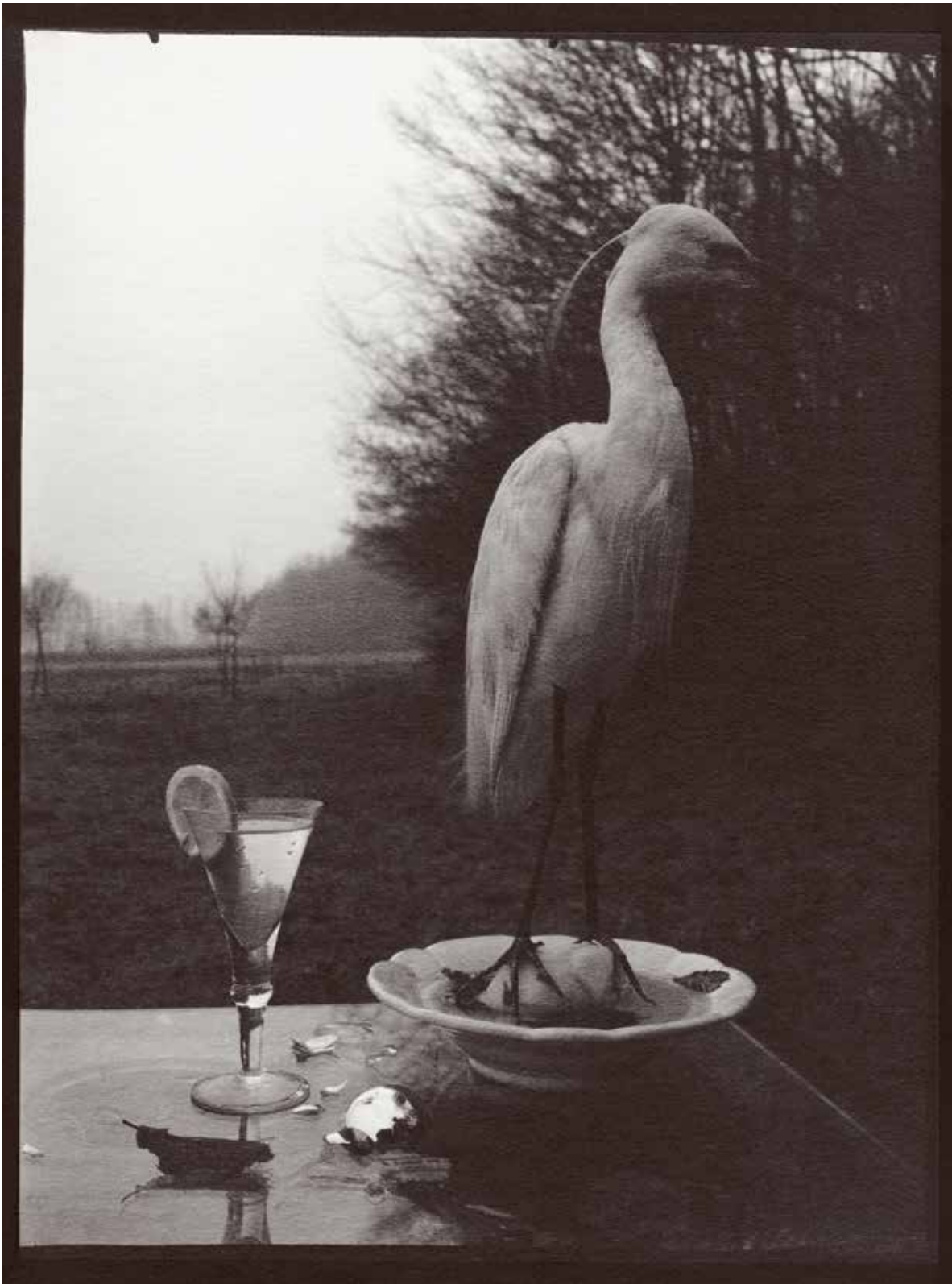
however, that photography was surreal long before the surrealism of the 20th century because it was totally absurd for clever minds even in the 19th century, like Baudelaire who, by the way, nevertheless agreed to be photographed for posterity. It is still necessary to go back to Josip Klarica 'from the seventies' and, without hesitation, to remove a superficial layer from his photographs which have an abundance of surreal infiltrations and literary unravelling. This layer was certainly noticed and gave many the opportunity to write about it in detail, and Klarica himself was not opposed to it. After all, the surreal is also the most visible. However, the sum of severed

bila potpuno izvan pameti čak i mudrih glava 19. stoljeća poput Baudelaira, koji se – usput budi rečeno – ipak dao uslikati za uspomenu. Potrebno je ipak vratiti se Josipu Klarici 'iz 70-tih' i bez oklijevanja odstraniti iz njegovih fotografija njihov površinski sloj s obiljem nadrealnih natruha i književnog raspredanja. On je dakako uočen i mnogima je dao priliku da se raspišu, a sam Klarica nije imao ništa protiv. Konačno, nadrealno je i najvidljivije. Ipak, zbroj odrezanih kokoških nogu, flajšmašine, punjene ptice i riblje glave na tanjuru, kao i njegov osobni stvaralački identitet prožet praškim školovanjem i blizinom Josefa Sudeka, eliminaciju spomenutog površinskog sloja nije lako učiniti. A zašto i bi? I tako je to samo vanjski, vrlo prepoznatljiv i lako čitljiv omotač skrivenoga i dubokog unutarnjeg sadržaja njegovih slika. Veza na koju upućuje Davor Matičević prilikom Klaričine samostalne izložbe 1991. godine, u tada još gornjogradskom Muzeju suvremene umjetnosti, mnogo je ozbiljnija i kompleksnija; Matičević za razumijevanje Klaričinih fotografija upućuje na Josipa Vaništu i grupu Gorgona. Dakako, veza na koju misli Matičević nije formalna, već isključivo mentalna, na razini apsurdna, a kad je o tome riječ, nadrealno nije daleko. Klarica koji u svom umjetničkom radu koristi medij fotografije, medij koji sav svoj ekspresivni naboj temelji na pojavnosti realnog svijeta, u pravilu izvlači iz njega ono što u tom stvarnom svijetu gotovo nije stvarno, ili realitet stvarnosti potpuno reinstalira kako bi čak i banalni prizor podigao na nadrealnu razinu. Dubina Klaričina paradoksa je međutim u tehnologiji. Klarica naime stvara slike na gotovo arhaičan način: svjetlom, fizikom i kemijom, ali se pravo čudo događa u njegovom alkemijskom laboratoriju u kojem se svjetlost postupno pretvara u sliku. Da se ne ponavlja, Klarica potanko opisuje način dobivanja svojih slika u razgovoru s Marinom Vicolin prilikom njegove velike izložbe u Klovičevim dvorima u Zagrebu 2005. godine. Za Klaricu je 'bilježenje' stvarnosti kamerom, koja je svojedobno nazvana čak i 'idiotom' kako bi bila što pristupačnija, banalnost neprimjerena ekspresivnom potencijalu ovog medija. Bilježili su je od renesanse naovamo na svakojake načine i različitim tehnikama, što se može vidjeti u muzejima. Novi je medij od samog početka pokazao svojstvo nestvarnog, a onda se to zapostavilo i zaboravilo, pa ponovno otkrilo. Nije Klarica jedini koji je ukazao na to svojstvo medija; ima ih još koji su ne samo proširili polje vizualnog i našu vizualnu kulturu, već ga i produbili. Premda je do identifikacije medija s 'optički nesvjesnim' od strane W. Benjamina prošlo točno osamdeset godina, i premda se takva identifikacija veže na freudovsku 'jezovitost', a onda opet – od jučer – na Rosalind Krauss koja o 'optički nesvjesnom' piše čitavu knjigu, posve je jasno da medij

chicken legs, meat grinders, stuffed birds, and fish heads on a plate as well as his personal creative identity imbued with his schooling in Prague and being near Josef Sudek – all these represent this superficial layer and it is not easy to eliminate it. And why would it be? It is anyway merely an external, very recognizable and easily readable cladding of hidden and deep inner content of his photographs. The link which was indicated by Davor Matičević in 1991, on the occasion of Josip Klarica's solo exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Arts, which was at that time still in the Upper Town, is much more serious and complex; Matičević refers to Josip Vaništa and the Gorgona group in order to understand Klarica's photographs. Of course, the link to which Matičević refers is not formal, but is exclusively mental, on the level of the absurd; and when we talk about that, the surreal is not very far away. Klarica, who uses the medium of photography in his artistic work, a medium with all of its expressive charge based on the appearance of the real world, as a rule draws from this medium what in this real world is almost not real. Or, he completely reinstalls the realness of reality in order to elevate even a banal scene to the level of surrealism. The profoundness of Klarica's paradox is, nevertheless, in technology. In other words, Klarica creates photographs in an almost archaic manner, with light, physics and chemistry; however, the real miracle happens in his alchemist's laboratory where light gradually becomes image. In order to avoid repetition, Klarica describes in detail his style of obtaining images in a conversation with Marina Vicolin on the occasion of his great exhibition in Klovičevi Dvori in Zagreb in 2005. For Klarica, 'recording' reality with a camera, which was at some point in time even called an 'idiot' in order to make it as accessible as possible, is banal and inadequate for the expressive potential of this medium. It was recorded from the Renaissance on in various ways and with different techniques, which can be seen in museums. The new medium displayed, from the very beginning, its quality of the unreal, and then it was neglected and forgotten, and then again rediscovered. Klarica is not the only one to point out this feature of the medium; there are others who not only broadened the field of the visual, and our visual culture, but also made it more profound. Although exactly eighty years have passed since identification of the medium with 'the optical unconscious' by W. Benjamin and although such identification is related to the Freudian 'uncanny' and then again – just recently – to Rosalind Krauss, who wrote an entire book on 'the optical unconscious', it is totally clear that the medium escapes the orthodoxy of realistic presentation. In the atmosphere of his Prague education, Klarica's deviation from all that was considered photography in the seventies was

Srebrna čaplja, kontaktna kopija 30x40 cm, Zagreb, 1982.

Silver Heron, contact copy 30x40 cm, Zagreb, 1982



Jastreb, čaša vode, kontaktna kopija 30x40 cm, Zagreb, 1982.

Hawk, Glass of Water, contact copy 30x40 cm, Zagreb, 1982



izmiče pravovjernosti realističkog prikaza. U ozračju praškog školovanja, Klaričin odmak od svega onog što se sedamdesetih godina smatralo fotografijom, bio je na izvjestan način put u osamu. Ona se danas i ne čini tako tragičnom; bilo je to opredjeljenje, kako bi fotografskom slikom progovorio nešto drugo, za razliku od tada 'nove novinske fotografije' poletovskog kruga. A to Klaričino 'drugo' suptilna je veza između slike i teksta. Kod njega ima obilje i jednog i drugog. 'Surrealna poetika', koju priželjkuje uredništvo, pričljiva je čak i bez nekoga posebnog imaginativnog zahvata u narativnu strukturu njegove slike. Ali čitanje i začudnost Klaričinih slika time nije iscrpljena. Nakon što se zadovolji 'surrealna poetika',

in a certain way the road to solitariness. It does not seem very tragic from today's point of view; it was a choice to talk about something else with the photographic image, in contrast to 'the new journalistic photography' of that time in the Polet circle. And this 'other' of Klarica is a subtle connection between image and text. There is an abundance of both in his work. The 'surreal poetics' which is wished for by the editorial board, is talkative even without a particular imaginative intervention in the narrative structure of his pictures. Nevertheless, the reading and wondrousness of Klarica's images is not exhausted with this. After 'surreal poetics' is satisfied, a narrowed but deep space of alchemic substance is opened. Today, some would call



▲ Maksimir, kontaktna kopija, 18x55 cm, Zagreb, 2002.

▲ Maksimir, contact copy, 18x55 cm, Zagreb, 2002

otvara se sužen ali duboki prostor alkemijske supstance. Tu supstancu neki bi danas moderno nazvali 'konceptom', a riječ je o zamisli ili prethodnom razmatranju što i kako nešto uraditi. Klarica naime ne 'hvata' sliku, on je stvara. Ono što se 'hvata', već je ionako tamo; zbog toga što slika još nije 'tamo', Klarica je stvara. ♣ Iako je medij fotografije dao priliku umjetnicima da pobjegnu iz zone lijepih umjetnosti u užem smislu te riječi, one su se često puta znale prijeteci nadviti nad medijem. Klarica je prijetnju otklonio dosljednim korištenjem bazičnih osobina medija. Pio je vodu s izvora – rekli bismo. Ali to ne znači da je prihvatio i istinu koju je estetika, a dijelom i teorija, nakalemila mediju od kako je izumljen, i koji je bio tako zrcalno

this substance 'a concept' in modern terms and this is an idea or preliminary contemplation about what to do and how to do it. Namely, Klarica does not 'catch' an image, he creates it. What is 'caught' is already there anyway; because a picture is not 'there' yet, Klarica creates it. ♣ Although the medium of photography provided artists with the opportunity to escape from the zone of fine arts in the narrower sense of the expression, they would frequently hang over the medium threateningly. Klarica removed this threat with his consistent use of the medium's basic features. He drank the water at the source – as we would say. But this does not mean he also accepted the truth which aesthetics, and partly theory as well, has attached to the medium

precizan u reproduciranju stvarnosti. Sumnjalo se već i ranije u vezu umjetnosti i istine, a vrijeme je u potpunosti pokazalo fragilnost te veze. Već i prije nadrealizma ta je veza pukla. Kao što i čitava umjetnost nastaje u umu, tako u ovom slučaju o kojem se ovdje piše, fotografska slika Josipa Klarice ne postoji u stvarnosti, već u njegovom umu, a tamo se svašta dešava. Glava pijevca na okruglom stolu (po svemu sudeći sirova) ne postoji u stvarnosti, ali u slici je itekako stvarna. Jednako tako i glava tune u Maksimirskom parku. ♣ 'Čudesno je uvijek lijepo, što više, čudesno je i jedino lijepo' – to su Bretonove riječi iz njegova Manifesta iz 1924. godine. Svakom svojom slikom Klarica potvrđuje Bretonove proročke riječi. To je jedno;

since it was invented, the medium which was so precise in reproducing reality, like a mirror. There were already earlier suspicions about the relation between art and truth, and time has shown the entire fragility of this connection. This link broke even before surrealism. And just as all art comes into being in one's mind, so it is in the case that is the subject of this text: Josip Klarica's photographic images do not exist in reality, but in his mind, and lots of things are going on there. The cock's head on a round table (in all likelihood it is raw) does not exist in reality, but it is very much real in the photograph. It is the same with the tuna fish head in Maksimir Park. ♣ 'The marvellous is always beautiful, in fact only the marvellous is beautiful' –



▲ Franz Kafka: Kažnjenička kolonija, sténopé viseur, kontaktna kopija 20x30 cm, Prag, 1979.

▲ Franz Kafka: The Penal Colony, sténopé viseur, contact copy 20x30 cm, Prag, 1979

drugo je što je Klarica unutar doista širokoga medijskog polja sačuvao i zadržao njegovo izvorno dostojanstvo i svojstvo koje s realnim svijetom ima tek usputnu vezu. To što njegove slike nose nazive (uostalom kao i slike Mana Raya), ne ometa imaginativnu slobodu njena čitanja. Naziv nije odredište nego polazna stanica maštovita putovanja nestvarnim prizorima koje je u jednom času Klaričinom voljom u tami kamere obasjalo sunce, tek toliko da učini neponovljivo čudo zadržano i – poslije – pretvoreno u trajnu sliku. I, treba znati, naziv je stigao tek poslije, možda za lakšu katalošku evidenciju, ali nikako za razumijevanje Klaričine slike. Na prvi pogled da, sve je u svojoj stvarnoj pojavnosti: glava pijevca, svinjske nogice,

these are words by Breton in his Manifesto of 1924. With each of his photographs, Klarica confirms Breton's prophetic words. This is one thing; another thing is the fact that Klarica has preserved and retained the original dignity of the medium and its feature which has merely an incidental relation with reality within the very wide field of this medium. His images do have titles (after all, just like Man Ray's images), but this does not disturb the imaginative freedom of their reading. A title is not a destination, but a starting point of an imaginative journey through unreal sceneries which are at one moment, by Klarica's choice, flooded with sunlight in the darkness of the camera, only to make the unrepeatable miracle held in view and – later on –



punjena ptica. Na drugi pogled sve se izokreće naopako, gubi se stvarno tlo po nogama, a u košmaru vizualne recepcije pijevac pije vino, tuna kukuriče, sadreni ljubavnici su nekud otišli, Sudek se smije, a u depou sadrenih odljeva nešto smrdi. A kad se поближе pogleda, u tom imaginativnom i nadrealnom vrtlogu sve je ipak na svom mjestu. Pa gdje je onda istina?

transformed into a permanent image. And, one should know that the titles only came later, perhaps for easier cataloguing, but certainly not for understanding Klarica's images. At first sight, yes, everything is in its real appearance: the cock's head, pig's trotters, stuffed bird. At second sight, everything turns upside down; the ground of reality is being lost under the feet and in the chaos of visual reception the cock drinks wine, the tuna fish is crowing, the plaster lovers have gone somewhere, Sudek is laughing, and something stinks in the depot of plaster casts. And when one looks more closely, still everything is in place in this imaginative and surreal vortex. So, where is the truth then?

▲ Svinjska glava, ogledalo, kontaktna kopija 30x40 cm, periferija Zagreba, 1979.

▲ Pig's Head, Mirror, contact copy 30x40 cm, Zagreb periphery, 1979



▲ Jutro u mom vrtu, kalotipija, sténopé viseur, kontaktna kopija, 25x40 cm, Zagreb, 2010.

▲ *Morning in my Garden*, calotype, sténopé viseur, contact copy, 25x40 cm, Zagreb, 2010



▶ Pismo mrtvom prijatelju, kalotipija, sténopé viseur, kontaktna kopija 30x40 cm, Zagreb, 2010.

▶ *Letter to a Dead Friend*, calotype, sténopé viseur, contact copy 30x40 cm, Zagreb, 2010



◀ Mrtva priroda na koju je pao snijeg,
kontaktna kopija, 20x30 cm, Zagreb, 1984.

◀ Snow-covered *Still Life*, contact copy,
20x30 cm, Zagreb, 1984