



Anthony Slessor  
44.4 Seconds





## 44.4 SEKUNDE – TOTEMI PATNJE

'Historija civilizacije, od uništenja Kartage i Jeruzalema do uništenja Dresdena, Hirošime pa do uništenja ljudi, zemlje i drveća Vijetnama, tragičan je dokaz sadizma i destruktivnosti'<sup>1</sup>.

Frommovo svjedočenje o čovjekovoj trajnoj obuzetosti apsolutnom vlašću i žudnjom za preobražavanjem živoga u mrtvo kao posljedicama odsutnosti duhovne autonomije, trajno opravdavanima političkim i društvenim kontekstom, doživljava potresno uprizorenje djelom Anthonyja Slessora, britanskog umjetnika koji je i sam žigosan ratom.

Instalacija posvećena tragediji Hirošime, kojoj je prethodilo tek 44,4 sekunde pada atomske bombe cinično nazvane 'Little Boy', nakon radova *Istočna međa* i *Dezorientiran*, još je jedan u nizu 'Totema žalosti'<sup>2</sup> kojima umjetnik provocira čovjeka lišenog empatije prema povijesnim tragedijama.

Oblikujući mimezu apokaliptičnog pejzaža, 'Ground Zero', eksplozijom uništeno područje od 4,4 četvorne milje, Slessor je krenuo tragom sjećanja i događaj rekonstruirao dokumentaristički, koristeći kao zvučnu kulisu arhivski zapis ravnodušnog vojnog izvješća o događaju. Naspram tako izražajne narativnosti stoji saznanje da je gotovo svaka Slessorova tema niknula iz zatečenih okolnosti – dostupnog materijala i prostornih uvjeta. Čini se da takav pristup zrcali 'staru englesku sklonost empirizmu koja vodi do izravnog, induktivnog izvođenja iz konkretnog materijala i objekta'<sup>3</sup>.

1 Erich Fromm: *Anatomija ljudske destruktivnosti, I*, Naprijed, Zagreb, 1986., str. 180.

2 Darko Glavan: *Crni Krajolici*, Katalog izložbe Josipa Roce, Muzej Mimara, Zagreb, 14.9. - 21. 9. 2007., str. 1.

3 Manfred Schneckenburger: *Skulpture i objekti, Umjetnost 20. stoljeća*, VBZ, Zagreb, 2000., str. 572.



**44.4 SEKUNDE / 44.4 SECONDS**

(2012)

olovo, papir, hrast i čelični konop

lead, paper, oak and steel cable

## 44.4 SECONDS – TOTEMS OF SUFFERING

'The history of civilization, from the destruction of Carthage and Jerusalem to the destruction of Dresden, Hiroshima, and the people, soil and trees of Vietnam, is a tragic record of sadism and destructiveness.'<sup>1</sup>

Fromm's testimony of human permanent obsession with absolute power and our desire to transform the living into the dead as consequences of the absence of spiritual autonomy, constantly justified by the political and historical context, experiences a painful mise-en-scène in the work of Anthony Slessor, British artist also branded by the war.

After the works *Eastern Frontier* and *Disorient*, the installation dedicated to the tragedy of Hiroshima, preceded by 44.4 seconds of the fall of the atomic bomb cynically named 'Little Boy', is another work from the 'Totems of Mourning' series in which the artist provokes a man devoid of empathy towards historical tragedies.<sup>2</sup>

Shaping the mimesis of an apocalyptic landscape, 'Ground Zero', a 4.4 square mile area destroyed in the explosion, Slessor followed the path of memories and reconstructed the event like a documentarian, using the archival record of the indifferent military report about the event as soundtrack. Such an expressive narrativity is due to the fact that almost each of Slessor's themes sprang from found circumstances – the material at hand and spatial conditions. This kind of approach seems to reflect the 'old English inclination towards empirics, leading to direct, inductive conclusion from concrete materials and objects.'<sup>3</sup>

1 Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, I, Naprijed, Zagreb, 1986., p. 180.

2 Darko Glavan, *Crni krajolici*, catalogue to the exhibition Josip Roca, Mimara Museum, Zagreb, 14 Sept – 21 Sept 2007, p 1.

3 Manfred Schneckenburger, *Sculptures and Objects: Art of the 20th Century*, VBZ, Zagreb, 2000, p. 572.

**44.4 NO 1**

(2012) 49 × 66 cm

akvarel, tuš i akrilik na papiru

watercolour, ink and acrylic on paper

Slessorov opus je po mnogočemu čvrsto vezan uz lokalno naslijeđe i objedinjuje naslijeđe različitih pravaca britanske kiparske tradicije, jednog od najupečatljivijih fenomena druge polovice 20. stoljeća. Tjeskobno ozračje zemlje koja je rat s nacizmom zamijenila Hladnim ratom s komunizmom razvidno je iz radova grupe umjetnika proslavljenih na Venecijanskom bijenalu 1952. godine. Njihove je skulpture međusobno povezivala sklonost prema totemizmu i arhaičnim motivima, koja se Slessorovim radovima donekle približila kroz rukopis Williama Turnbulla. Slessorovo oblikovanje ambijenta nalik na fiktivni arheološki lokalitet (*Gral, Rubovi*) ili kreacija imaginarnih fosilnih tragova (*Lutajuća riba*) mogli bi biti svjedočenja žudnje za stvaranjem osobne mitologije.

Iz Slessorovog se rada, razumljivo, u većoj mjeri iščitavaju principi oca britanske moderne skulpture Anthonyja Cara, koji je odbacio tradicionalne sastavnice skulpture – postolje, čvrstu jezgru i vertikalnost. Poput Carovog, Slessorov izraz doživljava punu afirmaciju u interijeru, koji je dio kiparske materije, energetski nabijena zapremina. Sposobnost kreativne prerade prisvojenog najrazvidnija je iz djela *Ključevi drveta snova*, koje ponavlja Carovu seriju eksperimenata s ravnotežom (*Stolni komadi*). Dio skulpture koji se proteže preko ruba podloge u Slessorovoj izvedbi dobiva biomorfni, puteni oblik koji propitkuje našu odluku da ga gledamo kao skulpturu.

Po sažimanju dubokih proboja u materiju i plitkom linearnom reljefu, skulptura *44,4 sekunde*, izvedena iz olova, fuzija je crtačkog i kiparskog načina. Slessor svoju skulpturu uvijek razvija iz fizičkih i simboličkih odlika njezine materije. Olovo, koje su alkemičari dovodili u vezu s planetom Saturnom, Gospodarom Melankolije, svojom podatnošću postaje grafički medij u koji umjetnik utiskuje svoje 'ideograme patnje' (André Malraux)<sup>4</sup>. Spomenuti organski pristup i odabir neortodoksnih materijala – rastaljenog olova, papira,

4 Leonida Kovač: *Izmislite sebe*, Katalog izložbe Gorkog Žuvele, Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti - Gliptoteka, 17. 2. – 15. 3. 2009., str. 13.

**44.4 NO 2**

(2012) 52 × 68 cm

lavirani tuš na papiru

ink on paper

Slessor's work is in many ways related to local heritage and encompasses several movements in British sculpture tradition, one of the most impressive phenomena in the late 20th century. The anxious atmosphere of a country that replaced the war against Nazism with the Cold War against Communism is evident from the work of a group of artists that made a name for themselves at the 1952 Venice Biennale. The mutual thread of their sculptures was an inclination towards totemism and archaic motives, which approached Slessor's work through the handwriting of William Turnbull. Slessor's design of ambience akin to a fictitious archaeological site (*Grail, Edges*), or a creation of imaginary fossil traces (*Out of Water*) might testify of a desire to create personal mythology.

Understandably, Slessor's work largely resembles the principles of the father of British modern sculpture Anthony Caro, who abandoned traditional components of sculpture - mount, solid core and verticality. Just like Caro's, Slessor's expression also experiences full affirmation in the interior, which is part of sculpting matter, a volume filled with energy. The capability of creative transformation of the appropriated is most evident in the work *Dream Tree Keys*, which repeats Caro's series of experiments with balance (*Table Pieces*). A part of the sculpture that stretches over the edge of the base acquires a biomorphic, sumptuous shape that challenges our decision to perceive it as a sculpture.

Combining profound penetrations into matter and a low linear relief, the sculpture entitled *44.4 Seconds*, made of lead, is a fusion of graphics and sculpture. Slessor always develops his sculptures from the physical and symbolic shapes of its matter. Lead, which alchemists connected with Saturn, the Master of Melancholy, becomes in its suppleness a graphic medium in which the artists inscribes his 'ideograms of suffering' (André Malraux)<sup>4</sup>. The said organic approach and selection of unorthodox materials - melted lead, paper, wax, gravel, tree

4 Leonida Kovač, *Izmislite sebe*, catalogue to the exhibition of Gorki Žuvela, Croatian Academy of Science and Art - Glyptothèque, 17 Feb - 15 Mar 2009, p 13.



#### 44.4 NO 3

(2012) 51 × 70 cm

akvarel i tuš na papiru

watercolour and ink on paper

voska, šljunka, kolofonija, pamuka, drvenog ugljena, gipsa, tinte, blisko je osjećajnosti Postminimalizma i Procesne umjetnosti, koja svojom efemernošću stoji naspram agresivnog materijalizma ljudske civilizacije. Njegova termička skulptura *Animé*, sačinjena od kolofonija zatočenog u blokovima leda, utješni je kontrapunkt olovnom odjeku japanske tragedije. Kada led iščezne, konačno će osloboditi čudesna blješteća tijela. Jer 'smrt uništava živo biće, poslije čega zaborav, dovršavajući djelo smrti, briše malo-pomalo ono sto je smrt poštedjela, ali čak i onda kada posljednje sjećanje na pokojnika i posljednji trag njegova kratka obitavanja na zemlji, štoviše i njegovo ime budu nestali iz spomena ljudi, i opet će u toj zagonetnoj egzistenciji, zaboravljenoj, nepoznatoj, uništenoj, pregaženom množinom stoljeća ostati nešto nerazorivo i neuništivo, i ništa, apsolutno ništa na svijetu ne može to uništiti'<sup>5</sup>.

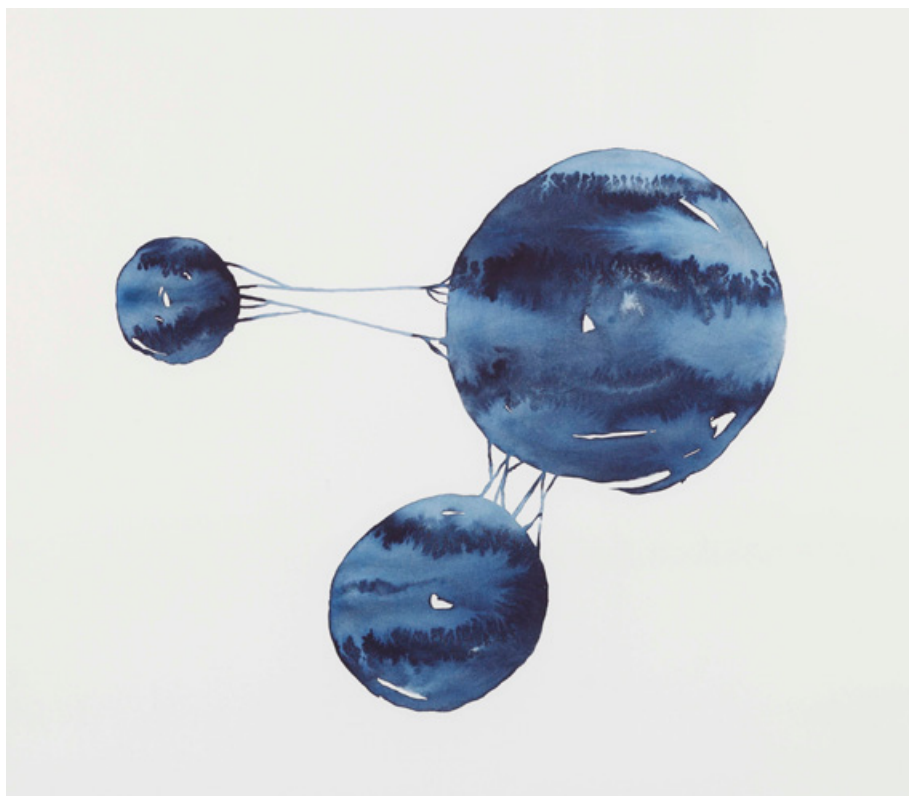
– Leila Mehulić

## ŽIVOTOPIS

Anthony Slessor rodio se 1954. u Lincolnshireu u Engleskoj. Diplomirao je na Sveučilištu u Durhamu, a zatim je služio u britanskoj vojsci kao pješak i pilot. U dobi od 38 godina odstupio je iz vojne službe i upisao studij umjetnosti u Cheltenhamu. Studiranje je nastavio u Školi za crtanje i likovnu umjetnost Ruskin te Visokoj školi Christ Church Sveučilišta Oxford. Na prvoj godini studija u Oxfordu osvojio je nagradu za kiparstvo Mitzi Cunliffe, a potom diplomirao s izvrsnim uspjehom. Nakon još dvije godine provedene na Ruskinu, gdje je predavao figurativno crtanje i radio na Odsjeku za kiparstvo, upisao je magisterij. Istodobno je nastavio služiti kao pričuvni vojni pilot helikoptera i u civilnom zrakoplovstvu.

Nakon magisterija sljedećih je sedam godina predavao likovnu umjetnost, služio kao vojnik na Bliskom istoku, u Sarajevu kao dio europskih snaga te kao savjetnik vlade Sierra Leonea. Konačno se potpuno posvetio slikarstvu i kiparstvu u Sloveniji i Dalmaciji. U posljednjih 13 godina održao je niz izložbi u Oxfordu i Readingu. Posljednji je put izlagao početkom 2011. godine u Martin's Gallery u Cheltenhamu.

5 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Fenomenologija duha*, Naklada Ljevak, Zagreb, 2000.



#### 44.4 INDIGO

(2012) 63 × 73 cm

akvarel na papiru

watercolour on paper

rosin, cotton, charcoal, plaster and ink, can be compared with the sensibility of the Post-minimalism and process art, whose ephemeralness opposes aggressive materialism of the human civilisation. His thermic sculpture *Animé* consists of tree rosin captured in blocks of ice and thus presents a comforting counterpoint to the echo of Japanese tragedy. When the ice vanishes, it will finally release wondrous shiny bodies. Because 'death destroys a living creature, and afterwards oblivion, completing death's work, gradually erases what death had spared, but even when the very last memory of the deceased and the last trace of his short life on earth, and moreover his name vanish from the people's memory, still this mysterious existence, forgotten, unknown, destroyed, crushed by the multiplicity of centuries will keep something indestructible and imperishable and nothing, absolutely nothing in the world can destroy that'<sup>5</sup>.

– Leila Mehulić

## BIOGRAPHY

Anthony Slessor was born in 1954 in Lincolnshire, England. After graduation from Durham University he served in the British Army as an infantryman and pilot. At the age of 38 he resigned and became an art student in Cheltenham. He went on to the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art and Christ Church, Oxford University, where he won the Mitzi Cunliffe sculpture prize in his first year, and subsequently graduated with a first class honours. After a further two years at the Ruskin both working in the sculpture department and teaching lifedrawing, he moved onto a Master's degree. Throughout this period he continued to fly helicopters in the military reserves and also in civil aviation.

After his Master's, there followed seven years of teaching art, soldiering in the Middle East and with the European Force in Sarajevo, and service on loan to the Government of Sierra Leone. He finally fully dedicated to painting and sculpture in Slovenia and Dalmatia. Over the last 13 years he has held a number of exhibitions in Oxford and Reading. His work was last shown at Martin's Gallery in Cheltenham in early 2011.

5 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Naklada Ljevak, Zagreb, 2000

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