

ZNANSTVENI SIMPOZIJ OB STOLETNICI ROJSTVA VENA PILONA

Ajdovščina, 24. 10. 1996



Veno Pilon vodi po svoji retrospektivni razstavi v Moderni galeriji v Ljubljani, 1966

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UVOD

Ob stoletnici rojstva likovnega ustvarjalca, ki sodi v vrh slovenske umetniške dediščine in je izrazno in kulturno globoko zaznamoval naše stoletje, sta Pilonova galerija in Slovensko umetnostnozgodovinsko društvo organizirala simpozij z namenom, da bi domači in tuji strokovnjaki spregovorili o njegovem času in opusu ter skupaj oblikovali sintetično vrednostno presojo o njegovi umetnosti. Pilonov slikarski in grafični opus je slovenski umetnostni zgodovini znan, pred časom pa je bil dopolnjen še s pregledom avtorjeve umetniške fotografije. Kljub temu ne gre zanikati številnih vrzeli v poznavanju in razumevanju okoliščin, ki so pripeljale do bolečega reza v avtorjevem ustvarjanju. Danes so na voljo vsa strokovna sredstva za ovrednotenje vsega že znanega. Hkrati želijo simpozijiški prispevki utreti nadaljnjo raziskovalno pot, ki bo omogočila kritično retrospektivno razstavo in prinesla ustrezen znanstveni katalog oz. monografijo.

Sodelujoči so predstavili ustvarjalca, vsidranega v svojem času, kulturi in prostoru. Kulturna in politična zgodovina Pilonovega časa nam kažeta neprijeten obraz svetovnih vojn, pritiska in prisile totalitarizma, njegove manipulacije s človekovo usodo in z narodno kulturo. Pilon je bil človek srednjeevropskega obzorja, kot ga je odpirala Gorica pred prvim svetovnim konfliktom s svojo izrazito multikulturno naravnanoostjo. Kot vojni ujetnik je bil priča oktobrski revoluciji, po vrnitvi iz Rusije pa je sodeloval pri neuspelem poskusu udejanjanja ideala Zedinjene Slovenije na naši severni meji. Zanj je bilo najbolj boleče dejstvo, da je primorska domovina postala plen italijanskih iredentističnih načrtov. Njegov dokončni odhod iz domačih krajev je treba videti v luči agresivne raznarodovalne politike fašistične Italije.

Človek in umetnik, ki se je razvil ob meji in imel široko razumevanje za nacionalne in karakterne razlike, je bil sam ukoreninjen v svoji kulturi. Po razgibanih študijskih letih v Pragi, Firencah in na Dunaju ter potovanjih po Nemčiji je najboljša dela ustvaril v nekaj letih v rodni mali Ajdovščini, s svojo univerzalno umetniško govorico, ne-

odvisno od prestolnic in sijaja množic. Razstavljal je tako na Slovenskem kot v Italiji: najdemo ga med sodelavci pomembnih razstav v Ljubljani in Jugoslaviji in med drugimi slovenskimi umetniki na tujem. Hkrati pa se je z vso intenzivnostjo udeleževal kulturnega življenja v t. i. Julijski Benečiji, to je na Goriškem in Tržaškem. Njegova umetniška dela zahtevajo poglobljeno analizo tako v dialogu s sočasnimi slovenskimi avtorji kot tudi s tistimi umetniki, ki so delovali in s katerimi je razstavljal v Trstu in Gorici. Potrebno je omeniti dve pomembni razstavi iz l. 1924, ko se je najprej predstavil v Rimu, v avantgardistični Casa Bragaglia, in takoj potem na prvi goriški razstavi, kjer mu je dr. Antonio Morassi posvetil posebno avtorsko predstavitev. Kritiki z italijanske strani so vztrajno opozarjali na plodno sintezo severa in juga v tem »primitivnem« in neposrednem zapisovalcu življenja brez olepšav. Njegova nemirna narava ga je sredi krutih razmer v ožji domovini odpeljala v samo središče takratnega likovnega sveta, ki se mu je razkazal v vsej raznolikosti podob. Sredi teh bleščečih zrcal umetniške domišljije je človeško in ustvarjalno zašel na druga pota. Ni izgubil pristnega slikarskega daru, vendar ni več našel zbranosti in umetniške discipline, značilnih za ajdovska leta. Kot radoveden duh je Pilon prehodil veliko poti, se umiril in za vedno zaspal doma leta 1970. Tri leta pozneje je bila ustanovljena Pilonova galerija v Ajdovščini.

Simpozij je vključil prispevke z različnih področij: najprej je zgodovinar dr. Branko Marušič, temeljit poznavalec Goriške, podal izčrpen pregled kulturnih razmer v Pilonovem času v domačem prostoru. Ob takem razgledu nam je lažje razumljiva širina obzorij, tako značilna za Pilonu človeka in umetnika. Umetnostnozgodovinski prispevek Igorja Kranjca postavlja Pilonu v sočasno likovno snovanje na Slovenskem, dr. Tomaž Brejc pa ga umešča v splet evropskih umetniških intencij 20. stoletja. S tema in več drugimi primerjalnimi analizami postaja jasno razumljiv Pilonov položaj v najširšem in hkrati vrhunskem likovnem svetu. Sodelovanje obeh italijanskih kolegic, dr. Marie Masau Dan, ki se posveča globljemu pomenu prijateljstva med Lojzetom Špacapanom in Pilonom, in Laure Safred, ki podaja formalno analizo avtorjevih likov in značajev, pomeni obogatitev domačih dognanj in kaže na dragoceno vlogo širšega osvetljevanja posamične teme. To se še posebej izkazuje v Pilonovem primeru, saj gre za človeka in umetnika na meji dveh

kulturnih svetov. Analiza pred leti odkritega Pilonovega fotografskega opusa, ki je delo Staneta Bernika, pa zaokroža poznavanje njegovega dela in likovne kvalitete ter aktualizira vprašanje njegove celovite predstavitve. Dodana je naddrobna analiza slike Št. Vida pri Vipavi restavratorka Iva Nemca, ki nam odkrije v tej umetnikovi preslikani veduti vso lepoto prvotne zamisli. Prispevek potrjuje koristnost tovrstnih analitičnih pregledov tudi pri sodobnem slikarstvu.

Po zaokroženem pregledu dosedanjih dosežkov umetnostnozgodovinske stroke – slovenske in italijanske – o Pilonovem opusu ostaja nujna uvodoma omenjena naloga: celostno ovrednotenje v obliki kritične predstavitve. Še pred tem pa bo treba opraviti izčrpen raziskovalni pregled, med drugim tudi usode izgubljenih del. Potrebno je natančno določiti prostor Pilonovega kulturnega obzorja, upošteva vse, tudi italijanska in druga interesna območja, ki jih je prehodil ta raznolik, vitalen in polnokrven ustvarjalec.

SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF VENO PILON

To commemorate the centenary of the birth of one of the most important Slovenian artists, who left his mark on our century both formally and culturally, the Pilonova galerija and the Slovenian Art History Association organised a symposium which gave local and foreign experts an opportunity to discuss Venio Pilon's time and to formulate a synthetic value judgement on his artistic endeavour. Pilon's opus as a painter and as a graphic artist has long been recognised in Slovenian art history, some time ago historians widened our knowledge still further with a review of the artist's photographic work. But it cannot be denied that there are still many gaps in our knowledge about Pilon and our understanding of the conditions which led to a fateful turning-point in the artist's career. However, today the professional resources required for an evaluation of all that is already known are available and the results of the symposium should also indicate the direction which further research must take if our aim is a critical retrospective exhibition and an appropriately scientific catalogue or monograph.

The participants presented an artist who was a child of his time, culture and soil. The cultural and political history of Pilon's time had the dismal face of world wars, the pressures and the constraints of totalitarianism, its manipulation with the fate of men and the culture of nations. Pilon had the

Central European horizon which Gorizia with its distinctively multicultural ambience offered before the first world conflict. As a prisoner of war he witnessed the October Revolution and after his return from Russia he collaborated in the unsuccessful attempt to realise the ideal of a United Slovenia on our northern frontier. But what caused him the greatest pain was the fact that the Primorska, the region which was his home, fell victim to Italian irredentist appetites. His ultimate departure from his homeland must be seen in the light of the aggressive denationalisation policy of Fascist Italy.

The man and the artist who had developed on a frontier with a profound understanding of differences of national character, was himself anchored in his own culture. After turbulent years of study in Prague, Florence and Vienna and travels in Germany, he created his best works in a few short years in Ajdovščina, his small home town, as proof of the universality of the artistic language, which does not depend on capital cities and the glare of public attention. He exhibited in both Slovenia and in Italy: we find him among the contributors to important exhibitions in Ljubljana and Yugoslavia and, with other Slovenian artists, abroad. At the same time he was closely involved in the cultural life of the so-called Venezia-Giulia, the area around Gorizia and Trieste. His artistic work deserves greater in-depth analysis both in dialogue with Slovenian authors of his time as well as with the artists who were active and with whom he exhibited in Trieste and Gorizia. Here we should mention two important exhibitions in 1924, when he first presented his work in Rome itself, in the avant-garde Casa Bragaglia, and immediately after that at the first exhibition in Gorizia, where Dr. Antonio Morassi devoted a special presentation to his work. The critics on the Italian side have always drawn attention to the fruitful synthesis of north and south in this "primitive" and direct chronicler of unembellished life. When conditions became very bad his restless nature led him away from his homeland to the very centre of the artistic world of the time, which he saw in all its great diversity of form. And in the midst of these shining mirrors of artistic invention he strayed to other paths, both personally and artistically. He did not lose his pure artistic talent, but the concentration and the discipline which were characteristic for the Ajdovščina days were gone. An inquisitive spirit, Pilon followed many avenues, later he became less active and finally departed from this life at home in Slovenia in 1970. Three years later the Pilonova galerija was established in Ajdovščina.

The symposium covered contributions from various areas: first the historian Dr. Branko Marušič, an expert on the Gorizia area, presented an exhaustive review of the conditions in the arts in the region in Pilon's time. With this framework the broad horizon which is so characteristic for Pilon as a man and an artist becomes more easily understandable. The contribution by the art historian Igor Kranjc sets Pilon in the contemporary artistic scene in Slovenia. Dr. Tomaž Brejc shows his place in the network of 20th century artis-

tic endeavour. With this, and through a number of comparative analyses, Pilon's place in the widest and also highest echelons of the artistic world becomes clearer. The collaboration of two Italian colleagues, Dr. Maria Masau Dan, who considered the deeper significance of the friendship between Lojze Špacapan and Pilon, and Laura Safred, who entered into a formal analysis of the artist's images and characteristics, enrich the Slovenian findings and indicates the positive role of a wider view of individual themes. This is particularly necessary in the case of Pilon, a man and an artist on the border between two cultural worlds. Bernik's analysis of Pilon's photographic opus, which was discovered some years ago, rounds off his personality and his artistic quality. As a supplement we present a detailed analysis of the painting of *Št. Vid near Vipava*, which reveals the whole beauty of the original conception of this veduta which was overpainted by the artist himself. This again confirms the utility of this type of analytic study also for modern painting.

After a comprehensive review of the dossiers on Pilon's opus provided so far by art history – both Slovenian and Italian – what we must now do is formulate an overall evaluation in the form of a critical presentation. Naturally this will not be possible before the conclusion of an exhaustive review of the research, when more will be known about the fate of works which have been lost. We need a clear definition of the limits of Pilon's cultural horizon, taking everything into account, including also the Italian and other areas of interest upon which this many-faceted and vital, full-blooded artist touched.