



la Biennale di Venezia

55. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni nazionali

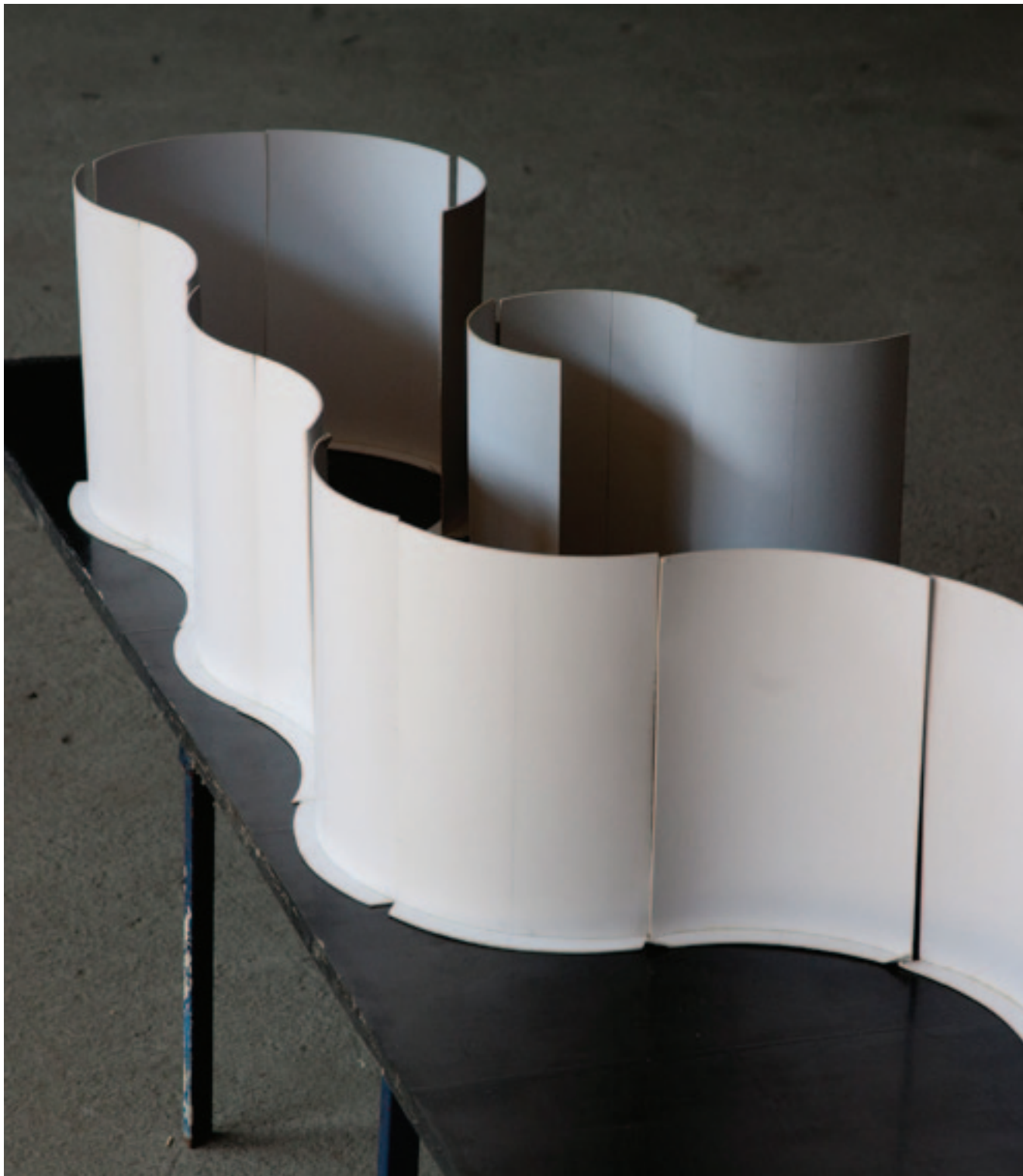
Silentio Pathologia



Silentio Pathologia

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva

Pavilion of the Republic of Macedonia
55th International Art Exhibition
La Biennale di Venezia



Introduction

Macedonia's official national representative at the Venice Biennale, Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, is a sharp-witted and sophisticated artist, a creative practitioner who bases her artistic canon on long-term research work in several disciplines, areas and media. She redefines the gnostic and synthesizes it into a concise concept, which then grows from an idea into a visualization of the design. The hard labour and complex process involving not only the manual artist labour, but often involve an entire team of architects, other artists, and specialists in various areas and industries, with a range of skills. This in itself shows the gravity of this sound creative potential.

When we add to this the information about the tendency of the author (in addition to using traditional materials) to experiment in non-artistic media, materials that involve biology, dermatology, taxidermy as discipline; when we have in mind the intention towards spatial, architectural site-specific objects and installations in given space and time, (interior or exterior) and when we append a philosophical and aesthetic thread to the multidisciplinary context, which walks a thin line bordering the ugly and the beautiful, the pleasant and the horrible, then we begin to form a more concrete idea about the nature of the author's identity.

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva is an artist of confirmed artistic quality, talent and determination, as noticed by the critics as early as her first public presentation, in 1996, with her graduation exhibition at Glasgow School of Art. Her fruitful and progressive creative growth, with outstanding and acclaimed presentations (primarily by her peers, and attractive for art lovers, as well), and on the other hand her qualitatively and substantially concentrated project she offered as a proposal for Macedonian pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale are



the reasons the committee of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia trusted her.

The Latin name *Silentio Pathologia* is the title of Hadzi-Vasileva's project and it is a sculptural object – an installation made for the space of the magnificent building *Scuola dei Laneri* in Venice. The project has a deep structure in terms of plastic production, i.e., it is very diverse, intriguing, thought-provoking, alluring, shocking, fun, expressive, narrative, educational and it possesses many other features and qualities in terms of its physical appearance and aesthetic sensation. As a counterpoint to the material performance, and even more as a looped appendix of the visual impact which is actually the root – the basis of the project, there is a multi-layered concept and art-historic, geographic-scientific, biological-industrial, philosophical-economic, political-intimistic, global-local and what-not nature of the context discourse that the complex work deals with, which makes *Silentio Pathologia* an ideal fit into the general concept of the 55th Venice Biennale *Encyclopedic Palace – Palace of All Knowledge*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni.

Macedonia is presenting its national pavilion at the Venice Biennale for the 9th time, and I am convinced that our national representative this year will cause particular interest and that it will be an excellent representation of Macedonian traditions and culture.

Halide Palloshi

Director of the National Gallery of Macedonia

Commissioner of the Macedonian Pavilion

at the 55th International Art Exhibition

La Biennale di Venezia

translated by Jasna Soptrajanova Vrteva



Brightness falls from the air



Viruses have caused the spread of some of the most devastating epidemics in history. SARS, bird flu and AIDS plague us today but it is bubonic plague, or the Black Death which best demonstrates how a virus can haunt the human imagination for centuries after it first appears. Emerging in the early 14th century, the story of the black death is essentially one of travel and it can be told through the mapping of international trade and exchange in the medieval period.

It is now accepted that the virus that caused bubonic plague first took root in China. It began its lethal journey in the gut of the flea – causing no harm to the insect it was spread through the transmission of infected blood from rat to rat as the fleas moved from one dying host to fresh new bodies. Often those bodies might just as easily be human as rodent, the virus flourished in both species and could also spread through the air as human victims coughed or through direct contact with an infected person. The virus made its way across the world via the Silk Route to Europe. There was no better system of transport than this trade network where men (naturally followed by rats and fleas) moved spices, silks furs, gems, medicines, cosmetics, perfumes, amber, gold and silver from one continent to the other. The intimate nature of the commodities being traded meant that the virus, following the merchants and their wares, quickly reached to the heart of every civilisation it encountered.

The repercussions of the black death are almost too great to summarise. It eventually destroyed nearly two thirds of the population of China and the same again in Europe. Whole empires were weakened fatally by the disease – and city states such as Venice suffered long term decline that can be traced, in great part, to the impact of the plague on their defences, their political class and their economic capabilities.

While the epidemic reached a peak between 1358 and 1360 it returned in waves through each generation up to the 17th century. Few other events have imprinted themselves so forcefully on the European imagination. The devastation caused by the plague touched every level of society. The radical reductions in population led to a recalibration of the political and economic structures of Europe, superstitions gained a stronger hold and the Catholic Church became a weaker force. The plague doctor with his surreal and haunting beak became a symbol of the age, entering the ranks of the commedia dell'arte characters while the plague mask

became an established part of the great carnivals. The plague became ‘the black death’ and the black death became firmly lodged in our imaginations as one of the most powerful cultural memories in Europe.

It is not surprising then that the very idea of a virus resonates with the memories of the many plagues that have scarred human history. This makes it difficult to see viruses objectively or to ask how or why these entities might function in the wider ecosystem. A virus is still one of the most enigmatic elements of the natural world. Of the many million that exist only about 5000 have been identified. It is in the nature of a virus to lie dormant for long periods and it remains debatable whether they can be described as a life form as they carry DNA but lack cell structure. This essential ambiguity of the virus is one of its most fascinating characteristics. Viruses have been described as ‘organisms at edge of life.’ They are also said to be smaller than a regular wavelength of visible light – effectively, a virus can hide between light wave making it difficult to detect.

Viruses play an essential role in evolution – they have the ability to move between species and as they carry DNA, they are vital in generating genetic diversity. The ability of the virus to cross natural borders points to a world that is permeable, mutable and constantly in flux. The dynamic and promiscuous movement of the virus leaves a trail of mutation and hybridity in its wake.

In the oceans, viruses appear to play a key role in shaping the size of microbial communities, moderating the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere and viruses have insinuated themselves into the human genome from the beginning of the history of mammals. From this perspective, the impact of plagues and the black death becomes a recent phenomenon while the deeper trace memory reveals our complicity with viruses. As agents of evolution, the virus can terrify us and decimate our populations. At the same time, the organism at the edge of life triggers the mercurial, shape-shifting characteristics of the human being that manifest themselves in our culture as well as in the physical world. Our curiosity, the desire to move between traditions and ideas, to evolve and cross-fertilise beyond national and intellectual borders are all symptoms of the virus. When the virus followed the Silk Route, our human network of trade and culture, it was simply acknowledging the mutual similarities in our desire for social intercourse and interaction.

Francis McKee

Multidisciplinary synesthetic mapping



Ideosincretism

In keeping with the working methodology of Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, through which a given project is defined and embodied in correlation with the given location/city/state, locally and globally, historically and geographically, morphologically and structurally, this time again the artist went through a long research period, a period in which the skeleton of the cognitive process was modulated, i.e., the gnoseological approach to the future visualization of the project was mapped. The Silk Road was identified as an empirical agent which would anthropomorphize life, will provide lusciousness to the building of the project.

Trade in silk and its sale from the East to the West has gone through three stages in different periods. Crucial for Hadzi-Vasileva's *Silentio Pathologia* is the second period, between the 14th and the 17th centuries, comprising what is now Western Europe, including the territories of today's Italy and, naturally, the location of the permanent residence of the artist – Great Britain. Following directly the line of the economic development of silk trade, one can trace the spreading and propagation of one of the most notorious diseases of that time, the plague.

The recourse of cognitive application of this geographic and historic phenomenon in Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva's project considers the link between the social and the natural sciences. Apart from the narrative fundus of this context, behind it there is the vivisection of the paradigm of transmission as ontology, transmission of information (morphology of media and their manipulative power), transmission of goods, transmission of ideas, of people, of cattle, but there is also the spreading of side-effects of the transmission – diseases in general (the plague is the example at hand, but it metaphorically refers to all genetic and synthetically produced modern diseases, as the bird and swine flu in recent history). An ephemeral level is also the transfer/transmission speed, depending on the times, histories, developmental qualities, etc. It (the transmission) is crucial in communication with the other; therefore, immanently positioning discourses about the otherness, about identity, belonging/affiliation, ideology, independent development and

dialogue with the different, borders, differences, connection/connectedness/ links and networking, belonging to a whole or problematic emanation and moulding into other's/alien standards, becoming part of alliances and pacts/ covenants (European Union or the inability to accede to it), historical and/ or nationalist blindness, political-historical discontinuity, unacceptability, communicability, economy, and many others. Many of the aforementioned standards and axioms are applicable to the fate and current societal Mise-en-scène in artist's native land – the Republic of Macedonia.

One of the main transmitters of plague is the rat, and it is precisely the most common animal (other than the pigeon) living in Venice, and, as opposed to other places where they are seen as pests and viewed with disgust and horror, here, in Venice, they are a kind of protected animal. This is the genealogy of application of the rat in *Silentio Pathologia*. In the visual semiotics of *Silentio Pathologia* the rat is present in two forms – alive and dead – i.e., only his skin (taken through a special manual and laborious process of skinning of already dead animals). Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva decided to use not the ordinary, but white (for surfaces made of prepared rat skins) and black (for the living) laboratory rats, bred artificially, exclusively for use in medical and cosmetic laboratories. They are kept in special and protected environments and are among the cleanest animals. Their intelligence is incredible, while the biological and organic morphology is most similar to humans.

The skin, as an uncommon medium for artistic expression, but very typical for Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva (In her previous works she had used chicken and fish skins, pork and lamb membranes, testicle skin, etc) is a synonym for armour – protection from outside influences, natural, physical, biological. It is a container saving the sacredness of the tissue; without the armour, there would be no essence of life. Hence, its importance in the visual panopticon of the artist which is a powerful rational-irrational (mental) instrument in the hands of the artist, identification, seal, structural – intertextual visual code, aesthetic – sensitive (sensual) parameter (including not only the sight, but the sense of smell as a sensor for reception of the artwork), ephemeris in her creative identity. Using such type of organic media, which according to the principle of visual concept are perceived in several stages, first with a

feeling of intrigue and mystique, then with knowledge and astonishment, while then, in the end, they cause certain eerie feeling and horror. Hadzi-Vasileva intelligently walks the thin line of certain philosophical aspects of the aesthetic of the ugly and the beautiful. She positions as fundamental the aspect of redefining the beautiful and recreating the beautiful – aesthetically appealing, using waste, ugly, defragmented, depleted, disgusting garbage.

The opposites as a conceptual idiom are also relevant to decode the project *Silentio Pathologia*, and therefore the contrasting and opponent simulations are given through several axiomatic couples, such as black-white (achromatic intensity to emphasize the idea simulacrum; black: metal, silk, the living rodents; white: the mesh of silk cocoons and panels of skins of white rats, sewn together), living-dead, organic – inorganic, whole – disassembled, beautiful – ugly, industrial – manual, full – empty, monumental – meticulous, etc.

Visualisation

The site-specific installation has a multi-layered and multi-dimensional resolution, with elements of playfulness, didacticism, interest, shock and unexpectedness. The recipient is guided by the set direction of movement, designed in the concept of the object. The notion of labyrinth is one variable of idea exemplification of the spatial panopticon. First we face a three-meter wall made of metal, mapping certain organic shape in the space (seen from a bird's perspective), and open only at a single spot, to allow penetration into the interior. This wall is a synonym for a frame – a balloon which protects the ideatheque, core, history, life, spasm. Metal, as a material, is the only inorganic – cold medium that can be matched by its specificities with the skin, because, in time, it corrodes, erodes and decomposes. Its constructive semiotics makes for an attractive sculptural sensibility and a lure towards the contents of the interior.

As soon as we enter the interior, we start walking a set/predefined path, and we are immediately consumed by a feeling of wonder (Alice in Wonderland). Inside, on the metal wall, and its peer/match forming the

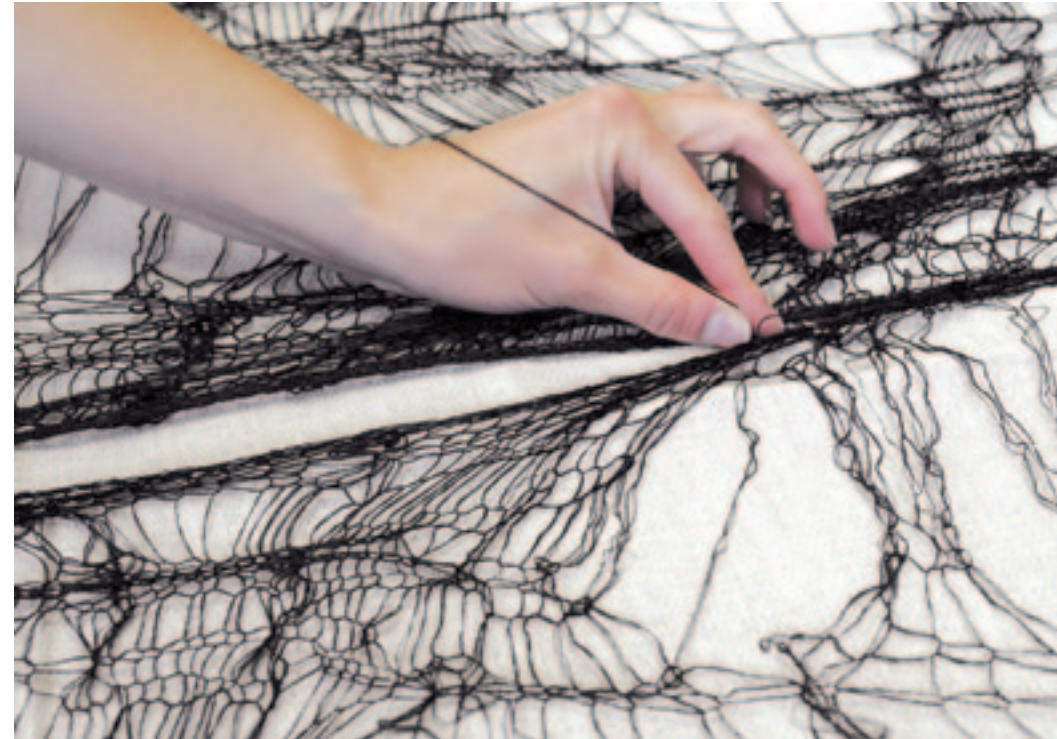




path together, we are welcomed by yet another wall – curtain, made of dry silkworm cocoons. The knitting structure (principle of knitting references Macedonian traditions and old media of creative industries) is in the shape of hexagon, as a cell configuration.

This scheme is followed upon with yet another curtain, three meters tall and 50 meters long, made of black silk, woven in the shape of defragmented spider web, as an allegory to dissolution and decomposition. The meandering path/walk continues to a canopy with the surface made of stitched skins of white lab rats. Each skin has left the head (full) and the body open, whereby the shape of the skin is visible in the seam with the next skin. The texture made of skins has holes – holes in between, a certain type of transparency, which allows for penetration of light and interesting visual effects of light and shade in the interior of the path and on the walls of surrounding surfaces. After this mystifying road, where history, geography, science, allegory, biology are intertwined/interwoven, as feelings of fascination, astonishment but also eeriness, emphasized by the smell (the silkworm cocoons surface and rat skin canopy, as direct organic reminiscences exude the specific stink of carcass), at the end of the road the moment of surprise awaits, two metal cages with two living rats in each, but this time black rats. Their inclusion in the project provides a different philosophy and approach to the defined thesis, questions about the beginning and the end, optimism as ideology (after black periods in history, light, fertile and rich periods came), but also as an allegory and alarm or caution that danger/risk always exists, that after H1N1 other modified pathologies will emerge; artificially produced and controlled by third parties, they are among the main risks of modern times.

In addition to the ephemeris of the space and shape as obvious visual elements that are resembling in *Silentio Pathologia*, significant in the visual semantics are also the texture, changing from smooth to coarse, from transparent to hairy, from shiny to matte; then the colour which is achromatic and reduced to black and white aspects and, in the end, the line and graphic precision in the design of the project. The diversity, variability and harmonic disharmony are predominant principles in the interpretation of Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva's project.



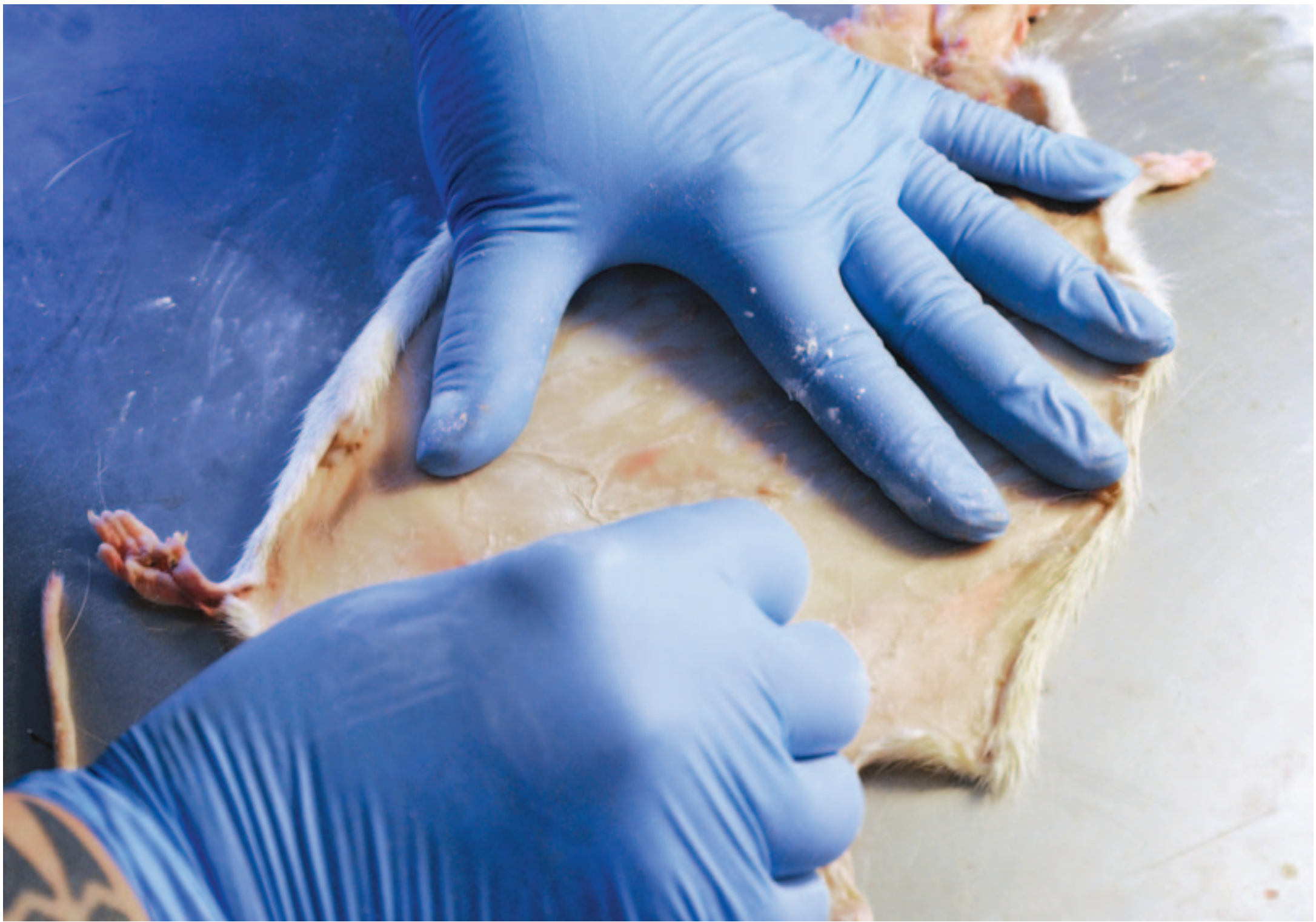
Instead of a conclusion

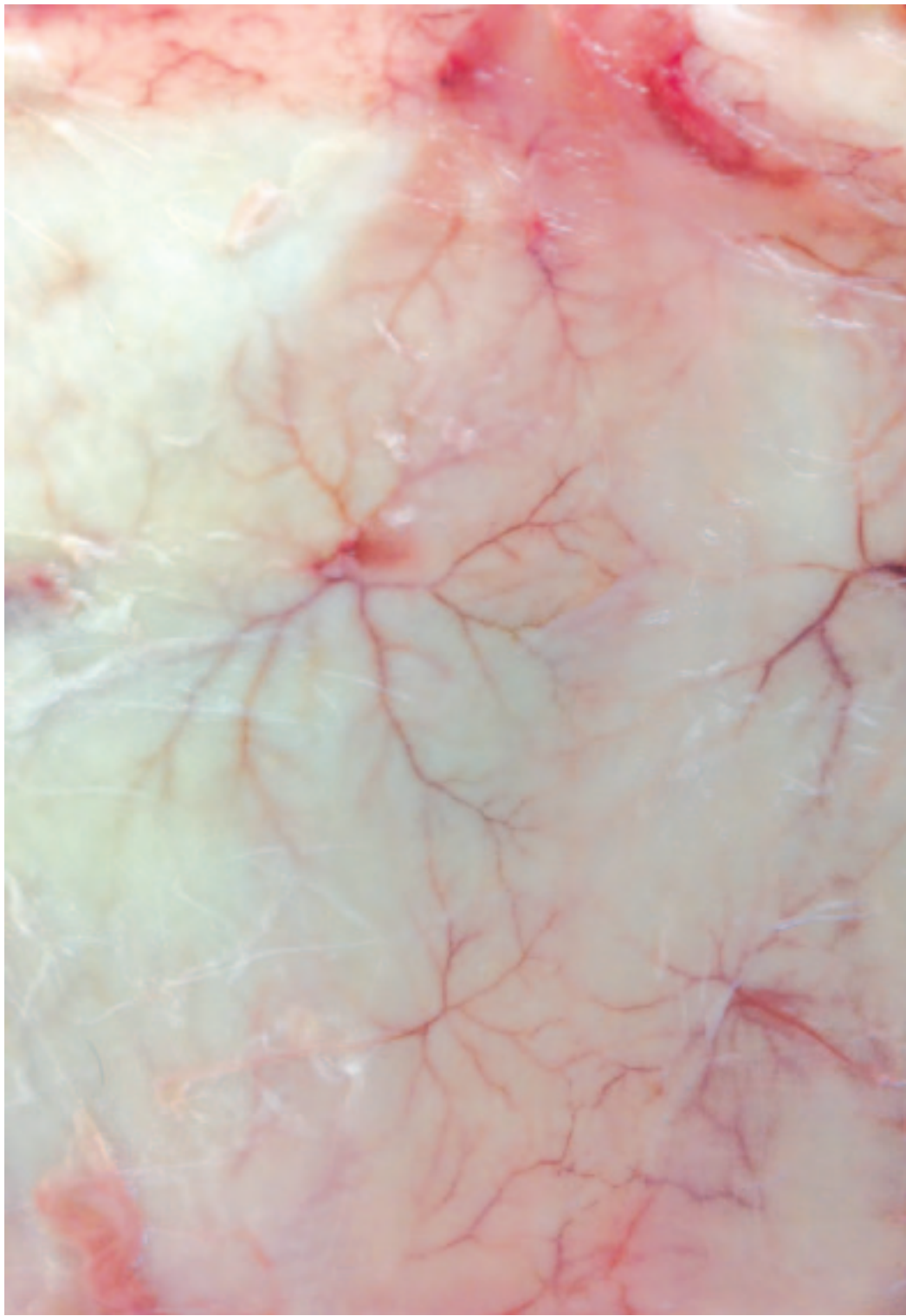
Resonated/reasoned as a whole, *Silentio Pathologia* (multilayered and metaphorical determination of the title, literally translated: silent pathology – with medical, but also metaphorical meaning, coined from the English word path and the Latin logia, applicable in both variants), will draw the attention of the viewer. Its complexity, comprehensiveness, multilayeredness, interdisciplinarity, intertextuality, transhistoricism, transculturality, existentialism, dedicated work, assiduousness will certainly entice the viewer and will not leave them indifferent. Some will like it, some will not, in the same way that we can use the definition of the aesthetic of the ugly, by Umberto Eco, who concludes, to paraphrase, that ‘garbage for one is treasure for others’ and that historical periods and lifestyle changes change the ways of perception of certain things (beautiful and ugly) and in today’s circumstances the border/line/distinction between the ugly and the beautiful is so blurred and fuzzy that it cannot be defined precisely, from a philosophical-artistic-aesthetic aspect. Therefore, different interpretations of the artwork of Hadzi-Vasileva are justified, but it is certain that it will cause strong sensations and experiences in everyone, accompanied by moments of elation and surprise.

Ana Frangovska

translated by Jasna Soptrajanova Vrteva











Silentio Pathologia



Over the last two years Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva has continued her well-established practice of working in unpredictable venues. Throughout 2011 she was the first Artist-in-Restaurant at Pied à Terre, a London restaurant with two Michelin stars. Twenty years ago, in 1993, the owner, David Moore, travelled to Venice to see Richard Hamilton's exhibition in the British Pavilion at the 45th Venice Biennale. Hamilton, who won a Leone d'Oro that year, was a founding director of Pied à Terre and the residency programme celebrates that long link with artists. 1993 was also the first year that The Republic of Macedonia participated at the Venice Biennale with its own national pavilion.

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva set the tone of the Pied à Terre residency by spending much of her time observing the chefs and working with them in the kitchen, learning their techniques and, most important of all, making the best use of materials that would normally be discarded. For the final exhibition, *The Wish of the Witness*, tiny skeletons of quails were gilded to enhance their beauty and arranged like gothic stone tracery; the skirts that hold scallops to their shells were flattened to the thinnest frill; sheep testicles, covered in wool and lined with silk were made into delicate evening bags and the translucent sacs themselves, like blown glass, contrived into lights.

Whatever the place or the material to hand, there is always sensuality in Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva's work which is aligned with wit and daring so that it presents itself to the viewer with panache. The realisation of what has been revealed – '*a bracelet of bright hair about the bone*'¹ – elicits frissons of delight, shudders of disgust, then admiration at her skill and *tours de force*. Playing with our reactions, she turns innards or the bits left on the side of the plate into loveliness, the base into the noble in an alchemical flourish.

Alongside her work for Venice, Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva has also been working in the north east of England where she was awarded the 2013 Alexandra Reinhardt Memorial Artist Residency at mima, the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. This award is in memory of Alexandra Reinhardt, an artist who died in 2004 having battled with a rare blood disorder and profound deafness all her life. It will result in a permanent commission for the museum garden, incorporating

1. *The Relic* by John Donne, first published 1633



sound (as Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva did with birdsong in Gloucester Cathedral) and making explicit reference to the town's long tradition of manufacture: during the 19th century the area set the world price for iron and steel.

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva responds to each new venue and its resonance but always contrives to follow a trajectory, whether in a cathedral or restaurant or landscape, which makes each new work the latest loop in her very distinctive fabric. She constantly refers back, leaps forward, and twists strands into a new complexity. Thus, at Berwick in *Epidermis*, 2001, the artist used cured salmon skins and bones to create sculptures that evoked nets for fishing or for army exercises, powerful references to the local community; at Valenciennes in *Butterflies in the Stomach*, 2007, she made links, literally, between the local traditions of lace making and tripe eating.

She constantly re-invents but also reprises, compiling and digging deep into her own encyclopaedia of materials, references and techniques. Cauls, lace, silk; blood, bones, skin; weaving, cutting, curing; industry, migration and the body: beauty, reality, transformation.

above: *Epidermis*, 2001

opposite page: *Butterflies in the Stomach*, 2007



And so, hauling this portmanteau of marvellous stuff, she arrived in Venice, a visitor like so very many others: about 60,000 people live in the historic centre but the city entertains an average of 55,000 tourists per day. Venice with her 118 islands was, from the 13th to the 18th centuries, a merchant city, luxurious above all others. About 1596, William Shakespeare began his play *The Merchant of Venice*; in the same year his eleven year old son Hamnett died, probably of the bubonic plague.

The Merchant of Venice – Act III, Scene I. Venice. A street.

Shylock: *I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.*

The Republic of Macedonia's pavilion is the Scuola dei Laneri which houses the Venetian Institute for Cultural Heritage (IVBC) specialising in conservation, a discipline in which Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva has also trained. The building was started in 1630 by the charitable guild for those in the wool trade. 1630 was also the year in which the bubonic plague yet again attacked Venice, this time more viciously than ever: one conservative estimate suggests that 46,000 people died out of a population of 140,000.

The bubonic plague or The Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history, at its very worst in Europe between 1348 and 1350, killing between 75 and 200 million people. Medical geneticists recently confirmed that the plague originated in Yunnan province in southwest China² reaching the Crimea by 1346. The bacterium *Yersinia pestis* was probably carried by fleas living on the black rats that were regular passengers on merchant ships plying the trade route from China to Europe via Asia Minor and the Balkans. This was the Silk Road.

In 1347, plague victims were catapulted by the Mongols over the city walls of Caffa, a town located in present day Ukraine, in what may be the first incident of chemical warfare, and it is possible that infected inhabitants may have fled first to Italy, spreading the Black Death to Europe.

The Merchant of Venice – Act I, Scene I. Venice. A street.

Salarino: *Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks...*

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva was born in Macedonia and now lives in Brighton, a seaside town in southern England where the Prince Regent built himself a summer pavilion around 1800. Its chinoiserie interiors were based on the summer palace of Kubla Khan, the Mongol ruler of China. About the time Brighton Pavilion was built, Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote his poem *Xanadu*:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree :

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

The most famous merchant on the Silk Road, Marco Polo (c 1254-1324), joined his first diplomatic mission and visited Kubla Khan at his summer palace in 1271.

Whether Marco Polo was born in Venice or, as some believe, in Dalmatia (politically linked to Venice and once part of Yugoslavia, like The Republic of Macedonia), is not proven. He was certainly one of the first Europeans to travel the Silk Road, bringing silk and other goods from China to Italy and beyond. A range of technologies, religions and philosophies were exchanged, and the bubonic plague fatally delivered along side rolls of silk, silken thread, silk moths still in their cocoons and the mulberry plants on which they feed.

Silk was a prized fabric first developed in ancient China, using the white silk thread originating from silkworm pupae bred for the purpose. The pupae are killed by either dipping them in boiling water before the adult moths emerge or by piercing them with a needle so the whole cocoon can be unravelled as one continuous thread, allowing a much stronger fabric to be woven. The silkworms feed on the leaves of the white mulberry tree which was introduced to Italy along with the art of silk manufacture although the black mulberry had been grown earlier for its delicious, staining red fruit.

Italy became the most important producer of silk during the Middle Ages and Venice, the epicentre of luxury trade, once had about 10,000 silk looms to produce the silk velvets, damasks and brocades that the nobility demanded for its adornment and the Church for its worship.

2. Nicholas Wade (Oct. 31, 2010). *Europe's Plagues Came From China, Study Finds*. New York Times

The Merchant of Venice – Act I, Scene III. Venice. A public place.

Shylock: *He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks.*

The merchant ships carried black rats from China via the Black Sea to Europe and those rats carried fleas. The infected fleas killed the rats and then sought out another host; humans were always nearby. So was their food waste and their excrement so the rat population flourished and the cycle continued. Many people fled infected areas, unwittingly creating more disease as they migrated.

The flea bite penetrated the skin of the victim and the bacterium entered the blood vessels which map their way under skin.

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva has long been fascinated by the many metaphorical aspects of skin, a membrane which protects us like our own personal architecture yet also wraps around us like a landscape with clefts, valleys, promontories and hills ... and at the very fingertip, is patterned uniquely to each of us in an identifying whorl. Skin, through pigmentation, exposure to the elements, time and cultural adornment, scars or surgery, also defines us by race, age, gender, economic status and health.

The plague arrived through human trade and natural bacteria but the notion of plague as social ill, and needing someone to be blamed, is still endemic to our culture. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the Jew Shylock is viciously described as a social parasite; his argument for the equality of humanity is at the heart of the play:

*'Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?'*³

3. *The Merchant Of Venice* Act III, Scene I

Shylock's case is fought in a court of law where he is granted the right to precisely one pound of flesh but no more blood or skin than that.

Silent witness is a term in law by which the integrity of an image – such as an x-ray looking deeply into the human body – gives visual evidence without words.⁴

So, in *Silentio Pathologia*, Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva takes up a thread from previous works to place the viewer in the role of witness then uses images and symbols to give eloquence. Sensual silk cocoons have been knotted, by her family and friends in Macedonia, into the polygons of a web. Using this web and the equally soft and beautiful cured skins of albino rats, the artist wraps us in a dichotomy of protection and fear. Both materials are pure and white, evoking memories of careful packing from birth to death, swaddling and shroud. An encyclopaedia of skin images will appear on tiles that form a canopy, mapping the progression of the first European plague. Sheets of steel and scarlet silk will form walls so the viewer is led, protected as if by a skin – hot, cold, soft, hard, moist, dry – through the fragility and interconnectedness of the work and its ideas.

Silentio Pathologia tells an ancient tale but one which plays on our fears of new viruses and bacteria, including H5N1 and HTN9 or Avian Flu, as well as those yet unknown.

Venice's airport is named after Marco Polo, citizen of Venice and legendary traveller. Every day it brings new tourists to Venice; other visitors come on liners bigger than any Venetian palazzo and may one day sink them all. Every two years, Marco Polo produces a reflux of people hungry to see new art in the Biennale and send it out again on new trade routes.

*'The Earth has a skin and that skin has diseases, one of its diseases is called man.'*⁵

Gill Hedley

4. www.jstor.org/stable/4144332

5. Friedrich Nietzsche; he first visited Venice in the 1880s.



Writer biographies

***Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Silentio Pathologia* by Gill Hedley**

Gill Hedley is an independent curator, writer and consultant. She has previously worked for city art galleries in Bristol, Newcastle upon Tyne and Southampton. She joined the British Council organising exhibitions around the world from *Francis Bacon* in Moscow (1988) to *Richard Hamilton* at the Venice Biennale (1993) and was then Director of the Contemporary Art Society from 1993 until 2006. At CAS she created two ground breaking National Lottery funded collection development schemes for 25 UK museums, investing £4.5m and enabling a new generation of curators to create new collections. Gill Hedley also developed Art Futures, an annual art market, and advised private collectors and clients ranging from Seagram, Pearson's, BAA and the Economist to Somerset House and Kew Gardens. Now she advises museums, organisations and trusts on working with contemporary artists while also working with individual artists as curator and adviser. She is currently writing a biography of the art dealer and collector Arthur Jeffress.
www.gillhedley.co.uk

***Brightness falls from the air* by Francis McKee**

Francis McKee is an Irish writer and curator working in Glasgow. From 2005–2008 he was director of Glasgow International, and since 2006 he has been Director of the Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow. He is also a lecturer and research fellow at Glasgow School of Art and has worked on the development of open source ideologies and their practical application to art spaces, specifically the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow. He curated the Scottish participation at the Venice Biennale with Kay Pallister in 2003. Since 2011 he has been lead researcher on an AHRC research project –The Glasgow Miracle: Materials Towards Alternative Histories – indexing the archives of The Scottish Arts Council Gallery, Glasgow, the Third Eye Centre and CCA, spanning 1973 to the present.
www.cca-glasgow.com www.francismckee.com

***Introduction* by Halide Palloshi**

Halide Palloshi is Director of the National Gallery of the Republic of Macedonia. She was Member of the Council of the City of Skopje between 2009 and 2011 and previously Professor at various schools in Skopje. She has written about Albanian national costumes and Albanian ethnographic exhibits in Macedonia. She is also currently President of Women's forum, Skopje and President of the NGO Jehona, Skopje.
www.nationalgallery.mk

***Multidisciplinary synesthetic mapping* by Ana Frangovska**

Ana Frangovska is an art historian and curator at the National Gallery of Macedonia. She graduated from the Institute of History of Art and Archeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje in 2001 and is currently a member of AICA. She has previously worked as an assistant in Contemporary Art History at the Institute of History of Art and Archeology and continues to run the Art Colony Galichnik, in the village of the same name in Macedonia.
www.nationalgallery.mk

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva.
Born Macedonia 1971. Lives and works in England.
www.elpihv.co.uk

Education

1996-98 Royal College of Art, MA in Sculpture, London, England
1993-96 Glasgow School of Art, BA(hons) Fine Art in Sculpture, Glasgow (first class honours)

Site specific commissions and proposals (selection)

2015 *Fragility, End of Life*, Fabrica Gallery, Brighton, England.
2013 *Silentio Pathologia*, Pavilion of the Republic of Macedonia, 55th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Italy
Alexandra Reinhardt Memorial Award, Engage & mima, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, England.
Back to Life, ArtSOUTH, Mottisfont Abbey (National Trust) & Hampshire County Council, England.
2012 *Visual Industries*, Billboards', Ars Akta, Skopje, Macedonia.
2011 *Compulsive, Obsessive, Repetitive*, Towner Gallery, Eastbourne, England.
2010 *Transpire* (permanent commission) Bristol City Council, Building Schools for the Future program, St Bede's Catholic College, Bristol, England.
Raison d'être (permanent commission) Southgate Project, Bath, England.
Spitalfields Sculpture Prize (shortlisted proposal) Spitalfields Market, London, England.
2009 *ArtChitecture* (site-specific project proposal for the New Forest), in collaboration with Snug Architects Ltd and TJ Thickett & Associates. Solent Centre for Architecture and Design & ArtSway, England.
2008 *We Are Shadows*, Unit 2 Gallery, Whitechapel, London, England.
2006 *Weather Cycle*, Suffolk County Council, Felixstowe, England.
2003-4 *Life Cycle*, Knowle West Health Park, Bristol, England.
2002 *Road to Nowhere* (temporary commission) The Samling Foundation, Kielder Forest, Northumberland.
2001 *Relsort*, Fabrica Gallery, Brighton, England.
Jerwood Sculpture Prize (shortlisted proposal) Jerwood Sculpture Park, Worcestershire, England.
Sweet Red (permanent commission) Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, England.
2000 *Ambush*, Year of the Artist Project (Arts Council England), Rhinefield Ornamental Drive, New Forest, England.

Solo exhibitions (selection)

2012 *Small Objects*, Makers Cabinets, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, Brighton, England.
2011 *The Wish of the Witness*, Pied à Terre, London, England.
Inherent Beauty, Museum-Gallery, Kavadarci, Macedonia.
2010 *Inherent Beauty*, Public Room, Skopje, Macedonia.
2009 *Motectum*, Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucester, England.
2008 *We Are Shadows*, Unit 2, London Metropolitan University, England .
Butterflies in the Stomach, l'H du Siege, Valenciennes, France.
2006 *Time stands still (1916_1991-2001)*, Kilmainham Gaol Museum, Dublin, Ireland.
2002 *Relsort*, Fabrica Gallery, Brighton, England.
2001 *Epidermis_2*, Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland.
Love Carpet, Hexham Art Centre, Hexham, England.
Epidermis, Berwick Gymnasium Gallery, Berwick upon Tweed, England.
2000 *WHO AM I*, ArtSway, Sway, Hampshire, England.

Group exhibitions and projects (selection)

2013 *Reflection: white-black or not*, CAM I Casoria Contemporary Art Museum, Napoli, Italy.
2012 *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, England.
Skin and Texture, (Art Lending Library) Market Gallery, Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, Glasgow, Scotland.
2010 *Heft: Weight and Touch in Contemporary Sculpture*, The Gallery, Winchester Discovery Centre, Winchester, England.
ArtChitecture, Artsway, Sway, New Forest, England.
Spitalfields Sculpture Prize, Allen & Overy, Bishops Square, London, England.
2009 *Climate change = cultural change*, Swiss Embassy Gallery and the World Bank, Skopje, Macedonia.
Lastari, Cifte Amam, National Gallery of Macedonia, Skopje, Macedonia.
Creative inclusion: Scotland and Macedonia, Step Beyond Mobility Travel Grant, European Culture Foundation, Macedonia.
Alperton Creative Outdoor Installation, Alperton Community School, London, England.
2008 *Around Photography*, Brighton Photo Fringe Exhibition, Apec Studios, Brighton, England.
Skin and Texture, UH Galleries, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, England.
2007 *Meeting Place*, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, England.
Meeting Place, Text+Work, The Gallery, Arts Institute at Bournemouth, England.
2005 *New Forest Pavilion*, Palazzo Zenobio, 51st Venice Biennale, Italy.
Urban Condition Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, Dublin, Ireland.
2004 *Crossovers Watershed II*, Ecology Centre, Mile End Park, London, England.
2002 *Jerwood Sculpture Prize*, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland.
2001 *Jerwood Sculpture Prize*, The Jerwood Gallery, London, England.

Artist in residence (selection)

2013 *Natural Bennachie*, Land Residency and Public Art Commission, Scotland
mima, Middlesbrough, England
2011 *Pied a Terre*, London, Artist in restaurant programme
2008-9 *Gloucester Cathedral*, Gloucester, England
l'H du Siege, Valenciennes, France.

Awards and grants

2013 *Ministry of Culture of Macedonia*, Pavilion of the Republic of Macedonia, 55th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy.
Arts Council England, Pavilion of the Republic of Macedonia, 55th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Italy.
Alexandra Reinhardt Memorial Award, artist in residency and permanent commission for mima, England.
2010 *September 7* award by the National Assembly of Kavadarci, Macedonia.
Award of recognition for special achievements in the field of Fine Art – Sculpture of importance for the development of Kavadarci, Macedonia.
Ministry of Culture of Macedonia, grant for solo exhibition *Inherent Beauty*
2009 *Arts Council England* South East, Grants for the Arts (R&D)
Arts Council England South West, Grants for the Arts (Gloucester Cathedral)
European Cultural Foundation, STEP Beyond Mobility Fund (travel to Macedonia with Dr Fiona Dean)

Silentio Pathologia by Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva
Pavilion of the Republic of Macedonia
55th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia
Commissioned by Halide Palloshi (Director, National Gallery of Macedonia)
Curated by Ana Frangovska (Curator, National Gallery of Macedonia)

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