

Buzzing Calligraffiti

Milena Popov - Nena

Abstract

This series of artworks explore the human perceptions of space, presence, belonging, communication, movement, resilience, and regrowth during the ongoing pandemic in New York City. In a dynamic spatial ontology, past-present-future palimpsests exist as our spatiotemporal perception of reality. Current pandemic trapped humans (including myself) in situ, and, in a way, recontextualized human social spatiability and psychogeographic perception of space, adding layers of introspection. During lockdowns, as the only means to communicate with other people was via digital technologies, entire life (work, school, religious service, exercising, entertainment, socializing, dating, etc.) moved online. This new spatiotemporal reality emerged as a form of resilience and solidarity in the time of crisis. New York City, the city that never sleeps, started to buzz again. In a dance between the real and the imaginary, the transient and the permanent, on and off screen, the virtual and the real, online and in-person, between here and there, appears the space in between, populated with traces, imprints, voices of the voiceless, and opportunities for regrowth. This newly created mashwork inspired my painting series “Buzzing Calligraffiti” where multiple realities, spaces, cultures, and points of view coexist in a buzzing harmony. These paintings (painted with natural and manmade pigments - acai juice, ink, color pencils, and blue watercolor) are a bridge between cultures, aesthetics, and points of view (calligraphy and graffiti), as well as a bridge between nature and the city. The work represents a unity in difference - at the same time a cultural unity and a unity where non-human and human nature coexist in harmony.

Keywords: calligraffiti, painting, natural pigments, cultural bridge, coexistence, New York City



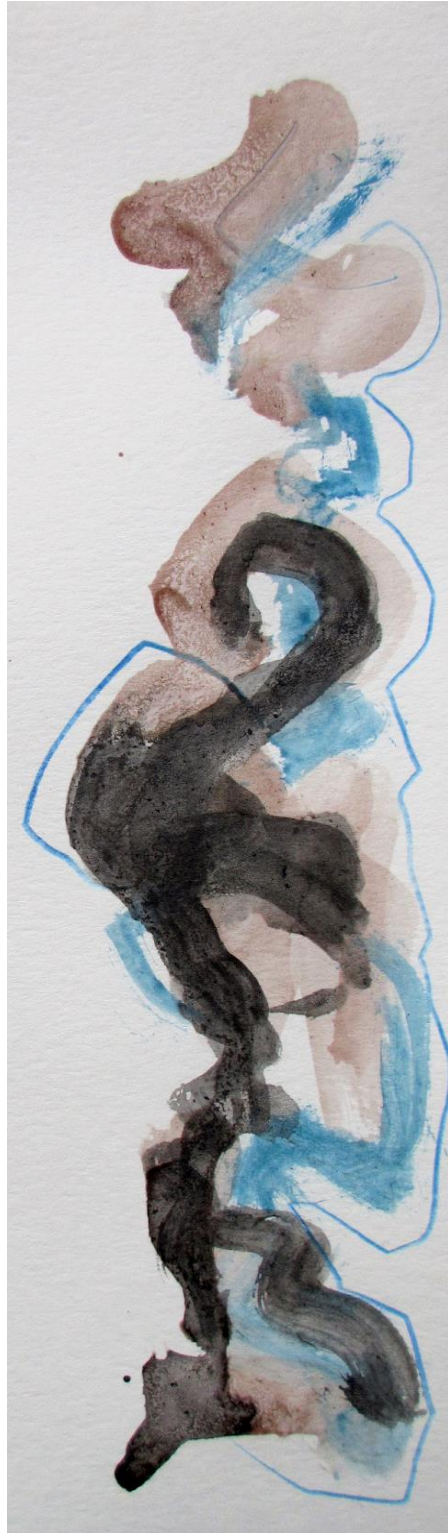
Buzzing Calligraffiti #1, 2020, photo by the artist. Material: acai juice, sumi ink, blue watercolor, color pencils on paper. Dimension: 7.62x30.48cm.



Buzzing Calligraffiti #2, 2020, photo by the artist. Material: acai juice, sumi ink, blue watercolor, color pencils on paper. Dimension: 12.7x30.48cm.



Buzzing Calligraffiti #3, 2020, photo by the artist. Material: acai juice, sumi ink, blue watercolor, color pencils on paper. Dimension: 25.4x7.62cm.



Buzzing Calligraffiti #4, 2020, photo by the artist. Material: acai juice, sumi ink, blue watercolor, color pencils on paper. Dimension: 25.4x30.48cm.

About the artist

Dr. Milena Popov - Nena is a Yugoslavian-born, New York City-based interdisciplinary artist and scholar. She received her PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies, Theory of Arts and Media from the University of Arts, Belgrade. She earned an MFA and a BFA in Painting and Art Education from the Academy of Arts, Novi Sad and from the Summer Academy at the University of Amsterdam. Popov teaches art and media theory at NYU Steinhardt, as well as art, and interdisciplinary sustainability and environmental justice courses at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY), where she is one of the founding members of the Environmental Justice and Sustainability Program. Popov has written and published numerous texts on art, media, sustainability, and culture, as well as participated in numerous panels and conferences. She is the founder, organizer, and moderator of the Intellectual Salon and a member of few art associations, such as International Eco Art Network. Her work is included in both public and private collections around the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina in Novi Sad. Popov is the recipient of several grants, honors, and awards, and has exhibited her artworks at 26 solo and over 70 group exhibits worldwide. Her website is: <http://www.milenapopovnena.com>.