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PRO KULTURA MAGAZIN  
CULTURE MAGAZINE

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**Rita Angus**  
**New Zealand**



**DIOGEN pro culture  
magazine ... a month for  
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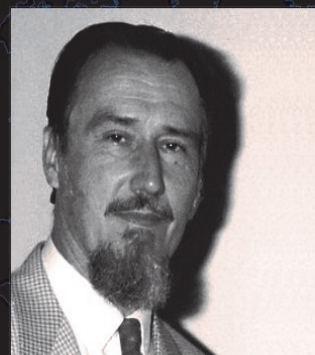
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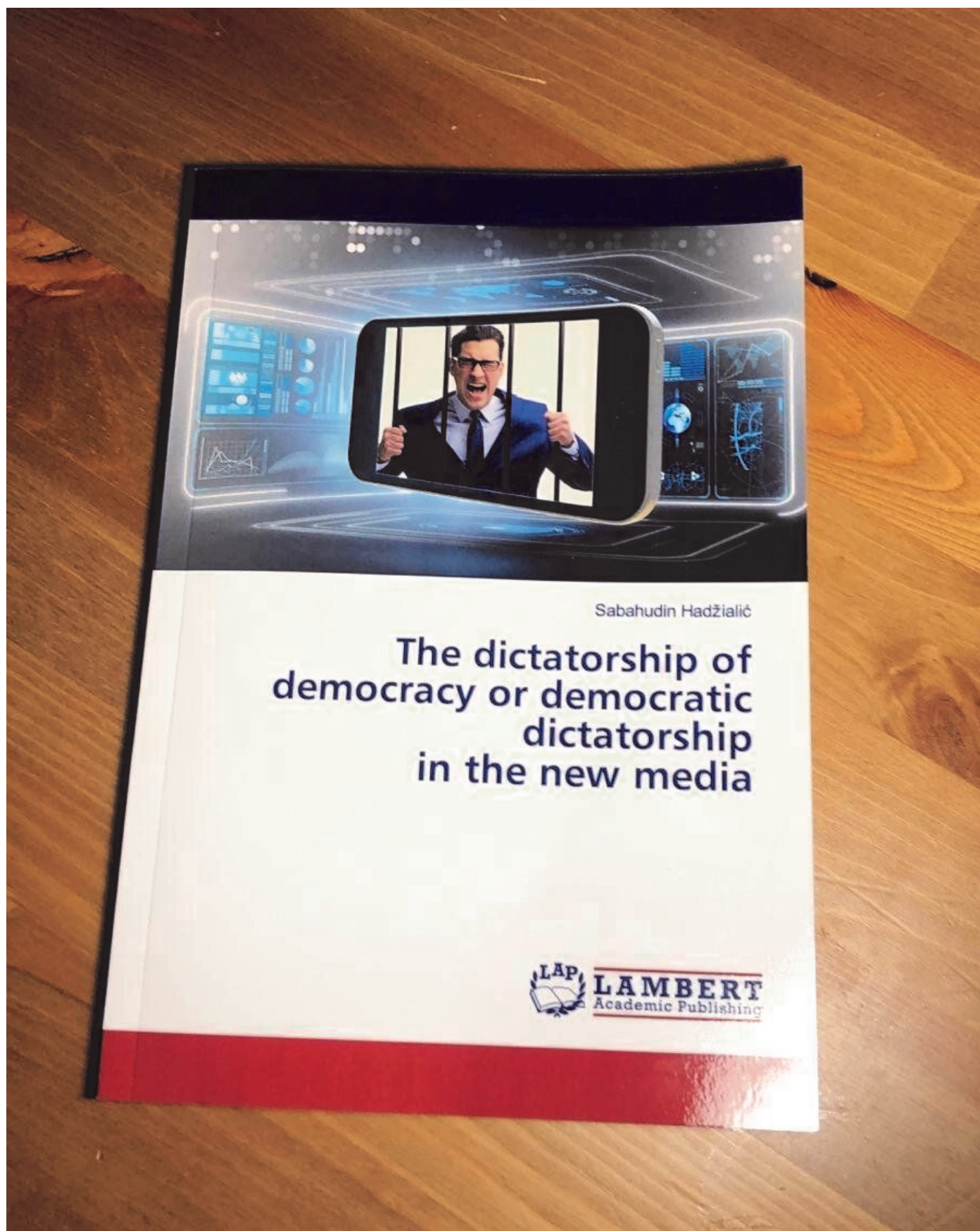


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**Rita Angus (source: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5a16/angus-rita>)**

Henrietta Catherine Angus, known as Rita, was born in Hastings on 12 March 1908. She was the eldest of seven children of Ethel Violet Crabtree and her husband, William McKenzie Angus, who began his working life as a carpenter and went on to establish the major construction company W. M. Angus Limited. During Rita's childhood, building contracts kept the family on the move between Palmerston North and Napier. From 1922 until 1926 she attended Palmerston North Girls' High School, where her art teacher, G. H. Elliott, recognised her talent and encouraged her to undertake further study.

In 1927 Angus enrolled at Canterbury College School of Art to begin a four-year diploma in fine arts. From tutors such as Leonard Booth, Cecil Kelly and Archibald Nicoll she received a sound traditional training in life drawing, still life, and landscape painting. Art history lectures introduced her to what would become an enduring interest in Renaissance and medieval art. Just as important was her interest in composition, and in this respect the work of Vermeer and Cézanne made a lasting impression. Although Angus never completed the diploma, her studies at the school continued, with interruptions, until 1933.

During the late 1920s and 1930s Christchurch was in its heyday as an art and cultural centre. Touring exhibitions such as the Loan Exhibition of Oriental Art (1934–35) were a source of stimulus to Angus, encouraging her growing interest in Far Eastern art and thought. News of contemporary art developments overseas was filtered through returning art students, such as Rata Lovell-Smith and Flora Scales.

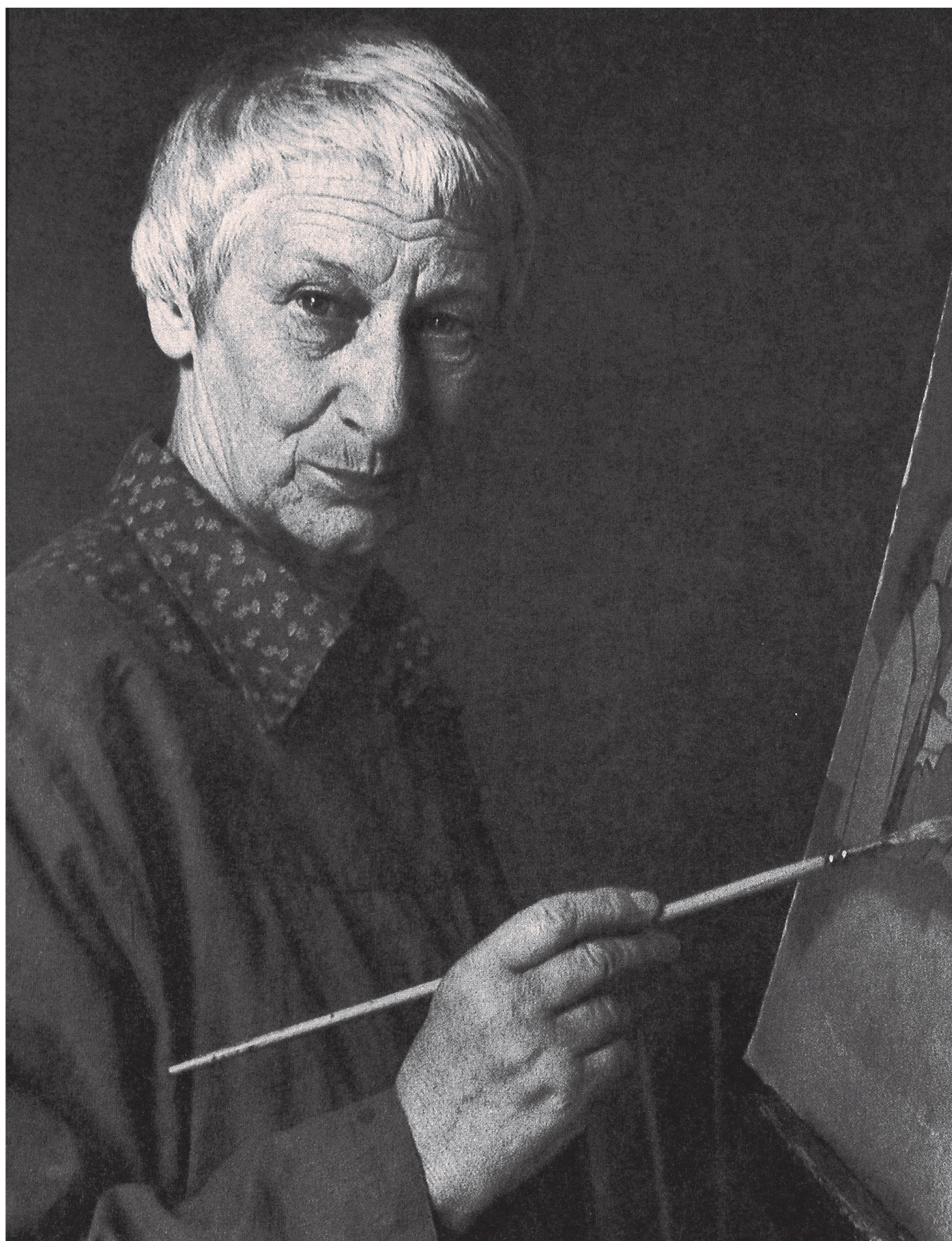
On 13 June 1930, Angus married fellow artist Alfred Herbert Owen Cook in Christchurch. The marriage was shortlived, however: in 1934 the couple separated on grounds of incompatibility, and were divorced in 1939. As a young artist with feminist views, Angus was evidently unable to reconcile the conflicting roles of wife and artist. She never remarried, living alone for most of her life. She signed her work Rita Cook from 1930 until 1946, but changed her name by deed poll to Henrietta Catherine McKenzie, and from 1941 sometimes signed paintings as R. McKenzie or R. Mackenzie, although she usually used the name Rita Angus.

Angus's divorce left her in a difficult position, financially and socially. During the 1930s and 1940s she lived mainly in Christchurch, working at various short-term jobs, including teaching and as an illustrator for the *Press*, in order to eke out a living. In 1930 she began to exhibit with the Canterbury Society of Arts, and in 1932 she first exhibited with The Group. These remained the primary outlets for her work for most of her life.

In 1936 Rita Angus and Louise Henderson made a sketching expedition to Arthur's Pass. The drawings from this trip formed the basis of 'Cass' (1936), a painting of a small Canterbury railway station, which represented a break away from her academic training. With its brilliantly lit, hard-edged form and insistent patterning, 'Cass' exemplifies Angus's very personal style and vision. In 1940 it was exhibited in the National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art, signalling critical recognition for her work.

Angus produced some of her finest portraits during the late 1930s and early 1940s. In works like 'Portrait (Betty Curnow)' (1942), she sought to convey the personality of her subject by the use of complex and highly personal symbolism. Betty Curnow is surrounded by objects that testify to her role as a mother, her intellectual and artistic interests, and the history of her family in Canterbury. This iconic painting has been aptly characterised as a 'portrait of a generation'.





Rita Angus (1908—1970)



Angus's art from this period has been described as 'regionalist' because of its realist style and its apparent celebration of a specific time and locality. However, she had little interest in the search for a New Zealand national style. For Angus, New Zealand was culturally dependent on the art of Western Europe and had yet to develop a style of its own. In 1947 she described her aims in the *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*: 'To show to the present a peaceful way, and through devotion to visual art to sow some seeds for possible maturity in later generations'.

As the threat of war intensified during the late 1930s, Angus adopted a pacifist stance, joining the New Zealand Peace Pledge Union. When war began she deliberately avoided work connected with the war effort. Instead, she picked tobacco at a farm at Pangatotara and spent time with pacifist friends at the Riverside Community near Nelson. In October 1944 she had to appear before the Industrial Man-power Appeal Committee in Christchurch to justify her refusal to undertake war work; her appeal was rejected, but troops were beginning to return home, the worst of the labour shortage was over, and she escaped punishment.

Angus subsisted on a meagre income during the war years and suffered periodic bouts of illness. By 1948 she was ill and unable to paint, and in 1949, near breakdown, she was committed for psychiatric treatment at Sunnyside Hospital. The following year she moved to Waikanae to convalesce in the care of her parents. Angus emerged from her illness more withdrawn and introspective, but as committed as ever to painting. During her recovery she completed some of her finest symbolic self-portraits, such as 'Sun goddess' (1949) and 'Rutu' (1951). Angus painted at least 55 self-portraits during her career. Ranging from the coolly objective to the allegorical and symbolic, they can be read as a kind of visual diary, documenting the inner life of this very private woman.

In 1951 Angus returned to Christchurch, where she based herself until 1954. With money provided by Douglas Lilburn, she spent the latter part of 1953 in Otago, making studies for the magnificent composite landscape 'Central Otago' (1954–56/1969). She also experimented with abstraction in works like 'Landscape with arum lily' (1953). In 1954 Angus went to live at Mangonui in Northland, but found life too isolated there. The following year she bought an old cottage at 194A Sydney Street West, in Wellington, which became her home for the rest of her life.

In 1957, at the age of 49, Angus had her first solo exhibition, at Wellington's Architectural Centre gallery. An Association of New Zealand Art Societies' fellowship in 1958 enabled her to study art for a year in England and Europe. She spent most of the time in London and St Ives, looking at historical and contemporary art. This was her only overseas trip.

Back in Wellington, Angus accepted a mural commission for Napier Girls' High School, which occupied her for most of 1960. The next decade was a productive period, despite encroaching ill health. Annual visits to her parents in Napier provided her with subject matter for works such as 'Fog, Hawke's Bay' (1966–68), but increasingly she focused on her local Wellington landscape. The experimental 'Journey, Wellington' (1962–63) compresses her experience of the bus route through the city in four scenes framed by the central motif – the driver's steering wheel. Self portraits from the 1960s include the mystical watercolour 'Self-portrait with fruit' (1960–61), a composite image showing aspects of her Thorndon environment. In the commanding oil painting 'Self-portrait' (1966), Angus depicts herself in painting smock, with brush and easel – her most forthright declaration of her vocation as an artist.



When Thorndon was bisected by a motorway in the late 1960s, Angus, in a spirit of protest, documented the demolition of old houses and the removal of tombstones at Bolton Street cemetery. 'Flight' (1968–69), one of her last major oils, is a visionary painting which combines a view of Island Bay with gravestones from the cemetery, and the flying dove, symbol of peace.

Angus entered Wellington Hospital with ovarian cancer in November 1969. She died there on 25 January 1970. Her cottage in Sydney Street later became a home for artists on yearly tenure.

Although she had always been highly respected by a small band of artists and critics, widespread critical acclaim came relatively late. Interest in her work grew steadily from the late 1950s, due in part to her inclusion in national touring exhibitions organised by the Auckland City Art Gallery, such as Eight New Zealand Painters (1957). During the 1960s the gallery's influential director, Peter Tomory, singled her out (with Toss Woollaston and Colin McCahon) as one of the leading figures in twentieth century New Zealand art. Angus, with characteristic wariness, resisted this attempt to canonise her and insisted that she be allowed to have her 'own art history'. After her death, her reputation continued to grow, and the National Art Gallery's major exhibition of her work in 1982–83 confirmed her status as one of the outstanding artists of her generation.

As a pioneer of modern painting in New Zealand, Angus evolved a distinctive and highly personal art. Always interested in contemporary art developments, she was nevertheless resolute in pursuing her own way as an artist: 'I am not wholly concerned with art trends as I prefer to find a deeper insight to the limitations which face a N.Z. painter'. Angus set an example to New Zealand artists by her dedication, her professionalism, and her concern for artists' rights, such as copyright.

Angus was an austere, disciplined, and often exacting woman, who was sustained by her belief in her vocation, and a religious philosophy informed by Far Eastern thought. In 1947 she summed up her attitude towards art: 'As a woman painter, I work to represent love of humanity and faith in mankind in a world, which is to me, richly variable and infinitely beautiful'.



































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# Nove knjige



Хаику и позориште. Рекли би, у прави мах – два удаљена света. Седамнаест слогова на супрот осветљене сцене пред препуним гледалиштем, концентрација усамљеног стихотворца на супрот преплетених личних драма глумца, редитеља, диригента, гледаоца. Непосредност прихватања на супрот шминке, маски, перика. Али, каква чудесна предност настаје у њиховом претапању када су и хаику и позориште узајамни и живе суптилни, духовитим уочавањима аутора Душана Видаковића. Магија људске природе укршта се са знањем и магијом позоришног живота. Душан сакупља, монтира, уобличава те искидане тренутке у низ луцидних, духовитих тростиха, између (ван)свесног и апсурдног, дражесног и гротеског. Његов неочекивани хаику оригиналан је не само по тематици, већ и мајсторством осмишљавања тих сложених позоришних ситуација у бисере светлуцаве имажинације.

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*Dušan Vidaković: „Godoov dubler“, Beograd, Alma; 2019.*

U svom književno-versičkom odgajalištu Dušan Vidaković smišlja, stvara i prati u neizvesnost recepcije osobene, podsticajne uzorke kratke književne forme, od inicijacijski osvešćenog i semantički koncentrovnog haikua do poetički artikulisanog aforizma. Ovo je autor kod koga su sve aksiološke odrednice uslovne ili redukovane, dok njegov intelektualni ludizam dekonstruiše erudiciju, vokaciju, lektiru, angažovanost, istoriju, postistoriju, dokument i nastoji da poeziji vrati izvornu snagu *sadašnjosti govora*, od ishodišnog žanra prevazilazeći književno istorijsku i formalnu predestinaciju. A poosobiti i haiku i aforizam na način u kom to nije mistifikacija duha kao posledica *megalomanije neshvaćenih* izuzetan je podvig.

Na mikro prostoru, poput intelektualnih cirkona, u zbirci „Godoov dubler“ blistaju i zrače epifanije, ono od čega se i strukturno sastoji prava poezija. Daleko od autistično hermetizovane šifre, s jedne strane, ali i daleko od populističkog samozadovoljavajućeg samozasmejavanja i logoreje, s druge strane, Vidaković u svojoj najnovijoj knjizi gustom mrežom asocijacija lovi preseke mnogoznačnosti detalja i stvari, fenomena i činilaca pojma *blaženog čudovišta pozorišta*. Beketovski naslućujući, *Godoov dubler* možda čeka neku kreativnu alternaciju ili semantičku reverberaciju, međutim pesnik uspeva da prevaziđe jednoznačni karakter svakog pojma, detalja, rekvizita i medija, žanra i posledice teatarskog sazvežđa, od rikvanda do rampe, od kulise do rekvizite, od rasvete do sufliranja, od autora do reditelja, od pisca do role, od glave do slave, od plača do trača, od reflektora do refleksije...

Institucionalna i kulturološka vasiona **pozorišnog** kao *meta simbola*, od iskonski prepoznatljivog i pojmovno utvrđenog, kroz bogat jezički roj efektnih asocijativno odjekujućih paradigmi, paradoksa i poetički otkrivalačkih iznenađenja, u ovoj kristalno provocirajućoj kratkoći projektuje prožimanje života i teksta. Scene, gledališta, strukture i arhitekture ovog zdanja i sazvežđa, u kom autentično superiorna poezija podstiče čitaoca na odabrani koštac fizisa i mimezisa, pokazuje da poezija ne tvrdi, ona uzvišeno iritira i oneobičava, dekonstruiše i izaziva čitalačku dokvalifikaciju. U „Godoovom dubleru“ njena koncentrovanost nije ishod formalno retoričke prepotencije, sakupljačke autoreferencijalnosti - ovde je svaki kratki tekst kao početak unutrašnjeg događaja, a ne spoljne cehovske i medijske pirotehnike.

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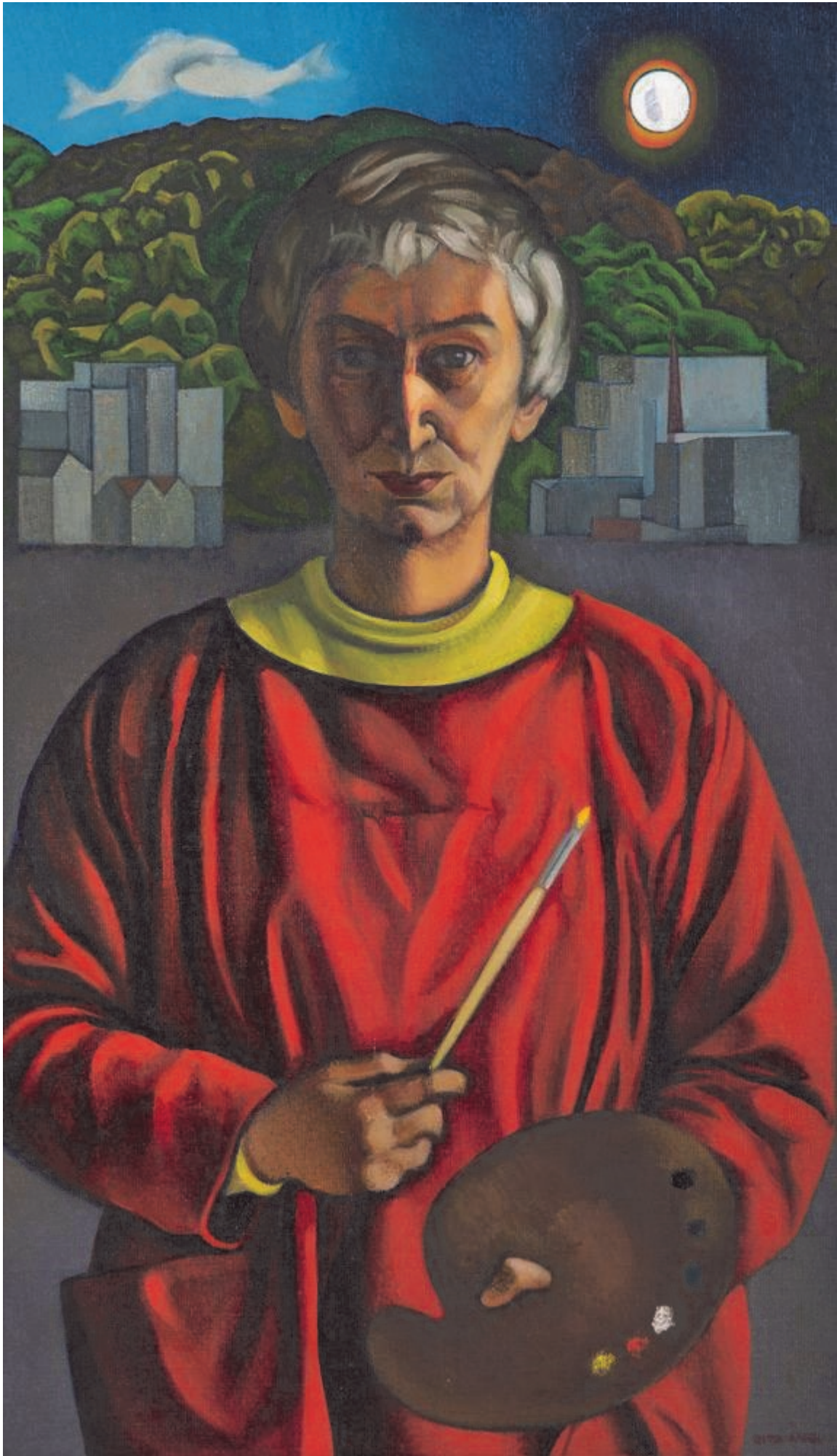






















































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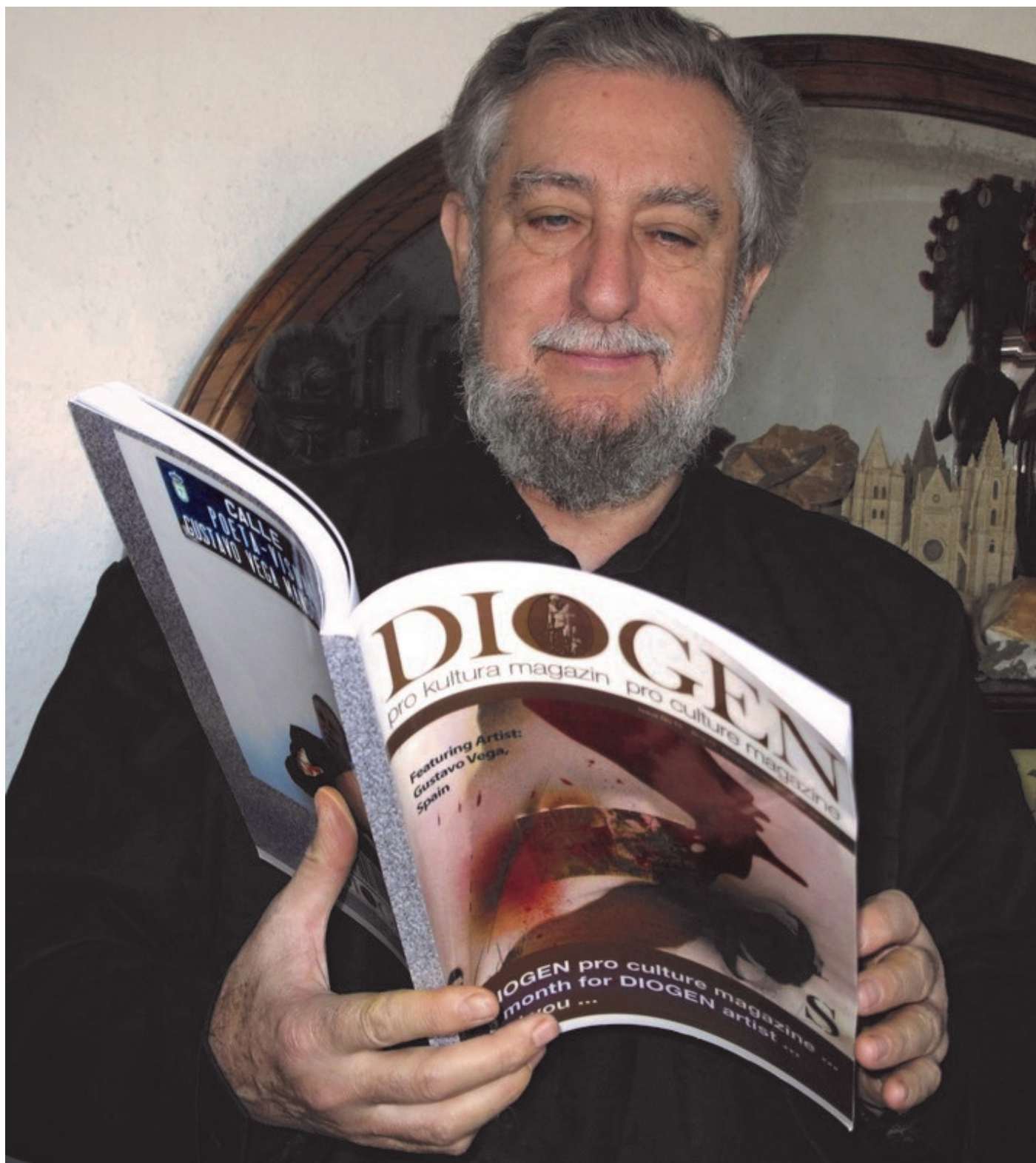








































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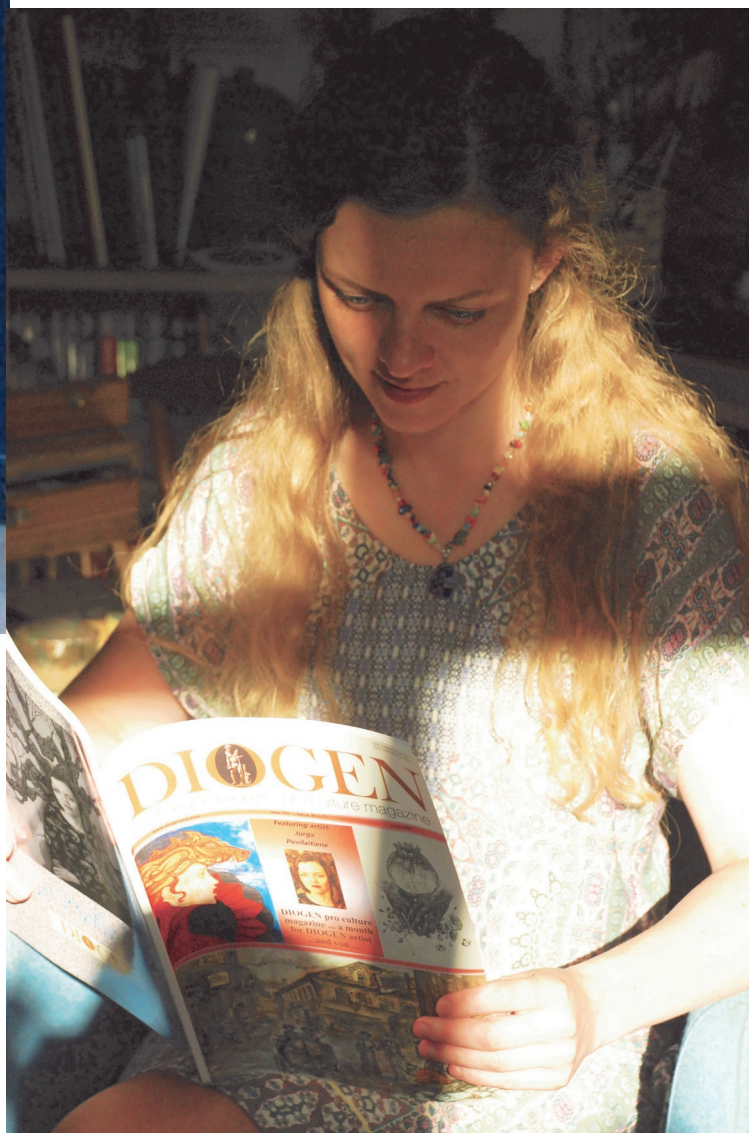












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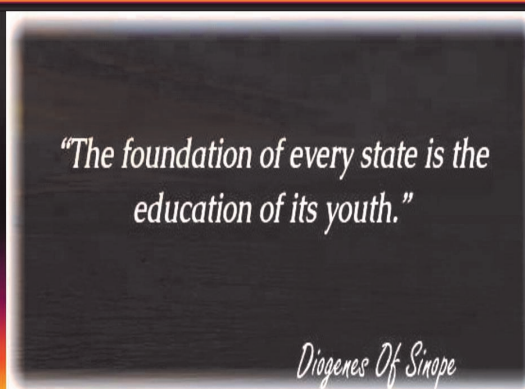
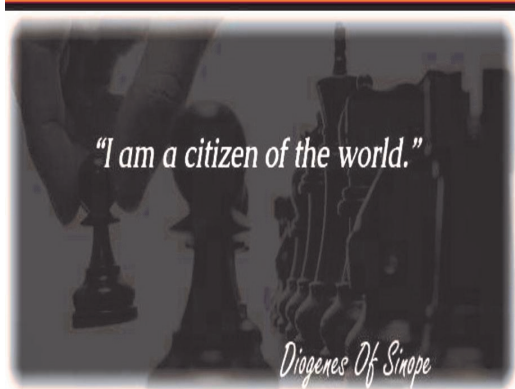
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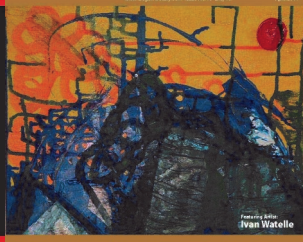
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