

# METKA VERGNION

Japonski trenutki  
Japanese Moments

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cankarjev dom  
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— Review by Tanja Cigoj

Access to the photographic story of Metka Vergnion, which grasps from traditional values, happens through perception of the sense of place caught in it. The mixture of impulses of the outside world and subtle records of the visible constructs a fable, comprehended and transposed through the individual, yet remaining material, within the framework of reality.

The story of these Japanese moments, which are the result of cognitions and feelings joined in concord, forms an unique embroidered image of the country and its originality and particularity. This door into a world of unfamiliarity was open to someone who could understand it through the distinct and rare ability to »taste« diversity, and it seems like the space, events and temporal »scenes« were waiting to respond in answer to something already present in this visitor.

The concept of this photographic series, from initially spontaneity, had been building up through several visits to Japan, and shows a mature harmony in the experience of the country. The manner in which the author perceived and absorbed (or was absorbed by?) this unique world appears through eyes unfamiliar with Japan as the distinct ability to capture the quintessential.

These moments of Japan are aphoristic perceptions of the land and its culture; they are moments taken from the spiritual and everyday life, imbued with silence and respectful »wordlessness«... And maybe just for this reason these minimalistic descriptions seem raised to a state of the ritual, the ceremonial... In the thematic photographs: the tea ritual, ikebana, the art of calligraphy, pottery, theater, music, literature, the temples, gardens in relation to nature and the seasons, are works which grew from absorbed dialogue with the chosen moments.

This dialogue ladles from the well of Zen Buddhist philosophy; it rests on the importance of awareness of the moment, infinite and temporary at the same time. And, as in the tea ritual, with its purity of decor, tableware and gesticulations, like some finely-tuned aesthetic ceremony, the photographic series of Metka Vergnion is, with its clarification of motif, with its completion of mood, and with entirely non-coincidental choice of detail, the thoughtful result of experience and maturity...

The ritual, built upon the principles of harmony, respect, purity and tranquility, and which joins the main body of Japanese philosophy and art, is embraced into the image and its perception with a sense of complete comprehension. In the picture showing the garden as a place of growth, nurturing life and the spiritual, and in which the succession of the seasons gives rhythm to life itself, new metaphors arise. Purified of loquacity and predominant accents and tones, and with detail which sustains within it the part and the whole simultaneously, these metaphors are tied to the philosophy of receiving and practice.

Her memory gradually absorbed fragments of experience, notes which slowly formed harmonies which sing out into her compositions, into creations which remain appropriately detached yet in their ambience curiously engaging. Her technically accomplished photography does not merely document reality, or improvise scenes, which additionally confirms the fact that she has developed a creative sensibility of perception and translation into the visible to a level of perfection as a photographer. And inside this whole, the simplicity of the declaration at its highest point is a revelation which – as in the whole of fine art – prevails upon and surpasses the aesthetic moment. ■