

# LOOPING

No.07 HUMAN RIGHTS \* DISABILITY \* SOCIETY \* CULTURE december 2011

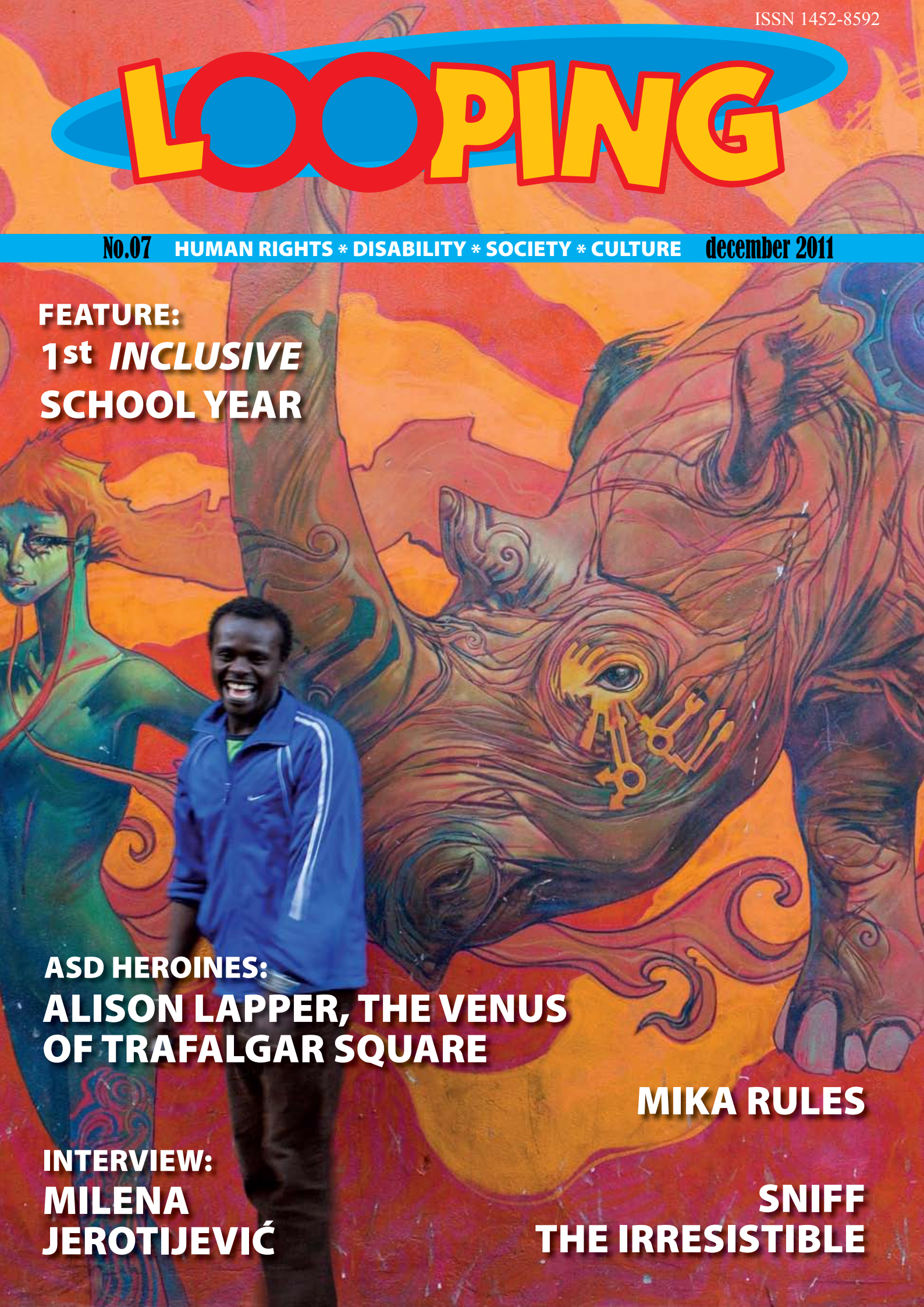
**FEATURE:**  
**1st *INCLUSIVE***  
**SCHOOL YEAR**

**ASD HEROINES:**  
**ALISON LAPPER, THE VENUS**  
**OF TRAFALGAR SQUARE**

**INTERVIEW:**  
**MILENA**  
**JEROTIJEVIĆ**

**MIKA RULES**

**SNIFF**  
**THE IRRESISTIBLE**





Maja Ilić

Dear All: friends, associates, and all those interested, Before you is the seventh issue of LOOPING, the magazine concerned with human rights, disability, society and culture, published by the Association for Students with Disabilities. Once again (!) our main topic is inclusive education. We have summed up the results of the first inclusive academic year and talked to Milena Jerotijević on how education changes the concept of disability. Mika Rules provides an illustration of students' life and reflects on the (in)equality of students with disabilities in higher education. The heroes of the ASD are Sniff the Irresistible (charm, magic and RFID technology) and Alison Lapper, the modern paradigm of beauty. We move through the dimensions of TIME/SPACE and POSSIBILITY/ZENITH, taking an inside look at Native Americans, the symbol of otherness in Westerns, a poetic-acrobatic theatrical piece and the adventurous escapades of our columnist in Riga, Jerusalem and Istanbul. The whole issue has been placed between two walls: one in a district of Cape Town, seldom visited by tourists, and the famous Western Wall in Jerusalem, visited by our ASD Band and our tireless columnist!

## LOOPING No. 7

december 2011  
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Nenad Filipović

# SUMMARY

## 1<sup>st</sup> INCLUSIVE SCHOOL YEAR

The mother said that other parents often moved their children away from her son when he started to behave differently. Her child still doesn't speak. He does not use verbal communication but knows all the letters and he writes by arranging them. That is an example of a child that is in many ways different from others. He attends regular school and his inclusion is successful because his teacher is adjusting to him. She did not finish defectology, nor did she have any specialized knowledge, but thanks to the meetings with the boy's mother and experts, she gained the knowledge presently needed for working with the boy on his education. She also used the knowledge to guide her support of children with autism, who are included in the regular preschools and schools. She learned to apply this knowledge in the classroom while working with the boy through an individualized plan.



Nenad Filipović

The first obligatory inclusion school year passed. There are more and more examples of good practice. In regards to the 2009/2010 year, the quick review showed that during the previous school year the enrollment of children with disabilities increased about 7 per cent, while the number of children of Roma nationality in first grade increased 10 per cent.

These data confirm the necessity of inclusion. However, Natasa Milojevic, from the Initiative for Inclusion 'Veliki-Mali', is certain that the Law on Education, adopted in 2009, is not and cannot be enough for accomplishing satisfactory results. "Children with disabilities are now at a very unenviable position, regardless of the law. Authorities in various fields determined their destiny and treated their parents in a highly unprofessional way for far too long. In one case, we were approached by the mother of the child with a disability that was enrolled in a regular group despite the differing advice of many. She was afraid that someone would move him into the developmental group for children with disabilities, and she asked us for advice. But what she actually did not understand is that nobody is allowed to do this. Parents still cannot free themselves from the fear and worry even though the law is very clear," said Natasa Milojevic and emphasized that parents must be informed, supported and encouraged to demand from schools to adjust the educational process for their children.

The example of a boy who was denied enrollment in the high school for computer science because he doesn't have a hand is the evidence that the law itself is not enough. In fact, the director and the board of the school were very glad to have him but he had to pass the medical exam. The piece of paper that the doctor had in front of him stated that for this type of school, the student must have mobility of all wrists, so the boy didn't receive a positive medical report for enrollment. But because the new law implies criminal responsibility, they didn't even give him the denial of his enrollment. Technically, the boy was enrolled, but then had to be withdrawn because he didn't have medical report. Somehow though, the correct procedure was initiated and the notice sent to the Ministry of Education and Science (MNP), so that he enrolled in the school.

With the enactment of the Regulation of Additional Education, Health and Social Support for Children and Students, the work of the Special Commission for Clas-



Aleksandar Starčević

sification of Children with Disabilities ceased and new interdepartmental commissions were formed. The jurisdiction of the new commission that oversees these cases is to evaluate the need for additional support necessary to provide conditions for the development, education and equal participation in social life for every child. One year earlier, when the law was not in the process of legislation, the boy would not be able to enroll in that school.

The inadequate or irresponsible approach of employees in schools is also a large obstacle, in the opinion of psychologist Natasa Milojevic. "The law gives us the responsibility to adjust education and the teaching process for the needs of all children. Of course, there are guides and regulations, about individualized education plans, that gives the skills that one should apply in order to give quality education to every child. However, the main problem is that they are not used sufficiently and there are many who view individualized education plan only as an additional administrative task. This kind of the approach is very bad - it has to be accepted as something that helps both teacher and child, and not as the additional paperwork which a school board lays upon you," she assures.

One of the novel changes in education that requires the serious and responsible attention of teachers and professors, and which actually makes the whole even harder to accept, is the introduction of the Right on the Individual Education Plan (IEP). Every child and student that has the need for additional support in education because of difficulties in approach, inclusion, participation or progress has the right to an IEP in their educational process. Besides children with learning difficulties, developmental difficulties and disabilities, as well as children that live in or come from an unstimulating environment, this right is also held by children with special capability.

Natasa Milojevic also said that this is her first time in the role of someone who informs the public about the work of MNP. "Everything is very simple, always on time and it is public and always available on the Internet page of the Ministry. There is information about the foundations and further steps in the strategy. However, when we go to the schools we realise that people don't use it. You cannot go after every employee to be sure that he will

read on the Internet page what is going on in his sector." On the MNP website, within the Resource centre ([www.mp.gov.rs/resursi/](http://www.mp.gov.rs/resursi/)) there are guides and regulations that are supposed to help teachers work with children with disabilities, as well as the documents through which the method of introducing inclusion into education in Serbia was composed. Among these the United Nations regulations that include Standard rules for equal potential for peoples with disabilities, the declaration of UNESCO concerning the Salamanca declaration and the general action plan for education of peoples with disabilities, the teacher's guide (UNESCO), the report of the European agency dealing with the development of education for students with disabilities, teacher's guide for needs and understanding of children with disability in inclusive classrooms (UNESCO), and many others.

Nevertheless, the Union of Education Workers said that they do not pay much attention to the guidelines of the Ministry and claim that teachers and professors are not specially professionally trained and do not have appropriate conditions for teaching children with disabilities. "In our school we work according to some parental instincts. There is no special system and we are the only ones who work in this way. That game is very dangerous and the outcomes are unknown. We obey the law, we act responsibly and we would like to help every child in every possible way, but I don't know if we are doing it in a properly," stated union president Dragan Matijevic.

However, according to UNESCO's definition, inclusion is the process directly connected with the improvement of the educational system in general. That is why the term "deprivation of the individual" is completely unacceptable. "Inclusion is the process that reacts to and solves the variety of the needs of every student through participation in studying, culture and community. It represents the decline of exclusion from education. It includes changes of the content, approach, structure and strategy with the vision that includes every child of appropriate age and with the conviction that the regular educational system is responsible for the education of every child."

So, let us turn back to the boy from the beginning of the article. While attending integrative preschool, even though he didn't speak, the boy started to be interested in letters, which continued during the attendance with the regular group. His favourite toys were spelling books. He liked to combine same letters and adults had to 'write' the words using the letters from the spelling book. Eventually, he started to write his own words using the letters, and started to speak and name certain objects and pictures. By the time he started the school he could write letters and speak with the support of his mother and teacher. His mother says that he likes to go to school and that he likes his teacher. He can count now and he's learning numbers. That is a child that first learned to write, and only then to speak.

Dejan Baić

# EDUCATION

## CHANGES THE CONCEPTION OF DISABILITIES

There are two main ways in which it is possible to change the conception of disabilities through education. One of the ways is to make education available to everyone with the larger involvement of persons with disabilities. That is important because education is preparation for life. In that way such persons, who have been ignored or completely excluded because of their personal characteristics, are allowed to gain the knowledge, skills and competence that will help them become a part of society. The other way involves those who must participate in the process of inclusion along with the people with disabilities. They have to change their understanding of the concept of disability so as to deconstruct and reconstruct it. This is a very serious process and even though many claim it is a long one, we had an opportunity to see that it is not. "When there is good and widespread action, public opinion is rapidly changed," said psychologist Milena Jerotijevic in her interview for Looping, and as Special Advisor for Inclusive Education in the Ministry of Education, she is one of the most deserving people for the introduction and development of inclusive education in Serbia.

*What results are accomplished by the first school year of the application of the Law on Education?*

Because of the increased number of children with disabilities and of Roma nationality there is a need in schools for additional training that will provide the knowledge and skills needed to support children from sensitive social groups during their education. Within the scope of the DILS project (providing the improved social protection, education and health services on the local level), 320 schools entered the first cycle of trainings that have been based on a pilot project involving 30 schools. These trainings mean an improvement of knowledge and skills result in the implementation of quality education for everyone. Within the DILS project, particularly within the education sector, there are several programs that have been financed. The first program addresses the involvement of children of Roma nationality in the educational system, the second addresses inclusion with an emphasis on children with developmental difficulties and disabilities, and the third is a program for schools without violence. There is also a training organised for the board of school advisers that deals with the education of children with disabilities. Finally, another very important thing is an inclusive education support network of about 70 people that provide support for schools having difficulty applying inclusive education. They are available not only for schools but also for parents, teachers and organisations. The network consists of highly trained people who have worked in this field for many years and are qualified to give appropriate support. I truly think that it has done more than anyone could have expected.

*What kind of inclusive education resistance you came across?*

I am really surprised how opposition is eliminated after the appropriate legislation. But there still remains some resistance because prejudice is a very stubborn thing. People mostly try to protect themselves by claiming they



Nenad Filipović



are not educated enough for that area. Still, prejudice is best eliminated when one argumentatively explains the phenomenon to these people, and when one, also argumentatively, shows them that they do not need to be afraid, because their own educational competence is what will provide quality education for everyone. Specialised knowledge is mystified such that it is more often considered an obstacle rather than advantage. Therefore, a defectologist's knowledge is harmful and prevents children's involvement in education. When teachers somehow realise that a teacher's general competence and contemporary pedagogical knowledge are the most powerful tools for the quality involvement of all children, and when we show them that they can do it, then the resistance disappears. I think that the major peril is when defectologists nurture resistance by claiming that others are not competent to work with children with disabilities.

*How do you cope with obstacles and resistance?*

Quality results are produced when you come directly to the school, show their people that they can do it, work with them so they can come to their own conclusions, and when they are able to present and bring to life their experiences. In that process it is very important to have a good school board and director because if the director is not supportive you have only individual teachers that are trying to make an attempt. There are some directors who are not interested or believe that the process would be unsuccessful, because they are appointed on a political basis or simply don't understand the educational system. With regard to primary schools, there are not too many directors of this kind. On the other hand, we have encountered directors and entire schools that are founders of inclusive education. Nevertheless, there are still things that we don't know because the parents are not informed about whom they should turn to, and the schools are silent.

*What are the results across the regions of Serbia?*

According to my impressions, Nis and Southern Serbia are really the best. Vojvodina is very interested and works a lot. Eastern Serbia also has good results, as well as Central Serbia and Kragujevac. In Western Serbia things are not so developed, and in Kraljevo situation is unacceptably bad. The Belgrade school administration is very good and supportive but Belgrade schools have an elitist view on education which is not helpful, but that is also something that is changing.

*What is Serbia's position in comparison to other countries?*

When we talk about how inclusion should look like, in comparison to former socialist countries I think we are in the best position. There are countries in our surrounding area that had laws and regulations before us but they are rather declarative. As far as more developed countries, we have to understand that we excluded from education not only children that were in foreign special education systems but also those who were in the regular system and who had appropriate support. We didn't have education with a differentiated approach. We had declarative schooling which was well-implemented only by the very smart teachers who had a developed sense of professional responsibility but since we know that there are many of them without this sense, the situation was very bad for children. We started from a very low level and that is why it is very difficult to make comparisons with countries with different approaches to inclusion. Developed countries, unlike the socialist ones, don't have special programs for teaching children with disabilities. They have regular teaching faculties, start their practice and may at one point in time decide themselves to specialise in teaching children with disabilities. In former socialist countries, there were defectology faculties that were very medically-oriented and ruinous for those it intended to benefit.

*Beside the laws, what other obligations support inclusive education?*

There is no other alternative that supports the development of the individual, a child in this case, that can achieve better results and effects than education. Education that does not start in the child's appropriate developmental stage cannot provide the same results as one that does start in the period of a child's natural tendency to learn. It is best to be surrounded by peers and in a presence of an adult to whom the children are attached. That is a moment when they are able to step out of their families and start to attach to someone from the outside. The Law on Education is actually based on that fact.

Dejan Baić

# MİKA RULES



The residence hall "Mika Mitrovic", part of the Student Centre Belgrade Organization, used to be in 33, Kralj Vladimir Street in Vozdovac. After the Second World War it was a residence for students with tuberculosis and later for convalescing and disabled students. The reasons behind the need to segregate these students can be found in the way of thinking of the day. However, by the first decade of the 21st century the situation had changed and the moment had come to remove the screen. What life behind the scenes looked like and what would happen after the changes were instituted can humorously be described through four short stories depicting the life of the students in the residence hall.

## AND WHAT ARE YOU STUDYING, MADAM?

Once it has been ascertained that the building is a students' hall of residence, we begin to ask ourselves whether in its nature it is closer to students or the fact that it's a residence. The student part of the phrase should bring to mind young, active people who live here during their studies; a life full of energy and the insecure pleasure that young people feel when they leave their families and when from carefree teenagers they are transformed into adults on their very first day without enough money for three meals, when they realize that there should be some order in life. In this place, such youthful energy was rarely felt; pleasure, even more seldom. For this reason it was more a residence than something belonging to students.

The first requirement for living in any students' hall, except this one, was academic. Here, the rules and conditions were completely different. The first and seemingly only prerequisite was a disability. Any other conditions, such as a good academic record, or any sort of academic record, or the mere desire to be a student, were welcome and appreciated. The students who met such requirements were occasionally even given the opportunity to choose their own personal assistant. Those who are familiar with the system of social support which provides a personal assistant might wonder: "Isn't it logical that a disabled person chooses his or her own personal assistant?" The question is certainly a valid one as the way the system primarily functions is that the person, in this case the student, i.e. a resident, decides who they want to assist them in their everyday activities. However, the system for choosing a personal assistant in the case of this hall of residence has remained unknown to this day. It was known to happen that a student was given a personal assistant, that his academic performance did not meet standards and that this situation was repeated for several years. This was followed by a kind of warning before expulsion and the assistant would be removed,

as it would be unfair that the student occupy two places without producing academic results. The student would then accept a "deal", as, after all, he has been given a roof over his head, but it would remain unclear how exactly he would function without assistance (or was it more a case of him not needing assistance in the first place?) Namely, there were a number of students who really did need assistance due to the inability to perform everyday activities alone. Often they would choose fellow non-disabled students who didn't have adequate accommodation to be their assistants. The disabled students would offer them accommodation in return for assistance, to the pleasure of both parties. These were shining examples that, unfortunately, got rarer and rarer as the years passed. Most of the time the case was that students would choose members of their families as assistants: sisters, brothers, sisters-in-law, fathers, mothers, and, in one case, even a grandmother with a wish to live a student's life. This created much confusion with the students who didn't live in the halls and who came to eat in the canteen.

A story is told of one of these students asking the grandmother on seeing her in the canteen: "And what do you study, madam?" For these reasons this place was more a residence than a students' hall.

## ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOOS NEST

It would be a great failure not to mention the events that were rare in the halls but which took place to the pleasure of all, or to be more precise, almost all. These were the parties that really made the place look more like students' halls. The members of the residence's Students' Association tried to comprehend the reason for the roles they had been given in the body to which they had been appointed by the residents themselves. Some of the terms in office in the Association were bloody good, albeit short. Nevertheless, the parties were an opportunity to forget all the disagreements between the residents, even though, the disagreements with the members of staff were not forgotten, and the parties were sometimes an occasion for imaginations to run amok.

Some of the staff lived with their families in one section of the building and before every such party they would voice their displeasure at the fact that there would be loud music. On these occasions they would grumble that they had to live in a residence such as this one, and not in another one, where these kinds of events were a weekly occurrence. The parties took place several times a year and there were also other celebrations, such as the saint day of the residence, Saint Sava, and "Mika's Days", as well as other events. These were completely authentic happenings, enriched by the sight, otherwise rare, of everybody dancing according to their abilities. It was at such moments that the building actually gave the impression of being a place where young people lived. The sight was marred by the presence of the occasional mother, but nothing is perfect. A successful party was one to which students who didn't live in the halls and who didn't have a disability came.

## THE GREAT MIGRATION

In the past ten years, mostly under the influence of the Association of Students with Disabilities, the difficulties which students with disabilities face have become more visible and the need for change more marked. Numerous initiatives to improve the conditions of study for these students and to enable them to lead lives similar to their non-disabled peers have been made. One of the priorities has been the availability of students' residences and inclusive accommodation. The decision makers have always found these issues unnecessary and frequently, almost reproachingly, say that the current situation favours students with disabilities. A common occurrence in this country is that decisions and actions are altered when we are forced to, often, because of international regulations and legal harmonization. Changing attitudes is a little more difficult but, luckily, there are legal provisions that see to it that the will of the individual or a group is not an instrument by which the importance of a social movement is measured.

In September 2011 the relocation of students with disabilities to other halls of residence appeared on the agenda of the Ministry of Education and Science. When the news was announced at first it seemed that the authorities had initiated a reform which would mean greater inclusion of students with disabilities. However, soon after the official proclamation it became clear that the process would not be performed in a suitable way, to say the least. Indeed, the main motive behind the relocation of the students was a renovation of the building. The speedy "migration" was explained to be a result of the determination of the authorities to get disabled students more involved in the academic community by moving them to other halls of residence. Also mentioned were the need to renovate the entire building and the funds that had been approved to this end. One part of the building was entered into and the moving of furniture had begun without some of the students there even being aware that such a move was to take place. All this was happening right in the middle of the exam period.

The relocation was performed in seven days, without any real strategy and without much consideration of disabilities even though it is well known that not one of the alternative halls of residence have disability access. What added to the confusion was the absence of an official statement regarding the process of application for a place in the residences, which meant that students with disabilities were suddenly from affirmative action, occasionally bordering on charity, placed in a situation where they had to apply under the same conditions as other students. Lest there be any confusion, this is what we are aiming for, but only when students with disabilities receive equal opportunities to accomplish satisfactory academic results. In the meantime, placing a group of students in a situation of equality when equal ability is lacking actually represents concealed discrimination. The situation has not yet been resolved, but one thing is for certain: nothing is as it was, and neither should it be.

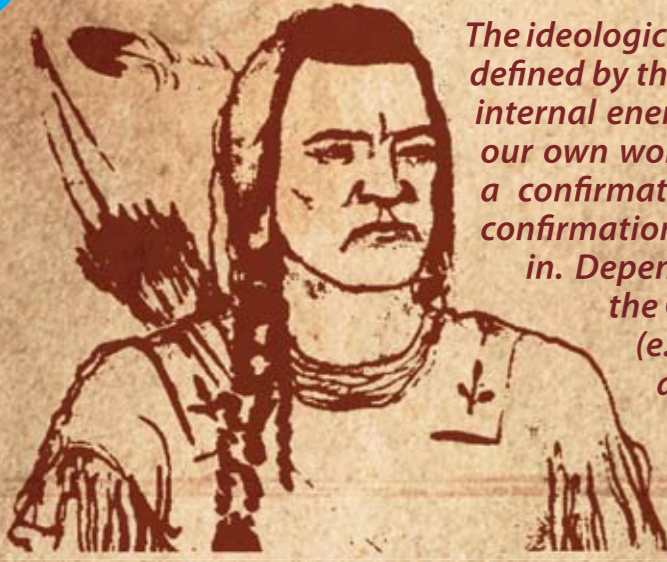
Ljupka Mihajlovska

## DUSTBINS

"Stop over there, to the left, right next to the dustbin." A sentence like this was spoken on many occasions, but always with a cheeky grin and with thoughts of the symbolism of the utterance, and ultimately, whether there was any symbolism at all. Did the dustbins really have to be right next to the residence; next to the halls where disabled students lived, disposed of and hidden from the rest of the academic world, just like the rubbish, carried to the dustbins with two fingers, with face turned away so as to avoid the strong smell? Apart from their primary purpose, the dustbins were useful for the students returning by taxi after a night out as a reference point to be given to the driver (Taxis were used at night because the modified transportation was not available at those hours. And why should it have been as students with disabilities shouldn't be going out at night in the first place.)

The residence was not a large building, but was the biggest in the narrow street, and at first glance one knew that its purpose was communal living. One thing, however, which could not be immediately worked out was something that most passers-by would probably ask themselves: "What is the true purpose of this building?"

# NATIVE AMERICAN INDIANS AS THE OTHERS IN WESTERNS

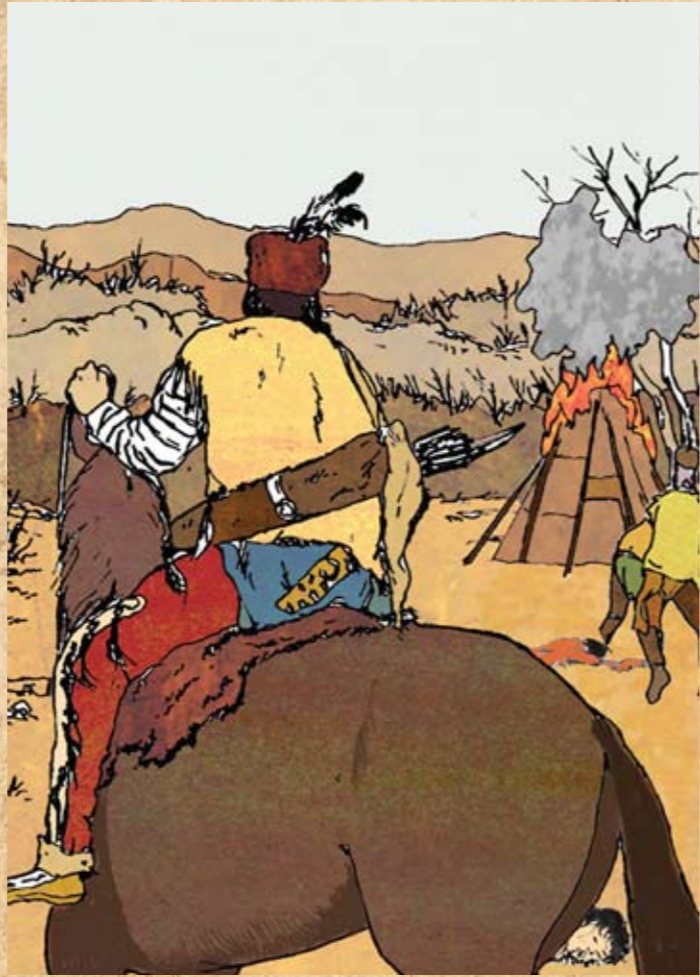


*The ideological basis of popular genres is, to a significant extent, defined by the concept of conflict with the Other, an external or internal enemy-stranger that exists in complete opposition to our own world. Physical and ethical victory over it represents a confirmation of our own righteousness and uniqueness: confirmation of us as humans, but also as the society we live in. Depending on the thematic requirements of the genre, the Other may receive a historical and cultural identity (e.g., westerns and war genre), or may become a direct embodiment of evil (e.g., horror)-- but because of its essential opposition to our world, confrontation with the Other transforms this conflict into a class of mythical and metaphysical battle between good and evil.*

Thus Native American Indians, cast as Other in the genre of westerns, express their complete opposition to our world, the world of the civilized American, by assuming the mantle of a "savage". The full extent of the metaphysical dimension of the historical conflict with these peoples is achieved by presenting it more generically as a conflict between savage and civilization. However, as is the case in other genres, the Other does not universally have to be demonized. Being different and opposite from us, the Other can assume a sheen of romantic or exotic characteristics, and may even triumph in the conflict as the superior side. In genre films, as pointed out by Bart with respect to cultural mythology in general, the Other becomes monstrous as in horror films, or exotic as in thrillers. In westerns, the Indians may either be demonized as "evil savages", or romanticized as "noble savages", and are consequently seldom treated as complete characters and bearers of their own identity<sup>1</sup>.

The case of the depiction of Indians in westerns clearly demonstrates that demonization and romanticization can be applied to one and the same Other, depending on which connotations are attributed to the notion of the "savage". The role given to the Indians was thus not founded on their actual characteristics. On the contrary, during their one hundred year long history, westerns have created two mutually completely opposing views

of Native Americans. Although the common feature was confrontation with white civilization, in one case this manifested them as "evil savages", and in the other as "noble savages".



## THE MEANING OF THE INDIAN-AMERICAN CONFLICT IN WESTERNS

Defined as evil or noble savages, Indians were part of the most important variation on the theme of binary opposition of wilderness vs. civilization which, as it was first defined by Jim Kitses<sup>2</sup>, provides the foundation for all western narratives. The history of the Wild West is a history of a single continuous movement, the conquest of the Wild Frontier-- when this Frontier was gone, the era of the Wild West was over. Conflicts between the Americans and the Native American Indians represent the peak in the arc of this epic story of conquest of the Frontier. Since their place (e.g., the wild or "wilderness") was already determined within this binary opposition, the actualization of representing the Native Americans depended on the role assigned to the white protagonists who, as the representatives of the modern Western civilization, were the main focus of identification for the audience. This context makes apparent the large share of the ideological in the representation of the Native American Indians.

The conflict between Americans and Indians in westerns is relevant not only for the short historical period under consideration, but also because it carries a broader historical significance as a conflict between civilization and savagery. Regardless of which of the two different ways this conflict could be realized, it was always through this lens. Due to its significance in the national history, the American-Indian war therefore becomes the most distinctive version of the conflict upon whose ideological symbols it is built.

## MOTIF OF CONFLICT BETWEEN SAVAGE AND CIVILIZATION CARRIED FORWARD FROM THE PAST

Different approaches to the ideology of the western are based on its definition as a popular (film) genre, where genre has been one of the most obvious ways of expressing ideology in contemporary popular culture. The themes of westerns, as well as that of other genres (regardless of their historical, geographical or other de-



terminations) are therefore interpreted with respect to their contemporary ideological workings, as relevant to contemporary circumstances. On the other hand, analyses of westerns seldom omit highlighting the connection between their representations and those of predecessors in colonial literature and painting, as well as in other forms of media typical for those times (e.g., exhibitions, travelling theater). In addition, many western films were adaptations of the classics of colonial and nineteenth century literature, or liberally borrowed material from these to create new stories. In this way, the importance of the broader historical-cultural context to which the western genre belongs cannot be missed. The ideology of the western thus shows its dual nature: on one hand, it maintains attitudes of the colonial West to the Other that are several centuries old (e.g., imperialism, racism, romanticism, exoticism), while on the other hand, it is defined by its manifestation as a contemporary popular genre.

<sup>1</sup> Barry Keith Grant. 2007. Film Genre: From Iconography to Ideology, Wallflower Press, London, United Kingdom, Short Cuts vol. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Jim Kitses. 2004. Horizons West: Directing the Western from John Ford to Clint Eastwood. British Film Institute, United Kingdom.



This duality of westerns is also present in the motif of the conflict between civilization and the savage: the tradition of representing good and evil savages as enemies of civilization is as old as the history of the colonial America itself. By continuing forward this tradition into the present, westerns at once make it current, putting this conflict easily within the context of contemporary sociopolitical events. However, this process is not specific to the western, since earlier periods have also done the same: each era of the conquest of America has had its version of this conflict, in accordance with its own social and ideological conditions.

### UNIVERSALS IN THE INDIAN-AMERICAN CONFLICT

On the other hand, the notions of civilization and savage contain something universal enabling us to understand this tradition. Such universalism derives from civilization being the inherited byproduct of sociocultural development, such that the representation of civilization depends on the society making the definition: Western, Christian (Catholic or Protestant), or modern societies in various historical phases.



Here, a continuity is therefore made apparent, despite some sharp differences that must have appeared occasionally between, for example, Puritan and American views. There is something universal in the notion of "savage" and its perception as the complete opposite to civilization in the general sense, as represented by the society in question. However, "savage" does not simply denote any example of the Other, for example peoples of the Far or the Middle East, whose civilizations could in some ways be considered potentially competitive. Granted, societies such as these were usually disqualified due to the lack of "true" civilized norms, above all Christianity, and differences in customs, so that they too were often considered more or less barbarian. However they still could not have been truly "savage" in the sense of the euro-American conceptualization of Native American societies of the wilderness. This means that they could not have represented such an absolute opposite



to the universal notion of civilization such that their societies and peoples would be considered so primitive and primordial as to be still undivided from nature.

Thus westerns also continued this tradition: presenting a clash between the civilization and savages, not only as what was literally presented (i.e., a conflict between Indians and Americans from the second half of the nineteenth century), but as in previous eras, understood as being universal. The ideological in westerns therefore amounts to creating a vision of the American society of the nineteenth century in the Wild West (e.g., cowboys, cavalry, and residents of frontier towns) as representatives of the civilized universal, and native American tribes of this region as its opposition, i.e. the savage man of the wild.

A complete ideological function of this conflict is only realized through its relation to the mythological speech by which society addresses its members, as Will Wright<sup>3</sup> would put it. This means that historical conflict, metaphorically represented as the conflict between civilized and savage, is perceived as the confirmation of the universal's survival in the twentieth century as well: identification of contemporary audiences with Americans

of the nineteenth century was much more than a relationship of descendants with their ancestors. Thanks to their currency, westerns practically equalize these temporally distant generations by determining common national and cultural identifiers that serve as characteristics with which to represent civilization. Portrayals of this conflict in some of the most famous cases – such as films of the Cavalry Trilogy by John Ford, or the revisionist westerns *Little Big Man* (1970) and *The Blue Soldier* (1970) – reached their broadest possible currency for this genre whose themes are located in the past: via indirect reference to current wars and political events.

*written and illustrated by Dušan Jevtović*



<sup>3</sup> Will Wright. 1977. *Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western*. University of California Press, USA.

# SNIFF

## THE IRRESISTIBLE

### CHARM, MAGIC AND RFID TECHNOLOGY

*Sniff, the cutest toy dog is a unique bundle of charm, intuition, interaction, retro-chic and modern technology. One of the most basic physiological activities of a dog, incessant sniffing, is turned into magic which connects its owner (a visually impaired child) with other children, space and the surrounding world.*

### SNIFF AND RFID-SNOOT/STOMACH/TECHNOLOGY

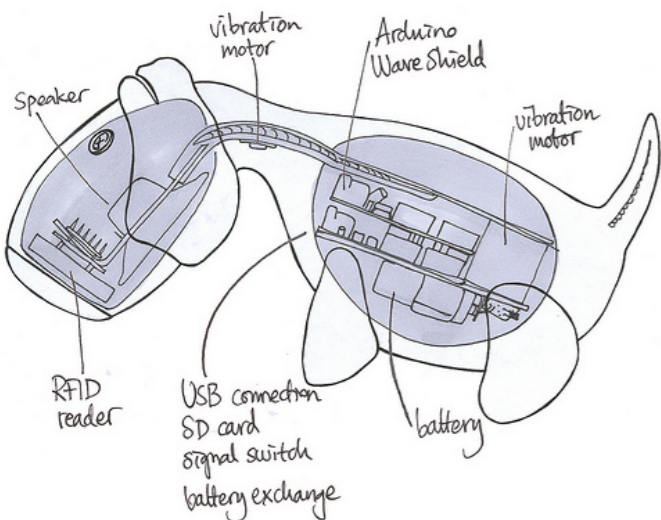
The anatomical analysis of this rotund puppy shows that under a layer of soft material there is an unexpected mechanism. In his stomach, Sniff hides a programmed microprocessor, while his long snout holds a RFID reader! Sniff's microprocessor is programmed to react to outside stimuli, hidden in green pebbles and stickers. The program contains all his reactions and behaviours and is Sniff's personal program which defines his unique personality.

When Sniff starts a new day, in the company of his owner (usually a human pup, aged between 4 and 8 years), he sniffs about and finds his microchips in the stickers and pebbles. His nose (a RFID reader) emits a non-stop signal which rouses the sleeping chips, each one containing

a personal code. The nose sniffs, smells, identifies and stirs the chip. Sniff then responds to the green pebbles and emotion sticker. He produces a sound instantly, instinctively, encouragingly and playfully, while the vibrations coming from somewhere deep inside him give a more real, personal touch and create a bond. The vibrations are produced by a small motor with an eccentric weight (a weight placed eccentrically to the motor axis).

### HE'S GOT THE LOOK

As the key feature of true magic is the element of surprise, Sniff's appearance is one of low-tech charm with a touch of hand-made. Sniff's retro-romantic chic has been inspired by Swedish 1970s design and is based on tactile and aesthetic values. His form is clearly defined and tangible, his texture is soft and certain parts of his body, like the neck, simply call the owner to hold the toy and move into action.



### SNIFF AND SARAH

Sniff the dog, amongst designers, scientist, teachers and the curious also known as Project Sniff, was invented by the young Norwegian designer Sarah Johansson. Her aim was to add something special and magical to situations requiring social interaction and physical activity of visually impaired children. Sniff was created to provide company in kindergarten, at home, while alone or with other children and other Sniffs. He reacts with vibrations and sound to marked objects that his nose meets. In order to make interaction and socializing with sighted children equal and complete, Sniff ignores visual input and explores the world of sound and touch. The author of Project Sniff was awarded in 2008 the prize for "Design for all" by the Norwegian Design Council. Sarah continues to develop the project and in a book on Sniff's adventures, through a series of drawings and photographs, she tells the story of a day in the life of the dog (Sniff, Adventures of an Interactive Toy Dog).



### SNIFF AND THE SECRET OF THE GREEN PEBBLES

The green pebbles produce a sound as soon as Sniff's muzzle comes close, then they lightly glide into the hand of his owner. Sniff, sniff, sniff, the dog moves along a path of green pebbles. The space is defined by sniffing the green auditive pathways and movement becomes intuitive and spontaneous. The child is given the opportunity to explore the relationship of its body to the surrounding space. The different sounds that the pebbles produce make it possible to create a new kind of memory game by placing the stones in pairs.



### SNIFF AT HOME

Like every other self-respecting dog, Sniff makes sure to mark his territory, making it easy for all living with him to manage the living space. The stickers that represent emotions and behaviours are placed around Sniff's home and become meaningful when his snout comes close. In a swift, spatial improvisation the order of Sniff's reactions was this: happy - fridge, exalted - bathroom, frightened - oven and dark closet, sneeze - corner.



### SNIFF READING A BOOK

During reading time, Sniff settles snugly in his owners lap but keeps his nose glued to the book. They both listen carefully, the dog sniffs and makes a sound when a sticker comes up. That's how they both know when a dangerous part in the story has come and that it's best to hide under the bed. The emotion stickers sometimes distract from the book but encourage a new story about emotions and their meanings. According to one theory, emotions are transmitted and "learned" through eye-contact. The absence of this visual dimension complicates the subject of emotions. That is why visually impaired children struggle to comprehend and define their emotions, so questions such as, "Now I'm happy. What does that look like?" are common.



### SNIFF AT PLAY

Sniff is always having fun. He plays with other Sniffs, his owner, children with and without disabilities, classmates, friends and acquaintances from the park. He initiates various types of games and adventures, diligently mapping and exploring inclusive sniffy bonds and friendships between children.

Maja Ilić



# THE VENUS OF TRAFALGAR SQUARE

*One rainy September afternoon in 2005 a large group of people assembled around the fourth plinth in London's Trafalgar Square, in anticipation of the unveiling of the sculpture Alison Lapper Pregnant, the work of British artist, Marc Quinn. The purple cloth covering the statue provided a pleasant contrast against the bleak sky, while the high mount on which it stood gave a sense of monumentality.*



After the decision of a commission that the fourth plinth officially be used to display artworks, the first statue to receive this honour was the sculpture Alison Lapper Pregnant. Its eighteen-month life on Trafalgar Square began to the words of the mayor of London, Ken Livingstone: "Marc Quinn has created an artwork that is a potent symbol". He further added that it spoke of courage, beauty and defiance and that Alison Lapper was a modern heroine. The sculpture Alison Lapper Pregnant caused an intense reaction, as it belongs to the category of public works of art, among which depictions of people with disabilities are not common. Artists and politicians argued whether the sculpture was representative of modern aesthetics or of the struggle, courage and perseverance of people with disabilities, or whether it was a symbol of motherhood and contemporary femininity. Besides its evident artistic value, the sculpture was applauded for its courage and audacity, as it places femininity, motherhood and disability in the fore. Others denounced it as a manifestation of political correctness which limits the possibility of discussion due to the fact that the model, Alison Lapper, is handicapped. What was it that thrust Alison Lapper into the limelight?

The monumental marble statue (3.5 metres high and weighing 13 tonnes) depicts Alison Lapper, the artist born without hands and very short legs, eight months pregnant and nude. The statue was carved from a single piece of white marble in the small Italian town of Pietrasanta and boldly named Alison Lapper Pregnant.

Quinn invites the beholder to look at Alison Lapper, so physically different, defiantly pregnant. He tries to tell us that physically different people are hidden from the eyes of the public and the media, and that there are no positive images of the disabled in public art. "For me, Alison Lapper Pregnant is a monument to the future possibilities of the human race as well as the resilience of the human spirit." The artist stresses that his work could represent a contemporary tribute to female heroism. "I regard it as a modern tribute to femininity, disability and motherhood. It is so rare to see disability in everyday life – let alone naked, pregnant and proud," said Alison Lapper.

Alison Lapper's posture resembles that of Venus de Milo, one of the most famous ancient sculptures, made between 130 and 100 BC. Marc Quinn points out that this similarity is intentional. Venus to the Romans, or Aphrodite to the Greeks, was the goddess of love, beauty, pleasure and fertility. In this way, Alison Lapper becomes the paradigm of modern beauty. Her pregnancy speaks of the emancipation of women with disabilities in the twenty-first century. Marc Quinn placed this reminder of ancient art in the traditional setting of London's city centre. Alison Lapper Pregnant is placed in the very centre of activity, without the possibility of escaping from the gaze of the passers-by. By the same token, the viewer has no option but to look at her and analyse her. In this way, she forces him to overcome his fear of the unknown and the discomfort felt when confronted with diversity; he becomes free to enter the debate about the real issues concerning equality of the disabled. Alison Lapper is someone who has overcome her disability, while Marc Quinn has created an art classic, displaying it to the wide public. Critics mainly talk of the bravery of Alison Lapper as the most salient feature of the sculpture. They also emphasise the wisdom of Quinn's message. The life of Alison Lapper is also brought into the discussion concerning the making of the sculpture. Such an approach to a work of art contributes to the opinion that Marc Quinn has created a deliberately conceptualized work which boldly enters the field of socially engaged art. Thus, the sculpture of Alison Lapper Pregnant becomes representative of the aesthetics of modern art, a symbol of struggle, courage and the resilience

of the disabled, as well as a representation of motherhood and modern femininity. Alison Lapper becomes the heroine of the modern world and Marc Quinn makes this plain in the most convincing of ways: through a monumental sculpture right in the centre of London.

The biography of Alison Lapper adds to the conclusion that she was a fitting model for Quinn's sculpture. She is an independent artist, a member of the Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists, and a single mother. She spent the first 19 years of her life in institutions for children with disabilities where her mother placed her, on recommendation from specialists. Alison experienced a complete transformation with art. She studied at the Faculty of Art and Architecture in Brighton and her work has been exhibited on numerous occasions. She produces paintings and photographs. In her words, her work "questions the notion of physical normality and beauty, in a society that considers me to be deformed because I was born without arms." Her life attracts public attention, especially since the birth of her son Parys and the unveiling of the sculpture in Trafalgar Square. Alison Lapper lectures and takes part in numerous television programmes, among others the documentary *Alison's Baby* and the BBC series *Child of Our Time*. She tries to focus the attention of the media on the continuing struggle for equality of the disabled. She has also written an autobiography, *My Life in My Hands*. In 2003 she was awarded the prize *Woman of The Year* in Spain and in Britain she received a MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for her contributions to art.



## THE FOURTH PLINTH

The Fourth Plinth in London's Trafalgar Square, designed by Sir Charles Barry in 1841, was originally intended to hold an equestrian statue, never finished, due to a lack of funds. There are four plinths placed around the central column, carrying the statue of Admiral Horatio Nelson, the British national hero who died in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The plinths on the southern side of the square hold statues of Henry Havelock and Charles James Napier, while the two northern plinths were designed to have equestrian sculptures. One of them indeed holds the sculpture of George IV, while the other was left bare.

The fourth plinth had been empty for over 150 years when the art commission of the Royal Society of Arts recommended it be used for the temporary display of artworks. The displays of contemporary sculptors Marc Wallinger, Bill Woodrow and Rachel Whiteread were a great success and the office of Mayor Ken Livingstone proposed that the Fourth Plinth be converted to a permanent exhibition area. To date it has displayed Alison Lapper Pregnant, by Marc Quinn (2005), Model for a Hotel, by Thomas Schutte (2007), One and Other, by Anthony Gormley (2009), and Nelson's Boat in a Bottle, by Yinka Shonibare (2010).

## MARC QUINN

British artist Marc Quinn is known to the public for his controversial works, Alison Lapper Pregnant, Self (a self-portrait made from his frozen blood) and Garden. He is a member of the group YBA (Young British Artists). In his work he uses unusual materials, such as his blood, ice and faeces. The centre of Quinn's art is man. His works encourage debate as they mostly deal with the mutations experienced by the human body and the duality of life: the physical and the spiritual, the superficial and the profound, the mental and the sexual. Quinn experiments with these paradoxes and combining various materials with glass, marble and iron he creates conceptual works, whose form is predominantly figurative. His interest in science is demonstrated in his genomic portrait of John I. Sulston, who in 2002 was awarded the Nobel Prize for sequencing the human genome. The artist placed Sulston's DNA in preserved bacteria, which he combined with a photograph of the scientist, thus creating a genomic portrait. The debates sparked by his sculpture Alison Lapper Pregnant inspired him to write a book on the genesis of this work, The Fourth Plinth.

Marija Drljević

# A POETIC - ACROBATIC MOSAIC

Fifi on a Shoestring, Ed and his Veiled Flights, Doesn't Look Like..., muses and accomplices in the performance for "dreamers and circus Don Quixotes" invite us to transcend limitations, go beyond the established route and discover how life can be danced, spoken and played with. Eighteen artists, with and without disabilities took part in the intriguing performance *Complicités*, produced by l'Espace Catastrophe/Creahm from Brussels, performed in the Yugoslav Dramatic Theatre during the 43rd BEMUS Festival.

The performance is flavoured with circus acts, short narrations, which often become (un)intentional mistakes that give freshness to the performance. A series of details and images create a theatrical piece with the structure of a mosaic, making it difficult to establish where a particular sequence begins and where it ends, as everything on stage mixes and melds. The beginning is marked by rich sound effects: first, individual tones call the attention of the spectator, followed by accompanying sounds that create a melody. Occasionally, one can make out the musical instruments: mandolins, trumpets and tambourines. Individual scenes stand out from the whole and follow one another seamlessly, so as not to disturb the sequence. The artists move in the centre of the stage and then retreat to the background, freeing the space for the others. This creates an unbroken dance of ideas and words, laughter and movement.

The performance is opened by Three Men in Tuxedos, who periodically appear on stage as narrators and entertainers. One of them tells an interesting tale in French and the other translates it into English. Their movements are relaxed and their speech is rich with laughter. The theatre magic begins to work and the desire to establish who of the performers has a disability quickly disappears. The performance starts to become an authentic artistic act and the elements of the mosaic begin to take shape.

The Door. Two men are playing table tennis. The door serves as a screen behind which a person sees the balls miraculously leaping into the air. There is a prevailing vagueness. An attempt is made to discover what sort of magic is taking place behind the door. The door opens and closes. The balls are used as a provocation. A forceful stroke of the bat and a shower of white balls fall onto the stage, bringing to mind the idea of the irrepressible.

The Girl with the Ball. During the greater part of the performance, the girl just sits on the ball. Later on she dances for Her, Him and the Ball, making amusing movements, as if playing. She taunts and outwits through movement. The focus of all on stage is to be the first to sit on the ball. The whole image is relaxing and entertaining, as all the movements with the ball remind the audience of the unconscious, engrossed play of children.

The Man on the Trapeze. His scenes are marked by litheness and an unbearable lightness of movement. He descends and performs tumbles with the help of a rope and then rises again to perform a complicated incision in the air. All that he does seems supremely easy and his body appears to be in perfect harmony with the rope. The movements intertwine, follow one another, and merge. The spontaneous bodily gestures make it clear how movement can become speech and how movement becomes synonymous with dance.

The sound of the gong, suspended high up to the left of the stage, structures the performance. The scenes which are in constant succession and which emerge from the darkened background, are linked to one another by the presence of a girl on roller-skates who occasionally whizzes past between two scenes. The light changes and the spotlights merge with the sounds to become a kind of Morse code, unfamiliar to the audience. In the last scene, the grand finale, all the performers come onto the stage, several dancers swing on ropes and the atmosphere is one of pulsating movement. This is followed by darkness. The final image is one of two lovers kissing in the left corner, under a red light. The strength and persistence of life are affirmed.

In collaboration with playwright and psychologist, Marko Pejovic, the author of several inclusive dance performances, we can discover the meaning of the word "inclusive" in the context of the theatre. An inclusive theatre performance is created through cooperation, dedication and learning during the process. All the people

involved go through auditions which include different elements (e.g. checking how movement is reproduced). All the performers move according to their abilities. The principles guiding the production of such a performance are that no one is treated differently, whether they are disabled or not. With the help of a choreographer, the performances are rehearsed for months. The "overcoming of disabilities" provides an interesting example of how an obstacle is transformed into an incentive and opens up new ways of communication between the performers: some of them learn sign language; sometimes there is no sound so as to introduce the hearing performers to the world of silence, where there are no auditive cues; or, performers are blindfold so as to begin to understand what it means to dance in the dark. Often, accidental slips become perfect scenes, through improvisation. The role of inclusive performances is the dissolution of the differences between the disabled and the non-disabled. Art gets a completely new facet that is clear to everyone. "It is interesting to be able to create a new language, a dance language, neither sign nor verbal; an entirely new creation, for which the dancers create their own choreographies, pieces with which they conquer, that is, create the new language. This language is able to communicate with the audience and has a completely new logic," Marko Pejovic says.

The theatre becomes more than just an open space. It becomes the transmitter of a far more powerful message than art itself. Disabilities stop being a difference, for art does not recognise this word. In a world where the division between the usual and the unusual is a habit, one such theatre performance brings a new experience of the universal connection between all people, where understanding is reached not through language, but through pure feeling. We can feel the pulsating of energy and we know that on that night we are not the only audience. Watching too is the entire universe, which treats differences as wealth in diversity.

Milanka Nikolić



Miroslav Dragojević

# From Stambol Gate in Belgrade to Belgrade Gate in Constantinople

part 1

piše: Marko Savić



# HEADBANGER'S CORNER

Some time after I got my job, I realized I do not have strength to spend my salary. No, it's not a matter of not having time, neither do I need to sleep more than during the studying days (quite opposite actually), it's just when I come home after work I have no strength left for anything more complicated than Civilization. Among other things this column and comic I'm working on have suffered because of that. Anyway, the very fact that my savings account was growing (and still does) from month to month despite my quite modest salary is testimony enough that I'm not having enough fun. Having that in mind, and lacking anything else that would attract enough of my attention, I've decided to fulfill a long-time dream.

Being a hajji in itself brings no tangible benefit, but it is the highest honor a lay person can hold in Orthodox Christian faith. Not being one to settle for average it had been my ambition even before I visited Hilandar (Hilandar) Monastery (in 1997). There was one other reason though. Too often in my life because of certain liberal and/or progressive attitudes (such as for instance that I'm translating this column myself) I was forced to defend my Serbian and Orthodox identity from idiots who believe that such is to be promoted by attacking Roma, Muslims, homosexuals or whichever discriminated group seems most vulnerable at the moment. I simply got tired of explaining of explaining to not only such people, but the rest of the population which constantly turns a blind eye and then laments over difficulties Serbian nation has found itself in, that such cowardice (as attacking those who are so few that are incapable even of defending themselves) brings in disrepute good name of Lazar Hrebeljanović, Miloš Obilić or Radomir Putnik, whose memory they allegedly cherish. It is much easier to simply say: kid, once you've reached Jerusalem maybe you will have the right to preach Orthodox Faith, but in the meantime, you shall address me as Hadži-Marko.

## Riga

Before going to the airport we dropped by Stambol Gate to take a couple of pictures. Even then the title of this article was lingering in my mind and I was positive that sooner or later I would write my thoughts down. I was hoping I'd end my journey like a football fan cloaked in Byzantine flag I'd buy in Great Bazaar in Istanbul. I figured that if in Belgrade merchants sell together pictures of Josip Broz and Draža Mihajlović, why wouldn't they in Istanbul sell together Byzantine and Turkish flags? By the whim of global capitalism it turned out to be way

cheaper to travel both from Belgrade to Tel Aviv and from Tel Aviv to Istanbul via Riga than directly, so we had an opportunity to see first-hand the relations between Russians and their former imperial possessions. First thing that caught my eye was that for a Euro one can get only 0.75 of local Ruble. (To this day I still haven't learned the name of Latvian currency.) Yes, that's right, their currency is actually stronger than Euro. I couldn't stop marveling all the way until cabbie told me that taxi from airport to center is worth 10 (without mentioning the name of the currency). Translated in Euros, it's 12-13€, which is a decent price for an EU capital. What was completely unacceptable for an EU capital was the sheer inaccessibility of the streets in city center for wheelchair users. I won't be exaggerating when I say that the streets in Riga are worse than in Belgrade, Jerusalem and Istanbul put together.

## Golgotha (they don't call it for nothing)

World wonder number one (one of many with which Israel abounds) is Ben Gurion airport. The building is designed in accordance with all standards of accessibility standards, whole in marble. Indeed it is fabulous



to behold, true wonder of modern engineering. If only they were selling tourist maps anywhere. We went three times from top to bottom till we found only one monograph that actually featured a map of Jerusalem! The monograph eventually proved both useful and interesting to read, which cannot be said about the map. For some reason streets in Jerusalem have more names than in Belgrade. And while in Belgrade all the names are listed in parallel (and in Latin script I might add), in Jerusalem they are mostly written in Israeli glyphs utterly unreadable for foreigners.

From the airport we caught a buss which was dirty even for standards of Belgrade public transportation from mid 90s. But it did have a ramp! It was a distinctively low-tech solution consisting of one rope (understandably dirty, since people walk over it), two wooden boards between which a metal one is sandwiched, connected to buss floor by simple door hinges and... one simply pulls the rope up, flips a ramp and BAM! (quite loudly) – an accessible bus. Both perfectly reliable and affordable solution. It turned out to be the pattern for all things in Jerusalem, combination of wonders beyond belief and incredible poverty especially keeping in mind how wealthy Israel is.

While we were walking from bus station in West Jerusalem towards the Old City, a local man asked us if we were from America. When we replied we were from Serbia he visibly lost interest and went on. Same thing happened couple of days later when a passing policeman shouted to me "Hey, Joe". Initially I could not understand what made people in Jerusalem think we're Americans, but then it hit me. Only Americans are both crazy and uninformed enough while being wealthy enough to actually attempt a journey to Jerusalem. Added to it my 'country' long hair and mustache, one could in no way mistake me for a Russian who, having failed every miraculous icon from Koenigsberg to Kamchatka, finally came to Jerusalem for a miraculous cure. For me on the other hand, the whole ordeal was a challenge in physical, mental, spiritual and finally financial sense and I always believed that God had better things to do than alleviate my private disability especially having in mind millions who suffer around the globe. I came to Jerusalem to find many things, but cure for my disability was never among them. I also must mention Boki, without whose assistance I'd never be able to even consider an undertaking like this. In his earlier years Boki was nicknamed Conan the Barbarian and amazing strength and skill he displayed on this journey perfectly illustrated why he earned such a nickname.

Arabs meanwhile were reluctant to guess our national-

ity, that is until they'd hear us speaking among us. Then they'd approach with most unbelievable line – "Ponyimaete po-Russkiy?" ("Do you speak Russian?") And while in Riga such line got real annoying real fast (because it meant that the speaker knew no English) in Jerusalem we grew quite fond because it meant that Arabs who speak Russian were so enterprising that in addition to Hebrew and English they also learned Russian! One thing we could in no way explain was that while similar to Russians, we were in no way as wealthy, (especially compared to Russians who are coming to Jerusalem) so they kept demanding Russian prices. None the less, they were quite useful as sources of information.

Also interesting reaction was that of Arab children. Some were looking at us with same mistrust as other tourist, which we fully expected, while to others we were a source of equal amazement as they were to us. First they'd ask us for names (presumably to guess based on that where we came from) and when Marko and Branko meant nothing to them they'd ask (in surprisingly good English I might add) where we're from. At first we'd use opportunity gained from proverbial bafflement from mentioning Serbia continue by, but on the last day curiosity got best of us. Boki then asked them for their names and then where they're from. They explained that they were from Palestinian territories and that they came to tour Jerusalem. And then it occurred to us that while Arab kids from Jerusalem were used to seeing tourists and foreigners in general, kids from Palestine territories were not and to them we were among most curious sights Jerusalem had to offer. Add to that that one of us is fat like a sultan, while the other is dying of thirst in the desert while pushing the wheeled chair and the picture is indeed something they'd remember.

Dying of thirst we may have, but we did make it along entire Way of the Suffering of our Lord. We did initially miss the first two stations on the Way of the Cross because Ecce Homo chapel was closed by the time we arrived, but we did return the next day. Also, on the place of the first station (Pilate's palace) is now a mosque, so there is no marking, but since we were returning to Ecce Homo the following day we did pray on that spot as well. From Lions' Gate to Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Boki counted over 300 stair steps and the wheelchair that I brought with me truly shined there. On this trip I had brought my kendo wheelchair which, according to manufacturer's specification, is designed for 12 years old, and whose wheels because of their small size were hitting cracks bigger wheelchairs wouldn't feel, such a small axle distance meant that it could fit on an individual step when going both upstairs and down. With



photo by Branko Borota

any bigger wheelchair this and thereby the whole trip wouldn't have been possible.

Golgotha did live up to its name, which in Serbian (means) came to mean literally an extremely painful ordeal.

The saddest part came just after Church of Holy Sepulchre. We didn't get more than just yards away from the center of Christian Faith and therefore center of Israeli tourism, when we could smell a sewer spill. We could not see where, but the spill was certainly there. What we could definitely see were some local kids playing amid that stench, clearly perfectly used to it. Israeli state claims that Jerusalem is its part as much as Tel Aviv is, does it not mean then that it is obliged to fix the damn sewer?! Or the fact that these children are Arabs makes them deserve no better?!

## Wonders of the World

Arabs and Israeli never heard of fiscal cash registers. Not only that, but prices are not listed and the salesman gives you a head-to-toe look and only then decides how much money he's gonna ask for. Of course, after that bargaining follows. What surprised me is that despite the fact that they bargain all the time, they're not too good at it. With exception of kid at the hostel (who skinned us twice!) we could easily lower the price for 40-60% and on a few occasions for whole 80%. But that's just the half of the work. After agreeing on the price you must explicitly agree with the salesman on the exchange rate (if you're paying in Dollars or Euros) and that he should give you change! This is because Arabs prefer to give change in merchandise rather than cash. To their credit, when one calculates prices afterwards, it turns out that you got even a better price than the one agreed, but what good is it when you get three times the number of wooden crosses than what you need (or asked)!

Of course, this leads to some quite unpleasant business practices, so by the first evening we decided to count the honest traders in Jerusalem. To our surprise the figure reached number five! The first one was the owner of an all-for-two-Shekel (40 Dinars, 0.4 Euro) store just northeast of the Old City. The store is not actually called "All for Two Shekel", but inside we could find everything we forgot to bring from Belgrade (razors, towels, mirrors and such). Second one was an Armenian just off Via Dolorosa. His store (amid strong competition) won the title of the most beautiful one in Jerusalem. He tried all Arab tricks to get us to buy his wares, but once that failed, he did something no Arab would do – he sat down with us and we had a long and pleasant conversation. His store was selling mainly silver portraits of the saints, and as such we knew right away we could afford noth-



ing, so we chose not to insult him by offering what little we had. Third was an Arab who owns a store right next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, who, after hearing that we're looking for Orthodox crosses and that we're from Serbia, told us that he's Greek and that his name is Theodore. I must admit that I couldn't believe this, so I asked him again a few minutes later. The problem of course was that the guy was an Arab, chubby, bald, with mustaches, exactly how we Serbs imagine "black Arabs" from legend. He wasn't nearly as talkative as we came to expect Greeks and Arab Christians to be and his prices were by no means cheap, but after we had paid, he stuffed so much of his wares as gifts in our bags that we could not include him on this list. Fourth was young man who worked in an Internet cafe near Jaffa Gate. He seemed most westernized of all folks we met during this journey and just rolled his eyes with understanding when to his question why I thought my USB wasn't working I replied "Because it was bought in Jerusalem". Fifth and the last one was the Arab who owns a store called "Sunce Vostoka" ("Sun of the East" in Russian, also easily understood in Serbian), written in Cyrillic of course. Owner was an Arab who was so enterprising that he hired two attractive Russian ladies to work in the shop. I demonstrated (all) my knowledge of Russian, but I did have to fall back to English on occasion. Fortunately both Russians (and the Arab, but who cares about him?) spoke English. If only I wasn't fasting...

It is a custom to fast during the hajj. Fasting is not only mean abstaining from eating meat, eggs and milk, but it also means refraining from sin in thought, word and deed as much as it's possible. It means no alcohol, avoiding all sorts of conflicts with fellow people and anger as much as possible and of course refraining from any unchaste thoughts regarding the opposite sex (or own gender depending on preference). Frankly, I found this last part most difficult.

It was very important to us to visit holy sites of Muslim and Jewish faiths as well as Christianity. Sadly it became clear fairly early that there was no chance of visiting any Muslim holy place in Jerusalem. Majority of the mosques we passed by were locked and in front of Al-Aqsa Israeli police informed us that it was off limits for the tourists. As far as Latins were concerned, their churches are by far best in terms of wheelchair accessibility. Other than that, they're better in building gardens than churches. For instance, we visited a church of theirs on Mount of Olives, which they call Church of All Nations because "people of all nations all the way to Mexico" built it, which I suppose means all the way from New York. Architecturally it is all right, with Greek columns and Byzantine domes, but iconography inside looks like (a kid was taking) snapshots from camera; compared to Orthodox imagery Latin paintings look to me devoid of all abstraction.

When we finally arrived to vicinity of Wailing Wall we



were keeping a very careful eye on all notices (in English, of course). We were unsure whether as Christians we were allowed to enter and pray at the Wall and we dared not ask because we were certain that quite a few of people there would not approve. There were no problems and God showed he was personally approving of my intentions so much so that He decided to provide me with small, but most pleasant favor. We knew that approach towards the Wall is segregated into male and female part, but where such segregation starts is not clearly marked, at least not in English. Since female part is closer to the entrance we took the first wheelchair access down assuming that segregation starts below. It simply did not occur to us that Israel is a state wealthy enough to build two ramps where one would do. A few seconds into the descent I realized this, but by the time I was already surrounded by beauty if Israel's piety that I simply could not help myself from enjoying as long as it lasted. First the ladies shouted something in Hebrew and I pretended (with premeditation, of course) that I had no idea what it meant. They guessed what was going on and then politely explained in English. I equally politely replied "I'm sorry" not letting them know I'm anything other than yet another dumb American. Then we turned around and (not too quickly) made our way back. Of course I was enjoying the closeup view of God's sculpturing ability all the way to the top as well. By this time there was no point in averting my eyes, anyway. The whole episode served to reinforce my religious beliefs and especially the part where it's quite possible to neglect earthly affairs by over-contemplating God and His greatness. Thus reinvigorated the rest of my fast (and it lasted for more than two weeks after that point) was in no way as difficult as those first few days.

One thing that people were asking me upon my return to Belgrade was why I was so interested in praying in Solomon's Temple or at least as close to it as possible. Part of the answer lies in my desire for religious acceptance and tolerance, but such goals can be pursued elsewhere. I have met a few lay Christians who know that Christ's arrest was triggered by his banishment of traders from the Temple, but only an odd priest remembers that He then led the "the blind, the weak and the lame" (in Serbian translation anyway) inside. Ancient terminology aside, since the Temple was a center of social life of the day, the gesture was a prototype of activism for inclusion. And since now, almost two thousand years later, we're finally seeing fruition of such efforts, as a person with a disability the whole story has deep spiritual and religious significance inseparable from Christian notion of universal love.

*(In next issue read about numerous Orthodox holy places in Jerusalem and beyond...)*

# USH SYSTEM

WRITTEN BY: MAJA & MARKO ART BY: IVAN

JERUSALEM... WESTERN WALL/WAILING WALL

UGH, THIS RAMP LEADS TO THE MEN'S AREA. GOTTA GO!

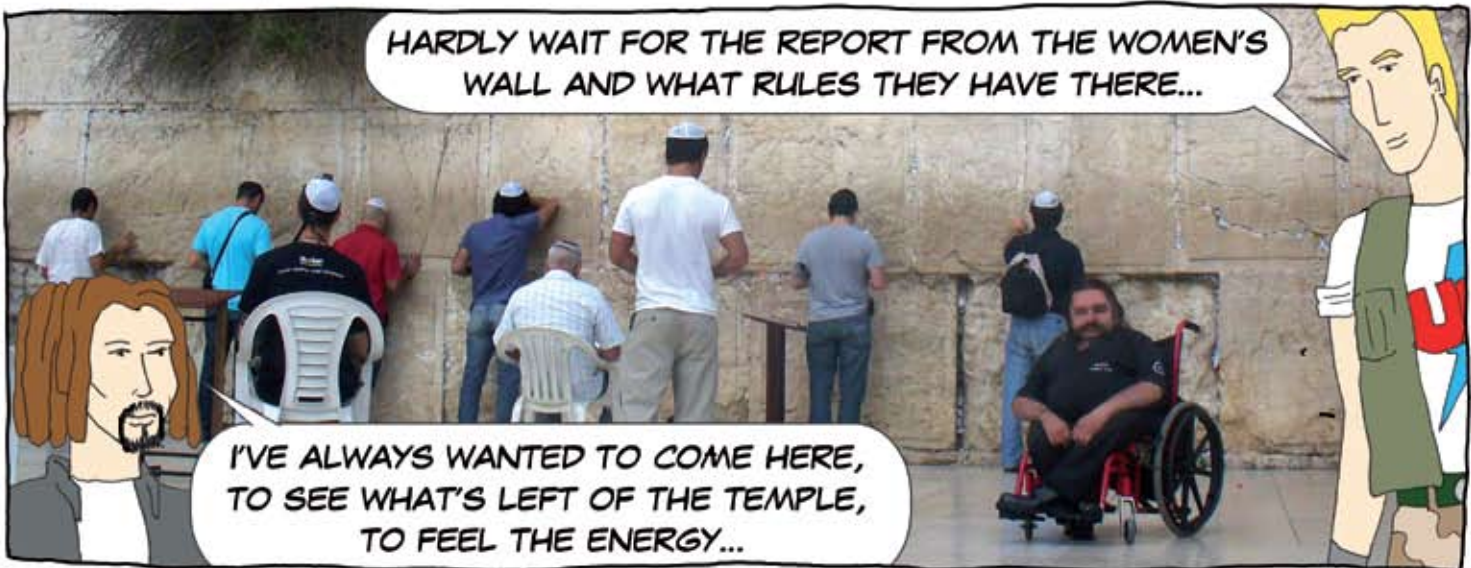
AH, YES, TRADITION DOESN'T ALLOW GENDER EQUALITY! 2 RAMPS FOR 2 PARTS OF ONE WALL!

WELL, HANA, THERE'S ALWAYS SOME TROUBLE WITH YOU!



HARDLY WAIT FOR THE REPORT FROM THE WOMEN'S WALL AND WHAT RULES THEY HAVE THERE...

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO COME HERE, TO SEE WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TEMPLE, TO FEEL THE ENERGY...



... JESUS DROVE OUT THE MONEY CHANGERS FROM THE TEMPLE. WHAT A REBEL!

A COMPLETE TURNAROUND, HERE HE BROUGHT INTO THE TEMPLE THE PARIAHs AND THE OUTCASTS, "THE CRIPPLED, THE BLIND AND THE LAME"!

WOW, HE LET THE DISABLED INTO THE TEMPLE, THE SOCIAL HUB!

WHAT A FIGHTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND INCLUSION! HOW ABOUT USING THAT IN OUR NEXT SONG?

