

M u h a m e d  
K a f e d ž i ć  
100 Views of Ukiyo-e  
Volume I: Masters





White Falcon  
after Koryusai  
2011



## Pop art & pop art

Ejiri in Suruga Province  
(A Sudden Gust of Wind)  
after Hokusai  
2009

The works of Muhamed Kafedžić, presented at the exhibition under the title 100 Views of Ukiyo-e, in its exquisite and absolutely unique way merge two units, which are physically, and, easily assumed, culturally separated and independent. By thoughtful exploration of the artistic flows in the second half of the 20th century, with particular attention to Pop art and fascination with popular Japanese culture and arts, the works created, with their uniqueness and originality, overcome the existing patterns of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian, as well as the regional, artistic production.

The very title of the exhibition refers to a complex Buddhist concept, ukiyo, which originally, in totally nihilistic way, defined the world as unpleasant and beyond repair place for living, while the change of the paradigm occurred in the beginning of the 17th century when the political and social stability of Edo period influenced a more positive attitude to life. Since the 17th century ukiyo-e term is literary translated as the images of the floating world, or more precisely, as an elaborate concept of the human need to enjoy in freedom and all pleasures offered by life. The visual representation of this concept is impersonated in wood carving, the medium whose ability to multiply allows for a broad use and distribution, while the esthetic criteria need to be observed within the framework of the popular art. Therefore, during the Edo period (until 1868) a particular kind of pop culture was developed, whose original optimistic idea, iconographic features and the reproduction techniques may be perceived in parallel to American Pop Art created several hundreds of years later.

In such a context the works of Muhamed Kafedžić are created, as a kind of balancing and intertwining of two pop art periods: American Pop Art (primarily Lichtenstein) takes on a technical aspect in which subjects meant for a broad usage (in this case



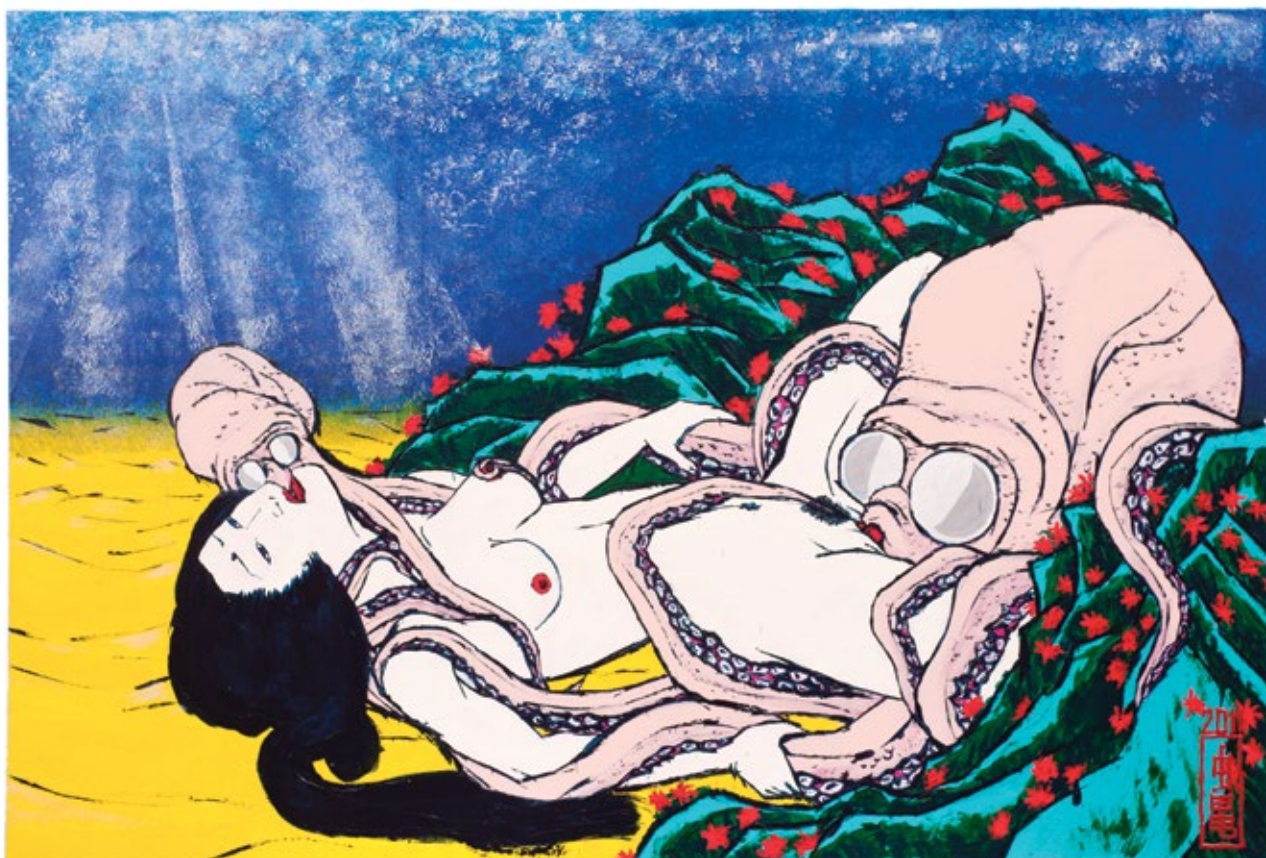
estampe, the items for a broad use) are painted on big canvases, so that the item is given a particular cult-like relevance, and from Japanese Pop Art and wood carving he takes on the content.

Scene at the Ichimuraza  
after Tanaka Masunobu  
2011

The technology of the work creation implies finding the sample, in most cases some of the renowned Ukiyo-e masters, like Hiroshige or Hokusai, transposing the images to big-size canvases and using acrylic colors. At first sight this process seems to be too simplistic, but "in the background" implies a serious concept or phenomenon which occupies the whole modern and contemporary arts, as well as the history of arts, and which is- the relationship between the original and the copy. By the emersion and evolution of the reproductive media the ontological status of artistic work has been changed and its nature has been redefined, while the process of inquiry affects the formation of various tendencies in arts and fragmentation of superior esthetics into micro esthetics. Within the Pop Art esthetics in Japan as well as in the USA, the status of original and reproduction is not specifically separated, which basically means that every change on the matrix or sample creates the original in itself. Therefore, the reproduced work is no longer appraised by the historic criteria, but it is treated as the goods, the product made for the market, in which case the original loses its significance.

With this in mind, the works of Muhamed Kafedžić represent the original creations, since the reproduction taken as the postulate is the original by itself, and the usage of different media, in this particular case painting, completes the process of reproduction, even for the moment.

The images fulfilling these big canvases also represent a peculiar reception of the popular Japanese culture and arts. Ukiyo-e iconography encompasses numerous representations made for everyone in all social classes, so that everyday themes are emphasized in a comprehensive and simple way, and the joy



Ama and Octopus  
after Hokusai  
2011

of living is glorified. On the other hand, if the representations are not directly related to popular themes, like the ones of courtesans, the scenes from kabuki theatre, landscapes, or the samurai fights, then they are supported by textual sources related to mythology and legends, and often times with didactic role.

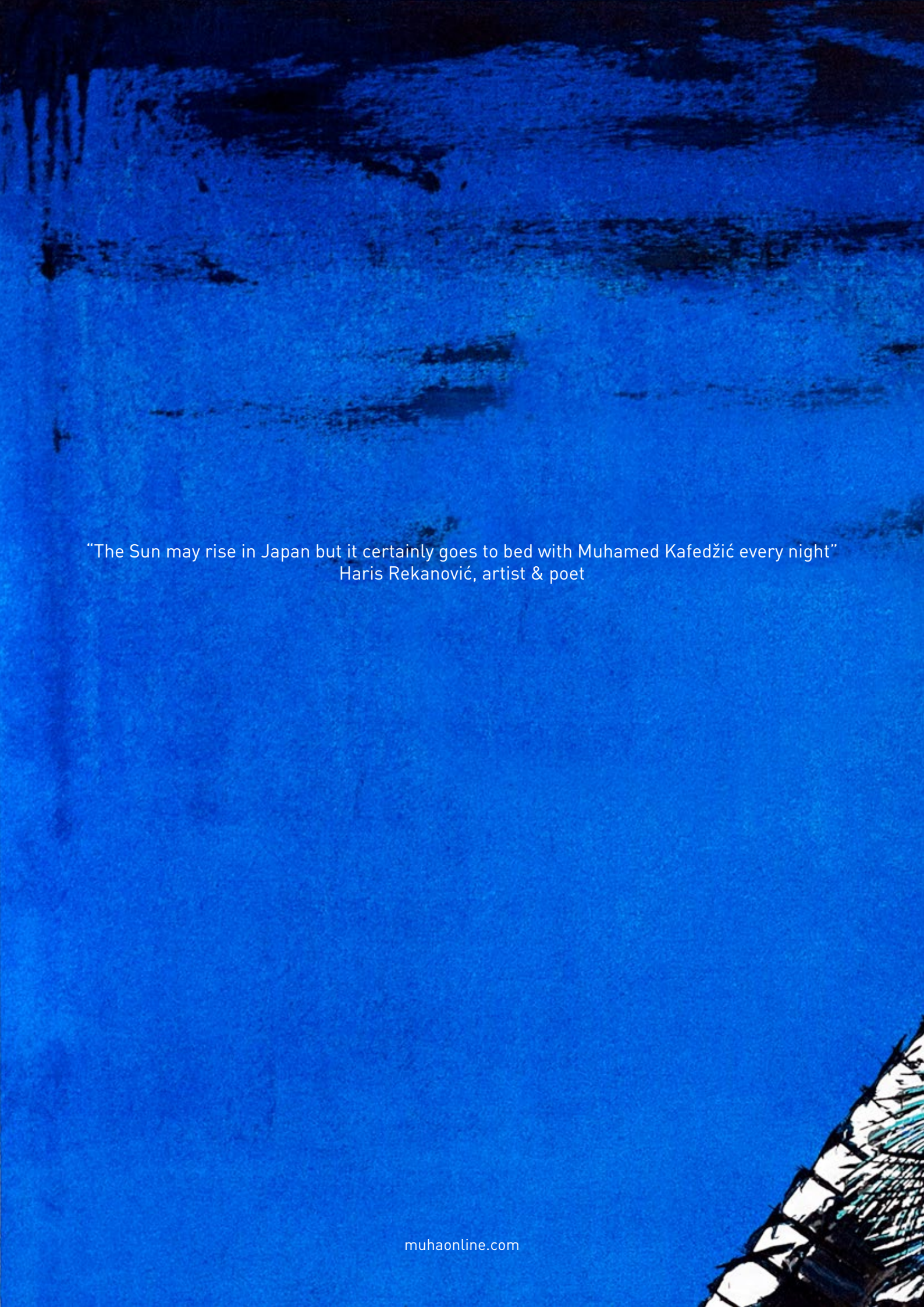
The paintings of Muhamed Kafedžić include contents of all kinds on popular themes, but also folk legends and beliefs of the Japanese society at the time. One can see the actors of the kabuki theater and the segments from the performances, courtesans enjoying themselves under the cherry-blossomed trees, different animals (a catfish, and a falcon on a stone), a mother playing with her child, famous Great Wave and Octopus by Hokusai, the scenes from the legend, Jade Rabbit and Sangoku, the war of dragons, but also Japanese shunga, or more precisely the representations of Japanese erotic scenes introduced in the most explicit way, which imply all kinds of heterosexual and homosexual acts. In such a way the themes are comprehensively presented and the breadth of the Japanese spirit and popular culture are visualized, as well as all those dilemmas and wishes inherent in the consciousness of the man of the time, which bear almost no difference when compared to the present times. Expressivity and narrativity of the contents in certain instances are additionally affected by accidents or "errors" in the realization, as well as the intentional usage of the drippy technique (running and smearing of the colors over the canvas), which was also often used by Warhol.

The works in the series 100 Views of Ukiyo-e by Muhamed Kafedžić represent the summary of the artistic research in the framework of the popular arts completed so far, which encompasses one unit of his artistic creation.





Nanso Satomi Hakkenden, On the Roof of Horyoji  
after Toyokuni III



“The Sun may rise in Japan but it certainly goes to bed with Muhamed Kafedžić every night”  
Haris Rekanović, artist & poet