

DANCING RED SLIPPERS

Letter

Beloved Whoever You Are,

When I put on them, I wish to dance. These are the Red Slippers. Their concern is neither being soft nor being orthopedic, that is to say, they are not so much comfortable; but these are the hand-crafted slippers that we have made: the red felt slippers wrapping my feet, attached by either just a single hooked needle, rope or a button. Its sole slips on stone, parquet and ceramic surfaces; but does not on carpets. Since it slips well, its use while dancing is well. I like walking barefoot. But walking by putting on them has a slight difference. It is just a very thin layer wrapping feet. That's it.

We all –Jasminka, Katia, Tjasa, Šölen and Mine- have read a book, the topic of which is on an archetype of wild woman¹: a wild women who is not domesticated, does not live other lives and acts as if she lives and who can listen to her instincts, and one who has female spirit. The aspects and the states of this woman are told through myths and stories in the book. Female aspects and states are resolved, and resolutions are blended with a female wisdom of the pagan culture. If you wonder the book in question, the back cover page is available for you in the Sketch Book of the Exhibition.

What attracts my attention in the book is the story of “Red Shoes” and what the “**Dancing Red Slippers**” emulates is this story. “Red Shoes” tells the aspects and the states of “Wild Woman”² through the story of a little girl. The story describes how the little girl abandons her red shoes and becomes the satellite of the other's life and how the red shoes made from patent leather kills her soul. Dancing by the red shoes that the little girl made is different from dancing by the patent leather red shoes. In the story, dancing by patent leather red shoes kills soul, just like the loss of the souls by the women who give up the red shoes they themselves make, despite they like them, and who seem to live the others' lives, but in reality do not... A difference appears from dancing to dancing. A woman who dances by her own shoes cherish her own female soul.

If you wish you may read the story placed in the Sketch Book.

Then why slipper? Slippers refer to domestic life. It is used in houses or indoors. I remember the women who keep all happenings at their home as secrets and live their own lives as if they are the living the lives of the others, and thus become alienated to themselves. If only they themselves could make their own slippers?! If only they could discover themselves by their labors. In this study the slippers I have designed are the representations of woman soul and my dreams during the design process became the wishes for such women for that they are able to awaken to themselves.

Having such an understanding I thought that red felt slabs can be cut and shaped and turned into slippers wrapping feet. The red felt slippers have been designed by this way. Six patterns are the result. I regard each of them as a skeleton and construction. I looked for ladies who are artificers. I reached the ladies who improve their handicrafts in the *Felt Class* of the Public Education Center at Urla. In a workshop first I read the story to them; then I explained what I was trying to do and defined my patterns as “skeletons” of the work. I wanted them to reflect their souls, their own stories on these designed skeletons. I gave the patterns. They worked on the felts and submit the products to me one week later. It was an “open-ended participation” involving 15 participants who produced 18 slippers. As one lady did not attend the workshop, she made her own pattern to submit me. Apart from her, my dear son Çınar Ege, who carefully observed my works at home, created a pattern, too. These two independent works, too, take their places at the exhibition.

After the workshop I regarded these six patterns as a foreigner and, by treating the patterns as “skeletons” and trying to reflect my soul on them I resolved the joint details. I experimented on myself. I used various materials that I bought at Kemeraltı. Everything is hand-made...

What I want to tell is a case in which a designer tries to be catalyzer with his/her knowledge of design. This process has become the story of the participation with heart and soul. What I can read in each slipper is a great heartiness and sincerity, besides ability. Each slipper has its own tag on which you can see the name of the co-designer and its own story. Each slipper bears the representation of the related co-designer. I am able to see the slippers wrapping the feet of those who are dancing.

With my wishes for dancing, accompanied even with door creak.

Mine Ovacık

¹ Clarissa P. Estés, (2003), *Women Who Run With the Wolves, Myths and Stories of The Wild Woman Archetype*

² “I define wild woman as the woman who was once in the state of a natural psychic with a real savage mind, and then captured after a series of event and domesticated, and thus turned into one who lost her instincts that she needed.” (Estés, P. C., 2003)