

Irena Z. Tomažin, Cmok V Grlu/Lump In The Throat

A sequence of belches, gulps, slurps and piglet-like squeals form the substance of “A Tiny Balloon Of Numbness”, one track on Cmok V Grlu/Lump In The Throat. Slovenian singer, sound artist and choreographer Irena Z Tomažin unapologetically embraces such bodily spillage. Overall, nonetheless, her vocal artistry is tightly focused, precise in execution, versatile and dazzlingly fluent. A dedicated experimenter, Tomažin also runs workshops where vocal projections and interactions in a ceaselessly changing and constantly sounding world are explored with others. In her solo work she draws attention to the mouth as a crucial interface of private and public life.

Valued as an outlet for interiority when channelling articulate language, that same mouth is used to taste, cough, kiss, scream or spit, and it is subjected culturally to regulation, protocols and etiquette or more extreme forms of censorship. In her essay “The Gender Of Sound” poet Anne Carson suggests that “putting a door on the female mouth has been an important project of patriarchal culture from antiquity to the present day”. Plunging beyond the confines of cogent verbal expression and consensual meaning, Tomažin breaks down that creaky door and gives voice to the unspeakable. Her mouth music weaves textured fabrics from those

United Waters untidy, lawless and excessive elements that make any kind of music an exhilarating living practice rather than a stolid traditional form. The caringly produced packaging adds a complementary visual dimension, through the dots and lines, smears and blotches of Matej Stupica’s designs in saliva and ink.

Along with six fresh improvisations this release features five tracks recomposed and remixed from material developed for “Faces Of Voices.Noise”, an event hosted by Ljubljana based research platform Museum of Transitory Art. Extended techniques may no longer startle or be rare, and listeners may detect echoes or parallels with the work of other artists such as Joan La Barbara, Ute Wassermann, Yoko Ono or Elaine Mitchener, but as Tomažin hones her own virtuosity, crossing limits and subverting regimes of control, she celebrates exuberantly the sublime babble of the human body.'

Julian Cowley, The Wire