

ON KUMERDEJ'S WORK

"The stories of Mojca Kumerdej are extremely exciting because they show the function of a desire in contemporary society in a radical way, although they also have, probably because of this, a terrifyingly liberating effect of a cocoon on the reader."

Gašper Troha, Večer/Čitalnica

"The author skilfully depicts different plots, situated between the appearance and reality, which derive from an indefinable but always present crack in the world."

G.B., Dnevnik

"The crack is a wish which will push the heroes ahead, towards destruction."

Vera Janeva, Študent

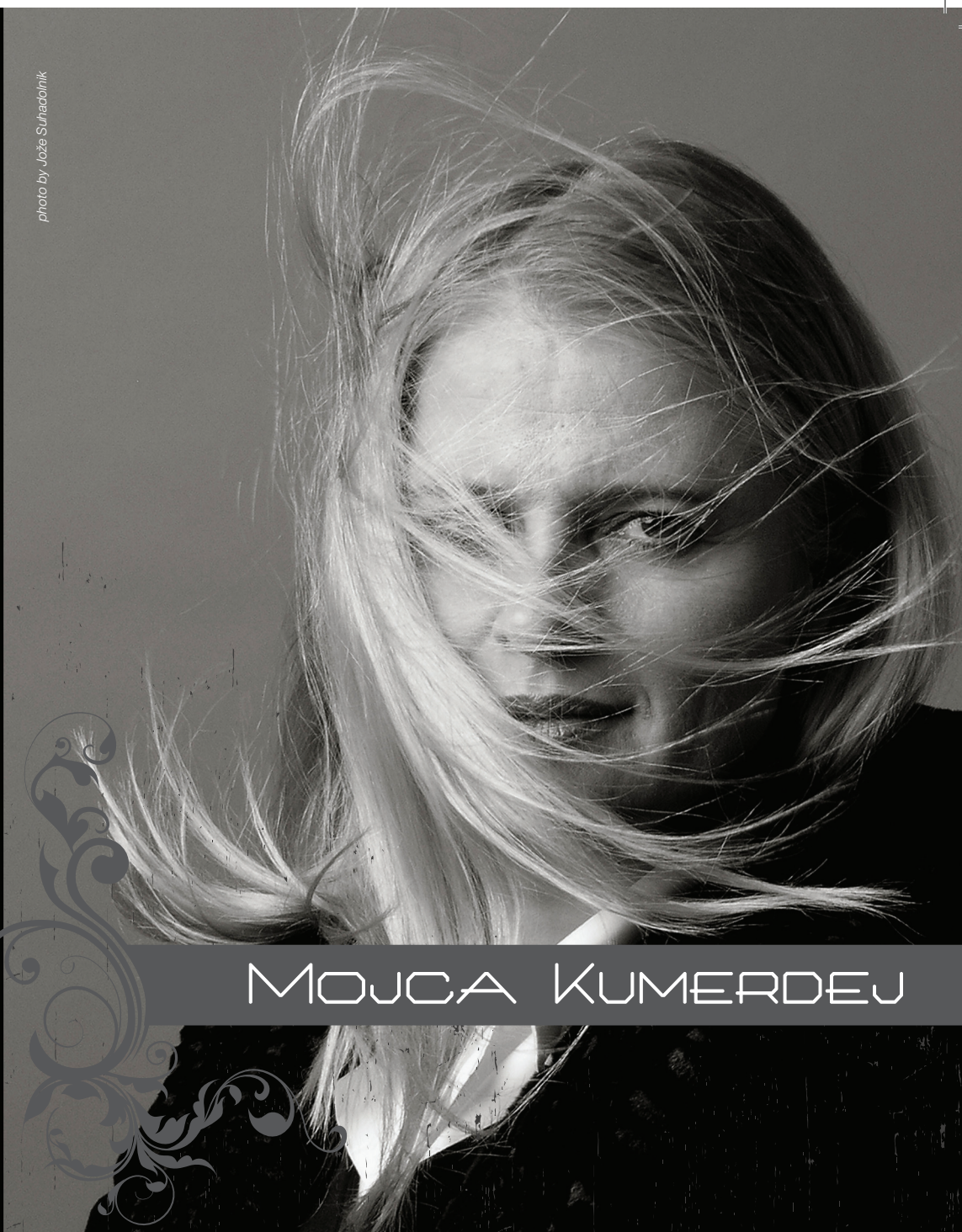
"The short stories of Mojca Kumerdej invite the reader to a special, always provocative literary world of sharpened mental states of erotic obsession and possessiveness with its imaginary originality and humour and with a vivid depiction of the uncertain state of the contemporary man."

Helga Glušič, Književni listi

"In every person a wild beast is hidden and every person carries a small cocoon of desire in themselves, a wish they has never dreamt of, a 'fragma', as Mojca Kumerdej would put it, a play of pain and ecstasy."

Ana Ristović Čar, Večer

photo by Jože Suhadolnik



MOJCA KUMERDEJ

design Studio Lohnek d.o.o.



MOJCA KUMERDEJ

born in 1964 in Slovenia, graduated in philosophy and sociology of culture in Ljubljana. She is a writer, philosopher, freelance dance and performance critic and cultural chronicler for the daily newspaper Delo. If she was still settling accounts with the Slovenian literary tradition and trying to find her place under the sun in *Krst nad Triglavom* (Baptism above Triglav, Študentska založba, 2001), *Fragma* (Študentska založba, 2003), a collection of short prose, shows an utterly original world, which derives from contemporary society and its problems. Her stories have been translated into German, English, French, Serbian, Russian, Czech, Spanish and Hungarian, Polish, Macedonian and were included in various Slovene and foreign anthologies, among them the Slovene short story anthology *O čem govorimo* (What We Are Talking About, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana, 2004), and the short story anthology *Zu zweit nirgendwo – Neue Erzählungen aus Slowenien* (Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2006). She gave many readings at home and abroad, including at the presentation of Slovene literature at the Frankfurt Bookfair in 2004 and on the literary tour in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. In 2005 she was a guest at the 11th International Bookfair in Prague and she participated at the 19th International Bookfair in Guadalajara, Mexico. In 2006 she received the Tandem grant from Stiftung Brandenburger Tor (together with the German writer Kevin Vennemann) and spent two months in Berlin, where she gave readings at Literarisches Colloquium Berlin and Stiftung Brandenburger Tor. Her story *Pod gladino* (Under the Surface) was awarded the Vilenica Crystal Award for the best short story at the 21st International Literary Festival Vilenica in 2006.

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Fragma



UNDER THE SURFACE

Excerpt was translated by Laura Cuder Turk

“Are you sure you aren’t coming swimming with me?” he asked me while he was entering into the cold water on the lakeside gravel.

“You know I’m not ... I don’t like swimming,” I replied, just as I do every time he asks me; as if he had forgotten, or else he does it because he doesn’t want to remember.

You will never know the real reason. I will never tell you. For us to spend the third summer, our summer together, by ourselves, without anyone interrupting us, there had to be a sacrifice. On that early July afternoon not only did I see everything but I didn’t do anything – and by doing so did everything. It was probably fate – that I went to the house from the beach because I was feeling sick all morning and wanted to throw up. Perhaps I was reading, perhaps not, I probably wasn’t doing anything, except walking around the house and going out onto the terrace a few times. I saw you playing on the beach, you and the little one with long curly fair hair. It isn’t true that I didn’t think about what happened later that afternoon, that I didn’t even wish for it. I have never cared much about children, I haven’t even thought about them and it only seemed that we would have one – just because in a relationship between two people who love each other this usually happens. I probably wouldn’t even think about that seriously if I hadn’t seen that woman selfishly moving around you, flattering you, purposely setting her hair right when speaking to you, the corners of her lips trembling before uttering a word, biting her lower lip and – seemingly incidentally but in fact meanly and selfishly - licking it, and your look becoming moist and frozen.

That’s when I knew I had to take action. After all she was more attractive than me and she had the ability to release a kind of a warm magnetic field around her, which I simply can’t do. And that’s how it happened. When you put your hand on my stomach I knew I had you and that’s when I decided to have you forever, whole and completely, without intermediary, disturbing elements, which could jeopardize our love.

But when the little one came along, you changed, especially you didn’t look at me the way you used to. Not anymore as a lover but as the mother of your child. As the mother of the little one who was becoming a girl and then more and more, I noticed, a little woman. Every time you returned home you first hugged the little one, played with her honey brown hair, kissed her on the cheeks and only then was it my turn. And the first months the little one was crying, she was crying indescribably a lot, so that already at that time I thought something should be done.