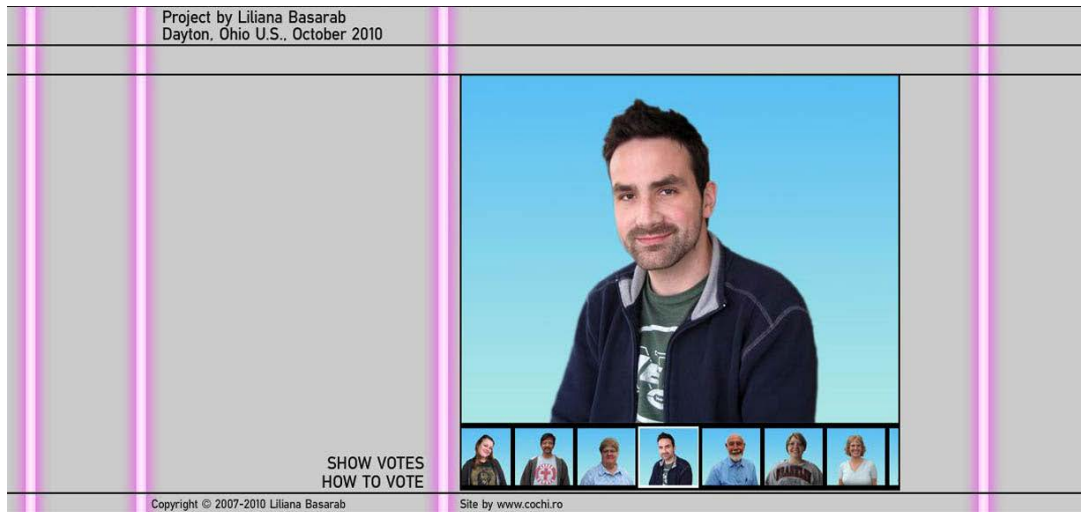


**Liliana Basarab Monuments for Concepts**  
Review by Yulia TIKHONOVA



*Liliana Basarab, Monuments for Concepts 2010, Dayton Visual Art Center*

I met the conceptual sculptor Liliana Basarab earlier this summer while she was stopping in NYC on her way to Dayton Ohio. Originally from Romania, Basarab spent two months as a resident at the Dayton Visual Art Center, funded through CECArtslink. Basarab came to Dayton with a plan to engage with the local community by taking a participatory approach to art making. Her overarching idea was to investigate the ways our collective consciousness has been manipulated, and how we have been fed by media stereotypes.



*Liliana Basarab, Monuments for Concepts 2010, Dayton Visual Art Center*

Previously the artist has questioned in the projects like; Mister Normality, Bucharest, Romania, 2009 and Miss Individualism , Bad Ems, Germany, 2008 and Miss/Mister Objectivity, Neutrality

and Sustainability in Sinaia, Romania, 2007. the ways the media confines our imagination to the norm. The artist was prompted to find common definitions of ethical concepts forged by the media when she asked local people to choose the facial characteristics which in their individual opinion represent the above mentioned abstract concepts.



*Liliana Basarab, Monuments for Concepts 2010, Dayton Visual Art Center*

In Dayton her conceptual stance was different although her methods remained similarly interactive. Based on her fundamental premise each project she does is site specific and is tied in to having a local context and on this occasion Basarab researched Dayton history. Quite apart from the common knowledge that Dayton is the home of the Wright Brothers' airplane, the artist found facts that were deeply compelling.

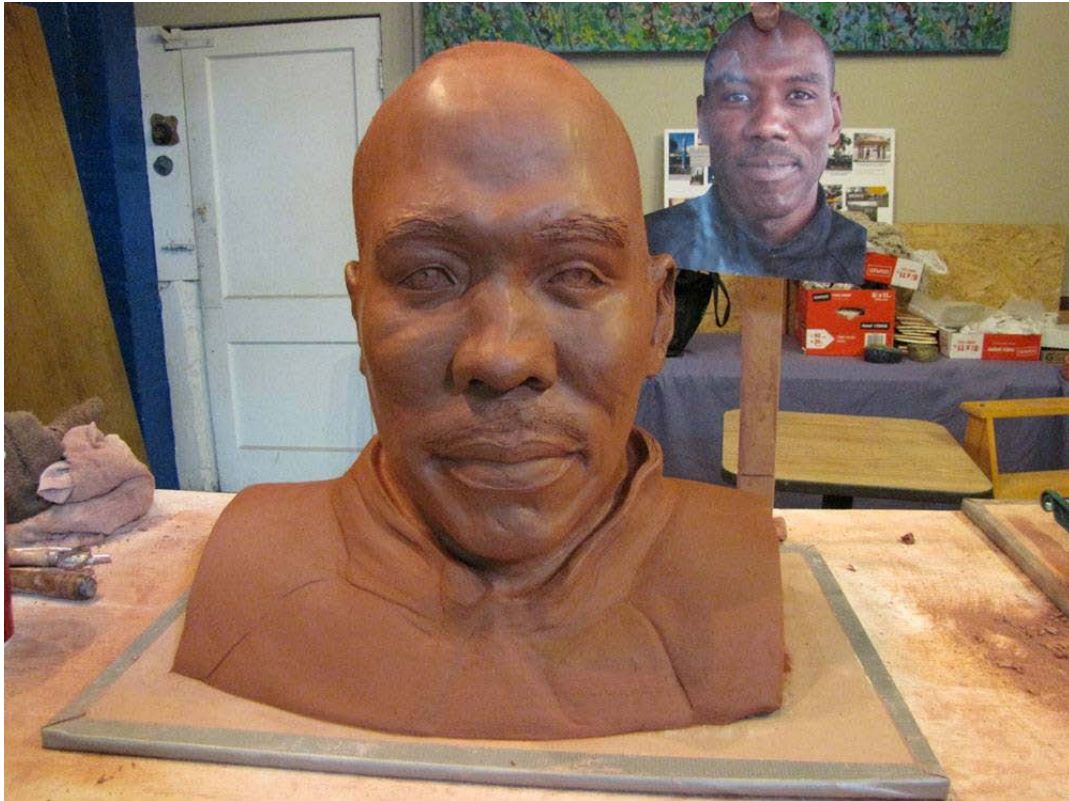


*Liliana Basarab, Monuments for Concepts 2010, Dayton Visual Art Center, Moving the sculpture in the kiln*

For Europeans, Dayton is the important location of the Dayton agreement which in 1995 put an end to the three and a half year long war in Bosnia, a former part of Yugoslavia. As a European citizen Basarab felt prompted to find a metaphor that expressed the fact that Dayton was a place of resolution and acceptance. Perhaps she thought that people there possess emotional traits that helped to mediate a long awaited agreement between the superpowers of America, Russia and Europe. She tried to find a physiognomic representation of acceptability

In order to implement her project, Basarab put on-line a set of images featuring the faces of local folk and asked Dayton people to vote for the best face, which in their opinion reflected an idea of acceptability. In a recent statement she wrote:

*“The permanent recycling of symbols has always played a paramount role in my work and made me always attempt and search for ways of translating abstract concepts into a visual language.”*



*Liliana Basarab, Monuments for Concepts 2010, Dayton Visual Art Center.  
The sculpture is drying*

The artist processed the results of voting that in itself presented her with a unique face, as it combined people's choices.

Being also a sculptor, Basarab had planned to mold in clay and turn to ceramic“ the face of Acceptability” and to exhibit this sculpture in the Dayton park. Unfortunately during the firing process the head cracked and thus had to be shown as such in an exhibition. In our interview Basarab said that she was compelled by people's reaction on the damaged sculpture. The artist

considers this accident as a fortuitous metaphor: although successful in stopping the bloody war the Dayton treaty has not halted nationalistic tensions and immigrant hostilities that shake Europe.



*Broken Acceptability*

*Liliana Basarab, Monuments for Concepts 2010, Dayton Visual Art Center*

The project has been titled Monuments for Concepts. Like an iffy ceramic head, projects like Dayton have a short-life, that only effective hands-on measures will help. Also in a way that is similar to Komar and Melamid, in the project People's Choices, Basarab investigates our collective perception and how often it comes as being shortsighted. The artist recharges her performativity and humor from works by Francis Alys, and Michael Creed.



*Liliana Basarab, Monuments for Concepts 2010, Dayton Visual Art Center*

**Liliana Basarab** (born 1979), is visual artist, who lives and works in Iasi, Romania. In 2010 she took part to the CEC ArtsLink residency program hosted by the Dayton Visual Art Center in partnership with Ohio Arts Council, local founders Dayton Power&Light and The Lombard Fund. MA in Contemporary Art from George Enescu University in Iasi and in 2005-2006 was part of Pavillion, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France.

**Yulia Tikhonova** - Art critic and curator. She is Russian-born, Brooklyn-based curator. Tikhonova received a M.A. in Curating from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College and is regular contributing editor to FlashArt International and writes for Art in America and ArtAsiaPacific

