

TANJA OSTOJIĆ: BODY, POLITICS, AGENCY...¹

4. 6. – 15. 7. 2012

Multi-layered art works and an unrelenting critical social stance are among the premises of the exhibition *Tanja Ostojić: Body, Politics, Agency...* in Škuc Gallery Ljubljana, whose exhibition programme seeks to present artists who, like her, have influenced the development of art in the region and wider area. Tanja Ostojić (Belgrade / Berlin), who has been active internationally since the second half of the 1990s, has presented her work at numerous group exhibitions in the region (including *The Present and Presence*, MSUM Ljubljana (2011); *Gender Check*, MUMOK Vienna (2009)), while the exhibition in Škuc Gallery is her first bigger solo presentation in the region, and is intended to present different levels of her work from 1995 to 2012. Her artworks - in the media of photography, video, video-performance, archive, video-installation and works on paper - were created in specific social and political contexts.

The gaze of so-called engaged art always focuses on the 'otherness' of the image of dominant technologies, thereby opening the possibility for the necessary critical reflection of society. The 'other' gaze definitely exists in the context of Ostojić's art. Her complex works and projects constantly confront the spectator with social reality, but also convey the artist's own position and feelings, which are never indifferent, but always demonstrate a strong personal opinion about a wider social issue. Her political positioning and the direct approach to issues that she wishes to highlight in the context of individual projects are perhaps the most prominent and recognisable characteristics of Ostojić's work. Her tireless social engagement with the 'here and now' and careful connection between form and content show her artistic works to be always relevant.

This is the theme, albeit in a somewhat different way, of the exhibition *Tanja Ostojić: Body, Politics, Agency...*, which seeks to highlight key formal and thematic tendencies in Ostojić's work through different periods by combining pieces, particularly focusing on establishing a thread which through non-physicality seeks to connect the established discourses (post-colonialism, feminism, etc.) generally attached to her work. Perhaps the focus is really on non-physicality, not so much in relation to material as such, but particularly in relation to the need for the artist's expression to exist only beyond the 'prosthetic media' in the body, action, thought, performance, etc. Somewhat less evidently, non-physicality is revealed in the context of the reflection of the area where the artist works – regardless of whether it thematises personal living space, as in earlier work, which explores the subject-object-space relation in an almost sculptural way, or later, more of a 'performative' examination of identity spaces, power systems, gender and economic relationships, various ideologies and their mechanisms.

¹ The title of the exhibition has been created in 2011 during the conversation between Suzana Milevska, Tanja Ostojić and Tevž Logar when they thought about the book that would accompany the exhibition and that hasn't been realized due to the lack of funding.

Although the art of Tanja Ostojić always expresses her stance, the exhibition is also an experience of the state of the world and a hidden timeline of stray contemporary social values, which emerge through the relationship between the social and political subject (body), space (politics), and the possibility of initiating change (agency). What is the role of the subject (body) in relation to the space (personal, political, cultural, economic, etc.) and does the body exist in it as an object or subject? The body of Tanja Ostojić, as a social and political subject, experiences itself in relation to space, while its experience also establishes this space. The body is not a space of discovering physical boundaries and abilities, but a space of social and political action.

The body of the non-physical does exist, but the perception depends on the artist's social engagement. Politics, gender identity, economics and integration are intangible components, spaces and structures which often appear on the fringes of art, but in the case of Ostojić, they become 'anchors' and the basis for art. The exhibition is not a linear chronological narrative which presents isolated thematic monoliths, but an attempt to present the artist's 'steps forward' by exploring the media and methods of her artistic research, and an attempt to overcome their reciprocal contextualisations and theories. At first sight, artworks and projects by Tanja Ostojić may seem highly provocative, even shocking, but a closer reading reveals to a much greater extent an incredible sensibility which expresses everyday social reality even more intensely.

Curator:
Tevž Logar

Preview of the exhibition with artist Tanja Ostojić and curator will take place on Monday, June 4th, at 7 p.m. at Škuc Gallery.

A guided tour of the exhibition will take place on Wednesday, June 6th and Friday, July 6th at 18.00 at Škuc Gallery.

Najava izložbe na srpskom: <http://seecult.info/vest/retrospektiva-tanje-ostojic>

Exhibition review in Italian: <http://www.artribune.com/2012/06/tanja-ostojic-e-la-politica-del-corpo/>

Review in Slovenian <http://www.siol.net/kultura/dogodki/2012/06/telo-agens-politika.aspx>

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