

PROJEKT ZADNJA VEČERJA Maja Manojlovič

Žlica obsedenosti, ščepec vraževerja, skodelica potrošništva, začinjena z nekaj kapljicami strupa in obilico ženske odločnosti, da okus projekta *Zadnja večerja* (2011). Kaj se zgodi, če se z mladostjo in photoshop lepoto obsedena kultura 21. stoletja pomeša s tisočletja staro vero v alkimijske izvore večnega življenja in enostavno dostopni pop-znanstvenimi viri o delovanju DNA? Soočimo se z vznemirljivim filmom / instalacijo Nataše Prosenč Stearns, ki jo je ustvarila izključno ženska ekipa.

Stopnjujoči napredek znanosti in tehnologije je, namesto da bi nas razbremenil, samo še okreplil naš strah pred smrtjo in staranjem. Kljub plastičnim operacijam, sofisticiranim prehranjevalnim dodatkom in intenzivnim fitnes programom iz specializiranih revij, polnih imperativov ki predpisujejo življenjski stil vzdrževanja mladostnosti in zdravja, se zdi da je naša kultura vse manj sposobna soočanja s staranjem. Nič ni demokratičnega v bildanju mišic v fitnes klubu z željo da bi se čim bolj približali trenutni normi. Nič ni osvobajajočega v vbrizgavanju botoks injekcij. Imperativi našega videza so tako zahtevni in dogmatični, da lahko potencialno sprožitjo radikalne reakcije. Disciplina, ki jo zahtevajo znanstveno overjene shujševalne diete in programi oblikovanja telesa, racionalizira impulze našega eksperiencijskega bitja do stopnje, da se začnemo spraševati o avtentičnosti naših izkušenj. V povezavi z neprestanim izpostavljanjem toku slik iz cyber-prostora, ki se intergrirajo v naš sensorium in fragmentirajo naše doživljanje sebe, se postopoma soočamo z vedno večjo odsotnostjo vrednot, ki so nekoč predstavljale naš avtentični svet.

Ali je sploh mogoče na novo odkriti smisel za avtentično, kot sestavino, ki je "organska" v današnjem svetu poplave vizualne reprodukcije?

Da bi inicirala potenciale za vzpon avtenčnega, se zgodba *Zadnje večerje* poigrava z vizualnim materialom na način, ki kljubuje pričakovanjem gledalca. Emocionalni naboj gibljivih slik kontinuirano spodkopava pričakovano sosledje dogodkov. Takšen dislociran pomen vztrajno zavaja gledalčeve poizkuse, da bi izsilil pričakovan in logičen pomen iz gibljivih slik. Vendar nas ta premestitev racionalnega ne vodi do katartične resnice zgodbe. Namesto tega, porine racionalno pomen(skost) do njenega nasprotnega ekstrema – do iracionalnih in potisnjenih vraževerij, ki vzniknejo iz primitivnih in pred-zavestnih reakcij strahu pred neznanim, kot sta smrt in staranje.

Z izzivanjem tako neukrotljivih in krvavo intuitivnih reakcij do neznanega, *Zadnja večerja* demistificira iracionalno jedro v centru naše civilizacije, ki se opira na potrošniški racio. Projekt pa tudi odkrito prenese področje "organsko" avtentičnega na individualno izkušnjo živega telesa samega.

THE LAST SUPPER PROJECT by Maja Manojlovič

A spoonful of obsession, an ounce of superstition, a cup of consumerism, spiced up with a few drops of poison and a handful of female determination and you get the taste of forces at work in *The Last Supper* project (2011). What happens when the 21st century's youth culture obsessed with photoshopped beauty mixes up with thousands of years old beliefs in the alchemical source of eternal life and the taking in of the overwhelming availability of the pop-scientific resources on the workings of DNA? We get an intriguing film / installation by Nataša Prosenč Stearns, cooked-up collaboratively with the whole female cast.

Instead of alleviating the fear of death and aging, the accelerated progress of science and technology seems to have intensified it. Despite plastic surgery, hi-tech dietary supplements and involving exercise programs laid out in specialized magazines filled with imperatives prescribing lifestyles to keep us youthful and healthy, our culture seems to have regressive tendencies in dealing with aging. There's nothing democratic about pumping your muscles in the gym to fit into the current model image. There's nothing liberating about getting Botox injections. The imperatives for looks are so strenuous and dogmatic, that they have a potential to trigger radical reactions. For example, the disciplinary demands of scientifically backed weight loss diets and body sculpting programs rationalize the impulses of our living embodiment to the degree that we question the authenticity of our own experiences. Combined with the extensive time spent in cyberspace continuously generating a slew of images integrating with our sensorium and fragmenting our experience of self, we gradually experience the dissolution of the parameters we used to hold for the authentic.

Is it even possible to re-discover a sense of authenticity as an ingredient "organic" to today's world of excess visual and image-re-production?

To grab a hold of the potentialities for the authentic to emerge, *Last Supper's* narrative plays with its visual material in ways that defy expectations of the viewers. For instance, the emotional charge in the visuals continuously undermines the narrative that the viewers assume should unfold. Such dislocated signification insistently defers the viewers' attempts to tease a unifying and "rational" meaning out of the images. What is most intriguing about this dislocation of the "rational" is that it doesn't lead us to a cathartic "truth" of the story. Instead it jolts the "rational" signification to its opposite extreme – to the irrational and the suppressed superstitions emerging from primal and pre-conscious reactions to the fear from the unknown, like death and aging.

By probing into such undisciplined and embodied gut-reactions to the unknown, *The Last Supper* project not only demystifies the irrational kernel underlying our civilization relying on its consumerist "rationality," but also ingenuously re-locates the site of the "organically" authentic onto the singularity of the lived embodiment itself.