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■ ■ Sarajevska je publika imala priliku vidjeti prezentaciju vašeg kustoskog djelovanja. Skandali koji se vezuju za vaše kasnije performanse umnogome zasjenjuju vaš kustoski rad koji je prethodio vašim samostalnim umjetničkim nastupima. Koje su glavne značajke vašeg kustoskog rada i na koji se način povezuju s onim što ste radili kao performer?

Pogrešno je razdvajati moj kustoski rad i moje umjetničke nastupe, moje performanse. Ja sam uvijek bio umjetnik, a ne kustos, no naprosto sam bio natjeran baviti se kustoskim radom. Naime, početkom 90-ih Rusiju je zahvatio trend napuštanja umjetnika, njihovog odlaženja na Zapad, što je uništilo sveukupni umjetnički život u zemlji. Sve je bilo u rasapu: i službene, akademske institucije, i ilegalne, i establišment i avantgarda, fondovi, savezi, dvorane, galerije... Uništen je bio i sistem prihvatanja umjetničkog iskustva, stubokom su se poremetili i odnosi umjetnosti i vlasti - ili je bolje reći - umjetnika i političara, što je u Rusiji fenomen za sebe. To su odnosi javnosti (elite i najširih slojeva) i umjetnosti, sistem kritike, odnosi između samih umjetnika - sve se to iz korijena promijenilo. Konačno, sam je pojam umjetnosti morao biti redefiniran, stara značenja naprosto više nisu funkcionirala. Umjetnici su morali razmišljati kako iznova moraju stvoriti same sebe kao umjetnike, u cijelom tom spletu novih kulturoloških i psiholoških okolnosti. Bio je neizbježan nov način prezentacije i nova pravila.

Očevi i sinovi

■ ■ Na koji način "nova"?

Da, na razini sadržaja tu nije bilo ničega epohalno novog. Jednostavno sam se, sa skupinom novih umjetnika koji su se velikim dijelom okupili i kao prijatelji, kao poznanici, osobe koje dijele slične ideje, otvorio prema svijetu nove ruske realnosti. Počeli smo u svoju umjetnost ubacivati komadiće realnosti, počeli smo detalje života donositi u dvorane i galerije. No, zapravo su bitniji od tih sadržaja bili principi koji su stajali iza njih, a cijeli se problem i jeste ticao uništenja principa, temeljnih zakona. Nama naši očevi u tom smislu u naslijeđe nisu ostavili ništa; pobjegli su sa svojim kapitalom (smijeh). Cijela generacija ruskih umjetnika je odrasla poput napuštene, odbačene djece, bez doma i skrbi, bez tradicije na koju su se mogla osloniti i kas-

● ● The Sarajevo audience had the opportunity of seeing the presentation of your work as curator. Scandals related to your later performances largely overshadow the impression of this work, which preceded your own artistic performances. What are the main features of your work as curator and how do they relate to what you have been doing as a performing artist?

It is a mistake to separate my work as curator and my artistic endeavour, my performances. I have always been an artist, not a curator, but I was simply forced to take up the post. Namely, at the beginning of the 90s, Russia was seized by a trend of emigration of artists, who were leaving for the West, which completely destroyed the artistic life of the country. Everything was collapsing: official institutions, academic institutions, even the illegal ones, both the establishment and the vanguard, funds, associations, art-halls, galleries... Even the system of reception of artistic experience was destroyed, from one day to another the relationship between art and government was shattered - it is even better to say: the relationship between artists and politicians, which is in Russia a phenomenon in itself. I am talking about the relationship between the public (elite as well as the masses) and art, the system of criticism, the relations between the artists themselves - all this changed root and branch. After all, the very idea of art had to be redefined, old notions simply did not function any longer. Artists were forced to reconsider how they were going to create themselves as artists in this cluster of new cultural and psychological circumstances. It was indispensable to find a new mode of presentation and new rules.

Fathers and Sons

● ● What do you mean by "new"?

Indeed, at the level of content there was nothing strikingly new. It was simply that, together with a group of new artists who were also friends and acquaintances, who shared common ideas, I opened up towards the new Russian reality. We began to incorporate pieces of this reality into our art, we began to introduce details from real life into the art-halls and galleries. However, what was actually more important than these contents were the principles that stood behind them, so that I could say that the issue was actually the destruction of principles, of basic laws. In this respect,



nije je ili prihvatiti ili odbaciti ili preraditi... Naprosto: ništa. Kada se danas osvrnemo na posljednjih deset godina u ruskoj umjetnosti, vidimo mnogo toga - recimo novi moskovski akcionizam. No, pazite, tu su i tradicionalnije umjetničke forme, slika i skulptura. No kako reko, najbitniji su principi na kojima su sva ta raznovrsna djela nastajala, a da smo u potrazi za tim principima mi u potpunosti odbacili glavne odlike suvremene umjetnosti, umjetnosti 20. stoljeća uopće. Mnogo nam je bitnija bila ruska literarna tradicija 19. stoljeća. Da pojednostavim, vratili smo se Lavu Nikolajeviču Tolstoju. Pretpostavili smo etiku estetici. Dakle, ne ljepota, nego istina. To se kosilo s dominantnim idejama umjetničkih kretanja u ovom stoljeću koje su se vrtjele oko pojavnosti, simulacije, igre... Svijet je okupiran pop-artom, a stvari poput pop-arta i suprematizma, to su za nas sranja... U tome nema stvarnih patnji, čuvstava.

■ ■ Lakanovski kazano, nema mjesta za tragediju...

Da, to je pravi izraz. Evo, pogledajte što se ovdje zbilo, taj rat - na koji način pop-art može adekvatno predstaviti tragičnost Sarajeva? Da sam bio ovdje u ratu, prije bih šutio, nego se bavio pop-artom. No, vratimo se Rusiji: usvajanjem novih principa otpočelo je i ustrojavanje nove scene. Umjetnici su se počeli međusobno povezivati, pružati jedni drugima solidarnost i pomoć, tako da su neki umjetnici jednostavno počeli priređivati izložbe drugih umjetnika. To je bilo nešto što sam i ja radio. Onda sam se prestao baviti tim poslom na koji sam bio prinuđen... Nekako u to vrijeme sa Zapada su se počeli vraćati i umjetnici koji su krajem 80-ih bili napustili zemlju, tako da je scena postala još bogatija i raznovrsnija. Istina, oni su bili prilično zatečeni - dočekale su ih stvari posve različite od onih koje su ostavili. Razlika od Gorbačovljevog i Jeljcinovog doba bila je veća nego između 80-ih i Gorbačova. Znam čovjeka koji se nije mogao oporaviti od šoka povratka: za vrijeme Gorbačova, primjerice, policajci nisu nosili pištolje, nije bilo stranih automobila, luksuznih restorana, ljudi su (smijeh) imali nekako dobroćudan izgled, a kad se taj povratnik zatekao u Jeljcinovoj Rusiji, sve je bilo posve drukčije - policajci pod punom oružanom opremom, na sve strane sijekaju strojnice, na sve strane gaze BMW-i i Rolls

our fathers did not leave any heritage to us; they ran away with their capital (laughs). An entire generation of Russian artists grew up as abandoned, rejected children, no home and no care, no tradition they could lean on and later have the choice of accepting it, rejecting or reshaping it... Simply: nothing. If we look back today to the past ten years of Russian art, we see many such cases - for example, the new actionism of Moscow. Still, you must be careful, there are also more traditional artistic forms present, the painting and the sculpture. But as I have just said, what is most important are the principles upon which all that variety of art came into being and the fact that, in order to find those principles, we completely rejected the main features of modern art, the 20th-century art in general. We have considered the 19th-century Russian literary tradition to be of far greater importance. Let me simplify: we turned back to Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy. We preferred ethics to aesthetics. That is, not the beauty counted, but the truth. That conflicted with the dominant ideas of the artistic movements of this century, which concentrated on appearances, simulations, games... The world is occupied by pop-art, and things such as pop-art and suprematism, that's all shit to us... there is no real suffering in that, no emotions.

● ● To use Lacan's words, no room for tragedy...

Yes, that is the right expression. There, look what's happened here, this war - how can pop-art adequately present the tragedy of Sarajevo? If I had been in this war, I would rather keep silent than create pop-art. But let us turn back to Russia: by adopting new principles, we in fact began the construction of a new scene. Artists started associating, offering each other solidarity and help, so that some of them simply took upon themselves to organise exhibitions for others. I have done that as well. Then I gave up that work to which I was actually compelled... Just about that time, artists that emigrated to the West at the end of the 80's started to return and that enriched the scene and made it more colourful. Admittedly, they were rather taken aback - things were now completely different from those they had left. The difference between the eras of Gorbachev and Jelcin was much greater than that between the 80's and Gorbachev's times. I know a man who could not recover from the shock

Royceovi, skupi restorani i noćni klubovi, a ljudi kao da su pod nekakvim gnusnim, izobličenim obrazinama (smijeh). Izraz ruskog lica danas iznimno je okrutan, kao da je riječ o posve drugom narodu. Dakle, umjetnici koji su napustili zemlju nakon rušenja Zida imali su posve drugu predodžbu. Valjda su vjerovali da Rusije neće niti biti, da sama umjetnost u Rusiji neće preživjeti, no danas se ipak vraćaju. Najveći broj ih se već vratio...

■ ■ Ali ne smijemo zaboraviti niti drukčije slučajeve; primjerice, Kabakova koji je upravo nakon što je vidio vaš performans u Zürichu rekao da se nikad neće vratiti u Rusiju.

(Smijeh) Da, to stoji. Ali Kabakov je Kabakov. On je jedan izvanredan i vrlo kompleksan lik. Njegov odnos spram Rusije vrlo je... Znači da on u svakom intervjuu tvrdi kako Rusije više nema. U principu, za Ilju Kabakova Rusije doista više nema. On je zemlju napustio u doba komunizma i današnja Rusija za njega je dalja i više tuđa nego SAD ili Kina. Dakle, za Kabakova nema Rusije, ali vrijedi i obrnuto: nema Kabakova za Rusiju. I to je, zapravo, njegov veliki problem. On se pretvorio u svojevrsnog etnografskog umjetnika. Kad govori o Rusiji, o ruskoj umjetnosti i kulturi uopće, tada on govori kao arheolog koji je iskopao nešto što ostatak svijeta nikad nije vidio. Na osnovi njegovih riječi nitko se ne prepoznaje, nitko se ne sjeća te i takve Rusije, tako da Kabakov, zapravo, Zapadu nudi egzotičnu nostalgiju. Samo usporedite njegove intervju s intervjuima ostalih umjetnika: dok drugi razmatraju aktualne teme spola, tijela, AIDS-a, cyber-fenomena, on opetovano fantazira o nekakvom gradu sunca, o ruskoj duši... (smijeh). Dobro, prihvaćam da se takvi mitski konstrukti poput ruske duše ili engleskog humora mogu zasnivati na nekim realijama - da nije tako, valjda bismo imali francuski humor, ali ga, naravno, nemamo (smijeh). Ali kad se to počne idealizirati, tada je to idiotizam. Takve kodove treba neprestano preosmišljavati, sagledavati i mijenjati prema novim uvjetima, a ne držati zatvorene i nepromjenjive.

■ ■ Vaša pozicija u odnosu Zapad - Istok je definitivno drukčija od Kabakovljeve, i svakako, višeznačnija. Dok jedni u vašem radu vide iznevjeravanje očekivanja što ih Zapad gaji spram Istoka, drugi vide podlaženje tim očekivanjima...

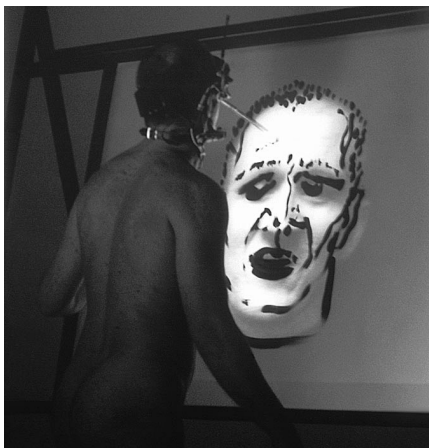
of his return: in Gorbachev's times, for example, policemen were not carrying guns, there were no foreign cars, no luxurious restaurants, people had a sort of (laughs) benevolent look in their eyes, and when the expatriate found himself in the Russia of Jelcin, everything was different - policemen running around fully armed, machine guns wherever you looked, BMW's and Rolls Royces everywhere, expensive restaurants and nightclubs, and people seemed to wear some kind of hideous, disfigured masks (laughs). The expression of a Russian face was exceedingly cruel, as if it were some completely other nation. Therefore, artists who had left the country after the fall of Berlin wall had an entirely different picture of Russia. They had probably believed that Russia would cease to exist, that its art would not survive, but now they were coming back. The majority of them has already returned...

● ● Still, we should not forget the opposite cases; Kabakov, for example, who upon seeing your performance at Zürich, said that he would never return to Russia.

(Laughs) Yes, that's true. But Kabakov is Kabakov. He is an exceptional and very complex figure. His relationship to Russia is... You know, in each interview he keeps saying that Russia no longer exists. As a matter of fact, for Ilja Kabakov Russia indeed no longer exists. He left the country during communism and today's Russia is for him more distant and foreign than America or China. So, for Kabakov there is no Russia, but also vice versa: for Russia there is no Kabakov. And that is actually his major problem. He has turned into a sort of artist-ethnographer. When he speaks of Russia, of its art and culture in general, he speaks as if he were an archeologist who has excavated something that the rest of the world had never seen. Nobody can recognize himself or herself in his words, nobody remembers such Russia, one might say that Kabakov actually offers exotic nostalgia to the West. It is enough to compare his interviews with those of other artists: whereas the others discuss actual topics such as gender, body, AIDS, the cyber-phenomenon, he repeatedly fantasizes about some city of sunshine, about the Russian soul... (laughs). Fine, I admit that such mythical constructions like the Russian soul or the British sense of humour might have some real bases - were it not so, I guess we would have a French sense of humour, but



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Tu očigledno postoji problem: jedni misle da Zapad od Istoka očekuje jedno, a drugi da Zapad očekuje nešto posve drugo. No pravi problem je mnogo dublji. Naime, sam Zapad ne govori što očekuje, a to je zato jer ni sam Zapad ne zna što hoće od Istoka. O tom pitanju ne postoji jedan zaokružen, konzistentan zapadnjački stav. Uzmimo za primjer moje performanse: ne znam je li Zapad očekivao toplu rusku dušu ili egzotičnog divljaka, ali kad su vidjeli što radim, strpali su me u zatvor. Odnosno, kakva god očekivanja Zapada bila, njih treba iznevjeravati, treba uzvratiti nečim što će izazvati šok, snažnu gestu... To će pokrenuti stvari, to će utjecati i na ta zapadnjačka očekivanja. To je nešto slično kao s votkom - prije nego je kušate, možete vi od nje očekivati ne znam što, ali prvi gutljaj je obavezno odvratno; ostaje taj užasni osjećaj u ustima. Kasnije taj osjećaj mine, naviknete se na nju, zavolite je i konačno se odlučite da pokušate iznova. Recimo da Zapad od Istoka očekuje novu votku, i recimo da ja Zapadu tu novu votku dajem. No za mene je najbitnije da pritom napravim, mafijaški kazano, ponudu koju Zapad neće moći odbiti, da ponudim onu predstavu

we certainly don't (laughs). But when you begin to idealize such a thing, that is idiotic. Such codes should be permanently reconsidered, reviewed and modified according to the changing circumstances, and not be kept closed and petrified.

● ● Your position regarding the relationship East - West is definitely different from Kabakov's and certainly more manifold in meaning. Some see in your work betrayal of expectations that the West has had with respect to the East, while others see subjection to them...

There we obviously have a problem: some think that the West expects from the East one thing, others that it expects something completely different. But the real problem lies much deeper. Namely, the West itself does not say what it expects, and that is because it does not even know what it expects. There is no rounded, consistent attitude of the West regarding that question. Let us take my performances for an example: I have no idea whether the West had expected some warm Russian soul or an exotic savage, but when they saw what I was doing, they put me into prison. That is, whatever the expectations of the West might be, it is best to betray them, to pay back with something that will shock, with some powerful gesture... That will stir things and make an impact upon the expectations of the West. It is something like wotka - before you taste it, you can expect it to be whatever you wish, but the first sip is bound to be disgusting; you can't get rid of that horrible taste in your mouth. Later, that feeling is gone and you get used to wotka, you learn to love it and finally you decide to try it again. Let's say that the West expects a new kind of wotka from the East, and I am giving it that new kind of wotka. However, for me the crucial thing is, if you let me use an underground expression, to make an offer to the West that it will not be able to refuse, that is, to offer such a performance that the West might not find too pleasing, but that will function. I do not mean mean function because of its beauty, but because of its truth and justice. That is why my dog might be mad and dangerous, but it is true (laughs).

● ● Renata Salecl has drawn attention to a paradox that marks your work: even though you use it to point to some general topics, some universals concerning the relationship between man and animals, the position of man within nature, etc., the

koja Zapadu možda i neće biti najmilija, ali će funkcionirati. Funkcionirati ne zbog njene ljepote, nego zbog njene istinitosti i pravednosti. Zato je moj pas možda bijesan i loš, ali je istinit (smijeh).

■ ■ Renata Salecl je upozorila na jedan paradoks koji obilježava vaš rad: premda vi kroz njega ukazujete na neke opće teme, univerzalije koje se dotiču odnosa čovjeka i životinje, pozicije čovjeka u prirodi itd., vaš rad od strane Zapada ipak ostaje percipiran kao rad ruskog umjetnika... Ili najkraće, da ste Zapadu interesantni ne kao pas, nego kao ruski pas...

To je stav koji se često ponavlja. Na neki način ona je u pravu, ali to nije ništa što bi iziskivalo neku posebnu priču. Američki umjetnici su ostatku svijeta zanimljivi i zato jer su Amerikanci; oni kroz medije, u javnosti, bivaju predstavljeni kao takvi. Taj detalj u njihovoj prezentaciji se ne može izbjeći, to je ono što se vidi na površini...

■ ■ Ne nalazite da je to otežavajuća okolnost za recepciju univerzalnog subteksta vašeg djela, da bi ona mogla biti svedena na lokalni eksces, kao nešto što se ne tiče ostatka čovječanstva?

No, to je naprosto pitanje dosljednosti. Moram biti dosljedan, moram provoditi svoju liniju i pritom ne biti dosadan. I nadati se da će publika, nakon što se zasiti Rusije i agresije, u svemu tome naći i nešto dublje, neku značajniju poruku. Kada lav ukrade kokoš u Indiji, prva će reakcija biti, naravno, da je lav negativac koji krade od civiliziranih ljudi. Dublji uvid će ići u smjeru da je čovjek taj koji je prisvojio kokoš, da joj hoće oduzeti ne samo život, kao što to čini lav, nego joj je oduzeo i slobodu - dakle, još je okrutniji od prirodnog grabežljivca. Uostalom, kao takvo biće sklono destrukciji uništio je i porobio cijeli planet. Moja pozicija je slična poziciji lava koji krade kokoške: kralj svih životinja kao najobičniji kokošar; ali i on je u tu poziciju došao zbog čovjeka. Umjetnici su danas u sličnoj poniženoj poziciji i otud smatram da umjetnici od kokošara opet moraju postati kraljevi. Zato naokolo ujedam kustose, kritičare i posjetitelje galerija. To je jedini jezik kojim danas raspolažu životinje i koji bi umjetnici također mogli iskoristiti za vraćanje svoga ugleda. Dakle, nekad ne možete izbjeći nasilje kao jedino pravo sredstvo komunikacije. Pa i sami znate - eto vam primjer

West keeps perceiving your work as that of a Russian artist... Briefly, the West is interested in you not as a dog, but as a Russian dog...

That is a very common attitude. In a way it is right, but it is nothing that would require much talking about. American artists are interesting for the rest of the world among other things because they are Americans; they are presented as such by the media and in public. That detail can not be avoided in their presentation, that is, what you see on the surface...

● ● Don't you find it an aggravating circumstance for the reception of the universal subtext of your work, don't you fear that it might end up reduced to a local act of excess, something that does not concern the rest of humanity?

Well, that is simply a matter of being consequential. I must remain consequential, I must pursue my line and avoid being boring. And hope that, when the audience is fed up with Russia and aggression, it will find in my work something deeper, some more significant message. When a lion steals a hen in India, the first reaction will naturally be that the lion is the bad guy who steals from civilized people. A deeper insight, however, will take the following direction: man is the one who has appropriated the hen, who wants not only to take its life, as the lion does, but has also taken away its freedom - therefore, he is even more cruel than the natural predator. By the way, as a being prone to destruction, man has demolished and enslaved much of the planet. My position is similar to that of the lion stealing hens: the king of all animals as mere henhouse-robber, reduced to that position because of man. Artists today find themselves in a similar humiliating position and therefore I am of the opinion that they should stop being henhouse-robbers and become kings again. That is why I keep biting around: curators, critics, and visitors to the galleries. That is the only language that animals own today and that artists could use as well in order to regain their dignity. Therefore, you can't avoid violence as the only true means of communication. You must be well aware of this - there you have the example of Milošević! Was it possible to put an end to him by any means other than violence? The position of artists today is the same as that of animals: they belong to a dying species. Their choice

sl. 2-4: Oleg Kulik, *Lizati ili ugristi? / To lick or to bite?*, Akademija likovnih umjetnosti / Academy of Visual Arts, Sarajevo, 2000., foto / photo: A. Zrno



4

Miloševića! Je li se s njim moglo izaći na kraj na bilo koji drugi način osim nasiljem? Pozicija umjetnika danas je istovjetna kao i pozicija životinja: to su vrste u nestajanju. Ili će iskoristiti sve svoje obrambene mehanizme i dobiti ono što zaslužuju, ili ih neće biti. Ovo miješanje umjetnosti i životinjskog svijeta možete, naravno, shvatiti i kao čisto rusko bunilo, ali tada imam alibi da sam samo jedan ruski umjetnik (smijeh).

Kapitalna tmina kapitalizma

■ ■ Očigledno nemate problema s vrstom identifikacije koja se tiče etničkog i nacionalnog. To je ovdje gorući problem već cijelo desetljeće. Uvijek se traži jasna identifikacija, uvijek se morate izjasniti - vi biste se morali izjasniti jeste li ruski ili ukrajinski umjetnik...

Ah, pa pitajte životinju. Recimo, pitajte orla je li ruski ili ukrajinski. To je posve suvišna stvar. Posebno je problematično što se ljudi, dok se zatvaraju u okvire nacije, istodobno sve više pozivaju na slobodu - sloboda, pa sloboda. Cijeli je evropski Istok u užasnoj poziciji - ne može se naprijed, a niti natrag, jer su sve veze pokidane. Sve je

is to use their defense mechanisms and get what they deserve or they will cease to exist. You can understand this blend of art and animal world as pure Russian delirium, but then I can use my alibi of being just a Russian artist (laughs).

Capital darkness of capitalism

● ● You obviously have no problem with identification regarding the ethnical and the national. That has been a hot issue in these areas during the past decade. One always needs clear identification, you are always required to state it - you, for example, should state whether you are a Russian or Ukrainian artist...

Ah, you should then ask an animal. Let's say, ask an eagle whether he is Russian or Ukrainian. It is utterly superfluous. What is particularly problematic is the fact that people, by closing themselves within the bounds of nations, refer to freedom at the same time - freedom and again freedom. The entire European East is in a terrible position - it can't move forwards, but backwards neither, since all ties have been torn. Everything is destroyed. It was necessary to change psychological boundaries in the first place. In that case it might not have even been necessary to change state boundaries, political or economic boundaries. Or at least the changes would not have been so violent. The story of freedom is still being told, but at the same time we survive by eating crumbs from the world's table.

● ● "A bogey-man is going around" this region (words from a rock-song, translator's note). The optimistic hypothesis is that here and now the most important thing is actually to establish capitalism, to stir the circulation of capital through the bodily tissue of society and that this will automatically save us from war, from "ethnic madness", etc. That goes together with the hypothesis that capitalist society is democratic and civilized. It does not engage in violence or wars. Therefore, we must become a capitalist society in order to survive...

That is a monstrous lie. Monstruous is the only fitting word. And then the privatization in Russia... Anyway, in all of former communist Europe... Only the Czech Republic had a somewhat better fate, but otherwise... That involves numerous issues,

uništeno. Prije svega je trebalo mijenjati psihološke granice. U tom slučaju možda se ne bi niti moralo mijenjati državne, političke, ekonomske granice. Ili barem te promjene ne bi bile tako nasilne. Priča o slobodi traje i danas, a za to vrijeme preživljavamo jedući mrvice sa svjetskoga stola.

■ ■ “Jedan bauk kruži” ovim prostorom. Optimistična teza da je ovdje i sada zapravo najpotrebnije da dođe kapitalizam, da kapital prokrvi društveno tkivo i da će nas to automatski spasiti od rata, “etničkog ludila” itd. To je teza da je kapitalističko društvo demokratsko i civilizarno. Ono se ne prepušta nasilju i ratovima. Dakle, moramo postati kapitalističko društvo da bismo preživjeli...

To je čudovišna laž. Čudovišno je jedina prava riječ. Pa ta privatizacija u Rusiji... Uostalom, cijela bivša komunistička Evropa... Jedino je Češka malo bolje prošla, ali inače... To povlači brojna pitanja, no riječ je o situaciji u kojoj ne možete biti na dobitku - jedini dobitnik je Zapad. Cijela priča o demokraciji uglavnom i funkcionira kao zastor za pranje novca, za kupovinu lokalnih tvornica i lokalne radne snage u bescijenje, tako da se ništa ne da ljudima. Konačno, to je posebno lako izvesti u zemlji u kojoj imate 12 predsjednika (Kulik aludira na činjenicu brojnih razina vlasti u današnjoj BiH: državne, entitetske, kantonalne, općinske... - op. N.J.). To je upravo toliko puta više priče da ste demokrati, da ste demokratska zemlja, a upravo toliko puta manje novca kod običnog naroda... Imali ste privatizaciju? Tada znate o čemu govorim... Sve je gore i gore...

■ ■ I u takvom crnom okruženju vi nastupate kao blještavi mirrorball - barem u svom najnovijem performansu *Armadillo for your show*. Glamour nakon naturalizma?

(Smijeh) Ah, pa Rusi bi rekli - barem jedna zraka svjetla u ruskoj tmini. No stvar je u globalnoj tmini: cijeli se svijet pretvorio u noćni klub - prostitutke, makroi, mafijaši, ubojice, zelenaši i naravno, umjetnici (smijeh). Svi nešto muljaju, ubijaju se na različite načine. Mrak sve to fino prikriva. Navikli smo se na tminu. Otud svjetlo u tom performansu - stotine malih ogledala polijepljenih po mojoj koži reflektira svjetlost; čovjek u pozi Jurija Gagarina kao dio disko mizanscene. Mene tmina ne zanima; užasavaju me kuloarska rješenja. Kad ste nepoznat umjetnik, svi vam jedno govore u

but we are talking here about a situation in which you can not win - the only winner is the West. Actually, the whole story about democracy mostly functions as a screen for money-washing, for the purchase of cheap local factories and labour at a bargain, so that nothing is given to the people. After all, that is particularly easy to achieve in a country in which you have twelve presidents (Kulik alludes to the fact of manifold layers of power in Bosnia and Herzegovina of today: state, entity, kantonal, communal power... interviewer's note). That means precisely more talk of being a democratic country and less money for the ordinary people... You went through privatization? Then you know what I am talking about... It is getting worse and worse...

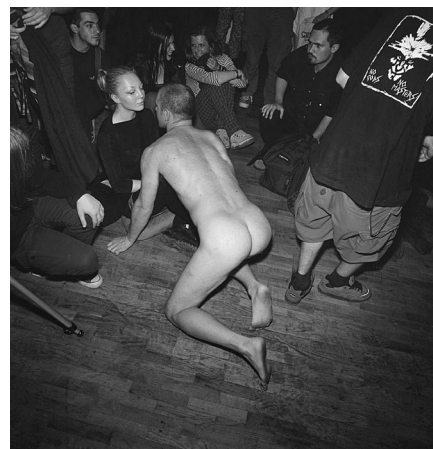
● ● And in such dark atmosphere you act as a shining mirrorball - at least in your recent performance *Armadillo for your show*. Glamour after naturalism?

(Laughs) Ah, well, Russians would say - at least a ray of light in the Russian darkness. But we are speaking here of global darkness: the whole world has turned into a nightclub - prostitutes, pimps, mafia, murderers, usurers and, of course, artists (laughs). Everybody is playing some game, killing each other in various ways. The darkness conceals it just fine. We are used to darkness. There is a source of light in my performance - hundreds of small mirrors glued to my skin reflect the light; a man posing as Yuri Gagarin as a part of the disco mise-en-scène. I am not interested in darkness; I am appalled by lobby solutions. When you are an unknown artist, everybody tells you one thing in your face, in some sort of fake confidence, and then they mock you behind your back. As soon as somebody tries to tell me something in confidence, I immediately turn my back at him. That sort of thing no longer interests me.

Parliamentary swarms

● ● What is your strategy of illumination for the future?

I am interested in new technologies. The body will inevitably blend with them. My way starts from the position of a dog towards the Internet. There will be no room for a man hostile to nature. Besides, man as a concept has been thoroughly exhausted; man in the sense of the crown of the entire natural order. Certainly, it makes



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sl.5: Oleg Kulik, *Bijeli čovjek i crni pas / White Man and Black Dog*, 1999., HDLU, Zagreb, foto / photo: B. Cvjetanović

lice, u nekakvom lažnom povjerenju, a iza leđa vas ismijavaju. Čim mi netko hoće reći nešto u povjerenju, odmah okrećem leđa. Ta me vrsta priče ne zanima.

Parlamentarni rojevi

■ ■ Kakva je vaša strategija za nastavak osvjetljavanja?

Interesiraju me nove tehnologije. Tijeklo će se neminovno sjediniti s njima. Moj put ide od pozicije psa prema internetu. Tamo neće biti mjesta za čovjeka suprotstavljenog prirodi. Uopće, čovjek kao koncept je posve iscrpljen; čovjek u smislu krune cijelog prirodnog poretka. Naravno, jedino ima smisla govoriti o čovjeku kao o kariki u lancu. Planiram otpočeti jedan proces u novom stoljeću, mnogo zanimljiviji od antropomornog procesa iz 19. i 20. stoljeća. To je nešto što sam postulirao još prije nekog vremena i što zovem zoofrenija. Dakle, riječ je prije o stanju, poput psihološke kategorije, a ne o pukom pojavnom obliku za koji se uvijek može ispostaviti da je utvara. Antropomorfni svijet je takva utvara. Mene interesiraju svijet i vrijeme kad će u parlamentu glasati prepelice.

■ ■ Što ako se ispostavi da su prepelice posve nezainteresirane za parlament?

Da, s prepelicama to definitivno može biti slučaj (smijeh), ali na nama je, ljudima, da brinemo o parlamentu kao o konceptu. Mi smo karika u lancu i naše je da budemo postojani sa svim što to znači, dakle i putem parlamenta. Isto tako, čovjeka karakterizira i to da izmišlja nova sredstva komunikacije, tako da ćemo sutra možda komunicirati s komarcima i biti ih u prilici pitati što misle o parlamentarnom sistemu. Možda im se dopadne...

■ ■ Za razliku od prepelica, komarci možda pristanu: naime, kukci bi u tom parlamentu imali aposlutnu većinu...

(Smijeh) To je pravi primjer ljudskog paranoičnog rezoniranja (smijeh). Prvi korak zoofrenije je usvajanje drugih oblika rezoniranja i ponašanja. Zašto tigar tjera srnu od laneta? Ne zato jer u njoj vidi skrbnika tog stvorenja, nego svog konkurenta; vidi nekoga tko bi mu mogao oduzeti plijen. Tigar će morati poraditi na promjeni svojih uvida, čovjek svojih.

■ ■ Govorili smo o odnosu Zapad-Kulik. Kakav je odnos Rusija-Kulik? Osim što vas, naravno, i tamo hapse...

sense to speak about man only as a link in the chain. I am planning to start a process in the new century, and a much more interesting one than the anthropomorphic process of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is something that I have postulated long ago and that I call zoophrenia. I am speaking of a condition, like a psychological category, not of a merely apparent shape which can always turn out a ghost. Anthropomorphic world is such a ghost. I am interested in the world and the time when quails will be voting in the parliament.

● ● What if it turns out that quails have no interest whatsoever in the parliament?

That's right, with quails that could definitely be the case (laughs), but it is our task, the task of humans, to take care of the parliament as a concept. We are a link in the chain and it is our task to be constant with all that such constancy entails, that means also through the parliament. Besides, man is marked by the tendency to invent new means of communication, so we might be able tomorrow to communicate with mosquitoes and have a chance to ask them what they think of the parliamentary system. They might as well like it...

● ● Unlike quails, mosquitoes might agree to it: namely, insects would have an absolute majority in that parliament...

(Laughs) That is a true example of the man's paranoic reasoning (laughs). The first step of zoophrenia is to adopt other forms of reasoning and behaviour. Why does the tiger chase the doe away from its fawn? It is not because he sees in the doe the protector of that creature, but because he takes it for a rival; he sees somebody who could take away his prey. The tiger will have to work on his insights, man will have to work on his.

● ● We spoke about the relationship Kulik-the West. What does the relationship Kulik-Russia look like? Apart from the fact, of course, that they have arrested you there as well...

(Laughs) Yes, arrests are arrests, and the difference is actually so small that I would not even mention it. Therefore it seems to me that artists in Russia do not have particular problems that would make them different from artists elsewhere. The same things happen to us like they do in the 'democratic' world. The main problem is the same: the bad side of democracy, the

(Smijeh) Da, hapšenja su hapšenja, i razlika je, zapravo, tako malena da je ne bih niti isticao. Otud mi se i čini da umjetnici u Rusiji nemaju neke posebne probleme po kojima bi se razlikovali od umjetnika drugdje. Dešava nam se sve što i u 'demokratskom' svijetu. Glavni problem je isti: ta loša strana demokracije, to da previše glupana iznosi svoje mišljenje, da dobivaju veliki medijski prostor, da ih se previše sluša i uzima za ozbiljno. Dakle, to je i u Rusiji, i ovdje kod vas, i u Americi. Umjetnost je u tom smislu najranjivija; već smo se dotakli toga. Moramo izgraditi svoje strategije, makar se pritom poslužili instrumentima glupana. Znae kako je soc-art posezao za slikama Lenjina ili Staljina: slikali su ih tako da su uvijek izgledali još monumentalniji. Posljedica toga je bila da su igledali još idiotskiji nego na standardnim portretima. Naravno, to se vidi, ljudi shvaćaju poruku, no glupani na vlasti to ne vide. Oni takve slike rado drže po svojim uredima i spavaonicama. Dakle, treba se nastaviti rugati glupanima: nemam ništa protiv ako mi oni pritom i plate za to, oni to ionako vrlo rado čine. Svoje subverzivno djelovanje, naravno, mogu zaodijevati u ljubav prema zekama i macama. Zbog toga će mi najvjerniji obožavatelji moći biti oni protiv kojih je to djelovanje upereno.

■ ■ Za kraj jedna demistifikacija: vrijedi li još uvijek primjedba Elene Seline iz njezine usporedne analize vas i Aleksandra Brenera, u kojoj je, između ostalog, utvrdila da Brener nikad ne bi pri planiranju performansa konzultirao horoskop?

(Pauza) Hm, to je bilo ranije, no danas to svakako nije slučaj. Više ne moram uzimati u obzir zvjezdani faktor.

■ ■ Hoćete li bar otkriti koji je vaš znak suncopasa?

(Smijeh) Neka ostane tajna. Ali, majka mi je Škorpija, a otac Riba. ■

fact that too many idiots express their opinions, that they get too much of the media space, that they are too often listened to and taken seriously. So that is the same in Russia as it is here, in America. Art is most vulnerable in this respect; we have already touched upon that. We must build up our strategies, even by using instruments of idiots. You know the way in which soc-art dealt with images of Lenin and Stalin: it presented them so that they looked ever more monumental. The result was that they looked even more idiotic than on standard portraits. Certainly, that can be noticed, people get the message though idiots in power do not see it. They love to hang such pictures in their offices and bedrooms. So, we must keep on mocking the idiots: I don't complain if they even pay me for that, they will do it gladly anyway. I can certainly conceal my subversive activity under love for kitties and bunnies. Therefore my most faithful admirers will be those against whom my activity is directed.

● ● At the end, an act of demystification: what about the remark of Elena Selina in her comparative analysis of you and Aleksander Brener, in which, among other things, she stated that Brener would never consult a horoscope while planning a performance - is it still actual?

(Pause) Hm, that was so before, today it is certainly not the case. I don't have to take the star factor into account.

● ● Will you at least reveal which is your Zodiac sign?

(Laughs) Let it remain a secret. However, my mother is a Scorpio, and my father a Pisces. ●

prijevod / translation: Marina Miladinov

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