

Milorad

Stajčić

**THE
EXHIBITION
OF A
SERBIAN
ARTIST**



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Bucharest, 2018.

The Exhibition of a Serbian Artist

With the title of his first solo exhibition abroad, Mića Stajčić contemplates the possibilities of national representation in art. At the same time, he hints about the context of contemporary art production as a tool for geopolitical positioning in the domain of authentic personal expression.

The key features of Stajčić's artistic expression are humor and provocation. In his work, he strives to highlight certain social phenomena in a way that is at once likable and intriguing, but also to provoke reexamination of the accepted dominant values, both collective and individual. His work abounds in symbols related to consumerist society and pop culture. The main goal of his art is to make the world a better place for man, by liberating it from the prejudices and fears grounded in social, political, and cultural dogmas and modern-day ideologies. This exhibition is a selection of works in different media, realized over the past few years. Sculpture is Stajčić's primary means of expression, though he often uses photography, videos, installations, and various interventions in public space.

Ksenija Marinković

Izložba srpskog umetnika

Nazivom svoje prve samostalne izložbe u inostranstvu, Mića Stajčić promišlja o mogućnostima nacionalne reprezentacije u umetnosti. Istovremeno aludira na kontekst savremene umetničke delatnosti kao sredstva geopolitičkog pozicioniranja u domenu autentičnog autorskog izraza.

Provokacija i humor su ključna obeležja Stajčićevog umetničkog izraza. Teži da svojim radom osvetli određene društvene fenomene na način koji je istovremeno dopadljiv i intrigantan te da podstakne na preispitivanje prihvaćenih dominantnih vrednosti, kako kolektivnih tako i individualnih. Njegov rad obiluje simbolikom iz oblasti potrošačkog društva i pop kulture. Glavni cilj njegove umetnosti je da svet učini boljim mestom za život čoveka, oslobađajući ga od predrasuda i strahova koje su utemeljene u društvenim, političkim i kulturološkim dogmama i ideologijama današnjice. Izložba predstavlja izbor radova u različitim medijima, realizovanih u proteklih nekoliko godina. Skulptura je primarni Stajčićev izraz, a bavi se još i fotografijom, videom, instalacijom i različitim intervencijama u javnom prostoru.

Ksenija Marinković

HOMOLOGOUS PAIRS

Mića's pieces are equally provocative and likeable. Their common feature is a prevailing sense of humor, which he expressed using puns translated into the medium of sculpture – what Americans call 'visual puns'. On the one hand, such an approach to sculpture may be seen in the works of the 1980s and is perhaps best embodied in the art of Jeff Koons. On the other, such an approach to sculpture may be regarded as expressive, because it also says a lot about the personality of the artist. It seemed interesting to follow Mića's artworks as expressions of his personality – some kind of symbolic self-portraits. The third important tradition present in the young artist's work, the history of modern sculpture, is tied to an awareness about the socially transformative potential of sculpture – the legacy of Joseph Beuys and his understanding of 'social sculpture'.

The installation titled 'Over the Rainbow' echoes all these three traditions, but also has a specific dimension related to the context and the environment in which it has been created and in which it is exhibited. I see it as a kind of an 'appropriate sculpture'. It seems important to note that a sculpture having appropriate character does not necessarily support a status quo. On the contrary, it merely derives from a broader domain of culture and is tied to a certain phenomenon that has its coordinates in time and space. Thus, Mića is here referring to an event that has had a shameful history in Serbia – the Gay Pride Parade, a public gathering of homosexually oriented people, who have been celebrating their basic human rights in this way all over the world. In Serbia, the first in a series of these events ended quite disastrously, showing how the institutions and the system were neither ready to allow such liberties to their citizens, nor were they especially interested in truly understanding diversity. At a time when this topic is, again becoming current, the artist wishes with his provocative installation to open a dialog. Mića's work is far from politically correct art that would dictate ethical content to people and thus annihilate its artistic nature – by becoming propaganda. His installation doesn't represent any one, however right, political agenda. But, in a playful way, it speaks to the public in order to disturb them.

HOMOLOGNI PAROVI

Mićini radovi su podjednako provokativni i dopadljivi. Zajednička karakteristika im je sveprisutnost humora, izraženog preko doskočica prevedenih u plastički medijum - ono što Amerikanci zovu "visual puns." Sa jedne strane, ovakav pristup skulpturi ima genealogiju počev od američkog popa, pa sve do postmoderne skulpture osamdesetih godina dvadesetog veka otelovljene najbolje u radovima Džef Kunsa (Jeff Koons). Sa druge strane, ovakav pristup skulpturi može se sagledati i kao ekspresivan, jer mnogo govori o ličnosti samog umetnika. Učinilo mi se interesantnim da pratim Mićine radove kao izraze njegove ličnosti - neke vrste simboličkih auto-portreta. Treća, važna tradicija istorije moderne skulpture prisutna kod ovog umetnika vezana je za svest o društvenom transformacijskom potencijalu skulpture - nasleđe Jozefa Bojsa (Joseph Beuys) i njegovog shvatanja "društvene skulpture".

Instalacija Over the Rainbow u sebi sadrži odjeke sve tri tradicije, ali ima i specifičnu dimenziju u odnosu na kontekst i sredinu u kojoj je stvorena i u kojoj se prikazuje. Ja je vidim kao jednu vrstu "prigodne skulpture". Čini mi se da je važno napomenuti da skulptura koja ima prigodni karakter ne mora da znači da podržava status quo. Naprotiv, ona samo ima povod u širem polju kulture i vezana je za izvesnu pojavu koja ima svoje koordinate u vremenu prostoru. Tako, Mića ovde referiše na događaj koji je u Srbiji imo sramnu istoriju - Gay Pride Parade - javno okupljanje ljudi homoseksualnog opredeljenja koji širom sveta na ovaj način obeležavaju svoja osnovna ljudska prava. U Srbiji, prvi ovaj događaj završio je izuzetno neslavno pokazujući kako ni institucije sistema nisu bile spremne da obezbede slobode svojim građanima, niti su posebno zainteresovane da razumeju različitost. U trenutku kada je ova tema ponovo aktuelna, umetnik želi da svojom provokativnom instalacijom otvori dijalog. Daleko je Mićin rad udaljen od politički ispravne umetnosti koja bi diktirala ljudima etički sadržaj i samim tim poništavala svoju umetničku prirodu – postavši propaganda. Njegova instalacija ne zastupa nijedan, ma koliko ispravan politički stav. Ona se, na razigran način, obraća publici da bi ih, uznemirila.

The sculptural installation 'Over the Rainbow' uses popular, emblematic Disney's heroes – Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck – in a frightful way. To the artist, it wasn't just about provoking shock – many other artists (for example, Jim Dine or Paul McCarthy) entered much deeply into the sphere of frightful and grotesque by destabilizing prudish characters such as Disney imagined them. Mića's approach to these popular figures is equally distanced from prudishness as it is distanced from politically correct propaganda. The artist toys with the sentimentality of the one who is observing the work – primarily in relation to the concept of the 'purely childish'. Mića, it appears, believes this construct to be false – childhood is only pure and innocent in a sentimentalized traditional version of the events. Or, although he likes to believe so, he is not entirely sure – and thus poses a dilemma before the observer. If we are being served such a relationship towards childhood by the dominant popular culture, then the only thing we could do is to reexamine it. At the same time, perhaps the observer needs to feel awkward when these likable creatures are found in an 'indecent' situation.

On a wider scale of the history and culture of the specific environment, the artist is undoubtedly attracting controversy so as to, among other things, signify his faith in the power of art to produce, if not society's transformation, then at least a reexamination. In this way, Mića has approached the utopian dimension of Beuys' idea about social sculpture and the artist as an agent of change. Hope remains that this installation could be exciting enough to the observer to successfully translate its meaning from the esthetics domain into the domain of ethics. The visually provocative installation would then act as a 'gentle switch' that calls for reviewing all the aspects of this social phenomenon and points to the crucial need for tolerance.

Jovana Stokić, 2010.

Skulptoralna instalacija Over the Rainbow koristi poznate, emblematičke Diznijeve junake - Mikija i Paju Patka na zazoran način. Za umetnika nije bilo samo važno da šokira - mnogi umetnici (na primer Jim Dine ili Paul McCarthy) zašli su mnogo dublje u sferu zazornog i grotesknog de-stabilišući čistunske likove kako ih je Dizni zamislio. Mićin pristup ovim popularnim likovima podjednako je udaljen od čistunstva koliko je udaljen od politički korektne propagande. Umetnik se poigrava sa sentimentalnošću onoga koji posmatra rad - pre svega u odnosu na koncept 'čistog detinjskog'. Mića, čini se, veruje da je ovaj konstrukt lažan - detinjstvo je samo u sentimentalizovanoj tradicionalnoj verziji događaja - čisto i nevino. Ili, iako u to i sam voli da veruje, nije skroz siguran - te stoga postavlja ovakvu dilemu pred posmatrača. Ako nam je ovakav odnos prema detinjstvu serviran od strane dominantne popularne kulture, onda ostaje da ga preispitamo. Istovremeno, možda je posmatraču potrebno da se oseti pomalo neugodno kada se dopadljiviji junaci nađu u 'nepristojnoj' situaciji.

Na širem planu istorije i kulture specifične sredine, neosporno je da umetnik svrsishodno priziva kontroverzu da bi naznačio i svoju veru u moć umetnosti da izazove, ako ne transformaciju društva, ono barem preispitavanje. Na ovaj način, Mića se približio utopijskoj dimenziji Bojsove ideje o društvenoj skulpturi i umetniku kao agensu promena. Ostaje nada da ova instalacija može da bude dovoljno uzbudljiva za posmatrača i da prenese značenje iz polja estetskog u polje etičkog. Vizuelno provokativna instalacija tako bi delovala kao 'nežni okidač' koji poziva na sagledavanje svih aspekata ovog društvenog fenomena i ukaže na neophodnost tolerancije.

Jovana Stokić, 2010.



OVER THE RAINBOW

2010.

Sculpture / Skulptura: 120 x 120 cm, polyester / poliester

Postament: 120 x 50cm, wood / drvo



Frozen person cannot dream, not even when asleep

French philosopher and cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard described Americanization of the world as Disneyfication – political, social, aesthetical, and other kitsch as societal model of a false, unadulterated happiness. Disney's characters inhabit a world devoid of doubt, injustice, suffering, and death. Their world is dehumanized by an imposed benevolence. In Disneyland, childhood is shown as birthplace of a utopia devoid of authentic experiences and oversaturated with effortless mental content; in a word, as an anesthetized dystopia. What happens when these seemingly naïve characters move from Disneyland to our world? When Stajčić assigns to Goofy, Pete, Miki, Donald, and Pluto roles not intended for them, then fiction gains and reality loses the same amounts. In this way, fiction becomes an eloquent form of reality.

In the artist's interpretation, cartoon characters cease to be flat and become portraits and self-portraits of contemporary global and local society. These are not individualistic but stereotypical portraits of societal functions and trends. Frozen man in the exhibition title is an alienated being seemingly moving in wide societal and political domains but actually staying in his intrinsic domain, akin to Marcuse's one-dimensional person. The artist uses animated characters from a sterile fairytale as "somewhat more general," two-dimensional representatives of contemporary characters. The artist places the characters in situations contrary to their innocuous character, thus achieving humorous effects.

In the artwork titled *Over the Rainbow*, the artist adapts contemporary societal and cultural trends in sexuality and human rights to children's understanding. The artist tries to neutralize a sexual orientation that some viewers may consider provocative. The author wonders whether the attitude tolerance of differences promptly resolves all ethical dilemmas. In particular, the author wonders whether one must follow this attitude in all cultural settings, or one may remain a hypocrite. If the supposedly open-minded adults accept sexual differences, do questions arise inside the family and among children?

Zaleđeni čovek ne sanja –ni u snu!

Svojevremeno je Žan Bodrijar (Jean Baudrillard) govorio o amerikanizaciji sveta kao o diznifikaciji. Pod tom odrednicom je podrazumevao politički, sociološki, estetski i dr. kič kao model društva čiji se poredak zasniva na simulakrumu ničim kontaminirane sreće. Dizniji likovi promovišu svet lišen sumnje, nepravde, patnje, smrti... ukratko svet dehumanizovan usiljenom benevolentnošću. Diznilend detinjstvo čoveka predstavlja kao rodno mesto jedne vrste utopije – toliko siromašne autentičnim iskustvima i prezasićene mentalnim komforom da se zapravo doima kao anestezirana distopija. Međutim, šta se dešava kada se ovi prividno naivni junaci, iz Diznilenda presele u svet koji nas okružuje? Stajčić Šilji, Dabi, Mikiju, Paji i Plutonu dodeljuje uloge koje za njih nisu pisane, čime fikcija dobija na težini u meri u kojoj je stvarnost gubi. Na taj način, fikcija postaje elokventan oblik stvarnosti.

Animirani likovi u umetnikovoj izvedbi gube jednoznačnost i postaju cinični (auto)portreti savremenog globalnog i lokalnog društva. Ovde nisu u pitanju individualni već tipski portreti socijalnih funkcija i/ili tendencija. Zaleđeni čovek iz naslova izložbe je otuđeni čovek koji se danas prividno kreće u nikad širim sociopolitičkim okvirima, istovremeno ne izlazeći iz domena vlastite imanencije, poput markuzeovskog jednodimenzionalnog čoveka. Iz tog razloga, umetnik animirane, sterilno-bajkolike junake, koristi kao „nešto svestranije” (dvodimenzionalne) zastupnike savremenika/ca. Stajčić ih pritom postavlja u situacije kontrastne njihovoj bezazlenosti, što proizvodi humoristički efekat.

Tako se recimo u radu *Over the rainbow*, autor bavi pitanjem prilagođavanja savremenih sociokulturnih tendencija u oblasti seksualnosti i ljudskih prava dečijem poimanju. Drugim rečima, umetnik preispituje mogućnost neutralizacije donedavno provokativne seksualne orijentacije. Autor se pita da li floskula „poštovanje razlika” jednim potezom razrešava sve etičke dileme i da li ona zahteva doslednost u svim kulturnim registrima (ili je bolje ostati licemeran).

Alternatively, may the unusual and controversial families and partnerships of today perhaps become dominant ones, displacing today's heterosexual norms to societal margins occupied by the economically disadvantaged and uncouth?

The triptych *More Equal than the Others* consists of white, yellow, and black Mickey Mouse corpses. This artwork deals with racial and other inequalities based on prejudice. Rosi Braidotti wrote in *The Posthuman*:

“This paradigmatic self-representation, moreover, is deeply male-centered and Eurocentric. As such, it implies the dialectics of self and other, and posits the binary logic of identity and otherness as respectively the motor for and the cultural logic of universal Humanism. Central to this universalistic posture and its dualistic logic is the notion of ‘difference’ as pejoration. By organizing differences on a hierarchical scale of decreasing worth, this humanist subject defined himself as much by what he excluded from as by what he included in his self-representation. Subjectivity is equated with consciousness, universal rationality, and self-regulating ethical behaviour, all of them equating masculinity and European civilisation, whereas Otherness is defined as its negative and specular counterpart: irrationality, immorality, femininity and non-westerness. In so far as difference spells inferiority, it acquires both essentialist and lethal connotations for people who get branded as the ‘others’. These are the sexualised, racialised, and naturalised others, who are reduced to the less-than-human status of disposable bodies. Consequently, we are all humans, but some of us are just more mortal than others. Because their history in Europe and elsewhere has been one of lethal exclusions and fatal disqualifications, these ‘others’ raise issues of power and exclusion.”¹

In Stajčić's interpretation, the self and the other are embodied in the same person. Only the first, however, of three deaths renders the fantasy (the white Mickey) real, as Stajčić conveys by a more realistic treatment. Only the white Mickey's death affects the viewer. Indeed, occasional massacres in Western Europe and the USA receive more publicity than the wars and countless victims in the rest of the world. The yellow and black corpses are aberrations, partially (un)successful copies of the basic human prototype – the white one.

Da li se kada se pomenute razlike uvedu u dečiji i porodični domen, one više ne pokazuju tako neupitnim, tako opštim mestom kakvo predstavljaju u svetu emancipovanih (?) odraslih? Ili su naprotiv danas još uvek alternativni oblici porodice/partnerstva na putu da postanu preovlađujući, istiskujući heteronormativnost na margine interesovanja, među ekonomski i/ili duhom siromašne, na primer.

Ovom ciklusu pripada i triptih *Jednakiji od drugih*, koji predstavlja tri leša Miki Mause, bele, žute i crne boje. Rad problematizuje rasnu ali i svaku drugu nejednakost, zasnovanu na predrasudama. Rečima Rozi Brajdotti (Rosi Braidotti):

„Evrocentrična paradigma podrazumeva dijalektiku sopstva i drugog, i binarnu logiku identiteta i drugosti kao motor i kulturnu logiku univerzalnog humanizma. Središnji koncept ovog univerzalističkog stava i njemu svojstvene binarne logike jeste koncept „razlike” kao degradacije. Subjektivnost je izjednačena sa svešću, univerzalnom racionalnošću, i samoregulativnim etičkim ponašanjem, dok je drugost određena kao njen negativan i utvarni dvojnik. U onoj meri u kojoj razlika podrazumeva inferiornost, ona zahteva esencijalistička i smrtonosna prenosna značenja za ljude koji su označeni kao „drugi”. To su seksualizovani, racijalizovani, naturalizovani drugi, svedeni na ne-sasvim humana potrošna tela. Svi smo mi ljudi, ali neki od nas su naprosto smrtniji od drugih (podvukla D.P.). Budući da je „istorija drugih” u Evropi i drugde bila niz smrtonosnih isključivanja i kobnog obezvređivanja, drugi skreću pažnju na problem moći i isključivanja”.¹

U interpretaciji M. Stajčića „prvog” i „druge” otelotvorava ista ličnost. Međutim, samo u prvom slučaju smrt fikciju (belog Mikija) pretvara u realnost, što je predloženo realističnijim likovnim tretmanom. Drugim rečima, jedino njegova smrt zaista deluje (sporadični teroristički napadi u zapadnoj Evropi i SAD, sa par desetina žrtava, više potresaju globalnu javnost od svih ratova i neizbrojivih žrtava u drugim delovima sveta). Ostala dva žuti i crni, predstavljaju tek aberacije, manje-više (ne)uspele kopije ili negativne „osnovnog”, belog „prototipa” ljudskosti. Etos globalizovanog sveta je navodno rasterećen konzervativne politike te zasnovan na kulturnom relativizmu.



MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS / JEDNAKIJI OD DRUGIH

2012.

polyester, plexiglass / poliester, pleksiglas

dimensions of 3 sculptures / dimenzije 3 skulpture : 30 x 35 x 15cm

Ethos of the globalized world allegedly is freed of conservative politics, and based on cultural relativism. For the white people of western societies, however, life is a domain of optional experiments with imagined identities. For the westerners, death is noteworthy, but it is an atavism nonetheless. The only unavoidable aspects of death are the connections with ancestors and the self. Westerners deny to the people in the other parts of the world the same creative autonomy and the same dignity in death.

From the viewpoint of the West, outsiders are marked by the actual political system, ethnic stereotypes, and obsolete values to a greater extent than the Westerners are. Because outsiders are considered less individualized and less self-aware, they die deaths that are “more encompassing but of lesser quality.” In other words, they die more irreversibly but deviating less from their own lives because even while alive “they were unable” to justify – or perhaps fictionalize – their own existence. This existence, in the westerners’ opinion, was akin to nonexistence.

Sculpture titled “Was ist Hirst” is cut lengthwise, and one-half is shown in a glass box, which exposes the innards made of m&m candy. At a first glance, “Was ist Hirst” refers to Damien Hirst’s installations of animal corpses submerged in formaldehyde inside glass tanks. These famous artworks share a common theme, namely the physical impossibility of the living beings to conceive death. Similarity with Hirst aside, Stajčić apparently is not trying to underlie the porous, and thus uncertain and shame-provoking, distinction between life and death, as Hirst does. On the contrary, Stajčić seems to parody Hirst’s combination of the literally dead remnant of life with memento mori elements of still life. Stajčić presents death’s action as an edible fun practiced without any transcendental input or insight. He uses dissection as a metaphor for a somber scientific act, but uses this act frivolously. Because a cartoon image has only the outside, it defies the distinction between outside and inside; dissection therefore becomes irrelevant. The author thus ironizes the dominant analytical paradigm, deconstruction, applying it to a case incapable of being deconstructed – cartoon character of a dog.

Međutim, za bele stanovnike/ce Zapada, život je područje neobavezujućih, autofiktivnih identitarnih eksperimenata dok je smrt, iako pažnje vredna, ipak „atavizam” – jedino što ih na obavezujući način povezuje sa sopstvenim prethodnicima/prethodnicama i samima sobom. Istovremeno, drugim delovima sveta zapadnjaci ne priznaju istu stvaralačku autonomiju, kao ni dostojanstvo u smrti.

U očima Zapada, ljudi izvana su nekako uvek neposrednije obeleženi zatečenim političkim sistemom, etničkim stereotipima, preživelim vrednostima i sično, nego što su to oni sa Zapada. Oni se samim tim smatraju manje individualizovanim, manje samosvesnim, zbog čega umiru smrću „sveobuhvatnijom ali lošijeg kvaliteta”.

Drukčije rečeno, oni umiru nepovratnije ali s manje otklona od sopstvenog života, budući da prethodno „nisu bili u stanju” da opravdaju (fikcionalizuju?) svoje postojanje, zbog čega se ono, po zapadnjačkom mnjenju, ne razlikuje mnogo od nepostojanja.

U istu grupu radova spada skulptura po imenu Was ist Hirst, izložena u staklenoj vitrini i presečena napola, kako bi se videla njena unutrašnja anatomija, sačinjena od bombona. Na prvi pogled, Was ist Hirst referiše na čuvene Herstove instalacije (Damien Hirst) mrtvih životinja, izloženih u staklenim vitrinama sa formaldehidom, koje, po zamisli umetnika, tematski objedinjuje fizička nemogućnost smrti u svesti živih. Ipak, bez obzira na sličnost, čini se da Stajčić svojim radom ne želi da potcrta poroznu i time zazorno neizvesnu razliku između života i smrti, poput Hersta. Naprotiv, on kao da parodira Herstovu kombinaciju (i doslovno) mrtve prirode i memento mori elementa. Stajčić prikazuje rad smrti kao jestivu zabavu koja se upražnjava bez ikakvog transcendentalnog obola ili uvida. Pritom, umetnik se disekcijom služi kao metaforom ozbiljnosti naučnog postupka, koji pak primenjuje na „neozbiljan” način: on disecira crtani lik koji po definiciji ne podleže dijalektici spolja-unutra, jer ima isključivo spoljašnjost, čime automatski tu vrstu analize čini bespredmetnom. Takođe, moglo bi se reći da autor na ovaj način ironizuje dekonstrukciju, prevlađujuću analitičku paradigmu, primenjujući je na slučaj u kome, s obzirom da animirani pas nema utrobu, nema šta da se dekonstruiše.

WAS IST HIRST

2016.

115 x 40 x 160 cm

glass, polyester, M&M candies / staklo, poliester, M&M bombone



Individualism sees typical instances and recognizes in them a miniature view of the world, so-called microcosm. Ironism seeks trivial instances, preferably humorous ones, in order to establish a whole. Ironism does not expose the content of the whole, in a way that would enlarge that whole. Rather, ironism relies on instantaneous magic, and invokes allusive reasoning powers. To correctly evaluate what it says, we should not view things from the standpoint of ambitious particulars, which make us laugh. A particular is, in fact, more entertaining than funny. Just as nothing in this world is limitless, nothing is worthless, either. Inherent to irony are simultaneous claims that every creation is positive and imperfect. Almost nothing deserves disdain; almost nothing is essential. In humor, nothing is irreplaceable. Prangs of conscience, however, oppose this view and consider everything as irreplaceable. Irony reconciles humor and prangs of conscience, holding that nothing is null although everything is null.²

In contemporary societal context, nothing seems to be limitless or unreachable, not even death. Until recently, death played a decisive role in individual selfawakening. Nowadays it is to the contrary. In Stajčić's art, death unobtrusively infiltrates the (un)consciousness of contemporaries, and emerges only as an accidental byproduct of the culture of (forced) enjoyment. Death so understood lacks eschatological dimension because death belongs on the proximate side of the impossibility of self-perception. The artist therefore deals with death by toying with it. The artist fully expresses actual numbness and irrelevance of death and numbness of the potential public facing death.

Dominant group in this series is a pair of larger-than-life sculptures of Goofy and Pete, titled "Placebo." Goofy, wearing a cleric's habit, offers sacrament to Pete wearing police uniform. The name Goofy suggests dullness and bumbling. Pete in Disney's ensemble is a criminal. Knowing their characters, we see these two sculptures as sarcastic figures, allegory of Stupidity blessing Force. Spiritual and worldly authorities get along and support each other in the joint mission of subduing human spirit. These two authorities use different means to the same end – docile citizenry least capable of distinguishing church and state. In this mission, Stupidity sanctifies Force, which in turn protects Stupidity.



PLACEBO

2015.

kombinovana tehnika / mixed media

visina skulptura / sculpture high: 210cm & 150cm, postament: 280 x 30 cm



„Ali dok individualizam nalazi načina da u tipičnim pojedinačnostima prepozna minijturni vid sveta, ili, kako se to kaže mikrokozam, „ironizam” traži beznačajnu i, koliko je to moguće, smešnu pojedinost kako bi pomoću nje vaspostavio celinu, ne izlaganjem njene sadržine kojim se njene razmere uvećavaju, nego oslonivši se na čaroliju koja trenutno deluje i prizivajući aluzivne moći rasuđivanja. Ako želimo da pravilno ocenimo ono što on kaže, stvari ne treba da posmatramo sa stanovišta ambicioznih pojedinačnosti na čiji nas račun on zasmejava. Pojedinost je, uistinu, pre zabavna nego smešna, i kao što na ovome svetu ništa nije bezgranično, tako ništa nije ni potpuno bezvredno: jer ironiji je svojstveno da istovremeno tvrdi da je svaka stvorena stvar pozitivna i nesavršena. Gotovo ništa ne zaslužuje prezir, ali ni gotovo ništa nije neophodno. Humor kaže da ništa nije nezamenljivo, ali se griža savesti protivi tom shvatanju jer je za nju sve nezamenljivo: ironija miri grižu savesti sa humorom i zaključuje da ništa nije ništavno, iako je sve ništavno”.²

U savremenom društvenom kontekstu, čini se da ništa nije bezgranično ni nedohvatno, pa ni smrt. Donedavno je smrt igrala presudnu ulogu u individualnom samosveščivanju. Danas je upravo suprotno, smrt se kao kod Stajčića, nenametljivo provlači kroz (ne)svest savremenika/ca, pomalajući se samo kao „slučajni” nusprodukt kulture (prinudnog) uživanja. Tako shvaćena smrt ne poseduje eshatološku dimenziju, budući da se nalazi sa ove strane nemogućnosti samosagledavanja. Zbog toga umetnik ovde progovara o smrti poigravajući se njome, puštajući da njena aktuelna nemuštosť te „irelevantnosť”, baš kao i nemuštosť potencijalne publike (pred njom), dođe do punog izražaja.

Konačno, dominantnu skulptoralnu grupu ovog ciklusa čine dve skulpture Šilje i Dabe, u nešto većim dimenzijama od prirodnih, pod imenom Placebo. Šilja, obučen u sveštensćku odeždu, pričešćuje Dabu koji nosi policijsku uniformu. Originalno ime Diznijevog Šilje je Guffy, što bi se moglo prevesti kao Glupavko ili Šeprtlja. A Daba (Pete) je u Diznijevom svetu lik kriminalnog mentaliteta. Imajući to u vidu, ove dve skulpture posmatramo kao dve sarkastićne, alegorijske figure, koje insceniraju situaciju u kojoj Glupost blagosilja Silu.



Harmonious tandem of two absolute authorities has a local flair but universal reach, nevertheless. Christian, Islamic, corporatist, wellness, ecological – all fundamentalisms exploit human longing for security. Certainty of good or evil is a commodity sold by fundamentalists of all stripes, in different wrappings for all tastes, for the sake of political correctness.

In this example, Orthodox Christian church or dogma symbolizes capital(ism), while the repressive apparatus of state, represented by police, ensures that the spiritual, intellectual, and moral life of the community remains inside the clearly marked limits of freely chosen unfreedom. The solemn act of Eucharist puts believers under the spiritual tutelage of the church just as police power puts them under the surveillance of the state. The artist presents an image of authority that rules over all the citizens as subjects and debtors without answering to anyone because all authorities are considered to be given by god.

Viewed as a whole, these artworks thoughtfully and humorously challenge the conventional understanding of human existence. Although Stajčić borrows pop-art morphology, his sculptures do not embody the aesthetics of false neutrality and pretended subtle irony, which are characteristic of pop art. On the contrary, the artist openly calls for confrontation with social and cultural contradictions and with harmful side effects of today's medications prescribed for good life.

References

¹Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, Polity Press, 2013.

²Vladimir Jankelevič, *Ironija (Irony)*, Zoran Stojanović's publishing bookstore, Sremski Karlovci, Serbia; 1989, pp. 163 - 164.

Dušica Popović, 2017.
Translation: Nenad M. Kostić

Duhovna i svetovna vlast se međusobno dobro slažu i podupiru s obzirom da se nalaze na istom zadatku podjarmljivanja ljudskog duha.

One se služe različitim sredstvima kako bi došle do istog cilja – poniznog građanstva koje treba da što manje bude u stanju da razlikuje državu od crkve. U te svrhe Glupost posvećuje Silu a Sila zauzvrat obezbeđuje Glupost. Skladan spoj dva neprikosnovena autoriteta, uprkos svom lokalnom tonu, ipak ima univerzalan domašaj. Hrišćanski, muslimanski, korporativistički, velnes, ekološki... fundamentalizmi uvek igraju na kartu samoskrivljene žudnje za sigurnošću. Izvesnost dobra ili zla je roba koju fundamentalisti raznih boja prodaju u različitim pakovanjima, „za sve ukuse”, političke korektnosti radi (sic!).

U ovom slučaju crkva tj. pravoslavna dogma predstavlja simbolički kapital a policija ili državni represivni aparat se stara da se duhovni, intelektualni, moralni život zajednice održava unutar jasno omeđenih granica slobodno izabrane neslobode. Svečani čin euharistije vernike/ce stavlja pod duhovno starateljstvo crkve baš kao što ih policijska ovlašćenja stavljaju pod nadzor države. Umetnik ovde prezentuje sliku vlasti čiji su svi građani/građanke podanici i dužnici a koja ne odgovara nikome, budući da je „svaka vlast od boga”.

Posmatrani u celini, ovi radovi sačinjavaju promišljen, humorom protkan izazov rutinerskom poimanju egzistencije. Iako autor preuzima morfologiju pop arta, njegove skulpture ne neguju estetiku lažne neutralnosti i kvazisuptilne ironije, tako karakteristične za pop art ostvarenja. Naprotiv, on otvoreno poziva na suočavanje sa društvenim i kulturnim kontradikcijama i kontraindikacijama ovovremenih lekova za dobar život.

¹Rozi Brajdoti, Posthumano, Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, Univerzitet Singidunum, Beograd, 2016,

²Vladimir Jankelevič, Ironija, Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, Sremski Karlovci, 1989, 163 - 164.

Dušica Popović, 2017.
preveo Nenad M. Kostić



Ebenezer Gold

Scrooge McDuck, or Uncle Scrooge, named after the character of a miser in a Charles Dickens' novel, is an extremely wealthy businessman and self-proclaimed 'adventure-capitalist'. In Ebenezer Gold, Stajčić parodies the most popular public monument in Belgrade, which has become an unofficial symbol of Serbia's capital. This monument of triumph, entitled 'The Victor', was installed in 1928, in the Upper Town of the Belgrade Fortress (Kalemegdan), on the occasion of celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Breakthrough of the Macedonian Front and the final victory in the First World War. The monument is a bronze male statue with a hawk on his left hand and a sword hanging from his right, whose author is the sculptor Ivan Meštrović. The statue is set on a pedestal shaped as a fluted Doric column raised on a high cubical base, which was designed by the architect Petar Bajalović. The authentic monument is a personification of victory. In the context of a city landmark, it reflects a specific set of values which have come to be identified with the image of the Serbian capital – bravery, justness, endurance. This same year when the Ebenezer sculpture was created, we are celebrating 100 years since the end of the Great War and 90 years since the installation of the Kalemegdan monument.

The spectacular memorial, however, endured some harsh criticism at the time when it was created. The newly formed Serbian civil society found the personification of victory in a body of a naked man to be unsettling and disputable. Initially intended for one of the city's most representative squares – Terazije, 'The Victor' was first taken to a depot and then, when the circumstances allowed it, set on a column tall enough to ensure that his nudity wouldn't offend the moral sense of Serbian women. Here, we are talking about the emancipation of the taste and values of an environment, which is a commonplace in the history of art. Many works that have been cruelly judged in the past are today championed as the finest examples of artistic and cultural heritage in their respective countries. Manet's *The Luncheon on the Grass*, Michelangelo's *Sistine Chapel*, and even Meštrović's *The Victor* in Belgrade.





Ebenezer Gold

Baja Patak originalno Uncle Scrooge, nazvan tako po karakteru tvrđice iz romana Čarlsa Dikensa, je izuzetno imućan biznismen i samozvani "kapitalista avanturista". U radu Zlatni Ebenezer (Ebenezer Gold), Stajčić parodira najpoznatiji spomenik u Beogradu, koji je postao nezvanični simbol glavnog grada Srbije. Reč je o trijumfalnom spomeniku koji nosi naziv Pobednik podignutog 1928. na Gornjem gradu Beogradske tvrđave (Kalemegdan) povodom proslave desetogodišnjice proboja Solunskog fronta i pobe u Prvom svetskom ratu. Spomenik čine bronzana muška figura sa sokolom u levoj ruci i spuštanim mačem u desnoj, rad vajara Ivana Meštrovića, kao i postament koji je koncipiran u vidu dorskog stuba sa kanelurama na visokoj kubičnoj bazi, autorsko delo arhitekta Petra Bajalovića. Originalni spomenik predstavlja samu personifikaciju pobe. U kontekstu prepoznatljivog obeležja grada reflektuje određeni skup vrednosti koje se identifikuju sa pojmom srpske prestonice – hrabrost, pravednost, izdržljivost. Istovremeno u godini u kojoj nastaje skulptura Ebenezera, obeležava se stogodišnjica od završetka Velikog rata te devedesetogodišnjica postavljanja spomenika na Kalemegdanu.

Ovo monumentalno obeležje pretrpelo je žustre kritike u trenutku u kom je nastalo. Personifikacija pobe u telu nagog muškarca unela je nemir i izazvala negodovanje tadašnje građanske Srbije u povelju. Prvobitno predviđen za jedan od najreprezentativnijih trgova u gradu – Terazije, Pobednik je izmešten najpre u depo, a potom kad su se za to stekli uslovi, postavljen na dovoljno visokom stubu, tako da njegova nagost ne vređa moral srpskih devojaka. Ovde govorimo o emancipaciji ukusa i vrednosti jedne sredine, što je opšte mesto u istoriji umetnosti. Mnoga dela koja su bila oštro osuđivana, danas predstavljaju nosioce umetničkog i kulturnog nasleđa zemalja u kojima se nalaze. Maneov Doručak na travi, Mikelandelova Sikstinska kapela pa i beogradski, Meštrovićev Pobednik.

The work of Mića Stajčić has recently been the subject of a public debate about the values and morals of the environment in which it has been created and which it symbolically represents, further motivating the artist to continue bringing to light and problematizing certain social phenomena recognized both in Serbia and globally. In Stajčić's interpretation, Scrooge McDuck, with his posture, his nudity and the attributes of The Victor, imitates and at the same time also absorbs its ethical and symbolic characteristics. In the past 30 years, the socio-political and economic circumstances in Serbia have created conditions for the inauguration of a new winner – one who's managed to survive and profit from the disintegration of public institutions, who has taken matters into his own hands and created a reality in accordance with his own rules. In Serbia, like in most ex-socialist countries, he is called a tycoon, although the word itself, which is derived from a Japanese title for a military and feudal lord, doesn't have a derogatory connotation anywhere else in the world. This expression comprises all the frustrations caused by the newly formed circumstances, the defeat and devaluation of an ideology, the crisis of identity and the crisis in general. For someone to win, someone else has to lose.

A photographic negative of the Ebenezer statue delineates a monument to the loser, in whose shadow gather those who 'couldn't manage' and who are the majority. Still, Stajčić doesn't make judgments, doesn't suggest or deny; instead, he sees, identifies and interprets phenomena, in his own way. The sculpture of Ebenezer is also interesting because of its manner of production. Namely, the statue's relaxed, laconic posture is topped by the glow of its 23.8 karat gold encrustation. Its height of 2.90 m adds monumentality. The fact that we recognize the model in the sculpture allows to establish an instantaneous and immediate connection between the observer and the artwork. The original link between this character and money – a universally arranged measure of value – gives it a quasi-sacral character. Ebenezer hence becomes a mirror for human weaknesses, desires, fears and expectations, and transcends the limits of local context in which it was created.

Ksenija Marković, 2018.

Rad Miće Stajčića je nedavno bio predmet javne rasprave o vrednostima i moralu sredine u kojoj nastaje i koje simbolički reprezentuje, što je dodatno podstaklo umetnika da nastavi da osvetljava i problematizuje pojedine društvene fenomene prepoznate u Srbiji ali i globalno. U Stajčićevoj interpretaciji Baja Patak imitira položajem tela, nagotom i atributima beogradskog Viktora, a istovremeno apsorbira njegove etičke i simboličke karakteristike. Društveno-političke i ekonomske okolnosti u Srbiji u proteklih 30 godina stvorile su uslove za inauguraciju novog pobednika – onog koji je opstao i profitirao u uslovima dezintegracije postojećih institucija, koji je uzeo stvari u svoje ruke i kreirao stvarnost u skladu sa sopstvenim pravilima. U Srbiji kao i većini bivših socijalističkih zemalja nazivaju ga tajkunom, iako sama reč koja vodi poreklo od japanskog naziva za vojnog i feudalnog poglavara drugde u svetu nema pežorativnu konotaciju. U ovome su izrazu sbrane sve frustracije novonastalim okolnostima, porazom i devalvacijom jedne ideologije, krizom identiteta i krizom uopšte. Pobednik se ne može pojaviti bez poraženog.

Statua Ebenezera u svom negativu ocrta spomenik gubitniku u čijoj senci se okupljaju svi oni koji se "nisu snašli" a kojih je većina. Stajčić ipak ne donosi nikakav sud, on ne zagovara niti opovrgava već samo zapaža, identifikuje i interpretira fenomene na sebi svojstven način. Skulptura Ebenezera posebno je zanimljiva zbog same obrade. Prirodnost i lakoća stava koji zauzima ovaj kip pojačani su sjajem 23.8 karatnog zlata kojim je obložena. Visina od 2.90m, dodaje joj monumentalnost. Činjenicom da prepoznamo modela na skulpturi, omogućava trenutno i neposredno povezivanje posmatrača sa delom. Inicijalna veza ovog karaktera sa novcem – univerzalnim ugovorenim merilom vrednosti, daje joj dodatni kvazi- sakralni karakter. Ebenezer postaje tako ogledalo ljudskih slabosti, želja, strahova i očekivanja, i prevazilazi okvire lokalnog konteksta u kome nastaje.

Ksenija Marinković, 2018.



Ebenezer Gold

2018.
290cm (130cm + 160cm),
polyester, 23,8 karat gold leaves, wood / poliester, 23,8 karatna pozlata, drvo / Kolekcija
Collection of Zepter Museum in Belgrade, Serbia / Kolekcija muzeja Zepter, Beograd, Srbija





TEST 1 2 3 / PROBA 1 2 3
2017.

High / Visina: 30 cm
epoxy resin, M&M candies /
epoksidna smola, M&M bombone



GOOD OLD SAYING (ENGLISH VERSION) / STARA NARODNA (ENGLESKA VERZIJA)

2018.

100 x 52 x 6 cm

light-box

Milorad Mica Stajcic was born in 1977. in Belgrade, where he still lives and works. He graduated information technologies at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences and sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts in the class of prof. Mrdan Bajic. In his artistic work other than sculpture, he express through a variety of installations, video art, performance art, photography. The most common topics are consumer society, various human taboos, social values.

Solo exhibitions:

- 2018. "Omnipresent", Street Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2017. "The Second Most Important Thing", Gallery SKC, Kragujevac, Serbia
- 2016. "Frozen Man's Dreams 2", Cultural Center Pozega Gallery, Pozega, Serbia
- 2014. "Frozen Man's Dreams", Cultural Center Belgrade Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2013. "Interactions", Dom Omladine, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2012. "Justice Of The White Male", Dom Omladine, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2012. "The Clean Space", Gallery 73, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2011. "Of course it can do better", The Third Belgrade Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2010. "Contraspexion", Art Center UBSM, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2010. "+PDV", Magacin u Kraljevića Marka, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2010. "Interaction, Provocation, Communication", Gallery Dvoriste, Pancevo, Serbia
- 2010. "Over The Rainbow", Gallery Remont, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2009. "Freedom Is Confusing", Magacin u Kraljevica Marka, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2009. "Street Car Performance", Österreichisches Kulturforum Beograd, Serbia

Selected group exhibitions:

- 2018. "Limited", Nadežda Petrović Memorial, Čačak, Serbia
- 2018. "La Fin et Le Dèbut", Centre Culturel de Serbie, Paris, France
- 2016. "Belgrade to Bowie", Yugoslav Film Archive Museum, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2015. "Belgrade Month in Pristina", Pristina
- 2012. "Car Art Festival", Delft, Netherlands
- 2011. "For Kids And Adults", Wita Stwosza 32, Wroclaw, Poljska
- 2011. "Algebra", ITS-Z1, Ritopek, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2007. "INBETWEENESS", S. Michele Complex, Roma, Italy

Artwork in Collections:

- 2018. Permanent Collection of The Museum Zepter, Belgrade, Serbia
- 2017. Gallery SKC Kragujevac art collection, Kragujevac, Serbia
- 2011. Šumatovačka Art Collection, Belgrade, Serbia

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Milorad Mića Stajčić je rođen 1977. godine u Beogradu, gde živi i radi. Diplomirao je informacione tehnologije na Fakultetu organizacionih nauka i vajarstvo na Fakultetu likovnih umetnosti u klasi prof. Mrdana Bajića. Trenutno je na doktorskim studijama na Fakultetu likovnih umetnosti u Beogradu. Ima status samostalnog umetnika, član je ULUS-a, umetničke grupe Dimenzija, suosnivač je galerije X Vitamin u Beogradu. U svom umetničkom radu, osim skulpture izražava se i putem raznih instalacija, video radova, performansa, fotografije... Najčešća tema su novac, potrošačko društvo, pop kultura, razni ljudski tabui, društvene vrednosti..

Samostalna izlaganja:

- 2018. "Sveprisutan", Ulična galerija, Beograd
- 2017. "Druga najvažnija stvar", Galerija SKC, Kragujevac
- 2016. "Snovi zaleđenog čoveka 2", Galerija KC Požega, Požega
- 2014. "Snovi zaleđenog čoveka", Galerija KCB, Beograd (nominacija za Politikinu nagradu za najbolju izložbu u 2015. godini)
- 2013. "Intertrakcije", Galerija Doma Omladine, Beograd
- 2012. "Pravda belog muškarca", Galerija Doma Omladine, Beograd
- 2012. "Brisani prostor", Galerija 73, Beograd
- 2011. "Naravno da može bolje", Galerija Treći Beograd, Beograd
- 2010. "Kontraspekcija", Umetnicki centar UBSM, Beograd
- 2010. "+PDV", Magacin u Kraljevića Marka, Beograd
- 2010. "Interakcija, provokacija, komunikacija", galerija Dvorište, Pančevo
- 2010. "Over The Rainbow", galerija Remont, Beograd
- 2009. "Sloboda zbunjuje", Magacin u Kraljevića Marka, Beograd

Probrana grupna izlaganja:

- 2018. "Limited", Memorijal Nadežde Petrović, Čačak
- 2018. "Kraj i početak", Kulturni centar Srbije, Pariz, Francuska
- 2016. "Belgrade to Bowie", Muzej jugoslovenske kinoteke, Beograd
- 2015. "Mesec dana Beograda u Prištini", Priština, Kosovo
- 2014. "O vrednosti", Šok galerija, Novi Sad
- 2012. "Car Art Festival", Delft, Holandija
- 2011. "Za male i velike", Wita Stwosza 32, Wroclaw, Poljska
- 2011. "Algebra", ITS-Z1, Ritopek, Beograd
- 2007. "INBETWEENESS", S. Michele Complex, Rim, Italija

Radovi u kolekcijama:

- 2018. Stalna kolekcija muzeja Zepter, Beograd, Srbija
- 2017. Kolekcija galerije SKC Kragujevac, Srbija
- 2011. Umetnička kolekcija Šumatovačke, Beograd, Srbija
- i brojne privatne kolekcije

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