

"The White Cube" and Exhibition Theatricality-Anca Munteanua Rîmnic and Delia Popa at Salonul de Proiecte

The most recent exhibition at the *Salon of Projects* unveils its protagonists and stake: *Anca Munteanu Rimnic* and *Delia Popa*, two artists with well-defined creative approaches that can be presented together, both symbolically and concretely. From the beginning of its activity between "salon" and one-man show shows, after "It is mandatory to have a title", the Salon hosts a collective exhibition "2 in 1" which sums up, like its non-title, two personal exhibitions juxtaposed at the same time and space. The site-specific installations of the two artists are set up as round and complete projects themselves, presented separately, without a common conceptual umbrella.

This monadic exposure becomes visible at the spatial level, each artist occupying a well defined and precisely circumscribed volume in the Salon architecture. In the absence of communication between the parties, the coherence of the ensemble is achieved subtly through the theatricality of the exhibition display. At the entrance, the spectator is absorbed in the funnel effect of the ellipsoidal wall incorporating *Delia Popa's* video installation, while directing the view to the black curtain, partially raised to reveal the dark room where *Anca Munteanu Rimnic's* video ghostly pulses. A flexible "white cube" on the material level, the Salon functions as a sense-generating space, which significantly revives the scene that the invited artists are active in.

Theatricality is explicitly owned in the case of *Delia Popa*, "*We, Our Friends and Us- A Play for Several Monitors*", a video installation on seven screens. Considered a play in four acts, the video discourse flows from one screen to another, depending on the sequential order of the character's response. In the construction of this work the artist has gone through a metadramatical approach, through which interviews with friends become the speeches of fictional characters. The "*Eighties Feminist Artist*," the "*Feminist Atheist Artist*," or "*The Holotropic Breathing Facilitator*" answer unspoken questions, or, more precisely, taken out of the represented-representation. By dividing the addressee from the video sequences, the dialogue becomes a monologue, and finally, when the accelerated rhythm of stage entry leads to the overlapping of voices, it collapses, according to the artist's terminology, in a sort of "super-log."

Delia Popa's work continues in the direction of her earlier creative path. The choice of quasi-anthropological research for interviewing as a work tool and also material that is manipulable for artistic purposes is the basis of projects such as *Secret Life of Houseplants* or *Matonge-Tervuren*, the call to a theatrical interface for a wider social comment is explicit in the *5+ 20* video and interest in feminism, gender issues or marginality is reported in *Poli and Mano*, *The Facebook Project*, or *Chelen Amenca*. In the *We, Our Friends and Us* installation, the artist indirectly interrogates feminism - socially, artistically and personally - in conjunction with various versions of spirituality, to suggest a possible parallelism between the diversity and relativism of the existing positions, or in relation to beliefs, ideologies, or social phenomena. The discursive puzzle remains unsolved, the voices overlap, the ideas mingle, and finally the verbalization of these themes with polemical weight and potential dissolves into chaos. But it can be a positive Babel: the individual voices coagulate, unite in a noisy stream flowing to the endpoint of any debate, where consensus consists, in fact, in providing a neutral ground that allows the coexistence of a plurality of opinions.

The work of Anca Munteanu Rîmnic, *Lamenta Imprint*, is structured in four stages, the latter transgressing the boundaries of the exhibition space and welcoming the audience from the Salon door. It's a collage that signals the object used in the gruesome dance of the *Lamenta II Footprint*: six black women, six probable boys in a tight circle, plastic bags like bundles of flowers in their hands. In the surroundings of Anca Munteanu Rîmnic, this core choreography is flanked by *Amprenta Lamenta I*, a two-channel video that addresses the viewer bidirectionally. The latter becomes the object of the fixed gaze of two elderly in black, characters with archetypal potential, communicating hidden, onomatopoeic knowledge. On the ground, *Lamenta III Impression*, six wax objects as a site-specific intervention that marks the traces left by the earlier function of the building as a paper storage building.

Anca Munteanu Rimnic interacts artistically with the past of the exhibition space, but also with her personal one. Her creative journey is marked by alternative scenarios whereby the artist is self-exonerating and perpetuating herself in the culture and customs of the country where she was born, but in which she lived only for a little while. When she photographs herself in a traditional costume with the question "*Would I Have Look Like This Had I Stayed in Romania?*", when a peasant carpet eaten by moths becomes *Map of Lost Steps*, or when she sculpturally revives the form of vases created by her father in Romania 60s, the artist traverses a reverse trajectory. Starting from the material footprints of an inaccessible past, from the left over physical impressions, towards the origins, she seeks their meanings and implications in relation to the present.

Anca Munteanu Rimnic's approach is symptomatic of the global context of contemporary art, in which the traveling artist has the world as home - the current project is actually the consequence of a proposal for the *Global Exhibition without Globalization* exhibition- and which facilitates other ways of communication and relationship. In relation to her original space, the artist practices a look from the exterior to the interior and from the object to the subject. Like a collaborative anthropologist, the artist works with the subjects of her own analysis and orchestrates a mourning in the *Amprenta Lamenta*, a collective complaint. The spectator finds himself/herself placed in the other's position, the intruder who involuntarily witnesses a mysterious ceremony, an inaccessible and indescribable mystery.

Beyond some seemingly common features of the two artists, their projects, both the previous ones and the ones exhibited at the Salon, are articulated sufficiently distinctive at a conceptual, material and aesthetic level, in order to have an individual feel in relation to the others. It is what the Salon exhibitions manages to do: to provide the vital space necessary for any artistic gesture to be metamorphosed into a project.

by **Diana Ursan**, Cultural Observer Magazine, # 677, 06/2013. Translated from Romanian by Google Translate and Delia Popa