

Mojca Puncer

Polona Tratnik: Ko fragmenti telesa postanejo skodelice za zajemanje mikrokozmosa

Delo slovenske vizualne umetnice Polone Tratnik nas ob pomoči biotehnologije s svojo perceptivno in predstavno večrazsežnostjo učinkovito usmerja k lastnemu telesu.

Ideja, da bi kip iz umetnih materialov prekrila z živo kožo, je umetnico vodila k instalaciji *37°C* (2001), ki ob tem, da uspe povzeti funkcije in lastnosti, tesno zvezane z našo telesnostjo, celostno pristopa k percepciji galerijskega prostora. Fragmenti telesa so bili postavljeni v posebne pogoje, tako da je na njih lahko zrasla plast človeških kožnih celic, s čimer preizprašujejo dekorativni status razstavljenih objektov ter intenzivirajo zaznavanje.

Tukaj ne gre spregledati deleža tiste telesnosti, ki prihaja iz biologije in medicine. Pri tem se umetnica sooči z zaporo kot posledico specifičnega odnosa z novimi tehnologijami, katere simptom je predvsem razpad telesne površine. Sodobna vidljivost telesa postaja polje nevarnih povezav - med naravnim in umetnim, organskim in anorganskim -, potencialnost, zaznamovana z grozljivostjo in privlačnostjo telesne razprtosti.

Z zadnjim projektom *Privatni mikroorganizmi* (2004) nas Polona Tratnik vpeljuje v mikrokozmos naših teles skozi mikroorganizme, s čimer na novo premisli ločnico med javnim in zasebnim. V steklenih vitrinah razstavljenе porcelanaste skodelice, ki so narejene po odtisih delov umetničinega telesa, v katerih se razmnožujejo mikroorganizmi z njenega telesa, pa med drugim rekonstruirajo tudi funkcijo muzeja.

Instalacije Polone Tratnik zaznamuje načelo dekompozicije ter svojevrstni ikonoklazem, dosežen z raztopitvijo materije v mikroskopsko majhne delce. Lahko govorimo tudi o dvojnosti raztelesenja (fragmenti telesa) in razpadanja (soočanje z mikroorganizmi: jezik razkroja vzbuja gnus). Toda tu ni preprosto na delu reduktivni materializem, temveč so poskusi vizualizacije stičnosti med živim in mrtvim vezani zlasti na človekovo intimno doživljanje, na čutni ustroj telesa ter posameznikovih zmožnosti analoškega povezovanja v vidnem polju. Slednje seže do meja fenomenalnega, kjer oko trči ob kaotično in monstrozno razsežnost človeškega telesa, kjer uporaba tehnologije ne prinese pomiritve pogleda in je okostenela funkcija institucionalnega uokvirjanja postavljena pod vprašaj.

Besedilo je bilo natisnjeno v *Vodniku po razstavi Moderne galerije 7 grehov: Ljubljana – Moskva* (20. 12. 2004 – 28. 2. 2005) v Ljubljani, na kateri je sodelovala tudi Polona Tratnik z delom *Privatne skodelice*. Delo, ki je sicer del širšega projekta *Privatni mikroorganizmi* (drugi del je *Mikrokozmos*), je bilo na ogled v Prirodoslovnem muzeju Slovenije v Ljubljani od 20. 12. 2004 – 20. 1. 2005.

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Polona Tratnik: When Fragments of the Body Become Cups for Capturing the Microcosmos

The work of Slovene visual artist Polona Tratnik, through its perceptive and representative complexity, and with the aid of biotechnology, effectively directs us towards our own body. The artist pursued the idea of covering a sculpture with live skin, whilst forming an installation which is successful in resuming the functions and properties tightly linked to our corporality, and approaching the perception of the gallery space in a holistic manner (installation *37°C*, 2001).

The fragments of the body were kept in special conditions enabling a layer of human skin cells to grow, and so questioning the decorative status of the exhibited objects and intensifying perception.

Here that part of corporeality which stems from biology and medicine cannot be overlooked: the artist is confronted by a blockade as a consequence of a specific relationship with new technologies, whose symptom is namely the disintegration of the bodily surface. The contemporary visibility of the body is becoming a field of dangerous connections – between the natural and the artificial, the organic and the inorganic –, the potentiality marked by the horrifying and appealing opening of the body.

In her last project *Private Microorganisms* (2004), Polona Tratnik takes us into the microcosmos of our bodies through microorganisms, by which she reflects anew upon the dividing line between the public and the private. Displayed in glass cases, the porcelain cups, which have been made using the imprints of the artist's bodily parts on which her own microorganisms have been made to multiply, also reconstruct the function of the museum.

The installations of Polona Tratnik are recognisable by the principle of decomposition and a unique iconoclasm attained by dissolving matter into microscopically minute parts. We can also speak of the duality of disembodiment (fragments of the body) and decay (the effects of comprehending microorganisms: the language of decay gives rise to disgust). However, what is at work here is not simply reductive materialism, but the attempt at visualising the meeting point between the living and the dead, which are especially tied to intimate human experience, to the sensual structure of the body and the individual's ability of making analogue connections in the field of vision.

The latter is taken to the limits of the phenomenal where the eye collides with the chaotic and monstrous extent of the human body, where the use of technology does not provide appeasement of the gaze, and the ossified function of institutional framing is brought into question.

Translated by Arven Šakti Kralj Szomi.

The present text was included in the *Exhibition Guide* for the group-exhibition **7 Sins: Ljubljana – Moscow** of Moderna galerija (20. 12. 2004 – 28. 2. 2005) in Ljubljana, where participated also Polona Tratnik with the work *Private Cups*. The artwork, which is one part of the broader project *Private Microorganisms* (the other is *Microcosmos*), was exhibited at the Slovenian Museum of Natural History in Ljubljana from 20. 12. 2004 – 20. 1. 2005.