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UNTACHIBLES

It is symptomatic that in one of the texts published in the Catalogue for Zoran Todorovic's exhibition in SKC Gallery, there is a discussion on futurism, non-art and anti-art, on "the art as an excess and a transgression of itself". There is another text in the same Catalogue, in which new media and new materials are mentioned, an "unbreakable juncture of media and our lives" is ascertained, a juncture which obviously manifests that, at the beginning of 1990ies, in writing about actual art, there are critical terms essentially different from those that, until recently, were dominant in mostly "painter's" 1980ies. This is just jet another fact that 1990ies have brought the change of the paradigm. When we speak of the art of this period, it might be easily seen that it holds onto some premises and features of historical modernity and historical avant-gardes, of course, in a way which is appropriate to the reality of the last decade of the 20th century, namely, after everything that art got to know in that century, and after it recently got over the postmodern (and most often also anti-modern) views of the art in the mirror of its own past. Or, rather, it is a matter of one possible view in the mirror of art's past, whereas it is now a view into that ideological and spiritual heritage which, again like at the beginning of 20th century, like some restored futurism, expresses its faith in use of new formative procedures, and thus also the faith in reality in which there is an unavoidable role of new media, science and new technologies, as essential and fundamental features of contemporary civilization.

At First biennial of Young Artists in Vršac, in 1994, Zoran Todorovic exhibited a work "No title", the technique of which is labeled, in the Catalogue of this exhibition, as electroinstallation. Work of the same appearance and technique makes the content of his one-man-(M. A.)-show in SKC Gallery, in January 1995. By the term 'electroinstalation' author connotes a kind of work which is decisively conditioned by the use and agency, or effect, of electric energy. Installation (rather than the classical exhibit on gallery walls) consists of ten identical metal modules; each of them consists of four tightly joined vertical tapes. Modules are placed in a regular series, between them there is always the same distance, and thus the work appears as an entirety of identical elements, as a series of same units. But everything described until now is just a work in potential, preliminary, inert state. For if this work is to function at all, it is necessary for it to be connected to a source of electric energy (each module has its own transformer), and the flow of electricity through metal tapes is adjusted in such a way that, at certain spots of these elements, an electric shock takes place which, as a direct visible consequence has the spark fly. This work, therefore, is not a static situation but is an event which starts to unfold only when electric circuit is on and when, exactly due to electric energy, there are some changes, occurrences, incidents, at the body of the work, which appear as sparks, as a breakthrough of light out of the very material of metal plates. And when in one moment the electricity is off, when it does not run anymore through the material, of which this work is made of, it goes back to its potential, preliminary and inert state, it ceases to exist and to function as a work-in-process.

In the text, by means of which the author explains his own procedure and his general artistic position, he speaks, regarding the agency, or the effect, of described objects, about “two discourses” and “two plays”, thus opening the question, what is, in fact, one supposed to understand by this twofoldedness of discourse and play. Firstly, it could be a latent state of the object, its material construction itself (flat iron of standard profiles and dimensions, high voltage transformers) as a material out of which modules are constructed and then put in a row on the wall of the gallery. And secondly, it could be the effective state of the object, that is, the process of its functioning, while through the body of material construction of that object, that serves as a conductor of electric energy, there goes the electric circuit and causes the effects of sparks flying, which in this case is the final goal, and for the viewer a real attraction and a spectacle of a performed art operation. Relations: potential–effective, static–dynamic, passive–active, fixed order of elements–unpredictable changes in their appearance, etc. – these are factors that condition the existence of above mentioned doubleness of discourse and play in this very specific type and utmost unusual kind of artwork, which is, precisely because of its essential operative features, completely involved in actual techno (techno-aesthetic, techno-spiritual) tendencies in the art of 1990ies.

Concepts of ‘techno-aesthetic’ and ‘techno-spiritual’, imply that in works of such an art orientation, technology is introduced into an area of the ‘aesthetical’ (instead of functional) and the ‘spiritual’ (instead of material). But ‘the aesthetical’ (in the sense of beautiful) and ‘the spiritual’ (in the sense of metaphysical) are in no way designations and features of this robust and secular art which, completely in accordance with the time in which it appears, is connected with conducts and meanings, to which terms such as: risky, dangerous, forbidden, are applicable. Namely, works like Todorovic’s, that offer themselves not only to watching but also to touching, are not at all desirable to be touched by hand, precisely because of the flow of electric circuit through its material body, furthermore, it is advisable and necessary to be at safe and allowed distance from these works. However, these objects of Todorovic are not the only art actions today that could seriously injure a careless operator. For this is also true for tips in Ivan Ilic’s installation, for peaks in Srdjan Apostolovic’s sculpture, for coils of barbed wire and broken glass in exhibits of Zivko Grozdanic; the only difference is that in comparison to their ‘cold’ blades there is Todorovic’s “hot” electric shock. But all these are certainly very noticeable signs that confirm that here an art is being discussed which, besides the fact that, with regard to media, it comes under the characteristics of an “expanded field”, with regard to emotions and dispositions it obviously testifies about this epoch of dangerous living, risky existence, about the existence at the very edge of potential or real violence, as the living and the existence in these daily dangerous and risky 1990ies is.

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