

Resisting Anthropocene

“Bare Bodies – Bodies & States of Exception” by Ursina Tossi at Kampnagel

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“That is the free theatre!” – commented one of the visitors to another the fact that all spectators already after the wardrobe had to leave the building of Kampnagel and to enter the stage from the backside. That was necessary to get in without passing along the stage. All the seats were covered with the box from white textile, inside of such shelter on the four screens with video art the random 3D models were rotating on the black background and time after time interrupted with fast shots of naked bodies. Similar models created on 3D printer were exhibited on the table as the archeological artifacts or bones. Together with the video these unidentified objects created an aesthetic frame of post-digital archeology. The shelter was full with the spectators and two performers in transparent plastic overalls on the naked bodies were moving inside the audience.

What does the spectator feel sitting in the white cube isolated from the stage? I expected that one of the walls, will be opened as a curtain. But instead I heard some sounds on the hidden stage and saw the flashes of the stroboscope, while staying seated in the isolated white space. The male voice on the background cited that the privacy is the most important thing, nevertheless at that very moment the most curious people were secretly looking through the curtain at stage. Some of them stepped out and didn't come back.

The rest of spectators followed and we found ourselves in another space. From the white and bright shelter, we stepped into dark stage with the black floor. Four naked women were joyfully dancing to classical music like the nymphs, surrounding the newcomers with the roundelay. Once all of the spectators came out of the space (an it turned out that there were also second white space like that) and placed themselves at the stage the atmosphere has changed: classical music has gone, one of performers (Tümay Kılınçel) started to interact with the clue of orange chords, two of them (Ursina Tossi and Angela Kecinski) were in the fight-birth-like resistant contact improvisation, the fourth one (Lisa Densem) interacted with the hanging chords in the corner.

For every part of spectators, who now were already mostly sitting in a circle on the floor, the performance had different accents, depending on which performer was closer; there was no certain 'right' point of view, as well as no 'wrong'. Although the four performers were naked, completely naked, the hair-band was the only item they all worn, the work didn't create any erotic context. Assumingly for any performer that is always a challenge to perform naked, but in case with “Bare bodies” that was not the thought you have while watching it, that is one of the most fascinating effects of the work, the body was brought into another political dimension and stopped to address all conventional female body messages.

The nakedness took attention from the facial expressions, the plasticity of the body turned to be more appealing than the mimic. The attempt to bring performers of different age didn't work, if that was an intention, because trained bodies of dancers were in comparably good shape and the faces, which could better represent the age, were not in the focus. All bodies were around the same weight and height, none of them took less or more attention because of some special features, in a way they were uniformed.

Choreograph Ursina Tossi explored the bodies in post-anthropocene context, as a refrain to the choreography two screens (white curtains tuned into) showed video with 3D models, as well as video webcams for animal research and archive from rehearsals in the same but empty stage. Naked female bodies referred to Matisse “Dance”, Roman bas-reliefs or “Laocoön” and at the same time to the glitched objects from 3D-printer. That could be the beginning of the “Space Odyssey” or the end of it.

One of the most stunning scenes was based on the contact improvisation technique when all four bodies were moving in one direction, supporting and lifting each other, staying in touch and turning into one organism made from human bodies. The chthonic character of this scene brought a reference to soviet sci-fi movie “Through the Thorns to the Stars”, where the life on the further planet was planned to be created from the “bio-mass” (which was produced for the film at before CG-times from a dough). In the piece by Tossi one can also meet such traces of “arte povera” in media-art, where the aesthetical meaning is reached by the minimal means of scenography.

In the last third of performance the subject of communication became present, the performers tried to establish new communication referring to rituals and to decoding of digital sounds, when every dancing body performed on it's own way guided by secret

voice in the headphones, partly citing, sometimes synchronic, the text, which was nevertheless hard to reconstruct from the quotes. The performance made a loop and quasi-archeological objects on the table at the entrance appeared again in the form of the deconstructed sounds they were decoded into. Again many pieces (of objects or sounds) tried to create the feeling of the complete meaning, but, at the last moment, just left a trace of the hope for possibility to understand.



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