

Relocations - Transfigurations of the visual memories from urban spaces

Cities are complex systems of social functions, representations and meanings, in which each specific site is a knot in which multiple signifying systems are tied together with constantly mutually contesting streams of individual and collective experiences and imaginative projections. Different traditions in public art have, in the course of a couple of last decades, been dealing with bringing onto surface memories of particular social groups in using a particular space, their habits and reference points in perceiving it, their strategies and tactics in appropriating it, their problems in approaching or personalizing it, resulting mainly with producing a site specific intervention that provides with a wider physical or symbolic access to it. The ways they were realized in concrete contexts were, of course, through the various constraints: limitations on budget and time, availability of a site, physical constraints of that site, then the expectation of the founder or commissioner, presumed reception by the general public and anticipated response of the planning authorities, and, of course, of the municipal authorities wanting it to be vandal proof and maintenance free. Within all these constraints, it was getting more and more in danger of becoming a simple problem solver, with the basic goal to enhance a badly designed public space, to resolve social problems, to enhance unsightly utilities and to provide a marker of quality in a development otherwise lacking good design, while the "art" of public art however was somewhat ignored or taken for granted. That process has brought the highest focus on the question of how one can keep the emancipatory aspect of art in 'making space' for a particular memory in urban context.

The manner this specific project that Predrag Terzic is carrying out in the course of several years of experiments with painterly qualities of ready made surfaces in the city structure in relation to imaginative and corporeal attitudes towards their appearance in urban space, gallery space and space of pictorial representation, deals with the question posed, comes out of attempts to provide an answer to that question by recourse to the traditions of abstract art and painterly meditations focusing on the hermeneutics of visual experiences. Material for his work comes from photographic images collected during his strolls around various urban and suburban sites, registering spots of immense visual potential, as heterotopic spots available for everyone, as unlicensed zones with the power of causing the whole spectrum of diverse feelings and thoughts. This material is then relocated into a gallery space, processed by the use of different techniques, varying from photography, drawing, painting, to video installations ambientalized in the manner respective of the specificity of the gallery space. The process is mainly related to reading the features of the city life by registering non-relational traces, fields of energy, capturing them as empirically given phenomena and translating them into forms of ideational representation. The mutations these traces undergo in the process are both fixing in memory what has been seen, and making manifest what is not visible, interpreting issues of visibility, corporeality and comprehensibility of direct experiences in metropolitan life, and are producing an overwhelmingly mediated visual environment, that is not just a reference to the situations and contexts they are encountered in. Therefore, in periods such as the present one, with intensifying globalization, when public space is increasingly linked to commodified amenities, this type of work offers an alternative in an autonomous field of image-centered heterotopic experience of displaced fields of condensed pictorial energy, derived from the urban context and pointing to it, and its revelatory and emancipatory potentials, but elaborated without regard for the recognizable.

Stevan Vuković