



OLEG KULIK

Merry-go-round



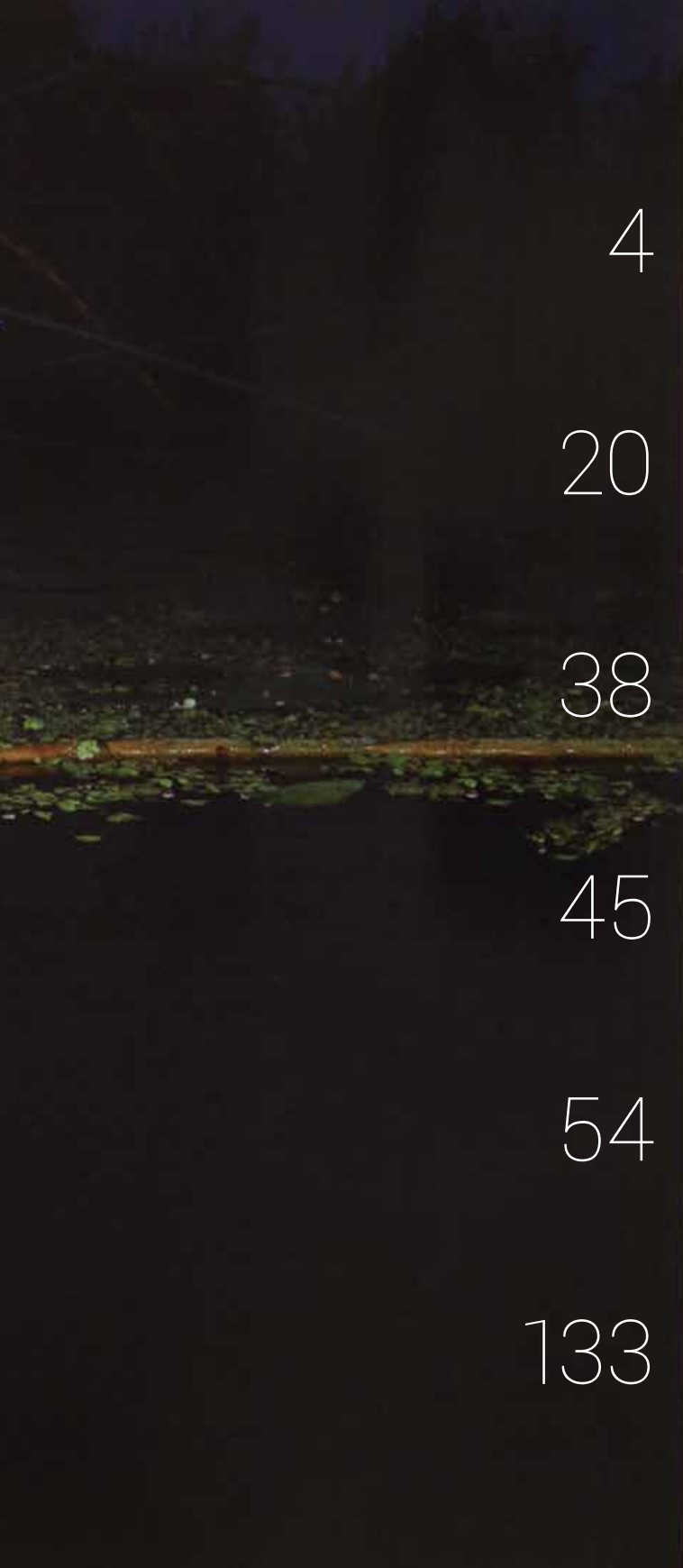
OLEG KULIK

Merry-go-round



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VOJVODINE
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OLEG KULIK:
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Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine je, u okviru međunarodnog programa po imenu RISK CHANGE, predstavio samostalnu retrospektivnu izložbu *Merry-go-round* Olega Kulika, umetnika internacionalno poznatog po svom fluidnom identitetu čoveka – psa ili „ruskog psa”. U pitanju je jedan od začetnika akcionizma u postsovjetskoj Rusiji i radikalnih performansa u Evropi i svetu, koji svojim upečatljivim i rizičnim performansima problematizuje geopolitičke odnose moći, naročito relaciju Istoka i Zapada, vladajući antropocentrizam, emocionalne i fizičke aspekte odnosa između ljudi i životinja, normalnost i devijaciju, kič i umetnost. Kulturna ličnost savremene međunarodne umetničke scene o kojoj se pripovedaju legende, po kojoj se kreiraju filmski likovi, kao što je umetnik–zver–majmun u švedskom satiričnom filmu *Kvadrat* (*The Square*, 2017) Rubena Ostlunda (Ruben Östlund); takođe, vajar, performer, slikar, fotograf i kustos; angažovani, interdisciplinarni umetnik i intelektualac.

Oleg Kulik je posle završenih umetničkih studija na Kraljevskoj akademiji u Kijevu i geologije, karijeru započeo sredinom 80-ih godina XX veka u Moskvi, prvo kao kustos u galeriji Regina, gde je privukao pažnju javnosti nekonvencionalnim izložbama i pristupima, kao što je – netipično postavljanje radova na vešalicama ili na točkovima koje su deca gurala po prostoru ili na improvizovanim zidovima kroz čije su rupe vojnici držali umetnička dela.

„Idea mi je bila da uvedem realnost, čoveka na izložbu, da to ne liči na zapadne žurnale”¹, navodi autor. Tako je izložbu *Leopardi su uleteli u hram* (*Leopards burst into the temple*)², moskovskog umetnika Anatolija Osmolovskog (Anatoly Osmolovsky), koncipiranu kroz otpor tradicionalnoj ruskoj umetnosti i konceptualizmu, koje je autor smatrao zastarelim i dosadnim, Kulik, kao kustos, iskoristio za direktnu dekonstrukciju postojećih vrednosti u umetnosti,

1 D.R.V. „Intervju: Oleg Kulik: Čuvaj se psa!”, Vreme, br. 498, 22. jul 2000.

2 Naslov je preuzet iz teksta Žana Bodrijara (Jean Baudrillard): „Leopardi su uleteli u hram i razbili svete posude”.

postavivši u kavez sa živim leopardima dvoje nagih ljudi, kao metaforu za sve novo i živo što se pojavljuje u životu – kao što *leopardi ulaze u hram i razbijaju svete posude* u tekstu Žana Bodrijara (Jean Baudrillard).

Počeci umetničkog rada Olega Kulika, njegova netipična kustoska praksa, zaiteresovanost za skulpturu i radikalni performansi, povezani su sa konceptom izložbe *Merry-go-round*. Naime, izložba preispituje ideju kružnog kretanja, kako kroz vreme, društvenu istoriju Rusije i Evrope, tako i kroz umetničku praksu autora, od početaka do njegovih aktuelnih radova, kroz opus prožet promenama u formi i mediju izražavanja, kao i percepciji pozicije tela u prostoru. Takođe, cikličnost je akcentovana kako realizacijom novog rada, karusel - objekta, tako i samom postavkom izložbe koja pruža utisak filmske trake koja se može sagledati samo kružnim kretanjem kroz galerijski prostor. Koncept aludira na prikaz sopstvene životne petlje koja se razvija nepregledno kroz ponavljanja (Loop).

Ovo je retrospektivna izložba mojih performansa, ALI sa stanovišta mog novog perioda – perioda vajara (u stvari, ovo je povratak na moje poreklo, pošto sam počeo kao vajar početkom 1980-ih). Zato posmatram svoje performanse kao vajar i mogu da sagledam nove aspekte tela. Danas me interesuje telo kao skulptura. Ranije mi je bilo zanimljivo telo u situacijama. (Oleg Kulik)³

Izložba je rezultat i nastavak saradnje započete 2017. godine, učešćem Olega Kulika na međunarodnoj izložbi *MIG21* u MSUV-u, kustosa Aleksandre Kostić, Nine Jeze, Petera Tomaža Dobrile i Sanje Kojić Mladenov, takođe u okviru međunarodnog RISK CHANGE projekta, a u organizaciji KID-a Kibla iz Maribora i MSUV-a iz Novog Sada. Tada je Oleg Kulik u Srbiji prvi put izložio manji broj radova, poput serije novijih foto-kolaža *Lolita vs. Alice* (1999-2000), *Dan Raspeća* i *Noć Raspeća* (2005). Takođe je izveo performans *Fontana. Slikanje na vodi* u Atrijumu Muzeja.

3 Oleg Kulik povodom izložbe.

Oleg Kulik je gostovao u Srbiji 2000. godine, kada je kao učesnik festivala Grad teatar Budva, kratko boravio u Beogradu i u organizaciji nezavisne umetničke asocijacije Remont održao prezentaciju rada i razgovor u prostoru Barutane⁴. Takođe, autor je duži niz godina kontinuirano sarađivao sa kustosom Petrom Ćukovićem i izlagao i gostovao u Crnoj Gori. Nastupao je na Bijenalu umetnosti u Veneciji 2001. godine, u tada Paviljonu Srbije i Crne Gore, gde je na Ćukovićev poziv, zajedno sa Milijom Pavićevićem, predstavio svoje radove u okviru izložbe *House & Windows*.

Međutim, čini se da Oleg Kulik, kao jedan od ključnih međunarodnih umetnika koji problematizuje marginalizaciju istočnoevropskog konteksta od strane zapadne umetničke scene, tranzicijske društvene promene komunističkih režima i kritiku socrealizma u umetnosti, važan takođe i za razmatranje i dekonstrukciju savremene umetnosti našeg regiona, nije imao priliku da prikaže svoje karakteristične radove značajnijom postavkom u Srbiji, što je bio povod da se inicira izložba u Novom Sadu. Zato je *Merry-go-round* zamišljena kao retrospektiva, na kojoj su zastupljeni rani Kulikovi radovi, kao što je *Duboko u Rusiju*, njegovi antologijski performasi iz 1990-ih poput: *Besni pas*, *Deitch projekat*, *Ja ujedam Ameriku, a Amerika ujeda mene...*, izbor foto-kolaža iz 2000-ih (kojima su bliski radovi prikazani u Veneciji), sve do dokumentacije novijih performansa: *Oklopnik za vaš šou* i *Fontana*, *Slikanje na vodi*, kao i nov rad *Merry-go-round* (2017-2019) koncipiran za izložbu u Novom Sadu, koji je, kao glavnu temu izložbe, naglasio ideju vrteške – cikličnog životnog kretanja. Nakon Novog Sada, izložba je pod nazivom *Golden Fleece*, u proširenom izdanju, prikazana u Kibla Portalu u Mariboru, a u planu je i njena postavka u Nacionalnoj galeriji u Skoplju, čime bi ključni opus ovog autora postao dostupniji i vidljiviji u regionu ex-Jugoslavije.

4 D.R.V. „Intervju: Oleg Kulik: Čuvaj se psa!”, Vreme, br. 498, 22. jul 2000.

Sa radom Olega Kulika prvi put sam se susrela 1997. godine, na izložbi *Europarte*, u izložbenom prostoru pod imenom Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa, na 47. Bijenalu u Veneciji. Tada je Kulik na umetničkoj sceni već bio prepoznatljiv po svojim performansima „besnog psa”, kao i po upravo završenom predstavljanju u Njujorku (*Deitch Projects*, 12–26. april, 1997), o kojem se mnogo pisalo, tako da su postojala određena očekivanja prilikom posete izložbe u Veneciji. Da bi se *sagledala duboka Rusija*, u polumračnoj izložbenoj prostoriji, moralo se *ući u kravlju vaginu*, odnosno u masivnim skulpturama kravljih zadnjica mogle su se pogledati projekcije seoskog života Rusije, prožete epigonskom (iskonskom) strašću i naglašenom seksualnošću, slikama emotivnog odnosa između ljudi i životinja, nagosti, polnih organa i zadovoljstva. Za većinu posetilaca venecijanskog privjua – stručnu javnost koja je dolazila uglavnom iz zapadnih zemalja, ovakav način prezentacije i sam sadržaj dela činili su se kao susret sa drugačijim – (divljim), promena i preispitivanje, moguće i šok! Prostorijom se čuo podsmeš, video nemir, sukob i revolt, ali i osećala pritajena žudnja i uzbuđenje. Instalacija je ocenjena kao kontroverzna, privukla je značajnu pažnju posetilaca, izazvala komentare i, ponovo kada je u pitanju Oleg Kulik, otvorila pitanja o dozvoljenom i društveno prihvatljivom u umetnosti.

Davnašnji susret je bio ponovljen na izložbi u MSUV-u 2019. godine na kojoj je jedan od prikazanih ciklusa bio i *Duboko u Rusiju*, snimljen u selu Dubrovki, u Tverskoj regiji (16. jul 1993), u čijem je lokalnom Domu kulture Oleg Kulik radio na početku svoje karijere. U pitanju je jedan od njegovih prvih radova kojima propituje antropocentričnost vladajuće kulture, hijerarhijske odnose između ljudi i životinja, društvene konvencije dozvoljenog ponašanja, humanizam i fluidnost identiteta, ideje kojima će se baviti i u narednim radovima.

O nepredvidivosti Rusije, njenoj sklonosti ka prekoračenju granica ljudskosti i problematičnoj blizini primitivne duhovnosti, piše Mila Bredihina u svom tekstu o Kuliku, navodeći reči Sigmunda Frojda: „Ambivalentnost emocija

je nasleđe duhovnog života primitivnog čoveka koji je tako dobro očuvan među Rusima za razliku od drugih nacija⁵. Stereotipi, pod čijim je uticajima artikulisani Frojgov iskaz o Rusiji, uticali su na uobičajen način doživljaja Istoka na Zapadu. U periodu nastanka serije radova *Duboko u Rusiju*, umetnička scena razvijenih zemalja Evrope samo je površno poznavala situaciju u Rusiji. Smatrali su tu umetnost „sovjetskom umetnošću”, „sorealizmom”, koji je bio strogo kontrolisan, u službi državne propagande. Drugi vidovi umetnosti za njih su bili gotovo nevidljivi, marginalizovani u „podzemlju” i finansijski oskudni. Tek od perioda perestrojke (1985-1991) i pada Berlinskog zida, dolazi do promene i otvaranja umetničke scene Rusije. Međutim, ovu slobodu umetničkog rada i saradnje, pratile su mnoge nepoznanice i predrasude, pogotovo Zapada u vezi sa pozadinom ruske kulture i umetnosti. Zato je svojim konceptom Oleg Kulik nastojao da problematizuje nerazumevanje, kao i očekivanja koja su u Evropi postojala od umetnika koji dolazi sa Istoka.

Prikaz stereotipa nastavio je androginijom, kao još jednom važnom karakteristikom kulturnih i istorijskih vrednosti Rusije, inkorporiranoj u bihevioralnoj interpretaciji čoveka – zveri, Kulika i njegovog alter ega psa, odnosa Erosa i Tanatosa. Njegov osnovni koncept je koncept „zoofrenije”, odnosno relacija između čoveka i životinja, između kulture i prirode. On kritikuje antropocentrično društvo koje nema simpatija prema bilo kojoj drugoj biološkoj vrsti, osim prema čoveku i u tom slučaju „ne zaslužuje naziv demokratsko”, navodi autor⁶. Suprotno tradicionalnom odnosu, Kulik svojom umetničkom aktivnošću propagira harmoniju koju stvaraju odnosi među različitim vrstama, svojevrsnu „porodicu budućnosti” u kojoj ne isključuje ni brakove između različitih bioloških organizama, gde vlada ljubav među jedinkama i bezgranično poverenje.

5 Bredikhina, Mila (2007). „Deep into Russia: (on stereotypes and new codes)” in: *Nothing inhuman is alien to me: Oleg Kulik*. KERBER VERLAG (Bielefeld), XL Gallery (Moscow), Galerie Rabouan Moussion (Paris)...., str. 43.

6 S.M.A.K. Oleg Kulik: „Deep into Russia”, 18.03.2001, <https://smak.be/en/exhibition/7838>

Prikaz jedne moguće „porodice budućnosti” je vidljiv u umetničkom radu *Body Speaks Louder Than Words-II* (2002) postavljenom na ulazu u galeriju, istaknutom i na pres materijalu i koricama kataloga. U pitanju je foto-kolaž kojim dominira Kulikova naga figura sa zlatnim đavoljim rogovima na glavi, koji leži u pozi prozapadne predstave Olimpije ili boga Baha, u blatnjavom, rustičnom pejzažu koji simbolizuje tog nepoznatog *Drugog* na Istoku. Okružen je domaćim životinjama u prvom planu i medvedima u pozadini, kao svojom porodicom, koja učestvuje u imaginarnoj svetkovini posvećenoj zabranjenom odnosu. Da li je u pitanju nedozvoljena ljubav između ljudi i životinja, Istoka i Zapada, hrišćanstva i paganizma, kiča i umetnosti, ostaje pitanje?

Jedna od fotografija prikazuje umetnika kako gura glavu u vaginu krave, u želji da umre i da se ponovo rodi kao nešto potpuno novo. Scena je smeštena ispod prikaza duge i simbolično odgovara tradicionalnoj predstavi vaskrsenja, kojom autor istovremeno propituje realnost i fikciju, „utopizam avangarde i kosmičke pra-vagine Maleviča”⁷, dok nas poziva da ga pratimo *u dubine Rusije*. „Kao u snovima pacijenata doktora Frojda, što dublje idemo, bliži smo nemogućoj realnosti koja postoji izvan „konceptata” i „kvadratnih korena” – na taktilno senzornom, životinjskom nivou”⁸.

Duboku u Rusiju je istovremeno i prikaz amorfnosti ruske duhovnosti. U okviru takvog koncepta postoje određene pravilnosti u rasporedu, međusobne povezanosti, ali i haotična pojavnost i razvoj, te već spomenuta nepredvidivost vidljiva i u iznenadnoj promeni umetničke strategije Olega Kulika koji se neočekivano *pretvara u psa* i izjavljuje: „Ništa neljudsko mi nije strano”⁹ i „Nikada nisam bio ljudsko biće”¹⁰.

7 Bredikhina, Mila (2007). „Deep into Russia: (on stereotypes and new codes).” in: *Nothing inhuman is alien to me: Oleg Kulik*. KERBER VERLAG (Bielefeld), XL Gallery (Moscow), Galerie Rabouan Moussion (Paris)..., str. 47.

8 Ibid.

9 Oleg Kulik (2007). *Nothing inhuman is alien to me: Oleg Kulik*. KERBER VERLAG (Bielefeld), XL Gallery (Moscow), Galerie Rabouan Moussion (Paris)..., str. 9.

10 Ibid. str 13



Kada sam došao u Moskvu, napravio sam staklene skulpture – prozirne figurativne stvari – i nikome se nisu sviđale... Zatim sam postao izvođač/performer, napravio ogroman skandal sa čovekom koji ulazi u ulogu psa, dobio priliku u „Deitch projektu“, a nakon toga osetio sam slobodu da nastavim kao umetnik. (Oleg Kulik)¹¹

Kulikova antologijska akcija *Besni pas ili Poslednji tabu koga čuva Kerber sam* (*The Mad Dog or Last Taboo Guarded by Alone Cerberus*), izvedena u ulici Boljšaja Jakimanka, ispred Galerije Gelman u Moskvi, 23. novembra 1994, predstavljala je stanje ruske umetnosti i društva u celini, dramatičnu socio-kulturno-političku atmosferu tranzicijskog doba tokom 90-ih godina prošlog veka, u postsovjetskoj Rusiji. To je bio period velike depresije u Rusiji u kojoj su se ljudi osećali beznadežno. Ideja akcije je bila usmerena prema kritici pozicija vrednosti u tadašnjem okruženju. Kulik je, tokom performansa u kojem je bio pas, simbolično čuvao odbačene vrednosti, kao što su: umetnost, remek-delo, talenat i obrazovana publika, koje je personifikovao Aleksander Brener, umetnik i politički aktivista¹² – pobunjenik. Potpuno nag, na hladnoći, Kulik je pomahnitalo lajao do promuklosti, vukao lanac koji je držao Brener i agresivno napadao gledaoce simulirajući pobesnelog psa koji se bori do svojih poslednjih snaga.

Odlučio sam da u bezizlaznoj situaciji budem pas koji ne razmišlja o umetnosti, ni o slikama. Osećao sam potrebu da ne razmišljam o ljudskim ograničenjima. Pripremili smo performans koji je trebalo da označi da je svemu kraj. Osećao sam veliki strah, skinuo sam se go, vezali su mi pseći povodac, Brener me je šetao, a ja sam hodao četvoronoške i lajao na ljude. Kada je performans započeo strah je prestao, video sam samo ljudske noge, tašne, izgubio sam ljudska čula, zaboravio

¹¹ izjava za potrebe presa izložbe.

¹² usmeren prema kritici društvenoekonomskog sistema, stanja u institucijama i umetnosti. Nešto kasnije je, 1997. godine, zatvoren zbog ispisivanja simbola dolara na slici Kazimira Maljeviča *Suprematizam*, aktu protiv konzumerizma u umetnosti.

*značenja. Sve je trajalo sedam minuta i ničega se ne sećam. Tek kasnije sam video video-zapis...*¹³

Posle ovog performansa Kuliku je ubrzo stigao zvanični poziv za izložbu u Cirihi. Protest prema umetničkom sistemu, priznatim vrednostima, pitanju materijalnosti umetničkog dela, umetnosti kao robi, nastavio je četiri meseca kasnije, 30. marta 1995. godine, performansom *Ulični pas (Reservoir Dog)*, na otvaranju velike izložbe *Znakovi i čudo (Signs and Wonder)*, u Muzeju umetnosti (Kunsthaus Zurich) u Cirihi, na kojoj su izlagala značajna međunarodna imena¹⁴. „Svi ti poznati umetnici, a izložba je izgledala nekako hladno, precizno, sterilno”¹⁵, smatrao je Kulik, uz osećaj uvređenosti i beznadežnosti zbog lošeg prijema i organizacije. Niko iz Muzeja nije znao šta će Kulik uraditi, a on je i ovog puta odlučio da bude pas, vezan lancem za ulaz u galeriju, kao čuvar zaboravljenih vrednosti koji laje i reži na posetioce. Mesto događaja, tzv. Švajcarska banka umetnosti, kako je naziva sam autor, jedno je od svetskih centara tržišta umetninama, simbol valorizacije i gradnje umetničkih pozicija, na kojem je umetnik, nasuprot očekivanoj ljubaznosti, sebe prikazao u ulozi zveri, primitivne životinjske strukture, potpuno se ogolivši.

Lajao sam, režao i ujedao. Nikoga nisam puštao da uđe. Organizatori su neprestano izlazili iz Muzeja i molili me da prestanem. Čak su za važne goste morali da otvore sporedna vrata koja nisu koristili dvadeset godina. Moram priznati da nisam znao kako da završim performans, ali je nakon 47 minuta stigla policija. Publika ispred ulaza je vikala: „Vodite ga, on nije umetnik, on je ludak”. Policajci su uzeli lanac, povelili me u maricu i priveli u stanicu. Organizatori su objasnili da je to performans i ubrzo sam pušten. Sutradan je većina švajcarskih novina na naslovnoj strani objavila vest ili reportažu o

13 D.R.V. „Intervju: Oleg Kulik: Čuvaj se psa!”, Vreme, br. 498, 22. jul 2000.

14 Jeff Koons, Cindy Sherman, Damian Hirst, Ilya Kabakov, Nico Pirosmanni.

15 D.R.V. „Intervju: Oleg Kulik: Čuvaj se psa!”, Vreme, br. 498, 22. jul 2000.

*performansu. Istoga dana je u Cirihu gostovala Vitni Hjuston, ali vest o njenom koncertu bila je beznačajna u odnosu na skandal koji sam napravio.*¹⁶

To je bio i početak njegovih problema sa „čuvarima zakona i reda”. Hapšenje je usledilo i nakon performansa *Kuća za pse (Dog House)*, izvedenog na izložbi *Interpol* u prostoru Fargfabriken, u Stokholmu, 2. marta 1996. godine. Naime, organizatori su ga pozvali da, u dogovoru sa njima, boravi u unapred izgrađenoj kućici, u nekoj vrsti egzotičnog, gotovog proizvoda nad kojim imaju kontrolu. Umetnik je naglasio da je bilo kakva komunikacija sa njim opasna budući da se on, tokom performansa, odriče jezika kulture, a prihvata samo jezik prirode, te da se ne sme prekoračiti njegova fizička teritorija. Međutim, upozorenje je zanemareno, Kulik je bio izazvan, ujeo je čoveka, što je dovelo do skandala i snažne medijske reakcije. Interpretacije događaja su, međutim, išle i u pravcu odvajanja umetnosti Istoka i Zapada, stvarajući još dublju podeljenost i nerazumevanje, degradirajući ono što je nerazumljivo, drugo i drugačije.

„Zašto je pas ljudima toliko privlačan?” postavlja pitanje teoretičarka psihoanalize, Renata Salecl, u tekstu *Love Me. Love My Dog: Psychoanalysis And The Animal/ Human Divide*¹⁷. Od Diogena, koji je provocirao svojim životom poput psa i u javnosti pokazivao naklonost prema prirodi, a prezir prema civilizaciji, do Olega Kulika koji je svojim ugrizima posetilaca u Cirihu i Stokholmu privukao pažnju svetske umetničke javnosti, postavlja se pitanje razlike između ljudi i životinja, koja je, kako navodi autorka, „za Žaka Deridu (Jacques Derrida) poslednja metafizička podela, još uvek nekonstruisana.”¹⁸

U fokusu problema koji su izazvale aktivnosti Olega Kulika našle su se razlike između Istoka i Zapada, problemi i nerazumevanje u komunikaciji, pitanja

16 Ibid.

17 Salecl, Renata (1996). „Love Me. Love My Dog: Psychoanalysis And The Animal/Human Divide”, u: *Interpol: The Art Show Which Divided East and West*. Ljubljana, Moscow: IRWIN, Moscow Art magazine, 2000.

18 Ibid.

dominacije i moći. Stereotipi da se u današnjoj Rusiji živi psećim životom, doveli su do toga da se na međunarodne izložbe pozove „ruski pas” kako bi se prikazala sva beda ruskog života; to je bila slika koju je stručna javnost sa Zapada očekivala od Kulika, pod uslovom da se zaista ne ponaša kao pas, već da pristupi procesu simulacije. Međutim, kako je umetnik istupio sa neočekivanom agresivnošću, tako je prestao da bude ukrasni umetnički objekat i postao je neprijatelj, što odgovara pogledima tzv. multikulturista koji u tretiranju drugih od istih očekuju da budu pasivni, podložni prihvatanju žrtve kao drugi, ali kada ne deluju na ovaj način, „brzo se označavaju kao imperijalisti, fundamentalisti, totalitaristi itd.”¹⁹

Reakcija na otpor kulturnog establišmeta Zapadne Evrope prema njemu, istaknuta je u performansu *Ja volim Evropu, a ona mi ne uzvraća ljubav* (*I Love Europe, It Does Not Love Me Back*), u kulturnom centru po imenu *Künstlerhaus Bethanien* u Berlinu, 1. septembra 1996. gde je Kulik sebe ponudio Evropi kao simboličnog neprijatelja, kako bi kroz zajedničku borbu protiv njega došli do željenog ujedinjenja. „Ako se svi psi ujedine napadajući mene, uočiće sličnost između moje pseće ogrlice i simbola Ujedinjene Evrope”, naveo je reagujući na geopolitičku situaciju posle pada Berlinskog zida i promene koje su usledile u Evropi.

Vremenom njegovi performasi sa „besnim psom” sve više ulaze u fazu preispitivanja fluidnosti identiteta i odnosa između animalnog i humanog. U eksperimentu *Pavlovljeva pas* (*Pavlov's Dog*), u interdisciplinarnom centru V-2 u Roterdamu (Manifesta I), 5–25 juna 1996. godine Kulik nastoji da se odrekne svog identiteta kao svesnog bića, ljudskog govora i ponašanja, kako bi postao živi organizam sa refleksima (pas). Živeo je u laboratoriji nag i kretao se na četiri noge, a eksperiment je, zajedno sa grupom naučnika iz oblasti biologije, medicine i psihologije, pratila Mila Bredihina.

19 Ibid.



Ovakvu vrstu prakse nastavio je i u *Deitch projektu, Ja ujedam Ameriku, a Amerika ujeda mene (I Bite America and America Bites Me)* realizovanom u Njujorku, 12–26. aprila 1997. godine. Kulik je živio u posebno napravljenj instalaciji – kutiji/ kući u prostoru galerije dok su ga posetioci posmatrali kroz prozore, a mogli su i da uđu u prostor instalacije obučeni u odelo za zaštitu od opasnih životinja. Koncept rada aludira na čuveni performans nemačkog umetnika Jozefa Bojsa *Ja volim Ameriku i Amerika voli mene* (1974), koji je realizovao u Galeriji Renea Bloka (West Broadway's René Block Gallery) u Njujorku, kada je tri dana delio prostor sa kojotom – divljom zveri, simbolom netaknutog američkog duha, koji tokom performansa biva pripitomljen. Verujući da umetnost ima moć da transformiše društvo, Bojs je analizirao društvenopolitičku poziciju Amerike kao globalne sile koja ne prihvata ono što joj je nepoznato, već ga odbacuje, negira i izoluje. Simbolično pripitomljavanje kojota proizvedeno Bojsovim performansom, u Kulikovom se nastavlja zarobljavanjem i dresurom umetnika – čoveka – psa sa Istoka, kao specifične divlje zveri koju bi trebalo ukrotiti. Performans je ukazivao na stanje savremenog američkog društva i postojeći snažni dualizam između kulture Istoka i Zapada.

U tekstu Mile Bredihine, u katalogu Manifeste u Rotterdamu 1996. navode se teorijske osnove Kulikovog rada koje podsećaju na stavove „duboke ekologije“ i kritike antropocentrizma. Autor propagira novu simbiozu između ljudi i životinja, novi balans među njima, kako bi podstakao studije psihologije životinja, što bi rezultiralo novim dijalogom između životinja i ljudi, takođe, smatra da bi čovek trebalo da prestane da doživljava životinje kao neantropomorfne *Druge* i počne da ih doživljava kao svoj alter ego. Za Kulika „prava demokratija može da se uspostaviti samo na politički inkluzivnoj ideji zoocentrizma (čovek je samo deo, a ne merilo biosfere naše planete). Zoocentrizam integriše čoveka kao supkulturu u širu celinu ujedinjene kulture

noosfere (izvedeno iz noosa: sposobnost mirisa, osećanja).²⁰ „Budući da idealna demokratija nije moguća, trebalo bi priznati da stvarna demokratija liči na džunglu, gde neki stanovnici prisvajaju prednost zbog činjenice da su jači ili brži od drugih. Tako Kulik zaključuje: „Džungla je, u stvari, efikasnije društvo, lišeno prevelike sofisticiranosti koja trenutno guši čovečanstvo. Glavna stvar je da je džungla jedino mesto gde snažni, mudri i energični mogu doneti sve svoje mogućnosti u igru.”²¹ Ovi stavovi, povezani sa „dubokom ekologijom“, govore o želji da se čovečanstvo potpuno odrekne antropocentrizma kako bi se stvorio novi oblik društva oslonjen na simbiozu prirode i ljudi.

Pored ciklusa „besnog psa”, Oleg Kulik je realizovao i druge performanse u kojima je propitivao poziciju antropocentrizma i fluidnog identiteta (humanog/ animalnog), kao u radovima: *Eksperimenti zoocentrizma (Zoocentrism Experiments*, 23. jul, 1995), *Kulik je ustvari ptica (Kulik is a Bird in Fact*, 22. septembar 1995), *Misionar (Missionary*, 27. oktobar, 1995), *Konji Bretanje (Horses of Bretagne*, 1998), *Oklopnik za vaš šou (Armadillo for Your Show*, 2003) i dr. Zašto se čovek smatra superiornim bićem u odnosu na prirodu, kako je on njen najvredniji i najvažniji deo, ko mu je dodelio mogućnost upravljanja svim drugim stvorenjima i Zemljom, kako je izgrađen vladajući antropocentrični pogled na svet, koliko je religija uticala na uspostavljanje postojećih hijerarhijskih odnosa moći i sl. su pitanja koja se neminovno otvaraju analizom Kulikovih radova i stavova.

Rad *Kulik je ustvari ptica (Kulik is a Bird in Fact*, 22. septembar 1995), polazi od značenja reči „kulik“ na ruskom – mala prutka (vrsta ptice), a govori o političkoj kampanji autora kao člana svojevrsne „Partije životinja“ za zagovaranje razvoja životinjskih kvaliteta u čoveku. „Antropocentrizam se iscrpio“, izjavio je umetnik. Akcija se sastojala od istraživanja čovekove sposobnosti da leti i Kulikovog leta sa prozora na sedmom spratu višespratnice uz upotrebu običnog remenja.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

Dovođenje sebe u nove, često rizične situacije, kao odgovor na proces uspostavljanja novog odnosa sa životinjama, vidljivo je i u radu *Konji Bretanje* (*Horses of Bretagne*, 1998), realizovanom u mestu Sen Nazer u Francuskoj, gde je istražujući Rusoova i Volterova dela o čoveku i prirodi, neko vreme živeo sa stadom konja koje je bilo na slobodi, u nekoj vrsti zoo parka.

U performansu *Oklopnik za vaš šou* (*Armadillo for Your Show*, 2003), izvedenom u muzeju Tejt modern u Londonu, bavi se savremenijim temama, uticajem mas-medija na prirodu i umetnost, ali i u ovom slučaju on sebe dovodi u vezu sa životinjama, konkretno sa noćnim oklopnikom koji je pokriven spojenim koštanim pločicama (ogledalima), simulirajući izgled disko-kugle koja se rotira uz zvuke elektronske muzike.

Na izložbi koju je Oleg Kulik je realizovao u MSUV-u predstavljena su njegova dva nova rada. Prvi je dokumentacija performansa *Fontana, Slikanje na vodi* (2017), izvedenog u Atrijumu Muzeja, zaštićenoj unutrašnjoj bašti čiji je centralni, plitak bazen postao specifična pozornica ovog participativnog dela. Umetnik je prvo prolio slikarske boje u vodu, a zatim započeo spontani ples sa devojkama obučenim u belo, aludirajući na proces slikanja, odnos umetnika i publike, ali i potencijalnih ljubavnika. Boje su ostavljale trag na odeći učesnika tokom trajanja performansa, a osvetljenje, muzika, kiša i gusti dim su granice između umetnosti i života činile nejasnim. Iz međusobne igre dijalog se, tokom akcije, pretvorio u agresivnu borbu, naglasivši ispitivanje tela u pokretu, a zatim se smirio i vratio na početnu emociju – ljubav. Performans je spojio osnovne elemente: vatru, vodu, zemlju i *glavni* element – ljudsko biće. Nastao je iz tradicije crtanja figura u vazduhu, pravljenja skulptura od peska, pisanja poruka na vodi – poetičnog i romantičnog stvaralaštva koje aludira na važnost nematerijalnosti kreativnog čina kao čovekovog početnog impulsa i unutrašnje potrebe.

Drugi rad je nastao kroz *Master klas – performans*, koji je prethodio otvaranju izložbe. U njemu su učestvovali novosadski srednjoškolci i studenti vajarstva sa Akademije umetnosti, realizujući svoje imaginarne portrete od brzосуšeće gline. Umetničko delo je nastalo kao participativni događaj zajedničkog vajanja volontera i umetnika, kroz strategiju improvizacije kao ključne za stvaranje kolektivnog rezultata. Realizovani portreti su postali deo veće metalne konstrukcije, vrteške koja se rotirala oko svoje ose, sačinjene, u osnovi, od povezanih točkova bicikala. Svakom portretu je dodata crvena pionirska marama, jedan od simbola socijalističkih sistema, kolektivismu i lojalnosti državi. Oleg Kulik je u centar postavio svoju figuru Lenjina koji balansira sa mačem na glavi, okruženu mnogim glavama pratilaca i podržavalaca. Instalacija je povezala celokupnu postavku izložbe, govoreći o istoriji Rusije, njenim društvenopolitičkim kretanjima i odnosu ka Zapadu, razlikama između kolektivne i individualne prakse, promenama u umetničkom interesovanju i opusu samog autora, istraživanjima tela kao „žive skulpture”. Važnu ulogu u ovom radu je imalo angažovanje drugih učesnika, nova komunikacija, razmena i dijalog sa njima, koja je pokazala koliko postoje generacijske razlike i nerazumevanje tuđe prošlosti, te koliko je prenošenje znanja važno i neophodno za dalji razvoj.

Šta je to što u radovima Olega Kulika izaziva toliko različitih reakcija, ali nikada i ravnodušnost? Da li je u pitanju strah od probijanja ustaljenih granica, izazov da drugačije sagledamo realnost, uspostavljene kriterijume i društvene vrednosti, istinu i humanizam ili je u pitanju sukob sa samim sobom i sopstvenim identitetom? Autor svoje radove objašnjava kao „svesni pad iz ljudskog horizonta”²² koji ga postavlja na ruke i kolena. Oni ukazuju na krizu savremene kulture i način komunikacije koji je podignut na nivo nerazumevanja pojedinaca, što stvara prepreke i čini kulturu nedostupnu većini. Zato Kulik pojednostavljuje jezik na osnovni i emotivni vokabular, jezik domaćih životinja.

22 Press text: Oleg Kulik: Golden Fleece, 9 August–7 September 2019, KIBLA Portal, Maribor, Slovenia

Iako na umetničkoj sceni pozicioniran kao umetnik sa Istoka, „ruski pas”, Oleg Kulik kolektivnim identitetima pristupa ispitivanjem slojevitosti sopstvenog identiteta povezanog sa kontekstualnim i društvenopolitičkim okolnostima, ali takođe i sa individualnom promenljivošću (fleksibilnošću) naglašenom u procesu propitivanja humanizma, prirode i stvaralaštva.

Oleg Kulik razbija tradicionalne norme prihvatljivog ponašanja, konvencije onogo što je poželjno i dozvoljeno u umetnosti, teži interaktivnom i otvorenom pristupu, razbija stereotipe i uobičajene načine predstavljanja umetničkog dela. Možda je to ono što nam smeta i što nas izaziva i nagoni da sebe preispitamo i sagledamo iz nekog novog mogućeg ugla.

SANJA KOJIĆ MLADENOV, PhD

OLEG KULIK:
FLUID IDENTITY
— HUMAN/DOG

Within the scope of the international programme RISK CHANGE the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina has presented the solo retrospective exhibition *Merry-go-round* by Oleg Kulik, an artist internationally known for his fluid identity human - dog, or "Russian dog". He is considered to be one of the founders of actionism in the post-Soviet Russia and the radical performances in Europe and worldwide, who problematizes, by his striking and risky performances, the geo-political balance of power, especially between the East and the West, the on-going antropocentrism, emotional and physical aspects of relationship between human beings and animals, normality and deviance, kitsch and art. He is a cult figure of contemporary international art scene whom legends are told about and film characters are created after, such as artist-beast-monkey in the satiric film *The Square* (2017) by Ruben Östlund; he is also a sculptor, performer, painter, photographer and curator and an engaged, interdisciplinary artist and intellectual.

After completing his art studies at the Royal Academy of Kiev and studies of Geology, Oleg Kulik began his career in the mid-1980s in Moscow, first as the curator at the Regina Gallery where he attracted public attention through unconventional exhibitions and approaches, such as atypical setting of works on hangers or on wheels pushed by children around the space or on artificial walls with holes through which soldiers were holding the works of art. "My idea was to introduce reality, man into an exhibition, so it would not resemble the magazines from the West,"¹ says the author. An exhibition that stands out is *Leopards burst into the temple*², by the Muscovite artist, Anatoly Osmolovsky, conceptualized through resistance to traditional Russian art and to conceptualism which the author considered obsolete and dull, and which Kulik, as a curator, used for the direct deconstruction of the existing values in

1 D.R.V. "Intervju: Oleg Kulik: Čuvaj se psa!", ("Interview: Oleg Kulik: Beware of the dog!") Vreme, br. 498, 22 July 2000.

2 The title was taken from the text by Jeana Baudrillarda: "The leopards burst into the temple and break the holy vessels".

art by placing two naked people in the cage with live leopards as a metaphor for everything new and alive that happens in life – just as *the leopards burst into the temple and break the holy vessels* in the text by Jean Baudrillard.

The beginnings of Oleg Kulik's artistic work, his atypical curatorial practice, his interest in sculpture and radical performances, are related to the concept of the Merry-go-round exhibition. Namely, the exhibition examines the idea of circular movement, both through time and social history of Russia and Europe, as well as through the artistic practice of the author, from its beginnings to his current works - an opus imbued with changes in form and medium of expression, as well as the perception of the position of the body in space. Also, the cyclicity is accentuated both by the realization of the new work, the carousel - object, and the very setting of the exhibition, which gives the impression of a film tape that can only be seen by circular movement through the gallery space. The concept alludes to the representation of one's own life loop that unfolds endlessly through repetitions (Loop).

*This is a retrospective exhibition of my performances, BUT from the point of view of my new period - the period of sculptor (but in fact this is a return to my origins, as I had started as sculptor in the beginning of 1980s). So I take a look at my performances as a sculptor and can see new aspects of a body. This body is as sculpture which is interesting for me now. Earlier it was the body in the action which was interesting for me. (Oleg Kulik)*³

The exhibition is the result of continued cooperation started in 2017, with the participation of Oleg Kulik at the international exhibition MIG21 at MSUV, curated by Aleksandra Kostić, Nina Jeze, Peter Tomaž Dobrila and Sanja Kojić Mladenov, also within the international RISK CHANGE project, organized by KID Kibla from Maribor and MSUV from Novi Sad. It was then that Oleg Kulik first exhibited a small number of works in Serbia, such as a series of recent photo

3 Oleg Kulik on the occasion of the exhibition.

collages *Lolita vs. Alice* (1999-2000), *Crucifixion Day* and *Crucifixion Night* (2005). He also executed a performance of *Fountain, Painting on Water* at the Museum Atrium.

Oleg Kulik had his previous guest appearance in Serbia in 2000 when, as a participant of the *Budva-grad teatar* festival he briefly stayed in Belgrade and, he held a talk and a presentation of his work in the *Barutana* space in the organization of the independent art association “Remont”. Also, the author had had a continuous years-long cooperation with the curator Petar Ćuković, which resulted in his presentations and guest appearances in Montenegro. Special place in this collaboration belongs to his performance at the Venice Biennale in 2001, in the Pavilion of Serbia and Montenegro at the invitation of Ćuković, where he presented his works together with Milija Pavićević at the *House & Windows* exhibition.

However, it seems that Oleg Kulik, as one of the key international artists who problematizes the marginalisation of the eastern-European context by the western-European art scene, the transitional social changes of the communist regimes and critique of social-realism in art, and who is, also, important for consideration and deconstruction of the contemporary art of our region, had not had an opportunity to show his characteristic works in a larger exhibition in Serbia, which was the reason for initiating the exhibition in Novi Sad. *Merry-go-round* was conceived as a retrospective, starting from Kulik’s early works such as *Deep into Russia*, his anthology performances from the 1990s such as: *Mad Dog*, *Deitch project*, *I Bite America and America Bites Me*, etc., a choice of his photo-collages from 2000s (which are close to the works displayed in Venice), all the way to the documentation of his newer performances - *Armadillo for Your Show and Fountain, Painting on Water*, as well as his new work *Merry-go-round* (2017-2019) conceived for the exhibition in Novi Sad, which emphasised the idea of a carousel – a cyclical movement of life as the main theme of the exhibition. After Novi Sad the exhibition entitled *Golden Fleece*, in an expanded

edition was displayed at the "Kibla Portal" in Maribor, and " , and it is planned to be presented at the National Gallery in Skopje, which would make this author's key oeuvre more accessible and visible in the ex-Yugoslavia region.

My first encounter with Oleg Kulik's work was in 1997 at the "Europarte" exhibition at the Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa, at the 47th Venice Biennale. At that time, he was already recognizable on the art scene for his mad dog performances as well as for his just-completed *Deitch Projects* in New York (April 12-26, 1997), which was much talked about, so there were certain expectations when visiting his new exhibitions in Venice. In order to *view deep Russia*, in a semi-dark showroom, one had to *enter a cow's vagina*, i.e. inside the massive sculptures of cow's buttocks one could watch the projections of rural life in Russia, imbued with epigone (primordial) passion and emphatic sexuality, images of emotional relationship between humans and animals, nudity, sexual organs and pleasure. For the majority of visitors of the Venetian preview - the expert public who came mainly from the Western European countries, this kind of presentation and the content of the piece seemed like an encounter with the different - (the wild), with the change and rethinking, and possibly with a shock! The rumour of ridicule was heard around the room, one could feel restlessness, controversy and revolt, but also, a sense of latent lust and excitement. The installation was rated as controversial, attracted a lot of visitors' attention, provoked comments and, again when it came to Oleg Kulik, raised questions about what is permissible and socially acceptable in art.

The encounter from long ago was repeated at an exhibition at MSUV 2019 where one of the cycles shown was *Deep into Russia*, filmed in the village of Dubrovki, Tver region (July 16, 1993), where Oleg Kulik had worked at the local Cultural Centre at the beginning of his career. It is one of his early works where he questions the anthropocentricity of the ruling culture, the hierarchical relations between human beings and animals, the social conventions of permissible behaviour, the humanism and fluidity of identity and ideas that he will address in his following works.

The unpredictability of Russia, its tendency to transcend the boundaries of humanity and the problematic proximity of primitive spirituality, is what Mila Bredikhina writes about in her article on Kulik, quoting Freud's words: "The ambivalence of emotions is a legacy of the spiritual life of a primitive man who is so well preserved among Russians unlike other nationalities"⁴. The stereotypes about Russia that Freud's statement was influenced by was the characteristic way the West looked at the East. At the time of the creation of the *Deep into Russia* series of works, the art scene in the developed European countries was only superficially aware of the situation in Russia. They considered it "Soviet art", "social realism", which was in the service of state propaganda and strictly controlled. Other forms of art were virtually invisible to them, side-lined in the "underground" and financially unsupported. It was only from the period of the Perestroika (1985-1991), the revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall that the artistic scene of Russia changed and opened. However, this freedom of artistic work and cooperation was accompanied with much ignorance and many prejudices regarding the background of Russian culture and art especially in the West. Therefore, with his concept, Oleg Kulik sought to problematize the misunderstanding, as well as the expectations that existed in Europe from an artist coming from the East.

The presentation of stereotype continued with androgyny, another important feature of Russia's cultural and historical values, incorporated into the behavioural interpretation of the human - beast, Kulik and his alter ego, dog and the relationship between Eros and Thanatos. His basic concept is the concept of 'zoophrenia', meaning the relation between man and animals, between culture and nature. He criticizes the anthropocentric society that has no sympathy for any biological species other than man, and in that case

4 Bredikhina, Mila (2007). "Deep into Russia: (on stereotypes and new codes)." in: *Nothing inhuman is alien to me: Oleg Kulik*. KERBER VERLAG (Bielefeld), XL Gallery (Moscow), Galerie Rabouan Moussion (Paris)...., 43.

“does not deserve the name of democracy”⁵ the author says. Contrary to the traditional relationship, Kulik, through his artistic activity, propagates the harmony created by relations between different species, a kind of “family of the future” in which he does not exclude marriages between different biological organisms, in which there is love and boundless trust between living beings.

A display of one possible “family of the future” can be seen in the artwork *Body Speaks Louder than Words-II* (2002) at the entrance to the gallery, highlighted also on the press material and covers of the catalogue. It is a photo collage dominated by Kulik’s naked figure with golden devil horns on his head, lying, all shiny, in the pose of pro-Western idea of Olympia or god Bach, in the muddy, rustic landscape symbolizing that unknown *Other* in the East. He is surrounded by farm animals in the foreground and bears in the background, as his family, participating in this imaginary feast dedicated to the forbidden relationship. The question remains if this is the illicit love between humans and animals, East and West, Christianity and paganism, kitsch and art.

One of the photographs shows the artist pushing his head into a cow’s vagina, wishing to die and be reborn as something totally new. The scene is set under the image of a rainbow and symbolically refers to the traditional idea of resurrection, which the author uses to simultaneously question both, reality and fiction, “the utopianism of avant-garde and the Malevich’s cosmic, progenitorial-vagina by Malevich”⁶, while inviting us to follow him *into the depths of Russia*.” As in the dreams of Doctor Freud’s patients, the deeper we go, the closer we are to the impossible reality that exists beyond “concepts” and “square roots” - at a tactile sensory, animal level.”⁷

5 S.M.A.K. Oleg Kulik: Deep into Russia, 18.03.2001, <https://smak.be/en/exhibition/7838>

6 Bredikhina, Mila (2007). “Deep into Russia: (on stereotypes and new codes).” in: *Nothing inhuman is alien to me: Oleg Kulik*. KERBER VERLAG (Bielefeld), XL Gallery (Moscow), Galerie Rabouan Moussion (Paris)...., 47.

7 Ibid.



Deep into Russia is also a presentation of the amorphous nature of Russian spirituality. Within such a concept there are certain regularities in the arrangement, interconnections, but also chaotic appearance and development, and already mentioned - unpredictability visible also in the sudden change of Oleg Kulik's artistic strategy, who unexpectedly *turns into a dog* and declares: "Nothing inhuman is alien to me" and „I've never been a human being“.⁸

When I came to Moscow, I made glass sculptures – transparent figurative things – and nobody liked them ... Then I became a performer, made a huge scandal with a man who takes the role of a dog, got an opportunity in the "Deitch project", and after that, I felt I was free to continue as an artist (Oleg Kulik)⁹

Kulik's anthological action *The Mad Dog or Last Taboo Guarded by Alone Cerberus* performed in *Bolshaya Yakimanka* Street in front of the Guelman Gallery in Moscow on November 23rd 1994 presented the state of Russian art and society as a whole - the dramatic social-cultural-political atmosphere of the transitional period during the 1990s in the post-Soviet Russia. It was a period of big depression in Russia, and people felt hopeless. The idea of the action was directed towards the critique of position of values in the environment of that period. During the performance in which he took the role of a dog, Kulik was symbolically guarding the discarded values such as: art, Master piece, talent and educated audience personified in Alexander Brenner, an artist and political activist¹⁰ - rebel. Completely naked, in the cold, Kulik barked frenzily to the hoarseness, pulling the chain held by Brenner and aggressively attacking viewers by simulating a furious dog fighting to the end of its strength.

8 Ibid.

9 Statement for the press of the exhibition.

10 Directed towards a critique of the socio-economic system, the situation in institutions and the arts. Somewhat later, in 1997, he was imprisoned for writing the dollar symbol on Kazimir Malevich's painting *Suprematism*, an act against consumerism in art.

*I decided, in the hopeless situation, to be a dog that does not think about art or about paintings. I felt the need not to think about human limitations. We prepared a performance that was supposed to indicate that everything was over. I felt huge fear, I stripped naked, they tied my dog leash, Brenner was walking me, and I was walking on all fours and barking at people. When the performance started the fear stopped, I saw only human feet, purses, I lost human senses, forgot meanings. It all lasted seven minutes and I don't remember anything. Only later did I see the video ...*¹¹

Soon after this performance Kulik received an official invitation from Zurich. Protest against the art system, recognized values, the materiality of artwork and art as a commodity, continued four months later, on March 30, 1995, with a performance *Reservoir Dog* in Kunsthaus in Zurich at the vernissage of a big exhibition *Signs and Wonder* that included the participation of important international artists.¹² "All those famous artists. And the exhibition looked kind of cold, precise, sterile,"¹³ thought Kulik with the feeling of resentment and hopelessness over poor reception and organization. No one at the Museum knew what Kulik was going to do, and this time he decided to be a dog, tied to a chain at the gallery entrance, as a guardian of forgotten values, barking and yelling at visitors. The venue, the so-called The Swiss Art Bank, as the author calls it, is one of the world's centres of the art market, a symbol of valorisation and construction of artistic positions, in which the artist, opposite to the expected kindness, portrayed himself as a beast, a primitive animal structure, stripping himself completely naked.

I barked, growled, and bit. I didn't let anybody in. The organizers came out of the Museum every now and then, asking me to stop. They even had to open a side door they had not used for twenty years for the important guests. I have to

11 D.R.V. "Interview: Oleg Kulik: Beware of the Dog!", Vreme, no. 498, 22nd July 2000.

12 Jeff Koons, Cindy Sherman, Damian Hirst, Ilya Kabakov and Nico Pirosmanni.

13 D.R.V. "Interview: Oleg Kulik: Beware of the dog!", Vreme, no. 498, 22nd July 2000

*admit I didn't know how to finish the performance, but after 47 minutes the police arrived. The audience in front of the entrance shouted, "Take him away, he's not an artist, he's a madman." The officers took the chain, took me to the police van and brought me to the police station. The organizers explained that it was a performance, and I was soon released. The next day, most Swiss newspapers published the news or a report about the performance on the front page. That same day Whitney Houston had a concert in Zurich, but the news about her concert was insignificant in the face of the scandal I had made.*¹⁴

That was the beginning of his problems with the "the law and order forces". The arrest also followed the performance of the *Dog House*, performed at the Interpol exhibition in Fargfabriken, Stockholm, on March 2nd 1996. Namely, the organizers invited him to stay, in agreement with them, in a pre-built cottage, as a kind of exotic, finished product over which they had control. The artist emphasized that any communication with him was dangerous because during the performance he renounced the language of culture and accepted only the language of nature, and that his physical territory was not to be exceeded. However, the warning was ignored and Kulik was provoked to bite a man, which led to a scandal and a strong media reaction. Interpretations of events, however, also went in the direction of separating the art of the East from the West, creating an even deeper division and misunderstanding, and degrading what was incomprehensible, the other and the different.

The question – "Why is the dog such an attractive animal for human beings?", is asked by Renata Salecl, a psychoanalysis theorist, in her text *Love Me. Love My Dog: Psychoanalysis and the Animal/Human Divide*¹⁵. From Diogenes, who provoked with his dog-like life and showed public affection for nature, and

14 Ibid.

15 Salecl, Renata (1996). "Love Me. Love My Dog: Psychoanalysis and the Animal/Human Divide", in: *Interpol: The Art Show Which Divided East and West*. Ljubljana, Moscow: IRWIN, Moscow Art magazine, 2000.

contempt for civilization, to Oleg Kulik, who attracted the attention of the world art public with his bites of visitors in Zurich and Stockholm, the question of the difference between humans and animals arises, which is “For Jacques Derrida, the last metaphysical division still unconstructed,”¹⁶ the author states.

The focus of the problems caused by Kulik’s activities were the differences between East and West, problems and misunderstandings in communication, domination and power. The stereotypes that life in today’s Russia is a dog’s life resulted in a *Russian dog* being invited to the international exhibitions in order to show all the misery of Russian life, which was the image that the professional public from the West expected from Kulik, but provided he would not behave really like a dog, but approach the process of simulation. However, as he acted with unexpected aggressiveness, he ceased to be a decorative art object and became an enemy, which corresponded to the views of the so-called multiculturalists who, in treating others, expected them to be passive, susceptible to accepting to be the victim as others did, but when they did not act in this way, “he or she is quickly designated as imperialistic, fundamentalist, totalitarian, etc.”¹⁷

The reaction to the resistance of the cultural establishment of Western Europe towards him was highlighted in the performance *I Love Europe, It Does Not Love Me Back* at *Kunstlerhaus Bethanien* in Berlin on September 1st 1996 when he offered himself to Europe as a symbolic enemy so that they could reach the desired unification through the common struggle. “If all the dogs unite by attacking me, they will notice the similarity of my dog collar and the symbol of the United Europe”, he stated in his reaction to the geo-political situation present after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the changes that followed in Europe.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

Over time his performances with the mad dog enter, more and more, into a phase of questioning the fluidity of identity and the relation between the animal and the humane. In the experiment *Pavlov's Dog* at V-2 in Rotterdam (Manifesta I), 5-25 June 1996. Kulik sought to give up his identity as a conscious being, human speech and behaviour, in order to become a living organism with reflexes (dog). He lived in the laboratory naked, moving on four legs, while Mila Bredikhina followed the program of the experiment together with a group of scientists from the field of biology, medicine and psychology.

He continued this type of practice in the *Deitch project, I Bite America and America Bites Me*, realised in New York, 12th to 16th April 1997, when he was living in a specially made installation – a box / house within the gallery space, while visitors could watch him through the windows or enter inside wearing a suit prepared for protection from dangerous animals. The concept of the work alludes to the famous performance of German artist Joseph Beuys *I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974) which he had realised at West Broadway's René Block Gallery in New York, sharing three days the space with a coyote – a wild beast that symbolises the unspoilt spirit of America and that had become tolerant during the performance. Believing that art has the power to transform society, Beuys analyses America's socio-political position as a global power that does not accept what is unknown to it, but rejects, denies, and isolates it. The symbolic domestication of the coyote achieved by Boise's performance continues in Kulik's performance by capturing and dressage of the artist - human - dog from the East, as a specific wild beast that needs to be tamed. The performance pointed to the state of contemporary American society and the existing strong dualism between the Eastern and the Western culture.

The text by Mila Bredikhina, in the catalogue of the Manifesta in Rotterdam in 1996, presents the theoretical foundations of Kulik's work that reminds us of the views of "deep ecology" and critique of anthropocentrism. He propagates a new symbiosis between humans and animals, a new balance between



them, to encourage studies of animal psychology, which would result in a new dialogue between animals and humans, he also believes that man should stop perceiving animals as non-anthropomorphic *Others* and should start perceiving them as the alter-ego. For Kulik: "True democracy can only be established on the politically inclusive idea of zoocentrism (man is but a part, rather than a measure of our planet's biosphere). Zoocentrism integrates man as a subculture in the larger whole of a united culture of noosphere (derived from noose: the ability to smell, to feel)."¹⁸ Since the ideal democracy is not possible, it should be acknowledged that the real democracy resembles a jungle, where some residents take precedence in the fact that they are stronger or faster than others. Thus Kulik concludes: "A jungle is in fact a more efficient society, devoid of the over sophistication that is currently stifling humanity. The main thing is that the jungle is the only place where the strong, the wise, and energetic can bring all their capabilities into play"¹⁹ These views, connected with deep ecology, speak of the desire for humanity to completely renounce anthropocentrism in order to create a new form of society based on the symbiosis of nature and people.

In addition to the *mad dog* cycles, Oleg Kulik has realised other performances in which he questions the position of anthropocentrism and fluid identity (humane/ animal), such as: *Zoocentrism Experiments*, 23rd July 1995; *Kulik is a Bird in Fact*, 22nd September 1995; *Missionary*, 27th October 1995; *Horses of Bretagne*, 1998; *Armadillo for Your Show*, 2003; etc. Why man is considered a superior being in relation to nature, how come he is its most valuable and most important part, who has given him the power to rule all other creatures and the Earth, how the ruling anthropocentric view of the world has been built, how much religion has influenced the establishment of existing hierarchical relations of power, etc. are questions that inevitably open up through the analysis of Kulik's views and works.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

The work *Kulik is a Bird in Fact*, September 22 1995, is based on the meaning of the word “kulik” in Russian - a small common sandpiper (bird species), and talks about the political campaign of the author as a member of a kind of an “Animal Party” that serves for advocating the development of animal qualities in man. “Anthropocentrism has worn off,” said the artist. The action consisted of exploring man’s ability to fly and Kulik’s flight from a window on the seventh floor of a multi-storey building using just a common strap.

Bringing himself into a new, often risky situations in response to the process of establishing a new relationship with animals is also evident in the work *Horses of Bretagne*, 1998, realized in *Saint-Nazaire*, France, where he was living for a while with a herd of horses that lived freely, in a kind of a zoo, exploring the works of Rousseau and Walter about man and nature.

In the performance *Armadillo for Your Show*, 2003, performed at the Tate Modern in London, he addresses the more contemporary themes of the influence of mass media culture on art and nature, but in this case he also associates himself with animals, this time with armadillo which is covered with linked bone plates (mirrors), simulating the appearance of a disco ball that rotates with electronic music.

Two latest works Kulik presented have been realised at the exhibition at MSUV (Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina). The first one is the documentation of the performance *Fountain, Painting on Water* (2017), set at the atrium of the Museum, the protected inner garden with a central, shallow pool that became a specific stage of this participatory work. The artist first poured the paints into the water, and then started a spontaneous dance with young girls dressed in white, which alluded to the painting process, the relationship between the artist and the audience or potential lovers. During the performance the paints were leaving marks on the participants’ clothing, while lighting, music, rain and thick smoke made the boundaries between art and life blurry. From spontaneous mutual play,

during the action the dialogue turned into an aggressive struggle, emphasizing the examination of the body in motion, and then calmed down and returned to the initial emotion - love. The performance combined the basic elements: fire, water, earth and the main element - the human being. It originated from the tradition of drawing figures in the air, making sand sculptures, writing messages on the water, as a poetic and romantic creation that alludes to the importance of the immateriality of the creative act as man's initial impulse and inner need.

The other work resulted from the *Master class – performance* which preceded the opening of the exhibition. High school and sculpture students participated, realizing their own imaginary portraits using quick-drying clay. The work of art was created as a participatory event of the joint sculpting of volunteers and artists, through a strategy of improvisation as the key to creating a collective result. The realized portraits became part of a larger metal construction, a carousel that rotates around its axis, constructed basically of connected bicycle wheels. A red pioneer scarf was added to each portrait, one of the symbols of socialist systems, collectivism and loyalty to the state. In the centre Oleg Kulik placed his figure of Lenin, balancing with a sword on his head, surrounded by many heads of followers and supporters. Through the research of the body as a “living culture”, this installation connects the entire exhibition, talks about the history of Russia, its socio-political movements and attitude towards the West, the differences between collective and individual practice, changes in the artistic interest and opus of the author himself. The important role belongs to the engagement of other participants, new communication, exchange and dialogue with them, which has shown the existence of large amount of generational differences, misunderstanding of the past of the others, and how important and necessary the transfer of knowledge is for further development.

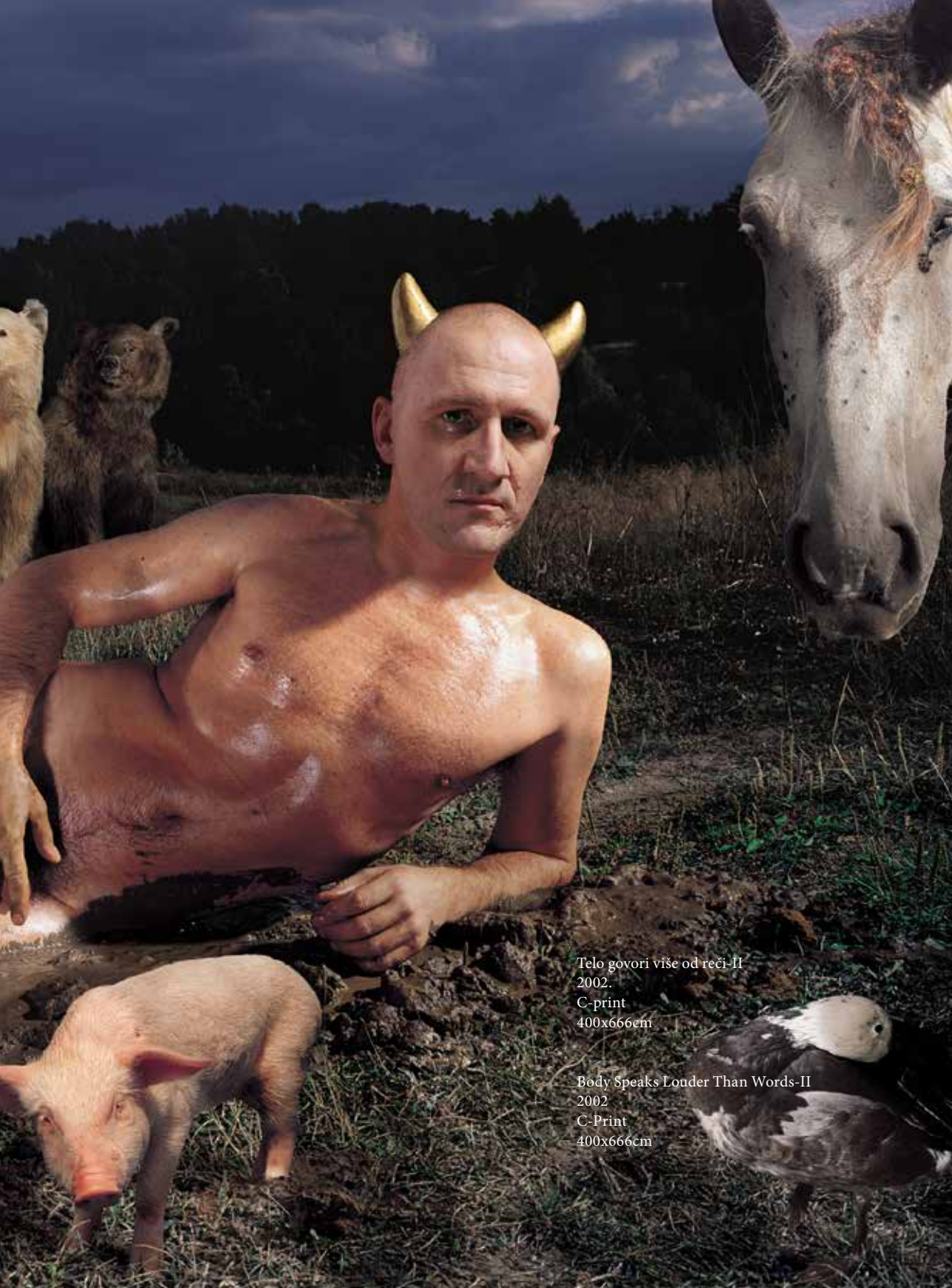
What is it in Kulik's works that provokes so many different reactions but never indifference? Is it a fear of breaking through established boundaries, a challenge

to differently perceive reality, established criteria and social values, truth and humanism, or is it a conflict with ourselves and our identity? The author explains his works as “a conscious fall from the human horizon”²⁰ that places him on his hands and knees. His works point to the crisis of contemporary culture and the kind of communication that has been raised to the level of not understanding the individuals, which creates obstacles and makes the culture inaccessible to most. Therefore, he simplifies the language into basic and emotional vocabulary, the language of domestic animals. Although positioned in the art scene as an artist from the East, the Russian dog, Oleg Kulik approaches collective identities by examining the layers of his own identity connected with contextual and socio-political circumstances, but also with individual variability (flexibility) emphasized in the process of questioning humanism, nature and creativity.

Oleg Kulik breaks the traditional norms of acceptable behaviour, the convention of what is allowed and desirable in art, strives for an interactive and open approach, and breaks stereotypes and ways of presenting work of art. Maybe this is what bothers us, what provokes us and impels us to question and look at ourselves from a certain, new, possible angle.

20 Press text: Oleg Kulik: Golden Fleece, 9 August–7 September 2019, KIBLA Portal, Maribor, Slovenia





Telo govori više od reči-II
2002.

C-print
400x666cm

Body Speaks Louder Than Words-II
2002

C-Print
400x666cm

TEODORA JEREMIĆ

UJESTI ILI LIZATI:
U RAZGOVORU SA
OLEGOM KULIKOM

Provala oblaka, pogrešni autobusi i nikada duži put do Novog Sada u koji idem da se sastanem sa Olegom Kulikom, legendom ruskog akcionizma. Ne znam koliko ću imati vremena, da li ću uspeti da ga pitam sve što želim, da li ćemo se razumeti... Znam samo da imam tremu koja me obično ne muči.

Stižem pred kraj radionice performansa. Oleg je u majici sa psihodeličnim hiپی printom, velikim osmehom; toliko je ljubavi, mira i razumevanja u svakom pokretu kroz koji komunicira sa publikom, mahom studentima, da me taj prizor odmah umiruje. Primećuje da sam stigla, mahne mi i, iskreno, kasnije potpuno razumem na šta misli kada kaže da sve zavisi od prvog osećaja.

Sve je u redu, sve je energija.

Pa da počnemo od početka, od razloga zbog kog sam danas u Novom Sadu. Nova izložba „Merry-go-round” u MSUV-u je, u suštini, rekapitulacija Vašeg dosadašnjeg rada kroz dokumentaciju performansa, fotografije i video-zapise. Boris Grojs se u svom tekstu „Umetnost u doba biopolitike – od umetničkog dela ka umetničkoj dokumentaciji” osvrće na taj specifični odnos dokumentacije i samog performansa. Kakav je Vaš odnos prema tome?

Performans je takva vrsta umetnosti koja postoji samo u trenutku u kom se dešava. Sama dokumentacija nema nikakve veze sa performansom. Možda je i besmisleno govoriti o tome koliko u njoj ima performansa. Dokumentacija je uspomena, sećanje. Najsurovija, naturalistička dokumentacija, to je već beletristika. Ali, beletristika je sama po sebi mit, podstiče na dela one koji žive. I zato je potrebno da primeri koji nas nadahnjuju budu snažni, upečatljivi. Nije pitanje da li je performans bio dobar ili loš, već u kakvoj se atmosferi i sredini akcija odvija. Mogu te spaliti na lomači ili možeš dobiti Zlatnog lava u Veneciji za istu stvar. Prosto, reč je o odnosu prema određenoj ličnosti.

Da, i kao da rad dobija drugi život?

Upravo, u tom smislu se sad udaljavamo od bilo kog akcionizma i govorimo o tome kako funkcioniše živo sećanje. Šta je to živo sećanje? To je ono sećanje koje budi i pokreće ljude na akciju. Moguće da je čovek bio nesrećan i živio veoma teško, ali je otkrio takve stvari da njegov nesrećan život nadahnjuje i inspiriše mnoge ljude na rizik.

Veoma mi je zanimljivo što ste pomenuli reč rizik, s obzirom na to da ova zložba i jeste deo projekta pod naslovom „Rizikuj promene” („Risk Change”). Šta za Vas danas znače te dve reči? I rizik i promena?

Rizikovati se može na razne načine, ali rizikovati i menjati se istovremeno je veoma složena stvar. Da bi nešto promenio moraš vrlo dobro da ga poznaješ. Zato postoje negativne i pozitivne promene. Negativne su kada se od nečeg kreće, a pozitivne kada se jedno menja za nešto drugo. Ako su nekoga uvredili i on je kao odgovor uvredio nekog drugog, to je negativna akcija. Ali, ako je umetnik, poput Pavlenskog, video sistem u celini i dobro razmislio šta može umetnik da uradi, da pokrene sredinu i sistem, to je nešto sasvim drugačije.

Kad smo već kod Pavlenskog, on je jedna od vodećih figura savremene ruske scene performansa... Kako vidite performans i akcionizam danas, ako imamo na umu da smo u 2019. godini, virtualno prisustvo i digitalna realnost u značajnoj meri zaokupljaju našu pažnju? Meni se čini da je performans danas možda značajniji nego ikada, jer nam je potrebno telo od kojeg smo se otuđili.

Da, zato što se sve brzo dešava. Svako se oseća kao deo performansa. Godine 1989, kada sam izveo prvi performans, imao sam osećaj da je tih 7 minuta, koliko je performans trajao, trajalo sigurno više od sat vremena. U tom drastičnom sažimanju vremena, bio sam bio toliko uvučen u proces da nisam video sebe.

Sada osećam da na taj način živim skoro svaki dan. Mislim da je bilo dobro što sam imao to iskustvo stresnog uranjaja u zgusnuto vreme. Volim brzinu, brzo vozim svoj motor, ali mnogi moji prijatelji, oni koji su moja generacija, pate jer su navikli na sporiji ritam. Sasvim je jasno da je umetnost u starom obliku umrla. Spora umetnost sa velikim repom tradicije. Savremenost, Fejsbuk, Gugl-Gorgona odsecaju rep toj tradiciji. Ali, stara kultura će nam pomoći da preživimo katastrofu. Jer, ona je zasnovana na ideji smrti i ponovnog rođenja, vaskrsenja. Ako smo pobedili zmaja, pobedićemo i Fejsbuk.

I šta ćemo onda? Kako da pobedimo svet u koji smo toliko uronili? Pre nekoliko dana su pali Instagram, Fejsbuk i Vocab na samo nekoliko sati i nastala je opšta drama. Šta je za nas takve vaskrsenje?

Osmišljena smrt. Tvoja lična smrt, ako je pažljivo osmisliš, biće umiranje za prostor umetnosti, a ne za život, i ako je dobro osmišljena imaće velik odjek i uticaće na druge ljude. Nekada su ljudi umirali za svoje ideje. Za savremenog čoveka to je smrt u medijima. Dobar umetnik može da se žrtvuje jer će svejedno posle pobediti. To će biti uskrснуće.

Vi uvek imate anarhistički, subverzivni i pristup i prizvuk... Međutim, zanimljivo je da nikada niste zapravo bili subverzivni prema sistemu nego prema sopstvu, prema ličnom sistemu.

Apsolutno. To su duboko individualni radovi, toliko duboko intimni da prestaješ da se plašiš sredine i ljudi koji te okružuju i da ih voliš. Prosto shvataš da su oni isto tako usamljeni i jedinstveni kao ti. Kao tantra. Ljudi nisu povezani, međusobno ne zavise jedni od drugih, svi su drugačiji, samo postoji taj neki unutrašnji osećaj da svi plivamo u istom moru blaženstva. Kvržice patnje ili svesti.

Jeste li po svom unutrašnjem osećaju birali kako ćete se ophoditi prema kojoj osobi, koja je ušla u kavez tokom performansa „Ja ujedam Ameriku, a Amerika ujeda mene”? Prema nekome ste bili agresivni prema nekome blagonakloni...

Zavisi. Mada, moram priznati da nisam očekivao da će doći toliko lepih, mladih devojaka. Dolazili su i neki nabildovani, krupni likovi. Zato sam i mogao da napravim performans, zbog različitosti. Bilo je tih elegantnih, finih, suptilnih žena sa decom. Kada bi se pojavilo neko takvo nežno, blago biće, čekao sam njihove postupke, prilagođavao sam se. Kada su me mazili, obraćali mi se, lepo sam im uzvraćao, publika je to znala da prepozna.

Kad govorimo o reakciji publike, ne mogu, a da ne pitam šta mislite o filmu „Kvadrat”. Vaš performans je očigledno i danas, 30 godina kasnije, toliko upečatljiv, da je njegova filmska reinterpretacija još uvek jednako šokantna. Kako Vam se generalno čini taj film, kakav je Vaš odnos prema njemu? Da li se slažete da je to film o umetniku?

Da i o umetniku i o umetničkom sistemu, izvrtnju sistema iznutra. Mnogo filmova o umetnicima i sistemu su loši, narativni, dosadni, govore o patnji umetnika, već viđenom. A ovde je reč o sasvim drugačijem konfliktu. Sam film je gest savremene umetnosti. Poput školjke, otkriva sistem i pokazuje kako je lep, bogat, ali mrtav. I samo je ono najživlje, što se pokreće, što je ostalo, zapravo ono ljudsko u njemu. Upravo ono zbog čega sistem i postoji i što ga, u isto vreme, čuva.

Sistem... značajna reč za Vaše stvaralaštvo. Nakon performansa „Ja ujedam Ameriku, a Amerika ujeda mene” ljudi su bili zatečeni i iako je muzej dobio jasne najave i instrukcije kakav je Vaš performans, ipak su bili šokirani, čak i revoltirani.

Ljudi su stizali autobusima iz drugih država. To više nije bila savremena umetnost nego nešto poput cirkusa, atrakcija, znamenitost Njujorka, „dovedeni Rus”.

Najzanimljivije je bilo što su svi pokušavali da me pogledaju u oči. To je bilo mnogo pre Marininog performansa u muzeju MoMA. Dolazili su ljudi, zagledali me i govorili: „On je čovek, on razume, neće me ujesti. Rusi su dobri, ne ujedaju.” Donosili su mi bombone. Performans je bio o čoveku i životinji, kao da su to dve potpuno različite stvari.

Jesu li? Pošto ne znam više.

Pa, ti si u svom kavezu, agresivan, želiš svoju teritoriju i svoj mir, ne treba ti niko, a ljudi dolaze sa ljubavlju i nežnošću. A ti kidaš tu ljubav.

Meni to liči i na neke ljude koje poznajem, ali dobro...

Tačno. Ali, to je bio iskren postupak.

Posle tog performansa, bilo je mnogo polemika i onih koji su govorili kako bi Vas trebalo izbaciti sa međunarodne umetničke scene, ali Vi tada na njoj, zapravo, niste ni bili prisutni. Na neki način, potpuno paradoksalno, ta pozicija autsajdera zapravo Vas je „ubacila” na međunarodnu scenu. Kako se sve obrnulo u Vašu korist?

Sporo. Prošlo je 20 godina kako niko nije izlagao moje radove. Bio sam prisutan na svim bijenalima i odjednom kao da sam odsečen od svega. Kao da je pas pregrizao lanac. Ali, ja sam odrastao u sovjetskom sistemu i uvek sam bio u nekoj vrsti *andergraunda* – KGB, prisluškivanje, tako da sam navikao na poziciju *autsajdera*. Mnogo mojih prijatelja je bilo u zatvoru, u vojsci, u ludnici. Što liči na stokholmski sindrom, navikao si na zatvor i postaješ mirniji. Više ne mogu da te kazne. Neće te više poslati u Sibir, nema dalje. Zato sam se 10 god bavio samo skulpturom. Razvio sam majstorsvo brzog vayanja i nadam se da će to postati trenutno vayanje, ne samo brzo nego instant. I to je sve zahvaljujući

iskustvu tela koje ne napuštaš. Umetnik je zanimljiviji od svog dela i stalno traži novo otkriće. Vaša jugoslovenska umetnica, Marina Abramović, je preteča onoga što ja radim. Ona se sad zaglavila negde između akcionizma, superstar pozicije i Lejdi Gage, ali je tako upečatljiva figura. I danas kad me vidi zagrlj me i dugo me tako drži. Snažna je i lepo miriše i ima toliko ljubavi što liči na neki bes, aposlutni bes.

Da li primećujete razliku između Istoka i Zapada? Nemamo Berlinski zid, ali margine i centri su još uvek tu.

Ima mnogo razlika u ovom svetu i razlike treba osnaživati. Neće pobediti onaj ko želi u centar – tamo već ima i previše istih i jednakih. Pobediće onaj ko se udalji od centra, što dalje, i pronađe ono jedinstveno, taj će zasvetleti kao zvezda. I svi će opet doći kod njega. A tražiti tuđi svet, tuđu svetlost, to možeš ceo život, a da je ne nađeš.

U svom eseju iz 1998. godine „Ujesti ili lizati”kažete: „Za mene danas, kao i za Rusiju uopšte, ne postoji važnije i ozbiljnije pitanje od toga da li ujesti ili lizati”. Čini se da je danas to pitanje možda umesnije nego ikad?

Ova dilema je postala duboko lična. Ne odnosi se više ni na religiju, politiku, ideologiju. Nije reč o banalnosti. Ili o našem kolektivnom biću. Kad vam neka osoba priđe vi istog trenutka, po mirisu, osetite da li želite da je ugrizete ili liznete. Komunikacija je još uvek na tom nivou. Čak iako neko ima rogove, još uvek ga prepoznajete po tom primarnom mirisu. Ljudi mogu biti svetli i sijati, a da im smrde noge. Naravno, treba imati na umu da, ako ste spremni da nekog ugrizete, možete očekivati da će vam on uzvratiti. Ako ugrizete Ameriku, budite spremni da će i ona ugristi vas. Ja sam spreman.

TEODORA JEREMIĆ

BITE OR LICK: IN
A CONVERSATION
WITH OLEG KULIK

Pouring rain, missed buses, and an interminable trip to Novi Sad, where I am headed to meet with Oleg Kulik, a legend of Russian Actionism. I don't know how much time I'll have, whether I'll get the chance to ask him everything I planned, will we understand each other... All I know is that I'm nervous, which I'm usually not.

I arrive a little before the end of his performance workshop. Oleg is wearing a T-shirt with a psychedelic hippie print, big smile, and so much love, peace, and understanding, apparent in every move he uses to communicate with the audience, mostly students, that I am appeased immediately. He notices I arrived, waves, and I honestly completely understand what he means when he tells me later that everything is known by the initial feeling.

Everything is OK, everything is energy.

Well, let's start from the beginning, and the reason I am in Novi Sad today. New exhibition "Merry-go-round" at MSUV is, basically, a recapitulation of your past work through documented performances, photographs, and video recordings. Boris Groys analyzes this particular relationship between documentation and performance in his article "Art in the Age of Biopolitics: From Artwork to Art Documentation." What are your feelings on this subject?

Performance is the kind of artistic expression which exists only at the exact moment it takes place. Documentation as such has nothing to do with performance. It might even be absurd talking about how much of the performance exists in the documentation. Documentation is a recollection, memory of something. The most brutal, naturalistic documentation, that's fiction. But fiction is in itself a myth, inciting to action those who are living. And this is why examples that inspire us need to be powerful, remarkable. The issue is not whether the performance was good or bad, that depends on the atmosphere and the environment in which the action takes place. You could be burned at the stake for it or receive a Golden Lion in Venice. And the process might be the same in either case. There is simply a culture of preserving someone's personality.

To offer it another life, just like with art work?

Precisely. In that sense, we are moving further away from any sort of actionism and are talking about the functioning of live memory. What exactly is live memory? It's the memory which awakens and inspires people to action. It is possible that a man is unhappy and has had a very difficult life but has made such discoveries that his life, such as it was, inspired and stimulated other people to take chances and risk something.

It is interesting that you mentioned the word risk, considering that this exhibition is a part of the Risk Change project. What do those two words mean to you, risk and change?

One could take risks in many ways, but to risk and change at the same time is a very complex thing. In order to change something, you need to understand it well. This is why there are positive and negative changes. Negative implies starting from something, and positive when something is exchanged for something else. If someone is insulted and as a result offends someone else, that is a negative reaction. But if an artist like Pavlensky understands the system as a whole and thinks about what he can do as an artist, and his potential to motivate the community and the system, that is something completely different.

Speaking of Pavlensky, he is one of the leading figures in the contemporary Russian performance scene... How do you see performance and actionism today, in 2019, when virtual presence and digital reality loom rather large. I feel that today they might be more significant than ever, as we need the living body, from which we alienated ourselves, now more than ever.

Yes, because everything happens so quickly today. Everyone feels a part of the performance. In 1989, when I carried out my first performance, I had the feeling that those 7 minutes, the duration of the performance, had lasted for over an hour. In this drastic compression of time, I was drawn into this process to such an extent that I couldn't see myself. Now I feel that I live like this almost every

day. I think it was good that I had the experience of a stressful immersion into this compressed time. I like speed, I like riding my motorcycle, but many of my friends from my generation suffer, because they are used to a slower pace. It is completely clear that art, in its old form, died. Slow art, with its long tail of tradition. Modernity, Facebook, Google-Gorgon, are cutting the tail off on this tradition. But old culture will help us live through that catastrophe. This is because the old culture is conceptualized on the idea of death, rebirth, and resurrection. If we managed to conquer the dragon, we can conquer Facebook.

And then what? How do we conquer the world in which we are so involved? Several days ago, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp all crashed for only a few hours and everyone became hysterical. What does Resurrection even represent for us?

A designed death. Your personal death, if you design it carefully, will be dying for the territory of art, and not for life, and if it's carefully thought through will have great repercussions and will influence others. Just like other people died for their ideas in the past. For a contemporary man, this is death in the media. And a good artist can sacrifice this, because he or she will win ultimately anyway. This will represent Resurrection.

Your approach and attitude always seem anarchistic, subversive... Nevertheless, it is interesting that you have never actually been subversive towards the system but yourself, your personal system.

Absolutely. These are deeply personal works, so profoundly intimate that you're no longer afraid of the surroundings or people around you but you start loving them. You simply begin to understand that they are as unique and lonely as you are. Just like tantra. People are in no way connected or mutually dependable. They are all separate and different, only this internal feeling exists that we all swim in the same sea of bliss. Lumps of suffering or awareness.

Had this, then, your internal feeling, guided you in your demeanor toward each person entering the cage during the performance “I Bite America and America Bites Me”? You were aggressive toward some, and benevolent toward others...

It depended. Through I have to admit I didn't expect so many beautiful young women to show up. Some large buffed up maniacs also came. It is because of this diversity that I was able to fully implement the performance. There were also these elegant, nice, subtle women, with children. When such gentle, tender beings show up, I wait to see what will happen, what they'll do, I adjust. They caressed me, talked to me, and I reacted benevolently. The audience recognized and reacted to this.

Speaking of audiences and reactions, I cannot but ask about your opinion about the movie “The Square.” 30 years later, your performance is obviously still powerful enough that its cinematic interpretation remains equally shocking even today. How do you feel about this film in general? Do you agree that it is a film about an artist?

Yes, about an artist and art system, about distorting the system from within. Majority of films about artists and the system are poorly done, narrative, boring, showing the suffering of the artist, something we have seen so many times before. There is a whole different conflict described here. The film itself represents a gesture of contemporary art. Just like a shell, it discloses the system and shows how beautiful and rich it is, but also dead. And the liveliest thing in it, the thing that rattles, that's left over, is actually the humane in it. Precisely what the system exists for and what protects it at the same time.

System... A rather significant word for your work. After the performance “I Bite America and America Bites Me,” people were somewhat caught off guard, and even though the museum was prepared and received clear instructions what your performance would be like, they were shocked, and even revolted.

People came by bus from other countries. This was no longer contemporary art, but more like a circus, attraction, New York landmark, they brought Russians. The most interesting part was the fact that everyone tried to look me in the eye. This was long before Marina's performance at MoMA. People came to me, ogled me and said: "He's a man, he understands, he isn't gonna bite me. Russians are ok, they don't bite." They brought candy. Performance was about a man and an animal, as if those two are completely different things.

Are they? I don't even know any more.

Well, you are in your cage, aggressive, you want your territory and your peace, you don't need anybody, and people keep coming with love and affection. And you tear up that love.

This reminds me of some people I know, but never mind...

Exactly. But it was an honest process.

After that performance, the museum sent letters to many people advocating for your expulsion from the international scene, but you were not actually present on it at the time to begin with. In a way, completely paradoxically, this position of an outsider actually 'launched' you on the international scene. How did this process happen, how did this situation turned into an advantageous one for you?

Very slowly. For 20 years nobody wanted to exhibit my work. I was present at every biennial and I was suddenly cut off. As if a dog bit off its chain. But I grew up in the Soviet system and I've always been functioning in some sort of an underground - KGB, wiretapping, so I was used to the position of an outsider. Many of my friends spent time in prison, in the army, at the mental asylum. It's a bit like a Stockholm syndrome, you're used to jail, and you become more peaceful. They can no longer punish you. Nobody will send you to Siberia, because that's as far as it goes. This is why, for 10 years, I only sculpted. I've

developed a craftsmanship of fast sculpting and I hope it will eventually become a momentary sculpting, not only fast but instant. And all of that thanks to the experience related to the body which you don't leave. An artist is always more interesting than their work and he/she is always looking for a new discovery. Yugoslav artist Marina Abramovic is an antecedent of what I am doing. She is currently stuck somewhere in between actionism, superstar position, and Lady Gaga, but she is such a remarkable figure. Even when she sees me today she hugs me and holds me for a long time. She is strong and smells nice and has so much love that it almost seems like an absolute anger of sorts.

Do you see any difference between the East and the West? Berlin Wall no longer exists, but margins and centers are still here.

There is still so much variety in this world and those differences should be reinforced. The winner won't be the one who strives for the center - there are too many of both the same and the equal. The winner will be the one who moves farthest away from the center and finds something unique, that person will shine like a star. And everyone will come back to him. Searching for someone else's world, someone else's light, you can do that all your life, and not find it.

In your 1998 essay "Biting or Licking" you say: "For me today, and also for Russia in general, there isn't a more important and serious question than the one whether to bite or to lick." It seems to me that this question is today perhaps more timely than ever?

This issue has become deeply personal. It is no longer about religion, or politics, or ideology. Not about banality. Or a collective us. When a person approaches you, you can immediately decide and feel whether you want to bite or lick them by the way they smell. The communication is still on that level. Even if they had horns, you can recognize them by that initial sense. And they can seem shiny and bright, but their feet might smell. Of course, one should keep in mind that, if you're getting ready to bite someone, be sure they will bite back. If you bite America, be prepared to be bitten in return. I'm ready.





Performans Fontana
Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine, Novi Sad
27. oktobar 2017.
dokumentovanje performansa

Fountain Performance
Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad
October 27, 2017
Performance documentation

Duboko u Rusiju

Proces samoidentifikacije je oduvek bila mučna stvar u Rusiji. Danas, isto kao što je to bilo i na početku 20. veka, on podrazumeva ponovno pokretanje revizije svih uobičajenih kulturnih i istorijskih vrednosti. Nastaviti raspravu o misteriji ruske duše sada je jednostavno neprikladno. Ima više smisla raspravljati o manje tajanstvenim pojmovima.

Ambivalencija i androginijska

Nepredvidiva svojstva Rusije su često iznenađivala, kako ruske istraživače, tako i posmatrače izvana. "Rusija nije deo čovečanstva, već postoji samo da bi nas naučila lekciju", pisao je Pert Čadev krajem 19. veka. "Ambivalentnost emocija je nasleđe duhovnog života primitivnog čoveka koji je, za razliku od drugih nacionalnosti, tako dobro sačuvan među Rusima", primetio je Sigmund Frojd nepristrasno, početkom narednog veka. Sklonost Rusije ka prekoračenju granica ljudskosti i njena problematična blizina određenoj primitivnoj duhovnosti, ekstravagantno je zastupljena u radu ruskog umetnika Olega Kulika, koji se, iznenada, pretvara u psa.

Androginijska je još jedan bitan stereotip u ruskoj kulturi, koji u Kulikovoj interpretaciji postaje nedeljiva celina koja kombinuje čoveka i zver. Eros, u Kulikovoj zoofrenoj transkripciji, bezobzirno ga prisiljava da traži seksualnog partnera zajedno sa svojim sopstvenim ne-antropomornim alter egom, u biću različite biološke prirode (nakon rata polova, gde nema pobednika, već samo bojno polje prepuno leševa naših želja, ovaj gest izgleda gotovo logičan). U isto vreme Tanatos gura Kulika na samoubilački upad u vaginu krave, ka želji da umre i da se ponovo rodi kao nešto potpuno novo. Ovaj program, u svom zastrašujućem fiziološkom pragmatizmu, sugerise prilično energičan način prevazilaženja amorfnosti ruske duhovnosti.



Duboko u Rusiju
Selo Dubrovki
16. jul 1993.
dokumentovanje
performansa
C-print
400x405cm

Deep into Russia
Village of Dubrovky
July 16, 1993
Performance
documentation
C-print
400x405cm

Agresija i moralizacija

Lajući i škrgućući zubima, agresivni, nagi čovek koji puze je, u stvari, sasvim bespomoćan pred svim tipovima društvenog uređenja. Agresivnost čoveka–psa je ništa drugo do očajnička moralizacija čoveka koji je razočaran vrednostima moderne antropocentrične kulture, te njenim izgledima i jezičkim sposobnostima. Nije ni čudo da veliki pisac i moralist prošlosti, Lav Tolstoj i njegova kritika društvenog establišmenta i književnog jezika, ostaju za Kulika figura snažnih principa.

Kulikove akcije otkrivaju dva međusobno isključujuća vektora, oba jednako tipična za današnju Rusiju. Njegova unutrašnja agresija i spoljašnja nepredvidivost koegzistiraju sa dubokim i iscrpljujućim traganjem za istinom u njegovim vlastitim neprozirnim i zagušljivim dubinama. Postojala je slična tendencija u ruskom avangardnom pokretu na početku veka – zbog svoje sopstvene prirode, agresivna energija velike Ideje težila je ka metafizičkom kosmosu, ka slepoj ulici posebne vrste. Mlako agresivan čovek–pas i bezumno energičan istraživač dubina krave su novi kodovi dveju ruskih realnosti koje koegzistiraju kao jedna jedinstvena.

San o realnosti

Pitanje u vezi sa tim kako transformisati današnji kaos u uređenost sutrašnjice je večno pitanje na koje Rusija ne uspeva da odgovori. Ruska kultura je povređena realnošću. “Život je neverovatno odvratn, ali ipak nije vađenje kvadratnog korena”, izjava Dostojevskog je simptomatična. Problematični koreni, neprestano traganje za dušom, gubljenje tradicije, što se pretvorilo u sopstvenu tradiciju, usadili su u rusku svest klicu skepticizma ka bilo kom uzročno-posledičnom odnosu, konceptu reda i bilo kom “vađenju kvadratnog korena”. Tako sada, više nego ikad, tvrdoglava želja da se po svaku cenu

pronađe sopstvena, autentična, nekonvencionalna, apsolutna stvarnost brzo sazreva (što je još luđa želja u vreme potpunog širenja virtualnih realnosti u pozadini). Ta želja u Rusiji podseća na utopizam avangarde i kosmičke *pravagine* Kazimira Maljeviča, kao i na Kulikovu veštačku unutrašnjost vagine krave. Umetnik, pak, poziva one koji žele da pronađu apsolutnu stvarnost, da ga prate – “u dubine Rusije”. Kao u snovima pacijenata Sigmunda Frojda, što dublje idemo, bliži smo nemogućoj realnosti koja postoji izvan “konceptata” i “kvadratnih korena” – na taktilno senzornom, životinjskom nivou.

(Mila Bredikhina/ Mila Bredihina)

Deep into Russia

The process of self-identification has always been a tormented affair in Russia.

Today, same as it used to be in the beginning of the last century, it entails starting afresh with a revision of all the habitual cultural and historical values.

To continue arguing about the mystery of the Russian soul is now simply indecorous. It makes more sense to discourse on less mysterious notions.

Ambivalence and androgyny

Russia's unforeseen qualities has often astonished both Russian explorers and observers from the outside. “Russia is not a part of humanity, but exists only to teach us a lesson”, - wrote Petr Chaadaev in the end of the 19th century. “The ambivalence of emotions is the legacy of a primitive man's spiritual life that has been preserved so well among Russians in contrast to other nationalities”, observed Freud dispassionately in the beginning of the next century. Russia's

inclination towards exceeding the bounds of humanity, and its problematic nearness to a certain primitive spirituality, are extravagantly represented in the work of the Russian artist Oleg Kulik, who all of a sudden turned himself into a dog.

Androgyny is yet another essential stereotype in the Russian culture, which in Kulik's interpretation becomes an indivisible whole combining a man and a beast. Eros, in Kulik's zoophrenic transcription, recklessly compels him to search for a sexual partner together with his own non-anthropomorphic alter ego, in a creature of different biological nature (after the war of the sexes, where there are no winners, but rather a battlefield littered with the corpses of our desires, this gesture seems nearly logical). At the same time Thanatos urges Kulik towards a suicidal intrusion into the vagina of a cow, towards a desire to die and to be born again as something completely new. This programme, in its frightening physiological pragmatism, suggests quite an energetic way of overcoming the amorphousness of the Russian spirituality.

Aggression and moralisation

By barking and snapping, the aggressive crawling naked man is in fact completely defenseless in front of all types of social establishment. The dog man's aggressiveness is nothing else but the desperate moralisation by a human being who has been disappointed by the values of modern anthropocentric culture, and by its prospects and language faculties. It's no wonder that the great writer and moralist of the past Leo Tolstoy and his critique of the social establishments and the literary language, remains for Kulik a figure of strong principles.

Kulik's actions reveal two mutually exclusive vectors, both equally typical for today's Russia. His internal aggression and external unpredictability co-

exist with the deep and tormented search of the truth in his own opaque, stifling profundities. There was a similar tendency in the Russian avant-garde movement at the start of the century - due to its own nature, the aggressive energy of the great Idea tended towards the metaphysical cosmos, towards a dead end of a special kind. The weakly aggressive man-dog and the madly energetic explorer of the profundities of the cow are respectively the new codes of two Russian realities that coexist in a unique one.

Dream of reality

The question about how to transform today's chaos into the order of tomorrow is the eternal question which Russia fails to answer. The Russian culture is hurt by reality. "Life is remarkably disgusting, but nevertheless it is not the extraction of just any square root", - the statement by Dostoevsky is symptomatic. The problematic roots, the continual soul-searching, the loss of tradition, which turned into its own tradition, have implanted into the Russian conscience the germ of scepticism towards any cause-and-effect relationship, concept of order and any "extraction of a square root". So now more than ever a stubborn desire to find its own authentic, non-conventional, *absolute* reality at all costs is quickly maturing (an even madder desire at the time of the total expansion of the virtual realities in a backdrop).

This desire in Russia recalls the utopianism of the avant-garde and of the cosmic pra-vagina of Malevich as well as Kulik's artificial bowels of a cow's vagina. The artist in his turn is inviting those who wish to find the absolute reality to follow him - "to the depths of Russia". Like in the dreams of Dr Freud's patients, the deeper we go, the closer we get to the impossible reality that exists apart from the "concepts" and from the "square roots" - at the tactile-sensorial, animal level. (Mila Bredikhina)

Nova propoved
Danilov market, Moskva
15. septembar 1994.
dokumentacija performansa
video
1'54"

The New Sermon
Danilov Market, Moscow
September 15, 1994
Performance documentation
video
1'54"



Nova propoved

Kulik je prerušen u Isusa Hrista-mutanta (sa kopitima umesto ruku) šetao između tezgi na pijaci, penjao se na platformu na kojoj se kasape tela životinja i tamo očajnički, dugo mukao. Ovo “novo jevanđelje” o očiglednoj nesavršenosti univerzuma bilo je upućeno svim stvorenjima, čak i zaklanim životinjama, a ne isključivo publici (ljudima). U međuvremenu se pijačna aktivnost nastavljala. Umetnik nije mogao sebe da natera da se udalji od “hrama” trgovaca i pijačara. Naprotiv, konzumeristički prostor pijace lako je transformisao Kulikov protest u jednu vrstu robnog oglašavanja.

The New Sermon

Video, 1'54" Kulik, disguised as a mutant Jesus Christ (with hoofs instead of hands), walked through the market aisles, climbed the platform where meat carcasses are butchered and mooed there desperately for a long time. This "new gospel" on the blatant imperfection of the universe was addressed to all creatures, even to slaughtered piglets, rather than to an exclusive audience of human beings. Meanwhile the market activity continued. The artist could not make himself be driven away from the "temple" of traders and publicans. On the contrary, the consumerist space of the market easily transformed Kulik's protest into a sort of commodity advertising.

Besni pas ili poslednji tabu koga čuva sam Kerber
(sa Aleksandrom Brenerom)
Ulica Boljšaja Jakimanka, Moskva
23. novembar 1994.
dokumentovanje performansa
crno-beli printovi
30x40cm

The Mad Dog or Last Taboo Guarded
by Alone Cerberus
(with Alexander Brener)
Bolshaya Yakimanka Street
Moscow, November 23, 1994
Performance documentation
Black and white print
30x40cm



Besni pas ili poslednji tabu koga čuva sam Kerber

Ovo je prvi Kulikov “pseći performans”. Trebalo je da postane simbol stanja ruske umetnosti i ruskog društva uopšte. Na ulazu M. Gelman galerije Kulik je čuvao odbačene vrednosti koje je personifikovao Aleksander Brener, umetnik i pesnik – pobunjenik: “umetnost”, “remek-delo”, “talenat”, “obrazovana publika” itd. Nag na mrazu, izgubljen, Kulik je lajao, jurio na lancu, obarao gledaoce s nogu i ujedao ih. S grlom promuklim od lajanja, nesvestan hladnoće i opasnosti, umetnik je uleteo pravo u gusti saobraćaj i uspeo da ga zaustavi.

The Mad Dog or Last Taboo Guarded by Alone Cerberus

This is the first “dog performance” by Kulik. It was to become an emblem of the state of Russian art and the state of Russian society as a whole. At the entrance to the M. Guelman Gallery Kulik was guarding deprecated values, personified by Alexander Brener, rebel artist and poet: “art”, “masterpiece”, “talent”, “educated public” etc. Naked in the frost, losing his bearings, Kulik barked, rushed on the chain, pushed spectators off their feet and bit them. His throat hoarse with barking, unaware of cold and danger, Kulik rushed into the thick of the traffic and managed to stop it.

Ulični pas
Kunsthaus, Cirihi
30. mart 1995.
dokumentacija performansa
video
7'00"

Reservoir Dog
Kunsthaus, Zurich
March 30, 1995
Performance documentation
Video
7'00"



Ulični pas

Ova aktivnost se odvijala na otvaranju velike međunarodne izložbe *Znakovi i čudo* (Signs and Wonder), koja je uključivala čuvene međunarodne umetnike kao što su Džef Kuns, Sindi Šerman, Demijan Hirst, Ilja Kabakov. Takođe je predstavila ekspresivne slike životinja Nike Pirosmenija (Nico Pirosmeni), naivnog umetnika i tragične figure, malo poznatog na Zapadu. Kulik je zavijao na ulazu izložbe plašeći i terajući posetioce. Ovo neočekivano pojavljivanje još jednog “naivnog umetnika”, psa-umetnika na ulazu u “Švajcarsku banku umetnosti” bio je njegov protest protiv transformacije života umetnika u materijalnu vrednost i protiv umetnosti kao robe. Kulik je uhapšen i proveo je noć u zatvoru.

Reservoir Dog

This action took place on the opening day of *Signs and Wonder*, a large international exhibition including famous international artists (e.g. Jeff Koons,

Cindy Sherman, Damian Hirst, Ilya Kabakov). It also featured expressive animalistic paintings by Nico Pirosmanni, a naive artist and tragic figure, hardly known in the West. Kulik was howling at the entrance of the exhibition scaring away spectators. This unexpected appearance of another “naive artist”, the dog-artist at the entrance of the “Swiss Bank of Art”, was his protest against the transformation of an artist’s life into material value, against art as commodity.

Kulik was arrested and spent a night in prison.

Alter Aegis/ Bifurkacija
(uz pomoć Alekseja Tabašova)
Centar za savremenu umetnost
Jakimanka, Moskva
20. jun 1995.
dokumentacija performansa
video
1'16"

Alter Aegis / Bifurcation
(with the assistance of Alexey Tabashov)
Center of Contemporary Art
Jakimanka Street, Moscow
June 20, 1995
Performance documentation
Video
1'16"



Alter Aegis/ Bifurkacija

Čovek je pre svega životinja, a tek nakon toga kulturna i društvena životinja. Tokom ove aktivnosti Kulik je okačio “dvostrukog čoveka” na konopac, čineći da je u interakciji sam sa sobom. Alter Ego čoveka ovde je izgledao kao Alter Aegis (aegis na latinskom znači “nalik na kozu”). Alter Aegis nasiljem prednjači nad svim biološkim vrstama, uključujući i sopstvenu. Savremena politika i narastajuće ekološke katastrofe čine ovu istinu još očitijom. Kulik veruje da nedostatak samosvesti pretili da uništi čovečanstvo.

Alter Aegis / Bifurcation

Man is an animal first of all, and a cultural and social animal after that. During this action Kulik hung a “double man” on rope, making him interact with himself. The Alter Ego of man looked as Alter Aegis here (aegis is Latin for “goat-like”). Alter Aegis prospers in the form of violence over all biological species, including its own species. Contemporary politics and looming ecological disaster make this truth ever more obvious. Kulik believes that a lack of self-awareness threatens to annihilate humanity.

Eksperimenti zoocentrizma
Moskovski zoološki vrt, Moskva
23. jul 1995.
dokumentacija performansa
video
2'55"

Zoocentrism Experiments
Moscow Zoo
July 23, 1995
Performance documentation
Video
2'55"



Eksperimenti zoocentrizma

Četiri istraživača Moskovskog istraživačkog centra protestovali su protiv zatvaranja ove institucije tako što su proveli ceo dan u kavezu orangutana. U podne, Kulik, nag i divlje zavijajući, penje se na kavez. Njega je razbesnela činjenica da su ljudi lišavali životinju njenog poslednjeg utočišta u Zoo vrtu. Istraživači su, sa svoje strane, bili ogorčeni Kulikovim ponašanjem. Odmah su sazvali konferenciju za novinare gde su izjavili kako “nisu imali ništa sa aktivnostima ovog orangutana”. Njihova žurba je objašnjena činjenicom da jedan od njihovih kolega nije učestvovao u protestu te su se plašili da bi Kulika mogli da zamene za tog kolegu.

Zoocentrism Experiments

Four researchers from the Moscow Research Centre protested against closure of this institution by spending a whole day in an orangutan cage. At noon Kulik, naked and howling wildly, climbed onto the cage. He was enraged by the fact that people were depriving an animal of its last shelter at the Zoo.

The researchers, on their part, were indignant at Kulik's behaviour. They immediately called a press conference where they hurried to state that they had nothing to do with the actions of this orangutan. Their haste was explained by the fact that one of their fellows did not participate in their protest, and they were afraid that Kulik would be mistaken as a colleague.

Kulik je ustvari ptica
Galerija 21, Sankt Peterburg
22. septembar 1995.
dokumentovanje performansa
C-print
30x40cm

Kulik is a Bird in Fact
Gallery 21, Saint Petersburg
September 22, 1995
Performance documentation
C-print
30x40cm



Kulik je, ustvari, ptica

Navedena akcija je zasnovana na značenju reči “kulik” (na ruskom “kulik” – mala prutka, vrsta ptice). Bila je u skladu sa Kulikovim izjavama na početku njegove izborne kampanje za ruskog predsednika kao člana Partije životinja i zagovarala je najveći mogući razvoj životinjskih kvaliteta u čoveku.

“Antropocentrizam se iscrpeo”, ponavljao je Kulik. Ova akcija, osim što je pružala uvid u sposobnosti čoveka da poleti sa prozora na sedmom spratu (uz upotrebu običnog remenja), prenela je i informaciju o letu na “ptičijem jeziku”. Proces u kome se postaje ptica uključio je prevazilaženje straha od visine, kao i psihološkog doživljaja letenja kako u vezi sa samim Kulikom, tako i u vezi sa gledaocima.

Kulik is a Bird in Fact

This action played on the meaning of the word “kulik” in Russian (“kulik” – sandpiper). It conformed to statements made by Kulik at the beginning of his election campaign for the Russian Presidency as a member of the Party of Animals, and advocated the utmost development of animal qualities in man. “Anthropocentrism has exhausted itself”, Kulik repeated. This action, besides providing an inspection of man’s ability to fly out of a seventh floor window (with the use of a simple harness), conveyed information about flight in “bird’s language”. The process of becoming a bird involved overcoming a fear of heights and the psychological experience of flight by Kulik and the spectators.

Misionar
(u okviru projekta Umetnost pripada ljudima-II)
Ulica Peščanaja, Moskva
27. oktobar 1995.
dokumentacija performansa
video
1'34"

Missionary
(in the framework of the project Art Belongs to People-II)
Peschanaya Street. Moscow
October 27, 1995
Performance documentation
Video
1'34"



Misionar

Ova aktivnost je posvećena Sv. Franji Asiškom, čoveku koji se nekada molio pticama i tako započeo komunikaciju sa drugim biološkim vrstama na najvišem konfesionalnom nivou. Kulik je pola sata u ledenoj vodi oslobađao ribe (šarane) grehova. Nakon ove aktivnosti, šarani su vraćeni u prodavnicu hrane da bi bili prodani. Dahtao je i nije mogao da izusti ni reč. Da li su šarani postali čistiji nakon postupka pročišćenja nije jasno kao što nije jasno ni Kulikovo religijsko opredeljenje.

Missionary

This action was dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi, a man who once prayed to the birds, and thus started communication with another biological species at the highest confessional level. Kulik was absolving live carps in ice-cold water for half an hour. After the action the carps were returned to a food store to be sold. Kulik resembled a fish after this action. He panted and could not say a word. Whether or not the carps became more pure after the absolution procedure is unclear, and likewise Kulik's religious persuasion.

Kuća za pse
Fargfabriken, Stokholm
2. mart 1996.
dokumentovanje performansa
C-print
30x40cm

Dog House
FargfabrikenStockholm
March 2, 1996
Performance documentation
C-print
30x40cm



Kuća za pse

Predloženo je da Kulik u okviru *Interpola* izradi svoj projekat *Kuće za pse*, izložbu posvećenu problemu u vezi sa komunikacijom. Umetnik je pozvan da, kao neka vrsta “gotovog proizvoda”, boravi u posebno sagrađenoj kući. Publika je upozorena da je bilo kakva komunikacija sa umetnikom koji se odriče jezika kulture opasna i da niko ne sme da prekorači granice njegove teritorije. Postupajući u skladu sa logikom ovog performansa, Kulik je ujeo gospodina Lindkvista koji je zanemario upozorenje. Švedska policija je uhapsila Kulika. Ovaj performans, kao i izložba u celini, izazvali su skandalozne reakcije medija. *Interpol* je optužen da svet umetnosti deli na Istok i Zapad. Kulik je objasnio svoju aktivnost kao odgovor na zahteve kustosa Manifeste I.

Dog House

It was suggested that Kulik produce his *Doghouse* project within *Interpol*, an exhibition devoted to the problem of communication. The artist was invited as a sort of a ready-made to stay in a specially built house. The audience was warned that any communication with the artist who denounced the language of culture is dangerous and that no one should cross the borders of his territory. Following the logic of this action Kulik bit a Mr. Lindquist who had neglected the warning. Kulik was arrested by the Swedish police. This performance and the exhibition as a whole aroused scandalous response from the media. *Interpol* was called an event that divided the art world into East and West. Kulik published an explanation of his action in response to demands made by the Manifesta I curators.

Pavlov's Dog
(u saradnji sa Milom Bredihinom)
V-2, Rotterdam (Manifesta I)
5–25. jun 1996.
dokumentacija performansa
video
2'33"

Pavlov's Dog
(in collaboration with Mila Bredikhina)
V-2, Rotterdam (Manifesta I)
June 5–25, 1996
Performance documentation
Video
2'33"



Pavlovljevi pas

Eksperiment *Pavlovljevi pas* uključio je naučnu studiju o korelaciji ljudskih bića i životinja na humanitarnim i psihosomatskim nivoima. U ovoj akciji Kulik je pokušao da se odrekne svog identiteta kao svesnog bića kako bi postao biće sa refleksima (pas). Tokom eksperimenta umetnik se odrekao ljudskog govora, drugih kulturoloških jezika i ljudskih uzoraka ponašanja. Nag i krećući se na sve četiri noge, živio je u laboratoriji. Mila Bredihina je bila odgovorna za koncept i program eksperimenata zajedno sa doktorom biologije, profesorom Andrejem Kamenskim i kardiologom Mikailom Alšibajom.

Pavlov's Dog

Pavlov's Dog experiment involved the scientific study of correlation between human beings and animals at humanitarian and psychosomatic levels. In this action Kulik made an attempt to renounce his identity as a reflective being in order to become a being with reflexes (a dog). In the course of the experiment the artist gave up human speech, other cultural languages and human patterns of behaviour. Naked and moving on all fours, he lived in the premises of laboratory. Mila Bredikhina was responsible for the concept and the programme of experiments (together with Doctor of Biology, Professor Andrey Kamensky and Cardiologist Mikhail Alshibaya).

Ja volim Evropu, a ona mi ne uzvraća ljubav
Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin
1. septembar 1996.
dokumentacija performansa
video
4'16"

I Love Europe, It Does Not Love Me Back
Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin
September 1, 1996
Performance documentation
Video
4'16"



Ja volim Evropu, a ona mi ne uzvraća ljubav

Nakon što je srušen Berlinski zid i unutrašnji sukobi počeli da eskaliraju, Evropa je izgubila svoje tradicionalne osobine i bila je prinuđena da počne “od nule”. Po Kuliku, Evropi je potreban lik neprijatelja kako bi postigla pravo jedinstvo: “Ja volim Evropu. To znači da sam spreman da ponudim sebe kao simboličnog neprijatelja. Ako se svi psi ujedine napadajući mene, uočiće sličnost moje pseće ogrlice i simbola Ujedinjene Evrope”.

I Love Europe, It Does Not Love Me Back

After the Berlin Wall had been pulled down and internal conflicts started to escalate, Europe lost its traditional features and was compelled to restart from “zero-point”. According to Kulik, Europe needs the image of an enemy in order to achieve real unification: “I love Europe. It means I am ready to propose myself as this symbolic enemy. If all dogs are united by attacking me, they will notice the resemblance my dog collar to the symbol of United Europe.”

Ne mogu više da ćutim
Evropski parlament, Strazbur
20. septembar 1996.
dokumentacija performansa
video
2'29"

I Can Not Keep Silence Any More
European Parliament, Strasbourg
September 20, 1996
Performance documentation
Video
2'29"



Ne mogu više da ćutim

Lajaću kao besan pas stojeći na sve četiri noge, zajedno sa teletom pokrivenim engleskom zastavom, jer ne mogu više da ćutim. Naziv moje akcije odnosi se na članak Lava Tolstoja istog naslova, u kome pisac protestvuje protiv pogubljenja ruskih seljaka, lišenih svih građanskih prava. Baš kao što se to danas dešava engleskim kravama, siguran sam da će monstruozi čin nasilja usmeren ka drugim biološkim vrstama biti destruktivan prvenstveno u odnosu na ljudska bića. Svako nasilje uništava našu ideju demokratije. Represija “nižih” klasa je obično dovođila do socijalnih kataklizmi. Represija “nižih” vrsta dovešće do globalne biološke katastrofe. Lajaću kao besan pas jer znam da, ako niko ne zaustavi genocid nad engleskim kravama, ja ću biti sledeći. A zatim, ti, sigurno.

I Can Not Keep Silence Any More

I will bark as a mad dog standing on all fours, together with a little calf covered with an English flag, because I can't keep silence any more'. The title of my action refers to Leo Tolstoy's article of the same name, in which the writer protests against the execution of Russian peasants, deprived of all civil rights.

Just as is happening to English cows today, I am sure the monstrous act of violence directed at the other biological species will be destructive primarily for human beings. Any violence destroys our idea of democracy. The repression of "lower" classes has usually led to social cataclysms. The repression of "lower" species will lead to the global biological catastrophe. I will bark as a mad dog, because I know that if no one stops the genocide of English cows I will be the next. Then you, for sure.

Ja ujedam Ameriku, Amerika ujeda mene
(sa Milom Bredihinom)
Deitch Projects, Njujork
12–26 april 1997.
dokumentovanje performansa
crno-beli printovi
30x40cm, 125x90cm

I Bite America and America Bites Me
(together with Mila Bredikhina)
Deitch Projects, New York,
April 12–26, 1997
Performance documentation
Black and white print
30x40cm, 125x90cm



Ja ujedam Ameriku, Amerika ujeda mene

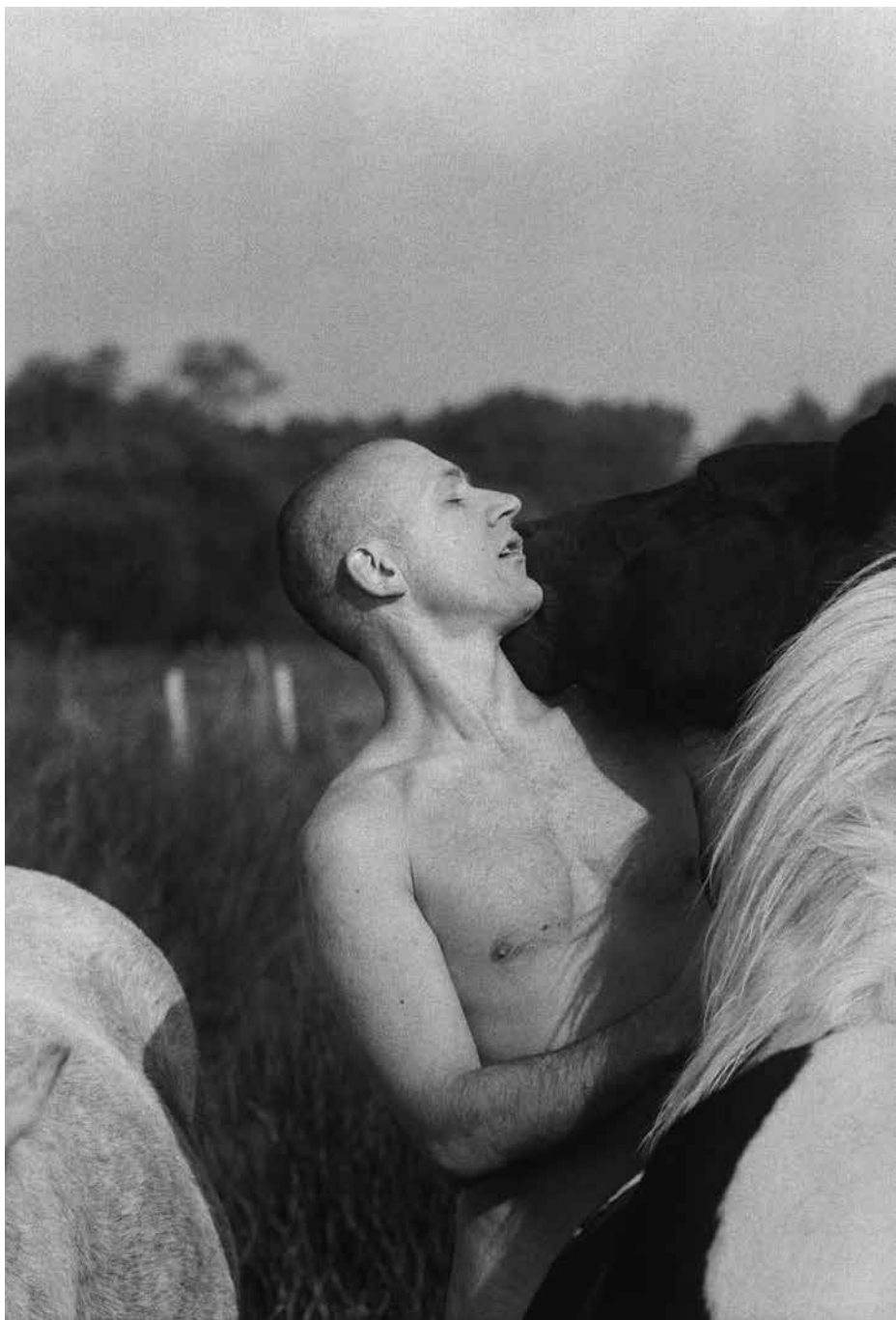
Kulik je dve nedelje živeo u posebno napravljenj kutiji koju nije napuštao. Posetioci galerije su mogli da ga posmatraju kroz prozore kutije ili da uđu unutra noseći zaštitno odelo. Ako je Bojsov performans *I Love America, America Loves Me* (*Ja volim Ameriku i Amerika voli mene*) bio simbolično pripitomljavanje Amerike, ovo pripitomljavanje Kulika predstavlja dijagnozu stanja savremenog američkog društva.

I Bite America and America Bites Me

For two weeks Kulik lived in a specially built box without leaving it. Gallery visitors could watch him through the windows of the box or go inside it wearing a protective suit. If Beuys' performance *I Love America, America Loves Me* was a symbolic domestication of America, this domestication of Kulik was a diagnosis of the state of contemporary American society.

Konji Bretanje
Sen Nazer, 1998.
dokumentovanje performansa
crno-beli printovi
30x45cm
(Posvećeno Jean-Francois Taddei)

Horses of Bretagne
Saint-Nazaire, 1998
Performance documentation
Black and white prints
30x45cm
(Dedicated to Jean-Francois Taddei)



Konji Bretanje

Ideja da neko vreme živi sa stadom konja prožeta je Kulikovim zoofrenim motivima, ona nema nikakve veze s činjenicom da će se to dogoditi u zemlji Rusoa i Voltera. Ipak, kao i obično, genius loci (duh mesta) je odigrao svoju ulogu. Kad god je mit o “prirodnom čoveku” funkcionisao, pratila ga je ozbiljna kulturna i istorijska galama. Ova galama, kako vidimo, nije mogla biti eliminisana kada je reč o konjima. Konji su bili dobro. Konji Bretanje nisu znali kakav je osećaj nositi uzde, sedlo, vući kola. Živeli su na slobodi, u nekoj vrsti zoo parka. Što je danas moguće. Da budemo precizniji, danas je vreme kad je to moguće. Da budemo još precizniji, ovo je jedino što je moguće danas.

Kulik uopšte nije bio dobro – on nije zaboravio, ni na trenutak, šta su uzde, sedlo, kola kulture. Kao rezultat, imamo foto i video-dokumente koji beleže ponašanje Anti-Nevinog u prostoru Anti-Kulture, a ne prirode.

Kulik, Anti-Nevini, nije dobio potreban (prema Volteru, ali suprotno Rusou) povratak u kulturu u obliku knjige planirane u saradnji sa Žanom Fransoom Tadeom, direktorom Muzeja savremene umetnosti u Sen Nazeru. Njegova smrt nas je naterala da mislimo o drugim stvarima. Priroda nema pamćenje (to joj je jedini prerogativ). Kultura ga mora imati. (Mila Bredihina)

Horses of Bretagne

The idea to live in a herd of horses for a while was imbued with Kulik's zoophrenic motives, it had nothing to do with the fact that it was going to happen in the land of Rousseau and Voltaire. Yet genius loci played its part, as usual. While the myth of the "natural man" worked sometimes, it was always accompanied with serious cultural and historical noise. This noise, as it happened, could not be eliminated in respect to horses. The horses were all right. The horses of Brittany did not know what a bridle, a saddle, a cart felt like. They lived in freedom, in a sort of a Zoo-park for Bretons. This is possible today. To be more exact, today is the time when it is possible. To be even more exact, this is the only thing which is possible today. Kulik wasn't all right at all – he didn't forget for a single moment what a bridle, a saddle and a cart of culture was. As a result, we have photo and video documents registering the behavior of the Anti-Innocent in the space of anti-Culture, not of nature. Kulik, the Anti-Innocent, did not get the necessary (according to Voltaire, but contrary to Rousseau) return to culture in the form of a book planned in cooperation with Jean-Francois Taddei, the director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Saint-Nazaire. His death made us think of different things. Nature has no memory (it is its sole prerogative). Culture must have it. (Mila Bredikhina)

Dva Kulika
La Kukarača restoran, Riga
4. novembar 1998.
dokumentacija performansa
video
4'20"

Two Kuliks
La Cucaracha restaurant, Riga
November 4, 1998
Performance documentation
Video
4'20"



Dva Kulika

Kulik–umetnik i Kulik–životinja se bore koristeći sredstva koja su obojici dostupna. Prvi crta auto-portret svojim “kljunom”, sećajući se da je ptica (pogledaj *In Fact, Kulik is a Bird*), dok je onaj drugi uvek nezadovoljan konvencionalnošću rezultata. U Rigi je konflikt dostigao vrhunac kada je jedan od Kulika rukom polomio staklo auto-portreta i morao hitno da bude odvezen u bolnicu na operaciju.

Two Kuliks

Kulik-the-artist and Kulik-the-animal fight using the means available to both of them. The first is drawing his self-portrait with his “beak”, remembering that he is a bird (see *In Fact, Kulik is a Bird*), while the second is always displeased with the conventionality of the result. In Riga the conflict reached its climax when one of the kuliks (which one?) broke the glass self-portrait with his hand, and had to be rushed to hospital for surgery.

Oklopnik za vaš šou
Tejt Modern, London
27. mart 2003.
dokumentovanje performansa
video
10'

Armadillo for Your Show
Tate Modern, London
March 27, 2003
Performance documentation
Video
10'



Oklopnik za vaš šou

Ovaj performans se bavio granicama konvencija savremene umetnosti i estetikom i efektima masovne kulture u noćnom klubu. Oklopnik je neuhvatljiva noćna životinja pokriven oklopom od spojenih koštanih ploča. U ovom performansu Kulik je bio “oklopnik”, pokriven spojenim pločama od ogledala zalepljenim za njegovu kožu, čineći tako da izgleda poput disko kugle. On se dugo rotirao uz pratnju izuzetno strasne muzike.

Armadillo for Your Show

This performance, at once, was concerned with the limits of contemporary art conventions, and the aesthetics and effects of mass culture at a night club. The armadillo is an elusive nocturnal animal with an armour-like covering of jointed bony plates. In this action Kulik was the “armadillo” covered by jointed mirror plates glued to his skin, making him look like a disco-ball. For a long time he rotated to the accompaniment of extremely passionate music.

Performans Fontana
Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine, Novi Sad
27. oktobar 2017.
dokumentovanje performansa
crno-beli printovi
90x130cm

Fountain Performance
Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad
October 27, 2017
Performance documentation
Black and white prints
90x130cm

Učesnice | Participants:

Evgenija Kudelina, DaNS ansambl Sokolskog društva Vojvodine: Mia Inić,
Tanja Štricki, Jelena Severova, Vanja Nadežden, Milica Šponja

Stručna podrška | Expert support:

Tatjana Grujić

Audio-vizuelna podrška | Audio-visual support:

Line audio Novi Sad

Zvuk | Sound:

Miloš Jovanović, Simon Macuh

Video:

Alfa Video

Koordinacija | Coordination:

Svetlana Mladenov, Tijana Filipov



Slikanje na vodi

Postoji stara tradicija crtanja figura u vazduhu, pravljenja skulptura od peska, pisanja poruka na vodi. Izgleda poetski i romantično – umetničko stvaralaštvo ne ostavlja tragove, već neverovatan osećaj da sve što nas okružuje formira celu sliku ili jedno telo. Interakcija sa njim ostaje u memoriji i ne zahteva nikakvo fiksiranje.

U performansu Fontana sam želeo da spojim elemente: vatru, vodu, zemlju i “glavni” element – ljudsko biće.

Pozvao sam devojke da učestvuju u predstavi. Nosile su belu odeću na kojoj su ostajali tragove boje.

Pretpostavio sam jednostavnu akciju: spontanu interakciju sa učesnicama u bazenu u koji sam prethodno prolivao boje u vidu traka i kapljica.

Pretpostavljalo se da će se o scenariju akcije odlučivati tokom procesa, ali razmišljao sam o plesu, laganim pokretima, crtežima. Međutim, tokom kretanja je došlo do spontane borbe učesnika u performansu. U potpunosti sam osetio moć elemenata što je bilo prouzrokovano činjenicom da su bila uključena ogromna spot-svetla, bilo je dima i padala je jaka kiša, što nije bilo planirano scenarijom. Akcija se pretvorila u borbu. Posetiocima je sve izgledalo kao ples ili neobična akcija. Postalo je nejasno gde su granice umetnosti: kiša, bazen, publika, muzika. Sve je postalo totalno umetničko delo, totalni performans, totalna akcija.

Painting on Water

There is an old tradition of drawing figures in air, to do sculptures of sand, to write messages on water. It looks poetically and romantically – artist's creation does not leave marks, but leaves improbable feeling that everything around formes a whole painting or one body. Interaction with it remains in memory and does not demand any fixing.

In the “Fountain” performance I wanted to connect all elements: fire, water, earth and the “main” element – human being.

I invited young girls to participate in the performance. They were wearing white clothes which keep paint traces well visible.

I assumed a simple action: spontaneous interaction with participants at the pool where I spill previously color paint strips and drops. It was supposed that the scenario of action will be decided in process, but I'd been thinking of dance, of smooth movements, drawings. However, in the course of the movement there was a spontaneous fight against participants. I felt in full the power of elements. It was promoted by the fact that huge spots had been switched on, smoke went and heavy rain poured down which was not provided by the scenario at all.

Action turned into fight, I choked. To public it seemed as dance or unusual action. It became unclear where border of this art: rain, pool, audience, music. Everything became the total work of art, a total performance, a total action.

Merry-go-round
2017–2019
polimerna glina, metal | polymer clay, metal
190x120x120cm

Učesnici/e master klas - performans
| Participants of master class - performance:

Miroslav Janjin, Anika Kunjadić, Suzana Rudić, Asja Komadina, Dušan Ivić,
Melody Lahoš, Daniel Mesaroš, Novak Požarev, Branislava Živić, Aleksa Zrnić,
Stefan Kovačić, Zorana Matković, Milan Lazić, Ivan Jokanović, Aleksandra
Pejanović, Snežana Tomašević, Anđela Amidžić, Igor Balać, Nataša Sušić, Luka
Žurovski, Dimitrij Baranov, Ivana Sailović, Simeon Stojanoski, Edvard Molnar









Biografija

Oleg Kulik je rođen 1961. godine u Kijevu i smatra se jednim od osnivača akcionizma u postsovjetskoj Rusiji. Kroz svoj rad istražuje odnos politike i moći, emocionalne i fizičke aspekte odnosa između ljudi i životinja, normalnosti i devijacije, kiča i umetnosti.

Diplomirao je na Kraljevskoj umetničkoj školi 1979. godine. Karijeru je počeo kao kustos u galeriji Regina u Moskvi, gde su njegove nekonvencionalne izložbe i pristupi odmah privukli pažnju javnosti.

Od 2000-ih godina, pretežno se bavi tehnikama kao što su: foto-kolaž, vajarske instalacije, pikturalna umetnost i performans. Učestvovao je na mnogim međunarodnim projektima i bijenalima, uključujući i Venecijansko bijenale umetnosti, kao i na festivalu Manifesta, a njegova dela se čuvaju u kolekcijama širom sveta, u nekim od najznačajnijih muzeja kao što su: Tejt Modern, Žorž Pompidu, JRT i dr.

Dobitnik je stipendije Fondacije Polok-Krasner (1990) i stipendije Berlinskog senata (1995). Osim brojnih međunarodnih nagrada, Kulik je nagrađen i medaljom Zaslužni (The Worthy) koju dodeljuje Ruska akademije umetnosti.

Živi i radi u Moskvi.

Biography

Oleg Kulik was born in Kiev (Ukraine) in 1961 and is considered to be one of the founders of actionism in the post-Soviet Russia. Through his work, he examines the relation between politics and power, emotional and physical aspects of the relations between people and animals, normality and deviations, kitsch and art.

He graduated from the Royal Art School in 1979 and began his career as a curator at the Regina Gallery in Moscow, where his unconventional exhibitions and approaches immediately attracted public attention.

Since the 2000s he has mainly dealt with the techniques such as photo-collage, sculptural installations, pictorial art and performance. He has participated in many international projects and biennials, including the Venice Biennial, as well as Manifesta Festival, and his works are kept in collections all over the world in some of the most important museums, such as Tate Modern, Pompidou, JRT, etc.

He received the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (1990) and the Berlin Senate Grant (1995). In addition to numerous international awards, Kulik was also awarded Заслуженный (The Worthy) medal by the Russian Academy of Arts.

He lives and works in Moscow.

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