



_____ Blažo Kovačević _____
Probe



NARODNI MUZEJ CRNE GORE
ATELJE DADO

DR. JOVANA STOKIĆ

Nadzor i kazna:

Istraga Blaža Kovačevića

Instalacija naslovljena *Probe* metaforički govori o savremenoj kulturi straha kojom je prožet neprestani rat protiv terora. Kovačević uvodi ključna moralna pitanja koja se tiču ukidanja ličnih sloboda zarad kolektivne bezbjednosti. Sa ciljem da otvori diskusiju o implikacijama koje nadziranje ljudi nosi sa sobom, umjetnik postavlja scenu u jedinom prostoru u kojem može da ima kontrolu – u galeriji. U njoj, poziva publiku da uzme učešće u njegovoj dirigovanoj aktivnosti. Kako bi posmatrača učinio svjesnim koliko je neprijatno biti pod kontrolom, Kovačević jasno označava granicu kretanja unutar prostora galerije. Učesnici se mogu kretati isključivo onim putanjama koje je umjetnik propisao. Ograničavajući slobodu kretanja unutar galerije, Kovačević se poigrava pojmom moći i kontrole. Ova smišljena umjetnička strategija podsjeća me na francuskog filozofa Mišela Fukoa i njegova dalekovida zapažanja o prirodi zapadne moderne civilizacije... Jedna od tehnika koju Fuko pominje je *Panoptikon*, arhitektonska konstrukcija koju je dizajnirao Džeremi Bentam sredinom XIX stoljeća za zatvore, ludnice, škole, bolnice i fabrike. *Panoptikon* je stvarao moćnu i sofisticiranu internu prisilu kroz stalno posmatranje zatvorenika koji su međusobno bili potpuno odvojeni i među kojima nije bila dozvoljena nikakva interakcija. Moderna konstrukcija trebalo je da omogući stražarima da sa svog mjesta, koje se nalazilo u visokom centralnom tornju, neprestano prate svaku ćeliju a da ih pritom zatvorenici ne vide. Smatralo se da stalna prismotra djeluje kao mehanizam kontrole, odnosno ugrađuje se svijest o stalnom nadzoru.

Ovu snažnu metaforu koristili su i savremeni društveni kritičari koji tvrde da je današnja tehnologija omogućila često neprimjetnu (ili nevidljivu) upotrebu panoptičkih struktura kroz čitavo društvo. Video nadzor (CCTV sistem) na javnim mjestima primjer je tehnologije koja je u svakodnevni život stanovništva uperila pogled superiornog lica. Za Fukoa, metafora *Panoptikona* otvorila je mogućnost istraživanja odnosa između sistema društvene kontrole kao sredstva za uvođenje discipline i koncepta moći i znanja, jer po njegovom mišljenju moć i znanje potiču od posmatranja drugih. Rezultati nadgledanja su prihvatanje pravila i poslušnost – neka vrsta normalizacije – koje potiču od prijetnje nadzora. Odgovarajuće ponašanje postiže se ne kroz totalni nadzor, već putem panoptičkog nadziranja i navođenja populacije da prihvati taj nadzor.

“Djelovanje posmatrača zasniva se na posmatranju i ponašanjima koja tim putem primijeti; što više posmatrač posmatra, postaje moćniji. Moć dolazi od znanja koje je akumulirao kroz kružno posmatranje djelovanja, pri čemu se znanje i moć međusobno osnažuju.” (Fuko, Nadzor i kazna, 1975). Dalji razvoj ove ideje vodi definisanju ugnjetavanja kao kontrolisane situacije u kojoj samo određena grupa ljudi kontroliše znanje. Umjetnik je, čini se, ovdje zainteresovan za mogućnost iskupljujuće radnje: šta da se radi onda kada postanemo svjesni mehanizama kroz koje se moć/znanje stiču?

Prateći ovakvu liniju rasuđivanja, neophodno je postaviti sljedeća pitanja – kako se pokreće protivisila kojom bi se “stvorio otpor protiv sveprisustva sve agresivnijeg elektronskog društva koje pokušava da upravlja svim informacijama do kojih dolazi i koje sakuplja? Gdje možemo povući granicu između bezbjednosti i slobode, naročito kada su moderne tehnike nadzora sve prisutnije na otvorenim prostorima urbanih sredina da bi se ušlo u trag pojedincima koji se kreću i da bi se kontrolisalo ili modifikovalo ponašanje?” (Moja K. Mejson, “Fuko i njegov Panoptikon”)

Neki teoretičari vide načine postizanja takozvane protivisile i redefinisanja lične slobode u formiranju *smart mob*-ova, na primjer. Umjetnika ovdje zanima problematizovanje mehanizama kontrole u savremenom društvu izvođenjem rituala i, eventualno, nuđenjem ličnog mjesta slobode od kontrole. Kovačević još više problematizuje pojam moći dozvoljavajući posmatračima da gledaju sadržaj svojih ličnih stvari. Ovo je samo po sebi voajeristička radnja i na prvi pogled ima iskupljujuću vrijednost. Ne bi je trebalo doživljavati samo kao nadoknadu. Mi kao posmatrači prihvatamo da nas vode, pregledaju, skeniraju, tako da najzad možemo da vidimo šta leži ispod. Slike ličnih stvari koje Kovačević izlaže ambivalentne su. One govore o želji javnosti da zna, posjeduje i dosegne skriveno (znanje). Istovremeno, obeležavajući rendgenske snimke predmeta lijepim bojama, umjetnik im vraća dostojanstveni status ličnih predmeta. Slike postaju još ambivalentnije kada shvatimo da među ličnim stvarima ima toliko mnogo oružja. Što je još problematičnije, Kovačević nam pokazuje da se čak i oružje može predstaviti kao ljepota (želja). Nakon što je posmatrač dobrovoljno učestvovao u Kovačevićevoj aktivnosti, ostaje mu da razmišlja o mogućnosti sticanja slobode od kontrole, na vlastiti rizik.



Plavi kofer, 40.6 x 45.7cm, digitalna štampa na Leksanu, 2010
Blue Suitcase, 16" x 18", digital print on Lexan, 2010

JOVANA STOKIC, PH.D.

Discipline and Punish:
Blazo Kovacevic's Probe

The installation titled Probe metaphorically speaks about the contemporary culture of fear that permeates the perpetual war on terror. Kovacevic is implying crucial moral questions regarding the renunciation of personal freedoms for the sake of collective safety. In order to open a discussion on the implications of monitoring people, the artist sets the stage within the only space he can assert control - the gallery. In it, he invites the audience to participate in his orchestrated action. In order to make his viewer aware of the discomforts of being controlled Kovacevic is clearly delineating movement within the gallery space. One can go only the direction prescribed by the artist. By limiting the freedom of movement within the gallery, Kovacevic is playing with the notion of power and control. This deliberate artistic strategy reminds me of French philosopher Michel Foucault's farsighted insights about the nature of Western modern civilization... One of the techniques/regulatory modes of power/knowledge Foucault cited was the Panopticon, an architectural structure designed by Jeremy Bentham in the mid-19th century for prisons, insane asylums, schools, hospitals, and factories. The Panopticon offered a powerful and sophisticated internalized coercion through the constant observation of prisoners, each separated from the other and allowed no interaction. The modern structure would allow guards to continually monitor each cell from their vantage point in a high central tower without being seen by the prisoners. The constant observation was seen to act as a control mechanism, a consciousness of constant surveillance is internalized. This powerful metaphor was further deployed by contemporary social critics who assert that technology today has allowed for the often unnoticed (or invisible) deployment of panoptic structures throughout society. Surveillance and closed-circuit television (CCTV) in public spaces is an example of a technology that brings the gaze of a superior into the daily lives of the populace. For Foucault, the metaphor of the Panopticon opened the possibility of exploring the relationship between systems of social control as a disciplinary tool and the power-knowledge concept, since, in his view power and knowledge come from observing others. The result of this surveillance is acceptance of regulations and docility – a normalization of sorts – stemming from the threat of discipline. Suitable behavior is achieved not through total surveillance, but by panoptic discipline and inducing a population to internalize that surveillance.

“The actions of the observer are based upon this monitoring and the behaviors he sees exhibited; the more one observes, the more powerful one becomes. The power comes from the knowledge the observer has accumulated from his observations of actions in a circular fashion, with knowledge and power reinforcing each other.” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 1975). Further development of this idea leads to the definition of oppression as a controlled situation in which only a certain group of people controls knowledge. The artist seems to be invested here in the possibility of redeeming action: what is to be done once we are aware of mechanisms through which the power/knowledge is acquired?

Following these lines of reasoning, it is necessary to ask the following questions - what are the processes of mobilizing counter-power to “form a resistance against the pervasiveness of the increasingly intrusive electronic society that is trying to manage all of the information that it is tracking and collecting? Where can we draw the line between security and freedom, especially when modern surveillance techniques are increasingly found in urban open spaces to track individuals who are mobile and to control or modify behavior?” (Moya K. Mason, “Foucault and His Panopticon”)

Some theorists offer ways to acquire so-called counter-power and re-define personal freedoms in creating smart mobs, for example. The artist is interested here in problematizing the mechanisms of control in contemporary society by enacting its rituals and, possibly offering a personal place of freedom from control. Kovacevic is problematizing the notion of power even more by letting the viewers observe the contents of their belongings. This, in its very nature is a voyeuristic action and at first glance has a redeeming value. It should not be read only as a simple pay-off. We as viewers accept to be guided, examined, and scanned, so we can finally see what lies beneath. The representations of personal belongings displayed by Kovacevic are ambivalent. They speak about the public desire to know, to possess and to grasp the hidden (knowledge). At the same time, by rendering the x-rayed objects in pretty colors, the artist recuperates their dignified status as personal objects. The representations are made even more ambivalent once we realize that among personal belongings there are so many weapons. More problematic, Kovacevic shows us that even weapons can be represented as beauty (desire). Once the viewer has voluntarily participated in Kovacevic’s action, he is left to contemplate the possibility of acquiring freedom from control, at his/her own risk.



Plava torbica, 40.6 x 40.6cm, digitalna štampa na Leksanu, 2010
Blue Purse, 16" x 16", digital print on Lexan, 2010



Pink friz, 63.5 x 795cm, digitalna štampa na Polikarbonatu, 2010
Pink Frieze, 25" x 313" digital print on Illusion film, 2010





Žuta torbica, 40.6 x 33cm, digitalna štampa na Leksanu, 2010
Yellow Purse, 16" x 13", digital print on Lexan, 2010



Zelena torba, 40.6 x 50cm, digitalna štampa na Leksanu, 2010
Green Bag, 16" x 19.5", digital print on Lexan, 2010



Ljubičasta torbica, 40.6 x 30.5cm, digitalna štampa na Leksanu, 2010
Violet Purse, 16" x 12", digital print on Lexan, 2010



Narandžasta torbica, 40.6 x 37cm, digitalna štampa na Lexanu, 2010
Orange Purse, 16" x 14.5", digital print on Lexan, 2010



Pink torbica, 40.6 x 30.5cm, digitalna štampa na Leksanu, 2010
Pink Purse, 16" x 12", digital print on Lexan, 2010



Pink tašna, 40.6 x 33cm, digitalna štampa na Leksanu, 2010
Pink Handbag, 16" x 13", digital print on Lexan, 2010



Crvena tašna, 40.6 x 40.6cm, digitalna štampa na Leksanu, 2010
Red Bag, 16" x 16", digital print on Lexan, 2010

Blazo Kovačević je rođen 1973 u Podgorici, Crna Gora, a živi u Savani, Džordžija.

Diplomirao je umjetnost na Univerzitetu Crne Gore 1997, i magistrirao slikarstvo na Pensilvanijskoj akademiji lijepih umjetnosti 2001. Kovačević je izlagao u Americi i Evropi u brojnim samostalnim i pozivnim izložbama, od kojih se izdvajaju samostalne izložbe: Probe, Atelje Dado, Narodni Muzej Crne Gore; Mape i Rezovi, Hurong Lou galerija, Filadelfija; Kontinentalni Doručak, galerija Haos, Beograd; Likvidacija, Kulturni Centar SCG, Pariz, Francuska; Rasprodaja, galerija Siano, Filadelfija. Od grupnih izložbi izdvajaju se: Probava - Athens institut savremene umjetnosti, Atens, Džordžija; Prvi Salon Petar Lubarda - Plavi Dvorac, Cetinje, Crna Gora; Savremena Umjetnost Crne Gore - Stephansdom Katedrala, Beč, Austrija; Internacionalni Festival Alternativne Kulturne Saradnje - Beograd i Novi Sad, Srbija; Kluj i Bukurešt, Rumunija; Plovdiv i Sofija, Bugarska; Sarajevo, Bosna i Hercegovina; Strazbur, Francuska; Ajndhoven, Holandija; kao i Utopia Stanica - 50. Venecijansko Bijenale, Italija. U 2004. godini je osnovao prvi Internacionalni festival digitalne umjetnosti u Crnoj Gori. Kovačevićev rad je predstavljen u mnogim medijima u Crnoj Gori, Srbiji, Francuskoj i Americi kao što su: Outlet, Art Newspaper, Modern Painter, Artension, Toledo City Paper, Der Standard, Glas Crnogoraca, House Style, Likovni Zivot, Monitor, Nasa Borba, Novosti, Philadelphia Weekly, Pobjeda, Politika, Publika, Vijesti, TV RTCG, TV Vijesti, TV IN, TV Atlas RTS i B92. On je član Udruženja likovnih umjetnika Crne Gore od 1997. godine. Kovačević trenutno predaje umjetnost na Savana Stejt univerzitetu.

Blazo Kovacevic (b. Podgorica, Montenegro 1973, resides in Savannah, Georgia). He earned a B.F.A. in studio art from the University of Montenegro in 1997, and a M.F.A. in painting from the Pennsylvania Academy of The Fine Arts in 2001. Kovacevic had his work presented in the United States and Europe in numerous exhibits such are solo: Probe, Atelier Dado, National Museum, Cetinje, Montenegro; Maps and Cuts, Hurong Lou Gallery, Philadelphia, PA; Continental Breakfast, Gallery Chaos, Belgrade, Serbia; Liquidation, Cultural Center of Serbia and Montenegro, Paris, France; Clearance, Gallery Siano, Philadelphia, PA. Among numerous group exhibitions are: Ingest - Athens Institute for Contemporary Art, Athens, GA; First Petar Lubarda Salon - Plavi Dvorac castle, Cetinje, Montenegro; Moderne Kunst Aus Montenegro - Stephansdom, Vienna, Austria; International Festival of Alternative Cultural Exchange (F.A.C.E.) - Belgrade and Novi Sad, Serbia; Cluj and Bucharest, Romania; Plovdiv and Sofia, Bulgaria; Sarajevo, Bosnia; Strasbourg, France; Eindhoven, The Netherlands; and Utopia Station at the 50th Venice Biennial, Italy. In 2004 he organized the first International Festival of Digital Arts in Montenegro. His work was reviewed in the following media sources in Serbia, Montenegro, France and the United States: Outlet, Art Newspaper, Modern Painter, Artension, Toledo City Paper, Der Standard, Glas Crnogoraca, House Style, Likovni Zivot, Monitor, Nasa Borba, Novosti, Philadelphia Weekly, Pobjeda, Politika, Publika, Vijesti, TV RTCG, TV Vijesti, TV IN, TV Atlas, RTS and B92. He has been a member of the Association of Fine Artists of Montenegro since 1997. Kovacevic currently teaches studio arts at Savannah State University.

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