

Gabriela Vanga

On Blind Faith

Opening: April 30, 18 - 22 h

April 30 - June 5, 2010

Tuesday - Saturday, 12 - 18 h

Heidestrasse 50, 10557 Berlin

Galeria Plan B is happy to present the first solo exhibition in Germany of the Romanian artist Gabriela Vanga (born 1977, currently working in Romania).

Perhaps the most striking feature of Gabriela Vanga's exhibition is its temerity in addressing concerns that could not be more unfashionable; furthermore, to do so on a tone that does not eschew or downplay the gravity of these questions, and via operations that very often verge on the symbolic, a stylistic device with which recent art has a profoundly ambivalent relationship. Life, education, death, the contours and unrest of contemporary subjectivity – construed as the agonistic prey of so many antagonisms – are recuperated as "stills from an infinite movie" (as an older exhibition title stated), as freeze-frames from a continuous projection of society trudging towards its collective destination.

Themes are isolated as climactic issues, and not paired with war or destruction, technology and ecology, consumerism or revolution. They are neither construed as occasions for ironic bathos, nor as triggers for an allegory, but "in themselves", in their spectral essence, in the perpetual disguise of their fundamental truth. Finally in the relevance they might still hold for any discourse of art, life and the gaps separating them, in the moral impulses they might still generate. The images in the show are disembedded from precise cultural or political narratives, from their textual attachments to the story of a specific place or time. The signs, dysfunctional indexes and semiotic residues of totalizing narratives and ideologies are re-played from a perspective that is certainly not a bird's eye view of human history, but one that activates the revelatory potential of everyday gestures and occurrences, that slightly disrupts the ready-made situation, that loops it or articulates it into a view of how the contemporary subject is 'modied'.

A film made especially for the exhibition sees a group of eight children smashing over two hundreds china figurines against a wall, in a nondescript urban setting. The voluptuousness of destruction, on which so many childhood discoveries are based, the form of possession that is interwoven with destruction and the annulment of the object, are filmed at a fast pace and edited into a tight sequence, emphasizing energetic performance. The second half of the film brings a sudden change of mood: the shards of china are picked and grouped, the figurines are patiently pieced and glued together. This indicates the emergence of an authority figure behind the camera, ambiguously doubled by the authority figure which had allowed the debacle to happen and set up the film. Plural symbolic extensions coalesce into a meditation on education, but also beyond, obliquely inquiring into social processes of learning and unlearning, their effects and after-effects – invoking all and not settling for any single interpretation.

A lightbox, called The Light, sums up the show's conceptual and formal explorations. Almost a "box of darkness", the image shows a mass of unrelieved black, which comes close to completely obscuring the source of light and defeating the purpose of the piece. The heavy darkness is only interrupted by a tiny fissure at the center, through which light glimmers. While the artist ironically notes that it could be read as a spatial inversion of the vanishing point in Courbet's The Origin of the World, and therefore could be said to reproduce the yet-to-be-born's first visual experience – right before being engulfed by radiant whiteness, the image also seems to breach the domain of moral choice. We can infer from it that the contemporary "glass" is no longer half full, and half empty. Maybe the relation – or proportion –, between light and darkness in this

almost-non-image, the way in which the lightning-bolt shape seems to protrude out of the frame, has to do with the sum of things to which hope can still attach itself, surrounded by menacing nothingness.

The exhibition text was written by Mihnea Mircan.

For further information please contact the gallery at +49.172.3210711 or contact@plan-b.ro

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