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## Temporary Dumping Place. Rotations in Given Space

Irena Lagator's work is often based on the concept of appropriation of environmental space. This is part of the way she works with a sensibility that introduces and allows the fourth dimension to be received by the multifaceted richness of enthusiastic sharing. The poetry of relationships, a delicate field of gestures, glances, and sounds inherent in the spaces emerges through works that reveal sense environments with poetic shades of light, color and movement.

In the case of *Temporary Dumping Place. Rotations in Given Space*, (2004), the context in which the artist chose to challenge herself is, however, neither pleasant nor neutral, but highly dramatic. It is about a temporary garbage dump built in Montenegro, more specifically in the natural environment of The Bay of Kotor, which looks out onto the Adriatic Sea. Surrounded by lush vegetation is a huge square hole created by deep excavation and covered with surfaces of black polyethylene. The hole was filled with waste (probably toxic) and, recently, covered with earth and newly-planted grass in order to disguise the environmental destruction.

The emphatic assumption of this square and tragically black space is set as the starting point of the work that Lagator developed in the fourth dimension with an installation of extensively multimedia approach. Essentially, the work consists of a kind of a route of knowledge presented by the structure of a dark pavilion, built as a rough parallelepiped, for which both internal and external walls are used.

The first step on the route is an external inscription that briefly explains what a temporary dumping place is. Continuing from the external, it is possible to observe a big photograph that shows, as in a documentary, the natural environment where the Bay of Kotor dump is in a progressive stage. You are offered a bird's-eye view of the enchanting landscape of the bay, with a very bright sea and a velvet spread of emerald green vegetation in which a small, barely perceptible, enigmatic square of light can be seen like a mirror-surfaced tub full of water. The route continues as the entryway to the pavilion through an entrance shaped like a book and pierced diagonally by a wall. On this wall there is a sequence of seven C-prints that make up an unbroken visual stripe, more than three meters long which picks up golden sun reflections on a liquid sea of ink. Here the previous misconstruction dump/tub seems to be repeated by attractive images of rippled waves captured in silent movement.

These disturbing and beguiling snaps, in fact, illustrate the folds of the polyethylene facing the rays of sunshine and they play on the ambiguity between natural and artificial, focusing on our perception of the environment.

When one gets into the dark room inside the pavilion, the projection is perceivable in a video loop on the floor. This shows the dump from the inside: a deep stage for a performance by the artist herself, which she also photographed. Thanks to immaculate white clothing, Lagator's elegant shape stands out from the black background of the hollow. She is caught engrossed in stubbornly performing a sequence of pirouettes that are consistently interrupted by loss of balance or by the fatigue of physical effort. This is an attempt at resistance that, indeed, ends with resignation and reclining into a sitting position.

Taken by itself, the act of the pirouette evokes the all-encompassing joy of childhood when the energy of the movement is not channeled into finalized gestures but pleases itself because of its miraculous existence. Not by chance, the leap on tiptoes represents the extravagant expression of the grace of a classical ballet dancer who seems here to be evoked in the precious and fragile shape of a little carillon statue, in which the box covered with shining silk is changed by the precious and as well deceptive circumstances of the dump. More than the pirouette, the expression of dance virtuosity seems to be an important repetition of the circular movement that expands rhythmically in an attempt to achieve a wide appropriation in time and space.

This is a centrifugal movement that researches a stubborn and always failing intention to embrace, catch and understand an environmental and historical reality – *hit et nunc* – which is rather complex to understand and make one's own. In this sense, the work proposes itself as a multiple attempt of relationship, with an idea of identification which excludes every purpose of condemnation: between artist and public, associated in the sharing of the unknown circumstance (through the projection, the bottom of the dump is the floor of the pavilion); between the artist and nature, both led as a pure imitation of themselves; between the artist and society, by then reduced to a mimesis of happiness.