

In *Irena Lagator Pejovic: The Society of Unlimited Responsibility. Art as Social Strategy*. 2001-2011. Edited by Christa Steinle, Karin Buol-Wischenau, Neue Galerie Graz am Universalmuseum Joanneum. Published by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Köln.
&
In *Irena Lagator Pejovic: What is Missing*, exhibition folder, gallery HAOS, Belgrade, 2005

Stevan Vuković

Constitutive Lack

From the standpoint of “perspective realism”, “relational ontology” or “contextualism”, the particular embodied subject is actually only the raw material for cultural inscriptions. In essence, the embodied self is a myth. Oneself is always lost in language, and is in the sphere of influence of those forces that are operative within the field of deciphering the language games taking place in everyday life. Further on, language is the most immediate realm absorbed in our everyday practices, and it provides us with the individuation method that converts us into particular agents of our basic desires.

Language is in that respect considered to be a material phenomenon itself. It exists only within acts of utterance that reinforce its dominion onto the existential realm of the subjects that use it. Taking an active part in a certain “language-game” is then meant to bring into prominence the fact that speaking a language is part of an existential activity or of a form of life. There are no neutral speakers; there are no speakers who just happened to come into the dominion of a language; they are all active producers of a view and the shareholders in a horizon that, as such, delimits one’s visual perspectives.

What does it mean then to encounter an installation that primarily engages the viewer as a perceptual subject, as a moving body that positions itself within the gallery space and its surrounding, not necessarily bringing onto the surface that one is also being a subject of language? Facing a curtain, facing a set of sheets with letters painted on them, while walking into and through the space, turned into a space for artistic intervention. Doesn’t this simply mean to dive into a perceptual trap cutting us off from the linguistic realm? Or does the deciphering of the word “missing” actually have some hermeneutical impact?

This installation does produce a certain graphic context, a certain quota of visual information that can be read along the lines of a traditional art-historical interpretative mode and be taken into a sphere of aesthetic appreciation. But there is also a certain surplus to it, a certain residue to the analytical questioning of its visual impact. It actually poses a question, a question that one cannot delimit simply to the inner-artistic concern with meaning that exists alongside the physicality of a work. It poses the question of the site-specificity of any art-related intervention and the manner in which it relates itself to the

space it occupies.

It actually deals with the category of “content” as such and its role in filling the void of the particular space it is to occupy. The question is then whether what actually fills the space could be what is said to be “missing”. Or, in other words, if the artwork as such, or if any artwork as such, can provide the viewer and the interpreter of it’s content and meaning with what it actually does not have. This is the power of fulfilling the promise of redefining, at least temporarily, the character of physical realities and contextual frameworks of a respective space and it’s relation to the immediate experience and further reflections of the visitor.

This work actually affects us in the area of the divide between the psychological subject and the subject of language, exploring moments of tensions between the physical world and language. It displays its content as “something which is missing”, as a kind of a constitutive lack, but without being tempted to close this or to fill it in, to replace it with something. On the other hand, it treats language as something we use to construct the world as well as to construct ourselves, even though finding it completely inadequate for both those tasks, filling the gaps in it’s functioning by phantasmatic means.