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The Horizon of the Multitude

Mediterranean

The Mediterranean – whose very name, derived from the Latin (*medius + terra*) ‘in the middle of land’, ‘surrounded by land’ – speaks of a sea that separates and unites. A plural universe is created there that does not erase differences but enables the coexistence of multiplicity, evading any fundamentalism. For French historian Fernand Braudel (1902–1985), the Mediterranean was a thousand things at once, not one landscape but countless landscapes, not one sea but a sequence of seas, not one civilization but civilizations that pile up. It is exactly this space of difference, the irreducible pluralism, peoples, languages, cultures that Europe was born from. As a multiverse, almost constantly on the brink of chaos, the Mediterranean is the cradle of Europe and Western civilization. There is no single Mediterranean culture because the Mediterranean is a polychrome and polyform whole, which has always eluded reduction to one, *reductio ad unum*.

Different cultures and peoples open to the Mediterranean, located between Europe, Asia (Middle East) and Africa, and share this space that unites and separates them. This sea is the centre of world history, with Greece, a bright spot in history; then Jerusalem, the centre of Judaism and Christianity; to the southeast there are Mecca and Medina, the home of Muslim faith; to the west are Delphi and Athens; farther to the west is Rome; Alexandria and Carthage are also on the Mediterranean. As the heart of the Ancient History, the Mediterranean is, for Hegel, the beginning and the end of world history, its rise and decline!

The Mediterranean, which refers to the internal identity of the world and chaos, chaosmos, to use Deleuze’s term borrowed from Joyce, is a constant mixing, the creation of a multitude that takes on different shapes in different epochs. Exactly because it is not a monolithic identity but a multiverse, the Mediterranean, as Franco Cassano points out, prepares the mind for the complexity of the world, hybridity, crossbreeding, an identity that does not strive for purity and purification, but has long mastered these elusive mixtures. The experience of the Mediterranean multiverse can certainly become a model of a new global configuration of the world, but also a matrix for all future mixtures of heterogeneous entities.

Therefore it should come as no surprise that the horizon of the Mediterranean Sea in *La*

divina proportione stands out from other ones; that there is no clear line connecting the sea and the sky but there is some haze, something that makes it blurred, vague, elusive, without sharp outlines. Finally, only in that painting you can see clouds (the figurative in which it is possible to draw the most various figures) while all other horizons come close to abstraction that goes beyond sight, where the sea and the sky refract into one another. Thus, the Mediterranean horizon points to a zone that often remains elusive, a zone of uncertainty that can any moment collapse into chaosmos – that cosmos emerges from. There is not one dominant thread that connects everything into an organized hierarchical structure, but a multiverse of various combinations that arise on the edges of civilizations and continents. It is the horizon of the multitude, closed and open at the same time, which points to the necessity of internal boundaries as a condition for survival, but also to the necessity of overcoming any closing, to an openness to the unknown and yet unexplored.

Installation

Marija Dragojlović's installation *La divina proportione* consists of one drawing and seven paintings. The reduced, almost minimal installation, emphatically repeats a situation in which the viewer is confronted with different horizons. These horizons arise from the junction of seven seas (Black, Red, Marmara, Dead, Sargasso, North and Mediterranean) and the sky, which takes on different characteristics depending on the sea it borders with. The horizon is determined "mathematically" because it is based on the golden ratio, where the drawing of Fibonacci's "golden spiral" defines the position of the horizon in each of the paintings. The "divine proportion" permeates the entire structure of the world, creating the condition for a multiverse, the first outlines of which could be seen in the Mediterranean through intertwining of different civilizations. But other horizons, too, cold and inaccessible to some people, have their multiverses and hidden multitudes, and it is necessary to truly love, like Buñuel, the cold, the North and the rains to make them visible and communicable. With a precise repetition of the horizon, this installation seems to warn that in the age of the Anthropocene, perhaps more than ever in history, mankind needs to reconsider its own horizons. With the Anthropocene, man becomes a geological force whose uncontrolled activity – the basic pattern of entrepreneurial capitalism and the ideology of unrestrained growth – can disrupt the functioning of the complex system of the earth.

Horizon

Although the etymology of the term horizon is related to "setting a boundary, limiting,

separating”, and the metaphor of the horizon is most often used as a reflection upon human boundaries: of power, knowledge, understanding, expectations, etc., the notion of the horizon has systemically acquired a dual role. It is a concept that implies duality: of opening and limiting, of the internal and the external, inclusion and exclusion, immanence and transcendence, definiteness and indefiniteness, the intimate and the distant, the surveyable and the imperceptible, completeness and incompleteness, continuity and discontinuity, etc. Therefore, the horizon metaphor is used to represent the openness or closedness of perspectives. This metaphor presupposes an absolute horizon, which forces us to think about the “event horizon” when an observer is confronted with the visible or invisible, the communicative or incommunicable.

With the modern idea of progress understood as exceeding the limit, with new technologies and the delimitation of space and time brought by globalization, the dynamic horizon of technical civilization dominates, which paradoxically leads to an implosion of the horizon. In the 21st century, when the idea of progress is equated with unlimited innovation, transgression becomes permanent, which has not only changed the character of the limit and the horizon, but also led to its final abolition. The aesthetics of modernity outlines a new reality, and that is life in a world without a horizon. Simultaneously with the unstoppable development of new technologies (info, nano, bio, neuro... techne), there is a need for a different way of thinking about the open and closed horizon, in order to outline a profound change not only in our relationship with the world but also the world itself.

On the one hand, the closed horizon can be understood as the interdependence of planetary boundaries that guarantee the functioning of the Earth’s systems, and thus the survival of life on Earth. In this case, the horizon of closedness suggests that if there is a serious violation of these boundaries, life on Earth may be irreversibly endangered. With the development of the Gaia theory, formulated by chemist James Lovelock together with microbiologist Lynn Margulis in the 1970s, the closed horizon took on a different meaning. The Gaia hypothesis proposes that living organisms interact with their inorganic surroundings on Earth to form a synergistic and self-regulating, complex system, which helps to maintain and perpetuate the conditions for life on the planet. Lovelock points out the deficiency of the assumption of a stable habitable zone – neither too hot nor too cold – because it overlooks the possibility that a life-containing planet tends to modify its environment as well as climate, in a way that favours life, as it is the case on Earth. The Gaia theory is based on the fact that since it began,

life has worked to modify its environment, a complex and multidimensional process that still eludes our understanding.

The concept of a closed horizon points to the existence of the critical zone (Bruno Latour), which – unlike the static habitability zone, which most often encompasses the entire planet (big blue ball) – means an uncertain status, unclear outline and disturbing atmosphere. In this way, attention is diverted away from “territory”, “land”, “soil”, “homeland” or “landscape”, and above all from the planet Earth as a source of various almost inexhaustible resources. A critical zone is actually a patchwork of heterogeneous and discontinuous non-linear events that make up a complex network of life. We reside within a limited space, a thin biofilm, no more than a few kilometres above and below the Earth’s surface, from which we cannot escape. In that sense, the critical zone is the space of interactions (chemical exchanges, geological mechanisms – geochemical cycles, as well as social processes), which is still largely unknown to us. Therefore, the critical zone is a provisional model that confronts us with the phenomenon of life as a thin and fragile layer, pure immanence, a multitude that cannot be overcoded by a transcendent structure. In a way, the critical zone unequivocally confirms that life is possible only within a defined, closed horizon, whose fragility we too often overlook due to our anthropocentric self-deception.

On the other hand, with an open horizon, there is no ultimate and comprehensive perspective, even if it is the sum of all possible perspectives. So, for Nietzsche, for humans alone among the animals there are no eternal horizons and perspectives. This open horizon is outlined in the final scenes of Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*, when astronaut David Bowman crosses the “event horizon” and, through a space-time wormhole, enters a new dimension. In that dimension, space-time bends in unusual directions, and he, as if in some kind of a zoo, is observed by god-like entities, creatures of pure energy and intelligence, with no shape or form. It is this Bowman’s crossing the “event horizon” that makes the erosion of the closed horizon visible, from which completely different and incredible combinations will emerge. First of all, it means leaving the critical zone, that primordial Mediterranean multiverse on the account of a different multitude, the one whose precondition is the erasure of many boundaries, primarily the one between man and machine, in order to create conditions for the next flux of intelligence and consciousness.

Proportion

Furthermore, one should keep in mind the distinction between two types of horizons that astrophysicist and artist Jean-Pierre Luminet makes. He differentiates a relative horizon, such as the earth horizon, having an observer at its centre and moving along with it and an absolute horizon, an “event horizon”, independent of any observer and dividing events into two categories – visible and invisible, communicable and incommunicable. In a way, in the case of a closed horizon, as well as with an open horizon, the observer is confronted with this absolute, “event horizon”, when they become aware of the inner limits of the machines of visibility and the mode of communicability within the historical formation to which they belong.

La divina proportione, confronts the viewer with the absolute horizon, at the same time opening a gap between events, this interspace when nothing happens, which creates conditions for perceiving the very march of time (“long term thinking”) beyond the accelerated life of modern man (“short term thinking”). Only beyond the chronos, beyond the chronological time, it becomes possible to see the non-linear structure of the world as a network of events whose complex weaving man can irreversibly disrupt at any time with their activities. So the place of the viewer is marginal – to destabilize the dominant, long-normalized anthropocentric view and make Homo sapiens re-examine their own place in the world. Involved in this installation, the viewer ceases to be a subject who contemplates infinity, which opens with the delineation of the absolute horizon, and becomes a singularity that confronts the visible and the invisible, the communicable and the incommunicable. It is when nothing happens and when a singularity is moved beyond a fixed point of view that it becomes able to perceive the world as a complex network and a web of countless events. Only in this way does Homo sapiens cease to be a subject as the “measure of all things” and the “point of all connections” and becomes a singularity, namely, one of the many hubs of the world as a cluster of complex networks of events. Like a fractal inscribed in the “divine proportion” that permeates the very structure of the world, a singularity is only a faint flash within the flux of becoming.

On the other hand, the installation *La divina proportione* shows exactly how many events remain invisible and incommunicable, completely outside our “event horizon”. In that case, the horizon of Homo sapiens is determined by their senses, which are a filter that does not allow anything not formed by the senses themselves to pass through. This constructivist approach, according to which the world is available to us only as an effect of our

interpretative activity, with the development of civilization, necessarily presupposes the use of some kind of *techne*. So, what now seems abstract and inaccessible will be decoded in order to make the invisible and incommunicable events visible and communicable, in a way still unknown to us. So much so that the installation with seven seas – following Arthur Clarke’s remark that “any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic” – retains a moment of the fairytale and magical. There is not just one perspective, or just one limiting horizon from which it is possible to see all the complexity of the multiverse, but there are many possibilities that, thanks to a new *techne*, prepare the mind for radically different perspectives. Perhaps only then, entering the Novacene Age, in which *Homo sapiens* builds new and unexpected fusions with intelligent machines, as predicted by James Lovelock, will we be able to approach the divine. Only with the emergence of these unusual fusions will we sense all the complexity of the “divine proportion” which, like a multidimensional lattice, creates a space for the emergence of complex interactions of events from the intertwining of which a multitude of worlds arises.