**From/To ENJOYMENT**

What is enjoyment today? What is its connection with capitalist formations of power, production and exchange of goods? Where is enjoyment in the world of algorithmically created needs, generated desires and clichéd ways to satisfy them? Is enjoyment a chemical reaction, communication in the brain between two or more transmitters with or without additional stimuli? Is enjoyment a relic of the past, a recurrence of enlightenment and humanistic values and beliefs that are superfluous today, in a post-human and post-produced reality? Is it banal, stupid and redundant to talk about enjoyment in a world where profit is the only unquestioned value? Is enjoyment separate from thinking or is it a condition to start thinking? Or is enjoyment the driving force for breaking free from the given framing and the creative potential – the only thing that can stand up to retrograde narratives, destructive forces, and neoliberal madness? “Is there any ‘enjoyment’ other than powerful, dominant, erectile enjoyment?” (Malabou) Or is enjoyment – the enjoyment of domination? Is it possible to talk about enjoyment outside of dominance? Or is enjoyment itself power?

In her work ***It Is Creepy Here*** (***Ovde je jezivo***) (2020), **Emilija Terzić** problematizes acute self-containment and the inability to get out of oneself as the effects that neoliberal reality has on our psyche. It was created during the first pandemic winter, in the period of the most intense lockdown crisis. The pandemic initiated the lockdown and isolation caused by it on the global scale, in almost laboratory conditions. The work consists of one frame showing a perfectly ordinary, banal situation of food preparation. The frame is reduced and zoomed in so that only a pan with eggs is seen. All contextual, temporal and spatial references are omitted. Still, the recent pandemic experience, close to all of us, provides the work with a meaning framework for understanding it. It can even be associated with a certain time of day, morning, because the first association connected with making scrambled eggs is – breakfast.

Another association that indirectly positions this action at the mentioned time of day is depression. Intensification of depression symptoms is characteristic of morning. The accompanying voice introduces us to this: while listening to it, we move in the space between the human, the most personal, utterly private and emotional, to something unfamiliar, extra-human. This effect is a product of our dilemma as to who that voice belongs to and whether it is a human voice at all. The barely noticeable automation in pronunciation keeps us in suspense, and we are not sure whether it is caused by nervousness and stress or by something else. This something else we sense is that the voice we hear is not human at all, but a computer generated voice. And all the time we are in that undefined space between the tone and articulation of the voice which emphasize the mechanized dimension and the content filled with emotions familiar to us, close, human; those that belong to our personal experience.

In her work, **Emilija Terzić** diagnoses this rift in the personal, present for a long time, and intensified with the pandemic crisis: a gap between the self that wants to live and enjoy and the other self that sabotages it, blocks desires and enjoyment. The effect of this is exclusion, moving in a circle, within a closed monological form bordered by schism, conflicting attitudes, absence of enjoyment and metastasized selfhood, which is emphasized in the work by a narrowed, static, fixed frame and enlargement.

**Zorica Čolić’s** video work ***The Thing That Enjoys Itself*** (***Stvar koja uživa***) (2022) problematizes a kind of a paradox and stimulated excitement in the age of lack of excitement. A symptom of this paradox is the separation of excitement from the body and its repackaging as a commodity. Constructing the need for more excitement, which is offered through a wide variety of contents and which calls for enjoyment, is one of the dominant economic matrices of functioning in a post-capitalist society. We have long lived in a time where excitement is equated with its consumption. Enjoyment is mediated by technologies and objects and subordinate to the constant tendency to create new needs for excitement and elusion of it. Bauman points out the difference between natural and created needs: unlike the natural needs, which disappear when satisfied, the opposite is true for the created needs. They not only do not disappear, but are strengthened by the development of addictive affinities and the associated economy of additional stimuli for their satisfaction, which is always absent.

**Zorica Čolić** shows this by introducing numerous sex toys to emphasize the consumerist character and technology mediation in enjoyment. Some of them resemble parts of male and female genitalia; some do not include even that kind of resemblance. However, all of them are set in motion, animated, and they function as separate vibrating bodies; they can be touched, licked, caressed, tickled, penetrated, pumped, kneaded and aroused. They produce the effect of excitement in contact with the body, but an identical effect is also achieved in the complete absence of the body. The body seems to be an obsolescent category in this game of seduction, sexual excitement and the related enjoyment. The good old organic human body, which feels, thinks and enjoys this game, is no longer necessary. The effect of excitement as a product of visual stimulation is there, but without human influence. It has been replaced by some kind of techno, neutralized and hybrid toy machines that simulate sexual arousal. The human factor is somewhere outside, in the background, and reduced to the user.

And so we enter a post-produced and post-human world in which enjoyment is only a recurrence of the past, of enlightenment and humanistic ideals, on the way to disappear. In the post-human world, we are on the edge that threatens to reduce enjoyment to a technological process. In the post-human world, the driving force is not energy, not striving for another, not Eros, but information. It circulates in the media space, producing a certain amount of excitement, but the human factor can be excluded from this media chain of pleasure production because it seems that all these toys that we see in **Zorica Čolić’s** work, in motion, playful and non-reproductive, in a word, perverse – if this Freudian interpretation can be applied to non-human entities – these bodies without bodies also function without the user, without the human in general.

In her video performance ***THAT BODY*** (***TO TELO***) (2022), **Dragana Žarevac** recreates a frame from Almodóvar’s film *High Heels* (Pedro Almodóvar, *Tacones lejanos*, 1991) in which the song *One Year of Love* (*Un Aňo de Amor*) is played. At the beginning of the 1990s, this film introduced the sexuality of transvestites into the media space and popular culture. On the other hand, the representation of the sexuality of the old is not forbidden, but it is still avoided as an unpopular and unattractive topic, unpleasant reminder of the inevitable. By any current criteria of success, it is absolutely not acceptable to be old. For this reason, all the media and advertising moguls have joined together in their noble intention to distract us from the thought of old age, to make it invisible and even inappropriate in our aestheticized world where only beautiful – and young – things sell well.

The conceptual framework of her work is represented by the following terms: body – old age – body – illness – body – enjoyment – body – pleasure in one’s own body. There is additional layer of meaning connected to the fact that the autoimmune disease from which the artist suffers attacks the muscles of the body and intensifies with age. Thus, living with the disease is a daily struggle because our body is made up of muscles, from those that move our eyelids to those in our toes. Sexuality is the other side of that body but, at the same time, it is the only resource of that same body for fighting against the disease and old age. It refers to the inner state and feeling, the energy that moves **THAT BODY** in communication with the other and independent of the other, of the partner or the situation in which it is; in the relationship with its own body, in exposing the body to challenges, in the desire to enjoy, to be beautiful and attractive, to be in harmony with itself, in the resistance it puts up and in accepting the limits it imposes.

The strategy that **Dragana Žarevac** implements in opposing that resistance is tango. In this case, tango is a way to get into a state of enjoyment, to initiate sexuality and establish harmony with one’s own body. But not only tango, it is not one, but a multiple play of producing meaning: from preparing for the performance, rehearsing the choreography, choosing costumes and intimate underwear, applying make-up to exposing the body. Tango is a framework for creating meaning, for meeting, harmonizing opposites and fighting. In this case, all this takes place between one body, the one that wants to enjoy, be beautiful, attractive, erotic, happy, and the other one, which is **THAT** same **BODY** affected by illness, impossibility and imposed limitations.

In his work ***Don't Play What's There, Play What's Not There*** (2022), **Predrag Terzić** explores the position between us and the world and us in relation to ourselves and establishing a balance between them. The framework for this kind of exploration is basketball. Here, the pleasure is in watching the game, in participating in the game, in the love of basketball, in the sound of the ball hitting the floor, in the excitement of following the game, in the effort, uncertainty, acceleration, defending and attacking of the players moving around, colliding on the court, in the mass media spectacle full of spotlights, crowds of people, shouts, whistles and applause. This sort of enjoyment also includes an analytical component of looking at the phenomenon of basketball as a spectacle, which is the thematic framework for several works of this artist.

In *24 Seconds* (*24 sekunde*) (2020–2021), the basketball game is problematized as a point of high intensity, constituted in relation to different registers: sport, business, entertainment, mass culture, economy, politics... By means of animated charcoal drawings, he recreates the situation when, during a game, NBA players paid respect to their deceased teammate Kobe Bryant by stopping the game for several seconds – the number of seconds was 24, his jersey number. With this symbolic gesture, they gave up what was most precious to them during the game – time. In this way, **Predrag Terzić** problematizes the condensed construction of time accelerated to the maximum limits, which is our reality, fully transparent during the basketball game, where seconds are decisive because they make the difference between victory and defeat. In *A Second of Happiness, Years of Pain* (*Sekund sreće, godine bola*) (2020), an installation composed of clock-shaped baskets, each of which is a point in a cyclical movement, a moment of fulfilment or failure; seconds offer the possibility of success – the ultimate value of modern man – or falling out of the game, which is, in a figurative sense, the modus operandi of every man in the late-capitalist machine. On the other hand, the work *Basketball Musical Strategy* (2018) produces transversals that connect seemingly completely separate registers: the game and the visual, through the reconstruction of movements, and then the music and rhythm that accompany both the game and its visual reconstruction.

In the work ***Don't Play What's There, Play What's Not There***, the pleasure is between the mass-media and the introspective. This in-between position is literally staged in the setting of the work, which consists of two parts: a basketball backboard and a mirror. The basketball backboard is damaged and with traces of numerous shots on it, suggesting the intensity of action, force, excitement and movement that go with basketball. At a right angle to it is the mirror, identical in size and shape, duplicating the situation on the other side, while the viewer is in between, caught in the gap between the real and its reflection, the object and its representation, the tangible and the elusive. **Predrag Terzić** suggests this relationship between the tangible and the elusive with the work’s title, too, taken from Miles Davis. The confronting of two boards creates a space that brings the viewer back from the mass-media to the individual, to themself, to the pseudo-introspective situation opened by the narrow space in between, where the action that produces pleasure is transformed into reflection, play into confrontation, and enjoyment into thinking.

Enjoyment includes both pleasure and delight; it is in that space in between and, following Barthes’ logic, includes what is speakable and also what is not. In that gap between – between the speakable and the unspeakable, the visible and the speakable, the expected and the unspeakable – is where enjoyment lies. It is scattered in the network of events, people, information, misinformation, background noise, everyday pleasures and their evasion, which is the starting point in **Jovan Čekić’s** work ***Points of Enjoyment*** (***Tačke uživanja***) (2022).

The traditional world before the advent of modernity, however chaotic it was, full of conflicts and turmoil like our world now, still had something different about it – clear regimes of visibility, the “stabilized matrices of the visible and the speakable” (**Čekić** 2017: 15). This can be seen most directly in the way the images functioned, what could be visible at that moment, in that period. In the history of art, this regime of work is suggested by the hierarchy of genres – ranking of paintings in relation to the subject and the intellectual effort that was needed to make them. On the top position in the hierarchy were historical, mythological and religious paintings because they represented divine and human works and required the greatest imagination and skill. Then came portraits because they depicted living, important people, and they were followed by genre paintings with scenes from the everyday life of anonymous people. The second last was landscape painting, which did not require too much imagination, but a sharp perception, since nature is not static. Finally, in the last place, there was still life with its more or less complex arrangements.

Modernism started to break these regimes of visibility; it literally reversed the hierarchical matrix of genres, which is best seen in the impressionists and post-impressionists, the first modern painters who turned to the genres of landscape and still life, the least valued genres in the traditional regime of painting. In the impressionists, the interest in movement, light, atmosphere, in everything that is ephemeral, changeable and elusive and that corresponds to the emergence and growing dominance of capitalism also came to the fore. Its main effect is acceleration that affects all segments of life, in the vortex of which we find ourselves today. Marx would say that all that is solid melts into air.

The work ***Points of Enjoyment*** is a triptych of photographs that combine, on a dark background, images of everyday objects, which directly or indirectly suggest situations of small everyday enjoyments, with text, information taken from different platforms that circulate in the online space in a sea of other information. Triptych is a traditional form, with a hierarchical logic and a stable regime of visibility. In contrast, the triptych form in **Jovan Čekić’s** work is emptied of hierarchical logic, clear divisions and centring. Instead, it functions as a network of connections and relations between different objects and information, seemingly unrelated, but constitutive in our daily movement. It suggests the disintegration of clear regimes of visibility, in terms of stable categories, such as genre divisions, ranking of images, truth and untruth, and suggests a completely different logic of the relationship between the visible and the speakable, which long ago lost their stable character and became fluid. There are no stable positions in the network because everything is in the process of change: from information to disinformation and fake information. Lasers pointed at certain segments of the photograph are an integral part of the work, so that the moment the viewer approaches it, they too become part of the work, part of the network, captured, targeted and under control.

***Points of Enjoyment*** is a diagram of the network of relationships within which our everyday pleasures are constituted, the excess of meaning that stands out in relation to the background noise and external view, which surround and control us. It is not fixed either, but is a matter of intensity, fluid, sometimes graspable, and sometimes elusive: in small or large details, in daily rituals, visible or unspeakable, changeable in relation to the network itself, what stands out against the background of the daily routine, what is planned or a product of chance.

**Neša Paripović’s** work ***Examples of Analytical Sculpture*** (***Primeri analitičke skulpture***) (1978) is a series of photographs in which “the camera is at close range – some 30 cm, so that in all the photographs the touch is in the centre of each individual photograph, thus avoiding a possible composition and aestheticism of the photograph” (Paripović 1980: 5). The touch happens between the female model, nude, “sculpture” and the artist and unfailingly “refers to the status of the female nude as an aesthetic and sexual category par excellence in European culture, as well as to the always intriguing ‘eroticizing’ relationship between the artist and the model”, while traditionally, the man is “the master of the gaze that objectifies the naked female body into a passive and silent object of scopic desire” (Sretenović). In another interpretation, referred to by the same author, “Bojana Pejić draws the conclusion that Paripović makes a ‘metonymic turn’ in the field of this economy of domination by renouncing the privilege of the ‘gazing subject’ and abolishing the distance between him and the model” (Ibid). When looking at the recorded situations, however, one gets the impression that she, although passive, dominates in relation to him, who moves around her, in relation to her, in a spiral that envelops her. Contributing to this impression is her aura of a work of art, coming from the reference to the sculpture in the title and the counterpoise, and the attribute of sublimity related to them, which accompany them in the traditional art. On the other hand, he is the one who serves her, because he circles like a satellite moving in orbit around her in the centre.

And if we look at it this way, we are again in the same logic of dominance and power relations from which we cannot escape. It seems to be very difficult for us to think differently, and to get out of that historically and culturally determined model of thinking that includes dual logic, opposition, where she is still just “the bearer of meaning and not the maker of meaning” (Mulvey). The argument that she is the bearer and not the maker of meaning holds even when we pervert traditional power relations between the male and female sex. However, this is not about the gaze, but about the touch, and this makes a difference, a breakthrough in relation to the conventional hierarchical observation matrix. And it changes everything, it puts that power relationship in the background, because what we see is a meeting, touch, body and body, where the distance between is removed for a short time. It could be said that it is a zero position in which – as Bataille would put it – the continuity is established between two separate, discontinuous beings. When the gaze and distance are abolished as the key parts of the scopic power relationship, this economy of power takes a backseat to the idea of overcoming the distance and connecting.

Of course, one can also say that the gaze has not been abolished, that the substitution for the artist’s gaze is the “male” gaze of the viewer, i.e., that the scopic pleasure remains, but it seems that we are only spinning in a circle of power games from which we cannot get out, and that what is different from it eludes us; it is the touch, which is, after all, the main theme of the work, and pleasure, and the pleasure is also on the side of the viewer, who becomes part of the touch-event, intimate, erotic, aesthetic, exciting, usually out of the viewer’s sight. In contrast to the scopic enjoyment, where watching itself is a source of pleasure, independent of drives and erogenous zones, and where people are reduced to the objects of the controlling gaze, this is about the introduction of what Catherine Malabou calls the multiplicity of enjoyment, that includes numerous erogenous zones, and connects it with the female body, referring to Luce Irigaray: “‘Body, breasts, pubis, clitoris, labia, vulva, vagina, cervix, uterus...’ The multiplicity of zones cannot be collected, it remains thinned, which is why pleasure leads to the other side of the openness-closeness, passivity-activity pairs” (Malabou). The analytical process of recording of the geography of female enjoyment introduces an element of analysis, as referred to by the title itself. But that analysis, in contrast to the generally accepted opinion that it kills pleasure, actually draws us, the viewers, into the event in which the multiplicity of enjoyment is produced and not reduced, “more elaborate, multiple in its differences, complex, subtle, unimaginable... in the imaginary too focused on sameness” (Ibid).

The detachment from identity determinations and the related power relations is the problematic frame of the ***Comfort Zones*** (***Zone komfora***) performance, carried out by **Vocal Curatorial Syndrome**. **Dvoglavi** [two-headed one] is one of the aliases in this collective’s performances, *the son of Triglav, [three-headed one]* *but without a father figure***.*****Dvoglavi*** *has one body but two heads that do not think alike and often come into conflict.* **Dvoglavi** has no identity, but numerous identities – sliding, indeterminate, fluid – in a constant process of perverting and interflowing. The identities are constituted in the course of the performance, then they flow out, they are destabilized and finally annulled. They are produced by means of various visual, verbal and stage strategies, using costumes, wigs, make-up and disguise. For **Dvoglavi**, identities are an inducement for play, exchange, parody, sarcasm and jokes.

For **Dvoglavi**, sliding identities are also a strategy to oppose the existing, established, conventional, expected and hackneyed power relations. During the performance, they do not disappear, but are duplicated, multiplied, parodied, shuffled and transformed. ***Comfort Zones*** is a performance in three acts in which the inner boundaries of the zone of enjoyment, pleasure and the related comfort – physical, intellectual, social, political – are re-examined, transcended, argued and deconstructed. In the first act, the performance is accompanied by the rhythm of a machine, producing an industrial, techno, mechanized sound that emphasizes the clear relationship of power, the stabilized regime between the subordinate and the master, the one who exercises force and the one on whom force is imposed, between what is forbidden and what is normalized, between limited and unlimited choice. Power is exercised over the body and is connected with bodily pleasure.

In the second act, the clear power relations dissolve and destabilize, which is emphasized by the introduction of light piano accompaniment and the ethereal sound of the harp, but the duality remains in the confrontations of two heads and two opinions: one critical, sharp and polemical and the other affirmative, coloured by emotions. The two heads alternately comment, analyse and enjoy talking about the exhibited works. This metanarrative, where the exhibited works are an incentive to create a new work, a performance realized at the exhibition itself, problematizes the enjoyment of art: whether it is intellectual, retinal, experiential, visual or spiritual. Questions about enjoyment multiply. The resolution or a hint of it is reached in the third act, ecstatically and in an activist manner with combat songs.

Despite the metanarrative as an integral part of the work, it seems that **Vocal-Curatorial Syndrome** does not operate from metapositions, separated and distanced, but from the event made up of numerous, multiple connections and relationships in which the artists who carry out the performance are at the same time art historians, critics who interpret the works and are also part of the performance in some kind of hybrid-crazy-tautological combination in the space between art, theory, criticism, parody and performing.

With his work ***CT Park*** (2008), **Milija Pavićević** introduces a position on the other side of power relations and the meditative, almost enlightening art of enjoyment. It is one in a series of works where he makes self-portraits, duplicates and produces his own image outside of the existing conventions. In order to do this, he implements the strategies of using collage and photomontage techniques, which enable him to connect and overlap different layers of meaning and produce multiple layers of sense, to bring together events that belong to different eras, registers – private, artistic, media, pornographic... – events from his childhood-youth and those painted on the canvases of great masters, childhood photographs, art and media images, fragments of reproductions of old masters, modern paintings and porn magazines; and enjoyment – one of the leitmotifs in his work is multiple and manifold enjoyment: erotic, bodily, profane, banal, sensual, enjoyment of food (*Father*, 2004), excessive drinking (*Big Alcoholics*, 2001), even going to the cemetery is a stroll on a sunny and clear day, an easy act tinged with enjoyment.

The motif of cherries dominates in the work – ripe, red, juicy and reproduced, reduced to a sign and surface. Another dominant motif is a yellow suit, worn by **Milija Pavićević**, with his hair dishevelled. The same suit appears in a series of works in which the artist seems to have entered another world, in every way similar to ours, and yet it is not ours. In it, Manet’s *Flautist* and Mickey Mouse keep him company. In contrast, in this work, the artist is alone, in the yellow suit and with a yellow umbrella, sitting on a bench in a park, while the trees are covered with ripe, red, huge masses of cherries against the black and white background. It is a world outside of our experience in which “elegant restlessness”, suggested by his gaze and dishevelled hair, and peace are paradoxically combined. It seems to be some kind of an inner world, which he has built for himself from the past, experience, art, enjoyment, life, suffering, passion, love and despair. It is not the world into which he has fled, it is the world which he has conquered in order to get out of himself and return to himself – ennobled, perfectly peaceful and filled with enjoyment.

Here enjoyment is the effect of getting out of all power relations, economies of dominant forces, dual matrices and imposed opposing; it is the effect of living and art at the same time, their merging, intertwining and overlapping, so that it is not entirely clear, nor important, where art begins and where life is; it seems that the distance in between, from life to art, is almost abolished, life transcends (into) art and vice versa. Those blossoming, manifold enjoyments, like overripe cherries that overflow the artist’s sky, spill over the entire surface of the picture and come out of its frame, thereby moving the concept of enjoyment to a higher level, bordering on enlightenment, accompanied by peace with oneself and in oneself and enjoyment in all aspects of the self and all the connections of the self with others, the pure pleasure of existence that is not out there somewhere, but right here, in front of us.

Enjoyment today is on a slippery slope, although it is familiar, normal and taken for granted. It is torn between the idea of success, its absence, depression, neoliberal madness that offers it as a commodity and pleasure, love, connecting, what moves us, what opens the way to the unknown, new, different and pulls us out of the routine and inertia of the everyday. Enjoyment is in small things, in big things, in available things and those we have to work for. From all sides, we are faced with almost an ultimatum demanding that we find enjoyment and numerous possibilities for tasting it. At the same time, in this world of extreme instability, nuclear threat, constant crises and wars, emigrations and pauperization of cities, entire regions and countries, influential inequality and various fascisms, the issue of enjoyment has been pushed aside, it is distant, non-essential; it is even rude and politically incorrect to raise.

Enjoyment seems to be the hardest thing to get. One of the key sources of aggression, destruction, violence, greed and arrogance is the effect of the inability to enjoy. Something always separates us from enjoyment, and the road to enjoyment is winding, uncertain and interrupted: by circumstances, possibilities, desires, routines, impossibilities, inertias, dissatisfactions, breaks and continuous production of distances. The distance that separates us From enjoyment and which we constantly pass To enjoyment – is constitutive of the very experience of enjoyment. Enjoyment is thus always an elusive and driving energy, and its absence is a trigger for the production of destructive energy. On the other hand, to enjoy yourself or to be able to enjoy something, to move from enjoyment to thinking and from thinking to pleasure is a privilege. In a world where thinking is unpopular, in a time of growing discontent, depression, survival and dominance of outdated, retrograde and conservative narratives steeped in the past – enjoyment is pure subversion.

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