

Akademický rok 2020/21

Diplomová práce – posudek oponenta

Jméno a příjmení studenta: BcA. Vendula Kolářová

Název práce: Přítomnost

Slovní hodnocení:

Vendula Kolorova cites three institutional positions as being formative for the development and understanding of her project: Working for the Bludný, Kámen association in Opava, internships at Display in Prague and subsequently at the Van Abbemuseum in the Netherlands. By actively seeking out these internships Kolorava demonstrated initiative in wanting to learn from institutional contexts and artists in developing the project. The result, as Kolorava describes it, was a shift in the project form one that focused on physical care to psychological care.

At the same time, collaboration within the project was approached as a key methodology within the project. This entailed Kolorova forging working relationships with a number of people on different aspects of the project (the scent and audio work being two examples). The emphasis on collaborative work demonstrates how Kolorova wanted to explore themes within the project through the working process (rather than merely representing it) showing an ability to take a holistic approach to the project.

In the project *Presence* Vendula Kolarova identifies comfort as both an aspect of the visioir experience and an important element of the collaborative process in making the work. She begins form a central question of ,why aren't people spending more time in galleries?' She identifies her personal interest and need to experience safe spaces. Both these questions and concerns are key considerations within current institutiona debates. How can institutions compete with the immedicacy of digital culture where people's attention span is shorter and shorter? Equally, how can institutions be genuinely safe spaces for different bodies?

Kolorava contextualises the project within recent developments in institutional practice, form the decrease in public funding and rampant commercialisation of museum spaces on the one hand, to the transformation of galleries to laboratories and convivial spaces as part of new institutionalism on the other. She identifies cafe for example as contributing to visitors' comfort. However, there is also of course the wish for musuem to capitalise on museum visotrs, ensuring they spend money. Here I recognise a a key contributiun in Kolorava's project. *Presence* offers an alternative way of thinking about leisure and comfort in institutiona spaces: not as driven by commerce, but by arriving at a multi-sensory, bodily and psychological comfort.

Whilst Kolorava cites a number of artists who have informed the project, Yael Davivds, for example – as well as institutional projects such as the *Multisensory Museum* there are other artists who I would expect to be cited. Apolonja Susterics *Light Therapy Room* being a key example, that was also part of Maria Lind's experiments with 'New Institutionalism'

What is intriguing, and left productively unresolved is how *Presence* both operates as a sign – a representation of a wellness environment (what Kolorava describes as increasingly dominating contemporary consumerism) and the actual transposing of a sauna environment in the gallery. Kolorava's refusal to either directly critique, or celebrate the references she draws on means the work constantly hovers between sign and the thing itself.

In the thesis Kolorava clearly marks out the trajectory of her work – from her background in medical training, her bachelor thesis project and other recent projects including developing a series of loungers before arriving at the final thesis. The trajectory shows an ability to identify a research interest and develop it over a period of time through different formats and scales, which should be commended.

Collaboration and the wish to move away from a 'solo' in the work is another strong and defining feature of the project. By insisting on collaboration as methodology she skilfully withholds the sense of authorship of the project. This aligns with the project's wish to consider care for each other in the project. As Kolorava reflects, it also created a sense of comfort for her, as composer of the project.

Turning to the physical and experiential installation. Each element within the installation played a role in achieving Kolorava's wish to create a sense of comfort. The evocation of sauna benches, the bath robes, the audio, the scent. The documentation shows a high technical finish to the work. The benches appear as exact replicas of sauna benches; the robes are immaculately folded. The scent, which I was unfortunately unable to smell, is described as indicating a sense of comfort and relaxation. Kolorava's choices in materials, collaborators and overall composition of the work appears highly thought through. The movement of the visitor through different parts of the installation is equally carefully considered. This is not an installation to be simply viewed, but rather to be experienced in a multi-sensory way. The body, smell, sound are all taken into consideration to create an overall experience. Here Kolorava's project makes a contribution to ongoing debates about how museum practices can move away from the modernist, ocular and intellectual approach to encountering art to one that entails bodily experience and for different able bodies. Kolorava cites projects such as the multisensory museum to situate her project within this trajectory.

Otázky k rozpravě:

Within the thesis I would like to understand Kolorava's critical position more. Kolorava says she is drawing on some of the cliches of wellness centres, but it is still not clear to me, if the work offers a critique of this industry. This is partly the work's strength as it refuses to be *read* easily. However, it could be encountered as a gimmick.

Also, I would be very interested to see this work in relation to other pieces / installations. Whilst this may not have been possible in this current project, Kolorava could have approached it in the written thesis. This work takes on a very different meaning when it is experienced as one room amongst many others where more conventional visual art encounters. This could help to further emphasise the multisensory nature of the work, as well as how we understand it within the context of contemporary art institutions.

Závěrečné hodnocení:

I recommend the thesis for defense/exam.

Návrh klasifikace:

B

Posudek vypracoval(a):

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Datum:

Date: 10.06.21