

A Load From the Inside - Reviewed



Freud's "Psychopathology of Everyday Life" extensively explores forgetting and mistakes, which are the basic mechanisms behind Lala Raščić's video performance "A Load From the Inside -

Reviewed". The performance was commissioned for the contemporary art programme of the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna, entitled "A View From the Outside - Reloaded". Raščić's performance appears to take place in the Freud family's Vienna apartment, preserved from oblivion in a photographic mise-en-scène of the museum, which was the family's former home. The artist inserts herself into photographs that were taken by Edmund Engelman just days before the Father of Psychoanalysis and his family left the Austrian capital. Via digital imaging, she sneaks through the photographic evidence like a concealed childhood memory. The artist's character is costumed and coiffed in accordance with the period - the nineteen thirties, yet her penetration into Sigmund Freud's everyday working and living space is anything but discreet and inconspicuous. Contributing to this is, of course, the scale of the artist's character in the video, ranging from a figurine to a human being, as is her performance encrypted in the form of a skit or slapstick.

Before the photographic mise-en-scène, Raščić deliberately makes awkward attempts to take the potential position of a human character. She tries *to fill* the apparently empty spaces of appropriated memories, but does so extremely clumsily. So clumsily that her skit's directing invokes early comedians such as Buster Keaton or the Marx Brothers. The physically expressive act, throughout a trial and error procedure, attempts to fix the costumed intruder/performer into the historical photographs. However, her assimilation into the surroundings is painstaking: the choreography of *the slip* both invokes the comedic gag as well as a mechanistic view of the human body from a surrealist standpoint. It also reveals the long process of digital image processing and editing: sometimes the embedding of characters into digital or photographed surroundings is as complex and unpredictable as their entry into human memory. On the other hand, the phantasmal figure that creeps into place of an aunt, a nanny, or a marble Venus alludes to earlier spiritualistic photomontages from a time when the camera was supposed to prove the existence of beings that the human eye could not perceive. At that time the belief in the superiority of the all-seeing camera lens

had to yield to human imagination, and consequently to the conscious and unconscious prefabrication of reality.

In Raščić's previous works *the slip*, forgetting or symptomatic actions often reveal the solution to the riddle in the narrative. Thus, the mafia boss inadvertently blows his cover in the neo-noiresque conspiracy "Everything is connected" (2007), while the technical bias and inconsistency between image and sound in the artist's interpretation of the legendary radio play "Sorry, Wrong Number" (2006) represents technology's futility in the face of real danger. The key question is not "*who did it*", but rather "*where are the slips*" hidden in the formal or narrative weave and in which places does reality radiate through? The mechanisms of confusion, misreading, oblivion and faulty memories are significant in the construction of elliptical narrative structures.

Along many examples from his own analytical practice and from the experiences of people close to him, Freud also mentions several examples of slips in literature in his "Psychopathology of Everyday Life", placing these slips at the same level with the narratives of "real life". The mechanism of artistic structure and the mechanism of the unconscious almost use the same methods although they are fed by different motives. Perhaps the final outcome is similar because the nature of written or spoken expression, which in paraphrasing and interpretation through the verbal, written or visual, respects the rendition of events that affect one's mental world, and, to a large extent, have lead one to the "office with the couch" reproduced in Engelman's photographs. The temporal and spatial overlapping of the photographic reproductions with the video recordings intended for manipulation, and the layering of their projections through the transparent glass panes of the window on Berggasse, do not build a model that merely combines unconscious and artistic constructs. It physically, if this can be said of an optical illusion, points to the circularity and connectedness of all elements in these processes, in such a way that the *view from the outside* can easily become *loaded from the inside*, and vice versa.

Text by Jasna Jakšić, 2011.