

davorca perić

momjan, visura aperta 2000. – 2007.

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► Međunarodni multimedijalni festival *Visura aperta* održava se već osmu godinu na specifičnoj lokaciji u Istri, neposredno uz slovensku i talijansku granicu, u dvojezičnom i multietničkom mjestu Momjanu/Momiano. Festival se sastoji od radionice (Laboratorio momiano) usmjerene na istraživanje kulturoloških problema vezanih za konkretan teritorij i specifičan geopolitički kontekst te od festivalskog programa u kojem se predstavljaju srodne umjetničke inicijative, održavaju predavanja, izložbe i videoprogram. Festival i radionica potiču suradnju ljudi s različitim humanističkih područja – umjetnika, arhitekta, dizajnera, snimatelja, sociologa, antropologa, povjesničara umjetnosti, filozofa, koreografa, kulturologa i drugih srodnih profesija, i, kao još značajnije, njihovu suradnju s mještanima i negalerijskom publikom. Sudionici radionice pozvani su reagirati na novi kontekst, proživjeti ga i nadovezati se na njega svojim interesima. Mnogostrana komunikacija s lokalnom društvenom sredinom u kojoj umjetnički rad postaje jedinstveni događaj vezan za specifične kategorije mjesta i trajanja konačni je produkt festivala koji je kao takav neponovljiv odnosno nepreseljiv u drugi kontekst, te sve daljnje prezentacije u galerijskim prostorima u pravilu mogu imati samo dokumentarni, postprodukcijski karakter.

Visura aperta zastupa i naglašava otvorenost transmedijalnog pristupa, te osim prožimanja vizualnih medija u širem smislu podrazumijeva uključivanje kulturološki i sociološki specifičnih okolnosti u kojima rad nastaje u sferi umjetničkog rada. Tako na primjer umjetnici Naoko Takahashi i Fabrizio Manco uz pomoć libela i metra, istražujući problem granica, odnosa i veza, pokušavaju "izmjeriti" udaljenosti i granice između ljudi, doslovno mjereći metrom ljudska tijela. *Mjerenja* tako započinju videoprojeksijom na vanjskom zidu crkve Sv. Martina u Momjanu, gdje

1. Naoko Takahashi: Bez naslova, performans s Armandom / Without title, performance with Armando, Momiano 2004

● The international multimedia festival *Visura aperta* has been taking place for eight years on a peculiar site in Istria, located very near the Slovenian and Italian borders: in the bilingual and multiethnic town of Momjan/Momiano. The festival consists of a research-oriented workshop (Laboratorio momiano), dedicated to the site-specific cultural problems and the particular geo-political context, and a festival programme presenting the relevant artistic initiatives, including lectures, exhibitions, and video streamings. The festival and the workshop encourage collaboration between individuals from various fields of arts and humanities - artists, architects, designers, cameramen, sociologists, anthropologists, art historians, philosophers, choreographers, cultural researchers, and others – and even more importantly, their cooperation with the local population and non-gallery audiences. Workshop participants are invited to react to the context, to experience it, and to refer to it with respect to their own interests. This multiple communication with the local social environment, in which art is becoming a unique event, related to the specific categories of place and duration, is the final product of the festival, which is in itself unrepeatable, or rather non-transferrable into a different context, meaning that all further presentations in gallery spaces can, as a rule, have only documentary or post-production character.

Visura aperta endorses and emphasizes the openness of transmedia approach, which, apart from the fusion of different visual media in a broader sense, entails the inclusion of culturally and sociologically defined context of particular artwork in the sphere of art. Thus, artists Naoko Takahashi and Fabrizio Manco have tried to "measure" the distances and borderlines between people with the help of a mechanic's level and ruler, exploring the problem of bounda-

se mjere odnosi veličinâ prikazanih arhitektonskih elemenata. Projekcija se potom sa zida proširila na okolni prostor i publiku.

Projekti redovito izlaze izvan granica ne samo vizualnih medija, nego i umjetničke prakse općenito te zadiru u prostor svakodnevnog života do mjere da svakodnevne situacije, razgovori i druženje s mještanima imaju jednak "umjetnički" status kao i finalna produkcija rada. U vrlo maloj multietničkoj zajednici potpuno nenavikloj na ulogu umjetničke publike koja im se nameće, sudionici radionice i festivala u biti su stranci svjesni da njihovo djelovanje mora biti otvoreno, pa činjenica da je granica između socijalne interakcije i stvaranja autonomnog umjetničkog rada teško određiva svakako predstavlja glavnu distinktivnu kvalitetu *Visure aperte*. U jednakoj mjeri kao i reakcija umjetnika i sudionika na kontekst mjesta, zanimljiva je reakcija mješтана na privremenu kolonizaciju festivalom, pa se doista može ustvrditi da

ries, relations, and links by literally measuring human bodies with a measuring tape. Their *Measurements* begin with a video streaming on the outer wall of St Martin's church at Momjan, measuring the size relations between various architectural elements. Eventually, the streaming expands from the wall to the surrounding space and the audience. The presented projects regularly cross boundaries, not only those of the visual media, but also those of artistic practices as such, which enter the space of everyday life to the extent that commonplace situations, conversations, and communication with the local population acquire the same "artistic" status as the final product. In that very small multiethnic community, totally unused to its newly acquired role of artistic audience, the workshop and festival participants are in fact strangers, aware of the fact that their activity must be open in its character. This makes it hard to define the borderline between social interaction and the creation of

1



festival uspijeva generirati uzajamnost uvažavanja kulturnog kapitala različitih društvenih skupina i njihovih interesa. Primjerice, mladi slovenski kipar Rok Bogataj 2004. napravio je fontanu geometrijske konstrukcije koja se sastoji od greda bez ispune površina. Rad prati videozapis – pitanja dječaka koji je gledao nastajanje skulpture, ispitujući smisao i funkcionalnost fontane. U pitanju "kako ona drži vodu" vidljiv je susret različitih svjetova te način na koji mještani s čuđenjem promatraju rad umjetnika, ali revno prisustvuju i sudjeluju u umjetničkim događanjima. Na takve i slične načine djeluje se u javnom prostoru gdje se realnost događaja infiltrira u prostor umjetnosti i obratno, preslikavajući stvarni kontekst grada u formalni koncept festivala.

U toj sporazumnoj suradnji počiva momjanski duh satkan od odgovornosti da se prema kulturnom, političkom i socijalnom karakteru mjesta odnosi s odgovornošću i poštovanjem, intenzivno uzvraćajući ljubaznost i gostoljubivost mještana, te u toj atmosferi nastaju radovi koji bilježe procese i otvaraju nove diskurse o umjetničkoj praksi i njezinoj društvenoj funkciji.

U višegodišnjem istraživanju mjesta kao privremenog prostora jedne utopijske zajednice, organizatori i sudionici istodobno, međutim, postaju svjesni traumatične i konfliktne realnosti u pozadini, prožete primarno etničkom podijeljenošću, po ključu po kojemu se organizira prostor svakodnevnog života u cjelini. Taj problem je naročito vidljiv u stanju i korištenju javnih kulturnih prostora – dok je za talijansku zajednicu renovirana i tehnički opremljena stara plemićka kuća u svrhu lokalnog centra kulture, prostor Narodnog doma ostao je zapušten i izvan upotrebe. Iz razgovora s mještanima saznaje se da hrvatski dio stanovnika ne koristi prostore talijanske zajednice osim za vrijeme trajanja festivala, dok zajednički Dom kulture ili "Narodni dom" – kako piše kamenom štukaturom na zidu zgrade – u te svrhe više nitko ne koristi. Na tragu tih i sličnih problema počinje izazov za kulturne projekte poput *Visura aperte* koji socijalno osjetljivim pristupom umjetničkoj praksi imaju priliku djelovati u smjeru poboljšanja suživota etnički podijeljene zajednice.

Upravo takva osviještenost je nužna želi li se izbjeći opasnosti da projekti poput ovoga kliznu u žanr kulturnog turizma; imajući to na umu, *Visura aperta* inzistira na javnoj umjetnosti koja reagira i kritički se postavlja prema društvenoj realnosti sredine, prepoznajući multietničke strukture proizašle iz povijesnih političkih granica, prisvajajući ih kao svoj radni materijal.

Umjetnička inicijativa Nicole Hewitt koja je 2005. godine na završnoj izložbi festivala obznanila pred mještanima do tada samozatajni projekt raščišćivanja ženskog WC-a u Narodnom domu, u tom je smislu urodila neočekivanim pomacima: potaknuti gestom umjetnice, mještani su dali obnoviti sanitarne prostore. Pomak od pasivnog promatranja

an autonomous work of art, which is certainly the main distinctive quality of *Visura aperta*. Beside the reaction of artists and participants to the local context, one should also emphasize the reaction of the local people to the fact that they have been temporarily colonized by the festival, which allows for the conclusion that such a festival can actually generate mutual respect between the cultural capital of various social groups with their interests. For example, the young Slovenian sculptor Rok Bogataj made a geometrically structured fountain in 2004, which consisted only of beams, with no filled-in surfaces. His work was documented on video, consisting of the questions asked by a boy observing the creation of the sculpture, who questioned the fountain's sense and functionality. The question "How does it hold water?" shows the encounter of different worlds and the way in which the local population observes the work of an artist in amazement, but also assists and participates in artistic events with enthusiasm. In such and similar ways, one can intervene in public space, whereby events from the reality are infiltrated in the space of art and vice versa, replicating the true context of the town in the formal concept of the festival.

That keen cooperation is the spirit of Momjan – readiness to relate to the cultural, political, and social character of the place with responsibility and respectfulness, in an intense answer to the kindness and hospitality of local population. Projects created in such atmosphere document the processes and open up new discourses on artistic practice and its social function.

However, years of research on Momjan as a temporary location for a utopian community have revealed both to the organizers and to the participants the traumatic and conflict-laden reality in the background, permeated with ethnic divisions as the key element that organizes the space of everyday life in its entirety. The problem has become particularly evident in the condition of buildings and their use as public cultural spaces – whereas the Italian community has obtained for their cultural centre a renovated and technically well-equipped old aristocratic mansion, the "People's Centre" has remained neglected and unused. Interviews with the local population have shown that the Croats are using the space of the Italian community only as long as the festival lasts, while the common Cultural Centre or "People's Centre" – as the inscription in stone stucco on the building reads – is no longer used for cultural purposes. These and similar problems present a challenge to the cultural projects such as *Visura aperta*, which have an opportunity to contribute to the betterment of cohabitation in an ethnically divided community owing to their socially sensitive approach to art.

Precisely that type of awareness is necessary in order to avoid the risk of projects like this slipping off into the genre of cultural tourism; keeping that

umjetničkih zbivanja do njihove aktivne recepcije, pa i participacije u onima koji otvaraju prostor za kolaboraciju, nastavlja se iz godine u godinu. Premda momjanski model nije moguće kvalificirati kao radikalnu i socijalno angažiranu umjetnost, on neosporno uspijeva pokazati jasnu kritičku intonaciju kako prema lokalnoj kulturnoj politici tako i prema umjetničkoj instituciji i njezinoj odgovornosti općenito.

Drugačiji su, manje izravno angažirani, ali također kolaborativni, participacijski i interaktivni tipovi projekata poput, primjerice, projekta pod nazivom *Principessa di Momiano*, istraživačkog rada čija je autorica također Nicole Hewitt. Okosnica projekta opet je tema lokalne derivacije – u mjesnom kolektivnom sjećanju preživjela legenda o tzv. momjanskoj princezi koja je navodno živjela u srednjovjekovnom kaštelu, a realizacija uključuje i sudionike festivala i mjesno stanovništvo, osobito djecu. Autorica na osnovi različitih varijanti priče koju je čula od stanovnika

2. Nicole Hewitt, Sjećanje, za Dantea / Memory, for Dante, video, digital 8, 20 min, 2004

in mind, *Visura aperta* insists on public art that is responsive and critical towards the social reality of its local environment, recognizing the multiethnic structures that have resulted from historical and political boundaries and appropriating them as its working material.

The artistic initiative of Nicole Hewitt, who at the final exhibition of the festival in 2005 presented to the public her project, concealed until then, of clearing the ladies' lavatories in the People's Centre, had some unexpected results: moved by the artist's gesture, the citizens decided to renovate the sanitary system. This shift from a passive viewing of artistic events to their active reception and even participation in those projects that offer some space for collaboration, has been taking place from one year to the next. Even though the model of Momjan can barely be characterized as radical or socially engaged art, it undoubtedly shows a clear critical tenor, both

2



Momjana kreće u istraživanje transformacija koje legenda doživljava prepričavanjem. Sudionicima festivala ispričala je legendu i dan kasnije zatražila od istih ljudi da je sami ispričaju. Priča je, naravno, doživjela transformacije uslijed selektivnosti pamćenja i subjektivne nadogradnje. Ispričane priče autorica je izložila u pisanom obliku, dok je u suradnji s momjanskom djecom napravila i imaginarnu mizanscenu – kartonski kaštel, dvorjane, glazbene instrumente i slične rekvizite kojima su zajednički pokušali rekonstruirati legendu kao lutkarski igrokaz. U svoj rad Nicole Hewitt spremno unosi lokalno i slučajno, osmišljavajući jednokratne projekte poput opisanog koji rijetko računaju na daljnje prikazivanje. U izmjenama i varijacijama legende, s obzirom na usmenu predaju, Nicole Hewitt tako neizravno fokusira heterogenost i pluralnost kulturnog nasljeđa kao kvalitetu i bogatstvo specifičnog geopolitičkog i društvenog prostora poput momjanskog.

Na primjeru ovih dvaju specifičnih, jednokratnih radova iste umjetnice, ujedno i jedne od stalnih suorganizatorica festivala, možda je najbolje vidljiva otvorenost *Visure aperte*. Između zaigranosti i angažmana, njegova je koncepcija otvorena i promjenjiva – sudionici privremeno postaju stanovnici Momjana, stanovnici – umjetnici, kustosi i umjetnici – publika itd.; uloge se mijenjaju te stvarajući stano-viti kreativni nered dinamiziraju društveni prostor.

Urbano tkivo i građevinska baština jedno su od najosjetljivijih mjesta manifestacije društvenih promjena, pa utoliko i jedna od glavnih tema radio-ničkih projekata, i, štoviše, scena na kojoj se najintenzivnije i najvidljivije upisuje festival u cjelini. Ruševine srednjovjekovnih i renesansnih kuća postaju poligoni za konstruiranje priča, privremenih novih lica zgrada – ozvučenih, pregrađenih i osvjetljenih zidova. Fokusiranjem na problem propadanja napuštenih kuća potakla se reakcija u obliku socijalnog i političkog angažmana lokalne vlasti koja je prostor jedne renesansne kuće ponudila za budući multimedijalni centar.

Videorad *Communita* (2004.) Ane Hušman bavi se tako vremenskim i prostornim preobrazbama arhitektonskog prostora kuće privremeno ustupljene festivalu za potrebe organizacije i provedbe. Videofilm koristi različite elemente, poput fotografija, legendi i sjećanja starog susjeda Dantea, kojije kuću poznao, prije renoviranja i promjene funkcije, kao kuću obitelji Gianollo, danas kulturnu instituciju *Comunità degli Italiani*. Zgrada i njezina dugogodišnja preobrazba postaju glavne junakinje videofilma u kojem se kuća kao struktura dugog trajanja iznova gradi od fragmenata, poput starih fotografija, tlocrta, poznatih priča ispričanih o njoj, itd. Rad Ane Hušman ujedno je i odgovor na lokalnu društvenu sredinu satkanu od složenog spleta imaginarnih i oficijelnih povijesti prostora i ljudi.

Visura aperta regionalni je projekt koji svoju poziciju traži i nalazi negdje između svjesnog izgrađivanja

with respect to the local cultural policies and with respect to the institution of art and its general responsibility.

The festival has also featured different types of projects, less directly engaged, but equally cooperative, participative, and interactive, such as the one entitled *Principessa di Momiano*, another research-based artwork by Nicole Hewitt. The basis of the project was again a locally derived topic – a legend that survived in the local collective memory of the so-called princess of Momjan, who is said to have lived in a medieval fortress. The project included both the festival participants and the local population, especially children. Basing herself on various versions of the story that she had heard from the inhabitants of Momjan, the author took up research on the transformations that the legend could experience through retelling. She told the story to the festival participants and asked them to retell it on the following day. Naturally, the story suffered a number of transformations owing to the selectiveness of memory and subjective additions. The new stories were exhibited in written form and an imaginary stage was created in cooperation with the local children – a cardboard fortress, the princess's courtiers, musical instruments, and similar props that could serve to reconstruct the legend as a puppet show. Nicole Hewitt has been readily introducing local and accidental elements into her work, realizing one-time projects such as the one described, which have rarely aimed at a second-time presentation. With these changes and variations of the legend owing to the oral transmission, Nicole Hewitt has indirectly drawn attention to the heterogeneity and plurality of cultural heritage in a specific geo-political and social space such as Momjan as a sign of its value and richness.

Perhaps these two examples of site-specific and one-time projects by the same artist, who is also one of the permanent co-organizers of the festival, can serve to show the openness of *Visura aperta*. Somewhere between playfulness and engagement, its conception is open and flexible – the festival participants are transformed for a while into the citizens of Momjan, its inhabitants into artists, its artists into audience, etc; the roles are changing and producing a sort of creative mess, introducing a new dynamics into the social space.

Urban texture and heritage are among the most sensitive spots that manifest the social change, which makes them also one of the main themes of workshop projects, or even the stage where the festival as such is presented most intensely and most palpably. The ruins of medieval and renaissance houses become the settings for constructing stories and buildings temporarily acquire new faces – their walls being wired, partitioned, or illuminated. Focusing on the problem of abandoned and decaying houses has even provoked the reaction of local authorities in the form of social and political involvement, since they

socijalne utopije i kritičkog potencijala koji podrazumijeva relacijsko-komunikacijsko razumijevanje suvremene umjetničke prakse. Istraživački, eksperimentalni pristup ono je što *Visura aperta* osigurava svježinu i spremnost za suočavanje s novim i nepoznatim.

Festival ne zazire od etabliranih umjetnika, nego ih redovito poziva da zajedno sa studentima i mještanima kreiraju privremenu sliku Momjana. Radionica (*Laboratorio*) stavlja svog protagonista, opremljena vlastitim idejama, kulturnim i edukacijskim nasljeđem, u specifičnu situaciju u kojoj je prisiljen upoznavati se i reagirati na različite načine mišljenja i umjetničkog djelovanja, pa radovi nastaju kao svježi i promptni odgovori na nov, drugačiji kontekst i stoga su većinom ograničeni na jednokratnu, svrhovitu konzumaciju, nerijetko i konkretno vezani za arhitekturu, stanovnike i ambijent. I do daljnega, čini se da je dovoljno tako – prepričavati multikulturalnu društvenost i prikriveno neslaganje različitosti, u romantičnom ambijentu, kao jedan lijepo upakiran kompromis. Podnoseći te i slične kontradiktornosti otvoreno i bez srama, *Visura aperta* ne odustaje, jer upravo kao utopijska, privremena mikrolokacija, na margini svih umjetničkih, kulturnih i društvenih zbivanja, predstavlja dobrodošlu priliku da se s ekscentričnog, socijalnim problemima opterećenog mjesta stalno iznova analizira i promišlja vlastiti rad i uloga u društvu. Bez oštrih rezova i isključivosti, čini se da upravo ta pomirljivost omogućuje momjanskom projektu da se mijenja i razvija. >

— **Davorka Perić** povjesničarka je umjetnosti, aktivna kao likovna kritičarka i kustosica. Osnivačica i kustosica međunarodnog Festivala vizualnih i audio-medija *VISURA APERTA* u Momjanu. Od 2006. zaposlena u Društvu arhitekata Zagreba gdje kao voditeljica programa realizira transdisciplinarne projekte, predavanja i izložbe. Urednica internetske kolumne i recenzije na web-stranici *DAZ*-a.

— **Davorka Perić** - art historian, active in the field of art criticism and curatorship. Founder and curator of the International Festival of Visual and Audio Media *VISURA APERTA* at Momjan. Since 2006, she has worked at the Zagreb Architects' Association (*DAZ*), organizing transdisciplinary projects, lectures, and exhibitions as their programme coordinator, as well as editing an Internet column and writing reviews for their website.

have offered a renaissance building for a future multimedia centre.

The video entitled *Comunità* (2004) by Ana Hušman was also concerned with temporal and spatial transformations in the architectural space of a building that was temporarily given to the festival for organizational and performative purposes. The video uses various elements of photography, legends, and memories of an old neighbour, Dante, who had known the building as the Gianollo family mansion before it was renovated and transformed into the cultural institution of *Comunità degli Italiani*. With its gradual transformation, the building had become the hero of a video, where it was rebuilt as a long-term structure on the basis of fragments such as old photographs, ground-plans, famous stories, etc. At the same time, the project by Ana Hušman was a response to the local social environment as an intricate web of imaginary and official histories of space and people.

Visura aperta is a regional project, seeking and finding its position somewhere between the conscious building of a social utopia and the critical potential presupposed by the understanding of contemporary artistic practice in terms of relations and communication. Its approach, characterized by research and experimentation, is what secures its freshness and readiness to face the new and the unknown.

The festival does not avoid established artists and invites them regularly to create the temporary image of Momjan together with the students and the local population. The workshop (*Laboratorio*) places its protagonist, supplied with his or her own ideas and cultural/educational background, into a specific situation, where he or she is forced to learn about different ways of thinking and artistic activity and to react to them, meaning that the projects are created as fresh and prompt responses to the new and different context, which is why they are largely limited to a single and purposeful consummation and mostly directly linked to the town's architecture, inhabitants, and atmosphere. It seems that this will remain sufficient for a while – retelling the multicultural cohabitation and the concealed conflict of differences in a romantic atmosphere, as a neatly packed compromise. Bearing such contradictions openly and without shame, *Visura aperta* will not give up, since it is precisely as a utopian, temporary micro-location on the margin of all artistic, cultural, and social events, that it functions as a welcome opportunity to analyse, again and again, one's own work and function in the society from an eccentric standpoint, burdened with social problems. Apparently, it is precisely that conciliatory manner, void of all sharp cuts or exclusiveness, that makes it possible for the Momjan project to change and to grow. o